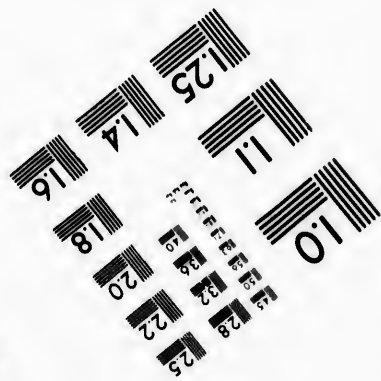
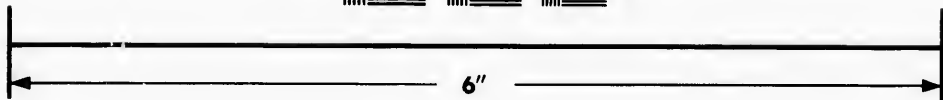
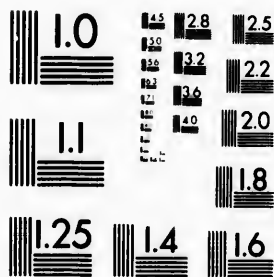


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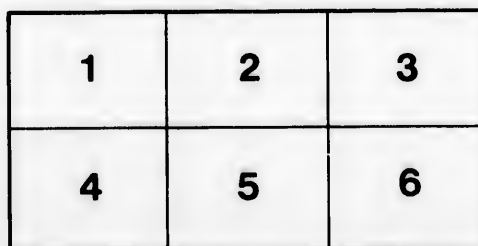
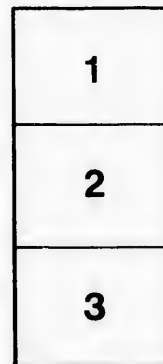
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## NORMAN MACLEOD, D.D.

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MEMOIR OF NORMAN MACLEOD, D.D., by his brother, the Rev. Donald Macleod, M.A. Two Volumes. Daldy, Isbister & Co., London. One Volume. Belford Bros., Toronto.

THIS is a really good book, and, even in its present shape, a popular book; which does honour to its subject, and to its author, in their several degrees. It is, however, so good, that we wish it were made better; and this might be accomplished by a process of excision. Biography, and among other descriptions of it ecclesiastical biography, is in danger of losing its joint titles to durability and permanent interest through the vice of overlength. To record the life of a man in less than two portly volumes is already an invidious exception, and may soon be an insult. But posterity will be, as we are, under limitations of time and strength, and many works may perish in two volumes, which might have lived in one; or, again, in three or four, which might have lived in two.

In the present instance, it is not difficult to point to the heads under which retrenchments might be rather largely effected. The wit and humour of Dr. Norman Macleod, on which his brother dwells with a natural fondness, appear to us to belong to the category of what is with more strict propriety called fun; and of this it is the characteristic property that it serves to refresh a wearied spirit, and enliven the passing hour, but that it will hardly bear repetition, and is hardly among the candidates for literary immortality. One or two specimens might fairly be given, as illustrative of the man. In any other view, this class of material is like the froth of an effervescent liquor; it dies in the moment of its birth; it brightens an occasion, it deadens a book. The same is to be said of the multitude of caricature sketches with which the

Doctor playfully adorned his letters to friends. Some of them may have merit as comic drawings, but nine-tenths of them at least ought certainly to be dismissed from a biography.\* The tracts, again, which appear as reprints in the Appendices, belong to his Works, not to his Life; and we can well believe that there must or may be others of his productions which deserve to be reprinted, for his oratorical power appears to have been peculiar in its freshness and its sympathetic energy. Besides all this, we should desire a great contraction, for a reason presently to be stated, of those parts of the work which belong to the region of religious experience. All the suggestions now made are offered in the hope that a Biography of Macleod, rendered more compact by a free application of the pruning-knife, might hold a permanent place in the ecclesiastical literature of Scotland.

For this is, according to our mind, a really valuable biography, even in its present form. The Anglican position is marked off by various lines of doctrine, discipline, and spirit from that of the Scottish Established Church. But there is much in these volumes with which we ought to cherish an entire and cordial sympathy; and even when differences of opinion and position intervene, there is still material from which we ought to draw some valuable lessons.

The outline of Dr. Macleod's personal career is simple. The son of a Highlander and Scottish minister, whose venerable and noble appearance did not belie his high character, he grew up, with a directness of purpose as complete as if it had been covered by a vow or a special dedication, for and into the ministry of the Scottish Church. She laid on him, in the phrase of Wordsworth, "the strong hand of her purity." He did not receive much of the education which is to be had from books, and from the discipline of schools and universities; and the lack or loss of it he frequently and ingenuously laments. He was, however, always gathering the education of society and the world; and in this sense, visiting Germany in early life, he obtained, shall we say

\* These caricature sketches were nearly all omitted from the Canadian Edition.

he picked up, a varied and rather extensive training. It is plain that, besides other and higher gifts, he was an extremely clever, ready, perceptive and receptive man. None of his experience passed by him idly like the wind; all had fruit for him; all left a mark upon his mind and character. He was first placed in the south-western parish of Loudoun, where he found himself among a population made up of archaic covenanting puritans and modern questioning weavers, under the shadow of the residence of the noble family of Hastings. Here (for a time) he lived in loving and active pastoral relations with both high and low. Indeed, the low for him were high; for in the very spirit of Saint Augustine, who saw Christ in the poor, Macleod desired "to see kings and queens shining through their poor raiment." It was on this arena that, when he commenced his energetic visitations, dispensing freely words of comfort and instruction, he entered the cottage of a veritable Mause Headrigg, who happened to be stone-deaf. The old lady, however, was fully prepared for his onslaught, and proceeded, not to receive, but to administer catechetical discipline. She motioned to him to sit down by her, planted her trumpet in her ear, and concisely gave him her Charge in the words, "Gang ower the fundamentals." Here and elsewhere he stood the test; and he so endeared himself to the parish that it bore, at least at the moment, the shock of the great disruption of 1843 almost without seeming to feel it. But the sudden avoidance, at that crisis, of almost all the prominent posts in the Kirk, created an irresistible necessity for the advancement of the most promising among the residuary ministers. Mr. Macleod was accordingly transferred to Dalkeith; and again, after no long period, to the great parish of the Barony, in Glasgow. He immediately developed, upon this broader stage, the same powers of activity and devoted benevolence and zeal which had marked his career from the first; and there seems to have been no department of ministerial duty, private or public, ecclesiastical or social, which escaped his vigilance or exhausted his powers.

In the later portion of his life, the whole of which did but number sixty years, from 1812 to 1872, calls of a kind wholly extraneous to his parochial work were made upon him, to an extent perhaps without parallel in the history of his Church. He became a leader in the business of the Church. He undertook a missionary tour to America, and afterwards to India. The whole of this subject had a great attraction for his mind, and occupied much of his time. His constant habit of travelling for needful relaxation perhaps promoted his tendency to take a wider *conspectus* of religious interests than is usual in Scotland. Resorting to London, he warmly promoted the scheme of the Evangelical Alliance; until, after some time, he was repelled by what he thought narrowness. He freely lent his aid in the pulpits of the Nonconformists. On account probably of his genial and popular qualities, he was sought out by Mr. Strahan, the publisher, and became the editor of *Good Words*, as well as a frequent contributor to its pages. Amidst all these calls, freely and largely answered, he became, some years before the death of the Prince Consort, a Court preacher and Court favourite. It would appear that to no person in the profession of a clergyman or pastor has Her Majesty accorded so large a share, not only of friendship, but of intimate personal confidence, as to Doctor Macleod. Nor does it appear that this favour was purchased by any manner of undue subserviency. His varied employments, avocations in the strictest sense of the word, called him much, and for long periods, away from his vast parish, which must have been left somewhat largely to the care of substitutes. Yet a large part of his heart always remained there, and he probably exercised much active care even from a distance. He was a man who would not have neglected his flock, even if he had dared to do so; but in Scotland he would be a bold as well as bad man who, especially in the case of such a flock, should hazard the experiment. It seems plain that Dr. Macleod returned the confidence and affection of the people in its fulness to the last. His unwearied labours led, in course of time, to great derangement of health,

with much acute pain. Against all this he struggled with an heroic spirit. But on June 16, 1872, he succumbed to a peaceful and happy death; and he lies buried under a marble cross in the churchyard of Campsie, where his father had once been minister, and around which clustered many of his own happiest memories.

So much for the form of his biography, and for the shell or outer facts of his life. Let us now endeavour to obtain a nearer view both of his personality, and of his relation, in thought and action, to the great movements of the time. For such men are not born every day: and though Scotland has been remarkable for its abundance of zealous and able ministers, Dr. Macleod, who was this, was also much more. He stands out, we think, as having supplied, after Dr. Chalmers, one of the most distinguished names in the history of Presbyterianism.

In some respects, much after Dr. Chalmers; in others, probably before him. He had not, so far as we see, the philosophic faculty of Chalmers, nor his intensity, nor his gorgeous gift of eloquence, nor his commanding passion, nor his absolute simplicity, nor his profound, and, to others, sometimes embarrassing humility. Chalmers, whose memory, at a period more than forty years back, is still fresh in the mind of the writer of these pages, was, indeed, a man greatly lifted out of the region of mere flesh and blood. He may be compared with those figures who, in Church history or legend, are represented as risen into the air under the influence of religious emotion. Macleod, on the other hand, had more shrewdness, more knowledge of the world, and far greater elasticity and variety of mind. Chalmers was rather a man of one idea, at least one idea at a time; Macleod, receptive on all hands and in all ways. Chalmers had a certain clumsiness, as of physical, so of mental gait; Macleod was brisk, ready, mobile. Both were men devoted to God; eminently able, earnest, energetic; with great gifts of oratory, and large organizing power. A Church that had them not may well envy them to a Church that had them. Nor do they stand alone. The Presbyterianism of Scotland, which has done but little for literature or for theology,

has, notwithstanding, been adorned, during the last fifty years, by the names of many remarkable persons, men of high and pure character: with great gifts of government and construction, like Candlish; of winning and moving oratory, like Guthrie; and only a notable fertility in the production of such men could have enabled the National Establishment of that small country to endure the fearful drain which has been brought upon it, since its establishment at the Revolution, by repeated catastrophes within its borders.

And it is with reference to these particular departments of excellence that we would venture earnestly to commend the life of Macleod to the consideration of the English clergy; who, trained and fed under a more catholic system, should never be content to allow any gift either to escape them, or to remain with them only in an imperfect development. As respects government, the Presbyterian communions have derived very great benefit, in some important respects, from their regular and elaborate internal organization. It has given them the advantages which in the civil order belong to local self-government and representative institutions: orderly habits of mind, respect for adversaries, and some of the elements of a judicial temper; the development of a genuine individuality, together with the discouragement of mere arbitrary will and of all eccentric tendency; the sense of a common life; the disposition energetically to defend it; the love of law combined with the love of freedom; and, last not least, the habit of using the faculty of speech with a direct and immediate view to persuasion. We do not doubt but that similar advantages of mental and practical habit will be derived by our own clergy from that revival of ecclesiastical organization, in which this generation of bishops, clergy, and churchmen has made laudable and considerable progress. But we have yet much ground to cover: these things are not done in a day. Yet more, perhaps, have we to learn from that more practical habit of preaching which prevails in the higher Scottish pulpits. We do not mean practical in the sense in which it is



distinguished from the devotional, but in this broader sense, that the sermon is delivered with the living intention and determination to act upon the mind of the hearer, and to carry him along with the movement of the preacher's mind. Many an English clergyman will think that, if he has embodied in his sermon a piece of good divinity, the deed is done, the end of preaching is attained. But the business of a sermon is to move as well as teach, and if he teaches only without moving, may it not almost be said that he sows by the wayside? It is often said, censoriously, to be a great advantage possessed by the clergy, that no one can answer them. To a bad clergyman this may be an advantage, in respect that it allows him to remain bad, and to grow worse with impunity. But to the true preacher or speaker it surely is far otherwise. It relaxes that healthy tension, that bracing sense of responsibility, under which we must habituate ourselves to act, if we are ever to do anything that is worth the doing. It is no advantage, but rather a temptation and a snare.

The hint conveyed in these remarks does not principally touch the question that may be raised as to the relative merits of written and unwritten sermons. The sermons of Dr. Macleod were, it appears, to a great extent, written but not read. The sermons of Dr. Chalmers were certainly in some cases, if not in all, both written and read. But all Scotch ministers of any note who read their sermons take, or used to take, good care to read as if reading not. To a great extent, Scottish sermons were delivered without book, having been committed to memory. When notes were used, they were sometimes, as much as might be, concealed on a small shelf within the pulpit, for the people had a prejudice, almost a superstition, against "the papers," and could not reconcile them with the action of the Holy Ghost in the preaching of the Gospel. Reading, pure and simple, was very rare. Apart from the question of the merit of this or that form in the abstract, there was a traditional and almost universal idea of preaching as a kind of spiritual wrestling with a congregation; and the better professors of the art entered into it

as athletes, and strove habitually and throughout to get a good "grip" of the hearer, as truly and as much as a Cumbrian wrestler struggles, with persistent and varied movement, to get a good grip of his antagonist. To give effect to this idea, in preaching or in other speaking, the hearers must be regarded in some sense as one. All fear of the individual must be discarded. Respect for the body may be maintained, and may be exhibited by pleading, by expostulating, by beseeching; but always with a reserve and underthought of authority, of a title to exhort, rebuke, convince. It is really the constitution of a direct and intimate personal relation, for the moment, between preacher and hearers, which lies at the root of the matter; such a relation as establishes itself spontaneously between two persons who are engaged in an earnest practical conversation to decide whether some given thing shall or shall not be done; and for this reason it is that we suggest that the mass of living humanity gathered in a congregation should perhaps be dealt with as one, and that, unless in exceptional junctures, the preacher might find a pathway of power, as the singer, the instrumentalist, or the actor does, in treating a crowd as an unity. What has been said is said tentatively, and so to speak provocatively, not to offer the solution of a great problem, but at any rate to set others upon solving it. For a great problem it is: and a solution is required. The problem is how, in the face of the press, the tribune, the exchange, the club, the multiplied solicitations of modern life, to awaken in full the dormant powers of the pulpit, which, though it has lost its exclusive privileges, is as able as it ever was manfully to compete for, and to share in, the command of the human spirit, and of the life it rules. The Church cannot, indeed, do what she will, make her twenty thousand ministers produce good sermons at the rate of two millions a year. She knows very well that to be good preachers without book, they must be good theologians; and that with all the holy and watchful care they are bound to exercise in all the parts of divine service, it is far more difficult for them, than for those who have no liturgy, to collect and concentrate themselves with full power

upon the act of preaching. If the priests have the highest office to discharge, they must be content and glad to face the greatest difficulties; and some aid in the task, we are confident, they may obtain from a careful study of the methods pursued in the Italian and in other foreign pulpits; and more generally, and for all who have not the Continent within reach, by noticing and digesting the practice in our own country of non-Anglican, and certainly not least of Scottish Presbyterian pulpits.

On the faculty and habit of government, as they are cherished in the same quarter, we have already said as much as our limited space permits; and the volumes before us, though they do not elaborately treat the points we have been considering, are full of passages which illustrate them: the spontaneous, inartificial thoughts of the earnest actor when he was off the stage.

