

## CHAPTER LX

### BOOKS IN BREECHES

GREVILLE came upon a giant unawares:

*February 6, 1832:* Dined yesterday with Lord Holland; came very late, and found a vacant place between Sir George Robinson and a common-looking man in black. As soon as I had time to look at my neighbour, I began to speculate (as one usually does) as to who he might be, and as he did not for some time open his lips except to eat, I settled that he was some obscure man of letters or of medicine, perhaps a cholera doctor. In a short time the conversation turned upon early and late education, and Lord Holland said he had always remarked that self-educated men were peculiarly conceited and arrogant, and apt to look down upon the generality of mankind, from their being ignorant of how much other people knew; not having been at public schools, they are uninformed of the course of general education. My neighbour observed that he thought the most remarkable example of self-education was that of Alfieri, who had reached the age of thirty without having acquired any accomplishment save that of driving, and who was so ignorant of his own language that he had to learn it like a child, beginning with elementary books. Lord Holland quoted Julius Cæsar and Scaliger as examples of late education, said that the latter had been wounded and that he had been married and commenced learning Greek the same day, when my neighbour remarked "that he supposed his learning Greek was not an instantaneous act like his marriage." This remark, and the manner of it, gave me the notion that he was a dull fellow, for it came out in a way which bordered on the ridiculous, so as to excite something like a sneer. I was a little surprised to hear him continue the thread of conversation (from Scaliger's wound) and talk of Loyola having been wounded at Pampeluna. I wondered how he happened to know anything about Loyola's

wound. Having thus settled my opinion, I went on eating my dinner, when Auckland, who was sitting opposite to me, addressed my neighbour, "Mr. Macaulay, will you drink a glass of wine?" I thought I should have dropped off my chair. It was MACAULAY, the man I had been so long most curious to see and to hear, whose genius, eloquence, astonishing knowledge, and diversified talents have excited my wonder and admiration for such a length of time, and here I had been sitting next to him, hearing him talk, and setting him down for a dull fellow. I felt as if he could have read my thoughts, and the perspiration burst from every pore of my face, and yet it was impossible not to be amused at the idea. It was not till Macaulay stood up that I was aware of all the vulgarity and ungainliness of his appearance; not a ray of intellect beams from his countenance; a lump of more ordinary clay never enclosed a powerful mind and lively imagination. He had a cold and sore throat, the latter of which occasioned a constant contraction of the muscles of the thorax, making him appear as if in momentary danger of a fit. His manner struck me as not pleasing, but it was not assuming, unembarrassed, yet not easy, unpolished, yet not coarse; there was no kind of usurpation of the conversation, no tenacity as to opinion or facts, no assumption of superiority, but the variety and extent of his information were soon apparent, for whatever subject was touched upon he evinced the utmost familiarity with it; quotation, illustration, anecdote, seemed ready in his hands for every topic. Primogeniture in this country, in others, and particularly in ancient Rome was the principal topic, I think, but Macaulay was not certain what was the law of Rome, except that when a man died intestate his estate was divided between his children. After dinner Talleyrand and Madame de Dino came in. He was introduced to Talleyrand, who told him that he meant to go to the House of Commons on Tuesday, and that he hoped he would speak, "*qu'il avait entendu tous les grands orateurs, et il désirait à présent entendre Monsieur Macaulay.*"

London, September 27, 1835: . . . I have heard of Southey, who would read a book through as he stood in a bookseller's shop; that is, his eye would glance down the page, and by a process partly mechanical, partly intellectual, formed by long habit, he would extract in his synoptical passage all that he required

to know. (Macaulay was, and George Lewis is, just as wonderful in this respect.)

