Three Victorian Historians

Three Victorian Historians:

Hallam, Buckle, Gardiner

By

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Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing

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This book first published 2025

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-0364-4568-3
ISBN (Ebook): 978-1-0364-4569-0

To my wife Mary and our daughter Juliana.

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PREFACE

I have many debts. Obviously, what I owe to scholars who previously wrote about Hallam, Buckle, and Gardiner is immense. I thank editors for permission to borrow from articles that appeared in their journals. When I was in my late twenties, I wrote "Henry Hallam--A Conservative as Whig Historian*," Historian* 28 no. 4 (August 1966). I am grateful to the current editor of the *Historian*, Cornelis Boterbloem, for permission to use parts of my early article. More recently, I wrote two articles published in the *International Social Science Review*, "Samuel Rawson Gardiner, A Victorian Historian whose Father Was an Angel" 99 no. 3 (September 2023) and "Buckle and America" 100 no. 3 (September 2024). I am grateful to editor Candice Quinn for permission to borrow from them. I also borrowed from myself, re-reading the chapters on Hallam and Gardiner in my doctoral dissertation, "Historical Interpretations of the English Civil War" (Ph.D. Notre Dame, 1964). I also have used my article, "Gardiner and Usher in Perspective," *Journal of Historical Studies* 1 (Winter 1967-68): 137-50.

Although this book is mostly written after reading other books, I made modest use of archival sources at the Bodleian, Eastbourne Central Library, and (via email, with the help of Tom Davies, assistant archivist) the archives at King's College, Cambridge. I published most of what I found at the Bodleian in the *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* (1971).

This book was written on an old laptop in my bedroom with the help of the Internet and the Miami University library. Among the many Internet resources, Google Books and Google Scholar stand out as invaluable. As I no longer drive, I am grateful to my wife Mary Fuller for driving me to the Miami library many times to borrow books from university collections and books obtained from other universities via OhioLink. The Miami library also emailed me numerous articles that had originated in specialized journals.

The illustrations are taken from contemporary paintings or photographs.

For Hallam: photograph of the painting by Thomas Phillips, currently at Clevedon Court in Clevedon, North Somerset. Also available at Wikipedia.

For Buckle: picture taken from the posthumous book, *Essays by Henry Thomas Buckle* (D. Appleton, 1863). Also available at Wikipedia.

For Gardiner: photograph by James Russell and Sons, posted at Wikipedia.

In the Index of Names, I do not include the lists of names in the introductory chapter, "Victorian Historians."

A few more debts. I want to thank the medical personnel, including a half dozen doctors, pharmacists, and a couple of hospitals, who made it possible for me to keep working. I am grateful to David W. Gutzke for reading a draft of my overly long Buckle chapter. My wife Mary Fuller tried to teach me to about transitions and topic sentences. Without her I could not have written this book in my late 80s.

CHAPTER ONE

VICTORIAN HISTORIANS

A great Swiss scholar of the Renaissance, Jacob Burckhardt, described historiography as a record of what one age found of interest in another. One corollary, what did historians seek to accomplish, and another, what did the elite reading public who purchased historical books think that they might learn? The Victorian era "was the last age in which the historian could expect to command the attention of a large and relatively homogeneous audience of educated general readers and to rest his authority on his ability to teach and uplift rather than on his advance of historical knowledge."[1] Audiences were not always middle class. In the late 1850s and early 1860s Buckle attracted and welcomed working-class readers.

We know that history fascinated nineteenth-century England and the other members of the United Kingdom, especially Ireland. In politics history mattered. At the end of the century controversy prevented a statue for Cromwell at Westminster until Lord Rosebery paid for it mostly out of his personal fortune. At the beginning of the century Sir Walter Scott made the genre of historical fiction popular. The vibrant style of Macaulay and Froude competed with popular novels. Even in art, history appeared. For instance, in 1878 the painting "And When Did You Last See Your Father?" offered viewers an interpretation of the English Civil War. The artist Yeames showed Parliamentarians interrogating a young son of an aristocratic Royalist who had evaded them.

J. W. Burrow, *A Liberal Descent: Victorian Historians and the English Past* (1981), is a classic study of Victorian historians which should be read as mid-Victorian intellectual history.[2] Burrow pointed out that "the thirty years between 1848 and 1878 saw a remarkable flowering of English narrative history" which interpreted England's "three great crises," the Norman Conquest, the Reformation, and the Revolution of 1688. The first historians that Burrow discussed were confident Whig historians or at least mostly confident. They were Macaulay, Stubbs, and Freeman. The central theme of Burrow's book in how the Whig interpretation of history changed. It became more sophisticated, but Whig history remained "the

story of the triumph of constitutional liberty and representative institutions." Burrow examines the period from the Reform Act of 1832 to "the emergence of history as a major university subject and a profession." Although late in life Freeman and Froude became professors, they spent most of their years as private scholars as did Macaulay. Stubbs eventually became a bishop. Although they saw the theme of liberty throughout English history, they had to cope with the problem, how to explain progress. Burrow's fourth historian, Froude, occupied an ambiguous position. He could not entirely escape Whiggism in his history of Tudor England, but like his mentor Carlyle was attracted to a rival interpretation, "disaffected, Radical or Tory Radical, and nostalgic."