We pass to what is yet more closely personal to Dr. Macleod. Scottish Presbyterianism, as a whole, has been, in history, singularly isolated from the thought and movement of the rest of the Christian world. It was, at any rate until lately, a system eminently stark; and the framework of theological thought, even down to forty years ago, had undergone little or no perceptible change since the days of Andrew Melvill. "Calvinism" in Scotland did not mean the profession of a school or party; it meant Christianity, meant it without doubt or question; and this too at a time when, to say nothing of Germany, the Calvinists of Switzerland, of Holland, and of France had for the most part passed into rationalism or something more. In the youth of Dr. Macleod himself, we find one of the latest indications of this state of things, where he reckons on the need and advantage of "a sound Calvinistic theology." But he lived on; and he did not shut his ears to the strokes of the battering-ram on the walls of the house; they quivered all around him; and in his riper life, this man, in no small degree a typical man for intelligent Scotland, honestly admits that he is out of harmony with the Confession of Faith concocted by the Westminster Assembly. So early, indeed, as in 1842, he writes to a dear friend: "There

are many points in theology upon which I somehow think you are destined like myself to undergo a change." Indeed he was sorely put about, and perhaps it was only the elasticity and buoyancy of his cheerful spirit which kept the conflicting elements in his mind from coming to some sharp crisis. The Disruption occurred when he was not yet thirty-one. He refused to join the high-hearted band who, in May of that year, marching out of the hall of the General Assembly, marched by that act out of kirk and school, glebe and teind, house and home; and without doubt, in remaining where he was, he acted solely as they did, on a sense of duty. But the iron necessity of the position compelled him to strain to its topmost bent the argument in favour of fixed Confessions of Faith. For he was an "Establishmentarian" from top to toe. He did not indeed stoop to Erastianism. The Church and the State, independent societies, had, in his view, made a treaty upon terms, and these terms were expressed in Confessions. According to him, the capital offence of the Free Kirk lay in its declining to observe that, as its Confession had become law, it must be interpreted like other laws, and by the same authority. So in his view the Veto Act of 1834, and the claim of spiritual independence, were capital offences, for they were breaches of faith, repudiations of a solemn treaty with the State. Of this theory he was a leading champion; and he defended it, as his manner was, with all his heart, and mind, and soul, and strength. Yet on the very question of Subscription, it soon appears that he came into an undeniable conflict with himself. At one time, he desires to get free from it; at another, he does not see how the Church, or any section of it, "can exist without a creed, expressed or administered in some form or other." There could not be a more cruel irony of fate than that the man, who had quite conscientiously assailed the Free Kirk for dissolving the alliance, should himself enthusiastically maintain it to the end along with the whole doctrine of State interpretation, and yet should take to interpreting the Confession of Faith for himself, and this is not in points few and doubtful, but with a

latitude and boldness which amounts to a "root-and-branch" reformation of his "sound Calvinistic theology." The Confession taught most unequivocally, and perhaps crudely, the doctrine of the eternal punishment of the lost: he seems to have sapped its foundation. The Confession taught the redemption of a few: he extended it to all, and he held that Christ's sufferings were not penal. The Confession disposed of men by irrespective decrees; he judged them by their works. The Confession set up the strictest Sabbatarianism; he demolished it. A tenth part of the deviations and divergences of Dr. Macleod, not from Christianity, but from Calvinism, would have sufficed to convict an unfortunate "Ritualist" or "Puseyite" of treason and dishonesty; but he died minister of the Barony, honoured by the Court, popular in society, respected by every class (for we have the testimony of a working man, "a' body likes the Doctor"), and what is more, in possession, by unequivocal and official marks, of the full confidence of his Church.

He had indeed, at particular times, been in bad odour; and perhaps had narrow escapes from his alarmed co-religionists. At one period, during the Sabbath controversy, he writes:—"I felt at first so utterly cut off from every Christian brother, that had a chimney-sweep given me his sooty hand, and smiled upon me with his black face, I would have welcomed his salute, and blessed him." But partly they loved him, partly they could not afford to part with him. Partly too, perhaps, he atoned for his many and bold offences by an outspoken hatred of "Puseyism." He had a kindly feeling towards the English Church; but Puseyism, it seems, he could not abide. Such a hatred as this covers, and that in many quarters, a multitude of sins. His sympathetic nature led him to communicate in the Free Church, but he shows much displeasure, and even some irritation, against it as "Presbyterian Puseyism;" and again "Laud and the Covenanters were just the same men on different sides, except that what one called Church the other called Kirk."

A good deal, not of the man, but of what is of lower quality in

the man, comes out in 1839: "I have a horror for Puseyism. I fear it is of more danger to religion than voluntarism."

He had but an imperfect appreciation, says Principal Shairp, of Newman's sermons. Again, it seems that the venom of the system penetrated even within the precinct of the Evangelical Alliance. Attending its conference in Paris, he had to make this entry: "Heard a Puseyite sermon; horrid trash."

But, all this notwithstanding, we find passages uttered or written by him which appear to convict him of nothing less than flat Puseyism. Many a man has been (morally) hanged, drawn, and quartered for less of it. He quotes in favour of an education beyond the grave the interpretation placed by "the early Church" on the preaching "to the spirits that are in prison." He thought it right and not wrong to utter to God a devout aspiration for the peace and rest of a departed spirit. Nay, he even wrote, "The living Church is more than the dead Bible, for it is the Bible and something more." And he complained, "we ignore sixteen centuries almost."

Apart from cavil, and even from careful scrutiny of expressions, the truth seems to be that the mind of Dr. Macleod was in a high and true sense catholic. But he had not the foundation of a solid training on which to rear his theology; and consequently he had not full possession of the grounds of dogma; while the particular scheme of it which had been taught him in his youth wholly failed to give satisfaction to his mind. Accordingly he lay open, within certain limits, to the attacks and wiles of the rationalizing spirit, and to a certain extent tampered with its commonplaces. But he could reject them upon occasion; he never was in his heart a rationalist, either as to the practical development of religion, or even as to the dogmatic principle. In proof of this proposition, let us take the following emphatic passage from his journal in 1870:—

"I have been astonished by a most influential member of the Church saying to me: 'What is it to me whether Christ worked miracles, or rose from the dead? We have got the right idea of

God through Him. It is enough; *that* can never perish! And this truth is like a flower, which has grown from a dunghill of lies and myths!' Good Lord, deliver me from such conclusions! If the battle has come, let it: but before God I will fight it with those only, be they few or many, who believe in a risen, living Saviour. This revelation of the influence of surface criticism has thrown me back immensely upon all who hold fast by an objective revelation."

Independently of the general direction of his mind, there was in him a certain fluctuation, not of piety, but of opinion, which was immediately due to his lively emotional nature, and his large and energetic sympathies. With every form of thought capable of wearing (for him) a favourable aspect, he closed according to that aspect. Hence an intellectual, not a moral, inconstancy: and estimates almost contradictory, within brief periods, of the state and prospect of his Church, and of its rivals. Even voluntarism, which once stood next to Puseyism in the scale of deadly sins, must have worn off some of its hateful features in his view; for in 1871 he says, "I do not fear Dis-establishment."

The consequence of all this is that we are to seek in the life and words of Macleod rather for moral, religious, and practical, than for intellectual and scientific lessons. Though his bark was driven out to sea over the abysses of speculation, he wanted either the powers, or the apparatus, to sound them. His intellect availed to raise questions, not to answer them; and his large heart and fine character neutralised the dangers which to a man of lower turn, and less of true heavenward bent, might have been very formidable.

He carried on from first to last, in his journals, the work of religious introspection. Repeated so often, it almost offers to readers the appearance of routine; and on this account perhaps many of the passages might have been spared, for they are in general elementary as to their character and range. They do not resemble the systematic work of those who go



on digging, deeper and deeper, by a continuous process, into the profound mysteries of the human heart. The imperious and violent demand of external duty prevented him from achieving what, in a more tranquil sphere, he might probably have accomplished with a more exercised and collected spirit. He was well aware, too, of his own difficulties of temperament in this respect, and has recorded them: "The outer world of persons and things I always relished so intensely, that I required an extra effort to keep to quiet reading and prayer." But they did not preclude him from recording with great force and freshness abundant manifestations of an ingenuous mind, and a devoted self-renouncing heart. For example in 1870:—

"God knows me better than I know myself. He knows my gifts and powers, my feelings and weaknesses, what I can do and not do. So I desire to be led, and not to lead; to follow Him; and I am quite sure that He has thus enabled me to do a great deal more in ways which seem to me almost a waste of life, in advancing His kingdom, than I could have done in any other way: I am sure of that. Intellectually I am weak. In scholarship nothing. In a thousand things a baby. He knows this: and so He has led me, and greatly blessed me, who am nobody, to be of some use to my Church and fellow-men. How kind, how good, how compassionate art thou, O God!

"Oh, my Father, keep me humble. Help me to have respect towards my fellow-men, to recognise their several gifts as from Thee. Deliver me from the diabolical sins of malice, envy or jealousy, and give me hearty joy in my brother's good, in his work, in his gifts and talents: and may I be truly glad in his superiority to myself, if Thou art glorified. Root out all weak vanity, all devilish pride, all that is abhorrent to the mind of Christ. God, hear my prayer. Grant me the wondrous joy of humility, which is seeing Thee as all in all."

Again, he was too good and true a man to test religion by abundance of words. One of the fond and almost idolizing attachments of his life (and it was distinguished for affectionate

friendships) was to Campbell of Row, who was deposed, under the stern prescriptions of the Westminster Confession, for teaching what is termed universal redemption. Macleod preached his funeral sermon; and thus finely comments on his deathbed: "He spoke not much of religion when dying. His silent death was, like his life, an Amen to God's will."

In most points, Macleod's deviations from the Westminster Confession were approximations to the belief of the Church of England. Most men will regard with an indiscriminating satisfaction the relinquishment of grim and dreary tenets, which, when taken in their rigour, seem to impair the grand moral base of the Divine character. The rather judaical Sabbatarianism of Scotland, like the Calvinistic formulæ, was simply a form of Protestant tradition, founded neither in the word of God nor in the general consent of Christendom. Still we must plead guilty to regarding with very mixed emotions the crumbling away of these conventional theologies. It was plain that such an end must come; but the question is, are they ready for it? and then, what is to come next? When a great void was made in the religious system of Scotland by utterly sweeping away the Divine office of the Church, the gap was filled up by broader as well as more rigid conceptions of the corporeal perfection (so to speak) and absolute authority of the Scriptures of the Old as well as the New Testament. The judaizing tendency, but too evident in the Covenanters and Puritans, had at least this advantage, that they fell back upon a code, and that they were enabled to give to their religious system a completeness and detail which had in other days been sought in the historical developments of the Christian society. We have some fear lest it should be found that when the wood, hay, straw, and stubble are swept away, they may be found to have departed without leaving any firmer or other substitute behind them. For any system, civil or religious, to come to a breach with its traditions is a great, even though not always the greatest calamity; and remembering what in other countries has become of Calvinism after once it

has put to sea, we feel some anxiety to know what will be its fate in Scotland, and who will be its eventual heirs.

Be this as it may, Dr. Macleod had always the courage of his opinions; and he was prepared to face the contingencies of the future by frankly casting the Church Establishment of Scotland upon the tide of popular sentiment. But without making the smallest deduction from the respect and admiration due to his memory, we doubt whether the course upon which he helped to embark that body was a safe one. On this subject he was, without doubt, eminently consistent. In 1843 he foretold that patronage must be given up to save the Church; and in 1871 he gave his weighty countenance to the movement, which terminated in the Act of 1874 for its abolition. But perhaps he was more consistent than wise. The Established Church of Scotland is in a decided minority of the population. It claims 42 per cent., a little over two-fifths of the whole; it is allowed to have 36 per cent., somewhat beyond one-third. Let us take it nearly at its own estimate, and suppose it has a full two-fifths. Is it, then, so easy to justify in argument the position of an establishment of religion for the minority of the population, as to make it prudent for such a body to assume against a clear nonconforming majority what has to them the aspect of an aggressive attitude? In the view of that majority, the Patronage Act of 1874, which gave the appointment of established ministers to the people of their communion, was an attempt to bid and buy back piecemeal within the walls those who had been ejected wholesale. It was resented accordingly; and by means of that Act, the controversy of Disestablishment, which had been almost wholly asleep beyond the Tweed, has been roused to an activity, and forced into a prominence, which may make it the leading Scottish question at the next general election, and which is not without possible moment or meaning, to a limited extent, even for England. Of Scottish Episcopalianism we shall here say nothing, except that it is, in nearly every diocese, harmonious and moderately progressive; and that Dr. Macleod regarded it as a somewhat formidable anta-

gonist. He even thought that "an episcopal era is near for Scotland's ecclesiastical history;" and reckoned the adoption of several among its principles and usages as a main part of the apparatus necessary, in order to enable the Kirk to grapple successfully with its future. In ecclesiastical policy we cannot resist the impression that he was, without knowing it, somewhat of a Rupert. But in estimating a life and character, the question rarely turns on the correctness of this or that opinion held. Least of all could it so turn in the case of Macleod. For there are few men in whom emotion more conspicuously towered above mere opinion, and conduct above both. Brave and tender, manful and simple, profoundly susceptible of enjoyment, but never preferring it to duty; overflowing with love, yet always chivalrous for truth; full of power, full of labour, full of honour, he has died, and has bequeathed to us for a study, which we hope will reach far beyond the bounds of his communion and denomination, the portrait of a great orator and pastor, and a true and noble-hearted man.

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## LORD MACAULAY.

LIFE AND LETTERS OF LORD MACAULAY, by his nephew, G. OTTO TREVELYAN. Two Volumes. Longmans, London ; Harper Bros., New York.

A PECULIAR faculty, and one approaching to the dramatic order, belongs to the successful painter of historical portraits, and belongs also to the true biographer. It is that of representing personality. In the picture, what we want is not merely a collection of unexceptionable lines and colours so presented as readily to identify their original. Such a work is not the man, but a duly attested certificate of the man. What we require, however, is the man, and not merely the certificate. In the same way, what we want in a biography, and what, despite the etymology of the title, we very seldom find, is *life*. The very best transcript is a failure, if it be a transcript only. To fulfil its idea, it must have in it the essential quality of movement ; must realize the lofty fiction of the divine Shield of Achilles, where the upturning earth, though wrought in metal, darkened as the plough went on, and the figures of the battle-piece dealt their strokes and parried them, and dragged out from the turmoil the bodies of their dead.

To write the biography of Lord Macaulay was a most arduous task. Such seems to have been the conception with which it was approached ; nor is it belied by the happy faculty with which it has been accomplished. Mr. Trevelyan had already achieved a reputation for conspicuous ability ; and the honour of near relationship was in this case at least a guarantee for reverent and devoted love. But neither love, which is indeed a danger as well as an ally, nor intelligence, nor assiduity, nor forgetfulness of self, will make a thoroughly good biography, without this subtle gift of imparting life. By this it was that Boswell established him-

self as the prince of all biographers; by this Mr. Trevelyan has, we believe, earned for himself a place on what is still a somewhat scanty roll.

Beyond doubt, his subject has supplied him with great and, to the general reader, unexpected advantages. The world was familiar in a high degree with the name of Lord Macaulay, and thought it knew the man, as one transcendent in much, and greatly eminent in all, that he undertook. With the essayist, the orator, the historian, the poet, the great social star, and even the legist, we were all prepared, in our anticipations of this biography, to renew an admiring acquaintance. But there lay behind all these what was in truth richer and better than them all—a marked and noble human character; and it has not been the well-known aspects, and the better-known works, of the man which Mr. Trevelyan has set himself to exhibit. He has executed a more congenial and delightful office in exhibiting *ad vivum* this personality, of which the world knew little, and of which its estimate, though never low, was, as has now been shown, very far beneath the mark of truth. This is the pledge which he gives to his readers at the outset (vol. i. p. 3):

“For every one who sat with him in private company, or at the transaction of public business, for every ten who have listened to his oratory in Parliament or on the hustings, there must be tens of thousands whose interest in history and literature he has awakened and informed by his pen, and who would gladly know what *manner of man it was* that has done them so great a service. To gratify that most legitimate wish is the duty of those who have the means at their command. . . . His own letters will supply the deficiencies of the biographer.”

And the promise thus conveyed he redeems in some nine hundred and fifty pages, which are too few rather than too many. In the greater part of the work, he causes Lord Macaulay to speak for himself. In the rest he is, probably for the reason that it was Lord Macaulay's custom to destroy the letters of his correspondents, nearly the sole interlocutor; and the setting will not disappoint those who admired, and are jealous for, the stones.

Lord Macaulay lived a life of no more than sixty years and

three months. But it was an extraordinarily full life of sustained exertion—a high table-land without depressions. If in its outer aspect there be anything wearisome, it is only the wearisomeness of reiterated splendour, and of success so uniform as to be almost monotonous. He speaks of himself as idle; but his idleness was more active, and carried with it hour by hour a greater expenditure of brain-power, than what most men regard as their serious employments. He might well have been, in his mental career, the spoiled child of fortune; for all he tried succeeded, all he touched turned into gems and gold. In a happy childhood he evinced extreme precocity. His academical career gave sufficient, though not redundant, promise of after celebrity. The new golden age he imparted to the “Edinburgh Review,” and his first and most important, if not best, parliamentary speeches in the grand crisis of the first Reform Bill, achieved for him, years before he had reached the middle point of life, what may justly be termed an immense distinction. For a century and more, perhaps no man in this country, with the exception of Mr. Pitt and of Lord Byron, had attained at thirty-two the fame of Macaulay. His parliamentary success and his literary eminence were each of them enough, as they stood at this date, to intoxicate any brain and heart of a meaner order. But to these was added in his case an amount and quality of social attentions such as invariably partake of adulation and idolatry, and as perhaps the high circles of London never before or since have lavished on a man whose claims lay only in himself, and not in his descent, his rank, or his possessions. Perhaps it was good for his mental and moral health that the enervating action of this process was suspended for four years. Although after his return from India in 1839 it could not but revive, he was of an age to bear it with less peril to his manhood. He seems at all times to have held his head high above the stir and fascination which excite and enslave the weak. His masculine intelligence, and his ardent and single-minded devotion to literature, probably derived in this



respect essential aid from that depth and warmth of domestic affections which lay nearer yet to the centre of his being.

