

**STUDIES IN EARLY  
VICTORIAN  
LITERATURE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649202218

Studies in early Victorian literature by Frederic Harrison

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**FREDERIC HARRISON**

**STUDIES IN EARLY  
VICTORIAN  
LITERATURE**



STUDIES  
IN  
EARLY VICTORIAN  
LITERATURE.

BY  
FREDERIC HARRISON.

EDWARD ARNOLD.

LONDON:  
37, BEDFORD STREET.

NEW YORK:  
70, FIFTH AVENUE.

## NOTE.

THE following essays appeared in the "Forum" of New York, and simultaneously in London, during the years 1894-95. They have been carefully revised and partly re-written, after due consideration of various suggestions and criticisms both in England and in America. The aim of the writer was to attempt a mature estimate of the permanent influence and artistic achievement of some of the principal prose writers in the earlier half of the reign of our Queen. The work of living authors has not been touched upon, nor any book of poetry, philosophy, or science.



## CONTENTS.

---

|  | PAGE |
|--|------|
| I. CHARACTERISTICS OF VICTORIAN LITERATURE . . . . . | 9    |
| II. THOMAS CARLYLE . . . . .                         | 43   |
| III. LORD MACAULAY . . . . .                         | 64   |
| IV. BENJAMIN DE RAELI . . . . .                      | 88   |
| V. WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY . . . . .             | 107  |
| VI. CHARLES DICKENS . . . . .                        | 128  |
| VII. CHARLOTTE BRONTË . . . . .                      | 145  |
| VIII. CHARLES KINGSLEY . . . . .                     | 163  |
| IX. ANTHONY TROLLOPE . . . . .                       | 183  |
| X. GEORGE ELIOT . . . . .                            | 205  |





STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
SANTA CRUZ COUNTY  
JAN 10 1881

I

CHARACTERISTICS OF VICTORIAN  
LITERATURE

THAT which in England is conveniently described as the Victorian Age of literature has a character of its own, at once brilliant, diverse, and complex. It is an age peculiarly difficult to label in a phrase; but its copious and versatile gifts will make it memorable in the history of modern civilisation. The Victorian Age, it is true, has no Shakespeare or Milton, no Bacon or Hume, no Fielding or Scott, — no supreme master in poetry, philosophy, or romance, whose work is incorporated with the thought of the world, who is destined to form epochs and to endure for centuries. Its genius is more scientific than literary, more historical than dramatic, greater in discovery than in abstract thought.

In lyric poetry and in romance our age has names second only to the greatest; its researches into nature and history are at least equal to those of any previous epoch; and if it has not many great philosophers, it has developed the latest, most arduous, most important of all the sciences. This is the age of Sociology; its central achievement has been the revelation of social laws. This social aspect of

thought colours the poetry, the romance, the literature, the art, and the philosophy of the Victorian Age. Literature has been the gainer thereby in originality and in force. It has been the loser in symmetry, in dignity, in grace.

The Victorian Age is a convenient term in English literature to describe the period from 1837 to 1895: not that we assign any sacramental efficacy to a reign, or assume that the Queen has given any special impulse to the writers of her time. Neither reigns, nor years, nor centuries, nor any arbitrary measure of time in the gradual evolution of thought can be exactly applied, or have any formative influence. A period of so many years, having some well-known name by which it can be labelled, is a mere artifice of classification. And of course an Englishman will not venture to include in his survey the American writers, or to bring them within his national era. The date, 1837, is an arbitrary point, and a purely English point. Yet it is curious how different a colour may be seen in the main current of the English literature produced before and after that year. In the year of the Queen's accession to the throne, the great writers of the early part of this century were either dead or silent. Scott, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Coleridge, Lamb, Sheridan, Hazlitt, Mackintosh, Crabbe, and Cobbett, were gone. There was still living in 1837, Wordsworth, Southey, Campbell, Moore, Jeffrey, Sydney Smith, De Quincey, Miss Edgeworth, Miss Mitford, Leigh Hunt, Brougham, Samuel Rogers: — living, it is true, but they had all produced their important work at some earlier date. Carlyle, Dickens, Thackeray, Macaulay, Tennyson,