Burrow acknowledged that he could have chosen other historians, for instance, Gardiner, Lecky, and Seeley. Apparently, he did not consider choosing Carlyle, Buckle, or Acton. Burrow often cited Hallam when writing about Macaulay and included much about J.R. Green in the Freeman chapter.

After an introductory chapter, Burrow's relatively short book is divided in four parts, each with two or three chapters. A detailed table of contents hints at Burrow's arguments.

Part I, The Whig
Macaulay and the Whig Tradition
2 A heritage and its history
3 Macaulay: progress and piety
4 Macaulay's *res publica*

Part II: The Tory
Stubbs and the Ancient Constitution
5 The German inheritance: a people and its institutions
6 Autonomy and self-realisation: Stubbs' Constitutional History

Part III The Democrat
Freeman and unity of history
7 Teutonic freedom and municipal independence
8 Conquest, continuity and restoration

Part IV The Imperialist
Froude's Protestant island
9 'Something strange and isolated': Froude and the sixteenth century
10 The spirit's trials: Reformation and renewal
11 *Postscript* [mostly about Macaulay and Froude]

Nearly all the initial response to the Burrow book was one of praise. In Victorian Studies, Reba M. Soffer begins by describing the book as "a dazzling, alchemical display of conversational virtuosity and self-conscious irony."[3] She says that Burrow did not see progress as central to the Whig historical tradition, but only "the Burkean preference for gradualism."

Frank M. Turner wrote a rare negative review for the *Journal of Modern History*. He felt that Burrow relied too much on Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (1931) and wished that he instead had made use of Joseph Hamburger's *Macaulay and the Whig Tradition* (1976). As a result of the vagueness of Burrow's concept of Whiggism, "none of [his] protagonists seems to be very much a Whig."[4]

In later years there was much more criticism of Burrow. Two of these challenges to Burrow's *Liberal Descent* borrow from its title. James Kirby, "An Ecclesiastical Descent: Religion and History in the Work of William Stubbs," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 65 (2014), emphasizes religion in the historical publications of Bishop Stubbs. Theodore Koditscheck in his chapter, "A Liberal Descent? E. A. Freeman's Invention of Racial Traditions," saw race and not material progress as central for Freeman.[5]

In 1978, several years before Burrow's book, a translation from the Dutch of Piet B.M. Blaas, *Continuity and Anachronism: Parliamentary and Constitutional Development in Whig Historiography and the Anti-Whig Rection between 1890 and 1930* (Martinus Nijhoff) was published. Blaas argued that economic historians such as J.E. Thorold Rogers and William Cunningham prepared the way for the displacement of the Whig interpretation of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In the twentieth century R.H. Tawney offered a new social-economic interpretation as an alternative to the Whig emphasis on the constitution.[6]

More recent general works widen our view to see beyond Burrow and his critics. The books include Rosemary Jann, *The Art and Science of Victorian History* (Ohio State University Press, 1985) who discusses Thomas Arnold, Thomas Carlyle, Thomas Babington Macaulay, James Anthony Froude, John Richard Green, and Edward Augustus Freeman. Ian Hesketh, *The Science of History: Making the Past Speak* (Pickering & Chatto, 2011) looks at different kinds of scientific historians H.T. Buckle, Edward Freeman, J.R. Seeley, J.R. Green, Lord Acton, and Mandell Creighton, among others, as well as the artistic historians Charles Kingsley and James Anthony Froude. Anthony Brundage and Richard A. Cosgrove, *British Historians and National Identity: From Hume to Churchill* (2014) is more biographical. Nearly all the Brundage/Cosgrove chapters deal with the nineteenth century, with a couple of earlier chapters and a couple of

later ones related to the nineteenth century. The chapters look at David Hume, Catharine Macaulay, John Lingard, Henry Hallam, Thomas Babington Macaulay, J.A. Froude, Edward Augustus Freeman, William Stubbs, J.R. Green, Samuel Rawson Gardiner, G.M. Trevelyan, and Winston Churchill.

Other recent books that look at many historians include Jeffrey Paul von Arx, *Progress and Pessimism: Religion, Politics and History in Late Nineteenth Century Britain* (Harvard University Press, 1985), and Christopher Parker, *The English Historical Tradition since 1850* (John Donald, 1990).

Some Modern Historians of Britain: Essays in Honor of R.L. Schuyler by Some of His Former Students, ed. Herman Ausubel and others (Dryden Press, 1951), has chapters about John Lingard, Henry Hallam, Thomas Carlyle, James Anthony Froude, Sir Henry Maine, Goldwin Smith, Samuel Rawson Gardiner, Sir Leslie Stephen, W.E.H. Lecky, Lord Morley, Sir George O. Trevelyan, George Burton Adams, Sir Charles H. Firth, and more recent historians. Schuyler himself had written earlier about Macaulay and John Richard Green. Presumably none of Schuyler's students asked to write about the historians not included such as Buckle, Stubbs, and Freeman.

