

The poem entitled the "Bridal" is hardly so simple as this writer would wish; but, as a *rich marriage-dress*, it challenges all admiration.

We must quote some passages.

Alive with eyes, the village sees
The Bridal *dawning* from the trees,
And housewives swarm i' the sun like bees.

Silence sits i' the belfry-choir!
Up in the twinkling air the spire
Throbs, as it *flutter'd wings of fire*.

The winking windows, stained rare,
Blush with their goutts of glory, fair
As heaven's shower-arch had melted there.

But enter—lordlier splendours brim,
Such mists of gold and purple swim,
And the light falls so rich and dim.

Even so doth love life's doors unbar,
Where all the hidden glories are,
That from the windows shone afar.

Sumptuous as Iris, when she swims
With rainbow-robe on dainty limbs,
The bride's full beauty overbrims.

The gazers drink rare overflows,
Her cheek a lovelier damask glows,
And on his arm she leans more close.

A drunken joy reels in his blood,
His being doth so bud and bud,
He wanders an enchanted wood.

Last night with weddable white arms,
And thoughts that throng'd with quaint alarms,
She trembled o'er her mirror'd charms.

Like Eve first glassing her new life;
And the Maid startled at the Wife,
Heart-pained with a sweet warm strife.

The *unknown sea moans on her shore*
Of life: she hears the breakers roar,
But, trusting him, she'll fear no more.

The blessing given, the ring is on;
And at God's *altar radiant run*
The currents of two lives in one.

Husht with happiness, every sense
Is crowned at the heart intense,
And silence hath such eloquence!

Down to his feet her meek eyes stoop
As *there* her love should pour its cup;
But like a king, he lifts them up.

Alone they hold their marriage-feast—
Fresh from the chrism of the priest,
He would not have the happiest jest

To *storm her brows* with a crimson fine;
 And, sooth, they need no wings of wine
 To float them into love's divine.

So *Strength and Beauty, hand in hand,*
 Go forth into the honey'd land
Lit by the love-moon, golden-grand,

Where God hath built their bridal bower,
 And on the top of life they tower,
 And taste the Eden's perfect hour.

No lewd eyes over my shoulder look!
 They do but ope the blessed book
 Of marriage in their hallow'd nook.

O, flowery be the paths they press;
 And ruddiest human fruitage bless
 Them with a lavish loveliness!

Melodious move their wedded life
 Through shocks of time, and storms of strife,
 Husband true, and perfect wife!"

How genius can glorify every object or incident! Had Mr. Massey been describing the marriage of two spirits who are to spend eternity together, or the nuptials of philosophy and faith, he could not have expended more wealth and splendour of imagery, than he does upon what is substantially the story of two children driven by a foe or storm into a nook, where they fondle each other, or weep in concert, till the inevitable enemy comes up and removes them both. What else is the happiest mortal marriage? Still, the spirit of the strain is beautiful, and reminds us forcibly of the one song of poor Lapraik to his wife, of which Burns thus writes:—

There was ae sang amang the rest,
 Aboon them a' it pleased me best,
 Which some kind husband had address'd
 To some sweet wife.
 It thirl'd the heart-strings through the breast,
 A' to the life.

Massey has no elements of the epic or constructive poet about him. He is simply and solely a true lyrist, and as such is both strong and sweet; but with sweetness in general, although not always, rejoicing over strength—sweetness, we mean, of thought, rather than of language and versification. Both of these are often sufficiently rugged. His sentiment seldom halts, but his verse and language often do. Some of his poems remind us of the dishevelled morning head of a beautiful child. This, however, we greatly prefer to that affectation of style, that absurd elaborate jargon, which many true poets of the day are allowing to crust over their style. Even our gifted friend Yendys must beware of a tendency he has lately exhibited in

Balder to pedantry and far-fetched forms of speech. Strong simple English can express any thought, however subtle; any imagination, however lofty; any reflection, however profound; any emotion, however warm; and any shade of fancy, however delicate. Massey, in all his more earnest and loftier strains, shuns the faults of over-elaboration and daintiness, and throws out diamonds in the rough. We may refer, as one of the best specimens of his stern and stalwart battle-axe manner, to "New Year's Eve in Exile." Hear these lines, for instance:—

Men who had broken battle's burning lines,
Dealing life with their looks, death with their hands;
And strode like Salamanders through war's flame;
And in the last stern charge of desperate valour
On death's scythe dash'd with force that turn'd its edge.

✓ Earnest as fire they sate, and reverent
As though a God were present in their midst;
Stern, but serene and hopeful, prayerful, brave
As Cromwell's Ironsides on an eve of battle.
Each individual life as clench'd and knit,
As though beneath their robes their fingers clutch'd
The weapon sworn to strike a tyrant down;
Such proud belief lifted their kindling brows;
Such glowing purpose *hunger'd* in their eyes.

The new year flashes on us sadly grand,
Leaps in our midst with ringing armour on,
Strikes a mail'd hand in ours, and bids us arm
Ere the first trumpet sound the hour of onset.
Dense darkness lies on Europe's winter world;
Stealthy and grim the Bear comes creeping on
Out of the North, and all the peoples sleep
By Freedom's smouldering watch-fire; there is none
To *snatch the brand and dash it in his face*.

This is masculine writing; resembling thy first and best style, O dear author of *The Roman*—a style to which we trust to see thee returning in thy future works. The grandest poetry has ever been, and shall ever be, written on *rocks*—like the stony handwriting traced by the tribes in their march through that great and terrible wilderness; or like the fiery lines which God's hand cut upon the two tables of the law.

We notice in Massey, as in all young poets, occasional imitations of other writers; nay, one or two petty larcenies. For example, he says,

She summers on heaven's hill of myrrh.

Aird had said, in his "Devil's Dream,"

And thou shalt summer high in bliss upon the hills of God.

Again, Massey says,

The flowers fold their cups like praying hands,
And with droop'd heads await the blessing Night
Gives with her silent magnanimity.

Aird in the same marvellous dream had used the words,

The silent magnanimity of Nature and her God.

In the same page Massey says,

How dear it is to mark th' immortal life
Deepen and darken in her large round eyes.

In Aird's "Buy a Broom" we find the following lines, *quoted*, however, and from what author we forget:

Like Pandora's eye,
When first it *darken'd with immortal life*.

In page 51 the following lines occur:

Wept glorious *tears* that *telescope* the soul,
And bring heaven nearer to the eyes of Faith.

We ourselves had said, "the most powerful of all telescopes is a tear." These, however, are really all the distinct instances of plagiarism we have noticed; and, besides being probably quite unintentional, they bear no proportion whatever to the numerous and splendid originalities of the volume.

We have endeavoured to find out from Mr. Massey's volume what his religious sentiments are; and think that, on the whole, he seems to have got little further, as yet, than the worship of Nature. We can forewarn him that this will not long satisfy his heart. Nature, to say the least of it, is a crude, imperfect process, not a complete and rounded result, far less a living cause. No delusion is becoming more general, and none is more contemptibly false, than a certain Brahminical worship of this universe, as if it were anything more than a combination of brute matter, coloured by distance and fancy with poetic hues. Carlyle has greatly aided our young poets to the pitiful conclusion that Matter is God. He cries out, "The Earth is my mother, and divine." He says again, after sneering at the authority of the Bible, "There is one book, of the inspiration of which there cannot be any doubt," namely Nature; forgetting that all the difficulties, and *far more*, which beset the thought that God is the inspirer of the Bible, beset the notion that he is the Author of nature; and that, if earth be *as a whole* divine, then its evils, imperfections, and unutterable woes must be divine, and consequently eternal too. We must warn young

poets against that excessive idolatry of light, heat, law, life, and their multitudinous effects, which are leading them so terribly astray, and sowing their pages with gross materialism, disguised under a transparent veil of Pantheistic mysticism. They see Silenus through a dream, and think him Pan, and make this Pan their only God. Connected with this, is that worship which they say can be best performed without going to church, and the fittest altars of which are

The mountains and the ocean,
Earth, air, stars—all that springs from the Great Whole,
Who hath produced, and will receive, the soul;

forgetting that this worship, being that of the imagination, not of the heart, must be vague and cold; that energy, zeal, and piety have never in former times been long sustained without the aid of public as well as of personal devotion; that the most of those who have thus "worshipped they knew not *what*," in a manner they could hardly tell *how*, have been unhappy and morbid beings; that Milton, whose example, they often quote, although he left his church, did not forsake his Bible; that Jesus Christ, whom they venerate, while he went up again and again to a mountain to pray, himself alone, far more frequently was found in the synagogues on the Sabbath-day; and that, even on merely artistic principles, no finer spectacle can be witnessed on earth than a man of genius not retiring into haughty isolation, and bowing the knee with greater pride than if he blasphemed, but mingling quietly with the common stream of the multitude which is pouring to the house of God, and uniting his voice with their psalmody, his heart with their thanksgiving, and his soul with their adoration.

Since commencing this paper, we have read a book—attributed to Dr. Whewell, and published by Parker—on *The Plurality of Worlds*.¹ Years ago, we had reached all the leading conclusions in this remarkable volume. Its merit is, that it bases what have long been our intuitions upon a solid foundation of logic and facts, proving, almost to a demonstration, that earth is the only part of the creation—at all events, of the solar system—which is yet inhabited. Our object at present in mentioning it, is to proclaim its value as a deadly blow in the face of creation-worship and Pantheism. It demonstrates that the glory of

¹ See our thoughts at greater length on this subject in a recent article in the *Eclectic Review*, to which we are happy to say the author in his "Dialogue," a masterly reply to his opponents, newly published, refers with satisfaction.

the heavenly bodies is all illusion—that they are really in the crudest condition—that there is not the most distant probability that they shall ever be fit for the habitation of intelligent beings—that man is totally distinct from all other races of beings, and is absolutely, essentially, and for ever superior to, and distinct from, the lower animals—and that, besides, he shall, in all probability, be renewed and elevated by a supernatural intervention. It hints, too, at our favourite thought (stated in our paper on Chalmers, in this volume), that, at death, we leave this material creation for ever, and enter on a spiritual sphere, disconnected from this, and where sun, moon, and stars are the “things invisible;” that, to use the words of MacIntosh to Hall, “we shall awaken from this dream, and find ourselves in *other spheres* of existence.” And all these, and many similar ideas are not thrown out as mere conjectures, nor even as bold gleams of insight, but are shown to be favoured by analogy—nay, some of them *founded on fact*. We never read a book with more thorough conviction that we were reading what was true. Had the author gone a step or two farther still, we could have followed him with confidence. Had he predicted the absolute annihilation of matter, we could have substantiated his statement by the words of Scripture: “They shall perish, but Thou remainest; yea, all of them shall be changed and folded up as a vesture; but Thou art the same, and Thy years fail not.” Again, we say that we deeply value this admirable book as a tractate for the times. It should be peculiarly useful to those poets who, like Mr. Massey, are constantly raving about the beauty, the glory, the immensity, and the divinity of Matter, each and all being palpable delusions, since matter is neither beautiful, nor glorious, nor immense, nor divine. It will show him that the glory of the moon, the planets, and the stars may be compared to the effects of a morning or evening sunshine upon the towers of an infirmary, a prison, or some giant city of sin—lending a false lustre to objects which in themselves are horrible or foul.

We must now take our leave of Mr. Massey. And, notwithstanding these concluding hints, we do so with every feeling of respect, admiration, and kindly feeling. Probably since Burns, there has been no such instance of a strong untaught poet rising up from the ranks by a few strides, grasping eminence by the very mane, and vaulting into a seat so commanding with such ease and perfect mastery. He has much yet, however, to do—to learn—and, it may be, to endure. It is yet all morning with him. Life’s enchanted cup is sparkling at the brim. From

early sufferings he has passed into comfort, domestic happiness, and general fame. Many veils are yet to drop from his eyes. He has yet to learn the worthlessness of human nature as a whole, the impotence of human effort, the littleness of human life, and the delusive nature of all joy which is not connected with our duty to God and man. His present sanguine hopes and notions of humanity will wither, just as the green earth and blue skies will by and by appear altogether insufficient to fill and satisfy his soul. This process we regard inevitable to all genuine thinkers and lofty poets; but the great question is, Does it result in *souring* or in *strengthening* the man? Carlyle and Foster both passed through this disenchanting process; but how different the results! The one has become savage in his despair as a flayed wild beast. The other became milder and calmer in proportion to the depth of his melancholy. And the reason of this difference is very simple. Carlyle believes in nothing but the universe. Foster believed in a Father, a Saviour, and a future world. If Mr. Massey comes (as we trust he shall) to a true belief, it will compensate him for every trial and every sad internal or external experience, and he will stand like an Atlas above the ruins of a world, calm, firm, pensive, but pressing forwards, and *looking on high*.¹

¹ Since this paper was written, we have read some specimens of Massey's *prose*, in his preface to his third edition, and in his review of *Balder* in the *Eclectic*. It is most excellent, clear, massive, masterly English, very refreshing to this age of mystical fudge.

HAZLITT¹

IN speaking of Hazlitt, we have nothing to do with him as a man, a politician, or a historian, but simply as a critic.

William Hazlitt was brutally abused while alive, and has been but partially appreciated since his death. Indeed, in many quarters he seems entirely forgotten. Sacrificing, as he did, popular applause in search of posthumous fame, he seems to have lost both—like the dog in the fable, shadow and substance seem alike to have given him the slip. Our proud and prosy quarterlies, while showering praise on the misty nothings which often now abuse the name of scientific or philosophic criticism—those compounds of natural and acquired dulness which disguise themselves under German terminology, and are deemed profound—seldom name, or coldly underrate, the glowingly acute, gorgeously clear, and dazzlingly deep criticisms of poor Hazlitt.

Harry Cockburn thinks him ineffably inferior to Lord Jeffrey. Macaulay first steals from Hazlitt, and then puffs Hallam. Bulwer and Talfourd have done him justice; but rather in a patronising way. Horne did his best to imitate him, and paid back the pilferings in praise. But De Quincey and one or two more seem alone aware of the fact that no thinker of such rich seminal mind—of such genuine originality, insight, and enthusiasm, has been ever so neglected or outraged as the author of *The Spirit of the Age*.

Hazlitt was, in many respects, the most *natural* of critics. He was *born* to criticise, not in a small and captious way, but as a just, generous, although stern and rigorous judge. Nature had denied him great constructive, or dramatic, or synthetic power—the power of the highest kind of poet or philosopher. But he possessed that mixture in proper proportions of the acute and the imaginative, the profound and the brilliant, the cool and the enthusiastic, which goes to constitute the true critic. Hence his criticism is a fine compound—pleasing, on the one hand, the lover of analysis, who feels that its power can go no farther; and, on the other, the young and ardent

¹ From *A Third Gallery of Literary Portraits*, 1854.

votary of literature, who feels that Hazlitt has expressed in language what *he* only could "with the faltering tongue and the glistening eye." When he has a favourite, and especially an old favourite author to discuss, it becomes as great a luxury to witness as to feel his rapture. Even elderly enthusiasts, whose ardour is somewhat *passée*, might contemplate him with emotions such as Scott has so exquisitely described in Louis XI., when looking at the hungry Quentin Durward devouring his late and well-won breakfast. Youth—hot, eager, joyous youth—sparkles in Hazlitt's best criticisms even to the last. And yet, beside all his bursts and bravuras, there is always looking on the stern, clear, piercing eye of Old Analysis. Why is it that Hazlitt, thus eminently fitted to attract all classes, has failed to be generally popular? Many answers might be given to this question. There was first the special victimisation he underwent during his lifetime from the reviews and magazines. Old Gifford was his bitterest, although by no means his ablest opponent. The power wielded thirty years ago by that little arid mass of commonplace and dried venom is, to us, absolutely marvellous. The manner in which he exercised the critical profession showed, indeed, that he was perfectly skilled in his former one, especially in the adroit use of the awl. He was admirable at boring small holes; but beyond this he was nothing. If Shakspeare's works had appeared in his time, he would have treated them precisely as he treated Shelley's and Keats', unless, indeed, they had been submitted to his revision before, or dedicated to him at publication. Otherwise, how he would have ostracised *Othello*; mauled *Macbeth*; torn-up *The Tempest*; mouthed, like a dog at the moon, against the *Midsummer Night's Dream*; laughed at *Lear*; raved at *Romeo and Juliet*; and admitted merit only in *Timon*, because it suited his morbid temper, and in the *Comedy of Errors*, because it melted down his evil humours into grim laughter. It is lamentable to think of such a man being respected by Byron, and feared by Hunt and Lamb. It is more lamentable still, to remember that he and his coadjutors were able to half-madden Shelley, to kill Keats, and to add gall and wormwood to the native bitterness of Hazlitt's spirit.

