

The Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay



THE London Times thus reviews "The Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay," by his nephew, the Right Hon. Sir George Otto Trevelyan.

Sir George Trevelyan's "Life of Macaulay" is one of the best biographies in the English language, and too well known to require notice on its own account. But this new and cheap edition of the book is enriched with some of those marginal notes which Macaulay was in the habit of writing upon the miscellaneous volumes of his library. Most of these specimens have already appeared in a separate form, and been reviewed in these columns. They form an agreeable addition to a work now published at a price which brings it within reach of the widest intellectual public. It is hardly possible that anything should be discovered about Macaulay which has not been anticipated by Sir George Trevelyan. Not even Dr. Johnson was subjected to a severer test. The extraordinary popularity of Macaulay's own writings has been shared by the contributions of his biographer, and even those who already possess the Life will probably like to have this final version of it, as the best because the most complete. It has become the fashion to say that Macaulay never doubted. But in his Notes he embodied the impressions of the moment, which he readily corrected by later knowledge and fuller thought. They were, indeed, a way of talking to himself, adopted when he had no other audience; and colloquial without being slovenly in style. They range over every variety of book, grave and gay, good and bad, in Greek, Latin, French, and English. Except Swift's notes to Burnet's History, it would be

difficult to find a case of an eminent author's casual jottings being thus laid before the general reader. But Sir George Trevelyan's robust faith in his uncle has been confirmed by experience, and his own book has been treated with a minuteness of scrutiny which he modestly attributes to the subject. "In several instances," his new Preface tells us, "a misprint or a verbal error has been brought to my notice by at least five-and-twenty different persons; and there is hardly a page in the book which has not afforded occasion for comment or suggestion from a friendly, and in some cases a sceptical, correspondent."

It would, therefore, be mere affectation upon Sir George's part to doubt the permanence of the interest which the workings of Macaulay's mind have for his countrymen, whatever form the expression of them may take. His remarks on Shakespeare's Plays are naturally among the most characteristic and valuable of these literary jottings. "I believe," he wrote in his Shakespeare, "that Hamlet was the only play on which Shakespeare really bestowed much care and attention." He studied it minutely himself, and his comments are very much more to the point than most Shakespearean criticism. While he considered the opening dialogue as "beyond praise," he did not hesitate to describe "the long story about Fortinbras, and all that follows from it," as "a clumsy addition to the plot." He compares Shakespeare, not with his Elizabethan contemporaries, nor with any English dramatists, but with the Greek drama, of which he was such a devoted student. For example, of the Royal audience near the beginning of the Play, he says: "The silence of Hamlet during the earlier

part of this scene is very fine, but not equal to the silence of Prometheus and Cassandra in the Prometheus and Agamemnon of Æschylus." For the language of the strolling players he has a most ingenious apology.

"It is (he writes) poetry within poetry, a play within a play. It was, therefore, proper to make its language bear the same relation to the language in which Hamlet and Horatio talk which the language of Hamlet and Horatio bears to the common style of conversation among gentlemen. This is a sufficient defence of the style, which is undoubtedly in itself far too turgid for dramatic or even for lyric composition."

Professor Raleigh has severely censured Macaulay for condemning Johnson's edition of Shakespeare as slovenly and worthless. The phrase, which may be found in the article on Johnson contributed by Macaulay to the Encyclopædia Britannica, is of course too contemptuous. Macaulay, however, had made himself acquainted with Johnson's notes before he used it, and had his reasons for the opinion. Johnson, for instance, was horrified at Hamlet's malignity in declining to kill his uncle at his prayers, lest he should go straight to Heaven. Macaulay observed:

"Johnson does not understand the character. Hamlet is irresolute; and he makes the first excuse that suggests itself for not striking. If he had not the king drunk, he would have refrained from avenging himself, lest he should kill both soul and body."

