BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE:
A SELECTIVE AND CRITICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY OF REVIEWS
(WITH AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY), 1850-1880

DISSERTATION

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INTRODUCTORY ASSAY

The aims of this introduction are (1) to discuss the purpose, scope, and procedure of this study, (2) to provide a brief historical sketch of Blackwood's Magazine, and (3) to point out that Blackwood's criticism is a reflection, for the most part, of the attitudes, ideas, and convictions generally considered characteristic of the mid-Victorian middle class.

I

The literary periodicals of the Victorian period were significant in that they both mirrored and influenced the thought of the time, yet as a group they have received considerably less study than the Victorian novel, poetry, and nonfictional prose. Although some work has been done on Blackwood's, it has been confined to various aspects of the period from 1817, when the magazine was founded, to 1854, the year of the death of John Wilson, who was the magazine's most important early contributor.

The purpose of this annotated bibliography of Blackwood's Magazine is to examine and evaluate literary reviews that appeared from 1850 to 1880, when John Blackwood was editor. The bibliography is broken down into three major divisions: nonfictional prose, novels, and poetry. Nonfictional prose is subdivided into (1) biography, (2) fine arts and aesthetics, (3) history, (4) philosophy, religion, science, and (5) politics, society, economics. Novels and poetry are classified under two headings: (1) general criticism and (2) individual authors. The writers included are the major and significant minor Victorians. The
reviews under each subdivision of nonfictional prose and under general criticism of novels and poetry are arranged chronologically. Individual novelists and poets are listed alphabetically, but a chronological order is followed for articles dealing with a particular author. The pattern that is usually followed is to summarize the contents of each review, compare Blackwood’s criticism with that of the day, and evaluate it in terms of modern critical thinking. Each section has a brief prefatory note which gives an over-all view of Blackwood’s coverage of works of the type with which that division is concerned.

II

About 1811 William Blackwood, already a prosperous bookseller of Edinburgh, established a publishing firm which succeeded so well that by 1817 bookselling had become just a side line. Exactly why Blackwood decided to found a magazine is uncertain; however, he may have been motivated by a desire to rival the Edinburgh Review, which had become a strong Whig organ by 1817.

The Edinburgh Monthly Magazine made its first appearance in April, 1817, under the editorship of Thomas Pringle and James Cleghorn. Just what the business arrangement was between Blackwood and his editors is not known; but it would seem that a co-partnership existed, under which Pringle and Cleghorn made the necessary provisions for material to go into the magazine and Blackwood took the risk and expense of printing and publishing. Pleasant relationships between publisher and editors did not last beyond the first number. When the third issue appeared, Blackwood gave his editors the three months’ notice that had been agreed upon in the event the partnership was to be dissolved. In trying to account for Blackwood’s dissatisfaction with his editors, Mrs. Oliphant reasons that
Blackwood, always a staunch Tory who disliked all that the Edinburgh did, disapproved of a panegyric on Francis Horner, one of Jeffrey's friends, and the praise of the Edinburgh Review found in the first number of his magazine. Both Pringle and Cléghorn were released with the publication of the sixth issue.

In October, 1817, Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine made its debut, the name having been changed because of an agreement between Blackwood and Pringle and Cleghorn that should the partnership be broken, no party could continue the magazine under the same name. Blackwood now assumed the editorship himself. Blackwood's became important almost immediately because it not only reviewed works dealing with a variety of subjects, but it also published in its pages original fiction and poetry, as the quarterlies did not.

During the early years of the magazine's existence, Blackwood had the services of a varied group of contributors. In addition to John Wilson and John Gibson Lockhart, his chief reviewers, there were William Maginn, James Hogg, John Galt, George Croly, G. R. Gleig, Mrs. Hemans, Alaric A. Watts, and, occasionally, Coleridge and DeQuincey. Principally because of Wilson, Lockhart, and Maginn, Blackwood's soon became known for its malice, abusiveness, horse-play, and wit, but it did attempt critical judgments. The magazine's early importance in this respect has been commented upon by Walter Graham. "Blackwood's," he says, "introduced original criticism into its magazine, as a more important element than it had ever had before—a fact of great interest to the historian of periodical literature." Important authors reviewed by Blackwood's include Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Hazlitt, and Lamb.
"Maga," as the magazine was affectionately known by those connected with it, prospered under Blackwood's direct guidance. Letters written by Blackwood reveal the progress the magazine made. In 1826, when business conditions in general were poor, Blackwood wrote that his magazine was doing better every day. One year later, although economic difficulties continued, Blackwood's circulation was increasing. Blackwood wrote in 1828:

'Maga,' I am happy to say, is flourishing more than ever. We now sell very nearly 6500 every month, and the sale is daily increasing. The Edinburgh Review, on the other hand, is every day falling off, and I do not think the sale is so great now as the Mag., though it was once nearly 14,000.

By 1829 Blackwood's sold upwards of 7000 copies, and sometimes it became necessary to print two numbers at once. At the end of that same year, Blackwood's was looked upon as the leading Tory organ. In 1830 Blackwood felt that business had so increased that he could afford to move his publishing firm to a more pretentious location. Accordingly, on May 28, 1830, Blackwood moved from 17 Prince Street to the familiar "45 George Street," which is still the address of William Blackwood & Sons, Ltd., Publishers.

At Blackwood's death four years later, Robert and Alexander, two of his seven sons, took charge of the publishing business and the magazine. Loyal friends and contributors rallied to the new publishers, partly because of the high regard they had had for their father and partly because of the pride they took in the magazine itself. As the years passed, the editorship of Blackwood's Magazine shifted from one member of the family to another.

The years considered in this study are those during which John, the sixth son, was editor. Born on December 7, 1818, in Edinburgh,
John received his education there at a public school and at the University of Edinburgh. In 1838 he was sent to London to work for the Messrs. Whitaker so that he could learn to run a publishing business. He remained with Whitaker for a year, and in 1840 he took charge of the London office of the Blackwood firm, which had been established in Pall Mall by Robert and Alexander. When Alexander died in April, 1845, John closed the London branch and returned to Edinburgh to take his place. Although John was not recognized as the chief editor until 1852, when Robert died, he had been acting in that capacity for two years prior to that date.

Under John's editorship, Blackwood's importance as a contemporary critical organ continued, and more and more original literary material, principally the novel and the tale, began to appear in its pages. Publishing in Blackwood's were Victorian authors such as George Eliot, Anthony Trollope, Bulwer-Lytton, Charles Lever, R. D. Blackmore, and Mrs. Oliphant. John's greatest achievement, perhaps, as an editor was that he recognized the merit of Eliot's Scenes of Clerical Life, which he accepted for publication in Blackwood's. After John's death in 1879, the publishing business and magazine were carried on by his nephew, William Blackwood, and since then both have continued to pass through the hands of various members of the Blackwood family.

Today Blackwood's is a miscellaneous periodical consisting of original fiction, criticism, poetry, and general articles. Walter Graham, in acknowledging Blackwood's significance as a literary periodical in the nineteenth century and after, says:

Such names as those of May Sinclair, Andrew Lang, Quiller-Couch, Percival Gibbon, Stewart Edward White, Locker-Lampson, Neil Munro, and Charles Whibley, in its table of contents, have, since
1900, revealed the fact that "Maga," the oldest of the now existing magazines in English—has maintained its position over more than a century. It has been the medium through which many great modern reputations have been made. The dean of our contemporary magazines, it is still a literary periodical of first importance.12

The Blackwood firm takes great pride in the continued existence and importance of its magazine. Its letterheads have a reproduction of the cover of Blackwood's first number for April, 1817, and carry the words just beneath it, "The fame and circulation of 'Blackwood's Magazine' are now, after well over a century, higher than at any other period—a record unique in literary history."

III

While, as it has been pointed out, generalizing with complete accuracy about the Victorians is impossible, an examination of literary criticism in Blackwood's Magazine from 1850 to 1880 reveals that its approach to works it reviews mirrors, as a rule, those attitudes, ideas, and convictions that are usually considered characteristic of the mid-Victorian middle class. As has also been shown, "middle class" is a vague, unsatisfactory designation for the "middle classes," who range between the landed gentry of the upper class and the wage-earning manual laborers of the lower. The country squires, clergymen, doctors, lawyers, and other educated, well-to-do persons who were the chief subscribers to Blackwood's, which appeared monthly and cost the relatively high price of a half crown per issue, actually represent the "middle" middle class. At times when Blackwood's estimates cannot be attributed to its middle-class outlook, they may be ascribed to the personal bias of a reviewer or to the Scottish origin of the magazine.
Occasionally Blackwood's renders judgments that have been sustained by modern criticism.

Study of reviews in Blackwood's of nonfictional prose, the novel, and poetry substantiates the generalizations of anti-intellectualism, conservatism, individualism, national self-satisfaction, religious orthodoxy, respectability, domesticity, and moral prudishness that have been made about the mid-Victorian middle class. In most of its judgments, Blackwood's usually reflects varied combinations of those traits.

Evidence of Blackwood's anti-intellectualism is seen in its insistence that literature should be utilitarian, in its respect for whatever is true or verisimilar, and in its suspicion of speculation and theorizing. Carlyle's *Sartor*, *Heroes*, *Past and Present*, and *Latter-Day Pamphlets* and Ruskin's *Time and Tide* are criticized for their lack of feasible suggestions; and Blackwood's attitude toward the novel and poetry is patronizing because it regards them as light literature which, because its primary purpose is the low one of entertainment, is less suited than nonfictional prose to meet the demands of a practical age.

It is in its handling of the novel that Blackwood's requirement that a work either be true or create the illusion of reality is most apparent. By expecting characters to be lifelike, incidents to be probable, and historical fiction to have the accuracy and fidelity of professional historical writing, Blackwood's condemns most of the minor sensation novels, Disraeli's *Lothair*, many of Reade's works, and Kingsley's *Westward Ho!* On these bases it praises Blackmore's *Lorna Doone*, Bulwer-Lytton's *My Novel*, *The Caxtons*, *What Will He Do with It?*. 

The third aspect of Blackwood's anti-intellectualism, its fear of speculative thinking, is particularly evident in its treatment of John Stuart Mill and Charles Kingsley. Blackwood's, uncertain about ideas expressed by Mill in his program of the Land Tenure Reform Association and by Kingsley in Yeast and Alton Locke, feels that such theorizing can only lead to trouble. Blackwood's reminds its readers that the French Revolution was a result of the operation of ideas advanced by subtle minds.

Equally pronounced with Blackwood's anti-intellectualism is its conservatism, individualism, and complacency, which are often found variously combined. Much of Blackwood's opposition to Ruskin in his championship of Gothic architecture, Turner, and the Pre-Raphaelites is simply that it is reluctant to accept new views that contradict those of the Royal Academy. John Eagles, a painter who contributed articles on art to the magazine, states Blackwood's position:

I, and you, and such as we are, are really put upon our defence, to defend the very principles upon which, during not a very short period, our tastes have been founded. It is rather provoking to have our young Ruskinized moderns looking contemptuously upon us as old fools.15

Ruskin is again condemned for his suggestions in Time and Tide that would increase the activity of the State in the affairs of the people.

Not only Ruskin, but Carlyle, Arnold, Mill, Dickens, Collins, Reade, and Kingsley are all criticized. Blackwood's dislikes Carlyle's attacks, in Sartor Resartus, Past and Present, and Latter-Day Pamphlets, upon Britain's economic, social, and political institutions; it is
offended by Arnold's characterization of the British Philistine in *Friendship's Garland* and disgusted with his admiration for the French system of secondary schools in *Mixed Essays*; it fears that Mill's program for the Land Tenure Reform Association will unsettle all of their established ideas about landed property, and it loathes his fight to change the status of women. The magazine disapproves of Dickens, Collins, Reade, and Kingsley for dealing with issues in their novels which indicate that there is much amiss in Victorian society.

Blackwood's, diligent in repelling attacks upon Britain's artistic traditions and social, economic, and political conditions, is no less persistent in combating the findings of science and of higher criticism which called into question a literal interpretation of the Bible, on which rests its religious faith. Blackwood's believes in an anthropomorphic God who created the world and man in six days, and it is convinced that Jesus was divine and that miracles had been performed. It appears that there could be no half measures—it is a matter of believing everything or nothing at all. With a desire not to have its faith in the infallibility of the Bible shaken, Blackwood's was placed in an awkward position because, wishing to be intellectually honest, it realized that many of the new findings could not be disputed. Knowing, then, that it must accept many of these new ideas, and yet not wishing to see the Bible discredited, Blackwood's welcomes any attempt to reconcile the two. If, however, no agreement can be achieved and it has to choose between science or higher criticism and the religion of the Bible, Blackwood's always chooses the latter. How far
Blackwood's is willing to go to seek reconciliation between religious orthodoxy and its opponents is seen in its eulogistic review of Hugh Miller's *The Testimony of the Rocks*. But it condemns works such as Mansel's *The Limits of Religious Thought*, Darwin's *Origin of Species* and *The Descent of Man*, Renan's *Life of Jesus*, Huxley's *Lay Sermons, Addresses, and Reviews*, Tyndall's *Fragments of Science for Unscientific People*, Seeley's *Lectures and Essays*, and Arnold's *Literature and Dogma* because their conclusions are anti-scriptural.

As prominent as any of the attitudes, ideas, and convictions mentioned so far as characteristic of the middle class are those of respectability, domesticity, and moral prudishness, which are most evident in Blackwood's coverage of the novel and narrative poetry. Since Blackwood feels that both the novel and poetry are instruments that can influence the conduct of a reader, it insists that characters be exemplary, that respect for the family and home be shown, and that indecencies and immoral situations and incidents not be depicted. Blackwood criticizes as disreputable, characters in the sensation novels, in Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, in Collins' *Man and Wife*, in novels by Dickens, Thackeray, and Lever, and in Tennyson's "Maud" and the *Idylls of the King*. It ranks Bulwer-Lytton as England's foremost contemporary novelist because he is adept at drawing gentlemen.

