LORD BEACONSFIELD.

THOSE who talk, as we constantly hear people do, of the uncertainty of history, seldom reflect that such uncertainty as belongs to it is only a part of the difficulty which every human being finds in ascertaining the truth about any other. Nobody quite knows himself, though the Greek sage has directed us all to the inquiry; how much less can he know any one else? We find different views entertained, different judgments passed by historians on the famous men who have gone before us, just because their characters, like all characters, presented so many different aspects, and the larger the figure the more striking these differences. In most instances, it would be found that the difficulty of forming a fair and penetrating estimate of a man is greater, rather than less, in his own time than it is to those who come after; the criticisms of history are truer than the criticisms of contemporaries.

This remark is suggested by the thought which has lately risen in many minds, what fifty years hence people will say about Lord Beaconsfield. He will seem a strange problem. Opposite views regarding his aims, his ideas, the sources of his power, will divide the learned, and perplex the ordinary reader. Men will complain that history cannot be good for much when, with the abundant materials at her disposal, she cannot frame a consistent theory of one who played so great a part in so ample a theater. Yet the riddle will not be harder, it will not be so hard, as it is for us, from among whom the man has even now departed. Of those who in England know or care at all about public affairs, perhaps a third part revere him as a profound thinker and a lofty character, animated by sincere patriotism. A still larger number hold him for no better than a cynical charlatan, bent through life on his own advancement, who permitted no sense of duty, no human tenderness or compassion, to stand in the way of his insatiate ambition. The rest do not know what to think. They feel in him the presence of power; they feel also something that repels them. They cannot understand how a man who seemed hard and unscrupulous could win so much attachment and command so much obedience. His death, following quickly upon the fall of his government, has, of course, disposed people to speak more leniently regarding him; but it would be a mistake to suppose that it, or the details of his private life (which after all have been few and uninstructive) that have been made public, have substantially altered the general sentiment, or toned down the sharpness of the contrast between the friendly and hostile views of his character. Many years must elapse before one who praises or blames him will cease to be suspected, in England at least, of doing so from a merely partisan point of view. The present writer is sensible that he will incur this suspicion. He does not wish to conceal that he belongs to the opposite party, and entertained an unfavorable opinion of Lord Beaconsfield's policy in general, and particularly of that foreign policy which has latterly been a main theme of controversy in England. Nevertheless, he has sought as far as possible to set politics on one side, and look at Lord Beaconsfield as a man instead of as a party leader, endeavoring rather to explain his policy by his personal qualities and the circumstances of his position than to proceed from a condemnation of his public acts to a judgment upon their author. Of course, one who holds many of those acts which his followers applauded to have been grave mistakes, must necessarily have an estimate of his wisdom and foresight different from theirs. All I desire is to explain that I do not write for the sake of attacking his policy and party, but in the sincere desire of trying to approach to such a view of his personality as historians may take when half a century has softened the rancors of the present. Human nature is far more interesting, far better worth studying, than any problem of politics.

First, a few words about the salient events of his life—not by way of writing a biography, but to explain what follows.

Mr. Disraeli was born in London, in 1804. His father was Isaac Disraeli, a literary man of cultivated tastes and independent means, whose "Curiosities of Literature" may be found in most good libraries. He belonged to that division of the Jewish race which is called the Sephardim, and traces itself to Spain and Portugal; but he had ceased to frequent the synagogue,—had, in fact, broken with his co-religionists. He had the access to good society, so that the boy saw eminent and polished men from his early years, and, soon after he quitted school, began to make his way in drawing-rooms where he met the wittiest and best-known people of the day. Samuel Rogers, the poet, took a fancy to him, and had him baptized at the age of nine. He was often to be seen with Count d'Orsay and Lady Blessington. It is worth remarking that he never went either to a public school or a university. In England, school-masters and the writers of school-boy's books have succeeded in persuading the public that there is no preparation for success in actual life comparable to the training of a great school. Such a superstition is sufficiently refuted by the examples of men like Pitt, Macaulay, Bishop Wilberforce, Disraeli, Cobden, and Bright. He first appeared before the public in 1826, when he published "Vivian Grey," an amazing book to be the production of a youth of twenty-two. Other novels—"The Young Duke," "Venetia," "Contarini Fleming," "Henrietta Temple"—maintained without greatly increasing his literary reputation during the next ten years. Then came two political stories, "Coningsby" and "Sybil," in 1844 and 1845, followed by "Tancred" in 1847; with a long interval of silence, till, in 1870, he produced "Lothair," in 1880 "Endymion." Besides these he published in 1839 the tragedy of "Alarcos," and in 1835 the more ambitious "Revolutionary Epic," neither of which had much success. In 1829 he took a long journey through the East, visiting Constantinople, Syria, and Egypt, and it was, no doubt, then, in lands peculiarly interesting to a man of his race, that he conceived those ideas about the East and its mysterious influences which figure largely in some of his stories, notably in "Tancred," and which in 1878 had no small share in shaping his policy and that of England. Meanwhile, he had not forgotten the political aspirations which we see in "Vivian Grey." In 1832, just before the passing of the Reform Bill, he appeared as candidate for the petty borough of High Wycombe in Buckinghamshire, and was defeated by a majority of twenty-three to twelve, so few were the voters in many boroughs of those days. After the Bill had enlarged the constituency, he tried his luck twice again, in 1833 and 1835, both times unsuccessfully, and came before two other boroughs also, Marylebone and Taunton, though in neither case did a contest take place. Such activity in a youth with little backing from friends and comparatively slender means marked him already as a man of spirit and ambition. His fourth attempt was lucky. At the general election of 1837 he was returned as member for Maidstone. His political professions during this period have been keenly canvassed; nor is it easy to form a fair judgment on them. In 1832 he had sought and obtained recommendations from Joseph Hume and Daniel O'Connell, and people had therefore set him down as a radical. Although, however, his professions of political faith included dogmas which, like triennial parliaments, the ballot, and the imposition of a land-tax, were part of the so-called radical programme, still there was a vagueness about some of his utterances, and an obvious aversion to the conventional Whig way of putting things, which showed that he was not a thorough-going adherent of any of the then existing political parties, but was trying to strike out a new line for himself, and attract men's minds by the promise of something fresher and more striking than the recognized schools offered. In 1834, his hostility to Whiggism was becoming more pronounced, and a tenderness for some Tory doctrines more discernible. Finally, in 1835, he appeared as an avowed Tory, accepting the regular creed of the party, declaring himself a follower of Sir Robert Peel, but still putting forward a number of views peculiar to himself, which he developed not only in his speeches, but in his novels. "Coningsby" and "Sybil" were meant to be a kind of manifesto of the Young England party—a party which can hardly be said to have ever existed out of his own mind, though a small knot of aristocratic youths who caught up and repeated his phrases seemed to form a nucleus for it.

The fair conclusion from his deliverances during these early years is that he was at first much more of a Liberal than a Tory, yet with a distinctive position which made him appear in a manner independent of both parties. The old party lines seemed to have been almost effaced by the Reform Bill struggle; and it was natural for a bold and inventive mind like his to imagine a complete new departure, and put forward a programme in which radicalism was mingled with other ideas of a different type. But when it became clear after a time that the old divisions still subsisted, and that such a distinctive position as he had conceived could not be maintained, he then, having to choose between one or other of the two recognized parties, chose the Tories, dropping some doctrines he had previously advocated which were inconsistent with their creed, but retaining much of his peculiar way of looking at political questions. How far the change which passed over him was a natural development, how far due to interested motives, there is little use discussing: perhaps he did not quite know himself. He seems to have received more blame for it at the time than he deserved, and in one thing he was consistent then, and remained consistent ever after—his hearty hatred of the Whigs. There was something about the dry, cold pride of the great Whig families, their stiff constitutionalism, their belief in political economy, perhaps also their alliance with the Nonconformists, which roused all the antagonisms of his nature, personal and oriental.

When he entered the House of Commons he was already well known to fashionable London, partly by his striking face and his powers of conversation, partly by his novels, whose satirical pungency had made a noise in society. He had also become, owing to his apparent change of front, the object of much adverse criticism, and a quarrel in which he became involved with Daniel O'Connell, in the course of which he challenged the great Irishman to fight a duel, each party having described the other with a freedom of language which would now be thought scurrilous, had made him, for a time, the talk of the political world. Thus, there was much more curiosity evoked by his first speech than usually awaits a new member. It was unsuccessful, not from any want of cleverness, but because its tone did not suit the temper of the House of Commons, and because the hostile audience sought to disconcert him by their laughter. Undeterred by this ridicule, he continued to speak, though in a less ambitious and artificial vein, till after a few years he had become one of the best known among the unofficial members. At first, no one had eulogized Peel more warmly, but after a time he edged a little away from the minister, whether repelled by his coldness, which showed that in that quarter no promotion was to be expected, or shrewdly perceiving that Peel was taking a line which would separate him from the bulk of the Conservative party. This happened in 1846, when Peel, convinced that the import duties on corn were economically unsound, proposed their abolition. Mr. Disraeli, who, since 1843, had taken repeated opportunities of firing stray shots at the powerful Prime Minister, now bore a foremost part not only in attacking him, but in organizing the Protectionist party, and prompting its leader, Lord George Bentinck. In embracing free trade, Peel carried with him his own personal friends and disciples, men like Gladstone, Sidney Herbert, Sir James Graham, and Cardwell, and some sixty or seventy others, the intellectual *élite* of the Tory party. The far more numerous section who clung to protection had numbers, wealth, respectability, cohesion, but neither brains nor tongues. An adroit tactician and incisive speaker was of priceless value to them. Such a man they found in Mr. Disraeli, while he gained an opportunity beyond his previous expectations of playing a leading part in the eyes of Parliament and the country. In 1849, Lord George Bentinck, who had been Mr. Disraeli's mouthpiece rather than an independent leader, died, leaving our hero indisputably the first man in the Protectionist party. In 1850, Peel, who might perhaps have brought that party back to its allegiance to him, was killed by a fall from his horse. The Peelites drifted more and more toward Liberalism; so that when Lord Derby, who, in 1852, had been commissioned as head of the Tory party to form a ministry, invited them to join him, they refused to do so, imagining him to be still a Protectionist, and resenting the behavior of that section to their master. Being thus unable to find one of them to lead his followers in the House of Commons, Lord Derby turned to Mr. Disraeli, giving him, with the leadership, the important office of Chancellor of the Exchequer. The appointment was thought a strange one, because Mr. Disraeli brought to it absolutely no knowledge of finance and no official experience. He had never been so much as an Under-Secretary. The Tories themselves murmured that one whom they still regarded as an adventurer should be raised to so high a place. After a few months Lord Derby's ministry fell, defeated on the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Budget, which had been vehemently attacked by Mr. Gladstone. This was a beginning of that protracted duel between him and Mr. Disraeli which has lasted down till 1881.

