

their blind achievements, which were performed by strength and are described by ignorance." Little touched by the optimistic belief in progress that could help Voltaire and Robertson recognize in the Middle Ages the promise of better things, he chose to see, as had his humanist predecessors, a steady decline from the peak of pre-Christian Rome. It suited neither his theme nor his temperament to end with a note of interrogation.

Though he wrote about the remote past, he did not avoid controversy, especially because of his skeptical treatment of Christianity and the way in which he yielded to the temptation to poke scabrous fun at it. "His ambition was to shine," wrote an anonymous contemporary, "and shine he will—but with a light like that which illumined Hell—with the double splendour of an Apostate and an Assassin." But while bigots continued to sulk, mere waverers were converted by the *Vindication*, in which he trounced those who had tried to convict him of errors or deliberate distortions of fact, and his work became an impressive popular success. He wrote to a friend that the first volume of the *Decline and Fall* "sold, according to the expression of the publisher, like a threepenny pamphlet on the affairs of the day . . . and I confess to you that so far as I am concerned I much like these praises. Those of women of condition, especially of young and pretty ones, without being of the greatest weight, do not fail to amuse me infinitely. I have had the good fortune to please these creatures, and the ancient history of your learned friend has succeeded like the novel of the day." This success grew from volume to volume, till the work had earned him some nine thousand pounds, and a reputation for wit and scholarship throughout Europe.

Gibbon wrote at the last minute in which it was possible to gain such a reputation by using Enlightenment methods. Romanticism was demanding a different sort of sympathetic involvement with the past, more concern with the common man and still wider subject matter. To Coleridge, the *Decline and Fall* was "an effective bar to all real familiarity with the temper of Imperial Rome." Evangelicism wanted a more positive understanding of medieval Christianity; the humanitarianism of Crabbe and Cowper was expressed in the work of antiquarian historians like Joseph Strutt, who wanted more information about how ordinary people had lived; Gothicists wanted to know more of the conditions in which their favorite art grew up; romantic nationalists wanted to know more about their countries' origins; bankers

wanted to know more about the origin of banks. The closed trunks in the Enlightenment attic were thrown open and their dusty contents shaken out: feudalism, chivalry, the friars, the Crusades, medieval literature (not yet medieval painting). Great men were out of favor. ". . . The arrangements and improvements which have taken place in human affairs result not from the efforts of individuals," wrote John Logan in his *Elements of the Philosophy of History* in 1781, "but from a movement of the whole society. . . . All that Legislators, Patriots, Philosophers, Statesmen and Kings can do, is to give a direction to that stream which is forever flowing," and in 1789 the traveler and agricultural economist Arthur Young complained from Florence that "to a mind that has the least turn after philosophical inquiry, reading modern history is generally the most tormenting employment that a man can have: one is plagued with the actions of a detestable set of men called conquerors, heroes, and great generals; and we wade through pages loaded with military details; but when you want to know the progress of agriculture, of commerce, and industry, their effect in different ages and nations on each other—the wealth that resulted—the division of that wealth—its employment—and the manners it produced—all is a blank. Voltaire set an example, but how has it been followed?"

The demand for more information about manners, trade, travel, arts, and sciences outstripped the supply. Once more historical theory and practice were out of step, but at least on this occasion the cry for new information was acted on with increasing method. In 1797 Sir Frederick Eden's *The State of the Poor* essayed a survey of poverty through the ages, and though his statement that he never wasted time looking for another word when he could use it to find another fact explains why he is dreary reading, the work of investigation was begun, and would in time be turned into literate history.

At the end of the eighteenth and at the beginning of the nineteenth centuries historians were still influenced by the laws of supply and demand. Historical studies did not center on the universities until after the middle of the nineteenth century, and only then did history begin to be written for a narrowing circle of professional colleagues. Before that, historians wanted to be popular. They spent great care in perfecting their style, and, as we have seen, Gibbon was not indifferent to his success among the fair sex. In the same spirit, Macaulay wrote to a friend: "I shall not be satisfied unless I produce something which

shall for a few days supersede the last fashionable novel on the tables of young ladies." The success of Hume, Robertson, and Gibbon had increased the demand for historical reading, but the demand had become more various than hitherto. The romantic audience wanted little more than time-traveling, to be transported backward in a historical capsule which would release them at some picturesque period in the past, where they could wander among the cottages of the poor and watch some unfortunate roasting for heresy. On the other hand, the disasters of the Napoleonic war, together with social unrest at home, led to a demand for a more relevant and reassuring history; "each age," as the *Edinburgh Review* put it, "has its appropriate wants, and some problem or other more peculiarly its own."

Amid so many calls for attention, one clue to the best road to follow was especially attractive to historians. This was the enormous success of the novels of Sir Walter Scott. Evidence of his influence on nineteenth-century historiography could be multiplied, but the witness of Carlyle, Macaulay, and Leopold von Ranke is enough to make it clear. "These historical novels," wrote Carlyle, "have taught all men this truth, which looks like a truism, yet was unknown to writers of history and others, till so taught: that the bygone ages of the world were actually filled by living men, not by protocols, state papers, controversies and abstractions of men." In his early essay on history, Macaulay claimed that if historians had read their sources with a true interest in human beings, "we should not then have to look for the wars and votes of the Puritans in Clarendon, and for their phraseology in *Old Mortality*; for one half of King James in Hume and for the other half in *The Fortunes of Nigel*." And Von Ranke acknowledged that "the romantic historical works of Sir Walter Scott, which were well known in all languages and to all nations, played a principal part in awakening my sympathy for the actions and passions of past ages."

Scott wrote some straightforward history, the *Life of Napoleon* (1827) and a *History of Scotland* (1830), but his influence did not come from these routine and hastily compiled works, but from the extraordinary panorama of British history deployed through his novels: the age of Richard I in *The Talisman* and *Ivanhoe*, of Richard III in *The Fair Maid of Perth*, of Mary Stuart in *The Monastery*, of Elizabeth in *Kenilworth*, of James I in *Nigel*, of the Commonwealth in *Woodstock*, of Charles II in *Peveil of the Peak*, of William III in *Old Mortality*, of George I in *Rob Roy*, George II in *Waverley*, and

George III in *Redgauntlet*. They contain mistakes of fact, they blend information from several periods into the portrait of one, but their general fidelity to the spirit and manner of the times they represent was backed by a formidable mass of miscellaneous learning and some downright scholarship. Scott had begun life with strong antiquarian interests, and a knowledge of Italian, Spanish, French, and German, with some Old Norse and Old English, enabled him to pursue them in a scholarly way. From the beginning he was fascinated by the information about the habits and attitudes of the past contained in early literature, especially ballad literature. His review of Ellis's *Specimens of Early English Metrical Romances* can be read as an introduction to his future career as a novelist.

Since the attention of our antiquaries has been turned towards the metrical romances of England and Normandy, we have gained more insight into the domestic habits, language and character of our ancestors during the dark, warlike and romantic period of the middle ages, than Leland and Hearne were able to attain from all the dull and dreary monastic annals, which their industry collected, and their patience perused. In fact, to form a just idea of our ancient history, we cannot help thinking that these works of fancy should be read along with the labours of the professed historian. The one teaches what our ancestors thought; how they lived; upon what motives they acted, and what language they spoke; and having attained this intimate knowledge of their sentiments, manners and habits, we are certainly better prepared to learn from the other the actual particulars of their annals. From the romance, we learn what they were; from the history what they did; and were we to be deprived of one of these two kinds of information, it might well be made a question, which is most useful or interesting?

The process of putting these sentiments into action came when he was asked to complete a historical novel, *Queenhoo-Hall*. Two extracts will show from what bonds Scott was to liberate the seriously intended historical novel:

"By the soul of Saint Dunstan, I am not awaped, though the moor-cock crow so loudly!" remarks one of his characters. "'An' you take not good heed, goodman bell-swaggerer, I will crack a fool's costard before May-day be done.'"