Its respect for the family is seen, for instance, in its condemnation of Thackeray for the situation between Lady Castlwood and Henry and in its admiration for certain poems from the *Idylls of the King*. Blackwood raises moral issues so often that one is justified in concluding that morality was, perhaps, its chief criteria in judging literary works.
In some instances in which Blackwood's judgments are not a result of its middle-class views, they may be attributed either to personal prejudice of the reviewer or to the Scottish origin of the magazine. Attacks are made by Mrs. Oliphant upon Trevelyan's Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay because she feels that in the biography he has tried to damage the reputation of John Wilson and that of Blackwood's; by Eagles upon Ruskin's Pre-Raphaelitism because Ruskin has criticized artists after whom Eagles had patterned his own style; and by Aytoun upon Ruskin's Lectures on Architecture and Painting, delivered at Edinburgh in November 1853 because Ruskin has condemned his native city. The Scottish nature of the magazine is suggested but once, perhaps, and that is in Blackwood's staunch support of Hamilton and the Scottish school of idealistic philosophy as opposed to Mill's empiricism.

During the thirty-year span from 1850 to 1880, Blackwood's, of course, rendered some judgments that are still valid. Commendable reviews are those by John Paget of Macaulay's History, W. Lucas Collins of novels by Eliot and Mrs. Oliphant, G. R. Gleig of Newman's Apologia, William Smith and Joseph B. Atkinson of Ruskin's Modern Painters, Mrs. Oliphant of Huxley's Lay Sermons, Addresses, and Reviews, W. E. Aytoun of poetry by Arnold, Mrs. Browning, and Bulwer-Lytton, and E.B. Hamley of poetry by Alexander Smith.
Although Blackwood's does not review biography extensively, it does handle well-known Victorian works of this genre in Newman's Apologia, Mill's Autobiography, and Trevelyan's Macaulay. Noticeable are (1) its critics' usual practice, which is characteristic of the Victorian reviewer, of telling a reader what a book is about by describing its contents at great length and by extracting long and numerous passages from it, and (2) its traditional penchant for abusiveness, which can be largely attributed here, as elsewhere in Victorian criticism, to anonymous reviewing. Blackwood's does not neglect the primary obligation of evaluation, but only its judgment of the Apologia is sound. Because it lacks "disinterestedness," it unjustly condemns, for one reason or another, Mill's Autobiography and Trevelyan's Macaulay.

"Rev. Charles Kingsley and Dr. Newman," XCVI (September, 1861), 292-308.

A review of the Apologia in which G. R. Gleig devotes most of his space merely to describing its contents and quoting long passages from it. Reminiscent of the early days of the magazine, when Wilson, Lockhart, and Maginn were contributors, is the abusive personal attack Gleig makes upon Kingsley because he leans toward the Whigs and is a Broad Churchman.

Reflected in Gleig's remarks is Victorian England's general feeling about Newman and the Apologia. Refusing to allow traditional British prejudice against Catholics (which Kingsley tried to arouse in his what, then, does Dr. Newman Mean?) to influence his judgment, Gleig demonstrates his sense of fairness by charging that Kingsley's assault upon
Newman was unprovoked and cruel, declaring that the *Apologia* has thoroughly convinced him that Newman is and has always been an honest and sincere man, and predicting that the *Apologia* will take its place as one of the great autobiographies of the world. Blackwood's, with England as a whole, espoused Newman's cause by acclaiming the *Apologia* and so effected the tremendous change in Newman's life and reputation.


A vicious, unsympathetic handling of Mill's *Autobiography*, the contents of which Herbert Cowell gives and so interprets as to discredit Mill's entire life and career. Calling attention to Mill's unusual education, Cowell concludes that a person so trained has nothing of practical value to say to his contemporaries, his proper sphere being that of abstractions and theories. Mill's relationship with Mrs. Taylor, which deserves the severest condemnation, argues Cowell, invalidates everything he has said on women and on marriage, and his unjustifiably high estimate of her intellectual capacity proves that his judgment in general is unsound.

Believing that Mill's political, social, economic, and religious views were disquieting and dangerous, Blackwood's opposed him throughout his lifetime. The twisting of the posthumously published *Autobiography* to justify its position toward Mill represents, however, the depth to which Victorian criticism could sink as it occupied itself with what Arnold called "practical considerations." From other critical organs, the majority of which were more charitable than Blackwood's, Mill's *Autobiography* won for him a sympathy and understanding he had not had during his lifetime except from persons closely associated with him.

"Macaulay," CXIX (May, 1876), 614-637.

A review of Trevelyan's *Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay* by Mrs. Oliphant, whose assertion that the work will not live on its independent merits is motivated by her resentment at what she considers to be Trevelyan's effort to injure the reputation of Blackwood's and that of John Wilson. His attempt lies, she feels, in his sharp criticism of "Maga" and Wilson for the *Noctes* in which Wilson flayed Macaulay, then just a young writer, for his review of Southey's Colloquies.

Mrs. Oliphant allowed herself to be piqued into rendering a poor judgment of Trevelyan's biography of his uncle. His *Life* still remains the standard one; and as has been pointed out, what is needed is not a new biography of Macaulay, but a critical edition of Trevelyan.

2. Fine Arts and Aesthetics

Neglecting to consider Ruskin's *Stones of Venice*, II and III (1853), *Modern Painters*, IV (1856) and V (1860), *The Political Economy*
of Art (1857), and The Two Paths (1859), Blackwood's does, nevertheless, review a great deal of Ruskin's work throughout the '50's, and it discusses Pater's Renaissance (1873), his first and only book to appear in the '70's. Blackwood's judgment of Ruskin varies from being biased to being discriminating and honest, depending on the reviewer. Ill-considered estimates are made by Eagles, Aytoun, and Paget, who, for personal or other reasons, persistently defend the principles and theories of the Royal Academy against Ruskin's views in claiming Turner's later style to be superior to his earlier (which has since become established) and in championing the Pre-Raphaelites. Smith and Atkinson, whose views anticipate those of modern criticism, are perceptive and open-minded. They call attention to Ruskin's shortcomings, such as his dogmatism, self-contradictions, and moral view of art, and indicate that his judgments often cannot be trusted. Both recognize his influence, however, and they agree that, whatever his faults, he has done good by revitalizing the criticism of art in England and by stirring the British layman to a consciousness of art.

In dealing with Ruskin, Blackwood's is militant and confident, but it is confused and bewildered by Pater's Renaissance. It recognizes in Pater a new and undesirable view of art and of life, and in condemning him, Blackwood's agrees with Elton, who finds that the great deficiency in Pater is "the want of fresh air."

"Mr. Ruskin's works," LXX (September, 1851), 326-348.

Not reviewed in Blackwood's since John Eagles attacked Modern Painters, I (1843), which renewed, and almost founded, the criticism of art in England, Ruskin had since so continued to stir both the artistic and the nonartistic world that Blackwood's could no longer ignore him.
Although listing Volumes I, the second edition (1846), and II (1846) of Modern Painters, The Seven Lamps of Architecture (1849), Volume I (1851) of The Stones of Venice, and Notes on the Construction of Sheepfolds (1851) as the works to be discussed, William Smith concerns himself primarily with describing and evaluating Ruskin's theory of the beautiful from Modern Painters, II. He does judge Ruskin's work as a whole, however, and he is discriminating and fair. Calling attention to Ruskin's dogmatism, self-contradictions, hyperbolisms, and ethical view of art, Smith warns that Ruskin is not always a safe guide. He believes, nevertheless, that Ruskin will do good by sending the poet to nature, teaching the critic how to admire, giving the mere admirer principles for criticism, and educating the general public.

"The Fine Arts and the Public Taste in 1853," LXXIV (July, 1853), 89-104.

Principal a criticism of Ruskin's Pre-Raphaelitism (1851) by John Eagles, who is attempting, rather late, to combat the popularity of the Pre-Raphaelites and maintain Britain's artistic tenets as they were expounded by Reynolds.

Unlike Smith's review, Eagles' is completely destructive as he opposes all of Ruskin's views, calling them nonsense and Ruskin a coxcomb. Blackwood's, with the Athenaeum, led in trying to repel Ruskin's influence, and with Eagles as a reviewer, Blackwood's had a painter who, while he was defending the old school, was also defending his own principles and practice.

"Ruskin on Architecture and Painting," LXXV (June, 1854), 740-756.

A scathing review of Ruskin's Lectures on Architecture and Painting, delivered at Edinburgh in November 1853 (1854) by W. S. Aytoun, whose ire has been aroused by Ruskin's condemnation of the streets, churches, public buildings, and homes of his native Edinburgh. Declaring that Ruskin, so far as he knows, has not knowledge enough to design even an ordinary pigsty, Aytoun calls all that he has to say about architecture nothing but drivel. In his criticism of the third lecture, "Turner and His Works," and the fourth, "Pre-Raphaelitism," Aytoun justifies Blackwood's being named as one of "the old guard of conventional art" as he opposes Turner's later style and the practice of the Pre-Raphaelites.

Inexcusable as in Aytoun's abusive language, his retaliating for the insult to Edinburgh is understandable; and one wonders at Ruskin's effrontery in standing before an Edinburgh audience and damning in its entirety the architecture of the city.

"Mr. Ruskin and His Theories--Sublime and Ridiculous," LXX (November, 1856), 503-527.

A considered judgment of Modern Painters, II (1856), by J.B. Atkinson. He begins by attempting to describe the contents of this volume
and note as he proceeds wherein he agrees or disagrees with Ruskin, while Atkinson points out that Ruskin has had to distort the facts of art history in order to justify the Pre-Raphaelites, he does not disparage their work. In order not to be misunderstood, he says, "We have been opposing Mr. Ruskin's inordinate claims, not deprecating their [the Pre-Raphaelites'] undoubted merits. We believe that in many ways they have done, and are doing, important service in the cause of art." Evidence of the accuracy of Jump's estimate of Ruskin's reputation in the '50's is Atkinson's expressed fear that Ruskin has so had the ear of the public that it might actually have come to believe, had he gone unchallenged, that Hunt's "Light of the World" is a greater picture than Raphael's "Transfiguration."

Unable to cover all that Ruskin has said, Atkinson concludes by merely mentioning by title some of the later chapters in the volume and saying that Modern Painters, III, in spite of its errors, is a great book, and that Ruskin, notwithstanding all that may be urged to the contrary, is a great man.

"The Elements of Drawing," XXXVII (January, 1860), 32-44.

A review of Ruskin's Elements of Drawing (1857) by John Paget, whose purpose, evidently, is to curb the added prestige it has given Ruskin as a practical teacher. Either misunderstanding or disregarding Ruskin's method and purposes in the work, Paget attacks the Elements as if it were a textbook designed for future professional artists. Finding nothing but fault with the book, Paget recommends instead to the student of landscape art Young Artist's Companion by David Cox and Elementary Art by J. J. Harding.


An unsympathetic treatment of Pater's Renaissance by Mrs. Oliphant, who concerns herself primarily with trying to combat this new voice that has something unhealthy about it. Unfortunate, she feels, is the indication in this work that art, and an interest in it, is ceasing to be the concern of the ordinary English public and is becoming instead the province of a small group of dilettanti, each of whom is interested in himself. Were the emphasis on the me to be carried into all phases of life, social relationships, bad enough as they are, would become even worse. Not overlooking the "Conclusion," she condemns as highly undesirable the view of life expressed there.

Mirrored excellently in this review is the passing of the mid- and the coming of the late-Victorian era.

3. History

To deal adequately with history during the Victorian period, a reviewer would have had to have knowledge of the trend away from the lit-
erary and toward the scientific approach to history. At the time that volumes of Macaulay and Carlyle, the great popularisers of history, were being bought by the thousands, German and English scholars like Ranke (whom Macaulay did not esteem highly) and Stubbs, E. A. Freeman, and J. R. Green were at work. Mrs. Oliphant and E. B. Hanley, who discuss Macaulay's History and Carlyle's Frederick the Great respectively, give no indication that they are acquainted with this change in attitude toward history. As a result, they are in no position to make a proper evaluation of Macaulay and Carlyle as historians. Paget, on the other hand, demonstrates in his four articles on Macaulay's History that he is thoroughly familiar with the new view. After he has pointed out many of Macaulay's errors, Paget predicts accurately that the time will eventually come when the History will be regarded as of little value as an authority.

"Macaulay," LXX (August, 1856), 127-141.

A weak consideration of Macaulay's History, III and IV (1855), by Mrs. Oliphant, whose charge that the work is highly unreliable goes unsupported as she takes up the greatest part of her review in recapitulating events recorded in these two volumes. Nowhere is there any suggestion that Mrs. Oliphant is aware of the movement in historiography which arose and developed in Germany during the first half of the nineteenth century with Niebuhr and Ranke and was to weigh against literary historians like Macaulay, Carlyle, and Froude and leave the field to the professional, scientific scholar.


Chiefly a summary of Carlyle's Frederick the Great, I and II (1858), by E. B. Hanley. As ignorant, apparently, as Mrs. Oliphant of the trend toward the scientific investigation and interpretation of historical evidence, Hamley does not discuss Carlyle's general conception of history, his method of writing it, or his use of authorities; and he passes no judgment on the historical value of these first two volumes. His
most discerning remark is that Carlyle has already allowed the work to become disproportionate. The early history of Prussia, to which he has devoted some three hundred pages, could have been condensed to a single chapter, and Frederick's father, rather than Frederick himself, is the central figure in the remaining pages of these volumes.

"Lord Macaulay and Marlborough," LXXXV (June, 1859), 661-676.

In the first of a series of scholarly, cogent articles on Macaulay's History, John Paget aims to temper the highly unfavorable portrait Macaulay has drawn of Marlborough. He achieves his purpose admirably by showing that Macaulay, in a deliberate effort to blacken Marlborough's character, has suppressed some documents, garbled others, and relied without question upon the testimony of a scurrilous Jacobite pamphlet. Realising that it is hopeless, however, to expect contemporary criticism to have any effect on the tremendously popular History, Paget is content to believe that Macaulay's claim as a reliable historian will certainly suffer in years to come.