For the following fourteen years, Mr. Disraeli's occupation was that of a leader of opposition, varied by one brief interval of office in 1858. His party was in a permanent minority in the country, so that nothing was left for its leader but to fight with skill, courage, and resolution a series of losing battles. This he did with admirable tenacity of purpose. Once or twice in every session he used to rally his forces for general engagement, and though always defeated, he never suffered himself to be dispirited by defeat. During the rest of the time he was keenly watchful, exposing all the mistakes of the successive Liberal governments in domestic affairs, and when complications arose in foreign politics, always professing, and generally manifesting, a patriotic desire not to embarrass the Executive, lest the common interests of the country should suffer. Through all these years he had to struggle, not only with a hostile majority in office, but also with secret disaffection among his own followers. Many of the landed aristocracy could not bring themselves to acquiesce in the leadership of a new man, of foreign origin, whose career had been so strange, whose ideas they found it hard to follow. Ascribing their long exclusion from power to his presence, they more than once conspired to dethrone him. But as it happened, there never arose any Conservative speaker in the House of Commons of gifts at all comparable to those which in him had been matured and polished by long experience, while he had the address to acquire an ascendancy over the mind of Lord Derby, still the titular head of the party, who, being a man of straightforward character, high social position, and brilliant oratorical talents, was, nevertheless, somewhat lazy and superficial, and therefore disposed to lean on his lieutenant in the Lower House, and to borrow from him those astute schemes of policy which he was fertile in devising. Thus, by Lord Derby's support, and his own imperturbable confidence, he frustrated all the plots of the malcontent Tories. New men came up who had not witnessed his earlier escapades, but knew him only as the bold and skillful leader of their party in the House of Commons. He made himself personally agreeable to them, encouraged them in their first efforts, diffused his ideas among them, stimulated local organization, and held out hopes of great things to be done when fortune should at last revisit the Conservative banner.

While Lord Palmerston lived, these exertions seemed to bear little fruit. That minister had, in his later years, settled down into a sort of practical Toryism, and both parties acquiesced in his rule. But, on his death, the scene changed. Lord Russell and Mr. Gladstone brought forward a Reform Bill strong enough to evoke the latent Conservative feeling of a House of Commons which, though nominally Liberal, had been chosen under Palmerstonian auspices. The defeat of the bill was followed by the resignation of Lord Russell. Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli came into power, and, next year, carried a Reform Bill which, as it was finally shaped in its passage through the House, really went further than Lord Russell's had done, enfranchising a greater number of the working classes. To have carried this bill remains the greatest of Mr. Disraeli's triumphs. He had to do it in a hostile House of Commons by wheedling a section of the Liberal majority, against the appeals of their legitimate leader. He had also to persuade his own followers to support a measure which they had all their lives been condemning, and which was, or, in their view, ought to have been, more dangerous to the Constitution than the one which they and the moderate Whigs had thrown out in the preceding year. He had, as he happily and audaciously expressed it, to educate his party into doing the very thing which they (though certainly not he himself) had always denounced. The process was scarcely complete when the retirement of Lord Derby, whose health had given way, opened his path to the premiership. He dissolved Parliament, expecting to receive a majority from the gratitude of the working class whom his bill had admitted to the suffrage. To the boundless disgust of the Tories, a Liberal House of Commons was again returned, which drove him and his friends once more into the cold shade of opposition. He was now sixty-four years of age, had suffered an unexpected and mortifying discomfiture, and had no longer the great name of Lord Derby to cover him. Disaffected voices were again heard among his own party, while the Liberals, re-installed in power, were led by the rival whose genius and unequaled popularity in the country made him for the time omnipotent. Still Mr. Disraeli was not disheartened; he fought the battle of apparently hopeless resistance with his old tact, wariness, and tenacity, losing no occasion for any criticism that could damage the measures—strong and large measures—which Mr. Gladstone's government brought forward.

Before long the tide turned. A reaction in favor of Conservatism set in, which grew so fast that, in 1874, the general election gave, for the first time since 1846, a decided Conservative majority. Mr. Disraeli became again Prime Minister, and now a Prime Minister no longer on sufferance, but with the absolute command of a dominant party, rising so much above the rest of the cabinet as to appear the sole author of its policy. The use he made of his power, especially in guiding the action of England abroad, is a matter of such recent and embittered controversy that any criticism on it might appear to be dictated by party animosity. Enough to say that his policy in the affairs of the Turkish East, in Afghanistan, in South Africa, while it received the enthusiastic approval of the military class and the richer people generally, raised no less vehement opposition in other sections of the nation, and especially in those two which, when heartily united and excited, are masters of England—the Nonconformists and the working classes. An election fought with unusual heat left him in so decided a minority that he resigned office in April, 1880, without waiting for an adverse vote in Parliament. A year later he died.

Here is a wonderful career, even more wonderful to those who live in the midst of English politics and society than it can appear to observers in other countries. A man with few external advantages, not even that of education at a university, where useful friendships are formed, with grave positive disadvantages in his Jewish extraction and the vagaries of his first years of public life, presses forward, step by step, through slights and disappointments which retard but never dishearten him, assumes as of right the leadership of a party, —the aristocratic party, the party peculiarly suspicious of new men and poor men,—wins a reputation for sagacity which makes his early follies forgotten, becomes in old age the favorite of a court, the master of a great country, one of the three or four arbiters of Europe. We have here more than one problem to solve, or, at least, a problem with more than one aspect. What is the true character of the man who has sustained such a part? Has he held any principles, or has he merely played with them as counters? By what gifts or arts did he win such a success? Has there been really a mystery behind the veil which he has delighted to wrap around him? And how, being so unlike the Englishmen his lot was cast among, did he so fascinate and rule them?

Imagine a man of strong will and brilliant intellectual powers, belonging to an ancient and persecuted race, who finds himself born in a foreign country, amid a people for whose ideas and habits he has no sympathy and little respect. Suppose him proud, ambitious, self-confident; too ambitious to rest content in a private station, so self-confident as to feel sure of winning whatever he aspires to. To achieve success, he must bend his pride, must use the language and humor the prejudices of those he has to deal with; his pride avenges itself by secret scorn or scarcely disguised irony. Accustomed to observe things from without, he discerns the weak points of all political parties, the hollowness of institutions and watchwords, the instability of popular passion. If his imagination be more susceptible than his emotions, his intellect more active than his moral feelings, the isolation in which he stands and the superior insight it affords him may render him cold, calculating, self-interested. The sentiment of personal honor will remain, because his pride will support it: and he will be tenacious of the ideas which he has struck out, because they are his own. But for ordinary principles of conduct he may have small respect, because he has not grown up under the conventional morality of the time and nation, but has looked on it merely as a phenomenon to be recognized and reckoned with, because he has noted how much there is in it of unreality or pharisaism—how far it sometimes is from representing or expressing the higher judgments of philosophy. Realizing and perhaps exaggerating the power of his own intelligence, he will revolve in secret schemes of ambition wherein genius, uncontrolled by fears or by conscience, makes all things bend to its purposes, till the sympathies and scruples and hesitations of common humanity seem to him only parts of men's cowardice or stupidity. What success he will gain when he comes to carry out such schemes in practice will largely depend on the circumstances he finds himself among, as well as on his gift for judging of them. He may become a Napoleon: he may fall in an imprudent collision with the law.

In some of his novels, and most fully in the earliest of them, Mr. Disraeli sketched a character and foreshadowed a career not altogether unlike that which has just been indicated. It would be unfair to treat as autobiographical—though some of his critics have done so—the picture of Vivian Grey. What it does show is that, at an age when his contemporaries were lads at college, absorbed in cricket matches or Latin verse-making, he had already meditated profoundly on the conditions and methods of worldly success, had rejected the ideal life of philosophy, had conceived of a character isolated, ambitious, intense, resolute, untrammeled by scruples, who molds men to his purposes by the sheer force of his intellect, humoring their foibles and luring them into his chosen path by the bait of self-interest.

To lay stress on the fact that Mr. Disraeli was by birth a Jew is not, though some of his political antagonists stooped so to use it, to cast any reproach upon him: it is only to note a fact of the utmost importance for a proper comprehension of his position. The Jews are still foreigners in England, not only on account of their religion, with its mass of ancient rites and usages, but also because they are filled with the memory of centuries of persecution, and perceive that in some parts of Europe the old spirit of hatred has not died out. The antiquity of their race, their sense of its purity and of the intellectual achievements of those ancestors whose unmixed blood flows in their veins, leads them to revenge themselves by a kind of scorn upon the upstart Western peoples where their lot is cast. Thus they are the more prone to mockery, such as in Heinrich Heine mingled itself with a poet's tenderness. Even while imitating, as the wealthier of them have latterly begun to imitate, the manners and luxury of those nominal Christians among whom they live, they retain their feeling of detachment, and so far from sharing, regard with a coldly observant curiosity the beliefs, prejudices, enthusiasms of the nations of Europe. The same passionate intensity which makes so much of the grandeur of the ancient Hebrew literature still lives among them, though often narrowed by ages of oppression, and gives them the peculiar effectiveness that comes from turning all the powers of the mind, imaginative as well as reasoning, into a single channel. They produce, in proportion to their numbers, an unusually large number of able and successful men, as any one may prove by recounting the eminent Jews of the last thirty years. This success has usually been won in practical life, in commerce, or at the bar, or in the press (which over the European continent they so largely control); sometimes also in the higher walks of literature or art or science.