*February 9, 1836:* I was talking yesterday with Stephen about Brougham and Macaulay. He said he had known Brougham about thirty years, and well remembers walking with him down to Clapham, to dine with Zachary Maçaulay, and telling him he would find a prodigy of a boy there of whom he must take notice. This was Tom Macaulay. Brougham afterward put himself forward as the monitor and director of the education of Macaulay, and I remember hearing of a letter he wrote to the father on the subject, which made a great noise at the time; but he was like the man who brought up a young lion, which finished by biting his head off. Brougham and Macaulay disliked each other. Brougham could not forgive his great superiority in many of those accomplishments in which he thought himself unrivalled; and being at no pains to disguise his jealousy and dislike, the other was not behind him in corresponding feelings of aversion. It was unworthy of both, but most of Brougham, who was the aggressor, and who might have considered the world large enough for both of them, and that a sufficiency of fame was attainable by each. Stephen said that if ever Macaulay's life was written by a competent biographer it would appear that he had displayed feats of memory which he believed to be unequalled by any human being. He can repeat all Demosthenes by heart, and all Milton, a great part of the Bible, both in English and (the New Testament) in Greek; besides this his memory retains passages innumerable of every description of books, which in discussion he pours forth with incredible facility. He is passionately fond of Greek literature; has not much taste for Latin or French. Old Mill (one of the best Greek scholars of the day) thinks Macaulay has a more extensive and accurate acquaintance with the Greek writers than any man living, and there is no Greek book of any note which he has not read over and over again. In the Bible he takes great delight, and there are few better Biblical scholars. In law he made no proficiency, and mathematics he abominates; but his great forte is history, especially English history. Here his superhuman memory, which appears to have the faculty of digesting and arranging as well as of retaining, has converted his mind into a mighty magazine of

knowledge, from which, with the precision and correctness of a kind of intellectual machine, he pours forth stores of learning, information, precept, example, anecdote, and illustration with a familiarity and facility not less astonishing than delightful. He writes as if he had lived in the times and among the people whose actions and characters he records and delineates. A little reading, too, is enough for Macaulay, for by some process impossible to other men he contrives to transfer as it were, by an impression rapid and indelible, the contents of the books he reads to his own mind, where they are deposited, always accessible, and never either forgotten or confused. Far superior to Brougham in general knowledge, in fancy, imagination, and in the art of composition, he is greatly inferior to him in those qualities which raise men to social and political eminence. Brougham, tall, thin, and commanding in figure, with a face which, however ugly, is full of expression, and a voice of great power, variety, and even melody, notwithstanding his occasional prolixity and tediousness, is an orator in every sense of the word. Macaulay, short, fat, and ungraceful, with a round, thick, unmeaning face, and with rather a lisp, though he has made speeches of great merit, and of a very high style of eloquence in point of composition, has no pretensions to be put in competition with Brougham in the House of Commons. Nor is the difference and the inferiority of Macaulay less marked in society. Macaulay, indeed, is a great talker, and pours forth floods of knowledge on all subjects; but the gracefulness, lightness, and variety are wanting in his talk which are so conspicuous in his writings; there is not enough of alloy in the metal of his conversation; it is too didactic, it is all too good, and not sufficiently flexible, plastic, and diversified for general society. Brougham, on the other hand, is all life, spirit, and gaiety—"from grave to gay, from lively to severe."

To this comparison Greville added a note:

*February 9, 1836: . . . Quantum mutatus!* All this has long ceased to be true of Brougham. Macaulay, without having either the wit or the *charm* which constitutes the highest kind of colloquial excellence or success, is a marvellous, and unrivalled (in his way), and a delightful talker.

*August 12, 1832: . . . Dined yesterday at Holland House; the*

Chancellor, Lord Grey, Luttrell, Palmerston, and Macaulay. The Chancellor [Brougham] was sleepy and would not talk; he uttered nothing but yawns and grunts. Macaulay and Allen disputed history, particularly the character of Emperor Frederick II, and Allen declared himself a Guelf and Macaulay a Ghibelline. Macaulay is a most extraordinary man, and his astonishing knowledge is every moment exhibited, but (as far as I have yet seen of him, which is not sufficient to judge) he is not *agreeable*. His propositions and his allusions are rather too abrupt; he starts topics not altogether naturally; then he has none of the graces of conversation, none of that exquisite tact and refinement which are the result of a felicitous intuition or a long acquaintance with good society, or more probably a mixture of both. The mighty mass of his knowledge is not animated by that subtle spirit of taste and discretion which alone can give it the qualities of lightness and elasticity, and without which, though he may have the power of instructing and astonishing, he never will attain that of delighting and captivating his hearers. The dinner was agreeable, and enlivened by a squabble between Lady Holland and Allen, at which we were all ready to die of laughing. He jeered at something she said as brutal and chuckled at his own wit.