In his second article, Paget deals with the Glencoe incident, described by Birk as the one which has led to more controversy than almost any other in Macaulay's History. Paget is successful in shifting the first responsibility for the slaughter of the Macdonalds of Glencoe from the Master of Stair, upon whom Macaulay has placed it, to William, where it rightly belongs. Paget is again methodical and thorough as he examines Macaulay's evidence and inferences, and he has no difficulty in showing that the fault lies with the latter, Macaulay purposely having drawn his conclusions so as to exonerate William at the expense of Stair.


Dealing again with Scottish history, Paget this time rectifies the vituperative and grotesque picture Macaulay has given of the Highlands and its inhabitants. He scrutinizes each of Macaulay's four authorities, and he is able to point out that Goldsmith's correspondence, Franck's Northern Memoirs, and Burt's Letters do not say what Macaulay has represented them as saying and that Cleland's "Highland Host" is of little value.

As in his first article, Paget demonstrates unquestionably that Macaulay has marred parts of his History by his unscientific method of handling historical evidence. Paget proves, as has since become well established, that memoirs, letters, and lampoons, Macaulay's chief authorities here, must be examined and weighed with considerable care.


Paget's final article on Macaulay's History. Here he clears Dundee of blame for the Glencoe Massacre.
of the charge of brutality Macaulay has made against him in connection with the execution of John Brown, a Covenanter. Uncontentious because Macaulay, who died in December, 1859, can no longer defend himself, Sargent simply makes his case and lets it rest. For the John Brown incident, Macaulay has relied upon Wodrow's History, which Sargent shows cannot be trusted in this instance.

What contemporary criticism there was of the highly popular History went unheeded, and Macaulay's death virtually stopped it. The 1930's, however, saw the fulfillment of Sargent's prediction that the hour of retribution would surely come. Firth's Commentary (1938) evaluates Macaulay as an historian, and in two chapters, "Macaulay's Treatment of Scottish History" and "Macaulay's Errors," Firth fully acknowledges the soundness of Sargent's work.

"Carlyle's Frederick the Great," XCVIII (July, 1865), 38-56.

A review of Frederick, III (1862), IV (1864), V and VI (1865), by E. B. Hanley. Limiting himself intentionally to describing and analyzing Frederick's unjust seizure of Silesia and the resultant wars, Hanley shows quite clearly that Carlyle has completely misinterpreted Frederick's character and motives. Carlyle has, Hanley observes, spent years on a figure so unusually deficient in great qualities that no amount of gloss can make him heroic.

Although Hanley is successful here in pointing up Carlyle's lack of insight, he goes no further, and it is evident that he is no more cognizant now than he was six years before of the new developments in historiography that were to turn history from literature into science. Carlyle, though he has fared better than either Macaulay or Froude, has been classified alike with them as an amateur literary historian; and his Frederick, which was immediately more successful even than the French Revolution, has failed to hold its place as an authority.

4. Philosophy, Religion, Science

That the Victorian period was an arena of conflicting ideas can be seen in Blackwood's coverage of works dealing with philosophy, religion, and science. In philosophy, the dispute is between the schools of empiricism and intuition, which are represented by Mill and Hamilton respectively. Realizing that the materialistic approach to man and reality is spiritually and ethically dissatisfying, Blackwood's takes sides with idealism and fights to repel Mill's influence. Its attack upon
Mill is directed chiefly against his empirical ideas in *Examination of Hamilton's Philosophy* (1856).

More violent than the controversy between the two philosophical systems is that between religious orthodoxy and its opponents—scientific naturalism, Biblical criticism, and liberal theology. With its religious faith resting, as did that of the orthodox Victorian believer, upon the conviction that the Bible is infallible, Blackwood's combats any findings or views that contradict the Bible's authority. *Amsel's The Limits of Religious Thought* (1858), *Darwin's Origin of Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1871), *Renan's Life of Jesus* (1863), Huxley's *Lay Sermons, Addresses, and Reviews* (1870), and Tyndall's *Fragments of Science for Unscientific People* (1871) are all disparaged because they contain inferences that are unscriptural. Even Seeley's *Lectures and Essays* (1870) and Arnold's *Literature and Dogma* (1873), which represent the thinking of men who were genuine friends of an enlightened religion, are criticized primarily because Blackwood's resents seeing the Bible approached as though it were any other book. Such well-known works as *Essays and Reviews* (1860), Colenso's *The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua Critically Examined* (1862), *Lyell's Antiquity of Man* (1863), Seeley's anonymously published *Ecce Homo* (1865), and Arnold's *God and the Bible* (1875) are not reviewed, but what Blackwood's attitude toward them would have been is evident.

This struggle was not an easy one because the claims of science, especially, were advanced by skilled controversialists like Huxley. Uneasy over these claims, Blackwood's welcomes, as in Hugh Miller's *The Testimony of the Rocks* (1857), any attempt to reconcile science with religion. But if no such agreement can be worked out, and it has to
choose between the two, Blackwood's rejects science and selects religion. The choice lies, Blackwood's is convinced, between a stone and bread, and it prefers bread.


A eulogistic summary of Hugh Miller's The Testimony of the Rocks (1857) by George Trevor, who regards Miller's way of reconciling Genesis with geology as the first one that is likely to satisfy the friends of both religion and science. Trevor's eagerness in accepting Miller's method as the via media reflects the dilemma of the intelligent, religious Victorian who realised that the conclusions of the geologists could not be controverted and yet who still clung to the infallibility of the Bible as the basis for his religious belief. Miller was popular in his own day in his native Scotland and in England and the United States; but his reputation has declined because such principles as that of uniformitarianism have invalidated his Footprints of the Creator (1849) and Testimony of the Rocks, both of which maintain the doctrine of special creation.

"Dr. Mansel's Bampton Lectures," LXXXVI (July, 1859), 48-66.

A review by William Smith of Mansel's Bampton Lectures, The Limits of Religious Thought (1858). Smith proves convincingly that Mansel's concept of the Deity will lead not to faith, but to scepticism. Oddly enough, Mansel, in adapting Hamilton's principle of the conditioned to theology, intended to curb increasing rationalism by placing faith beyond the reach of reason; yet, as Smith shows, his idea of a Supreme Being really makes it impossible for a person to conceive of a Deity at all. Although these lectures were popular, especially at Oxford, where Mansel was acclaimed as a second Butler, weaknesses in Mansel's arguments were also pointed out by such varied persons as Huxley, Spencer, Mill, and Maurice. Smith's criticism of this work parallels that of Hugh Walker, who says, "The wheel was come full circle; Hamilton had dug a pit for Reason, and Faith was in danger of falling in."12


A satirical poem by Charles Neaves, intended to ridicule Darwin's Origin of Species (1859). The poem itself has no value, except as it reveals certain things. It indicates (1) that Neaves, since he assumes that Darwin has said that man descended from the monkey, was probably like many others who denounced the work without reading it, (2) that it was about a year and a half (November, 1859—May, 1861) before the effect of the Origin was felt generally, and (3) that Blackwood's was among those numerous Victorian publications that railed against the anti-Scripturism of Darwin's book.
"The Life of Jesus," XCVI (October, 1861), i117-i31.

A review of John Tulloch's *The Christ of the Gospels and the Christ of Modern Criticism: Lectures on H. Renan's "Vie de Jesus"* (1864) by Mrs. Oliphant. Greatly disturbed by Renan's *Vie* (1863), as were the Victorians generally, Mrs. Oliphant gladly presents Tulloch's arguments to refute Renan's position on the authenticity of the miracles and the divinity of Christ. She regrets, however, that Tulloch is unsuccessful in destroying Renan's evidence to show that significant differences exist between the Synoptic Gospels and the Book of John.

Tulloch's views reveal the backwardness of English theology in biblical criticism, which was one result of the growth of the historical spirit in the nineteenth century. Widespread was Tulloch's conviction that if the Bible were found to be in error, religion itself would fall. Anticipating the dominant tone of future apologetic writing, Mrs. Oliphant proves herself to be a better defender of faith than Tulloch when she observes that while the church ought to meet its attackers boldly and frankly, it need never fear that religion will disappear. The average human being, she says, is so constituted that he needs and will not do without the comfort and satisfaction that religion alone can give.


In this review of *An Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy and of the Principal Philosophical Questions Discussed in His Writings* (1865), William Smith deals primarily with Mill's doctrine of the nature and origin of man's knowledge of the external world, which is that aspect of this work which excited the greatest interest among Mill's contemporaries. On this issue of whether external objects have a real existence, Smith differs with Mill and agrees with Hamilton.

Drawn to a head by this book, as Mill intended that it should be, was the controversy between the school of intuition and that of experience and association. Hamilton and Smith's contention that external objects have an existence completely independent of mind is that of realism, which has just recently displaced idealism.

"Stuart Mill on Mind and Matter," XCIX (February, 1866), 257-259.

Another criticism of chapters eleven through thirteen of *An Examination of Hamilton's Philosophy,* here a satirical poem by Charles Reaves, who derides Mill's reduction of mind and matter to mere feelings and sensations.

In the last quarter of the century, the English idealists showed that sensations and feelings, the data of the empiricists, were not enough to account for the universe and human life.

"Buridan's Ass; or, Liberty and Necessity," XCIX (May, 1865), 614-615.
A criticism, again by Huxley, of Mill's Utilitarian ethics.

Huxley objects to Mill's position that when the expectancy of pleasure clearly outweighs that of pain, one has no difficulty in deciding how to act, but that when the two are equally balanced, a person is reduced to inaction. Huxley declares that man has free will and that his actions are determined more by a moral than an hedonistic criterion.

The weakness of Mill's arguments was again exposed by English idealists. Their work showed that the ethical theory of the Utilitarians, despite Mill's refinement of it, was a highly superficial view of human conduct.


A sound review of Huxley's Lay Sermons, Addresses, and Reviews (1870) by Mrs. Ollphant. While she admits that Huxley has convinced her that scientific training should be part of the education of every child, she points out that the volume itself represents the thinking of a man who is lopsidedly interested in science. She objects particularly to "On the Physical Basis of Life" and "On a Piece of Chalk," both of which had excited a great deal of comment when they were delivered as lectures. She goes to the crux of the matter when she remarks that any interpretation of human life that is based wholly on physical principles is highly inadequate and that knowledge of the history of a piece of chalk is not nearly so important as deep reading in the records of humanity in learning of man's relationship to the universe. Such a materialistic, automatist approach, as Mrs. Ollphant observes, really renders human life meaningless.


Neglecting to give any idea of the scope of Seeley's Lectures and Essays (1870), Mrs. Ollphant singles out for attack "the Church as a Teacher of Morality." Resorting to nothing except an irrational appeal to tradition and custom, she condemns as more radical and revolutionary than an attempt to disestablish the church Seeley's suggestion that a clergyman might very often be more effective in reaching an intelligent congregation if he used not Biblical characters, but contemporary personages instead, as models of virtue. By stigmatising Seeley's proposal which is certainly ordinary enough, Mrs. Ollphant furnishes evidence that at the beginning of the '70's, religious orthodoxy was no less hostile than it had been in the '60's to unorthodox views. Tried by such works as Essays and Reviews (1860), Wolesen's The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua Critically Examined (1862), Renan's Vie de Jesus (1863), Huxley's Evidence as to Man's Place in Nature (1863), Lyell's Antiquity of Man (1863), and Seeley's Eco Homo (1865), the orthodox met them with denunciation, refusing to accept whatever truth might actually have existed in them.
"The Descent of Man," CIX (April, 1871), 517-519.

An ineffectual satirical poem in which Charles Reaves tries to belittle Darwin's application of the evolutionary principle to the human race in his The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex (1871). Darwin has not, he claims, presented enough evidence to conclude that man is descended from some ancient, lower, extinct form. His real reason for objecting to Darwin's conclusions becomes apparent, however, when he says in his last stanza that this work will be disturbing to sensitive minds.


More a survey of the Victorian conflict between science and religion than a review of John Tyndall's Fragments of Science for Unscientific People (1871), which is mentioned only incidentally. Science, says Mrs. Oliphant, has endangered traditional hopes and fundamental religious beliefs; and because of such men as Darwin, Huxley, and Tyndall, it is proceeding on its destructive way. To comfort and console those who have been hard hit by science, which included herself, Mrs. Oliphant insists that science has its limitations. Arguing from a standpoint that still has validity, she declares that there is not yet a satisfactory explanation of how the seed grows into the green plant and then into an ear of corn. As before, she successfully attacks scientific naturalism by asserting that it is religion that deals with those human experiences that make life significant. Her position is exactly that expressed by Robert Shafer in Christianity and Naturalism. In demonstrating the great superiority of the area of life with which religion deals, Shafer says that the trouble with science is that "it wholly neglects the facts of experience which characterise us as human beings in order to emphasize other facts which link us with the animal and inorganic worlds." 15

"Amateur Theology: Arnold's Literature and Dogma," CXIII (June, 1873), 678-692.

In reviewing Arnold's Literature and Dogma (1873), John Tulloch somehow mistakes Arnold's purpose, which he considers in great part to have been merely a desire to undermine the episcopacy, and resorts to subterfuge in attacking the work. Arnold is a literary man, not a theologian, Tulloch argues, and therefore his criticism of the bishopric and of church dogma must be regarded as inconsequential and amateurish. Such an argument is, of course, unsound.

With Tulloch as a reviewer, Blackwood's hostility was typical of the wide and vigorous opposition of the Victorian religious world to Literature and Dogma. Ironically enough, Arnold, who was himself genuinely religious, although he had rejected traditional Christianity, felt that since he was addressing himself not to those who still accepted the Bible and its religion, but to those who had cast them off, he was doing religion a service. But the observation made by some of Arnold's contemporaries
that literature and thought is more negative than positive has been sustained by modern critics. Although he shows that the Bible does contain errors, Arnold does not establish with certainty how one is to determine what is or is not an error.

5. Politics, Society, Economics

In its review of works concerned with politics, society, and economics, Blackwood's reflects the spirit and thinking that was dominant among the mid-Victorians. Its anti-intellectualism and adherence to the laissez-faire principles of the classical economists are exhibited in its complaints about Carlyle and Ruskin. According to Blackwood's, Carlyle's works, from Sartor Resartus (London, 1838) through Latter-Day Pamphlets (1850), and Ruskin's Time and Tide (1867) are to be condemned because they contain no practical remedies for the many ills that Carlyle and Ruskin are so adept at exposing, and they advance ideas that would increase governmental activity in the regulation of society.

