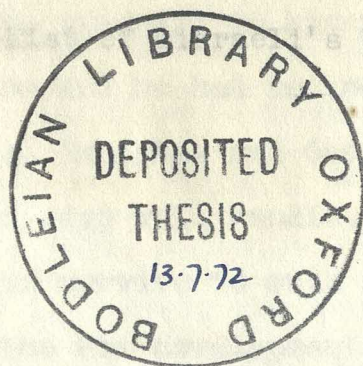


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1971 [i.e. 1972] TT

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1. Alms and Sanctuaries (1882), ed. H.F. Jones and A.T. Bartholomew. (London and New York, 1924), p.120.

FOREWORD

Samuel Butler described Disraeli as a writer who 'no matter how long he lived, would have been always growing'¹ and the purpose of the present study is to examine some elements in that growth. Disraeli's best novels, Lothair and Endymion, were the result of a very long apprenticeship in the course of which he had to learn to subordinate a whole mass of private preoccupations to the legitimate demands of the art of novel writing. He was a very long time in deciding what he wanted to do in his novels and by examining them chronologically one can see him developing from stage to stage - with two nearly disastrous side steps - towards an understanding of what he was best equipped to do and, quite as important, what he was not fit to do. For Disraeli's talent was not at all the vast Byronic affair that he imagined in his youth. His gift was for social observation and he had to learn to recognize that profound psychological insights and deep emotions were not matters that he could very well handle.

Disraeli's papers survive to such a remarkable extent that it is possible to trace his development without undue reliance upon critical interpretations and internal evidence. The emphasis of this study is therefore documentary. And,

¹. Alps and Sanctuaries (1882), ed. H. F. Jones and A. T. Bartholomew. (London and New York, 1924), p. 120.

curiously enough, while the documents do provide the necessary evidence for tracing Disraeli's growth they throw singularly little light upon Lothair and Endymion. This, on reflection, is not really so astonishing for these last two novels were less narrowly derivative than their predecessors. Disraeli was throughout the greater part of his career a highly derivative writer shaping his characters after people he knew - or knew of - and borrowing ideas, phrases, and sometimes passages from a wide range of published works. Sometimes he uses his sources to good effect, and sometimes not. But on the whole he is inclined to depend upon them rather too heavily until, with Lothair and Endymion, he breaks free and produces sustained works written directly from his own experience and imagination.

The major portion of this study, therefore, is concerned to show Disraeli developing a sense of what were his powers and his limitations as a novelist - to take him, in effect, to the threshold of Lothair and Endymion showing how, as he proceeded from book to book, he built upon what he had learnt, gradually discovering in himself the qualities as a writer to which he would finally give free rein in his last two novels.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many debts have been incurred in the preparation of this study but perhaps the greatest is to the National Trust for permission to work with the Disraeli Papers at Hughenden. I should particularly like to thank Mrs. Tempest for her genial assistance over the Papers and Mr. Jefferson for making accessible to me the contents of the Library and Study. I would also thank members of the staffs of various libraries for their patience and, often, their assistance : the Bodleian Library, Oxford; the British Museum Library; the National Library of Scotland; the Houghton Library at Harvard; the Pierpont Morgan Library; the New York Public Library; the Boston Public Library; and the Folger Shakespeare Library.

Obligations to several individuals are acknowledged in the course of the following pages, but I wish here to pay particular thanks to Mr. J. N. Bryson for his careful reading of the typescript and his many helpful criticisms and suggestions.

Letters & Home Letters, ed. Augustine Birrell (London, 1928).

Jerman = F. E. Jerman, *The Young Disraeli* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1960).

Blake = Robert Blake, *Disraeli* (London, 1966).

NOTE ON REFERENCES

All quotations from Disraeli's novels - with the sole exception of Coningsby (for reasons indicated in Chapter Six) - have been taken from the first editions. Disraeli revised the texts of several of his earlier novels in 1853 and again, less drastically, in 1870; all passages quoted have therefore been compared with the later texts and significant substantive differences have been duly noted. For the convenience of readers without access to the first editions, Book and Chapter numbers, as in the revised texts, have been indicated within parentheses in all references. The textual history of some of the early novels, especially Vivian Grey, would make a fascinating study in itself and one hopes that some day these books will be edited in such a way as to make the various textual changes apparent at a glance.

Works to which frequent reference is made have been abbreviated as follows :

M & B = W.F.Monypenny and G.E.Buckle, The Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield, six volumes (London, 1910-20).

Letters = Home Letters, ed.Augustine Birrell (London, 1928).

Jerman = B.R.Jerman, The Young Disraeli (Princeton, New Jersey, 1960).

Blake = Robert Blake, Disraeli (London, 1966).

¹ p.89. The review is unsigned but is attributed to Guizot in the advertisements to the second edition of Peverille and the third edition of Coningsby.

CHAPTER ONE

Vivian Grey, Part I

The anonymous publication of the first two volumes of Vivian Grey in 1826 launched Disraeli upon his career as a novelist. The book owed its existence primarily to his resentment at what he felt was the mistreatment he had received at the hands of the second John Murray and his circle. Written in a hasty and vengeful spirit, it is ill-considered, uneven, and yet, for all its limitations, at times highly amusing; it shows, moreover, evidence of talent of a very high order. Guizot's remarks in a review of it in the Revue Française for January 1828, were more prescient than he can have known :

La carrière du roman politique est ouverte en Angleterre, et on s'y précipite avec empressement. Vivian Grey est, à ce qu'il semble, un des premiers essais tentés dans cette nouvelle direction.¹

He goes on, however, to complain that though the book is 'political' in terms of plot, characters, and setting, it is singularly lacking in anything remotely resembling a political creed or even a political idea. The observation is just; Vivian Grey is as unmistakable an expression of its haphazard origin as a novel well could be. The story of its genesis is worth telling in some detail not because of the novel's

¹ p.89. The review is unsigned but is attributed to Guizot in the advertisements to the second edition of Popanilla and the third edition of Coningsby.

intrinsic value but because in writing it Disraeli was setting a pattern that he would follow to varying degrees in ^{much} ~~most~~ of his subsequent fiction. Even the Young England novels, where political ideas do come into their own, owe ^{a great deal} ~~much~~ of their flavour to the techniques that Disraeli had developed in his first published work of fiction. To understand the saga of Vivian Grey - its background in the Representative and Quarterly Review imbroglio and something of the characters who had incurred Disraeli's wrath and were in turn pilloried in the book's pages - is to go a long way towards understanding why Disraeli, for all his talent, failed to realise his promise as a novelist until the last decades of his life.

Disraeli's relationship with Murray and Lockhart - the 'raw material' out of which the first part of Vivian Grey was fashioned - has received a good deal of scholarly attention.¹ Yet for all that has been written on the subject, the full

¹. Blake, pp.27-52, gives the best short account of the Representative and Quarterly affairs. For details consult: M & B, I, chapters 5-6; the 'Introduction' to Lucien Wolf's edition of the novel (Lond.1904); Samuel Smiles, Memoir and Correspondence of the late John Murray (Lond.1891), II, Ch.26; Andrew Lang, Life and Letters of J.G.Lockhart (Lond.1897), chapter 12; Grierson, Scott Letters, IX, pp.245-312; Myron F.Brightfield, John Wilson Croker (Berkeley, 1940), pp.181-199; Kenneth Curry, ed. New Letters of Robert Southey (New York, 1965), II, pp.288-296; and W.Brackman, ed., 'Letters of Robert Southey to Sir John Taylor Coleridge', Studia Germanica Gandensia, IV (1964), pp.167-174. I am grateful to Lord Blake, Professor W.E.Houghton, and Mr.R.W.Stewart for kindly reading a draft of pp.2-47 of this chapter and making a number of helpful comments and suggestions.

story of the Representative and Quarterly episodes remains a mystery - as indeed it was at the time. Even Scott, who was in a better position to know what was going on than were many of the participants, finally threw up his hands over the Quarterly and exclaimed, 'I will puzzle my brains no more about it'.¹

What matters for a study of Vivian Grey, however, is less what actually occurred than how the adventure affected Disraeli. Fortunately an account of the whole business survives in Disraeli's own words in his letters to Lockhart. Spirited and full of mystification as they are, these letters provide quite the clearest picture we can now hope to have of the genesis of the novel. It is impossible after reading them to doubt, as some of Disraeli's apologists have hitherto done,² that the Marquess of Carabas was modelled on Murray, Cleveland on Lockhart, and the scheme for launching a new political lobby on the ambitious plans hatched over the Representative.

¹. The Journal of Sir Walter Scott (London, 1939), I, p.23.

². M & B, I, p.75: 'Murray apparently fancied that he had been satirised in the character of the Marquess, though it is not easy to detect the slightest resemblance between them'. Smiles omits the most important passage in the letter to Sharon Turner (16 October, 1826) where Murray complains of Disraeli's 'outrageous breach of all confidence and of every tie which binds man to man in social life in the publication of Vivian Grey'. - Blake, p.47, quoting the Murray Papers.

¹. Disraeli, Isaac D'Israeli (Oxford, 1939), chapter 6 and passim.

². M & B, I, pp.18-19.

There were many reasons for the intimacy that grew up between John Murray II and Disraeli. Their fathers had been friends since 1794 when John Murray I published Isaac's Curiosities of Literature. When Murray's son took over the firm at the age of twenty-four in 1802 he naturally looked to Isaac for advice on literary and business matters¹ and they were soon fast friends. 'My son Ben', wrote Isaac from Brighton, Benjamin being then four or five years old, 'assures me that you are in Brighton. He saw you !'². A few years later father and son were frequent guests at Murray's celebrated dinner parties - where the son caught his first dazzling glimpses of the great world. After one of these dinners, on November 27 1822, he transcribed a portion of the conversation between [Thomas] Moore and either his father or himself which later found its way into the exchanges between Vivian and Cleveland in Book IV, Chapter I, of Vivian Grey. Here are the two passages:

Hughenden Papers, Box 26,
A/X/C/1.³ [M&B, I, 37-8]

Vivian Grey

'You knew the glorious being, I think, Cleveland ?'

'Well; I was slightly acquainted with him when in England; slightly, however, for I was then very young. But many years afterwards I met him in Italy. It was

¹. James Ogden, Isaac D'Israeli (Oxford, 1969), chapter 6 and passim.

². M & B, I, pp.18-19.

Footnote ³. (previous page)

For a slightly different transcription, see M & B, I, pp.37-38. In A/X/C/2 Disraeli records a story told at Murray's on December 17 by the Reverend William Harness, Byron's old Harrow friend, about a Mrs. Latour who first learnt of her brother-in-law's death in the Battle of Waterloo from seeing his figure, 'bloody, pale & wounded' suddenly appear in her looking-glass; this was probably the basis for the Max Rodenstein story which Mrs. Felix Lorraine tells on pp.36-40 of the second volume of the novel (Bk.III, Ch.4). For the name 'Rodenstein', see below, p.83, n.2.

MOORE: I certainly was very much struck with an alteration for the worse.

Besides he dresses very extraordinarily.

DIS.: Slightly?

MOORE: Oh, no, no, he's very dandified and yet not an English Dandy. When I saw him, he was dressed in a curious foreign cap, a frocked great coat and had a gold chain round his neck and pushed into his waist-coat pocket. I asked him if he wore a glass and took it here nothing but a quantity of cut when I found fixed to it a set of trinkets. He had also another gold chain tight round his neck, something like a collar. He had then a plan of buying a tract of land & living in South America.

When I saw George Davies and told him that Byron was growing fat he instantly said. 'Then he'll never come to England'.

at Pisa, just before he left for Genoa. I was then very much struck at the alteration in his appearance.

'Slightly?'

'Oh! no, no, no - in the most dandified style that you can conceive; but not that of an English dandy either. He had on a magnificent foreign faraging cap, which he wore in the room, but his grey curls were quite perceptible; and a frocked coat; and he had a large gold chain round his neck, and pushed into his waistcoat pocket. I imagined, of course, that a glass was attached to it; but I afterwards found that it was a set of trinkets. He had also another gold chain tightly round his neck, like a collar'.

'How extraordinary!' And did you converse much with him?'

'I was not long at Pisa, but we never parted, and there was only one subject of conversation - England, England, England. I never met a man in whom the malady du pays was so strong. Byron was certainly at this time restless and discontented. He was tired of his dragoon captaincy, and pensioned postmaster, and he desired not come back to England with what he considered, a tarnished reputation. His only thought was of some

DISRAELI: Pray is L^d. Byron much much altered.

MOORE: Yes, his facing has swelled out and he is getting fat, his hair is gray & his countenance has lost that 'spiritual expression' which he so eminently had. His teeth are getting bad and when I saw him he said that if ever he came to England it would be to consult Wayte about them.

DIS.: Who is since dead and therefore now he certainly won't come.

MOORE: I certainly was very much struck with an alteration for the worse. Besides he dresses very extraordinarily.

DIS.: Slovenly?

MOORE: Oh, no, no, he's very very dandified and yet not an English Dandy. When I saw him, he was dressed in a curious foreign cap, a frogged great coat and had a gold chain round his neck and pushed into his waistcoat pocket. I asked him if he wore a glass and took it out when I found fixed to it a set of trinkets. He had also another gold chain like tight round his neck, something like a collar. He had then a plan of buying a tract of land & living in South America.

When I saw Scrope Davies and told him that Byron was growing fat he instantly said, 'Then he'll never come to England'.

at Pisa, just before he left for Genoa. I was then very much struck at the alteration in his appearance'.

'Indeed!'

'Yes; his face was very much swollen, and he was getting fat. His hair was grey, and his countenance had lost that spiritual expression which it once so eminently possessed. His teeth were decaying; and he said, that if ever he came to England, it would be to consult Wayte about them. I certainly was very much struck at his alteration for the worse. Besides, he was dressed in the most extraordinary manner'.

'Slovenly?'

'Oh! no, no, no - in the most dandified style that you can conceive; but not that of an English dandy either. He had on a magnificent foreign foraging cap, which he wore in the room, but his grey curls were quite perceptible; and a frogged surtout; and he had a large gold chain round his neck, and pushed into his waistcoat pocket. I imagined, of course, that a glass was attached to it; but I afterwards found that it bore nothing but a quantity of trinkets. He had also another gold chain tightly round his neck, like a collar'.

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desperate exertion to clear himself. It was for this he went to Greece. When I was with him, he was in correspondence with some friends in England, about the purchase of a large tract of land in Columbia. He affected a great admiration of Bolivar'.

The technique, as we shall see on a number of further occasions, is highly characteristic: scrupulous fidelity to the source materials at one moment, and lavish embellishment at the next.

Murray consulted Disraeli in the same year about a play he contemplated publishing, and two years later Disraeli submitted Aylmer Papillon to him, withdrawing it, however, on second thoughts.¹ In 1824-25 he helped prepare an English edition of J.H.Sherburne's Life of Paul Jones for Murray, wrote the three South American mining pamphlets which Murray published on commission, and assisted Thomas Crofton Croker in organizing his Fairy Legends of Ireland for the press. By this time Disraeli had clearly become one of Murray's principal advisors. In the spectacular success of Fairy Legends of Ireland, which Disraeli had urged him to publish, Murray must have seen a vindication of his faith in the precocious young man to whom, as he later wrote, he had given 'the most unbounded confidence and parental attachment ...'² When the scheme

² Smiles, MURRAY, II, pp.190-191.

¹ Blake, p.20.

² Blake, p.47, quoting the Murray Papers.

to launch the Representative - to rival and, hopefully, supplant the Times - was being formed in the summer of 1825 it would have been more than odd had Murray not wanted Disraeli to play a major part in it.

The first problem was to find an editor. Disraeli was accordingly despatched to Scotland late in September to persuade Lockhart to accept the job. His reception at Chiefswood, as described in a letter to Murray, provides a striking parallel to Vivian's reception at 'Kenrich Lodge'.¹

I arrived at Chiefswood yesterday, M.[i.e., Lockhart] had conceived that it was my father who was coming. He was led to believe this through Wright's letter. In addition, therefore, to his natural reserve, there was, of course, an evident disappointment in seeing me. Everything looked as black as possible. I shall not detain you now by informing you of fresh particulars. I leave them for when we meet. Suffice it to say that in a few hours we completely understood each other, and were upon the most intimate terms. M. enters into our views with a facility and readiness which were capital. He thinks that nothing can be more magnificent or excellent ...²

Disraeli goes on to say that if a Tory borough can be secured for Lockhart, 'I have no doubt that I shall be able to organize, in the interest with which I am now engaged, a most immense party, and a most serviceable one'.³ In a subsequent

¹. I, pp.9-23. Disraeli originally wrote 'Chiefston' in the manuscript but later crossed it out and substituted 'Kenrich Lodge'.

². Smiles, Murray, II, pp.190-191.

³. Ibid., p.192.

letter he writes of the 'friendly and familiar footing' he has established, making it 'utterly impossible for me to leave ... while there exists any chance of M.'s going to England. M. has introduced me to most of the neighbouring gentry and receives with a loud laugh any mention of my return to Edinburgh'.¹

Disraeli returned to London sometime around the 10th of October, possibly accompanied by Lockhart who seems to have travelled down at very nearly the same time.² While the visit to Chiefswood had been successful enough socially, Lockhart still refused - despite the lure of becoming no longer a mere editor but, as Disraeli put it, 'Director-

¹ Ibid., p.195; the letter is dated only 'September, 1825'. Lockhart's brief account of the visit in a letter to Croker some two months later is less fulsome: 'Mr. Disraeli's object was (after many circumlocutions) to bribe me to quit my profession here and assume the editorship of a newspaper to be set up by Murray under the patronage of very great people indeed'. (Brightfield, J.W. Croker, p.185). One of the 'very great people' may have been Canning who was rumoured at the time to have had a hand in both the Representative and the Quarterly. Although there is no solid evidence in the matter, the possibility that Canning was in some nebulous way behind Murray's schemes cannot be wholly discounted. In an undated manuscript fragment, apparently the draft of a letter, Disraeli writes: 'And I now [am] getting everything ready for the introduction of a newspaper which will be supported & which will be contributed by the greatest men in this kingdom & which will be under the immediate patronage of Mr. Canning'. (Hughenden Papers, Box 309, R/II/B/9^c, p.2).

² Lockhart left Chiefswood between the 9th and 11th (Grierson, Scott Letters IX, pp.232-233) and on the 9th Disraeli was still absent from London (Smiles, Murray, II, p.195).

General of an immense organ'¹ - to commit himself on the Representative. He agreed with Scott that to form a public connection with a newspaper would mean an irreparable loss of social position. What finally induced him to make the journey must have been Wright's letter of October 3rd, suggesting that he might be better suited to the editorship of the Quarterly. As a close friend of both Lockhart and Murray, William Wright was someone Lockhart could take more seriously than he could Disraeli, whom Wright tellingly characterizes in this letter as 'a sensible clever youth' whose 'judgement however wants sobering down'.² For Lockhart the trip proved to be well worth making; by the 20th he had agreed to edit the Quarterly at a stipend of £1,000 a year and to help unofficially with the Representative, occasionally contributing 'political articles', for a further £1,500.³

The agreement which Lockhart and Murray signed on this occasion was witnessed by Wright and Disraeli with numerous interpolations in Disraeli's hand and initialled by him.⁴ These interpolations are for the most part clarifications of Lockhart's responsibilities tending to strengthen his position

¹ Smiles, Murray, II, p.192.

² Blake, p.29, quoting from the Lockhart Papers; for the full text of this letter see Lang, Lockhart.

³ Lang, Lockhart, I, p.372; Smiles, Murray, II, p.226.

⁴ National Library of Scotland, MS.935, no.22B.

vis-à-vis Murray; taken in conjunction with Lockhart's visit to Hyde House and his peregrinations around fashionable London with Disraeli in search of a house,¹ they rather suggest - as do the following letters - that Disraeli and Lockhart, perhaps to the latter's surprise, had struck up something of a friendship. Allowing for Disraeli's usual embellishments, it may not be too fanciful to suppose that much of the witty and often malicious repartee between Vivian and Cleveland during the latter's stay in London at the beginning of Book IV of Vivian Grey² was recollected from Disraeli's conversations at the time with Lockhart, whose gift for satire had already been displayed in the pages of Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine.³

Between Lockhart and Murray, on the other hand, there was singularly little intimacy. As Disraeli later wrote to Lockhart :

You & he have never rightly understood each other. When such connections were about to be formed between two men, they should have become acquainted not by the stimulus of wine. There should have been some interchange of sentiments & feeling.⁴

¹ See below, letter 1, para.1; letter 2, para.1; letter 9, para.1.

² II, pp.147-173.

³ See below, pp.23-25

⁴ See below, letter 6, para.3.

This very lack of rapport, of course, made Disraeli's role as intermediary all the more important. When Lockhart returned to Scotland to arrange for the removal of his family to London it was understood that Disraeli would act in the meanwhile as his agent, keeping him informed on the progress of the Representative and, incidentally, helping him to find a house.

Disraeli's first letter to Lockhart opens with a reference to the death at 82 of his grandmother, Sarah Siprut de Gabay D'Israeli. As he later recalled, 'She came to stay with my father and mother at Hyde House near Chesham in the year 1825, and was kind and suave to all: upon seeing which I recollect that my mother remarked "Depend upon it she is going to die". I remember with horror the journeys on Sundays from Bloomsbury Square to Kensington when I was a boy. No public conveyances, no kindness, no tea, no tips - nothing'.¹

LETTER 1².

26 October, 1825

Oct 26 Wed^y / 25

Dear Lockhart,

I had intended to have sent you a packet today, or the

¹ M & B, I, p.8.

² The letters here reproduced are from MS.931, nos.112-120, in the National Library of Scotland and have not been published except in an expurgated form. Familiar Letters of Sir Walter Scott [ed. David Douglas] (Edinburgh, 1894), II, Appendix III, gives the text with numerous omissions and excluding letter 2 below. Some of the more important passages, transcribed from the MSS., are quoted in the notes to Grierson, Scott Letters, IX.

I have arranged the letters in chronological order on the basis of dates, postmarks and (when necessary) internal evidence. Disraeli uses dashes as all-purpose punctuation marks, and I have therefore rendered them, in cases where a dash is not itself called for, either as commas or full stops. Otherwise, the text given here follows spelling & punctuation of the MSS. →

next, but the death of my fathers mother, an old lady whom you might perhaps remember seeing at Hyde has rather disorganised my operations. She was of so advanced an age, that we were all prepared for this event, and altho' we can look upon her sudden decease, only as a very fortunate release from suffering & infirmity, still, you must be conscious, that even under these circumstances, death is somewhat affecting.

I have been engaged at the magnum opus unceasingly since we parted, as well as Murray who is perfectly indefatigable. I have received six letters from different correspondents in the Levant & Morea who all appear very intelligent. I have written to them fully. Mr. Briggs, the great Alexandrian merchant¹ & the agent in this country for the Pashaw of Egypt, has engaged to furnish us with information from that quarter. By his account Egypt is now one of the most flourishing countries in the world, and his detail of the policy and conduct of the reigning Pashaw certainly prove [sic] him one of the most enlightened of modern rulers. Besides letters, Briggs receives by every ship a journal of the public <pro> occurrences of the kingdom, and he has pledged himself to give us this regularly.

¹. Presumably Briggs Brothers & Co. of 7 Gould Square, Crutched Friars (see Robson's London Commercial Directory for 1822, p.69, and The Post Office London Directory for 1827, p.52). Disraeli was again in touch with Briggs during his Eastern tour in 1830-1831; see Home Letters (London, 1885), p.120.

I have not yet engaged Maginn,¹ but I hope shortly to inform you of this business being arranged.

I inform you, au secret² of course, that Copleston² is also engaged on the subject of Universities. As in the present state of affairs there is every appearance of the opinion of the Church party upon this important subject being extremely varying, Mr. Powles³ has written to the Bishop⁴.

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- ¹ William Maginn, LL.D. (1793-1842), arrived in London via Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine in 1823. Murray seems to have considered offering him the editorship of the Representative after Lockhart turned it down (Smiles, II, p.200); he was later sent to Paris as a correspondent (see below, letter 3, para.2 and 3) but according to Smiles did little more than borrow money and enjoy himself (II, 209). When he was brought back to edit the lighter side of the paper he produced - as befitted a future contributor to Westmacott's notorious Age - some witty but offensive articles which much embarrassed Murray.
- ² Edward Copleston (1776-1849), a liberal Tory of the Pitt and Canning school, was at this time Provost of Oriel College, Oxford. The Quarterly for December, 1825, contains an article by him on the new London University, a project which he regarded with misgiving. Disraeli satirizes the critics of the scheme in Vivian Grey (I, pp.222-224; ~~Wolf~~, I, pp.100-101; ~~Fuedolla~~, Bk.II, Ch.14, pp.77-78), ^{but} there is no reason to suppose that he was thinking of Copleston.
- ³ John Diston Powles was the principal partner in J. and A. Powles, a firm active in promoting South American mining shares after the government recognized the new republics late in December 1824. Disraeli probably met him while employed by Powles's solicitors, Messrs. Swain and Stevens; the result of their acquaintance was the three mining pamphlets, which Murray published on commission early in 1825, and the agreement establishing the Representative. He was a director of the Anglo-Mexican Mint Association, the Anglo-Mexican Mining Association, and the Columbian Mining Association (The Post Office London Directory for 1827, pp.513, 519, 538). Disraeli sketches him in Vivian Grey as 'Mr. Premium'.
- ⁴ Charles James Blomfield (1786-1857), Bishop of Chester, 1824-28, and Bishop of London, 1828-56; he contributed to the Edinburgh Review and the Quarterly on classical subjects, and in Tancred he figures as 'The Bishop'.

to arrange that on his coming to town, a council consisting of two or three Churchmen & as many laics should be instituted, & that they should immediately take into consideration the whole affair and settle upon some system to be adopted, & that their plan should be developed in our journal, that they should also invite Copleston to send in his ideas, & that you should, if in London, form one of the council, & if not, assist them by your advice. If this plan be adopted, I will immediately let you know. It seems rational.

I am vigorous in my researches after a maison for you and hope I shall succeed very shortly. Two or three are upon the tapis.

I observe today by the Times that Moore is about to reach Abbotsford with the intention of inducing the Illustrissimus to assist him with a projected life of L^d. B. If this be true, pray beware that Toad & Cupid² does not

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1. Thomas Moore (1779-1852), whose Life of Byron was published by Murray in 1830. The jibes at Moore's financial embarrassments at the end of this paragraph probably refer to the circumstances, then little known, surrounding the burning of Byron's memoirs in the fireplace at Albemarle Street on 17 May 1824. Moore in 1821 had sold the manuscript, given him by Byron, to Murray for £2,000 on the understanding that he might later buy it back. After Byron's death (19 April 1824), various of his friends and relatives, especially Sir John Cam Hobhouse and Mrs. Leigh, insisted that the manuscript be destroyed. Moore therefore agreed, reluctantly, to buy it back - borrowing the funds to do so from Longmans - and let Hobhouse and Mrs. Leigh decide what was to be done with it.
2. A combined allusion to Moore's diminutive stature and his penchant for writing amatory verse. The Loves of the Angels had appeared in 1823.

get any scent of the Volume you took down with you, & indeed I would advise you not to mention, in any manner, anything of Murray's Byronian collection. From peculiar circumstances, I know ----- 's affairs as well, I believe, as any one in Xdom. Beware of him ! his situation is such, that he must write - quartos & octavos can alone save him - & he goeth about like a hungry lion, seeking whom he can devour. ~~lost a very elegant tho'~~ Do me the favor of presenting my best compliments to Mrs. Lockhart & believe me, with great regard,
yours,

B. Disraeli

servants rooms, good, offices, down stairs good, kitchen adair- I say nothing of Guinea Hen¹. au present; but I will take care able. All these rooms look on the park, to which there is an entrance. The rent of this house for a lease of nearly 3 years is only 105 pr. ann. but a premium of 1500 £ is demanded in no wise different from what they were, when we parted. as the house has been thoroughly repaired. I understand they

will take 1000 £, but LETTER 2 takes 500 £ I should think to be

(repair) laid out in internal ¹ November, 1825 decoration &c. Write me a

line and tell me what you think of this ? Whitehall P. O.,

altho' not very agreeable to get at one way. Tuesday next

Dear Lockhart, masters of P. & people of grade residing there.

This I received your letter this morning. There is very

variation.

(W.P.)
1. It is little more than a guess, but this might be a reference to John Barrow (see below, p.30, n.178) who published two volumes of Travels into the Interior of Southern Africa in 1801 and 1804 and whom Scott described as one of those 'gentlemen who like Tristram Shandys bull gain a character by going gravely through their business' (Scott letters, IX, p.295). Disraeli refers to his 'African dinners' in one of the letters to Murray (Smiles, II, p.189).

great difficulty in getting houses in Westminster, everybody rushing to that quarter. I have seen however a great many houses in it. There are two, which appear to me to deserve attention. One is in Duke Street. It is a much superior house to the one we visited. It has a very pretty hall, an elegant little suite upstairs of two drawing rooms & boudoir, a handsome dining parlour, and a library, the last a very elegant, tho' not a very large room. There are two best bed rooms, one the size of the drawing room & therefore very commodious & a dressing room answering to the boudoir, and which is large enough for a room for Johnnie.¹ There are then three servants rooms, good, offices down stairs good, kitchen admirable. All these rooms look on the park, to which there is an entrance. The rent of this house for a lease of nearly 21 years is only 105 pr. ann. but a premium of 1500 £ is demanded as the house has been thoroughly repaired. I understand they will take 1000 £, but there requires 500 £ I should think to be laid out in internal ^(repair) painting and decoration &c. Write me a line and tell me what you think of this? The situation, altho' not very agreeable to get at one way, is yet most genteel, many members of P. & people of grade residing there. This house also belongs to a clergyman, who leaves ^(for) on acct. of promotion.

(W.P.)

There is a corner house in Whitehall Place, also deserving attention, lease of 21 yrs., no premium; might be got perhaps

¹ J.G.Lockhart's son, John Hugh (1821-31).

for £ 280 pr. ann. but requires thoroughly painting &c. inside, the walls never having been touched since they were finished. The best drawing room & dining room are bigger than Murrays,¹ but this size would of course make furnishing more expensive. Sent me your ideas on this also. I hope to have a letter from you by tomorrow's post, as you mention that you intend to plan. write. I have been out all day after houses & only write this by twilight, that you may not be disappointed in receiving a letter. You must not therefore expect any news & must excuse the scrawl. approbation of such a man as Scott is to him 'most drink & raiment'.¹ M.^t flly yrs

Each my dear Lockhart B. Disraeli. and since we parted - I think of importance [.] In the first place Maginn is engaged. I called upon the Dr. LETTER 3 after your departure. It is impossible for me 12 November, 1825 to give you a adequate idea of our interesting interview. To present you with a Saturday night.

Dear Lockhart,

I should have written you before this, but have waited with the expectation of receiving a letter from you as mentioned in your last. I hope you received mine directed to you at Edinburgh & dated somewhere about the end of last month - the subject, your house.² I am the last person who ^{could} _^

¹ i.e., presumably, his residence in Whitehall Place.

² The letter to which Disraeli here refers is indeed letter 2 above, directed to Lockhart in Edinburgh and re-directed, in another hand, to him at Chiefswood, Melrose.

ever wish to make a bore of correspondence, nor have I the least desire that you should write to me a single letter, unless you have something to communicate, which may authorise the great trouble of your writing and my reading a letter; but I confess, for Murray's sake, I rather wished to have a line as to the feeling now existing at Abbotsford on the grand plan. A communication of this kind infuses new life & energy into the Emperor. It is perhaps foolish to mention this, but the truth is Murray has long been accustomed to look up to authority, & the approbation of such a man as Scott is to him 'meat drink & raiment'.¹

Much my dear Lockhart has happened since we parted - I think of importance [.]. In the first place Maginn is engaged. I called upon the Dr. shortly after your departure. It is impossible for me to give you an adequate idea of our interesting interview. To present you with a few of the leading

¹ Byron had called Murray 'the most timorous of all God's booksellers' (M & B, I, p.70) and, in the present negotiations, Stewart Rose writing to Lockhart described him as one 'who is all sail & no ballast, & upon whom one puff tells as well as another' (Grierson, Scott Letters, IX, p.290, n.2) - or, as Disraeli writers of the Marquess of Carabas, 'treacherous as the wind' (II, p.200; Wells, I, p.243; Guadalla, [Bk.IV, Ch.3] p.159). Scott, (Journal, I, p.19) and J.W.Croker (Scott Letters, IX, p.254, n.2) both recognised Murray's volatility; and Lockhart, writing to Croker, described himself as 'always willing to take the good of him as his own and the evil as the result of the last visit that had had been paid to his salon in Albemarle Street' and alluded to Murray's 'leaky lips' (Brightfield, J.W.Croker, pp.185-186).

Murray's honorific 'Emperor' derived from the fact that when he moved to Albemarle Street in 1842 the booksellers took to calling him 'Emperor of the West'.

features, you must know, that M. speedily came to the point & told me, that 300 to 350 £ pr. ann. was the regular salary for the services we required, but that it would not suit his views to go for a less income than £ 500 pr. ann., 'but that he felt bound in honour & candour to tell us that he did not conceive that our paper could afford or justify such an expenditure'. He then went on 'backing Barnes¹ against us' ridiculing the attempt generally, swearing there was only one way to conduct a newspaper, that a newspaper was a newspaper & other of these sage truisms. He 'ventured to predict that with all our system in six months time we should be doing the same thing as the Old Times', - that he was 'the most experienced man as regards newspapers in London', that he knew what the system was capable of &c. &c. &c. *off. Have I managed this well?*

As I did conceive him to be decently honorable, and as I felt the importance of arguing the question with a man, who might fairly be considered a very prosopopeia of the Public Press, I thought the experiment might be hazarded of giving him a slight & indefinite sketch of our intentions. This I did with great caution & mentioning no names. To give you an idea of the effect which I produced is utterly impossible. The Dr. started from his chair like Giovanni in the Banquet Scene, & seemed as astounded, as attonitus, as Porsenna when Scaevola

¹ Thomas Barnes (1785-1841), editor of the Times from 1817 until his death.

*Maginn had borrowed some money from Barnes and this was presumably the 'little sum' now forgiven.

missed him.¹ A new world seemed opened to him, & this sneering scribe, this man of most experience, who had so smiled at our first mentioning of the business, ended by saying, that as to the success of the affair, doubt could not exist & that a year could not elapse without our being the very first paper going. Upon my faith Lockhart, I consider this a most important interview, because really after all, it is becoming acquainted, as it were, with the private opinion of Barnes &c. In brief, the Dr. goes to Paris, & Murray acquits him (this au secret) of his little engagement.* He sets off sometime in December, that he may have six weeks clear in Paris before we commence our operations - but his salary commences from this time & he is to assist us by his general advice & exertions until he goes off. Have I managed this well?

It has come to our knowledge that the Bp. of Durham, spirited on by his able council in the North (Philpotts Townsend & Co.)² is contemplating some move in the press. We intend

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1. Gaius Mucius Scaevola, a legendary Roman youth who tried to assassinate Lars Porsena, the leader of the Etrurian forces which besieged Rome in 509 B.C. But he missed and stabbed Porsena's secretary instead.
 2. Henry Philpotts (1778-1869), later Bishop of Exeter, and George Townsend (1788-1857) were both at this time chaplains to Shute Barrington (1734-1826), Bishop of Durham. Philpotts was a contributor to the Quarterly as early as 1812. All three were prominent Tory opponents of Catholic emancipation and published attacks against Charles Butler's arguments in its favour in his Historical Memoirs of the English, Scottish and Irish Catholics since the Reformation first issued by Murray in 1817 and much reprinted.

*Maginn had borrowed money from Murray and this was presumably the 'little engagement' now forgiven.

to write to them informing them of our plans and requesting their co-operation.

I am most unceasingly employed about this business. The following is a sketch of our correspondence at present established.

S. A.

All South America

N. A.

- All the North American Newspapers and private intelligence from a family of distinction at Washington by every packet.

Mexico

All the Morea -
All the Baltic
All the Levant
Smyrna
Constantinople
Greece.

Making about 27 correspondents.

Paris - a general agent.

Florence-
Rome - } Correspondents

Netherlands - Two correspondents - both men of intelligence.

Germany - Vienna - Berlin - Munich -
Dresden - Stuttgart - Weimar -
Coblentz Frankfurt Hamburg &
Treves.

I have been very much assisted in this grand coup of Germany by Mrs.Wm.Elliott,¹ who when devoid of humbug is very clever.

¹ Probably an in-law of Murray, who in 1817 married the daughter of Charles Elliott of Creech and Elliott, the Edinburgh publishers. But for a further bizarre possibility see below, p.44, n.3, Anecdote XIII. It may be that elements drawn from Mrs.Elliott went into the character of Mrs.Felix Lorraine in Vivian Grey - a sister-in-law of the Marquess of Carabas who also has connections in Germany. →

to write to them informing them of our plans and requesting their co-operation.

I am most unhesitatingly employed about this business.

The following is a sketch of our correspondence at present established.

N. A.

All the North American News-papers and private intelligence from a family of distinction at Washington by every packet.

Mexico

- All the News -
- All the Baltic
- All the Levant
- Smyrna
- Constantinople
- Greece.

Making about 27 correspondents.

Paris 2000 -

Florence - Correspondents

Rome -

Netherlands - Two correspondents - both men of intelligence.

Germany - Vienna - Berlin - Munich -

Dresden - Stuttgart - Weimar -

Frankfurt - Hamburg &

Treves.

I have been very much assisted in this grand coup of Germany

Mrs. Murray, at any rate, seems to have feared as much, in a letter to her son she remarks that 'Mr. Colburn might think it a fine puff for his book to say that a certain character was intended for a relation of Mr. Murray's.' (Quoted in 'George Paston', At John Murray's, London, 1920.)

daughter of Charles Elliott of Greenwich (1820). The Edinburgh publishers. But for another, please possibly see below, letter 9.11.99, Anecdote XIII. It may be that elements drawn from Mrs. Elliott went into the character of Mrs. Felix Lorraine in Vivian Grey - a sister-in-law of the Marquess of Carabas who also has connections in Germany.

All the letters which we have written to these places are not answered, but we do not anticipate the slightest doubt of their success. I have heard this day of a most admirable man at St. Petersburg. In addition to these we must put down

The West Indies -
Teneriffe

I have no doubt, that in a few days I shall get a most excellent correspondent at Cadiz, but I have not yet succeeded in Madrid which is most important. We have established also at Liverpool, Glasgow, Manchester, Birmingham &c. &c. - actually established. I see no visible obstacle to our beginning the 1st. day of February, for our mechanical part, such as - reporters, printers[,] building &c. goes on as well as the other.

Pray present my kindest Compliments to Mrs. Lockhart & remember me to John -

Yours ever faithfully

BD.

I should think it most desirable for you to write a serious letter to Maginn.

1. Croker is also represented as Vivida Vis, editor of 'the Representative', but as he receives only the briefest mention the success of which Disraeli does not appear to have thought worth 'the slightest doubt', sinister forces were gathering to block Lockhart's appointment to the Quarterly. J.W. Croker - First Secretary to the Admiralty and a prolific contributor to the 'Letters to his Kinfolk' in March, 1849. The full story is told in Smiles, Murray, I, chapter 19, and Lang, Lockhart, I, chapters 5-7.

Quarterly whom Disraeli caricatures as Staplyton Toad in Vivian Grey¹ and as Rigby in Coningsby - had organized a cabal among the older contributors to resist Lockhart's appointment. Their chief objection seems to have been Lockhart's satiric activity a few years earlier in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine along with James Hogg, 'Christopher North' (John Wilson), Maginn and De Quincey. Disraeli neatly (and ironically) hits at the core of the problem when in Vivian Grey he has Cleveland say of the rumoured appointment: "He certainly is a man of great powers, but I think rather too hot for the Quarterly", to which Vivian briskly replies, "Oh! no, no, no - a little of the Albemarle Anti-attrition will soon cool the fiery wheels of his bounding chariot".² Of Lockhart's Blackwood's contributions, most of them little more than exercises in personal villification, Scott wrote at the time: 'His powers of personal satire are what I most dread on his account - it is an odious accomplishment and most dangerous and I trust I have prelaidd on him to turn his mind to something better'.³

¹. Croker is also represented as Vivida Vis, editor of 'the Suffolk papers' and 'very able counsellor' to 'Lord Lowersdale', but as he receives only the briefest mention the identification is not very important.

². II, p.170; ~~Wolf, I, p.499; omitted from Guedalla.~~ ^{deleted in 1853.}

³. Grierson, Scott Letters, VI, p.227. For examples of Lockhart's contributions, see his series of essays on 'The Cockney School of Poetry' beginning in October, 1817, and 'Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk' in March, 1819. The full story is told in Smiles, Murray, I, chapter 19, and Lang, Lockhart, I, chapters 5-7.

This new emphasis on vituperative satire in Blackwood's, which had indeed revitalized the magazine if in an unsavory way, was also a source of anxiety to Murray. A long stream of letters to William Blackwood having failed to produce a change in the journal's tone, Murray dissolved his share in the partnership in December, 1819; henceforth Blackwood's was distributed in London by the less prestigious house of Cadell and Davies. When Lockhart and Murray came together over the Quarterly six years later, there was thus bound to be a certain tinge of embarrassment for both parties. This aspect of their relationship has its parallel in Vivian Grey in the political rift between Carabas and Cleveland which has occurred some years before the action of the novel begins.¹ Hence the consternation produced when the Marquess proposes - while very much in his cups, a weakness he shares with Murray² - that Cleveland be made parliamentary leader of the new party.³

¹ II, pp. 1-9; ~~Wolf, I, pp. 423-425; Guedalla (Bk. III, Ch. 1) pp. 95-97.~~

² See below, letter 6, para. 3, and p. 44, n. 3. On February 1, 1826, Mrs. Lockhart wrote to Scott as follows: 'If Murray would - and he seems to have got a fright - but keep sober for a few days and [?rest] all would do well, but the worst is when alarmed he takes to his bottle at night, which makes a perfect coward of him the following day'. About a month later Lockhart wrote in a similar vein: 'Murray, I am sorry to say, is so eternally drunk that I scarcely ever see him fit for serious business. He will kill himself very shortly, I fear. His paper sells very well... But it is the Master's eye that fattens the Mare, and there is no hope of getting other news or advertisements soon so long as this obstinate profligacy of his continues to hang heavy on all the arrangements of the concern'. - The Private Letter-Books of Sir Walter Scott, ed. Wilfrid Partington (London, 1930), pp. 355 and 147.

³ I, pp. 252-266; ~~Wolf, I, pp. 443-420; Guedalla (Bk. II, Ch. 16) pp. 88-94.~~

Hence, too, Cleveland's scepticism of the offer when Vivian tells him of it¹ and, conversely, Carabas's reluctance to 'trust himself alone with Cleveland':

It was the wish of the Marquess, if possible, not to meet his old friend till dinner-time. He thought that, surrounded by his guests, and backed by his bottle, certain awkward senatorial reminiscences might be got over.²

Objections to the new editor of the Quarterly must also have been raised on the score of the duel four years earlier between one of Lockhart's henchmen and John Scott, editor of the London Magazine. The quarrel, which was exceedingly complicated, arose from Scott's unsparing attacks on Blackwood's in general and Lockhart's contributions in particular.³ Although Lockhart took no direct part in the duel, which resulted in Scott's death, his inflexibility had done much to provoke it; when Disraeli has Vivian kill Cleveland at the end of the first part of Vivian Grey in a duel for which Cleveland's obstinacy is largely responsible, he is alluding to this incident in Lockhart's past.⁴

¹ II, pp. 12-20; Wolf, I, pp. 129-130; Guedalla (Bk. III, Ch. 1) pp. 166-167. Note that Cleveland's 'three years in a German University' in the first paragraph correspond to Lockhart's stay in Germany after going down from Balliol, and before returning to Scotland to become a contributor to Blackwood's.

² II, pp. 25-26; Wolf, I, pp. 132-133; Guedalla (Bk. III, Ch. 3) p. 163.

³ See Lang, Lockhart, I, pp. 250-282.

⁴ II, pp. 215-229; Wolf, I, pp. 220-226; Guedalla (Bk. IV, Ch. 5) pp. 165-170. Compare the details of the shooting with the account in Lang, I, pp. 274-276.

John Wilson Croker was a highly influential behind-the-scenes figure in early nineteenth century Tory politics. Not only was he a close friend of both Canning and Peel, but since 1822 he had been legal advisor and general overseer to the immensely rich third Marquess of Hertford - who had eight rotten boroughs in his gift and whose irregular private life was the subject of scandalous revelations after his death in 1842.

In 1819 Croker tried to enlist Lockhart and John Wilson - the two leading satirists of Blackwood's - in a weekly newspaper to be called the Constitution, but the project never came to anything. He then turned to Murray whom he induced to become his partner in the Guardian, a weekly newspaper printed by Charles Knight at Windsor; this venture, although at least a going concern when Murray and Croker took it over, was likewise doomed and did not last out the year. Croker seems to have wanted to control a prominent high Tory paper and, in view of his abortive efforts to launch one first through Lockhart and then through Murray, must have been galled by Disraeli's success over the Representative. When he heard of the project he advised Murray strongly against it - 'knocked it on the head, that is, ^{knocked it} out of his'¹ - and boasted to Barrow at the Admiralty that, as Murray wrote afterwards, 'he had completely destroyed my intention, and that he fancied I had left him with an

¹ Grierson, Scott Letters, IX, p.254, n.2.

inclination to sell the freehold I had bought for it at half price'.¹ Such attempts to dissuade the irresolute Murray must have called forth all Disraeli's keenest eloquence in the paper's defence.² These letters show

Crocker's proprietary sense had a better justification where the Quarterly was concerned, for he was one of its principal contributors. In 1823 he briefly replaced the ailing Gifford as editor, and his comments on the experience in a letter to Murray show that he had definite ideas about how the journal should be run:

This cursed system of writing dissertations [i.e., recapitulations of books rather than critical studies] will be the death of us, and if I were to edit another number, I should make a great alteration in that particular. But for this time I must be satisfied with plastering up what I have not time to rebuild.²

The hint - if it was a hint - was lost on Murray, who in any case had lately had his fingers burnt rather too often by Crocker, both in the failure of the Guardian and in Blackwood's success with the Monthly Register, a project which Crocker had advised Murray against launching.³

Blake is misleading in suggesting⁴ that the leader of

¹ Familiar Letters of Sir Walter Scott, II, p.416.

² Smiles, Murray, II, p.57.

³ Brightfield, J.W.Crocker, p.194.

⁴ p.31.

the cabal against Lockhart was Barrow. The two crucial documents in the case are Murray's letter to Lockhart on the 24th disclosing Croker's role in the plot¹, and Lockhart's long and detailed reply on the 27th.² These letters show conclusively that whatever the facts may have been - and the case is a complicated one - Murray and Lockhart were firmly convinced that Croker was the main force behind the opposition both to the paper and to Lockhart's appointment to the Quarterly; their conviction must have been passed on to Disraeli who thus discovered at long last the identity of his persistent antagonist over both the Representative and the Quarterly. Croker's machinations may have been more sinister still, for Murray complained of a plot to "set up Knight against me"³. - though whether this referred to the Representative, the Quarterly, or some other business is not clear. The ensuing animus between Lockhart and Croker at any rate, was intense; though they appear later to have recovered their equanimity. Croker had no further articles in the Quarterly until January, 1831.

¹ Familiar Letters of Sir Walter Scott, II, pp.415-417.

² Smiles, Murray, II, pp.225-229.

³ Familiar Letters of Sir Walter Scott, II, p.417.

⁴ John Taylor Coleridge (1790-1876), who had only recently become editor in succession to Gifford. Although the pressures of his growing legal practice made him glad enough to be relieved of the position, Murray's failure to consult him before appointing Lockhart seemed highly devious to Southey (His Letters, II, pp.288-293; W. Brackman, 'Letters to J.T. Coleridge', pp.167-171) - and no doubt to others.

All this, however, is to anticipate. At the middle of November Murray was still in the dark about Croker; if he suspected any one ~~single~~ person it was probably Barrow. But something needed desperately to be done if a full scale insurrection were to be avoided. Murray decided to send Disraeli on a second visit to Scotland - from which he had just returned at the writing of the next letter - to explain matters to Scott and ask him to intervene in the dispute on Lockhart's behalf. Unfortunately, Disraeli told all this to Lockhart - which was not at all what Murray had intended.

LETTER 4

21 November, 1825

1/2 pt 5 o'clock.

My dear Lockhart,

I have arrived after a most fatiguing journey. I went immediately to the Emperor & my reception was most unfavourable. I would use a harsher word if I remembered one. He has spoken to Coleridge¹ & nothing could go off better, it is perfectly settled. But as to my unhappy mission. He swears that he understood, I undertook to go to Sir W. au secret & not to you, that I have ruined & meleed everything &c., that he only

¹. John Taylor Coleridge (1790-1876), who had only recently become editor in succession to Gifford. Although the pressures of his growing legal practice made him glad enough to be relieved of the position, Murray's failure to consult him before appointing Lockhart seemed highly devious to Southey (New Letters, II, pp. 288-295; W. Brackman, 'Letters to J.T. Coleridge', pp. 167-174) - and no doubt to others.

(great mis)

wanted Sir W. to write a few letters in consequence of the spirit evinced against you &c. &c. I was too ill to answer him & I trust to the course of events to settle all things. He swears also that I ought not to have mentioned Barrow's¹ name &c. All these things, I need not tell you, appear to me very extraordinary, as I am not aware of having violated any confidence or instructions whatever. Stewart Rose² has made

¹ John Barrow (1764-1848), Second Secretary to the Admiralty, was a stalwart contributor to the Quarterly. He opposed Lockhart's appointment at first (Grierson, Scott Letters, IX, p.254, n.2), but by November 26th had come round to his support. 'I never thought Mr. Barrow had the least personal ill will against Lockhart', wrote Scott, 'but it was easy for him to be led into forming an erroneous opinion of his character by hearing old stories imperfectly mixt up with new matter to which he had no access' (Ibid., p.304).

² William Stewart Rose (1775-1843), poet and translator, was an intimate of both Murray and Scott. His principal works were a rhymed translation of the first three books of Amadis de Gaul (1803) and a two-volume translation of Ariosto (1823, 1831). He figures in the first part of Vivian Grey as Parthenopex Puff, a name drawn from his translation in 1807 of the twelfth century metrical romance Parthenopex de Blois, a variation on the Cupid and Psyche story but with the roles reversed. Lockhart's description of him as 'a timid dandy, and a bit of a Whig to boot' (Smiles, Murray, II, p.226) tallies with Cleveland's remark that 'He certainly tattles prettily about tenses, and terminations, and is not an inelegant grammarian'; of his Ariosto Cleveland declares: 'Mr. Puff is a man destitute of poetical powers; possessing no vigour of language, and gifted with no happiness of expression. His translation is hard, dry, and husky, as the outside of a cocoa-nut'. (II, pp.157-160; Wolf, I, pp.194-195, Guedalla, [Bk. IV, Ch. I]). Ch. I, pp.148-149).

previously known by the God of the Silver Bow to slay the mighty Python of Hungary whose vigorous & enormous folds were so fast & fatally smothering us. Thanks the God! I have

¹ During Disraeli's stay Lockhart may have given him an account of the spectacular visit of Mrs. Norton and her entourage to Abbotsford late in October - an incident which was evidently incorporated into Vivian Grey. Compare Chs. 12 to 15 (11 to 14 in the Revised Text) of Vol. II with Lockhart's Life of Scott (London, 1837), VI, pp. 95-98.

a miserable business of it - instead of calling on Murray, he wrote to Barrow, & the latter has called on Murray in great ire.

I hope all things will turn out well. Murray writes by tomorrow's post to Sir W.Scott, & has extracted a promise from me that I would not write by this to you. Consider therefore that this violation of my word ^(of) is the consequence of my sincere friendship for you, & mention it not to the winds. I will write by tomorrow's pt. fully & positively.

Yrs. Ever
BD

You will not of course come to town upon this letter. I only write that you may be prepared. ^{1.}

LETTER 5

22 November, 1825

Tuesday.

5 o'clock.

My dear Lockhart

Forget the letter, which in a moment of great agitation about your business, & utterly exhausted in mind and body I wrote you yesterday evening. I rose this morning, having previously sworn by the God of the Silver Bow to slay the mighty Python of Humbug whose vigorous & enormous folds were so fast & fatally encircling us. Thanks the God! I have

¹ During Disraeli's stay Lockhart may have given him an account of the spectacular visit of Mrs. Coutts and her entourage to Abbotsford late in October - an incident which was evidently incorporated into Vivian Grey. Compare Chs. 12 to 15 (11 to 14 in the Revised Text) of Bk. II with Lockhart's Life of Scott (London, 1837), VI, pp. 95-98.

succeeded !¹ You will now come to London in triumph.

Yours ever

BD.

Give my best compliments to your lady, & your visitors,² with whom I regret my too short acquaintance.

Murray is desirous of writing you as to all that has happened. I could not refrain giving you the gratifying result, but consider this letter as perfectly confidential.

As I am writing foreign letters I have scribbled by mistake on foreign letter paper, which I trust you will decypher.

Thanks for yr. kind letter. I am quite well. I confess it is a difficult subject to handle on a sheet of paper. You must know that I called on Tuesday morning at Murray's & finding that he was in a more

LETTER 6

23 November, 1825

November 23, 1825.

Wednesday.

My dear Lockhart, of what I had felt, since we had become

acc. Ecce iterum Crispinus !³ I think I have kept my
my experience of your disposition, my knowledge of your views

¹ "Disraeli had succeeded, by dint of 'three hours uninterrupted conversation', in restoring Murray's confidence in Lockhart as future editor of the Quarterly; see below, letter 6, para. 3. In some respects this episode may parallel Vivian's second interview with the Marquess of Carabas (I, pp. 84-104; Wolf, I, pp. 39-49; Guedalla (Bk. II, Ch. 2) pp. 29-38.

² One of these visitors was Mrs. Lawrence Lockhart, John Gibson's sister-in-law, to whom Disraeli refers at the end of letter 9.

³ An allusion to the first line of Juvenal's fourth satire: 'Ecce iterum Crispinus, et est mihi saepe uocandus/ ad partes...' which William Gifford in 1802 translated as 'Again Crispinus comes; and yet again,/ And oft, shall he be summoned to sustain/ His dreadful part' (ed. John Warrington, Dent, 1954, p. 36).

word & am pestering you with communications right sufficient. I am quite alarmed for the postmasters bill, which by the bye will not be the less light for the, by no means slender sums incurred by my own postage during my two visits, & which I am ashamed to say, your fascinating conversation prevented me from daily remembering & reimbursing.¹

The Emperor is writing you a long & full letter, but his morning has been so broken into that he has desired me again to write, lest you might imagine that all was not right.

I feel that a day should not pass without your having a somewhat more definite idea of what has passed than my last communication afforded. I confess it is a difficult subject to handle on a sheet of paper. You must know that I called on Tuesday morning at Murrays & finding that he was in a more temperate humor I determined to bring matters to a crisis. What I said in our three hours uninterrupted conversation it is difficult to detail. My communications were the results of what I had seen, of what I had felt, since we had become acquainted. I detailed my sentiments as to your character, my experience of your disposition, my knowledge of your views in life. The result you are acquainted with. Do not think

¹ The sums involved may well have been 'by no means slender', for the penny post was not introduced until 1840; at this time the rate for a letter between Melrose and London was 14d (Robson's London Commercial Directory for 1822, p.29, and The Post Office London Directory for 1827, p.489).

Murrays conduct in this last affair wavering & inconsistent. His situation has been very trying. You & he have never rightly understood each other. When such connections were about to be formed between two men, they should have become acquainted not by the stimulus of wine. There should have been some interchange of sentiments & feeling. The fault I know was not yours - the result however was bad. All men have their sober moments & Murray in his is a man of pure & honorable I might say, elevated sentiments. He wanted only to be told, what has now made him esteem the happiest incident in his life his connection with Mr. Lockhart.

I am speaking soberly & seriously. The trash which has been bandied about, as to your character, your feelings, your society, can only be effectively repelled by your conduct as really known, by ^{<your>} an acquaintance with yourself 'in spirit & in truth'.

The Baronets letter¹ has opportunely assisted me. When I ^{<saw>} say, it was worthy of him I say sufficient.

When you come to London you will be introduced on the best understood terms not only to all the regular supporters of the Q. R. but to Coleridge himself, who will feel honored by your acquaintance & will be most happy to assist you in the mechanical detail.

¹. At Lockhart's request, Scott had written Murray on November 17th endorsing his appointment to the Quarterly (Grierson, Scott Letters, IX, pp. 284-289).

As to your coming to London it cannot be too speedy. I expect in less than 8 & 40 hours to have arranged everything about your house. Many are offered & all suitable. The other affairs are prancing on in such prosperity, that a strong desire is expressed by all parties to commence operations sooner. The Emperor will <right> write how. When you come to town, it will be advisable for us to have some private conversation before you see him, as I think it proper for both of you that you should be put in possession of what has passed without obliging him to detail.

B. Disraeli

LETTER 7

24 November, 1825

J. S. Lockhart Esq. impossible to give you any more
Chilswood today & various things which have been given

My dear Lockhart,

I received your letter of Monday enclosing one for me this morning. I immediately put yours in an envelope & forwarded it to Murray without comment. He has this moment left me, having called in consequence. He tells me that he wrote to you last night.¹ I did the same & have troubled

¹ For the text of this letter, see Familiar Letters of Sir Walter Scott, II, pp. 444-445.

My compliments to all, & my best respects to Sir W.
when you write.

I shall not add to the unpleasant sensations which you
may have already experienced by presuming to offer advice from
a young gentleman aged twenty. I may however my dear Lockhart
indulge the hope, that your destiny may be crossed no more &
that no indiscretion may prevent your splendid talents from
having their full & fair play. If so, the result will be
gratifying to your

very attached friend

B. Disraeli

LETTER 7

24 November, 1825

J.G.Lockhart Esq.

Chiefswood

My dear Lockhart,

I received your letter of Monday enclosing one for me
this morning. I immediately put yours in an envelope &
forwarded it to Murray without comment. He has this moment
left me, having called in consequence. He tells me that he
wrote to you last night.¹ I did the same & have troubled

¹ For the text of this letter, see Familiar Letters of Sir
Walter Scott, II, pp.414-415.

you with epistles every day since I left Chiefswood. I hope you have received them all.

I have often complained to you of Murray's inconsistency, vacillation & indecision. I have done more, I have complained of them to himself. I regret it. Had I had any conception of the utter worthlessness of the intriguing, selfish & narrowminded officials by whom he has been so long surrounded, I certainly would have restrained my sentiments, and have pitied the noble & generous minded being who was subjected to such disgusting thralldom. When I tell you, that in the whole of this business Murray does really appear to have behaved in a manner more correct & more conscientious than I did previously consider human nature to be capable of, I feel that there is no person in the world to whom it can give such pleasure as yourself. It is impossible in a letter to give you any idea of the agitating & curious scenes which have taken place during these last days. The scales however have at length fallen from our friends eyes, & the walls of the Admiralty¹ have resounded to his firm & bold but gentlemanly tones. He is now in no state of excitement to which any reaction can ensue. His mind has undergone a revolution which it has taken ten years to bring about, & which, I honestly confess, I did conceive could never have occurred. You would not know

¹ i.e., Croker and Barrow.

him for the same man. Thank God I did not postpone my departure to town one other second! that I was not utterly

On the whole my good & excellent Lockhart I do most sincerely rejoice that ^(these) our affairs have taken this turn. Some ill blood may for a moment have existed, some intemperate expressions may have perhaps on both sides been uttered, but after all, without these mental purges where should we have been? Half confidence & hollow friendship¹*, & wavering councils, are of all things the most terrible, & I cannot see, that if this affair had not happened, you could come to London without these being your welcomers. I am most obliged to you for the frank & straightforward manner in which you have delivered yourself in this days letter. Honor me with your perfect confidence always, & I hope you will have no cause to repent. with the imperial request.

We are most nervously anxious to see you in London. Affairs assume a most important aspect. I need not say what place you hold now really in Murrays confidence. He says without any violent protestations & with a coolness which I never remember to have witnessed in him, that he listens to no more opinions on these affairs & that while he has cash in his pocket & blood in his veins he stands by John Gibson Lockhart, even unto death. You knew my former opinion of the Emperor.

¹. The manuscript is obscure at this point; it may read 'Half confidence shallow friendship', etc.

You know I have had some little experience with him & you have sometimes expressed your opinion that I was not utterly ignorant of this world's ways. Now I deliberately & solemnly declare that I have as much confidence in the permanency of Murrays present disposition as I have in your honor.

But to your coming to town. Murray is most anxious to know whether you & Mrs. Lockhart, her maid & your son & his peculiar suite will not come up immediately to Whitehall Place. Everything is already prep[ared]¹ for your presence, actually prepared and allow me to hope that you will come. Before that time I very probably shall have a house for you, but it appears to me by no means undesirable that Mrs. Lockhart should not be bored by novel domesticities immediately on her arrival. I do most sincerely hope therefore, that you will comply with the imperial request.

There is one thing which I again mention. It is absolutely necessary, that you & I should have a conversation before you see Murray. I have no objection to his knowing it, but mind me, it is absolutely necessary. ^{sevi} who has been so zealously kind in Yours ever, (for it is not etiquette for an architect B. Disraeli in these matters) has It is vain to give you any details. I keep them till we meet yourself.

¹ Tear in manuscript; possibly 'preparing' would be a better reading. ¹ level distinction as an architect and designed the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge, the layout of Regent Square, and a wing (unbuilt, however) of Balliol College, Oxford.

* The expression 'my father-in-law' might conceivably refer to Scott, but 'George Boston' has made the ingenious conjecture that 'Lockhart has evidently been chaffing him about his attentions to one of the Miss Murray's'. See Art John Murray (London, 1932), p. 19.

(as)
LETTER 8

25 November, 1825

Friday, Nov. 25

1825.

My dear Lockhart,

I have just received yr. lfe of Tuesday evening. God grant your communion with my father in law may lead to no ill consequences. You are perhaps by this time convinced that you have ^{been on a} wrong scent.* As for Murray, he has done more in eight & forty hours than if he had been sweating at the business as many weeks, & actually the Prince of Pluck & Count of Confidence must now be added to his numerous titles. I shall not show however to him the letter I received from you today, because I think when all goes right, I may as well be silent. I much regret that I have been unable to arrange the business of yr. house as I had hoped. The prices are so enormous & the season has commenced so early that I do not feel justified in closing with anything. Basevi¹ who has been so zealously kind in this business (for it is not etiquette for an architect to interfere in these matters) has counselled me today to advise you to come up & settle for yourself.

¹ George Basevi (1794-1845) was a cousin of Disraeli's who later achieved distinction as an architect and designed the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge, the layout of Belgrave Square, and a wing (unbuilt, however) of Balliol College, Oxford.

* The expression 'my father in law' might conceivably refer to Scott, but 'George Paston' has made the ingenious conjecture that 'Lockhart had evidently been chaffing him about his attentions to one of the Miss Murrays'. See At John Murray's (London, 1932), p. 19.

In the meantime ^(as) our affairs are momentarily growing more important. You are wanted every second of the day. For heavens sake then close with the imperial offer & come to town immediately. This, this indeed is most, most important for us both. Pray come.

As to other matters, my father sends you his Compliments & says if you think an article on Charles 1st worthy your attention, he will pledge himself that you shall have it for your first number.¹ As he has of late years cut the Q. R. he begs it to be understood that he now resumes his labors merely because you are its Conductor & that if at any time circumstances may arise from which you may deem it desirable for your interests that this fact be known you are perfectly at liberty to say so.

I have had a view of the gubernatorial article & I must say, altho' I hope I am the last fellow in the world who has a foolish penchant for parental effusions, that for exquisite philosophy, beautiful feeling, intense interest & profound research, it was never equalled.

Your fear that Murray may be endangered by a conference with Croker makes me smile. Perhaps you smile too at my remark, but my dear fellow, as ye showman says 'you will see

¹. But Lockhart did not take up the offer - or perhaps Isaac withdrew it. The first two volumes of D'Israeli's Commentaries on the Life and Reign of Charles I were published by Colburn in 1828. Volumes III and IV appeared in 1830 and volume V in 1831, all three issued by Colburn and Bentley.

what you will see'. communication from Trollope, the West.
house agent, that in the greatest haste I. Rodder in Duke St.
which we looked over t. BD. is to let for the season or year.

Rodder I have just received a letter from Powles & shall dine
with him today. I must again impress upon you the mighty
importance of your presence in London. May the next post
bring news of your movement southward.

Compliments to Mrs. L. &c.¹

By the 27th the crisis ^{was} over, ^{and} Lockhart's appointment to the
Quarterly ^{assured} ~~was over~~. 'A letter from Lockhart in the evening',
wrote Scott in his journal, 'All safe as to his unanimous
reception in London'.²

shall then, if they suit, conclude the bargain.

I have received your letter, & I believe have attended to
everything necessary.

28 November, 1825

Monday 1/2 pt 4.

My dear Lockhart,

As my letter[?]s about yr. house may give you a great
deal of uneasiness, I just write to say, that I have this

is to the paper, everything goes on swimmingly. The

1. There are two notes on the outside flaps of this letter:
'I have written every day since I left Chiefswood. I
mention this lest any shod. have miscarried.' to the right of
the address, and to the left of it, 'I have got a title'.
This last note is probably a reference to Disraeli's
invention of the title 'The Representative'. On December 21st
Lockhart wrote to Murray: 'I am delighted, and what is more
satisfied with Disraeli's title - the Representative. If
Mr. Powles does not produce some thundering objection, let
this be fixed in God's name'. (Smiles, Murray, II, p. 206).

2. The Journal of Sir Walter Scott (London, 1939), I, p. 20.

afternoon recd. a communication from Trollope, the West. house agent, that the house of the Revd. Rodber in Duke St. which we looked over togt. is to let for the season or year. Rodber has sold the lease to the present lessor, who wishes to go to the Continent for a yr. before he takes up his residence in Duke St. & wishes to let it for this year furnished. Altho' the house is not at all desirable as a permanent residence, yet taking into consideration the unparalleled difficulty of getting houses at all & also the contiguousness of the premises in question to Murray (a most important consideration for the first year of our labors) I^(he) have thought proper to require the terms &c. from Trollope without loss of time, & shall then, if they suit, conclude the bargain.

I have received your letter, & I believe have attended to everything necessary. I should not of course have pressed yr. immediate coming to town had I been aware of the circe you mention.¹ The sooner you arrive after, the better. Indeed the experience of every moment makes me the more urgent for your presence.

As to the paper, everything goes on swimmingly. The terrific agitation in which the City and the whole commercial interest has been thrown during the last three weeks may have prevented Powles from writing to you, but I know that he is attending to the points you mention.

¹ Probably Lockhart's testimonial dinner early in December; he left for London on the 5th. (Lang, Lockhart, I, pp. 374-375).

