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2 vol

THE LIFE OF EDWARD BULWER

FIRST LORD LYTTON

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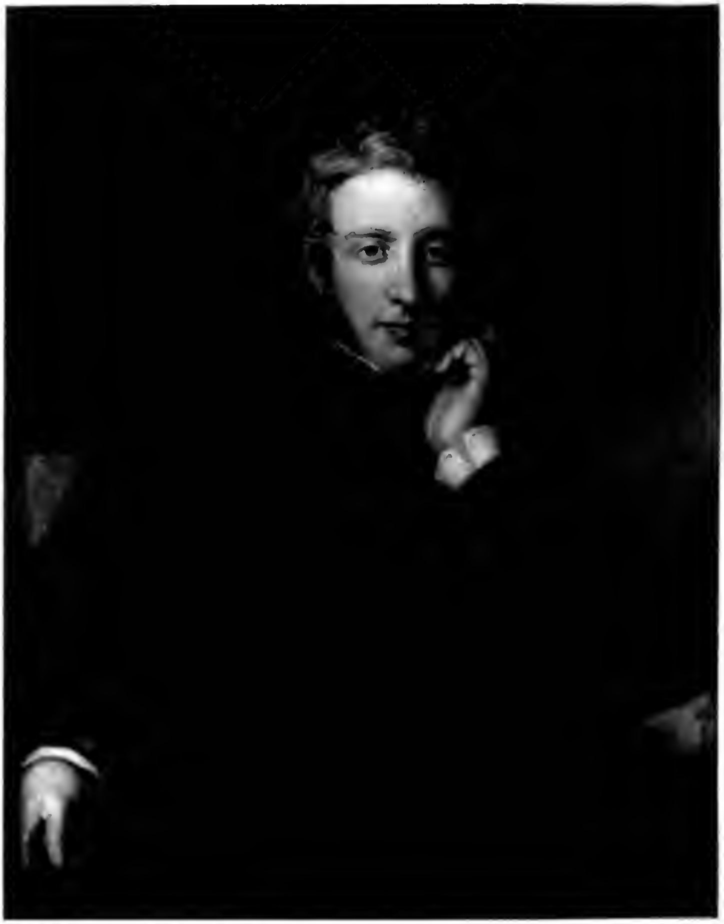

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Edward Bulwer

From the painting in the National Portrait Gallery

THE LIFE

OF

EDWARD BULWER

FIRST LORD LYTTON

BY

HIS GRANDSON
THE EARL OF LYTTON

Hon,
Victor Alexander George Robert
Bulwer-Lytto

IN TWO VOLUMES
VOL. I

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON
1913

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TO

MY MOTHER

IN LOVE AND GRATITUDE

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

PREFACE

In giving this book to the public I have sought to fulfil an inherited obligation long overdue. It is now forty years since my grandfather died. He left his papers to his son, with instructions that by him and by no one else his Life was to be written. These instructions my father felt it a sacred duty to carry out as soon as his public work allowed. On his return from his official career in India, in 1880, he set to work upon the papers which had been left to him, and began to write his father's biography. In 1883 he published in two volumes the first instalment of this work ; but before it was completed he was appointed British Ambassador at Paris, where he died in 1891, leaving his task still unfinished. Believing that both my father and grandfather would have wished the work to be completed, and interpreting the passage in my grandfather's Will as an instruction to myself no less than to my father, I have endeavoured to put together a narrative of the first Lord Lytton's life, in such a shape as will enable the world to form a true estimate, not only of his public career as an author and a statesman, but also of his character as a man.

At the outset, I was faced with the difficulty how best to deal with my father's unfinished fragment. Three alternatives were open to me—to republish it as it stood, and to continue the work on the same lines; to begin where those volumes ended, referring my readers to them for the earlier years; or to rewrite the whole story from the beginning. The first two alternatives appeared to me, for various reasons, to be unacceptable, and I have accordingly adopted the third, making such use as I considered my task required of all the materials at my disposal, whether previously published or not. In this way the reader will find the story of Lord Lytton's life treated from the beginning to the end by a single hand.

Two qualifications must, however, be made to the above remark. Wherever I have found that my father's treatment of his subject coincided with my own, I have not scrupled to embody in my narrative passages from his. In order not to interrupt the text, I have not printed such passages as quotations, nor marked them by references in footnotes, preferring rather to state my indebtedness generally in this Preface. These passages are not numerous; they consist of occasional sentences in the early chapters of Book II., and in Chapter I. of Book III. Chapter III. of Book III. I have borrowed in its entirety from my father's book, with such few alterations and omissions as were necessary; it fitted exactly into my scheme of treatment, I should have been obliged in any case to repeat the substance of it, and I should only have made it less effective by any attempt to transcribe it into my own words.

The second qualification applies to the autobiographical chapters in Book I. My grandfather has told the story of the first twenty-two years of his life in his own words, and it seemed to me best that they should remain on record in this form. For the sake of brevity, I have omitted the earlier chapters of the Autobiography, which refer to his ancestors and his parents, and also some of the personal adventures in the later chapters, which have been embodied in more or less the same form in some of his novels. I have rearranged the chapters, and in one or two instances, where events, only sketched in the Autobiography, are fully described in letters, I have given the narrative in a consecutive form, without stating which passages are from the Autobiography and which from letters. A careful comparison between Book I. of these volumes and Volume I. of *The Life, Letters, and Literary Remains*, will show in what respects I have diverged from my father's presentation of the autobiographical years.