But he had other opponents, who, if not animated by all Gifford's spirit, had ten times his talent. Wilson and Lockhart bent all their young power against a writer whom both in their hearts admired, and from whom both had learned much. The first twenty-five volumes of *Blackwood's Magazine* are disgraced

by incessant, furious, and scurrilous attacks upon the person, private character, motives, talents, and moral and religious principles of Hazlitt, which future ages shall regard with wonder, indignation, and disgust. "Ass," "blockhead," "fool," "idiot," "quack," "villain," "infidel," etc., are a specimen of the epithets applied to this master-spirit. *Old Maga* has greatly improved in this respect since; but there is at least one of its present contributors who would perpetrate, if he durst,¹ similar enormities of injustice, and whose maximum of will to injure and abuse all minds superior to his own, is only restrained by his minimum of power. Need we name the laureate of Clavers, and the libeller of the noble children of the Scottish Covenant?

We see nothing wrong in genius now and then turning round to rend and trample on its pertinacious foes. But Hazlitt was far too thin-skinned. He felt his wounds too keenly, he acknowledged them too openly, and gave thus a great advantage to his opponents. This was partly accounted for from his nervous temperament, and partly from his precarious circumstances. It was very easy for Lord Jeffrey, sitting in state in his palace in Moray Place, to curl his lip in cool contempt, or even to burst out into laughter, over attacks on himself in *Ebony*; or for Wordsworth, in his drawing-room on Rydal Mount, to grumble over the *Edinburgh*, ere dashing it to the other side of the room; it is very easy still, for those of us who are not dependent for subsistence on our writings, to treat insolent injustice with pity or scorn; but the tendency of such attacks upon Hazlitt was to snatch the bread from his mouth, to lower the opinion of his capacity with the booksellers, whose serf he was, and to drive him to mean subterfuges, which his soul abhorred, to prevent him literally from starving. He is said, a little before his death, to have met Horne, and said to him, "I have carried a volcano in my breast for the last three hours up and down Pall Mall; I have striven mortally to quench, to quell it, but it will not. *Can you lend me a shilling? I have not tasted food for two days.*"

Want of thorough early training, an unsettled and wandering life, want of time for systematic study, and want of self-control and of domestic happiness, combined to lessen the artistic merit, and have limited to some extent the permanent power, of Hazlitt's writings. Hence they are full of faults—the faults

¹ He has since dared! *Vide* that tissue of filthy nonsense, which none but an ape of the first magnitude could have vomited, yclept "Firmilian."

never, however, of weakness, but of haste, carelessness, and caprice. They swarm with gossiping anecdote, with flashy clap-trap, with egotism, with jets of bitterest venom, and with sounding paradoxes. They are cast chiefly, too, in the form of slipshod essays; nor has he ever completed any great, solid, separate work, for his *Life of Napoleon* is not worthy of his powers. His superficial readers—especially if their minds have been previously poisoned by reading the *Quarterly* and *Blackwood*—fasten on these faults, and never get farther. “An amusing, flimsy writer,” is the highest compliment they find in their hearts to bestow on one of the finest and deepest thinkers of the day. Our misty Germanisers, again, find him too clear, too brilliant, not sufficiently conversant with Kant, Fichte, Schiller, and Goethe, and vote him obsolete. Carlyle classes him with Dermody in one paper, and in another talks of him in such terms as these: “How many a poor Hazlitt must wander over God’s verdant earth, like the unblest over burning deserts—passionately dig wells, and draw up only the dry quicksand, and at last die and make no sign.” Such injustice is too rank long to continue rampant. Hazlitt, as a man, had errors of no little magnitude; but he was as sincere and honest a being as ever breathed. If not practically a Christian, he respected Christianity; he saw, though he shrank from, its unique and glorious character; he owned its unparalleled power; he has praised its Bible with all the enthusiasm of his heart, and with all the riches of his genius; and he would have burned his pen and the hand that held it, sooner than have set himself deliberately to sap by written innuendo, or blow up by open outrage, the faith in which his good old parents died. His writings constitute one of those quarries of thought, such as are also Bacon’s *Essays*, Butler’s *Sermons*, Boswell’s *Johnson*, and Coleridge’s *Table Talk*. They abound in gems, as sparkling as they are precious, and ever and anon a “mountain of light” lifts up its shining head. Not only are they full of profound critical dicta, but of the sharpest observations upon life and manners, upon history, and the metaphysics of the human mind. Descriptions of nature, too, are there, cool, clear, and refreshing as summer leaves. And then how fine are his panegyrics on the old masters and the old poets! And ever and anon he floats away into long glorious passages, such as that on Wordsworth and that on Coleridge, in the *Spirit of the Age*—such as his description of the effects of the Reformation—such as his panegyric poetry—his character of Sir Thomas Browne—and his

picture of the Reign of Terror! Few things in the language are greater than these. They resemble

The long-resounding march and energy divine

of the ancient lords of English prose—the Drydens, the Brownes, the Jeremy Taylors, and the Miltons.

All so-called “ beauties ” of great authors we detest. They are as dull as almanacs or jest-books. They are but torn fallen feathers from the broad eagle-wing. Nor do we mean to suggest that Hazlitt’s works should be subjected to such an equivocal process. But we should like to see his *Select Works*, including a selection from his essays, the whole of his *Characteristics*, and his *Characters of Shakspeare’s Plays*—all his lectures delivered at the Surrey Institution—a selection from his purely metaphysical works—certain passages from his *Life of Napoleon*—copious excerpts from his pictorial criticisms—and his *Spirit of the Age* entire. It is a disgrace to literature; and while there are cheap editions of Lamb and Hunt, and dear editions of Jeffrey, Smith, and Macaulay, there is no good edition we know of, whether cheap or dear, of the works of a far more original thinker, eloquent writer, and earnest man, than any of them all.

We will allude but to one other feature in Hazlitt’s critical character—we mean his attachment to Shakspeare and Coleridge. Others admire Shakspeare—Hazlitt loves and adores him; and this soft key of love opens to him many an intricate lock, and this deep light of adoration leads him safe through many a dark and winding way. Many prefer Ulrici, although, in fact, his work is just a “ *Midsummer Night’s Dream* ” of Shakspeare. It is not Shakspeare himself—the clear and manly Englishman, as well as the universal genius—it is Shakspeare seen through the mists of the Brocken, casting an enormous shadow, which is mistaken for and criticised as the substance. Indeed, we can conceive no spectacle more ludicrous than that of Shakspeare in the shades reading Ulrici, and marvelling to find that he understood him so much better than himself, and saw more in him than he ever intended—nay, often the reverse of what he did intend.

Hazlitt read Shakspeare with far greater perspicacity; saw his faults, and liked him better for them; took him at his word, believed what he said, and did not go about stumbling and groping for recondite meanings and merits in its author. Shakspeare has now a great gallery of critics:—Johnson, with his

sturdy generalities of encomium; Mrs. Montague, with her elegant and lady-like, if not very profound tribute; Joseph Warton's graceful papers in the *Adventurer*, as well as his brother's more elaborate testimony in his *History of English Poetry*; Goethe, in his fine remarks on *Hamlet* in *Wilhelm Meister*; George Moir, in his refined and thoughtful *Shakspeare in Germany*; Mrs. Jameson; De Quincey; Carlyle's striking sketch; Coleridge's wondrous talk about him; Hartley Coleridge's *Shakspeare a Tory and a Gentleman*; Professor Wilson's scattered splendours on the subject in the *Noctes*, etc. But love for the subject, profound and watchful study of it, the blended intellect and ardour of his nature, and the graces and powers of his style, render Hazlitt, in our judgment, the best limner of that standing wonder of the world; and to his warm and living portraits we most fondly and frequently recur.

Coleridge, too—a man resembling Shakspeare in width and subtlety, although not in clearness and masculine strength and directness—was seen by Hazlitt as few else saw him, and shown by him more eloquently and enthusiastically than by any or all his other critics. He knew him in his youth. He met him first at Wem, in Shropshire, where his father was minister; and most beautifully has he described, in his *First Acquaintance with Poets*, his meeting with the “noticeable man with large grey eyes.” 'Tis to us the most delightful of all Hazlitt's essays, striking as it does on some of our own early associations.

Like Hazlitt, the author of this sketch was the son of a dissenting (though not a unitarian) minister; like him, spent many a sad and solitary hour in the country, cheered, indeed, by books and by the loveliness and grandeur of nature; like him, had “shed tears over his unfinished manuscript,” while in vain seeking adequately to transcribe his confused but burning impressions of nature and of literature; and, like him, has again and again been delighted and raised from the dust by the visits and sermons of gifted preachers, who came like sunbeams to the sequestered valley of his birth; and he can hardly, therefore, read *My First Acquaintance with Poets*, or several other of Hazlitt's autobiographical essays, without a swelling heart and streaming eyes, as he thinks of the days of his own boyhood.

No man has better described than Hazlitt Coleridge's after-career, which was that of a comet among comets, more eccentric than all its lawless kindred; now assuming the form of a thin

and gaseous vapour, and now becoming blood-red, solid-seeming,
and

Firing the length of Ophiuchus huge
In the Arctic sky.

Let it ever be remembered that he fought the battle of Coleridge's fame, when he was under the cloud of public opinion, and of the opium curse; and that, although separated from him afterwards by political and other differences, he never ceased to be his ardent eulogist, as well as his honest adviser.

Peace to the memory of William Hazlitt! That pale, haggard face; those eager, restless eyes; those dark, grey locks; that brain, ever prolific of new thoughts; and that heart, ever palpitating with new, fierce, or rapturous passions—are now all still and quenched in the sepulchre. We dare rear no temple over his dust—nor is it worthy of a pyramid; but his works form, nevertheless, a noble monument—solid as marble, and clear and brilliant as flame—expressing at once the strength and the splendour of his unrivalled *critical* genius.

THOMAS MACAULAY¹

ONE great distinction between the great and the half-great is, we think, this: the half-great man is in his own age fully commented on and thoroughly appreciated; his character is faithfully inscribed in a multitude of reviews; his career is reflected in a wall of mirrors, which image his every step, and "now in glimmer, and now in gloom," trace out his history ere he be dead, and leave very little for posterity to add or to take away. The great man, on the other hand, while seldom quite overlooked or ignored, is as seldom during his life-time fully recognised: a shade of doubts hang around his form, like mist around a half-seen Alp; his motions are all tracked, indeed, but tracked in terror and in suspicion; his character, when drawn, is drawn in *chiaro-scuro*; his faults are chronicled more fully than his virtues; the general sigh which arises at the tidings of his death is as much that of relief as of sorrow; and not till the dangerous and infinite seeming man has been committed safely to the grave, does the world awake to feel that it has hid one of its richest treasures in the field of death. Nor should we entirely for this blame the world. For too often we believe that high genius is a mystery, and a terror even to itself; that it communicates with the demoniac mines of sulphur, as well as with the divine sources; and that only God's grace can determine to which of these it is to be permanently connected; and that only the stern alembic of death can settle the question to which it has on the whole turned, whether it has really been the radiant angel, or the disguised fiend.

We might illustrate our first remark by a number of examples. But our recent readings supply us with one more than sufficiently appropriate to our purpose. We have risen from reading for the first time Prior's *Life of Burke*, and, for the tenth or twentieth time, Macaulay's *Essays*, collected from the *Edinburgh Review*. And as we rise we are forced to exclaim, "Behold a great man, fairly though faintly painted by another, and a half-great man, unintentionally but most faithfully and fully sketched by himself." Macaulay has eloquently panegyrised Burke, and accu-

¹ From *A Third Gallery of Literary Portraits*, 1854.

rately discriminated him from inferior contemporary minds. But he seems to have no idea of the great gulf fixed between Burke's nature and genius and *his own*. He always speaks as if he and the object of his panegyric were cognate and kindred minds. Nay, some of his indiscriminate admirers have gone the length of equalling or preferring him to the giant of the Anti-Gallican Crusade. Let us, for their sakes, as well as his, proceed to point out the essential differences between the two.

Burke, then, was a natural, Macaulay is an artificial, man. Burke was as original as one of the sources of the Nile; Macaulay is a tank or reservoir, brimful of waters which have come from other fountains. Burke's imagination was the strong wing of his strong intellect, and to think and to soar were in general with him the same; Macaulay's fancy is no more native to him than was the wing of the stripling cherub assumed by Satan, the hero of the *Paradise Lost*, although, like it, it is of many "a coloured plume sprinkled with gold."

Macaulay's intellect is clear, vigorous, and logical; but Burke's was inventive and synthetic. Burke seems always repressing his boundless knowledge; Macaulay is ostentatious in the display of his. Of Macaulay's train of thought you can always predict the end from the beginning; Burke's is unexpected and changeful. Macaulay's principal powers are two—enormous memory and pictorial power; Burke's are also two—subtle, grasping, interpenetrating intellect and imagination. Burke is the man of genius; Macaulay the elaborate artist. Burke is the creature of impulses and intuitions—impetuous, fervid, often imprudent, and violent; Macaulay never commits himself, even by a comma, and seems, if he has impulses, to have dipped them in snow, and, if he has intuitions, to have weighed them in scales before they are produced to his readers. Burke has turned away from philosophic speculation to practical matters—from choice, not necessity; Macaulay from necessity, not choice,—it is an element too rare for his wing. Burke, as he says of Reynolds, descends upon all subjects from above; Macaulay labours up to his loftier themes from below. Burke's digressions are those of uncontrollable power, wantoning in its strength; Macaulay's are those of deliberate purpose and elaborate effort, to relieve and make his byways increase the interest of his highways. Burke's most memorable things are strong simple sentences of wisdom or epithets, each carrying a question on its point, or burning coals from his flaming genius; Macaulay's are chiefly happy illustrations, or verbal antitheses,

or clever alliterations. Macaulay often seems, and we believe is, sincere, but he is never in earnest; Burke, on all higher questions, becomes a "burning one"—earnest to the brink of frenzy. Macaulay is a utilitarian of a rather low type; Burke is, at least, the bust of an idealist. We defy any one to tell whether Macaulay be a Christian or no; Burke's High Churchism is the lofty buskin in which his fancy loves to tread the neighbourhood of the altar, while before it his heart kneels in lowly reverence. Macaulay's writings often cloy the mind of his reader—you are full to repletion; from Burke's you rise unsatisfied, as from a crumb of ambrosia, or a sip of nectar. Macaulay's literary enthusiasm has now a far and formal air—it seems an old cloak of college days worn threadbare; Burke's has about it a fresh and glorious gloss—it is the ever-renewed *skin* of his spirit. Macaulay lies snugly and sweetly in the pinfold of a party; Burke is ever and anon bursting it to fragments. Macaulay's moral indignation is too laboured and antithetical to be very profound; Burke's makes *his* heart palpitate, his hand clench, and his face kindle like that of Moses as he came down the mount. Burke is the prophet; Macaulay the grown and well-furnished schoolboy. Burke, during his life-time, was traduced, misrepresented, or neglected, as no British man of his order ever was before or since; Macaulay has been the spoiled child of a too early and a too easy success. As they have reaped they have sown. Macaulay has written brilliant, popular, and useful works, possessing every quality *except* original genius, profound insight, or the highest species of historical truth; Burke, working in an unthankful parliamentary field, has yet dropped from his overflowing hand little living germs of political, moral, literary, pictorial, and philosophic wisdom, which are striking root downwards, and bearing fruit upwards throughout the civilised world. Macaulay's works hitherto consist of several octavo volumes; but *Liberated America*, *India set free from Tyrants*, and *Infidel France Repelled*, are the three atlas folios which we owe to the pen and the tongue of Edmund Burke.

We had other points of contrast, which we forbear to press. Indeed, we feel ashamed at continuing so long a contrast between two persons so unlike. But Macaulay's unwise friends have compelled us to renew the old, and apparently superfluous work, of showing the superiority of an original to an imitator—of a sublime genius, informed from on high, to a cultured and consummate artist, galvanised from below—of one wearing a mantle which seemed dropped from some fiery chariot of the past, to

one "of the earth, earthy"—of one whose flights of genius and wisdom might almost entitle him to the name of the second Plato, to one who would be proud, we suspect, to bear that of the second Bacon, even although the meanness were added to the majesty, and the immortal degradation to the everlasting praise of the ambiguous and all-overrated name of the Chancellor of England.