As to the review, Coleridge, if possible, is more friendly. I mentioned I believe about my father. I have called at Wrights¹ three or four times & have kept him up to the sticking point. The Chancery Commissioners publish their report at the commencement of this year & it is therefore very important that you should have a first-rate article on the subject. Means might be taken to get a previous view of the report, & place it at the head of the article. I have attended to this. Palgrave² came to town last week & called on Murray yesterday in consequence of the Q. R. reports. He was delighted at hearing you were to be Editor, & enquired whether his assistance would in future [be] acceptable. He was of course not a little pleased when he found that his services had been already desired.

Merivale³ (a gentlemanly Whig) called immediately after to congratulate M. on the coup he had made in bringing you up to London &c. &c. great unknown &c. &c. such a father-in-law &c. &c. In short all goes right & you have only to come to the Quarterly for September, 1826; Disraeli may have acted as Lockhart's agent in negotiating over the article.

1. 6 Stone Buildings, Lincoln's Inn.
2. Francis Palgrave (1788-1861), father of the anthologist, was a close friend of both Murray and Isaac D'Israeli; he later contributed to the Edinburgh Review and the Quarterly, and later became prominent as a medieval historian.
3. John Herman Merivale (1779-1844), translator, antiquary and poet. He was a friend of Byron, Murray and Isaac D'Israeli, and contributed to Blackwood's and the Quarterly.

London to take advantage of affairs, and indeed as the Marchioness of Hastings says, in the letter which Mrs. Lawrence Lockhart wrode, not let me bring to town 'who the devil ever heard of anything against you' which considg. all we know, was rather an odd observn[.] in gt haste, BD. In the neighbourhood of Cavendish-square, and working his way along in a zigzag Chevenix¹ will be in London as soon as yourself. In his situation, enquired if he wanted a cab. 'No, &--we have had immense trouble about the Burke², & I am flattered today with the prospect of success.

I have heard nothing from Maginn & am most anxious to see him.

I send you 'the Age'.³ Is it credible, that it has come to this !!!!!

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1. Richard Chevenix (1774-1830), chemist, dramatist and poet, was an occasional contributor to the Edinburgh Review and the Quarterly.
 2. Probably a reference to the Review by Richard Wellesby, Marquis of Wellesby, of James Prior's Memoir of the Life and Character of the Right Hon. Edmund Burke which was published in the Quarterly for September, 1826; Disraeli may have acted as Lockhart's agent in negotiations over the article.
 3. Cynthia Courtown writing to Vivian Grey: "Do you ever see the Age? It is not proper for me to take it in. Pray send me down your numbers, and tell me all about it; that's a dear". (II, p. 101; Wolf, I, 166; Guedalla [Bk. III, Ch. 8] p. 434). The Age (1825-43), ed. Charles Westmacott, was a satirical weekly retailing the latest social and political scandals - many of them no doubt invented for its pages. Michael Sadleir gives a sketch of its history in Bulwer and His Wife: A Panorama (London, 1933), pp. 340-345 and passim. Its wit was both uneven but its malice constant. In politics it was mainly high-Tory (though this did not prevent it from attacking both Tories and Radicals), and it specialised in a facetious kind of character assassination; the Duchess of St. Albans, for example, because of her theatrical background, was always referred to as 'her Grease'. A few extracts from its collection of 'Murrayana' will give a fair illustration of the paper's tone:

Here the letters to Lockhart come to an end, leaving Disraeli and his correspondent at the height of their

Footnote ³ continued from previous page - Another crisis,

Anecdote X. - When our hero set up the 'Rip', alias the Representative newspaper, to eclipse the Old Times, it is well known that he had no less than six editors in seven successive days. During these annoying changes, John was seen one evening wandering in the neighbourhood of Cavendish-square, and working his way along in a zigzag fashion, ... by a certain humane person, who feeling for his situation, enquired if he wanted a cab. 'No, d--me Sir', hiccupped John, 'I want an editor !'

Anecdote XIII. - When Mrs. Elliott and John were --- But perhaps this anecdote may not be authentic: -- we shall enquire.

Anecdote XX. - When Murray was a miscellaneous vendor of books and stationery, in Fleet Street, that is, before he aspired to the ranks of 'absolute' publisher, a gentleman applied to him one day for a copy of Beckford's Caliph Vathek, which is rather a scarce book. After searching his shelves for some time in vain, he returned to his customer, and with one of his own winning smiles declared, that he could not put his hands on Caleb Vathek; but if Caleb Williams would do as well, that work was at his service.

- Spirit of the Age Newspaper for 1828
(London, 1829), pp.251-254.)

The copy of the Age that Disraeli enclosed for Lockhart was probably of the November 27th number containing a vituperative attack, full of personal abuse, upon Joseph Hume, a leading Radical M.P. and Leonard Horner, a Whig politician, both of whom had just delivered speeches in Edinburgh.

1. Blake, p.47, quoting the Murray Papers.

2. See above, letter 4, para.2.

3. See above, letter 7, para.6.

Here the letters to Lockhart come to an end, leaving Disraeli and his correspondent at the height of their triumph in the crisis over the Quarterly. Another crisis, however, was on the horizon. No record of this new difficulty survives, but that it involved intrigues centred on the 'Emperor' is clear from Murray's subsequent letter to Sharon Turner:

So my complaint against Mr. D'Israeli's son arises solely from the untruths which he told and for his conduct during, (of which in part I made the discovery subsequently) and at the close of our, in fact, transactions ...¹.

Perhaps the double-dealing of which we catch glimpses in these letters - Disraeli at one moment reporting secretly on events at Albemarle Street, in effect behind Murray's back,² and at another insisting to Lockhart that it 'is absolutely necessary, that you & I should have a conversation before you see Murray',³ - had finally proved too intricate even for the resourceful Disraeli to control. The scene of the final breach, never healed in the eighteen years left to Murray, had serious flaws - for all its wit and high spirits - was to be expected. It is over-written, melodramatic, and even, at times, tasteless. Disraeli himself looked back on it in 1832 interview with the Marquess of Carabas:

I will not affect to give any description of the conduct of the Marquess of Carabas at this moment.

scarcely excuse.³ Yet for all this, it has

¹ Blake, p.47, quoting the Murray Papers.

² See above, letter 4, para.2. Guizot, IX, IV, Ch.3, p.460.

³ See above, letter 7, para.6. and from Guizot.

³ M & B, I, p.192.

He raved ! he stamped ! he blasphemed ! but the whole of his abuse was levelled against his former 'monstrous clever' young friend; of whose character he had so often boasted that his own was the prototype, but who was now an adventurer - a swindler - a scoundrel - a liar - a base, deluding, flattering, fawning villain, &c. &c. &c. &c.

'My Lord !' - said Vivian.

'I'll not hear you - out on your fair words ! They have duped me enough already. That I, with my high character, and connections ! that I, the Marquess of Carabas, should have been the victim of the arts of a young scoundrel !' ¹.

The novel that Guizot had hailed as representing the first stage in 'la carrière du roman politique' was, in fact, merely the upshot of an imbroglio between Disraeli on the one hand and Lockhart, Murray and the Admiralty clique on the other. No careful deliberation as to the nature of politics or its place in a work of fiction had gone into the book; rather, its beginning and end lay in a sense of injustice, and a burning desire for revenge. That a work so conceived and written in the most 'hot and hurried' ² manner should have had serious flaws - for all its wit and high spirits - was to be expected. It is over-written, melodramatic, and even, at times, tasteless. Disraeli himself looked back on it in 1832 as 'the most unequal, imperfect, irregular thing that indiscretion ever published' with 'faults which even youth can scarcely excuse'. ³ Yet for all this, it has

¹ II, pp. 201-202; ~~Wolf, I, p. 214; Guedalla, Bk. IV, Ch. 3, p. 160.~~

² III, p. 6; ~~Wolf, I, p. 236; deleted from Guedalla.~~

³ M & B, I, p. 192.

a wit and vigour that, in a more subtle form, were to become Disraeli's hallmarks while the incident out of which it grew gave him one of his most characteristic themes, the struggle of an ambitious and clever youth to master the will of a great magnifico. The Carabas 'type' will emerge again in Lords Marney and de Mowbray in Sybil and perhaps most splendidly in the Marquess of Monmouth in Coningsby. Even in 'Ixion in Heaven'¹ Jove (who, like Lord Monmouth, cannot bear to be kept waiting for dinner) is a little like the Marquess of Carabas while Ixion, the audacious young usurper, is very like Vivian: the tale, indeed, could well be read as a broadly allegorical re-working of Disraeli's contretemps with Murray.

¹ Published originally in Colburn's New Monthly Magazine, December, 1832, and February, 1833.

Such of Trenholme, especially in the third volume, is taken up with moral and theological discussions the tedious of which can scarcely have appealed to Disraeli. Ward's main purpose in this highly didactic novel is to attack the deism and scepticism prevalent in the fashionable world, but he also satirises

¹ See, for example, Michael Sadleir, Salmer I A Pantheon (London, 1931), p.117.

² II, p. 95; Wolf, I, p. 463; Guendalla (Br. III, Ch. 7), p. 429.

~~Guizot's judgment was perhaps even sounder than he knew.~~ which
~~give Vivian his special character. No doubt the success of~~

We have seen some of the autobiographical elements that went into the first part of Vivian Grey; it remains to consider Disraeli's use of printed sources.

Robert Plummer Ward's Tremaine, or The Man of Refinement (1825), the first of the series of fashionable novels published and assiduously puffed by Henry Colburn, has often been cited as the 'chief impulse'¹ behind Vivian Grey. Certainly there are connections between the two books. We may be sure that Disraeli read Tremaine and admired its dandyism and wit - but he also saw fit to satirize its diffuseness and its piety:

Mr. Mackaw looked at the volume, and turned it over, and sideways, and upside downwards: the brain of a man who has written three folios on parroquets is soon puzzled. At first, he thought the book was a novel; but then, an essay on predestination, under the title of Memoirs of a Man of Refinement, rather puzzled him; then he mistook it for an Oxford reprint of Pearson on the Creed; and then he stumbled on rather a warm scene in an old Château in the South of France.²

Much of Tremaine, especially in the third volume, is taken up with moral and theological discussions the tedium of which can scarcely have appealed to Disraeli. Ward's main purpose in this highly didactic novel is to attack the deism and scepticism prevalent in the fashionable world, but he also satirizes

¹ See, for example, Michael Sadleir, Bulwer : A Panorama (London, 1931), p.117.

² II, p.95; Wolf, I, p.463; Guedalia (Bk.III, Ch.7), p.429.

affectation, ambition and intrigue - the very qualities which give Vivian his special character. No doubt the success of Tremaine demonstrated to Disraeli that there was a ready market for society fiction, but he did not need to go to it for any of the ingredients of Vivian Grey. For the two elements in Tremaine upon which he might reasonably have been expected to draw - the representation of real persons in fictional characters, and the precise delineation of the ways of the great world - were not new to him when Ward's novel first appeared.

The most recent, and perhaps the most distinguished, writer of 'key' novels was Thomas Love Peacock. His Headlong Hall had been published in 1816, Melincourt in 1817 and Nightmare Abbey in 1818. From John Cam Hobhouse's account of Disraeli's meeting with Peacock in 1848 at Erle Stoke, it appears that he must have known at least Headlong Hall:

He was much delighted with Peacock, and surprised to find in him the author of 'Headlong Hall', and calling him his 'master'; but, says Peacock to me, 'I did not know he was my pupil'.¹

Disraeli's surprise need not be wondered at; Headlong Hall was published anonymously, and all Peacock's other novels, during his lifetime, as 'By the Author of "Headlong Hall"'.¹

¹ Lord Broughton, Recollections of a Long Life, ed. Lady Dorchester (London, 1909-1911), VI, p.228. The passage is taken from Hobhouse's entry in his diary for 22 December, 1848. See also p.47, n.4 below.

SS, n.3

¹ M & B, I, pp.96-99.

But how seriously can one take his praise of Peacock?

Disraeli was a consummate flatterer and would not have been above a few inaccurate but ingratiating words to a fellow guest; that much must be admitted. Yet somehow the notion of Peacock as the young Disraeli's 'master' rings absolutely true, for they share several important qualities: a love of comic invention spiced with irony, a taste for dramatic and even farcical incidents, a determination to show that characters in fiction can think as well as feel, and above all an unerring sense of the comic possibilities of crisp conversational exchanges. They even have failings in common: too much talk and too little action, loosely constructed plots and transparently contrived denouements. If Disraeli did indeed have a 'master' it must have been Peacock.

Another example of the roman à clef which must have come to Disraeli's notice was Lady Caroline Lamb's Glenarvon (1816). From his earliest youth he had been fascinated by Byron and everything connected with him. While in Geneva in 1826 he sought out Byron's boatman, and not only elicited from him the story of the nocturnal storm upon the lake described in the third canto of Childe Harold, but even tried one stormy night to reproduce the scene by venturing onto the lake himself.¹ Such a youth could not have failed to read so notorious a novel as Glenarvon, in which Lady Caroline exhibits, amidst detailed accounts of the beau monde, the distraction to which

¹. M & B, I, pp.96-99.

her infatuation for Byron had reduced her. She herself figures as Calantha, Byron as Glenarvon, Lord Melbourne as Lord Avondale, Miss Milbanke as Miss Monmouth and Lady Oxford as Lady Mandeville.¹ There is also a mysterious exotic named Viviani who flits in and out of the action and is responsible for two murders; it is not until the end of the book that the reader learns that Viviani is Glenarvon in disguise - his alter ego, in fact. Disraeli may well have taken the name of his own wicked hero from this representation of the darker side of Byronism. For Vivian, however one may view his motives is certainly a villain in terms of the consequences of his actions: he murders Cleveland in a duel and ^{be deliberately causes} Mrs. Lorraine, more subtly, by causing her to burst a blood vessel in a fit of rage. Although there is no evidence that he read it, another possible source is Maria Edgeworth's Vivian (1812), a novel much admired by Stendhal for its study of social and political ambition. (See Compléments et fragments inédits, 1803-1820, ed. V. del Litto [Paris, 1930], p.173 and Molière, Shakspeare, La comédie et le rire [Paris, 1930], pp.227-268). Disraeli did, however, read Maria Edgeworth's Patronate (1814); see Home Letters (London, 1885), pp.68-69.

¹ Even the text of Glenarvon's letter rejecting Calantha after he has begun a liason with Lady Mandeville is based on Byron's letter of rejection supposedly dictated by Lady Oxford. Cf. Glenarvon (London, 1816), III, pp.82-83, and Letters and Journals of Lord Byron, ed. Rowland E. Prothero (London, 1898), II, p.136 n.

There is a further link between the two books. Contemporary keys - notoriously inaccurate though they are - assert that Mrs. Lorraine is a portrait of Lady Caroline. But this is rather a puzzling notion, for the major characters in Vivian Grey are all persons whom Disraeli knew - and there is no evidence that he ever met Lady Caroline. Some elements in Mrs. Lorraine, as has already been suggested, may have derived from the mysterious Mrs. Elliott.¹ Yet in her dogged pursuit of all the attractive men on hand, whether married or not, contemporary readers could not have missed an allusion to Lady Caroline's career, so liberally revealed in the pages of Glenarvon.²

As an illustration of how not to write a roman à clef, Glenarvon could hardly be surpassed. To display one's emotions so blatantly as did Lady Caroline was positively to invite the world's ridicule. In a 'key' novel it is essential that any autobiographical elements should be at least partially screened - as much to protect the author from the taunts of a possibly hostile public as to tantalize the reader's curiosity. One wants not a confessional tone but - as in Peacock - a detached and ironic one. The detachment might be largely pose, as it is in Vivian Grey, but it must be there if one is

¹ See p. 21, n. ¹50, above.

² Blake (p. 39) complains that Mrs. Lorraine is 'alleged without much basis to be a portrait of Lady Caroline Lamb' - but the 'basis' is surely Glenarvon.
 and Isaac's *could well be*, see James Ogden, *Isaac D'Israeli* (Oxford, 1969), pp. 59-70.

is not to be laughed out of court. ~~This was the lesson of Glenarvon, and it was one that Disraeli never forgot.~~

His father, indeed, might have helped him in this respect, for he had written two 'key' novels, Vaurien (1797) and Flin-Flams (1805), and one somewhat feverish 'political romance' called Despotism: or The Fall of the Jesuits (1811).

The main plot (for there are several sub-plots) of Vaurien concerns the attempt of a M. Vaurien, a French Jacobin agent, to promote a revolution in England along the lines of 1789. Among those he enlists in his conspiracy are Mr. Subtile (William Godwin), Mr. Reverberator (Thomas Holcroft), Mr. Rant (John Thelwall) and, as ostensible leader of the plot, Lord Belfield, a republican aristocrat whose wife serves as an example of the dissolution of London society. Isaac sees the source of contemporary unrest in the Godwinian mixing of politics and philosophy which, by fostering a belief in the 'infinite perfectibility'¹ of man, establishes the foundation for revolutionary action. 'Some assure us', he writes, 'that the human mind is in it's [sic] infancy; I fear it is in it's dotage ...'². As a novel, Vaurien is Isaac's most accomplished production; even so, it is not free from the dullness that afflicts all his fiction, and its neat and happy conclusion is a transparent bit of stage-managing.

¹ I, p.vi and passim.

² I, p.viii. For a more detailed account of the plot of this and Isaac's other novels, see James Ogden, Isaac D'Israeli (Oxford, 1969), pp.59-70.

Flim-Flams ! or, the Life and Errors of My Uncle, and the Amours of My Aunt ! is an exceedingly strange book - one hesitates to call it a novel - the general effect of which one might describe as a cross between Tristram Shandy and Flaubert's Bouvard et Pécuchet. Like the latter, it is a vast and miscellaneous compendium of the latest intellectual fads - but all done up in a friendly burlesque of Sterne's prose style. Isaac presents his satire of contemporary delusions in a chronicle of the futile dabbings of 'My Uncle'. Landscape gardening, architecture, political economy, metaphysics, phrenology, learned societies, chemistry, painting, literature, the grand tour, astronomy, sculpture, antiquarianism, the picturesque, geology, botany, entomology, medicine, physics and German transcendentalism all come in for ridicule - much of it at the expense of well-known contemporaries whom 'My Uncle' is perpetually quoting and (with disastrous consequences) trying to emulate. Although the result is more often tedious than funny, Isaac never forgets that his underlying purpose is the denigration of everything the new century stands for, and in particular the belief in material and moral progress:

We live, cried my Uncle, in topsy-turvy times, a wonder-working age ! In a short time, I am positive, we shall save churning butter and baking bread, for I am growing my own bread and butter in my botanical garden*. But a more eventful aera approaches ! We shall, I am convinced at no distant period, have silver saucepans, and golden kettles; all our kitchen utensils, now poisoning us by their oxyds of copper, lead, and iron, which unperceivably we swallow with our food, shall be done away with, and life be hence prolonged - as erst, when a man became a heir at law, after passing through a century of youth and vigour*!

Notwithstanding these grand promises of my Uncle, and the nineteenth century had already commenced, I own he dashed our hopes by his economical philosophy and German substitutes ! we were on the point of having gold for the common use of the kitchen, and yet we were actually living as if we were all at the workhouse ! What a thing is modern philosophy ! It promises gold, and it gives us soup squeezed out of bones !¹.

And again:

To oblige this walking metaphysician we all promenaded after him. When he saw all the room in motion, alive and animated, he seemed a little calmed.

I have been travelling these thirty years to discover 'the source of the moral motion'. Mankind is coming of age, after an infancy of near sixty centuries !

We are, no doubt - interrupted by Uncle, significantly nodding his head - doing wonderful things - but nothing to what the 19th century shall produce !!!².

Isaac's misgivings as to the 'march of mind' were shared by both Peacock³ and Disraeli. The latter, indeed, has Vivian's father remark, 'When our moral powers increase in proportion to our physical ones, then huzza for the perfect-

¹ II, pp.128-132.

² II, pp.222-223.

³ James Ogden remarks that Isaac's methods 'closely anticipate those of Peacock in his satirical tales' (p.61) adding that he 'pioneered types of subject-matter and techniques of presentation which were more effectively used by such novelists as Peacock and Benjamin Disraeli; but he lacked the novelist's gift of insight into character and ability to conceive a work as an artistic whole'. (p.69) There is no evidence, however, that Peacock knew Isaac's novels; the sale catalogue of his library (Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge, 11-12 June, 1866) records none of them, nor are they mentioned in his letters.

ibility of man !' ¹, while Vivian himself declares: "Scribble, scribble, scribble", as the Duke of Cumberland said to Gibbon, should be the motto of the mighty "nineteenth century" ².

The last of the three novels, Despotism or the Fall of the Jesuits, is an attempt to show the evils of absolute power (with an obvious reference, in 1811, to the rise of Napoleon) in the career of the Jesuit Ribadeneira who, through Machiavellian stratagems, becomes General of the Order only to have his power finally crumble to nothing through his own implacable arrogance. The reader, however, is never taken beneath the surface of Ribadeneira's character; his motivation, like Tamburlaine's, is a 'given' which we are not invited to explore. Apart from 'convulsive intrigues, and dark machinations' ³ - the workings of which remain unexplained - the most political feature of the book is its assumption that the lust for power is the root of all evil, with its corollary that absolute power corrupts absolutely.

At one point in Vaurien, a novel which begins to develop a political cast towards its conclusion, Isaac launches into a critique of gothic fiction urging that if a novel is to present marvellous occurrences at all they should be explained in a way consistent with what we know of nature ⁴. Like much of

¹. I, p.63; Welf, I, p.28; Guedalla (Bk.I, Ch.9), p.24.

². II, p.163; Welf, I, p.196; Guedalla (BK.IV, Ch.1), p.150.

³. I, p.198. Ogden, p.70.

⁴. I, p.196.

his criticism - and in the same chapter he remarks that the 'pleasure of discovering the character in the events'¹ is one of the principal rewards of the novel-reader - this modest plea for realism is eminently just. The trouble is that he often does not follow his own good advice, especially when it comes to treating politics; he explains neither the mechanics of his intrigues nor the motives of the intriguers, with the result that many of his incidents seem as marvellous as anything in gothic fiction. Not surprisingly, he considered Despotism his least successful novel, complaining to Douce in 1811 that 'no one, but the Author, seems to understand the Work !'². Whether he ever discussed with his son the peculiar difficulties of 'political romance' we do not know; but if he did, we may be sure that Despotism was not held up for emulation.

Disraeli's relationship with his father was a close one, and it is reasonable to assume that he must at an early age have read Isaac's novels with interest. That, in fact, he did so is borne out by an examination of Vivian Grey. There is even a hint in one of Mrs. Austen's letters that in the original manuscript he may have perpetrated a whimsical plagiarism or two - though whether from the novels or Isaac's other writings is unclear:

¹. I, p.192.

². Quoted by Ogden, p.70.

I hope 'Mr. Grey's experience' will not throw a cloud about our bright and amusing visions. I shall be delighted when he has seen and approved your plans ... I have been comparing some of the coincidences I named, and can you believe it, there are passages nearly word for word ... I would give the world to know what Mr. D. says of the Ms. tomorrow.¹

But 'Mr. D.' appears to have objected, for no trace of 'word for word' borrowing, at least from the novels, is evident in Vivian Grey. There are, however, plenty of indications that Disraeli had read the books with some care.

Of the three, he seems to have derived the least, so far as Vivian Grey is concerned, from Despotism. But it may be worth mentioning here - though the point will be taken up again in Chapter Six - that the theme of a Tory alliance between the crown and the people which plays so central a part in Coningsby and Sybil may have had its genesis in this novel. Isaac touches on the idea in his preface² and in Chapter X he attacks the despotism of the Venetian Republic broadly along the lines of Disraeli's assault upon the English constitution in Book I, Chapter 3, of Sybil where he complains that the Whigs have become a 'Venetian oligarchy' which can only be overpowered through a union of sovereign and people.

There are two allusions to Flim-Flams in Vivian Grey,

¹ Hughenden Papers, Box 291, folder marked 'Vivian Grey'; not in Blake, Jerman or M & B. The letter is undated but was probably written a few days after the letter of 25 February, 1826. (Jerman, p.53).

² pp.x-xi. 'As many Philos have solemnly testified that words have crept out of stones, and no one accounts how the devil they got inclosed, Mr. Le Cat thinks ...'; it was apparently something of a standing joke with him.

neither of them very important. The first occurs at the end of Book II when Vivian one evening at Château Désir, hearing Mrs. Lorraine singing from her window, walks along the balcony towards a point directly beneath it and there, to his consternation, stumbles upon Colonel Delmington:

He apologised to the militaire for treading on his toes, and wondered 'how the devil he got there !' ¹.

The last six words are enclosed in quotation marks not because they are colloquial, but in order to suggest an ironic juxtaposition with their source in Pope's Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot -

Pretty ! in Amber to observe the forms
Of hairs, or straws, or dirt, or grub, or worms;
The things, we know, are neither rich nor rare,
But wonder how the Devil they got there ? ².

- which Isaac, writing about the theory that toads sometimes issue from stones, paraphrases as:

But though these toads are neither strange nor rare,
He wonders how the devil they got there !

From Pope. ³.

It is an example of Disraeli at his most preciously literary, intent in this case upon a private joke between himself and his father. The other reference to Flim-Flams is Vivian's

¹ II, p.266; Wolf, I, p.420; Guedalla (Bk. II, Ch. 16) p. 94.

² Twickenham Edition, IV, ed. John Butt (London, 1953), p.108, ll. 169-172.

³ I, p.76n. Isaac repeats the allusion, more covertly, in volume II, p.18n: 'As many Philos have solemnly testified that toads have crept out of stones, and no one accounts how the devil they got inclosed, Mr. Le Cat thinks ...'; it was apparently something of a standing joke with him.

panegyric on the Purple Emperor butterfly¹*, an insect which Isaac introduces into his second volume in order to poke fun at 'the entomological style and entomological sensibility' ~~to~~ ^{by showing} show how an account of the Purple Emperor's habits might perfectly well fit such a being as Napoleon.² Vivian's rhapsody on the butterfly is, in turn, an excellent parody of the fulsome style Isaac adopts throughout Flim-Flams.

These connections between Vivian Grey and Isaac's second novel are interesting enough - but all they show is that Disraeli had read his father's book and enjoyed playing a few literary games with it in his own first effort. The case is somehow ^{what} different with Vaurien. The vulgar and calculating parvenues of this novel, Mr. and Miss Million³*, provided him with the name and some of the gaudiness of his own Mrs. Million⁴*, although, as we have seen, Mrs. Coutts's visit to Abbotsford was probably the immediate inspiration of

Disraeli's Mrs. Millions.* When Vivian is deterred from trying to master Platonism and the later Platonists by his father's opinion that such metaphysical studies are mere 'idle puzzles of the brain'⁵*, Disraeli is giving us a condensation of the character of Vivian himself. Lady Caroline's Vivian is a

1. II, pp. 178-180; ~~Wolf, I, pp. 203-204; omitted from Guedalla.~~ ^{deleted in 1853.}

2. II, pp. 78-79, 117-121 and plate 5. Wolf (II, p. 373) refers in a note to this episode, but his page reference is to the second edition.

3. I, pp. 112-114, 263-300, and II, passim.

4. I, pp. 182-189; ~~Wolf, I, pp. 82-85 and 102-105; Guedalla (Bk. II, Ch. 12), pp. 62-64.~~

5. I, p. 46; ~~Wolf, I, p. 21; Guedalla (Bk. I, Ch. 6), p. 47.~~

* See above, p. 31, n. 1.

two amusing chapters on 'The Platonist' in Vaurien¹. Isaac describes the peculiar malady of the Platonist (based on Thomas Taylor) as 'a debauchery of sensibility, breaking from a most inflammable and abstruse imagination'. The Platonist, he writes, 'had unfortunately plunged deeply into the commentaries of certain Platonists, who explain Homer into allegories, discover celestial systems, and convert the Iliad into a Greek Bible of the arcana of nature ... He read of a thousand fine meanings in Plato and Homer, which he could never have imagined, but having once imagined them, he added a thousand more of his own'. Such was the power of his obsession that

he could never read Plato without violent palpitations of the heart, and more than once such has been the agony of his sensibility, that he fainted over the volume as he held it with a kind of religious tremor. These indeed are the peculiar features of enthusiasm, that abstraction of the imagination which roves amidst unknown scenes, and gazes on poetical chimeras.²

It is precisely the fate against which Vivian's father warns him in Chapter 6 of Book I.

But Disraeli's greatest debt to Vaurien was for the character of Vivian himself. Lady Caroline's Viviani is a shadowy and enigmatic villain with little of the colouring of life; not so Vaurien:

His genius was probably equal to the greatest occasions; he, at least, had always found it superior to whatever he

¹. II, pp.165-213.

². II, pp.168-170.

had hitherto directed it. He joined to a calm and persevering industry, an ardent and hazardous temerity; we must risque a throw in the game of human life, he would say. His passions were impetuous when let loose, submissive when checked. He was judicious and inventive; temperate and voluptuous; avaricious and lavish. In his boundless soul was contained each extreme of passion; flexible or firm, it felt not the influence of human events; never so miserable, as to be hopeless of enjoyment, never so humiliated, as to be forgetful of glory. But his imagination, by having greater magnitude than that of other men, confounded itself like a whale in shallow water; men indeed were instruments in his hand, but for some vast and romantic projects, they were instruments too uncertain and too feeble. Like Archimedes, he thought that had he fit machines, he wanted not the skill, to move the earth at his pleasure.¹

His 'chimerical head ... considered Europe as the inheritance of every sublime politician'² and, like Vivian, he would conquer it by conquering Society first:

Vaurien was the soul of the conversation. He flew from topic to topic, and poured out to Miss Million all the little news that he had collected in the course of that morning's perambulation. He hinted at a marriage, narrated a duel, discovered an intrigue, and informed them, that last night Lady Bab lost ten thousand pounds at one sitting, and was obliged to retire for the unexpected delivery of a son and heir. He was a volume of secret memoirs; and every trifle was embellished by the graces of his manner. To Emily he directed a richer vein of conversation: he listened to the copious catalogue of her talents, as given by Miss Million; and when one of her paintings was pointed out to his observation, he gazed on it for some time, commended it in a few energetic expressions, and, at the same time, exhibited his accuracy of taste by some slight corrections, and his picturesque fancy, by describing how, from that subject, another might be formed more romantic to the imagination.³

1. I, pp.203-205.

2. II, p.312.

3. II, pp.25-26.

These words could apply equally well to Vivian. And if their characters are similar, so are their machinations: Vaurien exploits Lord Belfield, nominally the leader of the conspiracy, much as does Vivian the Marquess of Carabas; even the final parting, when Belfield upbraids his young mentor 'for his abortive and vast designs'¹, seems a foreshadowing of Vivian's last interview with Carabas. The difference is that Isaac merely states the nature of his characters' relationship - he does not show it in operation.

Vaurien, then, was one of the ingredients that went into Disraeli's conception of his hero. Another, of course, was Byron, or perhaps more accurately the Byromania of the age. For to say that Vivian - a character who in ambition and ruthlessness seems to anticipate such Romantic figures as Julian Sorel² and Eugène de Rastignac - was created after any single model, even the author himself, would be but a half-truth. Disraeli's characters, like his books, were often - at least in their origins - patchwork affairs. Vivian is a portrait, certainly, but not of his creator so much as of his creator's dandaical public mask. It 'would not have been possible to have found a more easy, agreeable, unaffected companion' when in private, Disraeli's friend James Clay remarked of him; but when they 'got into society his

uninformed reader is apt to feel that the entire has grown out

¹ II, p.311.

² Stendhal, indeed, must have read Vivian Grey, for he alludes to it in the preface to his first novel Armance (Paris, 1827).

coxcombry was intolerable'.¹ That coxcombry is at the heart of Vivian Grey. In part two it expresses itself in the rough, picaresque good nature of Essper George; but in part one Disraeli's gnawing resentment at the ill-treatment he felt he had received from Murray and his clique imparted to it a bitterness that was ultimately fatal alike to the character and the novel. For the trouble is that the dandaical mask - against all the rules - keeps slipping off to reveal the scowl underneath. This is evident in Vivian's gratuitous murder of ~~both~~ Cleveland, and Mrs. Lorraine, and especially in the flippant dialogue between Vivian and Cleveland in Chapter 1 of Book IV, where what might have been a delicately modulated sequence of contemporary absurdities is marred by Disraeli's desire to get in as many digs as possible at a miscellaneous collection of bêtes noires: the stock exchange, parliament, the Tory party, Canning, Southey, the Edinburgh Review, Stewart Rose, Lockhart and Murray. The effect is clever enough - but it leaves a sour taste. Disraeli's powers as a satirist were too diffuse, as indeed the whole book is, for him to be able to mount a sustained and convincing attack upon the vagaries of contemporary society. Like many nineteenth century satirists, he was not really confident of the ground he stood upon, so that even an uninformed reader is apt to feel that the satire has grown out

¹ Sir William Gregory : An Autobiography, ed. Lady Gregory (London, 1894), p.96. M & B, I, p.155, and Blake, p.64, both give the passage slightly inaccurately.

of some personal grudge rather than, as in writers like Swift and Defoe, from a carefully considered moral position.

The most successful element in Vivian Grey, as one might expect of its dandified author, is its splendid sense of theatre.¹ A good illustration of this is the brilliant set-piece (and is has, by the way, not the slightest relevance to the rest of the novel) in the chapter called 'Marriage', in Book II, where Vivian flirts with Julia Manvers.² With all its preciousness it is a superb scene: the timing is perfect, the whimsy irresistible. And in its delicate toying with the superficialities of life in such a way as to suggest - and only suggest - some of the more poignant realities underneath, it is Disraeli at his best. For the dextrous manipulation of surface events in order to evoke a very different reality beneath is one of Disraeli's chief accomplishments as a novelist. The ironic sense, developed originally perhaps in self defense, had already become a way of seeing life - and to few subjects was it better suited than to politics. The amusing account of the Marquess's 'Cabinet Dinner' in Book II, Chapter 17,³ where decisions of the greatest importance are shown to depend upon the most trivial accidents, might have

¹ Disraeli was devoted to the theatre, opera and ballet; see his letters in M & B, I, Ch. 4, and VII, Ch. 9-10 (6-7 in Guedalla 1855.)

² I, pp. 144-161; Wolf, I, pp. 65-72; Guedalla (Bk. II, Ch. 9), pp. 50-56.

³ I, pp. 252-266; Wolf, I, pp. 113-120; Guedalla (Bk. II, Ch. 16), pp. 88-94.

served as a descant on Disraeli's pronouncement in part two that 'in politics, however tremendous the effects, the causes are often as trifling ...'¹ The tension between trifling causes and tremendous effects is what makes such chapters as 'Marriage' and 'The Cabinet Dinner' so fascinating. The question now was whether Disraeli could learn to extend this effect beyond the confines of a single chapter, which I actually don't like, all of them disjointed, and therefore shattering the interest to pieces'.¹

The reason for this disjointedness is not far to seek. Disraeli had read widely in the picaresque tradition; a particular favourite was *Le Sage*:

Few men were better acquainted with their species than Gil Blas, when he sat down at Liria, and yet he had only travelled in two or three Spanish provinces.²

And in a letter addressed to his father from Paris, during his visit to the continent with the Austens, he writes:

¹ The Hon. E. Phipps, *Memoir of Plummer Ward* (London, 1850), II, p. 154. The passage is from a letter to Mrs. Austen, March 10, 1827.

² III, p. 15; deleted from revised text of 1853. For a scene in which Esaper George mimics both Punch and the 'diable boiteux' see III, pp. 318-320 (Bk. V, Ch. 15). See also III, p. 165 (Bk. V, Ch. 8). There are numerous references to *Gil Blas* in the *Star Chamber* - for example: 'Oh the sauce plume of modern criticism, which can make even carrion palatable! The

¹ III, p. 289; ~~Wolf, I, p. 382; Guedalla (Bk. V, Ch. 14) p. 267.~~ as Gil Blas did the old cat which was so exclusively puffed by his landlord, that he actually digested it as a young, sweet, and tender rabbit!' (24 May, 1826, p. 116).

CHAPTER TWO

Vivian Grey, Part II

If part one of Vivian Grey suffers from too episodic a structure, it nevertheless represents an enormous improvement over part two, which Plummer Ward succinctly described as 'a sort of magic lantern of pictures; many of them very beautiful, some of them very grotesque, and some which I actually don't like, all of them disjointed, and therefore shattering the interest to pieces'.¹

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1. The Hon.E.Phipps, Memoir of Plummer Ward (London, 1850), II, p.154. The passage is from a letter to Mrs.Austen, March 10, 1827.

2. III, p.15; deleted from revised text of 1853. For a scene in which Essper George mimics both Punch and the 'diable boiteux' see III, pp.318-320 (Bk.V,Ch.15). See also III,p.165 (Bk.V, Ch.8). There are numerous references to Gil Blas in the Star Chamber - for example: 'Oh the sauce piquante of modern criticism, which can make even carrion palatable ! The public are now devouring Granby with as much zest, as Gil Blas did the old cat which was so exquisitely puffed by his landlord, that he actually digested it as a young, sweet, and tender rabbit !' (24 May, 1826, p.116).

We reached Paris Sunday afternoon, and are now in the Rue de Rivoli, the best situation here, having obtained these apartments in a manner which would make an excellent chapter in Gil Blas, and beat the adventure of the Hotel Garni Hollow.^{1.}

As references scattered throughout part two indicate, he had also read Don Quixote, Rousseau, Scott, a gothic novel or two (possibly Melmoth the Wanderer or The Monk) and Byron's Corsair, Childe Harold and Don Juan.^{2.} In part one he describes Vivian as 'an intellectual Don Juan, reckless of human minds, as he was of human bodies',^{3.} and on the evidence of one of his working notebooks^{4.} it appears that he intended part two as a series of picaresque adventures - alternately sentimental, moral, sublime, grotesque and humorous - or, as the author of the Key puts it, a 'modern Diable Boiteux'.^{5.}

^{1.} M & B, I, p.95.

^{2.} III, pp.257,165, IV, pp.355-356, V, p.9, pp.121-134; Wolf, I, pp.366,319, II, pp.487,494, 254-259; Guedalla, Bk.V, Ch.13, p.255, Ch.8, p.224, Bk.VII, Ch.3, p.425 (partly deleted), Ch.4, p.428, Ch.6) pp.443-450.

^{3.} II, p.51; Wolf, I, p.444; Guedalla (Bk.III, Ch.5) p.443.

^{4.} Hughenden Papers, Box 11, A / III / E/5.

^{5.} Key to Vivian Grey (London, 1827), p.8. The author was probably Disraeli, but the point can be contested. For evidence on his connection with the Star Chamber, which also puffed the novel and in which a version of the Key originally appeared, see Appendix A.

Michael Sadleir's introduction to The Modern Aesop and The Dunciad of To-day (London, 1928) and M.A.Fido, 'The Key to Vivian Grey of 1827', Notes & Queries, Nov. 1965. Various letters and MSS. at Hughenden (Box 220, E/II/1; Box 309, R/II/C/1-28) point conclusively to Disraeli as the moving spirit behind the Star Chamber.

One curious puzzle connected with the two parts of Vivian Grey centres on Disraeli's insistence in a remark to Sir Philip Rose that he had written 'Vivian Grey' at Hyde House and completed the manuscript before he was twenty-one.¹ That this statement must be untrue so far as the first two volumes are concerned has generally been agreed. But could Disraeli not have meant what now we know as the second part of the novel - volumes three through five? This would make sense of the statement recorded by Rose and it would also explain why part two should have been based upon Disraeli's travels in Germany during 1824. When he returned from that tour he had determined not to be a lawyer and had a good year ahead of him in which to work on the book. There is evidence in the manuscript itself² to support this hypothesis, though admittedly the case must be largely circumstantial. Nevertheless, the draft in Disraeli's hand of the first two volumes is written on leaves watermarked predominantly 1824 and 1825, whereas the second part of the novel - volumes three through five as published - is written on leaves predominantly watermarked 1820. There are breaks in the sequence and it is only fair to add that chapters two to four of Book IV bear 1821 watermarks while the early pages of Book V (where Disraeli has made insertions replying to the criticism in the

1. Hughenden Papers, Box 27, A/XI/A/12.

2. Houghton Library, Harvard, MS.Eng.840.
See p.139, n.1, below for a short description of the four sets of extant MSS.

press of part one) bear 1823 and 1825 watermarks; similarly, a very few leaves later in the novel are watermarked 1826. But these are all clearly recognisable exceptions; the overwhelming majority of the leaves on which part one is written are watermarked 1824 and 1825 and those on which part two is written are watermarked 1820.

The notebook in which Disraeli recorded some of his ideas for part two is a miscellaneous collection of jottings, in ink and pencil, briefly sketching unusual characters and incidents - some observed or imagined, presumably, and others drawn from his reading. There are also a few pages of highly derivative verse in the manner of Spenser and Byron, both great favourites of Disraeli's youth. The contents throughout are arranged quite haphazardly, giving the impression that the volume must have been picked up and worked in more or less at random, probably either during the visit to the Rhine valley in 1824 or shortly afterwards.

Fragmentary as it is, the notebook reveals a great deal. The rapturous invocation to the Rhine and its tributaries with which part two opens, for example, appears in the notebook as verse.¹ Perhaps not wanting to pit his own talents so directly against Byron's as the introduction of such Byronic lines at the very beginning of the novel would imply, Disraeli recast the verse as prose, though some readers may feel that

¹ See pp.5,7 and 8. Disraeli also introduces patches of prose poetry into The Young Duke and Alroy.

he would have done better still had he cut it out altogether.

At another point in the notebook he inserts the following sketch:

The man who had only studied snuffboxes.

'Allow me to use your box sir?'

'Certainly'.

'A Louis Quatorze sir?'

'I had no idea of that'.

'Oh yes sir decidedly a L.Q. I'm acquainted with every kind of snuff box. have spent 1500£ a yr. upon them &c.'

Finds every box to be a L.Q.¹.

From this vignette he constructs the episode of the tedious Marquis de la Tabatière, an object lesson in boorishness on the text that "the true bore is that man who thinks the world is only interested in one subject, because he, himself, can only comprehend one"^{1, 2}.

One of the notes, headed 'Germany. incidental characters.'³ seems to refer to Kant:

A German Professor - 15 hours a day at least - never moved out of his village or little town - yet a mighty scholar.⁴

But before he got down to writing the novel, Disraeli dropped this idea in favour of something more specific encountered in his reading:

1. p.1.

2. III, pp.104-107; Wolf, I, pp.286-288. The original published version is somewhat overdone, but Disraeli condenses it to good effect in the revised text; see Guedalla (Bk.V, Ch.6), pp.203-205.

3. p.3.

4. Ibid.

A German Philo. Mad. d. S. Vol. 3. 107 with him you lose Idealists. The character of Fichte p.110-11.¹

He then gives a précis of the passage cited - which is in Murray's 1813 French edition of Madame de Staël's Germany - and adds: 'Vid also p.113, 116, 118. all the ideas shod. perhaps be brought into play'.² And so they are - in Chapter 3 of Book VII. But he brings in more than just the ideas:

Germany, III, pp.110-111.

Vivian Grey³.

Fichte est dans les idées abstraites une tête mathématique comme Euler ou La Grange. Il méprise singulièrement toutes les expressions un peu substantielles: l'existence est déjà un mot trop prononcé pour lui. Être, le principe, l'essence sont à peine des paroles assez éthérées pour indiquer les subtiles nuances de ses opinions. On diroit qu'il craint le contact des choses réelles, et qu'il tend toujours à y échapper. A force de la lire ou de s'entretenir avec lui, l'on perd la conscience de ce monde, et l'on a besoin, comme les ombres que nous peint Homère, de rappeler en soi les souvenirs de la vie.

'Yes, yes! we have plenty of metaphysicians, if you mean them. Watch that lively-looking gentleman, who is stuffing kalte schale so voraciously in the corner. The leader of the Idealists - a pupil of the celebrated Fichte! To gain an idea of his character, know that he out-herods his master; and Fichte is to Kant what Kant is to the unenlightened vulgar. You can now form a slight conception of the spiritual nature of our friend who is stuffing kalte schale. The first principle of his school is to reject all expressions which incline in the slightest degree to substantiality. Existence is, in his opinion, a word too absolute. Being, principle, essence, are terms scarcely sufficiently etherial, even to indicate the subtle shadowings of his opinions. Some say that he dreads the contact of all real things, and that he makes it the study of his life to avoid them. Matter is his great enemy. When

1. p.13.

2. Ibid. His copy of the book is in the library at Hughenden with the passage quoted below and several others scored in pencil in the margin.

3. IV, pp.346-347; Welf, II, pp.482-483; Guedalla (Bk.VII, Ch.3) . pp.423-424.

as Jonathan Wild did the Ordinal the moment when he was about altogether more selective. his source as the hint for on are all his own. A good example following notes: Die Berggeist, or ballet of account. Vol.3. p.579. 2. The reference is to T.F. Disraeli and Picturesque Tour in France you converse with him you lose all consciousness of this world. My dear sir', continued Mr.Sievers, 'observe how exquisitely Nature revenges herself upon these capricious and fantastic children. Believe me, Nature is the most brilliant of wits; and that no repartees that were ever inspired by hate, or wine, or beauty, ever equalled the calm effects of her indomitable power upon those who are rejecting her authority. You understand me? Methinks that the best answer to the idealism of M.Fichte is to see his pupil devouring kalte schale!'

We find, in fact, that at the very beginning of his career as a novelist Disraeli resorts to what one might call the 'collage' technique of composition so much favoured by modern writers like Mann, Joyce and Lawrence Durrell. But the method was not an invention of Disraeli's, though it might be argued that he carried it to a new stage of sophistication. His father had used it (identifying his sources, however, in footnotes) in all his novels, and especially in Flin-Flams; Lady Caroline Lamb used it in Glenarvon¹ and T.H.Lister was so much given to it in Granby (1826) that, as Stewart Rose wrote, 'almost every part of the author's system is borrowed, and so engrained in him is this habit of appropriation, that he even takes things from the works of his predecessors which are so little worth taking, that we could almost suppose he must have stolen them as mechanically

1. See p.43, n.2, above.

as Jonathan Wild did the Ordinary of Newgate's corkscrew at the moment when he was about to be hanged'.¹ Disraeli was altogether more selective. Sometimes, indeed, he merely uses his source as the hint for an incident in which the details are all his own. A good example is revealed in the following note:

Die Berggeist, or ballet of children. Vid. Dibdin's account. Vol.3. p.579. 2.

The reference is to T.F.Dibdin's Bibliographical, Antiquarian and Picturesque Tour in France and Germany (London, 1821), III, pp.579-582, where Dibdin describes a pastoral ballet given by beggar children at Vienna. There is no direct connection between this passage and the description of the children's chorus in Vivian Grey³, though it is a reasonable inference that the former suggested the episode which, however, Disraeli does not develop so fully as one might have expected from his evident interest in ballet.⁴

But the work upon which Disraeli drew more heavily than any other in writing part two - one might almost call it his narrow lane, with their that Vivian steered his way through the old narrow winding

¹. Quarterly Review (March, 1826), p.488.

². p.29.

³. V, pp.291-296; Welf, II, pp.340-343; Guedalla (Bk.VIII, Ch.3), pp.507-509.

⁴. V, pp.143-151; Welf, II, pp.263-267; Guedalla (Bk.VII, Ch.7), pp.453-457. In the course of his description of a performance of Byron's Corsair, Disraeli argues that the ballet, so far from being 'a vehicle for the display of dancing', should form an integral part of the opera, watched by the singers on stage and itself a part of the action.

manual - was Charles Edward Dodd's An Autumn near the Rhine. Murray first published it, anonymously, in 1818, but Disraeli used the second edition of 1821. Very likely he took it along with him on the visit to the Rhine in 1824; certainly he and his sister had gone over it carefully before his departure, as one of his letters to her makes clear:

On Saturday we visited the collection of Mr. Bethmann; in it Dannecker's grand Ariadne on the Lion, which you remember described in Dodd. 1.

Of the numerous references to Dodd in the notebook, ^{one of} ~~by far~~ the most germinal was the following:

Frankfort. Vid fair Society &c. Dodd. Let. 4.².

Although Disraeli did indeed visit Frankfort during his tour, he chose to base part of the description of Vivian's arrival in the city on Dodd rather than on his own observations:

An Autumn near the Rhine, p.70

Vivian Grey³.

The Zeil, a noble wide street, traversing the town, is the only one which can boast any regular beauty: but the old narrow lanes, with their lofty houses, dark casements, and gable fronts, have an antique gothic respectability, which reminds one of the early splendour of the Imperial City.

On crossing the bridge over the river, the crowd became almost impossible, and it was with the greatest difficulty that Vivian steered his way through the old narrow winding streets, full of tall ancient houses, with heavy casements and notched gable ends.

1. M & B, I, p.51. Letter of 23 August, 1824; the passage in Dodd is on pp.91-93.

2. p.9. Letter IV runs from p.67 to p.98.

3. III, p.20; ~~Wolf, I, p.243; Guedalla (Bk.V, Ch.2) p.478.~~

Disraeli left Frankfort on August 22nd¹, nearly a week too early for him to have had any first hand experience of the celebrated fair.² What he says of it in the novel he took, with modifications from Dodd: walls were in most instances,

The Michaelmas fair, during which I was in Frankfort, commences early in September; and its bustle and vivacity last throughout the month. The most considerable wholesale dealings are, however, transacted within the first week, when numbers of merchants flock to the fair at Leipsic. The Exchange, a small neat quadrangle, surmounted by a range of warehouses and shops, called the Braunfels, is thronged during the fair with a respectable cluster of merchants of all nations; perhaps a twentieth part of the number who assemble daily on our Exchange. High Change is about 12 o'clock, from which the merchants return home to dinner; they generally commence business at six or seven in the morning, and toil till 10 or 11 at night; not having, as yet, attained to that methodical celerity, which in London, dispatches a hundred times the amount of affairs between the commodious hours of nine and six. The large rooms in the Braunfels are fitted up as show-rooms and shops, in humble imitation of the Palais Royal, and loaded with merchandizes, showy and useful, from all quarters of Germany, Switzerland, Hungary, Poland, and Bohemia. 'Thomson's fine cotton goods from Manchester' - 'Picard, Marchand de Modes de Paris' - 'Zwingle, Uhrmacher aus der Schweiz' - and other such announcements of the trades and domiciles of the traders, attract notice in glittering capitals. The fairs, which had naturally declined during the obstructions of war, are gradually resuming their former alacrity. Frankfort, has, during the Fair, the animated aspect of a bustling, trading city. The Inns, the Theatre, the Casino, are thronged and lively; the drives round the suburbs crowded with gay equipages; the Tables d'Hôte with as motley assemblages of persons of all ranks and nations - the flowing costume of the Turk, and the venerable bearded Jew often meet the eye. ².

¹. M & B, I, p.51.

². ~~See the beginning of the passage from Dodd quoted on p.76 above.~~

². [Charles Edward Dodd], An Autumn near the Rhine (London, 1821), pp.85-87.

Here is how Disraeli treats the fair, following immediately on the passage quoted on page 76, above:

These structures did not, however, at the present moment, greet the traveller with their usual sombre and antique appearance: their outside walls were in most instances, entirely covered with pieces of broadcloth of the most showy colours; red, blue, and yellow predominating. These standards of trade were not merely used for the purpose of exhibiting the quality of the articles sold in the interior; but, also, of informing the curious traveller, the name and nation of their adventurous owners. Inscriptions in German, French, Russian, English, and even Hebrew, appeared in striking characters on each woollen specimen; and, as if these were not sufficient to attract the attention of the passengers, an active apprentice, or assistant, commented in eloquent terms on the peculiar fairness and honesty of his master. The public squares, and other open spaces, and indeed every spot which was secure from the hurrying wheels of the heavy old-fashioned coaches of the Frankfort aristocracy, and the spirited pawings of their sleek and long-tailed coach horses, were covered with large and showy booths, which groaned under the accumulated treasures of all countries: French silks, and French clocks, rivalled Manchester cottons, and Sheffield cutlery; and assisted to attract, or entrap the gazes, in company with Venetian chains, Neapolitan coral, and Vienna pipeheads: here was the booth of a great bookseller, who looked on the approaching Leipsic fair for some consolation for his slow sale, and the bad taste of the people of Frankfort; and there was a dealer in Bologna sausages, who felt quite convinced that in some things the taste of the Frankfort public was by no means to be lightly spoken of. All was bustle, bargaining, and business; and Vivian Grey, although he had no chance either of winning or losing money, was amused.¹

The comparison is illuminating. Disraeli has ignored

Dodd's account of the business hours of the exchange, his unfavourable comparison with the 'methodical celerity' of the London market and his characterization of the Braunfels as a dispatch of the business of a meal. On sitting down you

¹ III, pp. 20-21; Wolf, I, pp. 243-244; Guedalla (Bk. V, Ch. 2).
pp. 178-179.

'humble imitation of the Palais Royal'. By putting everything emphatically out of doors, he has created a more festive setting, and one closer to the great German fairs of the middle ages. But he has retained the fact that the Leipzig fair begins shortly after the opening of the fair at Frankfort, and turned it to good account in the amusing contrast between the disgruntled bookseller and the contented sausage dealer introduced towards the end of the paragraph. The description of the 'showy' and cosmopolitan character of the displays he retains and greatly elaborates while the 'glittering capitals' of the notices Dodd describes become 'striking characters' on 'pieces of broadcloth of the most showy colours; red, blue, and yellow predominating'. Both the goods and the 'bustle' he describes in ringing terms very different from Dodd's provincial market fair 'gradually resuming' its 'former alacrity'. Disraeli has worked closely with his source, but he has not followed it uncritically.

Another note - 'Vid Dodd p.20 for acct. of court dinners, opera, etc.'¹ - refers to a passage from which he takes little more than information:

The system of a German dinner, which is national, because the same at the table of a Prince and at the Table d'Hôte of an Inn - bating the additional plate and delicacies of the former - would have precisely hit the taste of Justice Greedy, as being admirably contrived for the undisturbed dispatch of the business of a meal. On sitting down you

2. IV no 112-113: Held 11-12-13 - Protokoll (IX, VII, Ch. 2) p. 118; in (the last two sentences are deleted).

1. p.9. vised text

find the board amply covered with dishes - there, merely to afford the eye a preliminary feast. In an instant the servants transport them to the sideboard, from whence they are offered one after another, in prescribed routine, ready carved to the company. In this way the knife and fork are kept in constant occupation, without the awkward interruptions of attention to others, by a succession of from fifteen to five-and-twenty dishes; beginning with soup and bouilli, continued by ragouts, made dishes, and entremets of various kinds, of course including sausages and sour kroust, summed up with substantial roast meat. Every lady and gentleman have their decanter of light Rhenish or Burgundy before them, which they drink without ceremony; and the more precious wines are handed round in the course of dinner. An attractive neighbour is thus the only possible diversion from the business in hand, which can happen at a German table. The Germans, in fact, dine as might be expected of people who do not breakfast - a meal much out of use with them, and rarely extending beyond a light milk roll, and a cup of coffee. I confess I approve the ease and sociability of this system. Conversation flows on without interruption, and the guests enjoy all the indolent luxury of a banquet. 1.

Vivian Grey:

The arrangement of a German dinner promotes conversation. The numerous dishes are at once placed upon the table; and when the curious eye has well examined their contents, the whole dinner, untouched, disappears. Although this circumstance is rather alarming to a novice, his terror soon gives place to self-congratulation, when he finds the banquet reappear, each dish completely carved and cut up. A bottle of wine being placed to each guest, your only business is, at the same time, to refresh both your body and your mind, by gratifying your palate and conversing with your neighbour. Would that this plan were adopted in our own country ! 2.

Although Disraeli accepts the general line of argument in his source, he subordinates it at the outset to the 'ease and

1. pp.21-22.

2. IV, pp.332-333; ~~Wolf, II, p.476; Guadalla (Bk.VII, Ch.2) p.448; in~~
(the last two sentences are deleted).

the revised text

1. pp.25-26.

sociability' of which Dodd writes only at the end. This provides the main theme of the passage, and while in the earlier description of the Frankfort fair he embellishes Dodd by adding material, here he prunes rigorously - references to forks, knives, servants, the food itself and the German style of breakfast all being jettisoned - so as to make the whole narrative an illustration not of the business-like aspects of the Museum, we left the form of a tent, and held a German dinner but of its sociability. The mystery is that he should have bothered to go to Dodd at all, for during his tour of the Rhine he had visited plenty of inns and must have observed the dining arrangements at first hand. Disraeli's was far from an unoriginal mind - but it seems to have required fairly substantial raw materials before it could set to work. A few pages further on in Dodd, as Disraeli's note implies, there is a brief account of the opera - in fact, the opera at Darmstadt under the patronage of the Grand Duke of Hesse who, like Beckendorff in Vivian Grey, 'has always refused promises of constitutions to his subjects' and whose government 'has the character of being mild and paternal'.¹ Dodd goes on to relate that 'The Grand Duke himself is a profound musician, and to his enthusiastic taste and his superintending skill, the Opera owes its excellence and celebrity. Rehearsals

constantly take place in his Royal Highness's Cabinet, at which he presides with the enthusiasm and the energy of a scientific

¹ pp.25-26.

musician'.¹ But Disraeli, although he must have read the ensuing few pages with interest, for once did not draw upon Dodd, at least directly, in Vivian Grey. For he had himself seen the Grand Duke conducting Rossini's Otello at Darmstadt and described the scene in a letter to his sister:

M & B, I, p.51². Vivian Grey³.

On Sunday, after visiting the Museum, we left Frankfort for Darmstadt, a lounging little city full of new and architectural streets. The Opera is celebrated throughout Europe, and justly so. We attended it in the evening - Otello; the scenery is the most exquisite I ever met with, the discipline of the orchestra admirable. The Grand Duke an immense amateur. The Royal Box is a large pavilion of velvet and gold in the midst of the Theatre. The Duke himself, in grand military uniform, gave the word for the commencement of the overture, standing up all the time, beating time with one hand and watching the orchestra through an immense glass with the other.

The Royal box was constructed in the form of a tent, and held nearly fifty persons. It was exactly in the centre of the house, its floor over the back of the pit, and its roof reaching to the top of the second circle; its crimson hangings were restrained by ropes of gold, and the whole was surmounted by a large and radiant crown. The house was, of course, merely lighted by a chandelier from the centre.

The Opera for the evening was Rossini's Otello. As soon as the Grand Duke entered, the overture commenced; his Royal Highness coming forward to the centre of the box, and himself directing the musicians; keeping time earnestly with his right hand, in which was a very long black opera-glass. This he occasionally used, but merely to look at the orchestra; not, assuredly, to detect a negligent or inefficient performer; for in the schooled orchestra of Reisenburg, it would have been impossible even for the eagle eye of his Royal Highness, assisted

1. p.26.

2. The letter is dated 23 August, 1824, from Heidelberg.

3. V, pp.138-139; Wolf, II, pp.260-261; Guedalla (Bk.VII, Ch.7).
pp.451-452.

where Vivian is no mere spectator as it was by his long black opera-glass, or for his fine ear, matured in the action. Read with one as it was by the most complete book gave Disraeli an acquaintance study, to discover there either inattention or feebleness.

There is no question of borrowing here. Disraeli simply drew the scene from memory, for the details that had struck him forcefully enough to seem worth recording for his sister were the details that became most firmly implanted in his memory. The same could be said of the sketch of Emms in the first two paragraphs of Chapter 5, Book V, which parallels very neatly, even to the number of rooms in the 'Princely Bathing House', the description in another of his letters to his sister.¹ As we have seen in the case of part one, he was as ready to draw material from his experience as he was from his reading.

If An Autumn near the Rhine was useful to Disraeli as a source for passages which he could adapt to his own purposes, it was perhaps even more valuable for the information it contains on German society generally. When he toured the Rhine valley with his father and Meredith they went as unabashed tourists with no entrée into the circles of the nobility. If they saw the Grand Duke of Hesse, it was at the opera - not, as Dodd could boast, in private.² Yet much of part two is set in palaces, castles and country houses

¹ M & B, I, pp.49-50. The letter is dated 19 August, 1824, from Mainz. He may, of course, have consulted his letters while working on the novel - as he would later do in writing Catharine Fleming; see Appendix E.

² p.25: 'I had, however, the honour of being presented to him, and found his conversation ... humane and sensible'.

where Vivian is no mere spectator but an important participant in the action. Read with enthusiasm and imagination, Dodd's book gave Disraeli an acquaintance which experience had denied him with the life and manners of the German courts. The whole character of Beckendorff, the enigmatic premier who has no 'von' to his name but nevertheless manages to rule Reisenburg (and much of Germany) from behind the Grand Ducal throne, could well be an elaboration upon Dodd's sketch of the declining political power of the old nobility and the attendant rise of a bourgeois officialdom.¹ From pages 155-157 he could have learnt about German boar hunting, a sport in which Vivian saves the life of the Prince of Little Lilliput (Bk.VI, Ch.2); from pages 76-78 about the formation of the Confederation of the Rhine and from pages 328-333 about the rift between the King of Wirtemberg and his mediatized Princes, two small episodes in recent German history upon which Disraeli builds the main political action in the novel, the abortive plot of the Prince of Little Lilliput to wrest his authority back from the control of the Grand Duke of Reisenburg (Bk.VI, Chs.3-8); from pages 284-285 about mediatized princes generally; from pages 286-287 and 334-335 about the aristocratic custom of the morganatic marriage, such as unites the Grand Duke and Madame Carolina (Bk.VI, Ch.4); and from pages 190-191² about folk

¹. pp.297-305.

². One of the legends mentioned by Dodd concerns a Knight of Rodenstein, a surname which Disraeli uses in part one (II, pp.36-40; ~~Wolf, I, pp.437-439; Guedalla, Bk.III, Ch.4, pp.407-409~~).

superstitions of ghostly knights and Jäger who harrow the countryside rather as does the Wild Huntsman of Essper's tale (Bk.VI, Ch.1). It is no exaggeration to say that Dodd's An Autumn near the Rhine was indispensable to Disraeli in writing part two of Vivian Grey.

But this is not to say that his own experiences were any less indispensable. A look at the origins of two episodes in the novel - Vivian's first meeting with Beckendorff and the weird drinking scene at Schloss Johannisberger - will show how adept Disraeli was at creating characters and incidents out of seemingly random recollections.

For the earlier part of his 1824 visit to the continent, Disraeli kept a very sketchy diary; towards the end of it, during his stay at Aix, he made the following entry:

Visited in the morning the collection of M. Betendorf. The proprietor having no place to put this collon in, has warehoused or rather stacked them - for many lie in cases one upon an other. The appearance of the room in which they are stowed was so mean that we imagined that our commissaire had taken us to a picture dealer & were with difficulty persuaded to proceed. We were fortunate for we had the opportunity of inspecting the richest private collon in the world & one containing many things unequalled over all Europe. We enjoyed the collon partarly [sic] from the very convenient & luxurious manner in which we viewed them. Chairs were placed for us opposite a standing frame in the best light in the room & the pictures were brought singly & placed on the frame for our inspection. We thus avoided that horrible promenade which all picture gazers are acquainted with, the perpendicular gaze, the strained & aching neck, the wearied legs &c.

I never knew a collection so rich in the ancient masters. There is an absolute profusion of Van Eyckes Albert Durers & John Eblings - all bright with colour - The specimens of the It. Schl. are first rate. The

nativity by Corregio, a glorious painting, the light comes from the Holy Boy & a man entering the stable is holding his hand before a lighted candle which he brings in with him. The colouring & composition are equally grand. The same subject is treated exactly in the same manner, even to the man with the candle, by Rubens in Aix Cath. ¹.

Here almost certainly is the genesis of the name Beckendorff and of the curious 'picture gallery' which that eccentric statesman proudly shows to Vivian and the Prince of Little Lilliput (travelling incognito as Mr. von Philipson) on their first meeting with him:

The room, which was very simply furnished, appeared at first rather gloomy; for, though lighted by three windows, the silk blinds were all drawn.

'And now', said Mr. Beckendorff, raising the first blind, 'you shall see my pictures. At what do you estimate this Breughel?'

The window, which was of stained green glass, gave to the landscape an effect similar to that generally produced by the artist mentioned. The Prince, who was already very puzzled by finding one who, at the same time, was both his host and his enemy, so perfectly different a character to what he had conceived, and who, being by temper superstitious, considered that this preliminary false opinion of his was rather a bad omen, - did not express any very great admiration of the gallery of Mr. Beckendorff: but Vivian, who had no ambitious hopes or fears to affect his temper, and who was delighted with the character with whom he had become so unexpectedly acquainted - good-naturedly humoured the fantasies of the Minister; and said that he preferred his picture to any Breughel he had ever seen.

'I see you have a fine taste', said Mr. Beckendorff, with a very serious air, but in a most courteous tone; 'You shall see my Claude!'

The rich yellow tint of the second window, gave to the fanciful garden all that was requisite to make it look Italian.

'Have you ever been in Italy, Sir?' asked Beckendorff. 'I have not'.

'You have, Mr. von Philipson?'

'Never south of Germany', answered the Prince, who was exceedingly hungry, and eyed, with a rapacious glance, the

IV, pp. 198-200; *Walt*, 32, pp. 104-105; *Snodgrass* (R.R. VI, Ch. 6)

¹. Hughenden Papers, Box 11, A / III / B, pp. 85-91. the revised text.

capital luncheon which he saw prepared for him.

'Well, then, when either of you go, you will, of course, not miss the Lago Maggiore. Gaze on Isola Bella at sunset, and you will not view so fair a scene as this! And now, Mr. von Philipson,' said Beckendorff, 'do me the favour of giving me your opinion of this Honthorst?'

His Highness would rather have given his opinion of the fine dish of stewed game which still smoked upon the table, but which he was mournfully convinced would not smoke long; or of the large cucumbers, of which he was particularly fond, and which, among many other vegetables, his amorous eye had already detected. 'But', thought he, 'this is the last!' and so he very warmly admired the effect produced by the flaming panes, to which Beckendorff swore that no piece ever painted by Gerard Honthorst, for brilliancy of colouring and boldness of outline, could be compared: 'besides', continued Beckendorff, 'mine are all animated pictures. See that cypress, waving from the gentle breeze which is how stirring - and look! look at this crimson peacock! - look! Mr. von Philipson'. 1.

Disraeli's mind was an intensely and subtly associational

one: the name Betendorf had become linked with paintings -

'the richest private collōn in the world' - and in particular

with paintings - 'all bright with colour' - which show the

effects of different kinds of lighting. From the placing of

Betendorf's pictures at Aix in 'a standing frame in the best

light in the room' so as to exhibit a succession of changing

scenes, it was a natural transition to Beckendorff's room

'lighted by three windows' each of which, through the staining

of its glass, transforms the view into a work of art - the

sombre green of a Breughel, the rich yellow of a Claude, or

the 'flaming' colours of a Honthorst.

In one of the letters to his sister Disraeli makes what

1. IV, pp. 198-200; Wolf, II, pp. 407-405; Guedalla (Bk. VI, Ch. 6) pp. 367-368.

The business about the cucumbers is deleted from the revised text.

seems at first an insignificant reference to Rhenish wines:

The governor allows us to debauch to the utmost, and Hochheimer, Johannisberg, Rudesheimer, Assmannshausen, and a thousand other varieties are unsealed and floored with equal rapidity. ¹.