Some recent books look at groups of related historians, as for instance, James Kirby, *Historians and the Church of England: Religion and Historical Scholarship, 1870-1920* (Oxford University Press, 2016) which focuses on High Church scholars such as E. A. Freeman, William Stubbs, J. S. Brewer, Nicholas Pocock, J. E. Thorold Rogers, R. W. Dixon, and Mandell Creighton. Kirby occasionally mentions Broad Church historians such as J.R. Green but never Evangelical ones. Were there any? For more Broad Church historians, see Duncan Forbes, *The Liberal Anglican Idea of History* (Cambridge University Press, 1952) which looks at Thomas Arnold, Richard Whitely, Julius Charles Hare, Connop Thirlwall, Henry Hart Milman, and Arthur Penrhyn Stanley. There were Nonconformist historians such as John Forster, a Unitarian and later a Congregationalist, who was best known as a biographer.

Hedva Ben-Israel, *English Historians on the French Revolution* (Cambridge University Press, 1968), includes William Smythe, John Wilson Croker, Morse Stephens, Lord Acton, and, most important, Carlyle, as little has been written about him as a historian.[7] Ben-Israel does not mention Bertha M. Gardiner's book on the French Revolution published in 1883 and often reprinted.

The only general survey of British historians that treated Buckle seriously is John Kenyon's *The History Men: The Historical Profession in*

England since the Renaissance (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1983). Kenyon devoted seven pages to Buckle. G.P. Gooch gave Buckle a long paragraph in *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century* (revised ed., Longmans, Green, 1952).

There are many studies of individual historians, as for instance, Robert E. Sullivan, *Macaulay: The Tragedy of Power* (Harvard University Press, 2009), Mark Nixon, *Samuel Rawson Gardiner and the Idea of History* (Boydell Press for the Royal Historical Society, 2010), Ciaran Brady, *James Anthony Froude: An Intellectual Biography of a Victorian Prophet* (Oxford University Press, 2013), Julia Markus, *J. Anthony Froude: The Last Undiscovered Great Victorian* (Simon and Schuster, 2005), and the edited collection about Freeman mentioned in a previous endnote. Older studies include Giles St. Aubyn, A *Victorian Eminence: The Life and Work of Henry Thomas Buckle* (Barrie, 1958), Martin L. Clarke, *George Grote: A Biography* (Athlone Press, 1962), Deborah Wormell, *Sir John Seeley and the Uses of History* (Cambridge University Press, 1980), Peter Clark, *Henry Hallam* (Twayne, 1982), John L. Clive, *Macaulay: The Shaping of the Historian* (Belknap, 1987), Owen Dudley Edwards, *Macaulay* (1988), and Donal McCartney, *W.E.H. Lecky, Historian and Politician, 1836-1903* (Lilliput, 1994). They are more books about Lord Acton than he himself wrote. Most recently, Roland Hill published *Lord Acton* (Yale University Press, 2000). Gertrude Himmelfarb, *Lord Acton: A Study in Conscience and Politics* (University of Chicago Press, 1952) remains valuable. For Carlyle, there is a standard life which includes his historical work, by Fred Kaplan, *Thomas Carlyle: A Biography* (University of California Press, 1993).

G.P. Gooch (1873-1968) fits awkwardly in the Victorian era but deserves a place here as the author of *The History of English Democratic Ideas in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 1898). Although Gooch in his preface thanked Lord Acton and S.R. Gardiner "for suggestions and criticisms," his is not a typical Victorian history. For instance, Gooch offered a few pages to the Diggers and called Gerrard Winstanley "the acknowledged leader of the English Communists." Frank Eyck wrote the standard biography, *G.P. Gooch: A Study in History and Politics* (Macmillan, 1982).

Interest among Roman Catholics has produced three modern books about the priest John Lingard. They are Donald F. Shea, *The English Ranke: John Lingard* (Humanities Press, 1969), Peter Phillips, *John Lingard: Priest and Historian* (Gracewing, 2008), and Philip H. Cattermole, *John Lingard: The Historian as Apologist* (Matador, 2013).

Both Burrow and his critics ignore women historians who sometimes were critical of Whig history. In *Fraser's Magazine* (August 1855), the Anglo-Saxon scholar J.M. Kemble grumbled, "we [men] must plead guilty, to a great dislike for the growing tendency among women to become writers of history." Women historians were numerous in Victorian England. Some of them spent more time in public and private archives than did gentlemen-scholars such as Hallam, Macaulay, and Freeman.[8] In her old age Agnes Strickland even travelled to the Hague to consult the royal Dutch archives.

Victorian historians were numerous and diverse.

Notes

[1] Rosemary Jann, *The Art and Science of Victorian History* (Ohio State University Press, 1985), p. xxvi.

[2] For detailed review, see Patricia M. Morton, "Life After Butterfield? John Burrow's "A Liberal Descent" and the Recent Historiography of Victorian Historians," *Historical Reflections* 10 no. 1 (Summer 1983). Much of Morton's review essay looks at Piet B.M. Blaas, *Continuity and Anachronism: Parliamentary and Constitutional Development in Whig Historiography and the Anti-Whig Rection between 1890 and 1930* (Martinus Nijhoff, 1978) which was translated from the Dutch too late for Burrow to make use of it.