Mr. Disraeli had three of these characteristics of his race in full measure—detachment, intensity, scorn. Nature gave him a resolute will, a keen and precociously active intellect, a vehement individuality,—that is to say, a consciousness of his own powers, and a determination to make them recognized by his fellows. In some men, the passion to succeed is clogged by the fear of failure; in others, the sense of their greatness is self-sufficing and indisposes them to effort. But with him ambition spurred self-confidence, and self-confidence justified ambition. He grew up in a cultivated home, familiar not only with books but with the brightest and most polished men and women of the day, whose conversation sharpened his wits almost from childhood. No religious influences worked upon him,—for his father had ceased to be a Jew in faith without becoming even nominally a Christian,—and there is nothing in his writings (of his private life it would be presumptuous and unbecoming to speak) to show that he had ever felt anything more than an imaginative, or, so to speak, historical interest in religion. Thus his development was purely intellectual. The society he moved in was a society of men and women of the world—witty, fashionable, without seriousness or reverence. He felt himself no Englishman, and watched English life and politics as a student of natural history might watch the habits of bees or ants. English society was then, and perhaps is still, more complex, more full of inconsistencies, of contrasts between theory and practice, between appearances and realities, than that of any other country. Nowhere so much dullness among the noble, so much pharisaism among the virtuous, so much vulgarity among the rich, mixed with so much real earnestness, benevolence, and love of truth; nowhere, therefore, so much to seem merely ridiculous to one who looked at it from without, wanting the sympathy which comes from the love of mankind, or even from the love of one's country. It was natural for a young man with such gifts to mock at what he saw. But he would not sit still in mere contempt. The thirst for power and fame gave him no rest. He must gain what he saw every one around him struggling for. He must triumph over these people whose follies amused him; and the sense that he perceived and could use their follies would add zest to his triumph. He might have been a great satirist; he resolved to become a great statesman. For such a career, his Hebrew detachment gave him some eminent advantages. It enabled him to take a cooler, a more scientific, view of the social and political phenomena he had to deal with. He was not led astray by party cries. He did not share vulgar prejudices. He calculated the forces at work as an engineer calculates the strength of his materials, the strain they have to bear from the wind and the weights they must support. And what he had to plan was not the success of a cause, which might depend on a thousand things out of his ken, but his own success, a simpler matter.

A still greater source of strength lay in his Hebrew intensity. It would have pleased him, so full of pride in the pure blood of his race, to attribute to that purity the singular power of concentration which the Jews undoubtedly possess. They have the faculty of throwing the whole stress of their natures into the pursuit of one object, fixing their eyes on it alone, sacrificing to it other desires, clinging to it even when it seems unattainable. He was only twenty-eight when he made his first attempt to enter the House of Commons. Three ignominious repulses did not discourage him, though his means were but scanty to support such contests; and the fourth time he succeeded. When his first speech in Parliament had been received with laughter, and the world was congratulating itself that this adventurer had found his level, he calmly told them that he had always ended by succeeding in whatever he attempted, and that he would succeed in this, too. He received no help from his own side, who regarded him with much suspicion, but forced himself into prominence, and at last to leadership, by his complete superiority to rebuffs. Through the long years in which he had to make head against a majority in the House of Commons, he never seemed disheartened by his repeated defeats, never relaxed the vigilance with which he watched his adversaries, never indulged himself (though he was naturally indolent and often in poor health) by staying away from Parliament, even when business was slack; never missed an opportunity for exposing a blunder of his adversaries, or commanding the good service of one of his own followers. The same curious tenacity was apparent in his ideas. Before he was twenty-two years of age he had excogitated a theory of the Constitution of England, of the way England should be governed at home and her policy directed abroad, from which he hardly swerved through all his later life. Often as he was accused of inconsistency he probably believed himself to be, and in a sense he was, exceptionally true to the same set of views; and one could discover from the phrases he employed how he was really following out these old notions, even when his conduct seemed opposed to the traditions of his party. The weakness of intense minds is their tendency to narrowness, and this he had in so far that, while always ready for new expedients, he was not easily accessible to new ideas. Indeed, the old ideas were too much a part of himself, too much stamped with his own individuality, to be forsaken or even varied. He did not love knowledge, he did not enjoy speculation for its own sake; he valued views as they pleased his imagination or as they carried practical results with them; and having framed his theory once for all and worked steadily upon its lines, he was not the man to admit it had been defective, and to set himself in later life to repair it. His pride was involved in proving it correct by applying it.

With this resolute concentration of purpose there went an undaunted courage—a quality less rare among English statesmen, but eminently laudable in him, because for great part of his career he had no one to lean upon, no family or party connections to back him up, but was obliged to face the world with nothing but his own self-confidence. So far from ever seeking to conceal his Jewish origin, he openly displayed his pride in it, and refused all support to the efforts which the Tory party made to maintain the exclusion of Jews from Parliament. Nobody showed more self-possession and (except on one or two occasions) more perfect self-command in the fierce strife of Parliamentary life than this suspected stranger. His enemies learnt to fear one who never feared for himself; his followers knew that their chief would not fail them in the hour of danger. His very face and bearing had in them an impassive calmness which magnetized those who watched him. He would sit for hours on his bench in the House of Commons, listening with eyes half-shut to furious assaults on himself and his policy, not showing by the movement of a muscle that he had felt a wound; and when he rose to reply would discharge his sarcasms with an air of easy coolness. How far this indifference was simulated remains still in dispute, for it was his pleasure to surround himself with mystery, and appear too self-reliant to need a confidant.

Ambition such as his could not afford to be scrupulous, nor have his admirers ever claimed scrupulosity as one of his merits. He who sets power and fame before him as the great objects of his pursuit, will think less and less about the lawfulness of the means he employs. From such as are obviously low and dishonorable, pride may hold him back; others he may reject because he knows that the opinion of his fellows, those whose good-will and good word he must secure, would condemn them, and him for using them. But he will not allow kindliness or compassion to stand in his way. A strenuous will, if it be not controlled by moral principles, is a relentless will, and crushes those who bar its path. Truth, also, will be apt to come badly off. To a politician, who must necessarily, however honest, have many facts in his knowledge, or many plans in his mind, which he cannot reveal, the temptation to put questioners on a false scent, and to seem to agree where he really dissents, is at all times a strong one. No one can hope altogether to escape in such a life the subsequent censure of his own conscience. The wonder rather is that, all things considered, the standard of truthfulness among English public men should be so high as it is. Lord Beaconsfield certainly fell short of it. There is no use concealing the fact that people did not take his word for a thing as they would have taken the word of the Duke of Wellington, or Lord Derby, or Lord Russell, or even of that not very strict moralist, Lord Palmerston. Instances were not wanting even as late as 1877. His behavior toward Sir Robert Peel, whom he plied with every dart of sarcasm, after having shortly before lavished praises on him, and sought office under him, has often been commented on. Mr. Disraeli was himself (as those who knew him have often stated) accustomed to justify it by observing that he was then an insignificant personage, to whom it was of paramount importance to attract public notice and make a political position; that the opportunity of attacking Peel, Prime Minister, yet disliked by his own party on account of his change of opinion on the Corn Laws, was too good a one to be lost; and that he was therefore obliged to assail him, though he had himself no particular attachment to the Corn Laws, and believed Peel to have been a *bona fide* convert. It was therefore no personal resentment against Peel, but merely the exigencies of his own career, that drove him to this course, whose fortunate result proved the soundness of his calculations.

This defense will not surprise any one who is familiar with Lord Beaconsfield's novels. They are as far as possible from being immoral; that is to say, there is nothing in them unbecoming or corrupting. Honor, friendship, love, are all recognized as powerful and worthy motives of human conduct. That which is wanting is the sense of right and wrong. Very rarely does any one of his personages ask himself whether such and such a course is right. They move in a world which is polished, agreeable, dignified, averse to baseness and vulgarity, but in which conscience and religion do not seem to exist—a world more like that of Augustus or Lorenzo de' Medici than like modern England. Though the men live for pleasure or fame, the women for pleasure or love, both are capable of making sacrifices at the altar of affection. But the idea of duty does not cross their minds.

The best excuse that can be made for Lord Beaconsfield's behavior toward Peel, and indeed for his political morality as a whole, is to be found in the circumstances of his position and early training. Few of us reflect how much of what we call our moral principles and rules of conduct we owe, not to settled convictions which we have reasoned out for ourselves, but to habit, association, the influence of those among whom our boyhood has been passed, the restraint imposed upon us by our family connections, our friends, the opinion of the society in which we move. This appears a truism, but it is one of those truisms which people are constantly forgetting to apply, and whose neglect leads them into judgments unduly harsh. Men who were brought up under religious influences, for example, when they have in later years ceased to regard the dogmas or the worship of Christianity, fancy that the morality on which they plume themselves is all their own, not reflecting that the habit may remain when the motive has departed. Mr. Disraeli was brought up neither a Jew nor a Christian. The elder people who took him by the hand when he entered life—people like Samuel Rogers and Lady Blessington—were not the people to give lessons in morality. Lord Lyndhurst, the first of his powerful political friends, and the man whose example most affected him, was, with all his admirable gifts, conspicuously wanting in political principle. Add to this the isolation in which the young man found himself outside the common stream of English life, not sharing its beliefs, perceiving with marvelous keenness the hollowness of much that passed for virtue and patriotism, and it is easy to understand how he should have been as perfect a cynic at twenty-five as painful experience of the world makes many at fifty. If he had been possessed by a great love of truth or of humanity, all might have come right; he would have quickly worked through his youthful cynicism to something higher. But pride and ambition, the pride of race and the pride of genius, left no room for these sentiments. His intellect was skeptical. His heart was somewhat cold. Before him lay a world in which fame and power were to be won by the gifts which he knew himself to possess; the laurels of others would not let him sleep; and he threw all his soul into the pursuit of fame and power.

