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DISRAELI



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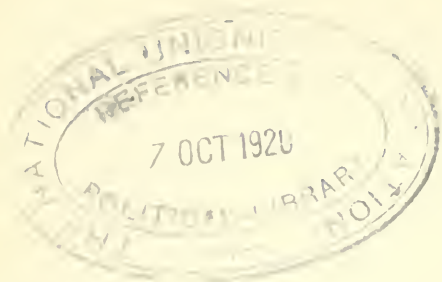
TORONTO

DISRAELI

BY THE
EARL OF CROMER

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON
1912

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PREFACE

A TRUE appreciation of the late Lord Beaconsfield's character and career is more than a matter of purely academical and historical interest. A whole group of politicians has grown up of recent years who appear to take Lord Beaconsfield as their model. Their reasons for adopting this course fail to convince me. I am well aware that the views which I have expressed will not find favour with many of those with whom I am politically associated. It appears to me that it is desirable that the aspect of the case which I have ventured to represent

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should be stated. Hence the production of these articles, which originally appeared in the *Spectator*, and are now reprinted by the kind permission of the editor of that journal.

CROMER.

December 1912.

DISRAELI

No one who has lived much in the East can, in reading Mr. Monypenny's volumes, fail to be struck with the fact that Disraeli was a thorough Oriental. The taste for tawdry finery, the habit of enveloping in mystery matters as to which there was nothing to conceal, the love of intrigue, the tenacity of purpose—though this is perhaps more a Jewish than an invariably Oriental characteristic—the luxuriance of the imaginative faculties, the strong addiction to plausible generalities set forth in florid language, the passionate outbursts of grief expressed at times (i. 177) in words so artificial as to leave a doubt in the Anglo-Saxon mind as to whether the sentiments can be genuine, the spasmodic eruption of real kindness of

heart into a character steeped in cynicism, the excess of flattery accorded at one time (i. 322) to Peel for purely personal objects contrasted with the excess of vituperation poured forth on O'Connell for purposes of advertisement, and the total absence of any moral principle as a guide of life—all these features, in a character which is perhaps not quite so complex as is often supposed, hail from the East. What is not Eastern is his unconventionality, his undaunted moral courage, and his ready conception of novel political ideas—often specious ideas, resting on no very solid foundation, but always attractive, and always capable of being defended by glittering plausibilities. He was certainly a man of genius, and he used that genius to found a political school based on extreme self-seeking opportunism. In this respect he cannot be acquitted of the charge of having contributed towards the degradation of English political life.

Mr. Monypenny's first volume deals with Disraeli's immature youth. In the second, the story of the period (1837-1846) during

which Disraeli rose to power is admirably told, and a most interesting story it is.

Whatever views one may adopt of Disraeli's character and career, it is impossible not to be fascinated in watching the moral and intellectual development of this very remarkable man, whose conduct throughout life, far from being wayward and erratic, as has at times been somewhat superficially supposed, was in reality in the highest degree methodical, being directed with unflagging persistency to one end, the gratification of his own ambition—an ambition, it should always be remembered, which, albeit it was honourable, inasmuch as it was directed to no ignoble ends, was wholly personal. If ever there was a man to whom Milton's well-known lines could fitly be applied it was Disraeli. He scorned delights. He lived laborious days. In his youth he eschewed pleasures which generally attract others whose ambition only soars to a lower plane. In the most intimate relations of life he subordinated all private inclinations to the main object he had in view. He

avowedly married, in the first instance, for money, although at a later stage (ii. 53) his wife was able to afford herself the consolation, and to pay him the graceful compliment of obliterating the sordid reproach by declaring that "if he had the chance again he would marry her for love"—a statement confirmed by his passionate, albeit somewhat histrionic love-letters. The desire of fame, which may easily degenerate into a mere craving for notoriety, was unquestionably the spur which in his case raised his "clear spirit." So early as 1833 (i. 224), on being asked upon what principles he was going to stand at a forthcoming election, he replied, "On my head." He cared, in fact, little for principles of any kind, provided the goal of his ambition could be reached. Throughout his career his main object was to rule his countrymen, and that object he attained by the adoption of methods which, whether they be regarded as tortuous or straightforward, morally justifiable or worthy of condemnation, were of a surety eminently successful.

