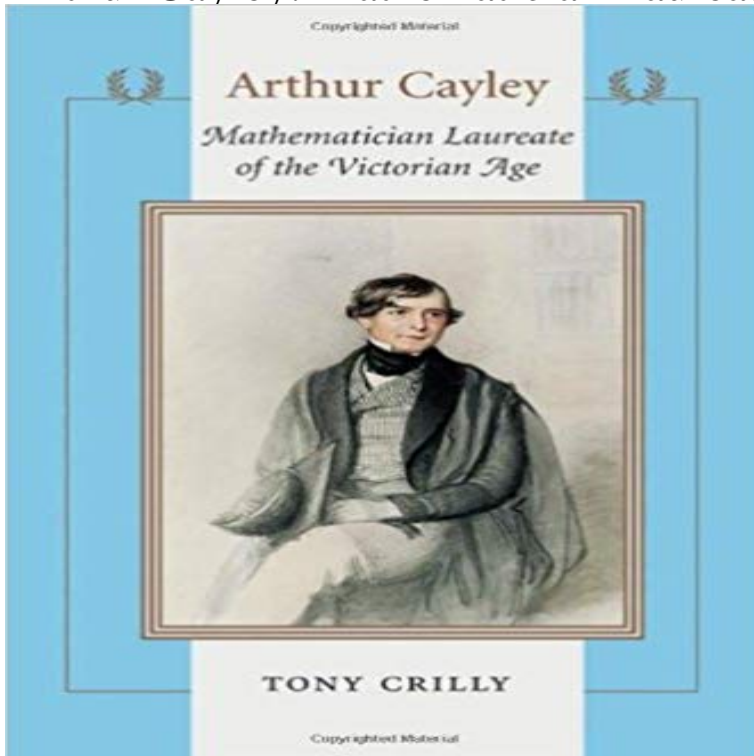


## Arthur Cayley: Mathematician Laureate of the Victorian Age



Arthur Cayley (1821-1895) was one of the most prolific and important mathematicians of the Victorian era. His influence still pervades modern mathematics, in group theory (Cayley's theorem), matrix algebra (the Cayley-Hamilton theorem), and invariant theory, where he made his most significant contributions. Yet Cayley's life has been overlooked by historians, who have lavished far more attention on lesser figures. Mathematician and biographer Tony Crilly, the world's leading authority on Cayley, rectifies this oversight with the first definitive account of his life. Born in England, Cayley spent his childhood in St. Petersburg, where his father was a commercial agent. After returning to England in 1828, Cayley received a first-rate education. As an undergraduate at Trinity College in Cambridge, he was named Senior Wrangler, the top mathematics student of his year. After graduating, he found himself at the vanguard of the revolution in British mathematics which included William Rowan Hamilton, George Boole, and James Joseph Sylvester. At the same time, needing a reliable income, he trained for the bar and became a barrister at Lincoln's Inn in 1849. Though a successful lawyer, Cayley devoted all his free time to mathematics and confirmed his reputation as one of the era's leading minds with a procession of brilliant articles on key aspects in pure mathematics. Only after 1863, when he was appointed to the Sadleirian Chair at Cambridge, could he fully pursue mathematical investigations, and he continued to publish influential papers until his death. Comprehensive and elegantly composed, this biography makes clear the scope of Arthur Cayley's prodigious achievements, firmly enshrining him as the Mathematician Laureate of the Victorian Age.

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