It was a poor ideal. But he seems to have thought it the only ideal, and probably looked on those who strove after some other as either fools or hypocrites. Early in his political life he said one day to one of the foremost of his political opponents (from whom the present writer heard the anecdote), as they took their umbrellas in the vestibule of the House of Commons: "After all, what is it that brings you and me here? Fame! This is the true arena. I might have occupied a literary throne. But I have abandoned it for this career." The external pomps of life, wealth and its trappings, titles, grand houses and splendid parks, all those gauds and vanities with which a sumptuous aristocracy surrounds itself, had through his life a singular fascination for him. He liked to mock at them in his novels, but they fascinated him none the less. One can understand how they might fire the imagination of an ambitious youth who saw them from a distance—might even retain their charm for one who was just struggling into the society which possessed them, and who desired to feel himself the equal of the possessors. It is far stranger that, when he had risen to be the master of the English aristocracy and was driving them where he pleased, he should have continued to admire such things. So, however, it was. In his will he directs that his estate of Hughenden Manor, in Buckinghamshire, shall pass under an entail as strict as he could devise, that the person who succeeds to it shall always bear the name of Disraeli. His ambition is the common, not to say vulgar, ambition of the English *parvenu*, to found a "county family." In the novel published a few months before his death, the hero, starting from small beginnings, ends by becoming prime minister: this is the crisis of the book, the crown of his career, the triumph which the author evidently regards as the noblest an Englishman can achieve. It might have been thought that one who had been through it all, who had realized the dreams of his boyhood, who had every opportunity of learning how little enjoyment is to be had from power or fame, how empty are the grandeurs which the populace admires, would have formed some other conception of the end of human life than this of personal success. With most men the flower they have plucked withers, and they value it no more. Even if he had discovered nothing nobler or purer, one might have expected that a man of such profound skepticism, such keen irony, would have been at least disillusionized, or have wished to seem so. But it was not thus with him. He had gained what he had sought, and, so far as appears, he was satisfied and could imagine no higher ideal. Most men who have had great success are no doubt proud of it. But they do not usually tell the world so naïvely of their self-content; and they have commonly a feeling that this is not enough, that a self-centered life is, after all, a poor and unsatisfying life. They pay to disinterestedness at least the homage of outward professions.

To say that Lord Beaconsfield's heart was somewhat cold is by no means to say that he was heartless. He was one of those strong natures who will let nothing stand in their way; if another will not make place, he must take the consequences. His theory was that politics had nothing to do with sentiment; so those who appealed to him on grounds of humanity appealed in vain. No act of his life ever so much repelled the English people as the light fashion in which he tossed aside the tales of the Bulgarian massacre of 1876. It incensed sections who were strong enough, when thoroughly roused, to bring about his fall. But he was far from being unkindly. He knew how to attach men to him by friendly deeds as well as friendly words. He seldom missed an opportunity of saying something pleasant and cheering to a *débutant* in Parliament, whether of his own party or the opposite. He was not selfish in little things; was always ready to consider the comfort and convenience of those who surrounded him. It is pleasant to note that age and success, so far from making him morose or supercilious, seem to have softened the asperities of his character and developed the affectionate side of it. His last novel, published only a few months ago, contains far more human kindliness, a fuller recognition of the worth of friendship and the nobility of sisterly and conjugal love, than do the writings of his earlier manhood. What it wants in intellectual power it makes up for in a mellower and more tender tone. Of loyalty to his political friends he was a model, and nothing did more to secure his command of the party than its sense that his professional honor, so to speak, could be implicitly relied upon. Toward his wife, a warm-hearted woman older than himself, and inferior to him both in birth and education, he was uniformly kind and indeed devoted. The first use he made of his power as Prime Minister was to procure for her the title of viscountess. A story used to be told how, long ago, when his political position was still far from assured, he and his wife happened to be with the chief of the party, and that chief so far forgot good manners as to quiz Mrs. Disraeli at the dinner-table—not malignantly, but with a spice of satire. Next morning Mr. Disraeli, whose visit was to have lasted for some days longer, announced that he must leave immediately. The host besought him to stay, and made all possible apologies. But Disraeli was inexorable, and carried his wife off forthwith. To literary men, whatever their opinions, he was always ready to give a helping hand, representing himself as one of their profession. Success did not turn his head, nor make him assume the airs of a *grand seigneur*. In paying compliments he was singularly expert, and made good use of his skill to win friends and disarm enemies. He knew how to please Englishmen, and especially the young, by entering into their tastes and pleasures, and, without being what would be called genial, was never wanting in *bonhommie*. In society he was a perfect man of the world—told his anecdote apropos, wound up a discussion by some happy epigram, talked to the guest next him as he would to an old friend. In short, he was excellent company. But he had few intimates; nor did his apparent frankness unveil anything more than he chose to reveal.

He was not of those who complicate political opposition with private hatreds. Looking on politics as a game, he liked, when he took off his armor, to feel himself on friendly terms with his antagonists, and often seemed surprised to find that they remembered as personal affronts the blows which he had dealt in the tournament. Two or three years before his death, a friend asked him whether there was in London any one whom he would not shake hands with. Meditating for a moment, he answered, "Only one," and named a conspicuous antagonist, who had said hard things of him, and to whom, when on one occasion in his power, he had behaved with cruelty. For the greatest of his adversaries he felt, there is reason to believe, genuine admiration, mingled with inability to comprehend a nature so unlike his own. No passage in the striking speech which that adversary pronounced, one might almost say, over Lord Beaconsfield's grave—a speech which may probably go down to posterity with its subject—was more impressive than that where he declared that he had the best reason to believe that, in their constant warfare, Lord Beaconsfield had not been actuated by any personal hostility. It is usually so with brave men; if they cannot like, they can at least respect, a redoubtable antagonist.

His intellect was singularly well suited to the rest of his character—was, so to speak, of one piece with it. One often sees the opposite—

intellects which are out of keeping with the active or emotional parts of the man. One sees persons whose thought is vigorous, clear, comprehensive, while their conduct is timid; or a comparatively narrow intelligence joined to an enterprising spirit, or a calm, sober, skeptical turn of mind yoked to an ardent and impulsive temperament. It is the commonest source of what we call the follies of the wise. Not so with him. His intelligence had the same boldness, intensity, concentration, simplicity—that is to say, singleness, as opposed to complexity—which we discover in the rest of the man. It was just the right instrument for the work he wanted it to do, and this inner harmony was one of the chief causes of his success, as the want of it has caused the failure of so many powerful natures. Its range was not wide. All its products were like one another: none of them give a reader the impression that it could have, had its master so wished, done a wholly diverse kind of work. It was not logical nor discursive, loving to amass and arrange great stores of knowledge, and draw conclusions from them. It was not analytically subtle, evolving new truths from profound reflection, bent on reducing everything to some principle. Nor was it judicial, with the power of calmly weighing reasons and pronouncing a decision which recognizes all the facts and is not confused by their seeming contradictions. There was in it a speculative element, no doubt, but it was primarily an artist's mind, capable of deep meditation, but meditating in an imaginative way, not so much on facts as on its own views of facts, on the pictures which its own creative faculty had called up. The meditation became dreamy, but the dreaminess was corrected by an exceedingly keen and quick power of observation—not so much the scientific observation of the philosopher, as the enjoying observation of the artist who sees how he can use these characteristic details, or of the forensic advocate (an artist, too, in his way) who perceives a way of fitting them into his presentation of his case. There are, of course, other qualities in his work: as a statesman, he was obliged to learn how to state facts, to argue, to dissect an opponent's arguments. But the characteristic note, both of his speeches and of his writings, is the combination of a few large ideas, clear, perhaps, to himself, but generally expressed in a vaguely grandiose way, and often quite out of relation to the facts as other people saw them, with a wonderfully acute discernment of small incidents or personal traits, which he used occasionally to support his ideas, but more frequently to conceal their weakness—that is, to make up for the absence of practical arguments, such as his hearers would understand. Everybody is now and then conscious of having theories of whose soundness he is fully convinced, but which he is not prepared to prove, by voice or writing, to a given audience, partly because it is too much trouble to trace out the whole process by which they were reached, partly because the uninstructed listeners could not be made to feel the full cogency of the arguments on which he relies. Lord Beaconsfield was always in this condition with regard to his political and social doctrines. He believed them, but as he had not gained them by pure logic, it was not easy for him to establish them by it; so he picked up some plausible illustration, or attacked the opposite doctrine and its supporters with a fire of raillery or invective. This non-ratiocinative quality of his thinking was a source both of strength and of weakness; of weakness, because he could not prove his propositions; of strength, because, stated as he stated them, it was not less hard to disprove them. That mark of a superior mind, that it must have a theory, was never wanting. He could not rest content, like the mass of his followers, with a prejudice, a tradition, a stolid suspicion that refused to move or answer. He would not acquiesce in negation. He must have a theory, a positive theory, to show not only that his antagonist's view was a bad one, but that he had himself a more excellent way. These theories generally had truth and value in them for any one who could analyze them; but as this was exactly what the rank and file of the party could not do, they got into sad confusion when they tried to talk his language.

He was not a well-read man, nor with varied intellectual interests. His education had been imperfect, and had not taught him how to study a subject seriously; natural indolence and the occupations of political life had kept him from learning much from books, while, in conversation, what he liked best was persiflage. Physical science seems to have had no attraction for him; political economy he hated and mocked at almost as heartily as Carlyle. People have measured his knowledge of history and geography by observing that he placed the Crucifixion in the reign of Augustus, and thought, down till 1878, that the Andes were the highest mountains in the world. But these are subjects which a man of affairs does not think of reading up in later life: he is content if he can get information on them when he needs it. There are some bits of metaphysics and some historical allusions scattered over his novels, but usually of a flimsy order. He amused himself and the public by now and then propounding doctrines on agricultural matters, but does not really seem to have mastered either that or any other economical or commercial subject. It was not in his way: he had been so little in office as not to have been forced to apply himself to such matters, while the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake would not have commended itself to a mind so concentrated and self-absorbed.