The interest in Mr. Monypenny's work

is enormously enhanced by the personality of his hero. In dealing with the careers of other English statesmen—for instance, with Cromwell, Chatham, or Gladstone—we do, indeed, glance—and more than glance—at the personality of the man, but our mature judgment is, or at all events should be, formed mainly on his measures. We inquire what was their ultimate result, and what effect they produced? We ask ourselves what degree of foresight the statesman displayed. Did he rightly gauge the true nature of the political, economic, or social forces with which he had to deal, or did he mistake the signs of the times and allow himself to be lured away by some ephemeral will-o'-the-wisp in the pursuit of objects of secondary or even fallacious importance? It is necessary to ask these questions in dealing with the career of Disraeli, but this mental process is, in his case, obscured to a very high degree by the absorbing personality of the man. The individual fills the whole canvas almost to the extent of excluding all other objects from view.

No tale of fiction is, indeed, more strange than that which tells how this nimble-witted alien adventurer, with his poetic temperament, his weird Eastern imagination and excessive Western cynicism, his elastic mind which (i. 244) he himself described as "revolutionary," and his apparently wayward but in reality carefully regulated unconventionality, succeeded, in spite of every initial disadvantage of race, birth, manners, and habits of thought, in dominating a proud aristocracy and using its members as so many pawns on the chess-board which he had arranged to suit his own purposes. Thrust into a society which was steeped in conventionality, he enforced attention to his will by a studied neglect of everything that was conventional. Dealing with a class who honoured tradition, he startled the members of that class by shattering all the traditions which they had been taught to revere, and by endeavouring, with the help of specious arguments which many of them only half understood, to substitute others of an entirely novel character in their place. Following

much on the lines of those religious reformers who have at times sought to revive the early discipline and practices of the Church, he endeavoured to destroy the Toryism of his day by invoking the shade of a semi-mythical Toryism of the past. Bolingbroke was the model to be followed, Shelburne was the tutelary genius of Pitt, and Charles I. was (ii. 368-369) made to pose as "a virtuous and able monarch," who was "the holocaust of direct taxation." Never, he declared, "did man lay down his heroic life for so great a cause, the cause of the Church and the cause of the Poor."¹ Aspiring to rise to power through the agency of Conservatives, whose narrow-minded conventional conservatism he despised, and to whose defects he was keenly alive, he wisely judged that it was a necessity, if his programme were to be executed, that the association of political power with landed possessions should be the sheet-anchor of his

¹ This passage occurs in *Coningsby*, and Mr. Monypenny warns us (ii. 296) that "his version of the quarrel between Charles I. and the Parliament is too fanciful to be quite serious; we may believe that he was here consciously paying tribute to the historical caprices of Manners and Smythe."

system ; and strong in the support afforded by that material bond of sympathy he did not hesitate to ridicule the foibles of those "patricians" — to use his own somewhat stilted expression—who, whilst they sneered at his apparent eccentricities, despised their own chosen mouthpiece, and occasionally writhed under his yoke, were none the less so fascinated by the powerful will and keen intellect which held them captive that they blindly followed his lead, even to the verge of being duped.

From earliest youth to green old age his confidence in his own powers was never shaken. He persistently acted up to the sentiment—slightly paraphrased from Terence—which he had characteristically adopted as his family motto, *Forti nihil difficile* ; neither could there be any question as to the genuine nature either of his strength or his courage, albeit hostile critics might seek to confound the latter quality with sheer impudence.¹ He abhorred the commonplace, and it is notably

¹ Mr. Monypenny says in a note (ii. 114) that a hostile newspaper gave the following translation of Disraeli's motto: "The impudence of some men sticks at nothing."

this abhorrence which gives a vivid, albeit somewhat meretricious sparkle to his personality. For although truth is generally dull, and although probably most of the reforms and changes which have really benefited mankind partake largely of the commonplace, the attraction of unconventionality and sensationalism cannot be denied. Disraeli made English politics interesting, just as Ismail Pasha gave at one time a spurious interest to the politics of Egypt. No one could tell what would be the next step taken by the juggler in Cairo or by that meteoric statesman in London whom John Bright once called "the great wizard of Buckinghamshire." When Disraeli disappeared from the stage, the atmosphere may have become clearer, and possibly more healthy for the body politic in the aggregate, but the level of interest fell, whilst the barometer of dulness rose.

