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## LORD MACAULAY: A MENTAL STUDY.

READ BEFORE THE ATHENÆUM CLUB, MONTREAL.

In the present paper I propose to analyze the intellectual qualities and mental attitude of one whose life has lately been submitted to the public, who attained great successes with apparently little effort, whose work is in many respects almost flawless, and whose mind is generally considered too simple and direct to repay the trouble of close attention. There is, however, great interest attaching to the study of any man's mind, for "other men are lenses through which we read our own minds." It is this, more, perhaps, than anything else, that makes George Eliot's novels so popular with those who do not profess to be novel-readers. This interest is increased when the mind we are studying is that of a man of letters confessedly great, but one who suggests a problem for our consideration. This problem is brought before us in a striking passage from Harriet Martineau's autobiography :

"While I write announcement is made of two more volumes (of Macaulay's History) to appear in the course of the year. If the radical faults of the former ones are remedied, there may yet be before this gifted man something like the 'career' so proudly anticipated for him a quarter of a century ago. If not, all is over ; and his powers, once believed adequate to the construction of

eternal monuments of statesmanship and noble edifices for intellectual worship, will be found capable of nothing better than rearing gay kiosks in the flower gardens of literature, to be soon swept away by the caprices of a new taste as superficial as his own. I have been led on to say all this by the vivid remembrance of the universal interest there was about Macaulay, when the London world first opened before me. I remember the days when he was met in the streets, looking only at the pavement as he walked, and with his lips moving—causing those who met him to say that there would be a fine speech from Macaulay that night. Then came the sighs over his loss when he went to India for three years ; then the joy at his return, and the congratulations to his venerable father ; then the blank disappointment at the way in which he had done his work."

All this undoubtedly requires qualification. It is impossible to believe in posterity ever acquiring a "taste" of such a nature that Macaulay's volumes will remain unread. But how is it that, after reading and thinking over his life, we feel a certain amount of disappointment at a youth of such promise followed by an age of inadequate performance,—at so lavish a display of power and so little accomplished ? To this question I shall attempt an answer, and I think it will be found when we have realized the deductions which have to be made before we assert Macaulay's to have been a mind of the highest order.