CHAPTER 111.

Criticism and History.—Macaulay.

I.

I shall not here attempt to write the life of Lord Macaulay. It can only be related twenty years hence, when his friends shall have put together all their recollections of him. As to what is public now, it seems to me useless to recall it: every one knows that his father was an abolitionist and a philanthropist; that Macaulay passed through a most brilliant and complete classical education; that at twenty-five his essay on Milton made him famous; that at thirty he entered parliament, and took his standing there amongst the first orators; that he went to India to reform the law, and that on his return he was appointed to high offices; that on one occasion his liberal opinions in religious matters lost him his seat in parliament; that he was re-elected amidst universal congratulations; that he continued to be the most celebrated publicist and the most accomplished writer of the Whig party; and that on this ground, towards the close of his life, the gratitude of his party and the public admiration, made him a British peer. It will be a fine biography to write—a life of honour and happiness, devoted to noble ideas, and occupied by manly enterprises; literary in the first place, but sufficiently charged with action.
and immersed in business to furnish substance and solidity to his eloquence and style, to form the observer side by side with the artist, and the thinker side by side with the writer. On the present occasion I will only describe the thinker and writer: I leave the life, I take his works; and first his Essays.

II.

His Essays are a collection of articles from reviews: I confess to a fondness for books of this kind. In the first place, we can throw down the volume after a score of pages, begin at the end, or in the middle; we are not its slave, but its master; we can treat it like a newspaper: in fact, it is the journal of a mind. In the second place, it is miscellaneous; in turning over a page, we pass from the Renaissance to the nineteenth century, from England to India: this diversity surprises and pleases. Lastly, involuntarily, the author is indiscreet; he displays himself to us, keeping back nothing; it is a familiar conversation, and no conversation is worth so much as that of England’s greatest historian. We are pleased to mark the origin of this generous and powerful mind, to discover what faculties have nourished his talent, what researches have shaped his knowledge, what opinions he formed on philosophy, religion, the state, literature; what he was, and what he has become; what he wishes, and what he believes.

Seated in an arm-chair, with our feet on the fender, we see little by little, as we turn over the leaves of the book, an animated and thoughtful face arise before us; the countenance assumes expression and clearness; the different features are mutually explained and lightened.
up; presently the author lives again for us, and before us; we perceive the causes and birth of all his thoughts, we foresee what he is going to say; his bearing and mode of speech are as familiar to us as those of a man whom we see every day; his opinions correct and affect our own; he enters partly into our thoughts and our life; he is two hundred leagues away, and his book stamps his image on us, as the reflected light paints on the horizon the object from which it is emitted. Such is the charm of books, which deal with all kinds of subjects, which give the author’s opinions on all sorts of things, which lead us in all directions of his thoughts, and make us, so to speak, walk around his mind.

Macaulay treats philosophy in the English fashion, as a practical man. He is a disciple of Bacon, and sets him above all philosophers; he decides that genuine science dates from him; that the speculations of old thinkers are only witticisms; that for two thousand years the human mind was on a wrong tack; that only since Bacon it has discovered the goal to which it must turn, and the method by which it must arrive there. This goal is utility. The object of knowledge is not theory, but application. The object of mathematicians is not the satisfaction of an idle curiosity, but the invention of machines calculated to alleviate human labour, to increase the power of subduing nature, to render life more secure, commodious, and happy. The object of astronomy is not to furnish matter for vast calculations and poetical cosmogonies, but to subserve geography and to guide navigation. The object of anatomy and the zoological sciences is not to suggest eloquent systems on the nature of organisation, or to set before the eyes the orders of the animal kingdom by
an ingenuous classification, but to conduct the surgeon's hand and the physician's prognosis. The object of every research and every study is to diminish pain, to augment comfort, to ameliorate the condition of man; theoretical laws are serviceable only in their practical use; the labours of the laboratory and the cabinet receive their sanction and value only through the use made of them by workshops and mills; the tree of knowledge must be estimated only by its fruits. If we wish to judge of a philosophy, we must observe its effects; its works are not its books, but its acts. The philosophy of the ancients produced fine writings, sublime phrases, infinite disputes, hollow dreams, systems displaced by systems, and left the world as ignorant, as unhappy, and as wicked as it found it. That of Bacon produced observations, experiments, discoveries, machines, entire arts and industries:

"It has lengthened life; it has mitigated pain; it has extinguished diseases; it has increased the fertility of the soil; it has given new securities to the mariner; it has furnished new arms to the warrior; it has spanned great rivers and estuaries with bridges of form unknown to our fathers; it has guided the thunderbolt innocuously from heaven to earth; it has lighted up the night with the splendour of the day; it has extended the range of the human vision; it has multiplied the power of the human muscles; it has accelerated motion; it has annihilated distance; it has facilitated intercourse, correspondence, all friendly offices, all despatch of business; it has enabled man to descend to the depths of the sea, to soar into the air, to penetrate securely into the noxious recesses of the earth, to traverse the land in cars which whirl along without horses, and the ocean in ships which run ten knots an hour against the wind." 1

1 Macaulay's Works, ed. Lady Trevelyan, 8 vols. 1866; Essay on Bacon, vi. 222.
The first was consumed in solving unsolvable enigmas, fabricating portraits of an imaginary sage, mounting from hypothesis to hypothesis, tumbling from absurdity to absurdity; it despised what was practicable, promised what was impracticable; and because it disregarded the limits of the human mind, ignored its power. The other, measuring our force and weakness, diverted us from roads that were closed to us, to start us on roads that were open to us; it recognised facts and laws, because it resigned itself to remain ignorant of their essence and principles; it rendered man more happy, because it has not pretended to render him perfect; it discovered great truths and produced great effects, because it had the courage and good sense to study small things, and to keep for a long time to petty vulgar experiments; it has become glorious and powerful, because it deigned to become humble and useful. Formerly, science furnished only vain pretensions and chimerical conceptions, whilst it held itself far aloof from practical existence, and styled itself the sovereign of man. Now, science possesses acquired truths, the hope of loftier discoveries, an ever-increasing authority, because it has entered upon active existence, and has declared itself the servant of man. Let it keep to its new functions; let it not try to penetrate the region of the invisible; let it renounce what must remain unknown; it does not contain its own issue, it is but a medium; man was not made for it, but science was made for man; it is like the thermometers and piles which it constructs for its own experiments; its whole glory, merit, and office, is to be an instrument:

"We have sometimes thought than an amusing fiction might be written, in which a disciple of Epictetus and a disciple of
Bacon should be introduced as fellow-travellers. They come to a village where the small-pox has just begun to rage, and find houses shut up, intercourse suspended, the sick abandoned, mothers weeping in terror over their children. The Stoic assures the dismayed population that there is nothing bad in the small-pox, and that to a wise man disease, deformity, death, the loss of friends, are not evils. The Baconian takes out a lancet and begins to vaccinate. They find a body of miners in great dismay. An explosion of noisome vapours has just killed many of those who were at work; and the survivors are afraid to venture into the cavern. The Stoic assures them that such an accident is nothing but a mere ἀποτρεπομένου. The Baconian, who has no such fine word at his command, contents himself with devising a safety-lamp. They find a shipwrecked merchant wringing his hands on the shore. His vessel with an inestimable cargo has just gone down, and he is reduced in a moment from opulence to beggary. The Stoic exhorts him not to seek happiness in things which lie without himself, and repeats the whole chapter of Epictetus, πρὸς τοὺς τὴν ἀπορίαν διδομένους. The Baconian constructs a diving-bell, goes down in it, and returns with the most precious effects from the wreck. It would be easy to multiply illustrations of the difference between the philosophy of thorns and the philosophy of fruit, the philosophy of words and the philosophy of works."  

It is not for me to discuss these opinions; it is for the reader to blame or praise them, if he sees fit: I do not wish to criticise doctrines, but to depict a man; and truly nothing could be more striking than this absolute scorn for speculation, and this absolute love for the practical. Such a mind is entirely suitable to the national genius: in England a barometer is still called a philosophical instrument; philosophy is there a thing unknown. The English have moralists,

1 Macaulay’s Works; Essay on Bacon, vi. 223.
psychologists, but no metaphysicians: if there is one—Hamilton, for instance—he is a sceptic in metaphysics; he has only read the German philosophers to refute them; he regards speculative philosophy as an extravagance of visionaries, and is compelled to apologize to his readers for the strangeness of his subject, when he tries to make them understand somewhat of Hegel's conceptions. The positive and practical English, excellent politicians, administrators, fighters, and workers, are no more suited than the ancient Romans for the abstractions of subtle dialectics and grand systems; and Cicero, too, once excused himself, when he tried to expound to his audience of senators and public men, the deep and audacious deductions of the Stoics.

III.

The only part of philosophy which pleases men of this kind is morality, because like them it is wholly practical, and only attends to actions. Nothing else was studied at Rome, and every one knows what place it holds in English philosophy: Hutcheson, Price, Ferguson, Wollaston, Adam Smith, Bentham, Reid, and many others, have filled the last century with dissertations and discussions on the rule of duty, and the faculty which discovers our duty; and Macaulay's *Essays* are a new example of this national and dominant inclination: his biographies are less portraits than judgments. What strictly is the degree of uprightness and dishonesty of the personage he describes, that is the important question for him; he makes all other questions refer to it; he applies himself throughout only to justify, excuse, accuse, or condemn. If he speaks of Lord Clive, Warren
Hastings, Sir William Temple, Addison, Milton, or any other man, he devotes himself first of all to measure exactly the number and greatness of their faults and virtues; he interrupts himself, in the midst of a narration, to examine whether the action, which he is relating, is just or unjust; he considers it as a legist and a moralist, according to positive and natural law; he takes into account the state of public opinion, the examples which surrounded the accused, the principles he professed, the education he has received; he bases his opinion on analogies drawn from ordinary life, from the history of all peoples, the laws of all countries; he brings forward so many proofs, such certain facts, such conclusive reasonings, that the best advocate might find a model in him; and when at last he pronounces judgment, we think we are listening to the summing up of a judge. If he analyses a literature—that of the Restoration, for instance—he empanels before the reader a sort of jury to judge it. He makes it appear at the bar, and reads the indictment; he then presents the plea of the defenders, who try to excuse its levities and indecencies: at last he begins to speak in his turn, and proves that the arguments set forth are not applicable to the case in question; that the accused writers have laboured effectually and with preméditation, to corrupt morals; that they not only employed unbecoming words, but that they designedly, and with deliberate intent, represented unbecoming things; that they always took care to conceal the hatefulness of vice, to render virtue ridiculous, to make adultery fashionable and a necessary exploit of a man of taste; that this intention was all the more manifest from its being in the spirit of the times, and that they were pandering to a
crime of their age. If I dare employ, like Macaulay, religious comparisons, I should say that his criticism was like the Last Judgment, in which the diversity of talents, characters, ranks, employments, will disappear before the consideration of virtue and vice, and where there will be no more artists, but a judge of the righteous and the wicked.