"'Certes,' quoth the damsel, courteseying as she received the money,

'this guerdon exceeds our poor deservings; the work, so please your ladyships, you deem so quaintly wrought, is purfled by one more couthful at the needle than we be.'

Queenhoo-Hall was published in 1808. Commenting in 1829 on its lack of success, Scott observed that "when an author addresses himself exclusively to the Antiquary, he must be content to be dismissed by the general reader with the criticism of Mungo, in the *Padlock*, on the Mauritanian music, 'What signify me hear, if me no understand?'"

In general, Scott's attitude toward history follows that of the Enlightenment. He scorned "the repulsive dryness of mere antiquity," unanimated collections of obscure facts; he believed, with Hume, that "the passions . . . are generally the same in all ranks and conditions, all countries and ages"; and, though the manner is fictional, his description of a declining feudal economy in *The Bride of Lammermoor* and of the social background of the Jacobite-Hanoverian conflict in *Rob Roy* are composed according to the synthesizing methods of Robertson. What was new was the lesson that any age, even the Middle Ages, was interesting for its own sake, however little it had to offer the future, and more important still, the lesson that history involves an imaginative, as well as an intellectual, commitment to the past.

The color, the passion, the pathos with which Scott invested the past needed a corrective before a careful historian could accept it with an easy conscience. The corrective was provided by his contemporary Henry Hallam, and it was a combination of the shot silk of Scott and the linsey-woolsey of Hallam that produced the historical outlook of Macaulay. While accepting the prestige of Hallam among his contemporaries, and the extent to which he stood out among such admirable scholars as Sharon Turner, Palgrave, and Lingard, it must be admitted that his fame is usually taken on trust: he is not a historian who is willingly read. Robertson strove to attract his readers by exalting the dignity of history in style and subject matter, but Hallam achieved, without trying, a dignity that disgusts. Here—to dispose of this topic as quickly as possible—is Hallam on Chaucer: "As the first original English poet, if we except Langland, as the inventor of our most approved measure, as an improver, though with too much innovation of our language, and as a faithful witness to the manners of his age, Chaucer would deserve our reverence, if he had not also intrinsic claims for excellencies, which do not depend upon any collateral considerations." There is an occasional light relief as when, in a

footnote, he compares an antiquary's estimate of Roger Bacon to "an oyster judging of a line-of-battle ship," but all too often Hallam's prose verges on the intimidating.

Hallam was a precociously intelligent child, born in easy circumstances, and the course of his career as lawyer and private scholar is as much in contrast with the heroic and pathetic struggles of Scott as is his prose. He produced three works, each of which cost him some ten years of steady preparation: *A View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages* (1818), *The Constitutional History of England from the Accession of Henry VII to the Death of George II* (1827), and *An Introduction to the Literature of Europe during the Fifteenth, Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (1837-39). Of these the first two deserve to be called great historical works: great in conception, great in execution, great in influence. The *View* covered a thousand years, from Clovis to the Italian wars of Charles VIII, and in describing the political development, one by one, of the European states, Hallam indicated the possibility of comparative institutional history without actually attempting it himself, and in the lengthy concluding section—"On the state of society in Europe during the Middle Ages"—he moved considerably further than had Robertson in the direction of the matured *Kulturgeschichte* of Burckhardt. Hallam is the first great English medieval historian, yet he had no affection for the Middle Ages; they represented little more than a corpse whose dissection was a necessary stage in understanding the functions of a living body. His approach was still that of the Enlightenment; he judged the Middle Ages by the standards of his own day, and made no attempt to involve himself in the thought processes of the past. Here is Robertson: "The Spaniards had hardly taken possession of America, when, with a most preposterous policy, they began to erect convents, where persons of both sexes were shut up, under a vow to defeat the purpose of nature, and to counteract the first of her laws." Here is Hallam: "Usury, or lending money for profit, was treated as a crime by the theologians of the middle ages; and though the superstition has been eradicated, some part of the prejudice remains in our legislation." The tone is the same: external and patronizing. Yet Hallam's curiosity is insatiable, and it is never merely descriptive: his facts are always subordinated to a desire to show his reader what the past was like as a whole. He does not amputate a particular limb and show it to his students in an access of professional glee; he methodically flays the entire body. He

deplores the lack of teaching aids and does his best to provide them. "No chapter in the history of national manners"—he writes in the "State of Society"—"would illustrate so well, if duly executed, the progress of social life, as that dedicated to domestic architecture. The fashions of dress and of amusements are generally capricious and irreducible to rule; but every change in the dwellings of mankind, from the rudest wooden cabin to the stately mansion, has been dictated by some principle of convenience, neatness, comfort, or magnificence. Yet this most interesting field of research has been less beaten by our antiquaries than others comparatively barren." He then provides a connected account of the development of domestic, including farmhouse, architecture, which has considerable pioneering importance. He has no more interest in the question "What is a fact?" than his predecessors had; he is as indifferent to the development of source criticism on the continent as they had been; but he develops their search for cause and effect to such an extent that his acceptance of certain events, like the development of the mariner's compass, or the invention of printing, as historical "accidents" comes as something of a shock.

If the *View* provided the first detailed survey of the Middle Ages, his *Constitutional History* set for his readers a new standard of impartiality in the writing of modern history; Macaulay called it the most impartial book he had ever read. It extended the survey of the medieval constitution which had formed a long section of the *View*, and though it can be labeled "Whig," this tone emerges from the most thoughtful and well-informed survey to which any period of English history had been subjected. It came near to freeing constitutional history from party history, and set a new standard of scholarship and objectivity for English history as a whole.

Before objectivity could become a habit, there erupted on to the historiographical scene the most passionately subjective of all English historians, Thomas Carlyle. The needs of Carlyle's personality took him far beyond a mere extension of prevailing rationalist or romantic attitudes toward history. The list of the influences which shaped his historical approach are many. He acknowledged his debt to Scott and the doubts he threw on the Enlightenment formula that history was "philosophy teaching through examples." After Scott, he wrote, historians must search for "direct inspection and embodiment: this, and this only, will be counted experience; and till once experience have got in, philosophy will reconcile herself to wait at the door." He inherited Hume's

skeptical attitude toward the idea of progress and his emphasis on men's passions rather than on their reason; his attention was drawn to the cautious and critical use of evidence by Von Ranke and the great German classical historian Niebuhr. On the other hand, he followed the Enlightenment's stress on a wider subject matter and on studying phenomena that were important to the present. But lessons that might simply have added layers of sophistication to the historical instincts of a less volatile man transformed the very core of Carlyle's. He wished history to reveal *all*, to show man what he was and what God wanted of him. He rejoiced at each lesson that showed how history's domain could be extended; each warning of its limitations fell on raw nerves. How he hated the commonplace assumption that men read history to find out about human nature! When men don't know themselves, don't really know their most intimate friends, what cant to think that they can discover truth in the maimed records of the past! "History is the essence of innumerable biographies," he wrote—but this was not a manifesto for the historical work that lay ahead of him, it was a cry of disgust at the subject's limitations. "But if one Biography," he went on, "nay our own Biography, study and recapitulate it as we may, remain in so many points unintelligible to us; how much more must those millions, the very fact of which, to say nothing of the purport of them, we know not, and cannot know!"

Carlyle's feeling for history was like that of a miser stumbling on a mass of coin but with only two hands to grasp, two pockets to carry; or like a dying man's sudden vision of a project that will take fifty years to put into effect. The pity of it! And the stupid pride of those who will not recognize it. The past is in ruins, a wilderness of stumps and fragments. We hear a call or a scream, but we lose a thousand murmurs. "When the oak-tree is felled, the whole forest echoes with it: but a hundred acorns are planted silently by the same unnoticed breeze." And when a fact survives, what does it mean? Three men described a brawl beneath Sir Walter Raleigh's prison window; all three described it differently, and his own version was different from theirs. Most is lost, what remains is dark. He damns the Enlightenment in a single sneer: "So imperfect is that same experience, by which Philosophy is to teach."

