

His father was Isaac Disraeli, author of "Curiosities of Literature," and whom his illustrious son described as "a complete literary character."

The family is a Hebrew one of great antiquity. Indeed, O'Connell, in replying to a somewhat cowardly attack made upon him by young Disraeli, very delicately insinuated that this political stripping was descended from the thief who was crucified over eighteen centuries ago. "His name," says O'Connell, "shows he is by descent a Jew. There were miscreants among these Jews, however, and it must have certainly been from one of these that Disraeli descended. He possesses just the qualities of the impudent thief who died upon the cross, whose name, I veritably believe, must have been Disraeli. For ought I know the present Disraeli is descended from him, and with the impression that he is, I now forgive the heir-at-law of the blasphemous thief who died upon the cross."

This bitter denunciation was promptly met by Disraeli in a challenge to mortal combat. O'Connell, however, who had a short time previously killed his antagonist in an affair of honor, declined to give our righteously indignant politician satisfaction by this means.

Before attaining his majority, Disraeli had made himself known as an author. His first romance, "Vivian Grey," was published when he was in his twenty-first year, and met with a flattering reception.

In many respects this first literary effort is the most remarkable of all Beaconsfield's productions, and still possesses for the reader as much or more interest than any of his later works. This is accounted for from the fact that the hero of the story, Vivian Grey, resembles in so many particulars the author himself. Some critics have even boldly stated that in this novel the author had deliberately prescribed for his hero a course of life which he proposed to exemplify in his own future career. And to this view we incline. The romance of "Vivian Grey," read in the light of what we now know of Lord Beaconsfield's checkered and eventful life, is really his own autobiography.

"Vivian Grey" was followed by a series of brilliant novels in which political and social topics were handled with great power and originality, and in which many of the leading personages of the day were introduced under thinly-veiled disguises.

To young men the study of Lord Beaconsfield's career is powerfully inspiring. He has been described as "the most superlatively successful man of his time," and when we consider the apparently insuperable difficulties he had to overcome, and the commanding position to which he attained, we cannot withhold our admiration of the brilliancy of his genius and the splendor of his achievements.

It was in June, 1832, that Disraeli first sought election to the British House of Commons. In this and in three subsequent contests he was unsuccessful. Many men, after having so frequently suffered defeat, would have given up the struggle and sank back into obscurity. Not so with Benjamin Disraeli. He knew no such word as fail. In a speech delivered shortly after his second or third defeat he said he was "not at all disheartened. He did not in any way feel like a beaten man. Perhaps it was because he was getting accustomed to it."

In 1837 he stood as a candidate for Maidstone. This was his fifth contest for Parliamentary honors, and at the close of the poll he was thrilled with delight to learn that he had been elected, and one great object of his ambition was realized.

Disraeli was exceedingly anxious to "air

his eloquence" in the House, and took the earliest opportunity and first pretext to deliver his maiden speech.

The circumstances under which this first effort took place have become historical, and we shall refer to them but briefly. He had carefully prepared his speech and rehearsed it, and expected to make a profound impression, but his profuse gestures and grandiloquent sentences excited the ridicule of the members. As he proceeded, the ironical cheering and shrill cat-calls became so frequent that he could not go on, and he concluded in the words of the indignant prophecy of which the world has long since seen the brilliant fulfilment: "I have begun sometimes many things and have succeeded at last, and though I sit down now the time will come when you will hear me!"

To many this terrible failure seemed overwhelming and irreparable, but Disraeli never accepted defeat. "A failure," said he, "is nothing. It may be deserved or it may be remedied. In the first instance it brings self-knowledge; in the second it develops a new combination which may be triumphant."

A year and a half elapsed before he again attempted to address the house. The interval had been spent in cultivating the arts of speech and in storing his mind with Parliamentary knowledge. The result was that in his next speech he created a complete revolution of feeling in his favor, and step by step rose to the position of one of the most powerful English statesmen the history of the nation had produced.

But we have not space to follow our subject through the alternate toils and triumphs which conducted him from the obscurity of a solicitor's chambers to the exalted degree of Prime Minister of the greatest empire in the world.

Disraeli's elevation to this lofty pinnacle took place in 1867, when he was 62 years of age. As Prime Minister he was determined and brilliantly dramatic, but we think not always conscientious.

What was the secret of his dazzling success?

O'Connor says that "the great principle and the great secret of Lord Beaconsfield's success was to play on the meaner passions of men."

Another writer affirms that "his patience, temper, perseverance, his contempt of reverse, of obstacle or difficulty made him irresistible in that which he undertook," whilst he himself attributed a large share of his political and literary success to his wife's inspiration and devotion.

Perhaps no public man of the last century and a half has had his motives so seriously questioned as Lord Beaconsfield. One critic has said that "all through his life he had played with every feeling, with every public man, with every interest of England with the recklessness of the foreigner, to whom all these things were but as worthless cards in the great game of ambition which he was playing."

But such severe strictures as the above usually emanated from those of opposite political views, and should not be taken as calmly dispassionate criticisms. Whatever motives actuated Lord Beaconsfield during his long and eventful public career, all, both friend and foe, must bow before the majesty of his power and the brilliancy of his genius.

"Ours be the gentler wish, the kinder task,
To give the tribute Glory need not ask."

Among all the virtues, humility, the lowliest, is pre-eminent. It is the safest, because it is always an anchor; and that man may be truly said to live the most content in his calling who strives to live within the compass of it.

SOME POLITICAL FORECASTING.

BY EDMUND COLLINS.

