



The Victorians

By A. N. Wilson

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A dramatic, revisionist panorama of an age whose material triumphs and spiritual crises prefigure our own.

The nineteenth century saw greater changes than any previous era: in the ways nations and societies were organized, in scientific knowledge, and in nonreligious intellectual development. The crucial players in this drama were the British, who invented both capitalism and imperialism and were incomparably the richest, most important investors in the developing world. In this sense, England's position has strong resemblances to America's in the late twentieth century.

As one of our most accomplished biographers and novelists, A. N. Wilson has a keen eye for a good story, and in this spectacular work he singles out those writers, statesmen, scientists, philosophers, and soldiers whose lives illuminate so grand and revolutionary a history: Darwin, Marx, Gladstone, Christina Rossetti, Gordon, Cardinal Newman, George Eliot, Kipling. Wilson's accomplishment in this book is to explain through these signature lives how Victorian England started a revolution that still hasn't ended. 65 illustrations

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

"There will always be an England" ran one of the New Yorker's fabled lines. And there will always be writers-and readers-besotted with the Victorians. Wilson, biographer of John Milton and C.S. Lewis and author of many other works, provides a pastiche of the Victorian age. The 43 chapters are notably brief; the five parts move chronologically through the decades from the 1830s to the 1890s. Individual topics cover the spectrum of life in 19th-century Britain, including high politics and astounding economic progress. Wilson offers vivid sketches of John Ruskin, Robert Browning and many other cultural luminaries. Yet Wilson is, thankfully, not pollyannaish: he depicts the wrenching conditions that industrialization foisted upon the common people and marshals an array of stories that shatter the image of a benign, civilizing colonialism. The many anecdotes about Victorians famous and obscure will delight many readers, but Wilson's book is long on stories and short on explanation. Those with little background in British history will be confused by the parade of people who come and go, and by events that are mentioned but not described. Specialists, on the other hand, will be annoyed by many of the author's judgments, such as the strange comparison of Marx and Hitler and the claim that "there is an inexorability about events and their consequences." Wilson's book has its enjoyable moments, but readers will be better off opening any one of the volumes in Peter Gay's magisterial series, *The Bourgeois Experience, Victoria to Freud*. 32 pages of illus. not seen by PW.
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From Library Journal

Wilson will need all his skills as a biographer and novelist to encompass an era that included Darwin, Marx, and George Eliot.
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From [Booklist](#)

According to the author, Victorian philosophers, scientists, economists, entrepreneurs, and politicians ushered in an era of rapid and unprecedented change. Twentieth and twenty-first century sensibilities were shaped and foreshadowed by a daring group of radical thinkers who belie the common notion that nineteenth-century Britons were, for the most part, staid and conservative thinkers and workers. Attempting to paint a "portrait of an age" that transformed the world and spawned an increasingly global point-of-view, Wilson provides a decade-by-decade overview of the Victorian era, animating those men and women whose actions and ideas helped define and characterize one of the most innovative and influential ages in history. Wilson's background as a biographer and a novelist enables him to vividly capture and communicate the texture and the flavor of Victorian Britain. *Margaret Flanagan*
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Anthony Youngblood:

The book *The Victorians* will bring someone to the new experience of reading a new book. The author style to spell out the idea is very unique. When you try to find new book to read, this book very ideal to you. The book *The Victorians* is much recommended to you you just read. You can also get the e-book from your official web site, so you can easier to read the book.

Rolanda Parker:

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