Yet these wines - as exotic to an English palate as their names to an English ear - had made a strong impression upon him. The idea of 'debauch', moreover, was very much on his mind:

We have had a perfect debauch of Rubens, and Meredith and myself have destroyed the reputation of half the cathedrals in Flanders by our mysterious hints of the spuriousness of their Sir Pauls. ².

And again:

The road to Spa is a perfect debauch of gorgeous scenery. ³. These were the modest beginnings of the extraordinary drinking scene in Book VI, Chapter 1; after the party reached Coblenz an experience befell them which gave Disraeli a further idea for his venture into the grotesque in fiction. Herr Maas, the inn keeper whom he later made a correspondent of the Representative, arranged for the visitors to see an unusual collection of drinking vessels. Disraeli does not mention the incident, but Meredith records it in detail:

Coblenz. - M. Maas, our obliging host at the Hôtel de Treves, introduced us to a very choice collection of ancient glass and other rarities, at the house of a

¹. M & B, I, p.49. Letter from Mainz, dated August 19, 1824.

². Ibid., p.45. Letter from Brussels, dated August 6, 1824.

³. Ibid., p.48. Letter from Cologne, dated August 14, 1825.

deceased relation. Goblets and other pieces, cut into landscapes and figures, both in intaglio and relievo, vied with the beautiful pink Venetian, and red glass of the most brilliant colour. There was also a beer glass of very large dimensions, which belonged, in the thirteenth century, to an hilarious Archbishop of Cologne; a Champagne glass, about four feet high; and very fine enamelled glass, 1570-1590, two pieces of which represented the Emperor of Germany sitting in state, with his Electors on each side of him.¹

The exotic wines and the oversized glasses merged in Disraeli's imagination to produce that fantastic scene - parodied by Poe in 'King Pest'² - in the Schloss Johannisberger which begins with a description remarkably close to Meredith's:

From the top to the bottom of the table extended a double file of wine-glasses and goblets, of all sizes and all colours. There you might see brilliant relics of that ancient ruby-glass, the vivid tints of which seem lost to us for ever. Next to these were marshalled, goblets of Venetian manufacture, of a clouded, creamy white; then came the huge hock-glass of some ancient Primate of Mentz, nearly a yard high; towering above its companions, as the church, its former master,

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1. [William George Meredith], A Tour to the Rhine. With Antiquarian and Other Notices (London, 1825); privately printed by S. & R. Bentley, Dorset-Street, in an edition of 25 copies. Copy 'No.1' is in the library at Hughenden, inscribed on the verso of the half-title: 'B. Disraeli Esq^r from his sincere friend / The Author'.
 2. See A.H. Quinn, Edgar Allen Poe (New York, 1941), pp. 214-215, and R.L. Hudson, 'Poe and Disraeli', American Literature (January, 1937), pp. 402-416. Miss Hudson also identifies 'The Duke de l'Omelette' as a parody of the coming-of-age party in The Young Duke and suggests that Poe may have drawn upon Alroy for some of his exotic interiors.

¹ IV, pp. 28-29; ² Walt Whitman's Poetry (1912), p. 22.

predominated over the simple laymen of the middle ages. Why should I forget a set of most curious and antique drinking-cups of painted glass, on whose rare surfaces were emblazoned the Kaiser and ten Electors of the old Empire. ¹ He writes that the 'magical scene' in the

The 'two pieces of enamelled glass' which 'represented the Emperor of Germany sitting in state, with his Electors on each side of him' must have been what set Disraeli off onto the strange scene that follows: the Grand Duke of Johannisberger seated at table surrounded by his noble fellow-tiplers, each of whom exemplifies in his person both the qualities of the Rhenish wine from which he takes his name and the brutishness to which his debauchery has reduced him. ² Thus Johannisberger himself has 'a prodigious paunch', a face and forehead 'of great breadth', eyes set far apart, ears hanging 'down almost to his shoulders', and 'the most prodigious nose that Vivian ever remembered not only seeing, but hearing or even reading of. In fact, it was too monstrous for a dream'. ³ The Archduke of Hockheimer is 'a thin, sinewy man, with long carrotty hair', mustachios 'very thin', and teeth of 'extreme length, whiteness, and apparent sharpness', while the Elector of Steinberg is 'a short, but very broad-backed, strong-built man', the Margrave of Rudesheimer 'slender' and 'elegant' with a smile 'half-satirical and half-jovial', and the Baron of Asmanshausen 'a sleek man' dressed in 'crimson purple' with a tiny head and 'small, black, beady eyes, of singular order that an effect may be produced which cannot be produced by adhering to Nature'. ⁴

¹ IV, pp. 24-25; Wolf, II, p. 44; Guedalla (Bk. VI, Ch. 1), p. 294.

brilliance'. Disraeli intended this mingling of human, animal and vinous qualities to produce a grotesque effect. In the notebook he writes that the 'magical scene' in the 'drinking hall' cannot be introduced abruptly but must be preceded by a tale of mystery and superstition - Essper's tale in fact¹ - which will 'harrow the mind of the reader'.² But Essper's tale isn't really very harrowing, while the drinking scene itself is too hilarious to qualify for the grotesque; burlesque is perhaps the word for it.³

~~Disraeli was not sufficiently firm of purpose, for the section~~

1. IV, pp. 5-16; ~~Welf, II, pp. 4-10; Guedalla (Bk. VI, Ch. 1) pp. 285-290.~~

2. pp. [31-32]; See also third page from end of notebook. Throughout this chapter I have attempted a representative rather than an exhaustive survey of the notebook. All the printed works Disraeli cites have been mentioned, with one exception: 'Life of Kames. Vid Proffr. Millar p. 200, vol. 1. where a man sits down without any more knowledge than a boy & disserts of the Feodal system'. (p. 14). The work is the Memoir of Henry Home, Lord Kames (London, 1807), two volumes, by John Millar, Professor of Law at Edinburgh. Neither page 200 nor any of the surrounding pages in volume one bears any trace of the remarkable man alluded to in Disraeli's note. Possibly he recollected the passage imperfectly, or had some other work in mind; possibly the idea of the note was suggested very generally by Kames's empirical and inductive philosophy. The 'Life of Kames' does not give us the answer.

3. For the text of Disraeli's essay in defense of the drinking episode, apparently written after the novel's publication, see C. J. Cline, 'Benjamin Disraeli on the Grotesque in Literature', Review of English Studies, (January 1940), pp. 68-71. But on the evidence of this essay, he had only a vague conception of the grotesque; the closest he comes to a definition is the statement that the 'grotesque is a deviation from Nature permitted in order that an effect may be produced which cannot be produced by adhering to Nature'. that went into the book; but as a

1. N & B, I, p. 114.

In the final analysis - making all due allowance for Disraeli's intention to write a modern picaresque novel - it is difficult to find much to praise in part two of Vivian Grey. Entertaining as some of the episodes undoubtedly are, Monypenny's judgment still stands: 'the book as a whole is flat and dull, and the story leads to nothing. Our interest has no sooner been awakened in a character or a situation than we are whisked away to something else, and the result is a novel which is fragmentary and inconsecutive, and always unsatisfying'. Disraeli was not sufficiently firm of purpose, for the action never moves quite fast enough to belong in the picaresque tradition, while the occasional and unconvincing references to Vivian's remorse at his misspent youth (in both parts of the novel Disraeli appears to have been conscious of the Bildungsroman tradition) are too spasmodic to serve as a unifying theme. The talent for epigrams and the sense of irony are only fitfully evident - mainly in Essper George - and are muted in their effect by passages of self-consciously 'fine' descriptive writing such as open Chapter 1, Book V, and Chapter 2, Book VI. And most of the political machinations, upon which much of the interest of the last two volumes depends, are narrated by Sievers rather than shown in the action - the major weakness, it will be remembered, of Vaurien and Despotism. Half a dozen amusing short stories might have been made of the materials that went into the book; but as a

¹ M & B, I, p.114.

novel it can hardly be said to function.

Although Vivian himself emerges as a singularly thin figure, with hardly a trace of the vitality he exhibits in part one, there are two fascinating subordinate characters. As Disraeli's first serious attempt to portray a statesman, Beckendorff has a special interest which has often been commented upon.¹ And the portrait (in some ways, no doubt, of Disraeli as he liked to think he might one day become) is a splendid one. Beckendorff is a master of statecraft who nevertheless has his eccentricities - his picture gallery, his aviary, his unexpectedly miscellaneous library, his abstemious diet, his ever-veiled political manoeuvrings, and his mysterious past - and whose policies are based on a conviction of human fallibility such as Disraeli shared with his father. Perhaps the key to his fascination is the sense of mystery that surrounds him and, despite tantalizing hints, is never fully penetrated. The same quality shows itself in a less subtle way in the conjuror Essper George, who rather than Vivian is the picaro of the book. Essper's flamboyance is a welcome relief from some of the more tedious passages, and his dazzling wit sometimes has a Shakespearean ring:

'He is an odd knave, Lady Madeleine, that I've met with before, at other places. I believe I may add, an honest one. What say you, Essper?'

'More honest than moonlight, My Lady, for that deceives every one; and less honest than self-praise, My Lady, for that deceives no one'.

¹ M & B, I, pp.114-115, for example.

'My friend, you have a ready wit'.

'My wit is like a bustling servant, my Lady; always ready when not wanted; and never present at a pinch'.

His ploy like Beckendorff's, is that of the conjuror: to fascinate without revealing.

Disraeli could create convincing characters and situations, but he had yet to submit himself to the discipline of constructing a coherent plot. The disjointedness of which

¹. III, pp. 133-134; Wolf, I, p. 302; Guedalla (Bk. V, Ch. 7) p. 246. One's suspicion that some of Essper's speeches may not be wholly original is reinforced by Leslie Stephen's discovery of the source for one of them (Hours in a Library, second series, London, 1876), pp. 383-384) in Fuller's Holy State. Here are two passages:

...who first taught the waters to imitate the creatures on land? so that the sea is the stable of horse-fishes, the stall of kine-fishes, the kennell of dog-fishes, and in all things the sea the ape of the land.

'Oh! thou indifferent ape of Earth! thy houses are of wood, and thy horses of canvas; thy roads have no landmarks, and thy highways no inns; thy hills are green without grass, and wet without showers! - and as for food, what art thou, oh, bully Ocean! but the stable of horse-fishes, the stall of cow-fishes, the sty of hog-fishes, and the kennel of dog-fishes!'

Thomas Fuller, The Holy State and the Profane State, ed. M.G. Walten (New York, 1938), in two volumes, II, p. 130.

V, pp. 253-254; Wolf, II, p. 324; Guedalla (Bk. VIII, Ch. 2) pp. 500-501.

It is interesting to note that in Disraeli's MSS. this passage occurs as an interpolation (Houghton MS. Eng. 840, volume II, Fol. 725).

Plummer Ward complained was perhaps as much a result of his working method as of his determination to write in the picaresque mode. In examining some of his printed sources in particular, one receives the impression that while he could reshape his materials incisively enough he was still too dependent upon them. Why, having read Dodd, did he need to go back to him for a close study of particular passages of no very great significance in themselves? Why could he not build freely on his initial impressions, leaving the details to his considerable inventive powers - as he had done in the bizarre drinking scene? A lack of confidence in his powers as a novelist and an uncertainty about the direction they should take, ^{may} ~~can~~ be the only explanation. The 'collage' technique of composition was not in itself such a bad idea; but it needed a surer hand than was possessed by the author of Vivian Grey. simultaneously exploiting and mocking the fashionable novel but, after the intervention of Bulwer Lytton, was transformed into a serious work following the general outlines of Tremaine and anticipating some important features of Sybil. Disparate as in many ways they are, Poisonville and The Young Duke together prepared the way for Disraeli's ventures into the novel of social comment in the 1840's.

¹ Revue Française (I,1), January, 1826, pp.97-99.

CHAPTER THREE

Although Popanilla and The Young Duke

Guizot's complaint of Vivian Grey - that for all its witty delineations of political intrigue, it failed to recognize the motive power of social and political ideas¹ - was, as we have seen, abundantly justified. With The Voyage of Captain Popanilla and The Young Duke, however, Disraeli began slowly and tentatively to move away from the conventions of the fashionable novel and to pay greater attention to social and political concerns. In each case his reasons for doing so were different. Popanilla had been the subject of intermittent rumination for some four years and from the start was conceived as a wide-ranging allegorical fantasy exposing a variety of contemporary follies, not least the excesses of Utilitarianism. The Young Duke, on the other hand, had begun as an unashamed piece of hack work simultaneously exploiting and mocking the fashionable novel but, after the intervention of Bulwer Lytton, was transformed into a serious work following the general outlines of Tremaine and anticipating some important features of Sybil. Disparate as in many ways they are, Popanilla and The Young Duke together prepared the way for Disraeli's ventures into the novel of social comment in the 1840's.

¹ Higham Papers, Box 231, E / V / A 10.

¹ Revue Française (I,1), January, 1828, pp.97-99.

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Although much of the satire in Popanilla is directed at conditions clearly indentifiable with the 1820's - the Utilitarian movement, laissez-faire economics, the rising power of the popular press, the enthusiasm for colonial expansion and the stock market crash of 1825 - the techniques derive primarily from the eighteenth century. 'The traducers of Swift', Disraeli wrote in a private memorandum, 'when forced to acknowledge the merits of his works talk of their transitory nature. Place then out of the scales his pamphlets his satires and all his political writings. Give Swift only his Gulliver and his Tale of the Tub [sic] and then ask who is the most brilliant & original genius not only of England but of the world'.¹ If Swift's satire could rise above the 'temporary nature' of his subject matter to utter truths which went beyond the mere heaping up of ridicule, why should not Disraeli's attempt something similar? Certainly Popanilla is good evidence of his ambitions in this direction. In sketching the history of Christianity in Britain through the story of the importation of pineapples, and in representing the British constitution in the elaborate allegory of the metallic statue much 'repaired and renovated'², Disraeli

¹. Hughenden Papers, Box 231, E / V / A 10.

². Popanilla (London, 1828), p.114 (Ch.10).

must have had in mind the complex religious allegory of the Tale of a Tub - as, indeed, in creating Vraibleusiana he was surely conscious of the precedent of Lilliput. And by making the catalyst of the action Popanilla's loss of a lock of his mistress's hair he seeks to remind us of another eighteenth-century satirist:

Ye Gentlemen of England, who live at home at ease, know full well the anxiety and exertion, the days of management, and the nights of meditation, which the rape of a lock requires, and you can consequently sympathize with the agitated feelings of the handsome and hapless Popanilla.¹

Disraeli also harks back to Pope, both in Popanilla and The Young Duke, in his use of a type of wit which sometimes comes close to zeugma. Here are some specimens from The Young Duke:

In public breakfasts, he was more indispensable than pine-apples ... (I, p.73). (Bk.I, Ch.10).

... and each, who succeeded in becoming a member of the Court, felt as proud as a peer with a new title, or a baronet with an old one. (I, p.75). (Bk.I, Ch.10).

Heaven at once sends both manna and quails. (I, p.79). (Bk.I, Ch.10)

But to our tale. If I be dull, - skip: time will fly, and beauty will fade, and wit grow dull, and even the season, although it seems, for the nonce, like the existence of Olympus, will, nevertheless, steal away. (I, p.108). (Bk.I, Ch.14).

It is pleasant to hear our fathers praised. We too may inherit their virtues with their lands, or cash, or bonds ... (I, p.219). (Bk.II, Ch.8).

'But what the deuce is death, when dinner is waiting all this time!' (I, p.226). (deleted in 1853).

¹. Ibid., p.17 (Ch.3).

So, he consoled himself by a little chat with Lord Mildmay, who sat smiling, handsome, and mustachioed, with an empty glass, and who was as much out of water as he was out of wine. (I, pp.232-233) (Sk.II.4.9).

Here were no lounging dandies, and no exclusive belles, who kept their bowers until hunger, which also drives down wolves from the Pyrenees, brought them from their mystical chambers, to luncheon and to life. (II, pp.25-26) (Sk.III.4.1).

... nor would I have introduced you to Dallington House, if I had no more serious business on hand than a flirtation with a lady or a lobster salad. (I, pp.182-183), 1.

(Sk.I.4.6).

And from Popanilla:

... but the greatest and the most gifted has only to leave his coterie, called the world, for a few days, to be fully convinced of what slight importance he really is. (p.26) (Ch.3).

The 'ancien marin' and present Ambassador had been so used to miracles, since the loss of that lock of hair, that he did not think it supernatural, having, during the last few days been in turn a Fantaisian nobleman, a post-captain, a fish, a goddess, and, above all, an author, he should now be transformed into a Plenipotentiary. (pp.106-107) (Ch.10).

... the Secretary suddenly stopped, as if he had seen his father's ghost, or lost the thread of his argument ... (p.172) (Ch.13).

These are all in their various ways amusing enough, yet Popanilla lacks the most important element in the eighteenth century satiric tradition. Apart from an implicit and highly generalized condemnation of 'human folly', there is no deeply felt moral theme to the book. One is reminded more of

1. Jerman (p.101) - and Blake after him (p.58n)-quotes the conclusion of the passage immediately following as "Why, why then cure us ? why send us forth with renovated livers, to lose our souls through salad and sex!" but this should read: "- why, why, then cure us ? why send us forth with renovated livers, to lose our souls through salads and the sex!" (I, p.183) The definite article does make some difference.

Peacock than of Swift or Pope. Even the traces of Voltaire (to whose work Plummer Ward compared Popanilla^{1.}) are all on the surface. Like *Candide*, *Popanilla* often seems to have been invented as a butt for the author's pet philosophical aversion - in Disraeli's case, Utilitarianism - but one cannot carry the comparison much farther than that. It is as if Disraeli had studied the style and structure of his various models while forgetting to pay any attention to their underlying sanctions.

In one respect, however, Popanilla does represent an innovation of sorts. Previous satirists had always based their cases upon some moral or ideological 'centre' - which they could safely assume their readers would share. It is hardly necessary to say that when such a 'centre' or norm fails to establish itself, as in Defoe's Shortest Way with the Dissenters, the satire completely backfires. But Disraeli sets himself no such 'centre'. The objection to Utilitarianism is neither moral nor ideological, but simply that it is at variance with 'human nature'. The idea that satire is possible on such a basis is new to the nineteenth century, and in Popanilla it has a curious effect. Disraeli's hero becomes an alien in a double sense: he is expelled from the natural paradise of Fantasia for his attempts to inculcate Benthamite theories, while he is also ultimately driven from

^{1.} See p. 91, n. 1, below.

* The latter originally appeared in the *New Monthly Magazine* for July and August, 1834; both are included in the third volume of the Bradenham Edition of Disraeli's novels, ed. Philip Guedalla (London, 1926-27).

Vraibleusia (the England to which he flees) for the very failure of the Utilitarian schemes he has introduced there. In both lands he is, as perhaps his creator sometimes felt himself, irretrievably alien. Yet the sense of detachment that results from Popanilla's position - and, in fact, permeates the whole book - plays an essential part in the novel: it makes a sustained ironic effect possible and by doing so gives Disraeli his first opportunity to produce a coherent, thematically organized whole. Although in no sense philosophically profound, the satire is vigorous, acute and often immensely funny. There is a verve and sparkle to the book worthy of 'Ixion in Heaven' and 'The Infernal Marriage'.*

Disraeli had thought carefully about the kind of philosophical fantasy he intended to write long before he sat down to the final draft. When he sent Murray an early version of the book in May, 1824, entitled The Adventures of Mr. Aylmer Papillon, he described briefly the kind of satire he was attempting:

My plan has been in these few pages so to mix up any observations which I had to make on the present state of society with the bustle and hurry of a story, that my satire should never be protruded on my reader. If you will look at the last chapter but one, entitled 'Lady Modeley's', you will see what I mean better than I can express it. The first pages of that chapter I have written in the same manner as I would a common novel, but I have endeavoured to put in action at the end the present fashion of getting on in the world.¹

1. Samuel Smiles, Memoir of John Murray (London, 1891), II, pp. 182-183.

* The latter originally appeared in the New Monthly Magazine for July and August, 1834; both are included in the third volume of the Bradenham Edition of Disraeli's novels, ed. Philip Guedalla (London, 1926-27).

To eschew rhetoric for the 'bustle and hurry of a story', in effect to let the satire work by implication through the action, is not at all a bad plan (so long as it does not degenerate into farce) for any aspiring satirist. But the two extant chapters - they were missing, as Disraeli notes in a postscript to the letter quoted above, when the manuscript was sent to Murray, but they survive at Hughenden¹ - are not very promising. Indeed, Disraeli's indifference to the niceties of structure may be gauged from his postscript; the two chapters, he tells Murray, 'are unfortunately mislaid, but they have no particular connection with the story'.²

The satiric technique of Aylmer Papillon was apparently to confront the hero with a series of adventures characteristic of contemporary English life (the arrest and transportation of a poacher 'for killing a hare', for instance) and then allow him to make an obvious but quite erroneous inference (that hares, in this land, are sacred) with predictably ludicrous consequences (the row that ensues when Aylmer, expressing his horror at finding a hare served up for dinner at a country inn, asks one of the diners if he is a dissenter). It is dangerous to judge too freely of a vanished work from a few surviving pages, but on the available evidence Aylmer Papillon cannot have been a very impressive effort; no doubt Murray

1. Hughenden Papers, Box 231, E / V / A / 1. manner by

2. Smiles, Murray, II, p.183.

1. Ibid., p.184; the letter is dated June, 1824.

2. Smiles, Murray, II, p.184.

eventually followed Disraeli's suggestion in a subsequent letter that 'as you have had some small experience in burning MS., you will be perhaps so kind as to consign it to the flames'.¹ Still, some features of this early draft - the presentation of England as 'Vraibleusia', the attack on the rising power of the press, and the account of Aylmer's 'banishment under the Alien Act from a ministerial misconception of a metaphysical sonnet'² - correspond roughly to episodes in Popanilla, indicating that much of the story was already fixed in Disraeli's mind as early as 1824. When he returned to the novel three years later his experience of life had been enormously extended. He had paid two visits to the continent; the Representative and Quarterly affairs were behind him; and he had written what were in effect two novels, one after the 'fashionable' formula, and the other an experiment in the modern picaresque. Considering the hostility that had greeted the first part of Vivian Grey and the comparative indifference accorded the second, it is not surprising that he should have been ready to turn his hand to something different. 'When a man has himself a little acquaintance with the art of writing', he declared to Plummer Ward,

he begins to grow a very temperate critic. He then discovers that, because an author has a peculiar way of conceiving his subject, it does not follow that that peculiar mode is a faulty one; but, on the contrary, that it is the author's style, a style or manner by

¹. Ibid., p.184; the letter is dated June, 1824.

². Smiles, Murray, II, p.184.

which he is distinguished from other artists, and that unless he commit what the critic may consider faults, he never will produce what all agree to be beauties. All works are not to be written on the same principles, nor do I quarrel with the Flora of Titian, because her countenance is not that of the Madonna of Raffaele. Yet some men do; but, after all, there are some men who set the sundial by their own watches. ¹.

Profoundly skeptical of dogmas, systems, principles and theories², Disraeli was bound to see in Utilitarianism the philosophy of 'men who set the sundial by their own watches'. In 1833 he wrote in his diary:

The Utilitarians in ~~both~~ politics are like the Unitarians in religion; both omit imagination in their systems, and imagination governs mankind. ³.

1. The Hon.E.Phipps, Memoir of Plummer Ward (London, 1850), pp.165-166. Although he gives no date for the letter, Phipps states that it was written 'three and twenty years ago' - i.e., in 1827.

2. When Popanilla, during one of his speeches at Fantaisie (Ch.4), notices that his words are being greeted with a certain scepticism he declares, 'that what he said must be true, because it entirely consisted of first principles'. (p.39). Disraeli adds in a footnote: 'First principles are the ingredients of positive truth. They are immutable, as may be seen by comparing the first principles of the eighteenth century with the first principles of the nineteenth'. His conservatism, like his father's, had its basis in the empiricist's distrust of everything doctrinaire - including, in Popanilla, such institutions as Church, Crown, constitution and empire, all which, of course, he later came to champion.

3. Hughenden Papers, Box 11, A / III / C. The elements is demonstrated to the meanest capacity. But it was not merely a material development to which he alluded - a moral development was equally indispensable. He showed that it was impossible for a nation either to think too much, or to do too much. The life of man was therefore

By proclaiming the supremacy of utility, Disraeli felt, Bentham and his followers had turned everything topsy-turvy. When Popanilla succumbs to their tracts washed up on the Fantaisian shore, his conduct becomes a splendid illustration of Bergson's theory that comedy occurs when men start behaving like machines. His address to the King is a skillful parody of the rhetoric and some of the tenets of Utilitarianism:

Popanilla ... spoke of man in a savage state, the origin of society, and the elements of the social compact, in sentences which would not have disgraced the mellifluous pen of Bentham. From these, he naturally digressed into an agreeable disquisition on the Anglo-Saxons; and, after a little badinage on the Bill of Rights, flew off to an airy aperçu of the French Revolution. When he had arrived at the Isle of Fantaisie, he begged to inform his Majesty, that man was born for something else besides enjoying himself. It was, doubtless, extremely pleasant to dance and sing, to crown themselves with chaplets, and to drink wine; but he was 'free to confess' that he did not imagine, that the most barefaced hireling of corruption could for a moment presume to maintain that there was any utility in pleasure. If there were no profit in pleasure, it was quite clear that pleasure could profit no one. If, therefore, it were unprofitable, it was injurious; because that which does not produce a profit, is equivalent to a loss - therefore, pleasure is a losing business; consequently, pleasure is not pleasant ...

Popanilla then went on to show that the hitherto received definitions of man were all erroneous; that man is neither a walking animal, nor a talking animal, nor a cooking animal, nor a lounging animal, nor a debt-incurring animal, nor a tax-paying animal, nor a printing animal, nor a puffing animal, but a developing animal. Developement [sic] is the discovery of utility. By developing the water, we get fish; by developing the earth, we get corn, and cash, and cotton; by developing the air we get breath; by developing the fire, we get heat. Thus, the use of the elements is demonstrated to the meanest capacity. But it was not merely a material developement to which he alluded - a moral developement was equally indispensable. He showed that it was impossible for a nation either to think too much, or to do too much. The life of man was therefore

two famous footnotes on these passages not reproduced here.

to be passed in a moral and material developement, until he had consummated his perfection. It was the opinion of Popanilla that this great result was by no means so near at hand as some philosophers flattered themselves; and that it might possibly require another half-century before even the most civilized nation could be said to have completed the destiny of the human race. At the same time, he intimated that there were various extraordinary means by which this rather desirable result might be facilitated; and there was no saying what the building of a new University might do, of which, when built, he had no objection to be appointed Principal.

In answer to those who affect to admire that deficient system of existence which they style simplicity of manners, and who are perpetually committing the blunder of supposing that every advance towards perfection only withdraws man farther from his primitive and proper condition, Popanilla triumphantly demonstrated that no such order as that which they associated with the phrase, 'state of nature', ever existed. 'Man', said he, 'is called the masterpiece of nature; and man is also, as we all know, the most curious of machines: now, a machine is a work of art, consequently, the masterpiece of nature is the masterpiece of art. The object of all mechanism is the attainment of utility; the object of man, who is the most perfect machine, is utility in the highest degree. Can we believe, therefore, that this machine was ever intended for a state which never could have called forth its powers - a state in which no utility could ever have been attained - a state in which there are no wants; consequently, no demand; consequently, no supply[;] consequently, no competition; consequently, no invention; consequently, no profits; only one great pernicious monopoly of comfort and ease. Society without wants, is like a world without winds. It is quite clear, therefore, that there is no such thing as Nature; Nature is Art, or Art is Nature; that which is most useful is most natural, because utility is the test of nature; therefore, a steam-engine is in fact a much more natural production than a mountain. 1.

And from this circular reasoning he moves on to its practical application, concluding with a stroke that might have been inspired by Gulliver's famous conversation with the King of

¹ Popanilla (London, 1828), pp.33-38 (Ch.4). There are two facetious footnotes on these passages not reproduced here.

¹ ibid., pp.40-42 (Ch.4). In a note on "only as an experiment" Disraeli observes: "A very famous and convenient phrase this - but in politics, experimentation means revolutions."

Brobdingnag: he chief magistrate, no longer daring to smile, burst into a fit of laughter; and turning to his courtiers

In the first place, a great metropolis must be instantly built, because a great metropolis always produces a very great demand; and, moreover, Popanilla had some legal doubts, whether a country without a capital could in fact be considered a State. Apologizing for having so long trespassed upon the attention of the assembly, he begged distinctly to state, that he had no wish to see his Majesty and his fellow-subjects adopt these new principles without examination, and without experience. They might commence on a small scale; let them cut down their forests, and by turning them into ships and houses, discover the utility of timber: let the whole Island be dug up; let canals be cut, docks be built, and all the elephants be killed directly, that their teeth might yield an immediate article for exportation. A short time would afford a sufficient trial. In the mean while, they would not be pledged to further measures, and these might be considered 'only as an experiment'. Taking for granted, that these principles would be acted on, and taking into consideration the site of the Island in the map of the world, the nature and extent of its resources, its magnificent race of human beings, its varieties of the animal creation, its wonderfully fine timber, its undeveloped mineral treasures, the spaciousness of its harbours, and its various facilities for extended international communication, Popanilla had no hesitation in saying, that a short time could not elapse, ere, instead of passing their lives in a state of unprofitable ease, and useless enjoyment, they might reasonably expect to be the terror and astonishment of the universe;¹ and to be able to annoy every nation of any consequence.

The conclusion of the episode illustrates Disraeli's method of balancing the more expository side of his satire with 'the bustle and hurry of a story':

Here, observing a smile upon his Majesty's countenance, Popanilla told the King that he was only a chief magistrate, and he had no more right to laugh at him than a constable. He concluded by observing, that although what he at present urged might appear very strange, nevertheless, if the listeners had been acquainted with the characters and cases of Galileo and Turgot, they would then have seen, as a necessary consequence, that his system was perfectly correct; and he, himself, a man of extraordinary merit.

¹ Ibid., pp.40-42 (Ch.4). In a note on "only as an experiment" Disraeli observes: 'A very famous and convenient phrase this - but in politics, experiments mean revolutions.'

Here the chief magistrate, no longer daring to smile, burst into a fit of laughter; and turning to his courtiers said, 'I have not an idea what this man is talking about, but I know that he makes my head ache: give me a cup of wine, and let us have a dance'.

All applauded the royal proposition; and pushing Popanilla from one to another, until he was fairly hustled to the brink of the lagoon, they soon forgot the existence of this bore: in one word, he was cut. When Popanilla found himself standing alone, and looking very grave, while all the rest were very gay, he began to suspect that he was not so very influential a personage as he previously imagined. Rather crest-fallen, he sneaked home; and consoled himself for having nobody to speak to, by reading some very amusing 'Conversations on Political Economy'.¹

I have quoted these passages at such length because they offer examples of both the strengths and the weaknesses of Disraeli's methods as a satirist. At once vigorous and terse, the prose could scarcely have been better calculated to convey a wry sense of the ironies inherent in the Utilitarian system. Yet occasionally Disraeli allows himself to become sidetracked or to overplay his effects. In one of the passages given above, for example, he brings in an allusion to the new London University, one of his favourite butts, only to divert the satire, after he has suddenly realised that his criticisms cannot be made persuasive without considerable elaboration, from the university itself to Popanilla's desire to become its president. He should either have developed an attack upon schemes for the new university, or dropped the reference altogether - for there is plenty of evidence elsewhere of Popanilla's egomania. Sometimes, too, Disraeli will seek to

¹. Ibid., pp.42-43 (Ch.4). There was indeed an anonymous work called Conversations on Political Economy (London, 1816) by Mrs. Jane Marcet. She also wrote edifying and instructive 'Conversations' on Chemistry (1806) and Natural Philosophy (1819).

². Popanilla (London, 1828), p.115 (Ch.10). Disraeli may have drawn the idea of the metallic statue from Voltaire's *Contes*.

resolve a scene by reverting to farce, as he does in chapters X, XI, and XV, and as he almost does in the passage immediately above. For all its fun and humour - Sharon Turner declared that he had not 'laughed over any book so much, altho unwell, for these last 12 years'¹ - Popanilla perhaps belongs finally to the category of satire that preaches best to the converted.

Disraeli's aversion to Utilitarianism points up one of the principal qualities of his imagination: an inability - or an unwillingness - to grasp abstractions. His natural bent as a novelist was towards the depiction of scenes and events drawn from his own experience, and he was never quite comfortable with general ideas or theories. This is evident in the ~~contrast between~~ ^{way} his two attempts at allegory in Popanilla; - the description of the British constitution in the figure of a colossal metallic statue much 'repaired and renovated'², and the sketch of the history of Christianity in England in the guise of a tale about the importation of pineapples - ^{contrast} ~~and~~ ^{with} the incidents which he bases upon his own recent adventures in the worlds of law, finance, fashion and trade.

¹ Hughenden Papers, Box 233, E/VI/B/4; the letter is dated 2 June, 1828. Turner also remarks that Popanilla 'is too singular and peculiar [to] be tried by critical rules - and as to regularity of fable or the usual plan or process of story. Perhaps I may think that it has really lost its head - unless like St. Denis it carries it under the arm, but if it be there I have not yet discovered it'. He concludes, however, that 'as my risibility has been so much excited - & that unaffectedly & unexpectedly & as I am really in my natural state, as grave as my histories, if not as dull, I do most conscientiously believe that there must be something worth something in the composition of this volume to put a sick man of sixty into such a laughing mood'.

² Popanilla (London, 1828), p. 114 (Ch. 10). Disraeli may have drawn the idea of the metallic statue from Voltaire's Conte Babouk.

The care of the statue, Disraeli tells us, was entrusted to twelve 'Managers' and supervised by a preternatural individual known as the 'Aboriginal Inhabitant', an amalgamation of George IV, the Crown in general and the landed interests favoured by the Corn Laws:

He was apparently a man: in stature a perfect Patagonian, and robust as a well-fed Ogre. His countenance was jolly, but consequential; and his costume a curious mixture of a hunting-dress and a court suit ... The great man got surrounded by a large body of little mechanics ... They began rating the mighty one for the dearness of his corn. He received their attacks with great mildness. He reminded them that the regulation by which they procured their bread, was the aboriginal law of the Island, under which they had all so greatly flourished. He explained to them that it was owing to this protecting principle, that he and his ancestors, having nothing to do but hunt and shoot, had so preserved their health that, unlike the rest of the human race, they had not degenerated from the original form and nature of man. He showed that it was owing to the vigour of mind and body, consequent upon this fine health, that Vraibleusia had become the wonder of the world, and that they themselves were so actively employed; and he inferred that they surely could not grudge him the income which he derived, since that income was, in fact, the foundation of their own profits. He then satisfactorily demonstrated to them, that if by any circumstances, he were to cease to exist, the whole Island would immediately sink under the sea.¹

This much is sufficiently clear. Not so, however, the description of the statue itself:

It represented an armed monarch. The head, and bust were of gold, and the curling hair was crowned with an imperial diadem: the body and arms were of silver, worked in the semblance of a complete suit of enamelled armour of the feudal ages; and the thighs and legs were of iron, which the artist had clothed in the bandaged hose of the old Saxons. The figure bore the appearance of great antiquity, but had evidently been often repaired and renovated since

¹ Ibid., pp.109-111 (Ch.10).

its first formation. The workmanship was clearly of different aeras, and the reparations, either from ignorance or intention, had often been effected with little deference to the original design. Part of the shoulders had been supplied by the other, though less precious, metal, and the Roman and Imperial ornaments had unaccountably been succeeded by the less classic, though more picturesque, decorations of Gothic armour. On the other hand, a great portion of the chivalric and precious material of the body had been removed, and replaced by a style and substance resembling those of the lower limbs. In its right hand, the Statue brandished a naked sword; and with its left, leant upon a huge, though extremely rich and elaborately carved, crosier. It trampled upon a shivered lance and a broken chain.¹

What are we to make of this? Crosier and sword clearly represent Church and State while the frequent repairs and alterations equally clearly refer in a general way to constitutional changes introduced over the years. But what are the 'shivered lance' and 'broken chain' meant to suggest? Why have the shoulders been repaired partly in gold and partly in silver? And why, indeed, the three metals? At first it is tempting to take them in a historical sense - the gold representing the era of domination by Imperial Rome, the silver, with its 'enamelled armour of the feudal ages', the Saxon period, and the iron the modern epoch following the Norman conquest. But this interpretation will not hold, for Disraeli a few pages further on identifies the metals with divisions of interest within contemporary society:

Some admired the gold, and maintained, that if it were not for the head, the Statue would be utterly useless:

¹ Ibid., pp.113-114 (Ch.10). The penultimate sentence is rather reminiscent of the frontispiece of Hobbes' Leviathan (1651).

others preferred the silver, and would assert that the body, which contained all the machinery, must clearly be the most precious portion; while a third party triumphantly argued, that the iron legs which supported both body and head, must surely be the most valuable part, since without them the Statue must fall. ¹.

From this it appears that the metals are intended to represent the different classes of society. The golden head, ^{could} thus stand for the monarchical power (also, however, represented in the Aboriginal Inhabitant), the silver body 'which contained all the machinery' for the ~~middle~~ ^{nobility} classes, and the iron legs for the ~~labouring~~ ^{'commons'} classes of what Disraeli elsewhere calls 'the rail-road state of Vraibleusia'. ² This reading may explain the passage given above well enough, but has it anything at all to do with the initial description of the statue quoted earlier? For unless we are prepared to throw normal allegorical distinctions to the winds, the statue cannot simultaneously represent historical epochs and class divisions within contemporary society. This is not to say that a single allegorical figure cannot sometimes denote a variety of persons or things; but if it is to do so effectively a logical thematic connection must exist between the things represented. Because each of the pairings - Roman Britain and the contemporary monarchy, feudalism and the ~~middle~~ ^{nobility} classes, and post-Conquest Britain and the ~~labouring~~ ^{'commons'} classes - has no particular rationale to link them together, the statue allegory finally

¹. p.118 (Ch.10).

². p.137 (Ch.10).

comes to an impasse. Disraeli's own sense of the failure of the episode is suggested by the events which follow. No attempt is made to build on the dramatic possibilities which one would normally expect such a figure to open up, but instead the action dwindles into farce: a succession of messengers arrive telling of political convulsions in different parts of the globe, armies are despatched and victories and disasters reported. At one point the statue, in its capacity as fountain of honour, 'vomited forth a flood of ribbons, stars, and crosses'.¹ The chapter finally grinds to a halt with an amusing but largely gratuitous reference to the accession of 'the famous Centaur Chiron',² (the Duke of Wellington) to the position of Chief Manager amidst fears among the people that 'if he could not succeed in persuading them by his eloquence, his Grace might chance to use his heels'.³

Disraeli is more successful with the pineapple allegory which he expounds with exquisite wryness. His account of the rival claims of foreign and home-grown faiths follows the history of English Christianity as neatly as one could

¹ p.131 (Ch.10).

² p.133 (Ch.10).

³ p.135 (Ch.10).

Disraeli's collection of the book to his, 'I should wish to have been brought more home to common life, as it is, the whole is a *Baroque* [sic], & out of the best parts of Vivian Grey'. Ward said 'Since the days of Swift and Voltaire, I had not seen any thing so witty. Je risais aux éclats, & so too. In my opinion it is equal to the best of a *tab*, & *Candide*, & superior to *Zadig* & *Babouk*' - he wrote he adds (rather ominously, some may think), 'the style is caustic, yet delicate, & what is best, can offend no one'. (Hagheaden Papers, Box 233, H/VI/B/1; the letter is dated June 1, 1828). But why the pineapple? For a possible explanation, see Appendix B.

wish.¹ The difficulty here is not in the allegory itself so much as in its role in the novel. The whole episode - the subject of chapter XIV - might well be removed to stand on its own. It adds nothing to the movement of the plot, to the exposition of Popanilla's character, or even, except as a mild diversion, to the satire on contemporary follies. One's attention is held more by curiosity to see how the particular ingredients in the allegory will fit together than by a sense that what one is reading has any relevance - amusing though it certainly is - to the rest of the novel.

But the pineapple and statue episodes occupy only two chapters of Popanilla. What of the remainder? The greater part of the novel describes Popanilla's adventures in Vraisleusia, particularly in its capital Hubbabub, and here something rather interesting emerges. To the casual reader Popanilla's doings are apt to seem no more than a series of imaginary incidents designed to poke fun at various aspects of contemporary society. But anyone familiar with the

formed to exploit the mineral resources of the new Republic

¹ 'If I were to criticize', wrote Plummer Ward acknowledging Disraeli's dedication of the book to him, 'I should wish that the application of the pine apple allegory (if I may so call it) would have been brought more home to common readers, but, as it is, the whole is a bijoux [sic], & worthy throughout, of the best parts of Vivian Grey'. Ward also remarks that 'Since the days of Swift and Voltaire, I have not read any thing so witty. Je risais aux eclats, & made others do so too. In my opinion it is equal to the Tale of a tub, & Candide, & superior to Zadig & Babouk' - to which he adds (rather ominously, some may think), 'the satire is caustic, yet delicate, & what is best, can offend no one'. (Hughenden Papers, Box 233, E/VI/B/1; the letter is dated June 1, 1828). But why the pineapple? For a possible explanation, see Appendix D.

biographical background to the first part of Vivian Grey is bound to perceive that in Popanilla Disraeli is again transmuting fact into fiction. There is hardly an episode in the Vraisleusian part of the novel that cannot be traced back to his experiences during the preceding three or four years. His disenchantment with the law, his three pamphlets extolling the prospects of Latin American mines¹; his disastrous speculations under the influence of Powles, his attempt to master the powers of the press through his work on the Representative, and his dealings with Colburn affording him an inside view of the way in which fashionable novels were puffed - all these bore fruit in Popanilla.

Consider, for example, Disraeli's account in chapter XII of the feverish speculation in which the Vraibleusians indulge as they prepare their ill-fated trading expedition to Fantaisie. On the face of it, this incident reads like the wildest fantasy. Yet it is firmly rooted in the 1824-1825 boom and bust in which vast sums were invested in companies formed to exploit the mineral resources of the new republics in South and Central America which had recently won their independence from Spain. Disraeli alludes to this mania for mining shares in chapter 10,² yet the thinly disguised sketch

¹ It is surely no accident that one of two similar pamphlets produced by Popanilla's faithful guide, the Marquess of Moustache's Private Secretary, is entitled 'The Present State of the Western Republics' - an echo of Disraeli's The Present State of Mexico (1825).

² pp. 123-127.

he there provides of the state of the London market is hardly an exaggeration: 'The number of companies formed rose to 624, involving a nominal capital of £372,173,100. This enormous sum represented £150 per head for the 13 million persons who then constituted the population of England, and was equivalent to a third of the total wealth of the country ... The price of the shares in several of the new companies rose very quickly. Those of the Anglo-Mexican Mining Company, for instance, which were issued at £10, rose within a month from £43 to £150; and the shares of the Real del Monte, issued at £70, rose from £550 to £1,350'.¹ Nor is the cargo of the Vraibleusian expedition - intended 'to supply the wants of a country where they dance by moonlight, live on fruit, and sleep on flowers'² with such dubious articles as 'flannels and ladies' albums; under-waistcoats, kid-gloves, engravings, coats, cloaks, and ottomans ... bear's-grease, blue pills, and bijouterie; arms, beards, poodles, pages, mustachios, court-guides ... ladies' maids ... boxing-gloves, guitars, and snuff-boxes ...'³ - quite so remote from reality as one might

¹ A. Andréadès, History of the Bank of England, fourth edition (London, 1966), pp.250-251. See also W.T.C.King, History of the London Discount Market (London, 1936), pp.35-70, and Harriet Martineau, The History of England during the Thirty Years' Peace (London, 1846), I, pp.352-366.

² Popanilla, p.144 (Ch.12).

³ p.145 (Ch.12).

¹ Captain F.B.Head, Rough Notes taken during some David Thompson's across the Pampas and across the Andes (London, 1826), pp.303-304. Head later became a friend of the Austens (Journals p.299a). Andréadès (p.250, n.2) mentions another astonishing company formed 'in order to drain the Red Sea with a view to recovering the treasure abandoned by the Egyptians after the crossing of the Jews'.

imagine. Captain Francis Head, who led an abortive expedition of miners to Buenos Aires, records one of the more bizarre enterprises promoted during the boom:

We had all sorts of English speculations in South America, some of which were really amusing. Besides many brother companies which I met with at Buenos Aires, I found a sister association of milkmaids. It had suddenly occurred to some of the younger sons of John Bull, that as there were a number of beautiful cows in the United Provinces of Rio de la Plata, a quantity of good pasture, and as the people of Buenos Aires had no butter to their bread, a Churning Company would answer admirably; and before the idea was many months old, a cargo of Scotch milkmaids were lying becalmed under the Line, on their passage to make butter at Buenos Aires. As they were panting and sighing (being from heavy rains unable to come on deck), Neptune as usual boarded the ship, and the sailors who were present say that his first observation was, that he had never found so many passengers and so few beards to shave; however, when it was explained to him, that they were not Britannia's sons, but Jenny Bulls, who have no beards, the old god smiled and departed. The people at Buenos Aires were thunderstruck at the unexpected arrival of so many British milkmaids; however, private arrangements had been made, and they, therefore, had milk before it was generally known that they had got cows. But the difficulties which they experienced were very great: instead of leaning their heads against patient domestic animals, they were introduced to a set of lawless wild creatures, who looked so fierce that no young woman who ever sat upon a three-legged stool could dare to approach, much less to milk them! - But the Gauchos attacked the cows, tied their legs with strips of hide, and as soon as they became quiet, the shops of Buenos Aires were literally full of butter. But now for the sad moral of the story: - after the difficulties had been all conquered, it was discovered, first, that the butter would not keep! - and secondly, that somehow or other the Gauchos and natives of Buenos Aires - - - - - liked oil better !! 1.

Disraeli did not need to stretch his imagination very far in order to concoct that absurd consignment of 'articles raw and

1. Captain F.B.Head, Rough Notes taken during Some Rapid Journeys across the Pampas and among the Andes (London, 1826) pp.303-304. Head later became a friend of the Austens (Jerman p.299n). Andréadès (p.250,n.2) mentions another astonishing company formed 'in order to drain the Red Sea with a view to recovering the treasure abandoned by the Egyptians after the crossing of the Jews'.

refined, goods dry and damp'¹, which the Vraibleusians hopefully ship off to Fantaisie.

Other instances in which he appears to have drawn upon his experiences and observations are not difficult to enumerate. Popanilla's bizarre trial at the end of the book (pp.233-240), illustrating the extravagant and sometimes pernicious ingenuity of the law - and in its surreal aspects a curious anticipation of the trial in Alice in Wonderland - was a logical projection of the displeasure with which Disraeli had come to view the law during his apprenticeship to Messrs. Swain in Frederick's Place.² Nor is it wholly fanciful to see in his description of the slap-dash way in which Vraibleusian publishers put together books designed to satisfy the caprices of literary fashion (pp.92-96) a reflection of his dealings with Colburn and, more specifically, his editorial work for Murray on Sherburne's Life of Paul Jones and Crofton Croker's Fairy Legends of Ireland. Perhaps, too, a tempered and faintly amused recollection of that 'mighty engine'³, the

¹ p.144 (Ch.12).

² See M & B, I, pp.32-34,40, and Blake, pp.18-19. Disraeli had decided against a career in law as early as 1824 (M & B, I, p.53), and in Vivian Grey, I (Bk.I.,Ch.8), p.55, he writes: "THE BAR - pooh! law and bad jokes till we are forty; and then, with the most brilliant success, the prospect of gout and a coronet. Besides, to succeed as an advocate, I must be a great lawyer; and, to be a great lawyer, I must give up my chance of being a great man". And in 1830 he wrote to his father that a true lawyer is 'ever illustrating the obvious, explaining the evident, and expatiating on the commonplace'. (Home Letters, London, 1885, p.27).

³ M & B, I, p.66.

Representative, lies behind Disraeli's own account of Popanilla's helplessness at the hands of the Vraibleusian press (pp.104-105; 173-179). Other elements in the novel, although not narrowly autobiographical, were also clearly based upon events with which Disraeli had been concerned in varying degrees during the early 1820's: the sketch of the anomalies of the Vraibleusian banking system with its 'Great Shell [i.e., paper money] Question' (pp.72-84), the digs at Adam Smith's supply and demand economics (pp.62-71; 229-232), the description of the sudden emergence, as a result of the Fantaisian boom, of a class of nouveaux riches eager to learn the ways of the aristocracy by reading fashionable novels (pp.147-157), and finally, of course, the crash itself (pp.218-224).

The raw materials, then, that went into Popanilla were largely the same as those which a few years earlier Disraeli had used in constructing Vivian Grey. But with an important difference. The bitterness that had prompted him to seek revenge upon his former colleagues in the confused and intemperate satire of Vivian Grey with its spiteful caricatures of Murray, Lockhart, Croker, and Powles had now altogether vanished. In its place was a new, faintly Horatian, sense of detachment. Disraeli was learning, as must every good ironist, to keep his subject matter at a distance. Max Beerbohm's fable about how that notorious character Lord George Hell by feigning the appearance of the unexceptionable Lord

George Heaven finally, and quite inadvertently, becomes him might almost serve as an illustration of the sort of change that had come over Disraeli in the few years that separate Vivian Grey and Popanilla. But only almost - for Disraeli never really became as detached and indifferent as he liked to pretend. He wrote in his diary for 1834:

Rogers hates me. I can hardly believe, as he gives out, that V.G. [Vivian Grey] is the cause. Considering his age I endeavoured to conciliate him, but it is impossible. I think I will give him cause to hate me. ¹ I have never yet

And at the very end of his life he was capable of launching in ^{the unfinished} Falconet a vicious attack upon the personality as well as the politics of his great adversary Gladstone. No, Disraeli never lost his amour propre, never ceased to be as thin-skinned as the author of Vivian Grey. But what he did do was to learn to conceal his sensitivity behind a mask of irony and nonchalance - and it is this that we see him doing in Popanilla.

11.

Bradenham House. Sunday
Feb. 14, 1830.

Disraeli had long been fascinated by the Near East and late in the 1820's was at work on a novel about the twelfth century Jewish hero, David Alroy.² One of his plans at this time was to make a tour of the region - partly for the

¹ • Hughenden Papers, Box 11, A / III / C.

² • M & B, I, p.121.

sake of his waning health, partly to elude his creditors, partly out of curiosity, and partly, presumably, to gather material for Alroy - but when he broached the idea to Isaac he met with no encouragement. Where else could he turn for the necessary funds? As he wrote to Benjamin Austen,

Altogether, I am sufficiently Down, but will not quite despair. A sanguine temper supports me still. There is yet time, & that, according to the great Frederick, is everything - The fact is I am 'spellbound within the clustering Cyclades'¹. and go I must, tho' I fear I must hack for it. A literary prostitute I have never yet been, tho' born in an age of general prostitution & tho' I have more than once been subject to temptations which might have been the ruination of a less virtuous young man. My mind however is still a virgin, but the mystical flower, I fear, must even be plucked - Colburn I suppose will be the bawd. Tempting Mother Colburn! However as Frederick says, I have yet time, & I may be saved.²

But time was running out faster than he appears to have realized, and Alroy was soon put aside in favour of what later became The Young Duke. Within nine weeks the new book had progressed far enough to justify an initial approach - marked 'Private' - to Colburn:

Bradenham House. Sunday
Monthly Magazine, in which 'Ixion' Feb. 14, 1830. 332-7833)

Dear Sir, Colburn's periodicals.

Forward the enclosed & don't look pale about the postage, which I will religiously discharge when we meet.

1. The Corsair, Canto III, 1.

2. Quoted by Jerman, p. 91; the letter is dated December 8, 1829.

Houghton Library, Autograph File (#522-255). As this letter shows, Marypenny (I, p. 127) and Jerman (p. 103) are mistaken to assume that Disraeli offered the novel in the first instance to Murray.

I have not forgotten you, 'tho the preparations for my departure & another cause have prevented me lately sending you a contribution.¹ In a word, being declared to be in a decline, which is all stuff, but really with positive Exile, probably Death, & possible Damnation hanging over me, I have been fool enough to be intent upon a novel. But such a novel! It will astound you, draw tears from Princesses, & grins from Printers devils: it will atone for all the stupid books you have been lately publishing, and allow me to die in a blaze. In a word to give you an idea of it. It is exactly the kind of work which you would write yourself, if you had time, and delightfully adapted to the most corrupt taste. This immortal work which will set all Europe afire & not be forgotten till at least 3 months has only one fault, - it is not written.

Seriously however a volume & 1/2 are finished but as I must go off before the end of March, I am afraid it is impossible to let you have it, but perhaps I can finish it at Rome before I go off to Greece, & then you can have it for next season.² A pity because it is exactly suited to the present. Write if you wish me to hatch this Phoenix - but any rate be secret as the grave. in haste

B. Disraeli

P.S. I have not yet read M^{rs}. C.G.'s novel³, which how⁴ I have. You are publishing a good deal of dull stuff. Imitations of imitations.⁴

Disraeli went ahead with the book and by April first Colburn had agreed to publish it. Because of the depressed state of

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1. It is not clear whether this is a reference to the New Monthly Magazine, in which "Ixion in Heaven" (1832-1833) and "The Infernal Marriage" (1834) first appeared or to another of Colburn's periodicals.
 2. Disraeli did not in fact leave England until early in June; see Home Letters (1885), pp.1 and 4. Nor did he visit Rome, as planned, although on p.202 of the first volume he maintains the fiction that part of The Young Duke was written there.
 3. Presumably Catherine Gore's Manners of the Day, published by Colburn in 1830.
 4. Houghton Library, Autograph File (*52M-255). As this letter shows, Monypenny (I, p.127) and Jerman (p.103) are mistaken to assume that Disraeli offered the novel in the first instance to Murray.

the book trade, however, he could only take it 'on the system of half profits advancing you a bill or two on account'.¹

At this point Disraeli appears to have pressed for a higher figure than the £500 initially offered, but Colburn remained firm citing his reader's apprehensions about the book's probable critical reception:

He acknowledges its amusing extravagance which will cause it to be read but at the same time he adds that it is certain of being seriously criticised for its egotism & other sins of the writer! Under all the circumstances we shall have much pleasure in undertaking the publication though we are absolutely unable to risk a larger sum upon it than was first mentioned - namely 500 £.²

On May 17th Disraeli accordingly signed an agreement with Messrs. Colburn and Bentley as a result of which he received at once £400 in post dated bills with the prospect of a further £100 in the event of a second edition.³ In less than two weeks he had left for the East.

Uneven in tone and derivative in plot⁴, The Young Duke is nevertheless an exceedingly amusing book. It begins with great sprightliness and wit but ends on a note of qualified realism - Disraeli's first attempt at anything of this sort - so that on the whole it is well described in its subtitle (from Don Juan) as '"A moral Tale, though gay"'.

¹ Hughenden Papers, Box 235, E / VII / D / 6.

² Ibid., Box 235, E / VII / D / 8; the letter is undated.

³ Ibid., Box 235, E / VII / D 7.

⁴ Evelyn and his daughter Georgina in Plummer Ward's Tremaine stand in precisely the same relationship to the hero of that novel as do Dacre and his daughter May to the young Duke of St. James. In each case the hero is redeemed through his love for the daughter and his edifying conversations with the father. The only difference is that whereas Ward's father and daughter are good Anglicans, Disraeli's are Roman Catholics.

In Papanilla Disraeli mocks in passing some of the absurdities of the fashionable novel; now in The Young Duke, as he hinted he would do in his letter to Colburn, he launches a frontal attack on the same victim. The method is burlesque - but burlesque with a curious ambivalence, for Disraeli is half in love with the affectations he ridicules. Here, for example, is how the novel begins:

How George Augustus Frederick, Duke of St. James, completed his twenty-first year, an event which created as great a sensation among the aristocracy of England as the Norman Conquest, or the institution of Almack's. A minority of twenty years had converted a family, always among the wealthiest of Great Britain, into one of the richest in Europe. The Duke of St. James possessed estates in the North and in the West of England, besides a whole province in Ireland. In London, there was a very handsome square and four streets all made of bricks, which brought him in yearly more cash than all the palaces of Vicenza are worth in fee-simple, with those of the Grand Canal of Venice to boot. As if this were not enough, he was an hereditary patron of internal navigation; and although perhaps in his two palaces, three castles, four halls, and lodges ad libitum there were more fires burnt than in any other establishment in the Empire, this was of no consequence, because the coals were his own. ¹

Or again:

It is difficult to conceive a career of more various, more constant, or more distracting excitement, than that in which the Duke of St. James was now engaged. His life was an ocean of enjoyment, and each hour, like each wave, threw up its pearl. How dull was the ball in which he did not bound! How dim the banquet in which he did not glitter! His presence in the Gardens compensated for the want of flowers, - his vision in the Park, for the want of sun. In public breakfasts, he was more indispensable than pine-apples; in private concerts, more noticed than an absent singer. How fair was the dame on whom he smiled! How brown was the tradesman on whom he frowned! ...

¹ The Young Duke, I, pp.[1]-2.

The Duke of St. James gave his first grand entertainment for the season. It was like the assembly of the Immortals at the first levee of Jove. All hurried to pay their devoirs to the young King of Fashion; and each, who succeeded in becoming a member of the Court, felt as proud as a peer with a new title, or a baronet with an old one. An air of regal splendour, an almost imperial assumption, was observed in the arrangements of the fête. A troop of servants in new and the [sic] richest liveries filled the hall; grooms lined the staircase; Spiridion, the Greek page, lounged on an Ottoman in an antechamber, and, with the assistance of six young gentlemen in crimson-and-silver uniforms, announced the coming of the cherished guests.¹

How much of this is satire and how much just plain buffoonery? Sometimes, however, he becomes more explicit, as in his description of the contrast between Mr. Dacre's guests and the sort of guests to whom the fashionable young Duke is accustomed:

The party assembled at Castle Dacre consisted of some thirty or forty persons, all of great consideration, but of a different character to any with whom the Duke of St. James had been acquainted during his short experience of English society. They were not what are called fashionable people. I have no Princes and no ambassadors, no Duke who is a gourmand, no Earl who is a jockey, no manoeuvring mothers, no flirting daughters, no gambling sons, for your entertainment. There is no superfine gentleman brought down specially from town to gauge the refinement of the manners of the party, and to prevent them by his constant supervision, and occasional sneer, from losing any of the beneficial results of their last campaign. We shall sadly want, too, a Lady Patroness to issue a decree, or quote her etiquette. I am not sure that Almack's will ever be mentioned: I am quite sure that Maradan has never yet been heard of. The Hockey Club may be quoted, but Crookford will be a dead letter. As for the rest, Boodle's is all I can promise, - miserable consolation for the bow window. As for buffoons and artists, to amuse a vacant hour, or sketch a vacant face, I must frankly tell you at once, that there is not one. Are you frightened? Will you go

¹. Ibid., pp. 73-74 and 75-76 (Bk. I, Ch. 10).

². Ibid., p. 815 (Bk. II).

³. Ibid., p. 16 (Bk. III).

on? Will you trust yourself with these savages?

Try. They are rude, but they are hospitable. 1.

The satiric thrust here is unmistakable enough. And as if to drive his point still further home, Disraeli adds that Mr. Dacre's guests, though from a fashionable viewpoint 'savages', 'were all persons of great consideration'. 2.

There is more to Disraeli's attack upon fashionable fiction, however, than the mere kicking at a convenient (and vulnerable) butt. For as early as The Young Duke he appears to have formed a strong, but as yet imperfectly realised, notion of the possibilities of a kind of fiction that would explore in meticulous detail the play for power between characters living in a restricted and elevated society. Objecting to the received opinion 'that the conduct of refined society, in a literary point of view, is, on the whole, productive but of slight interest' 3, he writes:

There is no doubt that that great pumice-stone, Society, smooths down the edges of your thoughts and manners. Bodies of men, who pursue the same object, must ever resemble each other: the life of the majority must ever be imitation. Thought is a labour to which few are competent; and truth requires for its development [sic] as much courage as acuteness. So conduct becomes conventional, and opinion is a legend; and thus all men act and think alike.

But this is not peculiar to what is called fashionable life - it is peculiar to civilization, which gives the passions less to work upon. Mankind are not more

1. Ibid., I, pp. 213-215 (Sk. II, Ch. 5).

2. Ibid., I, p. 215 (Ibid.).

3. Ibid., III, p. 16 (Sk. IV, Ch. 3).

heartless because they are clothed in ermine; it is, that their costume attracts us to their characters, and we stare because we find the prince or the peeress neither a conqueror nor a heroine. The great majority of human beings, in a country like England, glide through existence in perfect ignorance of their natures, so complicated and so controlling is the machinery of our social life! Few can break the bonds that tie them down, and struggle for self-knowledge; fewer, when the talisman is gained, can direct their illuminated energies to the purposes with which they sympathize.

A mode of life, which encloses in its circle all the dark and deep results of unbounded indulgence, however it may appear to some who glance over the sparkling surface, does not exactly seem to me one either insipid or uninteresting to the moral speculator; and, indeed, I have long been induced to suspect, that the seeds of true sublimity lurk in a life which, like this book, is half fashion and half passion.

Not that they will germinate here, for the seed, to rise, requires the burning sunbeam and the moistening shower; and passions, to be put in action, demand a more blazing brain, and bubbling pulse, than heat my torpid soul. In the mean time, I drop the hint for others, and proceed to sketch a feeling, or to catch a trait.¹

Disraeli will later pick up the hint himself, but for the moment he is concerned with a less subtle and more overtly funny conception of the comedy of manners. We have already mentioned his sense of theatre - a quality abundantly evident in *The Young Duke*, not least in its scattered references to Restoration comedy² - and it is this dramatic

¹. *Ibid.*, III, pp.17-19 (Sk. IV, Ch. 3).

². See I, pp.35-36, ^(Sk. I, Ch. 4) where Disraeli writes of one of his characters that 'he was unlike any of the leading men of modern days, and rather reminded one of the fine gentlemen of our old brilliant comedy, - the Dorimants, the Bellairs, and the Mirabels'. And ^(Sk. II, Ch. 3) some of the repartee between May and the Duke (I, pp.139-145, for example) seems, like the scene between Vivian and Julia Manvers in *Vivian Grey* (I, pp.144-161), to hark back to similar encounters in such plays as *The Man of Mode* and *The Way of the World*. The minor characters often bear names which are evocative in the Restoration manner, among them: Lord Fitz-pompey, Dr. Coronet, Lord Squib, Lady Aphrodite Grafton Arundel Dacre, Lord Mildmay, and the architects Sir Carte Blanche and M. Bijou de Millecolonnes.

sense in combination with a deep awareness of power as a motive force in human conduct that gives his books, from Vivian Grey onwards, their particular flavour. 'All works', he wrote, 'are not to be written on the same principles', and it is no more a just criticism of his novels to say that they are unlike Trollope's - though both sometimes aim roughly in the same direction - than it is to complain of Trollope's that they are unlike Disraeli's. But if all works are not to be written on the same principles - on what principles are they to be written? In The Young Duke Disraeli is groping towards an answer to this question. That he was aware of the possibility of a serious kind of novel of manners we have already seen; but it appears not to have occurred to him until he was well into the composition of The Young Duke that a novel designed along such lines might also deal realistically with contemporary social and political problems. For in the third volume (books four and five) an entirely new spirit comes into the book. Financial difficulties (the consequences of his earlier extravagance) and the continued failure of his suit for the hand of May Dacre having combined to humble his pride, the Duke suddenly decides to travel to London incognito in a public mail coach and address the House of Lords in support of Catholic emancipation. In the action that leads up to his decision thus to enter political life, we are given a glimpse of a subject that Disraeli will later develop into the 'two nations'. The Duke, who has just lost £100,000 in

a marathon bout of gambling, reflects on his plight in the following monologue:

'How is it to end? What is to become of me? Can nothing rescue me? Is there no mode of relief, no place of succour, no quarter of refuge, no hope of salvation? I cannot right myself, and there is an end of it. Society, society, society! I owe thee much; and perhaps in working in thy service, those feelings might be developed which I am now convinced are the only source of happiness - but I am plunged too deep in the quag. I have no impulse, no call. I know not how it is, but my energies, good and evil, seem alike vanishing. There stares that fellow at my carriage! God! willingly would I break the stones upon the road for a year, to clear my mind of the past'.¹

When the Duke boards the coach for London a few chapters later, he comes into contact for the first time in the book with ordinary people: an impoverished but kindly widow, an arrogant utilitarian who predicts the ruin of the aristocracy and boasts of his son's contributions to the 'Screw and Lever [i.e., Westminster] Review', a modest marine back from India, and an energetic and resourceful guard named Tom Rawlins.²

The account of the conversations between the passengers, the Duke's anonymous charity to the widow (whose son's involvement in 'a bad set' and hence 'a terrible scrape'² reminds him of his own unhappy career), and the friendship that springs up between Rawlins and the Duke - all is handled in a direct and realistic manner. Why, one is tempted to ask, does

¹ Ibid., III, pp. 82-83. (Sk. IV, Ch. 9) And later in the mail coach: "...Don't talk to me of poor souls. There is a poor soul", said the utilitarian, pointing to an old man breaking stones on the highway. 'That is what I call a poor soul, not a young prodigal, whose life has been one long career of infamous debauchery' (p. 186). (Sk. V, Ch. 7) Other anticipations of Sybil are, of course, the Roman Catholicism of the Dacres and the use of the ruins of Dacre Abbey as the setting for two critical scenes (I, pp. 291-295, and III, pp. 230-233; cf. Sybil, Bk. II, Chs. 4 and 5). (Sk. II, Ch. 14)

² III, pp. 200-201 (Sk. V, Ch. 7). (Sk. V, Ch. 9)

this change of emphasis come over the novel so abruptly in its final volume? Was it part of the plan with which Disraeli had begun what he described to Colburn as 'exactly the kind of work which you would write yourself, if you had time, and delightfully adapted to the most corrupt taste'? On balance, and without access to the manuscript¹, one is inclined to answer in the negative and to suggest that Disraeli wrote - or at least revised - the latter part of the book under the influence of his friend Bulwer. 'I have not gained much in conversation with men', Disraeli wrote in his Mutilated Diary in 1833; 'Bulwer is one of the few with whom my intellect comes into collision with benefit. He is full of thought & views at once original and just. The material of his conversation & many a hint from our colloquies he has poured into his "England & the English", a fine series of philosophical dissertations'.²

him to read the first volume of The Young Duke in manuscript.