Blackwood's further shows that its reactions may be classified as those that prevailed generally during the mid-Victorian period by being hostile to radical change and distrustful of theories and speculative thinking. Because he advocated the removal of women's political, social, and legal disabilities in speeches before Parliament and in The Subjection of Women (1869), Mill is severely attacked by Blackwood's, whose only real objection is nothing more than an unreasonable desire to see woman's status remain unchanged. In describing British aversion to change, Mill himself says:

It is the character of the British people, or at least of the higher and middle classes who pass muster for the British people, that to induce them to approve of any change, it is necessary that they should look upon it as a middle course:
they think every proposal extreme and violent unless they hear of some other proposal going still farther, upon which their antipathy to extreme views may discharge itself. 17

Blackwood's rejection of Mill's program for land reform indicates that, in addition to fearing change, it is highly suspicious of ideas.

National self-satisfaction, another general trait of the mid-Victorians, is displayed in Blackwood's handling of Arnold's Friendship's Garland (1871) and Fixed Essays (1879). It views with great shock and regret charges such as those that Bottles is obtuse, that the British are not well thought of by people on the Continent, and that the English system of secondary education is vastly inferior to the French.

By judging Trollope's North America (1862) on purely political grounds, Blackwood's still mirrors characteristic British opinion, which favored the cause of the South in the American Civil War.

Since Blackwood's was so diligent in opposing the Victorian prophets, it is surprising that it overlooked such publications as Mill's Representative Government (1861), Ruskin's Unto This Last (1862), Carlyle's Shooting Niagara, and After? (1867) and Arnold's Culture and Anarchy (1869). If Blackwood's had reviewed them, however, one may assume that its anti-intellectualism, individualism, conservatism, and complacency would have determined its appraisal of these works.

"Latter-Day Pamphlets," LXVII (June, 1850), 641-658.

Demonstrating one aspect of the anti-intellectualism of the Victorian mind, Aytoun applies to Carlyle's Latter-Day Pamphlets (1850) 18 the test of usefulness. Judged by this criterion, says Aytoun, the work must be regarded as being predominantly negative. Everywhere there is denunciation, but nowhere is there a remedy that deserves to be followed.
In particular, Aytoun protests that Carlyle's amorphous idea concerning Peel leans toward Cromwellism, which is contrary to British political principles of representative government, and his proposal that paupers be regimented into industrial units violates British belief in the freedom of the individual from excessive governmental supervision.

Aytoun's estimate of Letter-Day Pamphlets, which was that of the Victorians generally, has been upheld by modern critics. His work sustains the judgment that Carlyle's value lay more in being a provocative critic than a practical guide. Revealing Carlyle as it did in a new ultra-tyrannical mood, Letter-Day Pamphlets injured his reputation and popularity for a time.

"Carlyle, Mirage Philosophy," LXXXV (February, 1859), 127-142.

An examination principally of Sartor Resartus (London, 1838), Heroes and Hero-Worship (1841), Past and Present (1843), and Letter-Day Pamphlets (1850) by E. B. Hamley, who uses these works as a basis for his evaluation of Carlyle's contribution to his age. Hamley's assertion that Carlyle has never presented a single practical suggestion for correcting any of the many evils that he has brought to the attention of the public is inaccurate, but his conclusion that Carlyle's worth lies not in the feasibility of his social, political, and economic doctrines, but in the stimulating, sincere way in which he has urged them is valid. Hamley praises Carlyle highly for having been consistent throughout his extensive writings in preaching the necessity of conscientiousness, genuineness, virtue, reverence.

Of interest is Hamley's perplexity about Carlyle's great popularity. He is at a loss, he admits, to account for it because Carlyle's style is difficult, his works are those of a thinker, and his ideas are unpopular. Actually the answer lay in his own reason for admiring Carlyle—the eloquence, sincerity, and conviction with which Carlyle proclaimed his views.

"Trollope's North America," XCII (September, 1862), 372-390.

Considering Trollope's North America (1862) from a political standpoint only, E. B. Hamley, who favors the cause of the South, vigorously attacks the work. Underlying the review is the whole question of British opinion about the American Civil War. Sympathy with the North lay chiefly among the lower classes in the industrial areas. In supporting the South, Hamley mirrors the thinking generally of both Liberal and Conservative political leaders and of the upper and middle classes.

Although North America was well received, on the whole, in the United States, its reception in England was quite different. Much official criticism, of which Blackwood's was the most abusive representative, was hostile because its approach to the work was wholly political; but even those critics who did attempt to give a rounded judgment of North America qualified whatever praise they bestowed. North America, which has little to mark it as distinctive, as Trollope himself admitted, remains just a travel book written by the author of the Barsetshire novels.
An unfair assault by Charles Neaves upon Mill's stand for woman suffrage, which Mill had advanced in various speeches before Parliament since his election from Westminster in 1865. Having in mind the mid-Victorian prejudice against those who held unorthodox religious opinions, Neaves asserts that because an examination of Mill's Logic (1843), On Liberty (1859), Utilitarianism (1863), Auguste Comte (1865), and Examination of Hamilton's Philosophy (1865) reveals that Mill nowhere professes a belief in God, anything that he advocates must be considered dangerous.

Blackwood's attitude toward the political disabilities of women was representative of the contemporary thinking not just of men, but of the large majority of women as well. Victoria herself wrote Gladstone in 1870 expressing her disapproval of granting women the franchise. Although the question of woman suffrage, which was first introduced into practical politics by Mill in 1865, was not finally settled until 1928, much credit must go to Mill, whose greatest lasting contribution has undoubtedly been made in the area of women's rights.

Another strong objection to Mill's effort to secure the Parliamentary franchise for women, this time by Mrs. Oliphant. It was not God's intention that women should make speeches, plough, carry guns, or vote, protests Mrs. Oliphant, and she hopes that Mill will drop the whole affair.

Mrs. Oliphant's reaction, typical of that of middle-aged women such as herself and Charlotte Yonge, was also representative of popular opinion, which was strenuously opposed to the advocacy of women's rights. It was but a small number of young women who carried on the battle of the New Women for the removal of social, educational, political, legal disabilities. Many of the restrictions to which women were subjected, which were corrected by such laws as the Married Woman's Property Acts of 1870 and 1882, were unreasonable and unjust.

A derisive review of Ruskin's Time and Tide (1867) by Mrs. Oliphant, who defends the creed of individualism and laissez-faire, which was the prevailing one. She has no difficulty in pointing out the impracticality of Ruskin's proposals, but she fails to see that beneath his Utopian schemes lie basic truths. Although Time and Tide had a direct connection with the Reform agitation of 1867, Mrs. Oliphant does not mention it.

Mrs. Oliphant's attitude reflects the scorn with which contemporary critics regarded the social and economic views of Ruskin, whose proper sphere, they felt, was art criticism. Opinion about his principles did not begin to change until about 1885, when his fight against the theories
of the classical economists was recognised as being of value. Despite 
Austen's lack of practical ability, his social and economic teaching, 
which many critics feel is best summarized in *Time and Tide*, has had a 
far-reaching effect.

"Mr. Mill on the Subjection of Women, CVI (September, 1869), 309-321.

An irrational review of Mill's *The Subjection of Women* (1869) by 
Anne Mosley, whose emotional rejection of the work is added proof that 
not just men, but the large majority of women as well were opposed to 
the emancipation of women. By accepting custom, tradition, and pre-
judice as reasoned thought, which is the very tendency Mill was trying 
to curb in his countrymen, Miss Mosley claims that since women are in-
tellectually inferior to men, the educational handicap to which they 
are subjected are justified, and that if a woman is unhappily married, it 
is her duty to make the best of it. Women, she says, are happy in their 
naturally subservient state.

While it is true that Mill placed too much emphasis on opportunity 
and education as the chief factors in individual differences, his convic-
tion that women should not be denied civic and legal equality merely be-
because they are women is sound. The *Subjection of Women*, which stated 
adequately for the first time the whole cause of women, still remains 
the most important work of its kind. According to Biaase, the *Subjection 
of Women* holds an eminent place among those books that have directed 
thought with a new clarity and force.19

"Friendship's Garland. By Matthew Arnold," from *New Books*, CIX (April, 
1871), 458-460.

Although she fails to give an adequate conception of the range and 
extent of Arnold's criticisms of the British people in *Friendship's Garland* 
(1871), Mrs. Oliphant does indicate that the work as a whole is directed 
against the obtuseness of the British mind. Because Arnold has been un-
usually keen and accurate in his interpretation of the British public, she 
regrets that this work will probably never have the constructive effect 
that it might. The subtlety of Arnold's humor (for which she herself has 
no appreciation) will only confuse and bewilder the British Philistine, 
who is the one who really needs to profit by Arnold's message. Referring, 
evidently, to "My Countrymen," which had created a furor when it first 
appeared in the *Fall Mall Gazette* in 1866, Mrs. Oliphant notes with deep 
concern that England is held in low esteem by France, Germany, and other 
countries on the Continent.

Although both *Culture and Anarchy* (1869) and *Friendship's Garland* 
are expressive of the same doctrines, the former stands as the more sub-
stantial statement of them and the latter remains principally a *jeu 
d'esprit*. *Friendship's Garland* has, however, a claim to distinction. 
While the British feared France more than Germany, as they waged the 
Franco-Prussian War of 1870, Arnold, in this work, was one of the few who 
warned England that there was danger in the new regime being created by 
the German war lords.
In trying to discredit the entire program of the Land Tenure Reform Association, which Mill had founded in 1870, H. unity Price displays two dominant characteristics of the Victorian mind—conservatism and anti-intellectualism. Mill's thinking on landed property, especially that which favors the peasant-proprietor over the great landlord and that which levies a tax on unearned profits accruing to a landlord will, Price says, unsettle all of their established ideas about property in land. No less pronounced than Price's fear to see some change come about in the land system, which he regards as a solid British institution, is his dread of speculative thinking. Mill's ideas are mischievous, he declares, and it is difficult to tell what may happen if they are followed. To their sorrow, Price warns, the French saw the result of the successful working of the ideas of subtle minds—the French Revolution.

Through his strenuous, but unreasoned and unsuccessful objections to Mill's proposals concerning Britain's land laws, Price expresses not only his own apprehensiveness, but that of Blackwood's reading public, which consisted to a considerable extent of country squires and landowners. Although Mill himself had no great confidence in the State, his doctrine on land, which conceded to the State the right and obligation to impose and administer land laws, anticipates the socialisms of the latter part of the nineteenth and of the twentieth century. Mill's influence helped to increase, both in his own time and still more in subsequent generations, the strength and activity of the national government.

"Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: Mr. John Stuart Mill," CXIV (September, 1873), 347-362.

Encouraged by the appearance of James F. Stephen's Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity (1873), Herbert Cowell himself attacks Mill's On Liberty (1859) and The Subjection of Women (1869). Cowell is successful in showing that the weakness of On Liberty lies, in spite of Mill's numerous exceptions and qualifications, which almost destroy his position, in its emphasis not on cooperation, but on individualism, which could be interpreted at times as being mere eccentricity.

Less discerning than his view of On Liberty is Cowell's objection to The Subjection of Women. Concerned mainly about the laws regulating marriage, Cowell follows the anti-feminist thinking of the large majority of his contemporaries as he opposes any suggestion that they be changed. Tempering with these laws, Cowell argues, will completely undermine the institution of marriage. Cowell's fear is excessive, and the later removal of many of the unfair restrictions to which women were subjected can be attributed to a large extent to Mill's influence.

Mentioning that Arnold's *Mixed Essays* (1879) is a collection of previously published literary and social-political essays, Mrs. Oliphant shows a sense of discrimination in pointing out that the strength of the volume lies in those of the latter type, which deserve to be lifted from the periodicals where they first appeared and given permanence in book form. Dealing in detail with only "Equality" and "Porro Unum est Necessarium," Mrs. Oliphant petulantly objects to Arnold's expressed admiration for various aspects of French life in the former essay, saying that while the French way of life may be best for the French, the British manner is best for the British. In turning to "Porro Unum est Necessarium," which extols the French system of secondary education, she is silenced completely. Acknowledging that the statistics presented by Arnold are beyond question, she admits regretfully that England's inferiority is very marked indeed.

That Mrs. Oliphant was unable to contradict Arnold effectively is understandable. As Arnold traveled throughout Europe in his position as Inspector of Schools, he gained an understanding of the English people such as few of his contemporaries had; and by this time, 1879, he had already made two of his three trips to the Continent to study education. Arnold's efforts to make England aware of the deficiencies of her educational system and of her culture generally are well known.

Because *Mixed Essays* includes "Democracy" and "Equality," it will remain an important volume in any approach to Arnold's social-political ideas. Written as it was during the years of excitement that followed the passage of the Second Reform Bill on August 15, 1867, *Culture and Anarchy* (1869) must be supplemented by these two essays for a true picture of Arnold's thinking on the meaning and authority of the State.
From the standpoint of modern criticism, Blackwood's survey of the novel from 1850 to 1880 is largely unsatisfactory. Because its conception of the novel, like that of other Victorian critical organs generally, is that it is light literature that should tell an entertaining, edifying, and credible story about pleasant, respectable, and believable people, Blackwood's makes a number of judgments that would be regarded today as unbalanced. Further, it does not review the novel extensively. By viewing the novel as it does, Blackwood's misjudges Dickens, Thackeray, Charlotte Bronte, Charles Kingsley, Mrs. Gaskell, and Bulwer-Lytton; and, while its general estimates of Blackmore, Collins, Disraeli, Lever, Reade, and Thomas Trollope are still valid, they are now established on either different or additional grounds. Its appraisals of Eliot and Mrs. Oliphant come closest to anticipating present critical thinking.

