

Henry Thomas Buckle (Nov. 24, 1821 - May 29, 1862), English historian, author of the History of Civilisation, the son of Thomas Henry Buckle, a wealthy London merchant, was born at Lee, Kent, on Nov. 24, 1821. Owing to his delicate health he was only a very short time at school. He gained his first distinctions not in literature but in chess, being reputed, before he was 20, one of the first players in the world. After his father's death in Jan 1840, he spent some time with his mother on the continent from 1840 to 1844. He now resolved to devote all his energies to the preparation of ~~some~~^{some} great historical work. By 1851 he had decided in favour of a history of civilisation. The first volume, which appeared in June 1857, made its author famous. The second volume was published in May 1861. From the end of Oct. 1861 to the beginning of March 1862 he was in Egypt, from which he went over the desert of Sinai and of Edom to Syria, reaching Jerusalem on April 19, 1862. After staying there ~~for~~ 11 days, he set out for Europe by Sea.

nut, but at Nazareth he was attacked by fever; and he died at Damascus May 29 1862.

Buckle's fame, which must rest wholly on his History of Civilisation in England, is no longer what it was in the decade following his death. His History is a gigantic unfinished introduction, of which the plan was first to state the general principles of the author's method and the general laws which govern the course of human progress; and secondly, to exemplify these principles and laws through the histories of certain nations characterized by prominent and peculiar features - Spain and Scotland, the United States and Germany. In summing up Buckle's achievement Sir Leslie Stephen said: "What he did was not to achieve new results in the sciences of history, but to popularize the belief in the possibility of applying scientific treatment to historical problems."