We propose now, first, briefly to characterise, and in a general way, some of Macaulay's essays; and, secondly, to bend special attention on the longest and most elaborate of them all, that on "Lord Bacon."

There are in every author's works what may be called *representative* parts or papers—papers or books which indicate the leading qualities in his mind, or the leading stages in his intellectual development. Thus, in the case before us, we have "Milton" representing Macaulay the young and ardent scholar, "Byron" and "Johnson" representing him as the full-grown *litterateur*, "Warren Hastings," and a host more, representing him as the budding historian, and "Lord Bacon" as the thinker.

We have, first, "Milton," still, in our judgment, the sincerest, if not the most faultless of his papers. It is the work of a premature and impassioned school-boy, with the glow of the first perusal of the *Paradise Lost* extant on his cheek, and with the boy's dream of liberty still beating in his heart. Mr. Macaulay says that the paper contains "scarcely a paragraph of which his mature judgment approves." We may add, that there are many paragraphs in it which he now neither could nor durst write. "Men," says James Hogg, in the *Noctes*, "often, as they get auld, fancy themsel's wiser, whereas, in fac', they are only stoopider." It is not every one who, like Robert Burns, with his early volume of poems, sees at a glance that the "first bairn o' his brain is also the best." Artistically, Macaulay's "Milton" is not his best; but it is the opening of his vein—he throws forth in it a mass of pure ore, which he has since chiefly been employed in beating thin, or mixing with baser metals. Thus we find him, in many of his subsequent papers, cutting and clipping at his splendid picture of the Puritans—a picture which we deem true to the life of these illustrious men, as well as to the first sincere and burning convictions of Macaulay's young soul. He was not, as Sir Daniel Sandford somewhere insinuates, "a dishonest panegyrist of the Puritans." Brought up in a religious atmosphere, its influence still floated around him, as he wrote of those who "looked down with contempt

on the rich and the eloquent, on nobles and on priests—for they esteemed themselves rich in a more precious treasure, and eloquent in a more sublime language—nobles by the right of an earlier creation, and priests by the imposition of a mightier hand." But, since, the giddy effects of success and the chilling influences of the world have combined to damp and lower his lofty tone, and he seems more than once inclined to give up the Puritans as a ragged regiment, and to say, "I'll not march with them through Coventry—that's flat." The associate of Lord Palmerston could not latterly retain much sympathy for Harry Vane. The confrere of Whately could scarcely now be honest in praising John Brown. When he wrote "Milton," he was a worshipper dividing his adoration between three objects—Poetry, Liberty, and Protestantism—and all three seemed robed in virgin loveliness. All have undergone a disenchantment—Poetry no longer walks the clouds, but the earth; Liberty is no more the "mountain-nymph," but the highly accomplished daughter of a whig nobleman dwelling in Grosvenor Square; and Protestantism (see his review of "Ranke"), instead of being the true child of the primitive age, and the destined heir of the earth, is a candidate with nearly the same claims and the same chances of final success, as the "Woman sitting on the scarlet-coloured Beast, and with the names of Blasphemy written on her forehead."

Indeed, we advise any one who wishes to compute the extent and the rapidity of the cooling process which has passed over Macaulay's mind, to compare his papers on "Milton," and on "Ranke." In the one he speaks, with just indignation, of the vices of Popery, "complete subjection of reason to authority, a weak preference of form to substance, a childish passion for mummeries, an idolatrous veneration for the priestly character, and, above all, a merciless intolerance." In his review of Von Ranke, on the other hand, how tenderly does he treat the Jesuits, some of whom he classes beside the Reformers; how coolly he traces the progress of the Catholic re-actions; with what satisfaction almost he records that Protestantism has come to a stand-still, forgetting or ignoring the facts that, although as a proselytising power nearly stationary in Europe, it is advancing as a missionary power in every other part of the globe; that, as the principal element of *British* progress, its torch is leading the great march of general civilisation; that, in its rudest shape, as "Protestantism protesting against itself," it has of late begun to heave in revolution every country and throne on

the continent; and that even to hint a doubt as to the ultimate result of its struggle with Popery, is an act of treachery and cowardice, and betrays an ignorance of its true nature and pretensions. In all his later papers, Macaulay talks as if Popery and Protestantism were modifications of one system, instead of being opposed, as light is to darkness, inertia to progress, deceit to truth, God to the devil. And while considering the attempts of such men as Macaulay to fritter away to nothing the distinctions between God's creed and the devil's creed, we are tempted to use the language of the prophet, "Woe to them who put darkness for light and light for darkness, bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter, evil for good and good for evil." The contest between Popery and Protestantism is no scuffle in the dark between detachments of the same army; it is a deadly fight between deadly foes, carried on in one compartment of that field, the world, where the powers of light and darkness have been waging for ages their ever-deepening, ever-widening, but not for a moment dubious engagement.

Protestantism at a stand-still! Neither as a statement of the facts at the time the paper was written, nor as a prophecy of what has occurred since, is this assertion of any value. It is true that nations do not of late change their creeds as individuals their cloaks. Islands are not now converted, as of yore, by the "yellow stick" of a Protestant proprietor (see Dr. Johnson's *Tour to the Hebrides*). Protestantism has, like many a strong tide, been rolled back again and again in its progress. Catholicism, on the other hand, has had, and has at this hour, spasmodic revivals, sudden flushes, like the colours of the dying dolphin. She *is* dying hard. Nor can she fully expire till the brightness of Christ's coming surprise, and the "breath of his mouth" consume, her. But, apart from this, we think it difficult for a candid and true-telling observer to shut his eyes to the fact of a slow, steady, cumulative advance on the part of Protestantism—often repulsed, sometimes driven fiercely back, but always returning to the charge, and gaining sure and gradual ground with the wave of each successive generation. What, after all, has she lost? At her birth, she was hailed by literature and science: they—on the points, at least, in which she differs from Popery—are on her side still. Her infant arm lifted the printing press, the mariner's compass, and the telescope. She holds them now with a stronger grasp than ever. She rent then the shroud from the Bible, and she still defies the Catholic world to repair the rent. In Britain and the United

States, and the great rising colonies of the South, and in the stronger half of Germany, she possesses the real keys of the intellectual world—keys more powerful than those fabled ones which clank at the side of Peter. In our own country, she, not long ago, with almost a superfluous expenditure of power and wrath, repelled the insolence of Papal aggression. One thing only does she want to complete the strength and dignity of her attitude, that is, not to become more Popish, but to become more Protestant. Without sacrificing her Bible or the leading principles of her creeds, without yielding to the raving scepticisms of the day, she might and must accommodate her spirit and language to those of the age; she might in many points abridge and modify her articles of faith; she might and must get rid of the wretched incrustations of Paganism and Popery which are still around her—become, in short, that New Protestantism for which Milton's spirit long ago sighed, which alone can attract and detain before the Lord the young and the gifted of the age, and be thus prepared, as the "Bride, the Lamb's Wife," for welcoming her Husband, when he descends to the Universal Bridal. And then, like Milton's eagle, shall this young and puissant Protestantism rise above the fogs of scepticism, and the purple mists of Rome, and mate her stern and starry eye with the unearthly and far-streaming glory attending the steps of Him "who shall come, will come, and will not tarry."

In his papers on Byron and Johnson, we find his enthusiasm wondrously subdued and united to an artistic self-command, a self-consciousness, an elaborate wit, a bitter sarcasm, and a *tone of society*, not to be found in his first paper. With the exception of his papers on Madame D'Arblay and Addison, they are the last of his purely literary articles. Before he wrote them, he had entered parliament, and there is in both a great deal of the clever parliamentary reply. The elaborate carelessness of the papers on Byron is wonderful. Never was art more artificially concealed. Never did a deliberate and oil-smelling production seem so like an *impromptu*. Done in the sweat of his brow, it yet reads like a private letter. Its simplest-seeming sentences have probably cost him most trouble. Such are a "poor lord and a handsome cripple." "Lord Byron's system had two great commandments, to *hate your neighbour*, and to *love your neighbour's wife*." How cool such fledglings seem! and yet they were probably hatched with great care, and amid considerable heat. His character of Byron is a long

antithesis, and might, had it been done into rhyme, have figured well in Pope's *Moral Epistles*. Bits of blame and pats of praise are distributed with exemplary equality. But, to apply his own words, "it is not the business of the critic to exhibit characters in this sharp, antithetical way." It is his business rather to show us the true nature of the man at once, by a winged word or a simple sentence, or in a figure "piercing to the dividing asunder of his soul and spirit." Had he spoken of Byron's aimless earnestness, his unprincipled and ill-managed power, his union of generosity and selfishness, his strong religious tendencies, connected with an utter want of definite religious or even irreligious opinions, or hinted at the dark germ of derangement which was working all along in his bosom, he had, in a sentence, helped us to a distincter view of the poet's character, than by his whole seventeen pages of vague and unmingled brilliancy. As it is, he accounts for Byron's matchless misery from his bad education, the loss of his first love, the nervousness of dissipation; from every cause save the deepest of all—the want of habitual intercourse with the Father of Spirits. Byron was miserable, because he felt himself an orphan, a sunbeam cut off from his source, "without hope, and without God in the world." But how Puritanical would any statement like this have looked in the eyes of the Reform Club, or of the splendid circles of Holland House!

To Boswell and Johnson, he is, we think, unjust, in various measures. Boswell, in his relation to Johnson, was one of the most sincere and remarkable of men. Used like a spaniel by his idol; now caressed contemptuously, and now fiercely spurned; laughed at by his friends and by the world for his attachment to Johnson, he remained true to him to the last, and has suffered for it after as well as before death, and nowhere more severely than at Macaulay's hands. To worship was the master instinct of his being, and he could no more avoid following it, than can the moon escape the gravitation of the earth. His conduct was the finer, from the contrast it presented to the selfish and infidel habits of the eighteenth century. Boswell had a god—Johnson; but Voltaire and Hume had none, except themselves or their callous theories. Boswell, in short, seems to us the first crude curdling of the future Hero-worshipper, as the alchemist was the rude forerunner of the genuine chemist. Nor were his talents so contemptible as Macaulay alleges. He was undoubtedly a clever and cultivated man. And the power to which he principally pretended, that of appreciation, he

possessed in a very large degree. He *saw* Johnson as few even since have seen him; he gave him, during his life, an ante-past of the praise of future ages, and he added one important item to his claims for immortality. Boswell's *Life*, according to many, is Johnson's greatest work; according to all, it is *one* of his best. Nay, we cannot but fancy that Macaulay originally possessed a great deal of the better element of Boswell, as his *Milton* testifies, and that to clear himself of the suspicion of being a Boswell of a bigger size, he has shed the blood of his own spiritual father.

Scarcely less unjust is he to Johnson himself, who, had he been alive, would certainly have turned him on the spit of one of his rolling periods before the slow, grim blaze of his manly indignation. "What is your opinion, Dr. J., of Thomas Babington Macaulay?"—"Sir, the dog has some gifts and accomplishments, but he is a Whig, a vile Whig, a trimmer, sir, who would have acted as laureate to King George and the Pretender at the same time. Sir, he would have written a panegyric on the Pretender, on the steam of the sack which the king had just sent in at his door."—"Isn't he something like Burke, sir?"—"No, sir; Macaulay, sir, has not breath to blow the bellows to Burke's fire. As Goldy would say, he has Burke's 'tongue,' but without 'the garnish' of his 'brains.'"—"What think you of his style, sir?"—"It is mine, sir, docked, yet the dog turns round, and abuses the suit of clothes he has not only stolen, but *mangled down*, sir, to his own stature."—"Doesn't he know a great deal, sir?"—"Yes, sir, facts, not principles; he has millions of farthings, but few guineas, and no bank-bills; he is like a school-boy, who knows all the birds' nests in the parish, but can neither fly, nor lay an egg, sir, nor even incubate to life the deposits of others."—"What think you of his religious creed, sir?"—"Why, sir, it is that of one who prefers God to the devil, because he is in, and not because he ought to be in, and who is full of saving clauses lest the tables should one day be turned, and the New Premier prove somewhat absolute. He has no creed, sir, only a new credibility of God and the gospels, sir."—"Isn't he descended from your old friend, Miss Macaulay, sir?"—"Too-too-too, sir, not from *Miss* Macaulay, surely, sir. His grandfather was a minister in the Hebrides, and probably had the second sight, which he has not left to his descendant, any more than old Zachary left him his religion, sir."

Dr. Johnson's merit, according to Macaulay, has now

shrivelled up into his "careless table-talk." His writings have little merit. His criticisms on Shakspeare and Milton are "wretched." He knew nothing of the "genus, man — only of the species, Londoner." His style is "systematically vicious." His mannerism is "sustained only with constant effort." His "big words are wasted on little things." His prejudices and intellectual faults, too, are magnified by being torn from their context, and set up in cluster upon one pillory. Thus complacently does he try to "write down" old Sam as an ass. The attempt is as insolent as we hope to show it to be vain. Now, first, his table-talk was not "careless." It was the very sweat of his mind. In all good society he "talked his best." Secondly, it has discovered no new powers in Johnson's mind, although it has revealed new weaknesses. It has *increased* our notion of his variety, shrewdness, and readiness of retort, but not of his power, eloquence, and deep-hearted sincerity of nature. Thirdly, with regard to the prejudices and failings of this mighty man of valour, we ought to remember his time, his training, the dark disease which, like the leprosy in an ancient house, sent a stream of misery and embryotic madness throughout all the porticoes of his splendour, and all the columns of his strength—polluted every door, and looked out at every window—to remember that, strong and rock-founded that house must have been, to contain unbroken such a fearful guest—and to remember, in fine, that he is a poor forester who judges of an oak by its gnarled knots—and a petty astronomer who weighs the spots against the body of the sun. Fourthly, that his criticisms on Shakspeare and Milton do not bring out the minor beauties, the more delicate shades, the subtler meanings, of our two great national poets, is admitted. Johnson's mental, like his bodily, eye saw only tall cliffs, wide fields, bold mountains, broad outlines—it was not conversant with details or minute varieties. But who has spoken better of the more general and palpable qualities of Shakspeare, or of *Paradise Lost*—the pyramid of Milton's handiwork? *It* he found to surpass even his own Brobdignagian stature, and looking up to it in reverence, he had little leisure to mark the subordinate buildings on which Milton had slowly piled up its proud pinnacle. He is accused of not praising "The Castle of Indolence" very warmly, but he gives its author, and his far better poem, "The Seasons," their full meed. He called "Gray a barren rascal, and Churchill a blockhead;" but, if Mr. Macaulay had, as at *other* times, chosen to translate these expressions out of *Johnsonese* into plain

English, they had just meant the truth—this, namely, that Gray's genius was not so prolific as his learning was extensive, and that Churchill was not so good as he was able, and not so able as many thought. He has, indeed, admitted many stupid fellows into his *Lives of the Poets*; but, as he said he would, he has, in *his own way*, "told us that they were blockheads." In fact, his real offence, as a critic, in the eyes of many, is what, with us, is a merit. Himself a sincerely honest and pious man, an intense hater of humbug, of deceit, of brazen-faced infidelity, of twaddling sentimentalism, of the cant of virtue, and of the cant of vice, he has unsparingly exposed such offences wherever he found them, and many who cry out about his critical, have, in fact, taken fright at his moral, severity. Fifthly, as to the faults and mannerism of his style, we are not "careful to answer in this matter," least of all, in reply to the leading mannerist of this century. Johnson's is the mannerism of a left-handed giant. He throws awkwardly, but he throws stones which Macaulay could not *lift*. To say that he "sustains his style by constant effort," is simply untrue. It is notorious that the most sounding papers in *The Rambler* were written at a sitting, and *currente calamo*. He had but to dip his pen in ink, and there flowed out a current of thought and language, wide and voluminous as the Ganges in flood. We own our wrath always kindles when we hear others besides Macaulay preferring Addison to Johnson. We are not blind, as our former paper testifies, to his timid beauties, his inimitable irony, slight and withering as the smile of a scornful angel, his languid graces, the elegant negligence of his costume, his sweet-blooded and subtle humour, or his graver powers of contemplation and pathos; but there is this important difference in Johnson's favour:—Addison is chiefly a mirror; Johnson is a native mind. Addison reflects back—man and nature; Johnson is a thinker, penetrating into both. Addison's discussions and philosophising, even when just, are feeble; Johnson's, even when erroneous, are always strong. Witness the papers on the *Paradise Lost* by the one, and the *Lives of the Poets* by the other—a work which, with all its faults, is the most masculine and massive body of criticism in the English tongue. Addison's may be called almost a female mind of exquisite calibre; Johnson was every inch a man, nay, a son of Anak, from the rough earth, but with a heart touched, and a brow radiant with the influence and light of heaven. We base, indeed, our deepest admiration of this great man on his moral and religious qualities.