As popular as the novel was during the Victorian era, it is rather surprising that Blackwood's gives it no more space than it does. Usually, Blackwood's either reviews but one book by an author or waits for some occasion, such as the publication of a novel that becomes popular immediately, the appearance of an edition of his works, or his death, to comment on selected novels and evaluate his career. Eliot, with a separate article devoted to Adam Bede, The Mill on the Floss, Felix Holt, and Middlemarch, receives the most attention, while Dickens is noticed
but three times and Thackeray and Meredith but once each. Blackwood's weakness in this respect is most apparent, however, in its treatment of Trollope and Hardy. No article appears which deals exclusively with a novel or novels by Trollope, the chief references to him being in "Trollope's North America," in which E. B. Hamley mentions that Trollope is primarily a novelist, and in "Contemporary Literature: Novelists," in which A. Innes Shand groups Trollope with Eliot and Mrs. Oliphant as the leading novelists of the day. Hardy is not reviewed at all.

Blackwood's judgments of novelists, for the most part, would seem to justify Lounsbury's opinion that criticism by Victorians of their contemporaries is worthless. The Victorian feeling that "a novel is a novel, as a pudding is a pudding, and that this was the end of it" probably accounts for Blackwood's failure to review the novel more widely than it does, despite the fact that the novel had become the most popular form of literature.

1. General


By using such bases as amusement, pleasantness, edification, decency, and morality in estimating novels and classifying their authors as either superior or inferior, Mrs. Oliphant shows how the Victorian critic formed many of his poor judgments. According to these standards, she ranks Mrs. Gore, Mrs. Marsh, and Mrs. S. C. Hall above Charlotte Bronte, Mrs. Gaskell, Collins, and Reade. Characteristic are her comments that Rochester, who is sensual, rude, and brutal, and Jane, who is the latest example of the New Woman, are not exemplary people.

It is of interest that writers such as Mrs. Gore, Mrs. Marsh, and Mrs. S. C. Hall, who are now considered very minor literary figures of the Victorian period, were not only popular, but also acclaimed critically in their own day.
A discussion of the flourishing sensation novels by Mrs. Oliphant, who judges them on the basis of whether the author achieves his effects through means that are consistent with actuality. She considers Collins' *The Woman in White* (1860), the popularity of which she attests to by saying it is so well known that it is needless to take it up in detail, to be not only his supreme achievement, but that of this type of novel. Surprisingly enough, she does not criticize these novels for their themes, which were under attack by *Punch*, the quarterly, and the Contemporay Review.

The trend toward realism in English fiction, which became evident about mid-century, has damaged the reputations of those novelists whose forte lay solely in sensationalism. Since *The Moonstone* was not published until 1868, Mrs. Oliphant's opinion about *The Woman in White* can hardly be challenged.

Another protest by Mrs. Oliphant about the sensation novel. This time she attacks the genre for its unwholesome subjects of illegitimacy, adultery, bigamy, fraud, conspiracy, robbery, and murder, and for its unidealized, unexemplary characters. She selects Mrs. Wood's *East Lynne* (1861) and Collins' *No Name* (1862) to abuse, saying that both deal with issues that are inappropriate for the novel and portray characters who are polluted.

How *East Lynne* and other novels achieved the reputation they did of being wicked and immoral is apparent here. Since they regarded the novel as an instrument that could influence conduct, Victorian reviewers were reluctant to see the novelist exhibit to the reader any wrongdoing whatsoever.

Evident here is the great and continuing popularity of the sensation novel. Mrs. Oliphant admits regretfully that *Rupert Godwin*, Braddon's
most recently published work, is already in the fourth edition. That a novelist's greatness cannot be gauged by the public reception of his work is seen in such Victorian favorites and best sellers as Braddon and Yates, who are now relegated to obscurity, perhaps unjustly.


Showing that he is not unaware that a novelist is a craftsman who should select, arrange, and fashion his materials with great care, A. Innes Shand comments that in novels of purpose, the author, to the artistic detriment of the work, usually subordinates character and plot to his purpose and so becomes merely a preacher or a pamphleteer. Yet when Shand names Eliot, Mrs. Oliphant, and Trollope as the three contemporary novelists of worth, he does so purely on moral grounds.

It is apparent from Shand's remarks that even as late as 1879 the Victorian critic was still guided more by ethical than by artistic considerations in judging the novel. With such criteria, Shand puts Mrs. Oliphant, who has never written a scene or a page, he says, that a moralist could censure, on the same level with Eliot and Trollope. But, what is more serious, perhaps, is that he completely ignores both Meredith and Hardy. With Eliot's death in 1880, Meredith was to be recognized as England's foremost living novelist; and by 1879, Hardy had produced six novels, including *The Return of the Native* (1878).

2. Individual Novelists

Blackmore, R. D.


A review of R. D. Blackmore's *Lorna Doone* by Mrs. Oliphant, who says that this novel, which received little attention when it was published originally two years before, has become popular now that it has appeared in a cheap edition. In judging *Lorna Doone* to be well above the standard of the ordinary novel, she uses but one criterion—its truth to actual life. In view of Mrs. Oliphant's protests against the sensation novel, it is obvious that realism is acceptable to her only when it is pleasant and does not offend her sense of morality, which is really prudishness.

Interesting is Mrs. Oliphant's observation that *Lorna Doone* became widely known only after it was available at a price the general public could afford to pay. In the background lies the role not only of the inexpensive reprint, but that of the shilling pamphlet, circulating libraries, and cheap miscellanies in bringing down the standard price of 3ls. 6d. for a three-volume novel.

Recognized in his own day for only *Lorna Doone*, Blackmore is still regarded as one of those novelists who are known for a single book.
Bulwer-Lytton

"Bulwer," LXXVII (February, 1855), 221-233.

An article by Mrs. Oliphant on the literary career of Bulwer-Lytton, the occasion for which was the appearance of a People's Edition of his works. As she judges various novels, which she divides into the generally recognised groups of the fashionable, criminal, supernatural, historical, and domestic, she does so chiefly on whether characters are respectable, situations are moral, and incidents are probable. On these bases she considers The Cartoons (1849) and My Novel (1853) worthy enough to rank Bulwer-Lytton as the greatest of contemporary novelists.

Here again Mrs. Oliphant demonstrates the inadequacy of Victorian criteria for judging the novel. While such a high estimate might have been warranted during the few brief years between the death of Scott and the beginning of Dickens' career when Bulwer-Lytton was England's most popular novelist, it was wholly indefensible in 1855. By this time, Dickens, Thackeray, and the Brontes had all published either all or most of their best work. Not even her opinion with regard to the novels themselves has been sustained. Bulwer-Lytton's attempts in The Cartoons, My Novel, and What Will He Do With It? to follow the trend toward realism in the novel are now regarded as colorless; and if he is remembered at all, it is for Selham and his historical romances.

"Lord Lytton," CXIII (March, 1873), 356-378.

Another article by Mrs. Oliphant on the literary career of Bulwer-Lytton, this one being occasioned by his death in January of 1873. Her ranking of him as England's greatest contemporary novelist and her judgments of individual novels remain unchanged. She would, however, add to The Cartoons and My Novel his What Will He Do With It? (1859) which had been published since her review of eighteen years before. She says that these three novels "mark the maturity of Lord Lytton's intellect, and the highest level which pure fiction has reached in the present age."

Unsound as was Mrs. Oliphant's opinion in 1855 about Bulwer-Lytton's attainments as a novelist, it was even more so in 1870. The careers of Dickens, Thackeray, and the Brontes were all now completed, and between 1855 and 1873 the best of Eliot and Trollope and the early novels of Meredith had appeared.

"Aenelm Chillingly," CXIII (May, 1873), 615-630.

An uncritical review of Aenelm Chillingly (1873) by Mrs. Oliphant, who considers this a great novel merely because Aenelm is a gentleman. Although he has dealt, as he does in this work, with the lower class of society, Bulwer-Lytton has always been more successful, she is glad to say, in depicting the upper class, which he knew and understood better because it was the one to which he himself belonged. And, since he has
persisted throughout his literary career in presenting his heroes as
gentlemen, beginning with Pelham and ending with Aeneas, he may be re-
garded as "the historian, the prophet, the minstrel of the Gentleman, in
the truest and finest sense of the word." Still ranking Bulwer-Lytton as
England's greatest contemporary
novelist, Mrs. Oliphant feels that Aeneas Chillingly is a fitting close
to a distinguished career. Among literary personages and critics there
were but a few, however, such as Mrs. Oliphant and Kingsley, who held so
high an estimate of Bulwer-Lytton. Although he was extremely popular,
especially from 1832 until 1837, critics as a whole did not take him
seriously. The great decline in his reputation serves but to emphasize
Mrs. Oliphant's extremely poor judgment.

Collins, Wilkie

"Man and Wife. By Wilkie Collins," from New Books, CVIII (November,
1870), 628-631.

A review of Collins' Man and Wife (1870) by Mrs. Oliphant, whose
objections to the novel can be readily anticipated. She complains
about Geoffrey Delamain because he is uncouth and brutal and condemns
his victimisation of Anne and his marriage to Lady Jane as violations
of conventional morality.

Apparent once again is Mrs. Oliphant's reluctance, which was
shared by the Victorian reviewer generally, to see vice depicted in a
novel, since it was believed that its mere presence might possibly cor-
rup the readers (especially the young women). Noting that Man and Wife,
which attacks irregularities in the marriage laws and the mania for ath-
letic sports, marks a trend in Collins toward the novel of purpose, she
predicts accurately that however many other novels he may write that
have a public grievance as their starting point, Collins will be remembered
for his novels in which his primary concern has been intricacy of plot
construction.

Dickens

"Charles Dickens," LXXVII (April, 1855), 451-466.

A shortsighted article on Dickens' career to 1855 by Mrs. Oliphant,
who thoroughly demonstrates here the inadequacy of her criteria in judg-
ing novels. Because she believes that a novel is light literature that
should not concern itself with social evil, which is properly the province
of the essay, and that all its characters should be exemplary, she finds
more fault than merit in Dickens. She objects especially to the un-
pleasantness, misery, and vice in Oliver Twist, Nicholas Nickleby, Bleak
House, and Hard Times, his latest novel to be published. While she speaks
with admiration of characters such as Sam Weller, Nick Swiveller, Tom
Pinch, the Micawbers, and David Copperfield, who never disappoint one's
good opinion of them, she resents the very creation of Mrs. Bagnet, Fagin,
Sykes, Squeers, Mrs. Gamp, Squeers, Steerforth, and Uriah Heep.
Mrs. Oliphant's view of Dickens is wholly unbalanced. By 1855, although he was criticised by such an organ as the Saturday Review for vulgarity, caricature, and sentimentalism, Dickens was regarded generally by the public and the critics as well as being England's foremost contemporary novelist. Despite criticism, both Victorian and modern, for such faults, and others, as those pointed out by the Saturday Review, Dickens' claim as a great creative genius persists.

"Remonstrance with Dickens," LXXXI (April, 1857), 490-503.

Another distorted estimate of Dickens, this time by W. G. Hanley, who considers Dickens as being in his proper sphere only when he is humorous. Feeling that Dickens has done his best work in Pickwick, Hanley values Nicholas Nickleby, Barnaby Rudge, The Old Curiosity Shop, and Martin Chuzzlewit only for their touches of Pickwikean humor. Dickens, he says, concerns himself too much with being a moralist, politician, philosopher, and philanthropist in Bleak House, David Copperfield, and Little Dorrit, and he recommends that Dickens return to his former essentially comic vein of Pickwick.

To regard Dickens in 1857 as still the author of principally Pickwick, one would have to be completely unaware of his full merits as a novelist. Hanley, who is less judicious even than Mrs. Oliphant, thinks of the novel solely as a medium of light entertainment.

"Charles Dickens," CIX (June, 1871), 673-695.

A final survey by Mrs. Oliphant of Dickens' entire career, the article being occasioned this time by Dickens' death in 1870. Her estimate of Dickens remains unaltered from that which she held sixteen years before, but now her chief purpose is to stress that in reading Dickens, one is not brought into good company. She again classes as repulsive, characters such as Sikes, Fagin, and Uriah Heep; but what is rather surprising is that she now includes Sam Weller among this group with whom a reader would be reluctant to associate. Amusing as Sam may be, she says, his society is not edifying. Dickens' world is peopled, she protests, with genial fools, intolerable bores, and ridiculous oddities. Acknowledging that Dickens was acclaimed during his lifetime both in England and America by the public and by critics, she predicts, nevertheless, that his fame will decline.

Here again Mrs. Oliphant reveals her incompetency to evaluate the novel. Her attitude is that of the critic who, regarding the novel as a book of conduct, favors the depiction of ideal characters after whom the reader can pattern himself. And her prediction about Dickens' literary reputation has, to be sure, not been fulfilled.

Disraeli, Benjamin

"Lothair," CVII (June, 1870), 773-793.
A derisive, slashing review of Israel's *Lothair* (1870) by E. B. Hanley. To judge the novel by the author's style, which is extravagant and affected, and by the plot, which contains situations that are highly improbable, one can only suppose, Hanley says, that Israel intended the work as an elaborate jest. If *Lothair* is not a *jeu d'esprit*, he has no solution for the problem of why a once successful novelist and a veteran political leader would spend his time writing such a bad novel.

How little effect adverse criticism can have upon the popularity and sale of a work and how little connection there may be between the public reception of a book and its literary merit are both illustrated here. The reviews that appeared in the journals and magazines were largely unfavorable, with the *Quarterly* and *Blackwood's* being the most severe, yet *Lothair*, which sold well, was, and is, perhaps, Israel's most popular novel, its claim being challenged only by *Coningsby*. Since *Lothair* abundantly exhibits the shortcomings that are generally associated with Israel's earlier attempts at the novel, his reputation will probably continue to rest on his political trilogy.

Eliot, George

"Adam Bede," LXXV (April, 1859), 490-504.

The first of four discriminating reviews by W. Lucas Collins of as many novels by George Eliot. In refusing to extract the plot of *Adam Bede* (1859), a common practice which he dislikes because it permits those who have read an article to talk second-hand criticism of books they have never read, Collins asserts that the real excellence of the novel lies in "Mr." Eliot's ability to draw lifelike people. He characterizes Adam, Seth, Dinah, Rev. Irvine, and Mrs. Foyser at great length and sketches Hetty, Lisbeth Bede, Joshua Rann, and Mr. Craig. While *Adam Bede* is not a novel of action, Collins admits, there is enough, chiefly of a quiet order, to hold the reader's interest, and he praises the work for its intrinsic morality. Any thoughtful reader of *Adam Bede*, Collins says, "will feel at once that he has been sitting at the feet of a master; that he has been reading a book which, for original power and truth, has rarely been equalled."