1. The ms. was sold at Christie's in 1881 to H.R.H., the Duke of Albany, Queen Victoria's fourth and youngest son, but its subsequent history is elusive. The Duke of Albany's daughter, H.R.H. Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, has never heard of the ms. and thinks that if it had been in her father's library for any length of time it would certainly have been recorded in the inventory prepared by Sir Robert Collins. The Dukedom of Albany was bestowed upon her father, then a young man, in 1881 partly through Disraeli's earlier influence with the Queen - his letters to the Duke on this and other matters are printed in Princess Alice's For My Grandchildren (London, 1966) together with a helpful commentary - and it seems a reasonable conjecture that after Disraeli's death H.R.H. might well have purchased the ms. for presentation to the Queen. But Mr. Robert Mackworth-Young, the Librarian at Windsor, who has been kind enough to look into the matter, reports that the ms. is not among the Royal Archives, nor is any trace of it to be found in the Staatsarchiv at Coburg.
2. Hughenden Papers, Box 11, A / III / C. (See W. E. Harris, A Short History of the House of Commons, 1923) - or

Their acquaintance seems to have begun early in 1829 with an exchange of letters initiated by Disraeli who in February sent Bulwer some tobacco and referred in passing to his own novels as 'Juvenile Indiscretions'. Bulwer acknowledged the gift on the 19th, adding that he had 'great admiration for the only works I have read attributed to you - viz. Vivian Grey & Captain Popanilla. As they cannot come under the head of Juvenile Indiscretions I know not to what other works you allude - but shall be happy in any way to repay your attention to me'.¹ In July Bulwer wrote again to inquire after Disraeli's health and to send some books, unfortunately not identified.² But they did not meet personally until 'Just at the commencement of the spring of 1830'³ when Disraeli dined at Bulwer's house in Hertford Street. They appear to have struck up an immediate rapport; it may even have been on this occasion that Disraeli asked him to read the first volume of The Young Duke in manuscript. ^{at all events} Bulwer ~~of course~~ agreed, and in an undated note he remarks that he has read '3 parts of your first volume. You shall return with me from Windham's'⁴ & we'll talk about it'.⁵

1. Ibid., Box 104, B / XX / Ly / 1.

2. Ibid., Box 104, B / XX / Ly / 2 and 3.

3. M & B, I, p.124; see also p.125 for an account of the dinner.

4. ~~Probably Wyndham Lewis's house at Grosvenor Gate.~~

5. Hughenden Papers, Box 104, B / XX / Ly / 32. 'Windham's' was probably either the Windham Club in St. James's Square - although neither Bulwer nor Disraeli figured among the original members (see W.E. Harris, A Short Account of the Windham Club from its formation in 1828, Bath, 1923) - or Wyndham Lewis's house at Grosvenor Gate.

By the time he had finished the whole volume, however, Bulwer had formed serious objections to the work and on April 10th he took the trouble of preparing a long and detailed critique: and act a little, on this hint, I fear you are likely to be attacked & vituperated to a degree which fame can scarcely recompense, Hertford St. 36.

Thursday Night.

My dear D'Israeli,

I have read thro' your MS. with great attention - & it has afforded me a very uncommon gratification. - I could fill my letter with praises of its wit - the terseness & philosophy of its style - & the remarkable felicity with which you make the coldest insipidities of real life entertaining & racy. One would think you had been learning at Laputa, how to extract sunbeams from cucumbers. In the genius of your book I see not a flaw, nothing to point out to your attention. In the judgement of it, I think you are less invariably happy. - You do not seem to me to have done justice to your own powers, when you are so indulgent to flippancies. - I do think you should look with a harsh & even hypercritical eye on all those antithetical neatnesses of style which make the great feature of your composition [.]¹. Wherever they attain a witticism or a new truth (nine times out of ten), don't alter a syllable, but wherever you see that form of words which aims at a point & does not acquire it, be remorseless. - I would have you write a book not only to succeed, but to have that success which will hereafter be agreeable to yourself. Decriers & enemies you must have but don't give them an unnecessary handle & don't unnecessarily encrease their number. The flippancies I allude to are an ornate & shewy effeminacy that I think you should lop off on the same principle as Ld. Ellenbro².

¹. e.g.: 'When the ablutions were performed, Luigi came forward, with a richly quilted silken robe, and his Grace, folding himself with the dignity of Caesar, fell, not at the base of Pompey's statue, but on an Ottoman'. (I, p. 209).

². Edward Law, 2nd Baron Ellenborough (1790-1871); cr. Earl, 1844. Lord Privy Seal and President of the Board of Control during the Wellington administration, he was conspicuous both for his oratory and his vanity.

should cut off his hair. To a mere fashionable novel aiming at no higher merit, & to a mere dandy aiming at nothing more solid, the flippancy or the hair might be left, & left gracefully. But I do not think the one suits a man who is capable of great things nor the other a man who occupies great places. At all events if you do not think twice, and act a little, on this hint, I fear you are likely to be attacked & vituperated to a degree which fame can scarcely recompence, & which hereafter may occasion [sic] you serious inconvenience. Recollect that you have written a book (Vivian Grey) of wonderful promise, but one which got you enemies - you have therefore to meet in this a very severe ordeal both of expectation & malice. You have attained in the book more than the excellencies of Vivian Grey, but I do not think you have vigilantly enough avoided the faults. If you feel however, that what I have said does not obtain in the second & 3^d volume, never regard my frank impertinence as worth attention. For the first volume, after all, signifies very little compared with the rest of the book, but should you suspect that I am the least right, in this volume & that this volume, is a fair specimen of the others - put yourself some morning in a bad humour with antithesis & Voltaire & go carefully [sic], pen in hand, over the manuscript [.]

I speak to you thus candidly, first because unlike most advisers, I shall not think a whit the worse of you, if you do not follow the advice, & secondly because judging of you by myself, I think you will like even censure so long as it is available.

After all, your book is, certain 'to take' & your criticisms exercised on self will not, perhaps, make it take more - they will only give it a right to take on higher & more permanent ground. You have written a very fine & a very original thing - & all but a very sincere, well wisher should be perfectly satisfied with the display.

As a trifle not to be overlooked, I would give mature attention to the Duke's dress. I confess I think the blonde edgings - too bold - these are the things (strange as it may seem) that make enemies & scarcely make friends. May Dacre is beautiful, the egotisms I do not object to, they are always charming & often exceedingly touching. Moreover the interest of the story never flags & you have agreeably belied any prediction of extravagance.

Pray excuse all this candour & hold it for what it really is, a sign of my cordial & sincere interest in your success.

Hughenden Papers, Box 104, B / XX / Lf / 4. The letter is addressed to Disraeli at Bradenham and postmarked: 'FRI 10 / 10 AP 10 / 1830'. There is a short postscript asking whether the MS. should be posted to Bradenham or held at Hertford Street.

Wishing you also an entire & speedy restoration to your health, it is not to be consummated till next Session.

You may be sure of having for the sake of your idle friends Believe me, my dear Disraeli of Saul Clifford, with a copy of Falkland.

Very truly yours

Believe me My dear Disraeli

E. Lytton Bulwer¹.

With great regard & interest

Disraeli's answer does not survive, but his alarm at the severity of his friend's remarks may be gauged from Bulwer's reply of the 14th:

My dear Disraeli

You quite misconceive me, if you for a moment suppose, that I wish you even to dream of suppressing your new work. All I ask of you is to consider whether you will correct it. I assure of you I think it a very fine & brilliant book, but it has stuff in it worthy of severe polish, - & occasional faults that render polish more of use than it might be in a work of a colder - & I do not say a more solid - but a duller genius. The faults I mean are only in phrases such as 'He looked like a messiah & took wine', 'He looked not up to the sky but the ceiling'--. After all, I am more fastidious in these points than others, because I have the experience & therefore the warning of my own sins. I should be particularly gratified in seeing the other volumes, which are of more importance to success than the first. I did not like to ask you to see them after my frankness. But if you are not discouraged, pray give me a pleasure & an honour I shall value very highly indeed.

I go out of Town to morrow for 2 weeks. I have left with Mrs. Lytton Bulwer your MS. sealed, in case you should ask for it before May. But I shall certainly be back by the 1st - meanwhile it is quite safe & has not been glanced at by any but myself. -

A thousand thanks for your kindness & trouble about Parliament. I have the satisfaction of telling you that

¹ Hughenden Papers, Box 104, B / XX / Ly / 4. The letter is addressed to Disraeli at Bradenham and postmarked: 'FREE / 10 AP 10 / 1830'. There is a short postscript asking whether the MS. should be posted to Bradenham or held at Hertford Street.

² Disraeli, *Lyons*, Ly / 10. Arundel Dacre first enters the novel in volume II, pp. 54-56, and his history and character are sketched in Book III, chapter 6 (II pp. 34-35).

I yesterday brought to conclusion an affair of that sort, tho' it is not to be consummated till next Session.

You may be sure of having for the sake of your idle friends one of the very earliest copies of Paul Clifford, with a copy of Falkland.

Believe me My dear Disraeli

The 'last part of Vol[.] III.' had not been sent either

With great regard & interest

because Disraeli had not yet written it or because he wished

Yours very sincerely,

to revise what he had written in the light of Bulwer's

E. Lytton Bulwer¹.

earlier criticisms. Whichever was the case, it seems clear

Hertford St. 36,

that 'Ap. 14 1830. Book' - the Duke's hurried journey to

London by public coach (some of its details based no doubt on

Disraeli seems to have lost little time in availing himself

of Bulwer's offer to read the other volumes. 'I shall have

read your book in 4 or 5 days', Bulwer writes in an undated

note, 'and will then talk over it with you. At present I am

halfway thro' the second volume, which I like still better

than the first. The best part to my taste, of the whole,

is the character of Arundel Dacre'.² And finally:

My dear Disraeli,

I have read all your book that you have sent. You are aware that I have not had the last part of Vol[.] III.^d Can you call to morrow a quarter before 12 (I go out at a quarter before one) or will you fix any other time. I am very anxious to see the End of the Book. A great, perhaps the greatest merit of the Book will depend on its whole.

I like the 2nd & 3^d Vols. better than the first but I reserve Commendations (my only criticisms) till

¹. Ibid., Box 104, B / XX / Ly / 5. The letter is addressed to Disraeli at Bradenham and postmarked: 'AP / J 15 / 1830'.

². Ibid., Box 104, B / XX / Ly / 10. Arundel Dacre first enters the novel in volume II, pp.54-56, and his history and character are sketched in Book III, chapter 6 (II, pp.64-73).

we meet, had also urged his friend to raise his sights from 'Most truly yours novel' to a kind of fiction worthy of 'higher & more E. L. Bulwer¹ sound'. So far as the novel in general was concerned, this advice was of course unexceptionable; but as applied specifically to The Young Duke, it was because Disraeli had not yet written it or because he wished to revise what he had written in the light of Bulwer's earlier criticisms. Whichever was the case, it seems clear that 'the End of the Book' - the Duke's hurried journey to London by public coach (some of its details based no doubt on Disraeli's own travelling experiences), his speech in the House of Lords, and his triumphant return to Castle Dacre - took its peculiar shape as a direct result of Bulwer's influence. It is almost as if the more experienced novelist had undertaken to give his new friend tuition in the art of change of tone in the second and third volumes, Bulwer might have done better had he advised his friend to settle for either one or the other of the two themes - but not both - every-day English life whose conversation nevertheless turns on important social and political issues, is unlike anything Disraeli had previously written. By insisting upon a greater degree of realism in The Young Duke, Bulwer had started Disraeli upon the road that would lead him finally to the Young England novels.

¹ Ibid., Box 104, B / XX / Ly / 36. The letter, which has neither date nor postmark, is addressed to Disraeli at the Union Hotel, Cockspur Street.

² Ibid., the end of chapter 3 of Book II (I, p.143).

Bulwer had also urged his friend to raise his sights from 'a mere fashionable novel' to a kind of fiction worthy of 'higher & more permanent ground'. So far as the novel in general was concerned, this advice was of course unexceptionable; but as applied specifically to The Young Duke, it raised certain problems. Was the novel to be a burlesque of fashionable novels (as Disraeli had begun it), or was it to be a study, in the bildungsroman manner, of the gradual reformation of the Duke's character? Part of the trouble is that Disraeli apparently decided quite early in his work to saddle himself with a plot similar to that of Plummer Ward's Tremaine¹ - at least, that this was his intention is clearly established by the middle of the first volume of the printed text.² Instead, therefore, of stressing the need for a change of tone in the second and third volumes, Bulwer might have done better had he advised his friend to settle for either one or the other of the two themes - but not both - that he had undertaken in his first volume: a witty burlesque limited, like Popanilla, to a single volume, or a serious study of character development in the standard three volumes. Indeed, Bulwer's repeated assertion that the first volume

¹ In this connection, it is worth noting that Disraeli professed admiration for Edith Clifford (1830); in an undated letter

¹. See p. 99, n. 2, above. Although Disraeli drew upon both Ward and Bulwer in The Young Duke, he did not hesitate to chide them in the novel for the absurd solemnity with which he felt they treated commonplace domestic misfortunes (see III, pp. 104-105 (Bk. IV, Ch. 12)).

². i.e., the end of chapter 3 of book II (I, p. 148). (return from the East). On April 15th, 1832, Bulwer acknowledged another congratulatory letter: 'I am greatly delighted that you like "Eugene Aram"-it is more of a whole than my former works & less dependant on any extrinsic adornments or set off'. (Ibid., Box 104, B / XX / Ly / 11)

². M & B, I, pp. 129-135; Jermain, pp. 95-102.

matters so much less than the last is a sign of how little inclined writers were at this time to think of the novel as an organic whole.

But there is an obvious reason for Bulwer's failure to give such advice. In Pelham (1828) he had already written a widely admired novel according to the same formula as he was now urging upon Disraeli: a series of episodes at the outset illustrating (and, as few of his readers perceived, ridiculing) dandyism, numerous scenes from high life, the inevitable love story, and a closing section in which the action descends into low life and finally emerges in the hero's political and moral regeneration. ~~triumph~~. Bulwer's interest in the problem novel happened to be developing just at this time, and it was perfectly natural that he should have wanted to encourage Disraeli to think along similar lines.¹ But well-meant as his advice undoubtedly was, the result in The Young Duke is a novel in which beginning and end remain fundamentally at odds.

For the student of Disraeli's fiction, the final importance of The Young Duke - apart from the autobiographical asides, which have been dealt with fully elsewhere² - lies in

1. In this connection, it is worth noting that Disraeli professed admiration for Paul Clifford (1830); in an undated letter Bulwer writes: 'My dear Disraeli: I seize the only scrap of paper I can find, to tell you how delighted I am at your kindly opinion of P: Clifford'. (Hughenden Papers, Box 104, B/XX/Ly/8; the letter is addressed to Disraeli at the Union Hotel, Cockspur Street, and on internal evidence might equally well have been written in April-May, 1830, or in 1831 after the publication of The Young Duke and Disraeli's return from the East). On April 19th, 1832, Bulwer acknowledged another congratulatory letter: 'I am greatly delighted that you like "Eugene Aram" - it is more of a whole than my former works & less dependant on any meretricious adornments or set off'. (Ibid., Box 104, B / XX / Ly / 11)

2. M & B, I, pp. 129-135; Jerman, pp. 95-102.

what it shows us about his working methods and the development of his conception of what a novel ought properly to be. We have seen how ready he was to respond both to the demands of the marketplace and, on reflection, to the advice of a trusted friend. But the novel also contains a passage in which Disraeli describes his method of composition:

I find this writing not so difficult as I had imagined. I see the only way is to rattle on just as you talk. The moment that you anticipate your pen in forming a sentence, you get as stiff as a gentleman in stays. I use my pen as my horse; I guide it, and it carries me on.¹ And, to look ahead for a moment to Contarini Fleming, here is how Manstein, a novel that corresponds in Contarini's development to Vivian Grey in Disraeli's, was written:

I took up a pen. I held it in the light. I thought to myself what will be its doom, but I said nothing. I began writing some hours before noon, nor did I ever cease. My thoughts, my passion, the rush of my invention, were too quick for my pen. Page followed page; as a sheet was finished I threw it on the floor; I was amazed at the rapid and prolific production, yet I could not stop to wonder. In half a dozen hours I sank back exhausted, with an aching frame ...

The third morning I had less inclination to write. I read over and corrected what I had composed. This warmed my fancy, and in the afternoon I executed several chapters of my second volume.

Each day, although I had not in the least lost my desire of writing, I wrote slower. It was necessary for me each day to read my work from the beginning, before I felt the existence of the characters sufficiently real to invent their actions.²

¹ I, p.66; deleted in 1853.

² See Contarini Fleming (1832) (London, 1832), II, Part II, Ch. 12, passim.

Even allowing for some exaggeration, one suspects that there is more truth in these passages than otherwise. Certainly the manuscripts of the two parts of Vivian Grey which Disraeli submitted to Sara Austen give every indication of having been hastily written and then copiously revised - with some passages copied over several times.¹ And in the manuscript of

¹. There are two collections of Vivian Grey mss.: one at Hughenden (consisting of mss. retained by Disraeli or returned to him by Mrs. Austen) and one in the Houghton Library at Harvard (consisting of mss. in the possession of Mrs. Austen on her death in 1889). No definitive history of the evolution of the text will be possible until these two sets of mss. - written, inevitably, in two hands and on several types of paper - are brought together. In the meantime, here is a very tentative outline of the state of the mss.:

Bks. I-IV

- a.) Hughenden Papers, Box 216 (part one): a rough early draft in Disraeli's hand with a few passages interpolated by Mrs. Austen including the change of 'Chiefston' to 'Cleveland' and of 'Chiefwood' (the name of Lockhart's house at Melrose) to 'Kenrich Lodge'.
- b.) Houghton Library, MS. Eng. 840 (part one): a fair copy in Disraeli's hand of the above with scattered corrections and additions, apparently prepared for Mrs. Austen's use in making a copy for Colburn.

Bks. V-VIII

- a.) Houghton Library, MS. Eng. 840 (part two): a working draft in Disraeli's hand, apparently prepared for Mrs. Austen.
- b.) Hughenden Papers, Box 216 (part two): Mrs. Austen's fair copy of the above; that the type was set from this ms. is evident from the names of compositors and other printer's annotations inscribed in various margins. As an indication of the complexity of these mss., however, it is worth noting that even though this appears to be a final draft, Disraeli has nevertheless made extensive holograph changes to the beginning of the ms. (Bk. V, Ch. 1) where he at first complains of the 'evident mendacity, and frantic feebleness' of his critics and then proceeds to tone down his remarks.

Popanilla he likewise corrects and refines his text, sometimes re-writing as many as three successive times, crossing out the earlier versions as he goes along and leaving the last.¹

However spontaneously he may have 'rattled on' in his first draft, it seems clear that for Disraeli, unlike Gibbon, a large and significant part of the business of writing consisted in afterthoughts and revision.

The nature of his source materials and the use to which he put them, on the other hand, changed dramatically in The Young Duke. There is none of that borrowing of passages word for word that is so striking a feature of the second part of Vivian Grey; Disraeli's indebtedness to printed works appears to be confined to Tremaine and Pelham - and in both cases the debt is a very general one. Nor does he incorporate into the fabric of the novel, as he had done in the first part of Regency dandies Ball Hughes and Sir John Maldon.²

1. Pierpont Morgan Library, V 10 A. The ms. is entirely in Disraeli's hand and appears to be his final draft of a work that must have gone through a number of stages since its genesis in Aylmer Papillon. Jerman (pp 87, 89) mentions Mrs. Austen's interest in this novel while it was being written, and there is reason to think that she may have made a transcript of the ms. for Colburn just as she had done with the two parts of Vivian Grey. After her death in 1888, Disraeli's ms. was found by her executors among her effects and sold to a bookseller named J. Pearson (of 5 Pall Mall, S.W.) from whom J.P. Morgan obtained it. The text is close enough to the published version to suggest that it might have served as printer's copy; yet it bears none of the usual compositor's markings and in places is nearly illegible. Under the circumstances, it seems likely that the copy sent to the printer was a transcript of this ms. made by Mrs. Austen.

² Disraeli's acquaintance with Mrs. Austen in 1823 is alluded to on 2 April 1826 (p. 372) and again on 6 August (p. 517), while his criticisms are sprinkled liberally throughout the pages.

Vivian Grey, any systematic fictional reworking of his personal experiences. This is not to say that he had outgrown that curious deficiency of imagination so evident in his first work. Imagination, Robert Blake has observed, 'is not the same as fantasy or day-dreaming. The capacity to invent characters, to get inside them and present their development, the power to put oneself into unfamiliar scenes and situations, everything that is meant by creative imagination, was not Disraeli's forte'.¹ What he did in lieu of it was to turn to contemporary gossip. As Lucien Wolf has shown, a number of the Duke's escapades - his dramatic three days' gaming session (even his habit of sleeping on the floor in times of crisis) and his acquisition of an Italian singer called the 'Bird of Paradise' as his mistress - are drawn from episodes in the careers of the Regency dandies Ball Hughes and Sir John Maldolm.² No doubt, too, he was aware of Sir Jeffry Wyatville's spectacular additions during the 1820's to Windsor and other great houses³.

¹ Robert Blake, 'Disraeli the Novelist', Essays by Divers Hands (London, 1966), p.14.

² The Young Duke, ed. Lucien Wolf (London, 1905), pp.xx-xxii and pp.397-405 where he gives the appropriate extracts from Captain Gronow's Reminiscences.

³ For a good account of his work at Windsor, see Derek Linstrum, 'Sir Jeffry Wyatville at Windsor', The Victorian Society Annual, 1969-70 (London, [1970]), pp.41-50.

Wyatville's knighthood is reported in the Age for 14 Dec. 1828 (p.396); and Ball Hughes's elopement with Mercandotti in 1823 is alluded to on 2 April 1826 (p.372) and again on 6 August (p.517), while his witticisms are sprinkled liberally throughout its pages.

when he conceived of Sir Carte Blanche, and he may well have known of Decimus Burton's designs for 'St. Dunstan's', The Marquess of Hertford's retreat in Regent's Park, when he conceived of the 'Alhambra'. (See Bernard Falk, 'Old Q's Daughter' (London, 1937), pp.138-140 and for a list of Burton's building see The Builder, December 29, 1881, pp.780-781).

Wolf, however, surely goes too far - there is simply no evidence to support him - when he maintains (pp.xviii-xix) that Disraeli spent three months in the winter of 1829-30 living a life of dissipation and extravagance in London by way of gathering material for his novel. Everything we know of his career at this stage indicates that his poor health could hardly have permitted him to indulge in so taxing a regimen. Except for one or two short visits to London (incognito, lest his creditors catch wind of his presence)¹, he seems in any case to have spent most of this period at Bradenham.² What The Young Duke shows us, in fact, is the opposite of what Wolf contends. Instead of continuing in the vein of Vivian Grey, Disraeli is outgrowing the notion that his novels might be constructed on a narrowly auto-biographical basis. And in The Young Duke he had

1. They may have done so on one occasion late in November; see Jerman, pp.90-91 and 92-93.

2. See M & B, I, pp.120-121; Jerman, pp.87-93; Blake, pp.53-55. Disraeli had completed the more dandaical half of his novel, as we have seen (pp.27-28, above), by February 14th. The three months in London could thus not have begun after mid-November; yet on November 28th and December 8th we find him writing Austen from Bradenham (Jerman, pp.90-91). Wolf also alleges that Bulwer was one of his companions during this 'roystering winter' (p.xx), but in a memorandum already cited Disraeli dates their first meeting in 'the spring of 1830' (M & B, I, p.124).

Popanilla and The Young Duke belong to Disraeli's period of apprenticeship as a novelist. For they show him developing a sense of detachment from his subject matter (compensated, of course, by colloquial asides to the reader in both works) simultaneously with an interest in exploring social and political issues in a work of fiction. Having discovered - through the hostility with which the first part of Vivian Grey had been received perhaps as much as through his own judgement - that it was no longer enough to treat the novel (as Byron sometimes treats verse) as a means of chronicling the author's personal triumphs and misfortunes, it was inevitable that he should have asked himself upon what principles a novel should be written. How could he reconcile his own preoccupations with the expectations of readers and critics? How could he, in short, write what it amused him to write without incurring the wrath of those to whom he looked for recognition and fame? Setting out to burlesque contemporary theories of political economy in Popanilla, Disraeli had learnt to stand back from the recent past and transform his personal adventures into an arch and witty fable that requires no elaborate biographical explication for its full effect. And in The Young Duke he had sketched the rough outlines of a kind of novel in which the techniques of the comedy of manners - applied to the drama of parliamentary affairs - would be combined with the study of social and political problems in ordinary life. The ^{plan}~~formula~~ had not quite worked in The Young Duke. But there was yet time for it to germinate.

CHAPTER FOUR

Contarini Fleming and Alroy

'Poetry', Disraeli confided to his diary in the autumn of 1833, 'is the safety-valve of my passions, but I wish to act what I write. My works are the embodiment of my feelings. In Vivian Grey I have portrayed my active and real ambition. In Alroy my ideal ambition. The P.R. [i.e., 'Psychological Romance', the original title of Contarini Fleming] is a developm^t of my Poetic character. This Trilogy is the secret history of my feelings - I shall write no more about myself'.¹

It is difficult to know how to assess this much-quoted statement. Disraeli apparently meant that in Vivian Grey, with its detailed narrative of schemings and counter-schemings, he had foreshadowed his parliamentary ambitions; that in The Wondrous Tale of Alroy, with its account of an ultimately self-sacrificing hero who seeks to reunite and restore to power a divided and humiliated people, he had projected forth his sense of personal idealism and national destiny; and that in the highly autobiographical Contarini Fleming he had sought to record the development of his own artistic sensibilities. That he should at the same time have vowed to write 'no more about myself' is in itself significant, for it suggests that

¹ Hughenden Papers, Box 11, A / III / C; the entry is dated Sept. 1, 1833, and occurs in the so-called 'Mutilated Diary'. Blake (p.38), M & B (I, p.236), and Jerman (p.69) all quote it.

since his visit to the East a change had come over his attitude towards novel writing. Certainly Contarini and Alroy have nothing in common with Popanilla and The Young Duke, nor can they be said in any general way to anticipate Henrietta Temple, Venetia, Coningsby, or Sybil. Taken as a pair, they represent an interruption in the course of Disraeli's development as a novelist - indeed, a regrettable interruption but none the less a necessary one. ¹ Disraeli began work on Alroy, as we have seen¹, late in the 1820's. A tightly-packed notebook at Hughenden², as well as the section of 'Notes' that he appended to the novel show how extensive was the research he had undertaken. Besides the Bible and the Talmud, the 'Notes' alone refer to such works as Jacques Basnage de Beauval, Histoire des Juifs (La Haye, 1716); Dom Augustin Calmet, Dictionary of the Holy Bible (London, 1732); Edward Daniel Clarke's Travels (London, 1810-23); William Enfield, The History of Philosophy (London, 1791); Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (London, 1776-88); The Works of the Reverend and Learned John Lightfoot, D.D., ed. George Bright (London, 1684); Sir John Malcolm's Sketches of Persia (London, 1827); Sir Robert Ker Porter's Travels in Georgia, Persia, Armenia, Ancient Babylonia, &c. &c. (London, 1821-22); and George Sandys' Relation of a Journey (London, 1615). He seems not to have made a system-

1. See above, p. ¹¹⁹26, n.2.

2. Box 11, A / III / A.

atic study of these works but simply to have dipped into them and drawn out what suited his purposes. In several cases his references are incorrect: in notes 10 and 40 he gives the wrong volume numbers for his citations in Lightfoot, and, quoting from Porter's Travels, in note 3 he encloses in the quotation marks a passage that begins as quotation but ends as précis.

Disraeli's use of works of this sort, to which he would have had access at Bradenham, is not, however, of much importance where Alroy is concerned. He was not a scholar and never sought to become one.¹ The real impetus for the book came from his visit to the Near East:

I had commenced 'Alroy' the year after my first publication, and had thrown the manuscript aside. Being at Jerusalem in the year 1831, and visiting the traditional tombs of the kings, my thoughts recurred to the marvellous career which had attracted my boyhood, and I shortly after finished a work which I began the year after I wrote Vivian Grey.²

The greater part of both Alroy and Contarini was in fact written during these travels. In the preface to The Revolutionary Epick Disraeli explains why, having conceived

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1. Chapter 3 of Part VI of Alroy contains an amusing burlesque on the obscurantism of the learned. The first chapter of a certain treatise, one character remarks, "makes equal sense, read backward or forward" (I, p. 208) - a judgment which Robert Blake says (pp. 107-8) Disraeli himself once applied to the opening chapter of Alroy. But this is evidently erroneous, though the remark might with some justification be made of the first chapter of Contarini.
2. 'General Preface', Lothair, Longman's collected edition to (London, 1870)

4. Hughenden Papers, Box 12, A / IV / E 32.

that work 'on the plains of Troy'¹, he did not execute it until some years later. On reaching Constantinople, he writes, his thoughts 'more than once' recurred to the project; 'but the distraction of far travel, and the composition of two works long meditated - one devoted to the delineation of the Poetic Character, the other to the celebration of a gorgeous incident in the annals of that sacred and romantic people from whom I derive my blood and name, - finally expelled from my thoughts a conception which, in truth, I deemed too bold'.² And of Contarini he declares in the 1845 preface that it was 'written with great care, after deep meditation, and in a beautiful and distant land, favourable to composition, with nothing in it to attract the passions of the hour ...'. One place where he would have found little 'to attract the passions of the hour' was the lazaretto at Malta where, on his return from the East, he was in quarantine for over a month.³ As he wrote to his father from Gibraltar on the way back: 'You will be surprised, perhaps even astounded at the quantity I have planned & written'.⁴ On the whole it seems likely that he must have

1. (London, 1834), p.[i].

2. p.iii. 30 (Part III, Ch.9).

3. The Government Gazette of Malta records his arrival with Clay and 'Tita' on the Austrian brig 'Arpocrate' on 7 September and his departure, without Clay and 'Tita', on the steam-packet 'Hermes' on 12 October. I am indebted to Dr. Donald Sultana for this information.

4. Hughenden Papers, Box 12, A / IV / E 32.

done most of this work at Malta, though, for reasons which will be made plain below, he cannot have completed the last quarter of Contarini until his return to Bradenham.

A large portion of both works was thus written under the shadow of the death in Cairo of William Meredith, Disraeli's old friend and his sister's fiancé. This explains why Alroy should have been so floridly dedicated - in a style worthy of the rest of the book - to 'Sa', as he called her;¹ it perhaps explains, too, why Contarini is made to marry a young woman named Alcesté who dies tragically in childbirth shortly afterwards and who, as '"the last of the Contarinis"'², is at least the hero's cousin and possibly, it is darkly hinted,

Contarini he tells us through his hero: "She was fallen"

¹ The text, which is not reproduced in later editions, reads: 'To / ** *****/ Sweet Sister! as I wandered on the mountains of Sion, behold! a gazelle came bounding o'er the hills! It perceived me, it started back, it gazed at me with trembling surprise. Ah! fear not! fair creature, I fondly exclaimed, fear not, and flee not away! I too have a gazelle in a distant land; not less beautiful her airy form than thine, and her dark eye not less tremulously bright!'

¹ The Ah! little did I deem, my sweetest friend, that ere I pressed that beauteous form again, Sorrow should dim the radiance of thy smile, and charge that brilliant eye with many a tear! Yet trust thee, dearest, in a brother's love, the purest sympathy of our fallen state! If I recall one gleam of rapture to thy pensive cheek, not in vain I strike my lonely lyre, or throw these laurels at thy fairy feet!' (pp.[v]-vi). Letters (A/IV/6/4 and 10) she clearly refers to Sarah, who had paid her

² III, p.30 (Part III, Ch.9).

According to one of his Alroy notes, Disraeli was an admirer of the Alcestis of Euripides - particularly of the heroine's 'beautiful' conduct as death approaches. (Box 11, A / III / A / p.19).

² I, p.6. The full text of the passage will be found in

his half-sister as well.¹ But it does not explain why, even by the most generous critical standards, these books are so dreadfully bad. '... I am not', he wrote in the p. During his tour of the Near East Disraeli, like his hero Contarini, was engaged in an internal debate about his future: was his career to be literary or political? In the absence of any immediate political prospects, one way to seek a resolution of this problem was to set out to write a Great Novel. Both Contarini and Alroy exhibit flagrant aspirations in this direction. The Alroy notebook - of all Disraeli's extant 'working papers' the most voluminous and ambitious - has already been cited. In the first chapter of Contarini he tells us through his hero:

one and I am desirous of writing a book which shall be all truth, a work of which the passion, the thought, the action, and even the style, should spring from my own experience of feeling, from the meditations of my own intellect, from my own observations of incident, from my own study of the genius of expression. 2.

route and to take advantage of the opportunities opening up as

result of the influence of the Reform Bill.³ Well

1. The point is admittedly obscure, but some contemporary readers, possibly with the dedication of Alroy in mind, took Alcésté as a portrait of Sarah. In an undated letter to Disraeli, Mrs. Bolton complains that '...the rumour was, the book could not be moral Alcésté being your sister-pray shout at this!! They say it matters not about the doctrinal parts. The others render it unfit for a lady'. (Hughenden Papers, Box 13, A/IV/G/6) Yet in two other letters (A/IV/G/4 and 10) she clearly refers to Sarah, who had paid her several visits, as 'Alcésté'. 10-fashoned'. (Letters, p. 94).

2. According to one of his Alroy notes, Disraeli was an admirer of the Alcésté of Euripides - particularly of the heroine's 'beautiful' conduct as death approaches. (Box 11, A / III / A / p.19).

3. The point is admirably documented by Wagnon (H & B, I, 1, p.6. but still further evidence will be found in Letters, pp. 90-91).

If either of these books, as he worked on them, had struck him as having within them the stuff of which fame is made he might have stuck to letters. '... I am not', he wrote in the preface to The Revolutionary Epick, 'one who find [sic] consolation for the neglect of my contemporaries in the imaginary plaudits of a more sympathetic Posterity'.¹ But during the latter part of his travels his interest in current affairs was growing. The July Revolution in France had brought Louis-Philippe to the throne, there had been another revolution in Belgium, and at home William IV was surrounding himself with a more liberal court than would have been tolerated by his predecessor. 'Ever since you left', wrote Sarah, 'accessions, elections and revolutions have followed one another so rapidly that we have not had breathing time'.² Disraeli's letters from the East, even before Meredith's death, show an eagerness to get home by the shortest possible route and to take advantage of the opportunities opening up as a result of the imminence of the Reform Bill.³ Well

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1. (London, 1834), p.iv. It was in this spirit that, writing from Cairo, in May, 1831, he could look back on The Young Duke with indifference: 'I don't care a jot about the Young Duke'. I never staked any fame on it. It may take its chance. I meant the hero to be a model for our youth; but after two years' confinement in these revolutionary times, I fear he will prove old-fashioned'. (Letters, p.94).
 2. Hughenden Papers, Box 12, A / IV / E / 8; dated Sept.30, 1830.
 3. The point is admirably documented by Monypenny (M & B, I, p.202), but still further evidence will be found in Letters, pp.90-91.

before the publication and commercial failure¹ of Contarini me. I had ever been ambitious. I directed my desires, it would seem that his primary interests were turning towards politics - a subject, he later told Benjamin Jowett, which he had first begun to understand by reading a file of Galignani's Messenger while in quarantine at Malta.² Could he, in such circumstances, as he looked over his own manuscripts, have failed to be struck by their subjective and emotionally self-indulgent tone so little calculated to win that universal acclaim which he held so dear?

Disraeli had first taken to novel writing in a spirit of revenge, and, in a more generous temper, he had carried on in Popanilla and The Young Duke largely for financial reasons. It was the Eastern tour that brought to a head the question whether his future would be in politics or literature. We can see him working his way towards a resolution in Contarini. It must have been with his own epoch in mind that he had Contarini's father, in a letter to his son towards the end of the novel, declare of his own youth: too did not greatly appeal to him. Already in Popanilla, describing a

¹ See Jerman, pp.150-151, and C.L.Cline, 'The Failure of Disraeli's Contarini Fleming', Notes & Queries, August 1, 1942, p.69. On pp.224-226 Jerman tells the fascinating story of the disposal of the unsold sheets: they were issued by Moxon in 1834 and, after sale of only 8 copies, were turned over to Thomas Tegg who contrived their re-issue in Glasgow as The Young Venetian; or the Victim of Imagination - 'certainly a better title', Jerman remarks 'than Disraeli's own' - by one 'Granville Jones'. Although the preface in which Disraeli acknowledges his authorship is deleted, the text otherwise is unchanged. But Jerman's suggestion that Disraeli 'could have worked hand in hand with Tegg' seems baseless.

² Evelyn Abbott and Lewis Campbell, Life of Jowett (London, 1897), II, p.109.

'It was a political age. A great theatre seemed before me. I had ever been ambitious. I directed my desires, in a new channel, and I determined to be a statesman'.¹

The upshot of his growing interest in political affairs, the impending passage of the Reform Bill, and - possibly - a sense that in Contarini and Alroy he had gone as far in that particular line as it was in him to go, led him to decide henceforth to subordinate literature to politics.

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If Contarini was intended, as Disraeli wrote, to be 'a developm^t of my Poetic character', it may be worth asking just what that poetic character was. Certainly Byron had a large place in it: the Byron of The Corsair, naturally, and of Childe Harold, Hebrew Melodies, and Don Juan. Nor should the fashionable cult for Byron as a person be forgotten. Yet it was, one suspects, the couplets and the cynicism that most completely took possession of Disraeli's imagination. For romanticism as more generally understood did not greatly appeal to him. Already in Popanilla, describing a procession at Hubbabub, he had referred to Keats with no particular enthusiasm:

Each carriage was drawn by four horses, and attended by footmen so radiant with gold and scarlet, that, had Popanilla been the late ingenious Mr. Keates, he would have mistaken them for the natural children of Phoebus and Aurora.²

¹ IV, p.212 (Part VI, Ch.14).

² p.105 (Ch.10).

During his imprisonment, Popanilla's eye falls upon a faintly Shelleyan volume:

Taking up a brilliantly bound volume, which reposed upon a rose-wood table, Popanilla recited aloud a sonnet to Liberty; but the account given of the goddess by the bard was so confused, and he seemed so little acquainted with his subject, that the reader began to suspect it was an effusion of the gaoler.¹

And in Chapter 8 of Book II of The Young Duke, in a burst of magnificent high spirits, he is capable of loosely parodying Wordsworth's Ode: Intimations of Immortality in the following terms:

'Tis dinner! hour that I have loved as loves the bard at twilight; but no more those visions rise that once were wont to spring in my quick fancy. The dream is past, the spell is broken, and even the lore on which I pondered in my first youth is strange as figures in Egyptian tombs.

No more, no more, oh! never more to me, that hour shall bring its rapture and its bliss! No more, no more, oh! never more for me, shall Flavour sit upon her thousand thrones, and, like a syren with a sunny smile, win to renewed excesses, each more sweet! My feasting days are over: me no more the charms of fish, or flesh, still less of fowl, can make the fool of that they made before. The fricandeau is like a dream of early love; the fricassee, with which I have so often flirted, is like the tattle of the last quadrille; and no longer are my dreams haunted with the dark passion of the rich ragoût. Ye soups! o'er whose creations I have watched, like mothers o'er their sleeping child! Ye sauces! to which I have even lent a name, where are ye now? Tickling, perchance, the palate of some easy friend, who quite forgets the boon companion whose presence once lent lustre even to his ruby wine and added perfume to his perfumed hock!

It is difficult to resist the impression that Disraeli was basically out of sympathy with what we now call the romantic movement. His real affinities were with the eighteenth century and particularly with Pope - this, indeed, was the

¹. (London, 1828), p.226 (Ch.17). also printed in the Bockman (April, 1927) and the London Mercury (January, 1928).

side of Byron that he had already sought to emulate in 'The Dunciad of To-day'¹, as well as in the creation of ^{that} 'intellectual Don Juan'², the hero of Vivian Grey. His attempts at exalted versification in The Revolutionary Epick and The Tragedy of Count Alarcos are more often turgid and bombastic than otherwise. In 1837 when he sent some declamatory blank verse to The Times Thomas Barnes, its editor, replied in words that might fittingly be applied to all Disraeli's attempts to soar into the poetic empyrean: 'Your verses have a stately march and the sentiments are just, but they want variety. The tone is a high one, but the sound is monotonous'.³

Disraeli did not lack rhetorical power, but he had no sense of the poet's special way of seeing things - a point worth remembering in connection with Venetia. Like his verse, Contarini is full of 'fine' sentiments and painfully contrived expressions; yet little is presented in a way that seems genuinely and deeply felt, and the images are seldom more than felicitous. The poetic character, as Frank Swinnerton has remarked, 'is the one character that does not yield itself to ambition'.⁴ Disraeli is more concerned in Contarini

1. Star Chamber, 10-17 May, 1826, reproduced in The Dunciad of Today, a Satire, and the Modern Aesop, ed. Michael Sadleir (London, 1928). In his introduction Sadleir presents a convincing case for attributing this work to Disraeli.

See also p. 68, n. 5 above.

2. See p. 68, n. 3, above.

3. M & B, I, p. 333. IV, (3.3).

4. 'Disraeli as a Novelist', Yale Review (January, 1928), p. 290; this valuable article is also printed in the Bookman (April, 1927) and the London Mercury (January, 1928).

that his readers should recognize how exquisite and profound are his sensibilities that that they should see what those sensibilities reveal to him. The effect is finally one of appalling emptiness; the tone is indeed high but the sound monotonous. It is hardly surprising that two thirds of the way through the novel he should declare that 'It appears to me, that the age of Versification has past',¹ adding a few pages further on:

One would have supposed that the Poet who could not write, but even print his inventions, would have felt that it was both useless and unfit that they should be communicated by a process invented when his only medium was simple recitation. One would have supposed, that the Poet would have rushed with desire to the new world before him, that he would have seized the new means that permitted him to revel in an universe of boundless invention; to combine the highest ideal creation with the infinite delineation of teeming Nature; to unravel all the dark mysteries of our bosoms, and all the bright purposes of our being; to become the great instructor and champion of his species; and not only delight their fancy, and charm their senses, and command their will, but demonstrate their rights, illustrate their necessities, and expound the object of their existence; and all this too in a style charming and changing with its universal theme, now tender, now sportive; now earnest, now profound; now sublime, now pathetic; and substituting for the dull monotony of metre, the most various, and exquisite, and inexhaustible melody. 2.

If Disraeli had indeed read his Wordsworth, Keats, and Shelley, he does not seem to have profited much from the proper effect require to be declaimed. Having insisted upon experience.

What, then, is Contarini about? It isn't about the 'poetic' to any significant extent, nor is it exactly the

¹. III, p.154 (Part IV, Ch.3).

². pp.159-160.

'psychological autobiography' of the subtitle, although that comes nearer the mark. For if we understand by 'psychological' the description of a state of mind and the forces that create it, the book as a whole is only superficially viable. The early chapters dealing with Contarini's childhood, on the other hand, are both realistic and moving; they are a good anticipation of the brilliant early section of Venetia describing the tormented childhood of Cadurcis-Byron. This is possible because in both cases the narrator is necessarily outside his characters speaking in his own voice rather than theirs. But what Disraeli seems to have considered the 'psychological' part of the book comes slightly later, in the more rhetorical treatment of Contarini's efforts to recover from the ill-effects of an education such as Lord Chesterfield might have endorsed, and in the difficulties he experiences in choosing between a life of contemplation and a life of action. All this would be well enough if Disraeli had been able to make Contarini's mental processes clear to the reader. But this he cannot do; Contarini's ruminations are really self-conscious theatrical set-pieces that for their proper effect require to be declaimed. Having insisted upon a first person narrative - he stresses the importance of this in his 1845 preface - Disraeli had put himself in a position where he could leave nothing to the reader's inference. The result is that what Contarini thinks, we read; and what he doesn't think with a sufficient degree of consciousness to set down on paper, doesn't exist.

Beneath all its pretense, Contarini is scarcely more than a protracted revery about its author. Occasionally spirited but more often given over to artificial coincidences of plot and prolonged musings on the hero's destiny, its commercial failure is not difficult to understand. Nor, in an age interested in egoisms, is its modest critical réclame wholly surprising. As a 'psychological' autobiography' it did not have any very stiff competition to face. Madame d'Arblay and Milman, Murray's reader, were both enthusiastic admirers, the latter declaring: 'Very wild, very extravagant, very German, very powerful, very poetical ... It will, I think, be much read ... much admired, and much abused ... The latter part ... is a rapid volume of travels, a Childe Harold in prose'.¹ Beckford, to whom Disraeli had sent a copy on publication, exclaimed, 'How wildly original ! How full of intense thought ! How awakening ! How delightful !'² and Thomas Campbell, 'who, as he says, never reads any books but his own', Disraeli reported to his sister, 'is delighted with it; "I shall review it myself", he exclaims, "and it will be a psychological review"'.³ Apart from Campbell's banter, none of these comments deals with the 'psychological' side of the story - hence, perhaps, Disraeli's complaint to his sister that 'Amid abundance of praise and blame of Contarini, one thing which we all expected is very evident,

¹ M & B, I, p.190.

² p.191.

³ Ibid.

that not one of the writers has the slightest idea of the nature or purposes of the work.¹ Yet the only 'psychological' feature of the novel is the first person account of the hero's inner doubts about himself and his destiny: how is he to choose between the rival attractions of the hurly-burly world of public affairs and the artist's life of introspection and contemplation?

Throughout the book Contarini oscillates between these two poles. When his literary ambitions are frustrated he turns to the world of action, and when his political and diplomatic intrigues come to naught he turns back to literature. None of these various shiftings, however, is exactly conclusive - even at the end of the book. The ambivalent close of Part VI, Chapter 2, is typical:

Truly may I say, that on the plains of Syria, I parted for ever with my ambition. The calm enjoyment of existence appeared to me, as it now does, the highest attainable felicity, nor can I conceive, that anything could tempt me from my solitude, and induce me once more to mingle with mankind, with whom, I fear, I have too little in common, but the strong conviction that the fortunes of my race depended on my effort, or that I could materially advance that great amelioration of their condition, in the practicability of which I devoutly believe. 2.

Yet, as he says, this 'strong conviction' is wanting. By the time Contarini reaches his final pages he has become only slightly more confident about the future. Having retired to the life of a dilettante in his exquisitely appointed

1. Ibid.

2. IV, pp.151-152.

Neapolitan villa, hoping 'in time to create a scene which may rival in beauty and variety, although not in extent, the villa of Hadrian'¹, he resolves (no doubt with Beckford in mind) to erect a tower 'at least one hundred and fifty feet'² high. Here, he declares, 'let me pass my life in the study and the creation of the Beautiful'.³ Then suddenly:

Such is my desire; but whether it will be my career is, I feel, doubtful. My interest in the happiness of my race is too keen to permit me for a moment to be blind to the storms that lour on the horizon of society. Perchance also the political regeneration of the country to which I am devoted may not be distant, and in that great work I am resolved to participate.⁴

Yet the closest he comes to a clear statement of the nature of this participation is the concluding assertion that he hopes to devote himself 'to the amelioration of his kind, by the destruction of error and the propagation of truth'.⁵ The novel has to end somewhere and this is Disraeli's compromise to end it: a life of secluded aestheticism for Contarini with, however, the distant possibility of some future role in the world of affairs.

¹ IV, p.227 (Part VII, Ch.2).

² Ibid.

³ IV, p.228 (Part VII, Ch.2).

⁴ IV, pp.228-229 (Part VII, Ch.2).

⁵ IV, p.230 (Part VII, Ch.2). Disraeli also avows a deep sympathy with his fellow men and, surprisingly, 'a proud and profound conviction of their perfectibility'.

⁶ III, p.167 (Part IV, Ch.4).

⁷ III, p.168

There is an inertia about that last chapter, indeed about many of Contarini's ruminations, that can best be explained by looking back to the beginning of Part IV. After the death of Alceste, Contarini goes to Florence and begins work on a new and more serious novel than the unfortunate 'Manstein'. This work - which sounds suspiciously like Contarini itself - was the product of 'many long and unbroken hours'¹ of meditation and was intended to achieve 'a great and permanent fame'.² At first the business of composition proceeds easily enough, but soon Contarini is afflicted with 'an occasional, but increasing, languor ... a feeling of inertness, which was painful and mortifying'.³ It is as if at this point in his own work Disraeli's interest had suddenly collapsed - for the character of the book now changes dramatically. Contarini goes to Pisa for a fortnight's rest and the chapter concludes:

My visit to Pisa benefited me. I returned, and gave the last finish to my work.⁴

Then we proceed to chapter five:

All the Italian cities are delightful; but an elegant melancholy pervades Pisa, that is enchanting. What a marble group is formed by the Cathedral, the wonderful Baptistery, the leaning Tower, and the Campo Santo ...⁵

¹. III, p.149 (Part IV, Ch.2).

². III, p.170 (Part IV, Ch.5).

³. III, p.162 (Part IV, Ch.4).

⁴. III, p.167 (Part IV, Ch.4).

⁵. III, p.168

In short, at this point, the book becomes a sort of travelogue based, in a small way, upon Disraeli's recollections of his visit to Italy with the Austens in the summer of 1826, and - in a big way - upon his travels in Spain, Malta, and the Near East in 1830-31. Much of the text is in fact transcribed from the letters that he had sent home during the 1830-31 tour.¹

Yet what may seem surprising is that this last quarter - in which Disraeli has in fact abandoned his original purpose - is far and away the finest part of the novel. For instead of having to plough through Contarini's inconclusive ruminations and his melodramatic rencounters, we are suddenly plunged into a world of real persons and events - all brilliantly drawn. Disraeli was a superb letter writer, and never more so than during his Eastern tour. As his sister remarked, acknowledging a series of letters posted from Gibraltar on the way out: 'You describe so enchantingly all that you see, that we share all your enjoyments'.² The contrast between the portions of Contarini incorporating Disraeli's letters - which he had the good sense to leave largely unaltered - and the more laboured bulk of the novel is instructive. Disraeli was at his best when writing spontaneously (he was, after all, a supremely successful

¹. See Appendix E. He thus cannot have written this portion of the novel until his return to Bradenham.

². Hughenden Papers, Box 12, A / IV / E / 7; the letter is dated 28 July, 1830.

extemporaneous speaker); under pressure of time, the right word and the evocative image immediately sprang to mind. But when time lay heavy on his hands, when there was leisure for 'deep meditation' and nothing 'to attract the passions of the hour'¹ - as must have been the case during his quarantine at Malta - he was all too ready, especially when writing in the self-justifying mood so evident in Contarini, to let that old devil ambition drive him on to endless elaborations of the commonplace. In these circumstances his judgment would falter and, one suspects, he wrote more for himself than for others. Contarini which really has nothing to do with the rest of the novel. The story, as we have seen, is a Germanicised reworking of an anecdote Disraeli had heard at Murray's dinner-table. To the student of Disraeli's fiction as a whole, however, Contarini is of some interest for what it reveals about the development of certain themes which can be seen germinating in his previous work and which will go on to a further stage

Beckendorff's collection of 'pictures' in part two where, in a

¹ See above, p. 147. In the 'General Preface', Lothair, Longmans' collected edition (London, 1870), he observes that he had 'written it with deep thought and feeling' (p. xix) adding, however, that 'it would have been better if a subject so essentially psychological had been treated at a more mature period of life'. (p. xx). Of his own book, Contarini remarks: 'What seemed to me odd enough then, although no puzzle now, was, that they [i.e., the critics] admired what had been written in haste, and without pre-meditation, and generally disapproved of what had cost me much forethought, and been executed with great care. (III, p. 150, Part IV, Ch. 2) Lockhart, to whom Murray first showed the ms., had confessed himself perplexed by the contrast between 'the "affectations and absurdities" on the one hand and "the life and brilliancy" of the descriptions on the other'. (M & B, I, p. 190).

¹ See above, p. 4, n. 3.

in subsequent novels. To a considerable extent it is true to say that throughout his career Disraeli was really writing the same novel over and over again. Partly this is because most of his novels centre on a young and ambitious hero who is largely Disraeli - or Disraeli's persona - in fairly thin disguise; partly, too, it is because many of the ideas that preoccupied him at the very start remained, in one form or another, a source of recurrent interest to him.

In the first part of Vivian Grey it will be remembered that Mrs. Lorraine tells a mysterious story about one Max ^dRothenstein which really has nothing to do with the rest of the novel. The story, as we have seen, is a Germanicized reworking of an anecdote Disraeli had heard at Murray's dinner-table in 1822.¹ In its essentials it is about the relationship of art and nature: Max's portrait, by a sudden change in its appearance, announces the simultaneous death of Max himself. This theme pops up again in the description of Beckendorff's collection of 'pictures' in part two where, in a collaboration between art and nature, the light of the natural world, filtered through coloured windows, evokes the qualities of paintings by Breughel, Claude, and Honthorst. In Popanilla and The Young Duke - both of which are permeated with the idea of artifice - the theme goes underground, as it were, and such figurative expressions of it are replaced by verbal play. Then at the end of Contarini (a novel in which the hero learns to recognize the superior force of nature over

¹ See above, p. 4, n. 3.

education), Disraeli returns to the figurative exposition of his theme, this time with recollections of Pygmalion. In the villa to which Contarini retires one of the principal objects of veneration is 'a sleeping Cupid, by Canova, over which I have contrived, by a secret light, to throw a rosy flush, that invests the ideal beauty of the sculptor with still more ideal life'.¹ There is, too, this odd memorial of Alceste:

At the end of the gallery I have placed the portraits of my father and of my mother, the latter copied by an excellent artist from the miniature. Between them is a frame of richly carved ivory, enclosing a black velvet veil, studded with white roses, worked in pearls.²

Even Contarini's prose style, we are told, has been formed by a study of the Venetian, Tuscan, Florentine, Roman, and Spanish schools of painting.³

In Henrietta Temple Disraeli returns again to the idea of the artificially life-like statue. Lord Montfort takes Henrietta and her father to the studio of a 'celebrated sculptor' at Pisa:

The artist was full of enthusiasm for his pursuit, and showed them, with pride, his great work, a Diana that might have made one envy Endymion. The sculptor declared it was the perfect resemblance of Miss Temple, and appealed to her father. Mr. Temple could not deny the very striking likeness. Miss Temple smiled; she looked almost herself again; even the reserved Lord Montford

¹. IV, p.226 (Part VII, Ch.2)

². IV, pp.226-227 (Part VII, Ch.2). cf., The mysterious (and never fully explained) black-framed portrait over Beckendorff's fireplace in Book VI, Chapter 6, of Vivian Grey.

³. III, pp.139-142 (Part IV, Ch.1).

was in raptures. 'Oh ! it is very like', said his Lordship. 'Yes ! now it is exactly like. Miss Temple does not often smile; 1. but now one would believe she really was the model'.

Two chapters later the Temples visit Lord Montford's establishment at Rome:

At the end of the principal gallery, Henrietta perceived an open door, which admitted them into a small octagon chamber, of Ionic architecture. The walls were not hung with pictures, and one work of art alone solicited their attention. Elevated on a pedestal of porphyry, surrounded by a rail of bronze arrows of the lightest workmanship, was that statue of Diana, which they had so much admired at Pisa. The cheek, by an ancient process, the secret of which has been recently regained at Rome, was tinted with a delicate glow.

'Do you approve of it ?' said Lord Montfort to the admiring Henrietta. 'Ah ! dearest Miss Temple', he continued, 'it is my happiness that the rose has also returned to a fairer cheek than this'. 2.

Earlier in the same novel Disraeli makes much of the resemblance between Ferdinand, who has just met the Temples and is taking them over the picture gallery at Armine, and a portrait of his grandfather:

It was indeed a picture to gaze upon and to return to; one of those visages, which, after having once beheld, haunt us at all hours, and flit across our mind's eye unexpected and unbidden. So great indeed was the effect that it produced upon the present visitors [sic] to the gallery, that they stood before it for some minutes in silence; the scrutinizing glance of the gentleman indeed was more than once diverted from the portrait to the countenance of his conductor, and the silence was eventually broken by our hero.

'And what think you', he inquired, 'of the famous Sir Ferdinand ?'

¹. II, p.270 (Bk.V, Ch.2).

². II, (Bk.V, Ch.4), pp.291-292.

³. A technique for colouring statuary was developed at Rome early in the century by the English sculptor John Gibson (1790-1866) of whose work Disraeli might possibly have heard - though Gibson's own tinted sculptures were not exhibited publicly until after the date of Henrietta Temple.

The lady started, looked at him, withdrew her glance, and appeared somewhat confused. Her companion replied, 'I think, sir, I cannot err in believing that I am indebted for much courtesy to his descendant?' 1.

And in Venetia the heroine's discovery of a portrait of her father in a locked room at Cherbury is an incident from which the greater part of the novel's action springs - a point to be developed in the next chapter. There can be no doubt that the notion of a dichotomy between art and nature fascinated Disraeli; indeed, as some of the passages above indicate, at times it could have an almost superstitious hold upon him, analogous in a small way perhaps to his penchant for theological ^{and racial} mystifications in Alroy, ^{Contarini} ~~Tancred~~ and ^{Tancred} ~~Lothair~~. In general, however, he kept it to a subordinate role in his novels, though in Popanilla and, in a very different way, in Venetia he was able to turn it to good artistic effect.

Another important theme which runs through several of these early works is the romanticized feudalism with which Disraeli is inclined to invest his ancient country seats. This is not simply a question of magnificent old country houses; Chateau Desir in the first part of Vivian Grey is clearly an example of one of these, but apart from its Gothic antiquity there is nothing particularly feudal about the place. In The Young Duke, on the other hand, part of the Duke's self-discovery centres on his recognition of his duties to the tenants on his estates - a recognition helped

1. I (Bk.II, Ch.4), pp.171-172.

by the example of Mr. Dacre. And here, indeed, a new element enters the picture, for the Dacres, as has already been noted, are an old Roman Catholic family. From this point onwards in Disraeli's fiction, many of the great country houses which are described as being run with a sound understanding of the reciprocal duties of tenant and lord will be Roman Catholic. Alroy, of course, is necessarily an exception. So is Venetia, for Disraeli could not very well saddle Shelley and Byron with Catholic ancestors - although it must be admitted that he does his best in this direction by setting the scene of Herbert-Shelley's reunion with his wife in a convent near Venice. Similarly, in Contarini although the hero remains a Protestant, he is strongly attracted to Catholicism - through the mystical influence of incense and ritual rather than from doctrinal considerations - and weds Alceste according to the Roman rite. With the return in Henrietta Temple to a predominantly English setting, Disraeli draws the two strains of great country houses and Romanism together and for the first time gives us a Catholic hero (though not a very devout one) in Ferdinand Armine. Not only are the Armines good landlords passionately attached to their land, but they owe much of their felicity (indeed, too much so far as Ferdinand's viability as a character is concerned) to a Catholic priest named Glastonbury who befriends the family and acts as tutor to Ferdinand. And like The Young Duke and Contarini, Henrietta Temple contains important scenes set in ruined abbeys, a curious anticipation of the 'two nations' scene in

Sybil.¹ The reasons for this persistent association of Catholicism with the old landed aristocracy, a theme which has its fullest expression in Sybil, will be considered in more detail in chapter six; for the moment the impatient reader could do worse than consult Cobbett's History of the Protestant 'Reformation' in England and Ireland, a work which Disraeli certainly knew when he wrote Sybil and one which he may well have read not long after its publication late in the 1820's.

The mention of Glastonbury leads us to a third and final theme running through these early novels. One of Disraeli's 'stock' characters is a worldly and experienced older man, usually of an artistic and philosophical temper, who acts as mentor and - by getting him out of occasional scrapes - benefactor to the hero; to a large extent he embodies Disraeli's notion of his own wiser alter ego. Sidonia in Coningsby is perhaps the most conspicuous example of this type, but he is foreshadowed in nearly all the earlier novels. Horace Grey, as Vivian's father, must be excluded, and so must Beckendorff in the second part of the novel, for although Vivian quizically admires him and in an indefinite way benefits from his advice, in the last instance they are foes. But in The Young Duke this role of wise and kindly mentor is taken by Mr. Dacre, himself based upon Evelyn in Tremaine; in Contarini it falls to Winter; in Alroy to Honain; in Henrietta Temple to Glastonbury; and in Venetia to Dr. Masham.

Footnote ¹ from page 168:

- ¹ In the Vivian Grey notebook (Box 11, A/III/E/5, p.3) Disraeli cites Dodd's description (p.46) of a girl waltzing in the orange and black 'costume of the Couvent des Dames Nobles at Frankfort', an order open to both Catholics and Protestants; this was the basis for the initial description of the Baroness, arriving at the ball, in Vivian Grey (V, pp.95-96; Bk.VII, Ch.5) and it may have been the point at which heroines and religious orders coalesced in Disraeli's imagination.

general for that in any case. But it is instructive to notice how he reacted to these men; there was a strong, if well restrained, element of hero-worship in him, which comes through very clearly in the novels. From Florence, while touring with the Austens, he wrote to his father of 'a very extraordinary man of the name of Saunders ... the intimate friend of the late Emperor Alexander ... is still attached to the Court of Russia ...'

He is a deep student, full of philosophy, first principles, and the study of the beautiful, but elegant and profound. Though of a very close temper, he was so delighted to get hold of someone who had a literary turn that we have become tolerably intimate, and I occasionally visit him at his country villa, which, by the bye, is the Villa Vesuviani, rented by him of a noble family of that name, the lineal descendants of the famous Amerigo. He is now engraving the most valuable picture in Italy, the masterpiece of Fra Bartolommeo. ¹

And during his stay in Egypt in 1834 he fell in with the archaeologist and diplomat Paul Emile Botta, of whom he later

- ¹ M & B, I, p.408; the letter is dated September 29, 1826. In a letter of 11 July 1828, Meredith wrote from Stockholm of his 'newly acquired friend, the Baron Fleming' who, he added, 'is an intimate friend of young Saunders, the son of your Saunders of Florence'. (Meredith Papers, Box 12, A/IV/A/14) Meredith may subsequently have discussed the Baron with Disraeli and so, indirectly, have contributed to the character of Contarini's father.

Disraeli probably created these characters out of his own emotional needs and experiences. As a youth he was much given to the society of older men - men, that is, who could teach him something - and during his Mediterranean travels he encountered two such, one of whom he always felt had had an enormous influence over him. It is not important to identify either of these as his 'model' - and the type is too general for that in any case. But it is instructive to notice how he reacted to these men; there was a strong, if well restrained, element of hero-worship in him, which comes through very clearly in the novels. From Florence, while touring with the Austens, he wrote to his father of 'a very extraordinary man of the name of Saunders ... the intimate friend of the late Emperor Alexander ... is still attached to the Court of Russia ...'

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And during his stay in Egypt in 1831 he fell in with the archaeologist and diplomat Paul Emile Botta, of whom he later

¹. M & B, I, p.108; the letter is dated September 29, 1826. In a letter of 11 July 1828, Meredith wrote from Stockholm of his 'newly acquired friend, the Baron Fleming' who, he added, 'is an intimate friend of young Saunders, the son of your Saunders of Florence'. (Hughenden Papers, Box 12, A/IV/A/14) Meredith may subsequently have discussed the Baron with Disraeli and so, indirectly, have contributed to the character of Contarini's father.

wrote:

But the man from whom I have gained most in conversation is Botta, the son of the Italian historian, whom I knew in Egypt, travelling as a physician in the Syrian dress - the most philosophic mind that I ever came in contact with. Hour after hour has glided away, while, chibouque in mouth, we have disserted together upon our divan, in a country where there are no journals and no books. My mind made a jump in these high discourses. Botta was wont to say that they formed also an era in his intellectual life ... ¹.

Whatever the nature of their 'high discourses', Disraeli evidently felt a strong bond of sympathy - a favourite word of his, especially in Venetia - with Botta; they were in correspondence as late as 1846.²

These recurrent elements in the early novels are interesting enough to anyone who wishes to trace Disraeli's development, but they in no way attenuate the failure of Contarini as a novel. The tone may be high, but (excepting the passages drawn from his letters) the sound is indeed monotonous. For all the book's autobiographical interest, it is difficult to imagine any critical standards which would justify its rehabilitation today.

iv

As a novel, Alroy is even worse - though as a failure it is rather more interesting. There is nothing wrong with

¹. Hughenden Papers, Box 11, A/III/C; the passage occurs in the 'Mutilated Diary' and is dated September 1, 1833.

². Ibid., Box 12, A/IV/F/2. There are only two letters - 1831 and 1846 - and neither is especially 'philosophic' (see Blake, pp. 68-69), though it is perhaps significant that they should have kept in touch for so long. Disraeli mentions Botta again in a letter to his sister in 1840; see Letters, p. 233.

its conception. Although slightly episodic, the plot is essentially well laid and even has affinities with ancient tragedy: the pronouncements of oracles receive serious attention, a sense of destiny is never far from Alroy's mind, the conflict of love and honour figures prominently in the latter part of the book, and Alroy's final sufferings bring him to a new understanding of himself and a readiness to submit to the Divine will. None of this, moreover, interferes with the well-paced action one expects from a novel of exotic adventures. Even Alroy himself, a character torn between personal ambition and the wish to serve a higher cause (in this case the national aspirations of the Jews) is, at least in conception, believable and sympathetic.

The difficulty comes in the execution. So intensely has Disraeli identified his own feelings with the situation and character of Alroy that it seems not to have occurred to him that his readers, possibly not sharing in that identification, might find Alroy's vainglorious personality absurd if not, indeed, downright offensive. For he is a character who, in his more vaunting moments, irresistibly reminds one of C.S. Lewis' description of Marlowe's Tamburlaine as 'Giant the Jack Killer'.¹ The book is full of the most appalling rant, and it is indicative of the extent of Disraeli's identification with his hero that quite as much of this rant comes from the narrator as from Alroy himself. Here is

¹ English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama (Oxford, 1954), p.52.

Alroy after having slain Alschiroch, the governor of Hamadan who has attempted to abduct Alroy's sister Miriam:

'Away! I'll look upon him, and I'll triumph. Dead! Alschiroch dead! Why! but a moment since, this clotted carcass was a Prince, my tyrant! So we can rid ourselves of them, eh? If the Prince fall, why not the people? Dead, absolutely dead, and I his slayer. Hah! at length I am a man. This, this indeed is life. Let me live slaying!'¹.

And here is how Disraeli describes the deed:

The water column wildly rising, from the breast of summer ocean, in some warm tropic clime, when the sudden clouds too well discover, that the holiday of heaven is over, and the shrieking sea-birds tell a time of fierce commotion, the column rising from the sea, it was not so wild as he - the young Alroy.

Pallid and mad, he swift upsprang, and he tore up a tree by its lusty roots, and down the declivity, dashing with rapid leaps, panting and wild, he struck the ravisher on the temple with the mighty pine. Alschiroch fell lifeless on the sod, and Miriam fainting into her brother's arms.²

Disraeli also allows himself a great deal of prose-poetry - much of it alliterative and none of it moving; one remembers similar attempts in the second part of Vivian Grey where the verse gained nothing (save, perhaps, an element of concealment) from being set out as prose. Here are two specimens:

Still the courser onward rushes, still his mighty heart supports him. Season and space, the glowing soil, the burning ray, yield to the tempest of his frame; the thunder of his nerves, and lightning of his veins.

Food and water they have none. No genial fount, no grateful tree, rise with their pleasant company. Never

¹ I, pp.44-45 (Part I, Ch.2).