If the saying generally attributed to Buffon¹ is correct, that "the style is the man," an examination of Disraeli's style ought

¹ What Buffon really wrote was: "Le style est l'homme même."

to give a true insight into his character. There can be no question of the readiness of his wit or of his superabundant power of sarcasm. Besides the classic instances which have almost passed into proverbs, others, less well known, are recorded in these pages. The statement (ii. 85) that "from the Chancellor of the Exchequer to an Under-Secretary of State is a descent from the sublime to the ridiculous" is very witty. The well-known description of Lord Derby as "the Rupert of debate" (ii. 237) is both witty and felicitous, whilst the sarcasm in the context, which is less well known, is both witty and biting. The noble lord, Disraeli said, was like Prince Rupert, because "his charge was resistless, but when he returned from the pursuit he always found his camp in the possession of the enemy."

A favourite subject of Disraeli's sarcasm in his campaign against Peel was that the latter habitually borrowed the ideas of others. "His (Peel's) life," he said (ii. 385), "has been a great appropriation clause. He is a burglar of others' intellect. . . . From the

days of the Conqueror to the termination of the last reign there is no statesman who has committed political petty larceny on so great a scale."

In a happy and inimitable metaphor he likened (ii. 351) Sir Robert Peel's action in throwing over Protection to that of the Sultan's admiral who, during the campaign against Mehemet Ali, after preparing a vast armament which left the Dardanelles hallowed by the blessings of "all the muftis of the Empire," discovered when he got to sea that he had "an objection to war," steered at once into the enemy's port, and then explained that "the only reason he had for accepting the command was that he might terminate the contest by betraying his master."

Other utterances of a similar nature abound, as, for instance (i. 321), when he spoke of Lord Melbourne as "sauntering over the destinies of a nation, and lounging away the glories of an Empire," or when (ii. 385) he likened those Tories who followed Sir Robert Peel to the Saxons converted by Charlemagne. "The old chronicler informs

us they were converted in battalions and baptized in platoons.”

Warned by the fiasco of his first speech in the House of Commons, Disraeli for some while afterwards exercised a wise parsimony in the display of his wit. He discovered (ii. 12) that “the House will not allow a man to be a wit and an orator unless they have the credit of finding it out.” But when he had once established his position and gained the ear of the House, he gave a free rein to his prodigious powers of satire, which he used to the full in his attacks on Peel. In point of fact, vituperation and sarcasm were his chief weapons of offence. He spoke (i. 305) of Mr. Roebuck as a “meagre-minded rebel,” and called Campbell, who was afterwards Lord Chancellor, “a shrewd, coarse, manœuvring Pict,” a “base-born Scotchman,” and a “booing, fawning, jobbing progeny of haggis and cockaleekie.” When he ceased to be witty, sarcastic, or vituperative, he became turgid. Nothing could be more witty than when, in allusion to Peel’s borrowing the ideas of others, he spoke (ii.

386) of his fiscal project as "Popkins's Plan," but when, having once made this hit, which naturally elicited "peals of laughter from all parts of the House," he proceeded further, he at once lapsed into cheap rhetoric.

"'Is England,' he said, 'to be governed, and is England to be convulsed, by Popkins's plan? Will he go to the country with it? Will he go with it to that ancient and famous England that once was governed by statesmen—by Burleighs and by Walsinghams; by Bolingbrokes and by Walpoles; by a Chatham and a Canning—will he go to it with this fantastic scheming of some presumptuous pedant? I won't believe it. I have that confidence in the common sense, I will say the common spirit of our countrymen, that I believe they will not long endure this huckstering tyranny of the Treasury Bench—these political pedlars that bought their party in the cheapest market and sold us in the dearest.'"