*London, November 13, 1833:* . . . On Sunday dined with Rogers, Moore, Sydney Smith, Macaulay. Sydney less vivacious than usual, and somewhat overpowered and talked down by what Moore called the "*flumen sermonis*" of Macaulay. Sydney calls Macaulay "a book in breeches." . . . I believe we would all of us have been glad to exchange some of his sense for some of Sydney Smith's nonsense. He told me that he had read Sir Charles Grandison fifteen times!

*August 8, 1838:* James Stephen yesterday was talking to me about Macaulay. He came to him soon after his return from India, and told him that when there he used to get up at five every morning (as everybody else did), and till nine or ten he read Greek and Latin, and went through the whole range of classical literature of every sort and kind; that one day in the Government library he had met with the works of Chrysostom, fourteen Greek folios, and that he had taken home first one volume and then another, till he had read the whole through, that is, he had not read every word, because he had found that

it contained a great deal of stuff not worth reading, but he had carefully looked at every page, and had actually read the greater part. His object now is to devote himself to literature, and his present project, to write a History of England for the last 150 years, in which Stephen says he would give scope to his fine imagination in the delineation of character, and bring his vast stores of knowledge to the composition of the narrative, and would, without doubt, produce a work of astonishing power and interest. Macaulay says that if he had the power of recalling everything he has ever written and published and of destroying it all, he would do so, for he thinks that his time has been thrown away upon *opuscula* unworthy of his talents. This is, however, a very preposterous squeamishness and piece of pride or humility, whichever it may be called, for no man need be ashamed of producing anything perfect in its kind, however the kind may not be the highest, and his reviews are perfect in their way. I asked Stephen by what mental process Macaulay had contrived to accumulate such boundless stores of information, and how it was all so sorted and arranged in his head that it was always producible at will. He said that he had first of all the power of abstraction, of giving his undivided attention to the book and the subject on which he was occupied; then, as other men read by syllables or by words, he had the faculty, acquired by use, of reading by whole sentences, of swallowing, as it were, whole paragraphs at once, and thus he infinitely abbreviated the mere mechanical part of study; that as an educated man would read any number of pages much more quickly than an uneducated man, so much more quickly would Macaulay read than any ordinary man. . . .

. . . There is no more comparison between his brain and such a one as mine than between a hurdy-gurdy in the street and the great organ at Haarlem.

*January 21, 1841:* . . . What Henry Taylor said of him is epigrammatic and true, "that his memory has swamped his mind"; and though I do not think, as some people say, that his own opinions are completely suppressed by the load of his learning so that you know nothing of his mind, it appears to me true that there is less of originality in him, less exhibition of his own character, than there probably would be if he was less abundantly stored with the riches of the minds of others. We had

yesterday a party well composed for talk, for there were listeners of intelligence and a good specimen of the sort of society of this house—Macaulay, Melbourne, Morpeth, Duncannon, Baron Rolfe, Allen and Lady Holland, and John Russell came in the evening. I wish that a shorthand writer could have been there to take down all the conversation or that I could have carried it away in my head; because it was curious in itself, and curiously illustrative of the characters of the performers. Before dinner some mention was made of the portraits of the Speakers in the Speaker's House, and I asked how far they went back. Macaulay said he was not sure, but certainly as far as Sir Thomas More. "Sir Thomas More," said Lady Holland. "I did not know he had been Speaker." "Oh, yes," said Macaulay, "don't you remember when Cardinal Wolsey came down to the House of Commons and More was in the chair?" and then he told the whole of that well-known transaction, and all More had said. At dinner, amongst a variety of persons and subjects, principally ecclesiastical, which were discussed—for Melbourne loves all sorts of theological talk—we got upon India and Indian men of eminence, proceeding from Gleig's *Life of Warren Hastings*, which Macaulay said was the worst book that ever was written; and then the name of Sir Thomas Munro came uppermost. Lady Holland did not know why Sir Thomas Munro was so distinguished; when Macaulay explained all that he had ever said, done, written, or thought, and vindicated his claim to the title of a great man, till Lady Holland got bored with Sir Thomas, told Macaulay she had had enough of him, and would have no more. This would have dashed and silenced an ordinary talker, but to Macaulay it was no more than replacing a book on its shelf, and he was as ready as ever to open on any other topic. It would be impossible to follow and describe the various mazes of conversation, all of which he threaded with an ease that was always astonishing and instructive, and generally interesting and amusing. When we went upstairs we got upon the Fathers of the Church. Allen asked Macaulay if he had read much of the Fathers. He said, not a great deal. He had read Chrysostom when he was in India; that is, he had turned over the leaves and for a few months had read him for two or three hours every morning before breakfast; and he had read some of Athanasius. "I re-

