

In the same style of writing we have another author, one of the most attractive, and in his day certainly the most popular of British essayists and critics. Lord Macaulay is a name to conjure by when aught of forceful English is at issue, and his published collection of critical and historical essays contributed to the *Edinburgh Review* are still unrivalled among the productions of that class of literature.

The brilliant period, the profound erudition, the unlimited vocabulary, characterize the writings of Macaulay, and exhibit the remarkable strength and compass of the English language when in the hands of a master artist. Of all his critical essays, perhaps the most suitable as a specimen of scathing invective is his excellent criticism on Barère. Barère, as all students of history well know, occupied in France the pedestal of power during that terrible period when the nation was drenched with the blood of its noblest citizens. Although in power for only two short years, yet his name was associated throughout Europe and America with every act which rendered the French Revolution detestable. Chameleon-like, Barère could change his party to suit the exigencies of the occasion, and he never hesitated to sacrifice his dearest comrades to the ravenous appetites of his newly-made friends. He loved slaughter for its own sake, and was never happier than when condemning his daily score of innocent victims to the horrors of the guillotine. In his fall he was as servile to Napoleon as he had before been haughty and tyrannical to the nation, and on the whole his character is one of the most despicable which the criminal side of any nation's history can produce. The vibrant and vigorous essay

from which we here quote exquisitely portrays the character of this fiend-like tyrant. We imagine we see the coward and traitor wincing and squirming under the leash of this well-merited punishment. The author sums up Barère's character in the following trenchant manner.

"Barère approached nearer than any person mentioned in history or fiction, whether man or devil, to the idea of consummate and universal depravity. In him the qualities which are the proper objects of hatred, and the properties which are the proper objects of contempt, preserve an exquisite and absolute harmony.

There have been many men as cowardly as he, some as cruel, a few as impudent. There may also have been as great liars, though we never met of them or read of them. But when we put everything together, sensuality, poltroonery, baseness, effrontery, mendacity, barbarity, the result is something which in a novel we should condemn as caricature, and to which we venture to say no parallel case can be found in history.

He had many associates in guilt; but he distinguished himself from them all by the bacchanalian exultation which he seemed to feel in the work of death. He was drunk with innocent and noble blood, laughed and shouted as he butchered, and howled strange songs, and reeled in strange dances amidst the carnage.

Then came a sudden and violent turn of fortune. The miserable man, was hurled from the height of power to hopeless ruin and infamy.

The fumes of his horrible intoxication passed away. But he was now so irrecoverably depraved that the discipline of adversity only drove him further into wickedness. Having appalled the whole world by great crimes perpetrated under the