The artistic quality in him was evident in his fondness for particular words and phrases —a taste which allied itself in an interesting way with his cynical view of mankind. There is a passage in "Contarini Fleming" (which is one among those of his novels that contains the most of himself), where this is set in the clearest light. Contarini tells his father that he left college "because they taught me only words, and I wished to learn ideas." His father answers, "Few ideas are correct ones, and what are correct, no one can ascertain; but with words we govern men."

He went on acting on this belief in the power of words till he became the victim of his own phrases, just as people who talk cynically for effect often grow at last into real cynics. When he had invented a phrase which happily expressed the aspect he wished his view, or some act of his policy, to bear, he came to believe in the phrase, and to think that the facts were altered by the color his expression put upon them. During the contest for the extension of the parliamentary franchise, he declared that he was "in favor of popular privileges, but opposed to democratic rights." When he was accused of having assented, at the Congress of Berlin, to the dismemberment of the Turkish Empire, he said that what had been done "was not dismemberment, but consolidation." No statesman of recent times has given currency to so many epigrammatic phrases: "organized hypocrisy," "England dislikes coalitions," "plundering and blundering," "peace with honor," "*imperium et libertas*," "a scientific frontier," are a few, and not the best, though now the best remembered, of the many which issued from his fertile mint. This turn for epigram, rare among Englishmen, sometimes led him into scrapes which would have damaged a man of less imperturbable coolness. No one else could have ventured to say, when he had induced the Tories to pass a Reform Bill stronger than the one they had rejected from the Liberals in the preceding year, that it had been his mission "to educate his party." His opponents were indignant at such audacity, and many old Tories gnashed their teeth in silence. But the country only laughed. "It was Disraeli all over." And they liked him all the better.

If his intellect was not of wide range, it was within its range an admirably powerful weapon, of the finest flexibility and temper. Like Fitzjames's blade in Scott's poem, it was sword and shield in one. It was ingenious, ready, incisive. It detected in a moment the weak point, if not of an argument, yet of an attitude or a character. Its imaginative quality made it often picturesque, sometimes even impressive. Lord Beaconsfield had, indeed, the artist's delight in a situation for its own sake, and what people censured in him as insincerity or frivolity was frequently only the zest which he felt in posing, not so much because there was anything to be gained, as because he realized his aptitude for improvising a part in the drama which he always felt himself to be playing. The humor of the situation was too good to be wasted. It was, perhaps, partly this love of merry mischief, of startling people by doing just what they did not expect, that sometimes led him to confer honors on those whom the world thought least deserving.

In inquiring how these gifts qualified him for practical statesmanship, it is well to distinguish the different kinds of capacity which an English politician needs to attain the highest place. They may be said to be four:—He must be a debater; he must be a parliamentary tactician; he must understand the country; he must understand Europe. This last is, indeed, not always necessary: there are happily times when Europe may be left to itself, when England may look to her own affairs only; but when it is necessary, the necessity becomes terrible.

As an orator Lord Beaconsfield did not greatly shine. Indeed, in the highest sense of the word, he was no orator. He lacked ease and fluency. He had no turn for the lucid exposition of complicated facts, nor for the conduct of a close and cogent argument. Sustained and fiery declamation was not in his way. And least of all had he that truest index of genuine eloquence, the power of touching the emotions. He could not make his hearers weep, but he could make them laugh; he could put them in good humor with themselves; he could dazzle them with brilliant rhetoric, and he could pour upon an opponent streams of ridicule and scorn more effective than the hottest indignation. When he sought to be profound or solemn, he was usually heavy and labored. For wealth of thought or splendor of language his speeches will not bear for a moment to be compared—I will not say with Burke's, but with those of three or four of his own contemporaries. Even in his own party, Lord Derby, Lord Ellenborough, and Lord Cairns surpassed him.

There is not one of his longer harangues which can be read with interest from beginning to end. But there is none, or at least hardly any, which does not contain some striking passage, some image or epigram, or burst of sarcasm, which must have been exceedingly effective when delivered. It is partly upon these isolated passages, especially the sarcastic ones, and still more upon the aptness of the speech to the circumstances under which it was made, that his parliamentary fame rests. If he was not a great orator he was a great debater, who watched with the utmost care the temper of the audience, and said just what his instinct told him was needed at the moment to disconcert an opponent or to put heart into his friends. His repartees were specially happy, and must often have been unpremeditated. One must not forget to add that as he had not the ardent temperament of the born orator, so neither had he the external advantages which count for so much before large assemblies. His voice was not remarkable either for range or for quality. His manner was somewhat stiff, his gestures few, his countenance inexpressive. Yet his delivery was not wanting in skill, and often added point, by its cool unconcern, to a stinging epigram.

What he wanted in eloquence he more than made up for by tactical adroitness. No more consummate parliamentary strategist has been seen in England. He had studied the House of Commons till he knew it as a player knows his instrument—studied it collectively, for it has a collective character, and studied the men who compose it: their worse rather than their better side, their prejudices, their foibles, their vanities, their ambitions, their jealousies, above all, that curious corporate pride which they have, and which makes them resent the least approach to dictation. He could play on every one of these strings, and yet so as to conceal his skill; and he so economized himself as to make them always wish to hear him. He knew how in a body of men always listening to talk, and most of it tedious talk, about matters in themselves uninteresting, the desire for a little amusement becomes almost a passion: and he humored this desire so far as occasionally to err by excess of banter and flippancy. He had a happy knack of appearing to follow rather than to lead, and when he made an official statement it was with the air of one who was taking them into his confidence. A good deal of this he had learned from observing Lord Palmerston: but the art came far more naturally to that statesman, who was an Englishman all through, than to a man of Mr. Disraeli's origin. As leader of his party in opposition, he was at once daring and cautious. He never feared to give battle, even when he knew he was sure to be beaten, if he felt that it was necessary, with a view to the future, that the judgment of his party should have been pronounced in a formal way. On the other hand, he was wary of committing himself to a policy of blind or obstinate resistance. When he perceived that the time had come to yield, he knew how to yield with a good grace, so as both to support a character for reasonableness and to obtain valuable concessions as the price of peace. If difficulties arose with foreign countries he claimed full liberty of criticising the conduct of the Government, but studiously abstained from obstructing or thwarting its acts, declaring that England must always present a united front to the foreigner, whatever penalties she might afterward visit on those who had mismanaged her concerns. When he came into office at the head of a majority, he was not equally successful, and certainly made less use of his power than might have been expected. But he was then an old man, weakened by disease, feeling already that his time was short. As regards the inner discipline of his party, he had great difficulties to surmount in the jealousy which many Tories felt for him as a new man—a man whom they could not understand and only partially trusted. Conspiracies were repeatedly formed against him; malcontents attacked him in the press, and sometimes even in Parliament. These he seldom noticed, maintaining a cool and self-confident demeanor which disheartened the plotters, and discharging the duties of his post with the same steady assiduity. He was always on the lookout for young men of promise, drew them toward him, encouraged them to help him in parliamentary sharp-shooting, and fostered in every way the spirit of party. The bad side of that spirit was seen when he came into office, for then every appointment was given from party motives; and men who had been loyal to him were rewarded by places or titles to which they had no other claim. But the unity and martial fervor of the Tory party was raised to the highest point, and Mr. Disraeli himself, thanks to his unfailing tact, was never personally unpopular with his parliamentary opponents, even when he was most hotly attacked on the platform and in the press.

To know England and watch the shifting currents of its opinion is a very different matter from knowing the House of Commons. Indeed, the two kinds of knowledge are in a measure incompatible. Men who enter Parliament soon begin to forget that it is not, in the last resort, Parliament that governs, but the people. They grow absorbed in the daily contests which they witness or bear a part in, and estimate them above their true importance. They come to think that the opinion inside must necessarily be the opinion outside. When they are in a minority they are depressed; when they are in a majority they fancy that all is well, forgetting their masters out-of-doors. This tendency is aggravated by the fact that the English Parliament meets in the capital, where all the rich and luxurious congregate and give their tone to society. The House of Commons, though many of its members belong to the middle class by origin, belongs practically to the upper class by sympathy, mixes in what is called the "best society" of the capital, and can hardly help believing that what it hears every evening at dinners or receptions is what the country is thinking. A member of the House of Commons is, therefore, ill placed for feeling the pulse of the nation, and in order to do so must study the provincial press, and must frequently visit and communicate with his constituents. If this difficulty is experienced by an ordinary private member, it is greater for a minister whose time is absorbed by official duties, or a leader of opposition, who has to be constantly thinking of his tactics in the House. In Lord Beaconsfield's case there was, of course, a keenness of observation and discernment far beyond the common. But he was under the disadvantage of not being really an Englishman, and of having never lived among the people. The detachment which has been referred to above here came in to weaken his power of judging of popular sentiment, of appraising at their true value the various tendencies that sway and divide a nation so complex as the English. Early in life he had formed theories about the relations of the different classes of English society—nobility, capitalists, workmen, peasantry, middle-class people—which were far from containing the whole truth; and he adhered to them even when the changes of half a century had made them less true. He had a great aversion, not to say contempt, for Puritanism, and for the Dissenters among whom it chiefly holds its ground, and pleased himself with the idea that the extension of the suffrage which he carried in 1867 had destroyed their political power. The Conservative success in 1874 confirmed him in this belief, and made him also think that the working classes were much more ready than they really are to follow the lead of the rich. He perceived that the Liberal ministry of 1868–'74 (rightly or wrongly, I do not stop to inquire) offended the national pride of certain classes by appearing too modest or too neutral in foreign affairs, and fancied that the great bulk of the nation would be dazzled by a warlike mien, and an active, even aggressive, foreign policy. It was congenial to his own ideas, congenial to the society that surrounded him; it was applauded by some largely circulated newspapers; and thus he was, perhaps, more surprised than any other man of similar experience to find the nation sending up a much larger majority against him in 1880 than it had sent up for him in 1874. One takes this as the most striking instance of his miscalculation; but the fact is that he had all through his career a very imperfect comprehension of the English people. Individuals, or even an assembly, may be understood by dint of keen and long-continued observation; but to understand a whole nation, one must also have sympathy, and this his circumstances, not less than his character, had denied him.

