

# THE FREE LANCE.

*"His good blade carves the casques of men, for the Free Lance thrusteth sure."*

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THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY.

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WHEN, in 1825, Francis Jeffrey, Editor of the Edinburgh Review, searching for "some clever young man who would write for us," chanced upon Thomas Babington Macaulay, he did not know he was marking a red-letter day in the calendar of English journalism. Through the two decades of its existence the Review had served its patrons with the writings of Lord Brougham and of its editor, and the patrons had apparently dreamed of nothing better until the young Fellow of Trinity enlivened its pages with his essay on Milton. And for the next two decades the essays that followed from the same pen became so far the mainstay of the magazine that booksellers declared it sold or did not sell according as it contained or did not contain articles by Mr. Macaulay.

English prose, at this date, was still clinging to the traditions of its eighteenth century stateliness. But the life had nearly gone out of it and it was this languishing prose which Macaulay, perhaps more than any other writer, deserves the credit of rejuvenating with that wonderful something which Jeffrey was pleased to call "style." If Macaulay had done nothing else than revivify prose, which is possibly his most enduring achievement, he would have little reason to complain.