So also (ii. 399) on one occasion when in a characteristically fanciful flight he said that Canning ruled the House of Commons "as a man rules a high-bred steed, as Alexander ruled Bucephalus," and when some member of the House indulged in a very legitimate laugh, he turned on him at once and said, "I thank that honourable gentleman for his

laugh. The pulse of the national heart does not beat as high as once it did. I know the temper of this House is not as spirited and brave as it was, nor am I surprised, when the vulture rules where once the eagle reigned." From the days of Horace downwards it has been permitted to actors and orators to pass rapidly from the comic to the tumid strain.¹ But in this case the language was so bombastic and so utterly out of proportion to the occasion which called it forth that a critic of style will hardly acquit the orator of the charge of turgidity. Mr. Monypenny recognizes (ii. 224) that "in spite of Disraeli's strong grasp of fact, his keen sense of the ridiculous, and his intolerance of cant, he never could quite distinguish between the genuine and the counterfeit either in language or sentiment."

Much has at times been said and written of the solecisms for which Disraeli was famous. They came naturally to him. In his early youth (ii. 72) he told his sister that the

¹ *Iratusque Chremes tumido delitigat ore ;
Et tragicus plerumque dolet sermone pedestri
Telephus et Pelcus.*

Danube was an "uncouth stream," because "its bed is far too considerable for its volume." At the same time there can be little doubt that his practice of indulging in carefully prepared solecisms, which became more daring as he advanced in power, was part of a deliberate and perfectly legitimate plan, conceived with the object of arresting the attention and stimulating the interest of his audience.

I have so far only dealt with Disraeli's main object in life, and with the methods by which he endeavoured to attain that object. The important question remains to be considered of whether, as many supposed and still suppose, Disraeli was a mere political charlatan, or whether, as others hold, he was a far-seeing statesman and profound thinker, who read the signs of the times more clearly than his contemporaries, and who was the early apostle of a political creed which his countrymen will do well to adopt and develop.

It is necessary here to say a word or two about Disraeli's biographer. The charm of

Mr. Monypenny's style, the lucidity of his narrative, the thorough grasp which he manifestly secured of the forces in movement during the period which his history embraces, and the deep regret that all must feel that his promising career was prematurely cut short by the hand of death, should not blind us to the fact that, in spite of a manifest attempt to write judicially, he must be regarded as an apologist for Disraeli. In respect, indeed, to one point—which, however, is, in my opinion, one of great importance—he threw up the case for his client. The facts of this case are very clear.

When Peel formed his Ministry in 1841, no place was offered to Disraeli. It can be no matter for surprise that he was deeply mortified. His exclusion does not appear to have been due to any personal feeling of animosity entertained by Peel. On the contrary, Peel's relations with Disraeli had up to that time been of a very friendly character. Possibly something may be attributed to that lack of imagination which (ii. 306), at a much later period, Disraeli

thought was the main defect of Sir Robert Peel's character, and which may have rendered him incapable of conceiving that a young man, differing so totally not only from himself but from all other contemporaneous politicians in deportment and demeanour, could ever aspire to be a political factor of supreme importance. The explanation given by Peel himself (ii. 119) that, as is usual with Prime Ministers similarly situated, he was wholly unable to meet all the just claims made upon him, was unquestionably true, but it is more than probable that the episode related by Mr. Monypenny (ii. 122) had something to do with Disraeli's exclusion. Peel, it appears, was inclined to consider Disraeli eligible for office, but Stanley (subsequently Lord Derby), who was a typical representative of that "patrician" class whom Disraeli courted and eventually dominated, stated "in his usual vehement way" that "if that scoundrel were taken in, he would not remain himself." However that may be, two facts are abundantly clear. One is that, in the agony of disappointment,

Disraeli threw himself at Peel's feet and implored, in terms which were almost abject, that some official place should be found for him. "I appeal," he said, in a letter dated September 5th, 1841 (ii. 118), "to that justice and that magnanimity which I feel are your characteristics, to save me from an intolerable humiliation." The other fact is that, speaking to his constituents in 1844 (ii. 245) he said: "I never asked Sir Robert Peel for a place," and further that, speaking in the House of Commons in 1846, he repeated this statement (ii. 390) even more categorically. He assured the House that "nothing of the kind ever occurred," and he added that "it was totally foreign to his nature to make an application for any place." He was evidently not believed. "The impression in the House," Mr. Monypenny says (ii. 291), "was that Disraeli had better have remained silent."

Mr. Monypenny admits the facts, and does not attempt to defend Disraeli's conduct, but he passes over this very singular episode, which is highly illustrative of the character

of the man, somewhat lightly, merely remarking (ii. 392) that though Disraeli "must pay the full penalty," at the same time "it is for the politician who is without sin in the matter of veracity to cast the first stone."