Mr. Trevelyan has further promised us (i. 4) that he "will suppress no trait in his disposition, or incident in his career, which might provoke blame or question. . . . Those who best love him do not fear the consequences of freely submitting his character and his actions to the public verdict." The pledge is one which it was safe to give. It is with Macaulay the man that the biographer undertakes to deal, and not with Macaulay the author. Upon the structure of the mind, upon its extraordinary endowments and its besetting dangers, there is much that must or may be said, in tones of question and of warning, as well as of admiration and applause. But as regards the character and life of the man, small indeed is the space for animadversion; and the world must be more censorious than we take it to be, if, after reading these volumes, it does not conclude with thankfulness and pleasure that the writer who had so long ranked among its marvels has also earned a high place among its worthies.

He was, indeed, prosperous and brilliant; a prodigy, a meteor, almost a portent, in literary history. But his course was laborious, truthful, simple, independent, noble; and all these in an eminent degree. Of the inward battle of life he seems to have known nothing; his experience of the outward battle, which had reference to money, was not inconsiderable, but it was confined to his earlier manhood. The general outline of his career has long been familiar, and offers neither need nor scope for detail. After four years of high parliamentary distinction, and his first assumption of office, he accepted a lucrative appointment in India, with a wise view to his own pecuniary independence, and a generous regard to what might be, as they had been, the demands of his nearest relations upon his affectionate bounty. Another term of four years brought him back, the least Indian, despite of his active labours upon the legislative code, of all the civilians who had ever served the Company. He soon re-entered Parliament; but his zest for the political arena seems never to have regained the temperature

of his virgin love at the time of the Reform Bill. He had offered his resignation of office during the debates on the Emancipation Act, at a time when salary was of the utmost importance to him, and for a cause which was far more his father's than his own. This he did with a promptitude, and a manly unconsciousness of effect or merit in the act, which were truly noble. Similar was his dignified attitude, when his constituents of Edinburgh committed their first fault in rejecting him on account of his vote for Maynooth. This was in 1847. At the general election in 1852, they were again at his feet; as though the final cause of the indignity had been only to enhance the triumph of his re-election. Twice at least in the House of Commons he arrested the successful progress of legislative measures, and slew them at a moment's notice and by his single arm. The first was the Copyright Bill of Serjeant Talfourd in 1841; the second, the Bill of 1853 for excluding the Master of the Rolls from the House of Commons. But whenever he rose to speak, it was a summons to fill the benches. He retired from the House of Commons in 1856. At length, when in 1857 he was elevated by Lord Palmerston to the peerage, all the world of letters felt honoured in his person. The claims of that which he felt to be indeed his profession acquired an increasing command on him, as the interests of political life grew less and less. Neither was social life allowed greatly to interfere with literary work, although here, too, his triumphs were almost unrivalled. Only one other attraction had power over him, and it was a life-long power—the love of his sisters, which about the mid-point of life came to mean of his sister, Lady Trevelyan. As there is nothing equally touching, so there is really nothing more wonderful in the memoirs, than the large, the immeasurable abundance of this gushing stream. It is not surprising that the full reservoir overflowed upon her children. Indeed he seems to have had a store of this love that could not be exhausted (ii. 209) for little children generally; his simplicity and tenderness vying all along in graceful rivalry with the manly qualities, which in no one were more pronounced. After some forewarnings, a period

of palpable decline, which was brief as well as tranquil, brought him to his end on the 28th December, 1859.

With these few words we part from the general account of Macaulay's life. It is not the intention of this article to serve for lazy readers, instead of the book which it reviews. In the pages of Mr. Trevelyan they will find that which ought to be studied, and can hardly be abridged. They will find too, let us say in passing, at no small number of points, the nearest approach within our knowledge, not to the imitation but to the reproduction of an inimitable style. What remains for critics and observers is to interpret the picture which the biography presents. For it offers to us much matter of wide human interest, even beyond and apart from the numerous questions which Macaulay's works would of themselves suggest.

One of the very first things that must strike the observer of this man is, that he is very unlike to any other man. And yet this unlikeness, this monopoly of the model in which he was made, did not spring from violent or eccentric features of originality—for eccentricity he had none whatever—but from the peculiar mode in which the ingredients were put together to make up the composition. In one sense, beyond doubt, such powers as his famous memory, his rare power of illustration, his command of language, separated him broadly from others; but gifts like these do not make the man; and we now for the first time know that he possessed, in a far larger sense, the stamp of a real and strong individuality. The most splendid and complete assemblage of intellectual endowments, does not of itself suffice to create an interest of the kind that is, and will be, now felt in Macaulay. It is from ethical gifts alone that such an interest can spring. They existed in him not only in abundance, but in forms distinct from, and even contrasted with, the fashion of his intellectual faculties, and in conjunctions which come near to paradox. Behind the mask of splendour lay a singular simplicity: behind a literary severity which sometimes approached to vengeance, an extreme tenderness: behind a rigid repudiation of the sentimental, a sen-

sibility at all times quick, and in the latest times almost threatening to sap his manhood. He, who as speaker and writer seemed above all others to represent the age and the world, had the real centre of his being in the simplest domestic tastes and joys. He, for whom the mysteries of human life, thought, and destiny appear to have neither charm nor terror, and whose writings seem audibly to boast in every page of being bound by the visible horizon of the practical and work-day sphere, in his virtues and in the combination of them, in his freshness, bounty, bravery, in his unshrinking devotion both to causes and to persons, and most of all, perhaps, in the thoroughly inborn and spontaneous character of all these gifts, really recalls the age of chivalry and the lineaments of the ideal. The peculiarity, the *differentia* (so to speak) of Macaulay seems to us to lie in this, that while, as we frankly think, there is much to question—nay, much to regret or even censure—in his writings, the excess or defect, or whatever it may be, is never really ethical, but is in all cases due to something in the structure and habits of his intellect. And again it is pretty plain that the faults of that intellect were immediately associated with its excellencies: it was in some sense, to use the language of his own Milton, “dark with excessive bright.”\*

Macaulay was singularly free of vices, and not in the sense in which, according to Swift’s note on Burnet, William III. held such a freedom; that is to say, “as a man is free of a corporation. One point only we reserve—a certain tinge of occasional vindictiveness. Was he envious? Never. Was he servile? No. Was he insolent? No. Was he prodigal? No. Was he avaricious? No. Was he selfish? No. Was he idle? The question is ridiculous. Was he false? No; but true as steel and transparent as crystal. Was he vain? We hold that he was not. At every point in the ugly list he stands the trial; and though in his history he judges mildly some sins of appetite or passion, there is no sign in his life, or his remembered character, that he was compounding for what he was inclined to.

\* “Paradise Lost,” iii. 380.

The most disputable of the negatives we have pronounced is that which relates to vanity; a defect rather than a vice; never admitted into the septenary catalogue of the mortal sins of Dante and the Church; often lodged by the side of high and strict virtue, often allied with an amiable and playful innocence; a token of imperfection, a deduction from greatness; and no more. For this imputation on Macaulay there are apparent, but, as we think, only apparent, grounds.

His moderation in luxuries and pleasures is the more notable and praiseworthy because he was a man who, with extreme healthiness of faculty, enjoyed keenly what he enjoyed at all. Take in proof the following hearty notice of a dinner *a quattr'occhi* to his friend:—"Ellis came to dinner at seven. I gave him a lobster-curry, woodcock and maccaroni. I think that I will note dinners, as honest Pepys did" (ii. 243; compare ii. 281).

His love of books was intense, and was curiously developed. In a walk he would devour a play or a volume (ii. 287, 299, 282); and once his performance embraced no less than fourteen Books of the "Odyssey" (vol. ii. 295). "His way of life," says Mr. Trevelyan, "would have been deemed solitary by others; but it was not solitary to him" (ii. 465). This development blossomed into a peculiar specialism (ii. 466). Henderson's "Iceland" was "a favourite breakfast-book" with him. "Some books, which I would never think of opening at dinner, please me at breakfast, and *vice versa!*" There is more subtlety in this distinction than could easily be found in any passage of his writings. But how quietly both meals are handed over to the dominion of the master-propensity! This devotion, however, was not without its drawbacks. Thought, apart from books and from composition, perhaps he disliked, certainly he eschewed. Crossing that evil-minded sea, the Irish Channel, at night in rough weather, he is disabled from reading; he wraps himself in a pea-jacket and sits upon the deck. What is his employment? He cannot sleep, or does not. What an opportunity for moving onwards in the processes of thought

which ought to weigh on the historian. The wild yet soothing music of the waves would have helped him to watch the verging this way or that of the judicial scales, or to dive into the problems of human life and action which history continually casts upon the surface. No, he cared for none of this. He set about the marvellous feat of going over "Paradise Lost" from memory; when he found he could still repeat half of it (ii. 263). In a word, he was always conversing, or recollecting, or reading, or composing; but reflecting, never.

The laboriousness of Macaulay as an author demands our gratitude; all the more because his natural speech was in sentences of set and ordered structure, well-nigh ready for the press. It is delightful to find that the most successful prose writer of the day was also the most painstaking. Here is indeed a literary conscience. The very same gratification may be expressed with reference to our most successful poet, Mr. Tennyson. Great is the praise due to the poet: still greater, from the nature of the case, that share which falls to the lot of Macaulay. For a poet's diligence is, all along, a honeyed work. He is ever travelling in flowery meads. Macaulay, on the other hand, unshrinkingly went through an immense mass of inquiry, which even he sometimes felt to be irksome, and which to most men would have been intolerable. He was perpetually picking the grain of corn out of the bushel of chaff. He freely chose to undergo the dust, and heat, and strain of battle, before he would challenge from the public the crown of victory. And in every way it was remarkable that he should maintain his lofty standard of conception and performance. Mediocrity is now, as formerly, dangerous, commonly fatal, to the poet: but among even the successful writers of prose, those who rise sensibly above it are the very rare exceptions. The tests of excellence in prose are as much less palpable, as the public appetite is less fastidious. Moreover, we are moving downwards in this respect. The proportion of middling to good writing constantly and rapidly increases. With the average of performance, the standard of

judgment progressively declines. The inexorable conscientiousness of Macaulay, his determination to put out nothing from his hand which his hand was still capable of improving, was a perfect godsend to our slipshod generation.

It was naturally consequent upon this habit of treating composition in the spirit of art, that he should extend to the body of his books much of the regard and care which he so profusely bestowed upon their soul. We have accordingly had in him, at the time when the need was greatest, a most vigilant guardian of the language. We seem to detect rare and slight evidences of carelessness in his *Journal*: of which we can only say that, in a production of the moment, written for himself alone, we are surprised that they are not more numerous and considerable. In general society, carelessness of usage is almost universal, and it is exceedingly difficult for an individual, however vigilant, to avoid catching some of the trashy or faulty usages which are continually in his ear. But in his published works, his grammar,\* his orthography, nay, his punctuation (too often surrendered to the printer), are faultless. On these questions, and on the lawfulness or unlawfulness of a word, he may even be called an authority without appeal; and we cannot doubt that we owe it to his works, and to their boundless circulation, that we have not witnessed a more rapid corruption and degeneration of the language.

To the literary success of Macaulay it would be difficult to find a parallel in the history of recent authorship. For this, and probably for all future, centuries, we are to regard the public

\* In an unpublished paper on "Appointment by Competition," we find (at ii. 342) the following sentence: "*Instead of purity resulting from that arrangement to India, England itself would soon be tainted.*" Can the construction, of which the words we have italicized are an example, be found anywhere in the published works of Macaulay? Or in any writer of fair repute before the present century? Or even before the present day? Let any one who desires to test its accuracy, try to translate it into a foreign language. Fonblanque, who was laudably jealous for our noble mother tongue, protested against this usage. His editor records the protest; and in the next page himself commits the crime. We find another example in Macaulay's letter to his father at p. 150 of vol. i. "All minds seem to be perfectly made up as to the certainty of *Catholic Emancipation having come at last.*" This very slovenly form of speech is now coming in upon us like a flood, through the influence of newspapers, official correspondence, and we know not what beside. As to errors of printing not obviously due to the operative department, during our searches in preparation for this article we have only chanced to stumble upon one; in the *Essay on Bacon*, the word *ανωπονημενα* is twice printed with the accent on the *antepenultima*. Mr. Trevelyan records the rigour with which Macaulay proscribed 'Bosphorus' instead of Bosphorus, and Syren instead of Siren. In the interests of extreme accuracy, we raise the question whether Macaulay himself is correct in writing *macaroni* (ii. 243) instead of *maccaroni*. *Macaroni* is according to the French usage, and is referred by Webster to *μακαρ*, a derivation which we utterly reject. But the original word is Italian, and is derived from *macca*, signifying abundance or heap (see the admirable "Tramator" Dictionary, Naples, 1831).



as the patron of literary men ; and as a patron abler than any that went before to heap both fame and fortune on its favourites. Setting aside works of which the primary purpose was entertainment, Tennyson alone among the writers of our age—in point of public favour, and of emolument following upon it—comes near to Macaulay. But Tennyson was laboriously cultivating his gifts for many years before he acquired a position in the eye of the nation. Macaulay fresh from college, in 1825, astonished the world by his brilliant and most imposing essay on Milton. Full-orbed he was seen above the horizon ; and full-orbed, after thirty-five years of constantly-emitted splendour, he sank beneath it. His literary gains were extraordinary. The cheque for £20,000 is known to all. But his accumulation was reduced by his bounty ; and his profits would, it is evident, have been far larger still, had he dealt with the products of his mind on the principles of economic science (which, however, he heartily professed), and sold his wares in the dearest market, as he undoubtedly acquired them in the cheapest. No one can measure the elevation of Macaulay's character above the mercenary level, without bearing in mind, that for ten years after 1825 he was a poor and contented man, though ministering to the wants of a father and a family reduced in circumstances ; though in a blaze of literary and political success ; and though he must have been conscious from the first of the possession of a gift which, by a less congenial and more compulsory use, would have rapidly led him to opulence. Yet of the comforts and advantages, both social and physical, from which he thus forebore, it is plain that he at all times formed no misanthropic or ascetic, but on the contrary a very liberal, estimate. It is truly touching to find that never, except as a Minister, until 1851 (ii. 291, 292), when he had already lived fifty of his sixty years, did this favourite of fortune, this idol of society, allow himself the luxury of a carriage.

It has been observed, that neither in art nor letters did Macaulay display that faculty of the higher criticism, which depends upon certain refined perceptions and the power of subtle analysis. His

analysis was always rough, hasty, and sweeping and his perceptions robust. By these properties it was that he was so eminently *φορτικός*, not in the vulgar sense of an appeal to spurious sentiment, but as one bearing his reader along by violence, as the River Scamander tried to bear Achilles. Yet he was never pretentious; and he said frankly of himself, that a criticism like that of Lessing in his *Laocoon*, or of Göethe on *Hamlet*, filled him with wonder and despair. His intense devotion to the great work of Dante (ii. 22) is not in keeping with his tastes and attachments generally, but is in itself a circumstance of much interest.

We remember, however, at least one observation of Macaulay's in regard to art, which is worth perserving. He observed that the mixture of gold with ivory in great works of ancient art—for example, in *Jupiter of Phidias*—was probably a condescension to the tastes of the people who were to be the worshippers of the statue; and he noticed that in Christian times it has most rarely happened that productions great in art have also been the objects of warm popular veneration.

Neither again had he patience for the accurate collection of minute particulars of evidence, to disentangle an intricate controversy, and by the recovery of the thread to bring out the truth. He neither could nor would have done, for example, what Mr. Elwin has done in that masterly Preface to the *Letters of Pope*, which throws so much light upon the character.\* All such questions he either passed by unnoticed, or else carried by storm. He left them to the Germans, of whose labours he possessed little knowledge, and from a very insufficient estimate. His collection of particulars was indeed most minute, but he was the master, not the servant, of his subject-matter. When once his rapid eye was struck with some powerful effect, he could not wait to ascertain whether his idea, formed at a first view, really agreed with the ultimate presentation of the facts. If, however, he wrote many a line that was untrue, never did he write one that he did not believe to be true. He very rarely submitted to correct or

\* The Works of Alexander Pope. Edited, with Introduction and Notes, by Rev. Whitwell Elwin.

retract; and yet not because he disliked it, but simply because, from the habits of his mind, he could not see the need of it. Nothing can be more ingenuous, for example, than the following passage, written when he was at the very zenith of his fame (ii. 442), in 1858:

“To-day I got a letter from——, pointing out what I must admit to be a gross impropriety of language in my book; an impropriety of a sort rare, I hope, with me. It shall be corrected, and I am obliged to the fellow, little as I like him.”