And if we venture into that landscape and try to reconstruct its original form—as we must, for the past is "the true fountain of knowledge; by whose light alone [no Macaulayan sensitivity to meta-

phors about Carlyle], consciously or unconsciously employed, can the Present and the Future be interpreted or guessed at"—how do we write it down? Facts have three dimensions, the act of writing only one. "Narrative is *linear*, Action is *solid*. Alas for our 'chains' or chainlets, of 'causes and effects,' which we so assiduously track through certain handsbreadths of years and square miles, when the whole is a broad, deep Immensity, and each atom is 'chained' and complected with all!"

No major historian had looked so long or with such anguish at the nature of history or the problem of writing it. But what he saw was not entirely without hope. Though much had gone, something remained, and imagination could quicken it. And some clue as to how this could be done was offered by two Germans whose works he knew well: Schiller and Herder. The dramatic intensity of Schiller, and his bold handling of the masses as literally masses in the pictorial sense, showed the effectiveness of an emotional approach which generalized from the facts available, as an ancient chariot can be reconstructed from a hub and a shaft and driven with something like its original swiftness. From Herder's *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784-91) he took the notion of a people being formed of all the influences playing on them, a notion which allowed a national psyche, or the *Zeitgeist*, to be invoked to give the historian a sense of direction when the evidence failed him. But most essential was his development of what he admired in Scott; the historian must see, and feel, before he can portray; see everything and feel for all men, and sense too, that spirit of the times his characters themselves could not see, and did not know they felt. History, he wrote to John Stuart Mill, "is an address (literally out of Heaven, for did not God order it all?) to our *whole* inner man; to every faculty of Head and Heart, from the deepest to the slightest; there is no end to such purposes; none to one's amazement and contemplation over it. Now for *all* such purposes, high, low, ephemeral, eternal, the first indispensable condition, is that we *see* the things transacted, picture them wholly as if they stand before our eyes."

He saw history as a miraculous icon. It taught no cut-and-dried lesson, but it was created by God, and its contemplation deepened an awareness of God. And the image that best stirred a sense of awe and wonder was of a moment when a society was at the point of deepest ferment, when its spokesmen were no longer isolated warriors or prophets, but the people as a whole.

This feeling that the spirit of a people could best be apprehended

at a moment of crisis, of *ad hoc* decisions, of impulse rather than reflection, freed Carlyle from the cause-and-effect narration which he distrusted; and because a mob, a whole people, acts, as he thought, with a shared divine possession, the poverty of the facts mattered less; a little information here, a little there, could be used as representative of the whole. This is what gave him confidence to begin *The French Revolution*. There are plenty of footnotes in the work, but the number of books he read would have served only as a preliminary investigation for Robertson or Hallam. In the Appendix to his *Lectures on the French Revolution* Lord Acton remarked of Carlyle that "the mystery of investigation had not been revealed to him when he began his most famous book. He was scared from the Museum by an offender who sneezed in the Reading Room . . . the usual modest resources of a private collection satisfied his requirements." And as a result, he concludes, Carlyle's volumes "remain one of those disappointing storm-clouds that give out more thunder than lighting."

Carlyle used his reading to support him as, by a violent effort of the will and imagination, he identified himself with the past. As with Gibbon—but with what a startling difference of effect—he kept his knowledge not only in notebooks but in his head. His aim, he said, was "to keep the whole matter simmering in the living mind and memory rather than laid up in paper bundles or otherwise laid up in an inert way. . . . Only what you *have living* in your own memory and heart is worth putting down to be printed; this alone has much chance to get into the living heart and memory of other men." This was his aim: to create the whirlwind, force men's attention to it, and then speak to them from its midst. "As an actually existing Son of Time," he said on one such occasion, "look, with unspeakable manifold interest, oftenest in silence, at what the Time did bring." And having lived each several part of the events he describes, having watched at the guillotine, waited on street corners, screamed with the mob, sat trembling with the court at Versailles, and all this without real knowledge of the background, the why and wherefore of these events, improvising and striving to be true to the brief scenario of his reading, like a *commedia dell' arte* actor to his plot, when it was over, he told his wife, in anger at the toll this wretched, sacred craft had taken of him, "I know not whether this book is worth anything, nor what the world will do with it; but there has been nothing for a hundred years that comes more direct and flamingly from the heart of a living man."

In later years, his love-hate relationship with history became less tense. In the *Life and Letters of Oliver Cromwell* (1845) and *Frederick the Great* (1857-65) a wider reading left less space for improvisation, as did his growing confidence that great, well-documented men can be used as representative of the spirit of their age. But it is for his early, most emotional book that he will be remembered; it was with the *French Revolution* that he rose to share with Macaulay the admiration of the history-reading public until the shades of the university began to fall around a history that was poignantly felt and idiosyncratically written.

If no English historian has depended so much on instinct as did Carlyle in writing the *French Revolution*, none has so depended on calculated literary effect than did Macaulay in writing his *History of England from the Accession of James II*. Not even Gibbon. Gibbon lavished much care on making his style true to himself, to his own highly refined version of a manner accepted in a small cultivated circle. Macaulay took pains to appeal to the reading public as a whole; his criterion was not, What will satisfy me? but, What will please them?

This preoccupation with presentation dates from his youthful essay on *History* (1828). He surveys the course of English historiography from Hume to the present and finds little to praise, nothing unreservedly to admire: "We are acquainted with no history which approaches to our notion of what a history ought to be." Hume, Gibbon, and the rest had all been "seduced from truth, not by their imagination, but by their reason." They had taken sides, they had omitted aspects of the past which would have qualified the implications of the subject matter which they did exploit. "A history in which every particular incident may be true may on the whole be false. The circumstances which have the most influence on the happiness of mankind, the changes of manners and morals, the transition of communities from poverty to wealth, from knowledge to ignorance, from ferocity to humanity—these are, for the most part, noiseless revolutions." Yet without their presence, the history of statecraft and war cannot be true to the past. "The perfect historian is he in whose work the character and spirit of an age is exhibited in miniature. . . . He shows us the court, the camp, and the senate. But he shows us also the nation. He considers no anecdote, no peculiarity of manner, no familiar saying, as too insignificant for his notice which is not too insignificant to illustrate the operation of laws, of religion, and of education, and to mark the

progress of the human mind. Men will not merely be described, but will be made ultimately known to us." He concludes: "A historian, such as we have been attempting to describe, would indeed be an intellectual prodigy." It is not impossible that Macaulay, whose early precocity had made him something of an infant prodigy, already thought he had it in him to be such a historian.

Certainly this ideal picture of the historian's subject matter was one he tried to realize in his long essays for the *Edinburgh Review* and later in his *History*. He developed the theme in his essay on Hallam a few months later, repeating that "good historians, in the proper sense of the word, we have not. But we have good historical romances and good historical essays." The ideal would be a blend of Scott and Hallam, of Scott so that the reader could see the past, of Hallam so that he could think about it. Both Carlyle and Macaulay drew, then, the same moral from Scott, but while Carlyle was led to ask, What is the past? How do you leap back there? Macaulay, keeping the Scott-Hallam balance more firmly poised, and untroubled by the void spaces that so distressed Carlyle, asked, "How do I bring forward the past for the inspection of the present, so that men can be amused by the picture and thoughtfully compare it with the features of their own age?" Macaulay did visit the past mentally, but as the ideal traveler he describes in his essay on *History*, who does not only go to court but to the coffeehouses, who listens to the accent of the butcher and baker as well as to philosophers and statesmen; he wished to understand it, but not to identify himself with it with the almost trance-like intensity of Carlyle.

