

had just ability enough to deceive, and just religion enough to persecute. The principles of liberty were the scoff of every grinning courtier, and the anathema maranatha of every fawning dean."

As might be supposed, he has a peculiar power of bringing before us the characters of men. He describes the character of Strafford in a sentence of singular vivacity. "But Wentworth—who ever names him without thinking of those harsh, dark features, ennobled by their expression into more than the majesty of an antique Jupiter; of that brow, that eye, that cheek, that lip, wherein, as in a chronicle, are written the events of many stormy and disastrous years, high enterprise accomplished, frightful dangers braved, power unsparingly exercised, suffering unshrinkingly borne; of that fixed look, so full of severity, at once to forbode and to defy a terrible fate, as it lowers on us from the living canvas of Vandyke?" In giving an account of a scene he sometimes carries his search for striking details to a height which startles us from its deliberate boldness. In the case of the trial of Hastings, after going over the hall, the assemblage, and ceremonies, he proceeds to reveal to us the minds of the audience. "There Siddons, in the prime of her majestic beauty, looked with emotion on a scene surpassing all the imitations of the stage. There the historian of the Roman Empire thought of the days when Cicero pleaded the cause of Sicily against Verres, and when, before a Senate which still retained some show of freedom, Tacitus thundered against the oppressor of Africa." It was his fear of using general language which led him to bring to his aid the celebrated schoolboy. To say that a fact or event was universally known was with him too dull an expression. He therefore availed himself of the schoolboy, say-

ing that the schoolboy knew it. Macaulay's schoolboy is universally renowned for his extensive knowledge. The school girl sometimes comes to his aid, and more rarely the Hebridean minister and the country apothecary. But on the whole his duties must be admitted to be arduous. In the History there is another formula which occurs with a frequency almost equally ridiculous. It is the retirement of fallen ministers to the woods and pictures of their country seats. The writer cannot allow himself to say simply that the statesman retires to his country-house. He brings in the woods, the pictures, the orangery. The flower-pots sometimes come to the relief of the pictures. But the woods are inevitable. Halifax, Temple, Pitt, all go through the same process. Our idea of political overthrow is always to be associated with woods. In only one instance, however, can we remember his love of the particular leading him into real weakness. It is the case of Cowper and the water-lilies. Cowper, we are told, wandered among the water-lilies of the Ouse. The sentence conveys the impression that Cowper was an aquatic fowl.

In power of intense sarcasm he is probably not exceeded by any English writer. His hits at Penn, Prince George of Denmark, Marlborough, Sunderland, and other characters of the time of the Revolution, give his history one of its peculiar points of strength. He can never leave alone the oddities of Burnet, nor forget the subtlety and caution of Halifax and Carstairs. His most cruel blow, perhaps, is levelled at Feversham. Feversham, he tells us, was, at the Revolution, still allowed to preside over the queen dowager's basset table, the only office for which he was eminently qualified. The essay on Robert Montgomery is a satire of which every sentence is of the most scorching and venomous in-