I hardly think that this consolatory Biblical reflection disposes of the matter. Politicians, as also diplomatists, are often obliged to give evasive answers to inconvenient questions, but it is not possible for any man, when dealing with a point of primary importance, deliberately to make and to repeat a statement so absolutely untrue as that made by Disraeli on the occasion in question without undermining any confidence which might otherwise be entertained in his general sincerity and rectitude of purpose. A man convicted of deliberate falsehood cannot expect to be believed when he pleads that his public conduct is wholly dictated by public motives. Now all the circumstantial evidence goes to show that from 1841 onwards Disraeli's conduct, culminating in his violent attacks on Peel in 1845-46, was the result of personal resentment due to his exclusion from office in

1841, and that these attacks would never have been made had he been able to climb the ladder of advancement by other means. His proved want of veracity confirms the impression derived from this evidence.

Peel's own opinion on the subject may be gathered from a letter which he wrote to Sir James Graham on December 22, 1843.¹ Disraeli had the assurance to solicit a place for his brother from Sir James Graham. The request met with a flat refusal. Peel's comment on the incident was : "He (Disraeli) asked me for office himself, and I was not surprised that, being refused, he became independent and a patriot."

So far, therefore, as the individual is concerned, the episode on which I have dwelt above appears to me to be a very important factor in estimating not merely Disraeli's moral worth, but also the degree of value to be attached to his opinions. The question of whether Disraeli was or was not a political charlatan remains, however, to be considered.

That Disraeli was a political adventurer is

¹ *Sir Robert Peel*. Charles Stuart Parker. Vol. iii. 425.

abundantly clear. So was Napoleon, between whose mentality and that of Disraeli a somewhat close analogy exists. Both subordinated their public conduct to the furtherance of their personal aims. It is quite permissible to argue that, as a political adventurer, Disraeli did an incalculable amount of harm in so far as he tainted the sincerity of public life both in his own person and, posthumously, by becoming the progenitor of a school of adventurers who adopted his methods. But it is quite possible to be a self-seeking adventurer without being a charlatan. A careful consideration of Disraeli's opinions and actions leads me to the conclusion that only on a very superficial view of his career can the latter epithet be applied to him. It must, I think, be admitted that his ideas, even although we may disagree with them, were not those of a charlatan, but of a statesman. They cannot be brushed aside as trivial. They deserve serious consideration. Moreover, he had a very remarkable power of penetrating to the core of any question which he treated, coupled

with an aptitude for wide generalization which is rare amongst Englishmen, and which he probably derived from his foreign ancestors. An instance in point is his epigrammatic statement (ii. 57) that “In England, where society was strong, they tolerated a weak Government, but in Ireland, where society was weak, the policy should be to have the Government strong.” Mr. Monypenny is quite justified in saying: “The significance of the Irish question cannot be exhausted in a formula, but in that single sentence there is more of wisdom and enlightenment than in many thousands of the dreary pages of Irish debate that are buried in the volumes of Hansard.”

More than this. In one very important respect he was half a century in advance of his contemporaries. With true political instinct he fell upon what was unquestionably the weakest point in the armour of the so-called Manchester School of politicians. He saw that whilst material civilization in England was advancing with rapid strides, there was (ii. 277) “no proportionate ad-

vance in our moral civilization." "In the hurry-skurry of money-making, men-making, and machine-making," the moral side of national life was being unduly neglected. He was able with justifiable pride to say (ii. 271): "Long before what is called the 'condition of the people question' was discussed in the House of Commons, I had employed my pen on the subject. I had long been aware that there was something rotten in the core of our social system. I had seen that while immense fortunes were accumulating, while wealth was increasing to a superabundance, and while Great Britain was cited throughout Europe as the most prosperous nation in the world, the working classes, the creators of wealth, were steeped in the most abject poverty and gradually sinking into the deepest degradation." The generation of 1912 cannot dub as a charlatan the man who could speak thus in 1844. For in truth, more especially during the last five years, we have been suffering from a failure to recognize betimes the truth of this foreseeing statesman's admonition. Having for years ne-

glected social reform, we have recently tried to make up for lost time by the hurried adoption of a number of measures, often faulty in principle and ill-considered in detail, which seek to obtain by frenzied haste those advantages which can only be secured by the strenuous and persistent application of sound principles embodied in deliberate and well-conceived legislative enactments.