Macaulay, however, did full justice to Johnson's own personal observations, drawn

from life, and regarded the famous note on the character of Polonius as Johnson's masterpiece. His attack was directed against the want of scholarship and research, which is proved by the absence of quotations from the other Elizabethan dramatists to explain or illustrate Shakespearean phraseology. In the Dictionary itself there are no specimens of Elizabethan literature outside Shakespeare and Ben Jonson. Macaulay had his own view of Hamlet, which he expounds at the opening of the fourth scene in the first Act:

"Nothing can be finer than this specimen of Hamlet's peculiar character. His intellect is out of all proportion to his will or his passions. Under the most exciting circumstances, while expecting every moment to see the ghost of his father rise before him, he goes on discussing questions of morals, manners, or politics, as if he were in the schools of Wittenberg."

Again, of the conversation between Hamlet and Osric in the fifth Act:

"This is a most admirable scene. The fooling of Osric is nothing; but it is most striking to see how completely Hamlet forgets his father, his mistress, the terrible duty imposed upon him, the imminent danger which he has to run, as soon as a subject of observation comes before him—as soon as a good butt is offered to his wit. The ghost of his father finds him speculating on the causes of the decline of the fame of Denmark. Immediately before he puts his uncle's conscience to the decisive test, he reads a lecture on the principles of dramatic composition and representation. And now, just after Ophelia's burial, he is

analysing and describing the fashionable follies of the age, with as much apparent ease of heart as if he had never known sorrow."

That Macaulay should be as much read as ever is not surprising. He was so careful to avoid fashionable mannerisms and temporary caprice that nothing he wrote has become obsolete. But the interest still shown in his life and character goes beyond any literary explanation. His political career was not in itself remarkable, and the records of his conversation are no more. Perhaps something may be due to his intensely national fibre. Never was there a more typical Englishman in principle and prejudice, in mind and feeling, in tastes and habits. His homeliness of temper and disposition was as visible at Calcutta as at Clapham, nor did he ever lay aside any of the customs to which he had become used. What he says of Bacon's philosophy is true of his own mental processes. They are so clear that they make every one feel as if they were his own. Macaulay never attempted to deal with what he did not understand. His methods are transparent, and the force of positive conviction which grates on subtle or confused minds accounts for the influence which he still exercises over the ordinary reader. The honesty of his historical judgments was of a piece with his whole nature, and he could no more be obscure than he could be disingenuous. At the same time he made everything seem vivid by the raciness and energy of his treatment. It is this union of force with clearness, and of power with simplicity, which attracts such multitudes of readers to all the manifestations of talents so variously and yet so consistently applied.

Teaching of Psychology

THE winter session at King's College, London, was opened with an introductory lecture by Professor C. S. Myers, whose subject was "The Aims and Position of Experimental Psychology." The Principal of the College (Dr. Headlam) was in the chair, and there was a large audience.

Professor Myers began by defining the region of psychology which, he said, dealt with mental phenomena qua phenomena and, although closely related both to philosophy and to physiology, was in itself an independent science. The most striking results of the experimental method in psychology had been achieved in the investigation of the differences between different individuals in relation to the same external influences—differences as to the average number of objects a man can perceive at a single glance, the average number of figures one can remember after a certain number of readings, differences in sensations, imagery, liability to fatigue, important differences in thought, feeling, and action. He had his first introduction to experimental psychology when he helped to investigate the characters of primitive Islanders in the neighborhood of New Guinea; he and his colleagues then determined such questions as the distances at which those islanders could see and hear, their insensibility to pain, to small differences in lifted weights, to small differences in the pitch of musical instruments, their liability to fatigue, and so on. The investigators had not only to institute a comparison between the results given in the case of those primitive people and the results of similar experiments in more advanced communities, but they had to study also the great individual differences among the islanders themselves. The experiment of showing one individual after another a color and asking him if he liked it and why, revealed extraordinarily great individual differences. Some disliked or liked a color because it was more or less nearly what a good color should be—they liked it because it was well saturated; or they disliked it because it was too pale. Others liked or disliked some color because of the effect it produced upon them—they liked it because it was bright or warm, they disliked it because it was heavy or glaring. Others again based their preferences on association—they associated a color with some scene disagreeable to them; and yet others personified colors and spoke of an "honest," a "friendly," a "jealous," or an "angry" color. One person had spoken sincerely of a color which looked "as if it had a past." All these types had been investigated by the experimental method, and they were all as ready to discredit one another as the person who was destitute of visual imagery was to ridicule the claim of some friend to be able to see the furniture of his dining-room in his mind's eye. Dr. Myers, turning to the study of abnormal psychology, had thrown a great deal of light upon the physiological problem of color blindness, and had established the existence of two distinct systems of cutaneous sensation which, in abnormal conditions, may be dissociated. Speaking of the relation of psychology to disorders of personality, he said there were many cases on record in which the personality of the subject had become quite changed, and in which the subject had forgotten all that had occurred in the reign of his previous personality. In some cases there was an alternation of personalities, and in others there was a multiplication of personalities. In one case of such multiplication it seemed that one personality was present and lying behind during the reign of the others and knew what was going on all the time, though the other personalities did