If then Macaulay failed beyond many men inferior to himself in the faculty (as to his works) of self-correction, what was the cause of this defect? It certainly did not lie in any coarse, outward, vulgar view of his calling.

It was not in such a spirit that Macaulay wooed the Muses. In whatever garb he wooed them, it was always in the noble worship of the Georgies, as the divinities—

“*Quarum sacra fero ingenti percussus amore.*”

Though, relatively to the common standard of literary production, his very worst would have been good, his taste and his principle alike forbade him to be satisfied with less than his best. His conception of the vocation was lofty to the uttermost; his execution was in the like degree scrupulous and careful. Nowhere, perhaps, can we find a more true description of the motive which impels a great writer, than in the fine thought of Filicaja:

“*Fama non cerco o mercenaria lode,*”

that poet was content to sing for love of singing—

“*Purch' io cantando del bell' Arno in riva  
Sfoghi l'alto desio che'l cor mi rode.*”

He could not, indeed, have accepted that portion of the Italian minstrel's “self-denying ordinance” which dispensed with Fame. With the entire and peculiar force of his fancy, he projected in his mental vision the renown which the future was to bring him: and, having thus given body to his abstraction, allowed himself to dwell on it with rich enjoyment, as on some fair and bound-

less landscape. On the publication of his History, he felt as in all its fulness, so in all its forms,

“La procellosa e trepida  
Gioia d’ un gran disegno.”\*

“The sale has surpassed expectation ; but that proves only that people have formed a high idea of what they are to have. The disappointment, if there is disappointment, will be great. All that I hear is laudatory. But who can trust to praise that is poured into his own ear ? At all events, I have aimed high. I have tried to do something that may be remembered. I have had the year 2000, and even the year 3000, often in my mind. I have sacrificed nothing to temporary fashions of thought and style ; and, if I fail, my failure will be more honourable than nine-tenths of the successes that I have witnessed.”—(ii. 246.)

Yet we infer from the general strain of his Journals and Letters that even had there been no such thing as fame in his view, he still would have written for the sake of writing ; that for him reputation was to work, what pleasure probably is to virtue—the normal sequel, the grace and complement of the full-formed figure, but not its centre nor its heart.

We have spoken of some contrast between Macaulay himself and his works. It cannot be more fairly illustrated than in an instance which Mr. Trevelyan, true to his pledge, has not shrunk from exhibiting. Macaulay used the lash with merciless severity against the poems of Robert Montgomery ; and it entered deeply into the flesh of the man. Like “poor Yorick,” there are those who remember Montgomery, and who can say of him this, that if he was not, as he was not, “a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy,” he was a man of pure and high character, and of natural gifts far above the common. If his style was affected, his life was humble. He committed the fault of publishing, as hundreds do, indifferent verses ; and the popular press of the day, with the public at its back, offered an absurd worship before the idol. But he was an idol ; and Macaulay as the minister of justice for the welfare of the republic of letters, hurled him from the pedestal into an abyss. It was, we have not a doubt, without

\* Manzoni’s “Cinque Maggio.”

a shadow of ill-feeling towards the culprit that the judge, in this instance, put on the black-cap of doom. We very much regret, that when Montgomery subsequently appealed for mercy, although it seems he had the folly to intermix some kind of menace with his prayer, Macaulay (ii. 276) refused to withdraw his article, which had more than served its purpose, from the published collection of his Essays; so that this bad poet, but respectable and respected man, is not allowed the sad privilege of oblivion, and the public are still invited to look on and see the immortal terrier worrying the mortal mouse. We have here an example of the inability of Macaulay to judge according to measure. But this is not the point we seek to illustrate. What was the fault of Robert Montgomery? It certainly did not lie in the adulation he received; that was the fault of those who paid it. It lay simply and wholly in the publication of bad poems. And chiefly of the first bad poem; for when public praise told him his lines were good, and enabled him to go to Oxford for education with the proceeds, it was surely a most venial act on his part to give way to the soft illusion, and again and again to repeat the operation. His sin, then, was in giving a bad poem to the world. For this sin he was, as Scott says, "sair mashackered and misguggled" by the reviewer. But the very offence, so mercilessly punished by Macaulay the author, was habitually favoured and promoted by Macaulay the man. See his Journal (in or about 1856, ii. 413).

"I sent some money to Miss —, a middling writer, whom I relieved some time ago. . . . Mrs. — again. I will send her five pounds more. This will make fifty pounds in a few months to a bad writer whom I never saw. . . . If the author of — is really in distress I would gladly assist him, though I am no admirer of his poetry."

There is, no way of promoting the publication of bad books so effectual as that of giving subsidies to those who mistake their vocation in becoming and continuing bad authors.

There is indeed, one patent, and we might almost say lamentable void in the generally engaging picture which the "Life of Macaulay" has presented to us. We see his many virtues, his

deep affections, his sound principles of civil, social, and domestic action in full play ; nor is there anywhere found, or even suggested, a negation of those great principles of belief, which establish a direct personal relation between the human soul and its Creator, and an harmonious continuity between our present stage of destiny and that which is to succeed it in the world to come. Mr. Trevelyan has noticed his habitual reserve on subjects of religion ; a habit perhaps first contracted in self-defence against the rather worrying methods of his excellent, but not sympathetic, not always judicious father. He speaks of Bacon's belief of Revelation, in words which appear to imply that the want of it would have been a reproach or a calamity ; and, when challenged as to his own convictions before the constituency of Leeds, he went as far, in simply declaring himself to be a Christian, as the self-respect and delicacy of an honourable and independent mind could on such an occasion permit. He nowhere retracts what is thus stated or suggested. Much may be set down to the reserve which he commonly maintained on this class of subjects ; but there are passages which suggest a doubt whether he had completely wrought the Christian dogma, with all its consolations and its lessons, into the texture of his mind, and whether he had opened for himself the springs of improvement and of delight which so many have found, and will ever find, in it. At the same time, with a sigh for what we have not, we must be thankful for what we have, and leave to One wiser than ourselves, the deeper problems of the human soul and of its discipline.

We are free, however, to challenge outright the declaration of Mr. Trevelyan, that his uncle had a decided and strong taste for theology. " He had a strong and enduring predilection for religious speculation and controversy, and was widely and profoundly read in ecclesiastical history " (ii. 462). For all controversy, and for all speculation which partook of controversy, he manifestly had not a sour or querulous, but a genial and hearty love. And again, as respects ecclesiastical history ; in many of its phases it constitutes a part, and a leading part, of the history of the

world. What records the origin of the wars of the Investitures, the League, and the Thirty Years, could not be foreign to the mind and eye of Macaulay. But very large tracts of Church History lie outside the current of contemporary events, though they involve profoundly the thoughts and feelings, the training and the destiny of individual men. Of all these it would be hard to show that he had taken any serious account at all. It must be admitted, indeed, that no department of human records has on the whole profited so little as Church History by the charms, perhaps even by the methods, of literary art; but Macaulay, if he had desired to get at the kernel, was not the man to be repelled by the uncouth rudeness of the shell. As respects theology, the ten volumes of his published works do nothing to bear out the assertion of Mr. Trevelyan. We have ourselves heard him assert a paradox which common sense and established opinion alike reject: that the theology of the Seventeenth Article was the same as that of the portentous code framed at Lambeth about the close of the sixteenth century. A proof yet more conclusive of a mind, in which the theological sense has never been trained or developed, is supplied by his own contemptuous language respecting a treatise which has ever been regarded as among the gems of Christian literature. "I have read Augustine's 'Confessions.' The book is not without interest. But he expresses himself in the style of a field preacher." (i. 465).

And again, he rather contemptuously classes the great Father with the common herd of those who record their confessions, or, in the cant phrase, their experience. He had indeed no admiration, and but little indulgence, for any of these introspective productions. They lay in a region which he did not frequent; and yet they are among not only the realities, but the deepest and most determining realities, of our nature. We reckon his low estimate of this inward work as betokening the insufficient development of his own powerful mind in that direction.

It has been felt and pointed out in many quarters that Macaulay, as a writer, was the child, and became the type of his country and his age. As, fifty years ago, the inscription "Bath" used

to be carried on our letter-paper, so the word "English" is as it were in the water-mark of every leaf of Macaulay's writing. His country was not the Empire, nor was it the United Kingdom. It was not even Great Britain, though he was descended in the higher, that is the paternal, half from Scottish ancestry, and was linked specially with that country through the signal virtues, the victorious labours, and the considerable reputation of his father Zachary. His country was England. On this little spot he concentrated a force of admiration and of worship, which might have covered all the world. But as in space, so in time, it was limited. It was the England of his own age. The higher energies of his life were as completely summed up in the present, as those of Walter Scott were projected upon the past. He would not have filled an Abbotsford with armour and relics of the middle ages. He judges the men and institutions and events of other times by the instruments and measures of the present. The characters whom he admires are those who would have conformed to the type that was before his eyes, who would have moved with effect in the court, the camp, the senate, the drawing-room of to-day. He contemplates the past with no *desiderium*, no regretful longing, no sense of things admirable, which are also lost and irrecoverable. Upon this limitation of his retrospects it follows in natural sequence that of the future he has no glowing anticipations, and even the present he is not apt to contemplate in its mysterious and ideal side. As in respect to his personal capacity of loving, so in regard to the corresponding literary power. The faculty was singularly intense, and yet it was spent within a narrow circle. There is a marked sign of this narrowness in his disinclination even to look at the works of contemporaries whose tone or manner he disliked. It appears that this dislike, and the ignorance consequent upon it, applied to the works of Carlyle. Now, we may have little faith in Carlyle as a philosopher or as an historian. Half-lights and half-truths may be the utmost which in these departments his works will be found to yield. But the total want of sympathy is the more noteworthy, because



the resemblances, though partial, are both numerous and substantial between these two remarkable men and powerful writers, as well in their strength as in their weakness. Both are honest, and both, notwithstanding honesty, are partisans. Each is vastly, though diversely, powerful in expression; and each is more powerful in expression than in thought. Both are, though variously, poets in prose. Both have the power of portraiture, extraordinary for vividness and strength. For comprehensive disquisition, for balanced and impartial judgments, the world will probably resort to neither; and if Carlyle gains on the comparison in his strong sense of the inward and the ideal, he loses in the absolute and violent character of his onesidedness. Without doubt, Carlyle's licentious, though striking, peculiarities of style have been of a nature allowably to repel, so far as they go, one who was so rigid as Macaulay in his literary orthodoxy, and who so highly appreciated, and with such expenditure of labour, all that relates to the exterior or body of a book. Still, if there be resemblances so strong, the want of appreciation, which has possibly been reciprocal, seems to be of that nature which Aristotle would have explained by his favourite proverb: *κεραμεὺς κεραμῆι*. The discrepancy is like the discrepancy of colours that are too near. Carlyle is at least a great fact in the literature of his time, and has contributed largely, in some respects too largely, towards forming its characteristic habits of thought. But on these very grounds he should not have been excluded from the horizon of a mind like Macaulay's, with all its large, and varied, and most active interests.

His early training, and consequently the cast of his early opinions, was Conservative. But these views did not survive his career at Cambridge as an undergraduate. No details are given, but we hear that, during that period, Mr. Charles Austin effected, it would seem with facility, the work of his conversion (i. 76). He supplied an example rather rare of one who, not having been a Whig by birth, became one, and thereafter constantly presented the aspect of that well-marked class of politicians. *Poeta nascitur, orator fit*; and so as a rule a man not born a Liberal, may

become a Liberal ; but to be a Whig, he must be a born Whig. At any rate Macaulay offers to our view one of the most enviable qualities characteristic of that " variety " of the Liberal " species " — a singularly large measure of consistency. In this he will bear comparison with Lord Lansdowne or Lord Grey ; but in proportion as the pressure of events is sharper on a Commoner than on a Peer, so the phenomenon of consistency is more remarkable. And the feature belongs to his mental character at large. It would be difficult to point out any great and signal change of views on any important subject between the beginning of his full manhood and the close of his career. His life is like a great volume ; the sheets are of one size, type and paper. Here again Macaulay becomes for us a typical man, and suggests the question whether the conditions of our nature will permit so close and sustained an unity to be had without some sacrifice of expansion ? The feature is rendered in his case more noteworthy by the fact that all his life long, with an insatiable avidity, he was taking in whole cargoes of knowledge and that nothing which he imported into his mind remained there barren or inert. On the other hand, he was perhaps assisted, or, as a censor might call it, manacled, by the perpetual and always living presence in his consciousness, through the enormous tenacity of his memory, of whatever he had himself thought, said, or written at an earlier time. It may even be, as he himself said, that of the whole of this huge mass he had forgotten nothing. It cannot be doubted that he remembered a far larger proportion, than did other men who had ten or twenty times less to remember. And there was this peculiarity in his recollections ; they were not, like those of ordinary men, attended at times with difficulty, elicited from the recesses of the brain by effort. He was alike favoured in the quantity of what he possessed, and in the free and immediate command of his possessions. The effect was most singular. He was (as has been variously shown) often inaccurate: he was seldom, perhaps never, inconsistent. He remembered his own knowledge, in the modern phrase his own concepts, better than he retained, if indeed he

ever had embraced, the true sense of the authorities on which these "concepts" were originally framed. In the initial work of collection, he was often misled by fancy or by prejudice; but in the after work of recollection, he kept faithfully, and never failed to grasp at a moment's notice, the images which the tablets of his brain, so susceptible and so tenacious, had once received. *Diù servavit odorem.* Among Macaulay's mental gifts and habits, it was perhaps this vast memory by which he was most conspicuously known. There was here even a waste of power. His mind, like a dredging-net at the bottom of the sea, took up all that it encountered, both bad and good, nor even seemed to feel the burden. Peerless treasures lay there, mixed, yet never confounded, with worthless trash. This was not the only peculiarity of the wondrous organ.

There have been other men of our own generation, though very few, who, without equalling, have approached Macaulay in power of memory, and who have certainly exceeded him in the unflinching accuracy of their recollections. And yet not in accuracy as to dates, or names, or quotations, or other matters of hard fact, when the question was one simply between *aye* and *no*. In these he may have been without a rival. In a list of Kings, or Popes, or Senior Wranglers, or Prime Ministers, or battles, or palaces, or as to the houses in Pall Mall, or about Leicester Square, he might be followed with implicit confidence. But a large and important class of human recollections are not of this order; recollections for example, of characters, of feelings, of opinions; of the intrinsic nature, details, and bearings of occurrences. And here it was that Macaulay's wealth "was unto him an occasion of falling." And that in two ways. First, the possessor of such a vehicle as his memory could not but have something of an overweening confidence in what it told him; and quite apart from any tendency to be vain or overbearing, he could hardly enjoy the benefits of that caution which arises from self-interest, and the sad experience of frequent falls. But what is more, the possessor of so powerful a fancy could not but illuminate

with the colours it supplied the matters which he gathered into his great magazine, wherever the definiteness of their outline was not so rigid as to defy or disarm the action of the intruding and falsifying faculty. Imagination could not alter the date of the battle of Marathon, or the Council of Nice, or the crowning of Pepin. But it might seriously or even fundamentally disturb the balance of light and dark in his account of the opinions of Milton or of Laud, or his estimate of the effects of the Protectorate or the Restoration, or of the character, and even the adulteries, of William III. He could detect justly this want of dry light in others: he probably suspected it in himself: but it was hardly possible for him to be enough upon his guard against the distracting action of a faculty at once so vigorous, so crafty, and so pleasurable in its intense activity.

Hence arose, it seems reasonable to believe, that charge of partisanship against Macaulay as a historian, on which much has been, and probably much more will be, said. He may not have possessed that scrupulously tender sense of obligation, that nice tact of exact justice, which is among the very rarest, as well as the most precious, of human virtues. But there never was a writer less capable of intentional unfairness. This, during his lifetime, was the belief of his friends, but was hardly admitted by opponents. His biographer has really lifted the question out of the range of controversy. He wrote for truth; but, of course, for truth such as he saw it; and his sight was coloured from within. This colour, once attached, was what in manufacture is called a mordant; it was a fast colour; he could not distinguish between what his mind had received and what his mind had imparted. Hence, when he was wrong, he could not see that he was wrong; and of those calamities which are due to the intellect only, and not the heart, there can hardly be a greater. The hope of amending is, after all, our very best and brightest hope; of amending our works as well as ourselves. Without it we are forbidden *revocare gradum, superasque evadere ad auras*, when we have accidentally, as is the way with men, slipped into Avernus.