Disraeli, therefore, saw the rock ahead, but how did he endeavour to steer the ship clear of the rock? It is in dealing with this aspect of the case that the view of the statesman dwindles away and is supplanted by that of the self-seeking party manager. His fundamental idea was (ii. 277) that "we had altogether outgrown, not the spirit, but the organization of our institutions." The manner in which he proposed to reorganize our institutions was practically to render the middle classes politically powerless. His scheme, constituting the germ which, at a later period, blossomed into the Tory democracy, was developed as early as 1840 in a letter addressed to Mr. Charles Attwood,

who was at that time a popular leader. "I entirely agree with you," he said (ii. 88), "that an union between the Conservative Party and the Radical masses offers the only means by which we can preserve the Empire. Their interests are identical; united they form the nation; and their division has only permitted a miserable minority, under the specious name of the People, to assail all right of property and person."

Mr. Monypenny, if I understand rightly, is generally in sympathy with Disraeli's project, and appears to think that it might have been practicable to carry it into effect. He condemns (ii. 104) Peel's counter-idea of substituting a middle-class Toryism for that which then existed as "almost a contradiction in terms." I am unable to concur in this view. I see no contradiction, either real or apparent, in Peel's counter-project, and I hold that events have proved that the premises on which Disraeli based his conclusion were entirely false, for his political descendants, while still pursuing his main aim, viz. to ensure a closer association of the

Conservative Party and the masses, have been forced by circumstances into an endeavour to effect that union by means not merely different from but antagonistic to those which Disraeli himself contemplated.

It all depends on what Disraeli meant when he spoke of "Conservatism," and on what Mr. Monypenny meant when he spoke of "Toryism." It may readily be conceded that a "middle-class Toryism," in the sense in which Disraeli would have understood the expression, was "a contradiction in terms," for the bed-rock on which his Toryism was based was that it should find its main strength in the possessors of land. The creation of such a Toryism is a conceivable political programme. In France it was created by the division of property consequent on the Revolution. Thiers said truly enough that in the cottage of every French peasant owning an acre of land would be found a musket ready to be used in the defence of property. In fact, the five million peasant proprietors now existing in France represent an eminently conservative class. But, so far as I know,

there is not a trace to be found in any of Disraeli's utterances that he wished to widen the basis of agricultural conservatism by creating a peasant proprietary class. He wished, above all things, to maintain the territorial magnates in the full possession of their properties. When he spoke of a "union between the Conservative Party and the Radical masses" he meant a union between the "patricians" and the working men, and the answer to this somewhat fantastic project is that given by Juvenal 1800 years ago :—

Quis enim iam non intellegat artes
Patricias ?¹

“ Who in our days is not up to the dodges of the patricians ? ”

The programme was foredoomed to failure, and the failure has been complete. Modern Conservatives can appeal to the middle classes, who—in spite of what Mr. Monypenny says—are their natural allies. They can also appeal to the working classes by educating

¹ *Sat.* iv. 101.

them and by showing them that Socialism is diametrically contrary to their own interests. But, although they may gain some barren and ephemeral electoral advantages, they cannot hope to advance the cause of rational conservative progress either by alienating the one class or by sailing under false colours before the other. They cannot advantageously masquerade in Radical clothes. There was a profound truth in Lord Goschen's view upon the conduct of Disraeli when, in strict accordance with the principles he enunciated in the 'forties, he forced his reluctant followers to pass a Reform Bill far more Radical than that proposed by the Whigs. "That measure," Lord Goschen said,¹ "might have increased the number of Conservatives, but it had, nevertheless, in his belief, weakened real Conservatism." Many of Disraeli's political descendants seem to care little for Conservatism, but they are prepared to advocate Socialist or quasi-Socialist doctrines in order to increase the number of nominal Conservatives. This, therefore, has been the

¹ *Life of Lord Goschen*, Arthur D. Elliot, p. 163.

ultimate result of the gospel of which Disraeli was the chief apostle. It does no credit to his political foresight. He altogether failed to see the consequences which would result from the adoption of his political principles. He hoped that the Radical masses, whom he sought to conciliate, would look to the "patricians" as their guides. They have done nothing of the sort, but a very distinct tendency has been created amongst the "patricians" to allow themselves to be guided by the Radical masses.