[3] Reba N. Soffer in *Victorian Studies* 26 no. 2 (Winter 1983).

[4] Frank M. Turner in *Journal of Modern History* 55 no. 4 (Dec. 1983).

[5] The chapter is part of *Making History: Edward Augustus Freeman and Victorian Cultural Politics*, edited by G.A. Bremner and Jonathan Conlin (Proceedings of the British Academy, 2015).

[6] Blaas, p. 44-46.

[7] Earlier Ben-Israel had published an article, "Carlyle and the French Revolution," *Historical Journal* 1 (1958).

[8] Although Harriet Martineau is not generally remembered as a historian, she wrote a two-volume study in contemporary history, *History of England during the Thirty Years Peace*, for the period 1816-46 (Charles Knight, 1849-50). Other women historians, alphabetically, include Lucy Aikin, Elizabeth Cooper, Bertha M. Gardiner, Alice Stopford Green, Mary Anne Everett Green, Mary Dormer Harris, Kate Norgate, Lucy Toulmin Smith, Agnes and Elizabeth Strickland. For research about some of them, see Rohan Maitzen, "`This Feminine Preserve': Historical Biographies by Victorian Women," *Victorian Studies* 38 no. 3 (Spring 1995): 371-93 (who alerted me to the Kemble quotation); Rosemary Ann Mitchell, "The Busy Daughters of Clio: Women Writers of History from 1820 to 1880," *Women's History Review* 7 no. 1 (1998): 107–34; Anne Laurence, "Women Historians and Documentary Research: Lucy Aikin, Agnes Strickland, Mary Anne Everett Green, and Lucy Toulmin Smith," *Women, Scholarship and Criticism*: *Gender and Knowledge, 1790-1900*, ed. Joan Bellamy, Anne Laurence, and Gill Perry

(Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 125–41; Lynette Felber, ed., *Clio's Daughters: British Women Making History, 1790-1899* (University of Delaware Press, 2007); Mary Spongberg, *Women Writers and the Nation's Past, 1790-1860: Empathetic Histories* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2019); Elise Garritzen, "Women Historians, Gender, and Fashioning the Self in Paratexts in Late- Victorian Britain," *Women's History Review* 30 no.4 (2021): 651-68.

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CHAPTER TWO

HENRY HALLAM (1777–1859)

Henry Hallam

Today Henry Hallam is remembered as the father of Arthur Henry Hallam whose death at the age of twenty-two from a hemorrhagic stroke occasioned the poem *In Memoriam* by his friend Tennyson, but during the older Hallam's lifetime he was a celebrated historian.[1]

For the historian Hallam, "the advance of liberty and justice," provided a central theme.[2] This was especially true for England. He followed what is called the Whig interpretation of history which celebrated Magna Carta and later Parliaments in constraining the power of kings, but he broke with Whig history orthodoxy to condemn the Great Rebellion. For most of his private life, Hallam was politically a Whig who advocated many reforms, but he shocked his Whig friends by denouncing the Reform Act of 1832.[3] Although an enemy of royal despotism, he also feared democracy and so acquired Tory friends. Hallam was more conservative than his younger contemporary Macaulay which helps explain why he is less remembered.

A Sketch of Hallam's Life

Who was the now mostly forgotten Henry Hallam? He belonged to an old English family with extensive lands in southeastern Lincolnshire and, after an inheritance, property in the West Midlands.[4] Hallam's father was a Church of England clergyman, a canon of Windsor at the time of his son's birth in 1777 and dean of Bristol at his own death in 1812. Young Hallam's family home was mercantile Bristol and not London or rural England. Hallam received part of the family properties in 1806 and rest when his father died. Despite his father's high clerical offices, Dissent also entered Henry Hallam's life, as a brother-in-law left the Established Church in 1808 to join the Unitarians, albeit temporarily as he returned to the Church of England in 1827.[5] The historian Michael Bentley sees the influence of Unitarianism in Hallam's anticlericalism and coolness of vision.[6] Although Hallam was a lifelong Anglican, he resented clerical pretensions to authority over the laity and the State. Bishop William Stubbs complained that Hallam clung to "atavistic Whiggism" in his Erastian suspicion of the Church.[7]

Hallam took as his regular place of worship a chapel whose minister was an Evangelical, perhaps a choice influenced by Hallam's strongly Evangelical wife. She complained that her husband rarely took communion.[8] The chapel did not make the historian Hallam sympathetic to the Puritans. As an old man, Hallam complained that "Dissenters claiming the name of Liberal, are, in fact, the narrowest of men."[9]

No one questions Hallam's intellectual achievements. Precocious as a child, he read books at four and composed sonnets at ten.[10] His formal

education was typical for his class. He attended Eton, where an uncle had been provost, and as a youth he published poetry. Although his father, grandfather, and uncles had studied at Cambridge, Hallam instead attended Christ Church, Oxford. "It was very much a Tory and High Church enclave."[11] He left with mixed feelings. Despite recent reforms, it was not intellectually exciting, but Christ Church was important for forming friendships. One close friend, Peter Elmsley, became Camden professor of ancient history at Oxford.[12] Another friend, Lord Webb Seymour, the son and the brother of dukes of Somerset, devoted much of his life to the young science of geology.[13] Both died long before Hallam, Elmsley in 1825 and Seymour even earlier in 1819. Another friend who had not been a classmate died still earlier in Italy in 1817. Francis Horner, a Whig MP, had often corresponded with Hallam.