It was partly the same defect that prevented him from understanding the general politics of Europe. Of course, there is a sense in which no single man can pretend to understand Europe. Prince Bismarck himself does not: the problem is too vast, the facts to be known too numerous, the tendencies too complex. One can speak only of more or less. If Europe were now what it was a century ago, Lord Beaconsfield would have had a far better chance of being fit to become what it was probably his dearest wish to become—its guide and arbiter. He would have taken the exact measure of the princes and ministers with whom he had to deal, would have seen and played on their weaknesses with admirable skill. His novels show how often he had revolved diplomatic situations in his mind, and how expertly he would have dealt with them. Foreign diplomatists are all agreed that at the Congress of Berlin he played his part to admiration, spoke seldom, but spoke always to the point and with dignity, had a perfect conception of what he meant to secure, and of the means he must employ to secure it, never haggled over details or betrayed any eagerness to win support, never wavered in his demands, even when they seemed to lead straight to war. Dealing with individuals, representing material forces which he had gauged, he was perfectly at home, and deserved the praise he obtained. But to know what the condition of South-eastern Europe really was, and understand how best to settle it, was a far more difficult matter, for which he wanted both the previous study and the requisite insight. In the Europe of to-day, peoples count for more than the wills of individual rulers: one must comprehend the passions and sympathies of peoples if one is to forecast the future. He never cared to do this. He always treated with contempt the national movement in Italy; made no secret of his good-will to Austria and his liking for Louis Napoleon—a man to whom, though far his inferior in ability and in courage, his own character had some affinities. His imagination, his fondness for theories, and disposition rather to adhere to them than to study and interpret facts, made him the victim of his own preconceived ideas. A great adversary once said of him that he had only two ideas in foreign policy—the one the maintenance of the temporal power of the Pope, the other the maintenance of the Turkish Empire. We have seen the one expire; we are watching the agonies of the other. He was possessed by the notion, seductive to a dreamy mind, that all the disturbances of Europe arose from the action of secret societies; and when the Eastern Question was re-opened by the insurrection in Herzegovina and the subsequent war of Servia against Turkey, he explained the phenomenon in a famous speech by saying, "The secret societies of Europe have declared war against Turkey"—the fact being that the societies, which in Russia were promoting the Servian war, were public societies, openly collecting subscriptions, while those secret "social democratic" societies of which we have since heard so much were strongly opposed to the interference of Russia, and those other societies in the rest of Europe, wherein Poles and Italians have played a leading part, were either hostile or indifferent.

There was one instance in which he displayed a foresight, or, at least, a reserve, in foreign affairs for which he deserves every credit. He was the only leading statesman on his own side of politics who did not embrace and applaud the cause of the South in the American civil war of 1861–'65. Whether this arose from a caution that would not commit itself where it knew its own ignorance, or from a sound perception of the superior strength of the Northern States (a perception which one who visits the South is constantly astonished that so few people in Europe should have had), it is not easy to decide; but whatever the cause, the fact is a conspicuous evidence of his prudence or sagacity. Nor ought it to be forgotten that one or two of his earliest speeches display an insight into the sources of Irish suffering and Irish discontent which the English nation is only now beginning to reach.

In estimating his statesmanship as a whole, one must give due weight to the fact that it profoundly impressed foreigners, as well as his own party in England. No English minister has for a long time past so fascinated the opinion of Germany and France. They looked on him as the man who had given back to Britain her old European position; they attributed to him profound designs, a penetrating insight almost equal to what his domestic admirers revered. In some of our Conservative clubs, there hangs a large photograph of Lord Beaconsfield, wearing the well-known look of mysterious fixity, under which is inscribed the line of Homer: "He alone is wise: the rest are fleeting shadows." * It was a happy idea to go for a motto to the favorite poet of his rival; and whatever we may think of its appropriateness, the fact remains that this is the belief he succeeded in inspiring. He did it by virtue of those very gifts which often brought him into trouble: his taste for large and imposing theories, his power of clothing them in vague and solemn language, his persistent faith in them. Very few people were able to judge whether his imperial ideas were right or wrong—that is, how far they were sound and feasible; but every one saw that he had theories, and many fell under the spell which a grandiose imagination knows how to exercise. It is chiefly this gift which lifts him out of the line of mere party political leaders, the line in which his position was won, and makes him an interesting study. If he sometimes failed to see how much the English are impelled by their emotions, he did see that they may be swayed through their imaginations. Obvious; yet it was almost his discovery.

His novels are too valuable a revelation of his mind to be passed over, but in themselves they need not occupy us long. They are brimful, nay, foaming over, with cleverness; indeed, "Vivian Grey," with all its youthful faults, gives one a greater impression of purely intellectual brilliance than anything else he ever wrote or spoke. There is some variety in their subjects,—"Contarini Fleming" and "Tancred" are more romantic than the others, "Sybil" and "Coningsby" more political,—as well as in their merits; the two latest, "Lothair" and "Endymion," works of his old age, being markedly inferior in spirit and invention. But the general characteristics are the same in all—a lively fancy, a knack of hitting people off in a few lines, considerable power of describing the superficial aspects of society, a swift narrative, a sprightly dialogue, a keen insight into the selfishness of men and the vanities of women, with incessant flashes of wit lighting up the whole stage. But it is always a stage. The light is artificial light, not open-air sunshine. Nothing is really like nature. There is not one of the characters whom we feel we might have met and known; nor any whom we should like to know. Heroes and heroines are

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* Used of Tiresias, in the world of disembodied spirits. (Od. xi.)

theatrical figures; their pathos rings false, their love, though described as passionate, seems superficial; it does not spring from the inmost recesses of the soul. The studies of men of the world, and particularly of heartless ones, are the most life-like; yet, even here, any one who wants to feel the difference between the great painter and the clever sketcher need only compare Thackeray's Marquis of Steyne with Disraeli's Marquis of Monmouth, both of them suggested by the same original. There is, in short, an absence of real dramatic power in these stories, just as there is in his play of "Alarcos"; and if we read them with pleasure it is not for the sake either of plot or of character, but because they contain so many sparkling witticisms and reflections, setting in a strong light, yet not always an unkindly light, the seamy side of politics and human nature. The slovenliness of their style, which is often pompous, but seldom pure or correct, makes them appear to have been written hastily—an impression heightened by the undoubted fertility of invention in the earlier ones, where we feel that the sketches the author gives are, so to speak, only a few out of a large portfolio. The less they profess to be serious, the better they are; and, consequently, the most vivacious of all are two classical burlesques, written at a time when that kind of composition had not yet become common,—"Ixion in Heaven" and "The Infernal Marriage,"—little pieces of funning worthy of Thackeray, I had almost said of Voltaire. Whether Lord Beaconsfield would have taken high rank as a novelist if he had thrown himself completely into the profession may be doubted, for his defects were such as pains and practice would hardly have lessened. The literary vocation he was best fitted for was that of a journalist or pamphleteer; and in this he might have won an unrivaled success. His dash, his verve, his brilliancy of illustration, his scorching satire, would have made the fortune of any newspaper, and carried dismay into the enemy's ranks.

The question we set out with still remains to be answered: How did such a man, possessed, no doubt, of remarkable powers, but also weighted in his course by great disadvantages, by his Jewish origin (which no one who looked at him could forget), by the escapades of his early career, by the want of confidence which his habitual cynicism inspired, by the visionary nature of so many of his views,—how did he, in a conservative and aristocratic country like England, triumph over so many prejudices and enmities, and raise himself to be the head of the Conservative and aristocratic party, the trusted counselor of the Crown, the ruler, almost the dictator, of a free people? Mainly, no doubt, by the great gifts of intellect and still more remarkable powers of will which have been already described. But there were other secondary and incidental causes which deserve to be taken into account. The ancients were not wrong in ascribing to Fortune a great share in human affairs. He to whom it comes must, of course, have the capacity of using it. But he to whom it does not come, or comes too late, may never be able to display his power. Now, among the secondary causes of Mr. Disraeli's success, chance played no insignificant part.

Of these causes one or two may be particularized. The first lies in the nature of the party to which he belonged. The Tory party differs from the Liberal party in two important points. In the first place, it usually contains a smaller number of able men. When J. S. Mill once called it the stupid party, it did not repudiate the name, but pointed with some force to its strength and its earnestness as showing how many things besides mere intellect go to make political greatness. Hence it has been generally easier for a person of superior gifts to rise to eminence among the Tories than in the ranks of their opponents. Such a person has fewer competitors, and the comparative rarity of the phenomenon makes it more highly prized. This was signally the case after Peel's defection. That statesman had carried off with him the intellectual flower of the Conservatives. Those who were left behind to form the Protectionist opposition in the House of Commons were broad-acred squires, of solid character but slender capacity. Through this heavy atmosphere Mr. Disraeli rose like a balloon. Being the only man in his party with either strategical or debating power, he became indispensable, and established in a few months a supremacy which years of patient labor would not have given him in a rivalry with the distinguished band who surrounded Peel. And, what is hardly less remarkable, during the twenty years that followed till he became Prime Minister, no man of genius rose up in the Tory ranks to dispute his throne. The conspiracies against him might well have prospered could a candidate for the leadership have been found capable of crossing swords with the chieftain in possession. Fortune was true to her favorite, and suffered none such to appear.