In France, criticism has a freer gait; it is less subservient to morality, and more akin to art. When we try to relate a life, or paint the character of a man, we more readily consider him as a simple subject of painting or science: we only think of displaying the various feelings of his heart, the connection of his ideas and the necessity of his actions; we do not judge him, we only wish to represent him to the eyes, and make him intelligible to the reason. We are spectators, and nothing more. What matters it if Peter or Paul is a rascal? that is the business of his contemporaries: they suffered from his vices, and ought to think only of despising and condemning him. Now we are beyond his reach, and hatred has disappeared with danger. At this distance, and in the historic perspective, I see in him but a mental machine, provided with certain springs, animated by a primary impulse, affected by various circumstances. I calculate the play of his motives; I feel with him the impact of obstacles; I see beforehand the curve which his motion will trace out; I feel for him neither aversion nor disgust; I have left these feelings on the threshold of history, and I taste the very deep and pure pleasure of seeing a soul act after a definite law, in a fixed groove, with all the variety of human passions, with the succession and
constraint, which the inner structure of man imposes on the external development of his passions.

In a country where men are so much occupied by morality, and so little by philosophy, there is much religion. For lack of natural theology they have a positive theology, and demand from the Bible the metaphysics not supplied by reason. Macaulay is a Protestant; and though a very candid and liberal man, he at times retains the English prejudices against the Roman-Catholic religion. Popery in England always passes for an impious idolatry and for a degrading servitude. After two revolutions, Protestantism, allied to liberty, seemed to be the religion of liberty; and Roman-Catholicism, allied to despotism, seemed the religion of despotism: the two doctrines have both assumed the name of the cause which they supported. To the first has been transferred the love and veneration which were felt for the rights which it defended; on the second has been poured the scorn and hatred which were felt for the slavery which it would have introduced: political passions have inflamed religious beliefs; Protestantism has been confounded with the victorious fatherland, Roman-Catholicism, with the conquered enemy; prejudices survive when the strife is ended, and to this day English Protestants do not feel for the

1 "Charles himself, and his creature Laud, while they abjured the innocent badges of Popery, retained all its worst vices,—a complete subjection of reason to authority, a weak preference of form to substance, a childish passion for mummeries, an idolatrous veneration for the priestly character, and, above all, a merciless intolerance."—Macaulay, p. 24; Milton.

"It is difficult to relate without a pitying smile, that in the sacrifice of the mass, Loyola saw transubstantiation take place, and that, as he stood praying on the steps of the Church of St. Dominic, he saw the trinity in Unity, and wept aloud with joy and wonder."—Macaulay, vi. 468: Rankin, History of the Popes.
doctrines of Roman-Catholics the same good-will or impartiality which French Roman-Catholics feel for the doctrines of Protestants.

But these English opinions are moderated in Macaulay by an ardent love for justice. He is a liberal in the largest and best sense of the word. He demands that all citizens should be equal before the law, that men of all sects should be declared capable to fill all public functions—that Roman-Catholics and Jews may, as well as Lutherans, Anglicans, and Calvinists, sit in Parliament. He refutes Mr. Gladstone and the partisans of State religion with incomparable ardour and eloquence, abundance of proof, and force of argument; he clearly proves that the State is only a secular association, that its end is wholly temporal, that its single object is to protect the life, liberty, and property of the citizens; that in entrusting to it the defence of spiritual interests, we overturn the order of things; and that to attribute to it a religious belief, is as though a man, walking with his feet, should also confide to his feet the care of seeing and hearing. This question has often been discussed in France; it is so to this day; but no one has brought to it more common sense, more practical reasoning, more palpable arguments. Macaulay withdraws the discussion from the region of metaphysics; he leads it back to the earth; he brings it home to all minds; he takes his proofs and examples from the best known facts of ordinary life; he addresses the shopkeeper, the citizen, the artist, the scholar, every one; he connects the truth, which he asserts, with the familiar and intimate truths, which no one can help admitting, and which are believed with all the force of experience and habit; he carries off and conquers our belief by such solid reasons.
that his adversaries will thank him for convincing them; and if by chance a few amongst us have need of a lesson on tolerance, they had better look for it in Macaulay’s Essay on that subject.

IV.

This love of justice becomes a passion when political liberty is at stake; this is the sensitive point; and when we touch it, we touch the writer to the quick. Macaulay loves it interestedly, because it is the only guarantee of the properties, happiness, and life of individuals; he loves it from pride, because it is the honour of man: he loves it from patriotism, because it is a legacy left by preceding generations; because for two hundred years a succession of upright and great men have defended it against all attacks, and preserved it in all dangers; because it has made the power and glory of England; because in teaching the citizens to will and to decide for themselves, it adds to their dignity and intelligence; because in assuring internal peace and continuous progress, it guarantees the land against bloody revolutions and silent decay. All these advantages are perpetually present to his eyes; and whoever attacks the liberty, which forms their foundation, becomes at once his enemy. Macaulay cannot look calmly on the oppression of man; every outrage on human will hurts him like a personal outrage. At every step bitter words escape him, and the stale adulation of courtiers, which he meets with, brings to his lips a sarcasm the more violent from being the more deserved. Pitt, he says, at college wrote Latin verses on the death of George I. In this piece “the Muses are earnestly entreated to weep over the urn of Caesar:
for Cæsar, says the poet, loved the muses; Cæsar, who could not read a line of Pope, and who loved nothing but punch and fat women.”¹ Elsewhere, in the biography of Miss Burney, he relates how the poor young lady, having become celebrated by her two first novels, received as a reward, and as a great favour, a place of keeper of the robes of Queen Charlotte; how, worn out with watching, sick, nearly dying, she asked as a favour the permission to depart; how “the sweet queen” was indignant at this impertinence, unable to understand that anyone could refuse to die in and for her service, or that a woman of letters should prefer health, life, and glory to the honour of folding her Majesty’s dresses. But it is when Macaulay comes to the history of the Revolution that he hauls to justice and vengeance those men who violated the rights of the public, who hated and betrayed the national cause, who outraged liberty. He does not speak as a historian, but as a contemporary; it seems as though his life and his honour were at stake, that he pleaded for himself, that he was a member of the Long Parliament, that he heard at the door the muskets and swords of the guards sent to arrest Pym and Hampden. M. Guizot has related the same history; but we recognise in his book the calm judgment and impartial emotion of a philosopher. He does not condemn the actions of Strafford or Charles; he explains them; he shows in Strafford the imperious character, the domineering genius which feels itself born to command and to crush opposition, whom an invincible bent rouses against the law or the right which restrains him, who oppresses from a sort of inner craving, and who is made to govern as a sword is to strike.

¹ Macaulay, vi. 39; An Essay on William Pitt, Earl of Chatham.
He shows in Charles the innate respect for royalty, the belief in divine right, the rooted conviction that every remonstrance or demand is an insult to his crown, an outrage on his rights, an impious and criminal sedition. Thenceforth we see in the strife of king and parliament but the strife of two doctrines; we cease to take an interest in one or the other, to take an interest in both; we are spectators of a drama; we are no longer judges at a trial. But it is a trial which Macaulay conducts before us; he takes a side in it; his account is the address of a public prosecutor before the court, the most entrancing, the most acrimonious, the best reasoned, that was ever written. He approves of the condemnation of Strafford; he honours and admires Cromwell; he exalts the character of the Puritans; he praises *Hampden to such a degree, that he calls him the equal of Washington; he has no words scornful and insulting enough for Laud; and what is more terrible, each of his judgments is justified by as many quotations, authorities, historic precedents, arguments, conclusive proofs, as the vast erudition of Hallam or the calm dialectics of Mackintosh could have assembled. Judge of this transport of passion and this withering logic by a single passage:

"For more than ten years the people had seen the rights which were theirs by a double claim, by immemorial inheritance and by recent purchase, infringed by the perfidious King who had recognised them. At length circumstances compelled Charles to summon another parliament: another chance was given to our fathers: were they to throw it away as they had thrown away the former? Were they again to be cozened by le Roi le veut? Were they again to advance their money on pledges which had been forfeited over and over again? Were they to lay a second Petition of Right at the foot of the throne.
to grant another lavish aid in exchange for another unmeaning ceremony, and then to take their departure, till, after ten years more of fraud and oppression, their prince should again require a supply and again repay it with a perjury? They were compelled to choose whether they would trust a tyrant or conquer him. We think that they chose wisely and nobly.

"The advocates of Charles, like the advocates of other malefactors against whom overwhelming evidence is produced, generally decline all controversy about the facts, and content themselves with calling testimony to character. He had so many private virtues! And had James the Second no private virtues? Was Oliver Cromwell, his bitterest enemies themselves being judges, destitute of private virtues? And what, after all, are the virtues ascribed to Charles? A religious zeal, not more sincere than that of his son, and fully as weak and narrow-minded, and a few of the ordinary household decencies which half the tombstones in England claim for those who lie beneath them. A good father! A good husband! "Ample apologies indeed for fifteen years of persecution, tyranny, and falsehood!

"We charge him with having broken his coronation oath; and we are told that he kept his marriage vow! We accuse him of having given up his people to the merciless inflictions of the most hot-headed and hard-hearted of prelates; and the defence is, that he took his little son on his knee and kissed him! We censure him for having violated the articles of the Petition of Right, after having, for good and valuable consideration, promised to observe them; and we are informed that he was accustomed to hear prayers at six o'clock in the morning! It is to such considerations as these, together with his Vandyke dress, his handsome face, and his peaked beard, that he owes, we verily believe, most of his popularity with the present generation.