² I, pp.40-41 (Part I, Ch.2).

a beast or bird is there, in that hoary desert bare. Nothing breaks the almighty stillness. Even the jackal's felon cry might seem a soothing melody. A grey wild rat, with snowy whiskers, out of a withered bramble stealing, with a youthful snake in its ivory teeth, in the moonlight grins with glee. This is their sole society.¹

And:

Suddenly a creature steals through the black and broken rocks. Ha, ha! the jackal smells from afar the rich corruption of the courser's clay. Suddenly and silently it steals, and stops, and smells. Brave banqueting I ween to-night for all that goodly company. Jackal, and fox, and marten-cat, haste ye now, ere morning's break shall call the vulture to his feast, and rob ye of your prey.²

The novel has, too, some engaging implausibilities. Alroy, alone and starving in the desert, is approached by a lion:

He returned the lion a glance as imperious, and fierce, and scrutinising, as his own. For a moment, their flashing orbs vied in regal rivalry; but at length the spirit of the mere animal yielded to the genius of the man. The lion, cowed, slunk away, stalked with haughty timidity through the rocks, and then sprang into the forest.³

Next morning things get even better:

The carol of a lonely bird singing in the wilderness! Suddenly it downward dashes, and thrice with circling grace it flies around the head of the Hebrew Prince. Then by his side it gently drops a bunch of fresh and fragrant dates.

'Tis gone, 'tis gone! that cheerful stranger, gone to the palmy land it loves; gone like a bright and pleasant dream. A moment since and it was there, glancing in the sunny air, and now the sky is without a guest. Alas, alas! no more is heard, the carol of that lonely bird singing in the wilderness.⁴

¹ I, pp.54-55 (Part II, Ch.1).

² I, p.61 (Part II, Ch.2).

³ I, p.64 (Part II, Ch.3).

⁴ I, pp.65-66 (Part II, Ch.4).

Could anything be more banal ?

These passages have all been taken from the earlier part of the book and it is only fair to add that as the story advances there is less of this kind of desperate striving after effect. Yet Disraeli never wholly abandons a strain of resolute and humourless extravagance. Towards the end, in a passage much admired by Beckford¹, Miriam's death is described in the following terms:

Suddenly a trumpet sounded.

'What is that?' exclaimed Miriam, in a shrill voice, and looking up with a distracted glance.

Neither of them [*i.e.*, her handmaidens] answered, since they were aware it betokened the going forth of Alroy to his trial.

Miriam remained in the same posture, and with the same expression of wild inquiry. Another trumpet sounded, and after that a shout of the people. Then she raised up her arms to Heaven, and bowed her head - and died.²

It is reasonable enough to explain the worst excesses of Alroy as a result of Disraeli's intense emotional identification with his hero, but there is another point that should be mentioned. Disraeli was well aware that he was writing in the rather special genre of the oriental romance - a genre in which his father's 'Mejnoun and Leila' had already won a

1. 'Les scènes dans le donjon sont émouvantes, la mort de Miriam fort belle: l'héroïsme d'Alroy, sublime'. See G. Jean-Aubry, 'Disraeli et le solitaire de Bath', Figaro, 5 Decembre, 1931, pp.5-6. As with Contarini, Disraeli had sent an early copy of Alroy to Beckford, who greatly admired the book and made copious pencil notes - of which the sentence quoted (in Jean-Aubry's translation) is a typical specimen - on the margins and endpages. The volume in 1931 belonged to M.le comte Philipon. For an account of Disraeli and Beckford, see M & B, I, pp.191-92, 199, 248, 253.

2. III, p.81 (Part X, Ch.20).

modest place.¹ The terse and anecdotal style of the notes in Alroy bears a general resemblance to Henley's in Vathek - and Disraeli's presentation of one of the first copies of his book to Beckford speaks for itself.² As the Monthly Review had observed with reference to Vathek, the 'peculiar character' of the genre was 'not only to overstep nature and probability, but even to pass beyond the verge of possibility, and suppose things, which cannot be for a moment conceived'.³ Something of this sort was what Beckford had meant by sublime imagination, and Disraeli evidently was thinking along the same lines when he wrote Alroy.

Yet a more fundamental source of Disraeli's taste for the heroic and extravagant may be found in his childhood fascination with such chapbooks as The Seven Champions of Christendom, Valentine and Orson, and - possibly - The Most Excellent and

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1. Romances (London, 1799). The tale inspired an opera (Kais: or, Love in the Deserts) performed at Drury Lane in 1808, and as late as 1832 Colburn and Bentley advertised - but apparently did not publish - a separate edition; see James Ogden, Isaac D'Israeli (Oxford, 1969), p.56. Beckford pronounced it 'capital' when he met Disraeli for the first time in 1834. (Letters, p.127).
 2. 'William Beckford, esq., from the author'. That Disraeli must have sent the book almost immediately it was published is indicated by G.Jean-Aubry, p.6.
 3. May, 1787; quoted by Roger Lonsdale in the introduction to his edition of Vathek (Oxford, 1970), p.xix.

Delightful History of Fortunatus.¹ He had read at least the first two early in life and had found in them an enchanting mixture of the heroic, the chivalrous, and the bizarre. To a large extent they must have helped to form his literary tastes; certainly when he later proceeded to Sidney, Spenser, and Ariosto he seems to have been more attracted by the grand deeds and rich descriptions than by their allegorical and moral underpinnings.² Frederick Maples, a son of one of the partners in the law firm to which Disraeli was articled in his youth, reported in a letter to Lord Rowton in 1889:

On one occasion when Mr. Benjamin D'Israeli was calling on my Mother, he saw lying on the table some story books belonging to me as a young child. He then made the observation to my Mother: 'Oh! Mrs. Maples, why do you give

1. There was at least one chapbook of this tale (sometimes called 'The Wishing Cap') issued ca.1810, and in a letter from Alexandria to his sister Disraeli wrote: 'After some days we landed at Cyprus, where we passed a day on land famous in all ages, but more delightful to me as the residence of Fortunatus than as the rosy realm of Venus or the romantic kingdom of the Crusaders', (Letters, p.86) - but of course he might have been alluding to Dekker's Old Fortunatus. He knew the legend, at any rate, so it does not greatly matter.

2. See, for example, Henrietta Temple, III (Bk.VI, Ch.22), p.299: 'It is Kensington Gardens that is almost the only place that has realised his idea of the forests of Spenser and Ariosto. 'What a pity, that instead of a princess in distress we meet only a nursery-maid!' And in Venetia the young heroine loses herself in the 'wilderer pages' of the Arcadia, 'which she pored over with a rapt and ecstatic spirit, that would not comprehend the warning scepticism of her parent'. I (Bk.I, Ch.3), p.22.

3. I (Bk.I, Ch.6), pp.58-59, and Letters and Journals of Lord Byron (London, 1830), I, p.69.

such tame storybooks to Frederick? Let me send him some'. He shortly afterwards sent two books, one 'The History of the Seven Champions of Christendom' and the other 'Valentine and Orson'. In the latter he wrote some lines addressed to me. Mr. Isaac D'Israeli told my Mother that these were the first lines of Benjamin's he had ever seen. I enclose you these two books. ¹.

The impression formed, particularly by the Seven Champions, cannot have been a passing one, for early in Venetia Disraeli refers to it again:

Venetia loved her book; indeed, she was never happier than when reading; but she soon recoiled from the gilt and lilliputian volumes of the good Mr. Newbury [sic], and her mind required some more substantial excitement than 'Tom Thumb', or even 'Goody Two-Shoes'. 'The Seven Champions' was a great resource and a great favourite; but it required all the vigilance of a mother to eradicate the false impressions which such studies were continually making on so tender a student; and to disenchant, by rational discussion, the fascinated imagination of her child. ².

And when he has Mrs. Cadurcis in a fit of rage fling a volume at her young son, he is careful to substitute this favourite book of Venetia's for the 'poker and tongs' which, Moore records, were 'the missiles which Mrs. Byron preferred' on such occasions. ³. The romance, the chivalry, the bizarre adventures, and the heroism in these works were important - and, it would seem, enduring - influences on Disraeli's

¹. Hughenden Papers, Box 303, folder marked '"20-"24', sheet headed '1823'. The books, alas, are not at Hughenden. Although Monypenny quotes from this letter (I, p. 39), the passage given above is omitted.

². I (Bk. I, Ch. 3), pp. 21-22. See also pp. 46-47 (Bk. I, Ch. 5).

³. I (Bk. I, Ch. 6), pp. 58-59, and Letters and Journals of Lord Byron (London, 1830), I, p. 69.

literary imagination. Not only Alroy¹, but the 'Young England' novels generally, in their more heroic and medievalising aspects may be said to go back to Disraeli's absorption in such chapbooks early in the century.

parts of Contarini which he cites for 'what may be called poetical prose'² are, oddly enough, not the ruminative, soul-

When Leslie Stephen in a judicious survey of Disraeli's novels comes to the prose-poetry in Alroy, he not surprisingly admits that the effect is 'simply grotesque'.² Of the two novels he prefers Contarini and notes the 'amazing vitality'

1. The scattered references to 'the champions of the Cross' in The Rise of Iskander, which Disraeli appended as a companion piece to Alroy, suggest that the chapbook was even on his mind when he composed this tale while staying at Bath with Bulwer early in 1833. (Letters, p.117) But Iskander, although far superior to Alroy as a piece of workmanlike fiction, is a flat production and has therefore not been discussed here. Jerman (p.178) is no doubt right in seeing it as marking, with Alroy, 'an end of a stage in Disraeli's own development... From here on, Disraeli would become less and less introspective, much to his advantage and relief'. There are, incidentally, two parodies of Alroy: one, of an anti-semitic cast, is by R.H.Barham (attributable on the basis of the ms. in the Berg Collection at the New York Public Library) entitled '"The Wondrous Tale of" Ikey Solomons!!' in the New Anti-Jacobin, April, 1833, pp.86-91. I am grateful to Professor John W.Osborne for bringing this to my attention. Thackeray adapted the pseudonym to 'Ikey Solomons, Esq., Junior' and published his Catherine under it in Fraser's Magazine in 1839. The other parody, by Maginn in The Maclise Portrait Gallery, (London, [1873]), p.98), is more amiable and dwells on the prose-poetry and the egoism.

2. Hours in a Library, second series (London, 1876), p.391.

2. p.390.

3. p.390.

4. p.393.

of the hero as a sign of 'the effervescence of youthful genius'¹ in his creator. Certainly there are vigorous and even picaresque moments in the novel which look back to Vivian Grey. But as far as prose style is concerned, the parts of Contarini which he cites for 'what may be called poetical prose'² are, oddly enough, not the ruminative, soul-searching passages that Disraeli seems to have thought the more profound and 'psychological' portions of the book, but the 'pictures of life and scenery' which, he quite properly adds, are 'vivacious, rapid, and decisive'.³ These, as we have seen, are the portions which Disraeli transcribed with little alteration from the letters he had sent home from the East - written, indeed (and necessarily), in a 'vivacious, rapid, and decisive' manner in startling contrast to much else in the book.

This fact compels us to consider in a new light Stephen's lament that by entering parliament in 1837 Disraeli had taken the first steps in the 'degeneration of a promising novelist into a Prime Minister'.⁴ Writing several years after the publication of Lothair and before that of Endymion it was entirely reasonable for Stephen to suggest that 'In later years, the habit of parliamentary oratory seems to have

1. p.389.

2. p.390.

3. p.390.

4. p.393.

injured Mr. Disraeli's style'.¹ In the early works, he writes, 'the style is generally excellent till it becomes too ambitious. It has a kind of metallic glitter, brilliant, sparkling with numerous flashes of wit and fancy, and never wanting in sharpness of effect, though it may be deficient in delicacy'.² All this is true enough, but it is necessary to consider the alternative. Suppose, as Stephen wishes, that Disraeli's 'brilliant ability had been allowed to ripen undisturbed by all the worries and distractions of parliamentary existence'.³ He was, we know, a supremely ambitious man and it is idle to imagine that, had he opted for an exclusively literary career, he would have lost any of that ambition. The effect upon his style - 'generally excellent till it becomes too ambitious' - may readily be supposed. Disraeli wrote best under a sense of urgency, whether brought about by the need for ready cash or the need to get a letter into the next post, and when the hours lay heavily upon him - as in the lazaretto at Malta - the candour and vivacity that were otherwise natural to him fled from his mind. He would then set out to prove to the world, and not least perhaps to himself, that poets were made as well as born and that the literary renown for which he had put aside more worldly ambitions could be amply realized through his own unstinting

1. p.390.

2. p.391.

3. p.345.

exertions. Disraeli's talents as a writer were not for the sublime or profound, but for the sparkling, the bizarre, and the ironic. Such a writer may take himself seriously only at his peril. Deftness and lightness of touch were the marks of his particular gift, and a hastily written work like The Young Duke, for all its faults, shows more of his real powers than could a whole shelf of Contarinis and Alroys.

Disraeli's attempt to become a Member of Parliament, but the expected vacancy never materialised; in 1834 he again unsuccessfully contested High Wycombe, this time as an independent; in 1835 he stood as a Tory in a by-election at Reigate; and, finally, in 1837 he was returned as Tory M.P. for Maidstone.¹ During these years he was inevitably drawn into the social and political whirl of the London 'season' and, except for seeing Contarini Fleming and Alroy through the press, he paid little attention to novel writing until the latter part of 1836. His literary exertions were confined mainly to The Revolutionary Policy (1834), occasional squibs in the periodicals and annals, and such polemical writings as the Vindication of the English Constitution (1835) and The Letters of Ruyryade (1836).

Had Disraeli succeeded in any of his various attempts

¹ Disraeli's earliest attempt to obtain a seat - for Hindon, Wilts., in 1830 - seems to have escaped his biographers; see the letter of August, 1874, quoted by the Marquis of Zetland in The Letters of Disraeli to Lady Harcourt and Lady Chesterfield (London, 1929), I, p. 135.

CHAPTER FIVE

Henrietta Temple and Venetia

No sooner had Disraeli returned to England than he set out to obtain a seat in Parliament. In 1832, following the passage of the Reform Bill, he twice stood as Radical candidate for High Wycombe (the first time in a by-election under the old dispensation); in 1833 he made overtures to the electorate of Marylebone, but the expected vacancy never materialised; in 1834 he again unsuccessfully contested High Wycombe, this time as an independent; in 1835 he stood as a Tory in a by-election at Taunton; and, finally, in 1837 he was returned as Tory M.P. for Maidstone.¹ During these years he was inevitably drawn into the social and political whirl of the London 'season' and, except for seeing Contarini Fleming and Alroy through the press, he paid little attention to novel writing until the latter part of 1836. His literary exertions were confined mainly to The Revolutionary Epick (1834), occasional squibbs in the periodicals and annuals, and such polemical writings as the Vindication of the English Constitution (1835) and The Letters of Ruhnymede (1836).

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to get elected to Parliament between 1832 and 1835, it is quite possible that he would never have written ^{what} ~~when~~ we now know as Henrietta Temple and Venetia. For both works owe their existence principally to those ever-rising debts which had plagued him since his stock market days - debts from which a seat in Parliament would have given him at least temporary legal immunity.¹ Over the years he had managed by one stratagem or another to keep his creditors at bay. But at the beginning of 1836, for reasons which it would take a supremely gifted accountant to unravel fully, his house of cards suddenly threatened to come crashing down around him. 'The eighteen months between January 1836 and July 1837 were perhaps the most hectic and turbulent', writes Robert Blake, 'that Disraeli had so far known. His debts had increased and his creditors became even more pressing ... By May his affairs were in an alarming condition'.² The remedy - or one of them - was obvious. On June 13th he wrote to Bradenham:

I have agreed to let Colburn have a novel, to be published on October 1, and for a greater sum than I have ever yet received. I have a volume by me finished, but this I did not tell him ...³

¹. Of this fact Disraeli was well aware. In Henrietta Temple he makes Lady Bellair declare on learning that Ferdinand has landed in a spunging house, 'Why is not he in Parliament; and then they could not take him up?' III, p.251 (Book VI, Ch.19).

². p.133. ³. Letters, p.149.

². Letters, p.132.

³. Hughenden Papers, Box 14, A / III / C, pp.[49-51].

On the 28th the formal agreement was signed¹ and by August 20th he was within 'a few days' of giving the manuscript to the printer² - though this must refer to the first volume only. The chronology of the composition of both novels is succinctly described in the 'Mutilated Diary' under the heading 'Autumn of 1836':

Parted for ever from Henrietta.

Returned to Bradenham at the latter end of August; concluded 'Henrietta Temple' of which one vol had been written three years. It was published early in Dec^r & was very successful.

Passed January & early part of Feb^y on a visit to Count D'Orsay at Kensington Gore; saw of course much of the Cas B[lessington]. whose magnificent mansion adjoins his elegant residence. Commenced 'Venetia'. Harcourts election for the County on the death of Praed: my illness there: remained at Bradenham & finished 'Venetia' which was published early in May. 3.

The parting from 'Henrietta' - Lady Sykes, of course - and the admission that 'one vol had been written three years' are not unconnected. Disraeli is said to have remarked late in life that when he wanted to read a novel he wrote one. Underlying the amusing egoism of that statement is one reason (by no means the least) that he again and again took up his pen: he wished, by creating a thinly-disguised self-portrait, to come to terms with himself and his situation. In the midst of the earlier and more enthusiastic phase of his liason with the real Henrietta he had written the first two books

1. The agreement does not survive, but there is a note giving its date in Hughenden Papers, Box 235, E / VII / D / 77.

2. Letters, p.152.

3. Hughenden Papers, Box 11, A / III / C, pp.[49-51].

(volume one in the published text) of Henrietta Temple. A brief sketch of the family and upbringing of the hero, Ferdinand Armine, followed by an account of his stay at Malta with his regiment and the beginning of his fateful habit of incurring debts fill the first book while the second is given over to a description - in a pastoral setting¹ - of his falling in love with Henrietta. During the summer of 1834 he showed the manuscript to the lady who had sat for his heroine and her response was characteristically exuberant:

I pray that Henrietta Temple may be the crown book of your fame and Henrietta S. the blessing of your life.²

But for some reason - perhaps because life had not yet indicated the precise resolution of a plot which, at the end

¹. Disraeli may have drawn the idea of the country setting and the protective, slightly jealous father from Sir Egerton Brydges' Coningsby (Paris, Genève and London, 1819) - although, amidst many of Brydges' works, there is no mention of this novel in either the Bradenham ms. catalogue (in the Study at Hughenden) or the sale catalogue of Isaac's library (Sotheby's, March 16 and three days following, 1849). The motherless heroine living on a country estate does, of course, go back to both The Young Duke and Tremaine; but Brydges' account of his hero's surreptitious courting of Coningsby's daughter from a cottage on the estate is close enough in its general outline to the events in chapters 13 and 14 of Disraeli's second book and all of his third book to suggest that he may have known Brydges' novel. For example: 'He sought out a peasant's hut on the Common that adjoined Adelinde's residence; and there he took up his quarters. Thence night after night he strolled round the windows of the room, that contained the idol of his soul; and indulged visions allied to madness'. (p.178; see also pp.190-191).

². See Maitre, p.286, n.75.

Raymond Maitre, Disraeli : Homme de Lettres ([Paris]), 1963), p.286, n.75.

of the second book, sees Henrietta tacitly accepting Ferdinand's proposal - he put the novel aside. What more was there to say? And yet, as the chapter heading of the published text observes, the 'Incident' with which book two had concluded was one 'which is the Termination of Most Tales, though Almost the Beginning of the Present'.

One might have expected that after his break with Henrietta Sykes, Disraeli would have taken to his pen in a fit of spleen (as he had done after the collapse of his role in the Representative) and produced a witty phillipic on the follies and frailties of women. Yet he did nothing of the sort. There is a difference in tone between book two and the rest of the novel, but it is a difference entirely consistent with the spirit of the whole. Disraeli insisted in his correspondence with Colburn, as we shall see, that Henrietta Temple should be boldly subtitled 'A Love Story' - but what exactly did he mean by this? If he meant a story of passionate romance - a book two, as it were, writ large - why did he begin the novel in 1833-34 with ten chapters devoted not merely to the hero's childhood but describing in detail the history of the Armine family as far back as the Norman Conquest, their currently awkward financial situation, and the character of Glastonbury? The first five chapters and most of the sixth are missing from the Hughenden manuscript, but the remainder is substantially the same as the printed text. The presence of Glastonbury in particular - his

munificence is developed in chapters seven and eight - is clear evidence that so far as the general shape of the novel is concerned Disraeli knew very well what he was about, for it is Glastonbury who will come to Ferdinand's rescue time and again in the second and third volumes.¹ It is perfectly true that in book two Disraeli had deliberately set out to evoke the power of romantic passion - Tennyson thought he had caught the 'silly sooth' of love perfectly², but the Edinburgh Review complained that 'he presses the springs of feeling till they lose their elasticity'³: on this point each reader must decide for himself - yet taken as a whole this second book is never really at odds with the one that precedes it. Disraeli had begun Henrietta Temple as a social comedy quite as much as a love story - indeed, the two were perhaps inseparable for him. When he resumed work on it in 1836 he was still on friendly terms (though some of the initial ardour may well have cooled) with the real

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1. It might be objected that Disraeli could have written book one after book two, but the physical evidence of the ms. will not bear this out. The pagination throughout is continuous and so are the watermarks - all dated 1833 to the middle of book two and then 1834 to the end. For more on these watermarks, see p. 191 below.
 2. Quoted in M & B, I, p. 345.
 3. October, 1837, p. 63.

Henrietta.¹ He even incorporates passages from her letters into the first two chapters of book four². But the element of the first volume that he now chose to pick up was the social comedy of book one rather than the romance of book two. The point is that this did not (as, say, in the contrast between the two parts of Vivian Grey) represent a change of direction so much as a shift in emphasis. He was merely continuing, albeit with a romantic interlude, the comedy of manners that he had begun three years earlier.

Although Disraeli had signed the agreement for the novel on June 28th, no manuscript appears to have reached Colburn until late August or early September. At some stage, however, he was supplied with an outline of the work and it may be that his insistence upon this form of advance notice

¹. As Blake observes (p.136), they cannot have parted before September 17; indeed, on August 22 Colburn addressed a letter concerning the novel to Disraeli at Henrietta's house near Reading (see below, p.189, n.3). Since Disraeli delivered the last of the ms. to Colburn shortly after October 19 (see below, p.195), he can hardly have had time to write all of the second and third volumes after the breach with Henrietta, even if we assume this to have occurred on September 18.

². On this point I must defer to Professor Raymond Maitre whose mastery of Henrietta's handwriting far exceeds mine: 'Ces lettres reproduisent souvent les termes même des lettres de Lady Sykes à Disraeli: images, expressions, sentiments, tonalité, ont été manifestement copiés. Qu'il nous suffise de donner un exemple, choisi entre bien d'autres: 'If you knew how desolate this house is! Your guitar is on the sofa, a ghost of departed joy!' lit-on dans Henrietta Temple, p.202 [1871 ed.]. "If you knew how desolate this house is, your white stock on the sofa, a ghost of departed joy". Lettre d'Henrietta Sykes du 8 septembre 1834'. Disraeli: Homme de Lettres ([Paris], 1963), p.285, n.71 bis.

about what he was buying helped to induce Disraeli to pay closer attention to structure than he had previously done.¹ On July 19th, Colburn sent Disraeli a gentle prod: 'I trust you are rapidly progressing with your novel as arranged; I forgot to mention to you that there is a novel in the press from a high quarter called "Love". This it appears to me will a little interfere with your proposed title'.² Late in August he wrote again: 'I am glad to find you will be able to go to press with your new work about the 30th. I am very anxious to expedite matters as it is evident there will be a great many books published during the ensuing winter'.³ By September 10th the manuscript - of volume one - was in the hands of Colburn's reader, one John Newman, who wrote briefly but enthusiastically about it.⁴ A week later,

1. On April 29, 1837, while Venetia was in the works, Colburn wrote: 'But I must beg you will immediately send me some particulars about the story as you did of H.T. as I cannot keep the MS of Vol.2 & 3'. In this instance, of course, the work was already finished when Colburn made his request - presumably for puffing purposes. Hughenden Papers, Box 235, E / VII / D / 15.

2. Ibid., E / VII / D / 10; addressed to Disraeli at the Athenaeum.

3. Ibid., E / VII / D / 11; dated August 22nd^{and} addressed to Disraeli at 'Basildon Park, nr Reading'.

4. Hughenden Papers, Box 233, E / VI / K.

1. Hughenden Papers, Box 235, E / VII / D / 84.

2. Ibid.

however, he (or, conceivably, a different reader) submitted a longer and more critical report which Colburn also forwarded to Disraeli:

What I can speak to with most confidence about this volume, is its length - it is much too long - the scenes, descriptions & soliloquies become so elaborate as to be wearisome. There is [sic] in this MS. enough words for a volume and a half - with matter enough perhaps for one. The ancestral accounts at the opening should be cut away, especially as there are references of the same kind in another part of the book - and the meditations upon love madness honour and other romantic matters in the last quarter of the MS [i.e., the second half of book two] should be considerably curtailed. I have read all through and am confident that this should be done, throughout. Every scene would be better were it shorter. There is a beautiful and most affecting one - a leave-taking of mother and son - that would be inexpressibly touching were it briefer. So much for the faults.¹

He goes on to praise the book for its 'bold spirit' and 'a style of remarkable eloquence. There is much high-toned writing in it - though the effect here would be improved by pruning - some few extravagances to which the writer is addicted offend one in the midst of real beauty'.²

Much of this sounds like fairly standard commentary for a publisher's reader, though it is certainly true that the complaints of 'high-toned writing' and prolixity were exactly what the author of Contarini Fleming needed to hear. One point that the reader makes - about Lord Grandison, who will later emerge as Lord Monmouth in Coningsby - is absolutely

¹ Hughenden Papers, Box 235, E / VII / D / 81.

² Ibid.

² Ibid., Box 219, E / I / 42.

just: meets Henrietta. He has just seen her, dressed in a

There is humour also in the conception of Lord Grandison - he ought not to have died so soon, at least we should have had more of him - for the scene wants diversity. 1.

The question is, did Disraeli pay any attention to these criticisms ?

There is no evidence that Colburn returned the manuscript for revision. But to judge from the tone of their correspondence, Disraeli was on a familiar footing with Colburn and it is conceivable that during a visit to Great Marlborough Street he might have made some changes to his manuscript. That he did so in the case of book two - whether prompted by Colburn's reader or by his own judgement - is quite clear from the manuscript itself. 2.

The general pattern of watermarks is as follows: '1833' up to p.276 (in Disraeli's pagination), then '1834' to p.338, and '1835' to the end of book two at p.374. There are, however, three places where Disraeli introduces interpolations, all presumably involving the excision of earlier material.

1). pp.209-212 are two leaves written, against Disraeli's

usual practice, on both sides; the paper is water-marked '1834' and in contrast to the surrounding sheets has a distinctly blueish cast. The passage added occurs in chapter four of book two where Ferdinand first

Here the original version breaks off and Disraeli

1. Ibid. inserts the final paragraph of the chapter abruptly

2. Ibid., Box 219, E / I / 12. 's revery:

meets Henrietta. He has just seen her, dressed in a riding-habit and standing before a cedar 'evidently admiring its beautiful proportions'. Then the insertion, i.e., p.209, begins with a new paragraph: 'Her countenance was raised and motionless. It seemed to him that it was more radiant than sunshine...' This continues through two paragraphs - the second of which is the famous one beginning 'There is no love but at first sight' - and into the first sentence of a third:

Amid the gloom and travail of existence suddenly to behold a beautiful being, and, as instantaneously, to feel an overwhelming conviction that with that fair form for ever our destiny must be entwined; that there is no [here p.212 ends and we resume the earlier version] more joy but in her joy, no sorrow but when she grieves ...

The remainder of the paragraph describes the sensations produced by love, 'Magnificent, sublime, divine sentiment!'

- 2). p.287, which falls into the '1834' sequence, has been cut in half so as to delete a passage which originally followed what in the published text is the next-to-last paragraph of the seventh chapter of book two:

The delicious present monopolised his [Ferdinand's] existence. The ties of duty, the claims of domestic affection, the worldly considerations that by a cruel dispensation had seemed, as it were, to taint even his innocent and careless boyhood, even the urgent appeals of his critical and perilous situation - all, all were forgotten in one intense delirium of absorbing love.

Here the original version breaks off and Disraeli inserts the final paragraph of the chapter abruptly cutting short Ferdinand's reverie:

her Anon he rose from his seat, and paced his room for some minutes, with his eyes fixed on the ground. Then throwing off his clothes, and taking the flower from the vase, which he had previously placed on the table, he deposited it in his bosom. 'Beautiful, beloved flower', exclaimed he; 'thus, thus will I win and wear your mistress!'

This is far from satisfactory, but it does suggest

Then we that he has cut away a rapturous disquisition on the

'intense delirium of absorbing love', perhaps with the fading visions; it renewed the spell which had recently

enchantment of embodying the gist of it in action.

spirits that had a moment since hovered over him with

3.) pp.339-348 are written on smaller sheets of a smooth,

He move white stock watermarked '1836'. In the preceeding

His chapter Ferdinand has reluctantly left Henrietta in

when suddenly the music ceased. His courage vanished with

its order to return to Armine and meet his parents and the

misgave him, and he stole back to his solitude.

fiancée for whom he now cares nothing. On his arrival,

of our life sink before it. Food and sleep, that seem to

divine however, he finds a letter announcing that they have

their influence over the lover ...

been delayed. Here is the end of the fifth paragraph

In 'a tumult of enraptured passions' Ferdinand spends the

as in chapter thirteen of book two:

remainder of the night wandering about the grounds until he

He felt fortunate. He rushed to the tower, to tell the

stunews to Glastonbury. His tutor ascribed his agitation to

the shock, and attempted to console him. In communicating

the intelligence, he was obliged to finish the letter; it

expressed a hope, that, if their visit were postponed for

more than a day or two, Katherine's dearest Ferdinand

would return to Bath.

in these interpolated passages that, in contrast to the

Then the interpolation begins:

surrounding text, suggests - even though we do not have the

Ferdinand wandered forth into the Park to enjoy his

exc freedom. A burden had suddenly fallen from his frame; a

cloud that had haunted his vision had vanished ...

engaged in a pruning operation, removing and honing down 'the

This and the following six paragraphs describe in a level-

meditations upon love madness honour and other romantic matters

headed way Ferdinand's delight at his 'unhoped-for', if

in the last quarter of the MS.

temporary, release. He returns to Henrietta's and glimpses

her moving about inside the house; as the interpolated passage ends, he overhears her singing:

It sounded like a bell, sweet and clear and thrilling; it was astonishing - ay! it was ridiculous - what influence a little word uttered by this woman, without thought, would have upon your life. Of such fine clay is man made.

Then we resume the original version:

That beautiful voice recalled to Ferdinand all his fading visions; it renewed the spell which had recently enchanted him; it conjured up again all those sweet spirits that had a moment since hovered over him with their auspicious pinions ...

He moves closer to the window:

His hand is outstretched to clutch the curtain, his - when suddenly the music ceased. His courage vanished with its inspiration. For a moment he lingered, but his heart misgave him, and he stole back to his solitude.

What a mystery is Love! All the necessities and habits of our life sink before it. Food and sleep, that seem to divide our being, as day and night divide Time, lose all their influence over the lover ...

In 'a tumult of enraptured passion' Ferdinand spends the remainder of the night wandering about the grounds until he stumbles upon the cottage that he later uses as a temporary residence while pursuing his courtship of Henrietta.

There is a coolness and control, a shunning of rhetoric in these interpolated passages that, in contrast to the surrounding text, suggests - even though we do not have the excised portions for comparison - that Disraeli has been engaged in a pruning operation, removing and toning down 'the meditations upon love madness honour and other romantic matters in the last quarter of the MS.'

2. Houghton Library, 'Autograph File' (#328-256); posted from Bradenham and addressed to Colburn at Great Marlborough Street.

Colburn evidently began setting type on the first volume late in September or early in October. On the sixth he was still awaiting the last of the manuscript:

I am exceedingly glad to find that you will have so soon finished your work & are anxious for the proofs. Though you have not yet rec^d any proofs the Compositors have been proceeding in setting up a quantity [and] I know that this time you will receive proofs rapidly...I have just glanced at the first proofs. I wish the ancestral Description had not been so long. I hope you will have a dozen or more originals to draw from besides old Lady C[ork]. An exhibition of 2 or 3 leading political characters would not be amiss...so let me have the title of 2 or 3 to choose from & the proofs returned regularly and I hope that your wish of having the work out very early in Nov^r will be realised. I am most anxious to have it early myself. 1.

Disraeli seems to have been irked by Colburn's request for 'the title or 2 or 3 to choose from' and in his reply on the 10th referred back to Colburn's letter of July 19th:

My dear Sir,

The title of my book is the one inserted in our agreement

'Henrietta Temple,

a Love Story

by

The Author of Vivian Grey. [no ']

a title which I think attractive, & which is also correct, for it exactly describes the work, & I trust the second title 'A Love Story' will not be sacrificed in the advertisements to the ponderous tomes of 'Love' with which you threaten us.

I shall be in town on Wednesday, when I shall bring up the remaining MSS.

Yours

D 2.

1. Hughenden Papers, Box 235, E / VII / D / 12; there is no address so the letter may have been sent by hand. The book was not in fact published until early December.
2. Houghton Library, 'Autograph File' (#52M-256); posted from Bradenham and addressed to Colburn at Great Marlborough Street.

The last book of Henrietta Temple is vividly and finely drawn, but apparently not without effort on Disraeli's part; on the 19th he wrote Lady Blessington acknowledging receipt of a copy of her latest novel, The Elderly Gentleman, and observing, 'Invention seems to me the rarest faculty of the Novelist ...'¹.

Little has so far been said about the quality of Henrietta Temple as a novel. Critics have been divided, as Monypenny remarks², between those who, like Froude, regard Disraeli as primarily a political novelist and therefore incline to consider the book a 'clever story' but nothing more, and others, like Leslie Stephen, who see it as a substantial achievement by a writer who later made the mistake of launching himself into politics. Both positions are somewhat artificial. Anyone who, without preconceptions, examines the book in the general context of Disraeli's development is bound to see it as his finest effort before Coningsby - to which, in some ways, it is superior. The old complaint of looseness of structure that one feels obliged to raise so often in connection with his previous works is no longer applicable. Every episode and every character has a relevant place in the over-all scheme, while the movement of the plot might be called da capo: first, the building up of Ferdinand's relationship with Henrietta and its collapse; second, Henrietta's retreat to

¹ Berg Collection, New York Public Library; the ms. is a fragmentary transcript in the hand of Richard Robert Madden.

² I, p.345.

Italy with her father and her engagement to Lord Montfort while Ferdinand succumbs to a psycho-somatic illness at home; third, Henrietta's return, Ferdinand's rescue from his financial involvements, and the reconciliation of the lovers with Lord Montfort paired off with Katherine and Ferdinand with Henrietta. The book has prompted Anthony Powell to write that 'Disraeli has a grasp of human motives that makes his novels far more "true to life" than many laborious essays in realism.' Observing that Disraeli 'has few literary descendants to-day, though traces of his fluent manner can be detected in the novels of Mr. Evelyn Waugh', Powell continues:

Disraeli's picture is alive because he makes no demands on society as an institution. His is a world where people want to get on and to be amused, where birth and money and beauty and wit, all have their place as commodities; and where no one behaves, or is expected to behave, with disregard for material values. The psychology is unaccentuated but shrewd (the female characters are perhaps too faintly traced), and the final exchange of partners and friendship of the two families, in which the husbands 'both honestly confess that they are a little in love with each other's wives' is not so unlikely as might appear at first sight ... In spirit Henrietta Temple ... belongs to the eighteenth century ...¹.

Not only does the book belong in spirit to the eighteenth century, but the rather coy chapter headings and Ferdinand's ultimate recovery from the consequences of his imprudence remind one a little of Tom Jones. If the resemblance was intentional, it was unwise. The worst one can say of Henrietta Temple - and say it one must - is that Disraeli's

¹ III, p. 309 (Br. VI, Ch. 24).

¹ Introduction, Novels of High Society from the Victorian Age, ed. Anthony Powell (London, 1947), pp. vii-viii. Powell also remarks that Disraeli is 'a classical and not a romantic writer. As fashion dictates, his characters may run up the flag of Byronism; but their feet are firmly planted on the ground'.

cynicism, which infuses such wit and urbanity into the social comedy scenes, has a lot to answer for in the rest of the novel.

The action moves several times back and forth between the great world of London and the country, mainly Armine and Ducie. Honesty, simplicity, and directness are persistently associated with country life; Glastonbury, Ferdinand's parents, and Henrietta herself all express these qualities in their personalities. London, on the other hand, is a realm of lies, calculation, and pretence. Credit depends more upon one's friends than one's lands; Count Mirabel (D'Orsay) reawakens Henrietta's affection for Ferdinand by telling her, quite falsely, that her former lover contemplates suicide; and Lady Bellair declares near the end of the book, "'I like a lie sometimes ... but then it must be a good one. Do you know, I only say it to you, but I am half afraid lies are more amusing than truth"'.¹ Society, Disraeli seems to be saying, is an intricate world of make-believe, a masquerade in which the apparent takes on all the qualities of the real.

All this is perfectly consonant with the comedy of manners. But what about Ferdinand? As a child he is affectionate and dutiful - indeed, he is possibly too good. As a young man he becomes slightly foolish and wilful, but that

¹ • III, p.309 (Bk.VI, Ch.24).

² • II, p.47 (Bk.III, Ch.2).

is hardly unusual. Even when he meets and falls in love with Henrietta - while already engaged to his cousin, the very rich Katherine Grandison - so movingly does Disraeli describe the power of his infatuation that we at once sympathize with him and, perhaps against our better judgment, endorse his conduct. But when, having secured Henrietta's affections, he nevertheless continues his previous engagement while building up an elaborate system of patchwork deceptions in the vague hope that somehow things will sort themselves out, he exhausts all our patience. Refusing to face his difficulties squarely, he resorts to a spineless kind of duplicity involving lies, evasions, and a clandestine correspondence - all which is bound in the end to be injurious to everyone concerned, most of all to his beloved Henrietta with whom he avows an "innate sympathy ... superior to all situations, all ties, all circumstances"¹. The result is that Disraeli's hero suddenly comes perilously close to playing the villain. There are two possible ways out of this fix. One would be to follow the bildungsroman pattern and have Ferdinand gradually learn to extricate himself from the network of prevarications in which he has enmeshed himself - rather as Tom Jones learns to master the virtue of prudencia. The other, the one which Disraeli adopts, is to lift from Ferdinand's shoulders all responsibility for his actions.

¹. II, p.47 (Bk.III, Ch.2).

². III, p.295 (Bk.VI, Ch.22).

After Henrietta accidentally learns the truth, he confesses all to Glastonbury and (like Vivian and Contarini at similar junctures) falls into a coma. While he is thus incapacitated Glastonbury patiently clears up the mess and, acting as a deus ex machina even after Ferdinand's recovery, helps to bring the action to a happy conclusion. He is assisted, of course, by Henrietta's sudden accession to a large fortune and by the generosity and good luck of Mirabel and Bond Sharp. We are left, therefore, with a hero who is, to borrow Powell's terms, more a patient than an agent. What is most bothersome to the novel, however, is less this artificial tying together of events at the end - which we can accept in the spirit of the comedy of manners¹ - than the duplicity and, later, the helplessness of Ferdinand himself. Although Disraeli appropriately tells us that he has been 'schooled by adversity'², there is not the slightest evidence that he has learnt anything. The sophistication and worldly cynicism that form so admirable a background to this social comedy have been the undoing of its hero.

Every cynic is to some extent an idealist, and in Disraeli's case the two exist in almost perfect equilibrium.

Disraeli's case the two exist in almost perfect equilibrium.

¹ III, pp.321-322 (Bk.VI, Ch.24): "Well [says Katherine to Ferdinand], the comedy is nearly concluded. We shall soon join hands, and the curtain will drop". "And I hope, in your opinion, not an unsuccessful performance?" "Why, I certainly cannot quarrel with the catastrophe", said Miss Grandison'.

² III, p.296 (Bk.VI, Ch.22).

If we have Ferdinand on the one hand, we also have Glastonbury on the other. Attractive as he certainly is, he is not a character whom one can ^{easily} take seriously ~~easily~~. Self-effacing to a fault and totally devoted - for no very apparent reason - to the Armine family, here is how he asks Sir Ratcliffe to allow him to purchase Ferdinand's commission:

'Oh! Glastonbury, [says Sir Ratcliffe], no more of this, I pray; you have wasted a precious life upon our forlorn race. Alas! how often and how keenly do I feel, that had it not been for the name of Armine, your great talents and goodness might have gained for you an enviable portion of earthly felicity; yes, Glastonbury, you have sacrificed yourself to us'.

'Would that I could!' said the old man, with brightening eyes and an unaccustomed energy of manner. 'Would that I could! would that any act of mine - I care not what - could revive the fortunes of the house of Armine. Honoured for ever be the name, which with me is associated with all that is great and glorious in man, and (here his voice faltered, and he turned away his face), exquisite and enchanting in woman!'

'No, Ratcliffe', he resumed, 'by the memory of one I cannot name - by that blessed and saintly being from whom you derive your life, you will not, you cannot deny this last favour I ask, I entreat, I supplicate you to accord me - me, who have ever eaten of your bread, and whom your roof hath ever shrouded!'

How are we to explain this extraordinary devotion to an old but otherwise unremarkable county family?

The Armines are, it must not be forgotten, Roman Catholics and Royalists who have lived on their lands for centuries. In them Disraeli wishes to represent all the virtues of the old landed order, an order which he associates with the happy condition of pre-Reformation England so

¹ See Blake, pp.161-162.

¹ I, pp.88-89 (Bk.I, Ch.8).

eloquently described by Cobbett. This was a time - or so Disraeli, following Cobbett, will argue in the Young England novels - when master and tenant lived on friendly and sometimes even intimate terms, when there was no strong central government, and when the country abounded in monasteries liberally dispensing charity to the poor. There was no need then for an impersonal centrally administered Poor Law such as in 1839 Disraeli, inspired partly by the Chartists, vigorously condemned.¹ The two basic social units were the manor and the monastery: in Glastonbury we have the virtues of both incarnated in a single individual.

These virtues, however, are secular rather than moral or religious. We never learn anything about Glastonbury's theology and we have to take his faith as a 'given'. His piety, therefore, is bound to seem incongruous, for it is inspired not by a sacred mystery but by nothing more awesome than a rather nice - though not at all devout - county family.

As an idealization of Disraeli's opinions on society, Glastonbury looks forward to such characters as Sidonia and Sybil. In each case (and this is also true of some of his women) the perfection is too complete; we lack the trifling foibles that would make these figures come alive. It is rather as if Disraeli's cynicism had not only given him a

the overriding purposes of his

¹. See Blake, pp.161-162. goes to Malta with his regiment

Disraeli does not make that an excuse for treating us to a full

longing for the ideal but had persuaded him at the same time that a truly virtuous character cannot be made believable in realistic terms. The result is that the two strains of private feeling (represented in Glastonbury's piety and Henrietta's frankness) and public conduct (represented in Ferdinand's duplicity and Lady Bellair's urbane eccentricity) are never properly brought together.

So long as Disraeli sticks to the beau monde, however, his characters are eminently believable - and not in the least commonplace. No one who has ever read the book is likely to forget Lady Bellair, Count Mirabel, Bond Sharpe, or the waiter in the sponging house. Disraeli has an accurate eye for the revealing detail in both persons and places. Nor does he neglect to make every detail count: Lady Bellair's visit to Ducie is the means by which Henrietta learns of Ferdinand's betrothal, and later in London she is instrumental in bringing them together again; Mirabel and Bond Sharpe, each in a different way, help to pull Ferdinand out of his scrape; and the waiter - a descendant of Tom Rawlins in The Young Duke - provides a humour and confidence that sustain Ferdinand during his most dismal moments. Everything has a function in terms of the whole. Disraeli still borrows from life - but he borrows with greater discrimination and he is careful to subordinate what he takes to the overriding purposes of his fiction. When Ferdinand goes to Malta with his regiment Disraeli does not make that an excuse for treating us to a full

account of his own recollections of the island; we get just enough information to establish Ferdinand's extravagant habits and then he is called back to England. Later in the book when he visits Bond Sharpe - the sophisticated and generous owner of gambling 'hells' who has risen from pugilism and aspires to a place in respectable society - one small detail catches his eye:

The table was arranged for eight guests; its appointments indicated refined taste. A candelabra of Dresden china was the centre piece; there was a whole service of the same material, even to the handles of the knives and forks; and the choice variety of glass attracted Ferdinand's notice. ¹.

Although we hear no more of this china, Disraeli had seen a similar set which impressed him greatly. 'Our dinner', he wrote his sister on June 15, 1836:

was worthy of the 'veritable Amphitryon' of London, and was served off a set of Dresden china, of the most marvellous beauty; the candelabra in the middle of immense size, and covered with groups of shepherds and shepherdesses, the whole mounted on green velvet; even the salt-cellars and handles of knives and forks were china ... ².

The point, of course, is not that Disraeli introduces into his novel something he had observed (we have seen that often before) but that, instead of making it the subject of an enthusiastic digression, he mentions it so briefly - and then only by way of throwing light on Sharpe's character.

¹. III, pp.119-120 (Bk.VI, Ch.11).

². Letters, p.150. The book was The Revolutionary Epoch and she had it bound, Disraeli wrote, in crimson velvet at a cost of seventeen shillings.

Perhaps the most amusing person in the book is Lady Bellair, modelled on old Lady Cork, Dr. Johnson's 'dearest dunce'. Disraeli knew her and in a letter to his sister on June 19, 1834, reproduced a specimen of her conversation which Henrietta had overheard and related to him:

Lady C[ork].: Do you know young Disraeli ?

Lord C[arrington].: Hem! Why? Eh?

Lady C.: Why, he is your neighbour, isn't he, eh ?

Lord C.: His father is.

Lady C.: I know that. His father is one of my dearest friends. I dote on the Disraelis.

Lord C.: The young man is a very extraordinary sort of person. The father I like; he is very quiet and respectable.

Lady C.: Why do you think the young man extraordinary ? I should not think you could taste him.

Lord C.: He is a great agitator. Not that he troubles us much now. He is never amongst us now. I believe he has gone abroad again.

Lady C.: literatim: You old fool! Why, he sent me this book this morning. You need not look at it; you can't understand it. It is the finest book ever written. Gone abroad, indeed! Why, he is the best ton in London! There is not a party that goes down without him. The Duchess of Hamilton says there is nothing like. Lady Lonsdale would give her head and shoulders for him. He would not dine at your house if you were to ask him. He does not care for people because they are lords; he must have fashion, or beauty, or wit, or something; and you are a very good sort of person, but you are nothing more. ¹.

This - especially the last paragraph - has exactly the flavour of Lady Bellair's conversation in Henrietta Temple.

But the most remarkable feature of the novel, apart from the witty dialogue, is the acute sense of drama which

¹ See, on this point, John Holloway, The Victorian Sage

¹ M & B, I, p.251. The book was The Revolutionary Epick and she had it bound, Disraeli wrote, in crimson velvet at a cost of seventeen shillings.

informs scene after scene. Disraeli is, besides, extraordinarily alive to the spiritual ambience of place, yet the description is never gratuitous as it often is in Vivian Grey and The Young Duke. He takes particular pains, for example, to suggest, largely in terms of setting, a contrast between the characters of Levison and Bond Sharpe.¹ And in the drawing room scenes we are never uncertain about the movements and relationships of the persons present, while much that is not directly described is cleverly intimated, often with a view to the dramatic possibilities inherent in a particular situation. Here, for example, is how he treats the seating arrangements at a family dinner party:

At this moment dinner was announced. Lord Montfort offered his arm to Henrietta. 'There, lead the way', said the old lady: 'the girls must beau themselves, for I have no young men to-day for them. I suppose man and wife must be parted, so I must take my son's arm; Mr. Glastonbury, you will hand down the Duchess'. But, before Glastonbury's name was mentioned, Henrietta was half-way down stairs. The Duke and his son presided at the dinner. Henrietta sat on one side of Lord Montfort, his mother on the other. Glastonbury sat on the right hand of the Duke, and opposite their hostess; the two young ladies in the middle. All the guests had been seated without Glastonbury and Henrietta recognizing each other; and, as he sat on the same side of the table as Miss Temple, it was not until Lord Montfort asked Mr. Glastonbury to take wine with him, that Henrietta heard a name that might well, indeed, turn her pale.²

So vividly has Disraeli realised the scene in his own mind that in writing this novel he must have felt very much more at ease than he had

¹ See, on this point, John Holloway, The Victorian Sage (London, 1953), pp.96-98.

² III, p.22 (Bk.VI, Ch.3).

imagination that when he comes to relate it there is nothing superfluous and nothing wanting. Here is another dinner party - at the Temples - towards the end of the book:

As the Duke advanced to offer his arm to Miss Temple, Henrietta presented Ferdinand with a flower, as if to console him for the separation. It was a round table; the Duchess and Lady Bellair sat on each side of Mr. Temple, the Duke on the right hand of Miss Temple; where there were so many members of the same family, it was difficult to arrange the guests. Ferdinand held back, when Count Mirabel, who had secured a seat by Henrietta, beckoned to Ferdinand, and saying that Lady Bellair wished him to sit next to her, pushed Ferdinand, as he himself walked away, into the vacated seat. Henrietta caught the Count's eye as he moved off; it was a very laughing eye. ¹.

There is an unmistakably theatrical quality about this and many other closely observed scenes in the book. See, for example, Book III, chapter 4, where Glastonbury, having chanced upon Henrietta in the gallery at Armine, assumes that he addresses Katherine while Ferdinand, arriving in the nick of time, just manages by a barrage of rapid-fire conversation to avert the impending introduction - or the exchange in Book II, chapter 12, between Glastonbury and Ferdinand where their remarks are so ironically at cross purposes. Disraeli has a keen intuitive understanding of the comedy of manners and that, more than anything else, is what makes Henrietta Temple so delightful. One has the feeling that in writing this novel he must have felt very much more at ease than he had in any of his previous efforts. Yet he has also achieved an

¹. III, p.308 (Bk.VI, Ch.24).

economy of expression and a control over structure that are entirely new. How far, he has come since his picaresque days may be gauged from one of Henrietta's remarks to Katherine during a conversation about popular novels:

'I do not despise the talent which describes so vividly a dinner and a ball', said Miss Temple. 'As far as it goes, it is very amusing; but it should be combined with higher materials. In a fine novel, manners should be observed, and morals should be sustained; we require thought and passion, as well as costume and the lively representation of conventional arrangements; and the thought and passion will be the better for these accessories, for they will be relieved in the novel as they are relieved in life, and the whole will be more true'.¹

*'The child of love, though born in bitterness,
And nurtured in convulsion'.*¹

The spare, incisive style that characterizes so much of Henrietta Temple continues into Venetia. Yet it is a far less satisfying book and one reason may be that, having learnt to manipulate his ingredients so as to build up a coherent whole, Disraeli was altogether too eager to rearrange the facts about Byron and Shelley in a way that he felt would enhance the dramatic possibilities of his story. Byron (Cadurcis) thus becomes a generation younger than Shelley (Herbert) and falls in love while still a boy with Shelley's daughter (Venetia) - who is really Byron's daughter Ada (though she might also, of course, be taken as Mary Chaworth) and whose mother Lady Annabel is really the estranged Lady

¹ • III, pp.137-138 (Bk.VI, Ch.12).

² • London, 1825, pp.vi-vii.

Byron. This complicated arrangement is not in fact quite so confusing as it sounds, though the reader would be well advised to forget whatever he knows about Byron and Shelley before taking up the book.

Disraeli sets the action during the period of the American Revolution, but this cannot be to conceal the book's subject. That he is writing about Byron is abundantly clear from the quotation from the third canto of Childe Harold printed as motto on the title-page:

'Is thy face like thy mother's, my fair child ?'

'The child of love, though born in bitterness,
And nurtured in convulsion'.¹

Although the late-eighteenth century setting does not impinge much on the main events of the story, it is nevertheless puzzling that Disraeli should have bothered with so transparent a ruse. The explanation, however, may lie in one of his odder historical crotchets, for in his preface to Murray's edition of The Life of Paul Jones he had written:

The age in which he lived was the parallel of the present one. The revolt of the Anglo-American colonies had produced, in the mind of Europe, a similar effect to that which is the consequence of the revolt of Mexico and the States of South America. The same passions were excited in the eighteenth century; governments were placed in similar situations; and new interests then arose, as are now arising.²

In making Herbert a successful general in the American

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- ¹ The lines are from the beginning of the first and last stanzas; Disraeli's punctuation does not exactly follow Byron's. Part I (London, 1838). The essay is reprinted in Garnett's Essays of an Ex-Librarian (London, 1901).
 - ² London, 1825, pp.vi-vii.

Revolution - certainly as incongruous a post for Shelley as one can imagine - Disraeli may have had in the back of his mind Sherburne's depiction of John Paul Jones:

He was courageous, generous, and humane; and he appears to have been the only one in this age of revolutions, whose profession of philanthropy was not disgraced by his practice. As to his mental capacity, it cannot be doubted that his was a most ardent and extraordinary genius ... Accident had made him a republican, but the cold spirit of republicanism had not tainted his chivalric soul ... ¹.

Disraeli had become interested in the Cenci on the eve of his departure for Spain². and, as Richard Garnett has shown, in The Revolutionary Epick he owed much to Queen Mab, Alastor, The Revolt of Islam and Prometheus Unbound.³ By introducing Shelley into Venetia, however, he seems to have been concerned not so much for Shelley himself as for his own developing Toryism. It was necessary to cut Shelley down to size and show that respectable Toryism could be the refuge of a great revolutionary poet.

On December 20, 1836, Disraeli agreed with Colburn 'to write a Novel to be entitled "Venetia" or the "Poets Daughter"', receiving in exchange a twelve months' promissory note for £500 which he no doubt promptly discounted and handed over to his creditors. The manuscript was to reach Colburn in time

¹. Ibid., pp.318-319.

². M & B, I, p.362.

³. See pp.132-137 of 'Shelley and Lord Beaconsfield' in Notebook of the Shelley Society: The Shelley Society's Papers, Part I (London, 1888). The essay is reprinted in Garnett's Essays of an Ex-Librarian (London, 1901).

for the book to appear on May first¹, but he had already completed a substantial portion of it. 'My situation', he had written from Bradenham in November to his financial advisor William Pyne:

is simply this. I have taken advantage of the temporary repose for which I am indebted to you and with the exception of County business I have not quitted my room for the last ten weeks. I have now written five octave volumes, i.e., the novel about to be published, and two more of another, which I calculate finishing by the end of the year. 2.

As usual, his calculations were on the optimistic side.

'I am in good health', he wrote again on January eighth,

considering I have never left my rooms, and have been in worse spirits. But the quantity I have written, and am pouring forth, is something monstrous. I find it a relief, and now that I have nothing else to distract my thoughts, I am resolved to ruin Colburn. 3.

From the middle of January until well into February he was on a visit to D'Orsay at Kensington and had abundant opportunities to discuss the project with Lady Blessington.⁴

The seminal idea for the book may well have come from two passages in her Conversations of Lord Byron, published in 1834:

'I hope [she quotes Byron] my daughter will be well-educated; but of this I have little dread, as her mother is highly cultivated, and certainly has a degree of self-control that I never saw equalled. I am certain that

1. Hughenden Papers, Box 235, E / VII / D / 77.

2. M & B, I, p.351.

3. Ibid., p.353.

4. Ibid., pp.355-357.

Lady Byron's first idea is, what is due to herself; I mean that it is the undeviating rule of her conduct. I wish she had thought a little more of what is due to others. Now my besetting sin is a want of that self-respect, - which she has in excess; and that want has produced much unhappiness to us both'.¹

And again: 'I often, in imagination, pass over a long lapse of years', said Byron, 'and console myself for present privations, in anticipating the time when my daughter will know me by reading my works; for, though the hand of prejudice may conceal my portrait from her eyes, it cannot hereafter conceal my thoughts and feelings, which will talk to her when he to whom they belonged has ceased to exist. The triumph will then be mine; and the tears that my child will drop over expressions wrung from me by mental agony, - the certainty that she will enter into the sentiments which dictated the various allusions to her and myself in my works, - consoles me in many a gloomy hour. Ada's mother has feasted on the smiles of her infancy and growth, but the tears of her maturity shall be mine'.²

By the 19th he was back at Bradenham and wrote again to Pyne:

I have only 150 pages, or less, of my book to finish, which I ought to canter through in the remainder of the month with ease, but I find it difficult to command the Muse amid all these vexations. The form of Davis, or the unknown visage of Green, mix themselves up, by some damnable process, with the radiant countenance of my heroine, and though visions of spunging houses might have been in keeping with the last vol. of Henrietta Temple, they do not accord quite so well with the more ethereal scenes of the fair Venetia. Nevertheless I have contrived to write, and I hope my inspiration has not been much diluted by their distraction, but I am a little nervous.³

Another visit to D'Orsay filled out the remainder of the month, but early in March he was back at Bradenham. On the

¹ Ibid., pp.315-316.

² Ibid., pp.385-386. Disraeli may also have seen Trevelyan's

³ M & B, I, p.358. (London, 1828), I, pp.330-335.

21st he wrote Lady Blessington: *three printed works:*

My dear Lady, - Altho' it is little more than a fortnight since I quitted your truly friendly society & hospitable roof, both of which I shall always remember with deep & lively gratitude, it seems, to me at least, a far more awful interval of time. I have waited for a serene hour to tell you of my doings; but serene hours are rare, & therefore I will not be deluded into waiting any longer.

In spite of every obstacle in the shape of harassed feelings & other disagreeable accidents of life, I have not forgotten the fair Venetia, who has grown under my paternal care, & as much in grace, I hope, as in stature, or rather dimensions. She is truly like her prototype -

'... the child of love,

Tho' born in bitterness & nurtured in convulsion;'

but I hope she will prove a source of consolation to her parent, & also to her godmother, for I consider you to stand in that relation to her. I do not think that you will find any golden hint of our musing strolls has been thrown away upon me; & I should not be surprised if, in six weeks, she may ring the bell at your hall door, & request admittance, where I know she will find at least one sympathising friend. ¹ 'Cherbury' for the country

What golden hints may have resulted from their 'musing strolls' we can only speculate. Lady Blessington, however, was not Venetia's only godparent. *edition of 1804 at Southwell, gives*

Disraeli must have learnt much about both Byron and Shelley from Trelawney, whom he seems to have met in the *was* *revised, possesses a library of some extent, which the* summer of 1836 and thought 'a strange character',², and of *his first coming to Southwell; and one of the books* course from Tita. Yet, so far as we can identify such things,

his main sources - apart from a passage lifted verbatim from

Compare the paragraph on pp.547-548 of his review of Moore's Life of Byron in the Edinburgh Review, June, 1837, with the opening paragraph of Bk.IV, Ch.18, of

1. The Blessington Papers (Printed for private circulation, 1895), p.16. Disraeli was working on the ms. during his stay with D'Orsay; see Letters, p.156. *than for its bearing on Byron.*

2. M & B, I, p.332. Disraeli may also have seen Trevelyan's 'Narrative' of the drowning, in Leigh Hunt's Byron and his Contemporaries (London, 1828), I, pp.330-335.

Macaulay¹ - appear to have been three printed works: Moore's Letters and Journals of Lord Byron (1830), Thomas Medwin's Conversations of Lord Byron (1824) and Medwin's Shelley Papers (1833).

From all of these works Disraeli took phrases as well as facts and ideas. But perhaps the most important was Moore's Byron. He seems to have used it as a manual more or less as he had used Dodd's An Autumn near the Rhine in writing the second part of Vivian Grey. All the essential facts about Byron's career - and especially his childhood - were given by Moore, and Disraeli followed him most assiduously. Some readers of Venetia, for instance, may have wondered at the name 'Herbert' for Shelley and 'Cherbury' for the country house to which Venetia and her mother have retired at the beginning of the novel; Moore, remarking that Byron and his mother spent the summer vacation of 1804 at Southwell, gives us the answer:

The gentleman, from whom the house where they resided was rented, possesses a library of some extent, which the young poet, he says, ransacked with much eagerness on his first coming to Southwell; and one of the books

¹. Compare the paragraph on pp.547-548 of his review of Moore's Life of Byron in the Edinburgh Review, June, 1831, with the opening paragraph of Bk.IV, Ch.18, of Venetia. See M & B, I, p.365, on this appropriation. Disraeli probably took the passage more for the vigour and balance of Macaulay's prose than for its bearing on Byron.

Disraeli's Use of Shelley, Victorian Newsletter, Fall, 1964, pp.19-22, discuss briefly some of the passages Disraeli adapted from Medwin's Shelley Papers. I am indebted to all three scholars, although in one or two instances (the above, for example) I have been able to identify passages hitherto unrecognized as Disraeli's sources.

that most particularly engaged and interested him was, as may be easily believed, the life of Lord Herbert of Cherbury.¹

It is typical of the mixing up of biographical facts in Venetia that Disraeli should have taken his fictional name for Shelley from a Cavalier poet admired by the young Byron.

As has often been remarked, the best part of Venetia is the description of Cadurcis' miserable childhood in the first book. The emotional trials of a sensitive child was a subject that Disraeli had tackled in almost all his previous books, but he was never to handle it better than in Venetia. His treatment of the relationship between Cadurcis and his well-meaning but impossible mother illustrates how well he could realize a subject once he had put his mind to it. The rows described in chapters six and thirteen were entirely his own invention - but they were based upon a sensitive and imaginative reading of Moore, who sketches Byron's relations with his mother as follows:

1. London, 1830, I, p.61; cf., the statement at the end of Ch.7 that Cadurcis 'had turned over many a volume in the well-stored library at Cherbury' and, in Ch.3, the description of the library's contents. The edition that both Byron and Disraeli knew was presumably the one printed by Horace Walpole at Strawberry Hill in 1764. For a detailed comparison of Venetia with Moore's biography and Medwin's Conversations, see Herbert Bruce Hamilton, The Portrayal of the Life and Character of Lord Byron in the Novel by B.Disraeli entitled 'Venetia' (Leipzig, 1884). Richard Garnett in 'Shelley and Lord Beaconsfield', pp.128-130, and R.A.Duerksen in 'Disraeli's Use of Shelley', Victorian Newsletter, Fall, 1964, pp.19-22, discuss briefly some of the passages Disraeli adapted from Medwin's Shelley Papers. I am indebted to all three scholars, although in one or two instances (the above, for example) I have been able to identify passages hitherto unrecognized as Disraeli's sources.

His mother, without judgment or self-command, alternately spoiled him by indulgence, and irritated, or - what was still worse, - amused him by her violence. That strong sense of the ridiculous, for which he was afterwards so remarkable, and which showed itself thus early, got the better even of his fear of her; and when Mrs. Byron, who was a short and corpulent person, and rolled considerably in her gait, would, in a rage, endeavour to catch him, for the purpose of inflicting punishment, the young urchin, proud of being able to outstrip her, notwithstanding his lameness, would run round the room, laughing like a little Puck, and mocking at all her menaces. ¹.

This was the 'text' upon which chapters six and thirteen are a perceptive and, except for the lameness, a faithful all the elaboration. Other factual ingredients were gathered from Moore's references to Byron's humiliation when his mother called him '"a lame brat"' ², and the particularly virulent row after which Byron fled to London. ³. Cadurcis does not go to London but, rather like Contarini, takes up with a troupe of gypsies - and this provides an opportunity to introduce some argot, an idea which Disraeli could have taken from the example of Harrison Ainsworth's Rookwood (1834). Another of Mrs. Cadurcis' habits - that of likening her son to his father in such remarks as '"You are worse than your father, that you are!"' ⁴, was clearly derived from Medwin:

'My mother, when she was in a rage with me, (and I gave her cause enough), used to say, "Ah, you little dog, you are a Byron all over; you are as bad as your father!"' ⁵.

¹. I, p.66 (Bk.I, Ch.6).

¹. I, p.25.

². I, p.26. cf., for example, I, p.135 (Bk.I, Ch.13): '"O! you brat! You wicked brat you!"'

³. I, pp.68-69.

⁴. I, p.136 (Bk.I, Ch.13).

⁵. Conversations of Lord Byron (London, 1824), p.73.

Disraeli, however, adds to the picture by making Mrs.Cadurcis sometimes speak admiringly of her husband - a logical extension of the volatility that Moore had complained of in Mrs.Byron:

'He puts me in mind quite of his poor dear father, who was an angel upon earth; he was indeed, when he was not vexed'.¹

'Mrs.Cadurcis', Disraeli adds, chatting without ceasing, detailed to Lady Annabel all the history of her life, all the details of her various complaints and her economical arrangements, and all the secrets of her husband's treatment of her, - that favourite subject on which she ever waxed most eloquent.²

She is, indeed, 'only a child of a larger growth ...'.³

Mrs.Cadurcis, unlike Mrs.Byron, dies while her son is still no more than a boy. Yet in the last paragraph of chapter 17 Disraeli closely follows Moore's account of Byron's behaviour after his mother's death:

On the night after his arrival at Newstead, the waiting-woman of Mrs.Byron, in passing the door of the room where the deceased lady lay, heard a sound, as of some one sighing heavily from within; and, on entering the chamber, found, to her surprise, Lord Byron sitting, in the dark, beside the bed. On her representing to him the weakness of thus giving way to grief, he burst into tears and exclaimed, 'Oh, Mrs.By, I had but one friend in the world, and she is gone!'⁴.

¹. I, p.66 (Bk.I, Ch.6).

². Ibid., p.67.

³. Ibid., pp.71-72 (Bk.I, Ch.7).

⁴. I, pp.273-274. cf., Venetia, I, pp.191-193 (Bk.I, Ch.17): 'Ah! Mrs.Pauncefort, God had only given me one friend in this world, and there she lies!'

Herbert himself does not enter the action until Book V, but in Book II Venetia discovers a portrait of him which has been kept locked away at Cherbury. The idea for this episode goes back of course to Max Roth^denstein; but there was authority for it in Medwin:

'I am told[said Byron] that Ada is a little termagant; I hope not. I hear that my name is not mentioned in her presence; that a green curtain is always kept over my portrait, as over something forbidden; and that she is not to know that she has a father, till she comes of age. Of course she will be taught to hate me; she will be brought up to it'. 1.

This - down even to the colour of the curtain - exactly fits Venetia's situation. The description of the portrait itself Disraeli takes from Shelley's own words in a fragment entitled 'The Coliseum' reproduced by Medwin with the note, 'There never was drawn a more perfect portrait of Shelley himself'. Here are the two passages:

Shelley Papers
(London, 1833), pp.128-129

His form, that, though emaciated, displayed the elementary outline of exquisite grace, was enveloped in an ancient chlamys, which half concealed his face. It was a face, once seen, never to be forgotten. The lips and the moulding of the chin resembled the eager and impassioned tenderness of the shapes of Antinous; but, instead of the effeminate

Venetia
(London, 1837), I, pp.273-4
(Bk.II, Ch.4)

A man in the very spring of sunny youth, and of radiant beauty. Above the middle height, and very slender, yet with a form that displayed exquisite grace, he was habited in a green tunic that developed his figure to advantage, and became the scene in which he was placed - a park, with a castle in the distance; while a groom at hand held a noble steed, that seemed impatient for the

1. Conversations of Lord Byron (London, 1824), pp.143-144.

sullenness of the eye, and the narrow smoothness of the forehead, shone an expression of profound and piercing thought. His brow was clear and open, and his eyes deep, and like two wells of crystalline water which reflect the all-beholding heavens. Over all was spread a timid expression of diffidence and retirement, which intermingled strangely with the abstract and fearless character which predominated in his form and gestures.