We are never weary of thinking of his sterling honesty, his rugged integrity, his fearlessness of consequences, his untaught dignity, his generous sympathies for all real sorrows, his benevolence—bear-like in its external manifestations, lamb-like in its heart—the depth and profundity of his spiritual convictions, the tenderness of his conscience, the firmness with which he clung to Christianity, in a low and infidel age, “faithful found among the faithless,” his habitual fear of God—yea, we are not soon weary of admiring the rim of righteous anger which surrounded him at times—the severity of his occasional judgments, the fury of his assaults upon impostors of all sorts; and we can even bear with his sturdy prejudices, the errors of his temperament, the hasty verdicts of his excited conversation, his political and religious bigotries, and the rough usage he often gave to his friends and worshippers. These, like the scare of scrofula upon his cheek, are not beautiful, but they are *his*, and if they injure the grace of his aspect, they neither take a cubit from his intellectual stature, nor damp the vehement, though irregular flame of benevolence, sincerity, manhood, and piety, which burned in his heart. Would to God that some similar giant were now to tower up suddenly above the crowd of our sciolists, sceptics, and small poets, and rebuke them into sense, modesty, and Christianity again! Johnson was too decidedly an honest, fearless, and brawny original for Macaulay’s handling. He succeeds far better in depicting the splendid clap-trap of Chatham, the gimcrack ingenuity and polished malice of Horace Walpole, the manners-painting force of Madame D’Arblay, and the cultured common sense and elaborate eloquence of Sir James MacIntosh. He succeeds better still in crushing the wasp Croker, sting, wings, bag of venom, and all, by one nervous grasp of his strong, hot hand, or in clapping into air, amid mimic thunder, the empty paper-bags of some of our modern poets.

As Macaulay’s series of papers went on, it became manifest that he was gradually diverging from the flowery fields of literature, and turning towards the more difficult and less frequented heights of history. His “Machiavelli,” “Burleigh,” “Chatham,” “Temple,” and “Lord Clive,” were all, in reality, historical chapters—the antennæ of coming historical works. Of such, by far the ablest and most brilliant is the article on “Warren Hastings.” Indeed, we find in it, as in a microcosm, all the qualities, positive and negative, since more largely displayed in his *History of England*. These are intimate acquaintance, not only with the leading events, but with the minutiae,

the gossip, the family history, and the floating scandal of the period; intense sympathy with the *personnel* of his heroes—a partiality for certain characters amounting to favouritism—a hatred for others amounting to fury—immense power of painting traits in character, and scenes in historic life—an inferior gift of describing nature—frequent, cool, and refreshing literary allusions, blowing like breezes across the otherwise arid or blood-dried pages of his tale—Whig zeal and religious indifferentism, both indifferently concealed—an occasional negligence of style more highly finished in reality than the most swelling of his paragraphs—great and laboured passages, reminding you of historical paintings, and relieved by surrounding etchings of familiar life—a perpetual consciousness of himself, and of the artistic nature of his task, which seldom permits any spontaneous betrayal of emotion, and makes even his enthusiasm seem cold, as the hair of a sculptured Mœnad—something of the interest and simplicity of Hume, along with the richer tints of Robertson, and the gorgeous description of Gibbon—all the qualities of a good novel, added to some of those of an ideal history—these are the leading peculiarities alike of his historical papers, such as “Hastings,” and of his *England*, and they constitute him a historian after this age's own heart.

Admitting right cordially the exceeding interest and graphic power of the paper on Hastings, there are one or two points on which we must differ. We find in it evidences of that infirmity of trimming and balancing which so easily besets our author. We certainly do not think that Warren Hastings was a monster. Monsters in the moral world are still rarer than monsters in the natural; but, if the half of what Burke said, and the whole of what even Macaulay says against him be true, he must have been one of the worst characters in history. If seduction, perfidy, cruelty, greed, murder, both retail and wholesale, implacable revenge, and insatiable ambition, with a hundred smaller items of falsehood and corruption, are to be screened by success, it is time that the Ten Commandments were burned, the Sermon on the Mount buried, and the laws of nations and of nature repealed. Either he was one of the worst or one of the most maligned of men. Macaulay takes neither view; but between admiration of Hastings' abilities, and anger at some of his actions—reverence for Burke, and pity for the accused—sympathy with the oppressed people of India, and wonder at the splendid edifice of empire which was based on their blood—he himself hangs, and he suspends his readers in a state of

equilibrium which becomes half-painful and half-ludicrous, and tempts you at last to exclaim, "What would you have us to think of this man, after all? Was he a wise governor, or a cruel and unmanly oppressor? Shall we bless, or shall we ban him? Shall he sit in the synod of the gods, or, where Burke would have placed him, in that part of the Indian Pantheon where dwell the horrid deities who preside over small-pox and murder, and who, like the tremendous Three in the *Curse of Kehama*, expecting the coming of the 'Man Almighty,' might be conceived to wait impatiently for his advent, 'having been found worthy' to sit beside them on a burning throne?"

There is another point on which we crave a word: it is on the authorship of the *Letters of Junius*. This Macaulay, somewhat dogmatically, attributes *entirely* to Sir Philip Francis, although there is much internal evidence to prove him incapable of their better portions. The mere mechanism of their composition, the curt style, the fierceness and occasional malignity of their spirit, he could have supplied, but the profounder touches of satire, the strong clearness of diction, the high, almost super-human scorn which so often inspirits them, the frequent gleams of deep political sagacity, and the figures, sparing in number, but breathing an intense poetical spirit—all point to the darker moods and the fretted and gall-dipped pen of Edmund Burke. We do not mean that he was their sole or chief author, but that his subtle genius had its share in their conception, even as it had in some of Barry's pictures and Reynolds's discourses; and that he drew many of their sharpest and finest strokes, seems to us certain, and to some others, too, who can recognise that "Roman hand," and who know that its versatility was equal to its power. Burke notoriously was in the secret¹ of their authorship. He was, according to Johnson, the only man living equal to their composition. And as to style neither he nor Junius were consistent in it. Junius had three different styles—that of his private notes to Woodfall—that of his hasty letters, such as his first to Horne Tooke—and that of his more elaborate epistles. Burke, too, strange to say, had three styles—his plain style, as of his charges against Hastings—his middle style, as of his *Sublime and Beautiful*, and *Thoughts on the Present Discontents*—and his ornate and poetical style, as in his *French Revolution*, and his *Regicide Peace*. There are, besides, passages and clauses in Junius which we are as sure were Burke's, as if we had seen him write, or dictate, or inter-

¹ See Prior's *Burke*, Vol. i.

line them. Take one, "the melancholy madness of genius without the inspiration." Burke once said to Boswell, about Herbert Croft, "He has the contortions of the sibyl *without the inspiration.*" Of another we may say (accommodating Macaulay's language on another occasion), "Aut Burke aut Diabolus." It is in reference to Wilkes: "The gentle breath of peace will leave him on the surface, unruffled and unremoved. It is only the tempest that lifts him from his place." We could add a hundred more. On the whole, were we on a jury to try the question as to the authorship of *Junius*, we should be compelled, between the conflicting forces of the external and the internal evidences, to return a verdict against "Edmund Burke, Philip Francis, and other person or persons *unknown.*"

Ne sutor ultra crepidam, is a proverb so commonplace, as to require an apology for its repetition. And yet we cannot remember anything more appropriate to the light in which we are now to regard the subject of this sketch, in connection with his paper on Lord Bacon—which is, Macaulay the Thinker. To use his own illustration, "Hannibal at Waterloo, or Wellington at Plataea," were not more thoroughly out of place than Macaulay "found" in the difficult region of intellectual thought—a region which he knows not fully, has seldom visited, has visited not in the choicest society, and where he has never yet, we suspect, *spent a night*, the glooms and the grandeurs of which are alike unappreciated by his strong but unimaginative and uninstinctive spirit.

Had we foreseen that Macaulay meant so far to compromise his reputation as to write a paper on a purely philosophical subject, we should have put in a previous protest, based on the following grounds:—First, in all his other writings he gives no evidence of possessing the elements of a genuine thinker. He thinks in facts, not in figures or symbols. He estimates all things by their sharp edges, not by their solid bulks or their ideal shadows. He looks at them not as they are, but as they seem to him, or to the mirror from which he has caught their shape. The term absolute (except in its political sense, as connected with "absolute power!") has to him little or no meaning. He has an outer eye of much scope and clearness, but his inner eye is midnight. We dare any of his admirers to quote a sentence of his writings containing in it a new truth, chased in a new image—"an apple of gold in a picture of silver." Of poetic physics, he has some distinct idea—of poetic metaphysics, none whatever. Nor has he given himself that philo-

sophic culture and training which would qualify him for sounding metaphysical depths. With all his vast knowledge, it is clear to us that he has only run across the surface of philosophy, and studied it rather as a historian, than as a profound critic of its various systems and schools. Nor has his temperament or his heart ever urged him on to very earnest personal inquiry into the grounds of belief or leading principles of thought. Easily satisfied himself, he has been unable to give satisfaction or even suggestive hints to earnest and anxious inquirers. The profound thinker is either decidedly religious in his temperament and views, or decidedly the reverse. Macaulay is neither. And hence, while he speaks on historical matters with authority and power, on all abstract questions he exhibits the feebleness without the modesty of a child. The voice and manner are those of a master, but the matter and spirit are those of an inapt and forward scholar.

Lord Bacon was a subject, certainly, more than worthy of all the powers of the author. The apparent contradictions in his character, the singular and humiliating events of his history, his position as the leader of a wide intellectual movement, his achievements as the broad-browed parent of modern method—the width of his mind, which reminds you of the first rude maps of the globe, where the breadth and the blunders are alike enormous—the oriental wealth and splendour of his fancy, recalling to you Solomon “speaking of trees, from the cedar to the hyssop,” and issuing proverbs by the thousand—the proud, positive results which have sprung from his system have combined to render the woolsack on which sat he whom the poet calls

The greatest, wisest, meanest of mankind,

more interesting and more magnificent in many men's view than the thrones of “Ormus or of Ind,” and to make them think of an angel seated on a planet, and looking down in supreme dominion upon the subjected provinces of a universal intellectual empire.

To grapple with such a mind and character was a noble task, and Macaulay has undoubtedly brought to it all the resources of his knowledge, the strength of his ingenuity, and the energies of his style. But he has at the same time exposed himself to certain grave charges, into the proof of which we must now shortly enter.

Now, first, as in reference to Hastings and other equivocal characters, he has not painted Bacon well as a whole. He

has set the apparently contradictory parts of his character in violent and antithetical opposition to each other—opposition so violent as to produce a monstrous effect; he has not seen or shown to us any principle accounting for and unifying the whole. God does not make men on the plan of antithesis. Pterodactyles and all such contradictions of chaos are long extinct. Inconsistencies, of course, there are in all characters: but where a character is hollow and false, the intellectual power must be partially vitiated, and where the heart is extinct, the mind must have its flaws and feebleness too. Had Bacon been the “greatest,” he never could have been the “meanest” of mankind. The charges which Macaulay so ably and unanswerably urges against his *morale* tell, in some measure, against his method of investigating truth. Who, if we may accommodate Scripture language, “can bring a warm system out of a cold nature, a true creed out of a false heart?” No, not one!

There never was any such mis-creation as a *great* bad man, although wonderful and extraordinary villains have abounded. A really great man cannot be bad—a bad man cannot be really great. Prove the greatness, and you disprove the badness—or prove the badness, and you shatter down the greatness. A great man may be defined as one living under a lofty ideal, and having power in part to realise it. But the presence of a lofty ideal proves the absence of systematic and cold-blooded depravity, of abject meanness, of cowardice, cruelty, or falsehood. All true greatness is more or less moral. The highest cherub *is* also the purest seraph. The player Shakspeare was an infinitely better and greater man than the Chancellor Bacon, and would have died rather than have committed one of his viler deeds, or handled one piece of his unclean gold. The philosophers of Greece, whom Macaulay would crush under Bacon's feet, had many faults, but not the worst of them cuts such a disgraceful and contemptible figure as he; and does this furnish no *prestige* in favour of their intuitive and transcendental method?

The extraordinary and able men of no principle or heart, who abound in the history of the world, remind us of busts—all brow and no heart. They are the incarnations of mere understanding—having neither, if we may use Kant's language, the pure reason, which perceives the absolute as existence—nor the practical reason, which discerns it as moral law. The great are composed of a combination, more or less varied in its proportions, of the pure reason, the logical understanding, the

practical reason, and the imaginative sympathy. *They* are the composites, although the combination is definite, not contradictory. Whereas, the merely extraordinary man has the simple positive of understanding, added to a copious list of negatives. To this Bacon united the gift of a munificent fancy, not to speak of his multifarious knowledge and acquirements.

But, secondly, and chiefly, we charge Macaulay with greatly overrating Lord Bacon's philosophy, and with underrating, at the same time, the philosophies which preceded him. And here we mean out of his own mouth to condemn him. Now, to pursue him down his paper *seriatim*, we find him, as to the aim or end of the two philosophies, admitting, that while Bacon's sought solely the "relief of man's estate," that of the ancients aimed at "moral perfection." In other words, Bacon professed to cure corns, and Plato to heal consciences. Bacon wished to teach men to make better ships, or, as Macaulay has it, "better shoes;" and Plato to teach them to have nobler and happier souls. Bacon sought "fruit," perhaps ingrafted on rotten trees; whereas Plato and his school sought, although with imperfect success, to make the root of the tree sound, and its circulating sap pure. Bacon sought to make men better citizens of this hollow world; Plato to prepare them for the "City of God"—the everlasting mansions of the true, the spiritual, and the happy. How significant that Bacon died, in consequence of seeking to stuff a fowl with snow—an apt emblem of the coldness and comparative pettiness of his method, and rather a striking type, too, of the manner in which his ablest modern panegyrist has sought to embalm a cowardly nature in elegant, elaborate, and icy praise.

"*Although with imperfect success.*" These words will be seized on by the Baconian, and turned against us. But, first, we intend, ere we close, to show that the success of Bacon's method has been exaggerated; secondly, we remember the words, "in great attempts 'tis glorious even to *fail*;" thirdly, to Plato and his direct or indirect influence, we may attribute all the *mere philosophic* spiritualism of the cultivated world—which, while "far *below* the good, is far *above* the great;" fourthly, Platonism was the herald of Christianity, and its failure lay in the want of some elements which Christianity supplied—namely, a perfect model, a supernatural power, and a permanent divine influence; fifthly, on the grounds on which Macaulay claims superiority to Bacon over the Platonic school, we might claim superiority for a tailor over Bacon or Plato either. But we may

leave the details of this startling preference, although *legitimately deducible* from our author's premises, to the imagination of our readers. And, sixthly, he forgets, or overshoots while remembering, the fact, that he is talking of the *aim* of the two systems, and not at this point of their actual results. To make man better may not be so practicable as to improve the strops of his razors, but surely even at the first blush it is a *loftier* attempt.

But, according to Macaulay, contradicting old Seneca, "the first shoemaker was a greater philosopher than Seneca himself." Had he said the "first maker of a foot," he would have been nearer the mark. Neither Seneca nor the aboriginal shoemaker strikes us as a very wonderful philosopher. Both only shaped out the ideal of greater artists, the one imperfectly that of the Plato, the Pythagoras, and the Zeno, who saw the vast superiority of the soul to the body, of the next life to this, and the other of that plastic power, which, in forming a foot, silently bade man, while he covered its nakedness, to emulate its symmetry and copy its curve. But dare Macaulay expect sympathy when denying Seneca's assertion that "philosophy *lies deeper* than inventing transparent windows, tubes for diffusing warmth, or shorthand?" Judging by this statement, we should prefer Seneca as an expounder of the ideal philosophy, to Macaulay as an illustrator of the utilitarian. We are certain that the "three books on Anger," contain nothing so contemptible as the preference he gives, by implication, to "the man who teaches us to use our hands," over him "whose object is to form our souls." Not in the pages of Combe, or Robert Chambers, or of that Benthamite school which Macaulay himself once assaulted, do we remember anything so grossly absurd, or which more helplessly sacrifices the unhappy cause committed to his advocacy.