"For ourselves, we own that we do not understand the common phrase, a good man, but a bad king. We can as easily
conceive a good man and an unnatural father, or a good man and a treacherous friend. We cannot, in estimating the character of an individual, leave out of our consideration his conduct in the most important of all human relations; and if in that relation we find him to have been selfish, cruel, and deceitful, we shall take the liberty to call him a bad man, in spite of all his temperance at table, and all his regularity at chapel.”

This is for the father; now the son will receive something. The reader will perceive, by the furious invective, what excessive rancour the government of the Stuarts left in the heart of a patriot, a Whig, a Protestant, and an Englishman:

“Then came those days, never to be recalled without a blush, the days of servitude without loyalty and sensuality without love, of dwarfish talents and gigantic vices, the paradise of cold hearts and narrow minds, the golden age of the coward, the bigot, and the slave. The King cringed to his rival that he might trample on his people, sank into a viceroy of France, and pocketed, with complacent infamy, her degrading insults, and her more degrading gold. The caresses of harlots, and the jests of buffoons, regulated the policy of the state. The government had just ability enough to deceive, and just religion enough to persecute. The principles of liberty were the scoff of every grinning courtier, and the Anathema Maranatha of every fawning dean. In every high place, worship was paid to Charles and James, Belial and Moloch; and England propitiated those obscene and cruel ids with the blood of her best and bravest children. Crime succeeded to crime, and disgrace to disgrace, till the race accursed of God and man was a second time driven forth, to wander on the face of the earth, and to be a by-word and a shaking of the head to the nations.”

This piece, with all the biblical metaphors, which has

1 Macaulay, v. 27; Milton. 2 Ibid. v. 35; Milton.
preserved something of the tone of Milton and the Puritan prophets, shows to what an issue the various tendencies of this great mind were turning—what was its bent—how the practical spirit, science and historic talent, the unvaried presence of moral and religious ideas, love of country and justice, concurred to make of Macaulay the historian of liberty.

V.

In this his talent assisted him; for his opinions are akin to his talent.

What first strikes us in him is the extreme solidity of his mind. He proves all that he says, with astonishing vigour and authority. We are almost certain never to go astray in following him. If he cites a witness, he begins by measuring the veracity and intelligence of the authors quoted, and by correcting the errors they may have committed, through negligence or partiality. If he pronounces a judgment, he relies on the most certain facts, the clearest principles, the simplest and most logical deductions. If he develops an argument, he never loses himself in a digression; he always has his goal before his eyes; he advances towards it by the surest and straightest road. If he rises to general considerations he mounts step by step through all the grades of generalisation, without omitting one; he feels his way every instant; he neither adds nor subtracts from facts; he desires at the cost of every precaution and research, to arrive at the precise truth. He knows an infinity of details of every kind; he owns a great number of philosophic ideas of every species; but his erudition is as well tempered as his philosophy, and
both constitute a coin worthy of circulation amongst all thinking minds. We feel that he believes nothing without reason; that if we doubted one of the facts which he advances, or one of the views which he propounds, we should at once encounter a multitude of authentic documents and a serried phalanx of convincing arguments. In France and Germany we are too much accustomed to receive hypotheses for historic laws, and doubtful anecdotes for attested events. We too often see whole systems established, from day to day, according to the caprice of a writer; a sort of castles in the air, whose regular arrangement simulates the appearance of genuine edifices, and which vanish at a breath, when we come to touch them. We have all made theories, in a fireside discussion, in case of need, when for lack of argument we required some fictitious reasoning, like those Chinese generals who, to terrify their enemies, placed amongst their troops formidable monsters of painted cardboard. We have judged men at random, under the impression of the moment, on a detached action, an isolated document; and we have dressed them up with vices or virtues, folly or genius, without controlling by logic or criticism the hazardous decisions to which our precipitation had carried us. Thus we feel a deep satisfaction and a sort of internal peace, on leaving so many doctrines of ephemeral bloom in our books or reviews, to follow the steady gait of a guide so clear-sighted, reflective, instructed, able to lead us aright. We understand why the English accuse the French of being frivolous, and the Germans of being chimerical. Macaulay brings to the moral sciences that spirit of circumspection, that desire for certainty, and that instinct of truth, which make up the practical mind, and
which from the time of Bacon have constituted the scientific merit and power of his nation. If art and beauty loose by this, truth and certainty are gained; and no one, for instance, would blame our author for inserting the following demonstration in the life of Addison:

"He (Pope) asked Addison's advice. Addison said that the poem as it stood was a delicious little thing, and entreated Pope not to run the risk of marring what was so excellent in trying to mend it. Pope afterwards declared that this insidious counsel first opened his eyes to the baseness of him who gave it.

"Now there can be no doubt that Pope's plan was most ingenious, and that he afterwards executed it with great skill and success. But does it necessarily follow that Addison's advice was bad? And if Addison's advice was bad, does it necessarily follow that it was given from bad motives? If a friend were to ask us whether we would advise him to risk his all in a lottery of which the chances were ten to one against him, we should do our best to dissuade him from running such a risk. Even if he were so lucky as to get the thirty thousand pound prize, we should not admit that we had counselled him ill; and we should certainly think it the height of injustice in him to accuse us of having been actuated by malice. We think Addison's advice good advice. It rested on a sound principle, the result of long and wide experience. The general rule undoubtedly is that, when a successful work of imagination has been produced, it should not be recast. We cannot at this moment call to mind a single instance in which this rule has been transgressed with happy effect, except the instance of the Rape of the Lock. Tasso recast his Jerusalem, Akenside recast his Pleasures of the Imagination and his Epistle to Curio. Pope himself, emboldened no doubt by the success with which he had expanded and remodelled the Rape of the Lock, made the same experiment on the Dunciad. All these attempts failed.
Who was to foresee that Pope would, once in his life, be able to do what he could not himself do twice, and what nobody else has ever done?

"Addison's advice was good. But had it been bad, why should we pronounce it dishonest? Scott tells us that one of his best friends predicted the failure of Waverley. Herder adjured Goethe not to take so unpromising a subject as Faust. Hume tried to dissuade Robertson from writing the History of Charles the Fifth. Nay, Pope himself was one of those who prophesied that Cato would never succeed on the stage, and advised Addison to print it without risking a representation. But Scott, Goethe, Robertson, Addison, had the good sense and generosity to give their advisers credit for the best intentions. Pope's heart was not of the same kind with theirs."  

What does the reader think of this dilemma, and this double series of inductions? The demonstrations would not be more studied or rigorous, if a physical law were in question.

This demonstrative talent was increased by his talent for development. Macaulay enlightens inattentive minds, as well as he convinces opposing minds; he manifests, as well as he persuades, and spreads as much evidence over obscure questions as certitude over doubtful points. It is impossible not to understand him; he approaches the subject under every aspect, he turns it over on every side; it seems as though he addressed himself to every spectator, and studied to make himself understood by every individual; he calculates the scope of every mind, and seeks for each a fit mode of exposition; he takes us all by the hand, and leads us alternately to the end, which he has marked out beforehand. He sets out from the simplest facts, he descends

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1 Macaulay, vii. 109; Life and Writings of Addison.
to our level, he brings himself even with our mind; he
spares us the pain of the slightest effort; then he leads
us on, and smooths the road throughout; we rise gradu-
ally without perceiving the slope, and at the end we
find ourselves at the top, after having walked as easily
as on the plain. When a subject is obscure, he is not
content with a first explanation; he gives a second,
then—a third: he sheds light in abundance from all sides,
he searches for it in all regions of history; and the
wonderful thing is, that he is never prolix. In reading
him we find ourselves in our proper sphere; we feel as
though we could understand; we are annoyed to have
taken twilight so long for day; we rejoice to see this
abounding light rising and leaping forth in torrents;
the exact style, the antithesis of ideas, the harmonious
construction, the artfully balanced paragraphs, the
vigoruous summaries, the regular sequence of thoughts,
the frequent comparisons, the fine arrangement of the
whole—not an idea or phrase of his writings in which
the talent and the desire to explain, the characteristic
of an orator, does not shine forth. Macaulay was a
member of Parliament, and spoke so well, we are told,
that he was listened to for the mere pleasure of listen-
ing. The habit of public speaking is perhaps the cause
of this incomparable lucidity. To convince a great
assembly, we must address all the members; to rivet
the attention of absent-minded and weary men, we
must save them from all fatigue; they must take in too
much in order to take in enough. Public speaking
vulgarises ideas; it drags truth from the height at
which it dwells, with some thinkers, to bring it amongst
the crowd; it reduces it to the level of ordinary minds,
who, without this intervention, would only have seen it
from afar, and high above them. Thus, when great orators consent to write, they are the most powerful of writers; they make philosophy popular; they lift all minds a stage higher, and seem to enlarge human intelligence. In the hands of Cicero, the dogmas of the Stoics and the dialectics of the Academicians lose their prickles. The subtle Greek arguments become united and easy; the hard problems of providence, immortality, highest good, become public property. Senators, men of business, lawyers, lovers of formulas and procedure, the massive and narrow intelligence of publicists, comprehend the deductions of Chrysippus; and the book *De Officiis* has made the morality of Panætius popular. In our days, M. Thiers, in his two great histories, has placed within reach of everybody the most involved questions of strategy and finance; if he would write a course of political economy for street-porters, I am sure he would be understood; and pupils of the lower classes at school have been able to read M. Guizot’s *History of Civilisation*.