He began work on the *History* in 1841, and his letters and journals show him at work. He must write so that he will be read. "How little the all-important art of making meaning pellucid is studied now! Hardly any popular writer, except myself, thinks of it." He aimed to combine color with clarity, to combine a mass of allusion and imagery with rapid comprehensibility. "My account of the Highlands," he wrote in July, 1850, "is getting tolerable shape. Tomorrow I shall begin to transcribe again, and to polish. What trouble these few pages will have cost me! The great object is that, after all this trouble, they may read as if they had been spoken off, and may seem to flow as easily as table-talk." He thought that every aspect of historical writing needed improving: narrative, transition from one scene, or one topic, to another, analysis; he labored to correct them all. And every effort was successful;

his narrative combines pace with a glamorous freight of literary device, it turns from scene to scene without any preliminary clearing of the throat or shuffling of notes; his analysis of the state of parties, or of public opinion, combines an impression of thoughtful completeness with immediacy. The problem of summing up attitudes had been approached in antiquity and in the Renaissance through the device of the imaginary speech, which drew together various points of view. Macaulay adopted a halfway measure: a synopsis of views, which he termed the declamatory disquisition. "The declamatory disquisition which I have substituted for the orations of the ancient historians," he noted in his journal, "seems to me likely to answer. It is a sort of composition which suits my style, and will probably take with the public." The extent to which his pains did take was shown by sales which soared above those of the works of any previous historian and made him a rich man. Nor did he spare pains in collecting material. He describes his approach to the reign of William III:

I will first set myself to know the whole subject; to get, by reading and travelling, a full acquaintance with William's reign; I reckon that it will take me eighteen months to do this. I must visit Holland, Belgium, Scotland, Ireland, France. The Dutch archives and French archives must be ransacked. I will see whether anything is to be got from other diplomatic collections. I must see Londonderry, the Boyne, Aghrim, Limerick, Kinsale, Namur again, Landen, Steinkirk. I must turn over hundreds, thousands, of pamphlets. Lambeth, the Bodleian and the other Oxford libraries, the Devonshire Papers, the British Museum, must be explored, and notes made: and then I shall go to work. When the materials are ready, and the History mapped out in my mind, I ought easily to write on an average two of my pages daily. In two years from the time I begin writing I shall have more than finished my second part. Then I reckon a year for polishing, retouching, and printing.

No historian had used so much miscellaneous information from plays, pamphlets, broadsheets, songs, or memoirs before, but if Macaulay was cautious about the reliability of some of his sources, he was not touched by the spirit of painstaking source criticism that was rising like a dye through historical work on the continent, and through the books of English historians of antiquity like Thomas Arnold and George Grote, his contemporaries. Macaulay's salient characteristic

was confidence; he knew that if he appeared to distrust his sources his audience would distrust him. He had not been twice a Member of Parliament for nothing. The same confidence marked the judgments he passed on the characters in his *History*. While not crudely black and white, they extinguish the possibility of appeal. It is for faults of interpretation that Macaulay has been most severely castigated, not for factual errors, and the explanation lies in the precocity with which he judged men when he had first read about them, and the extent to which his opinion hardened while dealing with them in the sometimes slapdash course of his journalistic career. It has been said that Macaulay found the historical essay brick, and left it marble; certainly his work for the *Edinburgh Review* petrified many of his opinions. His amazing memory, on which he greatly relied, brought into his *History* not only information gleaned in his youth, but judgments passed there. Nor was Macaulay made cautious, as Robertson had been, by any vision of history as a subject which was constantly developing. He transformed it from brick into marble and thought it would keep its shape; he did not see his judgments as interim judgments, or his evidence as capable of extension.

The aspect of his confidence which has caused most offense is the assumption that Britain in the mid-nineteenth century was in every sense a better place than it had been at any time in the past. After warning his readers at the beginning of the *History* that he would have to recount disasters and follies, as well as triumphs, he reassured them, for "unless I greatly deceive myself, the general effect of this chequered narrative will be to excite thankfulness in all religious minds, and hope in the breasts of all patriots. For the history of our country during the last hundred and sixty years is eminently the history of physical, of moral, and of intellectual improvement." And he continued, at regular intervals, to jog his reader into a flutter of pride at his own good fortune. Speaking of Manchester, in the celebrated survey of England in the third chapter, he remarks, "That wonderful emporium, which in population and wealth far surpasses capitals so much renowned as Berlin, Madrid, and Lisbon, was then a mean and ill built market town, containing under six thousand people. It then had not a single press. It now supports a hundred printing establishments. It then had not a single coach. It now supports twenty coachmakers." It may be that there is vulgarity here, a tendency to crow over the past rather than to illuminate it by contrast, but in general, Macaulay's manner

was a perfectly legitimate blend of cajolery and shock. Without confidence in our own society, we may find the "look here upon this picture, and on this" technique crude, but it did involve his readers in history, and it did sharpen their mental picture of the past. Even Tory Hume, skeptical of progress as he was, wrote that the English people ought to cherish "that noble liberty, that sweet equality, and that happy security, by which they are at present distinguished above all nations in the universe." Even dour and impartial Hallam looked on "the long and uninterruptedly increasing prosperity of England as the most beautiful phenomenon in the history of mankind." When he was working on the second volume of the *History* at the end of 1848, the year of revolutions in the rest of Europe, Macaulay reminded his readers of their own comparative tranquillity: "And, if it be asked, what has made us to differ from others, the answer is that we never lost what others are wildly and blindly seeking to regain. It is because we had a preserving revolution in the seventeenth century that we have not had a destroying revolution in the nineteenth." We may censure this confidence on personal grounds, because we don't like its tone—too brash, too intolerant—but it can only be censured on historical grounds if it perverted his judgment of the past and made him unduly selective in his treatment of affairs. Neither of these objections can be sustained to a really damaging degree. His acts of injustice to some of his characters were based on their behavior as individuals rather than as supporters or opponents of the principles of 1688, and while he neglected certain aspects of the national life, he greatly increased the wealth of detail with which it was henceforward to be described. The most pertinent criticism of his constant reference to the present would be this: that it obscured the extent to which development was taking place throughout the period with which he dealt. It is possible to shrink from Macaulay the Whig while admiring the Whiggery of his historical method. "He remains to me," Lord Acton said, "one of the greatest of all writers and masters, although I think him utterly base, contemptible and odious for certain reasons."

While Hallam, Carlyle, and Macaulay were in the heyday of their reputation and Englishmen were congratulating themselves on being a historical nation, there appeared an iconoclast of what seemed a particularly shocking sort. Historians, he claimed, had enlarged their subject matter, but to a pitifully small degree; they had generalized a little more than in the past, but with what timidity!

In all the other great fields of inquiry, the necessity of generalization is universally admitted, and noble efforts are being made to rise from particular facts in order to discover the laws by which those facts are governed. So far, however, is this from being the usual course of historians, that among them a strange idea prevails, that their business is merely to relate events, which they may occasionally enliven by such moral and political reflections as seem likely to be useful. According to this scheme, any author who from indolence of thought, or from natural incapacity, is unfit to deal with the highest branches of knowledge, has only to pass some years in reading a certain number of books, and then he is qualified to be an historian.

And again, "The most celebrated historians are manifestly inferior to the most successful cultivators of physical science." The iconoclast was Henry Thomas Buckle, and this challenge to the panjandrums of his subject was made in volume one of his *History of Civilization in England* (1857).

Buckle is a sport in the development of English historiography. He had no native predecessor, and no disciple. A gifted linguist, an omnivorous reader, he had been forcibly impressed by the positivist philosophy of Auguste Comte, and resolved to write the first history of English civilization that would really discover the principles that underlay its development. It would not be based on great political or military leaders—they and their deeds did little more than ruffle the surface of events; it would not give weight to religious leaders, for morals remained static: only intellect advanced; it would deal with men in the mass, how they were shaped by climate, geography, and diet into becoming intelligent beings, and how they in turn, by the use of intelligence, gradually came to exploit the world about them. It would, then, by deducing the fixed laws that determine human actions, help men to progress still further. Unfortunately, because of the stupidity of historians, the materials from which the science of man was to be constructed had been so neglected "that whoever now attempts to generalize historical phenomena must collect the facts, as well as conduct the generalization." In consequence of his labor, however, he hoped "to accomplish for the history of man something equivalent, or at all events analogous, to what has been effected by other inquiries for the different branches of natural science."

