

nection with the Penal Code is, that it proves that Lord Macaulay must have had a knowledge of English criminal law, which, considering how little he had practised it, may fairly be called extraordinary. He must have possessed the gift of going at once to the very root of the matter, and of sifting the corn from the chaff in a most unusual degree." As historian and essayist, it was Macaulay rather than Hallam or Allen, than Forster or Arnold, that decided the battle raging about the time of the Reform Bill over the memory of the Stuarts. By his ridicule and wit he succeeded in dispelling for a time the *aberglaube* that had gathered, mainly owing to the genius of Scott, round the fated line. While the influence he has exercised upon written English* has been almost equal to that of Carlyle, his literary verdicts, if not very deep, are rarely impeachable. No critic has probably thrown out so many *obiter dicta* that a mature consideration is willing to accept. But besides influencing the style of written English, he has changed the tone of history. The old notions of its dignity, which produced what have been called "drum and trumpet" works, have vanished, one may hope for ever. Macaulay popularized the social review, and now no history is complete without it. In more ways than one, Mr. Green's "Short History of the English People" is a work that shows the culmination of the ideas on the writing of history which Macaulay propounded, and of the principles upon which, following the example of the father of history, Macaulay insisted. To say that his writings are always interesting, his descriptions of famous

scenes and manner of ushering in a grand historical personage, unrivalled, that the most careless reader has no chance of misunderstanding him, the most prudish no room for the complaints that can justly be made against Carlyle—are great merits and complete the picture. Almost all that he says of his old favorites at the opening of his essay on Bacon may be said too of him.

But here we come to a point of difference. "A great writer," he says, "is the friend and benefactor of his readers; and they cannot but judge of him under the deluding influence of friendship and gratitude." To many among the dead we stand as it were in personal relations; we read Charles Lamb and Goldsmith through their books. In their case the men interest us as much as their writings; we feel pity for their foibles while we admire their genius, but they are ever present. With Macaulay the case is quite different. The reader feels a curiosity about, never an interest in, his teacher. He would like to know how his vast knowledge was accumulated, how far his memory was natural, how far artificial; but in his habits and ways we feel no personal interest. The impression we carry away is one of the high intellectual, not the great moral qualities of the writer; we feel we have been reading a clever book, not that we have been conversing with a great man.

I have called Macaulay a "teacher," and that in truth he is, but a teacher of the class so happily characterized by Emerson: "For a time our teachers serve us personally, as metres or milestones of progress. Once they were angels of knowledge and their figures touched the sky. Then we drew near, saw their means, culture and limits, and they yielded their place to other geniuses. Happy if a few names remain so high that we have not been able to read them nearer, and age and comparison have not robbed them of a ray." To the

* I have never seen noticed the striking similarity between the prose styles of Macaulay and Dryden. He, more than any one else, is Macaulay's teacher, and one to whom he often appeals as a master of English. This will perhaps account for the favorable treatment that this apostate and Tory, two characters for which Macaulay ordinarily has but scant tolerance, meets with at his hands.