

attached to it is much greater than the generality of readers may suppose, it will require all the aid its well-wishers can give it to increase its circulation and enable the proprietor to accomplish his purpose.

HISTORY OF ENGLAND,

By THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY.

Mr. Macaulay, in addition to his distinction as a senator and minister, enjoys that of the most brilliant article-writer of the day; and this is no small literary distinction considering the importance which now belongs to periodical literature. He has at length fairly ventured on one of those massive tasks which may still be considered as a more effective trial of literary genius and skill—the first two volumes of his *History of England from the Accession of James II.* have just appeared. The limitation as to time may be presumed to imply, what most people will be ready to acknowledge, that the earlier portion of our national history is chiefly interesting as merely a romantic narrative, and that it is only towards the close of the seventeenth century that we find in it any decided bearing upon modern politics, social economy, or even the national character, as now exhibited and understood. For this period we possess certain histories which—overlooking the few final chapters of Hume—can only be considered as so many pieces of literary journeymanship: we have, besides, the *History of England from the Peace of Utrecht* by Lord Mahon, which, though graceful and intelligent, is yet far from satisfying the requirements of the case. We are therefore glad to find a man of such qualifications for historical narration as Mr. Macaulay taking up this duty: partial his work must necessarily be, but that it will be instinct with the vitality of genius, and written from an abundance of information unexampled, no one can doubt.

He commences with a brief and rapid sketch of the history from Elizabeth downwards. Unrelenting towards the Stuarts, as might be expected, it will be found considerably less kindly towards Cromwell and the Puritans than Mr. Carlyle.

With so little space at our command, it is impossible that we should lead our readers into anything but the most partial acquaintance with Mr. Macaulay's volumes. We are anxious that the few quotations we can make should present to full advantage the large information and artistic skill under favour of which the work is executed. We shall commence with a portion of Mr. Macaulay's view of William of Orange's character, including a trait of genuine natural friendship in a sphere of life where it is not generally looked for. William was born with violent passions and quick sensibilities; but the strength of his emotions was not suspected by the world. * * * Where he loved, he loved with the whole energy of his strong mind. * * * Highest in his favour stood a gentleman of his household named Bentinck, sprung from a noble Batavian race, and destined to be the founder of one of the great patrician houses of England [Portland]. The fidelity of Bentinck had been tried by no common test. It was while the United Provinces were struggling for existence

against the French power that the young prince on whom all their hopes were fixed was seized by the small-pox. That disease had been fatal to many members of his family, and at first wore, in his case, a peculiarly malignant aspect. The public consternation was great. The streets of the Hague were crowded from daybreak to sunset by persons anxiously asking how his highness was. At length his complaint took a favourable turn. His escape was attributed partly to his own singular equanimity, and partly to the intrepid indefatigable friendship of Bentinck. From the hands of Bentinck alone William took food and medicine; by Bentinck alone William was lifted from his bed and laid down in it. "Whether Bentinck slept or not while I was ill," said William to Temple with great tenderness, "I know not. But this I know, through sixteen days and nights, I never once called for anything but that Bentinck was instantly at my side." Before the faithful servant had entirely performed his task, he had himself caught the contagion. Still, however, he bore up against drowsiness and fever till his master was pronounced convalescent: then, at length, Bentinck asked leave to go home. It was time; for his limbs would no longer support him. He was in great danger, but recovered, and as soon as he left his bed, hastened to the army, where, during many sharp campaigns, he was ever found, as he had been in peril of a different kind, close to William's side.

For a page of animated painting, we may present the account of the entry of the prince's troops into Exeter, on their way to effect what became the Revolution. 'All the neighbouring villages poured forth their inhabitants. A great crowd consisting chiefly of young peasants, brandishing their cudgels, had assembled on the top of Haldon Hill, whence the army, marching from Chudleigh, first descried the rich valley of the Exe, and the two massive towers rising from the cloud of smoke which overhung the capital of the west. The road, all down the land descent and through the plain to the banks of the river, was lined, mile after mile, with spectators. From the West Gate to the Cathedral Close, the pressing and shouting on each side was such as reminded Londoners of the crowds on the Lord Mayor's Day. The houses were gaily decorated. Doors, windows, balconies, and roofs were thronged with gazers. An eye accustomed to the pomp of war would have found much to criticise in the spectacle: for several toilsome marches in the rain, through roads where one who travelled on foot sank at every step up to the ankles in clay, had not improved the appearance either of the men or their accoutrements. But the people of Devonshire, altogether unused to the splendour of well-ordered camps, were overwhelmed with delight and awe. Descriptions of the martial pageant were circulated all over the kingdom. They contained much that was well fitted to gratify the vulgar appetite for the marvellous. For the Dutch army, composed of men who had been born in various climates, and had served under various standards, presented an aspect at once grotesque, gorgeous, and terrible to islanders who had, in general, a very indistinct notion of foreign countries. First rode Macesfield at the head of two hundred gentlemen, mostly of English blood, glittering in helmets and cuirasses, and mounted on Flemish war-horses. Each was attended by a negro, brought from the sugar plantations on the coast of Guiana. The citizens of Exeter, who had never seen so many specimens of the African race, gazed with wonder on those black faces,