From his study in mid-nineteenth-century London, Buckle not only poured scorn on his fellow historians but he reached toward a materialism that found little echo in England until the present century, and a sociological technique that historians have not adopted even today. And he did it with a clumsy eagerness that enabled those who recoiled in horror from his attempt to explain men by statistics to cover themselves by poking fun at him. "Rejecting the metaphysical dogma of free will," he wrote, "and the theological dogma of predestined events, we are driven to the conclusion that the actions of men, being determined solely by their antecedents, must have a character of uniformity." And as evidence he quoted—amongst much else—statistics that showed in any year there were roughly the same number of suicides, marriages, and letters sent undirected: "so that for each successive period we can actually fortell the number of persons whose memory will fail them in regard to this trifling and, as it might appear, accidental occurrence." It was bad enough for a man to be told that his inclination to marry was influenced by the price of corn, but when he was told that he would learn more about morals from the law of averages than from Shakespeare and Homer, and that his religious sense was determined by the number of earthquakes and volcanoes in his vicinity, he was not surprised to hear Buckle denounced from the pulpit and hounded by university historians in holy orders. What of conscience? Of free will? Of the subjective elements in choice? All, according to Buckle, could be explained if all were known. And much could be known, if only historians and moralists had spent more time collecting statistics and less in parroting the truisms of their trades.

The young Acton concluded a savage review of Buckle in *The Rambler* (1858) by saying that "in his laborious endeavour to degrade the history of mankind, and of the dealings of God with man, to the level of the natural sciences, he has stripped it of its philosophical, of its divine, and even of its human character and interest." Buckle was lampooned by John Phillimore:

This is the creed, let no man chuckle,
Of the great thinker, Henry Buckle:
I believe in fire and water,
And in fate, dame Nature's daughter;
I believe in steam and rice.
Not in virtue or in vice (*and so on*).

Macaulay was against him; so was Carlyle, so was Froude, so was Stubbs.

Buckle was certainly vulnerable. Amidst the horror and the mockery that greeted his work there were calmer and graver criticisms. While in theory *against* the special contributions which great men could make to the development of society, Buckle devoted much attention to them. While preaching an all-inclusive mechanical causality, he admitted the role of the accidental. His claim that history demonstrated "one glorious principle of undeviating regularity" was blindly sweeping, and he invited the sort of answer given in 1859 by the shrewdest of his critics, the Oxford professor Goldwin Smith: "History cannot furnish its own inductive laws: an induction to be sound must take in, actually, or virtually, all the facts. But history is unlike all other studies in this, that she never can have, actually or virtually, all the facts before her. Moreover history, unlike the sciences, dare not predict."

It was not the least of the services of Buckle's *History* to force historians to prepare their armory for the question that was later to be asked with increasing insistence: Is history a science? Buckle's plea that historians should look to neighbor fields of study, especially what came to be called the social sciences, went unheeded, but he forced them to take stock of the possibilities and limits of their subject, as Goldwin Smith did, in a way which anticipates with curious closeness some of the arguments in recent discussions. Much that long seemed dead in Buckle now leaps to the eye with an odd sense of familiarity. Speaking of science on the one hand, and the humanities on the other, he wrote:

There has arisen an unnatural separation of the two great departments of inquiry; the study of the internal and of the external: and although, in the present state of European literature, there are some unmistakable symptoms of a desire to break down this artificial barrier, still it must be admitted that as yet nothing has been actually accomplished towards effecting so great an end. The moralists, the theologians, and the metaphysicians continue to prosecute their studies without much respect for what they deem the inferior labours of scientific men; whose inquiries, indeed, they frequently attack, as dangerous to the interests of religion, and as inspiring us with an undue confidence in the resources of the human understand-

ing. On the other hand, the cultivators of physical science, conscious that they are an advancing body, are naturally proud of their own success; and, contrasting their discoveries with the more stationary position of their opponents, are led to despise pursuits the barrenness of which has now become notorious."

It is to be hoped that the future historian of the Two Cultures controversy will pay some tribute to its founding father.

Two years after Buckle's death, James Anthony Froude, then the most popular historian in England, lectured at the Royal Institution on "The Science of History," and paid a tribute to "the eminent person whose name is connected with this way of looking at History" before settling down to the task of demolishing his theories. Froude's own attitude toward history was influenced by three men—they make a beguiling juxtaposition—Carlyle, Buckle, and Shakespeare. His relation with Carlyle was close. Carlyle read the proofs of the first volumes of his *History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada*, and Froude remained a constant disciple and became his literary executor and biographer. From Carlyle he learned to resent the fragmentary, disconnected nature of the past, which made history "like a child's box of letters, with which we can spell any word we please," and the little trust that could be put in historians: "Read Macaulay on the condition of the English poor before the last century or two, and you wonder how they lived at all. Read Cobbett, and I may say Hallam, and you wonder how they endure the contrast between their past prosperity and their present misery." Buckle's influence was also a negative one. Froude revolted against a mechanistic interpretation which would rob men of their own volition. There must be free choice, or it would make nonsense of the standards by which we praise men or blame them. Men are not masses, analyzable in terms of statistical norms; they are an aggregation of individuals, and history is the record of individual actions. Philosophers of history became anathema to him. "Hegel falls out of date, Schlegel falls out of date, and Comte in good time will fall out of date." In a later lecture he declared, "I object to all historical theories. I object to them as calculated to vitiate the observation of facts."

If a man wants to write history, but distrusts the historical record, and cannot accept any "philosophical" aid in arranging the facts and bridging the lacunae between them (for "a history is durable or perish-

able as it contains less or more of the writer's own speculations"), what is he to do? Froude found encouragement in Shakespeare's history plays, where, he claimed, "the most perfect English history which exists is to be found." By this he meant that Shakespeare kept near to the facts as he found them, letting the characters speak as the chronicles said they had spoken, and did not try to moralize or philosophize about the deeds he was narrating. He invented, of course. Eastcheap was introduced to give body to the statement that Henry V had lived among loose companions in his youth, but his invention took the form of ornament, not commentary. "The greatness of the poet," he told his audience at the Royal Institution, "depends on his being true to nature, without insisting that nature shall theorise with him, without making her more just, more philosophical, more moral than reality; and, in difficult matters, leaving much to reflection which cannot be explained. . . . May we not thus learn something of what history should be, and in what sense it should aspire to teach?"

What it taught was that men's lives were a battlefield of right and wrong, and that eventually right triumphed; from history men learned to love the noble and hate the base. If a subject could be found, then, that would show right battling with, and in a conquest of Titans overcoming, wrong, and also be rich in the verbatim accents of its protagonists, then the criteria of great drama and high purpose would be fulfilled. Such a subject Froude found in the history of England from the destruction of Romish error to the scattering of a Romish fleet and the death of a triumphant Protestant Queen. So began a work that held its own in sales even with the later volumes of Macaulay's *History*, and from the Reformation volumes of 1856 proceeded with two volumes each in 1858, 1860, 1863, and 1866 to 1870, when, overwhelmed by his material, he ended with the Armada.