Collins' enthusiastic reception of *Adam Bede* parallels that of the Victorian public generally. Although he makes no attempt here to rank Eliot among her contemporaries, the Victorians, as a whole, felt that *Adam Bede* warranted her a place just below Dickens and Thackeray.


An appreciative, discerning review of Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), again by Collins. He says that in this novel there is the same keen insight into human nature that there was in *Adam Bede*, and he points out Eliot's ability to describe setting with simplicity and truthfulness. This work also has a moral which is unobtrusive, he states; and while,
as in his article on *Adam Bede*, he does not retell the story as such, he indicates simply that he sides with St. Ogg in its attitude toward Maggie. No one except a superior novelist, Collins concludes, could interest a reader in the thoughts, remarks, and actions of a group of commonplace people such as those who live in and around the provincial town of St. Ogg, and Eliot has done it.

Again Collins makes no effort to compare Eliot with other contemporary novelists. He recognizes, however, that Eliot's strengths as a novelist that were exhibited in *Adam Bede* are also present in *The Mill on the Floss* and that this latter novel fully sustains the high standard set by the former one.

"Felix Holt, the Radical," C (July, 1866), 94-109.

Since *Silas Marner* (1861) and *Romola* (1863) went unnoticed by Blackwood's, Collins' third review of an Eliot novel is of *Felix Holt, the Radical* (1866). Collins is somewhat disappointed in *Felix Holt* because, in his estimation, it falls below both *Adam Bede* and *The Mill on the Floss*. *Felix Holt*, he charges, has fewer fully-drawn characters than either of these two previous novels, and he misses the provincial life of towns such as Hayslope and St. Ogg and the spontaneity, ease, and familiarity with which Eliot portrayed it.

Collins' judgment of *Felix Holt* has been sustained generally by modern criticism. *Felix Holt*, which ranks low among Eliot's novels, is not considered important even as a political novel.

"Middlemarch," XII (December, 1872), 727-745.

Collins' fourth review is an enthusiastic one of Eliot's *Middlemarch* (1871). Here once again, he says, are the provincial town and its people, many careful studies of character, truthful depiction of Midland country scenery, a plot interesting enough to hold the reader's attention, intrinsic moral purpose, and original thought that is expressed in epigrammatic language. Collins is most concerned, however, in pointing out that there is much excellent character drawing and analysis in *Middlemarch*. After taking up the major persons and many of the minor ones and stressing that nowhere is there one who is without both good and bad traits, he says, "The creatures are all so intensely human, even in their baser aspects, that in spite of that sevenfold shield of virtue behind which we shelter ourselves..."

Had *Middlemarch* stood alone, Collins concludes, it would have made an era in literature, but it followed other masterpieces. He considers *Middlemarch*, however, to be the greatest novel Eliot has produced so far.

Although Collins writes this last article on Eliot and still makes no attempt to rank her among her contemporaries, it is obvious that he
believes her to be one of the foremost novelists of their time, even, possibly, the foremost. She was so regarded by some organs of criticism, such as the Spectator and the Saturday Review.

There is no general agreement among modern critics as to which novel is Eliot's masterpiece, but, with the choice lying among Adam Bede, The Mill on the Floss, and Middlemarch, there are many to support Collins' selection. In George Eliot, Blanche C. Williams, for one, says, "Middlemarch is not only George Eliot's masterpiece; it is one of the two or three greatest novels in English literature."13

Kingsley


An attack upon Kingsley's Alton Locke (1850) by W. E. Aytoun, who declares that he has no sympathy with quacks, visionaries, and agitators. Kingsley's concern for the welfare of the working classes is understandable and commendable, Aytoun admits, but the problem of their condition is one for society to face and solve. A work such as Alton Locke, which simply advances the peculiar social views of a particular author, often rather absurdly, may have the effect of hindering more than helping the cause of those it advocates.

Aytoun's reaction to Alton Locke is similar generally to that of other contemporary reviewers, who disapproved of the novel because they felt it was revolutionary. Judged and condemned as it was in its own day for its subject and purpose, Alton Locke is important today only because of them.


A review of Kingsley's Yeast (3rd. edition, 1853), Hypatia (1853), and Westward Ho! (1855) by W. E. Aytoun, whose principal objection to Kingsley is still more social than literary. Aytoun points out discerningly that Yeast lacks artistry, but he is dissatisfied chiefly because Kingsley seems to suggest through the love affair of Honoria and Tregarva that social distinctions ought to be eliminated. In judging both Hypatia and Westward Ho! to be failures, Aytoun demands unreasonably that an historical romance have complete historical accuracy and fidelity. The reason, however, for Aytoun's general antagonism towards Kingsley is revealed when he concludes by saying that he has read Kingsley's works from the beginning with great care, and he is convinced that his views will not promote good will among the different classes of society.

Evident here is Kingsley's continuing unpopularity, with Blackwood's being a representative of those critical organs that found no good in anything he wrote. Yeast and Hypatia merit Aytoun's estimates of them, although principally for reasons other than those he gives. Westward Ho!, however, which was regarded by Victorian reviewers generally as a masterpiece of historical fiction, is still so considered.
A review by Robert B. Lytton of Lever's career as a novelist to the year 1862, when Chapman and Hall published the Works. Lytton mentions that Lever writes principally about the lower classes of Irish society and that his earlier novels are more popular because they have an exuberant spirit which the later ones lack. Although his early efforts are further distinguished, Lytton says, because of Mickie Free, who is an excellent example of the typical Irish peasant, he prefers his later works because they are generally more pleasant. But Lever's novels as a whole must be condemned, he thinks, because they depict too many vicious and vulgar people and deal too much with the vices and corruptions of society. In complaining that successive books continue to be concerned with sharpers and vagabonds and their activities, Lytton states, "As we close one after the other of such books, we feel like men returning from a hell. Our gains are not equivalent to the unpleasurable process of their acquirement, and we long for some wholesome intercourse with mankind."1

Lytton's low estimate of Lever, justified as it is, could and should have been firmly established on additional grounds. The review, however, serves to re-emphasise that the Victorian critic, feeling that the novel must both please and teach, demanded that vice, crime, and misery be toned down and that characters be exemplary. Lytton's acceptance of Lever's Irish peasant as being faithfully drawn corroborates the charge that there are many Englishmen whose conception of the Irish is based on such popular novels as Harry Lorrequer (1839), Charles O'Malley (1841), Jack Hinton (1843), and Tom Burke of Ours (1844). The distinction Lytton makes between Lever's earlier and later work is generally recognized, but his reputation continues to rest on the former.

Another review of Lever's literary career, this one, by laurence Lockhart, being occasioned by Lever's death in June 1872. Lockhart also separates his novels into early and late ones and says that they are characterised by their "Irishry" and their military element, the latter of which Lytton gave no attention to as such. He considers Jack Hinton (1843) to be his best work for the Irish aspect, Tom Burke (1844) for the military, Charles O'Malley (1840) for the two combined, and all three novels as those on which his future fame will chiefly rest. Like Lytton, Lockhart accepts Lever's picture of the Irish as being accurate and truthful.

Lockhart's judgment of Lever's works so far as his reputation would be concerned anticipates that of modern criticism, excepting that he excludes Harry Lorrequer. He, like Lytton, however, is convinced of the fidelity of Lever's depiction of the Irish. Neither reviewer attempts to compare Lever with Carleton in this respect.
Meredith


A bewildered half-column notice of Meredith's Harry Richmond (1871) by Mrs. Oliphant, who describes the novel as generally wild, half-mad, and obscure. Although the first part of it is readable, the last is like a thicket that is hard to get through, she complains; and it is, in its entirety, an odd book.

In 1872, which was five years before Meredith published his "On the Idea of Comedy and the Uses of the Comic Spirit," his over-all purpose was not clear, but even after that date his method and style continued to perplex the reader. Mrs. Oliphant's reaction to Harry Richmond, which was abused by both public and critics alike for its obscurity in plot and language, is typical of the way Meredith's novels were received, on the whole, until Diana of the Crossways began to appear in the Fortnightly in 1884. That Meredith's manner has always prevented him from having a large number of readers is, however, understandable.

Mrs. Oliphant

"Mrs. Oliphant's Novels," CXIII (June, 1873), 722-739.

A considered judgment of Mrs. Oliphant's career as a novelist to the year 1873 by W. Lucas Collins. Mrs. Oliphant has written many novels, some of which have been deservedly popular for their Scottish element, Collins declares, but only Salem Chapel, from the Chronicles of Carlingsford, has any literary merit. Feeling that Mrs. Oliphant has pictured Nonconformity with essential truth, Collins says that Salem Chapel "seems to us to stand almost alone in its graphic delineation of this particular sphere of English middle-class life, which, in spite of its wide extent and growing importance, is very little understood by those who stand outside it." Although she lacks the genius necessary to become a great novelist, Mrs. Oliphant might have eliminated many of her imperfections, Collins thinks, if she had written fewer books and not executed them so rapidly.

Collins' estimate of Mrs. Oliphant as a mediocre novelist has been upheld, and Salem Chapel, especially, still has some importance because of its subject. Ashamed herself of the great number of works she produced, although she regarded writing simply as a means of earning a living, Mrs. Oliphant was glad she was unable to remember one year what she had written the one before. She could not have continued to write, she said, if her conscience had been oppressed by the recollection of all the "rubbish" she had poured upon the public.17

Reade, Charles

"Charles Reade's Novels," CVI (October, 1869), 488-514.
Prompted by the appearance of a popular edition of Reade's novels, Mrs. Oliphant discusses his career as a fiction writer. As she takes up his best-known novels from Peg Woffington (1853) and Christie Johnstone (1853) to Foul Play (1869), she complains that Reade constantly violates probability in the construction of incidents and that he deals with controversial social issues. Despite these shortcomings, however, she feels that Reade deserves to be ranked highly as a novelist because his heroes and heroines, such as Peg Woffington, Mabel Vane, Christie Johnstone, Lucy Fountain, David Dodd, Kate Peyton, Margaret, and Gerard, are decent, good, respectable people. She sums up what in her estimation is Reade's greatest power by saying, "He sets before us men and women whom it is no shame to admire, who are not occupied solely by the aimless loves and labours of mediocrity, but who are able to mould their own fortunes, to stand fast before the assaults and bear the hardships of life, and who are actuated by motives and meanings beyond the mean level of the ordinary." 18

Mrs. Oliphant's high opinion of Reade is, to be sure, not consistent with contemporary thinking. What reputation Reade now has as a novelist rests principally upon one book, The Clown and the Hearth.

Mr. Thackeray

"Mr. Thackeray and His Novels," LXXVII (January, 1855), 86-96.

A discussion by Mrs. Oliphant of Thackeray's career to January, 1855, when the sixteenth monthly number of The Newcomes appeared. Thackeray, has not, she thinks, greatly distinguished himself so far as a novelist. Vanity Fair is a disagreeable book in which all of the rogues are clever and all the good people are fools; Pendennis contains a hero who is unheroic and Blanche Amory, who is more detestable even than Becky Sharp; and Henry Esmond has in it the cruel siren Beatrix and the monstrous marriage of Lady Castlewood to Henry.

Showing the great interest the Victorians took in the fortunes of fictional characters, Mrs. Oliphant warns Thackeray that before he concludes The Newcomes, he must see that Clive marries someone. Because of Colonel Newcome, Clive, and Lord Newcome, she feels that The Newcomes is "not only the most agreeable story, but the cleverest book which Mr. Thackeray has yet contributed for the amusement and edification of the admiring public." 19 Mrs. Oliphant's reaction to Thackeray, which was that of many contemporary reviewers, is again proof that the use of Victorian criteria could result in serious aberrations of judgment. It was on such bases as pleasantness, decency, and instruction that she ranked Bulwer-Lytton, for his domestic works, above both Dickens and Thackeray.

Mr. Thomas Trollope's Italian Novels," XCIII (January, 1863), 84-98.
A consideration of Thomas Trollope's *La Beata* (1861) and *Marietta* (1862) by William Smith, who condemns the first one for immorality and the second for improbability. He summarizes the plot of *La Beata* at great length and then criticizes the novel severely because La Beata lives with the artist Pippo without being married to him. Smith also recounts the main incidents from *Marietta* and shows that all of them, which center around Marietta's attempt to regain possession of the family mansion, are highly improbable.

Smith's low estimation of Thomas Trollope, which is justified, should have been based on additional criteria; but what is surprising is that it was Thomas rather than Anthony who was reviewed. By 1863 Trollope had published *The Warden* (1855), *Barchester Towers* (1857), *Doctor Thorne* (1858) and *Framley Parsonage* (1861) and was described by Hamley in his article on *North America* in September, 1862, as being among the most popular novelists of the day; yet up to 1860 *Blackwood's* had no review devoted exclusively to Trollope.
Blackwood's coverage of poetry produced from 1850 to 1880 is inadequate because it misjudges most of what it does review, and it fails to consider many publications. Blackwood's, like so many other critical magazines and journals, takes pride in describing the times as unpoetical. Nonfictional prose and the novel, both of which are superior rivals, are considered more adaptable than poetry to the needs of a practical age. That poetry is being written, however, and must be reviewed, Blackwood's realizes.

The poor evaluations made by its critics, Mrs. Oliphant, W. Lucas Collins, Anne Mozley, and Elizabeth J. Hasell, are a result of their primary emphasis upon content and purpose. Only Aytoun and E. B. Hanley, who consider form, execution, and technique important, render judgments that approximate those of modern criticism.

No less serious than Blackwood's misjudgments is its failure to review many poetical works. Tennyson's *In Memoriam* (1850), while commented upon in various articles, was never reviewed as such. His *The Holy Grail and Other Poems* (1869); Browning's *Christmas Eve and Easter Day* (1850), *Dramatis Personae* (1864), and all of his work of the '70's except *Aристophanes' Apology* (1875); Arnold's *Eupædocles on Etna and Other Poems* (1852), *Poems: Second Series* (1855), and *New Poems* (1867); and Morris's *The Defense of Guenevere and Other Poems* (1858) and all of his work after *The Earthly Paradise* (1870) went unnoticed. The work of Swinburne, Meredith, Christina Rossetti, Fitzgerald, and Katsch was completely neglected.