In the second place, the Tory party is far more of a party than are the Liberals. The latter are (not, indeed, at this moment, but usually) a confederation of three parties, generally acting together, but liable, unless dominated by some extraordinary mind or animated by some extraordinary enthusiasm, to fall asunder, perhaps to fire into each other's ranks. But the Tories, being the party of the property-holders, and having not to advance but to stand still, not to propose changes but to resist them—having bonds of interest as well as of sentiment to draw them close together, possess a coherence, a loyalty to their chiefs, a vehement corporate spirit, far exceeding those of their adversaries. Thus, when any man wins a conspicuous place among the Tories, he acquires forthwith a right to the support of all its members; and, when he becomes its leader, he is followed with a devotion, an unquestioning submission and confidence, which places his character and doctrines under the ægis of the party. The whole party feeling takes shape in applause of his words and attachment to his person. This was of infinite value to Mr. Disraeli. The historical past of the great Tory party, its associations, the social consideration which it enjoys, all went to ennoble his position and efface the remembrance of the less satisfactory parts of his career. And, in the later days of his reign, when no one disputed his supremacy, every Tory was, as a matter of course, his advocate and admirer, and resented attacks on him as insults to the party. It was a mistake on the part of the Liberals —a mistake, however, into which their foremost leaders did not fall so much as the minor lights—to make these attacks so bitter, for they only confirmed the loyalty of the Tories, leading them to identify themselves still more completely with their chieftain's policy.

Finally, he had the great advantage—an advantage whose weight is often forgotten—of living long. Many a statesman has died at fifty, leaving a second-rate reputation, who might have become world-historical with twenty years more of life. Had Lord Beaconsfield's career closed in 1854, he would have been remembered as a parliamentary gladiator, who had produced a crude Budget and some brilliant social and political sketches. The higher qualities of his character would have remained unknown. True it is that a man must have greatness in order to stand the test of long life. Some are found out, like Louis Napoleon. Some lose their heads and run to seed, like Lord Brougham. Some prove incapable of growth and development, like Prince Metternich, or, to take a far superior instance, M. Guizot. Lord Beaconsfield not merely stood the test, but gained immensely by it. He gained by rising into a position where his strength could show itself. He gained also by so impressing his individuality upon people as to make them accept it as an ultimate fact, till at last they came, not so much to blame him for what he did in consistency with his established reputation, as rather to relish its expressions, to enter into the humor of his character. As they unconsciously came to judge him by a standard different from that which they applied to ordinary Englishmen, they hardly complained of deflections from accuracy which, in other persons, would have seemed grave. He had given notice that he was not like other men—that his words must not be taken in their natural sense, that he was to be regarded rather as the skillful player of a great game, the consummate actor in a great part, than as one who was battling for a cause he believed in. And, once more, he gained by the many years during which he had opportunities of displaying his fortitude, patience, constancy under defeat, unwavering self-confidence—gifts rarer than mere intellectual power, gifts that deserve the influence they bestow. Nothing so fascinates mankind as to see a man equal to every fortune, unshaken by reverses, indifferent to personal abuse, maintaining a long combat against apparently hopeless odds with the sharpest weapons and a smiling face. They fancy he must have great hidden resources of wisdom as well as of courage. When some of his predictions come true, when the turning tide of popular feeling begins to bear his party toward power, they believe that he has been all along right and the rest of the world wrong. When victory at last settles on his crest, even his enemies can hardly help applauding a reward which seems so amply earned. It was by this quality, more perhaps than by anything else, by this serene exterior with an unfathomable reserve below, that he laid his spell not only on so large a part of the English people, but upon the imagination of Germany and France.

Singular career, which appears hardly less singular when one has sought everywhere for explanations of it: a Jewish adventurer climbing from nothing, by no single stroke of luck, but by patient and unaided efforts, to sway a vast empire, and make himself one of the four or five greatest personal forces in the world. If it is not a career to be recommended for imitation, if his aims were mainly selfish, if one must confess that he did something to lower the tone of English public life, yet may it not fairly be held that as, while he sat in the House of Commons, no one was prouder of it, or more jealous of its dignity and privileges, so, too, when at last the destinies of England fell into his hands, he felt the greatness of the charge, and strenuously sought to secure what he believed to be her imperial position in the world? Whatever judgment history may ultimately pass upon him, she will find in the long annals of the English Parliament no more striking figure.

Niñita; she was already reaching out into the dim vastness of eternity.

Through the still night, as she knelt there silently, prayerless, there came the sound of a locomotive whistle—it was the night express for the North. The train was still miles away down the line, for sound travels very far in that still, pure air, and more than a quarter of an hour would pass before it would go thundering by the village and up the valley beyond.

Suddenly, Niñita gave a little shudder. Then she rose steadily and walked out through the darkness of the church into the faint moonlight—walked on down the hill behind the church, past the *padre's* garden, out into the fields beyond, and so at last to where the railroad swept around a curve through a grove of cotton-woods. This was the field that was to have been her marriage portion. It was under those cotton-woods, by the *acequia*, that she and Manuel had made little adobes in the years so long gone by. She noticed how greatly the trees had grown, and wondered to herself that she had never noticed it before. Through their branches she could see the head-light of the engine, a great ball of fire, coming up the line. She did not know that Grant was sitting in the lobby of the sleeping-car—looking a little pale, but not much the worse for the wound he was telling the conductor about as he smoked his cigar. It was better that Niñita did not know how close Grant was to her. At least one added pang of grief was spared her at the last.

"MUST have been one of them Mexican goats, I guess, Bill," said the engineer of the express to his fireman, as they felt a little jar, just as the engine rounded the curve, and they saw something black glance down the embankment and fall among the trees.

"Guess so. Serve him right for bein' fool enough to go to sleep on the track. Just like a Mexican goat to do that. Goats and Mexicans, they're all much of a muchness, and all d—— fools together. What's the use of any of 'em *I* don't know, and I haven't found the fellow that does." And the engine and train, the advance guard of the coming race, swept on up the line.

Down under the cotton-wood, by the *acequia*, Niñita—one poor little soul of the race that must go—lay dead.

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WAS THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD A REPRESENTATIVE JEW?

HERR GEORG BRANDES concludes his acute and brilliant study of the late Earl of Beaconsfield with the question: "Is he (Disraeli), as he considers himself, a representative man? Can he be truly said to be a representative of the Semitic race? If the question be put in this direct form, it must decidedly be answered in the negative. For the Jewish mind has revealed itself in far more affluent and nobler forms than in Disraeli's comparatively limited mental range." To our thinking, Herr Brandes' own book affords grounds for the contrary reply to his leading question. Despite his eminent gift of critical discernment, he seems to have fallen into error, rather owing to a misconception of that which constitutes the true Judaic type, than of the special character of the great statesman and novelist whom he portrays with masterly skill. In order that a single man shall represent a people, it is certainly unnecessary that he shall embrace, in the most perfect degree, the whole gamut of qualities ever possessed by the united members of his race. In other words, taking Spinoza and Shylock as the opposite poles of the Hebraic character, it is not requisite that the representative Jew shall be, at the same time, Spinoza and Shylock. All that is required is that he shall furnish us with an epitome of the race-features common to both, and give us an example, on however limited a scale, of the master quality of each. Now, this is precisely what we think Benjamin Disraeli has done. If he was a stranger to the serene disinterestedness, the philosophic repose, the simplicity and magnanimity of Spinoza (all of which traits were purely individual), yet he shared with the inspired Hollander the distinctively national combination of mysticism and cool-headed shrewdness, of powerful imagination and mathematical precision in argument, together with indomitable energy, unhesitating self-confidence, and indefatigable perseverance. On the other hand, we have not far to look for his affinity with the Jew of Venice. Again, we find the poetic, oriental imagination dealing in tropes and symbols, the energy, or rather now the obstinacy, of will, the intellectual superiority, the peculiarly Jewish strength of the national and domestic sentiments; and, added thereto, the rebellion of a proud heart imbittered and perverted by brutal humiliations, and the consequent thirst for revenge, the astuteness, the sarcasm, the pathos, the egotism, and the cunning of the Hebrew usurer. Disraeli possessed in an eminent degree the capacity which seems to us the most characteristic feature of the Jew, whether considered as a race or an individual, and one which has been developed to perfection by ages of persecution. We refer to the faculty which enables this people, not only to perceive and make the most of every advantage of their situation and temperament, but also, with marvelous adroitness, to transform their very disabilities into new instruments of power. To-day, in Europe, their commercial prosperity is such as to arouse the jealousy and enmity of nations supposed to be the most enlightened, and yet this excessive accumulation of wealth is only the natural result of the stupid, not to say cruel, policy of those very nations in confining them for years to the practice of usury. Ostracized from the society of Christians, even when not made the victims of actual barbarity, refused a voice in the administration of public affairs, denied the honor of military service, excommunicated at the same time from legal protection and from Christian charity, it behooved them to organize all the more stringently their own little communities, to perfect their system of private beneficence, to administer their own affairs with scrupulous exactness, to practice the arts of peace, and to keep their eyes and wits ever open to the chance of gaining an inch of ground from the common enemy. Thus has a virtue, or at least a new element of force, been instilled into them by every provision for their extermination. Only an outward "sufferance is the badge of their tribe." The patient humility which accepted blows and contumely in silence was not the inertia of a broken will, but the calculating self-control of a nature imbued with persistent and unconquerable energy. In the long run, it was sure to endow them with the immense superiority that the self-contained man has over the man of unbridled temper. No other Jewish trait is more conspicuously exemplified than this in the career of Benjamin Disraeli. It was this which supported him through his repeated defeats before securing a seat in Parliament, and again through the disgraceful exhibition of Parliamentary brutality which attended his maiden-speech. No tempest of ridicule could shake his imperturbable calm. Not that he was lacking in sensitiveness, in pride, in the justifiable indignation of an insulted gentleman, but simply that he was used to it—that he had inherited and cultivated the simulated patience to submit to it without flinching, while straining every nerve and directing every energy to the aim of retaliation and revenge. Upon that memorable day, the chief objects of derision, Herr Brandes tells us, were the speaker's peculiar manner and outlandish costume; there was nothing in his speech either absurd or dull. We fancy we can discern something deeper than the so-called oriental love of show in Disraeli's fantastic attire on this occasion; it is probable that the wily diplomatist adopted it deliberately as a conspicuous mark for the shafts of scorn—a sort of "Alcibiades' dog" to divert attention from the natural race-peculiarities of his appearance. The ridicule he foresaw as inevitable; rather let it be poured upon the masquerade-dress, which could be doffed at will, than upon the inalienable characteristics of his personality, still less upon any vulnerable points in his oratory. Moreover, he was doubtless anxious to let it exhaust itself at once—to provoke the full measure of scorn, and prove once and forever that he was to be dealt with by other opponents than bullies or buffoons.