It is very rare, as we have seen, for a historian to write a book which actually conforms to his statements about what a history should be. Froude is no exception. In a lecture "On the Means of teaching English History" he used Hume as a whipping boy for the theme that a historian should not write about what he cannot intuitively sympathize with; yet the Catholics in his *History* got as short shrift as Hume gave John Knox, and his growing dislike for Elizabeth led to his bringing Burghley forward as the true architect of Elizabethan greatness. He protested against the way historians had concentrated on major figures, giving the impression that the history of a country

was the history of its kings, and that the people themselves had no existence worth recording; yet in J. R. Green's view, Froude's great fault was that "in a history of England he had omitted the English people." He repeated his view that "the better people know things the less they have views about them. The thing itself was the true object of knowledge, and the mind rests in that." Yet his mind rested on Henry VIII and subjected him to such a whitewashing that even the Protestants, as Leslie Stephen recorded, "refused to accept such a champion, and the burly figure looked awkward in wings and a white robe." Carlyle had written on an early draft of the *History*: "The rule throughout is, that *events* should speak. Commentary ought to be sparing: clear insight, definite conviction, brought about with a *minimum* of Commentary: that is always the *Art* of history." Both he and Froude believed that events might be put in an ornamental frame, in the Shakespearean sense, but this advice, echoed and echoed again by Froude, did imply a strict impartiality. Yet Froude came to tug the "definite conviction" so far out of context that by 1891, when he published *The Divorce of Catherine of Aragon*, he could state, "I do not pretend to impartiality. I believe the Reformation to have been the greatest incident in English history; the root and source of the expansive force which has spread the Anglo-Saxon race over the globe, and imprinted the English genius and character on the constitution of mankind," and admit that "something of ourselves must always be intermixed before knowledge can reach us."

The admission is perfectly consistent with his earlier revulsion from a science of history. It would be universally endorsed today; the interest lies in his tardy recognition that not only is history not a science, but the use of historical evidence cannot be scientific. In the post-Buckle period there was much discussion of these two concepts, and much confusion between them. German scholarship and the work of Stubbs and the record editors seemed to suggest that historians could hate Buckle and still catch a little glamour from the sciences through their use of evidence, but well before Acton's successor J. A. Bury pronounced in his Cambridge inaugural lecture in 1903 that history was "a science, no more and no less," the issue had been decided against him in the hearts of thoughtful historians, and its repeated proppings up and knockings down up to the present day have become the dreariest, and the most mechanical, item of historical apologetics. Ironically, Froude's use of evidence did in a sense become more

scientific as his narrative proceeded. He relied increasingly on source materials and on growing supplies of them. He worked prodigiously in the public records (then in the Rolls House) and the British Museum, and among the Spanish archives in Simancas. It has been said that probably no previous historical work incorporated so much new material. Unfortunately he printed some of it inaccurately. H. A. L. Fisher, a wiser and wittier man than Froude, though his inferior as a historian, went so far as to accuse him of being constitutionally inaccurate. "Writing, for instance, of Adelaide, in Australia, he says:—'Seven miles away we saw below us, in a basin with a river winding through it, a city of 150,000 inhabitants, not one of whom has known, or will ever know, one moment's anxiety as to the recurring regularity of his three meals a day.' Adelaide is on high ground, not in a valley: there is no river running through it; its population was not more than 75,000: and at the very moment when Mr. Froude visited it, a large portion of that population was on the verge of starvation." Yet neither Fisher's urbane malicious comments on his travel book, nor Freeman's far from urbane attacks on the *History* ("One can belabour Froude on a very small amount of knowledge," he confessed to a friend. "I am profoundly ignorant of the sixteenth century.") have damaged the authority of his picture of Elizabeth's reign. His reading of character, especially that of Henry VIII, has been rebutted, but the essential authoritativeness of the Elizabethan volumes remains, and his slips and carelessnesses in transcription have never been shown to spring from a desire to distort the evidence. It was not just the excellence of his style—easy, supple, colorful without ever becoming turgid—but the range of his story and the directness with which he brought it home to the reader which prompted so critical a man as Leslie Stephen to say, ". . . if I want to know something of the Elizabethan period, I can nowhere find so vivid and interesting a narrative." Froude remained true to his aims in this respect at least; he is the most Shakespearean of our historians.

Even as Froude was working, the manner of writing history was turning from the literary to the academic. The growing documentation of his last volumes reflects it, and his reception in Oxford when he returned there as professor in 1892 symbolizes it. The young don who had been rejected because of his ideas was brought back because of his facts, but his welcome had a certain chill politeness about it.

The study of history was becoming more exact, more preoccupied

with sources, less philosophical. When Buckle's work appeared, William Stubbs, the greatest English medievalist of any age, said, "I don't believe in the philosophy of history, so I don't believe in Buckle." Stubbs was Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford from 1866 to 1884, the first properly trained historian to hold the post, and an acquaintance recorded how he came upon him reading a review by Froude of G. O. Trevelyan's *Life of Macaulay* and heard him say, as he abruptly got up, "When rhetoricians fall out, historians may come by their own."

The third quarter of the nineteenth century saw the foundations of modern research laid, and a series of massive blocks of scholarship raised on them. The Rolls series of medieval sources commenced in 1857, and in the same year began the great series of printed calendars of state papers. In 1869 the Historic Manuscripts Commission began its work of cataloguing documents in private collections. The first British periodical devoted to scholarly historical studies, the *English Historical Review*, was founded in 1886. In 1871 the Oxford "School of Modern History" permitted undergraduates to study history, and history alone, for the first time, and Cambridge followed suit with a separate History Tripos in 1873. The study of history became increasingly identified with the universities as its scholarly standards became more exacting. Stubbs's *Constitutional History of Medieval England* appeared in 1874-78; E. A. Freeman's *History of the Norman Conquest*, in 1867-79; the first volume of Samuel Gardiner's history of seventeenth-century England in 1863. All were based on the newly published record collections, and each author was at the time of writing, or later became, a university professor. Froude's *History*, which filled the chronological gap between Stubbs's work and Gardiner's, was easily the most vulnerable to scholarly criticism among these works.

It is tempting to see history itself becoming divided into Two Cultures in this period: on the one side, the professional academics, austere and unreadable; on the other, the popular but unreliable amateur. Such a baleful division did occur but its establishment depended on factors that did not begin to operate seriously until the twentieth century—the loss of faith by historians in their own subject save as a training for the mind; the cult of research work on narrow subjects at the universities; and the isolation of a small group of "serious" readers of history from the reading public at large. Perhaps another factor

was the extension of women's higher education, with its intemperate admiration for accuracy at the expense of imagination; there has been no great woman historian, though the names of Eileen Power, Beatrice Webb, and Barbara Hammond will be remembered both for scholarship and humanity.

The day of the private scholar was waning. It was no longer easy for bankers like William Roscoe, the historian of the Medici, or Grote, the historian of Greece, or lawyers like Hallam and Buckle, or politicians like Macaulay, or parsons like Robertson, to gain an international reputation for historical scholarship. But Stubbs prepared for his publications as a professor by his research as a country parson. Freeman wrote as a private scholar of independent means before he took his chair; William Lecky, whose *History of England in the Eighteenth Century* (1878-90) continued chronologically the basic surveys of Freeman, Stubbs, Froude, and Gardiner, never held a university post; and John Richard Green, whose *Short History of the English People* (1874) was second as a best seller only to Macaulay's *History*, while a confidant of Freeman, and a friend of Stubbs, lived and worked as a vicar in the East End of London. But the influence of the universities was, nevertheless, a pervasive one. They could tempt the private scholar with a chair, they could reward work of which they approved—as they did Lecky's—with honorary degrees. It was largely their influence that prompted Frederick Harrison, himself a private scholar and a historian, to express in 1898 his nostalgia for the days of Carlyle and Macaulay:

The historians of the present century, under the influence originally of Ranke in Germany, of Guizot in France and Sir Henry Ellis and other editors of the Museum and Rolls records in England, have devoted themselves rather to original research than to eloquent narrative, to the study of special institutions and limited epochs, to the scientific probing of contemporary witness and punctilious precision of minute detail. The school of Freeman, Stubbs, Gardiner, and Bryce [Professor of Civil Law at Oxford and author of the *Holy Roman Empire*] has quite displaced the taste of our grandfathers for artistic narration and a glowing style. Where the older men thought of permanent literature, the new school is content with scientific records. Would that J. R. Green had lived out his life!