Although the Christ Church curriculum, which focused on the classics and mathematics, ignored modern history, Hallam on his own read the historians Hume and Rapin. Neither had been born in England, but each of them wrote a multi-volume history of England. The Scottish philosopher David Hume is generally considered to be a Tory historian, while his obscure rival, Paul Rapin, a Huguenot exile, wrote from a Whig perspective.[14] Hallam also read Adam Smith, Gibbon, and Blackstone.

To supplement the Latin and Greek that he had learned at Eton, Hallam studied German with a tutor three days a week but never became fluent in the language.[15] He had more success with French and Italian. In 1808 he learned Spanish.[16] By the mid-1830s he read German well enough to rely on German scholarship in writing his *Introduction to the Literature of Europe*.[17]

After studying first at Lincoln's Inn and then at the Inner Temple, Hallam became an active barrister in 1802. This was important for Hallam as a historian. Readers of his books saw him as an objective but severe magistrate, and law as shaping his view of the past. In England he relied on the courts of law, not Parliament, to protect civil liberties.[18] One should never forget that Hallam was a lawyer. For example, he reported that "perjury was the dominant crime of the middle ages; encouraged by the preposterous rules of compurgation, and by the multiplicity of oaths in the ecclesiastical law."[19]

After practicing law briefly, Hallam spent twenty years, beginning in 1806, as a commissioner of stamps, a lifetime appointment which he owed to a Whig ministry. There were seven commissioners. The stamp office collected duties on miscellaneous items from newspapers to hair powder and did not dispatch mail. Hallam enjoyed the pay at this sinecure, but he grumbled, that his job was "destroying almost the whole of the morning."

He refreshed himself by taking an annual holiday of at least two months. His appointment as a commissioner of stamps provided him with a handsome retirement income of £500 a year.[20]

While a commissioner of stamps, he was ineligible to serve in the House of Commons, and when he became eligible, he was uninterested in seeking a parliamentary seat. As a wealthy landowner, made more wealthy by his government salary and then pension, he was free to spend his time as he chose without the distraction of making money. During the long wars against France, he chose to remain a civilian.

In 1807 he married Julia Maria Elton, the daughter of a wealthy baronet. They raised eleven children, only four reaching adulthoods. His children, except for one daughter, died long before their father. Julia Hallam had been reared an Evangelical and tried to impose her religiosity on her children. She disliked her new responsibilities, such as managing the household and acting as hostess at her husband's dinner parties. She increasingly suffered from depression.[21]

Where would Hallam's oldest son attend university? In 1823 Hallam put down the name of his son Arthur for admission at his old Oxford college, Christ Church, but a year later a new dean announced that he would not honor earlier promises. Christ Church had a waiting list. Furthermore, Hallam may have wanted to separate Arthur from his Eton friends such as Gladstone.[22] In addition, Hallam believed that Trinity College, Cambridge, would provide Arthur with a more rigorous education than Christ Church. In these decisions, Hallam was an authoritarian father who did not ask his son's opinion.[23] Arthur had learned nothing of science while at Eton. Although not himself a scientist, Hallam was active in several scientific societies, and he admired William Whewell, professor of mineralogy at Cambridge, who taught at Trinity.[24]

In 1838, in conversation with the American scholar George Ticknor, Hallam made clear his coldness toward Oxford and an equal lack of enthusiasm for Cambridge. He complained, reported Ticknor, that the English universities, despite "great resources of property and talent … effect so little."[25] At a dinner that Hallam hosted, Ticknor said that the conversation focused on the German universities.[26] They presumably were what Hallam believed universities should be.

Although Hallam was one of the most conservative Whigs, he was a friend of George Grote, a political radical and an atheist. Hallam knew him from when Grote was a boy and, what was unusual at the time, continued to call him by his first name when he was an adult. Hallam appears often in *The Personal Life of George Grote* (1873), written by his widow Harriet Grote. It includes a long letter (7 Dec. 1846) in which Hallam exhibited

his Greek scholarship as he explained where he agreed and where he disagreed with Grote's account of ancient Greece. In a dinner party in 1846, Hallam told Harriet Grote that "I have been familiar with the literary world for a very long period, and I can readily affirm that I never knew a book take *so rapid* a flight to the highest summits of fame as George's new History of Greece." In May 1858, when Hallam was old and ailing, he told his fellow British Museum trustees that when he died "I should like to think that George would fill my shoes" as a trustee.[27]