While, as to his authorship, Macaulay was incessantly labouring to improve, in the substance of what he had written he could neither himself detect his errors, nor could he perceive them when they were pointed out. There was a strange contrast between his own confidence in what he said, and his misgivings about his manner of saying it. Woe to him, he says of his History, if some one should review him as he could review another man. He had, and could not but have, the sense of his own scarifying and tomahawking power, and would, we firmly believe, not have resented its use against himself. "I see every day more and more clearly how far my performance is below excellence" (ii. 232). "When I compare my book with what I imagine history ought to be, I feel dejected and ashamed." It was only on comparing it with concrete examples that he felt reassured (*ibid.*) He never so conclusively proved himself to be a true artist, as in this dissatisfaction with the products of his art because they fell below his ideal; that Will-o'-the-wisp who, like the fabled sprite, ever stirs pursuit, and ever baffles it, but who, unlike that imp, rewards with large, even if unsatisfying, results every step of real progress. But it is quite plain that all this dissatisfaction had reference to the form, not the matter, of his works. Unhappily, he never so much as glances at any general or serious fear lest he should have mistaken the nature or proportions of events, or, what is, perhaps, still more serious, lest he should have done injustice to characters: although he must have well known that injustice from his χεῖρ πᾶχεια, his great, massive hand, was a thing so crushing and so terrible. Hence what is at first sight a strange contrast—his insensibility to censure in the forum, his uneasiness in the study; his constant repulsion of the censure of others; his not less constant misgiving, nay censure on himself. In a debased form this phenomenon is, indeed, common, nay, the commonest of all. But he was no Sir Fretful Plagiary, to press for criticism, and then, in wrath and agony, to damn the critic. The explanation is simple. He criticised what men approved; he approved what they criticised. His style, unless in some very rare

cases it was wrought up to palpable excess,\* no one attempted to criticise. It was felt to be a thing above the heads of common mortals. But this it was which he watched with an incessant, a passionate, and a jealous care, the care of a fond parent, if not of a lover; of a parent fond, but not doting who never spared the rod, that he might not spoil the child. Of his matter, his mode of dealing with the substance of men and things, by the constitution of his mind he was blind to the defects. As other men do in yet higher and more inward regions of their being, he missed the view of his own besetting sin.

However true it may be that Macaulay was a far more consummate workman in the manner than in the matter of his works, we do not doubt that the works contain, in multitudes, passages of high emotion and ennobling sentiment, just awards of praise and blame, and solid expositions of principle—social, moral, and constitutional. They are pervaded by a generous love of liberty, and their atmosphere is pure and bracing, their general aim and basis morally sound. Of the qualifications of this eulogy we have spoken, and have yet to speak. But we can speak of the style of the works with little qualification. We do not, indeed, venture to assert that his style ought to be imitated. Yet this is not because it was vicious, but because it was individual and incommunicable. It was one of those gifts, of which, when it had been conferred, Nature broke the mould. That it is the head of all literary styles we do not allege; but it is different from them all, and perhaps more different from them all than they are usually different from one another. We speak only of natural styles, of styles where the manner waits upon the matter, and not where an artificial structure has been reared either to hide or to make up for poverty of substance. It is paramount in the union of ease in movement with perspicuity of matter, of both with real splendour, and of all with immense rapidity, and striking force. From any other pen, such masses of ornament would be tawdry; with him they are only rich. As a model of art concealing art,

\*We may take the liberty, after the lapse of more than eight years, of pointing to a successful parody in the number of this "Review" for April, 1863, p. 290.

the finest cabinet pictures of Holland are almost his only rivals. Like Pascal, he makes the heaviest subject light; like Burke, he embellishes the barrenest. When he walks over arid plains, the springs of milk and honey, as in a march of Bacchus, seem to rise beneath his tread. The repast he serves is always sumptuous, but it seems to create an appetite proportioned to its abundance; for who has ever heard of the reader that was cloyed with Macaulay? In none, perhaps, of our prose writers are lessons, such as he gives, of truth and beauty, of virtue and of freedom, so vividly associated with delight. Could some magician but do for the career of life what he has done for the arm-chair and the study, what a change would pass on the face (at least) of the world we live in, what an accession of recruits would there be to the professing followers of virtue!

As the serious flaw in Macaulay's mind was want of depth, so the central defect with which his productions appear to be chargeable is a pervading strain of exaggeration. He belonged to that class of minds, whose views of single objects are singularly and almost preternaturally luminous. But nature sows her bounty wide; and those, who possess this precious and fascinating gift as to things in themselves, are very commonly deficient beyond ordinary men in discerning and measuring their relations to one another. For them all things are either absolutely transparent, or else unapproachable from dense and utter darkness. Hence, amidst a blaze of glory, there is a want of perspective, of balance, and of breadth. Themselves knowing nothing of difficulty, or of obscurity, or mental struggle to work out of it, they are liable to be intolerant of those who stumble at the impediments they have overleapt; and even the kindest hearts may be led not merely by the abundance, but by the peculiarities, of their powers, into the most precipitate and partial judgments. From this result Macaulay has not been preserved; and we are convinced that the charges against him would have been multiplied tenfold, had not the exuberant kindness of his heart oftentimes done for him the office of a cautious and self-denying intellect.

Minds of the class to which we refer are like the bodies in the outer world fashioned without gaps or flaws or angles; the whole outline of their formation is continuous, the whole surface is smooth. They are, in this sense, complete men, and they do not readily comprehend those who are incomplete. They do not readily understand either the inferiority, or the superiority, of opponents; the inferiority of their slower sight, or the superiority of their deeper insight; their at once seeing less, and seeing more. In Macaulay's case this defect could not but be enhanced by his living habitually with men of congenial mind, and his comparatively limited acquaintance with that contentious world of practical politics which, like the heaviest wrestling-match for the body, exhibits the unlimited diversities in the attitudes of the human mind, and helps to show how subtle and manifold a thing is the nature that we bear. Parliament could not but have opened out in one direction a new avenue of knowledge for Macaulay; but we do not agree with Mr. Trevelyan in thinking that the comparatively few hours he spent there, most commonly with his thoughts ranging far abroad, could have largely entered into, or perceptibly modified, the habits of his mind.

The very common association between seeing clearly and seeing narrowly is a law or a frailty of our nature not enough understood. Paley was perhaps the most notable instance of it among our writers. Among living politicians, it would be easy to point to very conspicuous instances. This habit of mind is extremely attractive, in that it makes incisive speakers and pellucid writers, who respectively save their hearers and their readers trouble. Its natural tendency is towards hopeless intolerance; it makes all hesitation, all misgiving, all suspense, an infirmity, or a treachery to truth; it generates an appetite for intellectual butchery. There was no man in whom the fault would have been more excusable than in Macaulay; for while with him the clearness was almost preterhuman, the narrowness was, after all, but qualified and relative. The tendency was almost uniformly controlled by the kindly nature and genuine chivalry of the man; so that even,



in some of his scathing criticisms, he seems to have a real delight in such countervailing compliments as he bestows: while in conversation, where he was always copious; sometimes redundant, more overbearing, the mischief was effectually neutralised by the strength and abundance of his social sympathies. Yet he exhibited on some occasions a more than ordinary defect in the mental faculty of appreciating opponents. He did not fully take the measure of those from whom he differed; in the things wherein he differed. There is, for example, a parliamentary tradition sufficiently well established\* that Croker assailed, and assailed on the instant, some of Macaulay's celebrated speeches on Reform with talent, and with no inconsiderable effect. But he never mentions Croker except with an aversion which may be partially understood, and also with a contempt which is not so easy to account for. It is common to misunderstand the acts of an adversary, and even to depreciate his motives; but Macaulay cannot even acknowledge the strength of his arm. It is yet more to be lamented that, in this instance, he carried the passions of politics into the Elysian fields of literature; and that the scales in which he tried the merits of Croker's edition of "Boswell" seem to have been weighted, on the descending side, with his recollections of parliamentary collision. But the controversy relating to this work is too important to be dismissed with a passing notice;† for what touches Boswell touches Johnson, and what touches Johnson touches a large and immortal chapter of our English tradition. This is the most glaring instance. There are many others. His estimate of Lord Derby is absurdly low. He hardly mentions Peel during his lifetime, except with an extreme severity; and even on the sad occasion of his death, although he speaks kindly of the "poor fellow" (ii. 278), and cries for his death, he does not

\* In the valuable Biography of Lord Althorp, which has just appeared, it is said that Croker attempted a reply to Macaulay, on the second reading of the second Bill, in a speech of two hours and a half, which utterly failed (p. 383). It is not common to make (apparently off-hand) a reply of two hours and a half upon historical details without the possession of rather remarkable faculties. But this volume, though from the opposite camp, bears witness to Croker's powers: it mentions at p. 400 "a most able and argumentative speech of Croker," and other living witnesses, of Liberal opinions, might be cited to a like effect. This subject is discussed more fully in Article III. of our present number.

† See *infra*, Art. III.

supply a single touch of appreciation of his great qualities. Yet Sir Robert Peel, if on rare occasions he possibly fell short in consideration to friends, was eagerly generous to an opponent like Macaulay, during the struggle on Reform (i. 172), and again in 1841 (ii, 135). Peel moreover had for four years before his decease, from his dread of a possible struggle for the revival of protective duties, been the main prop of the Government which had all the sympathies of Macaulay. There is something yet more marked in the case of Brougham, who is said to have shown towards him in his early life a jealousy not generous or worthy. In 1858, at a period when Brougham's character was greatly meliorated and softened, and he had discharged almost all his antipathies, Macaulay writes of him, "Strange fellow! His powers gone. His spite immortal. A dead nettle." At this point only, in the wide circuit of Macaulay's recorded words or acts, do we seem to find evidence of a moral defect. Under the semblance of a homage to justice, he seems to have been occasionally seduced into the indulgence of a measure of vindictive feeling.

The combination of great knowledge, great diligence, great powers of appreciation, and great uprightness and kindness of mind with a constant tendency to exaggerate, with unjust and hasty judgments, and with a nearly uniform refusal to accept correction, offers a riddle not unknown on a smaller scale in smaller men, but here of peculiar interest, because, though Macaulay's kind may not have been the greatest, he was, in his kind, so singularly great. The solution of it seems to lie in this: that, with a breathless rapidity, he filled in his picture before his outline was complete, and then with an extreme of confidence he supplied the colours from his own mind and prepossessions, instead of submitting to take them from his theme. Thus each subject that he treated of became, as has been observed, a mirror which reflected the image of himself. The worshipping estimate, which Mr. John Stuart Mill formed of his wife's powers, was unintelligible to those who had known her, until it was remembered that she was simply the echo of his own voice. She repeated to him his own

thoughts and his own conclusions; and he took them, when they proceeded from her lips, for the independent oracles of truth. The echo of himself, which Mill found in his wife, was provided for Macaulay in his own literary creations; and what he thought was loyal adhesion to the true and right was only the more and more close embrace of the image he himself had fashioned and adored.

All this, however, is not to be taken for granted. We shall support it by reference to the works of those who we have supplied the proof, and shall likewise proceed to add some illustrations in detail.

For his own eye, the ornaments of his Essay on Milton were so soon as in 1843 gaudy and ungraceful, while for the world they were only rich, dazzling, or at most profuse. As he writes in that year, it contains "scarcely a paragraph such as his matured judgment approves" ("Essays," Preface). But there is no misgiving as to the substance of the Essay; and even with regard to his articles on James Mill, which he had dropped on special grounds, he was not "disposed to retract a single doctrine which they contain."\* If it be thought unfair or misleading to scrutinize so closely a production which, while so wonderful, is likewise so youthful as the Essay on Milton, we reply that we examine it for the following reason: because it was the work over which he cast the longest retrospect, and yet this retrospect did not suggest even so much as a qualification, however general, of the opinions it conveyed. We must observe, however, that in the case of Macaulay general qualification would be nearly useless. The least we could have craved of his repentance, had he repented, would have been that the peccant passages should be obelized. For in all his works, the sound and the unsound parts are closely dovetailed; his *series juncturaque*, his arrangement and his transitions, are perfect; the assertions are everywhere alike fearless, the illustrations alike happy; and the vision of the ordinary reader has scarcely a chance of distinguishing between truth and error, where all is bathed, and lost, in one overpowering blaze and flood of light. We

\* Preface to "Essays," republished in 1843.

might as well attempt to detect, with the naked eye, the spots in the sun.

The Essay combines in one view the works, the opinions, and the character of Milton; and it may perhaps be pronounced at once the most gorgeous and the most highflown panegyric to be found anywhere in print. It describes Milton ("Essays," i. 4) as the martyr of English liberty; seemingly for no other reason than that in later life the course of public affairs was not to his mind. Deeply dyed with regicide, he was justly and wisely spared; and he suffered no molestation from those whom, the first day he had got the power, he would not have lost a moment in molesting. Macaulay scoffs at the idea that Charles I. was a martyr to religion; but religion had manifestly something to do with his end, and his title to the name is sounder than Milton's at least in this, that his head was actually cut off.

Milton took (says the great Reviewer, p. 30) in politics the part to be expected from his high spirit and his great intellect; for he lived "at the very crisis of the conflict between Oromasdes and Ahrimanes," when the mighty principles of liberty were exhibited in the form of a battle between the principle of good and the principle of evil. Such is Macaulay's trenchant view of the character and merits of the great and mixed conflict known by the name of the Great Rebellion. In what strange contrast does it stand with that of another writer, his contemporary and his friend, not less truly nor less heartily a lover of freedom than himself. Let those who prefer a temperate to a torrid zone, pass from these burning utterances to Mr. Hallam's discussion, in his Eleventh Chapter, of the respective claims and merits of the two parties to the war. In a statement, than which perhaps the whole compass of history does not contain a finer example of searching scrutiny together with judicial temper, he arrives at the conclusion that the war was opened in 1642 "with evil auspices, with much peril of despotism on the one hand, with more of anarchy on the other."\*

\* 'Constitutional History' (4to.), i. 615.

Referring to the (then) recently published work of Milton on "Christian Doctrine," Macaulay observes "some of the heterodox doctrines which he avows seem to have excited considerable amazement, particularly his Arianism, and his theory on the subject of polygamy." At this amazement he is himself amazed; and with a cursory remark he passes lightly on. As regards his Arianism, we could not reasonably have expected more. That, after all, touches only dogma; and though dogma be the foundation-stone of Christianity, still, like other foundation-stones, it is out of sight. But the "theory of polygamy" which, as the Essayist observes, Milton did something to illustrate in his life, ought surely to have made him "think thrice" before he proceeded to assure us that Milton's conception of love had not only "all the voluptuousness of the Oriental harem," and not only "all the gallantry of the chivalric tournament," but "all the pure and quiet affection of our English fireside" (p. 29.)

It is especially to be borne in mind that Milton's advocacy of this detestable and degrading institution is not either casual or half-hearted. "So far," he says himself, "is the question respecting the lawfulness of polygamy from being a trivial, that it is of the highest importance it should be decided."\* He then discusses it at such length, and with such care, that it may fairly be termed a treatise within a treatise. It is not necessary to cite more than a few short references. "With regard to the passage, they twain . . . shall be one flesh" . . . if a man has many wives, the relation which he bears to each will not be less perfect in itself, nor will the husband be less one flesh with each of them, than if he had only one wife."† "He who puts away his wife, and marries another, is not said to commit adultery because he marries another, but because, in consequence of his marriage with another, he does not retain his former wife."‡ "If, then, polygamy be marriage properly so called, it is also lawful and honourable, according to the same apostle: marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled."§ Nor was his system incom-

\* Milton on "Christian Doctrine," (Sumner's translation), p. 232.

† Ibid. ‡ Ibid. p. 237. § Ibid. p. 241.

plete. The liberty of plurality, with which it begins, is capped at the other end by an equally large liberty of divorce. The *porneia*, for which (he says) a wife may be put away, includes (according to him) "any notable disobedience or intractable carriage of the wife to the husband," "any point of will worship," "any withdrawing from that nearness of zeal and confidence which ought to be." "So that there will be no cause to vary from the general consent of exposition, which gives us freely that God permitted divorce, for *whatever was unalterably distasteful, whether in body or mind.*"\* We must remember also that when we censure the men of that period for their intolerance with respect to religion, witchcraft, and the like, we censure them for what in substance they had inherited from their fathers through many generations, and that from such ties of hampering tradition the extrication must needs be slow. But in this matter of polygamy, Milton deliberately rejected the authority, not only of Scripture and not only of all Christian, but of all European civilisation, and strove to bring among us, from out of Asiatic sensuality and corruption, a practice which, more directly than any other social custom, strikes at the heart of our religion as a system designed to reform the manners of the world. It seems impossible to deny that this is one of the cases in which the debasement of the opinion largely detracts from the elevation of the man. Yet the idolatry of his Reviewer in summing up his character ("Essays," i. 55) can only see just what he likes to see: and he finds that, from every source and quarter, "his nature selected and drew to itself whatever was great and good, while it rejected all the base and pernicious ingredients by which those finer elements were defiled!" If ever there was an instance in which close and cautious discrimination is demanded from a critic, it is the case of Milton. For never perhaps so conspicuously as in him were splendid genius, high and varied accomplishment, large appreciation of mankind and life, exquisite refinement, deep affection, and soaring aspiration conjoined, we cannot say united, with a fierce-

\* 'Tetrachordon,' Works (Ed. 1753), i. 279, 304.

ness of opinion and language that belongs to barbarism, with a rejection of the authority of world-wide consent such as only the most irreflective ignorance could palliate, with a violence of prejudice which sometimes drove him to conclusions worthy only of senility, and with conceptions as to the character and office of Christian women, and the laws and institutions affecting them, which descend below historic heathenism, and approximate even to brutality.