not know what was going on when that personality alone predominated. This indicated the dissociation of functions which in normal conditions were united. Dr. Myers merely mentioned such other psychological problems as the strength of association, the "rate" of forgetting, the influence of time on associations of equal strength, but different age, the influence of the distribution of repetitions upon retention (the greater number of groups the learner can divide his repetitions into the better the lesson can be retained), the most economical method of learning, the influence of retroactive inhibition, the influence of drugs upon mental activity, the behavior of adults, children and animals under strong emotions, the psychology of religion, and the psychology of evidence. The closing part of his lecture dealt with what he described as the inadequate provision of the London University for the teaching of psychology. The subject was recognized in six separate courses of study in the University, but that distribution was harmful in its progress. It was an independent science, with methods which were distinctly its own. Yet there was no body of professed psychologists within the University. He pleaded for the institution of a board of studies in psychology in order that the teaching of the subject should be reorganized and co-ordinated. Describing the provision made for the teaching of psychology on the Continent and in the United States, Dr. Myers showed that London was conspicuously backward, and he said there were not more than half-a-dozen medical men in the country who could carry out such observations upon a patient as would satisfy a psychologist. He advocated the establishment of a psychological institute in a central part of London where post-graduate teaching and post-graduate research could go on hand in hand. With a Board of Studies in Psychology and such a central institute, the London University would be enabled to bring itself abreast of the foreign Universities in that important science.

Professor Haliburton, in proposing a vote of thanks to the lecturer, mentioned with regret that that was probably the last appearance of Professor Myers as a lecturer for that college, considerations of health having obliged him to resign.

The Principal, in seconding the proposition, complained of the inadequate support given to the college by the Government. Galway college, in the west of Ireland, which had 100 students, was to receive £12,000 a year from the Government and £20,000 for new buildings. In King's College there were 2,500 University students, and the college received a grant of £8,000 a year and nothing for new buildings. It was the same in regard to other colleges in London when contrasted with smaller institutions in "the Celtic fringe." Wales got two or three times as much per head of population for its Universities as England received, and it was now claiming more. London University got very little help, and it was met with suspicion, and sometimes, indeed, with active opposition, from those in authority when it asked for help. A great improvement had been made by the London County Council, but it was a fundamental mistake to organize education from below instead of from above. There could not be good elementary teachers without good secondary schools, and there could not be secondary schools without Universities. The education authorities should have made it their first care to see that the Universities were strong and efficient.

Intoxicating strains of music seldom come from a barrel organ.