Hallam, although outwardly stoical, was hard-hit by a series of family deaths. After the death of his wife in 1847, Hallam told a friend that he felt "like a dismasted ship driven before the wind."[28] Some of the deaths were sudden, as in the case of his promising sons, first Arthur and then Henry Fitzmaurice. In 1846 Hallam declined a hereditary title, a baronetcy, after consulting Henry Fitzmaurice who told his father that he was "content to be known as the son of Henry Hallam."[29] In 1848 Oxford awarded Hallam an honorary degree, Doctor of Civil Law.[30] In 1851 he took the unusual step of resigning his £500 pension because the death of Henry Fitzmaurice in the previous year meant there no longer was any reason for it.[31]

He did not retire from life. For instance, the historian Clark reported that Hallam purchased "a large number of shares in the Great Western Railway Company," discussed the Crimean war with his nephew Sir Arthur Elton (29 June 1854), read recent books such as the first volume of Buckle's *History of Civilization in England* and, less happily, a novel by George Sand.[32] Hallam suffered a stroke in the Spring of 1854 which made him a semi-invalid.[33] According to his biographer, Robert E. Sullivan, Macaulay complained that Hallam's handwriting had become illegible and that visits had become "a duty—Alas! No pleasure now."[34] When Ticknor saw him in 1856, Hallam was "much broken in strength … [but] talked as fast as ever."[35] John Lothrop Motley, the historian of the Dutch republic, saw Hallam shortly before his eighty-first birthday. Motley told his wife (6 June 1858) that Hallam was "paralyzed in the right leg, the right arm, and slightly in the tongue," but "his mind seems bright and his spirits seem light."[36] In January 1859, Hallam died at the home of his surviving daughter and son-in-law. Macaulay wrote in his journal: "Poor Hallam. To be sure he died to me some years ago. I then missed him much, and often. Now the loss is barely felt."[37]

What Did Hallam Write as a Historian?

Henry Hallam wrote massive books that pioneered medieval history and the history of European high culture. While he usually is known for what

he wrote about the constitutional history of England, he might better be seen as a historian of western Europe. He was comfortably at home in France, Italy, the Low Countries, Germany, and Switzerland and additionally was part of a transatlantic intellectual community. American friends tried to persuade him to cross the ocean to visit them.

In England, he was known as a fast-talking and sometimes contentious dinner guest, "his mouth full of cabbage and contradiction," while his lengthy breakfasts, attracting the best and the brightest, were almost as famous as Macaulay's.[38] Hallam socialized with people whose conversation interested him, from politicians to scientists, from scholars to poets, both Whigs and Tories, and he joined innumerable intellectual organizations that mattered.

Living before the age of specialization, Hallam could write an important review of Sir Walter Scott's life of the poet Dryden for the *Edinburgh Review* (October 1808) and a few years later help found a statistical society. Writing before Darwin, Hallam was fascinated by "that noble science, the boast of our age, geology."[39] For several years he was a member of the Geological Society council. The historian Donald R. Kelley said: "Hallam was rather late [in his life] to think of history as a 'progressive science' like chemistry or geology."[40]

Although Hallam contributed to the *Edinburgh Review*, his reputation rests on his three multi-volume histories. The first was the *View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages* (two volumes, 1818). Hallam began writing it in 1808. Its title was borrowed from the opening section of *The History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles V* (1762), by the Scottish historian William Robertson, called "A View of the Progress of Society in Europe from the Subversion of the Roman Empire to the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century." Unlike Robertson, Hallam used the term the Middle Ages. While Hallam did not invent this term to describe the years between antiquity and modern times, he did popularize it. Like later historians, Hallam had trouble identifying beginning and concluding dates for the Middle Ages. No set of dates fit every part of Europe. In practice, Hallam began his history with the reign of Clovis (c. 466-511), a Frankish king, who conquered his neighbors, converted to the Roman Catholic version of Christianity, and was accepted by a realistic emperor in Constantinople as a legitimate sub-ruler. Hallam's concluding date for the Middle Ages, 1494 when the French king Charles VIII invaded Naples, seems quaint when compared with alternative turning points, such as Renaissance high culture or the European voyages to the Americas and India or, a bit later, the Protestant Reformation.

G.P. Gooch, in his *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century*, reported that Hallam's history of medieval Europe made him famous. Not impressed, Gooch said that "it represents the immature scholarship of the early nineteenth century."[41]

An obituary in the *Times* said that among Hallam's books his first was "perhaps the greatest." Writing a revisionist article in the *Historical Journal* (2012), the scholar Michael Bentley agreed and said Hallam's most important book was not his celebrated *Constitutional History of England* but instead his earlier book. It was the most important, said Bentley, because it represented Hallam as a European historian and not as only an English one. Hallam's view of Europe was cosmopolitan, and England was an integral part of it.[42]

Although Hallam wrote mostly about men of the higher ranks, he did include at times merchants, peasants, and women, although briefly. For instance, he quoted an Italian notary, Ricobaldus of Ferrara, about the rude conditions of a household in the middling orders around the year 1300. "A man and his wife ate off the same plate. There were no wooden-handled knives, nor more than one or two drinking cups in a house. Candles of wax or tallow were unknown; a servant held a torch during supper."[43]

As a sign of how widely respect was given to Hallam's medieval history, in 1836 the South Carolina Female Institute recommended it to its students.[44] Many Southerners liked Hallam for his recognizing how common in past centuries slavery and semi-slave serfdom had been in Europe.[45] In fact, Hallam was not an apologist for slavery. In his own country he opposed the slave trade and slavery in the West Indies.