member a sermon," he said, "of Chrysostom's in praise of the Bishop of Antioch"; and then he proceeded to give us the substance of this sermon till Lady Holland got tired of the Fathers, again put her extinguisher on Chrysostom as she had done on Munro, and with a sort of derision, and as if to have the pleasure of puzzling Macaulay, she turned to him and said, "Pray, Macaulay, what was the origin of a *doll*? when were dolls first mentioned in history?" Macaulay was, however, just as much up to the dolls as he was to the Fathers, and instantly replied that the Roman children had their dolls, which they offered up to Venus when they grew older; and quoted Persius for

Veneri donatæ a virgine puppæ,

and I have not the least doubt, if he had been allowed to proceed, he would have told us who was the Chenevix of ancient Rome, and the name of the first baby that ever handled a doll.

The conversation then ran upon Milman's *History of Christianity*, which Melbourne praised, the religious opinions of Locke, of Milman himself, the opinion of the world thereupon, and so on to Strauss's book and his mythical system, and what he meant by mythical. Macaulay began illustrating and explaining the meaning of a *myth* by examples from remote antiquity, when I observed that in order to explain the meaning of "mythical" it was not necessary to go so far back; that, for instance, we might take the case of Wm. Huntington, S. S.: that the account of his life was historical, but the story of his praying to God for a new pair of leather breeches and finding them under a hedge was mythical. Now, I had just a general superficial recollection of this story in Huntington's *Life*, but my farthing rush-light was instantly extinguished by the blaze of Macaulay's all-grasping and all-retaining memory, for he at once came in with the whole minute account of this transaction: how Huntington had prayed, what he had found, and where, and all he had said to the tailor by whom this miraculous nether garment was made.

*November 27, 1841:* On Thursday I dined with Milman, to meet Macaulay, Sydney Smith, and Babbage. Pretty equal partition of talk between Sydney and Macaulay. The latter has been employing his busy mind in gathering all the ballads



he can pick up, buying strings of them in the streets, and he gave us an amusing account of the character of this species of literature, repeating lines and stanzas without end. The ballad writers, who may be supposed to represent the opinions and feelings of the masses for whose delectation they compose, do not, according to Macaulay, exhibit very high moral sentiments, as they evince a great partiality for criminals, and are the strenuous opposers of humanity to animals.

*December 23, 1841:* . . . Another night, Moore sang some of his own Melodies, and Macaulay has been always talking. Never certainly was anything heard like him. . . . The drollest thing is to see the effect upon Rogers, who is nearly extinguished, and can neither make himself heard, nor find an interval to get in a word. He is exceedingly provoked, though he can't help admiring, and he will revive to-morrow when Macaulay goes. . . . We walked together for a long time the day before yesterday, when he talked of the History he is writing. I asked him if he was still collecting materials, or had begun to write. He said he was writing while collecting, going on upon the fund of his already acquired knowledge, and he added, that it was very mortifying to find how much there was of which he was wholly ignorant. I said if he felt that, with his superhuman memory and wonderful scope of knowledge, what must ordinary men feel? He said that it was a mistake to impute to him either such a memory or so much knowledge; that Whewell [Master of Trinity College, Cambridge] and Brougham had more universal knowledge than he had, but that what he did possess was the ready, perhaps too ready, use of all he knew. I said what surprised me most was, his having had time to read certain books over and over again; e.g., he said he had read *Don Quixote* in Spanish, five or six times; and I am afraid to say how often he told me he had read *Clarissa*. He said that he read no modern books, none of the novels or travels that come out day after day. He had read *Tom Jones* repeatedly, but *Cecil a Peer* not at all; and as to *Clarissa*, he had read it so often that, if the work were lost, he could give a very tolerable idea of it, could narrate the story completely, and many of the most remarkable passages and expressions.