A discussion by Mrs. Oliphant of the status of poetry and of Tennyson and Browning as representative poets of the day. Poetry occupies but a secondary position in their age, she says, because serious prose and the novel, to which the best writers are devoting themselves, are better suited to ordinary uses. Tennyson is the greatest contemporary poet, she concedes, but she is dissatisfied with him. If "The Princess" has any real meaning, it is not apparent; "In Memoriam" simply exploits grief; and "Maud," a "piece of trifling," can do nothing to encourage and hearten a nation at war. Browning's Men and Women (1855) is so unintelligible, Mrs. Oliphant protests, that she is able to understand only Andrea and Bishop Blougram.

Mrs. Oliphant's complaint that the times were unpoetical was a common one; and her approach to poetry is characteristic of the average Victorian reviewer, who emphasized content and purpose to the exclusion or minimization of technique. That such an approach could result in extreme misjudgments is seen particularly in her estimate of "In Memoriam." Her charge that Men and Women is obscure is due in part, no doubt, to Mrs. Oliphant's inattentive reading of its two volumes. She admits that as she tried to read, she was thinking about the Crimean War and her own problems.


An article by Mrs. Oliphant, who comments about poetry and mentions that Owen Meredith has attracted some attention. As before, she asserts that the Victorian period is unpoetical. It is an age, symbolized by steam engines and electric telegraphs, in which people are so concerned about national and international problems that they have little leisure to read poetry, which is usually personal. Poetry would have a wider audience even so, she feels, if the poet confined himself to the narrative type, which can easily be understood by the average reader. A narrative poet who has had several successful publications is Owen Meredith, but she hesitates to predict whether he will achieve fame. Unfortunately, he seems to be more interested in vice than in virtue.

Mrs. Oliphant's survey of contemporary poetry is less satisfactory here than it was four years before. This time she does not discuss either Tennyson or Browning, even to disparage them, and she completely ignores Arnold, Morris, E. B. Browning, Clough, and Pamphor. Her review emphasizes the fact that the Victorian reviewer expected poetry to pass the tests of morality and utility.

"Epigrams," XCIII (June, 1863), 750-761.

An article by W. Lucas Collins, whose primary concern is to point out that the Victorian period is unsuited for poetry. His explanation is
that modern science has made the Victorians less imaginative than their grandparents, so that poems about women's eyebrows, at least, are no longer being written. But if there must be poems, Collins says, let there be as few as possible and let what few there are be short.

The assertion made by both Mrs. Oliphant and Collins that the age was unpoeitical was a familiar one, which can be traced, partly, to Peacock's *The Four Ages of Poetry* and Macaulay's essay on Milton. Collins' belief that poetry was hardly worth considering at all was also current.

2. Individual Poets

Arnold, Matthew

"The Two Arnolds," LXXV (March, 1854), 303-314.

A discerning but unsympathetic review by W. A. Aytoun of Arnold's Poems. A New Edition (1853) and Edwin Arnold's Poems, Narrative and Lyric (1853). Aytoun summarises Arnold's critical Preface, which he agrees with almost in its entirety, and says, "It would be well for the literature of the age if sound criticism of this description were more common." Arnold has undeniable poetic power, as he demonstrates well in "The Forsaken Merman," Aytoun says; but his style is too imitative of the Greek, and often he does not adhere to the principles he himself has enunciated in his Preface, especially that of symmetry of design. Two cases in point are "Sohrab and Rustum" and "Tristram and Iseult." But Arnold's chief difficulty, Aytoun asserts, is unevenness of execution. Aytoun dismisses the other Arnold by saying he is someone who is merely "exercising himself in verse."

Blackwood's reception of Arnold's poetry reflects that of contemporary criticism as a whole. Critics for the Times, North British Review, English Review, and Fraser's were all hostile because, among other criticisms, they could find no social usefulness in Arnold's poems. Although Aytoun examines but a few poems in detail, it is odd, since it is evident that he is competent to judge poetry, that he overlooked "The Scholar-Gipsy." It is to his credit, however, that he recognized the great value of Arnold's Preface. Edwin Arnold's volume, which hardly deserved being noticed at all, merits Aytoun's judgment.

Browning, E. B.


A review of Mrs. Browning's *Aurora Leigh* (1856) by W. E. Aytoun, whose comments, except that there is none about Mrs. Browning's humani-
tarian spirit, anticipate those of modern criticism. He complains that certain situations and incidents are inconsistent with probability, that there are numerous extraneous reflective passages, and that most of the characters are unnatural. Her language is often coarse and vulgar, Aytoun adds, and many of her verses have a prosaic quality. What little value there is in the poem lies in isolated descriptive sketches. Mrs. Browning has deservedly won an audience for her skill with the sonnet, Aytoun says; and he recommends that she cease to experiment, which he feels she is doing in Aurora Leigh, and return to that form.

"Poetic Aberrations," LXXXVII (April, 1860), 490-494.

An attack on Mrs. Browning's Poems before Congress (February, 1860) by Aytoun, whose remarks are more political than literary. Designating this as a volume of verses, not poems, Aytoun points out the inferiority of "Napoleon III in Italy," "The Dance," and "A Curse for a Nation." But bad as her poetry is, Aytoun says, her politics are much worse. After mentioning that France's annexation of Savoy just the month before upsets Mrs. Browning's belief that Napoleon III's interest in the unification of Italy was genuine, Aytoun declares that women should stop meddling in politics.

Since Poems before Congress is more political than poetical, Aytoun's approach is not without justification. In the background lies England's distrust of Napoleon III, which was heightened in 1859-1860 by his activities relating to Italy's struggle for freedom. Although critics as a whole reviewed the volume unfavorably, Mrs. Browning noticed Blackwood's article especially. In a letter to Miss E. F. Haworth, she says, "Did you see how I was treated in 'Blackwood'? In fact you and all women, though you hated me, should be vexed on your own accounts. As for me, it's only what I expected, and I have had that deep satisfac­tion of 'speaking though I die for it,' which we are all apt to aspire to now and then."2

Browning, Robert

"Prolixity," CIX (May, 1871), 616-630.

A diatribe about prolixity by Anne Mozley, whose example of a literary work that must be condemned on the basis of inordinate length is Browning's The Ring and the Book (1868-69). She disagrees, she says, with those many readers and critics who consider The Ring and the Book, now published for several years, as the poem of the day. To her it is merely a murder story which, because it is retold about a dozen times, repels the reader from the outset. If, however, one can get through the poem, he can gain much miscellaneous knowledge, as, for example, that Pope Stephen had the body of Pope Formosus exhumed and that formerly gentlemen were taught to endure torture.
Miss Mosley's evaluation of *The Ring and the Book* is not only shortsighted but perverse. As she herself admitted, the poem had been well received by both the reading public and the critics, but she chose to believe that most of them had done so in order to be regarded as intellectuals. *The Ring and the Book*, which was reviewed favorably by organs of criticism such as the *Fortnightly*, the *Quarterly*, the *Edinburgh Review*, the *London Quarterly*, the *Athenaeum*, and the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, strengthened Browning's reputation, which had begun to grow in the '60's.


A review of Browning's *Aristophanes' Apology* (1875) by Mrs. Oliphant, who is distressed by the work. Browning's career divides itself, she says, into an early period, in which he was "in those wilds of confused wordiness which made *Sordello* the wonder and the fear of all readers"; a middle, in which he created great figures such as Andrea del Sarto, Cleon, Karshish, Pompilia, and Caponsacchi; and a late, in which he has produced works, such as *Aristophanes' Apology*, that mark a reversion to the over-intellectuality and needless complexity of his initial period. Browning has, she adds, written to little purpose. Why Aristophanes attacked Euripides in his plays may be of interest to the dilettante critic, but it is neither informative nor edifying so far as three-fourths of those who do read poetry are concerned. Browning is foolish to suppose, she declares, that his reputation can make Aristophanes' *Apology* popular.

Mrs. Oliphant's reaction to *Aristophanes' Apology* reflects the consternation and dismay with which the general reading public received Browning's work in the '70's. It is interesting to note that viewing Browning's career from the standpoint of three periods, of which only the middle was productive of great poetry, was firmly established by the middle of the '70's. While modern criticism accepts no such division without much qualification, it is true that *Aristophanes' Apology* is one of his later works that cannot be defended as achieving the best of which Browning was capable.

*Bulwer-Lytton*


A review of Bulwer-Lytton's *Poems* (1865) by W. E. Aytoun, who again demonstrates a sense of discrimination. This volume will not gain immediate recognition, Aytoun says, because it is too reflective for those who demand sensational excitement and it is too deficient technically to satisfy those who expect the poet to be a skilled craftsman. He examines several poems at length, including "Milton," "Constance, or the Portrait," "The Boatsman," and "The Pilgrim of the Desert," for both content and form. In his estimation, "Milton," a poem Bulwer-Lytton wrote when he was in college, is the most able one in the volume.
Aytoun's prediction about the volume proved correct; and while he makes no attempt to rank Bulwer-Lytton among his contemporaries, it is obvious that he has no great respect for him as a poet. It is noteworthy that Aytoun, unlike many Victorian critics, considered not only content and purpose, but form as well.

Clough, Arthur Hugh

"Clough's Poems," XCII (November, 1862), 586-598.

An inadequate review by W. Lucas Collins of Clough's Poems (1862), which were edited, with a Memoir, by F. T. Palgrave. Collins first objects to the Memoir because he thinks that Palgrave, who was a friend of Clough's, has used it as an opportunity merely to puff the volume. Feeling that few know anything about Clough, Collins then proceeds to furnish a biographical sketch of him. When Collins finally takes up the poetry itself, he deals with only "The Boothie of Tober-na-Vuolich" and "Amours de Voyage"; and in each instance, his primary purpose is to summarize and comment on the narrative element in the poems. There are poems throughout the volume which express Clough's yearning for something, Collins says, but the whole matter is too mystical for his comprehension. He confines himself, therefore, to the "objective" side of Clough's poetry, for which, he thinks, the reader will thank him.

Collins, who had shown some competency in judging the novel, is hesitant and uncertain in dealing with poetry, unless he can treat it as though it were prose fiction. He fails to give a conception of the scope and nature of Clough's Poems, and he neglects to evaluate Clough's achievement as a poet.

Morris, William


A review of Morris's The Life and Death of Jason (1867) and The Earthly Paradise (1868), Part I, by Elizabeth J. Hasell, who summarizes them at great length by means of long and numerous extracts and running comments. Typical observations are that she feels that Morris has been wise to omit the episode of the seduction and desertion of Hypsipyle because it is offensive morally and that she likes the story of Cupid and Psyche best because the heroine is so lovable. After describing Jason and "Atalanta's Race," "The Doom of King Acrisius," "The Son of Croesus," "The Man Born to Be King," "Ogier the Dane," "Lady of the Land," and "Cupid and Psyche," Miss Hasell remarks that she is running out of space. She concludes by saying that each poet has a mission. Morris's is not to instruct, to discuss philosophical issues, or to solve world problems in verse, but to entertain, which is not a high aim but is legitimate enough.

Here again Blackwood's does not attempt a considered evaluation of the work(s) to be reviewed; and it is interesting that its notice of Jason,
which became popular immediately upon publication and made Morris one of
the best-known poets of the day, was two years late. *Blackwood's*, like
many other Victorian critical *magazines* and *journals*, was inconsistent
in that it looked with condescension on poetry as light literature fit
only to give pleasure and yet denied that it should be concerned with
serious problems.

"The Earthly Paradise. Part III," from *New Books*, CVII (May, 1870),
614-617.

A brief notice of Morris's *The Earthly Paradise*, Part III, by Mrs.
Oliphant. She says that of this group of poems, she likes especially
"East of the Sun, West of the Moon" because it is the most charming. She
warns Morris, however, that this poetical storytelling is getting some­
what monotonous and that unless his poetry soon begins to take on some
substance and meaning, he will lose his *common* readers, who have little
time to waste.

A reviewer's likes and dislikes do not constitute criticism, of
course, and here Mrs. Oliphant fails even in that aspect of reviewing for
which the Victorian critic was noted—a detailed description of the con­
tents of a work. Her attitude reflects the inconsistency mentioned
above of those who regarded poetry as being useful only in whiling away
an hour or two and yet complained if it did deal with important issues.

Newman, John Henry

"Newman's Poems," CVIII (September, 1870), 285-301.

A review of Newman's *Verses on Various Occasions* (1868) by Elizabeth
J. Hasell, who feels that this volume establishes Newman's claim to be
regarded as a real poet. Stressing that she usually likes Newman's sub­
jects and ideas, she refers to "Progress of Unbelief," "A Voice from Afar,"
"St. Paul at Melita," "Flowers without Fruit," and "Desolation." She de­
votes most of her space, however, to a summary of "The Dream of Gerontius."
Although she objects to the idea of purgatory and the role of the inter­
cessor because, as she says, her theology allows no place for them, she
considers "The Dream of Gerontius" a worthy poem because it emphasises the
idea that holiness is worth any sacrifice and suffering.

Miss Hasell's high estimation of Newman's achievement is particularly
ironical because Newman, who thought of poetry simply as propaganda in
metrical form, depreciated his own poetical efforts. Her position is de­
scribed by Lounsbury when he says of that large number of English people
who enjoy being preached to, "For them all other pleasures pale beside the
reading of platitudes seasoned with morality and religion and garnished
with the ornament of verse...They honestly believe that they are appreciatin
fine poetry when they are simply listening with devout attention to
commonplace preaching."5
Rossetti, Dante Gabriel


An appalling review by Mrs. Oliphant of Rossetti's Poems (April, 1870). Undaunted, she says, by the great critical acclaim already won by this volume, now in its third edition although it was published originally but four months before, she will judge it herself by examining those poems which have been talked about the most. "The Blessed Damozel" merely transfers a commonplace fit of love-longing from earth to a heaven which resembles a village green; the refrain of "Sister Helen" is distracting; "Troy Town" has no meaning; "Dante at Verona" tells nothing about Dante; and "The Last Confession" could have been better than it is. Only "Jenny," which handles a difficult theme without offensiveness, achieves any success. Her final verdict is, "In none of these poems, however, is there the least indication of a new poet arisen to bless us."