Hallam's second book *The Constitutional History of England from the Accession of Henry VIII to the Death of George II* (two volumes, 1827), was popular with the reading public. Early in Victoria's reign he was one of the few literary figures invited to Court, and Prince Albert read the *Constitutional History* aloud for the Queen's edification while she was at cross-stitch.[46]

Although he lived to be more than eighty, at the age of forty Hallam had completed his most important work as a historian with his first two books. The historians Brundage and Cosgrove argued that Hallam's "insistence upon the constitution's primacy in the national story [was what] proved influential." His errors mattered little. Making his book more readable, Hallam presented the constitution as entwined with "familiar political events and personalities."[47] Another historian, Peter Clark, saw the book as "more a commentary than a narrative."[48] Citing Hallam's medieval history (3: 155-58), J.W. Burrow argued that "Hallam, in pursuit of the Whig middle way, proclaimed his intention of steering between the

errors of radical libertarian ancient constitutionalists on the one hand, and Hume's indulgence to the royal prerogative on the other."[49]

Hallam ended his book in 1760 because he wanted to avoid recent or almost recent politics, although he acknowledged that "the factions of modern time trace their divergence" to the Civil Wars.[50] Hallam had no interest in writing contemporary history which he left to writers of memoirs. Often the *Constitutional History* was reprinted with the addition of the chapter on the English constitution first published in Hallam's history of medieval Europe. Hallam was the first to use the term constitutional history or at least popularized it. His *Constitutional History* remained a standard textbook until Stubbs superseded it. Between 1827, when it was published, and 1908, eighty-four editions appeared in Britain and the United States.[51] The medievalist T. F. Tout judged that the *Middle Ages* and the *Constitutional History* had been serviceable introductions for the general reader, Hallam's intended audience.[52]

The geographical focus of Hallam's third book, the *Introduction to the Literature of Europe during the Fifteenth, Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (four volumes, 1837-39) reinforced the argument that Hallam should be viewed as a European historian rather than a historian who wrote principally about England. In this massive work Hallam defined literature as all kinds of books and not simply fiction and poetry, so he offered his readers a general intellectual history of early modern Europe.[53] Hallam told his publisher: "I have very confident hopes that this will be thought the best that I have written."[54] Disraeli brought Hallam's *Introduction to Literature* with him on his honeymoon.[55]

Before Hallam's death in 1859 his first two books had gone through eleven editions and the third, eight. The first two works were translated into French, German, and Italian, and the third into French.[56] The history of the Middle Ages probably also had a Dutch translation.[57] All three were also abridged for student use. These translations underscore Hallam being a historian with a European reputation.

In 1848 Hallam added a volume of *Supplemental Notes* to his medieval history. His preface to this supplement pointed out that the first chapter and part of the second of his medieval history had been written almost forty years earlier. Since Hallam had written, other historians had added enormously to medieval scholarship. By this time, Hallam read German well enough to cite German medievalists, but he continued to rely mostly on historians who wrote in French: Sismondi, Michelet, and especially Guizot.

When reprinting his books, Hallam made changes. It could be as minor as calling Dunstan (a tenth-century abbot and archbishop) Saint Dunstan

and not simply Dunstan, which a Protestant like Hallam might be expected to say. The *Supplemental Notes*, when incorporated into the history of medieval Europe, produced massive endnotes. For instance, the endnote about trial by jury extended to seventeen pages. On its final page this endnote offered Hallam's surprising condemnation of the requirement of unanimity in jury verdicts, "a preposterous relic of barbarism."

Hallam's Whig Approach to History

In declining an offer of a baronetcy, Hallam confessed to the prime minister, Sir Robert Peel, that he was "little more than a collector of facts."[58] This was false modesty from a man not known for his modesty. In his books he put forward strong opinions.

One of the themes that stands out in his books is his hostility toward arbitrary power, not surprising in a Whig and a lawyer. This was clearest in his non-denominational criticism of ecclesiastical power, an authority which by its nature often partakes of the arbitrary. For this son of an Anglican cleric, the enemy could be a pope, a bishop, or a presbyter. Significantly, his chapter on the medieval Church was entitled, "History of Ecclesiastical Power during the Middle Ages." He was not interested in theology or liturgy, in spiritual or cultural growth. The Church meant jurisdiction, usurped in origin and pernicious in effect. Most readers of the *Middle Ages* believed Hallam's best chapter was that on the English constitution, which provided the foundation for his second great work. His own preference was the chapter on ecclesiastical power.[59] What Hallam liked most in the medieval church were its great councils. In 1415 the Council of Constance deposed two of the three claimants to the papacy and the third one resigned. Hallam referred to the claim of the Council to depose the so-called anti-popes as "the whig principle of the catholic church."[60]

Hallam was a convinced Protestant unafraid to attribute events to Providence, but he had no use for the idea that the Reformation sprang from ideas of political liberty or of freedom of inquiry. After theological and political disputes, the people simply changed masters.[61] His treatment of ecclesiastics was almost always hostile. He was unhappy with Jesuit, Laudian, and Puritan divines alike. Hallam abhorred the enthusiastic temper which made light of ordinary rules and standards.[62] He sensed insanity in Francis of Assisi and possibly in Martin Luther, and he sniffed indignantly at the latter's "disgusting filthiness." Archdeacon J. C. Hare was provoked by Hallam into writing a book to vindicate Luther, but in

subsequent editions Hallam continued his unabashed preference for the moderates, Erasmus and Melanchthon.

