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Macaulay's Essay on Milton.

Macaulay's Essay on Milton discloses to the careful reader all the qualities that distinguish this great historian and essayist. It is remarkable in the first instance as the production of a mere youth. Macaulay was twenty-five years of age when this essay appeared in the *Edinburgh Review*. Many writers at this age have scarcely formed their style, but the style and method of the essay on Milton, are pre-eminently characteristic also of the author's later work.

It has been said of Macaulay, that everything he wrote was a defence, directly or indirectly, of Whig principles. If Dr. Johnson had known Macaulay, he would have labelled him a 'bottomless Whig.' The cause of liberalism, of liberty and progress, was dear to Macaulay, and he championed this cause on all

occasions. The Essay before us is no exception to the rule. Milton, the apostle of individual and national freedom, Milton, the author of *Liberty of the Press*, and of a *Defence of the English People*, was a man whom Macaulay must endorse. In the views and the conduct of Milton, he finds little to condemn, and much to condone and to praise. "Therefore it is that we decidedly approve of the conduct of Milton and the other wise and good men, who, in spite of much that was ridiculous and hateful in the conduct of their associates, stood firmly by the cause of public liberty."

Macaulay is first and last and always the politician and partizan. He exhibits little of the unbiased judgment of the judge and much of the special pleading of the advocate. True, he is often fair to the other