I cannot terminate these remarks without saying a word or two about Disraeli's great antagonist, Peel. It appears to me that Mr. Monypenny scarcely does justice to that very eminent man. His main accusation against Peel (ii. 404) is that he committed his country "apparently past recall" to an industrial line of growth, and that he sacrificed rural England "to a one-sided and exaggerated industrial development which has done so much to change the English character and the English outlook."

I think that this charge admits of being

answered, but I will not now attempt to answer it fully. This much, however, I may say. Mr. Monypenny, if I understand rightly, admits that the transition from agriculture to manufactures was, if not desirable, at all events inevitable, but he holds that this transition should have been gradual. This is practically the same view as that held by the earlier German and American economists, who—whilst condemning Protection in theory—advocated it as a temporary measure which would eventually lead up to Free Trade. The answer is that, in those countries which adopted this policy, the Protection has, in the face of vested interests, been permanent, whilst, although the movement in favour of Free Trade has never entirely died out, and may, indeed, be said recently to have shown signs of increasing vigour, the obstacles to the realisation of the ideas entertained by economists of the type of List have not yet been removed, and are still very formidable. That the plunge made by Sir Robert Peel has been accompanied by some disadvantages may be admitted, but Free

Traders may be pardoned for thinking that, if he had not had the courage to make that plunge, the enormous counter-advantages which have resulted from his policy would never have accrued.

As regards Peel's character, it was twice sketched by Disraeli himself. The first occasion was in 1839. The picture he drew at that time was highly complimentary, but as Disraeli was then a loyal supporter of Peel it may perhaps be discarded on the plea advanced by Voltaire that "we can confidently believe only the evil which a party writer tells of his own side and the good which he recognises in his opponents." The second occasion was after Peel's death. It is given by Mr. Monypenny in ii. 306-308, and is too long to quote. Disraeli on this occasion made some few—probably sound—minor criticisms on Peel's style, manner, and disposition, but he manifestly wrote with a strong desire to do justice to his old antagonist's fine qualities. He concluded with a remark which, in the mouth of a Parliamentarian, may probably be considered the highest

praise, namely, that Peel was "the greatest Member of Parliament that ever lived." I cannot but think that even those who reject Peel's economic principles may accord to him higher praise than this. They may admit that Peel attained a very high degree of moral elevation when, at the dictate of duty, he separated himself from all—or the greater part—of his former friends, and had the courage, when honestly convinced by Cobden's arguments, to act upon his convictions. Peel's final utterance on this subject was not only one of the most pathetic, but also one of the finest—because one of the most deeply sincere—speeches ever made in Parliament.

I may conclude these remarks by some recollections of a personal character. My father, who died in 1848, was a Peelite and an intimate friend of Sir Robert Peel, who was frequently his guest at Cromer. I used, therefore, in my childhood to hear a good deal of the subjects treated in Mr. Monypenny's brilliant volumes. I well remember—I think it must have been in 1847—being present on one occasion when a relative of

my own, who was a broad-acred Nottinghamshire squire, thumped the table and declared his opinion that "Sir Robert Peel ought to be hanged on the highest tree in England." Since that time I have heard a good many statesmen accused of ruining their country, but, so far as my recollection serves me, the denunciations launched against John Bright, Gladstone, and even the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, may be considered as sweetly reasonable by comparison with the language employed about Sir Robert Peel by those who were opposed to his policy.

I was only once brought into personal communication with Disraeli. Happening to call on my old friend, Lord Rowton, in the summer of 1879, when I was about to return to Egypt as Controller-General, he expressed a wish that I should see Lord Beaconsfield, as he then was. The interview was very short; neither has anything Lord Beaconsfield said about Egyptian affairs remained in my memory. But I remember that he appeared much interested to learn

whether "there were many pelicans on the banks of the Nile."

The late Sir Mountstuart Grant-Duff was a repository of numerous very amusing *Beaconsfieldiana*.

CROMER.

November 27, 1912.

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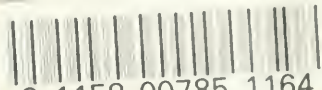
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