Twelve years after the *Essay on Milton*, another and yet more elaborate effort was applied, we can hardly say dedicated, to the character and philosophy of Bacon. The philosophy was set upon a pinnacle, the character trampled in the mire; while the intellectual faculties of that nearly universal genius were highly appreciated and powerfully set forth. We have in this *Essay*, with an undiminished splendour, also an undiminished tendency to precipitancy and to exaggeration; though they are no longer engaged in the worship of a fond idolatry, but working with energy on the side of censure as well as on that of praise.

Into the controversies relating to the life and character of Bacon we do not propose to enter in detail. Of all the cases in which there has been a call for champions to confront the powerful rush of the assailant, this has been the most adequately met. Whewell records his feelings of "indignation at the popular misrepresentations of Bacon's character, and the levity with which each succeeding writer aggravates them."\* We may specify Mr. Paget, Mr. Hepworth Dixon, and, in a peculiar fashion, Dr. Abbott, as vindicators of Bacon; but the greatest importance attaches to the life-long labours of Ellis, now deceased, and of Spedding, still happily preserved to English literature. As regards the impeachment of Bacon, if taken alone, it may establish no more against him than that, amidst the multitude of engrossing calls upon his mind, he did not extricate himself from the meshes of a practice full of danger and of mischief, but in which the dividing lines of absolute right and wrong had not then been

\* Whewell's "Writings and Letters," ii, 380.

sharply marked. Hapless is he on whose head the world discharges the vials of its angry virtue; and such is commonly the case with the last and detected usufructuary of a golden abuse which has outlived its time. In such cases, posterity may safely exercise its royal prerogative of mercy. The wider question is whether, in a list of instances which Macaulay blazoned on his pages, most of all in that of Essex, Bacon did, or did not, exhibit an almost immeasurable weakness, sordidness, and capacity of baseness in his moral character. The question is one of wide interest to the moralist and psychologist, and to England, and even mankind at large. To us the victory seems to lie with the advocates for the defence; the judgments of Macaulay we deem harsh, and his examinations superficial. But we would not tempt the reader to rely upon this opinion, since he has at hand ample and varied materials for the formation of his judgment. With regard to the speculative life of Bacon we shall not be quite so abstinent.

Macaulay's account of the Baconian philosophy is as follows: After stating that from the day of his death "his fame has been constantly and steadily progressive," the illustrious Essayist proceeds to say that the philosopher "*aimed* at things altogether different from those which his predecessors had proposed to themselves:" at a new "*finis scientiarum.*" "His end was in his own language "fruit," the relief of man's estate;"\* "*commodis humanis inservire;*"† "*dotare vitam humanam novis inventis et copiis.*"‡ Two words form its key, "utility and progress." Seneca had taught the exact reverse. "The object of the lessons of Philosophy is to form the soul." "*Non est, inquam, instrumentorum ad usus necessarios opifex.*" The Baconian philosophy strikes away the *non*. "If we are forced to make our choice between the first shoemaker, and the author of the three Books on Anger, we pronounce for the shoemaker;" so says the Essayist. From this peculiarity of the Baconian philosophy, "all its

\* "Adv. of Learning," book i.

† *De Augm.*, vii. 1.

‡ *Nov. Org.* i. aph. 81. (Also, cites *De Augm.* "Essays," ii. 373 *seqq.* 9th edit.; 2, and *Cogitata et Visa.*)



other peculiarities directly and almost necessarily sprang." And Seneca is a type of what was both before and after. Socrates and Plato (but where we would ask is Aristotle?) produced flowers and leaves, not fruits. Accordingly, "we are forced to say with Bacon that this celebrated philosophy ended in nothing but disputation; that it was neither a vineyard nor an olive ground, but an intricate wood of briars and thistles, from which those, who lost themselves in it, brought back many scratches and no fruit" (p. 378). The powers of these men were "systematically misdirected." The ancient philosophy was a treadmill, not a path. He then enumerates, among the subjects which that philosophy handled, the following heads: "what is the highest good; whether pain be an evil; whether all things be fated; whether we can be certain of anything; whether a wise man can be unhappy." These questions he next compares to the Bigendian and Littlendian controversies in Gulliver, and he gravely pronounces that such disputes "could add nothing to the stock of knowledge," that they accumulated nothing, and transmitted nothing. "There had been plenty of ploughing, harrowing, reaping, and thrashing. But the garners contained only smut and stubble" (p. 380).

At this point we must in fairness allow the reader to pause and ask himself two questions: first, whether in what he has read he is to believe the witness of his own eyes; and secondly, after due rubbing and ruminating, whether Bacon is really responsible for these astounding doctrines? Unfortunately Macaulay has a contempt for Saint Augustine, and therefore we may make an appeal that would in his view be vain, if we observe that that great intellect and heart has left upon record in his works an acknowledgment in terms superlative if not extravagant of the value as well as the vast power of the works of Plato; the "godly Plato," as Alexander Barclay calls him. Something more we may hope to effect, since, Macaulay not only admired but almost worshipped Dante, if we plead that the intellect of that extraordinary man was trained under Aristotelian influences, and imbued, nay saturated, with Aristotelian doctrines. But if we plead for the

persons, much more must we contend for the subjects. Can it really be that, in this nineteenth century, the writer who, a. Mr. Trevelyan truly says, teaches men by millions, has gravely taught them that the study of the nature of good, of the end for which we live, of the discipline of pain, of the mastery to be gained over it by wisdom, of the character and limits of human knowledge, is a systematic misdirection of the mind, a course of effort doomed beforehand to eternal barrenness, a sowing of seed that is to produce only smut and stubble ?

From this strange bewilderment, and this ganglion of errors, even his own Milton might have saved him, who says of his lost angels, "on a hill retired"—

"Of good and evil much they argued them,  
Of happiness and final misery,  
Passion and apathy, and glory and shame."

And then, as if from between narrowing defiles of Puritanism which left him but a strip of sky and light, condemns their high themes and thoughts—

"Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy ;"

but yet he cannot help emerging a little ; and he adds—

"Yet with a pleasing sorcery *could charm*  
*Pain for a while or anguish*, and excite  
Fallacious hope, *to arm the obdured breast*  
*With stubborn patience, as with triple steel.*"\*

Having disposed of the Greek and Roman philosophers, the Essayist finds, as might be expected, still less difficulty in "settling the hash" of the schoolmen, to whom the more cautious intellects of Mackintosh and Milman have done another kind of justice ; and at length we have the summary, p. 353 :—"Words, and more words, and nothing but words, had been all the fruit of all the toil of all the most renowned sages of sixty generations." But the new epoch had arrived, and the new system.

"Its object was the good of mankind, in the sense in which the mass of mankind always have understood, and always will understand, the word 'good.' 'Meditor,' said Bacon, '*instauracionem*

\* "Paradise Lost," ii. 512.

*philosophiæ ejusmodi quæ nihil inanis aut abstracti habeat, quæque vitæ humanæ conditiones in melius provehat.\**

“To make men perfect was no part of Bacon’s plan. His humble aim was to make imperfect men comfortable.”

As if Bacon had been an upholsterer, or the shoemaker whom Macaulay says, if driven to choose, he would prefer to the philosopher. So, if driven to choose for food between the moon and green cheese of which in the popular saying it is supposed to be made, we should unquestionably choose the green cheese. But we could never be so driven: because the objects of choice supposed to compete are not *in pari materia*. Nor are the shoemaker and the philosopher: there is no reason why we should not have both—the practitioner in useful arts, and the man meditative of the high subjects of human thought, mind, destiny, and conduct. The imagined opposition is a pure figment; a case of “words and more words, and nothing but words,” if not indeed, of “smut and stubble.” The truth is that Macaulay was not only accustomed, like many more of us, to go out hobby-riding, but from the portentous vigour of the animal he mounted, was liable, more than most of us, to be run away with. His merit is, that he could keep his seat in such a steeple-chase: but as the object in view is arbitrarily chosen, so it is reached by cutting the fields, spoiling the crops, and spoiling or breaking down the fences, needful to secure to labour its profit, and to a man at large the full enjoyment of the fruits of the earth. Such is the overpowering glow of colour, such the fascination of the grouping in the first sketches which he draws, that, when hot upon his work, he seems to lose all sense of restraints of fact and the laws of moderation: he vents the strongest paradoxes, sets upon the most violent caricatures, and handles the false weight and measure as effectively as if he did it knowingly. A man so able and so upright is never indeed wholly wrong. He never for a moment consciously purgues anything but truth. But truth depends, above all, on proportion and relation. The preter-human vividness with which

\* “Redargutio Philosophiarum.”

Macaulay sees his object, absolutely casts a shadow upon what lies round; he loses his perspective; and imagination, impelled headlong by the strong consciousness of honesty in purpose, achieves the work of fraud. All things for him stand in violent contrast to one another. For the shadows, the gradations, the middle and transition touches, which make up the bulk of human life, character, and action, he has neither eye nor taste. They are not taken account of in his practice, and they at length die away from the ranges of his vision.

We presume it cannot be doubted that Bacon found philosophy had flown too high; had been too neglectful both of humble methods, and of what are commonly termed useful aims. What he deemed of himself is one thing: what we are now to deem of him is another. And we believe the true opinion to be that Bacon introduced into philosophy no revolutionary principle or power, either as to aims or as to means; but that he helped to bring about important modifications of degree. To the bow, bent too far in one direction, he gave a strong wrench in the other. He did much to discourage the arbitrary and excessive use of *à priori* and deductive methods, and, though he is thought himself to have effected nothing in physical science, largely contributed to open the road which others have trodden with such excellent effect. But the ideas imperfectly expressed in these sentences were far too homely to carry the blaze of colour and of gilding, which Macaulay was required by the constitution of his mind to lay on any objects he was to handle with effect. Hence the really outrageous exaggerations (for in this case we cannot call them less), of which we have given the sum. But, after writing in that strain for twenty-five or thirty pages, at length his Hippogriff alights on *terra firma*; and he tells us with perfect *naïveté* (p. 403) that Bacon's philosophy was no less a moral than a natural philosophy, and that, though his illustrations are drawn from physical science, his principles "are just as applicable to ethical and political inquiries as to inquiries into the nature of heat and vegetation." Very good: but then why the long series

of spurious, as well as needless, contrasts between the useful and the true, between the world of mind and the world of matter, between the good on which philosophers have speculated and the good which the masses of mankind always have sought, and always will; and why, in order that Lord Macaulay may write a given number of telling sentences and fascinating pages, is Bacon to be made responsible for a series of extravagances which with his mind, not less rational than powerful, not less balanced than broad, we are persuaded that he would have abhorred?

We shall not attempt any more precise appreciation of the philosophy of this extraordinary man. Of all English writers, until Germany cast the eye of patient study upon Shakespeare, he has enjoyed, perhaps, the largest share of European attention, as in his speculations he touched physics with one hand, and the unseen world with the other. There has, however, been much doubt, and much difference of opinion, as to the exact place which is due to him in the history of science and philosophy. So far as we can gather, a sober estimate prevails. De Maistre has, indeed, in a work on the subject of Bacon and his philosophy, degraded him to the rank of something very near a charlatan: and, with reference to his character as a forerunner and torch-bearer on the paths of science, asserts that Newton was not even acquainted with his works. We do not suppose that any mere invectives of so inveterate a partisan will sensibly affect the judgment of the world. But writers of a very different stamp have not been wanting to point out that Bacon's own writings partake of prejudice and passion. Mr. Stanley Jevons, for example, in his able work on "The principles of Science,"\* animadverts on his undue disparagement of philosophic anticipation. Upon the whole, we fear that the censure of Lord Macaulay have done but little to assist an impartial inquirer, or to fix the true place of this great man in the historical evolution of modern philosophy.

Those who may at all concur in our comments on Macaulay's besetting dangers, will observe without surprise that, while his

\* London: Macmillan, 1874.

excesses in panegyric gave rise to little criticism, the number and vehemence of his assaults drew upon him a host of adversaries. He received their thrusts upon his target as coolly as if they had been Falstaff's men in buckram. We do not regret that he should have enjoyed the comforts of equanimity. But there is something absolutely marvellous in his incapacity to acknowledge force either in reasonings of opponents, or in those arrays of fact, under which, like battering rams, so many of his towering structures of allegation were laid level with the ground.

“ It surely was his profit, had he known :

It would have been his pleasure, had he seen.”\*

The corrections made in his works were lamentably rare ; the acknowledgments were rarer and feebler still. Nor was this from any want of kindness of heart, as these volumes would of themselves suffice to demonstrate, or from any taint in his love of truth. It was due, we sincerely hold, to something like what the theologians call invincible ignorance. The splendid visions which his fancy shaped had taken possession of his mind ; they abode there each of them entire in their majesty or beauty ; they could only have been dislodged by some opposing spell as potent as his own ; they were proof against corrections necessarily given piecemeal, and prepossession prevented him from perceiving the aggregate effect, even when it was most conclusive.

It would be all well, or at least well in comparison, had we only to contemplate this as a case of psychological curiosity. But the mischief is, that wrong has been done, and it remains undressed. In ordinary cases of literary quarrel, assailants and defendants have something not hopelessly removed from equal chances ; although as a rule the greater pungency, and less complexity, of attack makes it decidedly more popular and effective than defence, when the merits do not greatly differ. But in this case the inequality was gross, was measureless. For every single ear that was reached by the reply, the indictment, such was Macaulay's monarchy over the world of readers, had sounded in

\* Tennyson's "Guinevere."

scores or hundreds, or even thousands. The sling and the stone in the hands of half-a-score of Davids, however doughty, found no way of reproach to the forehead of this Goliath, and scarcely whizzed past him in the air.

And yet among the opposers whom he roused, there were men who spoke with care, information, or authority: some of them had experience, some had a relative popularity, some had great weight of metal. We have already referred to the champions in the case of Bacon. In relation to Mr. Croker's "Boswell," no less a person than Lockhart—*nomen intra has aedes semper venerandum*\*—confuted and even retorted, in "Blackwood's Magazine," a number of the charges of inaccuracy, and reduced others to insignificance. So far as this instance was concerned, the fame of Boswell's work supplied a criterion which appears decisive of the controversy; for Mr. Croker's edition has been repeatedly republished, and has become classical, although the mere amount of material, extraneous to the text, which it carries, cannot but be deemed a disadvantage. Warren Hastings had not a son; but the heavy charges against Sir Elijah Impey, especially in connection with the condemnation and execution of Nuncomar, brought the son of that Judge into the field. Mr. Impey's "Memoirs"† of his father appear sufficiently to repel these accusations; but the defence is lost in the mazes of a ponderous volume, known perhaps to no more than a few scores of readers, and that imperfectly, while the original accusation circulates, with the other Essays, in a Student's Edition, 1 vol.; a People's Edition, 2 vols.; a Cabinet Edition, 4 vols.; a Library Edition, 3 vols.; a Cheap Edition, 1 vol.; and as a separate Essay, at 1s.‡ Who shall rectify or mitigate these fearful odds? With greater power and far greater skill, and with more effect, Mr. Hayward, in this Review and elsewhere, cast his shield over Madame Piozzi. Yet the number of persons who have read, without the means of guarding against

\* See the inscription under the bust of Wolsey in the Quadrangle of Christ Church.

† "Memoirs of Sir Elijah Impey." Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 1846, pp. ix. *seqq.*; chapters iii. iv. ix. xiii., and elsewhere.

‡ From the advertising sheet at the close of the Biography.

error, some of the harshest and most gratuitous imputations ever scattered broadcast in the thoughtless wantonness of literary power, must be immensely larger than those who have had the means of estimating the able, and, we apprehend, irrefragable defence.\* A remarkable article in "Fraser's Magazine" for June, bearing the initials of a distinguished historian, widens the front of the attack, and severely questions the accuracy of Macaulay's representations in a portion of our annals, where they had hitherto been little sifted.