When, with the faculty for proof and explanation, a man feels the desire of proving, he arrives at vehemence. These serried and multiplied arguments which all tend to a single aim, those reiterated logical points, returning every instant, one upon the other, to shake the opponent, give heat and passion to the style. Rarely was eloquence more captivating than Macaulay’s. He has the oratorical afflatus; all his phrases have a tone; we feel that he would govern minds, that he is irritated by resistance, that he fights as he discusses. In his books the discussion always seizes and carries away the reader; it advances evenly, with accumulating force, straightforward, like those great American rivers, impetu-
ous as a torrent and wide as a sea. This abundance of thought and style, this multitude of explanations, ideas, and facts, this vast aggregate of historical knowledge goes rolling on, urged forward by internal passion, sweeping away objections in its course, and adding to the dash of eloquence the irresistible force of its mass and weight. We might say that the history of James II. is a discourse in two volumes, spoken without stopping, and with never-failing voice. We see the oppression and discontent begin, increase, widen, the partisans of James abandoning him one by one, the idea of revolution arise in all hearts, confirmed, fixed, the preparations made, the event approaching, growing imminent, then suddenly falling on the blind and unjust monarch, and sweeping away his throne and dynasty, with the violence of a foreseen and fatal tempest. True eloquence is that which thus perfects argument by emotion, which reproduces the unity of events by the unity of passion, which repeats the motion and the chain of facts by the motion and the chain of ideas. It is a genuine imitation of nature; more complete than pure analysis; it reanimates beings; its dash and vehemence form part of science and of truth. Of whatever subject Macaulay treats, political economy, morality, philosophy, literature, history, he is impassioned for his subject. The current which bears away events, excites in him, as soon as he sees it, a current which bears forward his thought. He does not set forth his opinion; he pleads it. He has that energetic, sustained, and vibrating tone which bows down opposition and conquers belief. His thought is an active force; it is imposed on the hearer; it attacks him with such superiority, falls upon him with such a train of proofs, such
a manifest and legitimate authority, such a powerful impulse, that we never think of resisting it; and it masters the heart by its vehemence, whilst at the same time it masters the reason by its evidence.

All these gifts are common to orators; they are found in different proportions and degrees, in men like Cicero and Livy, Bourdaloue and Bossuet, Fox and Burke. These fine and solid minds form a natural family, and all have for their chief feature the habit and talent of passing from particular to general ideas, orderly and successively, as we climb a ladder by setting our feet one after the other on every round. The inconvenience of this art is the use of commonplace. They who practise it do not depict objects with precision; they fall easily into vague rhetoric. They hold in their hands ready-made developments, a sort of portable scales, equally applicable on both sides of the same and every question. They continue willingly in a middle region, amongst the tirades and arguments of the special pleader, with an indifferent knowledge of the human heart, and a fair number of amplifications on that which is useful and just. In France and at Rome, amongst the Latin races, especially in the seventeenth century, these men love to hover above the earth, amidst grand words or general considerations, in the style of the drawing-room and the academy. They do not descend to minor facts, convincing details, circumstantial examples of every-day life. They are more inclined to plead than to prove. In this Macaulay is distinguished from them. His principle is, that a special fact has more hold on the mind than a general reflection. He knows that, to give men a clear and vivid idea, they must be brought back
to their personal experience. He remarks\textsuperscript{1} that, in order to make them realise a storm, the only method is to recall to them some storm which they have themselves seen and heard, with which their memory is still charged, and which still re-echoes through all their senses. He practises in his style the philosophy of Bacon and Locke. With him, as well as with them, the origin of every idea is a sensation. Every complicated argument, every entire conception, has certain particular facts for its only support. It is so for every structure of ideas, as well as for a scientific theory. Beneath long calculations, algebraical formulas, subtle deductions, written volumes which contain the combinations and elaborations of learned minds, there are two or three sensible experiences, two or three little facts on which we may lay our finger, a turn of the wheel in a machine, a scalpel-cut in a living body, an unlooked-for colour in a liquid. These are decisive specimens. The whole substance of theory, the whole force of proof, is contained in this. Truth is here, as a nut in its shell: painful and ingenious discussion adds nothing thereto; it only extracts the nut. Thus, if we would rightly prove, we must before everything present these specimens, insist upon them, make them visible and tangible to the reader, as far as may be done in words. This is difficult, for words are not things. The only resource of the writer is to employ words which bring things before the eyes. For this he must appeal to the reader's personal observation, set out from his experience, compare the unknown objects presented to him with the known objects which he sees every day, place

\textsuperscript{1} See in his \textit{Essay on the Life and Writings of Addison} (vii. 78) Macaulay's observations on the \textit{Campaign}. 
past events beside contemporary events. Macaulay always has before his mind English imaginations, full of English images, I mean full of the detailed and present recollections of a London Street, a dram-shop, a wretched alley, an afternoon in Hyde Park, a moist green landscape, a white ivy-covered country-house, a clergyman in a white tie, a sailor in a sou'-wester. He has recourse to such recollections; he makes them still more precise by descriptions and statistics; he notes colours and qualities; he has a passion for exactness; his descriptions are worthy both of a painter and a topographer; he writes like a man who sees a physical and sensible object, and who at the same time classifies and weighs it. We will see him carry his figures even to moral or literary worth, assign to an action, a virtue, a book, a talent, its compartment and its step in the scale, with such clearness and relief, that we could easily imagine ourselves in a classified museum, not of stuffed skins, but of feeling, suffering, living animals.

Consider, for instance, these phrases, by which he tries to render visible to an English public, events in India:

"During that interval the business of a servant of the Company was simply to wring out of the natives a hundred or two hundred thousand pounds as speedily as possible, that he might return home before his constitution had suffered from the heat, to marry a peer's daughter, to buy rotten boroughs in Cornwall, and to give balls in St. James's Square.\(^1\) . . . There was still a nabob of Bengal, who stood to the English rulers of his country in the same relation in which Augustulus stood to Odoacer, or the last Merovingians to Charles Martel and Pepin. He lived at Moorshedabad, surrounded by princely magnificence. He was

\(^1\) Macaulay, vi. 549; Warren Hastings.
approached with outward marks of reverence, and his name was
used in public instruments. But in the government of the
country he had less real share than the youngest writer or cadet
in the Company's service.”

Of Nuncomar, the native servant of the Company, he writes;

“Of his moral character it is difficult to give a notion to
those who are acquainted with human nature only as it appears
in our island. What the Italian is to the Englishman, what the
Hindoo is to the Italian, what the Bengalee is to other Hindoos,
that was Nuncomar to other Bengalees. The physical organiza-
tion of the Bengalee is feeble even to effeminacy. He lives in a
constant vapour bath. His pursuits are sedentary, his limbs
delicate, his movements languid. During many ages he has
been trampled upon by men of bolder and more hardy breeds.
Courage, independence, veracity, are qualities to which his con-
stitution and his situation are equally unfavourable. His mind
bears a singular analogy to his body. It is weak even to help-
lessness, for purposes of manly resistance; but its suppleness
and its tact move the children of sterner climates to admiration
not unmingled with contempt. All those arts which are the
natural defence of the weak are more familiar to this subtle race
than to the Ionian of the time of Juvenal, or to the Jew of the
dark ages. What the horns are to the buffalo, what the paw is
to the tiger, what the sting is to the bee, what beauty, accord-
ing to the old Greek song, is to woman, deceit is to the Ben-
galee. Large promises, smooth excuses, elaborate tissues of cir-
cumstantial falsehood, chicanery, perjury, forgery, are the
weapons, offensive and defensive, of the people of the Lower
Ganges. All those millions do not furnish one sepoy to the
armies of the Company. But as usurers, as money-changers,
as sharp legal practitioners, no class of human beings can bear
a comparison with them.”

1 Macaulay, vi. 553; Warren Hastings.

2 Ibid. 555.
It was such men and such affairs, which were to provide Burke with the amallest and most brilliant subject-matter for his eloquence; and when Macaulay described the distinctive talent of the great orator, he described his own:

"He (Burke) had, in the highest degree, that noble faculty whereby man is able to live in the past and in the future, in the distant and in the unreal. India and its inhabitants were not to him, as to most Englishmen, mere names and abstractions, but a real country and a real people. The burning sun, the strange vegetation of the palm and the cocoa-tree, the rice-field, the tank, the huge trees, older than the Mogul empire, under which the village crowds assemble; the thatched roof of the peasant's hut; the rich tracery of the mosque where the imam prays with his face to Mecca, the drums, and banners, and gaudy idols, the devotee swinging in the air, the graceful maiden, with the pitcher on her head, descending the steps to the river-side, the black faces, the long beards, the yellow streaks of sect, the turbans and the flowing robes, the spears and the silver maces, the elephants with their canopies of state, the gorgeous palanquin of the prince, and the close litter of the noble lady, all those things were to him as the objects amidst which his own life had been passed, as the objects which lay on the road between Beaconsfield and St. James's Street. All India was present to the eye of his mind, from the halls where suitors laid gold and perfumes at the feet of sovereigns, to the wild moor where the gipsy camp was pitched, from the bazaar, humming like a bee-hive with the crowd of buyers and sellers, to the jungle where the lonely courier shakes his bunch of iron rings to scare away the hyænas. He had just as lively an idea of the insurrection at Benares as of Lord George Gordon's riots, and of the execution of Nuncomar as of the execution of Dr. Dodd. Oppression in Bengal was to him the same thing as oppression in the streets of London." ¹

¹ Macaulay, vi. 619; Warren Hastings.
VI.

