

**NARRATIVES FROM MACAULAY:  
I. THE TRIAL OF THE BISHOPS;  
II. THE SIEGE OF LONDONDERRY;  
III. THE MASSACRE OF GLENCOE**

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**MACAULAY MACAULAY & FANNY JOHNSON**

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**English Literature for Secondary Schools**  
*General Editor* :—J. H. FOWLER, M.A.

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# Narratives from Macaulay

- I. The Trial of the Bishops
- II. The Siege of Londonderry
- III. The Massacre of Glencoe

*Edited with Introduction, Notes, Glossary, &c., by*

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## INTRODUCTION.

OF all branches of human knowledge, History is the most complicated, and in a sense includes every other department in itself. The chief difficulty therefore that confronts the Historian is the selection of a point of view, and the consequent rejection of material, which, however interesting, may yet serve to confuse the main stream of his narrative. In the more usual and narrower sense, however, History is the account of the life of States, or Governments, as distinguished from Biography, which is an account of the lives of Individuals. Politics, or the science of government, has always been one of the favourite preoccupations of Englishmen, and the popularity of Thomas Babington Macaulay is largely due to his sharing the sympathies of his countrymen in that regard. Born in 1800, the son of Zachary Macaulay, a man of notable character and achievement, he was continually associated with the actual makers of history. His father was one of the principal members of a group of men, the better part of whose life was occupied in agitating for the abolition of the Slave Trade. When the Abolition Bill was passed in 1807, the precocious boy of seven was quite able to enter into its meaning. At Mr. Preston's private school, Little Shelford, he shewed the wonderful power of memory and quick absorption of a new book, or new subject of learning, that ever after distinguished him. As an undergraduate at Trinity College, Cambridge, he began to concern himself with literature, and in 1825 he

published an article on Milton in the *Edinburgh Review*. The series of literary and historical Essays, of which this was the first, rapidly brought him fame. From this time forth his wordly success was assured. He became a member of Parliament, and was esteemed as a debater on the subject that was then foremost in interest—namely, the first Reform Bill, which was finally carried in 1832. This was the first of the democratic measures for the extension of the franchise to the middle, lower middle, and working classes, which has now culminated in the return of a large group of labour members in the present Parliament (1906). Macaulay was a Whig—in favour, that is to say, of extending the liberties of the common people. But his Whiggism was, of course, a very different matter from the Liberalism or Radicalism of the present day. He had been called to the Bar, and in 1834 he was made Legal Member of Council in India. This office provided an opportunity for studying Indian History on the spot, of which he made brilliant use in his Essays on Clive and Warren Hastings. After a few years in this well-paid post, he had saved enough money to be able to devote the rest of his life to politics and literature, without reference to worldly prospects. He returned to England (1838), became member of Parliament for Edinburgh, and held various posts under government until 1847. In that year the question arose of devoting a certain grant of Government money to the Roman Catholic College at Maynooth, in Ireland. This was vehemently opposed by the strong Protestants both in and out of Parliament. Macaulay, true to his Whig principles, supported the grant, and lost his seat.

In 1848 he published the first volumes of his *History of England from the Accession of James II.*, from which the following "Narratives" are selected. The History has been often described as a Whig Pamphlet. It is, in fact, in large part, an eulogy of William III., and a defence of the Revolution which established the Protestant

Succession. Previous historians had generally taken the part of the king in their account of the struggles between the various members of the body politic. Macaulay frankly accepted the dictum that government depends upon an implied contract between the monarch and his subjects, and once for all disposed of the Stewart doctrine that a "king can do no wrong." Dealing as he did with a period in which these were the questions at issue, his history is in the main special pleading on one side of the argument. But though his method undoubtedly gives a colour to the facts of which he treats, and though later research has thrown further light on some of his statements, his narrative remains on the whole the recognised standard account of the period, while his way of looking at events has influenced the judgment of all later historians, as well as of the average reader.

It is, however, as literature that the "Narratives" are here presented. Apart from questions of accuracy, it is the first requisite of an historian to be capable of telling a story, and his gift in this respect only differs from that of the novelist by being concerned with ready-made incidents instead of with inventions. Readers whose taste has not been spoilt by bad books invariably find Macaulay as good as a novel, in regard to the exciting and maintaining of interest. The secret in his case, as in all others, is that he himself has first lived through the story, has seen and felt with the seven Bishops, has pictured vividly in his mind the sufferings of the besieged at Londonderry, has trembled in imagination with Hamilton before the crime of the massacre of Glencoe. This power of visualising, as we now call it, is indeed the supreme gift without which no prose or verse can be composed that is worth the making. An author must have felt, seen, and perceived deeply before he attempts to convey his impressions to others. The historian, as distinguished from the poet or dramatist, needs his special talent besides. He must have patient industry to seek for facts,