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Illustrated English Social History: 3

G. M. Trevelyan



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George Macaulay Trevelyan, O.M., C.B.E., F.B.A., born in 1876, was the third son of Sir George Otto Trevelyan and a great-nephew of Lord Macaulay. He was educated at Harrow and at Trinity College, Cambridge. In the First World War he was awarded the Silver Medal for Valour (Italy) and the Chevalier of the Order of St Maurice and St Lazarus (Italy).

He was an Hon. D.C.L., Oxford, and Hon. LL.D., St Andrews and Edinburgh, a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and an Honorary Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford. From 1927 to 1940 he was Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge and from 1940 to 1951 he was Master of Trinity. He was also a Trustee of the British Museum and the National Portrait Gallery. He was President of the Youth Hostels' Association from 1930 to 1950, and was Chairman of the Estates Committee of the National Trust. He died in 1962.

Among his books on British history are: *England in the Age of Wycliffe*, *England under the Stuarts*, *The English Revolution 1688*, *England under Queen Anne*, *British History in the Nineteenth Century*, and *History of England*. *Lord Grey of the Reform Bill*, *Lord Grey of Fallodon*, *The Life of Bright*, and the famous Garibaldi trilogy are his biographical works.

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G. M. TREVELYAN

VOLUME THREE: THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

WITH 147 ILLUSTRATIONS, SELECTED BY RUTH C. WRIGHT

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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
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PREFATORY NOTE TO THE ILLUSTRATIONS

Although the broad principles of selection from English sources contemporary with the scenes represented have governed my choice of illustrations for Volume Three as for Volumes One and Two, a basic difference in the artist's or illustrator's approach is visible when one reaches the eighteenth century.

In the medieval period such social scenes as exist are, as it were, incidental, occurring mainly in decorative borders, or as miniatures or as seasonal or zodiacal representations in the calendars of liturgical mss. With the rise of printing comes a crude and often stereotyped kind of woodcut to illustrate such educational books as the *Stans puer ad mensam* or romances and legends such as Caxton and Wynkyn de Worde produced.

But in the later sixteenth century, book illustration includes engraved maps and bird's eye views of towns, and moves besides into the field of technical woodcuts (with explanatory keys) of mine workings or methods of glass blowing, as well as into that of the deliberate recording of foreign scenes and peoples as in de Bry's *Virginia*. These various classes of illustration continue and develop throughout the seventeenth century, but there appear also the road map, the battle plan, outdoor sporting scenes – racing or hunting – or fashionable amusements such as taking the waters at Bath, side by side with the popular broadsheet 'cuts' of gamesters or milkmaids, of marvels and wonders of all kinds.

It is not until the eighteenth century, however, that there appears for the first time the artist with his sketch-book

jotting down either for his own pleasure, or for antiquarian record, or simply as an illustrative accompaniment to a tour undertaken with a patron, scenes of any and every kind: the interior of a Northumbrian kitchen, a cricket match, a picnic party, the passers-by in Edinburgh High Street, or the frequenters of a coffee house.

Besides the formal conversation piece, the painter contributes records of a rural ale-bench or the stage-coach on the Dover Road, while the engraver and book illustrator, besides representing noblemen's houses and ancient castles, are now interested in depicting the latest cotton mill or brass foundry, and the satirist makes himself responsible for calling attention to the social evils of the new age.

It is thus possible to see life in the eighteenth century at many levels through contemporary eyes in a way which had not been possible before that date. For instance, a row of poor dwellings has become of sufficient interest in itself to catch the sketcher's eye, as the colliers' houses on the Newcastle road caught Grimm's, but we can search in vain in an earlier age to find a contemporary representation of the interior of a medieval peasant's hut. The illuminator of the Smithfield Decretals had not hesitated to censure ecclesiastical laxity or rapacity, but this is something entirely different from the harsh realism of Gillray's satire on the press-gang or Hogarth's gin-sodden London slum.

Documentary record, social criticism, antiquarianism, and topographical interest all play their part in eighteenth-century illustration, actuated sometimes by an instinct for the decorative and picturesque, sometimes by the desire for savage caricature, sometimes by the mere delight of setting down things seen and enjoyed.

It has thus been possible to illustrate in this volume more sides of life than previously in that the extant records are themselves fuller and more diversified, and I have therefore allowed the artist and illustrator to speak out more fully for the new industrial age that was just beginning, for the rural life of the south and north not yet smothered or standardized, for town development and the ways in which men and women were expressing themselves, and have cut down to a minimum

the better known and more formalized conversation pieces, which have been used so often to emphasize the elegance of eighteenth-century manners and settings.

As previously, full notes of the sources from which these illustrations have been drawn, together with details of anything noteworthy in their content or history, will be found at the end of the book.

I must again record my gratitude to the late Sir Henry Hake and to his assistant (now Director) at the National Portrait Gallery, Mr C. K. Adams, for their advice on the dating and authenticity of the portraits illustrated.

RUTH C. WRIGHT