

Newton and Laplace into the shade. This story was believed, and it needed long years of failure to convince the credulous vulgar that the powers of Henry Brougham were not superhuman. In truth, Henry Brougham was not in any sense a man of genius. His parts were excellent, his ambition was great, his capacity for work was immense, and he excelled in many departments. But he did not excel pre-eminently in any one department. He was undoubtedly a good orator, or perhaps it would be better to say a ready and effective speaker. His most celebrated speeches are those he delivered in defence of Queen Caroline, and on the second reading of the Reform Bill. Lord Campbell sneers at both, though to have saved himself from perdition, he could not have composed or indited such discourses. Yet, though these orations are far above mediocrity, they are not to be compared to the great speeches of Burke, Chatham, and Charles James Fox. Let any one glance at the well-known peroration to the Queen Caroline speech, and let him then take up a volume of Mr. Bright's speeches, and glance at some of the perorations of the Right Hon. Member for Birmingham, and he will at once perceive that Brougham was a clever speaker, but not like Mr. Bright, an orator born as well as made; for, in spite of the maxim, a man cannot be an orator unless gifted by nature, even as a man cannot be a poet who does not add to cultivation the inborn talent for poesy. It would be superfluous to canvass the claim of Brougham to be accounted eminent as a lawyer. It is now universally admitted that he was deficient as a lawyer, and that he was not even successful as a *visi prius* advocate. His defence of Queen Caroline gave him a splendid chance. For a few terms he was inundated with briefs, but his practice soon fell off. He was not competent to argue a point of law, being prone to put forward theories in place of precedents, and he was not fortunate in winning verdicts. As Lord Chancellor he justly boasted that he cleared off the arrears of the Court, but his judgments were not profound, they do not elucidate the principles of equity, and they are seldom referred to. Lord Brougham was a zealous law reformer, and was not guided by knowledge. Considering that he was for nearly half a century talking about law reform, it is surprising how little he accomplished. Lord Campbell says, 'If it would not appear malicious, I would like to move for a return of all the bills introduced into the House of Lords by the Lord Brougham and Vaux since the month of November 1830, with the number of those that have passed into Acts of Parliament, the stages in which the others have died, and the estimated expense of printing them.' Such a return would vindicate our remarks on Lord Brougham as a law reformer, but it is a rich joke to suppose that Lord Campbell was restrained from moving for it lest he should appear malicious. In sci-

ence Brougham has done nothing more than write some clever papers, and his labours have not contributed to the advancement of science. As a *littérateur* Brougham had a very moderate success. Of his 'Speeches with Historical Introductions,' Lord Campbell tells us that he heard from Mr. Black, the publisher, 'that a large proportion of the edition was damasked—i. e., passed through a machine by which small squares are impressed upon the printed pages before they are sent to line trunks.' As to his 'Political Philosophy,' Lord Campbell says: 'I do seriously and sincerely think it a most excellent treatise, and I have *bona fide* read it through with pleasure and advantage; but I could never find more than one other person who had undergone the same labour, and the fact was that, unaccountably, it fell still-born from the press. Anticipating a great sale from the reputation of the author, an edition of several thousands had been printed off, and they almost all went to the trunk-maker. The Society of Useful Knowledge (to which Lord Brougham had very generously presented the copyright), had been before in pecuniary distress, and this blow proved its death.' Please to remember that Lord Campbell was a loving friend, that he was under considerable obligations to Brougham, that he had a horror of even the appearance of malice, and then the foregoing passage will be read with amusement or disgust, according to the temperament of the reader. The most successful of Brougham's works was his 'Sketches of Statesmen.' His contributions to the *Edinburgh*, very well in themselves, are not comparable to the essays by Jeffrey, Sidney Smith, or Macaulay. As a politician, Brougham was guilty of grave errors of judgment. After his election for the county of York, he said, 'Nothing on earth shall ever tempt me to accept place.' This was a very imprudent and a very improper declaration. A man who enters the House of Commons ought to be ready to serve his country in office, if he is called upon to do so on fair and honourable terms, and to refuse office on any terms is to shirk bounden duty and honourable responsibility. Soon after, in the House of Commons, he said during the ministerial crisis, 'No change that may take place in the administration can by any possibility affect me.' This was on the 16th November, 1830, and yet on the 22nd of the same month, six days after, he received the Great Seal from the King, and went to the House of Lords as Lord Brougham and Vaux. Such conduct was calculated to render him unpopular and to make him an object of suspicion. We need not, however, assume that Brougham was insincere. It is probable, not to say certain, that a week before he was named Lord Chancellor he had no idea of taking office, and unquestionably the elevation involved a heavy sacrifice, since he had to relinquish a proud position in the Commons. He recovered his popularity by his vehement support of the Reform Bill, but it seems that he needlessly