Other forms of his talent are more peculiarly English. Macaulay has a rough touch; when he strikes, he knocks down. Béranger sings:

"Chez nous, point,
Point de ces coups de poing
Qui sont tant d'honneur à l'Angleterre." ¹

And a French reader would be astonished if he heard a great historian treat an illustrious poet in this style:

"But in all those works in which Mr. Southey has completely abandoned narration, and has undertaken to argue moral and political questions, his failure has been complete and ignominious. On such occasions his writings are rescued from utter contempt and derision solely by the beauty and purity of the English. We find, we confess, so great a charm in Mr. Southey's style that, even when he writes nonsense, we generally read it with pleasure, except indeed when he tries to be droll. A more insufferable jester never existed. He very often attempts to be humorous, and yet we do not remember a single occasion on which he has succeeded further than to be quaintly and flippantly dull. In one of his works he tells us that Bishop Spratt was very properly so called, inasmuch as he was a very small poet. And in the book now before us he cannot quote Francis Bugg, the renegade Quaker, without a remark on his unsavoury name. A wise man might talk folly like this by his own fireside; but that any human being, after having made such a joke should write it down, and copy it out, and transmit it to the printer, and correct the proof-sheets, and send it forth into the world, is enough to make us ashamed of our species." ²

¹ Béranger, Chansons, 2 vols. 1853; Les Bozeurs, ou L'Anglomanie
² Macaulay, v. 233; Southey's Colloquies on Society.
We may imagine that Macaulay does not treat the dead better than the living. Thus he speaks of Archbishop Laud:

"The severest punishment which the two Houses could have inflicted on him would have been to set him at liberty and send him to Oxford. There he might have staid, tortured by his own diabolical temper, hungering for Puritans to pillory and mangle, plaguing the Cavaliers, for want of somebody else to plague, with his peevishness and absurdity, performing grimaces and antics in the cathedral, continuing that incomparable diary, which we never see without forgetting the vices of his heart in the imbecility of his intellect, minuting down his dreams, counting the drops of blood which fell from his nose, watching the direction of the salt, and listening for the note of the screech-owls. Contemptuous mercy was the only vengeance which it became the Parliament to take on such a ridiculous old bigot." ¹

While he jests he remains grave, as do almost all the writers of his country. Humour consists in saying extremely comical things in a solemn tone, and in preserving a lofty style and ample phraseology, at the very moment when the author is making all his hearers laugh. Such is the beginning of an article on a new historian of Burleigh:

"The work of Dr. Nares has filled us with astonishment similar to that which Captain Lemuel Gulliver felt when first he landed in Brobdingnag, and saw corn as high as the oaks in the New Forest, thimbles as large as buckets, and wrens of the bulk of turkeys. The whole book, and every component part of it, is on a gigantic scale. The title is as long as an ordinary preface; the prefatory matter would furnish out an ordinary book: and the book contains as much reading as an ordinary

¹ Macaulay, v. 204; Hallam’s Constitutional History.
library. We cannot sum up the merits of the stupendous mass of paper which lies before us better than by saying that it consists of about two thousand closely printed quarto pages, that it occupies fifteen hundred inches cubic measure, and that it weighs sixty pounds avoirdupois. Such a book might, before the deluge, have been considered as light reading by Hilpah and Shalum. But unhappily the life of man is now three score years and ten; and we cannot but think it somewhat unfair in Dr. Nares to demand from us so large a portion of so short an existence."

This comparison, borrowed from Swift, is a mockery in Swift’s taste. Mathematics become in English hands an excellent means of raillery; and we remember how the Dean, comparing Roman and English generosity by numbers, overwhelmed Marlborough by a sum in addition. Humour employs against the people it attacks, positive facts, commercial arguments, odd contrasts drawn from ordinary life. This surprises and perplexes the reader, without warning; he falls abruptly into some familiar and grotesque detail; the shock is violent; he bursts out laughing without being much amused; the trigger is pulled so suddenly and so roughly, that it is like a knockdown blow. For instance, Macaulay is refuting those who would not print the indecent classical authors:

"We find it difficult to believe that, in a world so full of temptations as this, any gentleman whose life would have been virtuous if he had not read Aristophanes and Juvenal will be made vicious by reading them. A man who, exposed to all the influences of such a state of society as that in which we live, is yet afraid of exposing himself to the influence of a few Greek or Latin verses, acts, we think, much like the felon who begged

1 Macaulay, v. 567; Burleigh and his Times.
the sheriffs to let him have an umbrella held over his head from the door of Newgate to the gallows, because it was a drizzling morning, and he was apt to take cold." ¹

Irony, sarcasm, the bitterest kinds of pleasanty, are the rule with Englishmen. They tear when they scratch. To be convinced of this, we should compare French scandal, as Molière represents it in the *Misanthrope*, with English scandal as Sheridan represents it, imitating Molière and the *Misanthrope*. Célimène pricks, but does not wound; Lady Sneerwell's friends wound, and leave bloody marks on all the reputations which they handle. The raillery, which I am about to give, is one of Macaulay's tenderest:

"They (the ministers) therefore gave the command to Lord Galway, an experienced veteran, a man who was in war what Molière's doctors were in medicine, who thought it much more honourable to fail according to rule, than to succeed by innovation, and who would have been very much ashamed of himself if he had taken Monjuich by means so strange as those which Peterborough employed. This great commander conducted the campaign of 1707 in the most scientific manner. On the plain of Almanza he encountered the army of the Bourbons. He drew up his troops according to the methods prescribed by the best writers, and in a few hours lost eighteen thousand men, a hundred and twenty-standards, all his baggage and all his artillery." ²

These incivilities are all the stronger, because the ordinary tone is noble and serious.

Hitherto we have seen only the reasoner, the scholar, the orator, and the wit: there is still in Macaulay a poet; and if we had not read his *Lays of Ancient Rome*,

¹ *Macaulay*, vi. 491; *Comic Dramatists of the Restoration*.
it would suffice to read a few of his periods, in which the imagination, long held in check by the severity of the proof, breaks out suddenly in splendid metaphors, and expands into magnificent comparisons, worthy by their amplitude of being introduced into an epic:

"Ariosto tells a pretty story of a fairy, who, by some mysterious law of her nature, was condemned to appear at certain seasons in the form of a foul and poisonous snake. Those who injured her during the period of her disguise were for ever excluded from participation in the blessings which she bestowed. But to those who, in spite of her loathsome aspect, pitied and protected her, she afterwards revealed herself in the beautiful and celestial form which was natural to her, accompanied their steps, granted all their wishes, filled their houses with wealth, made them happy in love and victorious in war. Such a spirit is Liberty. At times she takes the form of a hateful reptile. She grovels, she hisses, she stings. But woe to those who in disgust shall venture to crush her! And happy are those who, having dared to receive her in her degraded and frightful shape, shall at length be rewarded by her in the time of her beauty and her glory!"  

These noble words come from the heart; the fount is full, and though it flows, it never becomes dry. As soon as the writer speaks of a cause which he loves, as soon as he sees Liberty rise before him, with Humanity and Justice, Poetry bursts forth spontaneously from his soul, and sets her crown on the brows of her noble sisters:

"The Reformation is an event long past. That volcano has spent its rage. The wide waste produced by its outbreak is forgotten. The landmarks which were swept away have been

1 Macaulay, v. 31; Milton.
replaced. The ruined edifices have been repaired. The lava has covered with a rich incrustation the fields which it once devastated, and, after having turned a beautiful and fruitful garden into a desert, has again turned the desert into a still more beautiful and fruitful garden. The second great eruption is not yet over. The marks of its ravages are still all around us. The ashes are still hot beneath our feet. In some directions, the deluge of fire still continues to spread. Yet experience surely entitles us to believe that this explosion, like that which preceded it, will fertilise the soil which it has devastated. Already, in those parts which have suffered most severely, rich cultivation and secure dwellings have begun to appear amidst the waste. The more we read of the history of past ages, the more we observe the signs of our own times, the more do we feel our hearts filled and swelled up by a good hope for the future destinies of the human race.”

I ought, perhaps, in concluding this analysis, to point out the imperfections caused by these high qualities; how ease, charm, a vein of amiability, variety, simplicity, playfulness, are wanting in this manly eloquence, this solid reasoning, and this glowing dialectic; why the art of writing and classical purity are not always found in this partisan, fighting from his platform; in short, why an Englishman is not a Frenchman or an Athenian. I prefer to transcribe another passage, the solemnity and magnificence of which will give some idea of the grave and rich ornament, which Macaulay throws over his narrative, a sort of potent vegetation, flowers of brilliant purple, like those which are spread over every page of Paradise Lost and Childe Harold. Warren Hastings had returned from India, and had just been placed on his trial:

1 Macaulay, v. 595: Burleigh and his Times.
"On the thirteenth of February 1788, the sittings of the Court commenced. There have been spectacles more dazzling to the eye, more gorgeous with jewellery and cloth of gold, more attractive to grown-up children, than that which was then exhibited at Westminster; but, perhaps, there never was a spectacle so well calculated to strike a highly cultivated, a reflecting, an imaginative mind. All the various kinds of interests which belong to the near and to the distant, to the present and to the past, were collected on one spot, and in one hour. All the talents and all the accomplishments which are developed by liberty and civilisation were now displayed, with every advantage that could be derived both from co-operation and from contrast. Every step in the proceedings carried the mind either backward, through many troubled centuries, to the days when the foundations of our constitution were laid; or far away, over boundless seas and deserts, to dusky nations living under strange stars, worshipping strange gods, and writing strange characters from right to left. The High Court of Parliament was to sit, according to forms handed down from the days of the Plantagenets, on an Englishman accused of exercising tyranny over the lord of the holy city of Benares, and over the ladies of the princely house of Oude.