Hallam also was a consistent enemy of arbitrary civil power, whatever its form. In one of his many *obiter dicta* he said, "We lose a good deal of our sympathy with the spirit of freedom in Greece and Rome, when the importunate recollection occurs to us of the tasks which might be enjoined, and the punishments which might be inflicted, without control of law or opinion, by the keenest patriot of the Comitia, or the Council of Five Thousand."[63] His contempt for the arbitrary power accepted in oligarchic Venice contrasted with the more typical admiration for that long-lived and internally stable republic.[64] In the history of his own country he was as suspicious of Parliament as of the Crown. What especially aroused his ire was the practice of the two Houses punishing private citizens with haughty disregard for every legal safeguard. He admitted to "a jealous distrust of . . . indefinable, uncontrollable privilege of parliament," of which no ordinary court dared take cognizance.[65] The claim to arbitrary power in this area was such that, theoretically, the House of Lords, "might order the usher of the black rod to take a man from their bar, and hang him up in the lobby."[66]

Hallam was an old-fashioned liberal who saw democracy as a threat to civil liberties. A popular majority could be as brutal a master as a priest or a prince. Consequently, he did not welcome the Reform Act of 1832. It was dangerous in itself, Hallam believed, and even more dangerous for what future legislation might follow. Nothing could satisfy the so-called reformers. *Nil actum reputans si quid superesset agendum*, "Not to consider anything is done as long as anything remains to be done," was their philosophy.[67] Trusting neither Parliament nor the people, the lawyer Hallam said that "the defence of English civil liberty needed the open administration of justice."[68]

Hallam was not a profound philosopher of history, but according to Michael Bentley, "he created a sense of the past resting on law and science which would be reasserted in the age of Darwin."[69] "Along with the idea of law as an expression of social reality," Hallam added "a deep commitment to the idea of science" to his work as a historian.[70] Bentley added that Hallam "brought to history a sense of science and a quasi-Unitarian coolness of vision."[71]

Bentley's *Historical Journal* article about Hallam is impressive, but I do not share what I think is his reluctance to call Hallam a Whig historian. Perhaps I misread Bentley. In any event, it is difficult to define a Whig historian which would exclude Hallam. As Hallam preferred a new Cromwellian dynasty to the alternative of a Stuart restoration, he cannot be

considered a Tory historian. He was a moderate, idiosyncratic Whig historian. Macaulay argued that the Glorious Revolution of 1688 was the most important moment for the English constitution, but the medievalist Hallam disagreed. For him it was Magna Carta (1215). Moreover, for him, "the distinctive evolution of the English Constitution lay not in institutions, or in laws, but in social structure."[72] Feudalism had not erased Saxon socage tenures. Saxon socmen "are the root of a noble plant, the free soccage tenants or English yeomanry, whose independence has stamped with peculiar features both constitution and our national character."[73]

Hallam's Reputation as a Historian

Hallam ranks among the great Victorian historians, but only barely. In the early nineteenth century, he was considered a giant, while his reputation today is practically nil. His biographer, Peter Clark, asked: "why did Hallam go out of fashion so completely?" He explained that Hallam was a gentleman-scholar when historians were becoming professionals and, even more important in Clark's opinion, a new readership, influenced by Sir Walter Scott and other novelists, had come to expect history to tell an exciting story.[74] The *Times* obituary said that Hallam "had little ambition to be … popular. His works are far more for the student that the idle reader."[75]

Trained as a lawyer, Hallam was a thoughtful historian but not strikingly original. His clear and dignified writing style, "like a translation of Cicero," avoided expressions of emotion.[76] It lacked color or imagination. Only occasionally, did he exhibit passion. According to Clark, Hallam was England's last great "philosophical historian" in the tradition of Gibbon. Clark explained that a philosophical historian created "a moral fable based on the evidence of the past."[77]

Hallam was less "philosophical" than his eighteenth-century predecessors. He admitted this when a friend pointed it out as a criticism of the manuscript for Hallam's book about the Middle Ages. Hallam's apology was that "the labour of collecting facts of itself places the mind in a state adverse to the formation of general results on original theories; & in the uncertainty which I have frequently found to attend my views of this kind from a consciousness of imperfect information, I have generally been afraid to hazard them. Perhaps I do not altogether concur with you as to the degree in which the views of political philosophy should be blended with an historical work."[78] Hallam rejected the universalism of the Scottish historians who had influenced Lord Webb Seymour. Hallam saw the English constitution as the result of what was unique in England such as