

into obscurity, but says that it has followed its predecessors to the dust and silence of the upper shelf. The upper shelf, the dust, the silence, strike us as none of the other expressions could, and to the upper shelf, the dust and the silence, the essayist accordingly has recourse.

To recite the descriptive and pictorial passages of Macaulay would be to recite his whole works; yet no account of his style would be adequate without giving a series of examples of those finer descriptions which abound in the historical essays. If we search for them, even at random, we cannot fail to come upon some of great merit. The following are from the Essay on Machiavelli. First, a description of the decay of Venice: "All the curses denounced of old against Tyre seemed to have fallen on Venice. Her merchants already stood afar off, lamenting for their great city. The time seemed near when the sea-weed should overgrow her silent Rialto, and the fisherman wash his nets in her deserted arsenal." Then that of Florence: "With peculiar pleasure every cultivated mind must repose on the fair, the happy, the glorious Florence, the halls which rang with the mirth of Pulci, the cell where twinkled the midnight lamp of Politian, the statues on which the young eye of Michael Angelo glared with the frenzy of a kindred inspiration, the gardens in which Lorenzo meditated some sparkling song for the May-day dance of the Etrurian virgins. A time was at hand when all the seven phials of the Apocalypse were to be poured forth and shaken out over those pleasant countries, a time of slaughter, famine, beggary, infamy, slavery, desair." Again: "The time when eloquence was to be gagged, and reason to be hoodwinked, when the harp of the poet was to be hung on the willows of Arno, and the right hand of the painter to forget its cunning."

The following is a description of the Italian coast:—"The felucca passed the headland where the oar and trumpet were placed by the Trojan adventurers on the tomb of Misenus, and anchored at night under the shelter of the fabled promontory of Circe. The voyage ended in the Tiber, still overhung with dark verdure, and still turbid with yellow sand, as when it met the eyes of Æneas."

The essay on Milton abounds in brilliant descriptions. In language of Cavalier energy he shews the ridiculous aspect of the Puritans. "Major-generals fleecing their districts; soldiers revelling on the spoils of a ruined peasantry; upstarts, enriched by the public plunder, taking possession of the hospitable firesides and hereditary trees of the old gentry; boys smashing the beautiful windows of cathedrals; Quakers riding naked through the market-place; Fifth-monarchy-men shouting for King Jesus; agitators lecturing from the tops of tubs on the fate of Agag." He shews the nobility of the Puritan character, a little farther on, in language which, from its beauty, must be immortal. "In his devotional retirement he prayed with convulsions, and groans, and tears. He was half maddened by glorious or terrible illusions. He heard the lyres of angels, or the tempting whispers of fiends. He caught a glimpse of the beatific vision, or woke screaming from dreams of everlasting fire. Like Vane, he thought himself entrusted with the sceptre of the millennial year. Like Fleetwood, he cried in the bitterness of his soul that God had hid his face from him." His sentences on the age of Charles II. are of unequalled sarcastic power. "The golden age of the coward, the bigot and the slave. The caresses of harlots and the jests of buffoons regulated the policy of the state. The government