It was, however, the appearance of the History, in 1848 and 1855, which roused into activity a host of adverse witnesses. Of these we will give a cursory account. Bishop Phillpotts, perhaps the most effective pamphlet-writer of his day, entered into a correspondence with Macaulay, which was afterwards published, chiefly on his grave inaccuracies in relation to Church History. The Bishop, a biting controversialist, had, we say advisedly, none of the servility which is sometimes imputed to him; but he was an eminently, perhaps a redundantly, courteous gentleman. We have sincere pleasure in citing a portion of his introductory eulogium, which we feel confident was written with entire sincerity. After some other compliments of a more obvious kind, the Bishop proceeds:

"But your highest merit is your unequalled truthfulness. Biassed as you must be by your political creed, your party and connections, it is quite clear that you will never sacrifice the smallest particle of truth to those considerations."†

This correspondence ended as amicably as it began. The Bishop obtained a courteous admission "of the propriety of making some alterations."‡ But they were to be "slight." On the main points the historian's opinion was "unchanged." We will notice but one of them. It has to do with the famous Commissions taken out by certain Bishops of the sixteenth century, among whom Bonner, under Henry VIII., was one. Macaulay had stated that these

\* "Quarterly Review," April, 1868, p. 166. Hayward's "Autobiography, Letters, and Literary Remains of Mrs. Piozzi." 2 vols. 8vo. London, 1861.

† "Correspondence between the Bishop of Exeter and the Right Hon. T. B. Macaulay." London, Murray, 1861, p. 3.

‡ P. 44.



documents recognised the Crown as the fountain of all Episcopal authority without distinction. The Bishop pointed out that the authority conveyed by the Commissions was expressly stated to be over and above *præter et ultra ea, quæ tibi, in Sacris Libris, divinitus commissa esse dignoscuntur*. In gallant defiance alike of the grammar and the sense, as will be seen on reference, Macaulay calmly adheres to his opinion.\* It is hardly too much to say that with so prepossessed a mind, when once committed, argument is powerless and useless.

One able writer, Mr. Paget, in his "New Examen,"† took up and dealt with most of the passages of the History which had been impugned; nor can we do better than refer the readers to his pages for the defence, against very sweeping and truculent accusations, of Dundee, Marlborough, and William Penn. All these cases are of great interest. In all, the business of defence has been ably, and in most points conclusively, performed. But the rejoinder to the defence is truly formidable. It consists in this, that the charge, without the reply, has been sold probably to the extent of half a million copies, and has been translated (ii. 390) into twelve languages. It would not be possible, without adding too greatly to the number of these pages, to give an outline of the argument on the respective cases. But there is an incident connected with the case of Penn, which we cannot omit to notice. The peaceful Society, to which he belonged, does not wholly abjure the practice of self-defence on grave occasions; nor could there be a graver, than when one of the most revered names in its annals had been loaded by so commanding an authority with a mass of obloquy:

"Lord Macaulay seeks to show that this same William Penn prostituted himself to the meanest wishes of a cruel and profligate court; gloated with delight on the horrors of the scaffold and the stake, was a willing tool of a bloodthirsty and treacherous tyrant, a trafficker in sin, a suborner of perjury, a conspirator seeking to deluge his country in blood, a hypocphant, a traitor, and a liar."‡

\* P. 13.

† "The New Examen" (reprinted in "Paradoxes and Puzzles." Blackwood, 1874).

‡ Paget "New Examen," sect. v. ("Paradoxes and Puzzles," p. 134).

From original sources, Mr. Paget has answered the charges which he had thus emphatically summed up. Mr. Forster, who has since risen to such high distinction in the House of Commons, performed the same duty in a preface to the "Life of Clarkson," afterwards separately republished.\* There remains impressed on the mind of that community a sentiment which, even if it be somewhat mellowed by the lapse of nearly thirty years, can still be recognised as one of indignation against what is felt or thought to be literary outrage. That Macaulay should have adhered to his charges with unabated confidence can, after what we have already seen, excite little surprise. But there still remains room for a new access of wonder when we find that he not only remained himself unconverted, but even believed he had converted the Quakers.

"February 5, 1849. Lord Shelburn, Charles Austin, and Milman to breakfast. A pleasant meal. Then the Quakers, five in number. Never was there such a rout. They had absolutely nothing to say. Every charge against Penn came out as clear as any case at the Old Bailey. They had nothing to urge but what was true enough, that he looked worse in my History than he would have done on a general survey of his whole life. But that is not my fault. . . . The Quakers were extremely civil. So was I. They complimented me on my courtesy and candour."—ii. 251.

And all this when they had left him boiling, or at least simmering, in unanimity of wrath, and silent only because hopeless of redress, and borne down by a torrent that nothing could resist.

We shall trespass on the reader with a rather more detailed examination of a single remaining point, because it has not been touched by any of the vindicators whom we have already named. It is of considerable historic interest and importance; and it illustrates, perhaps more forcibly than any foregoing instance, that particular phenomenon which we believe to be for its magnitude unparalleled in literature, namely, the absence of remedy when a wrong has been done; the utter and measureless disparity between the crushing force of this onslaught, together with its certain and immediate celebrity through-

\* London, C. Gilpin, 1849.

out the whole reading world, and the feeble efforts at resistance which have had nothing adventitious to recommend them. For, the style of Macaulay, though a fine and a great, is without a doubt a pampering style, and it leaves upon the palate a disrelish for the homely diet of mere truth and sense. We refer to the celebrated description, which Macaulay has given, of the Anglican clergy of the Restoration period. Few portions of his brilliant work have achieved a more successful notoriety. It may perhaps be said to have been stereotyped in the common English mind. It is in its general result highly disparaging. And yet that generation of clergy was, as we conceive, the most powerful and famous in the annals of the English Church since the Reformation. If we do not include yet earlier times, it is from want of record, rather than from fear of comparison. Perhaps, at the very most, one reader in a thousand could for and by himself correct, qualify, or confute, Macaulay's glittering and most exaggerative description. The other nine hundred and ninety-nine lay wholly at his mercy. We were ourselves at the outset, and we have continued to be, among the sturdiest disbelievers. But it will best serve the general purpose of this article if, instead of stating the detailed grounds of our own rebellion, we follow a guide, whom we shall afterwards introduce to our readers.

Though it may seem presumptuous, we will boldly challenge the general statement of Macaulay, that the reign of Charles II., when the influence of the Church was at its height, was the most immoral in our history. There has been a fashion of indulging in this kind of cant, and that mainly among those who exaggerate the strictness of the Puritan ascendancy which immediately preceded it; as if it were possible for a people, much less for a solid and stable people like the English, thus violently to alter its morality in the space of a few years. It is hard for an individual to descend instantaneously into the lower depths: *nemo repente fuit turpissimus*; but for a nation it is impossible. Macaulay has, we are convinced, mistaken the Court, the theatre, and the circles connected with them, which may be called metropolitan,

for the country at large. In these, indeed, the number of the dissolute was great, and the prevailing tone was vile. We, who have seen and known what good the example of Victoria and Albert amidst their Court did during twenty years for the higher society of our own generation, may well comprehend the force of the converse operation, and rate highly the destructive contagion spread by Charles II. and his associates. But even for the Court of Charles II., we appeal from Lord Macaulay to the most recent and able historian of Non-conformity, Dr. Stoughton. From his pages we may perceive that even within that precinct were to be found lives and practices of sanctity, no less remarkable than the pollutions with which they were girt about.\* We have introduced these preliminary sentences because even now there is, and much more at that time there was, no small degree of connection between the morality of the country, and the piety, honour, and efficiency of the clergy. Among the corrupt retainers of the Court and theatre, there can be little doubt that they were in contempt. From such a stage as then existed, it would have been too much to ask respect for Jeremy Collier and his order.

We shall take in succession the leading propositions of Macaulay. The Reformation, he says, fundamentally altered the place of the clergyman in society. Six or seven sous of peers at the close of Charles II.'s reign held episcopal or other valuable preferment; but "the clergy were regarded as on the whole a plebeian class; and, indeed, *for one who made the figure of a gentleman, ten were mere menial servants.*" ("History," i. pp. 325 seqq.)

No doubt the prizes of the Church, as they are called, were fewer and poorer, than they had been before the time of Henry VIII. But more than twice the number of members of noble families stated by Macaulay have been enumerated. This, however, is a secondary error. It is more to the purpose that Eachard, a favourite authority of Macaulay, complains that the gentry as a class made a practice of sending their indifferent and ill-pro-

\* Stoughton's "Ecclesiastical History." London, 1867-70. See also the very remarkable "Life of Mrs. Godolphin," *passim*. London, 1847.

vided children into the ministry. While Archdeacon Oley, who published a preface to Herbert's "Country Parson," in 1675, writes as follows: "Though the vulgar ordinarily do not, yet the nobility and gentry do, distinguish and abstract the errors of the man from the holy calling, and not think their dear relations degraded by receiving holy orders."

Wood says in the "Life of Compton," that holy orders were the readiest way of preferment for the younger sons of noblemen.\* And Jeremy Collier is yet more to the point. "As for the gentry, there are not many good families in England, but either have or have had a clergyman in them. In short, the priesthood is the profession of a gentleman."

Here is a flat contradiction to Macaulay, from a man whom he himself declares to be "of high note in ecclesiastical history;" and is taken from the work on the stage, declared by him to be "a book which threw the whole literary world into commotion, but which is now much less read than it deserves." ("Essays," vol. iii. pp 298-301.)†

Again, if the clergy were a plebeian class, and nine-tenths of them were menial servants, we must take it for granted that their education was low in proportion. Yet Eachard, on whom Macaulay loves to rely, in his work on the Contempt of the Clergy, cites as one of the causes of the mischief, that in the Grammar Schools, where they were educated, they were until sixteen or seventeen kept in pure slavery to a few Latin and Greek words.‡ the very complaint most rife against Eaton and the other public schools during the last fifty years. To make good his view of the ignorance prevailing among the clergy, Macaulay falls foul of the Universities. But his favourite, Burnet, writes, "learning was then high at Oxford" ("Own Time," i. p. 321), and Barrow, a still higher authority, thus addresses an academic audience at Cambridge ("Opusc." iv., 123, 124):

"Græcos auctores omne genus, poetas, philosophos, historicos, scholiastas, quos non ita pridem tanquam barbaros majorum inscitia verita est attingere.

\* "Ath. Ox." ii. 968 (fol. ed.).

† "Babington," pp. 18-21.

‡ "Contempt," etc., p. 4.

jam matris nostræ etiam juniores filii intrepidè pervolvunt, ipsorum lectionem in levis negotii censu reputantes : nec minus promptè Lyceum, aut Academiam adeunt, quam si, remeantibus seculis, cum Platone et Aristotele in mediis Athenis versarentur."

Not a whit better\* stand the statements of the historian concerning the marriages of the clergy. "The wife had ordinarily been in the patron's service; and it was well"—such is the easy audacity of his license—"if she was not suspected of standing too high in the patron's favour." Girls of honourable family were enjoined to eschew lovers in orders. Clarendon marks it as a sign of disorder that some "damsels of noble families had bestowed themselves on divines." ("History," i. 328, 329.)

For the extraordinary libel on the purity of the contemporary brides of clergymen, there does not appear to be either the foundation, or even the pretext, of authority. An injunction of Queen Elizabeth in 1559 is cited to prove the vulgarity of clerical marriages one hundred and twenty years afterwards: not to mention that even that Injunction appears to be seriously misunderstood. Clarendon's passage refers to "the several sects in religion," and nothing can be more improbable than that, with his views of Church polity, he could by these words intend to designate the Church of England. The divines whom he goes on to mention (early in Charles's reign), are "the divines of the time," and it seems more than probable that he intends by the phrase the Nonconforming Ministers, not the young men recently ordained, and of the ordinary age for marriage. Besides, even at the present day, a certain inequality would be recognised in the nuptials of women of rank with clergymen of average station and condition. In citing the testimony of plays of the time, Macaulay forgets the preface to one of those he quotes. "For reflecting upon the Church of England . . . no learned or wise divine of the Church will believe me guilty of it. . . . A foolish lord or knight, is daily represented: *nor are there any so silly to believe it an abuse to their order.*" (Preface to Shadwell's "Lancashire

\* "Pabington," sect. iv. pp. 37-52.

Witches.") It may be truly said that instances of good or high marriages, which can easily be supplied, do not prove the case affirmatively. But Pepys speaks of the extreme satisfaction with which he would give his sister to his friend Cumberland, a priest.\* Nelson speaks of Bull's marrying a clergyman's daughter with praise, because he preferred piety and virtue to the advantages "which for the most part influence the minds of men upon such occasions."† Herbert warns the clergy against marrying "for beauty, riches, or honour."‡ Beveridge speaks of the same temptation in his own case. Collier§ notes as a strange order the Injunction of 1559 (already mentioned), that a clergyman should gain the consent of the master or mistress where a damsel served. Every one of these testimonies loses its force and meaning, if Macaulay is otherwise than grossly wrong in his allegation that the clergy were mostly in the state of menial servants, and made corresponding marriages.

Our readers may be already wearied with this series of exposures, and it cannot be necessary to dwell at any length on the incomes of the clergy. It is extremely difficult to compute them in figures; and Macaulay judiciously avoids it. Yet even here he cannot escape from the old taint of exaggeration: "Not one living in fifty enabled the incumbent to bring up a family comfortably." Ordinarily, therefore, he followed manual employments. On "white days" he fed in the kitchens of the great. "Study was impossible." "His children were brought up like the children of the neighbouring peasantry." ("History," i. 330.) Now, on the point of manual labour, George Herbert, in the preface to the "Country Parson," expressly says the clergy are censured "because they do not make tents, as Saint Paul did, nor hold the plough, thrash, or drive trades, as themselves do." (i. e. laymen). Walker, in the "Sufferings of the Clergy," speaks of it as a special hardship when they are driven to such occupations.

\* "Diary," iii. 170.

† "Life of Bull," p. 44.

‡ "Country Parson," chap. ix.

§ "On Pride," p. 40.

Eachard speaks of the extreme poverty of such as had but £20 or £30 per annum, and certifies that there are hundreds of such.\* Now, multiplying by four for the then greater power of money, these extreme cases correspond with £80 and £120 at the present day: and there are not only hundreds, but thousands, of our clergy, whose professional incomes do not rise above the higher of the figures. A yet more telling piece of evidence may be had from Walker, who calls a living of £40 or £50 a year small. Such a living corresponds with £160 or £180 at the present time. This is still about the income of a "small living;" and the evidence under this, as well as the other heads, goes to show, in contradiction to Macaulay, that while the absolute clergyman was without doubt much less refined, his social position relatively to the other members of society was in ordinary cases nearly the same as now. Of the aggregate national income, there can, we think, be no doubt that the clerical order had not a smaller but a larger share.

With respect to the children of the clergy, as a general rule, Macaulay's statement (which he does not support by any authority), that the boys followed the plough and the girls went out to service, is no more and no less than a pure fable. It is also unpardonable, because the contemporary or nearly contemporary authorities, who confute it, are not obscure men, but men whose works any writer on the history of the period must or ought to have known; such as George Herbert, in the "Country Parson," Fuller, in his "Worthies of England," Beveridge, in his "Private Thoughts," Dr. Sprat, afterwards a Bishop, preaching upon the Sons of the Clergy in 1678, and White Kennet, in his "Collectanea Curiosa." Only want of space prevents our crowding these pages with citations; and we content ourselves with two passages, each of a few words. The first is from White Kennet, who declares that "many of the *poorer clergy* indulge the inclination of their sons by breeding them to a good competence of school learning," though they are afterwards unable, just as is now the case, to support them at the University, and are in such cases

\* "Contempt," etc., pp. 112-14. "Babington," sect. v., pp. 59, 64.



driven to divert them to "mean and unsuitable employs."\* The second is from Fuller,† who heads one of his sections thus: "That the children of clergymen have been as successful as the sons of men of other professions." Without doubt the difficulties, which press so hardly now upon the clerical order along its lower fringe, pressed in like manner on it then. But Macaulay's description is of the order, not of the lower fringe of it. What would he have said if he had discovered that there was under Charles II., as there has been under the sovereigns of the nineteenth century, a "Pious Clergy Society," which expressly invited, on behalf of the impoverished priesthood, gifts of cast-off clothing?

We then pass to the libraries of the clergy: "He might be considered as unusually lucky if he had ten or twelve dog-eared volumes among the pots and pans in his shelves" (i. 330). If the volumes were dog-eared, it was by being much read. If they were but ten or twelve, there was much to be got out of ten or twelve of the close and solid tomes which then were more customary than now. But then it was only the lucky man who had ten or twelve. Now, let the reader mark how this stands. His favourite Eachard‡ describes the case of men having six or seven works, which he enumerates, together with a bundle of sermons, for their library. For this account he was taken to task by his opponent in the "Vindication." Whereupon, Eachard himself thus replies: "The case is this: whether they may not be here and there a clergyman so ignorant, as that it might be wished that he were wiser. For my own part, I went, and guessed at random, and *thought there might be one or so.*" §

And this *minimum* is transformed by Macaulay's magic wand into a *maximum*, this uncertain exception into the positive and prevailing rule. And here, again, while the solitary prop crumbles into dust, the counter-evidence is abundant. Walker recites the "rabbling" and plunder of clerical libraries of the value of 500*l.*

\* "Coll. Cur." ii. 304.