A story which Sir Conan Doyle is fond of telling about himself appears in the October "Lady's Realm." It relates to a humorous mistake made by a mother superior of one of the big Irish convents, who had confused his name with that of Canon Doyle, the famous Roman Catholic ecclesiastic, whom she admired. Seeing the name Canon Doyle on a copy of "Micah Clarke," the good mother bought the book, thinking that it would do excellently to read aloud for the edification of the convent students. Even in the opening chapters the edification was not as apparent as she expected it to be, for the story told of love-making and of fighting, and had an unmistakably worldly tone. The consequence was that the novices were thrilled, and the older nuns started. "The dear Canon is preparing us for a miracle of grace," said the Mother Superior in explanation. "The frivolous flirt and the fierce heretical warrior will be converted as the tale unfolds." Then someone perceived the mistake, and pointed out the name Canon instead of the word Canon. The Mother Superior, who was thoroughly interested in the story, was somewhat crestfallen, but she took the matter philosophically. "Oh, well," she said, "the book must be a good one, for I bought it from a pious bookseller. Now we have bought and paid for it, it would be wasteful were we not to read it to the end." And we presume they did.

History seems to be repeating itself in railway matters at the present time. The suggested arrangement in the matter of sleeping passengers between the Midland, the Great Northern, and the London and North-Western recalls, says the Pall Mall Gazette, the early day of the iron horse, when every little company had to fight for its life. Keenest amongst the "strugforlifers" were the North Midland, the Midland Counties, and the Birmingham and Derby Junction, which were doing no good to themselves or anybody else by their fierce and unrestrained competition. Mr. James Heyworth, of the Midland Counties, took the bull by the horns. He candidly expressed the opinion that the Company had "too many directors" by half; instead of twenty-four at £1,200, twelve gentlemen at £600 would be ample. The twenty-four gaped, but Heyworth carried his motion for a committee of investigation by a 75 per cent majority, and paved the way for the amalgamation which is now known as the Midland Railway.

The Infant Dom Miguel (Michael Maximilian Sebastian Maria), of Braganza, whose betrothal to Mrs. Chauncey, a wealthy American widow, has lately been announced, is, says the Manchester Guardian, the direct descendant of John VI., King of Portugal. His father, Dom Miguel, Duke of Braganza, is the son of the Dom Miguel who attempted to seize the Crown of Portugal from his niece, Maria da Gloria, the great-grandmother of the present King. Dom Miguel's attempt would probably have been successful if it had not been for the "sympathy" of the British Government for the youthful Maria, who represented the Liberal cause in Portugal. Since the extinction of all hopes of gaining the Portuguese Crown the male branch of the house of Braganza has lived quietly in Germany, the chronicle of its doings being filled principally with the marriages of the daughters of the house to members of the smaller German reigning and mediatised families.

In Copenhagen the unemployed men have found occupation in rat killing, the number exterminated reaching 5,000 to 8,000 a week, while for the rest of Denmark the figure is from 10,000 to 15,000.

Game Animals of Africa

HERE has just been issued from the pen of R. Lydekker, a book on "The Game Animals of Africa." It is thus reviewed by the London Times: The besetting sin of zoology has been the itch to make new species. It has been, perhaps, in entomology and similar branches, wherein the creatures are small and specific differences often difficult of determination, that the evil effects have been most felt; but in the opening up of Africa, rich in a fauna almost peculiar to itself and with an expanse of country giving ample room for local variations, there has been provided a new field in which the mania has been able to run riot among nobler game than butterflies and beetles. Thus, if we choose to follow German precedent, we may have no fewer than 18 full species of African buffalo, ranging from the big black Cape buffalo to the small red bush-cow of the Congo region. The wholesome tendency in England is against this lavish multiplication of species, and Mr. Lydekker prefers to class the different varieties as local races only of one and the same species. In the particular case of the buffalo the conservative course is the most desirable because there is evidence that individuals of supposedly different "species" are found not only in the same region, but actually in the same herds; while, as Mr. Selous has pointed out, Dr. Matschie based his differentiation of the species largely on comparison of the horns, and especially on the difference in the length of the smooth tips thereto. But the length of the smooth tips is unquestionably largely a matter of age. The longer an animal lives after his horns have attained their full development, the more he wears them down and the shorter do the tips become.

