

I should think unequalled, and of which I can convey no idea. She told me that she "liked silent, melancholy men." I answered "that I had no doubt of it."

The "flirt" and the "rattle" was destined to become his wife; and the "silent, melancholy man" she liked was Disraeli himself.

Touching the same dinner we are told:—

Luttrell says that the two most disgusting things in the world, because you cannot deny them, are Warrender's wealth and Croker's talents. We had some amusing conversation, and our host, whatever may be his situation, is more sumptuous and fantastic than ever. Mrs. B. was a blaze of jewels, and looked like Juno; only instead of a peacock, she had a dog in her lap, called Fairy, and not bigger than a bird of paradise, and quite as brilliant.

In May, 1833, he writes:—

There was a review in Hyde Park, and the Wyndham Lewises gave a *déjeuner*, to which I went. By the by, would you like Lady Z—for a sister-in-law, very clever, 25,000*l.*, and domestic? As for "love," all my friends who married for love and beauty either beat their wives or live apart from them. This is literally the case. I may commit many follies in life, but I never intend to marry for "love," which I am sure is a guarantee of infelicity.

Under date of June, 1834, he says:—

I have had three interviews with three men who fill the public ear at present—O'Connell, Beckford, and Lord Durham. The first is the man of the greatest genius, the second of the greatest taste, and the last of the greatest ambition.

There are many notes of the intimacy between him and O'Connell before the memorable breach which occurred in May, 1835, when he wrote to his sister, "There is but one opinion among all parties, viz., that I have squashed them." After he had sent off his challenge to the Irish patriot, he said, "I never quitted his (D'Orsay's) house till ten o'clock, when I dressed and went to the opera, and every one says I have done it in first-rate style." Three days afterwards he reported an incident which will be new to his biographers:—

This morning as I was lying in bed, thankful that I had kicked all the O'Connells and that I was at length to have a quiet morning, Mr. Collard, the police officer of Marylebone, rushed into my chamber and took me into custody. In about an hour and a half, being dressed (having previously sent to S—), we all went in a hackney coach to the office, and where I found that the articles were presented by a Mr. Bennett, residing in some street in Westminster, and an acquaintance of the O'Connells. We were soon dismissed, but I am now bound to keep the peace in 500*l.* sureties. As far as the present affair was concerned, it was a most unnecessary precaution, as if all the O'Connells were to challenge me, I could not think of meeting them now. I consider and every one else that they are lynched. It is very easy for you to criticise, but I do not regret the letter: the expressions were well weighed, and without it the affair was but clever pamphleteering. Critics you must always meet. W. told me the last letter was the finest thing in the English language, but that the letter to Dan was too long; others think that perfect. One does not like the Yahoo as coarse, others think it worthy of Swift, and so on. . . . The general effect is the thing, and that is, that all men agree that I have shown pluck.

The following extract shows how early formed was Disraeli's conviction of his success as a politician:—

February 7, 1833.—Tuesday I went to the new opera at Drury Lane, and was introduced to the Brahams, on whom I have promised to call. Went to the House of Commons afterwards to hear Bulwer adjourn the House; was there yesterday during the whole debate—one of the finest we have had for years. Bulwer spoke, but he is physically disqualified for an orator, and, in spite of all his exertions, never can succeed. He was heard with great attention, and is evidently backed by a party. Heard Macaulay's best speech, Sheil and Charles Grant. Macaulay admirable; but, between ourselves, I could floor them all. This *entre nous*: I was never more confident of anything than that I could carry everything before me in that House. The time will come. . . .

"The time will come," were the words with which, as is well known, Disraeli four or five years later ended that famous maiden speech to which the House of Commons refused to listen. Of that speech, so often described by his biographers and critics, he himself gives an account:—

December 8, 1837.—I made my maiden speech last night, rising very late after O'Connell, but at the request of my party and the full sanction of Sir Robert Peel. As I wish to give you an exact idea of what occurred, I state at once that my début was a failure, so far as that I could not succeed in gaining an opportunity of saying what I intended; but the failure was not occasioned by my breaking down or any incompetency on my part, but from the physical powers of my adversaries. I can give you no idea how bitter, how factious, how unfair they were. It was like my first début at Aylesbury, and perhaps in that sense may be auspicious of ultimate triumph in the same scene. I fought through all with undaunted pluck and unruffled temper, made occasionally good isolated hits when there was silence, and finished with spirit when I found a formal display was ineffectual. My party backed me well, and no one with more zeal and kindness than Peel, cheering me repeatedly, which is not his custom. The