When Herbert finally does appear, near the end of the novel, he engages Cadurcis in some interesting conversations for which Medwin was again the source - though Disraeli adds much animation:

When Herbert finally does appear, near the end of the novel, he engages Cadurcis in some interesting conversations for which Medwin was again the source - though Disraeli adds much animation:

Shelley Papers
pp.153-154, from a fragment entitled 'Life'

Life, and the world, and whatever we call that which we are, and feel, is an astonishing thing. The mist of familiarity obscures from us the wonder of our being. We are struck with astonishment at some of its transient modifications, but it is itself the great miracle. What are the changes of empires, the wreck of dynasties, with the opinions that supported them - what is the birth and extinction of religions, and of political systems, to life? What are the revolutions of the

chase. The countenance of its intended rider met fully the gaze of the spectator. It was a countenance of singular loveliness and power. The lips and the moulding of the chin resembled the eager and impassioned tenderness of the shape of Antinous; but, instead of the effeminate sullenness of the eye, and the narrow smoothness of the forehead, shone an expression of profound and piercing thought. On each side of the clear and open brow descended, even to the shoulders, the clustering locks of golden hair; while the eyes large, and yet deep, beamed with a spiritual energy, and shone, like two wells of crystalline water that reflect the all-beholding heavens.

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Venetia
III, pp.181-182 (Bk.VI,Ch.4)

"Ah! Death," said Lord Cadurcis "that is a botherer. What can you make of death? There are those poor fishermen now; there will be a white squall some day, and they will go down with those latteen-sails of theirs, and be food for the very prey they were going to catch; and, if you continue living here, you may eat one of your neighbours in the shape of a shoal of red mullets, when it is the season. The great secret - we cannot penetrate that with all our philosophy, my dear Herbert. "All that we know is, nothing can be known." Barren, barren, barren! And yet what a grand world it

globe which we inhabit, and the operations of the elements of which it is composed, compared with life? what is the universe of stars and suns, and their motions, and the destiny of those that inhabit them, compared with life? Life, the great miracle, we admire not because it is so miraculous. If any artist, I do not say had executed, but had merely conceived in his mind, the system of the sun, the stars, and planets, they not existing, and had painted to us in words or upon canvas the spectacle now afforded by the sight of the cope of heaven, and illustrated it by astronomy, what would have been our admiration! - or had imagined the scenery of the earth, the mountains, and the seas, and the rivers, and the grass and the flowers, and the varieties of the forms and the masses of the leaves of the woods, and the colours which attend the rising and the setting sun, and the hues of the atmosphere turbid or serene, truly we should have been wonder-struck, and should have said, what it would have been a vain boast to have said, Truly, this creator deserves the name of a God. But now, these things are looked upon with little wonder; and who views them with delight, is considered an enthusiast or an extraordinary person.

The multitude care little for them. It is thus with life, that includes all. What is life? Thoughts and feelings arise with or without our will, and we employ words to express them.

from civilisation; for man never ceases to be a social being.

is! Look at this bay, these blue waters, the mountains, and these chestnuts - devilish fine! The fact is, truth is veiled, but, like the Sheekinah over the tabernacle, the veil is of dazzling light!"

"Life is the great wonder", said Herbert, "in which all that is strange and startling resolves itself. The mist of familiarity obscures from us the miracle of our being. Mankind are constantly starting at events which they consider extraordinary. But a philosopher acknowledges only one miracle, and that is life. Political revolutions, changes of empire, wrecks of dynasties and the opinions that support them, these are the marvels of the vulgar, but these are only transient modifications of life. The origin of existence is, therefore, the first object which a true philosopher proposes to himself. Unable to discover it, he accepts certain results from his unbiassed observation of its obvious nature, and on them he establishes certain principles to be our guides in all social relations, whether they take the shape of laws or customs. Nevertheless, until the principle of life be discovered, all theories and all systems of conduct founded on theory must be considered provisional."

"And do you believe that there is a chance of its being discovered?" inquired Cadurcis.

"I cannot, from any reason in my own intelligence, find why it should not," said Herbert.

"You conceive it possible that a man attain earthly immortality?" inquired Cadurcis.

"Undoubtedly."

"By Jove," said Cadurcis, "if abusing mankind proves that you do not hate them; it is clear

We are born, and our birth is unremembered, and our infancy remembered but in fragments. We live, and in living we lose the apprehension of life.

Shelley Papers, pp.156-7,
from a fragment entitled
'Love' (see also pp.21-24)

The mind selects among those who most resemble it, that which is most its archetype and instinctively fills up the interstices of the imperfect image, in the same manner as the imagination moulds and completes the shape in the clouds, or in the fire, into a resemblance of whatever form, animal, building, &c. happens to be present to it.

Man is in his wildest state a social animal - a certain degree of civilization and refinement ever produces the want of sympathies still more intimate and complete, and the gratification of the senses is no longer all that is desired. It soon becomes a very small part of that profound and complicated sentiment which we call love, which is rather the universal thirst for a communion not merely of the senses, but of our whole nature, intellectual, imaginative, and sensitive, and which, when individualized, becomes an imperious necessity, only to be satisfied by the complete, or partial, or supposed fulfilment of its claims. This want grows more powerful in proportion to the development which our nature receives from civilization; for man never ceases to be a social being.

I only knew how, I would purchase an immense annuity directly."

Venetia, III, pp.210-13
(Bk.VI, Ch.6)

"That is very clear," said Cadurcis, "but I was thinking of love in the vulgar sense, in the shape of a petticoat. Certainly, when I am in love with a woman, I feel love is life; but, when I am out of love, which often happens, and generally very soon, I still contrive to live."

"We exist," said Herbert, "because we sympathise. If we did not sympathise with the air, we should die. But, if we only sympathised with the air, we should be in the lowest order of brutes, baser than the sloth. Mount from the sloth to the poet. It is sympathy that makes you a poet. It is your desire that the airy children of your brain should be born anew within another's, that makes you create; therefore, a misanthropical poet is a contradiction in terms."

"But when he writes a lampoon?" said Cadurcis. "He desires that the majority, who are not lampooned, should share his hate," said Herbert. "But Swift lampooned the species," said Cadurcis. "For my part, I think life is hatred."

"But Swift was not sincere; for he wrote the Drapier's Letters at the same time. Besides, the very fact of your abusing mankind proves that you do not hate them; it is clear

Shelley Packer,
pp. 172-173, from a fragment
entitled 'On the Revival
of Literature'.

The disputes of the schools were mostly scholastical; it was the discussion of words, and had no relation to morality. Morality, - the great means and end of man, - was contained, as they affirmed, in the extent of a few hundred pages of a certain book, which others have since contended were but scraps of martyrs' last dying words, collected together and imposed on the world. In the refinements of the scholastic philosophy, the world seemed in danger of losing the little real wisdom that still remained as her portion; and the only valuable part of their disputes was such as tended to develop the system of the Peripatetic Philosophers. Plato, the wisest, the profoundest, and Epicurus, the most humane and gentle among the ancients, were entirely neglected by them. Plato interfered with their peculiar mode of thinking concerning heavenly matters; and Epicurus, maintaining the rights of man to pleasure and happiness, would have afforded a seducing contrast to their dark and miserable code of morals. It has been asserted, that these holy men secluded their lighter moments in a contraband worship of Epicurus, and profaned the philosophy which maintained the rights of all by a selfish indulgence of the rights of a few. Thus it is: the laws of nature are invariable, and man sets them aside that he may have the pleasure of travelling through a labyrinth in search of them again.

that you are desirous of obtaining their good opinion of your wit. You value them, you esteem them, you love them. Their approbation causes you to act, and makes you happy. As for sexual love," said Herbert, "of which you were speaking, its quality and duration depend upon the degree of sympathy that subsists between the two persons interested. Plato believed, and I believe with him, in the existence of a spiritual antetype of the soul, so that when we are born, there is something within us, which, from the instant we live and move, thirsts after its likeness. This propensity develops itself with the development of our nature. The gratification of the senses soon becomes a very small part of that profound and complicated sentiment, which we call love. Love, on the contrary, is an universal thirst for a communion, not merely of the senses, but of our whole nature - intellectual, imaginative, and sensitive. He who finds his antetype, enjoys a love perfect and enduring; time cannot change it, distance cannot remove it; the sympathy is complete. He who loves an object that approaches his antetype, is proportionately happy, the sympathy is feeble or strong, as it may be. If men were properly educated, and their faculties fully developed," continued Herbert, "the discovery of the antetype would be easy; and, when the day arrives that it is a matter of course, the perfection of civilisation will be attained."

"I believe in Plato," said Lord Cadurcis, "and I think I have found my antetype. His theory accounts for what I never could understand."

as it might be, and they exercised their intellect only in discussing words. They, therefore, adopted Aristotle and the Peri-

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The disputes of the schools were mostly scholastical: it was the discussion of words, and had no relation to morality. Morality, - the great means and end of man, - was contained, as they affirmed, in the extent of a few hundred pages of a certain book, which others have since contended were but scraps of martyrs' last dying words, collected together and imposed on the world. In the refinements of the scholastic philosophy, the world seemed in danger of losing the little real wisdom that still remained as her portion; and the only valuable part of their disputes was such as tended to develop the system of the Peripatetic Philosophers. Plato, the wisest, the profoundest, and Epicurus, the most humane and gentle among the ancients, were entirely neglected by them. Plato interfered with their peculiar mode of thinking concerning heavenly matters; and Epicurus, maintaining the rights of man to pleasure and happiness, would have afforded a seducing contrast to their dark and miserable code of morals. It has been asserted, that these holy men solaced their lighter moments in a contraband worship of Epicurus, and profaned the philosophy which maintained the rights of all by a selfish indulgence of the rights of a few. Thus it is: the laws of nature are invariable, and man sets them aside that he may have the pleasure of travelling through a labyrinth in search of them again.

Venetia, III, pp.225-231

"Well, I always have a prejudice against Pontius Pilate," said Lord Cadurcis; "and I think it is from seeing him when I was a child, on an old Dutch tile fireplace at Marringhurst, dressed like a burgomaster. One cannot get over one's early impressions; but when you picture him to me as an Epicurean, he assumes a new character. I fancy him young, noble, elegant and accomplished; crowned with a wreath and waving a goblet, and enjoying his government vastly."

"Before the introduction of Christianity," said Herbert, "the philosophic schools answered to our present religious sects. You said of a man that he was a Stoic or an Epicurean, as you say of a man now that he is a Calvinist or a Wesleyan."

"I should have liked to have known Epicurus," said Cadurcis.

"I would sooner have known him and Plato than any of the ancients," said Herbert. "I look upon Plato as the wisest and the profoundest of men, and upon Epicurus as the most humane and gentle."

"Now, how do you account for the great popularity of Aristotle in modern ages?" said Cadurcis; "and the comparative neglect of these, at least his equals. Chance, I suppose, that settles every thing."

"By no means," said Herbert. "If you mean by chance an absence of accountable cause, I do not believe such a quality as chance exists. Every incident that happens, must be a link in a chain. In the present case, the monks monopolised literature, such as it might be, and they exercised their intellect only in discussing words. They, therefore, adopted Aristotle and the Peri-

pateticks. Plato interfered with their heavenly knowledge, and Epicurus, who maintained the rights of man to pleasure and happiness, would have afforded a dangerous and seducing contrast to their dark and miserable code of morals."

"I think of the ancients," said Cadurcis, "Alcibiades and Alexander the Great are my favourites. They were young, beautiful, and conquerors : a great combination."

"And among the moderns ?" inquired Herbert.

"They don't touch my fancy," said Cadurcis.

"Who are your heroes ?"

"Oh! I have many; but I confess I should like to pass a day with Milton, or Sir Philip Sidney."

"Among mere literary men," said Cadurcis, "I should say, Bayle."

"And old Montaigne for me," said Herbert.

"Well, I would fain visit him in his feudal chateau," said Cadurcis. "His is one of the books which give a spring to the mind. Of modern times, the feudal ages of Italy most interest me. I think that was a springtide of civilisation; all the fine arts flourished at the same moment."

"They ever will," said Herbert. "All the inventive arts maintain a sympathetic connection between each other, for, after all, they are only various expressions of one internal power, modified by different circumstances either of the individual or of society. It was so in the age of Pericles; I mean the interval which intervened between the birth of that great man and the death of Aristotle; undoubtedly, whether considered in itself, or with

Shelley Papers, pp.135-138, from a fragment entitled 'The Age of Pericles'

The period which intervened between the birth of Pericles and the death of Aristotle, is undoubtedly, whether considered in itself, or with reference to the effects which it produced upon the subsequent destinies of civilized man, the most memorable in the history of the world. What was the combination of moral

either of an individual, or

poetry, and poetry alone, that

and political circumstances which produced so unparalleled a progress during that period in literature and the arts;— why that progress, so rapid and so sustained, so soon received a check, and became retrograde,— are problems left to the wonder and conjecture of posterity. The wrecks and fragments of those subtle and profound minds, like the ruins of a fine statue, obscurely suggest to us the grandeur and perfection of the whole. Their very language,— a type of the understanding, of which it was the creation and the image,— in variety, in simplicity, in flexibility, and in copiousness, excels every other language of the western world. Their sculptures are such as, in our perception, assume to be the models of ideal truth and beauty, and to which, no artist of modern times can produce forms in any degree comparable. Their paintings, according to Pausanias, were full of delicacy and harmony; and some were powerfully pathetic, so as to awaken, like tender music or tragic poetry, the most overwhelming emotions. We are accustomed to consider the painters of the sixteenth century, as those who have brought this art to the highest perfection, probably because none of the ancient pictures have been preserved. All the inventive arts maintain, as it were, a sympathetic connexion between each other, being no more than various expressions of one internal power, modified by different circumstances, either of an individual, or

references to the effects which it produced upon the subsequent destinies of civilised man, the most memorable in the history of the world.”

“And yet the age of Pericles has passed away,” said Lord Cadurcis, mournfully, “and I have gazed upon the mouldering Parthenon. O! Herbert, you are a great thinker and muse deeply; solve me the problem why so unparalleled a progress was made during that period in literature and the arts, and why that progress, so rapid and so sustained, so soon received a check and became retrograde?”

“It is a problem left to the wonder and conjecture of posterity,” said Herbert. “But its solution, perhaps, may principally be found in the weakness of their political institutions. Nothing of the Athenians remains except their genius; but they fulfilled their purpose. The wrecks and fragments of their subtle and profound minds obscurely suggest to us the grandeur and perfection of the whole. Their language excels every other tongue of the western world; their sculptures baffle all subsequent artists; credible witnesses assure us that their paintings were not inferior; and we are only accustomed to consider the painters of Italy as those who have brought the art to its highest perfection, because none of the ancient pictures have been preserved. Yet of all their fine arts, it was music of which the Greeks were themselves most proud. Its traditional effects were far more powerful than any which we experience from the compositions of our times. And now for their poetry, Cadurcis. It is in poetry, and poetry alone, that

of society.

The paintings of that period would probably bear the same relation as is confessedly borne by the sculptures to all successive ones. Of their music we know little; but the effects which it is said to have produced, whether they be attributed to the skill of the composer, or the sensibility of his audience, were far more powerful than any which we experience from the music of our times; and if, indeed, the melody of their compositions were more tender, and delicate, and inspiring, than the melodies of some modern European nations, their progress in this art must have been something wonderful, and wholly beyond conception. Their poetry seems to maintain a high, though not so disproportionate a rank, in comparison. Perhaps Shakspeare, from the variety and comprehension of his genius, is to be considered as the greatest individual mind, of which we have specimens remaining;—perhaps Dante created imaginations of greater loveliness and beauty than any that are to be found in the ancient literature of Greece;—perhaps nothing has been discovered in the fragments of the Greek lyric poets equivalent to the sublime and chivalrous sensibility of Petrarch:—but, as a poet, Homer must be acknowledged to excel Shakspeare in the truth and harmony, the sustained grandeur, and satisfying completeness of his images, their exact fitness to the illustration, and

modern nations have maintained the majesty of genius. Do we equal the Greeks? Do we even excel them?"

"Let us prove the equality first," said Cadurcis. "The Greeks excelled in every species of poetry. In some we do not even attempt to rival them. We have not a single modern ode or a single modern pastoral. We have no one to place by Pindar, or the exquisite Theocritus. As for the epic, I confess myself a heretic as to Homer; I look upon the Iliad as a remnant of national songs; the wise ones agree that the Odyssey is the work of a later age. My instinct agrees with the result of their researches. I credit their conclusion. The Paradise Lost is, doubtless, a great production, but the subject is monkish. Dante is national, but he has all the faults of a barbarous age. In general the modern epic is framed upon the assumption that the Iliad is an orderly composition. They are indebted for this fallacy to Virgil, who called order out of chaos; but the Æneid, all the same, appears to me an insipid creation. And now for the drama. You will adduce Shakspeare?"

"There are passages in Dante," said Herbert, "not inferior, in my opinion, to any existing literary composition, but, as a whole, I will not make my stand on him; I am not so clear that, as a lyric poet, Petrarch may not rival the Greeks. Shakspeare I esteem of ineffable merit."

"And who is Shakspeare!" said Cadurcis. "We know of him as much as we do of Homer. Did he write half the plays attributed to him? Did he ever write a single whole play? I doubt it.

in my opinion, effect a great whole." This, Burnett concludes, "would seem to indicate that the quality of Sheller's genius had formed the subject of discussion between Disraeli and his friend."

to that which they belong. Nor could Dante, deficient in conduct, plan, nature, variety, and temperance, have been brought into comparison, but for the fortunate isles, laden with golden fruit, which alone could tempt any one to embark in the misty ocean of his dark and extravagant fiction.

Shelley Papers, p.37,
from Medwin's 'Memoir'

What his real opinion of Byron's genius was, may be collected from a sonnet he once showed me, and which the subject of it never saw. The sentiments accord well with that diffidence of his own powers- that innate modesty which always distinguished him. It began thus-

If I esteemed him less,
envy would kill
Pleasure, and leave to
wonder and despair
The ministration of the
thoughts that fill
My soul, which, as a worm
may haply share
A portion of the unappro-
achable,
Marks his creations rise
as fast and fair
As perfect worlds at the
Creator's will.

He appears to me to have been an inspired adapter for the theatres, which were then not as good as barns. I take him to have been a botcher up of old plays. His popularity is of modern date, and it may not last; it would have surprised him marvellously. Heaven knows, at present, all that bears his name is alike admired ...'

Venetia, III, pp.232-233
(Bk.VI, Ch.8)

'For myself,' said Herbert, 'if I ever had the power to impress my creations on my fellow-men, the inclination is gone, and perhaps the faculty is extinct. My career is over; perhaps a solitary echo from my lyre may yet, at times, linger about the world like a breeze that has lost its way. But there is a radical fault in my poetic mind, and I am conscious of it. I am not altogether void of the creative faculty, but mine is a fragmentary mind; I produce no whole.¹ Unless you do this, you cannot last; at least, you cannot materially affect your species. But what I admire in you, Cadurcis, is that, with all the faults of youth, of which you will free yourself, your creative power is vigorous, prolific, and complete: your creations rise fast and fair, like perfect worlds.'

¹ Of this sentence Garnett makes the interesting observation (p.128) that it seems to echo a remark of Bulwer's in a letter to Thomas Jefferson Hogg (January 12, 1832; reproduced in The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley, London 1858, I, p.xvii): 'He is great in parts; but, the "Cenci" excepted, does not, in my opinion, effect a great whole.' This, Garnett concludes, 'would seem to indicate that the quality of Shelley's genius had formed the subject of discussion between Disraeli and his friend.'

Shelley Papers, p.73
 from Medwin's 'Memoir'
 (see also p.75)

Byron's name is still a terror to the despots of Italy. His writings have done much to fan the flame of liberty. Shelley used to say that poets were the unacknowledged legislators of the world.

"Well, we will not compliment each other," said Cadurcis; "for, after all, it is a miserable craft. What is poetry but a lie, and what are poets but liars?"

"You are wrong, Cadurcis," said Herbert; "poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world."

From these passages we can see that Disraeli was doing more than just plagiarizing.¹ Shelley's fragments are relatively solemn affairs and needed to be lightened up and set into a dramatic context before they could serve as dialogue.

By attending so scrupulously to Moore and Medwin, Disraeli was trying to ensure a note of authenticity - yet it is largely an authenticity of externals. The only character who is portrayed both movingly and in depth is the young Cadurcis. Herbert, when he finally appears, is a placid and worn out version of Shelley whose virtues are so conspicuous that the reader's sympathies begin to turn against Lady Annabel.

¹ He does, however, have some fun at Byron's expense by making Cadurcis confess to Herbert that he has used a collection of his poems as "my cribbing book ... I always kept it by me when I was writing at Athens, like a gradus, a gradus ad Parnassum, you know. But although I crib, I am candid, and you see I fairly own it to you". (III, pp.179-180; Bk.VI, Ch.4) In a note on pp.71-72 Medwin says that he had complained to Byron of his habit of plagiarizing and 'taxed him roundly' for it.

The monster that her insistence upon a separation had led us to expect turns out to be nothing of the sort with the result that what we had earlier taken as her discretion, integrity, and good sense resolve themselves into priggishness. As the Countess Guiccioli remarked, 'It is questionable whether the virtues and qualities which adorn Lady Annabel are compatible with the defects of her nature'.¹ Had Disraeli really wished to explore Shelley's character he would have presented him in his prime and not as a repentant idealist well on the way to Toryism. Cadurcis is a much better realised figure (certainly closer to Byron than Herbert is to Shelley) and the treatment of his childhood could not be improved upon. The scenes at Cherbury, tranquil and affectionate, contrast with an almost Brontëan pointedness with the grim milieu at Cadurcis Abbey. But after Cadurcis grows up and goes to London he becomes a far less definite figure and one suspects that Disraeli is no longer so much interested in him. To use the terminology of the day, the interest shifts from character to incident. We thus have a series of events which roughly parallel the facts about Byron's career: the affair with Lady Monteagle (Lady Caroline Lamb), the duel with her husband, and - an inspired device for suggesting Byron's

Dickens should not have had a look at Fenella when it appeared

¹ My Recollections of Lord Byron, tr. H.E.H. Jerningham (London, 1869), II, p.433.

¹ Edgar Johnson, Charles Dickens (London, 1953), I, pp.103-4, 226; John Forster, The Life of Charles Dickens ed. J.W.T. Ley, (London, 1928), p.654, n.309.

disenchantment with England - the scene in which Cadurcis is snubbed in the House of Lords and, on leaving, is attacked by the mob outside. But as a person Cadurcis does not come into his own again until the conversations with Herbert towards the end of the book. One has the impression that Disraeli's interest in what he is writing has waned considerably - and this is confirmed by the mediocre quality of Herbert's poetry, utterly lacking in the daring flights of imagination that one associates with Shelley.

But there is one aspect of Venetia that, as a possible footnote to literary history, deserves closer scrutiny. Throughout 1836 Disraeli and Dickens - both young men of dandaical habits - were making their way in the small world of literary and social London. They certainly met, at Harrison Ainsworth's and at Gore House if not elsewhere, though they equally clearly seem not to have developed any particular friendship. But they had many friends in common, among them Jerdan, Bulwer, MacLise, D'Orsay, Lady Blessington, and Macrone.¹ Indeed, it was Macrone who in 1836 published both Sketches by "Boz" and The Letters of Runnymede. This was a time when Byron and Shelley were still names to conjure with in literary drawing rooms, and it seems incredible that Dickens should not have had a look at Venetia when it appeared

¹. Edgar Johnson, Charles Dickens (London, 1953), I, pp.103-4, 228; John Forster, The Life of Charles Dickens ed. J.W.T.Ley, (London, 1928), p.854, n.509.

in May, 1837.¹ He would not have found much to please him in it; the vaguely upper-class bias, the complete lack of realism in the treatment of Venetia and Herbert, and the general absence (Pauncefort and the gipsy episode are exceptions) of scenes from ordinary life would all have earned his umbrage. But one feature of the book - the central incident upon which the whole plot turns - could hardly have been better calculated to elicit a response from Dickens' taste for the macabre and grotesque.

At the beginning of the book the relations between Venetia and her mother are as happy as anyone could wish. Gradually, however, we become aware of Venetia's perplexity at a subject which at intervals had haunted her even from her earliest childhood. Why had she only one parent? What mystery was this that enveloped that great tie? For that there was a mystery Venetia felt as assured as that she was a daughter. By a process which she could not analyse, her father had become a forbidden subject.²

Cadurcis tells Venetia of seeing her mother pay a nocturnal visit to a locked chamber at Cherbury, and finally her curiosity (aet. 14) overpowers her:

¹. He does not, however, refer to the novel in any surviving letters though he did own a set of Disraeli's Novels and Tales, ten volumes in five, dated 1859 - probably a reprint of the 1853 Bryce edition. See Catalogues of the Libraries of Charles Dickens and W.M. Thackeray, ed. J.H. Stonehouse (London, 1935), p.38. I am grateful to Mr. Graham Storey for looking at Dickens' unpublished correspondence in this connection.

². I, pp.228-229. (6k. II, a.1).

In: Her hand is upon the lock; it yields without an effort. Venetia steps into a spacious and lofty chamber. For a moment she paused almost upon the threshold, and looked around her with a vague and misty vision. Anon she distinguished something of the character of the apartment. In the recess of a large oriel window, that looked upon the park, and of which the blinds were nearly drawn, was an old-fashioned yet sumptuous toilet-table of considerable size, arranged as if for use. Opposite this window, in a corresponding recess, was what might be deemed a bridal bed, its furniture being of white satin, richly embroidered; the curtains half closed; and suspended from the canopy was a wreath of roses, that had once emulated, or rather excelled, the lustrous purity of the hangings, but now were wan and withered. The centre of the inlaid and polished floor of the apartment was covered with a Tournay carpet, of brilliant, yet tasteful, decoration. An old cabinet of fanciful workmanship, some chairs of ebony, and some girandoles of silver, completed the furniture of the room, save that at its extreme end, exactly opposite to the door by which Venetia entered, covered with a curtain of green silk¹, was what she concluded must be a picture.

recom: An awful stillness pervaded the apartment: Venetia herself, with a face paler even than the hangings of the all: mysterious bed, stood motionless with suppressed breath, the: gazing on the distant curtain, with a painful glance of of: agitated fascination. At length, summoning her energies as of: enterprise, she crossed the room, and averting her face, 'wh: and closing her eyes in a paroxysm of nervous excitement, she stretched forth her arm, and with a rapid motion im: withdrew the curtain. The harsh sound of the brass rings and: drawn quickly over the rod, the only noise that had yet met her ear in this mystical chamber, made her start and tremble. She looked up - she beheld, in a very broad and massy frame, the full-length portrait of a man.².

Here the paragraph quoted above on pages 218-219

occurs, and Venetia at length realises that the portrait is of her father.

¹ I, pp.271-272 (Bk.II, Ch.5).

¹ In the Longmans edition of 1871 this becomes 'green velvet'.

² I, pp.271-272 (Bk.II, Ch.4). gives presumably from the equivocal hero of Scott's *Waverley* (1806).

In the next chapter she muses on her discovery:

This chamber, then, was the temple of her mother's woe - the tomb of her baffled affections and bleeding heart. No wonder that Lady Annabel, the desolate Lady Annabel, that almost the same spring must have witnessed the most favoured and the most disconsolate of women, should have fled from the world, that had awarded her at the same time a lot so dazzling and so full of despair ...

Venetia turned and looked upon her parents' bridal bed. Now that she had discovered her father's portrait, every article in the room interested her, for her imagination connected everything with him. She touched the wreath of withered roses, and one instantly broke away from the circle, and fell; she knelt down and gathered up the scattered leaves, and placed them in her bosom.

From this point onwards Venetia's sole aim is to find her father (whom she had at first supposed dead) and effect a reconciliation between her parents, while Lady Annabel, 'with all her sealed-up sorrows'², struggles to prevent anything of the sort - and to protect Venetia from the baleful influence of Herbert and his kind. She goes to the forbidden chamber, 'where, with so much labour, she had created a room exactly imitative of their bridal apartment at her husband's castle', and exclaims before the portrait:

'Marmion³, you seem to smile upon me; you seem to exult in your triumph over the heart of your child. But there is a power in a mother's love that yet shall baffle you. Hitherto I have come here to deplore the

¹. I, pp.277-279 (Bk.II, Ch.5).

². Ibid., p.288 (Bk.II, Ch.6).

³. Herbert's Christian name derives presumably from the equivocal hero of Scott's Marmion (1808).

past; hitherto I have come here to dwell upon the form that, in spite of all that has happened, I still was, perhaps, weak enough to love. Those feelings are past for ever. Yes! you would rob me of my child, you would tear from my heart the only consolation you have left me. But Venetia shall still be mine; and I, I am no longer yours. Our love, our still lingering love, has vanished. You have been my enemy; now I am yours. I gaze upon your portrait for the last time; and thus I prevent the magical fascination of that face again appealing to the sympathies of my child. Thus, and thus!" - She seized the ancient dagger that we have mentioned as lying on the volume [containing Herbert's manuscript poem 'On the Night Our Daughter Was Born'], and, springing on the chair, she plunged it into the canvas; then, tearing with unflinching resolution the severed parts, she scattered the fragments over the chamber, shook into a thousand leaves the melancholy garland, tore up the volume of his enamoured Muse, and then quitting the chamber, and locking and double locking the door, she descended the staircase, and, proceeding to the great well of Cherbury, hurled into it the fatal key.¹

Later in the book when Cadurcis pays court to Venetia, having in the meantime fallen under the spell of Herbert's writings and developed a streak of Radicalism, Lady Annabel advises her daughter to "beware of such beings! They bear within them a spirit on which all the devotion of our sex is lavished in vain. A year - no! not a year, not one short year! and all my hopes were blighted! O Venetia! if your future should be like my bitter past! ..."

"He cannot have a heart. Spirits like him are heartless. It is another impulse that sways their existence. It is imagination; it is vanity; it is self, disguised with glittering qualities that dazzle our weak senses, but

¹ I, pp.305-306 (Bk.II, Ch.7).

selfishness, the most entire, the most concentrated. We knew him as a child, - ah! what can women know! We are born to love, and to be deceived. We saw him young, helpless, abandoned; - he moved our pity. We knew not his nature; then he was ignorant of it himself. But the young tiger, though cradled at our hearths and fed on milk, will in good time retire to its jungle and prey on blood. You cannot change its nature; and the very hand that fostered it will be its first victim.' 1.

Such scenes, with more than a touch of melodrama, would have struck Dickens forcibly and it is at least conceivable that - lingering in the back of his mind - they might have contributed to Miss Trotwood and her maid Janet in David Copperfield and, later, to Miss Havisham and Estella in Great Expectations. This is not to say that Dickens in writing those novels consciously went back (even in imagination) to Venetia; he need not, in fact, have remembered the book at all. Dickens' was very largely a submerged imagination, drawing upon a multitude of unconscious associations. The various sources that have previously been suggested for Miss Havisham² are not,

1. II, pp.300-301 (Bk.IV, Ch.14).

2. Russell Fraser in 'A Charles Dickens Original', Nineteenth-Century Fiction, March, 1955, pp.301-307, suggests a tavern legend about one Nathaniel Bentley commemorated by William Allingham in 'The Dirty Old Man. A Lay of Leadenhall' published in Household Words, January 8, 1853; Harry Stone in 'An Added Note on Dickens and Miss Havisham', June, 1955, pp.85-86, argues that priority must be given to Dickens' own 'When We Stopped Growing' in Household Words, January 1, 1853; and Martin Meisel in 'Miss Havisham Brought to Book', PMLA, 1966, pp.278-285, traces Miss Havisham to a music hall skit by Charles Mathews, Wilkie Collins' Woman in White, and, of course, 'When We Stopped Growing'.

moreover, necessarily incompatible with Venetia. What should perhaps be insisted upon is that unlike any of these, Venetia could have given Dickens the germ not just of Miss Havisham but also of Estella and much of the relationship built up between them. If this is so, it is odd to think that in a very roundabout way an important element in Great Expectations may be said to go back to the marital difficulties of Lord Byron.

Whatever Dickens may have derived from Venetia, such emotionally heightened scenes as Lady Annabel's slashing at her husband's portrait show Disraeli at very nearly his worst. The relationship between Venetia and her mother is one that Dickens, with his extraordinary awareness of the gothic possibilities of the commonplace, was uniquely suited to exploit; in Disraeli's hands it becomes no more than an occasion for melodrama and forced diction. As we have seen in Contarini and Alroy, Disraeli simply could not handle high emotions. When he tries he falls into an habitual, almost automatic, style of writing in which the succession of clichés is only occasionally relieved by some absurdly grandiose incident. He was really not equipped to deal with the emotional complexities of such persons as Byron and Shelley. The information that he took from Moore and Medwin seldom suggested to him - Cadurcis' childhood must be excepted - any

underlying psychological currents. And in his zeal to bring Shelley into the action as well as Byron, he had created an ingenious and firmly structured plot which, however, compelled him to give short shrift to Byron's mature years and to transform Shelley altogether.

Yet this very readiness to manipulate his materials for the sake of their dramatic effects and to dwell more upon the surfaces of life than its undercurrents is precisely what gives Henrietta Temple its distinction. The cynical, urbane world where appearance seems so much more important than the reality it does not quite conceal is exactly Disraeli's proper milieu. Whenever his characters are frank and open he is lost; but when they put on masks he can catch their essential features - both revealed and concealed - with a skill that is, if not unrivalled, certainly preeminent. With the publication of Venetia Disraeli had reached a stage in his career as a novelist at which everything depended upon his recognizing that his future lay primarily in the comedy of manners.

¹ General Preface (in the Lothair volume of the 1870-71 edition of the novels), p. xii.

² See Blake, Chapter VIII, and M & B, III, Chapter VI, for the full story; Charles Whitley in Lord John Manners and his Friends, 2 vols. (London, 1935), gives a detailed account of the group's formation.

CHAPTER SIX

Coningsby, Sybil, and Tancred

The idea of treating political and social questions in a fictional form was not new to Disraeli when in the autumn of 1843 he sat down to write Coningsby. He had already dealt in Vivian Grey with some of the more superficial and melodramatic aspects of political life, in Popanilla he had satirised English institutions and manners in a sweeping allegorical fantasy, and in The Young Duke he had shown his hero developing a political and social conscience in the last volume. Even in Contarini Fleming and Venetia he had glanced, though only in passing, at political and social topics. All these works, however, had been written for fame or money. Coningsby was Disraeli's first wholly polemical novel - begun at the Deepdene after his host Henry Hope had 'urged the expediency of my treating in a literary form those views and subjects which were the matter of our frequent conversation'.¹

Disraeli's friendship in the early '40s with Hope, George Smythe, Lord John Manners, and Baillie-Cochrane had led to the formation of the Young England party, that amiable but ineffectual attempt to renovate the present by reviving the manners and customs of the feudal past.² The movement attracted a

¹. General Preface (in the Lothair volume of the 1870-71 edition of the novels), p.xii.

². See Blake, Chapter VIII, and M & B, III, Chapter VI, for the full story; Charles Whibley in Lord John Manners and his Friends, 2 vols. (London, 1925), gives a detailed account of the group's formation.

good deal of ridicule, made little headway in parliament, and soon fell apart; its one enduring achievement was the trilogy - Coningsby, Sybil, and Tancred - that Disraeli wrote to promote some of its ideas.

The main purpose of Coningsby was to show the 'derivation and character of political parties' while 'the condition of the people which had been the consequence of them' fell to Sybil and 'the duties of the Church as a main remedial agency in our present state'¹ to Tancred. But these subjects, as anyone who has read his Vindication of the English Constitution (1835) will be aware, were not entirely new to Disraeli. In the preface to the 'fifth edition' of Coningsby he wrote in 1849:

The main purpose of its writer was to vindicate the just claims of the Tory party to be the popular political confederation of the country; a purpose which he had, more or less, pursued from a very early period of life.

And in the General Preface he even traces these preoccupations back to his boyhood:

Born in a library, and trained from early childhood by learned men who did not share the passions and the prejudices of our political and social life, I had imbibed on some subjects conclusions different from those which generally prevail, and especially with reference to the history of our own country. How an oligarchy had been substituted for a kingdom, and a narrow-minded and bigoted fanaticism flourished in the name of religious liberty, were problems long to me insoluble, but which early interested me. But what most attracted my musing,

¹ In her Novels of the Eighteen-Forties (Oxford, 1954); General Preface, p.xii. Tilletson quotes (p.62) from a passage in Barter Messias that could conceivably have given Disraeli the idea of the 'two nations'. But as we shall see below, Disraeli had a much closer connection with another slightly earlier work which touches on the same idea.

even as a boy, was the elements of our political parties, and the strange mystification by which that which was national in its [sic] constitution had become odious, and that which was exclusive was presented as popular.¹

If Disraeli's basic political and social attitudes were indeed formed so early in life (and we shall return to this point shortly) it may be worth asking whether Carlyle's influence upon the Young England trilogy can have been so great as is sometimes alleged. Disraeli, we may assume, could well have read Sartor Resartus (1833), Chartism (1839), Heroes and Hero-Worship (1841), and Past and Present (1843); indeed, as M.E. Speare has shown, his contributions to the Times early in 1838 contain faint echoes of Carlyle's exuberant prose style.² Carlyle's contempt for the utilitarian values of the age, his denigration of the 'cash nexus' with all its inhumane social consequences, and his idealization of the heroic in history and art may all be said in a broad sense to parallel some of Disraeli's own ideas.³ But Disraeli had developed his views on these issues too early for him to have derived them from Carlyle: even before the end of the '20s in Vivian Grey and Popanilla he had expressed his distrust of

1. p.ix.

2. The Political Novel (New York, 1924), pp.165-166; see also M & B, II, p.17. He had probably been reading Carlyle's articles in the Edinburgh Review about this time.

3. In her Novels of the Eighteen-Forties (Oxford, 1954; reprinted 1962), Kathleen Tillotson quotes (p.82) from a passage in Sartor Resartus that could conceivably have given Disraeli the idea of the 'two nations'. But as we shall see below, Disraeli had a much closer connection with another slightly earlier work which touches on the same idea.

the Benthamite faith in utility, laissez-faire, the march of mind, and the perfectibility of man, while in Contarini and Alroy in the early '30s he had shown his ^{enthusiasm} ~~enthusiasm~~ for the heroic ideal. Had Carlyle at any stage made a strong impression upon Disraeli's mind it is reasonable to expect that in his letters or elsewhere he would have made some allusion to him - as he does to Le Sage, Plummer Ward, Burke, Bolingbroke, Dodd, Byron, Scott, Cobbett, Madame de Staël, and a host of others. Probably the answer is that when Disraeli encountered Heroes and Hero-Worship and Past and Present early in the '40s (for he can hardly have escaped them in some form) they must have given him more a confirmation of his own views than a startling revelation of new ones.

Disraeli had written that his political ideas went back to 'a very early period of life'. Along with his rejection of utilitarianism went, in The Young Duke and Henrietta Temple, a lively sense of the position in the social order occupied by the landed interests - at all levels - and particularly by old Roman Catholic families. Mixed up with this was Disraeli's anti-Whig theory of English history and his notion of a strong monarchy as the logical defender of popular interests - both of which emerge very clearly in the Vindication. These are the principal ingredients of that highly unorthodox political creed elaborated in Coningsby and Sybil. Much of it, of course, came from Disraeli's readings

On Isaac's political views generally, see James Ogden, Isaac D'Israeli (Oxford, 1969), pp. 17-18, 60-62, 67-69, 156-159, 204-205, and passim.

in Burke and Bolingbroke while some of the chivalric feeling may well have come from that sacred text of Young England, Kenelm Digby's Broad Stone of Honour (1822-29). Yet the combination is so idiosyncratic that one may perhaps take Disraeli at his word and look back to 'a very early period of life' for some clues to its origins.

That he felt a great veneration for his father all Disraeli's biographers are agreed. But little attention seems to have been paid to Isaac's political views and their possible influence upon his son. This is the more surprising in that such a large portion of Disraeli's formative years was spent at home rather than away at school or university. Like many of his contemporaries, as a young man Isaac had been caught up in the prevailing enthusiasm for the French Revolution and again like many of his contemporaries, he had been turned by the outrages that followed in the wake of 1789 from incipient Radicalism to staunch Conservatism.¹ In 1816, when Benjamin was twelve, his 'literary conscience' (as he declared in the 'Advertisement') prompted him to publish An Inquiry into the Literary and Political Character of James the First vindicating the king's reputation against his Whig detractors. He had become, in fact, an ardent Royalist as the publication of his Commentaries on the Life and Reign of Charles I between 1828 and 1831 further confirms. How

¹ On Isaac's political views generally, see James Ogden, Isaac D'Israeli (Oxford, 1969), pp.17-18, 60-62, 67-69, 156-159, 204-205, and passim.

his attitude towards the Crown resembles Disraeli's in Coningsby and Sybil may be judged from the preface to his anti-Napoleonic novel Despotism: or the Fall of the Jesuits (1811): from which he quotes in his notes, interestingly

May we not yet catch an useful moral, that winds up the awful story of perverted wisdom, and power abused? Who cannot see shadowed in this little history, an Empire more dreadful than an Oriental Despotism, because more enlightened; in the Institute of the Jesuits, the perfect Code of Despotism; and in the General and his Jesuits, political fanatics, who, actuated by views of perpetual aggrandisement of dominion, are themselves victims of false glory, and the scourges of humanity. From the political dangers of so vile and anti-social a government, what can save Nations, but a returning love and reverence for their Sovereigns, to guard their independence from the Universal Despot? While Sovereigns, instructed by severe fortune, and rising with the genius of the age, shall feel that their inexhaustible strength lies in the hearts of their people; and that the art of reigning is not found by aggrandising the Sovereign, or the State, till the diadem is sparkling with the tears of its subjects, and crimsoned with the blood of its neighbours. 1.

In Chapter X Isaac expounds the evils of the Venetian system of government and in so doing comes very close to his son's later theory of the 'Venetian constitution' as introduced into England by the Whigs.

The Venetian government was clouded over with mysterious politics. Every where it wore a studied appearance of popular freedom. Yet Ribadeneira [the General of the Jesuits] well knew, the State was without patriotism. He had watched this Aristocracy, contracting itself into an Oligarchy, ready to receive a Master-genius ...2.

1. I, pp.x-xi.

2. I, p.95.

Isaac goes on to show in a conversation between two Venetian nobles, Foscarini and the young Contadini, how completely Venice has submitted to the will of 'the Three'. The authority from which he quotes in his notes, interestingly enough, is Amelot de la Houssay's Histoire du Gouvernement de Venice - the very work which so excites Disraeli's Contarini Fleming and prompts him to set off for Venice.¹

At one point Foscarini proclaims:

'Our mutual jealousies have induced us to throw all the power of the State into the hands of the Few. Is Venice free, where the most intelligent Venetian would tremble, and lose his voice, should a stranger inquire the nature of his government?'²

Contadini in turn inveighs against the Council of Ten with "their mock Sovereign, our degraded old Man, the Doge"³ and declares that the real rulers are the Council of Three who scorn the Senate, the Nobles, the Council of Ten, and the great Doge himself:

'The Three enter the chamber of their Sovereign, he perishes in the midnight darkness, and all Venice is silent'.⁴

Like his son, Isaac seems to have felt that all this had some bearing on English history. In his essay on 'The Oceana of Harrington' in The Amenities of Literature (1841) he castigates Harrington - whose writings Disraeli in Coningsby

1. Pt.I, Ch.14.

2. I, pp.101-102.

3. p.104.

4. p.107.

cites as an illustration of 'how the minds of the English leaders in the seventeenth century were saturated with the Venetian type'¹ - for his admiration of the Venetian commonwealth, what of Disraeli's championing of the English

with all its "ballottings" and "its rotations," and its hidden and horrible dictatorship, where sate the council of "Three" in their dark conclave, like the sister-fates, the arbiters of every soul in Venice. Alas for that folly of the wise, who, in the delusion of a theory, to support the edifice of imagination disguise the truths which might shake it! The advocate of a free state, he who pretends to draw sovereignty from the hands of the people, is the perpetual eulogist of the most refined tyranny that ever swayed the destiny of a people. Spirit of Harrington! meditate in thy sepulchral city, motionless and naked as she lies, there to correct so many passages of admiration which spread their illusion in thy "Oceana!"²

Disraeli tells us in his memoir of his father that 'He did not excel in conversation, though in his domestic circle he was garrulous.'³ We have seen in the first part of Vivian Grey how ready Disraeli was to draw upon his father's novels; can there be any doubt that his attitude towards the Crown and his the conservative Radicalism of Cobbett.

- ¹. II (Bk.V, Ch.2), p.230. Page references throughout are to the 'third edition' of Coningsby which was a partially new type-setting with various minor errors corrected. This edition would appear to offer the best copy text for any future edition of the novel for Disraeli specifically authorizes 'all those corrections' which it incorporates in a letter of July 13, 1844, to Bernhard Tauchnitz; see The Harvest (Leipzig, 1937), pp.46-47. I am grateful to Mr. Desmond Neill for very kindly drawing my attention to this important volume with its facsimiles of English letters to Tauchnitz which, along with many others unpublished, were destroyed by bombing in 1943.
- ². III, p.328.
- ³. Curiosities of Literature, ed. Earl of Beaconsfield (London, 1881), I, p.xxxvi; the memoir was written in 1848 and first published in 1849.

theory of the 'Venetian oligarchy' of the Whigs both owed something to his conversations with his father at 'a very early period of life' ?

But what of Disraeli's championing of the English Catholics and his odd notion of 'Dutch finance' - the idea that the accession of William of Orange in 1688 had brought with it the insidious practise of raising government funds through a national debt to be paid for by indirect taxation of a kind bound to hit the poorer classes hardest ?

There is at Hughenden a scrap of paper on which Disraeli has written as follows:

Cobbett - Canning ¹.

This in itself is not much, but in conjunction with other evidence to which we shall turn in a moment it could almost stand as a formula for the Young England idea as it developed in Disraeli's mind: the liberal Toryism of Canning joined to the conservative Radicalism of Cobbett.

Disraeli's family appears to have been well acquainted with Cobbett's writings for the library at Bradenham contained, besides copies of his Life of Thomas Paine². and his English Grammar³., at least two volumes of the Political Register⁴..

¹. Hughenden Papers, Box 231, E / V / A / 10.

². Hughenden Papers, Box 269, G / IV / 37.

³. MS. Catalogue of Isaac D'Israeli's Library, bound in green vellum and kept in the first floor study at Hughenden, entry 188.

⁴. Ibid., entry 179. It is not clear from the catalogue whether there were two shelves of Registers or merely two volumes.

In one of his manuscript notes Isaac transcribed Cobbett's sardonic reflections on the manner in which the literary world had greeted the exposure of W.H.Ireland's Shakespeare forgeries:

May 30th [1835] Cobbett's Register

Heddekashun & poor Ireland

At last it was discovered by nothing but the indiscretion of Mr.Ireland that he was the author of the m.s.s.!! Instantly the base wretches, from every quarter poured in upon him; instead of admiring his engenuity & apologizing, as well as they could for their own folly in having been Shakespear mad, they pitched on upon him like tigers, called him a forger, called him an imposter & almost literally hunted him from the face of the earth. I never heard, & believe no man ever heard of injustice & cruelty to surpass this. Such is the effect of book-education in softening the heart. 1.

It is easy to imagine how this astonishing piece of special pleading, taken from Cobbett's obituary of Ireland, must have amused Isaac.

As for Disraeli, in Sybil he has Gerard say of Morley, 'He has not been at your schools and your colleges, but he can write his mother tongue, as Shakespeare and Cobbett wrote it'². and in Coningsby he alludes to the occasion after the passage of the Reform Bill when 'old Cobbett insolently thrust Sir Robert from the prescriptive seat of the chief of opposition...'³.

1. Hughenden Papers, Box 269, G / IV / 20; Isaac's note is inserted in a copy of the Register for June 13, 1835, 'being the last production of Mr.Cobbett's pen'.

2. I (Bk.II, Ch.16), p.307.

3. I (Bk.II, Ch.1), p.139.

Disraeli had witnessed the incident and in 1872 related it to Lord Ronald Gower:

The dinner that evening [at Hughenden] was more lively than it had been on the previous night. Mr. Disraeli was in better spirits and talked more. His recollections of Cobbett formed part of his conversation. On one occasion, he told us, Cobbett insisted upon taking Sir Robert Peel's seat on the Treasury Bench. Sir Robert did all he could to show the intruder that he objected to this proceeding; but all was in vain - do what he would, Cobbett would not budge an inch. At last Sir Robert requested Cobbett to move, politely but firmly. 'I'll be d--d if I do!' was all the answer that he got; and Peel, continued Disraeli, had perforce to take a lower seat elsewhere.¹

But the most conclusive evidence that Disraeli had made a study of Cobbett - and especially ^{of} ~~on~~ his polemic on behalf of Catholic emancipation, A History of the Protestant 'Reformation' in England and Ireland (1826) - is to be found in the famous scene in Book II, Chapter 5, of Sybil where the theme of the 'two nations' is first announced. Disraeli, indeed, seems to have written this chapter with Cobbett's book open before him:

¹. My Reminiscences (London, 1895), new ed., pp.279-280. Cobbett's influence on Disraeli has also been noted by one "X.D." in a letter in the Times for April 29, 1880, and by T.E.Kebbel in Lord Beaconsfield and Other Tory Memories (New York, 1907), p.25. Disraeli, Kebbel writes, 'thoroughly appreciated' Cobbett: 'He thought him superior to Junius, superior to Fonblanque, and superior to the best articles in the newly-started Saturday Review. Indeed, he availed himself very largely of Cobbett's History of the Protestant Reformation, and in Sybil he puts into Walter Gerard's mouth Cobbett's very words and arguments. But it was, of course, of the Political Register that Mr. Disraeli was thinking when he spoke of Cobbett as the first journalist of the century...' Louis Cazamian is mistaken when he states in Le Roman Social en Angleterre (Paris, 1903), p.350, n.3, that Cobbett's opinions are embodied in St. Lys; it should, of course, be Walter Gerard.

A History of the Protestant 'Reformation' in England and Ireland (London, 1826), paragraphs 149-155.¹

Sybil, or, The Two Nations (London, 1845), I, pp.138-150.

The hospitality and other good things proceeding from the Monasteries, as mentioned by the Protestant Bishop Tanner, are not to be forgotten; but we must take a closer view of the subject, in order to do full justice to these calumniated institutions. It is our duty to show, that they were founded in great political wisdom, as well as in real piety and charity. That they were not, as the false and malignant and selfish Hume has described them, mere dolers out of bread and meat and beer; but that they were great diffusers of general prosperity, happiness and content; and that one of their natural and necessary effects was, to prevent that state of things which sees but two classes of people in a community, masters and slaves, a very few enjoying the extreme of luxury, and millions doomed to the extreme of misery.

From the land all the good things come. Somebody must own the land. Those who own it must have the distribution of its revenues. If these revenues be chiefly distributed amongst the people, from whose labour they arise, and in such a way as to afford to them a good maintenance on easy terms, the community must be happy. If the revenues be alienated in very great part;

'You lean against an ancient trunk,' said Egremont, carelessly advancing to the stranger, who looked up at him without any expression of surprise, and then replied. 'They say 'tis the trunk beneath whose branches the monks encamped when they came to this valley to raise their building. It was their house, till with the wood and stone around them, their labour and their fine art, they piled up their abbey. And then they were driven out of it, and it came to this. Poor men! poor men!'

'They would hardly have forfeited their resting-place had they deserved to retain it,' said Egremont.

'They were rich. I thought it was poverty that was a crime,' replied the stranger in a tone of simplicity.

'But they had committed other crimes.'

'It may be so; we are very frail. But their history has been written by their enemies; they were condemned without a hearing; the people rose oftentimes in their behalf; and their property was divided with those on whose reports it was forfeited.'

'At any rate, it was a forfeiture which gave life to the community,' said Egremont; 'the lands are held by active men and not by drones.'

'A drone is one who does not labour,' said the stranger;

'whether he wear a cowl or a coronet, 'tis the same to me.'

¹ Published in parts, 1824-1826, then as a single volume in 1826; it became a best-seller and in 1827 Cobbett added a second volume containing a list of the confiscated ecclesiastical properties. On the book's remarkable sales, see M.L.Pearl, William Cobbett: A Bibliographical Account of His Life and Times (Oxford, 1953), pp.132-137.

if they be carried away to a great distance, and expended amongst those, from whose labour no part of them arise, the main body of the community must be miserable: poor-houses, jails, and barracks must arise. Now, one of the greatest advantages attending the Monasteries, was, that they, of necessity, caused the revenues of a large part of the lands of the country to be spent on the spot whence those revenues arose. The hospitals and all the other establishments of the kind had the same tendency. There were, of the whole, great and small, not less, on an average, than fifty in each county; so that the revenues of the land diffused themselves, in great part, immediately amongst the people at large. We all well know how the state of a parish becomes instantly changed for the worse, when a noble or other great land-owner quits the mansion in it, and leaves that mansion shut up. Every one knows the effect which such a shutting up has upon the poor-rates of a parish. It is notorious, that the non-residence of the Clergy and of the noblemen and gentlemen is universally complained of as a source of evil to the country. One of the arguments, and a great one it is, in favour of severe game laws, is, that the game causes noblemen and gentlemen to reside. What, then, must have been the effect of twenty rich Monasteries in every county, expending constantly a large [*sic*] part of their incomes on the spot? The great cause of the miseries of Ireland, at this moment, is "absenteeship"; that is to say, the absence of the land-owners, who draw

Somebody I suppose must own the land; though I have heard say that this individual tenure is not a necessity; but however this may be, I am not one who would object to the lord, provided he were a gentle one. All agree the Monastics were easy landlords; their rents were low; they granted leases in those days. Their tenants too might renew their term before their tenure ran out: so they were men of spirit and property. There were yeomen then, sir: the country was not divided into two classes, masters and slaves; there was some resting-place between luxury and misery. Comfort was an English habit then, not merely an English word."

"And do you really think they were easier landlords than our present ones?" said Egremont, inquiringly.

"Human nature would tell us that, even if history did not confess it. The Monastics could possess no private property; they could save no money; they could bequeath nothing. They lived, received, and expended in common. The monastery too was a proprietor that never died and never wasted. The farmer had a deathless landlord then; not a harsh guardian, or a grinding mortgagee, or a dilatory master in chancery; all was certain; the manor had not to dread a change of lords, or the oaks to tremble at the axe of the squandering heir. How proud we are still in England of an old family, though, God knows, 'tis rare to see one now. Yet the people like to say, We held under him, and his father and his grandfather before him: they know that such a tenure is a benefit. The abbot was ever the same. The monks were in short in every district a point of refuge for all who needed succour, counsel,

away the revenues of the country, and expend them in other countries. If Ireland had still her seven or eight hundred Monastic institutions, great and small, she would be, as she formerly was, prosperous and happy. There would be no periodical famines and typhus fevers; no need of sun-set and sun-rise laws; no Captain Rocks; no projects for preventing the people from increasing; no schemes for getting rid of a "surplus population"; none of that poverty and degradation that threaten to make a desert of the country, or to make it the means of destroying the greatness of England herself.

Somebody must own the lands; and the question is, whether it be best for them to be owned by those who constantly live, and constantly must live, in the country and in the midst of their estates; or, by those who always may, and who frequently will and do, live at a great distance from their lands, and draw away the revenues of them to be spent elsewhere. The monastics are, by many, called drones. Bishop Tanner has shown us, that this charge is very false. But, if it were true, is not a drone in a cowl as good as a drone in a hat and top-boots? By drones, are meant those who do not work; and, do land-owners usually work? The lay land-owner and his family spend more of their revenues in a way not useful to the people than the monastics possibly could. But

and protection; a body of individuals having no cares of their own, with wisdom to guide the inexperienced, with wealth to relieve the suffering, and often with power to protect the oppressed.)

"You plead their cause with feeling," said Egremont, not unmoved.

"It is my own; they were the sons of the People, like myself."

"I had thought rather these monasteries were the resort of the younger branches of the aristocracy?" said Egremont.

"Instead of the pension list," replied his companion, smiling, but not with bitterness. "Well, if we must have an aristocracy, I would sooner that its younger branches should be monks and nuns; than colonels without regiments, or housekeepers of royal palaces that exist only in name. Besides see what advantage to a minister if the unendowed aristocracy were thus provided for now. He need not, like a minister in these days, entrust the conduct of public affairs to individuals notoriously incompetent, appoint to the command of expeditions generals who never saw a field, make governors of colonies out of men who never could govern themselves, or find an ambassador in a broken dandy or a blasted favourite. It is true that many of the monks and nuns were persons of noble birth. Why should they not have been? The aristocracy had their share; no more. They, like all other classes, were benefitted by the monasteries: but the list of the mitred abbots when they were suppressed, shows that the great majority of the heads of

Try to imagine the effect of thirty or forty Chateaus

besides this, besides the hospitality and charity of the monastics, and besides, moreover, the lien, the legal lien, which the main body of the people had, in many cases, to a share, directly or indirectly, in the revenues of the Monasteries, we are to look at the monks and nuns in the very important capacity of landlords and landladies. All historians, however Protestant or malignant, agree, that they were "easy landlords"; that they let their lands at low rents, and on leases of long term of years; so that, says even Hume, "the farmers regarded themselves as a species of proprietors, always taking care "to renew their leases before they expired." And, was there no good in a class of landlords of this sort? Did not they naturally and necessarily create, by slow degrees, men of property? Did they not thus cause a class of yeomen to exist, real yeomen, independent of the aristocracy? And was not this class destroyed by the "Reformation", which made the farmers rack-renters and absolute dependants, as we see them to this day? And, was this change favourable then, to political liberty? Monastics could possess no private property, they could save no money, they could bequeath nothing. They had a life interest in their estate, and no more. They lived, received, and expended in common. Historians need not have told us, that they were "easy land-

houses were of the people."

"Well, whatever difference of opinion may exist on these points," said Egremont, "there is one on which there can be no controversy: the monks were great architects."

"Ah! there it is," said the stranger, in a tone of plain-tiveness; "if the world but only knew what they had lost! I am sure that not the faintest idea is generally prevalent of the appearance of England before and since the dissolution. Why sir, in England and Wales alone, there were of these institutions of different sizes; I mean monasteries, and chantries and chapels, and great hospitals; considerably upwards of three thousand; all of them fair buildings, many of them of exquisite beauty. There were on an average in every shire at least twenty structures such as this was; in this great county double that number: establishments that were as vast and as magnificent and as beautiful as your Belvoirs and your Chatsworths* in this county the proprietors of which were never absent. You complain enough now of absentees. The monks were never non-resident. They expended their revenue among those whose labour had produced it. These holy men too built and planted as they did everything else for posterity: their churches were cathedrals; their schools colleges; their halls and libraries the muniment rooms of kingdoms; their woods and waters, their farms and gardens, were laid out and disposed on a scale and in a spirit that are

*your Wentworths and your Stowes. Try to imagine the effect of thirty or forty Chatsworths

lords." They must have been such, unless human nature had taken a retrograde march expressly for their accommodation. And, was it not happy for the nation, that there was such a class of landlords? What a jump for joy would the farmers of England now give, if such a class were to return to-morrow, to get them out of the hands of the squandering and needy lord and his grinding land-valuer!

Then, look at the monastics as causing, in some of the most important of human affairs, that fixedness which is so much the friend of rectitude in morals, and which so powerfully conduces to prosperity, private and public. The Monastery was a proprietor that never died; its tenantry had to do with a deathless landlord; its lands and houses never changed owners; its tenants were liable to none of many of the uncertainties that other tenants were; its oaks had never to tremble at the axe of the squandering heir; its manors had not to dread a change of lords; its villagers had all been born and bred up under its eye and care; their character was of necessity a thing of great value, and, as such, would naturally be an object of great attention. A monastery was the centre of a circle in the country, naturally drawing to it, all that were in need of relief, advice, and protection, and containing a body of men, or of women, having no cares of their own, and having wisdom to guide the inexperienced, and wealth to relieve the distressed. And was it a good thing, then, to plunder and devastate these

now extinct; they made the country beautiful, and the people proud of their country."

"Yet if the monks were such public benefactors, why did not the people rise in their favour?"

"They did, but too late. They struggled for a century, but they struggled against property and they were beat. As long as the monks existed, the people, when aggrieved, had property on their side. And now 'tis all over," said the stranger; "and travellers come and stare at these ruins, and think themselves very wise to moralize over time. They are the children of violence, not of time. It is war that created these ruins, civil war, of all our civil wars the most inhuman, for it was waged with the unresisting. The monasteries were taken by storm, they were sacked, gutted, battered with warlike instruments, blown up with gun-powder; you may see the marks of the blast against the new tower here. Never was such a plunder. The whole face of the country for a century was that of a land recently invaded by a ruthless enemy; it was worse than the Norman conquest; nor has England ever lost this character of ravage. I don't know whether the union workhouses will remove it. They are building something for the people at last. After an experiment of three centuries, your gaols being full, and your treadmills losing something of their virtue, you have given us a substitute for the monasteries."

"You lament the old faith," said Egremont, in a tone of respect.

"I am not viewing the question as one of faith," said the stranger. "It is not as a matter

establishments: was it a reformation to squander estates, thus employed, upon lay persons, who would not, who could not, and did not, do any part or particle of those benevolent acts, and acts of public utility, which naturally arose out of the monastic institutions?

Lastly, let us look at the monasteries as a resource for the younger sons and daughters of the Aristocracy, and as the means of protecting the government against the injurious effects of their clamorous wants. There cannot exist an Aristocracy, or body of Nobility, without the means, in the hands of the government, of preventing that body from falling into that contempt, which is, and always must be, inseparable from Noble-poverty. 'Well,' some will say, 'why need there be any such body?' That is quite another question; for we have it; and have had it for more than a thousand years; except during a very short interval, at the end of which our ancestors eagerly took it back again. I must, too, though it really has nothing to do with the question before us, repeat my opinion, many times expressed, that we should lose more than we should gain by getting rid of our Aristocracy. The basest and most corrupt government that I ever knew any thing, or heard any thing of, is the republican government of Pennsylvania, and withal, the most truly tyrannical: base and corrupt from bottom to top; from the root to the topmost twig; from the trunk to the extreme point of every

of religion, but as a matter of right, that I am considering it: as a matter of fact, I should say, of private right and public happiness. You might have changed if you thought fit the religion of the abbots as you changed the religion of the bishops: but you had no right to deprive men of their property, and property moreover which under their administration so mainly contributed to the welfare of the community.'

'As for community,' said a voice which proceeded neither from Egremont nor the stranger, 'with the monasteries expired the only type that we ever had in England of such an intercourse. There is no community in England; there is aggregation, but aggregation under circumstances which make it rather a dissociating, than an uniting, principle.'

It was a still voice that uttered these words, yet one of a peculiar character; one of these voices that instantly arrest attention: gentle and yet our solemn, earnest yet unimpassioned. With a step as whispering as his tone, the man who had been kneeling by the tomb had unobserved joined his associate and Egremont. He hardly reached the middle height; his form slender, but well proportioned; his pale countenance, slightly marked with the small pox, was redeemed from absolute ugliness by a highly-intellectual brow, and large dark eyes that indicated deep sensibility and great quickness of apprehension. Though young, he was already a little bald; he was dressed entirely in black; the fairness of his

branch. And, if any Pennsylvanian, who has a name, and who will put it to a challenge to me to prove my words, I will, before the face of all Europe, prove them in the most complete and ample manner. I am not, therefore, for republican government; and, then, it follows, that I am for an aristocracy; for without it, there can be no limit to a kingly government.

However, this has nothing at all to do with the present question: we have the aristocracy, and we must, by a public provision of some sort, for the younger branches of it, prevent it from falling into the degradation inseparable from poverty. This provision was, in the times of which we are speaking, made by the Monasteries, which received a great number of its monks and nuns from the families of the nobles. This rendered those odious and burdensome things, pensions and sinecures, unnecessary. It, of course, spared the taxes. It was a provision that was not degrading to the receivers; and it created no grudging and discontent amongst the people, from whom the receivers took nothing. Another great advantage arising from this mode of providing for the younger branches of the nobility was, that it secured the government against the temptation to give offices and to lodge power in unfit hands. Look at our pension and sinecure list; look at the list of those who have commands, and who fill other offices of emolument; and you

call patriotism, consist in part of the admiration of,

linen, the neatness of his beard, his gloves much worn, yet carefully mended, intimated that his very faded garments were the result of necessity rather than of negligence.

"You also lament the dissolution of these bodies," said Egremont.

"There is so much to lament in the world in which we live," said the younger of the strangers, "that I can spare no pang for the past."

"Yet you approve of the principle of their society; you prefer it, you say, to our existing life."

"Yes; I prefer association to gregariousness."

"That is a distinction," said Egremont, musingly.

"It is a community of purpose that constitutes society," continued the younger stranger; "without that, men may be drawn into contiguity, but they still continue virtually isolated."

"And is that their condition in cities?"

"It is their condition everywhere; but in cities that condition is aggravated. A density of population implies a severer struggle for existence, and a consequent repulsion of elements brought into too close contact. In great cities men are brought together by the desire of gain. They are not in a state of co-operation, but of isolation, as to the making of fortunes; and for all the rest they are careless of neighbours. Christianity teaches us to love our neighbour as ourself; modern society acknowledges no neighbour."

"Well, we live in strange times," said Egremont, struck

"THE RICH AND THE POOR."

will, at once, see the great benefit which must have been derived from institutions, which left the government quite free to choose commanders, ambassadors, governors and other persons, to exercise power and to be intrusted in the carrying on of the public affairs. These institutions tended, too, to check the increase of the race of nobles; to prevent the persons connected with that order from being multiplied to the extent to which they naturally would, otherwise, be multiplied. They tended also to make the nobles not so dependant on the crown, a provision being made for their poor relations without the crown's assistance; and, at the same time, they tended to make the people less dependant on the nobles than they otherwise would have been. The monasteries set the example, as masters and landlords; an example that others were, in a great degree, compelled to follow. And thus, all ranks and degrees were benefitted by these institutions, which, with malignant historians, have been a subject of endless abuse, and the destruction of which they have recorded with so much delight, as being one of the brightest features in the "Reformation".

Nor must we, by any means, overlook the effects of these institutions on the mere face of the country. That soul must be low and mean indeed, which is insensible to all feeling of pride in the noble edifices of its country. Love of country, that variety of feelings which, all together, constitute what we properly call patriotism, consist in part of the admiration of,

by the observation of his companion, and relieving a perplexed spirit by an ordinary exclamation, which often denotes that the mind is more stirring than it cares to acknowledge, or at the moment is capable to express.

"When the infant begins to walk, it also thinks that it lives in strange times," said his companion.

"Your inference?" asked Egremont.

"That society, still in its infancy, is beginning to feel its way."

"This is a new reign," said Egremont, "perhaps it is a new era."

"I think so," said the younger stranger.

"I hope so," said the elder

"Well, society may be in its infancy," said Egremont slightly smiling; "but, say what you like, our Queen reigns over the greatest nation that ever existed."

"Which nation?" asked the younger stranger, "for she reigns over two."

The stranger paused; Egremont was silent, but looked inquiringly.