*December 26, 1842:* Macaulay went away the day before Christmas Day, and it was wonderful how quiet the house

seemed after he was gone, and it was not less agreeable. Rogers was all alive again, Austin and Dundas talked much more than they would have done, and Lord Lansdowne too, and on the whole we were as well without him.

*February 19, 1842:* . . . I went on Wednesday with Lord and Lady John, Charles Howard and Macaulay, to the Battersea schools, Robert Eden's and Dr. Kay's. We put forward Macaulay to examine the boys in history and geography, and Lord John asked them a few questions, and I still fewer. They answered in a way that would have put to shame most of the fine people's children. . . . There is one striking contrast between the boys at Eden's school; and the aristocratic schoolboys: while the latter consider learning as an irksome employment, going to school an event full of misery and woe, and never think of anything but how to shirk their lessons, and find time for play and idleness, the poor boys rejoice in their school, love the instruction they receive, and no punishment is so great to them as exclusion from the schoolroom.

*October 29, 1842:* . . . Macaulay's book, which he calls *Lays of Ancient Rome*, came out yesterday, and admirable his ballads are. They were composed in India and on the voyage home. He showed them to Dr. Arnold, who advised him to publish them, but probably while he was in office he had not time to think about them, and the publication is the result of his leisure. He has long been addicted to ballad-writing, for there is one in the American edition of his works, and there is a much longer one written when he was at Cambridge (or soon after), upon the League, and one of Henry IV's battles, which is very good indeed. He is a wonderful fellow altogether.

*October 16, 1843:* . . . Before I was attacked (gout) I went to breakfast with George Lewis to meet Ranke, the author of *The Popes of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century*. He had got Macaulay, who had reviewed his book, to meet him, Sir Alexander Duff Gordon and his wife (daughter of Mrs. Austin, his translator), and Sir Edmund Head. I went prepared to listen to some first-rate literary talk between such luminaries as Ranke and Macaulay, but there never was a greater failure. The professor, a vivacious little man, not distinguished in appearance, could talk no English, and his French, though spoken fluently, was quite unintelligible. On the other hand,

Macaulay could not speak German, and he spoke French without any facility and with a very vile accent. It was comical to see the abundance of his matter struggling with his embarrassment in giving utterance to it, to hear the torrent of knowledge trying to force its way through the impediment of a limited acquaintance with the French language and the want of habit of conversing in it. But the struggle was of short duration. He began in French, but very soon could bear the restraint no longer, and broke into English, pouring forth his stores to the utterly unconscious and uncomprehending professor. This babel of a breakfast, at which it was impossible for seven people to converse in any common language, soon came to an end, and Ranke was evidently glad to go off to the State Paper Office, where he was working every day. After he was gone, Macaulay held forth, and was as usual very well worth listening to.

*December 17, 1855:* This morning the two new volumes of Macaulay's History came forth. The circumstances of this publication are, I believe, unprecedented in literary history; 25,000 copies are given out, and the weight of the books is fifty-six tons. The interest and curiosity which it excites are prodigious, and they afford the most complete testimony to his excessive popularity and the opinion entertained by the world of his works already published. His profits will be very great, and he will receive them in various shapes. But there is too much reason to apprehend that these may be the last volumes of his History that the world will see, still more that they are the last that will be read by me and people of my standing. Six years have elapsed since the appearance of the first volumes, and these two only advance about ten years. He announced at the outset that he meant to bring down the history of England to a period within the memory of persons still living, but his work has already so much expanded, and of course will do so still more from the accumulation of materials as he advances, that at his present rate of progress he must live much beyond the ordinary duration of human life, and retain all his faculties as long, to have any chance of accomplishing his original design; and he is now in such a precarious state of health that in all human probability he will not live many years. It is melancholy to think that so gifted an intellect

should be arrested by premature decay, and such a magnificent undertaking should be overthrown by physical infirmities, and be limited to the proportions of a splendid fragment. He is going to quit Parliament and to reside in the neighbourhood of London.

