

It is very conclusive evidence of the intellectual progress of the present century that so many men have distinguished themselves, not only in politics, but in science and literature. No public man, certainly of these later times, exhibited greater versatility of genius than Lord Brougham. Like Lord Bacon, he was a man of wonderful energy, who seemed capable of grasping and making himself master of every branch of knowledge. History, politics, biography, theology, science, were all handled by this extraordinary man with equal vigour and ability. Like Bacon, he associated his name with law reform; for it is well known that as Lord Chancellor he performed the remarkable judicial feat of clearing the Court of Chancery of every cause that had been heard before him. His efforts, in his later years, to promote science and philanthropy, gave additional force to his claims to be considered among the benefactors of his race. Great minds like Bacon and Brougham resemble magnificent comets—only making their appearance at distant intervals of time, and awing us by their splendour.

Before we refer to the immediate present, we must recall the names of other distinguished men who, within a very few years, have passed away. To Lord Macaulay must be conceded the first place among the historians and essayists of the present age; his reputation, indeed, in letters has entirely overshadowed the ability which he displayed in parliamentary and official duties. Lord Normanby was also the author, in his early manhood, of a number of novels which were exceedingly popular in their day, although they, like his disquisitions on political topics, are now almost forgotten. The late Lord Campbell, devoted his intervals of leisure to the lives of the Lord Chancellors and Chief Justices of England—both of which distinguished positions he himself filled with dignity and ability. Another distinguished statesman, too soon deceased, Sir George Cornwall Lewis, was the author of numerous philosophical, historical and critical works, exhibiting research and perspicuity, although wanting in originality and imagination.

The noble woman who graces the throne of Britain has herself come down into the republic of letters, and in a simple, pleasing style has given additional evidence of the tenderness of her heart, and her deep sense of the beautiful in nature. Among the peers that surround her throne, we also meet with many who have devoted not a little attention to the cultivation of literature. The Duke of Argyll has been well known as an able controversialist, as well as for his zeal in all matters relating to social progress. The Earl of Derby has found leisure, amid the many political and social duties devolving upon him, to write a translation of the *Iliad* of Homer, which is remarkable for its comprehension of the spirit of the great original. His eminent political opponent, Earl Russell, is quite a voluminous author, especially in biography. The astute ex-Premier, Disraeli, is the writer of a number of political novels which have never been equalled in their peculiar line, and show that he might have elevated himself to a literary throne, if he had not thrown himself into the busy political arena. His political rival, Gladstone, has also made his mark in literature; one of his latest works, *Homer and the Homeric age*, exhibiting the high stand-