A man of less audacity and tact would have endeavored to suppress, or at least to keep in the background, those facts relating to his origin and creed which were most at variance with the prejudices of his fellow countrymen. Not so Disraeli. His object was not to conciliate, but to dazzle; no difficulties could daunt him, but he was lynx-eyed to discern the line that separates the arduous from the impossible. No Englishman would ever forget he was a Jew; therefore, he himself would be the first and the loudest to proclaim it, and instead of apologizing for it, he exerted all his powers of rhetoric and persuasion to make it appear a natural prerogative of rank and honor. He did not knock servilely at the doors of the English aristocracy; he conquered them with their own weapons; he met arrogance with arrogance, the pride of descent based upon a few centuries of distinction, with the pride of descent supported by hundreds of centuries of intellectual supremacy and even of divine anointment. As a communicant of the Anglican Church he did not deny Christianity's claim to all the glory of civilization, but he went a step farther back and declared this very Christianity to be the outcome, the apotheosis, of Judaism. In the attitude which he assumed, politically, socially, and æsthetically, toward his race, we do not know which to admire more—the daring originality of his position, or the pluck and consistency with which he maintained it.

It would be an injustice, however, to attribute solely to a calculated audacity Disraeli's haughty position in regard to his race. He belonged, by birth, to the branch of modern Jews known as the Sephardim, concerning whom an English writer has remarked: "Of the two large bodies of European Jews, the Ashkenazim, from Germany and Poland, and the Sephardim, of Spanish and Portuguese descent, it is well known that during the Middle Ages the latter were the more eminent in wealth, literature, and importance. The general histories of modern Jews have treated of them as one people *per se,* without adequate consideration of how differently must have been modified the Judaism of Granada in the twelfth century, or of Castile in the fourteenth century, from that of the same period amid the ferocity and unlettered ignorance of Muscovy and Poland." There can be no doubt that a spark of fiery Castilian pride was transmitted, unstifled by intervening ages of oppression, to the spirit of Benjamin Disraeli. He knew himself to be the descendant, not of pariahs and pawnbrokers, but of princes, prophets, statesmen, poets, and philosophers, and in his veins was kindled that enthusiasm of faith in the genius and high vocation of his own people which strikes outsiders as an anomaly in a member of an habitually despised race. Indeed, in reading the annals of the mediæval Jews of Granada, we meet with more than one instance of a career ascending from the humble station of the Hebrew scribe or shopkeeper to the premiership of the kingdom, which seems almost the counterpart of that of Lord Beaconsfield, and which he, doubtless, treasured in his mind as an earnest of future possibilities, no less than a proof of historic superiority. Herr Brandes says: "Disraeli certainly cannot be looked upon as the personification of the many-sidedness of the Jewish race. He is wanting in its idealistic tendencies." But our author seems to forget that the idealism of politics is not the idealism of philosophy. Disraeli's faith in the sovereign power of imagination seems to us a proof of his "idealistic tendency." Ideal is a vague word, of many meanings. Ideal aims, in the sense opposed to egotism or personal ambition,—the idealism of Washington as contrasted with the selfishness of Bonaparte,—held no place in Disraeli's career or policy. But idealism as opposed to utilitarianism, faith in the romantic, the poetic idea, rather than in the dead, prosaic fact, characterized every act and statement that emanated from this brilliant Semite. Says Herr Brandes:

> "It is in this high value placed on the use of imagination, conditioned by the lack of scientific training, that the originality of the man consists. There is some truth, something even profound, in this view of imagination as a political motive power. It springs from his own peculiarly imaginative temperament, and this mode of looking at things is to such an extent the central point with him that he who rightly apprehends Disraeli's opinion of the part played by imagination in politics, and his adroitness in turning it to account, possesses the key to his mental powers as a novelist and statesman." (Pp. 59 and 60.)

Again we must differ from Herr Brandes in the assertion that Disraeli was lacking in the "many-sidedness" of the Jew. Prime-Minister of England, poet, novelist, orator, satirist, wit, and dandy, the leader of the Tories and the writer of a novel ("Sybil") which Herr Brandes says is "a confession of sympathy with the Chartists," and contains "passages that remind one of Lasalle," the author of "a little masterpiece of composition ('Ixion in Heaven')—a classic model which Heine might have envied," and of poems (in "Venetia") "not unworthy of Shelley," the chief of the Conservatives and the enthusiastic champion of Byron and Shelley as opposed to the cant and stupidity of British society,—in the name of Proteus, have we not here enough, on Herr Brandes' own showing, to establish Disraeli's claim to many-sidedness of sympathy and mind?

And yet the fact remains that Disraeli was not a first-class man; his qualities were not those of the world's heroes; he possessed talent, rather than genius; he was a sagacious politician aiming at self-aggrandizement, not a wise statesman building his monument in enduring acts of public service; and the study of his career is calculated to dazzle, to entertain, even to amuse, rather than to elevate, to stimulate, or to ennoble. But do all these derogatory facts preclude him from being considered a representative Jew? On the contrary, we think they tend to confirm his title. First-class men in all races are sufficiently rare, and they have not been absent from the annals of Judaism: Moses, Jesus, St. Paul, the prophets, Spinoza, bear glorious testimony to their existence. But centuries of persecution and the enforced narrowness of their sphere of action have, nevertheless, developed among the Jews a typical national character other than that of the above-named scions of the race. Adroitness, dexterity, tact, industry, perseverance, ambition, brilliancy, and imagination—these may be enumerated as their distinguishing qualities. Where shall we look for the great modern Jews? At the head of the revolutions, the politics, the finance, the journalism of Europe, or among actors, musical *virtuosi* and composers, wherever they can find a field for their practical ability, their long-starved appetite for power, their love of liberty, and their manifold talents. They are on the surface in every city of Europe and America where they have gathered in any considerable numbers. But in proportion as we seek among the less brilliant avenues to renown, among the slowly rewarded workers and students, we shall find fewer and fewer representatives of the race.

The distinguished Belgian publicist, M. de Laveleye, says:

> "The rapid rise of the Jewish element is a fact which may be observed all over Europe. If this upward movement continues, the Israelites, a century hence, will be the masters of Europe. * * * This fact is popularly attributed to usury, rapacity, hard-heartedness, and what not of the sort. This is a complete error, a baseless prejudice. When all transactions are free, no one is forced to submit to more onerous conditions than those of the general market. Christians do not neglect to profit, like every one else, by whatever favorable opportunities are accidentally presented to them. In the great financial scandals of our day, especially in Belgium, only Christians have figured. * * * The Jews have a very keen and very just sense of reality, which they seize and render with extreme precision; and at the same time a strong ideality, a powerful imagination. Heine seems to me the type of this rare combination of apparently antagonistic qualities. Apply this genius to business, and their success is explained. Imagination and invention discover advantageous operations, solid good sense enables them to see the good and bad sides, and protects them against illusions. Among us, business-men with imagination ruin themselves through optimism, and those without it crawl in routine."

We hear much of their achievements in art, but among no modern people has the loftiest embodiment of any single branch of creative art been a Jew. In music, for which they are peculiarly gifted, the high-water mark of the art was reached by the three Christians, Bach, Beethoven, and Handel. In poetry, their most brilliant exponent, Heine, must take his seat at the feet of Goethe, and even of Byron, to whom he is more nearly related. Neither in painting nor in sculpture can they bring forward any supreme name. The great modern revolution in science has been carried on without their participation or aid. Thus far, their religion, whose mere preservation under such adverse conditions seems little short of a miracle, has been deprived of the natural means of development and progress, and has remained a stationary force. The next hundred years will, in our opinion, be the test of their vitality as a people; the phase of toleration upon which they are only now entering will prove whether or not they are capable of growth. In the meantime, the narrowness, the arrogance, the aristocratic pride, the passion for revenge, the restless ambition, the vanity and the love of pomp of Benjamin Disraeli, no less than his suppleness of intellect, his moral courage, his dazzling talents, and his triumphant energy, proclaim him, to our thinking, a representative Jew.

THE BLESSINGS OF PIRACY.

In the good old romantic days, when pirates wore top-boots and cutlasses, and bore down upon their victims with ships instead of printing presses, the trading-place of the buccaneers was Jamaica, where they spent in riotous living and the outfitting of their vessels the greater part of the wealth taken from merchant ships and wrung from the inhabitants of captured towns by torturing men and frightening women. There was naturally a party in the island opposed to the suppression of freebooting. That did not seem to Jamaicans so very bad a business which brought gold and silver plate and other precious stuffs, rifled from Panama or the coasts of South America, to be sold at low rates to Jamaican traders, and which afforded a liberal market for the rum and other commodities of that favored island. Those planters in Jamaica, if any there were, who opposed this sort of unlawful privateering, were, no doubt, deemed unpatriotic. Great fortunes were amassed indirectly from the trade, and to abolish it was to blight forever the golden prosperity of the country. The people who were plundered and tortured were, after all, only foreigners, Spaniards, and, above all, Papists. Piracy was not so very bad; it served to depress the Spanish power and to exalt that of Protestant England, and so promoted the glory of God, even though the means were most devilish.

One is forcibly reminded of this state of moral and intellectual fuddle into which the church-going English colonists of Jamaica fell through the seductions of trade, by the attitude of some of our publishing-houses on the copyright question. There are prominent publishers who are at length, after so many years of delay, in favor of granting to the foreign author some more definite interest in his book than the courtesy-money paid voluntarily of late years, but even these publishers continue to higgle for certain restrictions. They are not yet willing that literary theft shall be wholly suppressed, though they would like to see it reformed, now that a