† "Worthies," i. 78.

‡ "Contempt," &c. pp. 106, 7.

§ "Letter to the Author of the Vindication," p. 234.

and 600*l.* St. David's was one of the poorest dioceses of the country; but Nelson\* tells us that Bishop Bull considered the reading of the Fathers, "at least of those of the first three centuries" "not only as useful but absolutely necessary to support the character of a priest." Burnet's demands on the clergy in the "Pastoral Care,"† seem to be quite as large as a bishop could now venture to put forward; and many other writers may be cited to a similar effect.‡ The general rule, that no clergyman should be ordained without an university degree,§ was in force then as now; and probably then more than now. The Grand Duke Cosmo III. states in his "Travels," when he visited the two Universities, that Cambridge had more than two thousand five hundred students, and Oxford over three thousand; and it is safely to be assumed that a larger proportion of these large numbers, than now, were persons intending to take holy orders.

That we may in winding up the case come to yet closer quarters, let it be observed that Macaulay admires and alleges|| that there was assuredly no lack of clergymen "distinguished by abilities and learning." But "These eminent men were to be found, with scarcely a single exception, at the universities, at the great cathedrals, or in the capital."

A passage perfectly consistent with all that has preceded; as, indeed, Lord Macaulay is perhaps more notable than any writer of equal bulk for being consistent with himself. For the places thus enumerated could hardly have included more than a tenth of the clergy. Of the mass the historian has yet one disparaging remark to make: that "almost the only important theological works which came forth from a rural parsonage" were those of Bull; and those only because, inheriting an estate, he was able to purchase a library, "such as probably no other country clergyman in England possessed."¶ This assertion, not less unhappy than those which have preceded, is reduced to atoms by the production

\* "Life of Bull," p. 428. † Chap. vii.

‡ "Babington," sect. vii. pp. 87-9.

§ Cardwell's "Documentary Annals," ii. 304, 5.

|| I. 330. ¶ II. 331.

of a list of men, who sent forth from country parsonages works of divinity that were then, and in most cases that are now, after two hundred years, esteemed. Many of them, indeed, have been recently republished. The list includes the names, with others, of Towerson, Puller, Sherlock, Norris, Fulwood, Fuller (who died in 1661), Kettlewell and Beveridge.

From this compressed examination, which would gain by a greater expansion, it may sufficiently appear that Lord Macaulay's charges of a menial condition and its accompaniments against the clergy of the Restoration period, generally and miserably break down. In no instance are they tolerably supported by positive evidence; in many they are absolutely confuted and annihilated. Not, indeed, that he was absolutely and wholly wrong in any point, but that he was wrong in every point by omission and by exaggeration. Because books were then, especially in the country, more difficult to obtain than now; because manners were more rude and homely in all classes of the community; because cases of low birth and conduct, still individually to be found, were perhaps somewhat more frequent; because a smaller number of the well-born might have taken orders during the period of the Protectorate, so that the Episcopal Bench was for a short time filled with men of humble origin, though of great learning and ability; these incidents must be magnified into the portentous statement, that "for one who made the figure of a gentleman, ten were mere menial servants." Isolated facts and partial aspects of his case he eyes with keenness; to these he gives a portentous development; and a magnified and distorted part he presents to us as the whole. The equilibrium of the truth is gone; and without its equilibrium it is truth no longer.

That which may be alleged of the clergy of that period is, that they were unmitigated Tories. This is in reality the link which binds together the counts of the indictment; as a common hostility to William of Orange, or sympathy with James the Second, brings into one and the same category of invective and condemnation persons appearing at first sight to have so little in common

as Marlborough, Claverhouse, and Penn. The picture of the Restoration clergy is a romance in the form and colour of a history. But while history in the form of romance is commonly used to glorify a little our poor humanity, the illusions of this romance in the form of history go only to discolour and degrade. That William, that Burnet, that Milton should have personal embellishment much beyond their due, is no intolerable evil. But the case becomes far more grievous when a great historian, impelled by his headstrong and headlong imagination, traduces alike individuals and orders, and hurls them into a hot and flaming inferno of his own.

We have selected this case for an exposition comparatively full, not on the ground that it is the most important, but because, better than any other, it illustrates and exemplifies the uncommon, the astounding, inequality of the attack and the defence. The researches which we have partially compressed into the last few pages are those of Mr. Churchill Babington, a Fellow of Saint John's, the neighbour college to Macaulay's justly-loved and honoured Trinity. We do not assume them to be infallible. But every candid man must admit that the matter of them is formidable and weighty; that, in order to sustain the credit of Macaulay as an historian, it demands examination and reply. It is in vain that in his "Journal,"\* he disclaims the censorship of "men who have not soaked their mind with the transitory literature of the day." For in the first place this transitory literature, the ballad, the satire, the jest-book, the farce or vulgar comedy, requires immense sifting and purgation, like other coarse raw material, in order to reduce the gross to the net, to seclude and express the metal from the ore. In the second place, Mr. Babington seems thus far to have made it very doubtful whether Macaulay has made out his case even as tested by that transitory literature. Give, however, transitory literature what you will, it can form no apology for the gross neglect of grave and weighty and unimpeachable authorities.

\* Trevelyan's "Life," ii. 224.

But if Macaulay's invocation of the transitory literature of the day is insufficient, what shall we say of Mr. Trevelyan's appeal to Buckle? Buckle, forsooth, bears witness that Macaulay "has rather understated the case than overstated it." Macaulay, even when least *âpretious*, can stand better on the feet that Nature gave him, than on a crutch like this. Quote if you choose publicans on liquor laws, or slave-drivers on the capacities of blacks; cite Martial as a witness to purity, or Bacchus to sobriety; put Danton to conduct a bloodless revolution, or swear in the Gracchi as special constables; but do not set Mr. Buckle as an arbiter of judicial measure or precision, nor let the fame of anything that is called a religion or a clergy depend upon his nod.

Mr. Babington's work can only receive due appreciation upon being consulted *in extenso*. It attracted little notice on its appearance, except from periodicals connected with the clerical profession. He had from Sir Francis Palgrave the consolatory assurance that he had supplied a confutation as complete as the nature of the attainable evidence in such a case would allow. But his work was noticed\* by the *Edinburgh Review*, in language which we can only describe as that of contemptuous ignorance. It is a book by "a Mr. Churchill Babington" (he was a Fellow of Saint John's and Hulsean Lecturer at Cambridge), which was "apparently intended to confute, but in reality very much confirms, our author's views." Such was the summary jurisdiction exercised upon the material of which we have presented a sample.† The measure of notice accorded to it by Macaulay was simply the insertion of an additional reference ("History," 5th edition, i. 331) to the life of Dr. Bray, "to show the extreme difficulty which the country clergy found in procuring books." The text remains unaltered. The work of Mr. Babington, of which only a very few hundred copies were

\* Not by Macaulay's fault. "I have told Napier that I ask it, as a personal favour, that my name and writings may never be mentioned in the *Edinburgh Review*, September 29th, 1842, vol. ii. p. 119." The *Review* had a deep debt to Macaulay; but this was not the right way to pay it.

† Mr. Paget's valuable work, to which we have previously referred, was treated by the *Edinburgh Review* in the same fashion. He was charged with ignorance, self-sufficiency, carelessness, and bad faith, though the Reviewer failed to convict him of any mistake or inaccuracy. Mr. Paget very properly declined to enter the arena against a champion who wielded such weapons.

sold or distributed, was for its main purpose still-born, is now hardly known in the world of letters, is not found in some of our largest and most useful libraries,\* and if it now and then appears in an old book-shop, confesses by the modesty of its price, that it is among the merest waifs and strays of literature. Such is the fate of the criticism; but the perversion—the grave and gross caricature with which it grappled—still sparkles in its diamond setting, circulates by thousands and ten thousands among flocks of readers ever new and ever charmed, and has become part of the household stock of every family. Since the time when Père Daniel, the Jesuit, with guns at once so ponderous and so weak, replied inaudibly to the raking and devouring fire of Pascal, there never has been a case of such resistless absolutism in a writer, or such unquestioning and general submission in the reading world.

Of this kind has been the justice administered by the tribunals of the day. We sorrowfully admit our total inability to redress the balance. Is there, then, any hope for the perturbed and wandering ghosts whom Macaulay has set agog, for Dundee, for Marlborough, for Quaker Penn, for Madame Piozzi, for the long and melancholy train of rural clergy of the Restoration period, still wearing their disembodied cassocks, in the action of the last, the serenest, the surest, the most awful judge, in the compensating award of posterity? Our hope is, that final justice will be done: but first let us ask whether the injustice which has been done already will, not as injustice, but by virtue of the other and higher elements with which it is fused, stand the trying test of time. Has Macaulay reared a fabric—

“ Quod nec Jovis ira, nec ignes,  
Nec poterit ferrum, nec edax abolere vetustas? ” †

Among the topics of literary speculation there is none more legitimate or more interesting than to consider who, among the writers of a given age, are elected to live; to be enrolled among the Band of the Immortals; to make a permanent addition to the

\* In the only one where we chance to have discovered the work, it is a presentation copy.

† “Ov. Met.” xv. *in fin.*

mental patrimony of the human race. There is also none more difficult. Not that there is any difficulty at all in what is technically called purging the roll: in supplying any number of names which are to sink (if they have not yet sunk) like lead in the mighty waters, or which, by a slower descent—perhaps like the zigzag from an alpine summit—are to find their way into the repose of an undisturbed oblivion. Sad as it may seem, the heroes of the pen are in the main but fools lighted by the passing day on the road to dusty death. But it is when the list has been reduced, say to a hundredth part of the writers, and to a tenth of the few prominent and well-known writers of the day, that the pinch, so to call it, of the task begins. We now stumble onwards with undefined and partial aids. Bulk will surely kill its thousands; that, which stood the ancient warrior in such good stead, will be fatal to many a modern author, who, but for it, might have lived. And money will as surely have killed its tens of thousands beforehand, by touching them as with palsy. It was one of the glories of Macaulay that he never wrote for money; it was the chief calamity of a yet greater, a much greater, man, of Scott, that iron necessities in later life, happily not until his place had long been secure, set that yoke upon his lofty crest. And few are they, who, either in trade or letters, take it for their aim to supply the market, not with the worst they can sell, but with the best they can produce. In the train of this desire, or need, for money comes haste with its long train of evils: crude conception, slipshod execution, the mean stint of labour, suppression of the inconvenient, blazoning of the insignificant, neglect of causes, loss of proportion in the presentation of results; we write from the moment, and therefore we write for the moment.

Survival, we venture to suggest, will probably depend not so much on a single quality, as upon a general or composite result. The chance of it will vary directly as quality, and inversely as quantity. Some ores yield too low a percentage of metal to be worth the smelting, whereas had the mass been purer, it had been extracted and preserved. Posterity will have to smelt largely the

products of the mines of modern literature; and will too often find the reward in less than due proportion to the task. So much for quantity. But quality itself is not homogeneous; it is made up of positives and negatives. Merits and demerits are subtly and variously combined; and it is hard to say what will be the effect in certain cases of the absence of faults as compared with the presence of excellences, towards averting or commuting that sentence of capital punishment which, estimate as we may the humanity of the age, must and will be carried into wholesale execution. Again, men look for different excellences in works of different classes. We do not hold an "Æneid" or a "Paradise Lost" bound to the veracity of an annalist. We do not look to Burke or Sheridan for an accurate and balanced representation of the acts of Warren Hastings. The subtle gifts of rhetoric, the magic work of poetry, are loved for their own sake; and they are not severely cross-examined upon the possession of historic attributes to which they do not pretend. But rhetoric is not confined to speeches, nor poetry to metre. It can hardly be denied, either by eulogist or detractor, by friend or foe, that both these elements are found in the prose of Macaulay; and if they are most attractive, they are also perilous allies in the work of the historian and the critic.

In truth, if we mistake not, the poetical element in his mind and temperament was peculiar, but was strong and pervading. Those who may incline to doubt our opinion that he was a poet as well as a rhetorician, and, perhaps a poet even more than a rhetorician, would do well to consult the admirable criticism of Professor Wilson on his "Lays." ("Life," ii. 121.) We will not dwell upon the fact (such we take it to be) that his works in verse possess the chief merits of his other works, and are free from their faults. But his whole method of touch and handling are poetical. It is, indeed, infinitely remote from the reflective and introspective character, which has taken possession of contemporary poetry among our writers in such a degree, as not only to make its interpretation a work of serious labour, but also to impair its objective force. Macaulay was, perhaps, not strong in his reflective facu-



ties ; certainly he gave them little chance of development by exercise. He was eminently objective, eminently realistic ; resembling in this the father of all poets, whom none of his children have surpassed, and who never converts into an object of conscious contemplation the noble powers which he keeps in such versatile and vigorous use. In Macaulay all history is scenic ; and philosophy he scarcely seems to touch, except on the outer side where it opens into action. Not only does he habitually present facts in forms of beauty, but the fashioning of the form predominates over, and is injurious to, the absolute and balanced presentation of the subject. Macaulay was a master in execution, rather than in what painting or music terms expression. He did not fetch from the depths, nor soar to the heights ; but his power upon the surface was rare and marvellous ; and it is upon the surface that an ordinary life is passed, and that its imagery is found. He mingled, then, like Homer, the functions of the poet and the chronicler ; but what Homer did was due to his time, what Macaulay did, to his temperament. We have not attempted to ascertain his place among historians. That is an office which probably none but a historian can perform. It is more easy to discover for him contrasts and resemblances. Commonly sound in his classical appreciations, he was an enthusiastic admirer of Thucydides ; but there can hardly be a sharper contrast than between the history of Thucydides and the history of Macaulay. Ease, brilliancy, pellucid clearness, commanding fascination, the effective marshalling of all facts belonging to the external world as if on parade—all these gifts Macaulay has, and Thucydides has not. But weight, breadth, proportion, deep discernment, habitual contemplation of the springs of character and conduct, and the power to hold the scales of human action with firm and even hand—these must be sought in Thucydides, and are rarely observable in Macaulay. But how few are the writers whom it would be anything less than ridiculous to place in comparison with Thucydides. The History of Macaulay, whatever else it may be, is the work not of a journeyman but of a great artist, and a great artist who lavishly

bestowed upon it all his powers. Such a work, once committed to the press, can hardly die. It is not because it is translated into a crowd of languages, nor because it has been sold in hundreds of thousands, that we believe it will live, but because, however open it may be to criticism, it has in it the character of a true and high work of art.

We are led, then, to the conclusion or the conjecture, that, however the body of our writers may be reduced in a near future by many and many a decimation, Macaulay will, and must, survive. Personal existence is beset with dangers in infancy, and again in age. But authorship, if it survive the first, has little to fear from the after-peril. If it subsist for a few generations (and generations are for books what years are for their writers), it is not likely to sink in many. For works of the mind really great there is an old age, no decrepitude. It is inconceivable that a time should come when Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, shall not ring in the ears of civilized man. On a lower throne, in a less imperial hall of the same mansion, we believe that Macaulay will probably be found, not only in A.D. 2,000, which he modestly specifies, but in 3,000 or 2,850, which he more boldly formulates, or for so much of this long, or any longer lease as the commentators on the Apocalypse will allow the race to anticipate. Whether he will remain as a standard and supreme authority, is another question. Wherever and whenever read, he will be read with fascination, with delight, with wonder. And with copious instruction too; but also with copious reserve, with questioning scrutiny, with liberty to reject, and with much exercise of that liberty. The contemporary mind may in rare cases be taken by storm; but posterity, never. The tribunal of the present is accessible to influence; that of the future is incorrupt. The coming generations will not give Macaulay up, but they will, probably, attach much less value than we have done to his *ipse dixit*. They will hardly accept from him his net solutions of literary, and still less of historic, problems. Yet they will obtain from his marked and telling points of view great aid in solving them. We sometimes fancy that ere long there will be

editions of his works in which his readers may be saved from pitfalls by brief, respectful, and judicious commentary, and that his great achievements may be at once commemorated and corrected by men of slower pace, of drier light, and of more tranquil, broad-set, and comprehensive judgment. For his works are in many respects among the prodigies of literature; in some, they have never been surpassed. As lights that have shone through the whole universe of letters, they have made their title to a place in the solid firmament of fame. But the tree is greater and better than its fruits; and greater and better yet than the works themselves are the lofty aims and conceptions, the large heart, the independent, manful mind, the pure and noble career, which in this Biography have disclosed to us the true figure of the man who wrote them.

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