*December 9, 1848:* I dined on Tuesday with Milman, Guizot, Macaulay, and Hallam; Macaulay receiving felicitations with great modesty and compliments on his book, of which the whole impression was sold off, and not a copy was to be got, though it had only been out three days. Macaulay and Hallam talked of a branch of our literature of which Guizot, well informed as he is, could know nothing. Macaulay's French is detestable, the most barbarous accent that ever has *écorché les oreilles* of a Parisian.

Hallam was Tennyson's friend whose death inspired "In Memoriam." Apparently, Greville was unconscious of Tennyson's existence.

It is in the pages of Greville that the mystery attending the authorship of the *Letters of Junius* was cleared up.

*December 26, 1845:* . . . The other day Mr. Woodfall, grandson of the original publisher of *Junius' Letters*, came to me to ask me if I would edit a new edition of *Junius*. He said he had nothing new to furnish, and the only scrap that never has been published is one which never could be, a copy of very indecent verses upon the Duke of Grafton and Nancy Parsons in *Junius'* handwriting, and sent to Woodfall. He told me that his father never had an idea who *Junius* was, but never would believe that Francis was the man.

Macaulay, on the other hand, said (September 7, 1846), "he had not the shadow of doubt that Francis was *Junius*."

A curious coincidence seems to settle the matter:

*September 23, 1829:* . . . Giles told me about the letter to his sister written by [Sir Philip] Francis, and which was supposed to have afforded another proof that he was *Junius*. Many years ago Francis was in love with his sister, Mrs. King (at Bath), and one day she received an anonymous letter, enclosing a copy of verses. The letter said that the writer had found the verses, and being sure they were meant for her, had sent them

to her. The verses were in Francis' handwriting, the envelope in a feigned hand. When the discussion arose about Francis being Junius, Giles said to his sister one day, "If you have kept those verses which Francis wrote to you many years ago at Bath, it would be curious to examine the handwriting and see if it corresponds with that of Junius." She found the envelope and verses, and, on comparing them, the writing of the envelope was identical with that of Junius as published in Woodfall's book.

Macaulay fortified this conclusion thus:

*The Grove, September 7, 1846:* . . . He told me this morning that when he was in the War Office he found what he considers a piece of corroborative evidence to prove that Francis was Junius, or rather he found a difficulty done away with. In one of his letters to Draper he [Junius] asks him if he did not swear that he received no other pension before he could take his other appointments. Draper replied that he took no such oath. As Francis was a chief clerk in the War Office he must have had official knowledge of the practice, and it seemed strange he should charge Draper with what he must (or might) know to be untrue. But it turned out that Draper received his pension from the Irish establishment, where no oath was required. Francis might very well suppose that the custom was the same in Ireland, and knowing very well what it was in England, he would naturally think that he had caught Sir W. Draper tripping.

A possible explanation of the Satirist's anonymity (September 27, 1841) was the fact that he had been "an habitual guest" at Woburn where his host had been the Duke of Bedford whom he represents as a "monster."

In the House of Commons, Macaulay was a set speaker rather than a debater:

*January 31, 1840:* Macaulay's speech, which was said to be a failure, reads better than Sir George Grey's, which met with the greatest success—the one fell flat upon the audience, while the other was singularly effective. So great is the difference between good manner and bad, and between the effect produced by a dashing, vivacious, light, and active style, and a

ponderous didactic eloquence, full of matter, but not suited in arrangement or delivery, and in all its accessory parts, to the taste of the House.

*London, July 23, 1852:* . . . The only really creditable election is that of Edinburgh, where Macaulay was elected without sollicitation, or his being a candidate, although he did not appear at the election, and the constituency were well aware that his opinions were not in conformity with theirs on many subjects, especially on the religious ones, upon which they are particularly hot and eager.