What! a shorthand writer equal to a philosopher or a great orator—Woodfall above Burke, Gurney above Canning, or Macaulay seated at Highgate, and drinking in Coleridge's inspired accents, equal to the "old man eloquent." And yet, such abject trash, when printed in the *Edinburgh Review*, or republished by the "Historian of England," must gain unchallenged acceptance, and require this humble pen to dash it into exposure and contempt.

In the paragraph which follows, he throws out insinuations against Seneca's character, which require only two remarks. First, Seneca is no more to be taken as a fair type of the Platonic

philosophy, than Emerson of the system of Fichte, or Combe of Benthamism. He was the hard dreg of a Stoic, and the Stoic was only the stony similitude of a Platonist. And, secondly, should we accept this test of character in judging of Seneca's system, what is there to prevent us from applying it to Bacon's, upon the premises Macaulay has newly laid down, namely, that Bacon, if he *did* not, like Seneca, "meditate epigrammatic conceits about the evils of luxury in gardens, which moved the envy of sovereigns, rant about liberty, while fawning on the insolent and pampered freemen of a tyrant, nor celebrate the divine beauty of virtue with the same pen which had just before written a defence of the murder of a mother by a son"—nevertheless *did*, and that, too, under the light of Christianity in its full blaze, take bribes for justice, till corruption's own brazen brow grew pale, and her iron hand trembled; suffer the profligate minion of a monarch to influence his most solemn judicial decisions; pervert the old laws of England to the vilest purposes of tyranny, by "tampering with judges, and torturing a prisoner," who, like the laws, was venerable, innocent, and old—and, lastly, become the betrayer, and the public, voluntary, and malignant accuser, of his own principal friend and patron? It is from his hand, be sure, and not from Seneca's, that our author would expect the key of nature. The two succeeding paragraphs contain a caricature of the objects and results of ancient philosophy, and their sting might easily be extended to all metaphysics, and to all theology. Mr. Macaulay forgets what he had so recently stated, that one object of academical studies is to elevate and purify the soul—a purpose independent of objective results: he forgets that the fruit sought being of the rarest kind, and hanging on the topmost branches of the tree of knowledge, cannot be gathered without long labour, and that the maintenance of a lofty spiritualism, of an attitude of wonder and worship among the better minds of every succeeding age, is a richer result than all the possible discoveries made under the Baconian method. Who would set the history of patents above that of opinions? Because theologic science has not unriddled the mystery of a God, or explained the conditions or the localities of the future life, must the truths involved in such speculations, and the influences their agitation has exerted on the spiritual nature of man, be degraded in practical power below gas, the steam-engine, or the diving-bell? Are churches, missionary societies, great religious movements, high spiritual poems, and holy lives, not worthy "fruit"?—and these, under

God, we in this nineteenth century owe, not to the school of Bacon, but to that combination of the philosophy of Plato, and the divine teaching and working of Jesus, which constitutes the only theology, whether theoretic or practical, deserving the name—the theology of Taylor, Howe, Milton, and Coleridge.

The Baconian philosophy bears flowers and fruits in great abundance—and every year; but the deep thought of the ancient Greek mind, informed and warmed by the supernatural Sun of Christianity, like the aloe, brings forth, at long intervals, its precious blossoms, of which you may say with the poet—when you contrast them with more short-lived and earthy productions—“one blossom of Eden outblossoms them all,” and the fruit of which is everlasting. For why? Bacon sowed the thin soil of the finite and the present; Plato the deep loam of the permanent and the infinite. Bacon expected and received the return of an early crop of material results; Plato's harvest lay in the slow yield of souls. “Now the things seen are temporal, but the things unseen are eternal.”

Macaulay next expresses a disappointed hope in the “Epicureans.” They were, according to him, mutilated utilitarians. It was even wonderful that “Epicurus' style did not breed a Bacon.” *They* approached the true and sensible notion of things, in “referring all happiness to bodily pleasure, and all evil to bodily pain.” But, like the gods in whom they were said to believe, they were lazy, and preferred lolling in the sun to constructing *Novum Organons*. *Our* notion of their sense is increased by this. If all happiness lies in bodily pleasure, and all evil in bodily pain, it may be a question if it be not our “strength to sit still” to take the good the gods provide us, or to drink our hemlock in silence, instead of moving heaven and earth, and convulsing the spheres, in order to wheel round to our feet new varieties of the same mixed and eternal meal. It was reserved for Macaulay to trace the proud Baconian Tree, which some compare to the Tree of Life, with its “many manner of fruits, and its leaves for the healing of the nations,” to a rejected acorn from the trough of Epicurus.

That an infection of despondency seemed to lie upon other shapes of the Grecian philosophy besides the Epicurean, is granted to their detractor. But he has not pointed out the element which would have dissipated this gloom. That was Christianity, with its supernatural discoveries of the immortality of man—of his intimate relations to God—and of the God-Man Mediator. The ancient philosophers saw the necessities and

cravings of man's immortal nature; they felt that to seek to supply these by temporal comforts were as insulting and absurd as to give rich food to a raging fever; they felt, some of them, that one great want of man was an Incarnation of the Godhead, and they had even a hope of his appearance—saw in some measure his “day afar off, and were glad,” but it was only a dim prospect, after all, and they lived not to see the culmination of their systems, and the completion of their desires, in the divine Carpenter of Nazareth. Hence, their systems have an imperfect aspect—like the Sphinx or the Tower of Babel—and, because only half-finished, have been treated as ruins. But to call their despondency “contented” is unjust. If they sought moral perfection, and sought it sincerely, but found it not, how could they remain contented? Is even the maniac who tries to leap to the moon contented with his fall? On the contrary, the Baconian philosophy having made its bow to Christianity, and derived from it something of its liberal and unfettered spirit, has too often proceeded in its investigations to ignore its existence, or to treat its occasional protests with impatient scorn.

It is easy to enlarge on the errors of the schoolmen. But to charge these upon the ancient philosophers is as unfair as to confound Popery with Christianity. Scholasticism was the putrefaction of the old philosophy—deriving a twofold virulence from the coeval putrefaction of religion, or it might be termed the dotage and driveldom of the Grecian philosophy. But, though doomed to dote, that glorious thing was not doomed to die. In spite of Macaulay's pæan over its fall, it is alive and in full vigour still, and, surviving Bacon's system, may merge, like the Morning Star, only in the Sun of that divine vision which we, according to His promise, expect sooner or later to irradiate the evening of the world.

Mr. Macaulay, after comparing Bacon to Bonaparte—a comparison with two edges—proceeds to make the following extraordinary statement:—“The object of the new philosophy was the good of mankind, *in the sense* in which the *mass of mankind* always *understood*, and *will always* understand, the word good.” Surely this gentleman was born to be a fatal friend to the fame of the Baconian system. What has been the object or “good” always hitherto sought or contemplated by the *mass of mankind*? Has it not been selfish gratification, in one or other of its myriad forms? Alas! for Bacon and his philosophy, if this was their object too! And alas! for man, if he is never to rise to a higher purpose; and if the

Baconian philosophy be merely a devil's wind to fan the sails of human selfishness to the end of time! Indeed, we are now at this point tempted to ask, if Mr. Macaulay be not, after all, conducting a long, insidious, and ironical argument against Bacon's idea and method, after he had, in the former part of the paper, triumphantly demolished and trampled on his personal character. We defy the bitterest opponent of our English sage to utter a severer sentence against his system than has his eloquent and seemingly sincere eulogist. Poor Bacon! has he not fared like a man who should sit down to have his features copied by an artist apparently friendly, and should continue to smile, well pleased, while on the other side of the canvas there was rising, to the tune of smothered laughter, the most hideous of caricatures?

But this suspicion—which would save the intellect at the expense of the honesty of the writer—fades away and becomes incredible, as we follow him a little farther. He goes on to contrast the estimates Plato and Bacon have respectively formed of the different branches of knowledge. Plato thought that the “great office of geometry was to discipline the mind, not to minister to the base wants of the body.” Macaulay, on the other hand, sneers at “the abstract, essential, eternal truths” of this science, but passes over the great objection to its study, which is, that men accustomed to mathematical evidence become often incapable of appreciating or receiving any other. There is a mist around the region of mathematics colder and denser than that of metaphysics; and he who finds the darkness of problems clear, will by and by wink and be struck blind by the blaze of day. But surely the idea of mathematics propounded by Plato is far loftier than the other—unless Meyer on *Mensuration* can be compared to Newton's *Principia*.

In talking of their estimates of astronomy, Macaulay grants that both agree in condemning the astronomy which then existed, and in desiring a higher and purer; but, strange to say, he prefers Bacon's “living astronomy”—which seems to have been nothing else than *astrology*—to Plato's, which was a fine and large idealism. Bacon aspired to know the “nature and the *influences* of the heavenly bodies as they really are;” Plato, to attain to an astronomy to which the “stars are like the figures which a geometrician draws on the sand—an astronomy ‘independent of the stars.’” Suppose either of these imaginary astronomies attainable; which of the two, we ask, were the nobler? Suppose both visionary; which vision is the grander

of the two? Our common astronomy may be compared to a measurement of the dimensions of the human *brain*; Bacon's to a knowledge of its relations to the body and the nervous system; and Plato's to the study of the mind, of which the brain is but the organ. The stars may be called the developments of "God's Own Head:" our common astronomers number them, and take their weights and sizes; Bacon wishes to know how they are connected with our every-day life and fortunes; Plato, to read the divine idea—the large thought and purpose of God—inscribed on them in legible fire.

It seems to us that in this science we are fast approaching a point where we need the guidance rather of a new Plato than of a new Bacon or Newton. The telescope of Lord Rosse has sounded our present astronomy to its real depths. Few more great prizes are reserved, we suspect, in that starry sea. We have attained the knowledge that the stars are old, that they are of one stuff, and that there is no visible end to their numbers. What more of any moment, in this direction, by our present methods, is ever likely to be reached by us? It is like walking through a pine forest of vast extent and uniform aspect: a few miles tire and satisfy us. So now, the news of "stars, stars, stars," pouring on us in everlasting succession—all *like* each other, all distant, all inscrutable, and ever silent, the moral history of all unknown—produces very little effect, and the midnight heavens of modern astronomy become again, as to the eye of childhood, a mighty and terrible pageant or procession, the meaning and the purpose, the whither and the whence, of which we do not understand. And we are tempted to say to astronomers, as they prate of their new firmaments, and planets, and comets, "We knew something like this long ago; can ye not give us some light on the meaning of these distant orbs, or read us off some worthy lessons of moral interest from that ever-widening but never-clearing page?" And to cry out to the stars, "Speak as well as shine, ye glorious mutes in the halls of heaven! Shed down on some selected and favoured ear the true meaning of your mystic harmonies! Hieroglyphics, traced by the finger of God on the walls of night, when shall the Daniel arrive to interpret you, and to tell us whether ye contain tidings of hope or of despair? Star-gazers have looked at you long enough, and mathematicians weighed and measured you; when shall the eye—the Rossian eye of a true seer—lift itself up to your contemplation, and extract the heart of your mystery? If not, men may soon turn away from you in disappointment, and

look with as much hope on the bright foam-bells of an autumn ocean as on you, the froth of immensity."

Plato's opinions on medicine are next brought forward against him; and yet in nothing do we perceive greater proof of his profound sagacity. True, he pushes his views to excess; but under the veil of his extravagant statements we see an idea which is gaining ground, and shall yet become universal—that medicine, as it began in, shall return to, surgery; that, as a barber was the first, he shall be the last physician; that in a body, as well as in a mind diseased, the patient best ministers to himself; that the words, "Physician, heal thyself," may be freely rendered, "Cure thee of quackery by ceasing to be a physician at all;" and that nature, strong in her own resources, coincides with Plato in crying out, "Throw physic to the dogs; I'll none of it." This belief, having sent on before it its imperfect forerunners, of homœopathy and hydropathy, is following them in full force, and in a higher form, and threatens soon to turn out of doors the "Royal Academy of Physicians," to celebrate a universal jubilee—illumination at the death of quackery—and to burn drugs, like demons, in a blaze of consuming fire. Honour to old Plato for having, by one glance of his eye, seen the quackery of ages *through*, and *down* to its dying day.

Grasping always at the ideals of things, Plato saw that all true legislation must propound to itself a lofty end, and he proclaims that end to be the "virtue of the subject." This was the thought of Moses too, and the theocracy of Israel was its accomplishment. It were easy to prove that it was also the idea of Christ, although its realisation was *deferred*, and he did not at that time restore the kingdom to Israel. It is certainly the idea of Millennial Christianity; but Mr. Macaulay scouts it as utopian, and prefers the line of legislation recommended by Bacon, and, alas! acted on by the majority of human governors, which has for its watchword the low word "well-being;" which acknowledges no virtues but industry and submission, and no God but Mammon; which is careful to regulate and derive revenue from stews, but never intermeddles with the education of souls; which tolerates every species of corruption so long as it is profitable, and the money derived from it does not *smell*; which washes the outside of the platter, whitens the sepulchre, and decks the corpse, but neglects the weightier matters of the law—judgment, mercy, and faith; and seeks (not in vain) to divorce human legislation from eternal justice. Let the praises of Baconian legislation be sung by mightier voices than ours—

by the whirlwinds of anarchy, the blood-red trumpets of revolution, the cries of tormented and fugitive slaves, and by that crash of all-existing governments, which may form the first thunder-step of Him who is to come, and who, in pronouncing doom against them, may make *this* the conclusive charge: "Ye did *not* make it the principal end of your legislation to make men virtuous; ye turned my father's house into a house of merchandise, nay, a den of thieves; and ye must be scourged—*hence!*"

An antithetical comparison is introduced between the philosophy of Plato and that of Bacon, which, as it is short, we may quote:—"The aim of the Platonic philosophy was to exalt man into a God; the aim of the Baconian philosophy was to provide man with what he requires while he continues to be man. The aim of the Platonic philosophy was to raise us far above vulgar wants; the aim of the Baconian philosophy was to supply our vulgar wants. The former aim was noble; but the latter was attainable. Plato drew a good bow; but, like Acestes in *Virgil*, he aimed at the stars, and, therefore, though there was no want of strength or skill, the shot was thrown away. His arrow was indeed followed by a track of dazzling radiance, but it struck nothing. Bacon fixed his eye on a mark which was placed on the earth, and within bow-shot, and he hit it in the white. The philosophy of Plato began in words, and ended in words; the philosophy of Bacon began in observations, and ended in arts."

Let us try a parallel on the other side of the question, which, if not so pointed, is much more true. The aim of the Baconian philosophy was to make the dungeon of man's irrecoverable captivity as comfortable as possible, to ventilate it well, to loose everything except the chains, to cleanse the floors, clear the windows of cobwebs, and to whisper the while to the bondage, *Esto perpetua*; that of the Platonic was to set the lawful but hopeful prisoner free. The aim of the Baconian philosophy was to cherish, expand, and cultivate the animal and intellectual nature of man; that of the Platonic was to strengthen and purify the spiritual, which is the germ of the Godhead in humanity. The aim of the Baconian philosophy was to "supply man's vulgar wants," and leave him content as a sated sloth with the supply; that of Plato was to suggest the thrilling thought, that there are instincts and wants in man which earth and time cannot satisfy, and which, with their silent uplifted fingers, point to immortality.

The aim of the Baconian philosophy was, even if *attainable*,

not very *noble*—but attainable it was not, since the sensuous, as well as the spiritual, nature of man continually cries, "Give, give." Bacon's system, although it had a "New Atlantis," had no "Mahometan paradise" annexed to it; the aim of Plato, partaking of the eternal, demands the field of the future for its development, and disdains the petty geographical gauges by which it has been hitherto tried. Plato "aimed at the sun," like Hercules of old; but Macaulay has not, with all his "thunder," broken the "shaft," which is still travelling upwards with unabated speed in the heaven-sent breeze of Christianity, and shall hit that far "white" in due time. Bacon's arrow has not pierced entirely through even his broad targe—this world. The "philosophy of Bacon began in observations and ended in arts;" Plato's began in instincts, and shall end in a Daedalean crop of men.

