

▶ For Convenience -

▶ we may arrange the - writers - **in three groups**

▶ those who were chiefly **associated with the two great Edinburgh periodicals**

- ▶ secondly, the **London men**, who were largely, if not entirely, journalists and miscellanists
- ▶ lastly, such writers as do not naturally fall under one or other of these two heads.

▶ **The Edinburgh Men.**

▶ FRANCIS JEFFREY (1773- 1850)

▶ called by his admirers the “ Archcritic,” and by

▶ his victims “Judge Jeffrey“

▶ (in reference to the notorious “bloody judge”

▶ of the seventeenth century -

▶ conducted the trials of captured rebels.

- ▶ He became **notable during the reign of King James II**, rising to the position of Lord Chancellor
- ▶ His conduct as a judge was to enforce royal policy, resulting in a historical reputation for severity and bias.



- ▶ Contributed some 200 articles to the *Edinburgh*
- ▶ and may be regarded as the most influential though not the greatest critic of his time.

- ▶ On the whole, as our quotation in 86 -
- ▶ Lord Jeffrey wrote in an early number of the
- ▶ Edinburgh Review : “ Poetry has this much in common with religion, that its standards were fixed long ago by certain inspired writers, whose authority it is no longer lawful to call in question.”

- ▶ he represents the conservative side in criticism.
- ▶
- ▶ He was not indeed **consistently opposed to**
- ▶ **the romantic movement,**
- ▶ nor was he a blind supporter of the Augustan tradition ;
- ▶ but his general influence was on the side of **authority and against innovation**

- ▶ To-day his criticism seems in general unsatisfactory.
- ▶ He lacked breadth of sympathy and flexibility of judgment ;
- ▶ His object was not to interpret but to arraign (accuse) and, if possible, to condemn ; he was often brutal



- ▶ he cared little for subject-matter and fixed his attention on form and style
- ▶ and he had no feeling for the large human aspects of literature.

- ▶ His chief coadjutor, (one who aids another, associate) **SIDNEY SMITH** (1771-1845)
- ▶ an exceedingly clever clergyman, who is now better known for his witticisms than for his literature.

- ▶ He contributed some 65 articles to the *Edinburgh*,
- ▶ and produced a considerable body of other work-
- ▶ including a brilliant satire on the Irish question, *Peter Plymley's Letters* (1807).

- ▶ His writings labour under the disadvantage of having dealt for the most part with **dead abuses and forgotten controversies.**
- ▶ For this reason they are **now little read,**
- ▶ which is a pity, for they are full of good things

- ▶ Of the “ Blackwood's men “ the most famous in his own day -
- ▶ **JOHN WILSON** (1785-1854)
- ▶ better known under his pen-name of **Christopher North.**

- ▶ A man of powerful physique
- ▶ a wrestler and boxer

- ▶ and a devotee of the prize ring while he was Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh

- ▶ he carried his high spirits and his boisterous energies into nearly everything he wrote.

- ▶ His output was enormous
- ▶ comprised stories, poems,
- ▶ and a vast number of magazine articles on all sorts of subjects.

- ▶ His best work is to be found in his
- ▶ *Noctes Ambrosianae*
- ▶ (or Nights at the Ambrose Tavern in Edinburgh)

which appeared in *Blackwood* at irregular intervals, and ran to 70 numbers in all.

- ▶ They are in the form of dialogues, and are full of **conviviality** (jovial, good humour), **reckless** humour, and dashing criticism of literature and politics.

- ▶ But their interest was **largely local and temporary**, - and their broad Scotch makes it additionally difficult for the southern reader to appreciate them.
- ▶ In regard to **prose style, Wilson was entirely with the romantics.**

▶ **THOMAS DE QUINCEY (1785-1859).**

▶ Though he wrote for the London Magazine as well as for Blackwood, we may here find place for **a personal friend of Wilson,** and a **man of far greater importance in**

▶ **literature** THOMAS DE QUINCEY (1785-1859).

- ▶ essentially a magazinist
- ▶ 17 volumes of his collected works consist mainly -
- ▶ **essays on a large variety of subjects.**

- ▶ His writing is often marred (imperfection) by glaring defects
- ▶ **he had a habit of abusing his extraordinary learning and of sinking thereby into obscurity** (state of being unknown, unimportant) **and pedantry** (excessive concern with minor details and rules)

▶ **in argument, while wonderfully subtle, he**

▶ **was frequently captious** (tending to find fault or raise petty

objections) **and trivial**

▶ **and he continually indulged in huge**

unwieldy (unmanageable) **digressions** (deviation, diversion).