"Yes," resumed the younger stranger after a moment's interval. "Two nations; between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy; who are as ignorant of each other's habits, thoughts, and feelings, as if they were dwellers in different zones, or inhabitants of different planets who are formed by a different breeding, are fed by a different food, are ordered by different manners, and are not governed by the same laws."

"You speak of --" said Egremont, hesitatingly.

"THE RICH AND THE POOR."

and veneration for, ancient and magnificent proofs of skill and of opulence. The monastics built as well as wrote for posterity. The never-dying nature of their institutions set aside, in all their undertakings, every calculation as to time and age. Whether they built or planted, they set the generous example of providing for the pleasure, the honour, the wealth and greatness of generations upon generations yet unborn. They executed every thing in the very best manner: their gardens, fish-ponds, farms; in all, in the whole of their economy, they set an example tending to make the country beautiful, to make it an object of pride with the people, and to make the nation truly and permanently great. Go into any county, and survey, even at this day, the ruins of its, perhaps, twenty Abbeys and Priories; and, then, ask yourself, "what have we in exchange for these"? Go to the site of some once-opulent Convent. Look at the cloister, now become in the hands of a rack-renter, the receptacle for dung, fodder and faggot-wood: see the hall, where, for ages, the widow, the orphan, the aged and the stranger, found a table ready spread; see a bit of its walls now helping to make a cattle-shed, the rest having been hauled away to build a work-house: recognize, in the side of a barn, a part of the once-magnificent Chapel: and, if, chained to the spot by your melancholy musings, you be admonished of the approach of night by the voice of the screech-owl, issuing from those arches, which once, at the same hour, resounded with the vespers of the monk, and which have, for seven hundred years, been assailed by storms and tempests in vain; if thus admonished of the necessity of seeking food, shelter, and a bed, lift your eyes and look at the white-washed and dry-rotten shell on the hill, called the "gentleman's house"; and, apprized of the "board-wages" and the spring-guns, suddenly turn your head; jog away from the scene of devastation; with "old English Hospitality" in your mind, reach the nearest inn, and there, in room half-warmed and

half-lighted, and with reception precisely proportioned to the presumed length of your purse, sit down and listen to an account of the hypocritical pretences, the base motives, the tyrannical and bloody means, under which, from which, and by which, that devastation was effected, and that hospitality banished for ever from the land.

How different is Disraeli's use of Cobbett here from his use of Dodd in the continuation of Vivian Grey and of Medwin in Venetia ! In the earlier works he is content to appropriate whole passages with only the slightest alteration; here he takes up most of Cobbett's ideas and generally follows his argument, but only occasionally does he adopt phrases - often improving them - and, of course, he sets Cobbett's monologue into a dramatic context carefully leading up to the grand finale of the last line, "The Rich and the Poor". Cobbett's 'Monasties could possess no private property, they could save no money, they could bequeath nothing' is the only sentence that, changing commas to semicolons and adding the definite article at the beginning, Disraeli takes over in toto. The question 'is not a drone in a cowl as good as a drone in a hat and top-boots?' Disraeli improves immensely as "A drone is one who does not labour ... whether he wear a cowl or a coronet, 'tis the same to me". His description of the monks as easy landlords who let their lands at low rents on long leases Disraeli follows closely but not exactly - as he

does, too, such lines as 'Somebody must own the land', 'The Monastery was a proprietor that never died', 'a deathless landlord', 'its oaks had never to tremble at the axe of the squandering heir', and 'a body of men, or of women, having no cares of their own, and having wisdom to guide the inexperienced, and wealth to relieve the distressed'. Disraeli condenses Cobbett's remarks on pensions and sinecures adding such telling phrases as "colonels without regiments, or housekeepers of royal palaces that exist only in name", "generals who never saw a field" and "a broken dandy or a blasted favourite". While following Cobbett's assertion that the 'monastics built as well as wrote for posterity' Disraeli evokes the pre-Reformation state of the country in terms that Cobbett would never have used: the monasteries were "as vast and as magnificent and as beautiful as your Belvoirs and your Chatsworths, your Wentworths and your Stowes. Try to imagine the effect of thirty or forty Chatsworths in this county the proprietors of which were never absent." But the passage of which Disraeli makes the greatest use is the assertion at the end of Cobbett's first paragraph that one of the 'natural and necessary effects' of the monasteries was, to prevent that state of things which sees but two classes of people in a community, masters and slaves, a very few enjoying the extreme of luxury, and millions doomed to the extreme of misery.

To this Disraeli adds Cobbett's remark in paragraph 151 about the 'class of yeomen ... real yeomen, independent of the aristocracy' who were 'destroyed by the "Reformation"' and we get Gerard's speech:

'There were yeoman then, sir: the county was not divided into two classes, masters and slaves; there was some resting-place between luxury and misery.'

Disraeli returns to Cobbett's 'community' a few pages later when Morley enters and declares:

'There is no community in England; there is aggregation, but aggregation under circumstances which make it rather a dissociating, than an uniting, principle.'

He also observes that '"It is a community of purpose that constitutes society"' but that in cities especially this idea of 'community' has broken down:

'A density of population implies a severer struggle for existence ... In great cities men are brought together by the desire of gain. They are not in a state of co-operation, but of isolation ...'

And so we are led logically to Morley's conclusion that England has become divided into 'two nations.' ^{1.}

Disraeli's debt to Cobbett's History of the Protestant 'Reformation' in England and Ireland is clear enough. But the 'two nations' idea is not all that he seems to have drawn from it, for chapter fourteen contains the gist of the 'Dutch finance' theory. To see this properly it is really necessary to read the whole chapter, but here we shall have

footnote ¹. from page 260:

1. The 'two nations' phrase itself, however, probably came from Thackeray's use of it - as Professor Gordon Ray has indicated in Thackeray's Contributions to the Morning Chronicle (Urbana, Illinois, 1955), p.10 - in a review of D.Owen Madden's Ireland and its Rulers (20 March, 1844). Ray's conjecture is bolstered by the fact that at this time Disraeli appears to have been a fairly regular reader of the Morning Chronicle; see below, pp.301-304.

to be content with a few excerpts.

393X. We have seen, that King James and his family were set aside, because they were Catholics ... But we are now particularly to bear in mind, that James, an Englishman, was set aside, that William, a Dutchman, was made king in his stead ...¹.

396X. The "Protestant Deliverer" had, in the first place, brought over a Dutch army for the English nation to support. Next, there were the expenses and bloodshed of a civil war to endure for the sake of the "deliverance from popery." ...

399X. Thus, all these deeply interested parties, who were also the most powerful parties in the kingdom, were for a war with France, which they rightly regarded as absolutely necessary to the keeping of William on the throne, and to the quiet enjoyment of their great possessions, if not actually to the safety of their lives ...

400X. But, though passion muddles the head, though even honest feeling may silence the reasoning faculties, the PURSE is seldom to be quieted so easily ... The taxes were, of course, in proportion to those expenses; and the people, who already paid more than four times as much as they had paid in the time of James, began not only to murmur, but to give no very insignificant signs of sorrow for having been "delivered!" ... Force, as far as law and the suspension of law, could go, was pretty fairly put in motion; but, a scheme was, at last, hit upon, to get the money, and yet not to tug so very hard at that tender part, the purse ...

402X. Thus arose loans, funds, banks, bankers, bank-notes, and a NATIONAL DEBT; things that England had never heard, or dreamed of, before this war for "preserving the Protestant religion as by law established;" ...

408X. The "deliverer," and all those who had brought him in, together with all those who had been fattened or elevated by him, were, as I said before, embarked in the same boat: but the great body of the people were not yet thus embarked ... But, if all, or a great part, of those who had money to lend, could, by the temptation of great gain, be induced to lend their money on interest to the Government; if they could be induced to do this, it was easy to see that all this description of persons would then be embarked in the same boat too; and that they, who must necessarily be a class having great influence in the community, would be amongst the most zealous supporters of the "deliverer," and the "glorious" aiders, abettors, and makers of the "revolution" which had just taken place.

¹. "A Whig", Cobbett declares in paragraph 423, "means, in England, one who approves of the setting of James and his heirs aside."

409Y). For these purposes, this funding-system was invented. It had the two-fold object, of raising money to carry on the "no-popery" war; and, of binding to the "No-popery" Government all those persons who wished to lend money at high interest ... The scheme, which was quite worthy of the mind of the Protestant Bishop Burnet, answered its purposes: it enabled the "deliverer" to carry on the "no-popery" war: it bound fast to the "deliverer" and his bringers-in all the base and selfish and greedy and unfeeling part of those who had money. The scheme succeeded in effecting its immediate objects: but, good God! what a scourge did it provide for future generations!

However much the History of the Protestant 'Reformation' in England and Ireland may have provided Disraeli with material for his Young England novels, it remains true that Cobbett's views are very far from being serious history. Nor should the reader of Coningsby or Sybil be disturbed if he finds himself unable to accept in toto Disraeli's revised version of the past 300 years of English life. It is enough, as Monypenny observes¹, that he was able to show that a plausible case could be made for the Tory side - though his digressions, one must admit, are seldom very satisfactorily incorporated into the body of either novel.

That Disraeli in his own works had to some extent anticipated the Young England trilogy has already been suggested; there was, besides, a whole school of novelists like Bage, Holcroft, Godwin, and Bulwer who had dealt with political and social issues. But how well Disraeli himself may have been acquainted with such works is another matter.

¹ M & B, II, p.296.

We do know, however, that he had studied very carefully Plumer Ward's second and overtly political novel, De Vere. It was published by Colburn in 1827 and soon after receiving a copy Disraeli reported his reaction to the author:

Yours is a work as improving as delightful - one which must always be remembered with profit, as it must ever be recurred to with pleasure. The vein of unaffected philosophy, practical wisdom, and ennobling morality which pervades it, will render it an object of study, or a source of interest, when incidents however artfully contrived, and characters however skilfully delineated, must, from our previous acquaintance with them, cease to engage our attention, and excite our sympathies. I have read this morning, for the twentieth time, De Vere's first interview with Sir W. Flowerdale, and probably may read it every year of my life with unabated pleasure, since every year of my existence must afford a fresh commentary upon such views of human life. It is, indeed, admirable. The Man of Content and the Man of Imagination are a couple of cabinet pictures; the last is my favourite, and is highly coloured. 'Tis in truth richly fanciful. These episodes, too, are in the right vein, since they develop the philosophy of the work. Indeed, without them, the moral plot would be deficient. Clayton is excellently conceived, and admirably sustained. His sensibility was a grand hit. This character is, if I mistake not, original in literature, though not in human life. I, for one, have met with Clayton. Lord Mowbray's death is actually sublime, and his daughter becomes every page more delightful; but she will not supersede, in my most agreeable associations, the inimitable Georgina¹, whom I shall always uphold, as not only the most delightful heroine, but the most engaging woman, to whom I ever had the honour of being introduced. But if I descant upon every character, I shall trespass most unwarrantably upon your patience, and therefore I say nothing of the sagacious Herbert, the classic Wentworth, the arrogant Cleveland, and the timid Oldcastle, nor of

¹ The Hon. E. Phipps, *Memoir of Plumer Ward* (London, 1856), II, pp. 164-165; the letter is undated but Phipps states "The heroine of Tremaine (1825). twenty years ago". Phipps also states "The heroine of Tremaine (1825). twenty years ago".

the dignified Lady Eleanor, nor of the delightful Lady Clanellan. Cleveland's love for Constance is finely discriminated, and Oldcastle's interview with De Vere on the embassy is beyond praise. Such passages, however, as this last are caviare to the general; nevertheless, time and the cognoscenti will discover them. I mention no faults, which may surprise you; for what critic ever bored an author with so long a letter, without hinting at a few blemishes, merely to prove that his previous praises were sincere. Candidly, and upon my honour, I see none...

One thing has peculiarly delighted me in 'De Vere,' and that is, that a writer who has proved himself conversant above all others of the age with the fascinations of courts and senates, should on all occasions, and in a manner so preeminently beautiful, have evinced his deep study and fervent adoration of Nature. ¹.

"De Vere's first interview with Sir W. Flowerdale" is a discussion of the perennial question whether the wish to perform disinterested public service is compatible with a successful career in politics, a question which it is no surprise to find of interest to so ardent a student of Bolingbroke as was Disraeli. Ward exemplifies in De Vere himself the candour and integrity that he wishes could be made to dominate public life. The novel revolves around the conflict between political principle and political expediency and, for modern tastes at least, is too heavily didactic as well as rather flatly written. But it does have its moments, as Disraeli makes clear. The incident of the "Man of Content" day at the very moment that he is seeking an ambassadorial

¹. The Hon. E. Phipps, Memoir of Plummer Ward (London, 1850), II, pp. 164-166; the letter is undated but Phipps states that it was written "three and twenty years ago". This is the same letter quoted above on pp. 102-103.

shows the value of a Horatian detachment from political affairs in the rural seclusion to which Flowerdale's younger brother has retired, while the lively enthusiasm of the "Man of Imagination", whom De Vere meets in the Pyrenees, is indeed "highly coloured" and a little reminiscent, perhaps, of Gil Blas and Disraeli's own Essper George. Clayton, an unscrupulous place-hunter and wire-puller (rather in the manner of Rigby) who attaches himself to Lord Mowbray, carries his 'sensibility' well; he sincerely regrets the deceits and betrayals that come naturally to him. Yet for all Disraeli's praise of the 'grand hit' of his 'sensibility', this side of the professional political sycophant Disraeli wholly excludes from Rigby - possibly in deference to the cold and calculating manner that Croker is supposed to have possessed. Lord Mowbray's decline and death after his fall from office - his one real love in life - is perhaps more pathetic than sublime, though Mowbray himself, like Disraeli's character of the same name in Sybil, is magnificent in his small mindedness. 'Oldcastle's interview with De Vere on the embassy' brings to a head the book's moral theme with De Vere manfully owning his aversion to the government of the day at the very moment that he is seeking an ambassadorial post from its chief minister. De Vere's sincerity and integrity rise to such heights that at times they really seem a kind of naiveté and he himself a political Candide; in the

end his success owes more to a suddenly benevolent providence than to his much-vaunted virtues. *of them is anybody's guess.*

De Vere Whether or not one agrees with all Disraeli's praise in this letter, the tone does suggest (despite the obvious eagerness to please) that Disraeli had been genuinely struck by Ward's book. *Cummingsby does against* And what he seems to have admired most is the 'vein of unaffected philosophy, practical wisdom, and ennobling morality' - in short, what he later calls the 'moral plot', the conflict between political principle and political expediency which is the subject of most of De Vere's conversations with Sir William Flowerdale and Lord Oldcastle. *ing* If one asks oneself what are some of the more memorable scenes in Cummingsby and Sybil more likely than not one's answer will include Cummingsby's final interview with Lord Monmouth and Egremont's disputes with his brother Lord Marney. *tw* These are scenes involving a conflict between principle and expediency and as such are at the heart of Disraeli's aim in the Young England novels to bring principle back *into politics. The value of Ward's book would seem to have been* to show Disraeli that the moral overtones of political questions (which Ward does not fill in with anything like Disraeli's detail) might be made the subject of a work of fiction. And if Ward's exchanges are often stilted and baldly didactic, Disraeli's spring to life with a sense of dramatic conflict only dimly evident in De Vere. *Painting's M.A. thesis at the University of Wales, Cardiff. Disraeli's Contribution to the Political Novel, 1830-1845 (1958), pp. 30-37. I am indebted to*

In terms of plot there are some minor but suggestive the bearing of De Vere on Cummingsby.

similarities between De Vere and Coningsby and Sybil - though whether Disraeli was himself aware of them is anybody's guess. De Vere's early history, growing up in obscure but genteel poverty, is a little like Coningsby's background (and Ferdinand's in Henrietta Temple); De Vere rebels against the political views of his uncle, Lord Mowbray, more or less as *Coningsby does against* Lord Monmouth's and Egremont against Lord Marney's; the cynical and ambitious Lord Cleveland was based, like Disraeli's Monmouth, on Lord Hertford¹; at the end of the novel De Vere regains his county influence by being elected to a borough which had been usurped by Clayton rather as Coningsby wins the seat originally intended for Rigby; the Duke of Bellamont in Tancred and Nigel Penruddock in Endymion may both owe their names, though certainly not their personalities, to minor figures in Ward's book; and, finally, the two rival guardians in Lothair could have been suggested by the rivalry between Harclai and Dr. Herbert in De Vere.² The business, too, of the stolen deed and the lawsuit which follows on its recovery leading to the restitution of De Vere's estates which had formerly been in the hands of the Mowbrays (easily the

¹ See Phipps, II, p.49.

² These parallels are developed more fully in David E. Painting's M.A. thesis at the University of Wales, A Study of Disraeli's Contribution to the Political Novel, 1826-1844 (1958), pp.30-37. I am indebted to Dr. Painting's thesis for first drawing my attention to the bearing of De Vere on Coningsby.

most absorbing part of the novel) might well have given Disraeli the idea of transferring the de Mowbray property in Sybil to Gerard by means of a document which Lord de Mowbray has locked away at Mowbray Castle but which is finally restored to its rightful owner.¹ Some of the weaknesses of the Young England books might also be traced to Ward's novel: Coningsby, Egremont, and Tancred all share with De Vere an aura of unreality while the perfections embodied in Ward's heroine, Lady Constance, are, like Sybil's, a little too complete to be quite palpable. But this was evidently a price that both writers were prepared to pay in the interests of conveying an edifying message.

Having resolved to expose in Coningsby the absence of political principle in the Tory and Whig parties, Disraeli set about his task in a characteristic way. As in Vivian Grey, he determined that his dramatis personae would be drawn from well known figures of the day. The third Marquess of Hertford, whom he had met in 1834², and in whom

¹. This sub-plot might just conceivably have been developed with Thomas Earl of Coningsby's An Account of the Manor of Marden in mind. There was at Hughenden - until 1937 - a copy of the 1813 edition of this collection of legal documents relating to Coningsby's claims early in the eighteenth century to various Herefordshire estates. See Sotheby's Catalogue of Printed Books, 'the property of Major and Mrs. Disraeli', February 23, 1937, lot 551.

². Letters, pp.126 and 128.

he seems to have been interested since the late '20s¹, thus became the Marquess of Monmouth while his adjutant Croker of course became Rigby. The 'key' is well known: Lord John Manners figures as Lord Henry Sydney, his father the Duke of Rutland as the Duke of Beaumanoir, Baillie-Cochrane as Buckhurst, Ambrose Phillipps De Lisle as Eustace Lyle, Lord Lonsdale as Lord Eskdale, Lady Jersey as Lady St. Julian (though she is perhaps more a type than an individual), Theodore Hook as Lucian Gay, and, of course, Disraeli himself mixed up with an idealized version of the Rothschilds as Sidonia. George Smythe is said to have been the model for Coningsby, though the resemblance is not easy to see. To judge from the

1. See above, ^{p. 142,} ~~Chapter III~~, p. 144, for the suggestion that the 'Alhambra' in The Young Duke might have been based on 'St. Dunstan's'. In the ms. of Vivian Grey (Houghton Library, MS. Eng. 840) Disraeli struck out at fol. 116 (p. 583) a passage that seems to hint at something libellous about Hertford, possibly in connection with the cabal which he and the Duke of York are said to have attempted against Canning on the Catholic Question (see Lucien Wolf's 'Introduction', p. xxxv). The passage would have appeared in Book IV, Chapter 1, immediately following "York House rises proudly; if York House be its name":

"Oh! his Royal Highness was terribly enraged at the story about the Marquess, which, as Buckhurst Stanhope says was 'rather in bad taste', for now everyone of course believes it's true. And why should it not be true. I wish Grandgout would make me the same offer. Would you accept it Cleveland? However, I'm a staunch Yorkite, & consequently feel it my duty to whisper everywhere that the whole story is a mere fabrication. Did I show you any of Cynthia Courtown's letters about John Bull [i.e. the periodical] ? Mind I do then."

4. H & B, II, p. 202, n. 2.

chapter devoted to him in Lives of the Lords Strangford¹.

Smythe was a far more cynical and worldly character - chronically in debt and not unwilling to oblige his father by marrying an heiress - than Coningsby ever becomes.

Disraeli describes one of his speeches in a letter to his wife as 'very Radical indeed, and unprincipled as his little agreeable self ...'² Smythe's sister-in-law had this to say of his supposed portrait in the novel:

It is possible that 'Coningsby' was never intended as a portrait of George Smythe, but that it was currently reported to be so was perhaps one of his worst misfortunes, for the idealised and glorified picture supposed to be there painted by his friend and master was very unwholesome to a mind that required bracing rather than humouring and panegyrising.³

That Disraeli never really intended Coningsby as a serious portrait of Smythe may well be correct; like Egremont and Tancred, his character is too generalized to have been based on a particular individual.

There is some uncertainty also about the 'original' of Millbank. Contemporary keys identify him as Gladstone, but Monypenny insists that the attribution is absurd.⁴ His

¹ Edward Barrington de Fonblanque (London, [1877], Chapter V).

² M & B, II, p.126; the letter is dated February 22, 1842.

³ Memoir by Emily, Viscountess Strangford, at the beginning of Smythe's posthumously published novel, Angela Pisani, 3 vols. (London, 1875), p.xiii.

⁴ M & B, II, p.202, n.2.

reasoning, however, is not wholly convincing: he merely points out that the third John Walter (whose father, the proprietor of the Times, had been involved in the founding of Young England) was at Eton with Smythe and Manners whereas Gladstone belonged to a slightly earlier generation there.¹ But in this instance there is perhaps a danger of putting too much emphasis upon chronology; Disraeli had to set the action in 1832 if he were to be able to treat the passing of the Reform Bill. The Walters, moreover, had no northern mercantile connections such as characterize both Millbank and Gladstone. In 1844 Disraeli may well have hoped to enlist the support of one of the more distinguished of the younger Tory M.P.s who shared with Manners the representation for Newark. Disraeli and Gladstone had met in 1835² and since

¹ One aspect of Millbank's schooldays, the near drowning in the Thames, could have been suggested by the first number of the Eton Miscellany (June, 1827) which Gladstone founded and edited. 'Bartholomew Bouverie', the editorial persona, makes much in his introductory epistle of his mother's fears at his exposure to 'the gulphs and whirlpools of the Thames': '"Oh, and the water too!" cried she. "And the boats! - and the bathing! To bathe - to swim - perchance to drown! Oh, Bartle! Bartle!"' (p.6). Several of Gladstone's contributions, incidentally, are highly amusing, especially 'Appearance of Virgil in the Upper World' in number four and 'Lethe' in number five. But there is no evidence that Disraeli had seen a copy - though it is interesting to note in Gladstone's diary a reference to his reading of Disraeli's Star Chamber (The Gladstone Diaries, ed. M.R.D. Foot, Oxford, 1968, I, under date August 26, 1826).

² Letters, p.131.

1843 he had been a member of Peel's cabinet; his career already had been a distinguished one and he was clearly a 'rising' man. At the time that Disraeli was writing Coningsby he had every reason to seek to conciliate the man who would later become his bitterest enemy. It was not until the Maynooth controversy of 1855 that, with an uncharacteristic lack of prescience, he decided Gladstone was without a political future¹, nor did they openly quarrel until 1852. When Disraeli has Millbank argue for the union of Church and State in such lines as these:

'The parochial system, though shaken by the fatal Poor Law, is still the most ancient, the most comprehensive, and the most popular institution of the country ... Divorce the Church from the State, and the spiritual power that struggled against the brute force of the dark ages, against tyrannical monarchs and barbarous barons, will struggle again in opposition to influences of a different form, but of a similar tendency; equally selfish, equally insensible, equally barbarising.'²

he is making what his contemporaries must have recognized as an obvious allusion to Gladstone's The Church in its Relations with the State (1838); revised 1841).

It is just as well, however, to be wary as a general rule of taking the keys to Disraeli's novels too seriously. From the very start in Vivian Grey (where we are told, for

¹. Blake, p.188.

². III (Bk.VII, Ch.2), pp.110-111.

instance, that Carabas is the Marquess of Clanricarde) the keys were circulated more with a view to boosting sales than with any serious intention of identifying Disraeli's originals. Some of his characters, Lord Monmouth, for example, are full and well-balanced portraits; others, like Rigby, are obvious caricatures (though no doubt with a grain of truth behind them); and still others are either composite portraits (Sidonia for example) or highly idealized ones (Coningsby himself). Disraeli was an acute observer of the human comedy and, perhaps almost instinctively, built up his characters eclectically from the impressions he had received from those around him; it does not follow that the 'portraits' which resulted are necessarily faithful ones - or even were intended to be.

Disraeli's plots, as we have seen, are often makeshift affairs drawn from a variety of sources; to this rule the Young England novels are no exception. The oriental part of Tancred (the last two volumes), for instance, is essentially a re-worked version of Alroy and The Rise of Iskander, a point to which we shall return in due course. Coningsby and Sybil, on the other hand, take their main outline from Henrietta Temple which contains the best plot Disraeli had so far devised. The structure is basically the same in all three works: the hero's obscure youth, his arrival in the great world of the metropolis, his falling in love, his disinheritance by his grandfather (in Sybil the row with Marney),

a period of disgrace from his family and a sort of exile (this comes very late in Coningsby and in Sybil it occurs when Egremont flees from Marney and goes to live near Gerard and Sybil), and finally the miraculous sorting out of events at the end with the hero restored to wealth and the couples neatly paired off. Although a little contrived perhaps, on the whole it is not at all a bad plot and without it Coningsby and Sybil would have been even more loosely constructed than they are.

But although this is Disraeli's basic outline, he adds much supplementary matter. There are the Eton and Paris scenes in Coningsby - the first based upon information supplied by Smythe's tutor, the Reverend W.G. Cookesley¹, and the second drawn from Disraeli's impressions during the winter of 1842-3 which he and Mary Anne spent in Paris.² There

¹ M & B, II, p.202; Blake, p.218. There is a letter to Colburn at Harvard (Houghton fms.Eng.945 [391]), dated March 29, 1844, in which Disraeli asks for 'two copies of the next proof (wh: contains the chapter on the Montem)... as I wish to give one to an Eton friend of mine, who is in town for a few hours, & whom, I mentioned to you, I have already consulted.' Whether all the Eton scenes in the novel are handled as well as the account of Montem may be open to question though it is perhaps presumptuous for a non-Etonian to claim knowledge of such matters. Still, a little less earnestness and a little more mischief might have been in order; or so, at least, a reader of A High Wind in Jamaica and The Lord of the Flies is apt to feel. At the end of Book II, Chapter 7, incidentally, Disraeli has inserted what is little less than an advertisement for donations to the Eton library - perhaps his return for Cookesley's help.

² M & B, II, Chapter V.

¹ See his 'Everyman' edition of the novel (London & New York, 1911), p.403, n.3.

are, too, the industrial scenes in Sybil built up from information in the Blue Books as we shall see shortly.

Several elements in the plot of Coningsby, however, seem to have been drawn from two of Sir Samuel Egerton Brydges' novels which Disraeli had probably read in his youth. The possibility that Ferdinand's surreptitious courtship at Ducie in Henrietta Temple might have been suggested by similar scenes in Brydges' Coningsby (1819) has already been suggested. It now appears that Disraeli must also have known Brydges' The Hall of Hellingsley (London, 1821).

There is no need to suppose that he took his title from Brydges' Coningsby - whose eponymous protagonist is utterly unlike Disraeli's. Langdon-Davies is probably right in suggesting that for Disraeli the main significance of the name lay in its association with Sir Philip Sidney.¹ But an interest in the Thomas Coningsby who travelled with Sidney might well have been what attracted him initially to Brydges' book, though in that case he would have been disappointed. The action is set at Belville Park, a small estate in Ireland to which Humphry Coningsby, after a life of ruinous dissipation in St. James's, has retired on an officer's half-pay with the intention of raising his only child, a daughter called Adeline, far from the corruptions of a world he has grown to despise. All goes well until Lord Drayton, eldest son of the

¹ See his 'Everyman' edition of the novel (London & New York, 1911), p.403, n.3.

Earl of Grandchester, accidentally enters the park while on a hunting expedition, meets Adeline, pays his court, and secretly marries her:

Had Coningsby known that Lord Drayton was sojourning in this neighbourhood, his person would not have been safe: such was the inveteracy of Coningsby's hatred of the very name of Drayton.¹

This hatred of a man he has never met is inspired by the earlier conduct of his father, Lord Grandchester. We learn that Adeline, 'a child of crime, though born in marriage'², is in fact Coningsby's illegitimate daughter by the wife, now dead, of one of Lord Grandchester's sons. Their affair had culminated in a divorce³ in which Lord Grandchester's vindictiveness enraged Coningsby and led to the death of Adeline's mother:

The divorce, and the action for damages, had been pursued with a good deal of violence: and Lord Grandchester had been blamed as taking an active part in this business... Her [Adeline's mother's] heart was broken: she never lived to fondle the angelic creature, whom she brought

¹ p.138.

² p.19; cf. Byron's line which Disraeli quotes on the title-page of *Venetia*, 'The child of love, though born in bitterness'.

³ The situation rather parallels Sir Ferdinand Armine's divorce mentioned, for no very apparent reason, in the first chapter of *Henrietta Temple*: 'After three startling years he married the Lady Barbara Ratcliffe, whose previous divorce from her husband, the Earl of Faulconville, Sir Ferdinand had occasioned. He was, however, separated from his lady during the first year of their more hallowed union ...' I, p.7.

⁴ III (bk.VI, ch.3), p.29.

into life. Coningsby was not worthy of her; but he adored her. It was the indelicate conduct used towards her, that was the poisonous dagger never to be eradicated from his bosom, and feeding there gangrenous humours of hatred and revenge.¹

Grandchester in turn feels an 'abhorrence of Coningsby' and is consumed by his own:

unconquerable desire of alliances, that would do his children honour in the fashionable world; his prudential desire for at least some fortune, that might aid in the disentanglement of his encumbered estates ...².

In short, the aversion of the two fathers, Grandchester and Coningsby, to a union between Drayton and Adeline roughly parallels the aversion that both Monmouth and the elder Millbank show towards a marriage between Coningsby and Edith. In Henrietta Temple Ferdinand and Henrietta find themselves in a similar situation - and Lord Grandchester's ill-treatment of Adeline's mother might be seen as a parallel of sorts to Lord Monmouth's neglect of Coningsby's mother. But we need now to turn briefly to The Hall of Hellingsley.

Disraeli gives the name 'Hellingsley' to the estate that Monmouth and Millbank both covet and that is eventually secured by the latter. The hatred between the two men, 'for which political opinion, or even party passion could not satisfactorily account'³, is no less intense than that

¹. pp.158-159.

². pp.171-172.

³. III (Bk.VI, Ch.3), p.29.

between Grandchester and Brydges' Coningsby, and it has a similar genesis.

Disraeli's habit of introducing mysterious portraits into his novels has already been noticed. When Coningsby first visits the Millbanks his attention is 'greatly attracted' by a portrait in the dining room:

It represented a woman extremely young and of rare beauty. The costume was of that classical character prevalent in this country before the general peace; a blue ribband bound together as a fillet her clustering chestnut curls. The face was looking out of the canvass, and Coningsby never raised his eyes without catching its glance of blended vivacity and tenderness.

There are moments when our sensibility is affected by circumstances of a very trivial character. It seems a fantastic emotion, but the gaze of this picture disturbed the serenity of Coningsby. He endeavoured sometimes to avoid looking at it, but it irresistibly attracted him. More than once during the dinner he longed to inquire whom it represented; but it is a delicate subject to ask questions about portraits, and he refrained.¹

It is not until some years later, when he asks the elder Millbank for Edith's hand, that the picture - which Coningsby has in the meantime discovered is a portrait of his own mother - is finally explained:

'There was a being once [says Millbank], not less fair than the peerless girl that you would fain call your own, and her heart was my proud possession. There were no family feuds to baffle our union, nor was I dependent on anything, but the energies which had already made me flourishing. What happiness was mine! It was the first dream of my life, and it was the last; my solitary passion, the memory of which softens my heart. Ah! you dreaming scholars, and fine gentlemen who saunter through life, you think there is no romance in the loves of a man

¹ II (Bk.IV, Ch.4), p.43.

who lives in the toil and turmoil of business. You are in deep error. Amid my career of travail, there was ever a bright form which animated exertion; inspired my invention, nerved my energy, and to gain whose heart and life, I first made many of those discoveries and entered into many of those speculations, that have since been the foundation of my wide prosperity.

"Her faith was pledged to me; I lived upon her image; the day was even talked of when I should bear her to the home that I had proudly prepared for her.

"There came a young noble, a warrior who had never seen war, glittering with gew-gaws. He was quartered in the town where the mistress of my heart, and who ^{was} soon to share my life and my fortunes, resided. The tale is too bitter not to be brief. He saw her, he sighed; I will hope that he loved her; she gave him with rapture the heart which perhaps she found she had never given me; and instead of bearing the name I had once hoped to have called her by, she pledged her faith at the altar to one who like you was called - Coningsby." 1.

Although the poignancy with which Disraeli treats the situation is perhaps rather too emphatic, he has turned it to good effect structurally as the basis for an emotional bond between Coningsby and the elder Millbank; it helps to make credible Millbank's surrender of the borough of Darlford, near Hellingsley, to Coningsby later in the novel.

Brydges' 'Hellingsley', like Disraeli's, is 'an old-fashioned manor-house'², but apart from that there is not

¹. III (Bk.VII, Ch.8), pp.166-167. Brydges' theme also occurs in Sybil where Egremont falls in love with Lady Arabella only to have her swept up by his elder brother Lord Marney (see Bk.I, Ch.5 and Bk.III, Ch.2). Sybil herself bears an uncanny resemblance to the portrait of a saint, by the sixteenth century Florentine painter Allori, which Egremont's mother gives him for his birthday (Bk.IV, Ch.2).

². (London, 1821), 3 vols., I, p.19. "a wild set; we feared not God or man" (III, p.129), had used 'Hellingsley' as a base for pillaging the countryside rather as the young Contarini and his friends use the castle of 'Jonsterna' in Contarini Fleming (Pt.II, Chs.2-5).

much in common between the two novels. 'Brydges' is set in the seventeenth century and concerns 'the hereditary animosity between the Berkeleys and the Greys of Wye'.¹ Their feud is resolved in the last volume when the hero, Henry Huntley, having discovered that he is 'the legitimate son and heir of the late Sir Ambrose [Grey] ... entitled to the barony of Wye',², marries his childhood friend and (as it turns out) cousin, Alice Berkeley; it is a symbolic reconciliation of the families through marriage and - were it not such a stock convention of fiction - one might be tempted to see in it a model for the marriages in Coningsby and Sybil which symbolically reconcile different classes in the community.

But the distinction of Coningsby does not lie in its plot. It is the characters of Monmouth and, to a lesser extent, Rigby and some of the women, that bring the book alive and provide its chief source of interest. Monmouth, indeed, is the star of the piece and Disraeli seems to have taken particular pains over him. It would have been easy enough - and it would not have hurt the book's sales potential or interfered with its polemical side - had Disraeli patterned Monmouth more closely on the Marquess of Hertford than he

¹. I, p.57.

². III, p.287. On his death-bed Sir Ambrose confesses that in his youth he and his companions, '"a wild set; we feared not God or man"' (III, p.429), had used 'Hellingsley' as a base for pillaging the countryside rather as the young Contarini and his friends use the castle of 'Jonsterna' in Contarini Fleming (Pt.II, Chs.2-5).

does. Hertford's death in 1842 and his extraordinary will had been objects of fashionable curiosity, as Disraeli reported to his wife:

Hertford's will is still the subject of endless tales. It appears now that by a codicil, revoking former legacies to them, he left £25,000 apiece to his valet and Croker. This is a fact. He had left his star of the Order of the Garter, in costly brilliants, with a long panegyric to Peel, as the saviour of his country and all that, and the legacy was afterwards revoked. I suppose his ghost smelt the Income Tax ... The Zichy has £150,000 because she saved Lord Hertford from being poisoned by her mother.¹

As we have seen, Disraeli had met him in 1834 and much earlier had been aware of his equivocal reputation; yet there was something impressive about the man for all his alleged wickedness. The scandal of his private life disclosed when Croker acting as executor brought a lawsuit against the valet Nicholas Suisse - Hertford's confidant and, in effect, procurer - charging him with embezzlement, had provoked immense discussion in the press², and did not show Croker in a very favourable light. All this had become public property and might well have been brought into Goningsby - as John Mills brought much of it into his D'Horsay or the Follies of the Day (1844) - but Disraeli rigorously excludes it, turning Suisse into a perfectly respectable down-at-heel theatrical

¹. M & B, II, pp.130-131; the letter is dated March 14, 1842.

². See Bernard Falk, 'Old Q's' Daughter (London, 1937), Chapter 12; Brightfield, J.W.Croker, pp.129-132; and the Times for March-April, July-August, November-December, 1842, and January-March, 1843. Suisse's trial was in July and August, 1842, and he was acquitted for lack of evidence.

manager who later appears as a prosperous financier in Tancred. Nor does he allow himself the sort of innuendoes about Monmouth's relations with Madame Colonna and Lucretia that Hertford's dealings with Lady Strachan and her daughter Madame Zichy could have authorised. So far from directing indignation or mockery at Hertford, Disraeli has done his best to present him in a balanced and even sympathetic manner. His politics may be all wrong in the eyes of Young England; yet there is a magnificence about him that evokes something of the spirit of the old noblesse which commands Disraeli's aesthetic, if not his moral, approval. Disraeli had always had a weakness for magnificos (Baron Fleming, Honain, and Lord Grandison, for instance) and in Monmouth-Hertford he had at last found such a being in its most fully developed form - a Marquess of Carabas on a truly grand scale. The result inevitably is that Monmouth occupies a much larger place in the novel than its avowed purpose of exposing the unprincipled state of political parties strictly warrants. Selfish and cynical as he is, he has far more genuine humanity about him than the novel's ostensible hero whom Thackeray a trifle unfairly, though not without point, calls 'the Jeremiah of the clubs'.¹ So completely does Monmouth dominate the action that only his death can clear the way for the

beings. Like Contarini, they tell

¹. In a review of Smythe's Historic Fancies (1844) reprinted in Thackeray's Contributions to the Morning Chronicle, ed. Gordon N. Ray (Urbana, Illinois, 1955), p.57.

realisation of Coningsby's two ambitions, marriage with Edith and a seat in parliament. This is not to say that Coningsby is ineffective; as Disraelian heroes go he is plausible enough. But he lacks the flesh and blood which Monmouth, Rigby, the ridiculous Tadpole and Taper, Madame Colonna, Lucretia, Lord Eskdale, the elder Millbank, Lucian Gay, and Lord and Lady Everingham all possess to abundance. Disraeli has still not found a way of making his exemplary characters convincing - a serious flaw in a novelist with didactic intentions. Where irony and satire are called for he can point the moral perfectly; but when he tries to be edifying he falls into difficulties. Coningsby (whom Walter Allen rightly calls 'almost a servant girl's hero'¹), Edith, Oswald, Lord Henry Sydney, and Eustace Lyle - the characters who carry the constructive side of the book's argument - are for the most part pale and uninviting. Like Herbert in Venetia or Glastonbury in Henrietta Temple, they are in every sense admirable; yet they fail to convince, and this is perhaps because they were drawn more to show people as they ought to be than as they are. Honest and forthright, their ideas exist wholly on the surface. They have none of those afterthoughts and reserves, those hidden motives, private fears, and petty vanities that animate Disraeli's lesser beings. Like Contarini, they tell

¹ 'Introduction' to Coningsby (London, 1948), p.14.

all, and there is nothing left for the reader - or the author - to discover. About such characters Disraeli's splendid gift for peering behind masks can tell us nothing.

The most idealized character in Coningsby is, of course, Sidonia. Whether Disraeli intended him to be taken wholly seriously has often been debated. We have seen that as a rule the flatness of his idealized characters comes from their very openness and sincerity, qualities which in Disraeli's hands render them one-dimensional. Is this also true of Sidonia? ^{elsewhere in the novel.} This may well be what

Disraeli intended. He is wise, honest, and all-knowing. He may have had doubts and reservations in the past, but he has none now. Everybody likes him (even Monmouth), his advice is always sound, and he never makes mistakes. But this does not mean that he is without faults - or rather, a fault. Like Monmouth, he is unfeeling:

He was a man without affections. It would be harsh to say he had no heart, for he was susceptible of deep emotions, but not for individuals. He was capable of re-building a town that was burned down; of restoring a colony that had been destroyed by some awful visitation of nature; of redeeming to liberty a horde of captives; and of doing these great acts in secret; for void of all self-love, public approbation was worthless to him; but the individual never touched him. Woman was to him a toy, man a machine. ^{1.}

If this deficiency gives to Monmouth a certain eighteenth

¹ Coningsby, second series (London, 1876), p.370.
² II (Bk.IV, Ch.10), pp.133-134.

century hauteur, it has the odd effect in Sidonia - where Disraeli seems to be saying that the truly wise man must be as superior to passion as he is to petty vanity - of making him appear rather mechanical. The content of Sidonia's remarks may not be predictable (though, after confronting chapter ten of Book IV, the reader may feel otherwise), but their wisdom invariably is. Leslie Stephen suggests that Sidonia's function is to present the positive side of Disraeli's argument and so act as a foil to the irony and satire that prevail elsewhere in the novel.¹ This may well be what Disraeli intended, but surely from a polemical point of view the positive side of the case ought to be stated by a character with whom the reader can feel some element of sympathy. Sidonia is altogether too exotic for this. His relentless wisdom, his oriental manner, and especially his Jewishness all set him apart - the latter, indeed, by connecting him with a people who, we are told in no uncertain terms, are both Divinely favoured and racially superior. Anyone who doubts the seriousness with which Disraeli advanced these notions has only to look at the preface to the 'fifth edition' of the novel (1849), or at Tancred and particularly Eva's speeches - ably assessed by Robert Blake² - or, indeed, at

¹ Hours in a Library, second series (London, 1876), p.370.

² pp.201-205.

² Thackeray's Contributions to the Morning Chronicle, ed. Gordon N. Ray (Urbana, Illinois, 1955), p.39. The imagery of the last few lines might be compared with Thackeray's self-caricature in the 'Before the Curtain' preface to Vanessa Fair.

chapter twenty-four of Lord George Bentinck (1852). The clergyman who wrote Disraeli during his last period as Prime Minister to ask the meaning of 'the great Asian mystery' was not, one feels, the butt of a joke when Disraeli endorsed the letter for his secretary:

Write to this gentleman that, as I have written three volumes to answer the question he asks, and, so far as he is concerned, have failed, it would be presumption to suppose I could be more fortunate in a letter.

Recommend repeated, and frequent, study of the work as the most efficient means for his purpose.¹

Reviewing Coningsby in the Morning Chronicle, Thackeray - one of Disraeli's most discerning critics - may have had Sidonia in mind when he wrote:

It is a glorification of dandyism, far beyond all other glories which dandyism has attained. Dandies are here made to regenerate the world - to heal the wounds of the wretched body politic - to infuse new blood into torpid old institutions - to reconcile the ancient world to the modern - to solve the doubts and perplexities which at present confound us - and to introduce the supreme truth to the people, as theatre managers do the sovereign to the play, smiling, and in silk stockings, and with a pair of wax candles.²

Declaring that he believes the author 'to be not only a dandy but a man of genius', he continues:

He writes for a page or two in passages of the most admirable and pure English, thoughts finely poetical, fresh, startling, or ingenious; but one may be pretty sure of not being able to turn half-a-dozen leaves without coming upon something outrageous. Never was a moralist who laid himself more open to censure, a

¹. M & B, III, p.41, n.1.

². Thackeray's Contributions to the Morning Chronicle, ed. Gordon N. Ray (Urbana, Illinois, 1955), p.39. The imagery of the last few lines might be compared with Thackeray's self caricature in the 'Before the Curtain' preface to Vanities Fair.

philosopher more personally weak, or a dandy and teacher of ton whose own manner was more curiously and frequently offensive.¹

And perhaps the most bizarre and persistent of these lapses is the racial theory Disraeli embodies in *Sidonia*:

Caucasism seems to be a sine qua non with Mr. Disraeli. "But I come also from Caucasus," hints simple Coningsby. Verily (replies the man of the mountain), and thank your Creator for being such - your race is sufficiently pure. The question henceforth, then, regarding a man must be, is he a Caucasian? If not, woe be to him.²

Thackeray presents these criticisms in a more dramatic form in his parody 'Coddingsby',³ where the brunt of his attack is directed not so much at the Young England gospel or at Disraeli's sometimes over-wrought settings,⁴ but at the racial mystifications expressed through *Sidonia*. Thackeray saw at once that although Disraeli had the makings of a fine comic novelist, he was too much inclined to let a polemical bias of one kind or another run away with him. It was not from its 'wholesome philosophy',

with all respect be it spoken, that the great success of "Coningsby" arose - not from the Caucasian theory, and discovery of the Venetian origin of the English constitution - but from those amusing bitter sketches of Tadpole, Rigby, Monmouth, and the rest, of which the likenesses were irresistible, and the malice tickled everybody. There is no master in this style of delineation, since Swift's day, more dexterous and faithful than Mr. Disraeli.⁴

1. Ibid., p.41.

2. p.49.

3. "by B. de Shrewsbury Esq" in 'Punch's Prize Novelists, Punch (1847) and reprinted in Novels by Eminent Hands (1856).

4. Review of Sybil in Thackeray's Contributions to the Morning Chronicle, p.78.

In a certain sense Vanity Fair is Thackeray's answer: a scrupulously realistic panorama of just the kind of world that Disraeli had surveyed in Coningsby, but without the Disraelian digressions and mystifications.¹ Thackeray's assessment of Disraeli's talent is exactly right. What Disraeli says of Sidonia -

The secret history of the world was his pastime. His great pleasure was to contrast the hidden motive, with the public pretext, of transactions.²

- really applies to Disraeli himself. This is precisely the element in the book that makes it so excellent - and easily the finest of the Young England trilogy. Coningsby's first and last interviews with Monmouth, the visit to Coningsby Castle, Rigby's embassy to the intriguing Madame Colonna (herself perhaps a throwback to Mrs. Felix Lorraine) to break the news of Monmouth's engagement to Lucretia - these are the scenes which call forth Disraeli's highest powers. To penetrate the facade of appearance (without, however, in the least disturbing it), to discover 'the hidden motive' behind 'the public pretext' - much as, in Vivian Grey, he had dwelt

1. For the suggestion that Vanity Fair is in part a series of variations on Coningsby, see D.J. Greene, 'Becky Sharp and Lord Steyne - Thackeray or Disraeli?' in Nineteenth-Century Fiction (September, 1961). Greene argues that Steyne was modelled directly on Monmouth rather than Hertford and that Mrs. Guy Flouncey was the original for Becky; his case would have been even stronger had he cited Mrs. Flouncey's re-appearance in Tancred. See also Lionel Stevenson, 'Vanity Fair and Lady Morgan', PMLA (June, 1933), and C.L. Cline, 'Disraeli and Thackeray', Review of English Studies (October, 1943).

2. II (Bk. IV, Ch. 10), p. 137.

more crudely on the disparity between trifling causes and tremendous effects - is exactly Disraeli's forte. Here is how he treats the discussion, at Monmouth's dinner table in Paris, of Sidonia's rumoured engagement to Edith:

"They say he is going to be married," said the Attaché.

"Poh!" said Lord Monmouth.

"Married?" exclaimed Lady Monmouth. "To whom?"

"To your beautiful country woman; 'la belle Anglaise' that all the world talks of," said the Attaché.

"And who may she be, pray?" said the Marquess. "I have so many beautiful country women."

"Mademoiselle Millbank," said the Attaché.

"Millbank," said the Marquess with a lowering brow. "There are so many Millbanks. Do you know what Millbank this is, Harry?" he inquired of his grandson, who had listened to the conversation with a rather embarrassed, and even agitated spirit.

"What, sir - yes - Millbank?" said Coningsby.

"I say, do you know who this Millbank is?"

"Oh! Miss Millbank: yes, I believe, that is I know a daughter of the - the gentleman who purchased some property near you."

"Oh! that fellow! Has he got a daughter here?"

"The most beautiful girl in Paris," said the Attaché.

"Lady Monmouth, have you seen this beauty? - That Sidonia is going to marry," he added with a fiendish laugh.

"I have seen the young lady," said Lady Monmouth; "but I had not heard that Monsieur Sidonia was about to marry her."

"Is she so very beautiful?" inquired another gentleman.

"Yes," said Lady Monmouth calm, but very pale.

"Poh!" said the Marquess again.

"I assure you that it is a fact," said the Attaché; "not at least an on-dit. I have it from a quarter that could not be well mistaken."

Behold a little snatch of ordinary dinner gossip that left a very painful impression on the minds of three individuals who were present.

The name of Millbank revived in Lord Monmouth's mind a sense of defeat, discomfiture, and disgust; Hellingsley, lost elections, and Mr. Rigby; three subjects which Lord Monmouth had succeeded for a time in expelling from his sensations. His Lordship thought that in all probability

this beauty of whom they spoke so highly was not really the daughter of his foe; that it was some confusion which had arisen from the similarity of names; nor did he believe that Sidonia was going to marry her, whoever she might be; but a variety of things had been said at dinner, and a number of images had been raised in his mind that touched his spleen. He took his wine freely, and, the usual consequence of that proceeding with Lord Monmouth, became silent and sullen. As for Lady Monmouth she had learnt that Sidonia, whatever might be the result, was paying very marked attention to another woman, for whom undoubtedly he was giving that very ball which she had flattered herself was a homage to her wishes, and for which she had projected a new dress of eclipsing splendour.

Coningsby felt quite sure that the story of Sidonia's marriage with Edith was the most ridiculous idea that ever entered into the imagination of man; at least he thought he felt quite sure. But the idlest and wildest report that the woman you love is about to marry another, is not comfortable. Besides he could not conceal from himself that between the Wallingers and Sidonia there existed a remarkable intimacy, fully extended to their niece. He had seen her certainly on more than one occasion in lengthened, and apparently earnest conversation with Sidonia, who, by the bye, spoke with her often in Spanish and never concealed his admiration of her charms nor the interest he found in her society. And Edith - what, after all, had passed between Edith and himself, which should at all gainsay this report, which he had been particularly assured was not a mere report, but came from a quarter that could not be well mistaken? She had received him with kindness. And how should she receive one, who was the friend and preserver of her only brother, and apparently the intimate and cherished acquaintance of her future husband? Coningsby felt that sickness of the heart that accompanies one's first misfortune. The illusions of life seemed to dissipate and disappear. He was miserable; he had no confidence in himself, in his future. After all, what was he? A dependant on a man of very absolute will and passions. Could he forget the glance with which Lord Monmouth caught the name of Millbank and received the intimation of Hellingsley? It was a glance for a Spagnoletto, or a Caravaggio to catch and immortalize. Why if Edith were not going to marry Sidonia, how was he ever to marry her, even if she cared for him? Oh! what a future of unbroken,

continuous, interminable misery awaited him! Was there ever yet born a being with a destiny so dark and dismal! He was the most forlorn of men, utterly wretched! He had entirely mistaken his own character. He had no energy, no abilities, not a single eminent quality. All was over! ¹.

It matters not in the least that the rumour is in fact quite untrue so that all this psychic agitation turns out to have been unnecessary. The incident has given Disraeli an opportunity to pierce the surface of his characters by playing off the public manner of Monmouth, Lucretia, and Coningsby against their private anxieties. It is scenes of this sort that drew upon Disraeli's greatest powers. His real creative energies did not go into the construction of his plot or the exposition of his political ideas - both of which, as we have seen, were largely derivative - but into the invention of psychologically revealing scenes which in themselves are highly finished pieces of writing.

The passage just quoted shows something else about Disraeli's way of writing. It comes at the end of a short chapter the preceeding portion of which serves mainly to provide it with an introduction. Disraeli's basic unit of composition is the chapter and, like a playwright, he tends to think in terms of scenes. This is why the structure of his novels is more often episodic than organic - and why, too,

Another curious feature of *Coningsby*, considered as a

¹. III (Bk.VI, Ch.4), pp.43-48.

he is so much given to flash-backs. Book V, chapter 3, for example, begins, 'We must now revert to the family, or rather the household of Lord Monmouth, in which considerable changes and events had occurred ...' and we learn of the loss of Hellingsley, the death of Prince Colonna, and Rigby's efforts to secure the seat for Darlford. Chapter 6 in the same Book goes back to Sidonia's departure from Coningsby Castle and recounts step by step Lucretia's successful campaign to ensnare Monmouth. A writer like Thackeray or Trollope would have woven these episodes into the texture of his narrative as he went along. But Disraeli rarely builds on the past or looks ahead to the future. Each chapter is a complete and self-contained unit. Open Coningsby (or Sybil) at random and more likely than not the first chapter one hits upon will begin either in medias res, rather as if a curtain had just gone up, or with a careful description of the setting in which the ensuing action is to occur; turn to the end of the chapter and one will probably find that the action is rounded off to a neat conclusion almost as if a curtain were about to come down. There is, indeed, especially in the treatment of the 'two nations' in Sybil, a good deal of deliberate juxtaposing of contrasting chapters.

Another curious feature of Coningsby, considered as a 'political' novel, is that although there are three scenes

set amidst the hurly-burly of the hustings¹, Disraeli shows nothing of the workings of parliament with its front benchers and back benchers, its committees and commissions. This is because in Disraeli's mind politics is primarily a social art and political issues are really settled not in public debates (consider how irresponsible and raucous are the goings-on he describes at the hustings) but behind the scenes in the privacy of drawing rooms and clubs - or, indeed, during "that little half hour" after dinner to which Louis Philippe had told him that he 'ascribed the superiority of the English in political life ...'². In Endymion Disraeli has the all-knowing Baron Sergius declare, 'It is private life that governs the world'³, and in Tancred Coningsby, now in the House of Commons, finds in his wife, 'a fine critic and a lively narrator', his most important source of political

¹. Bk.V, Chs.2 and 4, and Bk.IX, Ch.6. Any lingering doubt as to whether these scenes were based on Disraeli's own experiences has been allayed by G.W.E.Russell who quotes in his Sketches and Snapshots (London, 1910), p.374, from a newscutting reporting the then recent discovery at Hughenden of several silk banners dating from 1837 and 1841 and bearing such legends as: 'Disraeli and your ancient institutions: "Forti nihil difficile"'; 'Church, Queen, and Constitution'; 'Disraeli, and native industries'; and 'Disraeli and popular principles'.

². I (Bk.III, Ch.3), p.278.

³. I (Ch.36), p.330.

information:

He was always behind those social scenes which, after all, regulate the political performers, knew the springs of the whole machinery, the changings and the shiftings, the fiery cars and golden chariots which men might mount, and the trap-doors down which men might fall.¹

One of Disraeli's principal achievements in both Coningsby and Sybil is that he shows his characters genuinely thinking about themselves and the world around them; and if it is characters like Monmouth, Lucretia, and Rigby who think most convincingly, this is merely because Disraeli really believes in them and therefore paints them in the round - their public pretexts and their private motives alike - whereas Sidonia, Coningsby, and Young England generally, if they are to be worthy of their ideals, must be made to live and think on but a single plane.

'Morals and manners', Thackeray observed in his review of Sybil,

we believe to be the novelist's best themes; and hence prefer romances which do not treat of algebra, religion, political economy, or other abstract science. We doubt the fitness of the occasion, and often (it must be confessed) the competency of the teacher ... Talk of a key to "Coningsby"! - as a key to "Sybil", booksellers should send down to their country correspondents a history of the Reformation, the Revolution, and of parties since the advent of the House of Hanover - a digest of the social, political, and commercial life of the Normans and Anglo-Saxons - a history of agriculture,

¹ I (Bk.II, Ch.8), pp.213-214. The paragraph is quoted in an incomplete transcription in Letters, p.267, and E & S, II, p.251.

manufactures, banking and credit - the works of Burke and Bolingbroke, which in "Sybil" are much discussed; and then the reader could be competent to judge this wonderful author; and then, surely, to form theories for himself, after mastering such a political encyclopaedia. ¹.

Thackeray was not far off the mark, as anyone who has looked at Disraeli's multifarious sources for Sybil will realise.

The novel's rather haphazard construction may well reflect the disordered conditions in which it was written. On

'May Day 1845' Disraeli wrote his sister from Crockford's:

pp. 42 Sybil was finished yesterday. I thought it never would be the printers were on my heels & have been for the last month = but I don't think it can be published till the middle of the month. I can't send the rough proofs; they would destroy the illusion, & I have no clean sheets, nor do I think there are any yet [ready], as we have only commenced striking off within these ten days. I have never been thro' such a four months, & hope never again. What with the House of Commons wh: was itself quite eno' for a man & writing 600 pages, I thought sometimes my head must turn = & this must be my excuse for not having written wh: was clearly impossible. I have never had a day until this that I have felt as it were home for the holidays = Fortunately this year my private affairs have not so much harassed me, tho' they did also at first. ².

Disraeli has left several fragmentary notes at Hughenden indicating some of his sources for the novel. One of these reads as follows:

1. Thackeray's Contributions to the Morning Chronicle, pp. 77-79. General Preface, p. xiii) in the industrial sections of Sybil requires far more comprehensive attention
2. Lee Kohns Collection, Manuscript Division, New York Public Library. The paragraph is quoted in an incomplete form and a slightly different transcription in Letters, p. 267, and M & B, II, p. 251. Lenhall and Wodgate: Disraeli's Use of Blue Book Evidence, Review of English Studies (November, 1962), pp. 368-384, as well as her Mr. Disraeli's Readers (Nottingham, 1966). The whole subject of Disraeli's industrial sources is currently being investigated by Mr. A. Fide of the University of Leeds.

Ath : 1842

Children's Employment 1st Rep^t.

And Sanitary Condition [sic]¹.

The references, of course, are to The Athenaeum for 1842 and in the May 7th number, pp.395-400, we find the first part of a review of the 'Children's Employment Commission. First Report of the Commissioners. Appendix to Report.' which is continued and concluded in the number for May 14th, pp.422-425. If one examines this review one makes the curious discovery that Disraeli's descriptions of mining conditions in Book III, chapter 1, would appear to have been based on the information it contains (often quoting at length from the Appendix to the Report) rather than, as has hitherto been assumed, on the Report itself. All the principal details that he gives on conditions in the mines can be traced to this review. There is a particularly interesting account, by the reviewer himself, of the 'Butty' system:

Here centres the evil. In every other description of occupation the employer visits his establishment; and

¹. Hughenden Papers, Box 231, E / V / A 4^a. Disraeli's use of parliamentary reports and other sources (the Chartist correspondence of Feargus O'Connor, for example, referred to in the General Preface, p.xiii) in the industrial sections of Sybil requires far more comprehensive attention than can be given here, and I have therefore confined myself to sources for which there is documentary authority amongst the Hughenden Papers. The interested reader should consult Sheila M.Smith's 'Willenhall and Wodgate: Disraeli's Use of Blue Book Evidence', Review of English Studies (November, 1962), pp.368-384, as well as her Mr. Disraeli's Readers (Nottingham, 1966). The whole subject of Disraeli's industrial sources is currently being investigated by Mr. A. Fido of the University of Leeds.

any glaring evils, any negligences or abuses necessarily injurious to the comfort and health, or perilous to the lives of the work-people, are brought under his own observation; and only when avarice or wilful recklessness exist, is the evil permitted to continue. But coal proprietors rarely visit their collieries ... Everything is intrusted to a subordinate. In first-rate collieries, the steward, or Butty, as he is often called, is a trustworthy person, but in multitudes of the middle and smaller classes of mines, he is a common collier, more or less recently promoted to supreme authority, which is to be exercised out of sight. Thus colliers are debarred from the benevolence of a master, who knows not of the need for its exertion; and thus the condition and safety of the labourers employed in a branch of industry eminently perilous, and, above all others needing benevolent superintendence is, more than any other, left, hidden and unheeded, to the mercy of a menial, whose power is exercised apart from the responsibility even of ordinary observation!¹

Disraeli combines the gist of this passage with the theme of the 'two nations' in several of Nixon's remarks:

"And I'll tell you what, sir, that I never knew the people play [strike] yet, but if a word had passed atween them and the main-masters aforehand, it might not have been settled; but you can't get at them any way. Atween the poor man and the gentleman there never was no connexion, and that's the wital mischief of this country."

"It's a very true word, Master Nixon, and by this token that when we went to play in -28, and the masters said they would meet us; what did they do but walk about the ground and speak to the butties. The butties has their ear."

"We never want no soldiers here if the masters would speak with the men; but the sight of a pitman is pison [sic] to a gentleman, and if we go up to speak with 'em, they always run away."

"It's the butties," said Nixon; "they're wusser nor tommy [payment in goods]."²

¹ May 14, 1842, pp.399-400.

² II (Bk.III, Ch.1), pp.16-17.

But it does not appear that Disraeli wrote the chapter with the review before him for he does not quote from it directly and he works into the dialogue numerous references to the 'truck' or 'tommy' system of which he had probably learnt from his friend and fellow M.P., W.B.Ferrand.¹ The third and fourth paragraphs of the chapter, however, do seem to have been inspired by his recollections of two woodcuts which accompany the review showing children at work in the mines.²

The review of the Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain begins by quoting a proverb which Disraeli introduces quite casually into Sybil:

It is a long lane, says the proverb, that has no turning; and, accordingly, we may at length discover signs of a divergence from the narrow path of legislative

1. See M & B, II, pp.195, 235-6, 243, 247, and 369-370. He was a member of the Select Committee on Payment of Wages which submitted its report on July 20, 1842.
2. May 7, 1842, pp.396-397; see Appendix af. These woodcuts were especially made for The Athenaeum and do not appear in the Report itself; the one on p.397 is an adaptation of one in the Report and the one on p.396 is entirely new. In the first half of the third paragraph of Book III, Ch.1, of Sybil he seems to allude to a statement about female colliers at Halifax and Bradford quoted in the Report, and reproduced, in The Athenaeum for May 14: 'They are to be found alike vulgar in manner and obscene in language; but who can feel surprise at their debased condition when they are known to be constantly associated, and associated only, with men and boys, living and labouring in a state of disgusting nakedness and brutality, while they have themselves no other garment than a ragged shift, or, in the absence of that, a pair of broken trousers to cover their persons?' (p.424).

4. I (M.B.II, Ch.3), pp.116-121. Thackeray thought this 'perhaps the best part of his volumes: it is written with honesty, truth, and hearty sympathy.' Thackeray's Contributions to The Morning Chronicle, p.80.

misdealings with the people.¹

The reviewer goes on to quote a passage from the Report on the health and content of his workpeople. He knew which Disraeli adapts - probably from memory - in the novel:

Athenaeum, p.725. Sybil

A conception may be formed of 'And yet,' said Egremont, 'in the aggregate effects of the old days they had terrible several causes of mortality pestilences.' from the fact, that of the 'But they touched all alike,' deaths caused during one year said Gerard. 'We have more in England and Wales by epidemic, endemic, and contagious pestilence now in England than diseases, including fever, we ever had, but it only reaches typhus, and scarlatina, the poor. You never hear of it. Why Typhus alone takes every amounting to 56,461, the great year from the dwellings of the proportion of which are proved artisan and peasant a population to be preventible, it may be equal to that of the whole said that the effect is as if county of Westmoreland. This the whole county of Westmoreland, now containing 54,469 goes on every year ...' 2. souls, or the whole county of Huntingdonshire, or any other equivalent district, were entirely depopulated annually...

He may also have had in mind the reviewer's own remark that the cause of

domestic mismanagement, tending to induce disease, is the want of sufficient and wholesome habitations ... it is evident that the desire to possess objects of comfort and neatness, and even the power of preserving personal cleanliness, must be subordinate to the possession of an habitation weather-tight and adapted to civilized habits.³

when he described the appalling conditions in the town of Marney⁴ and when he wrote of Trafford, the Catholic factory

¹. August 13, 1842, p.724; cf., Sybil, III (Bk.VI, Ch.3), p.167.

². II (Bk.III, Ch.5), p.78.

³. p.725.

⁴. I (Bk.II, Ch.3), pp.116-121. Thackeray thought this 'perhaps the best part of his volumes: it is written with honesty, truth, and hearty sympathy.' Thackeray's Contributions to the Morning Chronicle, p.80.

owner who 'recognized the baronial principle': ¹.

Deeply had he pondered on the influence of the employer on the health and content of his workpeople. He knew well that the domestic virtues are dependent on the existence of a home, and one of his first efforts had been to build a village where every family might be well lodged. ².

Given the fact that Disraeli consulted and evidently drew upon the review of the First Report of the Children's Employment Commission in The Athenaeum, may one make the assumption that he also went to it in connection with the Second Report? If one compares The Athenaeum's review (March 4, 11, and 18, 1843) with what is known of Disraeli's use of the Second Report one finds that he might well have taken most of his factual matter from it and - with one exception, the reference to the lad whose master in beating him had cut his eyes - all the passages which he plagiarised. ³.

¹. II (Bk.III, Ch.8), p.100.

². Ibid., pp.99-100.

³. Cf., Sheila M. Smith's findings in 'Willenhall and Wodgate: Disraeli's Use of Blue Book Evidence', Review of English Studies (November, 1962), pp.368-384. It is interesting to note parenthetically that after Disraeli had been charged with plagiarising from Thiers in his eulogy on the Duke of Wellington (Blake, p.335), in 1852, he deleted from the 'Advertisement' to the 1853 edition the reference to 'Royal Commissions and Parliamentary Committees' and in 1858 removed altogether the words 'and he believes that there is not a trait in this work which official documents will not more than verify'.

¹. Rugby Papers, Box 231, E / 7 / A / 3 / 16.

It may well be that Disraeli's initial impression of the Report was formed by The Athenaeum, for his own emphases are remarkably close to those in the review.

Another fragment at Highenden reads 'Ashburton & Game Laws / Morning Chron: Aug. 1844'¹ and apparently refers to an article in the Morning Chronicle for August 14th, p. [3], headed, 'INCENDIARISM in the EASTERN COUNTIES. - THE HARVEST - GAME-LAWS, MORAL DETERIORATION OF THE PEOPLE.' After reporting a good harvest and a reduction in the 'destructive mischief' of incendiarism, the anonymous writer proceeds to complain of landlords who 'for the protection of the game' compel the farmers to leave a stubble of 'from twelve to fifteen inches of the straw on the ground when reaping':

Here, then, we have the farmers feeding swarms of destructive vermin at their own expense, for the landlord's amusement and that of his friends who come to shoot there...

He mentions but does not at first identify a nobleman whose offences in this line are considerable:

Were the nobleman just referred to the representative of a baronial race, retaining the feudal practices because of his possession of feudal pride and power, it would be a matter of regret that in a commercial country he should know so little of the just principles of business as to impose such profitless burthens on his tenantry, doing them so much injury in their business, retarding enterprise and profitable employment, lessening the general produce, to the detriment of the general population; but how much more is it a matter of regret to see one doing this whose whole property and power has been accumulated through his connection with trade, and from his practical knowledge of its principles? This nobleman is no other than the

¹. Highenden Papers, Box 231, E / V / A / 3 / 16.

head of the house of Baring - Lord Ashburton.¹

But perhaps worst of all is the effect of such conduct on the people themselves. The destruction done by game can never be properly estimated, for it

demoralizes the labouring population, who crowd the prisons as poachers - augment the county-rates - proceed in due time to pilfering and sheep-stealing, and ultimately to incendiarism and murder ...