Macaulay comes, in fine, to the question on which he lays most stress—that of the results of the two philosophies. On this point we have touched already, but must be permitted another word. Now, that many and wonderful results have sprung from the pursuit of the Baconian plan of philosophising, is conceded at once. But are they, after all, equal to the panegyrics bestowed on them? Are they not principally *mechanical*? Have they made man, as a whole, much happier, wiser, or better? What is "morality," or "moral obligation," without "grounds"—and Bacon has, according to Macaulay, laid down no such grounds. He says, "he loved to dwell on the power of the Christian religion to effect much that the ancient philosophers only promised." This might have been only a compliment; and how easy it were to turn round and to say, "the objections to the ancient philosophy you urge, may be urged, with equal force, against the Christian faith—where do we find the moral perfection at which it aimed?—where the faultless men it sought to produce?—has it not been a sublime failure?" And so we grant it has; unless you admit the facts of a great future, to which it points, and of a supernatural intervention, which it promises. And what we demand for Christianity, we demand also for the Platonic philosophy. Like it, it has done much, but not hitherto in proportion to the infinite scale it has itself fixed. Yet we are willing to weigh even its present products against Macaulay's elaborate list of the results of the Baconian method. "That has lengthened life" (Macaulay hopes, we suppose, to live longer than Methuselah!), "mitigated pain" (Christianity has no solace in it equal to chloroform!),

“extinguished diseases” (by creating new ones), “increased the fertility of the soil” (to the benefit of the serf, eh?), “given new securities to the mariner” (the polar star shone and the needle trembled before Bacon was born), “furnished new arms to the warrior” (is *this* a service to the human race? must the name of Bacon be written in blood?), “spanned great rivers and estuaries with bridges of form unknown to our fathers” (what an achievement! the rainbow is nothing to it!), “guided the thunderbolt innocuously from heaven to earth” (shall we never hear the last of that poor, tattered, tell-little kite of Franklin’s, the Elijah’s mantle of modern philosophers?), “lighted up the night with the splendour of the day” (was it not so also in the halls of Persepolis and the palaces of Babylon, or is all the glory of night included in gas?), “extended the range of the human vision, accelerated motion, annihilated distance, facilitated intercourse, enabled man to descend into the sea, soar into the air, penetrate into the noxious recesses of the earth, traverse the land in cars without horses;” and so on he goes, like the hack orator at a Watt or Mechanics’ Institute, through the wearisome round of railways, diving-bells, balloons, safety lamps, etc. Splendid toys, truly! Childish things, fitting our present state of advancement. Nay, rather *conductors*, laid out and waiting for the electric influences of a better era. But to speak of them as *ends*, as objects, as living things, as aught but dead trifles, till the shadow of the divine be made to fall on them, and the power of the divine to propel them, and the spirit of the divine to animate them, is intolerable from one pretending to be a philosopher. We throw into the scale over against them the highest philosophy, poetry, and theology of the last two centuries in Britain, Germany, and America, all of which has been coloured by the genius, and more or less inspired by the spirit, of Plato, and also the deep spiritual effects and moral movements which have sprung from these, and ask which is likely to kick the beam? And, if it be said that we are unfairly adding Christianity as a make-weight to Platonism, we reply that the one is, in our notion, the other fulfilled—the other *Deified*, yet practicalised; and that we have a right to rate the system we defend at its *best*.

The philosophy of Bacon has sounded the ocean, but it has ignored the profounder depth of the infinite in the soul of man. It has brought down the lightnings on its rod, but they have come reluctantly, and departed as much a mystery as ever. It has told the number, but not the meaning, of the stars, which

roll on in their courses as inscrutable to us as they were to the Chaldean shepherds. Treating man as a cultivable ape, it has made his outward condition more comfortable; it hurries him along the path to his grave on railways; it smooths the harsh, outward edges of his intercourse with his fellow-man, but it leaves his heart as hard as it found it; it satisfies not, nor tries to satisfy, one of the deep thirsts of his moral nature. It has not cast a gleam of light upon the dark problems of his being, such as birth, sin, madness, or death. It casts not, nor seeks to cast, a ray upon the life beyond; it leaves a cloud of utter darkness upon his future progress on earth; and it neglects the care, if not denies the existence, of that immortal instinct which points up the poorest scion of humanity to his Father in heaven. It is of the earth, earthy; nor is that earth regarded as God's footstool, or as the springboard from which undying souls are to take their bound upwards, but as the eternal womb, home-stead, and grave of certain erect compositions of clay, made, worked, and at last buried in night, by a mere mechanical power. Should ¹ once more the Baconian appeal to the "Great Exhibition," and say, "Behold the triumph of my principles there," we answer—the splendour of the instance is granted; we saw there "the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, in a moment of time;" but not for the gift, instead of the sight, of all this magnificence, would we bend down before the golden calf. That exhibition was, after all, an exhibition of the works of *man's* industry; if we would see the works of God's industry, we must look elsewhere—to those books which his Spirit has inspired, and to those men who bear his image, and fight his battles. Millions flocked to see this great sight; but there are sentences in Plato, and far more in John, one of which is worth the whole magnificent medley. And yet, were a new truth of still more compact significance and grandeur, from the same source, inscribed upon a pillar, and the existence of that pillar announced to the ends of the earth, how few would travel to read the same. So it is, but so it shall not always be. Nay, it appears to us that the Great Exhibition brought the Baconian system to a point; it produced all that it *could* do for humanity—and may not this bright pinnacle of human deed and skill have shone across the gulf, as a signal to the superior and supernatural power, seeing in it man's splendid impotence, and gilded woe, to take his case, and the remainder of his otherwise hopeless destiny, by and by, into *his own* all-

¹ This was written when the Great Exhibition was going on in London.

wise, powerful, and merciful *hands*? The cry of Plato was for an avatar, and a fuller revelation of the Deity. That was fulfilled in Christianity, but Christianity, in unison with creation, is beginning to cry aloud, in her turn, for a farther and a final apotheosis. The words of John Foster are seldom to be despised, and let both Baconian and Platonic Christian hear him with attention, as he says, "Religion is utterly incompetent to reform the world, till it is armed with some new and most mighty powers—till it appears in a *new* and *last* dispensation."

Our space is exhausted, else we would have had rich pickings of absurdity and weakness in the closing parts of Macaulay's essay—where, for instance, he tells us gravely, "that the knowledge of the theory of logic has no tendency to make men good reasoners," an assertion equivalent to "the knowledge of the theory of grammar has no tendency to make men good grammarians," or, "a man may be a very good French scholar, without studying French;" or where he reduces Bacon's claims to absolute zero, by telling us that his "rules are not wanted, because, in truth, they only tell us to do what we are all doing;" or where, closing his estimate of what Bacon has after all done, he calls him a "person who first called the public attention to an inexhaustible mine of wealth, which had been utterly neglected, and was accessible by that road alone, and thus caused that road which had been previously trodden by peasants and higglers" (Platos and Aristotles? nay, Johns and Pauls?), "to be frequented by a higher kind of travellers." By-ends Bacon, we suppose, Demas Dumont, Save-all Joe Hume, Hold-the-World Bentham, Young Atheist Holyoake, Feel-the-Skull Combe, and My-Lord-Time-server Mr. Macaulay.

MACAULAY AS A HISTORIAN¹

WE have repeatedly discussed Macaulay's merits and defects as a thinker, poet, *litterateur*, and orator. We have never yet, however, had the opportunity of examining, in any separate paper, his character as a historian. This is now furnished us by the appearance of the third and fourth volumes of his *History of England*, and we proceed, with perfect candour and impartiality, to record our impressions.

Historians may be divided into the following classes—(1), the bold recounter of facts, or the Mechanical Historian; (2), the Controversial Historian; (3), the Descriptive and Rhetorical Historian; (4), the Philosophical Historian; and (5), the writer who, by combining some of the qualities of all or most of these, becomes the Ideal or Poetic Historian. The Mechanical Historian differs very little from the old almanac compiler—his sole object is to accumulate facts; but how to show their bearings on each other, to compute their relative value, to measure their symbolic size, to generalise them into broad principles, or to heat them into eloquence, he knows not—a fact is to him what a flower was to Peter Bell:—

A primrose by the river's brim,
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more.

The Controversial historian is one who, setting out with a party formula in his hands, is less anxious to mirror truth than to twist it to his own preconceived notions. He hurries along the thread to get at the knots of history, and his works are mostly special pleadings, more or less powerful in proportion to his ability, but always narrow and one-sided. The Descriptive and Rhetorical historian belongs to no party except the party of effect,—has no principles but the principles of art, or at least is often ready to sacrifice what principles he may have to the emphasis of clauses, the music of cadences, and the flow of balanced and beautiful periods; facts, too, he casts like old silver pieces into his mint, and if he can give them a new stamp and burnish, cares not although their weight, form, and pressure be materially altered. The Philosophical historian, on the

¹ From the *Scottish Review*, April 1856.

other hand, sees little in history but a procession of principles,—he looks almost entirely to the subjective, seldom to the objective; and, instead of painting the body and the bloom, he traces the bones of his subject,—thus, although not in the original sense of the words, “seeing the invisible,” and ignoring the “things seen.” The highest form of history has often been attempted, although not yet fully exemplified. It aims at uniting accuracy with selection and generalisation of facts,—stern attachment to principle with catholic charities and sympathies,—truth of description with eloquence,—stern analysis and profound thought with that poetic imagination which invests all things, even abstractions, with beauty, unity, and life. He that approaches nearest to the full combination of these qualities, approaches, of course, nearest to the Ideal or Poetic historian.

In looking at the historians of the past, we find (although in many of them the characteristics we have mentioned are blended, and run into each other) several specimens of each class. Herodotus, the “father of history,” was little else than a reciter of bare facts, without selection as to their quality. Being the earliest of historians, however, his facts were often so strange and romantic that their mere recital was poetry, and he became sometimes, without knowing or suspecting that he was, a fine describer, principally because he allowed events to describe themselves. Thucydides united much of the philosophical thinker, and of the political reasoner, to great powers of description and rhetoric; but wanted elasticity of movement, clearness of style, and completeness of effect. Xenophon was rather an elegant novelist than a historian; and although his *Anabasis* be a pleasing episode, it gives no promise of the epic grandeur of a great history. Polybius belonged, on the whole, to the Mechanical school. The fragments which have been preserved of Sallust give you the impression of a vigorous painter and sententious moraliser, with a strong dash of the special pleader, rather than of a philosopher, a judge, or a man of true historical imagination. Livy is entirely an eloquent artist,—his sole object is to write what people will admire,—his narratives are often as fictitious as his descriptions, and his descriptions are often as unreal as the speeches he puts into the mouths of his generals. Tacitus, of all ancient historians, approached nearest the ideal of his art. Although not practised in that habit of severely sifting facts and evidence, which is now essential to a writer of history, he is eminently a lover of truth, and never

seems to be playing his reader false,—his prejudices in favour of Trajan and Agricola give no more than an agreeable *animus* to his writings,—his descriptions are unrivalled in their knotty force, in their laconic compression, and in their combination of general grandeur of effect, with minute fidelity; and his penetration into the characters, the mental workings, and the passions of men, is as accurate as it is profound. His great deficiency, besides the want of modern culture and training, lies in his style, which is frequently obscure, involved, curt, inverted, and never attains that easy flow which adds so great a charm to the writings of many inferior historians. As Dante to Virgil and Tasso, is Tacitus to Livy and Robertson, at once incomparably more powerful, and very much inferior in popularity.

In our own country we find all the varieties of the tribe-historian. Goldsmith and Smollett are good specimens of the merely Narrative school,—only the former tells his story in a manner so natural, and in language so unconsciously felicitous, that, whether he be narrating falsehoods, or uttering the feeblest of common-places, you cannot but listen delighted; and are tempted to cry, “If this be not history, it is something better.” Controversial historians we have many,—such as Whitaker, Goodall, Stewart, and Bell, the four champions of Mary, Queen of Scots,—Malcolm Laing, her strong-minded and acute defamer,—George Brodie, the opponent of Hume,—and M’Crie and Hallam, who, while presenting other historical aspects, are chiefly remarkable for the mastery with which they grapple with special party questions, the admiration they concentrate on certain partisan characters, and the strong, although in Hallam’s case the subdued, bias which runs through all their writings. Examples of the Descriptive and Rhetorical historian are too numerous to be mentioned. Robertson may, perhaps, be regarded as the most thorough, if not the most brilliant, specimen of this species. In his mind, the *What* always stands inferior in importance to the *How*,—the matter is less regarded than the manner,—truth must often bow before beauty and effect. “What is the chaff to the wheat,” says the prophet,—“What is the wheat to the chaff,” says the Scotch historian, if that chaff be well-arranged and softly coloured with the light of fancy,—what is the truthful termination of a battle, or negotiation, compared to the musical close of a sentence,—perish facts and principles, provided periods be safe! Not that Robertson meant to lie; on the contrary, he was willing to speak truth,

provided his clauses and his cadences did not suffer. And, certainly, he was an enchanting narrator. Who that ever read can forget his picture of the death of Mary, Queen of Scots, or his account of the discovery of America by Columbus? In Hume, and Gibbon, we find a combination of the Philosophical and the Descriptive historian, although in both we desiderate a supreme attachment to truth, and in both we see too much of the partisan. Hume assumes the attitude of a cool and neutral observer, but retains it only till liberty or religion cross his path, when he flies at each as at his natural game; and although his cold temperament forbids a display of fury, it does not restrain expressions of spite. His style is loose and unidiomatic, but abounds in felicitous touches, in which the extreme of art is concealed under the appearance of artlessness. Of heart and genuine imagination he is entirely destitute. Gibbon had what Hume wanted, genius of an Oriental type, and of Oriental richness, although his taste was like that of the Orientals, deficient in delicacy and refinement. This was one reason why the severe simplicity of Christianity repelled him, and why he found Mahometanism, with its sensuous splendours, gorgeous fictions, and false unity, more attractive. That he took a true or profoundly philosophical view of the causes of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, De Quincey has denied, and with much power pled the contrary. His attempt to account for the progress of Christianity, although admirably managed, entirely fails; and his great work, which at a distance towers grandly up, like Constantinople under the morning sun,—like that city, too, when approached more closely, reveals many a beggarly street, and many a rotten edifice. A great work, nevertheless, it is; the greatest historical work in the world. Its style has been finely compared by Landor to the splendid colouring of the clouds which surround the setting sun,—its march is not the strut of a martinet, but the stately step of a giant,—it unites the feeling of reality inspired by history with the charm and sorcery of an Arabian tale; and of all histories hitherto written, it alone deserves the name of an epic.

This present portion of the century has produced, besides many other historians, Arnold, Alison, Carlyle, De Quincey, and Macaulay. In Arnold met all the mechanical, all the moral, and many of the mental qualifications of the true historian. He had learning and research,—he had a passion for truth, which has rarely been paralleled in strength and sincerity; and he had a profound belief in God and in Christianity. What he wanted

were, first, long life to permit him to execute his colossal plans; and, secondly, greater compass and brilliance, along with sagacity and earnestness of mind. Of Alison's merits and faults it is unnecessary here to dwell. If not a great, he has certainly written a large history; the largest, we believe, except the *Universal History*, extant. Carlyle, like Gibbon, does not *say*, but *sing*, his history, although in wilder, fiercer, and more scald-like strains. His *History of the French Revolution* has been called an epic. It is in reality a succession of lyrical poems, like the rhapsodies of Homer ere they were collected and unified by Pisistratus. And what powerful, although jagged and irregular prose-odes, the chapters on the *French Revolution* are! Truly Titanic utterances, worthy of that Titanic contest, when the nations were angry, and blood was flowing up to the very horse bridles. Were we to live ten thousand years, we could not forget the wild raptures of the first reading of these three volumes,—how history became transfigured in our sight into the highest poetry,—how the light of imagination glorified the abyss foaming with revolutionary blood,—how there hurried along before us, as in successive dissolving views, the storming of the Bastille, the procession of the National Assembly, the march to Versailles, the death-bed of Mirabeau, the Flight of the King, the Reign of Terror, the Massacres of September, the guillotining of Danton, the fall of Robespierre; and how, as strong passion must find relief, or burst its barriers, our enthusiasm rushed impetuously to vent, and, as it were, bleed itself in a written panegyric on the magical powers which had so enthralled us. We linger the longer in recalling these days, as some of the subsequent works of this author have excited in us very different emotions.