*September 24, 1831:* . . . He [Peel] cut Macaulay to ribands. Macaulay is very brilliant, but his speeches are harangues and never replies; whereas Peel's long experience and real talent for debate give him a great advantage in the power of reply, which he very eminently possesses. Macaulay, however, will probably be a very distinguished man.

*October 12, 1831:* . . . Macaulay's speech was as usual very eloquent, but as inflammatory as possible. Such men as these three can care nothing into what state of confusion the country is thrown, for all they want is a market to which they may bring their talents; but how the Miltons, Tavistocks, Althorps and all who have a great stake in the country can run the same course is more than I can conceive or comprehend. Party is indeed, as Swift says, "the madness of many," when carried to its present pitch.

*September 17, 1839:* He told me what Brougham had said of Macaulay (whom he hates with much cordiality), when somebody asked if he was to be Secretary of War.

"No, Melbourne would not consent to it, he would not have him in the Cabinet, and could not endure to sit with ten parrots, a-chime of bells and Lady Westmorland."

On one occasion, Macaulay's intervention had the effect of changing the opinion of the House, "an unusual occurrence."

*January 26, 1856:* . . . Macaulay has retired from Parliament, where he had done nothing since his last election; he hardly ever attended and never spoke, or certainly not more than once. It is to be hoped his life will be spared to bring down his history to the end of Queen Anne's reign, which is all that can possibly be expected.

*September 6, 1857:* . . . They have made some Peers, of whom the most conspicuous is Macaulay, and I have not seen or heard any complaints of his elevation.

*January 2, 1860:* The death of Macaulay is the extinction of a great light, and although every expectation of the completion of his great work had long ago vanished, the sudden close of his career, and the certainty that we shall have no more of his History, or at most only the remaining portion of King William's reign (which it is understood he had nearly prepared for publication), is a serious disappointment to the world. . . . He used frequently to invite me to those breakfasts in the Albany at which he used to collect small miscellaneous parties, generally including some remarkable people, and at which he loved to pour forth all those stores of his mind and accumulations of his memory to which his humbler guests, like myself, used to listen with delighted admiration, and enjoy as the choicest of intellectual feasts. I don't think he was ever so entirely agreeable as at his own breakfast table, though I shall remember as long as I live the pleasant days I have spent in his society at Bowood, Holland House, and elsewhere. . . . "Don't you remember?" he was in the habit of saying when he quoted some book or alluded to some fact to listeners who could not remember, because in nineteen cases out of twenty they had never known or heard of whatever it was he alluded to. I do not believe anybody ever left his society with any feeling of mortification, except that which an involuntary comparison between his knowledge and their own ignorance could not fail to engender. . . . Above all he was no hero worshipper, who felt it incumbent on him to minister to vulgar prejudices or predilections, to exalt the merits and palliate the defects of great reputations, and to consider the commission of great crimes, or the detection of mean and base motives, as atoned for and neutralized by the possession of shining abilities and the performances of great actions. Macaulay excited much indignation in some quarters by the severity with which he criticized the conduct and character of the Duke of Marlborough, and the Quakers bitterly resented his attacks upon Penn. He was seldom disposed to admit that he had been mistaken or misinformed, and I thought he was to blame in clinging so tenaciously to his severe estimate of Penn's conduct after the

vindication of it which was brought forward, and the production of evidence in Penn's favour, which might have satisfied him that he had been in error, and which probably would have done so in any case in which his judgment had been really unbiassed. . . . But the case of the Duke of Marlborough is very different, and reflects the highest honour on his literary integrity and independence. Undazzled by the splendour of that great man's career and the halo of admiration which had long surrounded his name, he demonstrated to the whole world of what base clay the idol was made and how he had abused for unworthy ends the choice gifts which Nature had bestowed upon him. Macaulay no doubt held that in proportion to the excellence of his natural endowments was his moral responsibility for the use or abuse of them, and he would not allow Blenheim and Ramillies to be taken as a set-off against his hypocrisy, perfidy, and treason. Macaulay's History is the best ethical study for forming the mind and character of a young man, for it is replete with maxims of the highest practical value.