uproar was all organized by the Rads and the Repealers. They formed a compact body near the bar of the House, and seemed determined to set me down; but that they did not do. I have given you a most impartial account, stated indeed against myself. In the lobby at the division, Chandos, who was not near me while speaking, came up and congratulated me. I replied that I thought there was no cause for congratulations, and muttered "Failure!" "No such thing," said Chandos, "you are quite wrong. I have just seen Peel, and I said to him, 'Now tell me exactly what you think of D.' Peel replied, 'Some of my party were disappointed and talk of failure; I say just the reverse. He did all that he could do under the circumstances. I say anything but failure; he must make his way.'" The Government and their retainers behaved well. The Attorney-General, to whom I never spoke in my life, came up to me in the lobby and spoke to me with great cordiality. He said, "Now, Mr. Disraeli, could you just tell me how you finished one sentence in your speech, we are anxious to know—" In one hand the keys of St. Peter, and in the other —?" "In the other the cap of liberty, Sir John." He smiled, and said, "A good picture." I replied, "But your friends will not allow me to finish my pictures." "I assure you," he said, "there was the liveliest desire to hear you from us. It was a party at the bar, over whom we had no control; but you have nothing to be afraid of." Now I have told you all. Yours, D.—in very good spirits.

The following letter embodies the opinion of Sheil, the great Irish orator, with regard to Disraeli's prospects in Parliament:—

December 11, 1837.—I dined with Bulwer on Saturday, and, strange enough, met Sheil. I should have been very much surprised had I not arrived first and been apprised. It thus arose:—On Saturday, Bulwer walked into the Athenæum. Sheil, who had just recovered from the gout, was lounging in an easy chair, reading the newspaper; around him was a set of low Rads (we might guess them) abusing me, and exulting in the discrimination of the House; probably they thought they pleased Sheil. Bulwer drew near, but stood apart. Suddenly Sheil threw down the paper, and said in his shrill voice: "Now, gentlemen, I have heard all you have to say, and, what is more, I heard this same speech of Mr. Disraeli; and I tell you this, if ever the spirit of oratory was in a man, it is in that man; nothing can prevent him from becoming one of the first speakers in the House of Commons." Great confusion. "Ay! and I know something about that place, I think; and I tell you what besides, that if there had not been this interruption, Mr. Disraeli might have made a failure. I don't call this a failure, it is a crush. My début was a failure, because I was heard; but my reception was supercilious, his malignant. A début should be dull. The House will not allow a man to be a wit and an orator unless they have the credit of finding it out. There it is." You may conceive the sensation that this speech made. I heard of it yesterday from Eaton, Winslow, and several other quarters. The crowd dispersed, but Bulwer drew near and said to Sheil: "D. dines with me to day; would you like to meet him?" "In spite of my gout," said Sheil, "I long to know him; I long to tell him what I think." So we met. There were besides only D'Eyncourt, always friendly to me, and Mackinnon, a Tory, and one Quin of the Danube. Sheil took an opportunity of disburdening his mind of the subject of which it was full. "If you had been best speech that you ever would have made. It would have been received frigidly, and you would have despaired of yourself. I did. As it is, you have shown to the House that you have a fine organ, that you have an unlimited command of language, that you have courage, temper, and readiness. Now get rid of your genius for a session. Speak often, for you must not show yourself cowed, but speak shortly. Be very quiet, try to be dull, only argue, and reason imperfectly, for if you reason with precision they will think you are trying to be witty. Astonish them by speaking on subjects of detail. Quote figures, dates, calculations, and in a short time the House will sigh for the wit and eloquence which they all know are in you; they will encourage you to pour them forth, and then you will have the ear of the House and be a favourite." . . . I think that altogether this is as interesting a *rencontre* as I have ever experienced.

Here is a story of the death of William IV., which should not be forgotten by those who wish to estimate aright the character of the old Sailor-King:—

5.30 P.M.—I have just seen a very interesting letter from Munster, dated eleven last night. The King dies like an old lion. He said yesterday to his physicians: "Only let me live through this glorious day!" This suggested to Munster to bring the tricolour flag which had just arrived from the Duke of Wellington, and show it to the King. William IV. said: "Right, right," and afterwards, "Unfurl it and let me feel it," then he pressed the eagle and said, "Glorious day." This may be depended on.

EGAN was a great friend of Curran's, and held the office of chairman of Kilmainham. He was a man of huge size and massive build, as brawny and nearly as black as a coal-porter. In an election for the borough of Tallagh, outside Dublin, Egan was an unsuccessful candidate. He appealed, and the matter came before a committee of the House of Commons. It was in the heat of a summer afternoon that Egan was seen struggling through the crowd in a profuse perspiration, and mopping his face with a huge red handkerchief. "I am sorry for you," said Curran, "very sorry indeed." "Sorry! Why so, Jack, why so? I am perfectly at my ease." "Alas, Egan, it is evident to every one that looks at you that you are losing *tallow* (Tallagh) fast."