Like Anne Mosley's article on Browning's The Ring and the Book, Mrs. Oliphant is not only obtuse, but perverse. In several letters, Rossetti commented on Blackwood's unfavorable review, which he felt may have resulted because he could not work out with the Blackwood firm a satisfactory arrangement for the publication of these poems. In one to Frederick S. Ellis, who published the poems, Rossetti says, "Blackwood & the Nation have come too late to smash me, as no doubt the war [Franco-Prussian] has been beforehand with them as regards poetry in general." And in another to William Allingham, he writes, "Have you seen the last Blackwood? If you have not, and need a relish before dinner, try it instead of gin and bitters. What Brother Bard but must find an added zest in the meat dispensed by the hand of detected mediocrity."

Smith, Alexander

"Alexander Smith's Poems," LXXV (March, 1854), 345-351.

A discerning review of Alexander Smith's Poems (1853) by E. B. Hamley, who regards Smith's poetic efforts with amusing condescension. Referring, evidently, to A Life Drama (1852), Hamley says that a previous volume by "Alexander" set off a hubbub, in which some reviewers declared that he was a truly great poet. Considering such an estimate of Smith utterly ridiculous, Hamley points out those defects of rant, excessive emotion, affectation, over-use of metaphors, and disjointed thoughts that are recognised as characteristic of Smith's early poetry. Since he has as yet produced nothing really to justify his being named a poet of worth, Hamley hopes that "Alexander" will accept his remarks as more paternal than irreverent.

While it is true that one thinks of Aytoun's Firrilian (May, 1854) as being responsible for dramatically exposing the shortcomings of "Spasmodics" like Smith and Dobell, Hamley, who was one of a minority of critics who anticipated Aytoun, must also be given credit for a sound
evaluation of Smith's earliest efforts at a time when they were being compared with the works of Keats and of Tennyson.

Tennyson

"Maud. By Tennyson," LXXVIII (September, 1855), 311-321.

An abusive review of Tennyson's Maud, and Other Poems (1855) by W. E. Aytoun, who says it is a disgrace, and indisputable proof that Tennyson, who has for so many years been ranked as Britain's leading poet, is losing ground with each publication. Aytoun extracts as representative the first nine stanzas, which he describes as bombast set to meter, and declares that most of the lyrics throughout the poem are more silly and childish than any of the nursery rhymes in Halliwell's collection. And he wishes that the disagreeable hero, rather than being cured by a strange, unwholesome passion for war, had gone off to Crimea instead and been killed. There is, in his estimation, only one passage that deserves to be called poetry—the lyric beginning "Come into the garden, Maud." In its entirety, however, "Maud" is mere "barbarous bedlamite jargon, without a vestige of meaning, and it is a sore humiliation...to know that it was written by the Laureate." Without even naming the other poems in the volume, Aytoun dismisses them by saying that none of them is worth noticing.

Blackwood's reception of "Maud" reflects the Victorian disapproval of it for its subject, treatment, and conclusion; but that Aytoun's article was, perhaps, the most offensive to appear is suggested by the fact that Albert Nordell has included it in his Notorious Literary Attacks. Since Aytoun, like his contemporaries, either ignores or is unaware of Tennyson's purpose in "Maud," some of his strictures are unreasonable. But his esteem for "Come into the garden, Maud" anticipates the thinking of the modern critics who, while they would add others such as "O let the solid ground" and "O that 'twere possible," feel that whatever merit "Maud" has lies in certain lyrics. Aytoun's dismissal of the other poems cannot be justified, since among them was the "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington."

"Idylls of the King," LXXXVI (November, 1859), 608-627.

A review of the four idylls, "Enid," "Vivien," "Elaine," and "Guinevere," by Elizabeth J. Hasell, who summarises them at great length and evaluates them wholly on grounds of amusement, pleasantness, morality, and edification. She dislikes the first and second idylls, the former because Geraint's treatment of Enid is shameful and the latter because the evil Vivien is repulsive. She recommends that a reader skip these first two and begin with "Elaine." Here one sees in Elaine that when someone has no love higher than an earthly one, death, not life, results; and, in Lancelot, that those "who seek happiness in forbidden paths are doomed by a divine decree to find one day or other that they have lost the substance while wildly grasping at the shadow." The fourth idyll,
she says, pictures a woman justly reproached not only for failing to help the man it was her duty to help, but for working against him; and it depicts a great and good man saddened by the loss, on the same day, of a trusted friend and his wife. Although Miss Hasell wishes that all of the idylls were equally worthy, she is glad that the last two "will by the pure and lofty sentiments which they tend to foster, as well as by the delight they cannot fail to give, make no inconsiderable addition to the great debt of gratitude which his country already owes to her worthy son, Alfred Tennyson."

Blackwood's appreciation for these original idylls is noteworthy because its attitude toward Tennyson had been, as a rule, either indifferent or hostile and because most of the other critical organs received them rather coolly. Divided as modern critical thinking is on the merit of the Idylls, both collectively and individually, its usual objections include the reasons for which Miss Hasell praises them.


Another laudatory review by Elizabeth J. Hasell, this one of *Enoch Arden, and Other Poems* (1864). She is impressed with the volume as a whole because there is little in it to bewilder and confuse the reader as there was in "Maud," "The Palace of Art," and "In Memoriam." "Enoch Arden" is a true modern idyll, she says, because it depicts the joys and sorrows of humble life and the means by which joy may be enhanced and sorrow soothed. That Tennyson knows how to make noble use of the religious faith of the simple is seen in the fact that some of the most moving passages in "Enoch Arden" are those in which the Bible is quoted. She wishes, however, that Tennyson had had Enoch moralize in his solitude and that he had added his own observations on Enoch's grief and on Annie's disquietude. Miss Hasell notices briefly "Sea Dreams," "The Voyage," "The Grandmother," "Northern Farmer, Old Style," and "Aylmer's Field," her comments consisting chiefly of what she likes or dislikes about them. She describes "Tithonus" last and ranks it as Tennyson's best classical poem.

This review, more favorable even than Miss Hasell's of the Idylls, is regarded by Charles Tennyson as the most appreciative ever to appear in Blackwood's on Tennyson. Although "Enoch Arden" did have critics, Blackwood's reception of it mirrors the widespread popularity it achieved. It is interesting to note, however, that its strain of sentimentality, for which the Victorians liked "Enoch Arden," is one of the chief charges brought against it by modern criticism. Whether Miss Hasell's esteem for "Tithonus" represents an independent judgment is questionable. "Tithonus" first appeared in the *Cornhill* for February, 1860, and by this time, November, 1864, its merit and popularity were already well established.


A severe criticism of "Gareth and Lynette" by Mrs. Oliphant, who hopes that this will be Tennyson's last poem to deal with the Arthurian
legend. All over England, she claims, the whisper is rising that Tennyson needs to abandon this material. Her comments about the poem itself, which she dislikes, can readily be anticipated. The condition that Gareth serve as a kitchen knave for a year and a day and not reveal his identity is ridiculous; Lynette is an impertinent, modern young woman; and the representation of death as a blooming boy offends the moral sense. In reviewing a popular favorite such as Tennyson, a critic is often reluctant, she says, to condemn his work for fear he himself may be regarded as inadequate. Feeling, however, that Tennyson needs to be advised of what all England is thinking, she says, "Enough, oh beloved poet!... Let us have no more Last Tournaments or last words. The harp has other strings, and the world other stories full of poetic meaning. Create us something new out of Time and Nature—something fresh out of the unknown."15 "Gareth and Lynette," she concludes, is evidence that Tennyson is declining.

While Mrs. Gilphant's review again reveals her incompetency to deal with poetry, it is worth noting that after "Gareth and Lynette" Tennyson did not return to the Idylls, except briefly in 1885 with "Balin and Balan." Mrs. Gilphant's assertion that reviewers were often hesitant about criticizing a popular author is laughable when one realizes that Blackwood's was noted for the savageness of its assaults and that she herself attacked Macaulay, Dickens, Thackeray, Collins, Rossetti, and Tennyson once prior to this.20
NOTES

The authorities for the authorship of the reviews are:


These notes include biographical sketches for only those contributors who are not treated in the DNB.

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

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4  Ibid., p. 83.

5  Ibid., p. 91.

6  Scenes of Clerical Life (Jan., 1857-Nov., 1857); The Lifted Veil (July, 1859).

7  Nina Balatka (July, 1866-Jan., 1867); Linda Tressel (Oct., 1867-May, 1868); John Caldigate (April, 1878-June, 1879); Dr. Wortle's School (May, 1880-Dec., 1880).

8  My Novel (Sept., 1850-Jan., 1853); What Will He Do With It? (June, 1857-Jan., 1859); The Haunted and the Haunters (Aug., 1859); The Parisians (Oct., 1872-Jan., 1874).

9  Tony Butler (Oct., 1863-Jan., 1865); Sir Brook Fossbrooke (May, 1865-Nov., 1866); A Whist Reminiscence (March, 1869).

10  Maid of Sker (Aug., 1871-July, 1872); Alice Lorraine (March, 1874-April, 1875).

11  Katie Stewart (July, 1852-Nov., 1852); The Quiet House (Dec., 1853-May, 1854); Zaidee (Dec., 1854-Dec., 1855); The Athelings (June, 1856-June, 1857); Chronicles of Carlingford (Oct., 1861-Sept., 1864); Miss Marioribanks (Feb., 1865-May, 1866); Brownlow (Jan., 1867-Feb., 1868); John (Nov., 1869-July, 1870).


"The Fine Arts and the Public Taste," LXXIV (July, 1853), 93.
He graduated from Wadham College, Oxford, in 1859, and was called to the bar at the Middle Temple two years later.


See below, Section 4, "Philosophy, Religion, Science," and Section 5, "Politics, Society, Economics."


Joseph Beavington Atkinson (1822-1886), art critic. Born at Manchester, Atkinson spent his early manhood at Bristol, where he lectured on art and was for many years honorary secretary of the Bristol School of Art. In 1865 he settled in London, where he devoted himself to the literature of art. He became the regular art critic for the *Saturday Review* and contributed largely to other periodicals as well. His publications are: *An Art Tour to Northern Capitals of Europe* (1873); *Studies Among the Painters* (1874); *The School of Modern Art in Germany* (1880); Overbeck (1882), and, with others, *English Painters of the Present Day* (1872). (Kirk, *Supplement to Allibone's Dictionary* (Philadelphia, 1902), I.)


"Modern Painters," LIV (October, 1843), 485-503.

See above, "Mr. Ruskin's Works," LXX (September, 1851), 326-348.


"Mr. Ruskin and His Theories—Sublime and Ridiculous," LXXX (November, 1856), 522.


"Democracy" had served as the Introduction to The Popular Education of France (1861); the others had appeared in the Fortnightly Review, the Nineteenth Century, and the Quarterly Review.
NOVELS

1. See above, Section 5, "Politics, Society, Economics."

2. See below, Section 1, "General."


9. William George Hamley (1815-1893), British general and writer. He was educated at Bodmin grammar school and at the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, and he received his commission in the Royal Engineers after finishing the Academy. In 1863 he went to Bermuda in command of the engineers, and the following year he was appointed lieutenant-governor of the island. He first contributed to Blackwood's in 1857, and in 1861 his Captain Clutterbuck's Champagne appeared serially in its pages. For several years following 1861 hardly an issue of Blackwood's appeared without some contribution from Hamley on topics that might be political, social, historical, or literary. His published works include A New Sea and an Old Land: being Papers suggested by a visit to Egypt at the end of 1869 (1871); and the tales, Guilty or Not Guilty (1878), and The House of Lys (1879).

William Hamley was a brother of General Edward Bruce Hamley and Colonel Charles Hamley, both of whom were also contributors to Blackwood's. At one time, the unusual situation occurred in which contributions from the three brothers made up a complete issue of the magazine. ("General William Hamley," Blackwood's, CLIII (June, 1893), 879-884.)
10. See above, "Charles Dickens," LXXVII (April, 1855), 451-466.
15. Ibid., pp. 452-472.
16. "Mrs. Oliphant's Novels," CXIII (June, 1873), 729.
19. "Mr. Thackeray and His Novels," LXXVII (January, 1855), 95.
20. See above, Section 5, "Politics, Society, Economics."
POETRY

1  "Two Arnolds," LXXV (March, 1854), 306.

2  Letters of Elisabeth Barrett Browning, ed. Frederic G. Kenyon, with Biographical Additions (New York, 1897), II, 387.


4  See above, NOVELS, George Eliot.


7  See above, Robert Browning.

8  The Letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti to His Publisher, F. S. Ellis, ed. Oswald Wouknight, with Introduction and Notes (London, 1928), Letter 52, p. 82.


10  "Maud. By Tennyson," LXXVIII (September, 1855), 319.

11  New York: Boni and Liveright, 1926.

12  "Idylls of the King," LXXXVI (November, 1859), 622.

13  Ibid., p. 627.


16. See above, NONFICTIONAL PROSE, History.

17. See above, NOVELS, Dickens.

18. See above, NOVELS, Thackeray.

19. See above, NOVELS, Wilkie Collins.

20. See above, POETRY, Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

21. See above, POETRY, General, "Modern Light Literature--Poetry."
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Walker, Hugh. The Age of Tennyson. London: George Bell and Sons, 1897.


I, McDonald Williams, was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, November 13, 1917. I received my secondary school education in the Pittsburgh public schools. My undergraduate and graduate training on the master's level were obtained from the University of Pittsburgh, from which I received the degree Bachelor of Arts in 1939 and that of Master of Letters in 1942. While completing the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy at the Ohio State University, I served as graduate-assistant in the Department of English during the years 1947-48 and 1949-51. Since 1942, except for the time spent at the Ohio State University, I have been a member of the Department of English at Wilberforce University, Wilberforce, Ohio.