It may be wondered that we name De Quincey as a historian, since he has written no regular historical work, only certain scattered chapters and fragments of history. But these, we venture to say, reveal in him more of the essential elements of a great historian than have been united in any other author. His "Cæsars," his "Revolt of a Tartar Tribe," his "Joan of Arc," his "Spanish Nun," and many other papers, discover the true spirit of research, the well-digested learning, the breadth and minuteness of vision, the philosophical impartiality, the measured march of eloquent narrative, the consummate clearness, and the deep glow, which form between them the ideal writer of history. To all these De Quincey adds an imagination superior to Gibbon's in elevation and solid grandeur. What a pity that he has never attempted to grasp some broad historical theme, commensurate

with his learning, his understanding, and his genius; and that now his declining years forbid the prospect of any new effort. Dear to many of the Muses has this extraordinary man been, but peculiarly dear to Clio; and it is for ever to be regretted that he did not more exclusively attach himself to her service.

Macaulay has often been called "the lucky." And in nothing do we see his pre-eminent good fortune more than in his selection of the history of England for his theme. The chances against this subject coming fresh into his hands were at one time considerable. Had Sir James MacIntosh accomplished his purpose of writing the history of England, Macaulay would certainly, partly in awe and partly in love for that eminent man, have avoided the task,—a task for which he was, at the same time, much better qualified than Sir James, so far, at least, as elasticity and brilliance were concerned. But MacIntosh having never executed his design, Macaulay might be said to receive it in legacy; and a rich legacy it has proved. He was unquestionably as well fitted to be the chronicler of his country's *outer* story, as Boswell to write the life of Johnson, or Scott to paint the manners of Caledonia. His boundless accomplishments, his eloquent style, his intimacy not only with books and records bearing on the history of England, but with men who had become depositaries of traditional information, and were living authorities,—his strong direct John Bullism of understanding, even his portly prejudices in favour of all that was English, his connection through his father with Scotland, his liberal feelings as a Whig toward Ireland, the part he had played in parliamentary politics, the practical knowledge he had acquired in the War Office and in India, all united in marking him out for our most interesting and popular, if not our most philosophical, most impartial, and final historian. Some, indeed, there were, who put in some strong preliminary objections and caveats. They questioned, first of all, the depth and comprehension of his mind, his possession of the true philosophic faculty. They doubted if he had much sympathy with the more earnest and lofty elements of human nature. They questioned his impartiality, and maintained that his essays proved him to be rather a lover of the *telling* than of the true. They ventured to doubt if he were a master of historic proportion, and to fear that his love of minute detail and preserved gossip would lead him astray. And they hinted that his style would not easily be toned down to that moderation which suits a long history; and that the work, while interesting and eloquent in parts, would be fatiguing as a whole.

Some six years ago the first two volumes of the work appeared, and were hailed with acclamation—a feeling which has been, we believe, not much lessened by the two additional volumes, under whose unparalleled issue the press has recently been groaning. We shall now proceed, simply, to daguerreotype the impressions made on our mind by the perusal of the two volumes, premising, first, that we have not read a single critique on them; and secondly, that, considering their enormous sale, as well as the numerous extracts from them which have appeared in the newspapers, we shall give no quotations of any length.

And, first, the fears of many, as to the want of continuous and cumulative interest, have been put to flight, partly by the two first volumes, and still more by those before us, which, if not so riveting as some passages in the former, are quite as entertaining as a whole. Each volume reads like a novel. This incessant interest is produced by a diversity of artistic methods, partly by a deliberate sinking down, an artificial carelessness and arranged disorder of style—(the repetition, for example, of the same words in the same sentence; the closing of long and laboured paragraphs, not as you expected, with a rolling climax, but with a quiet short period, etc.)—partly by the skilful alternation of historical subjects, partly by the interposition, at proper intervals, of anecdotes, incidents, or brief literary sketches and criticisms, and partly by the glimpses he is constantly giving us of the private and domestic life of men in the past. His book, in fact, includes in it several kinds of composition; the history, the memoir, the political disquisition, the criticism, the antiquarian treatise, and the materials of the *Ana*. And instead of cramming his miscellaneous information, as some historians do, into notes, he weaves it into the tissue of the text. He carries on five or six distinct histories abreast, and has, besides, a very fair proportion of what must be called conjectural history, *i.e.*, pure fiction. To call the interest of the work a suction were wrong, because suction implies unity, the unity of a maelström. Macaulay's interest may be compared to a succession of rising and sinking waves, breeze-stirred, and bearing on the bark irresistibly to the harbour. Coleridge's "Marinere" held men by his "glittering eye," a magic centred in, and radiating from a point. Macaulay holds his readers by the varied play and changing expressions of his face. He wields a fascination, but it is rather the fascination of great talent, laboriously exerting itself to sway the mind, than it is that quick, quiet, potent spell, exerted over the inmost

soul by the magic of genius. He always interests, often rouses, but seldom melts, and never thrills. He instructs the intellect, fills the memory, delights the fancy; but he seldom subdues the heart, and never rules the imagination.

With regard to impartiality, that, on the whole, has been better preserved than was expected, particularly in the third and fourth volumes. To the manifest scoundrels of all parties, he is most Rhadamanthine in his execution of justice—and as he seems rather to like this office, it must be satisfactory for him to find that never were scoundrels more plentiful than in the age of King James and William. In some parts of these volumes he leads us through a whole gallery of miscreants, and shows us here a Claverhouse, reeking with Covenanting blood—and there a Stair, croaking like a raven in hideous joy over the massacre of Glencoe; here a despicable Russell, intriguing with James while serving William; and there a coarse coxcomb, like Tyrconnell, storming and blaspheming in his drunken ire; here a weak Shrewsbury, seized with a remorse as contemptible as his crime; and there a Marlborough, ablest and basest of men, stained with a thousand treacheries, and in whose character you know not whether more to loathe the liar, to admire the general, or to despise the miser; here a Breadalbane, the prince and paragon of shufflers; and there a James II., in whom a weakness and superstition approaching idiocy, are not sufficient to excuse cruelty, tyranny, cowardice, and the spirit of an assassin, not to speak of the hundred minor ruffians, the Penns, Fenwicks, Friends, Fullers, and Rookwoods, who are also consigned by a stern and rapid etching to immortal infamy. On the other hand, he has done full justice to the few good or tolerable characters whom the time produced,—to Montague, Portland, Somers, Boufflers, Leslie, Tillotson, William and Mary, and it is not his fault that the most of these were Whigs. His hero, of course, is William, and his portrait of that wonderful person, with the lips of ice, and the look and the heart of fire, the thin worn figure, the determined unconquerable soul—

Which fretted the puny body to decay,
And o'er-informed its tenement of clay—

—who was never so great as when defeated, and never so terrible as when *down*; with his asthma and cough, his cold short answers, his predestinarianism, which, in him, became the “mild teacher of charity,” his unrivalled diplomatic tact, his love of Holland and of Mary,—is admirable, and proves its truth by its masterly execution. Mary is his heroine, and

surely she shines above that troubled and treacherous age, like a "sunbeam on a sullen sea," and in her personal charms, her gracious manners, her conciliating disposition, her practical good sense, and her mild deep piety, stands alone amidst the Queens of England, and is approached only by the present illustrious occupant of the throne. While agreeing generally with Macaulay's estimates of character, and admiring the execution of most of his portraits, we are compelled to state some exceptions. We think that his reprobation of Stair's conduct in the Glencoe business, is not sufficiently strong. He pleads the example of others, and the spirit of the age in palliation, and says that Stair's motive was his intense desire to civilise the Highlands, by extirpating the lawless Highlanders. But that this transaction went far beyond the spirit of that age, is proved by the cry of horror it awakened through the length and breadth of the land, when its particulars were fully known. It was not merely the fact of the massacre, but the treachery, cold-blooded cruelty, breach of hospitality and family ties, and the infernal falsehood connected with it, that roused the nation and the world against it,—it was "murder under trust"—the worst thing done in the worst way. And the charge against Stair is, that he not only commanded the massacre, but organised and in spirit presided over *every one* of its disgusting and horrible details. One could conceive no more appropriate punishment for the guilty soul of the statesman, than that it should be condemned for ever to haunt that gloomy glen, or from the mouth of Ossian's cave be compelled continually to contemplate the road up which the fugitives rushed through the snows of that dread February morn, and in the sounds of the Cona from below to hear the everlasting echo of the voice of blood, the cry of insatiable vengeance.

The battle of Killiecrankie is well described, but his account of the death of Clavers comes to a rather "lame and impotent conclusion." Surely he should have given one stamp of indignation on the grave of the oppressor ere he bid him farewell. Macaulay is half a Scot, but the Scottish blood in his veins has come through a Highland, not a Lowland channel, else it would have boiled far more fiercely against "Dark John of the battles," the despicable and heartless murderer of John Brown. Perhaps it is to this Highland extraction, too, that we are to trace his spite at Macpherson, whom in his essays, and in these volumes, he takes every opportunity to decry. Were the Macphersons and Macaulays ever at feud; and did the historian lose his great

great grandmother in some onslaught made on the Hebrides, by the progenitors of the pseudo-Ossian? Macpherson, as a man, we respect not, and we fear the greater part of Ossian's poems can be traced no farther than his teeming brain. Nor are we careful to defend his poetry from the common charges of monotony, affectation, and fustian. But we deem Macaulay grossly unjust in his treatment of his genius, and its results, and can fortify our judgment by that of Sir Walter Scott and Professor Wilson—two men, as far superior to Macaulay in knowledge of the Highlands and Highland song, and in genuine poetic taste, as they were in original imagination. The former says, "Macpherson was certainly a man of high talents, and his poetic powers are honourable to his country." Wilson, in an admirable paper in *Blackwood* for November, 1839, while admitting many faults in Ossian, and ridiculing Blair's over-estimate, eloquently proclaims the presence in his strains of much of the purest, most pathetic, and most sublime poetry, instancing, among others, the "Address to the Sun," as the "highest poetry," equal to anything in Homer or Milton. Both these great writers have paid Macpherson a higher compliment still, they have imitated him, and the speeches of Allan Macaulay, Ranald MacEagh, and Elspeth MacTavish, in the *Novels*, and such articles in *Blackwood* as "Cottages," "Hints for the Holidays," and "A Glance at Selby's Ornithology," are all coloured by familiarity with Ossian's style. Best of all, the Highlanders, as a nation, have accepted Ossian as their bard; he is as much the poet of Morven, as Burns is of Coila, and it is as hopeless to dislodge the one from the Highland, as the other from the Lowland heart. The true way to learn to appreciate Ossian's poetry is not to hurry, as Macaulay seems to have done, in a steam-boat from Glasgow to Oban, and thence to Balahulish and Glencoe, and thence to Inverness and Edinburgh; but it is to live for years under the shadow of the Grampians, to wander through lonely moors, amidst drenching mists and rain, to hold trystes with thunder-storms on the summit of savage hills, to bathe in sullen tarns after nightfall, to lie over the ledge and dip one's fingers in the spray of cataracts, to plough a solitary path into the heart of forests, and to sleep and dream for hours amidst their sunless glades, on twilight hills to meet the apparition of the winter moon rising over snowy wastes, to descend by her ghastly light precipices where the eagles are sleeping, and returning home to be haunted by night visions of mightier mountains, wider desolations, and giddier descents,—experience

somewhat like this is necessary to constitute a true "Child of the Mist," and to give the full capacity of appreciating the shadowy, solitary, pensive, and magnificent spirit which tabernacles in Ossian's poetry. This was in part the experience of Wilson, but has not certainly been that of Macaulay, who, at the best, is a degenerate descendant of the mountains, and who has neither (as we shall see afterwards) adequately described Highland scenery, nor appreciated Highland genius.

It has sometimes been charged against Macaulay, that he has little sympathy with religious enthusiasm, and that he is somewhat of a latitudinarian in these matters. We fear the present volumes will corroborate these impressions. His language about the Cameronians is too trenchant and severe. He may be right in blaming their extravagance, but he ought to have made more allowance for the oppression which made them mad, and to have shed a stronger light on their sincerity and want of selfishness. What a contrast between these people of the rocks, with all their sullen spleen and frenzied earnestness, and the paltry courtiers and statesmen of that day,—the trimming Whigs on the one hand, and the snaky traitors and sanctified assassins of Jacobitism on the other. It was not Alexander Shields—it was Claverhouse who wrote the *Hind Let Loose*; his cruelty turned Shields' pen into iron, and roused in the Cameronian party a demon that it took a half-century to lay. We think still less of the historian's attempt to ridicule George Fox. He has tried to effect this by the cheap and easy, but contemptible method of culling all his extravagant traits, and exhibiting them without his redeeming points—a method which Hume applied to Cromwell and the other noble Puritans, and which a recent writer (the Rev. James Smith, author of *The Divine Drama of History*) has ventured to apply to those "infatuated, imbecile, and weak-minded" persons (his very words)—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the other prophets of Israel! Macaulay sneers at Fox's suit of leather; he might as easily sneer at certain "sheepskins and goatskins," of which a certain Apostle speaks in his epistle to the Hebrews. He catalogues the contortions of the Sibyl, and laughs a dull laughter at them, but says nothing about the inspiration. He would have looked at Elijah's mantle with the eye of a tailor, and spoken of his fiery chariot in the spirit of a London cabman. How different from the style in which he once wrote of the Puritans in his paper on Milton! How different, to do Carlyle justice, from the spirit in which he speaks of Fox in *Sartor*. In

his chapter entitled "An Incident in Modern History," he treats Fox as a great earnest man, and not as a gibbering maniac, and rises as much above Macaulay in this, as Criffel above the Albany club-house. We deplore deeply this growing insensibility on our historian's part, to the highest spiritual enthusiasm. In a writer like Dickens, whom we always regard as a marvellous mannikin—a combination of the Cockney and the Parisian—who, like a rope-dancer, can perform feats which true men can neither do, nor refrain from despising when they see them done, and whose very geniality and genius are both as fantastic as they are wonderful, we are not astonished to find silly sneers at religion, caricatures of the Christian Sabbath, and a hundred other monkey-like mockeries of the earnest and the lofty. But in a man of Macaulay's thews and sinews, early education, and hereditary religious name, we know not whether to be more grieved or angry, at such passages as that on George Fox. It can raise him in the eyes of none but the profane. It must lower him in the estimation, even of those who now differ very widely from Fox's opinions; but who respect his intense sincerity, and are thankful for the good done to society by him, and the amiable sect who own him as their founder.

Those who desiderate in Macaulay's mind the true philosophic element, will not have their estimate materially altered by these volumes. We seldom find him grappling with general principles, and seldom do we come upon the seed-pearl of aphoristic thought—of that thought which suggests long trains of thinking in his readers' minds. Many of his fond admirers, who are also the (ignorant) admirers of Burke, have compared, and even preferred, him to that great statesman and orator. We are willing to stake the question upon this, which of the two writers expresses the most quotable and remarkable thoughts? We would not say images, for in this case we would be met by the foolish outcry about Burke's exuberant fancy; but thoughts, with or without figures, either lying bare on the simple page of the *Causes of the Present Discontents*, or sparkling on the rich ground of the *Reflections on the French Revolution*? We venture to say that we can quote from any fifty consecutive pages of Burke's works, more profound and pregnant reflections, as well as more brilliant images, than from *all* Macaulay's essays put together. Strong, direct, manly, highly-furnished, and intensely cultured intellect Macaulay always displays; but in subtlety, grasp, and above all thorough originality, he is not, for an instant, to be compared to Burke. That writer often

commences his paragraphs with simple and commonplace thoughts, but ere you are aware, and ere you reach the middle of the paragraph, you feel yourself in an abyss all gleaming with pearl-like truths. Macaulay is fond of beginning his paragraphs, too, with truisms, but, although, as he gets on, they seem to expand and to glow, they never deepen into comprehensive principles. In point of variety, nature, and energy of style, there is also no comparison. Burke, even when at ease, is great, and when he makes an effort he manages, in general, to conceal it,—you see the height but not the heaving of the wing.—Macaulay, when at ease, is so elaborately, and by effort, and with this effort, the common-place of the thoughts sometimes contrasts; and when he strains, the struggle is not always redeemed by the success. It is but fair, however, to grant, that of all his productions, the third and fourth volumes of the *History* are the easiest in style, and that in them his mannerisms are few, and never offensive.

