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**THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND**

**FROM THE YEAR 1830—1874.**

FROM THE RIGHT HON. JOHN BRIGHT'S SPEECH AT  
BIRMINGHAM :

“It is a great misfortune that the history of our country that is nearest our own times young men are least acquainted with. It is not written in histories that were read at school, and they are not old enough, as I am old enough, to remember almost every political fact since the great Reform Bill of 1832. I wish young men would read some history of this period. A neighbour and a friend of mine, a most intelligent and accomplished clergyman—Mr. Molesworth—has published a work, being a political history of England from the year 1830—that is, from the first Reform Bill—until within the last two or three years: a book honestly written, in which facts are plainly—and I believe truly—stated, and a work which would give great information to all the young men of the country, if they could be prevailed upon to read it.”

THE  
HISTORY OF ENGLAND

FROM THE YEAR 1830—1874.

BY

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AUTHOR OF "THE HISTORY OF THE REFORM BILL OF MDCCCXXXII," ETC.

Tenth Thousand.

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## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

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FOR reasons that are assigned at the beginning of my History I have commenced it with an account of the great reform struggle of 1831 and 1832; and I have embodied in the present volume my History of that contest; but greatly abridged, in some parts altogether re-written, in all carefully revised and corrected, and with a few additions. There is, however, one passage of that work which I have left entirely untouched—that, namely, which narrates the interview of Lords Grey and Brougham with William IV. on the morning of the 22d of April 1831, and which gave rise to a protracted controversy. I have made a slight correction in the observations with which the anecdote was prefaced; but the story of the interview itself is told word for word as it was given in the first edition of my History of the Reform Bill of 1832. I felt that after the generous and honourable alacrity with which Lord Brougham came forward to rescue me from the embarrassing position in which the present Lord Grey's flat denial of my narrative had placed me, and to make himself distinctly responsible for the correctness of my narrative, I should be laying myself open to a charge of being wanting in the grateful respect I owe to the memory of that great man, if I were now to withdraw the passage from any desire to shorten this part of my work. I am now enabled to give that anecdote stamped

with what Lord Grey justly termed 'the high authority of Lord Brougham;' an evidence in its favour which I say advisedly, and after having, I believe, read all that has been written on the subject, is not only unshaken, but rather corroborated by the efforts that have been made to confute it.

In that large portion of my work which is altogether new I propose to follow with regard to the debates on questions of great national importance the plan adopted in my History of the Reform Bill of 1832. I have given the report of the speeches which throw most light on the question, and on the manner in which it was received and regarded by different parties, in a very shortened form. Exordia, perorations, flights of rhetoric, even flights of eloquence, have been remorselessly pruned away, and the residue has been greatly condensed; but the style, and, as far as possible, the very words, of each orator have been carefully preserved.

I am aware that there are other histories which cover a portion more or less considerable of the ground over which this work is intended to extend; but their point of departure is different, and so also are the presiding ideas under which they are written.

W. N. M.

Spotland Vicarage, Rochdale,  
May 30, 1871.

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