But Harrison's nostalgia need not be ours. England had been cut

off by her insularity from the refinements in scholarship that had become commonplace in France and Germany, but could not stand on her tradition of spacious thought, fine writing, and indiscriminate reading forever. And this first generation of exact historians, convinced, as great historians must be, that the work of their predecessors must be done all over again, produced a body of work that if taken as a whole is still unsurpassed. All the four men Harrison refers to wrote well; none was as plodding as Hallam, none so stood on his dignity as did Robertson, none was so fretful as Buckle, none so unfair as Gibbon or Macaulay. There was a growing wariness, and a tap on the knuckles in the *English Historical Review* came to be feared more than a cudgel blow on the head in the *Edinburgh* or the *Quarterly*, but the vice of timidity had not yet taken a firm hold, and Stubbs, Freeman, and Gardiner treated their great themes and long periods with as much confidence as scholarship. An age of glamour it may not be, but it is an age of grandeur.

And amid so many other names, it is pre-eminently the age of Stubbs. That this monosyllable should still so haunt the study of medieval English constitutional history is the measure of the authority with which he presided over every state of what—in spite of Hallam's chapter on England in the *Sketch of Europe in the Middle Ages*—was still its infancy. He deciphered manuscripts, he edited fundamental texts—nineteen of the volumes in the Rolls series were his; his *Select Charters* (1870) still retains its value as an anthology of sources, his *Constitutional History* surveyed the whole scene from Julius Caesar to the accession of the Tudors with a richness of detail, a firmness of plan, and an awareness of the main currents of national life that have never been matched. And his concern for his subject went well beyond his writings. He was abreast of continental scholarship as none of his predecessors had been, his lectures were designed to provoke thought as well as to fill notebooks, and he had the true academician's realism about the impossibility of being definitive. "History," he said, "knows that it can wait for more evidence and review its older verdicts; it offers an endless series of courts of appeal, and is ever ready to re-open closed cases." The publication of records on a large scale, and the concentration of historical studies in the universities, with their continuing routine of teaching and research, added a new dimension to men's thinking about history. The private scholar had looked on history as a record of man's activities reaching to the present, a record

which could be plundered to produce a book which would portray, definitively, some aspect of the past. Now to this concept was added a notion of history as a subject with laws of development of its own. The notion implied a built-in obsolescence, the impossibility of the definitive, and historians increasingly tried to save themselves from being swept out of sight by throwing overboard what they thought most perishable in their work: their own opinions and judgments, connections between their subjects and their own day. Then they became aware that even facts, by the mere acts of selection and arrangement, become mortal and have to be selected and arranged again and again. Carlyle rebelled against the gaps in the past and the pain it cost to bring it to life. Buckle abused the misdirected energies of his fellow historians, but did not shake their conviction that something could be done and that their efforts would bring a lasting reward. It was left for their successors to feel that history offered no hard surface where a man could chisel his name for posterity, and to suffer a failure of nerve much more debilitating than that produced by academic jealousy or a lack of faith in the progress of society.

The consequences of academized history still lay in the future when Stubbs wrote. The spate of record publications was impressive, but his generation saw them as making it possible to write history that was truer to the past, and embarked on them with excitement; they had not yet become an uncontrollable flood, and work in the archives was not yet a necessary badge of academic respectability. Stubbs's *Constitutional History* was written from printed sources; so were Green's work and Freeman's. Gardiner worked in Brussels and Venice and Simancas, not to add prestige to his work but to get information that had not been printed. The "dark industry" which Hume had groaned over was not yet something to brag about, nor did historians yet choose to work by preference where the industry would be darkest. Stubbs was a painstaking editor of texts, yet the introductions to his volumes in the Rolls series show how eager he was to see the period dealt with by the text as broadly as possible, and they contain striking and energetic portraits of the main characters concerned—Dunstan, or Henry II, or Richard I, or John. His *Constitutional History* created this subject as a branch of specialized inquiry at a blow, but it was also, because of his insistence on seeing the dependence of constitutional changes on specific political, or military, or economic needs, the best available general history of medieval England. It is

massively impartial. Stubbs declared in a lecture that he was not interested in making men into Whigs or Tories but in making the Whigs good, sensible Whigs, and Tories good, sensible Tories, and the biases that have been read into the work have appeared in retrospect, not because Stubbs put them there—save in the one instance that this parsonical professor, and future bishop, respectively, of Chester and Oxford, could not feel that any good had come from Rome and adjusted his account of the post-conquest church to prove it. The main criticism leveled against Stubbs is that he anticipated the maturity of the medieval parliament, and wrote too much in terms of its development. But to Stubbs, the twice-reformed parliament, with Disraeli and Gladstone at the height of their powers, really did seem to dominate the constitution, and the printed sources revealed its working in the Middle Ages as they did the functions of no other device of government. He anticipated his critics in a warning he delivered against “the danger of generalising from results, and attributing to men of the past the historian’s own formulated conclusions,” and where he exaggerated the development of early parliaments, and saw the nation speaking where only a faction bargained—as in Magna Carta—he was heeding the old Adam of the Enlightenment far less than the message of the sources, and the opinions of his colleagues on the continent. For Maitland, the greatest of English legal historians, to read Stubbs “is a training in justice.”

If Stubbs tackled the most neglected period of English history, Samuel Gardiner accepted the challenge of the most written about, the most controversial, period of all. The attraction of the seventeenth century is easy to understand. It saw the first fully articulate conflict between large sections of the nation in both politics and religion, and a settlement of these issues in 1688 which loomed as large in the eyes of Englishmen as did the Declaration of Independence to Americans. The personalities of the Stuarts, and of Cromwell, were not only vividly interesting but they could be studied, through state papers, pamphlets, and memoirs, as no earlier historical characters could; the sixteenth century had no Clarendon. For Gardiner the truth had been obscured by the Whig or Tory bias of earlier historians. No partisan himself, he resolved to guard against contemporary partisanship by basing his work on primary sources, state papers and the like, wherever possible, and using pamphlets and memoirs sparingly and with the utmost caution. To resist any temptation that might develop in himself to stress

certain aspects in his story at the expense of others, he decided to work through the material year by year, publishing as he went, so that his work should demonstrate what actually happened, and not his hindsight of what had happened. This reversal of the methods of Hume, Hallam, and Macaulay might have led to his producing a set of annals, a mere reference book; but his constant linking of cause and effect, his belief that history was “the record of change, of the new circumstances into which communities of men are brought, and of the new ideas called forth by the circumstances, and by which circumstances in turn are moulded,” enabled him to give a credibility and sense of growth even to a brief span of years.

He thought the subjective element in a historian’s work emerged most dangerously in the thematic treatment of the past, and in large-scale portraiture, so he avoided both. To have a clear picture of James I or Cromwell before writing about their times was to see their actions in terms of the behavior of a literary concoction. “Historians,” he wrote, “coolly dissect a man’s thoughts as they please, and label them like specimens in a naturalist’s cabinet. Such a thing, they argue, was done for mere personal aggrandisement; such a thing for national objects; such a thing from high religious motives. In real life we may be sure it was not so.” Gardiner was much humbler than Stubbs, and his sacrifice of nearly every device whereby a historian writes himself into his history makes him the first English historian to write in the modern manner.

He was as aware as Stubbs of the need to keep European history as a whole constantly in view when writing about England, he was as critical in his use of authorities, and circumstances forced him to work far more in archives than did Stubbs. He was careful not to rely on the horizontal, the contemporary, dimension. “No one can really study any particular period of history,” as he said, “unless he knows a great deal about what preceded it. . . . He has to bear in mind that it is a portion of a living whole.” He accordingly began his first volume with a summary of previous events, which in the expanded form of *An Introduction to English History* (1881), became (after Green’s *Short History*) the most influential textbook of its day. And Gardiner’s impersonal attitude, and his refusal to draw morals or point lessons, did not mean that he thought the writing of history to be merely an end in itself, of no more use to society than a meticulously arranged collection of tram tickets. “It has always been my wish,” he wrote,

"that I might so be able to write the history of the period as to convey something better than information. It seems to me that, without any attempt at preaching, merely to explain how men acted towards one another, and the reason for their misunderstandings, ought to teach us something for the conduct of our own lives."

