

most striking sensations known to English political life, his interest in that also waned, and a broken, occasional effort now and then only served to show what he might have accomplished had it been continuous. If he had been free of the vices that pulled him to earth, and possessed of the industry and persistency which were not in his nature, he would, with scarcely any doubt, have left both fortune and rank to his descendants. As it was in everything he did, he but scratched the soil. Those who believe that the conditions under which a man does his work are those which are best adapted to his genius will comfort themselves that there was nothing beyond this fertile surface, soon exhausted and capable of but one overflowing crop and no more, and there is a completeness and want of suggestion in his literary work which favours this idea. But the other features of his life are equally paradoxical and extraordinary; the remarkable financial operations which must have formed the foundation of his career were combined with the utmost practical deficiency in the same sphere; and his faculty for business, for negotiation, explanation, copious letter-writing, and statement of opinion, contrast as strangely with the absolute indolence which seems to have distinguished his life. He could conjure great sums of money out of nothing, out of vacancy, to buy his theatre, and set himself up in a lavish and prodigal life, but he could not keep his private affairs out of the most hopeless confusion. He could arrange the terms of a Regency and outwit a party, but he could not read, much less reply to, the letters addressed to him, or keep any sort of order in the private business on his hands. Finally, and perhaps most extraordinary of all, he could give in *The Critic* the deathblow to false tragedy, then write the bombast of *Rolla*, and prepare *Pizarro*

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