With respect to historic proportion, Macaulay has had some difficulties to surmount, and has not always surmounted them well. Many English readers, for instance, will think that he has dwelt too long in the third volume on the state of the Highlands, and that the elaborate and eloquent dissertation on clans is out of proportion to the skirmish of Killiecrankie, which is recounted afterwards, while many Scotch and English, too, will grudge the space devoted to the affair of Sir John Fenwick. A few will blame him for narrating the massacre of Glencoe too minutely, while many will yawn over the controversies about the currency. Some would not have been sorry had two or three of the minor Jacobite plots been omitted, or, at least, told less prolixly, while, perhaps, all will wish that at least a fourth had been subtracted from the whole narrative. It is long since Lord Jeffrey cried out for a powerful calculus to compute the dimensions of *The Recluse*, of which the "Excursion" was only a small portion; and we would certainly require some very extraordinary power of numbers to compute how many pages, working at this rate, Macaulay is likely to produce ere he bring down the narrative to the age of George the Third.

With regard to the principal beauties of this work most of its readers will be of one opinion. Its account of battles and sieges has most impressed our imagination. Nothing can be better in their way than his pictures of the sieges of Derry and Namur—the battle of Landen and the battle of the Boyne. You see in these, the true spirit of the author of *The Lays of Ancient*

Rome. "He saith among the trumpets, 'Ha, ha,' and smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains and the shouting." Here his Highland blood stands him in good stead, and you feel that the ancient spirit is not dead. Whether that spirit be of the loftiest or purest kind, is a different question. But battles can only be described as battles are fought, with self-forgetting enthusiasm and thorough *abandonment*, and these in the field of war Macaulay has in perfection. We do not admire, on the other hand, his descriptions of scenery. Action, character, men,—he describes with marvellous success, but not the still grandeurs or the solemn terrors of nature. Occasionally he pictures the beautiful in a happy style—witness in the third volume, his description of Kerry, which we consider a quiet delicious bit of landscape painting, but half a Highlander though he be, he shrinks before the scenery of the Highlands. Whether this be owing to his want of early contact with mountains, to his long residence in England, or to defect of natural taste for the magnificent and the terrible, we cannot tell, but the fact is unquestionable. There is not a scribbler on the London press but might describe Killiecrankie or Glencoe as well. In his account of Killiecrankie he becomes exceedingly artificial, and seems to think that he compliments its exquisite beauties by comparing them to the landscapes of celebrated painters, reminding you of the artist, who, when he once saw a peculiarly splendid sunset, cried "Titian all over!" Of the rich woodlands, the golden waters, the green-marble rocks, the steep frowning mountains, the white pathway piercing like a silver arrow the dark gulf of the pass—he gives no idea, and omits to mention the striking tradition that, when the soldiers of Mackay came to the opening of the gorge, they recoiled in fear, and said their leader had brought them to the mouth of hell. In describing Glencoe, he still more signally fails. He says:—

"That pass is the most dreary and melancholy of all the Scottish passes, the very valley of the shadow of death. Mists and storms brood over it through the greater part of the finest summer, and even on these rare days when the sun is bright, and when there is no cloud in the sky, the impression made by the landscape is sad and awful. The path lies along a stream which issues from the most sullen and gloomy of mountain pools. Huge precipices of naked stone frown on both sides. Even in July the streaks of snow may often be discerned in the rifts near the summits. All down the sides of the crags, heaps of ruin mark the headlong path of the torrents. Mile after mile the traveller looks in vain for the smoke of one hut, for one human form wrapped in a plaid, and listens in vain for the bark of a shepherd's dog, or the bleat of a lamb. Mile after mile the only sound that indicates life is the faint cry of a bird of prey from some storm-beaten pinnacle of rock. The progress of civilisa-

tion, which has turned so many wastes into fields yellow with harvest, or gay with apple-blossoms, has only made Glencoe more desolate."

This description, it will be noticed, seeks only to represent the solitude of the scene, and even that it greatly overstates. You would never guess from it that stage coaches loaded with passengers pass daily through this "valley of the shadow of death," and that, in summer, gigs and cars are perpetually plying. The few hours we spent in it, we met several mountaineers, and saw various dogs as well as sheep. One would imagine from Macaulay's picture, that the valley was as narrow as that in Bunyan, to which he compares it, whereas, in fact, as Talfourd truly says, "it is not a narrow defile, but a huge valley between mountains of rock, receding from each other till a field of air of several miles' breadth lies between their summits." The stream, the Cona, is one of the most beautiful of mountain rivers, and its voice although melancholy is inexpressibly pleasing, and sounds like an old Scottish melody amidst the stern and rugged hills. The pool is a lovely little lake, lying right under a stupendous mountain, a deep ravine in whose breast is called Ossian's Cave. Macaulay, while magnifying the sterility, has not a word to say about the grandeur of the scene, the torn and ruptured cliffs, the sea of serrated ridges which tumultuates around, the colossal confusion which reigns over the whole, and which makes you think of a "frozen hurricane" or of a tempest-tossed range of clouds, with all their jagged edges arrested and stiffened into eternal granite. In mist, or under the wing of a thunder-storm, the glen must be ineffably gloomy, but in us, seeing it on a bright autumn forenoon, it awakened emotions of rapturous enthusiasm, and the wilderness seemed to rejoice, and the solitary place to become glad, although, like the scenery, the joy and the gladness were stern and strange, reminding us of the emotion with which we had seen the waves of mist attacking the iron sides and summit of dark Lochnagar, while the last beams of day were vainly smiling upon the hopeless assault.

A tendency to paradox, or at least to pushing truth too far, has often been named as a characteristic of our author's mind. Nor has this peculiarity entirely deserted him in these volumes. For example, he ascribes the interest so generally felt in the scenery of the Highlands, entirely to the safety with which tourists can now traverse our glens and mountain solitudes. General Wade, and he alone, gets the credit for our modern taste for the picturesque. Now, surely, this is going absurdly far. Surely, in the course of this last century, many other agencies

besides improved road-making have been at work in awakening a love for the beauties of nature. Culture has been extending. Books have been circulating. Sir Walter Scott has been writing. The "Schoolmaster," as well as General Wade, "has been abroad." And while steam and railways have been conveying the bodies of "milliners and clerks" to the Trossachs and the Hebrides, knowledge has been preparing their minds to enjoy their beauties. Sight-seeing is indeed a fashion, but it is a fashion springing out of a highly cultured state of feeling, and we are persuaded that although wolves were still the tenants of our glens, and banditti were still haunting our woods and corries, many would dare all risks, for the sake of seeing the broad isle-bedropped Loch Lomond—visiting Iona, the Eye of the West—listening to that solemn hymn which the sea at Staffa sings to the heavens—wandering by the inky waters of Loch Aven—or treading the pathless brink of that dreadful Loch Coriskin, in Skye, to which Glencoe itself is a garden; just as many are at this hour defying the wolves and the banditti of the Apennines, the frightful crevasses and avalanches of the Alps, and the cougars, condors, and chasms of the Andes, for the sake of the wondrous beauties and grandeurs which they enclose. Of course, we grant that more have been attracted to the Scottish Highlands by good roads and cheap conveyances, than would otherwise have been, but other causes have also materially contributed to what we must call the delightful result. Macaulay slightly sneers at the "milliners and apprentices who visit our Highlands in autumn in such numbers," but, for our part, we love to fall in with such parties, to see the breeze of Caledonia blowing health on their faded cheeks, the lochs and glorious glens calling up the light of enthusiasm in their dim eyes, and surprising their hearts into a strange joy, in which they feel their being elevated and bettered, and the varied scenery through which they pass furnishing them with stores for memory and reflection through their long winter of tedium and of toil. Sometimes, indeed, their admiration of nature is affected, and we know few spectacles so ludicrously sad as the sight of certain Cockneys trying to measure their souls with our great mountains, to get up a sensation when beholding Foyers or the dark outline of Mull, and to apply some higher epithet than "handsome" to the prospects from Benvoirlich or Schiehallion, but, more frequently now, our visitors from the south are beginning to appreciate truly, and to love warmly, the scenery of Scotland, and their repeated visits are tending to give those a taste for it

who had none at first, and to cultivate it in those in whom it was originally small.

While granting that there is much justice and much eloquence in Macaulay's statements, as to the ignorance of the Highlands which prevailed previous to the end of the last century, we think that he not only exaggerates the facts, but is guilty of rather an egregious sophism. Because the *English* were ignorant of Highland manners, he concludes that the Lowland Scotch were equally so. This is quite incredible, when we remember the close proximity of the most populous parts of Scotland to the Highland line—the fact that the Highland host, as it was called, was let loose on the west long before the revolution, which inevitably introduced to the Lowlanders a knowledge of the barbarous manners and customs of the Northern clans—that Highland drovers were, at a very early period, in the habit of visiting every part of Scotland, as well as many parts of England—and that, in the age of Rob Roy, extensive commercial transactions had commenced between Glasgow and even English merchants and the Highland lairds. These, and many other facts, are incompatible with the theory that such a blank and black wall of ignorance separated the people of Edinburgh, who saw Rob Roy's country every day they mounted the Castle or the Calton Hill, and the inhabitants of Strathtay and Deeside. Less intercourse, of course—less sympathy, by far, there was than now between them. But the very contempt and hatred often expressed by the Lowlanders for the inhabitants of the mountains, proved that they were well acquainted with their peculiarities; although, in fact, the majority of the Lowlanders were not, till late in the eighteenth century, very much superior to their Highland brethren.

Macaulay, by the choice of his subject, has necessarily brought himself into comparison with Hume. To that historian he is by no means to be equalled in acuteness of philosophic genius or in exquisite simplicity of occasional style; but has, unquestionably, the advantage, not merely in the superior culture of a later age, and in access to more varied sources of information, but in eloquence, animation, broad and liberal views, and in his much warmer sympathies with literature, with freedom, and with religion. And yet his sympathies with this last are far from being sufficiently profound. We allude not merely to his unworthy treatment of the high religious heroism of individuals, but to his want of appreciation of the religious element, as a whole, in its workings in English history. Religious enthu-

siasm has been the most powerfully operating cause in the development of British character—in the establishment of British liberty—and in the production of British civilisation and intelligence. These three things—Protestantism, Puritanism, Methodism—all alike and kindred, although all different, what prodigious influence they have had in building up and in cementing the structure of the British Empire! The grandest passages in British story took place through the force, not of a cold, but of an enthusiastic Christianity. Need we name the Reformation, the Civil War, the Resistance of Scotland to Charles Second, the Revolution of 1688? Now, if it be true that history is best written in the spirit in which it is enacted, then we cannot salute Macaulay as our ideal historian of the deep-hearted religious eras in the past. His paper on Ranke's *Lives of the Popes*, as well as many parts of his history, prove that his early feelings towards Protestantism and Puritanism have somewhat cooled. If he ever tries to get up a glow about these subjects, it is but a faint and flickering feeling. He "even's" Cromwell ("even Cromwell governed Ireland better," he says)—he maligns the Cameronians—he derides George Fox—and, we fear, if permitted to carry down his narrative to the age of George Third, he will caricature the Methodists and the Missionaries in the same manner. Once a worshipper of earnest enthusiasm, he now seems to worship little else than courage, intellect, and genius. He sees Christianity, but it is as "in a glass, darkly"—he sees it as *of* history, but not as *in* history, as part of the matter, but not as the master of the progress of man. We have no wish that he should have set himself, like Rollin or D'Aubigne, elaborately and systematically to show us God in history. This, with both these authors, becomes a species of cant, and generates a spurious religious sentimentalism, just as a kindred spirit, Cheever, in his *Wanderings under the Shadow of Mont Blanc*, disgusts every sensible reader by his everlasting introduction of Scripture phrases, and sanctimonious common-places, and won't allow Nature to speak of God herself, without cramming bits of Job and Isaiah into her mouth. But without going to this extreme, Macaulay might have followed the example of one who equalled him in learning, and excelled him in regard for truth and in comprehensive views, if not in eloquence and genius—we mean Arnold, who without often using the language of Scripture, steeped his histories with the spirit of Christianity, who did not always, any more than the writer of *Esther*, employ the name of God, but who, like that writer, showed us the work-

ing of God's plan and providence in all things, and who, without ostentatiously proclaiming that he did, always in reality occupied a Christian point of view. Vain, however, to wish that Macaulay should ever become an Arnold, or a Christian historian. It is not in him to be this, nor can he become it without a miracle. Let us be thankful for him as he is, and for the work he has done. He has amassed materials out of which some master-mind, filled with the Christian idea, may, in a future age, pile up a colossal and conclusive history of England.

Such a writer, should he arise, will go to work in a spirit of sterner truthfulness, as well as under a higher spiritual ideal. Macaulay is far too much of a rhetorician to be a trustworthy narrator. In a hundred, and a hundred more places you feel that he is sacrificing rigid truth to artistic beauty, and has said within himself, "This I shall at least make telling, whether or not it be true," while a historian of a higher order would have said, "I shall ascertain and state the truth, whether it tell or not." The large flowers of his effects stand too often on a very narrow root of facts. He makes history far too entertaining. It is, in his hands, "reading made easy." In terror at dulness, he loses something of historic dignity. History, written like history enacted, *should* have its pauses, its rests, its tedious or tortuous passages—its difficult heights and its profound hollows. Macaulay *bowls* you along, with the utmost speed and ease. No great passage ever occurs over which you stop and feel your breast heaving thick—no solitary thought ever startles you by its surpassing loveliness, or its profound meaning. One consequence of this is, that much as you enjoy his writing at the first perusal, you seldom think of recurring to it again. When he has informed and amused you, he has done his work. There are no stings left behind—no far glimpses given, from lofty pinnacles of view, to which you are tempted to return. You open his pages with intense expectation and interest, but you close them without a sigh, or if you sigh, it is as you fancy what a striking resemblance there is between the impression produced by a (so-called) first-rate history and a second-rate novel. That the excessive popularity of this history is a disgrace to the age, we will not say; the age is, perhaps, quite right to pay best those who please it most. The world, let us talk as we like, will "love its own;" and Macaulay is intensely in harmony with the spirit of our bustling, fact-loving, mechanical age; but we would fain hope that there is an age approaching, when the demand for a history as high above Macaulay's as the heavens are above the earth, shall create the supply.

EDMUND BURKE¹

ALL hail to Edmund Burke, the greatest and least appreciated man of the eighteenth century, even as Milton had been the greatest and least appreciated man of the century before! Each century, in fact, bears its peculiarly great man, and as certainly either neglects or abuses him. Nor do after ages always repair the deficiency. For instance, between the writing of the first and the second sentences of this paper, we happened to take up a London periodical, which has newly come in, and have found Burke first put at the feet of Fox, and, secondly, accused of being actuated in all his political conduct by two objects—those of places and pensions for himself and his family; so that our estimate of him, although late, may turn out, on the whole, a “word in season.” It is, at all events, refreshing for us to look back from the days of a Derby and a Biographer Russell, to those of the great and eloquent Burke, and to turn from the ravings of the “Latter-Day Pamphlets,” to the noble rage and magnificent philippics of a “Regicide Peace.”

First of all, in this paper, we feel ourselves constrained to proclaim what, even yet, is not fully understood—Burke’s unutterable superiority to all his parliamentary rivals. It was not simply that he was above them as one bough in a tree is above another, but above them as the sun is above the top of the tree. He was “not of their order.” He had philosophic intellect, while they had only arithmetic. He had genius, while they had not even fancy. He had heart, while they had only passions. He had widest and most comprehensive views; their minds had little real power of generalisation. He had religion; most of them were infidels of that lowest order, who imagine that Christianity is a monster, bred between priestcraft and political expediency. He loved literature with his inmost soul; they (Fox on this point must be excepted) knew little about it, and cared less. In a word, they were men of their time; he belonged to all ages, and his mind was as catholic as it was clear and vast.

Contrast the works and speeches of the men! Has a sentence

¹ From *A Third Gallery of Literary Portraits*, 1854.