Some of the best of masters have had their property burned down, both in Norfolk and Suffolk, by some of the worst of men. But these worst of men have been, without an exception, initiated in crime by the game-laws and the game preserves.

The article created a good deal of stir and on the 15th, p.[2], the following editorial comment appeared:

If we are ever to see more wholesome relations between the rich and the poor in the agricultural districts, it will be necessary either to get rid of the game-laws, or to modify them, and at the same time to make some large compensation for their continuance, by provisions for popular amusement.

And on the 17th, pp.2-3, the Morning Chronicle in a leading article called Lord Ashburton 'one whose patent of nobility is not yet dry' and 'one who represents the aristocracy of the breeches pocket, the nobility of Three per Cent. Consols' and declared that he

has written on all sides and spoken on all sides ... when a fund-holder, was an open-port man and a Corn-law repealer ... now that he is a great landholder, is a vigorous Corn-law supporter and game preserver! Wonders, however, will never cease. We have lately had mediaeval art and mediaeval religion, and it seems as if now we were fallen into the depths of feudalism.

¹ Disraeli had a slight acquaintance with the 'Baring family' and 'the Ashburtons' as early as 1836; see Letters, p.150.

These remarks are of interest not because Disraeli incorporates them into Sybil in any readily indentifiable way, but because they so clearly express his attitude in the novel towards the agricultural population and especially, perhaps, towards Lords Marney and de Mowbray.

The Morning Chronicle for August, 1844, also contains a series of articles and leaders on the work of the Select Committee on the Gaming Bill. The principal complaint is that the gaming laws have not been enforced uniformly and that, however severely applied to lesser establishments, Crockford's has always been treated as though exempt:

the reader [of the Report] is forced to the conclusion that the object of the committee was not so much to put down gaming generally as ... to prohibit the indulgence, so to term it, of this dangerous pursuit to the lower orders of society, and tacitly to sanction, or, at any rate, to connive at, its continuance amongst the privileged upper classes ... it may safely be asserted that there is more money won and lost at Crockford's in the course of the year, than in all the other dens of infamy in the metropolis put together. ¹.

And:

The immunity of great sinners is as perfect as any of the privileged can desire, and Crockford's flourishes because its members are titled, wealthy, and belong to the Legislature. The 'Great Greatness' which elevated Jonathan Wild has its successful parallel in St. James's-street. ².

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- ¹. August 1, 1844, p.4; the articles continue in this vein throughout most of the month.
 - ². August 3, 1844, p.4. 'Mr.D'Israeli' and his 'Caucasian' theory are mentioned briefly on August 13, p.[2]. It is a wild surmise, but - could some of these articles have been written by Thackeray?

Here is yet another indication of the 'two nations' which throws some light on the opening scene of Sybil. When Disraeli begins his novel amid the gilded idleness of Crockford's with his characters all arranging their bets on the Derby, he is making a covert allusion to the 'two nations' theme even before formally announcing it; his contemporary readers (or those, at least, who took the Morning Chronicle) would have known that the activities described at Crockford's were technically illegal and that in any humbler establishment the participants would have been liable to prosecution.

Finally, another scrap at Hughenden deals with Shaftesbury and 'Dutch finance': 'Burnet Vol 1. 165p. / Vol 3 . 127'.¹ The reference is to the 1823 Oxford edition in six volumes of Bishop Burnet's History of His Own Time. Disraeli's notes refer to passages which he incorporates, with significant changes, into Sybil:

'Burnet Vol.1. 165p.'

Sybil

His strength lay in the knowledge of England, and of all the considerable men in it. He understood well the size of their understandings, and their tempers: and he knew how to apply himself to them so dexterously, that, though by his changing sides so often it was very visible how little he was to be depended on, yet he

Bishop Burnet, in speculating on the extraordinary influence of Lord Shaftesbury, and accounting how a statesman, so inconsistent in his conduct and so false to his confederates, should have so powerfully controlled his country, observes, "HIS STRENGTH LAY IN HIS KNOWLEDGE OF ENGLAND."

Now that is exactly the kind of knowledge which the Duke of

¹ Hughenden Papers, Box 231, E / V / A / 3 / 19.

² III (Ch. 9), p. 133. This point is also made in E & B, VI, p. 560, n.d.

was to the last much trusted Wellington never possessed.¹
by all the discontented
party.

On page 164 of the Burnet - facing the page from which Disraeli quotes - is a footnote containing an anecdote (from Speaker Onslow) which he evidently committed to memory, for he introduces a variant of it into Endymion.² The story is told to illustrate Shaftesbury's doubtful religious position - 'a deist at best':

A person came to make him a visit whilst he was sitting one day with a lady of his family, who retired upon that to another part of the room with her work, and seemed not to attend to the conversation between the earl and the other person, which turned soon into some dispute upon subjects of religion; after a good deal of that sort of talk, the earl said at last, 'People differ in their discourse and profession about these matters, but men of sense are really but of one religion.' Upon which says the lady of a sudden, 'Pray, my lord, what religion is that which men of sense agree in?' 'Madam,' says the earl, 'men of sense never tell it.'

The second passage, on Burnet's relations with William of Orange, illustrates how drastically Disraeli could alter his sources. It is also interesting to see that he shares Cobbett's bias against Burnet:

'Vol. 3 . 127'

Sybil

I had a mind to see a little In an authentic conversation
into the prince's notions, which has descended to us, held
before I should engage myself by William at the Hague with
deeper in his service. I was one of the prime abettors of
afraid lest his struggle the invasion, the prince did
with the Louvestein party, not disguise his motives; he
as they were called, might said, 'nothing but such a

¹ I (Bk.I, Ch.3), p.51.

² III (Ch.81), p.135. This point is also made in M & B, VI, p.560, n.1.

have given him a jealousy of liberty and of a free government. He assured me, it was quite the contrary: nothing but such a constitution could resist a powerful aggressor long, or have credit that was necessary to raise such sums, as a great war might require...

constitution as you have in England can have the credit that is necessary to raise such sums as a great war requires.' The prince came, and used our constitution for his purpose: he introduced into England the system of Dutch finance. ¹

Apart from its loose and contrived structure², the weakest part of Sybil is its characterization. Sybil herself is quite unreal and Egremont is only slightly better. The two principal villains - Lords Marney and de Mowbray - have none of the depth to their characters that we get in Monmouth, insufficiently colloquial to seem altogether real. Devils-

¹ I (Bk.I, Ch.3), pp.43-44.

² The frequent juxtapositioning of scenes set amongst the 'rich' and the 'poor' does, of course, help. And in his recurrent allusions to his characters as 'Saxon' (northern, labouring, and quintessentially British) or 'Norman' (southern, aristocratic, and faintly foreign), he has also sought to pull the book together. Disraeli's description of Victoria's accession, at the end of Book I, Ch.6, was based, as is well known, on the account Lyndhurst had given him; in the last paragraph Disraeli says of her that 'she has the blood and beauty of the Saxon' and thereby links her with the 'People'. This Norman-Saxon dichotomy was probably suggested to Disraeli by the detestation in which Ernest, Duke of Cumberland, a fierce and hoary reactionary who later became King of Hanover, was held throughout the early part of the century; had Victoria died before William IV, he would have succeeded to the throne and, one Whig nobleman 'of great experience and calm judgement' declared, 'no earthly power could have averted a revolution'. See G.W.E. Russell, Collections and Recollections (London, 1898), pp.136-142 and 275-276. Russell reproduces as his frontispiece a cartoon of 1837 called 'The Contrast' showing a delicate Victoria on the left, headed 'England', and a fearsome and scowling Ernest on the right, headed 'Hanover'. Beneath is the legend, 'Look here upon this picture - and on this The counterfeit presentment of two Sovereigns'.

Lucretia, Madame Colonna, and even Rigby - for Disraeli does not allow them any psychological undercurrents but, no doubt with his didactic purpose in mind, makes them reveal their objectives quite openly: Marney wants "compensation" from the railroads and a place at court, while de Mowbray wants to consolidate his social position by marrying off his eldest daughter to a member of the old aristocracy. Gerard and Morley are in the main believable (though Morley becomes somewhat hysterical in his relations with Sybil towards the end), but they lack substance; their conversation is insufficiently colloquial to seem altogether real. Devilsdust (whose history is powerfully sketched), Dandy Mick, and the two girls are finely drawn - but again, they are minor characters with only a small part in the book. In exposing social ills and getting at their causes Disraeli is very acute; yet he is unable to communicate any real feeling, such as one finds in Mrs. Gaskell, for the poor and oppressed as individuals. But this is not because of a lack of feeling on his own part. Edmund Gosse wrote in 1918:

The late Duke of Rutland [i.e., formerly Lord John Manners], that illustrious and venerable friend who alone survived in 1904 to bear witness to the sentiments of Young England, told me that he accompanied Disraeli on the journey [to the north] which led to the composition of 'Sybil', and that he never, in long years of intimacy, saw him so profoundly moved as he was at the aspect of the miserable dwellings of the hand-loom workers.¹

¹. Edmund Gosse, C.B., 'The Novels of Benjamin Disraeli', Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature, second series (London, 1918), p.78.

The problem was not a deficiency of sensibility but an inability as a writer to present deep feelings credibly - a weakness we have seen before in Contarini, Alroy, and Venetia. Perhaps it was in part a realization of this limitation that led him to turn for so much of his material to printed sources. In treating the mining and manufacturing districts, Thackeray wrote,

his descriptions fail; not from want of sympathy, but from want of experience and familiarity with the subject ... They are not good, as we fancy, but they can do good; they are written with genuine feeling, and are worth all the fantastic Venetian and Dutch theories, to our mind.¹

We can agree that not only could they "do good" - but that, insofar as they brought the plight of the industrial and agrarian poor to the attention of the voting upper and middle classes, they did. Besides this, Sybil was the first English novel to treat seriously and at length the darker side of industrialism and in so doing may be said to have opened up a new vein for the novelist.

The best scenes in Sybil, however, are not the industrial ones, but those in which Disraeli allows himself to follow his natural bent towards the comedy of manners: the Hoaxem episode (Bk.VI, Ch.1), for example, much admired by Gladstone²; or the account (Bk.II, Ch.7) of the transformation of the

1. Thackeray's Contributions to the Morning Chronicle, p.80.

2. British Museum Add.MS.44,792, fol.50: "Against deputations. A capital passage...Instructions to Hoaxem on the two-faced effects of Mr.Peels legislation". Gladstone's notes on Sybil, though brief and undated, are written on paper headed "10, Downing Street" and must therefore not have been made before 1868.

St. James's Street club waiter, John Warren, into Baron Fitz-
 Warene and of his son into Earl de Mowbray - an historical
 vignette rather in the manner of the sketch of Ferdinand's
 ancestry in Henrietta Fleming, but with more sting in its
 tail. The political machinations of Lady St. Julians and of
 Egremont's mother, Lady Deloraine (said to be modelled on
 Lady Londonderry), are similarly well handled, as is the
 fatuous Sir Vavasour Firebrace¹ and, too, "Bishop" Hatton,
 that rather Cromwellian "Liberator", whose wild and drunken
 demise amidst his cohorts in the cellars of Mowbray Castle
 harks back to the grotesque drinking scene in the second part
 of Vivian Grey. One of the most lively of the low-life
 scenes - the visit of Dandy Mick and the two girls to the
 "Temple of the Muses" - succeeds largely because Disraeli uses
 the same comedy of manners technique that he elsewhere applies
 to high-life: (as Thackeray does upon Steyne) is at work in

"Well, what do you think of it?" asked Caroline of
 Harriet in a whisper as they entered the splendid
 apartment.

"It's just what I thought the Queen lived in," said
 Harriet: "but indeed I'm all of a flutter."

"Well, don't look as if you were," said her friend.

"Come along gals," said Mick; "who's afraid? Here,
 we'll sit down at this table. Now, what shall we have?
 Here, waiter; I say waiter!" Disraeli and Mick are agreed

on "Yes, sir, yes, sir."

"Well, why don't you come when I call," said Mick
 with a consequential air. "I have been hallooing these
 ten minutes. Couple of glasses of bar mixture for these
 ladies and a go of gin for myself. And I say waiter, stop,

¹ Based upon Sir Richard Broun (1801-1858); see Blake, p.
 219.

III (2k.VI, Ch.2), pp.10-11.

stop, don't be in such a deuced hurry; do you think folks can drink without eating; - sausanges [sic] for three; and damme, take care they are not burnt."

"Yes, sir, directly, directly."

"That's the way to talk to these fellows," said Mick with a self-satisfied air, and perfectly repaid by the admiring gaze of his companions.

"It's pretty Miss Harriet," said Mick looking up at at the ceiling with a careless nil admirari glance.

"Oh! it is beautiful," said Harriet.

"You never were here before; it's the only place. That's the Lady of the Lake," he added, pointing to a picture; "I've seen her at the Circus, with real water."

The hissing sausages crowning a pile of mashed potatoes were placed before them; the delicate rummers of the Mowbray slap-bang, for the girls; the more masculine pewter measure for their friend.

"Are the plates very hot?" said Mick;

"Very, sir."

"Hot plates half the battle," said Mick.

"Now, Caroline; here, Miss Harriet; don't take away your plate, wait for the mash; they mash their taters here very elegant." ¹.

Although Disraeli would hardly endorse what his characters say and do here, his tone is affectionate. The same ambivalence that prevents him from passing an absolute judgement upon Monmouth (as Thackeray does upon Steyne) is at work in this passage and it is one of the most interesting features of Disraeli as a novelist. Again and again he finds himself on the verge of outright satire only to draw back into social

¹. I (Bk.II, Ch.10), pp.217-219. Disraeli and Mick are agreed on one point: the need for food to be served on hot plates. What was the secret, Disraeli asks in Coningsby, of the success of Monmouth's Paris dinners? "The simplest in the world, though no one seemed aware of it. His Lordship's plates were always hot: whereas at Paris, in the best appointed houses, and at dinners, which for costly materials and admirable art in their preparation, cannot be surpassed, the effect is always considerably lessened, and by a mode the most mortifying - by the mere circumstance that every one at a French dinner is served on a cold plate." III (Bk.VI, Ch.2), pp.10-11.

comedy adopting a detachment which allows him to savour the ironies in the situations he has created.

The talent for social comedy that distinguishes both Coningsby and Sybil carries over into the first volume of Tancred.¹ One wishes that Disraeli had continued in the vein of that first volume, for it contains some of his best prose as well as some of his finest scenes. But an event had occurred in 1845 which determined that - whatever his original plans for a sequel to Sybil might have been - the greater part of Tancred would have to confront an urgent crisis of faith:

The writer and those who acted with him looked, then [1845], upon the Anglican Church as a main machinery by which these results [a "durable" society "built upon the principles of loyalty and religious reverence"] might be realised. There were few great things left in England, and the Church was one. Nor do I now doubt that if, a quarter of a century ago, there had arisen a churchman equal to the occasion, the position of ecclesiastical affairs in this country would have been very different from that which they now occupy. But these great matters fell into the hands of monks and schoolmen; and little more than a year after the publication of CONINGSBY, the secession of DR. NEWMAN dealt a blow to the Church of England under which it still reels. That extraordinary event has been 'apologised' for, but has never been explained. It was a mistake and a misfortune. The tradition of the Anglican Church was powerful. Resting on the Church of Jerusalem, modified by the divine school of Galilee, it would have found that rock of truth which

¹ Disraeli could have taken his title from any number of places: the second book of The Broad Stone of Honour entitled Tancredus (1828); Rossini's Tancredi which he had seen with Henrietta Sykes in 1833 (Jerman, p.187); or even the Thomas Tancred who was one of the Children's Employment Commissioners.

¹ General Preface, Lothair (London, 1870), pp. xiv-xv.

Providence, by the instrumentality of the Semitic race, had promised to St. Peter. Instead of that, the seceders sought refuge in mediaeval superstitions, which are generally only the embodiments of pagan ceremonies and creeds.¹

And Disraeli himself sought refuge in that "Caucasian" theory he had first propounded in Coningsby. If it was a question of finding a "rock of truth" for the Anglican Church, this inevitably meant a return to the cradle of civilization in the Near East and an attempt to compensate for the defection of Newman and his followers by vamping up the Hebraic side of Disraeli's Hebraeo-Christian conception of the Church. In terms of the novel it meant a return, in short, to the world of Contarini, Alroy, and The Rise of Iskander.

The plot of the second and third volumes - apart from the descriptive matter, a chastened return to Contarini and Alroy - is essentially an elaboration on the plot of The Rise of Iskander. The conflict in the latter between the two princes who are friends at the beginning but enemies at the end, the one noble and heroic, the other mischievous and self-serving, is reworked in Tancred's relations with the Emir Fakredeem (a name probably suggested by Fakredin in Vathek). Their adventures make interesting enough reading, and their characters are delineated far more realistically and in greater depth than can be said of their equivalents in Iskander. But they do not really take us anywhere - or rather, they

¹ General Preface, Lothair (London, 1870), pp. xiv-xv.

² II (Bk. IV, Ch. 7), p. 253.

take us to Ansarey (the Queen's name, interestingly, is Astarte) where, in a mountain temple, we come face to face with the original statues of the ancient Greek gods (Tancred exactly resembles Phoebus Apollo!) and we begin for a moment to think that regeneration will be found after all in Athens rather than Jerusalem. But this turns out to be a mere cul de sac and we are soon back at Jerusalem just in time to greet the Duke and Duchess of Bellamont.¹

As for the ostensible purpose of the book, the exposition of the 'Great Asian Mystery', we never find out quite what this is. Well, one may say, isn't it a bit unfair to ask that a 'mystery' be explained? If the answer is yes, one must at least be able to convince oneself that a genuine 'mystery' is involved. But in Tancred what we get is not 'mystery' so much as mystification. Any number of guesses might be made about the nature of Tancred's revelation on Mount Sinai. "Cease then," cries the angel of Arabia, waving 'a scepter, fashioned like a palm tree':²

'to seek in a vain philosophy the solution of the social problem that perplexes you. Announce the sublime and solacing doctrine of theocratic equality. Fear not,

¹. The novel, it will be seen, lends itself to parody, and in The Shilling Book of Beauty (London, 1858) - itself a belated burlesque of the fashionable annuals - there is an attempt at something of the sort by Edward Bradley ('Cuthbert Bede') called 'Tancredi; or, the New Party' by 'Right Hon.B.Bendizzy, M.P.' But the main object of attack, despite several references to the 'Asian Mystery', is Coningsby in which Bradley oddly seems to think Disraeli approved of the 'Venetian constitution'.

². II (Bk.IV, Ch.7), p.243.

faint not, falter not. Obey the impulse of thine own spirit, and find a ready instrument in every human being.¹ only briefly - in the second and third volumes of

Setting aside the logic of the last line - which could well have led Tancred into becoming something like the hero of James Hogg's Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner (1824) - what is meant by the "doctrine of theocratic equality"? One could hazard a few speculations (though none with much authority in the text), but perhaps the most obvious is that all men are equal before God, with the implied corollary that they are equal nowhere else. This is quite consistent with Disraeli's ideas on race and society, and beneath the rhetoric one sees generally what he means: as he has so often, and so rightly, told us before, imagination and energy are the keys to human achievement and so to the history of men and nations. But is this new to anybody - except perhaps some incorrigible Utilitarian like Popanilla? Is it worth going to Jerusalem (and nearly dying of fever) for?

Disraeli has the same difficulty with his theological theories in Tancred as he does with his racial ones in Coningsby. Like many self-educated men (Cobbett, for instance), he is so confident of the value of everything he has to say that he fails to make sufficient allowance for the natural scepticism of his readers. The self-indulgence that

¹ Disraeli was much struck by the book (Letters, p.265; H & B, III, p.30, n.3) and his heavily thumb-stamped copy survives at the Bodleian. He is tempted to regard it as a source for some of Disraeli's ideas about the influence of race in Coningsby - but it was not published until October, 1844.

¹ Ibid., pp.245-246.

so mars Contarini and Alroy has returned to him - though fortunately only briefly - in the second and third volumes of Tancred.

It is, then, the first volume that one remembers best: the splendid scenes amongst the cooks at the beginning (again, a low-life subject treated as comedy of manners), the satire on Chambers' Vestiges of Creation¹, the terse dissection of the means by which Mrs. Guy Flouncey has at last achieved the status of a grande dame, and the gradual exposure of the abortive intrigues of the 'spiritual' Lady Bertie and Bellair (this last a development of the 'Lady Spirituelle' in chapter 9 of Popanilla). And what is here true of Tancred is true also of the Young England novels generally. The attacks upon political abuses and social ills, though they doubtless had considerable influence when the books were first published, are now likely to interest only the social historian. There are exceptions, of course, - the indignation at political self-serving in Coningsby and such scenes as the Zolaesque burning of the Tommy-shop in Sybil can indeed be powerful - but in the main it is Disraeli's love of the subtleties of gossip and intrigue and his scrupulous disentangling of ^{private} ~~public~~ motives and ^{public} ~~private~~ pretexts that compel the reader's attention from page to page and, in the end, leave the strongest impression.

¹. Disraeli was much struck by the book (Letters, p.265; M & B, III, p.36, n.2) and his heavily thumbed copy survives at Hughenden. One might be tempted to regard it as a source for some of Sidonia's ideas about the influence of race in Coningsby - but it was not published until October, 1844.

AFTERWORD

Lothair and Endymion

Twenty-three years separate Tancred and Lothair.

During this time Disraeli had achieved, if only briefly, the very highest political office; he had established his power on a firm base in the Commons; and, quite naturally, he had grown out of many of those ambitions and anxieties that mar his earlier books. His point of view had become altogether more detached and this, one imagines, suited his ironic and contemplative turn of mind.

Lothair and Endymion are easily Disraeli's finest novels and to a large extent they owe their excellence to this very detachment. There is no longer a need for the egoisms of the earlier books (born, one suspects, largely of a lack of genuine self-confidence) or, indeed, for the various theoretical and historical hobby horses that we find in the Young England novels. By the end of the 'sixties Disraeli had become his own master and could give free reign to the most characteristic side of his imagination. His old habit of appropriating ideas and passages from printed works now largely disappears¹ for, in Lothair and Endymion, he is not

¹ Though he does put into Waldershare's mouth in Endymion a few lines from a speech of Smythe's quoted in the memoir at the beginning of Angela Pisani (1875); see M & B, VI, p.562.

jumbling together bits of plot and aspects of character drawn from other works; he is writing directly from his own imagination. This is not to say that these last two novels are not "derivative"; that is true of all Disraeli's fiction. But they are derivative in quite a different sense. The materials that went into them - Lord Eute's recent conversion to Romanism in Lothair and Disraeli's own social and political ascent in Endymion - had been fully digested and they emerged in a form that is unmistakably original.

From the very early days, in Popanilla, in 'Ixion in Heaven', and in 'The Infernal Marriage', Disraeli's love of fantasy had been evident, and it returns in only slightly abated force in these last two novels. It is mistaken to expect a conventional realism in these books. They must be approached in something of the spirit one brings to Virginia Woolf's Orlando, Max Beerbohm's Zuleika Dobson, or even Norman Douglas's South Wind. To complain, in Leslie Stephen's magnificent phrase, that the malleable Lothair is a 'passive bucket'¹ (and Endymion, indeed, a still more 'passive' one) is to assume that Disraeli is aiming at a conventional society novel whereas in fact (as we shall see in a moment) he is doing something both more unusual and more complex.

The power of will - that much-vaunted quality in the earlier novels - became less important to Disraeli as he grew

¹ Hours in a Library, second series (London, 1876), p.352.

older and saw more of the unpredictable and freakish in life. From an interest in so egocistic and wilful a character as Vivian Grey he had moved on to a wider interest in the whole scheme of human affairs; how slight and in themselves insignificant accidents of fate will have vast consequences, and how different events and characters will react against one another in the delicate interplay of social life. His interest had shifted from the autonomous individual to the social and political world in which human destinies work themselves out. To have a strong central character in a novel in which this kind of social conspectus is the primary object would be a mistake. It would mean running the risk that the hero would dominate the action and so draw attention away from the intricate pattern of social causes and effects to a particular individual - creating the illusion, which Disraeli above all wishes to dispel, that each man is the absolute master of his own destiny. This is why in both novels he follows the practise he had begun in Tancred of making his protagonist an ingenu whose interest lies not in the impact he makes upon the world around him but in exactly the reverse.

This absence of "will" in the protagonists is one of several reasons why Lothair and Endymion are "political" in a far larger and truer sense than can be said of the Young England novels. By showing how circumstances act upon his characters rather than how his characters attempt to mould

their circumstances Disraeli can step back from the action and reveal something of the anonymous shaping forces behind human events. This applies as much to the realm of ideas as to that of human conduct. When d'Orsay wrote to Mrs. Disraeli to offer congratulations on Coningsby he had one very predictable reservation: "I would have preferred if D'Is had made his actors discuss on [sic] Politics, instead of having these digressions in his own person".¹ We get no authorial digressions in Lothair, yet it tells us far more about the state of political and religious affairs leading up to 1870 than do the Young England novels for their own period. That wonderful gift for dramatising social situations (which one sees even in the "Temple of the Muses" scene in Sybil) can also be put to work where ideas are concerned. But ideas - and especially political and religious ones - do not exist purely as abstractions. In Lothair Disraeli shows them playing upon the sensibilities of an earnest and unformed but by no means insensitive youth; as they cast and then loosen their spell on him they are, in effect, showing themselves for what they are worth. We do not turn the page to see what the very uninteresting Lothair will do next so much as to see what will be done to him - in short, to see how the various ideas, dramatised in the conflicting efforts of the Roman Catholics,

¹ • Hughenden Papers, Box 233, E / VI / 0 / 15; the letter is dated May 17, 1844.

the revolutionaries, and the Anglicans to secure Lothair's adherence, will work themselves out. For all this it was necessary that the authorial presence should not be so keenly felt as it is in the Young England novels. The aristocratic pageantry and glitter, observed half-affectionately and half-ironically, help to achieve this - and, indeed, are striking and delightful in themselves. But most of all it is a genuine detachment in Disraeli's mind, a withholding of ideological commitment, that gives an essential element of autonomy to the ideas to which Lothair is exposed. Disraeli is able, for example, to make the Catholic point of view attractive in its own right so that even after the cynical attempt to dupe Lothair into believing he had fought on the Papal side there is a careful distinction between Catholics who stoop to fraud (Monsignore Catesby and Cardinal Grandison) and Catholics whose belief is sincere and whose conduct honourable (the St. Jeromes). The revolutionaries, too, have their engaging qualities, especially the General, though it must be admitted that Disraeli does seem to rely rather too heavily upon the mysterious Theodora the source of whose commanding influence on Lothair is not always clear. The Anglicans, ultimately victorious, are the weakest of the three contending forces and perhaps this is because Disraeli finds in the ecclesiastical and social order they represent much that is admirable but little that is exciting. Corisande, indeed, is an insubstantial

little knowledge of the world is a very dangerous thing,

being who, like Lady Annabel, verges at times on the priggish. Her reunion with Lothair at the end (again, the book's structure follows the general da capo pattern of Henrietta Temple) is appropriate both to their characters and as a resolution of the ideological battles Lothair has weathered.

But perhaps the best index to Disraeli's objectivity in writing the book can be found in his treatment of Mr. Phoebus. This brash but charming aesthete hates everything Semitic in the world and adores everything Aryan; when Lothair first meets him and is exposed to his theories he recoils in well-bred distaste, but as the novel proceeds Phoebus shows his attractive side as well and one realizes that Disraeli is depicting the Aryan-Semitic dichotomy as an amiable and harmless crotchet - in fact, a burlesqued Sidonia in reverse.

If authorial detachment was necessary to the ideological give-and-take of Lothair it has an equally important place in Endymion. Some notion of the kind of fiction Disraeli was aiming at in both these works may be gathered from Lord Montfort's remarks in Endymion on another "Novel without a Hero", Vanity Fair:

"... I have got here a most amusing book, "Topsy Turvy;" it comes out in numbers. I like books that come out in numbers, as there is a little suspense, and you cannot deprive yourself of all interest by glancing at the last page of the last volume. I think you must read "Topsy Turvy," Berengaria. I am mistaken if you do not hear of it. It is very cynical, which authors, who know a little of the world, are apt to be, and everything is exaggerated, which is another of their faults when they are only a trifle acquainted with manners. A little knowledge of the world is a very dangerous thing,

especially in literature. But it is clever, and the man writes a capital style; and style is everything, especially in fiction.¹

Thackeray's insistence upon passing judgement - often immediate and absolute - upon the characters that pass through his pages is Disraeli's primary complaint for it inevitably falsifies the very world he is trying to delineate.² Style is perhaps as much a way of seeing things as a way of writing, and for Disraeli the proper way to see the social carnival is in the round, scrupulously withholding hasty and unqualified judgements much as he withholds them in his treatment of Monmouth in Coningsby.

The central position occupied by ideas in Lothair yields, in Endymion, to character and circumstance. Again the protagonist is passive - but not so his sister who, with Berengaria and others, urges him on, at times very much against his will, to political and social exertions which leave him Prime Minister at the end. We know very little of Endymion's political beliefs except that he is a Whig vaguely sympathetic to repeal of the Corn Laws. As a character in the

¹. III, pp.14-15 (Ch.70).

². The ferocious caricature of Thackeray as St.Barbe is itself, in part, an elaboration of this complaint. For an excellent study of St.Barbe, see David E.Painting, 'Thackeray v. Disraeli', Quarterly Review (October 1964); Painting suggests that much of Disraeli's animosity can be traced to the fact that 'Coningsby' with its marked anti-Semitism was published just at a time when his position in the Commons was especially delicate.

usual sense he is too vague to amount to much. But the novel, despite its title, is not about Endymion. One suspects that all along Disraeli had wanted to write a novel that would show the behind-the-scenes world of political and social machinations; the knowing coyness of Vivian Grey even points in this direction. Endymion - and it is interesting to observe that he had been intermittently at work on it since 1870¹ - follows logically on Lothair in that, again, the world that surrounds the protagonist is more important than the protagonist himself. As a balanced and ruminative survey of the upper echelons of English society, set largely in the 'thirties and 'forties, the book would be difficult to rival. In a sense it is Disraeli's riposte to Vanity Fair - an attempt to show the great world, with all its trivialities and inconsequences, exactly as it is. There is a reflective repose about the novel that does not signify an exhaustion of energy so much as a surrender at long last to the contemplative side - so long stifled - of Disraeli's personality. Lord Montfort, Berengaria, Lord Roehampton, Waldershare, Neuchatel, and Job Thornberry are fully developed characters none of whom ever utters a dull word, while the lesser figures (with the exception of Jawett and St. Barbe, St. Jerome and their magnificent Vauxe, and in Endymion there

1. For a thorough study of the novel's composition, see Robert Blake, 'The Dating of Endymion', Review of English Studies (May, 1966), pp. 177-182.

both of whom are scarcely more than caricatures) are carefully arranged to support the action in the foreground. The result is a meticulous delineation of a world somewhere between the fanciful and the real in which the events, whether carefully meditated or haphazard, and the characters, purposeful or slipshod, are neatly tied in with one another in what amounts to a detached and ironic comedy of manners on a grand scale.

Lothair and Endymion together represent - much more than do the Young England novels - a new stage in the development of Disraeli's art. But its roots can be seen in the stark and vengeful social comedy of the first part of Vivian Grey, in the love of fantasy in Popanilla, in the growing reticence and sense of social nuance in Henrietta Temple, and in the detached but partly sympathetic irony with which the real hero of Coningsby, Lord Monmouth, is presented. Such favourite themes of Disraeli as mysterious portraits, grand old Catholic houses, and wise if worldly mentors can still be found in these last two works. There is the statue of Theodora mounted on a prophery plinth - as in the Diana of Henrietta Temple; and there is in Endymion the Gainsborough portrait so "very like" Myra. In Lothair we have the St. Jeromes and their magnificent Vauxe, and in Endymion there is Thornberry's Hurstley, Romanized under the influence of Nigel Penruddock. Benevolent mentors necessarily appear in

both books - Paraclete in Lothair and Baron Sergius in Endymion. But the important point about these and many other such elements that can be traced back to the earlier books is that in Lothair and Endymion they are so unobtrusive. Disraeli has resolutely subordinated his old preoccupations to the special purposes of his last two novels; he has gradually developed a sense of structure and proportion lacking in his earlier works. As Samuel Butler and his friend Festing Jones noted:

the growth observable throughout Lord Beaconsfield's life was continued to the end. He was one of those who, no matter how long he lived, would have been always growing: this is what makes his later novels so much better than those of Thackeray and Dickens. There was something of the child about him to the last. Earnestness was his greatest danger, but if he did not quite overcome it (as who indeed can? - it is the last enemy that shall be subdued), he managed to veil it with a fair amount of success.¹

It is not easy to choose between Lothair and Endymion. Both are accomplished and Lothair perhaps sparkles the most, but it is Endymion that is the more polished work of art. We are spared, for example, the ghost of Theodora appearing in the Coliseum and the mysterious Paraclete who enters the story and then vanishes without much reason - indeed, the last of the second volume teeters on the brink of a return to the spirit of Contarini and Alroy. No such difficulties arise in Endymion which is what none of Disraeli's other

¹. Alps and Sanctuaries (1882), ed. H.F.Jones and A.T. Bartholomew (London and New York, 1924), p.120.

novels can be said to be: a complete and finished whole unbroken by digressions or mystifications. It is almost as if Disraeli knew that he had not long to live and were determined to pull together into a vast and saturnine social panorama recollections of his past and the best in his previous writings. The wryness, the irony, the amused contemplation of the human comedy that appear crudely and fitfully in Vivian Grey have their finest expression in Disraeli's last two novels, and perhaps especially in Endymion.

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APPENDIX A

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.. , .. , De Vere (London, 1827).

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-- , -- The Young Duke (London, 1905)

APPENDIX B

The Reverend Eli Cogan

So little is known about Disraeli's schooling that it may be useful to bring together several references to the Reverend Eli Cogan (1762-1855) and his school at Higham Hill, Walthamstow, which seem to have escaped Disraeli's biographers. Cogan was a self-educated Unitarian minister whom Isaac first met at the bookshop of Payne and Foss¹ where, Disraeli later wrote, 'Cogan purchased always the finest editions in the finest condition'.² Late in 1820 Isaac tried to persuade him to become a reviewer for one of the periodicals, but Cogan politely declined.³

Despite its small size, Cogan's school was not so obscure as one is apt to assume today. 'Mr. Cogan's reputation as a schoolmaster', wrote P.W. Clayden in 1883, was universal in the first quarter of the present century. The house at Higham Hill, Walthamstow, was always full, and an unusual number of his pupils gained distinction or success in after life. Dr. Parr, in a letter to Archbishop Magee, speaks of him as 'an accurate Greek scholar, and a diligent and discriminating reader of the best critical works which have been lately published at Berlin, Leyden, Göttingen, Leipsic and Paris, and at home by Porson, Blomfield, Gaisford, and Elmsley.' His method was to

¹ Hughenden Papers, Box 303, Notebook A, and Box 291.

² M & B, I, p.24. Cogan's library was sold at Sotheby's on Sept.3, 1855.

³ Hughenden Papers, Box 243, G / I / 173; the letter is dated Dec.26, 1820.

ground his pupils in the grammar of the classical languages, and he probably estimated their ability and measured his esteem for them by their success in Latin and Greek composition. Speaking to the late Rev. J. J. Tayler of Mr. Disraeli (afterwards Lord Beaconsfield), who had been one of his pupils, he once said:- "I don't like him. I never could get him to understand the subjunctive." ¹

In 1818 Samuel Rogers, on behalf of a Mrs. Greg, made "some enquiries respecting Mr. Cogan's school" and reported as follows:

Mr. Towgood has sent all his sons there but one who was not very strong and has never been to any school but as a day boarder; the youngest is there now, and is just fourteen, so that he can't give a stronger proof of his opinion of it. Only the two eldest of the Sharpes, from some circumstances, have been there, but Miss Sharpe says that she much prefers it to any school she ever heard of, as the boys are not only made to learn while there but are inspired with the love of it, which is certainly of the greatest importance, for what is learnt at school is of trifling consequence provided it is followed up afterwards. Mrs. Cogan is a very kind and good nurse, but as the house is too much crowded to allow of any rooms being set apart for the sick, it would not be so eligible a situation for a delicate boy whose friends live at a distance, and the majority are certainly under fourteen. ²

Notwithstanding the inevitable emphasis on classical studies - Disraeli complained that nothing was thought of "but the two dead languages" ³ - one feature of the school which may have influenced Isaac's decision to send his eldest

¹. Samuel Sharpe (London, 1883), p.28.

². Quoted by P.W. Clayden, Rogers and his Contemporaries (London, 1889), I, p.277.

³. M & B, I, p.24.

son there was its openness, then by no means common, to the study of English subjects. Samuel Sharpe, whose younger brother Daniel was a contemporary of Disraeli's at the school¹, wrote in his journal:

Sutton and I were sent to Mr.Cogan's school at Higham Hill, Walthamstow ... At school I made fair progress in Latin and Greek. I learned a little French and Mathematics, and during the play hours I read many of the best English histories and other standard works, which were always within our reach in the school library.²

Doris Gunnell, in her life of Sutton Sharpe (a friend of Stendhal), is even more forthright on this point:

Prenons-le vers l'âge de dix-huit ans, au moment où il finit ses études scolaire. Il les a faites brillamment à la pension du docteur Cogan, pédagogue fort célèbre pendant les premières années du XIX^e siècle, et dont la grande originalité était d'encourager chez élèves de goût de la littérature anglaise. N'alla-t-il pas jusqu'à leur permettre de lire les auteurs contemporains pendant les repas, au grande scandale de ses collègues plus orthodoxes? L'autre article de son programme pédagogique, moins osé celui-là, consistait en l'étude des langues anciennes.³

Whatever Disraeli's experiences at the school may have been, on December 20, 1828, he was one of 118 of Cogan's former pupils who, in honour of his retirement, gave him a dinner at the Albion Tavern in Aldersgate Street and presented him with a portrait by Thomas Phillips, R.A.⁴

¹. Doris Gunnell, Sutton Sharpe et ses amis français (Paris 1925), p.8n.

². Quoted by P.W.Clayden, Samuel Sharpe (London, 1883), p.27.

³. Sutton Sharpe et ses amis français (Paris, 1925), p.8.

⁴. George F.Bosworth, Essex Hall, Walthamstow, and the Cogan Associations (Walthamstow Antiquarian Society, Official Publication No.5, 1918), pp.12-13 and Appendix III.

APPENDIX C

John Payne Collier on Disraeli

Collier's memorandum on Disraeli, dating from sometime between 1868 and 1872, has one great advantage over most such commentaries: it was written by a contemporary who had observed its subject from the early days of his career. Unfortunately, it also has a great disadvantage: Collier's deadly inaccuracy (not to put too fine a point upon it) has long been notorious and his remarks below are in several respects glaringly incorrect. Still, there seems no particular reason to doubt Disraeli's association with Thomas Campbell's 'Literary Union'¹ - a connection not otherwise recorded - and it is interesting to learn of his early friendship with 'a man of the name of Churchill'.²

-
1. Founded by Campbell in 1829, the society was intended as a sort of metropolitan literary symposium (ultimately to have provincial affiliates) at which members would read papers as the spirit moved them. Campbell himself, however, is said to have been the only member so moved, and although the society lasted until 1843 it seems fairly early to have declined into an ordinary London club. See Life and Letters of Thomas Campbell, ed. William Beattie, M.D. (London, 1849), III, pp.48-56, and Cyrus Redding, Literary Reminiscences and Memoirs of Thomas Campbell (London, 1860), II, pp.261-270. It is at least possible that the 'London Union' debating society described in Endymion (I, pp.221-225, et seq [Ch.24]) may owe something to Disraeli's recollections of Campbell's 'Literary Union'.
 2. Possibly N.John Spencer Churchill from whom there are nine letters (1828-30) to J.V.Evans at Hughenden (Box 174, D / I / F / 80-88).

The eye-witness account of his maiden speech in parliament, a subject on which much has been written, is also worth having for its description of Disraeli's 'dictatorial' tone and the 'derisive'¹ cheers to which he sat down.

The manuscript is in the Folger Shakespeare Library (Y.d.6) and I am grateful to Professor David Clay Jenkins for drawing it to my attention. In the following transcript, words struck out have been enclosed in angular brackets.

Benjamin Disraeli.

He began life as clerk to an eminent Solicitor in Colman Street, on one of whose desks "Ben. Disraeli" cut with his own pen-knife may yet be seen. I have been told by <his> a fellow clerk<s> what I can readily believe that he paid little attention to professional business himself and <that> by his clever vivacity hindered those who had more anxiety to attend to their duties. At this period he composed various political songs all on the side of the liberal party: one of them was a parody on Emery's well known Yorkshire effusion,

"When I goes to town with a load o' hay,

Mean & lowly though I seems,

<we> I knows pretty well how they figures away,

Whilst I<le> whistles & drives my team."

Disraeli made all his verses satirically & humorously applicable to the political parties & events of the time - i.e. about 1825. He sometimes contributed them to newspapers on his, then, side of the question, and kept the party supplied with paragraphs, and even longer articles, for which he was duly paid: it is untrue (as I know) to assert that his contributions were disinterested:

¹ Was this perhaps why Peel was reported as having 'quite screamed with laughter'? See Blake, p.149.

on the contrary, he was duly rewarded for them in money more than in reputation, as well as for letters he sent during a short residence (abroad) in Palestine, and elsewhere abroad. The fact is that he could never keep his pen from scribbling and before he was of age he published his first novel "Vivian Grey": its success was encouraging & he soon followed it by other works of the same class. He was one of the original members of T.Campbell club the "Literary Union" (afterwards "the Clarence") and presented to it various books one of which was his "Revolutionary Epic". I joined the association when it first met at Campbells house in Scotland Yard, and then it was that Disraeli was active in procuring good (names) members. One of his intimate friends whom he introduced was a man of the name of Churchill, a rather irregular liver, who was very active and made speeches for him when Disraeli put up for High Wycombe, not far from Bradenham House where his father resided, but did not approve of the extreme radical politics, professed by his son, and upon which he stood at the general election. He was returned for Maidstone in 1837 (and) for Shrewsbury in 1841 and for Buckinghamshire in 1847. By this date he had completely changed his politics and obtained the suffrages of the freeholders on high Tory principles. I heard his maiden speech in Parliament when he sat on the opposition side of the house and when with great fluency and considerable power he took so dictatorial a tone towards all parties that the House generally resented it and he was at last coughed and scraped down, but ended with this remarkable and prophetic sentence:- I perceive clearly that the House is determined not to (hear) listen to me now, but the time will come when it shall hear me"; and so saying, he sat down amid the derisive cheers of the whole assembly: how well his prophecy was fulfilled (we) need not be stated, but it must be added that for some months Disraeli was a silent member, & that when he again presented himself to the house his tone was greatly altered and he became deferential instead of dictatorial. At the time he was thus commencing his great career he still kept up his connexion with newspapers & was paid by them for his contributions; but they by this time indicated clearly an approaching change in his political opinions: he also abandoned most of his former associates, though he still kept up a friendly intercourse with Churchill: he no longer was seen at the Literary Union.

I remember that on(e) one occasion afterwards his "Revolutionary Epic" was jocularly thrown in his teeth; but he only joined in the laugh and spoke of it as "a boyish folly". He now shifted his helm, (and) steered in the very opposite direction, and has made a most successful voyage.

His course has since become so historical that everybody is acquainted with the various incidents. The first port at which he touched was in company with Sir Robert Peel, who however rather distrusted his new ally and did not allow him <much> sufficient sea-room <that he might> to spread all his ambitious <can> canvass. Under Lord George Bentinck he became most useful and <even> absolutely essential when the Earl of Derby came into power under whom he served as Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the House of Commons <no> though not a few of the old Tories were disposed to grumble at his prominence. <His> The father continued a Jew to the last but the son, when he became Prime Minister found it at least convenient to become a Christian. He could not be spared in the House of Commons or he might himself (like Sir Robert Peel) have become a peer; but as some acknowledgement of his services, his wife, the rich widow of Wyndham Lewis, <was raised to the> obtained a coronet in her own right as Viscountess Beaconsfield with remainder to whomever she shall by will appoint.

When John Murray and others started "the Independent" it contained in the first number a very long leading article of some five or six columns, & for many years Disraeli had the credit of being the writer of it: of late years this has been distinctly denied; but it has not been denied that he was the paid author of many of the articles in the paper. From what I know, I do not <believe> think it likely that it will be denied.

Mrs Wyndham Lewis whom Disraeli married had been companion, some assert lady's-maid, to the first Mrs and Wyndham Lewis. Upon this point I know nothing: she is said to be a very accomplished woman; but so are all Viscountesses said to be.

As a young man Disraeli had been keenly interested in painting. His father, a bibliophile, antiquarian, and inveterate Royalist, was working throughout the 1820's on his Commentaries on the Life and Reign of Charles I (1828-1831) and would naturally have been attracted to so unusual a portrait of Charles II. We have no way of knowing for sure, but if Greve's plate did come to Disraeli's notice - bought, perhaps, by his father during one of his rambles among the booksellers and print shops - he might well have been struck by the quasi-clerical pose and costume of the

APPENDIX D

The Pineapple Allegory in Popanilla

An exotic tropical fruit at first imported into England and later grown here, the pineapple lends itself admirably to the allegorical purposes of chapter XIV of Popanilla. No doubt Disraeli knew in general terms something of the fruit's history, but the notion of linking it with Christianity is quite another matter.

Where did he get the idea? There is a possibility - and it is nothing more - that it might have come to him by way of the celebrated portrait of 'Charles II Presented with a Pineapple' (ca. 1675) which Horace Walpole had attributed to Danckerts. Although there is no reason to suppose that Disraeli knew this painting, he could easily have seen the line engraving of it made by Robert Grave (1798-1873) and published on May 1st, 1823.

As a young man Disraeli had been keenly interested in painting. His father, a bibliophile, antiquarian, and inveterate Royalist, was working throughout the 1820's on his Commentaries on the Life and Reign of Charles I (1828-1831) and would naturally have been attracted to so unusual a portrait of Charles II. We have no way of knowing for sure, but if Grave's plate did come to Disraeli's notice - bought, perhaps, by his father during one of his rambles among the booksellers and print shops - he might well have been struck by the quasi-clerical pose and costume of the

gardener which in turn could have suggested the idea of making pineapples stand for Christianity and a caste of pineapple-growing market-gardeners for the clergy. At any rate, the description of the arrival of the first pineapple at Vraibleusia runs close enough to Grave's plate: 'The master of the vessel [we are later told that he is 'merely a market-gardener on a great scale'], on being brought before the King ..., presented, with his right hand, to his Majesty, a small pyramidal substance of a golden hue, which seemed to spring out of green and purple leaves. His Majesty did not exactly understand the intention of this ceremony, but of course, like a true legitimate, construed it into a symbol of homage ...' ¹.

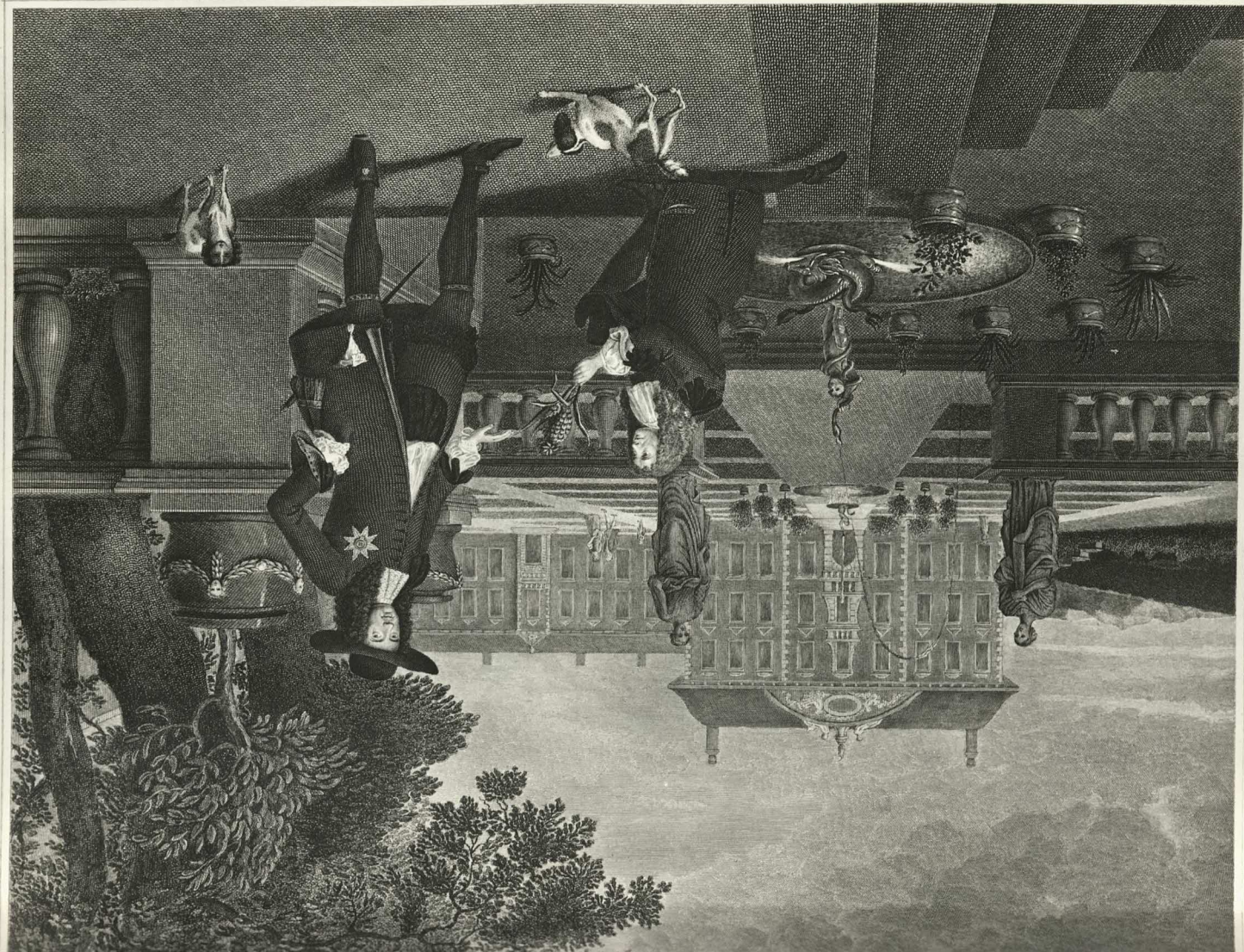
There are three versions of the painting itself the best of which belonged to Horace Walpole. After Walpole's death it passed indirectly to the sixth Earl Waldegrave (who allowed Grave to reproduce it in 1823); it was in the Strawberry Hill sale of 1842 and is now in the collection of the Marchioness of Cholmondeley at Houghton. Other versions belong to H.M. the Queen and Lord Harlech. The gardener shown presenting the pineapple is John Rose (1619-1677), Chief Gardener to Charles II, but botanists think it doubtful if pineapples were grown in England much before the eighteenth century so that it may be an imported one. Evelyn mentions the presentation of foreign pineapples to the

¹. p. 187.

King as early as 1661, and it is interesting to note that this is the only picture of Charles II in everyday dress. There is some uncertainty about the identity of the house in the background.

For further particulars on the painting, see Oliver Millar, The Tudor, Stuart and Early Georgian Pictures in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen (London, 1963), item 316; Christopher Hussey, 'Dorney Court - II', Country Life, August 2, 1924, pp.176-183; Lionel Cust, 'The First Pineapple Grown in England', Apollo, February, 1926, pp.73-79; and Miles Hadfield, 'Growing Pineapples in Britain', Country Life, May 14, 1959, pp.1072-1073.

I am grateful to the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, for enabling me to reproduce the Grave plate (340mm. x 390mm.) overleaf.



FROM THE ORIGINAL PICTURE AT STRAWBERRY HILL.

FROM THE ORIGINAL PICTURE AT STRAWBERRY HILL.

ROB. GAYE SCULPT.

ROBERT GAYE.

TO THE MOST NOBLE RICHARD PLANTAGENET MARQUIS OF CHANDOS,
 THIS PLATE OF KING GEORGE II. REMOVING THE FIRST FIRE ARMY (LIT) IN ENGLAND, FROM ROSE THE GARDENER, AT DARTMOUTH, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE,
 THE SEAT OF THE DUCHESS OF CLEVELAND, IS RESPECTFULLY
 INSCRIBED BY HIS LORDSHIP'S MOST OBLIGED HUMBLE SERVANT
 ROBERT GAYE.

London, Published May 1733, by J. A. Wilson, at Pall Mall, and R. Greville, at Endicott Place, Hampshire Road.

Printed by N. Collins.

APPENDIX E

Disraeli's Letters in Contarini Fleming

The following table locates by page numbers the various passages in his letters which Disraeli reproduced almost verbatim in the fourth volume of Contarini:

<u>Home Letters</u>	-	<u>Contarini Fleming</u>
(London, 1928)		(London, 1832) IV

51-52.....	5-8 (Pt.V, Ch.1)
50-51.....	9-11
33.....	11 (Ch.2)
22,40-41.....	11-17
45-47.....	19-27 (Ch.3)
36.....	33-41 (Ch.5)
40-43.....	41-49 (Ch.6)
37-40.....	49-53 (Ch.7)
23.....	54-55 (Ch.8)
75.....	57-58 (Ch.10)
64-66.....	60-65
66-69.....	66-73 (Ch.11)
69-71.....	73-79 (Ch.12)
72-74.....	79-87 (Ch.13)
78.....	118-119 (Ch.22)
81.....	119-120
82,80.....	120-130 (Chs.22-24)
87-89.....	170-175 (Pt.VI, Chs.4-5)
97.....	195-196 (Ch.10)

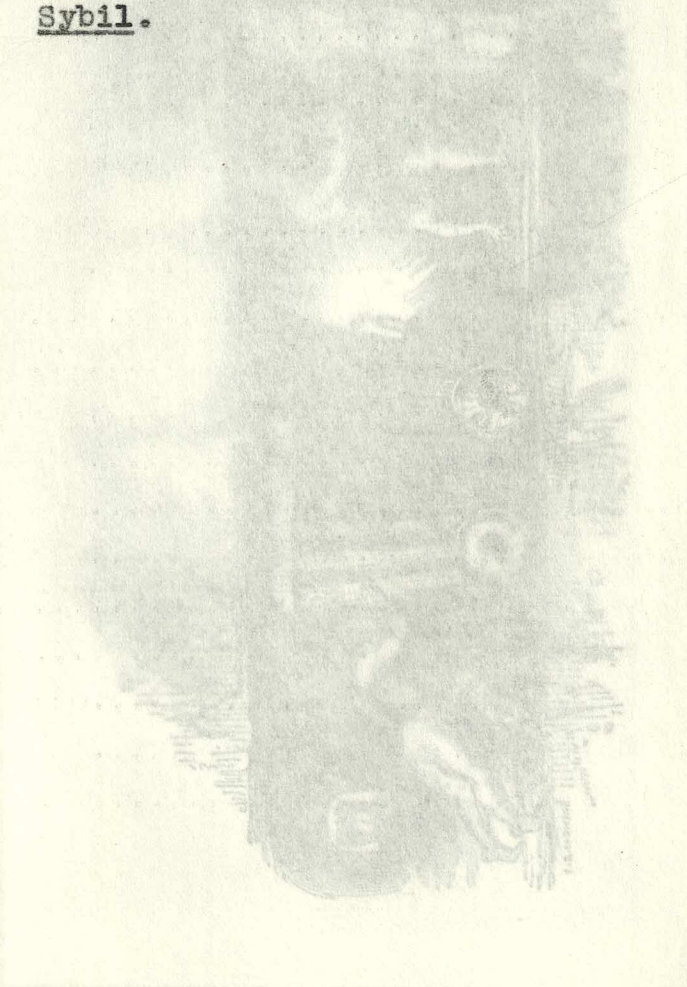
In the second volume of the novel, Disraeli draws upon recollections of his journey, with the Austens in 1826, across the Alps and on to Venice. He had described his experiences in letters to his father (reproduced in part by Monypenny), but when writing Contarini he seems to have relied, despite occasional common phrases, solely upon his memory. The following comparisons make an interesting contrast to his use of letters in volume four:

M & B, I	-	<u>Contarini Fleming</u> , II
96-97.....		199-200 (Part III, Ch.1)
98-99.....		209-211
100-101.....		212-230 (Chs.2-4)
104-105.....		231-247 (Ch.5)

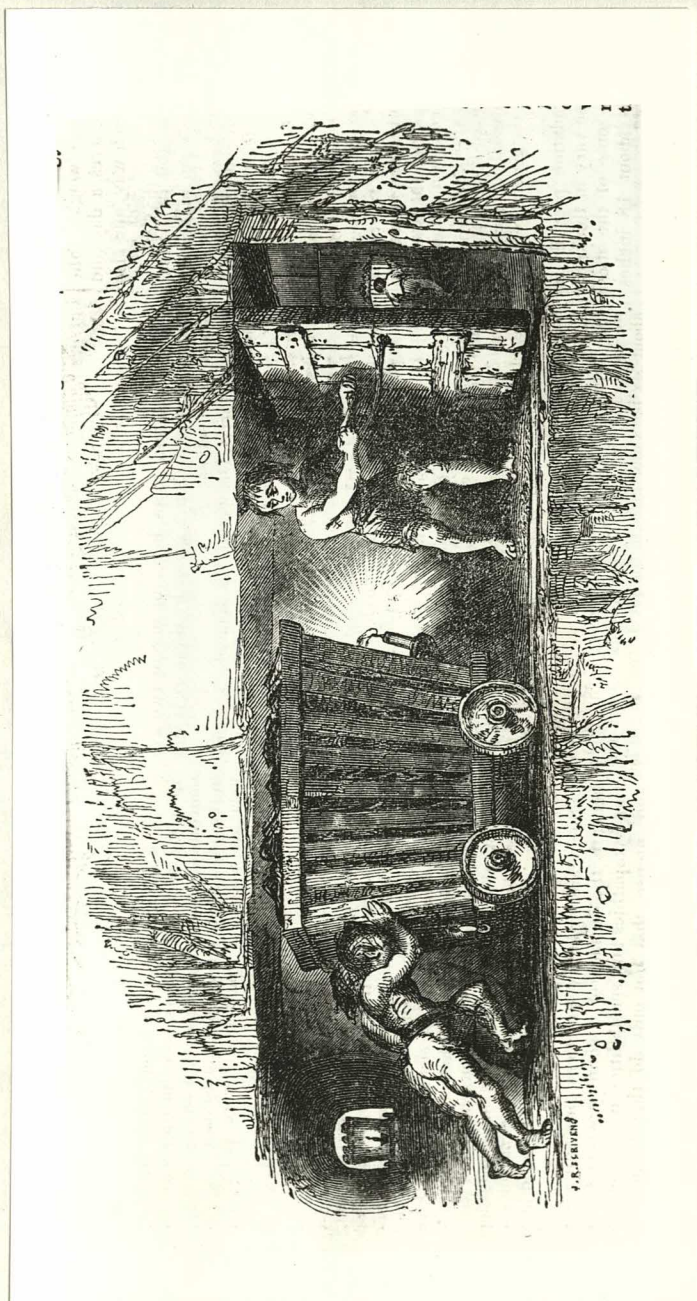
The Athenaeum (N. APPENDIX F 1846:

The Athenaeum Woodcuts of Children in the Mines

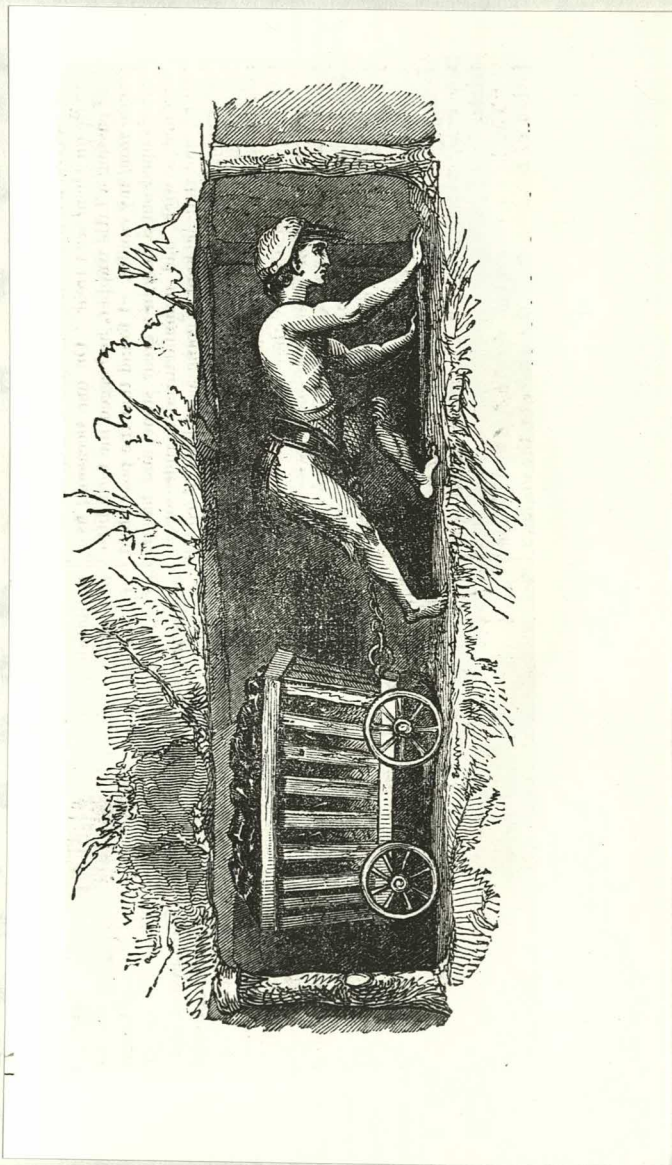
See above, p. 298. The two woodcuts reproduced on the following page, in their original size, from The Athenaeum for May 7, 1842, should be compared, respectively, with the third and fourth paragraphs of Book III, chapter 1, of Sybil.



The Athenaeum (May 7, 1842), p.396:



The Athenaeum (May 7, 1842), p.397:



APPENDIX G

A Finding-List of Disraeli's Manuscripts

A Documentary and Critical Survey

The following list gives the present location of most of the manuscripts of Disraeli's novels :

- Vivian Grey, Part One }
Vivian Grey, Part Two } - Hughenden and Houghton Library,
 Harvard; see above, p.139, n.1.
- Popanilla - J.Pierpont Morgan Library, New York; see above ,
 p.140, n.1.
- The Young Duke - unknown; see above, p.129, n.1. There are a
 few fragments at Hughenden.
- Contarini Fleming - unknown; sold at Christie's in 1881 to
 Sir Theodore Martin. There are a few
 fragments at Hughenden.
- Alroy - the Earl of Rosebery. There are some fragments at
 Hughenden.
- The Rise of Iskander - British Museum.
- Henrietta Temple - Hughenden (incomplete).
- Venetia - Hughenden (incomplete).
- Coningsby - Hughenden.
- Sybil - Hughenden.
- Tancred - Hughenden.
- Lothair - Hughenden (almost complete).
- Endymion - Hughenden.
- Falconet (unfinished) - Hughenden.

An indispensable guide to the materials at Hughenden is R.W.Stewart's Hand List of the Hughenden Papers (1961; revised, 1968; 'Summary Index', [1970]) published by the National Trust, 42 Queen Anne's Gate, London S.W.1. Mr.Stewart has also compiled a most helpful typewritten catalogue of the Literary Papers (Boxes 205-238, E) which will be found in Box 237. In addition to the manuscripts, the Hughenden collection includes revised proof sheets for most of the novels and extensive correspondence from publishers.

ABSTRACT

Disraeli as a Novelist

A Documentary and Critical Survey

This study is based primarily upon the Disraeli Papers in the custody of the National Trust at Hughenden Manor; letters and documents from other sources, however, have been consulted and occasionally quoted. Broadly speaking, Disraeli's development as a novelist was from the highly autobiographical in his early works through a period of concern with social issues in the Young England novels on to a detached and contemplative view of politics and 'Society' in his last two works. Disraeli was an intensely 'bookish' writer - not in the antiquarian manner of his father, but in the sense that his imagination was often very strongly affected by what he had read so that even in his middle years he was apt to return in his fiction to themes that had first struck him in the readings of his youth. His dependence, indeed, upon printed sources - sometimes involving direct and unacknowledged quotation - is a good inverse index of his growth as a novelist: in the early works his sources are easily recognized while in his last two novels they are barely distinguishable.

Chapter One examines the first two volumes of Vivian Grey (1826) against the background of Disraeli's involvement with Murray over the setting up of the Representative and the

appointment of Lockhart to the editorship of the Quarterly Review; much of the evidence is drawn from the nine letters which Disraeli wrote to Lockhart in 1825 during the midst of their negotiations. The bearing of Isaac D'Israeli's novels on Vivian Grey is also assessed.

Chapter Two considers the continuation of Vivian Grey (vols.III-V, 1827) in terms of Disraeli's interest in the 'picaresque' and contains the suggestion, largely on circumstantial evidence, that most of the continuation might well have been written before the first two volumes. Some of his sources, recorded in a notebook at Hughenden, are identified and discussed, most especially Charles Edward Dodd's An Autumn near the Rhine (1821).

Chapter Three attempts to show that in both Popanilla (1828) and The Young Duke (1831) Disraeli deals with many of the same autobiographical materials that had gone into the first part of Vivian Grey, but with a far greater degree of detachment. Some of Bulwer's letters are examined and found to provide evidence that the third volume of The Young Duke, which in some ways anticipates themes Disraeli will develop in Sybil, was composed in part under Bulwer's supervision.

Chapter Four considers Disraeli's two worst novels, Contarini Fleming (1832) and Alroy (1833), in the light of his attempt during his travels in the Mediterranean and the Near East to decide whether his ambition should be directed towards politics or letters and suggests that, so far as his novels are

concerned, his decision in favour of the former was a wise one, for it freed him from the necessity of those egoisms and vanities that disfigure both these works.

Chapter Five investigates the composition of Henrietta Temple (1837) and Venetia (1837) showing in the latter, written under great financial stress, that despite Disraeli's careful use of printed sources for information about Byron and Shelley he had no very clear conception of what the poetic imagination involves. Henrietta Temple, on the other hand, is a novel of considerable skill and in Disraeli's revision of the manuscript at the suggestion of Colburn's reader it is possible to see him (now that he had decided to subordinate literature to politics) becoming a very good critic of his own writings.

Chapter Six examines some of the sources of the Young England Trilogy and argues that Disraeli's ideological preoccupations (few of which seem to have been wholly original) tend to detract from the quality of these novels - although it is certainly true that the treatment of political and social issues in Coningsby (1844) and Sybil (1845) helped to open up a new vein for the novelist. Disraeli had discovered in writing Henrietta Temple that his real gift as a novelist was for social comedy and that is the aspect of the trilogy that is most successful.

There is an Afterword suggesting that Lothair (1870) and Endymion (1880) are Disraeli's most characteristic novels and that in their ironic detachment they are 'political' in a far more comprehensive sense than can be said of the Young England trilogy.