"The place was worthy of such a trial. It was the great Hall of William Rufus, the hall which had resounded with acclamations at the inauguration of thirty kings, the hall which had witnessed the just sentence of Bacon and the just absolution of Somers, the hall where the eloquence of Strafford had for a moment awed and melted a victorious party inflamed with just resentment, the hall where Charles had confronted the High Court of Justice with the placid courage which has half redeemed his fame. Neither military nor civil pomp was wanting. The avenues were lined with grenadiers. The streets were kept clear by cavalry. The peers, robed in gold and ermine, were marshalled by the heralds under Garter King-at-arms. The judges in their vestments of state attended to give
advice on points of law. Near a hundred and seventy lords, three-fourths of the Upper House as the Upper House then was, walked in solemn order from their usual place of assembling to the tribunal. The junior baron present led the way, George Eliott, Lord Heathfield, recently ennobled for his memorable defence of Gibraltar against the fleets and armies of France and Spain. The long procession was closed by the Duke of Norfolk, Earl Marshal of the realm, by the great dignitaries, and by the brothers and sons of the King. Last of all came the Prince of Wales, conspicuous by his fine person and noble bearing. The grey old walls were hung with scarlet. The long galleries were crowded by an audience such as has rarely excited the fears or the emulation of an orator. There were gathered together, from all parts of a great, free, enlightened, and prosperous empire, grace and female loveliness, wit and learning, the representatives of every science and of every art. There were seated round the Queen the fair-haired young daughters of the house of Brunswick. There the Ambassadors of great Kings and Commonwealths gazed with admiration on a spectacle which no other country in the world could present. There Siddons, in the prime of her majestic beauty, looked with emotion on a scene surpassing all the imitations of the stage. There the historian of the Roman Empire thought of the days when Cicero pleaded the cause of Sicily against Verres, and when, before a senate which still retained some show of freedom, Tacitus thundered against the oppressor of Africa. There were seen, side by side, the greatest painter and the greatest scholar of the age. The spectacle had allured Reynolds from that easel which has preserved to us the thoughtful foreheads of so many writers and statesmen, and the sweet smiles of so many noble matrons. It had induced Parr to suspend his labours in that dark and profound mine from which he had extracted a vast treasure of erudition, a treasure too often buried in the earth, too often paraded with injudicious and inelegant ostentation, but still precious, massive, and splendid. There appeared the
voluptuous charms of her to whom the heir of the throne had in secret plighted his faith. There too was she, the beautiful mother of a beautiful race, the Saint Cecilia whose delicate features, lighted up by love and music, art has rescued from the common decay. There were the members of that brilliant society which quoted, criticised, and exchanged repartees, under the rich peacock-hangings of Mrs. Montague. And there the ladies whose lips, more persuasive than those of Fox himself, had carried the Westminster election against palace and treasury, shone round Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire.”¹

This evocation of the national history, glory, and constitution forms a picture of a unique kind. The species of patriotism and poetry which it reveals is an abstract of Macaulay’s talent; and the talent, like the picture, is thoroughly English.

VII.

Thus prepared, he entered upon the History of England; and he chose therefrom the period best suited to his political opinions, his style, his passion, his knowledge, the national taste, the sympathy of Europe. He related the establishment of the English constitution, and concentrated all the rest of history about this unique event, “the finest in the world,” to the mind of an Englishman and a politician. He brought to this work a new method of great beauty, extreme power; its success has been extraordinary. When the second volume appeared, 30,000 copies were ordered beforehand. Let us try to describe this history, to connect it with that method, and that method to that order of mind.

¹ Macaulay, vi. 628; Warren Hastings.
The history is universal, and not broken. It comprehends events of every kind, and treats of them simultaneously. Some have related the history of races, others of classes, others of governments, others of sentiments, ideas, and manners; Macaulay has related all.

“I should very imperfectly execute the task which I have undertaken if I were merely to treat of battles and sieges, of the rise and fall of administrations, of intrigues in the palace, and of debates in the parliament. It will be my endeavour to relate the history of the people as well as the history of the government, to trace the progress of useful and ornamental arts, to describe the rise of religious sects and the changes of literary taste, to portray the manners of successive generations, and not to pass by with neglect even the revolutions which have taken place in dress, furniture, repasts, and public amusements. I shall cheerfully bear the reproach of having descended below the dignity of history, if I can succeed in placing before the English of the nineteenth century a true picture of the life of their ancestors.”

He kept his word. He has omitted nothing, and passed nothing by. His portraits are mingled with his narrative. We find those of Danby, Nottingham, Shrewsbury, Howe, during the account of a session, between two parliamentary divisions. Short curious anecdotes, domestic details, the description of furniture, intersect, without disjointing, the record of a war. Quitting the narrative of important business, we gladly look upon the Dutch tastes of William, the Chinese museum, the grottos, the mazes, aviaries, ponds, geometrical garden-beds, with which he defaced Hampton.

1 Macaulay, i. 2; History of England before the Restoration, ch. i.
Court. A political dissertation precedes or follows the relation of a battle; at other times the author is a tourist or a psychologist before becoming a politician or a tactician. He describes the highlands of Scotland, semi-papistical and semi-pagan, the seers wrapped in bulls' hides to await the moment of inspiration, Christians making libations of milk or beer to the demons of the place; pregnant women, girls of eighteen, working a wretched patch of oats, whilst their husbands or fathers, athletic men, basked in the sun; robbery and barbarities looked upon as honourable deeds; men stabbed from behind or burnt alive; repulsive food, coarse oats, and cakes made of the blood of a live cow, offered to guests as a mark of favour and politeness; infected hovels where men lay on the bare ground, and where they woke up half smothered, half blinded by the smoke, and half mad with the itch. The next instant he stops to mark a change in the public taste, the horror then experienced on account of these brigands' retreats, this country of wild rocks and barren moors; the admiration now felt for this land of heroic warriors, this country of grand mountains, seething waterfalls, picturesque defiles. He finds in the progress of physical welfare the causes of this moral revolution, and concludes that, if we praise mountains and an uncivilised life, it is because we are satiated with security. He is successively an economist, a literary man, a publicist, an artist, a historian, a biographer, a story-teller, even a philosopher; by this diversity of parts he imitates the diversity of human life, and presents to the eyes, heart, mind, all the faculties of man, the complete history of the civilisation of his country.

Others, like Hume, have tried or are trying to do it
They set forth now religious matters, a little further political events, then literary details, finally general considerations on the change of society and government, believing that a collection of histories is history, and that parts joined endwise are a body. Macaulay did not believe it and he did well. Though English, he had the spirit of harmony. So many accumulated events form with him not a total, but a whole. Explanations, accounts, dissertations, anecdotes, illustrations, comparisons, allusions to modern events, everything is connected in his book. It is because everything is connected in his mind. He had a most lively consciousness of causes; and causes unite facts. By them, scattered events are assembled into a single event; they unite them because they produce them, and the historian, who seeks them all out, cannot fail to perceive or to feel the unity which is their effect. Read, for instance, the voyage of James II. to Ireland: no picture is more curious. Is it, however, nothing more than a curious picture? When the king arrived at Cork, there were no horses to be found. The country is a desert. No more industry, cultivation, civilisation, since the English and Protestant colonists were driven out, robbed, and slain James was received between two hedges of half-naked Rapparees, armed with skeans, stakes, and half-pikes under his horse’s feet they spread by way of carpet the rough frieze mantles, such as the brigands and shepherds wore. He was offered garlands of cabbage stalks for crowns of laurel. In a large district he only found two carts. The palace of the lord-lieutenant in Dublin was so ill built, that the rain drenched the rooms. The king left for Ulster; the French officers thought they were travelling: “through the deserts of Arabia.”
Count d'Avaux wrote to the French court, that, to get one truss of hay they had to send five or six miles. At Charlemont, with great difficulty, as a matter of favour, they obtained a bag of oatmeal for the French legation. The superior officers lay in dens which they would have thought too foul for their dogs. The Irish soldiers were half-savage marauders, who could only shout, cut throats, and disband. Ill fed on potatoes and sour milk, they cast themselves like starved men on the great flocks belonging to the Protestants. They greedily tore the flesh of oxen and sheep, and swallowed it half raw and half rotten. For lack of kettles, they cooked it in the skin. When Lent began, the plunderers generally ceased to devour, but continued to destroy. A peasant would kill a cow merely in order to get a pair of brogues. At times a band slaughtered fifty or sixty beasts, took the skins, and left the bodies to poison the air. The French ambassador reckoned that in six weeks, there had been slain 50,000 horned cattle, which were rotting on the ground. They counted the number of the sheep and lambs slain at 400,000. Cannot the result of the rebellion be seen beforehand? What could be expected of these gluttonous serfs, so stupid and savage? What could be drawn from a devastated land, peopled with robbers? To what kind of discipline could these marauders and butchers be subjected? What resistance will they make on the Boyne, when they see William's old regiments, the furious squadrons of French refugees, the enraged and insulted Protestants of Londonderry and Enniskillen, leap into the river and run with uplifted swords against their muskets? They will flee, the king at their head; and the minute anecdotes scattered
amidst the account of receptions, voyages, and ceremonies, will have announced the victory of the Protestants. The history of manners is thus seen to be involved in the history of events; the one is the cause of the other, and the description explains the narrative.

It is not enough to see some causes; we must see a great many of them. Every event has a multitude. Is it enough for me, if I wish to understand the action of Marlborough or of James, to be reminded of a disposition or a quality which explains it? No; for, since it has for a cause a whole situation and a whole character, I must see at one glance and in abstract the whole character and situation which produced it. Genius concentrates. It is measured by the number of recollections and ideas which it assembles in one point. That which Macaulay has assembled is enormous. I know no historian who has a surer, better furnished, better regulated memory. When he is relating the actions of a man or a party, he sees in an instant all the events of his history, and all the maxims of his conduct; he has all the details present; he remembers them every moment, and a great many of them. He has forgotten nothing; he runs through them as easily, as completely, as surely, as on the day when he enumerated or wrote them. No one has so well taught or known history. He is as much steeped in it as his personages. The ardent Whig or Tory, experienced, trained to business, who rose and shook the House, had not more numerous, better arranged, more precise arguments. He did not better know the strength and weakness of his cause; he was not more familiar with the intrigues, rancours, variation of parties, the chances of the strife, individual and public interests. The great novelists
penetrate the soul of their characters, assume their feelings, ideas, language; it seems as if Balzac had been a commercial traveller, a female door-keeper, a courtesan, an old maid, a poet, and that he had spent his life in being each of these personages: his existence is multiplied, and his name is legion. With a different talent, Macaulay has the same power: an incomparable advocate, he pleads an infinite number of causes; and he is master of each cause, as fully as his client. He has answers for all objections, explanations for all obscurities, reasons for all tribunals. He is ready at every moment, and on all parts of his case. It seems as if he had been Whig, Tory, Puritan, Member of the Privy Council, Ambassador. He is not a poet like Michelet; he is not a philosopher like Guizot; but he possesses so well all the oratorical powers, he accumulates and arranges so many facts, he holds them so closely in his hand, he manages them with so much ease and vigour, that he succeeds in recomposing the whole and harmonious woof of history, not losing or separating one thread. The poet reanimates the dead; the philosopher formulates creative laws; the orator knows, expounds, and pleads causes. The poet resuscitates souls, the philosopher composes a system, the orator redisposes chains of arguments; but all three march towards the same end by different routes, and the orator, as well as his rivals, and by other means than his rivals, reproduces in his work the unity and complexity of life.