Widely as Stubbs and Gardiner were esteemed, they were not popular, and their influence was largely restricted to the universities. Of John Richard Green, however, it could be said, as it was said of Gibbon and Macaulay (and with the same degree of exaggeration), that here was a serious and scholarly historian who was read as popular novels are read. Green's *Short History of the English People* was a work of the greatest independence of mind. Stubbs and Freeman were his friends and he had a respectful admiration for the work of Gardiner, yet while he sympathized with their aims, he could not follow them. They were all primarily interested in public events, and if Freeman's dictum: "history is past politics" was an unfair comment even on his own work, there was enough truth in it to justify Green's resolution to have no truck with "trumpet and drum" history, as he called it in a phrase that was to become famous. For Green, history should deal with the progress of the nation as a whole. It was not, as we have seen, a particularly original idea, but he alone kept it steadily in view throughout a major work, and this at a time when the idea had practically the whole force of responsible opinion against it. He felt this; he regretted that he could not win the good opinion of Gardiner, that Freeman would have to belabor him in the press and Stubbs wince in public for his views. When Stubbs and Green were conducting a viva voce examination together in Oxford on one occasion, Stubbs said to a candidate, "You say that George III had an inveterate hatred of men of genius. Where did you get that extraordinary statement from?" The man looked very uncomfortable but said nothing. Green wrote on a piece of paper and passed it to Stubbs: "Verbatim from my *Short History*." The editor of Stubbs's letters adds, "*solventur risu tabulae*," but Green was sensitive about the extent to which his emphasis on the common man, his playing down of court and camp and law court, his graphic character sketches, and his use of men like Chaucer, Bacon, and Milton as the representatives of their times would disappoint the men he most revered.

He was unrepentant, however. When he wrote the book, he recorded, "I felt as if I were a young knight challenging the world with

my new material," and when Freeman sent him a copy of a sharply critical review, he admitted that the style might have been on the periphrastic side, but, he went on:

. . . there are other "faults"—if faults they are—which I can hardly correct unless I wholly alter my conception of the book, and indeed of history. One is the suppression or omission of facts which appear to me to have no historic value. . . . In the same way the "putting things out of their place" means, I suppose, putting things out of the place they have hitherto occupied in common histories. But then my *plan* is in many ways different from that of common histories. . . . I give English History in the only way it is intelligible or interesting to *me*, but it does not follow that others will find my rendering of it intelligible or interesting. Then again, there is such a just aversion to "philosophies of history" on account of the nonsense which has passed under that name, that it is quite likely people may turn away from a story which strives to put facts on a philosophical basis, and to make events the outcome of social or religious currents of thought.

His hope had been to supersede Hume, not by rivaling his style but, he said, "because I have a larger and grander conception than he had of the organic life of a nation as a whole."

Today the idea of a one-volume account of a national civilization is a commonplace, but in Green's day there was no such thing. There was not even a convenient political outline; he had to invent the form and bring it to life in the same work. And his plan involved, not only turning the usual proportions of political, religious, social, and intellectual history upside down, but introducing a different periodization, following not dynasties but changes in the mood of society. It was high praise when in spite of Green's iconoclasm, Stubbs could describe the book as the best general history of England, and add, "when it comes to be superseded, it will be by a history on the lines of Green rather than on the lines of his critics." And when in fact it was superseded, it was by G. M. Trevelyan's *History of England*, a work which was at once recognized as being on the lines of Green, and this was not until fifty years later, in 1926.

Green's favorite period was the Middle Ages, and after publishing an expanded version of the *Short History* he took up the notes he had started making on the Anglo-Saxon conquests, and published, shortly

before his premature death from tuberculosis, *The Making of England* and *The Conquest of England*. Again he was plunging in against the advice of his friends. "In doing so, however," he said in the Preface to *The Making of England*, "I have largely availed myself of some resources which have been hitherto, I think, unduly neglected." The most important of these was the character of the land itself, "the fullest and the most certain of documents. Physical geography has still its part to play in the written record of that human history to which it gives so much of its shape and form; and in the present work I have striven, however imperfectly, to avail myself of its aid." This emphasis on a close study of geography was another of Green's contributions to historiography. In the eighteenth century it did not occur to historians to wish to visit the places they were writing about. Even when the Romantic doctrine of the influence of landscape on character was burgeoning, Roscoe did not leave Liverpool for Italy, and Grote did not quit London for Greece. By the middle of the century, Macaulay made a point of visiting fortified towns and battlefields, and Gardiner did the same for his Civil War volumes as a matter of course, and historians like Freeman, John Addington Symonds—author of *Renaissance in Italy*—and Green himself traveled on the continent and wrote sketches and essays on the towns which moved their historical sense. But this interest went no further than a liking for the picturesque, on the one hand, and a desire to see if such and such an authority was right in saying that the cavalry fell into a ditch. Green was the first to try to re-create the original features of the countryside as a whole and, by watching his Angles, Saxons, and Jutes grope their way through it, was able to chart settlements and movements that the documents left unexplained. His interest in the effect of geography on history led to his writing, with his wife, a *Short Geography of the British Isles* (1879), and the detailed regional maps in his Anglo-Saxon volumes are an essential commentary on the text, just as the walks he took through the countryside were an essential preparation for it. Mr. E. H. Carr has recently, in his *What Is History?*, referred to J. R. Green as "a rather pedestrian historian." This is unfair. Green was the most pedestrian of all our historians. It is the combination of his close knowledge of the countryside and sympathy for its people, together with a clear and lively style and scholarly zeal to reform the Englishman's attitude toward the past, that has put him among our great ones.

Partly because of German scholars, who were interested in the Teutonic origins of Anglo-Saxon England, early medieval history attracted greater attention among professional historians at the end of the nineteenth century than any other period. Green had shown what could be learned from topography; Frederic Seebohm's *English Village Community* (1883), how far a study of medieval husbandry and land tenure could supplement the picture of early society given by the charters, chronicles, and governmental records used by Stubbs. The greatest desideratum, however, was a study of early English law, for "legal documents are the best, often the only evidence we have for social and economic history, for the history of morality, for the history of practical religion. There are large and fertile tracts of history which the historian has to avoid because they are too legal for him." This was the opinion of Frederic Maitland, who not only revealed the wealth of the material in volume after volume which he edited for the Selden Society, but showed how it could be interpreted in the massive *History of English Law* (1895) which he wrote—and to which he contributed the greater part—in collaboration with Sir Frederick Pollock.

While not the greatest, Maitland is perhaps the most perfect of English historians. He was nobly and affectionately praised in his own day. Lord Acton called him "the ablest historian in England" at a time when Stubbs and Gardiner were still living and, after comparing his gift of analogy and the concreteness of his vision with Macaulay's, A. L. Smith asked, ". . . can we name anyone since Gibbon who has so combined the two sides . . . the scientific and the literary, the analyst and the artist, the Stubbs and the Froude?" And his reputation has remained serenely consistent. He is the only significant English historian who has never been adversely criticized.

He possessed all the historical talents. He was formidably industrious. He died at the age of fifty-six, but it is doubtful if any other historian has produced so much solid and original work. He was passionately careful. In spite of the rapidity with which he worked, he did not put pen to paper until he had thoroughly mastered the intricacies of his material. This habit led him, when toward the end of his life he was eager to write a continuation of his *History of English Law*, to carry out a pioneer study of legal Anglo-French which was hailed by a distinguished French philologist as of fundamental importance. He was determined that his work should not only be