TRUTH had some very sensible observations the other day respecting the necessity for an infusion of new vitality into the Cabinet at Ottawa; and the remarks made have suggested this contribution. Sir Leonard Tilley, whose health, it will be learned everywhere with regret, is in no hopeful condition, is in England with his deputy, Mr. Courtney, seeking to negotiate a loan. It is whispered in very well informed circles that Sir Leonard is negotiating his last loan, has delivered his last budget speech; and that, upon his return from England, he will assume for the second time the Lieutenant-Governorship of New Brunswick. There would be many claimants for the Finance Ministership, but it is more than likely that Mr. Thomas White, proprietor of the *Montreal Gazette*, would stand the best chance for the portfolio. The country has not forgotten that we reckon now among our citizenship a very lion of finance, the late High Commissioner of Canada, Sir A. T. Galt. But Sir John does not like Sir Alexander. While High Commissioner he made several loose speeches, and aired some astonishing facts. The chief of these was the Federation Scheme, and this airing very much displeased Sir John Macdonald. But the whirligig of time brings its revenge very often. Sir John himself, of late, has not been looking with such sovereign disapproval upon the pad whose airing was such a piece of impertinent guilt in the mouth of Sir Alexander. The Department of Railways and Canals has been vacant now for more than a year, and yet it seems as far from getting an administrator as ever. Mr. Chapleau frequently casts longing eyes towards Railways and Canals from his paltry office of State, and a capital Minister he would make. But if Sir Hector retains Public Works, the important office of Railways and Canals will not be permitted to go into the hands of another Frenchman. There is a rumor afloat, but it lacks confirmation, that Sir Hector may be asked to take the administration of the Department of the Interior. This would be a most desirable change for the country and for the North-West; but it is not likely that Sir Hector will let Public Works out of his hands. As the case stands there is much striving for the vacant Department. Mr. Pope is acting Minister, but he has just carried through his own railway scheme, and upon the score of railways is pretty well satisfied. His son-in-law, Mr. Ives, makes it pretty plain to the House that the portfolio would be very dear to him; but he is not yet Minister of Railways and Canals. There is likewise vacant the Department of the Interior, Sir John having suggested to Sir David Macpherson to bury himself in the baths at Baden while the arraignment for North-West management was going on. It is considered highly improbable that Sir David could ever again return to the Cabinet. He will in all probability replace Mr. John Beverley Robinson in the Lieutenant-Governorship. It is therefore surmised that there may next session be a vacancy in the Speaker's chair,—that a portfolio, during the summer, may be given to Mr. Kirkpatrick.

Meanwhile the session drags its slow length along. A week's adjournment has been talked about to allow members to run home and take a look at their business; but most honorable gentlemen would just as lief see the tedious business through, now that they have borne it so far. The protracted contest between the majority and the Opposition has revealed a fact which, since the beginning of Parliament, had not been laid

bare before, namely, that there is not much ability, certainly very little fighting ability, on the Government side of the House.

When the Opposition had fired broadsides after broadsides into the Government, some of the Ministerialists began to twist uneasily; and they were heard to pray heaven that Tupper was back. The wish being father to the thought, the report got into some of the newspapers that he was coming back. But Sir John very speedily had the story contradicted. There was never any danger of Sir Charles coming back! He is not in good odor enough in the Cabinet for that. It is said that for three weeks before he sailed for England, Sir John and he did not exchange words except when compelled by official necessity to do so.

The talk about Riel has subsided, and the poor newspapers look like punctured gas-bags. My prediction, as published in TRUTH, that Riel would be tried in the ordinary way, was pooh-poohed, but the Prime Minister has since stated in the House that in this manner he will be tried. Some still wink and nod their heads, and say that "Riel will be looked after by Sir John." No better guarantee can be given that Riel is out of the hands of the Executive, and fairly in the hands of the law, than the fact that Mr. Christopher Robinson is to conduct the prosecution. This is a gentleman to whom no Prime Minister would dare to "tip a wink." If he says, "I shall prosecute Riel," the country may be sure that the duty of the crown against the murderer and disturber of the common peace will not be heedlessly or unfaithfully done.

A Short Sermon.

Mr. Spurgeon has a sermon to young men, in which, commending the service of God as the most desirable, he says: "I have great delight in seeing my children in the same service. When a man finds that a business is a bad one, you will not find him bringing up his boys to it. Now, the great desire of my heart for my sons was, that they might become the servants of God. I never wished for them that they might be great or rich, but, oh, if they would give their young hearts to Jesus! This I prayed for most heartily. It was one of the happiest nights when I baptized them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, upon profession of their faith; and now, while I am speaking to you, one is preaching in New Zealand, and another in Greenwich, and my heart is glad that the gospel which the father preaches the sons are preaching too. If my Lord's service had been a hard one, I should have said to these lads, 'Don't you take to it. God is a hard master, reaping where He has not sown; I went into the service blindly, but I warn you to avoid it.' My conduct has been the reverse of this, and thus have I given you hostages in the persons of my sons for my honest love to my Master and Lord; I do, without reserve, commend to you the service of the Lord Jesus Christ; for if you enter it, you will wish your sons and daughters to enter it; and it will be your ambition that to the latest generation all your house may fear and serve God."

Perfect manners are a part of the character as much as patience and honesty, and their beneficence is displayed not only towards the just, but the unjust—in fact, they seem to belong to the texture of the wearer's mind, to be a reflection of the spirit of justice which would give everybody his due, withholding no civility or kindness.

It is curious how we despise our best gifts merely because they are common, and refuse to consider ourselves prosperous and well off unless we possess many coins and titles, things outside ourselves. In his old age Montaigne used to say, "I am ready to jump out of my skin with joy, as for an uncommon favor, when nothing ails me."