A second feature of this history is clearness. It is popular; no one explains better, or so much, as Macaulay. It seems as if he were making a wager with his reader, and said to him: Be as absent in mind,
as stupid, as ignorant as you please; in vain you will be absent in mind, you shall listen to me; in vain you will be stupid, you shall understand; in vain you will be ignorant, you shall learn. I will repeat the same idea in so many different forms, I will make it sensible by such familiar and precise examples, I will announce it so clearly at the beginning, I will resume it so carefully at the end, I will mark the divisions so well, follow the order of ideas so exactly, I will display so great a desire to enlighten and convince you, that you cannot help being enlightened and convinced. He certainly thought thus, when he was preparing the following passage on the law which, for the first time, granted to Dissenters the liberty of exercising their worship:

"Of all the Acts that have ever been passed by Parliament, the Toleration Act is perhaps that which most strikingly illustrates the peculiar vices and the peculiar excellences of English legislation. The science of Politics bears in one respect a close analogy to the science of Mechanics. The mathematician can easily demonstrate that a certain power, applied by means of a certain lever or of a certain system of pulleys, will suffice to raise a certain weight. But his demonstration proceeds on the supposition that the machinery is such as no load will bend or break. If the engineer, who has to lift a great mass of real granite by the instrumentality of real timber and real hemp, should absolutely rely on the propositions which he finds in treatises on Dynamics, and should make no allowance for the imperfection of his materials, his whole apparatus of beams, wheels, and ropes would soon come down in ruin, and, with all his geometrical skill, he would be found a far inferior builder to those painted barbarians who, though they never heard of the parallelogram of forces, managed to pile up Stonehenge. What the engineer is to the mathematician, the active states-
man is to the contemplative statesman. It is indeed most important that legislators and administrators should be versed in the philosophy of government, as it is most important that the architect who has to fix an obelisk on its pedestal, or to hang a tubular bridge over an estuary, should be versed in the philosophy of equilibrium and motion. But, as he who has actually to build must bear in mind many things never noticed by D'Alembert and Euler, so must he who has actually to govern be perpetually guided by considerations to which no allusion can be found in the writings of Adam Smith or Jeremy Bentham. The perfect lawgiver is a just temper between the mere man of theory, who can see nothing but general principles, and the mere man of business, who can see nothing but particular circumstances. Of lawgivers in whom the speculative element has prevailed to the exclusion of the practical, the world has during the last eighty years been singularly fruitful. To their wisdom Europe and America have owed scores of abortive constitutions, scores of constitutions which have lived just long enough to make a miserable noise, and have then gone off in convulsions. But in English legislation the practical element has always predominated, and not seldom unduly predominated, over the speculative. To think nothing of symmetry and much of conveniençe; never to remove an anomaly merely because it is an anomaly; never to innovate except when some grievance is felt; never to innovate except so far as to get rid of the grievance; never to lay down any proposition of wider extent than the particular case for which it is necessary to provide; "these are the rules which have, from the age of John to the age of Victoria, generally guided the deliberations of our two hundred and fifty Parliaments."  

Is the idea still obscure or doubtful? Does it still need proofs, illustrations? Do we wish for anything

more? You answer No; Macaulay answers Yes. After the general explanation comes the particular; after the theory, the application; after the theoretical demonstration, the practical. We would fain stop; but he proceeds:

"The Toleration Act approaches very near to the idea of a great English law. To a jurist, versed in the theory of legislation, but not intimately acquainted with the temper of the sects and parties into which the nation was divided at the time of the Revolution, that Act would seem to be a mere chaos of absurdities and contradictions. It will not bear to be tried by sound general principles. Nay, it will not bear to be tried by any principle, sound or unsound. The sound principle undoubtedly is, that mere theological error ought not to be punished by the civil magistrate. This principle the Toleration Act not only does not recognise, but positively disclaims. Not a single one of the cruel laws enacted against nonconformists by the Tudors or the Stuarts is repealed. Persecution continues to be the general rule. Toleration is the exception. Nor is this all. The freedom which is given to conscience is given in the most capricious manner. A Quaker, by making a declaration of faith in general terms, obtains the full benefit of the Act without signing one of the thirty-nine Articles. An Independent minister, who is perfectly willing to make the declaration required from the Quaker, but who has doubts about six or seven of the Articles, remains still subject to the penal laws. Howe is liable to punishment if he preaches before he has solemnly declared his assent to the Anglican doctrine touching the Eucharist. Penn, who altogether rejects the Eucharist, is at perfect liberty to preach without making any declaration whatever on the subject.

"These are some of the obvious faults which must strike every person who examines the Toleration Act by that standard of just reason which is the same in all countries and in all ages.
But these very faults may perhaps appear to be merits, when we take into consideration the passions and prejudices of those for whom the Toleration Act was framed. This law, abounding with contradictions which every smatterer in political philosophy can detect, did what a law framed by the utmost skill of the greatest masters of political philosophy might have failed to do. That the provisions which have been recapitulated are cumbersome, puerile, inconsistent with each other, inconsistent with the true theory of religious liberty, must be acknowledged. All that can be said in their defence is this; that they removed a vast mass of evil without shocking a vast mass of prejudice; that they put an end, at once and for ever, without one division in either House of Parliament, without one riot in the streets, with scarcely one audible murmur even from the classes most deeply tainted with bigotry, to a persecution which had raged during four generations, which had broken innumerable hearts, which had made innumerable firesides desolate, which had filled the prisons with men of whom the world was not worthy, which had driven thousands of those honest, diligent and god-fearing yeoman and artisans, who are the true strength of a nation, to seek a refuge beyond the ocean among the wigwams of red Indians and the lairs of panthers. Such a defence, however weak it may appear to some shallow speculators, will probably be thought complete by statesmen."

What I find complete in this, is the art of developing. This antithesis of ideas, sustained by the antithesis of words, the symmetrical periods, the expressions designedly repeated to attract attention, the exhaustion of proof, set before our eyes the special-pleader's and oratorical talent, which we just before encountered in the art of pleading all causes, of employing an infinite number of methods, of mastering them all and always, during every incident of the

lawsuit. The final manifestation of a mind of this sort are the faults into which its talent draws it. By dint of development, he protracts. More than once his explications are commonplace. He proves what, all allow. He makes clear what is already clear. In one of his works there is a passage on the necessity of reactions which reads like the verbosity of a clever schoolboy. Other passages, excellent and novel, can only be read with pleasure once. On the second reading they appear too true; we have seen it all at a glance, and are wearied. I have omitted one-third of the passage on the Act of Toleration, and acute minds will think that I ought to have omitted another third.

The last feature, the most singular, the least English of this History, is, that it is interesting. Macaulay wrote, in the Edinburgh Review, several volumes of Essays; and everyone knows that the first merit of a reviewer or a journalist is to make himself readable. A thick volume naturally bores us; it is not thick for nothing; its bulk demands at the outset the attention of him who opens it. The solid binding, the table of contents, the preface, the substantial chapters, drawn up like soldiers in battle-array, all bid us take an armchair, put on a dressing-gown, place our feet on the fender, and study; we owe no less to the grave man who presents himself to us, armed with 600 pages of text and three years of reflection. But a newspaper which we glance at in a club, a review which we finger in a drawing-room in the evening, before sitting down to dinner, must needs attract the eyes, overcome absence of mind, conquer readers. Macaulay attained, through practice, this gift of readableness, and he retains in his History the habits which he acquired in peri-
odicals. He employs every means of keeping up attention, good or indifferent, worthy or unworthy of his great talents; amongst others, allusion to actual circumstances. You may have heard the saying of an editor, to whom Pierre Leroux offered an article on God. "God! there is no actuality about it!" Macaulay profits by this remark. He never forgets the actual. If he mentions a regiment, he points out in a few lines the splendid deeds which it has done since its formation up to our own day; thus the officers of this regiment, encamped in the Crimea, stationed at Malta, or at Calcutta, are obliged to read his History. He relates the reception of Schomberg in the House: who is interested in Schomberg? Forthwith he adds that Wellington, a hundred years later, was received, under like circumstances, with a ceremony copied from the first: what Englishman is not interested in Wellington? He relates the siege of Londonderry, he points out the spot which the ancient bastions occupy in the present town, the field which was covered by the Irish camp, the well at which the besiegers drank: what citizen of Londonderry can help buying his book? Whatever town he comes upon, he notes the changes which it has undergone, the new streets added, the buildings repaired or constructed, the increase of commerce, the introduction of new industries: hence all the aldermen and merchants are constrained to subscribe to his work. Elsewhere we find an anecdote of an actor and actress: as the superlative degree is interesting, he begins by saying that William Mountford was the most agreeable comedian, that Anne Bracegirdle was the most popular actress of the time. If he introduces a statesman, he always announces him by some great word: he was the
most insinuating, or the most equitable, or the best informed, or the most inveterately debauched, of all the politicians of the day. But Macaulay's great qualities serve him as well in this matter as his literary machinery, a little too manifest, a little too copious, a little too coarse. The astonishing number of details, the medley of psychological and moral dissertations, descriptions, relations, opinions, pleadings, portraits, beyond all, good composition and the continuous stream of eloquence, seize and retain the attention to the end. We have hard work to finish a volume of Lingard or Robertson; we should have hard work not to finish a volume of Macaulay.

