

which, with one exception, are the most brilliant of all his productions. Ixion in Heaven, The Infernal Marriage, and Papanilla, a satire on the English Constitution. Here we have his real mind, and matter, style, and manner are equally admirable. The influence of Lucian and Swift is noticeable in Disraeli's satire, but it is all pleasant, laughing and good-humored. In all his life he never hated anybody or anything; never bore a grudge or remembered a libel against himself. In June, 1830, he again went abroad, and his adventures are related in a series of brilliant and charming letters to his family. In a year the tour was over, and his health recovered.

The law was at this time practically abandoned, and Disraeli now hoped to be a poet. But his "Revolutionary Epic" was not a success, and he again took up prose. "Contarini Fleming" and the tale of "Alroy" were well received and the fame of "Vivian Grey" was revived. He became a London lion. The saloons of the great were thrown open to him.

At Bulwer's house he met many notabilities. Lady Blessington welcomed him at Kensington. He made acquaintances with Lord Mulgrave, Lord William Lennox, and Tom Moore. Though success as a novelist might gratify vanity, it alone could never meet Disraeli's aspirations. "He met public men, and studied the ways of them, dimly feeling that their's was the sphere where he could best distinguish himself." He met Peel, and found him most gracious. It was now that he first met Mrs. Wyndham Lewis, whose husband was a gentleman of large fortune and member for Maidstone, in the Tory interest. They became close friends. The death of William IV. in the summer of 1837, dissolved Parliament; and Disraeli, being adopted by Mr. Lewis as his colleague, was returned by an easy majority. But the deeply coveted seat in the House of Commons had not been obtained until after three great struggles. Disraeli was poor; he had no social connection; his fame as a novelist was no recommendation to a constituency. But his extraordinary confidence in his own powers never allowed him to doubt. His striking and original speeches, his brilliant contributions to *The Times* his novels, his social successes kept him constantly before the world. Few men with the odds so heavy against them had risen so high in so short a time.

In his fifth chapter, Mr. Froude has excelled himself. Besides giving the best and fairest description of Disraeli's early days in the House, which we have yet seen, he gives an eminently effective sketch of the state of public affairs when the novelist's political life began. Down to the Reformation of the sixteenth century men and women of all ranks were brought up on the hypothesis that their business in this world was not to grow rich, but to do their duties in the state of life to which they had been called. It was then that in every parish there arose a church, on which piety lavished every ornament which skill could command, and then and thus was formed the English nation, which was to exercise so vast an influence on the fortunes of mankind. The fear of God made England, and no great nation was ever made by any other fear. But after the Reformation "Protestantism dwindled into opinion and ceased to be a rule of life." The faith itself became consistent with the active sense that pleasure was pleasant and wealth was power, and while our faith would make things right in the next world we might ourselves make something out of the present. From the Restoration downwards the owners of land began to surround themselves with luxuries, and the employers of labour to buy it at the cheapest rate. Selfishness became first a practice and then developed boldly into a theory. Life was a race in which the strongest had a right to win. Man could not alter the laws of nature,

which political economy had finally discovered. Vast fortunes were accumulated as the world's markets opened wide. But in this prosperity the working class did not share. The remedy of the economists was to heat the furnace still hotter, to abolish every lingering remnant of restraint, and stifle complaint by admitting the workingmen to political power. In the meantime let the Corn Laws go. Let all taxes on articles of consumption go.

But protection for native industry had been established for centuries. It had prevailed and still prevails in spite of the arguments of free-traders all the world over, and under all forms of government. The principle of it has been and is that no country is in a sound or safe condition which cannot feed its own population, independent of the foreigners. Take protection away and wheat would cease to be grown. The peasantry of the villages would dwindle away. Into the town they would drift in festering masses, living precariously from day to day, ever pressing on the means of employment, with decaying physique and growing discontent.

With regard to all this Disraeli had his own views. He had declared that no Government should have his support which did not introduce some large measure to improve the condition of the poor. He had chosen the Conservative side, because he had no belief in the promises of the political economists, or in the blessed results to follow from cutting the strings and leaving everyone to find his own level. He held to the old conceptions of the commonwealth, that all orders must work faithfully together; that trade has to be extended, not by cheapness and free markets, but by good workmanship, and superior merit, and that the object which statesmen ought to set before themselves was the maintenance of the character of the people, not the piling up in enormous heaps of what wealth had now come to mean. The facts that he considered most important to be known were the facts of human nature and human responsibilities; and the interpretation of those facts, which had been revealed to his own race, Disraeli really believed to be deeper and truer than any modern speculation. To him Christianity was only Judaism developed. Moreover, he had taken the teaching of Carlyle to heart. Both regarded the aristocracy as the least corrupted part of the community, and to them, in alliance with the people, Disraeli looked for a return of the English nation to the lines of true progress. The Church was moving at Oxford. A wave of political Conservatism was sweeping over the country. He thought he saw signs of a genuine reaction, and Peel, he hoped, would give effect to his hopes.

Such were his convictions. Outwardly, he amused himself in the high circles which his Parliamentary notoriety had opened to him. The affectation which was natural in him as a boy, was itself affected in the matured politician, whom it served well as a mask, or as a suit of impenetrable armour.

The story of Disraeli's first appearance in the House of Commons is too well known to repeat here, but it should be noted that his first speech was not a failure, as many erroneously suppose. By the Premier and by the Tory party he was cheered repeatedly. He was put down by the clamour of a jealous clique. The Speaker could not silence it. A week after he had been howled down, he spoke again, and was listened to with curious attention. Never after had Disraeli to complain that he was not listened to with respect. It was supposed that he was looking for office and that Peel's neglect of him in 1841 was the cause of his subsequent revolt. But if office was really his object, never did any man take a worse way of recommending himself. His independence irritated Peel. He would not put on harness and be docile in the shafts. His sympathy with the Chartists