

**SELECTIONS FROM THE SPEECHES
AND WRITINGS OF
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE HENRY,
LORD BROUGHAM & VAUX**

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Selections from the Speeches and Writings of the Right Honourable Henry, Lord Brougham & Vaux by Henry Brougham

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HENRY BROUGHAM

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SELECTIONS

FROM THE

SPEECHES AND WRITINGS

11202
OF

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

HENRY,

LORD BROUGHAM & VAUX,

LORD HIGH CHANCELLOR OF GREAT BRITAIN.

WITH A

BRIEF MEMOIR OF HIS LORDSHIP'S LIFE.

LONDON :

JAMES RIDGWAY, PICCADILLY.

M.DCCC.XXXII.

BRIEF MEMOIR,

&c. &c.

THE eminent person who is the subject of the following Memoir is the eldest son of Henry Brougham, Esq., of Scales Hall, in Cumberland, and Brougham, in Westmoreland, (in which latter place the family were settled prior to the Norman Invasion:)* by Eleanor, only child of James Syme, D.D., and niece of Dr. Robertson, the celebrated historian.† He

* Those desirous of further information relative to the family, should consult Nicolson's and Burn's Westmoreland and Cumberland, I. 393; and Hutchinson's Cumberland, I. 299.

† The late Mr. Brougham had six children, viz. Henry, (Lord Brougham,) James, (successively M.P. for Tregony

was born at Edinburgh, on the 19th of September, 1779, and received his education at the High School of his native city, where his subsequent acquirements lead us to assume he was a most laborious and diligent student.

When little more than sixteen years of age, he exhibited one of the most remarkable instances of precocious intellect ever recorded: by the composition of a paper, containing a series of experiments and observations on the inflection, reflection, and colours of light; this paper he transmitted, through the hands of Sir Charles Blagden, to the Royal Society, in whose Transactions it was printed;* and in the following year, a paper, containing further experiments and observations on the same subject, was communicated by him to the Society, and printed in their Transactions;† where,

and Downton, and now for Winchelsea,) Peter, (who died in 1800 at St. Salvadore, on his passage to the East Indies,) John, (an eminent wine merchant, of Edinburgh, who died at Boulogne in September, 1820,) William, (late Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge, now M. P. for Southwark, and a Master in Chancery,) and Mary.

* Philosophical Transactions, 1796, p. 227.

† Idem, 1797, p. 352.

in 1798, appeared from his pen, "General Theorems, chiefly Porisms in the higher Geometry."* These papers excited considerable interest in the scientific world, (although the extreme youth of their author does not seem to have been generally known:) an article by Professor Prevost, of Geneva, containing Remarks on the Optical Papers, appeared in the Philosophical Transactions for 1798;† and Mr. Brougham is said, at this early period of his life, to have carried on a Latin correspondence on scientific subjects with some of the most distinguished philosophers of the Continent.

Whilst very young, he quitted Edinburgh, and accompanied Mr. Stuart (now Lord Stuart de Rothsay) in a tour through the northern parts of Europe. On his return he was called to the Scotch Bar; and about the same time became a Member of a celebrated Literary Society, called the Speculative Club, of which Mr. Southey, the late Mr. Horner, Mr. Jeffery, and the late Lord Kinnaird, were also distinguished Members.

* Philosophical Transactions, 1796, p. 378.

† Idem, 1798, p. 311.

On the establishment of the Edinburgh Review, in 1802, Mr. Brougham became one of the principal contributors to that popular journal, in which he continued to write until a very recent period; and of which he is said, for a short time, to have been the editor.

He acquired considerable celebrity by the publication, in 1803, of "An Enquiry into the Colonial Policy of the European Powers." This elaborate work, which is written in a lively, perspicuous, and elegant style, abounds in profound observations on modern politics and international policy; contains several passages of great eloquence, and displays throughout the deep thought, extraordinary acuteness, and extensive information, for which the author is so celebrated. It must, however, be allowed, that certain passages in this work are not altogether in accordance with his more matured opinions respecting the important subject of West Indian Slavery: if, however, any justification, for an alteration so honourable to his feelings as a man, be wanting, it may be found in the conduct of the planters for the last twenty-five years, which has pro-

duced a greater and more general change of sentiment on the subject, than could otherwise have been produced by all the exertions of the most zealous opponents of slavery.

Mr. Brougham, having been called to the English Bar by the Society of Lincoln's Inn, about 1806 or 1807, removed from Edinburgh to London, where his splendid talents seem to have soon attracted attention; since we find him, as early as 1808, engaged in a case of very considerable importance. Certain merchants of London, Liverpool, Manchester, &c., having presented a petition to the House of Commons, praying to be heard at the Bar of the House, by their Counsel and Witnesses, against the celebrated Orders in Council, restricting the trade with America, Mr. Brougham was made choice of as their advocate; and, accordingly, on the 16th of March, 1808, he appeared before that House, of which he was ultimately destined to be the chief ornament; and having opened the case of the petitioners in a concise address, he proceeded to the examination of his witnesses, which was not completed till the 1st of April; when, and

on the 6th of the same month, he again addressed the House with much ability and eloquence for above five hours. Although in this instance unsuccessful, he acquired much reputation by his exertions on the occasion; and from this period, his practice, both in the Court of King's Bench, and on the Northern Circuit, began to increase.

Through the influence of the Earl of Darlington, (now Marquis of Cleveland,) he, in the beginning of 1810, obtained a seat in Parliament for the Borough of Camelford; in the representation of which a vacancy had occurred, by the accession of the present Marquis of Lansdowne to the Peerage. His first Speech, which was made on the 5th of March, 1810,* on the debate upon Mr. Whitbread's motion, reprobating the Earl of Chatham's private transmission to the King of his narrative respecting the expedition to the Scheldt; has been usually considered to have disappointed the expectations excited by the knowledge of his great talents: it was, however, pertinent and perspicuous; but being delivered

* Collection of Speeches in the press.—Ridgway.