Here is a detached narrative which shows very well, and in the abstract, the means of interesting which he employs, and the great interest which he excites. The subject is the Massacre of Glencoe. Macaulay begins by describing the spot like a traveller who has seen it, and points it out to the bands of tourists and dilettanti, historians and antiquarians, who every year start from London:

"Mac Ian dwelt in the month of a ravine situated not far from the southern shore of Loch Leven, an arm of the sea which deeply indents the western coast of Scotland, and separates Argyleshire from Inverness-shire. Near his house were two or three small hamlets inhabited by his tribe. The whole population which he governed was not supposed to exceed two hundred souls. In the neighbourhood of the little cluster of villages was some copsewood and some pasture land: but a little further up the defile no sign of population or of fruitfulness was to be seen. In the Gaelic tongue, Glencoe signifies the Glen of Weeping: and, in truth, that pass is the most dreary and melancholy of all the Scottish passes, the very
Valley of the Shadow of Death. Mists and storms brood over it through the greater part of the finest summer; and even on those rare days when the sun is bright, and when there is no cloud in the sky, the impression made by the landscape is sad and awful. The path lies along a stream which issues from the most sullen and gloomy of mountain pools. Huge precipices of naked stone frown on both sides. Even in July the streaks of snow may often be discerned in the rifts near the summits. All down the sides of the crags heaps of ruin mark the headlong paths of the torrents. Mile after mile the traveller looks in vain for the smoke of one hut, or for one human form wrapped in a plaid, and listens in vain for the bark of a shepherd's dog or the bleat of a lamb. Mile after mile the only sound that indicates life is the faint cry of a bird of prey from some storm-beaten pinnacle of rock. The progress of civilisation, which has turned so many wastes into fields yellow with harvests or gay with apple blossoms has only made Glencoe more desolate. All the science and industry of a peaceful age can extract nothing valuable from that wilderness: but, in an age of violence and rapine, the wilderness itself was valued on account of the shelter which it afforded to the plunderer and his plunder.\footnote{Macaulay, iii. 513, History of England, ch. xviii.}

The description, though very beautiful, is written for effect. The final antithesis explains it; the author has made it in order to show that the Macdonalds were the greatest brigands of the country.

The Master of Stair, who represented William III. in Scotland, relying on the fact that Mac Ian had not taken the oath of allegiance on the appointed day, determined to destroy the chief and his clan. He was not urged by hereditary hate nor by private interest; he was a man of taste, polished and amiable. He did this crime out of humanity, persuaded that there was
no other way of pacifying the Highlands. Thereupon Macaulay inserts a dissertation of four pages, very well written, full of interest and knowledge, whose diversity affords us rest, which leads us over all kinds of historical examples, and moral lessons:

"We daily see men do for their party, for their sect, for their country, for their favourite schemes of political and social reform, what they would not do to enrich or to avenge themselves. At a temptation directly addressed to our private cupidity or to our private animosity, whatever virtue we have takes the alarm. But virtue itself may contribute to the fall of him who imagines that it is in his power, by violating some general rule of morality, to confer an important benefit on a church, on a commonwealth, on mankind. He silences the remonstrances of conscience, and hardens his heart against the most touching spectacles of misery, by repeating to himself that his intentions are pure, that his objects are noble, that he is doing a little evil for the sake of a great good. By degrees he comes altogether to forget the turpitude of the means in the excellence of the end, and at length perpetrates without one internal twinge acts which would shock a buccaneer. There is no reason to believe that Dominic would, for the best archbishopric in Christendom, have incited ferocious marauders to plunder and slaughter a peaceful and industrious population, that Everard Digby would, for a dukedom, have blown a large assembly of people into the air, or that Robespierre would have murdered for hire one of the thousands whom he murdered from philanthropy." ¹

Do we not recognise here the Englishman brought up on psychological and moral essays and sermons, who involuntarily and every instant spreads one over the paper? This species of literature is unknown in

French lecture-rooms and reviews; this is why it is unknown in French histories. When we wish to enter English history, we have only to step down from the pulpit and the newspaper.

I do not transcribe the sequel of the explanation, the examples of James V., Sixtus V., and so many others, whom Macaulay cites to find precedents for the Master of Stair. Then follows a very circumstantial and very solid discussion, to prove that William III. was not responsible for the massacre. It is clear that Macaulay's object, here as elsewhere, is less to draw a picture than to suggest a judgment. He desires that we should have an opinion on the morality of the act, that we should attribute it to its real authors, that each should bear exactly his own share, and no more. A little further, when the question of the punishment of the crime arises, and William, having severely chastised the executioners, contents himself with recalling the Master of Stair, Macaulay writes a dissertation of several pages to consider this injustice and to blame the king. Here, as elsewhere, he is still an orator and a moralist; nothing has more power to interest an English reader. Happily for us, he at length becomes once more a narrator; the petty details which he then selects fix the attention, and place the scene before our eyes:

"The sight of the red coats approaching caused some anxiety among the population of the valley. John, the eldest son of the Chief, came, accompanied by twenty clansmen, to meet the strangers, and asked what this visit meant. Lieutenant Lindsay answered that the soldiers came as friends, and wanted nothing but quarters. They were kindly received, and were lodged under the thatched roofs of the little community. Glenlyon and several of his men were taken into the house of 2
tacksman who was named from the cluster of cabins over which he exercised authority, Inveriggen. Lindsay was accommodated nearer to the abode of the old chief. Auchinriater, one of the principal men of the clan, who governed the small hamlet of Auchnaion, found room there for a party commanded by a serjeant named Barbour. Provisions were liberally supplied. There was no want of beef, which had probably fattened in distant pastures: nor was any payment demanded: for in hospitality, as in thievery, the Gaelic marauders rivalled the Bedouins. During twelve days the soldiers lived familiarly with the people of the glen. Old Mac Ian, who had before felt many misgivings as to the relation in which he stood to the government seems to have been pleased with the visit. The officers passed much of their time with him and his family. The long evenings were cheerfully spent by the peat fire with the help of some packs of cards which had found their way to that remote corner of the world, and of some French brandy which was probably part of James' farewell gift to his highland supporters. Glenlyon appeared to be warmly attached to his niece and her husband Alexander. Every day he came to their house to take his morning draught. Meanwhile he observed with minute attention all the avenues by which, when the signal for the slaughter should be given, the Macdonalds might attempt to escape to the hills; and he reported the result of his observations to Hamilton....

"The night was rough. Hamilton and his troops made slow progress, and were long after their time. While they were contending with the wind and snow, Glenlyon was supping and playing at cards with those whom he meant to butcher before daybreak. He and Lieutenant Lindsay had engaged themselves to dine with the old Chief on the morrow.

"Late in the evening a vague suspicion that some evil was intended crossed the mind of the Chief's eldest son. The soldiers were evidently in a restless state; and some of them uttered strange exclamations. Two men, it is said, were over-
heard whispering. 'I do not like this job,' one of them muttered; 'I should be glad to fight the Macdonalds. But to
kill men in their beds—' 'We must do as we are bid,' answered another voice. 'If there is anything wrong, our
officers must answer for it.' John Macdonald was so uneasy, that, soon after midnight, he went to Glenlyon's quarters.
Glenlyon and his men were all up, and seemed to be getting their arms ready for action. John, much alarmed, asked what
these preparations meant. Glenlyon was profuse of friendly assurances. 'Some of Glengarry's people have been harrying
the country. We are getting ready to march against them. You are quite safe. Do you think that, if you were in any
danger, I should not have given a hint to your brother Sandy and his wife?' John's suspicions were quieted. He returned
to his house, and lay down to rest.'

On the next day, at five in the morning, the old chieftain was assassinated, his men shot in their beds or by
the fireside. Women were butchered; a boy, twelve years old, who begged his life on his knees, was slain;
they who fled half-naked, women and children, died of cold and hunger in the snow.

These precise details, these soldiers' conversations, this picture of evenings by the fireside, give to history
the animation and life of a novel. And still the historian remains an orator: for he has chosen all these
facts to exhibit the perfidy of the assassins and the horrible nature of the massacre; and he will make use
of them later on, to demand, with all the power and passion of logic, the punishment of the criminals.

VIII.

Thus this History, whose qualities seem so little English, bears throughout the mark of genuine English talent. Universal, connected, it embraces all the facts in its vast, undivided, and unbroken woof. Developed, abundant, it enlightens obscure facts, and opens up to the most ignorant the most complicated questions. Interesting, varied, it attracts and preserves the attention. It has life, clearness, unity, qualities which appear to be wholly French. It seems as if the author were a populariser like Thiers, a philosopher like Guizot, an artist like Thierry. The truth is, that he is an orator, and that after the fashion of his country; but, as he possesses in the highest degree the oratorical faculties, and possesses them with a national tendency and instincts, he seems to supplement through them the faculties which he has not. He is not genuinely philosophical: the mediocrity of his earlier chapters on the ancient history of England proves this sufficiently; but his force of reasoning, his habits of classification and order, bestow unity upon his History. He is not a genuine artist; when he draws a picture, he is always thinking of proving something; he inserts dissertations in the most interesting and affecting places; he has neither charm, lightness, vivacity, nor finesse, but a marvellous memory, vast knowledge, an ardent political passion, a great legal talent for expounding and pleading every cause, a precise knowledge of precise and petty facts which rivet the attention. charm, diversify, animate, and warm a narrative. He is not simply a populariser; he is too ardent, too eager to prove, to conquer belief, to beat down his foes, to have
only the limpid talent of a man who explains and expounds, with no other end than to explain and expound, which spreads light throughout, and never spreads heat; but he is so well provided with details and reasons, so anxious to convince, so rich in his expositions, that he cannot fail to be popular. By this breadth of knowledge, this power of reasoning and passion, he has produced one of the finest books of the age, whilst manifesting the genius of his nation. This solidity, this energy, this deep political passion, these moral prepossessions, these oratorical habits, this limited philosophical power, this somewhat uniform style, without flexibility or sweetness, this eternal gravity, this geometrical progress to a settled end, announce in him the English mind. But if he is English to the French, he is not so to his nation. The animation, interest, clearness, unity of his narrative, astonish them. They think him brilliant, rapid, bold; it is, they say, a French mind. Doubtless he is so in many respects: if he understands Racine badly, he admires Pascal and Bossuet; his friends say that he used daily to read Madame de Sévigné. Nay more, by the structure of his mind, by his eloquence and rhetoric, he is Latin; so that the inner structure of his talent places him amongst the classics: it is only by his lively appreciation of special, complex, and sensible facts, by his energy and fierceness, by the rather heavy richness of his imagination, by the depth of his colouring, that he belongs to his race. Like Addison and Burke, he resembles a strange graft, fed and transformed by the sap of the national stock. At all events, this judgment is the strongest mark of the difference between the two
nations. To reach the English intellect, a Frenchman must make two voyages. When he has crossed the first interval, which is wide, he comes upon Macaulay. Let him re-embark; he must accomplish a second passage, just as long, to arrive at Carlyle for instance, —a mind fundamentally Germanic, on the genuine English soil.