Similarly, we may have ten species of giraffe if we will; but again Mr. Lydekker seems to do ample justice in allowing the varieties to pass as local races. And if the buffaloes and giraffes furnish us with labyrinths of nomenclature, the antelopes are a wilderness indeed. There are, first, twenty-one antelopes of what may be called the Hartbeestie group, followed by forty-three duikers. Then come some four or five kipspringers, eight oribi, and eleven dik-diks. Next eight kobs, true and false, fourteen gazelles, and sixteen bushbucks, besides grysboks, steinboks, redbucks, gemsboks, blaauwboks (now extinct), and palas, beisas, bongos, oryx, addax, elands, and kudus with a few plain "antelopes" in addition. It is unlikely that all the truly "new" antelopes in Africa have yet been discovered; but even now there is not much difficulty, if we allow specific rank to local variations, in scraping together some 200 species. One sympathiser with the desire of the sportsman to discover a new beast which shall be named after him. It is a worthy ambition; and, with such prizes as the okapi hidden in the lucky bag of the forests, almost any dream seems reasonable in Africa. At the worst no sportsman of perseverance need despair of standing godfather to a new duiker. But the time is coming when we shall know our African fauna better than we do now. There will be inevitable discoveries of intermediate links between animals which at present stand clearly apart, and there will be closer scrutinizing of the patents conferring the right to rank as a full species. If any one can thread the mazes of African zoology today it is Mr. Lydekker; but how imperfect our knowledge still is becomes apparent in the mere fact that while this book was in the press no fewer than seven new species (or sub-species or races) of game ani-

mals were reported, which have to be included in some supplementary pages of "addenda." We know also from other sources that the recent expedition sent to the Ruwenzori country furnished the British Museum with something like 130 hitherto unknown kinds of mammals, birds, reptiles, insects, and plants. In such circumstances a definite work on any department of African natural history is as yet impossible, but what Mr. Lydekker has done is to bring the subject as nearly up to date as it can be brought.

While new species are still being found, there is also the other and less cheerful side of the picture—the sad procession of creatures which are already disappearing. In districts where buffalo are now rare they might, according to Mr. F. J. Jackson, have been seen as late as 1889 "in dense black masses on the open grassy downs at all hours of the day." The true gun, the great herds of which Gordon Cumming described in the middle of the last century, is rapidly following its former chosen companion, the quagga, down the road to extinction. "As a truly wild animal," says Mr. Lydekker, "it no longer exists." The blaauwbok has gone. The eland, with other animals, has disappeared from the greater part of its southern habitat. The typical race of the true or mountain zebra only lingers in a single district by grace of the rigid protection of the Cape government. The range of the hippopotamus is now enormously restricted. It was once plentiful in Matabeleland, where certain herds, Mr. Selous tells us, were protected by Lo Bengula under penalty of death, but "within a few months of the conquest of Matabeleland in 1893 all, or nearly all, were destroyed by white men for the sake of their hides"; and skin hunters also must be held responsible for the extermination of the giraffe in many districts where it once abounded. Finally, lions everywhere disappear before the advance of civilization.

The matter of this book is not altogether new, the plates being reduced reproductions (with some alterations) from those published in the large quarto volume "The Great and Small Game of Africa"; from which also the author has taken, though generally with revision, his own contributions to the text of that work. Besides this he has drawn freely, as is necessary, from the writings of others on the subject. Thus, from one source and another, he has succeeded in presenting us not only with as good descriptions as, perhaps, can be made of the physical characteristics of each species, but also with a quantity of miscellaneous information about their habits and range, and the methods of hunting them. In addition to the fifteen plates there are nearly a hundred photographs excellently reproduced. The volume is one of sound scientific value, and it should be of the greatest service to any one who goes to Africa to shoot.

"Never," groaned the picture dealer, "never try to argue a woman into believing that she ought to pay a bill when she thinks otherwise. I tried it this morning—presented a bill for some stuff ordered two months ago. Here was the irrefutable logic:

"I never ordered any pictures."
"If I did you never delivered them."
"If you did I never got them."
"If I did, I paid for them."
"If I didn't, I must have had some good reason for it."
"And if I had, of course, I won't pay."
—Wasp.

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