I have, of course, been obliged in the earlier chapters of this book to reproduce many original letters which have already appeared in my father's book, but in so doing I have had an opportunity of correcting a few inaccuracies in the dates which had been ascribed to some of them, and of giving them exactly as they were written, instead of in the corrected form in which many of them appear in *The Life, Letters, and Literary Remains.*

I have throughout used all original matter, whether letters, speeches, or other documents, as illustrations of the points in my narrative to which I desire to call attention. In spite of the ceaseless activities of his life, my grandfather was a voluminous letter-writer; and almost every incident in his life, as well as every feature in his character, may be traced in his correspondence. He never wrote letters as literary essays, or with a view to their publication. He was indeed much too occupied for letter-writing of this kind, for, as he once wrote to Lord Walpole: "The wear and tear of English life, with its miserable routine of cares and troubles, leaves not the mind free for good correspondence. Letter-writers should be idle men and live like your selfish and illustrious namesake, amidst knicknacks in a villa."

The letters, therefore, in this book, are not selected as examples of epistolary style, but rather, like lantern slides in a lecture, as illustrations of his occupations, tastes, or opinions.

In one respect, the delay in the publication of Lord Lytton's Life has rendered my task easier than it could have been for my father. The story of the domestic tragedy, which will be found in these pages, was one which neither my father nor grandfather could bring themselves to tell. The experiences of both in connection with it had been too painful to admit of a calm and dispassionate statement of the facts by either of them. For this reason the Autobiography stopped short just at the point where that tragedy began, and the *Life and Letters* only carried the story a few years further. My father always intended to complete the story; but the difficulty which he experienced at this point probably caused him to delay until it was too late for him to fulfil his intentions. The passage of time has now made it possible to say much that would have been impossible at an earlier date, and it is easier for one who had no personal knowledge either of the events or the actors, to keep a true perspective, and to give to each stage in the drama its proper historical value.

Neither Lord Lytton nor his wife could give an accurate history of their relations from the beginning, because the mind of each was biassed by their knowledge of the end. Each sought to justify the hatred which both had lived to feel, by representing the other as hateful from the first, forgetful of the time when their love and respect had been mutual. The contemporary documents alone enable the historical sequence to be maintained. It is one of the advantages which the public derive from waiting many years for the biography of a distinguished man, that, when at last the story of his life is told, it is likely to be at once more interesting and more truthful. The biographer of one who has but recently died is often constrained, both out of respect for the dead and out of consideration for his living contemporaries, to use so much reserve and discretion as to leave his readers dissatisfied, and convinced that the picture offered to them is not that of the real man.

When I came to deal with this difficult subject, I naturally had the same hesitation as my father, the same doubts as to how much of this story it was necessary or desirable to tell. I soon came to the conclusion that it was necessary to tell all or nothing, and of the two alternatives I adopted the former. As it was impossible to give a true picture of my grandfather without referring to events which overshadowed his whole life, and which were already partially known to the public, I decided to tell the whole story as fully and as accurately as possible, in the firm belief that the truth can damage neither the dead nor the living. The steps which led to the final separation between my grandparents, and the forces which brought about so disastrous a conclusion of a marriage of love, apart from their biographical interest, afford a study of human nature of the utmost value; and so great are the moral lessons which this story contains, that I venture to hope that the public may find in much that is tragic and pitiful much also that is redeeming, and that the ultimate verdict of posterity may be that these two unfortunate people did not suffer entirely in vain.

Of my grandfather's many published works, I have attempted no analysis or criticism. Where possible I have given any letters which throw light upon the circumstances under which they were written, or which contain the opinions either of the author or his contemporaries concerning them. The works themselves have been too long before the public to require any criticism at the present day. Whatever is durable or of value in them will survive the vicissitudes of taste or the ingenuity of critics. As regards their biographical value, it is open to anyone who has the inclination and the industry, to study carefully these works, to extract from them the multifarious opinions which they contain, and from such materials to create a picture of the author himself. My task is limited to that which no one else can accomplish, namely, from the unpublished papers in my possession to select and arrange such as are illustrative of his life and character.

Lord Lytton himself wrote an essay on "The difference between authors and the impressions made by their works," in which he remarks that "an author usually has two characters—the one belonging to his imagination, the other to his experience." Both are necessary to the complete understanding of the man as a whole. With Lord Lytton the author, and the character "belonging to his imagination," the public is already familiar ; Lord Lytton the man, and the character " belonging to his experience," it is the object of this book to portray.

Professor Jowett, in preaching his funeral sermon in Westminster Abbey, said : " I have sometimes asked myself how eminent men—if their spirits could hear what we are saying—would wish to be spoken of after death. 'Let me not be forgotten,' is the natural cry of the human heart. 'I do not want a panegyrical oration or a funeral sermon, but I should like to be known as I was. I do not wish to have my virtues exaggerated, or my faults concealed ; of what value is the praise of man to me now ?' Such appears to me to be the true principle we should follow in writing the lives of men ; it is better to have the truth or nothing." That principle I have endeavoured to follow in writing this book. My grandfather died three years before I was born ; I never knew him, therefore, in the flesh, but I feel that in the last two years I have learnt to know him intimately. Whether or not I shall succeed in imparting that knowledge to others my readers must decide ; but my study of his papers in the home in which he lived and worked, and which must for ever be associated with his memory, has made him live for me, at least, as a real personality, with all his weaknesses and faults,—his prejudices, affectations, vanities, susceptibilities, and eccentricities, and also with all his great qualities of industry, courage, kindness of heart, sound judgment, patience, and perseverance.

In conclusion, I wish to express my thanks to those who have assisted me in the preparation of this book. I am specially grateful to Mr. Edmund Gosse for the advice and encouragement which he has given me. He devoted much time to a consideration of my work, both in manuscript and in proof; he supplied me with many interesting biographical notes on persons mentioned in the book; and his kindness, sympathy, and practical help have been of the utmost value to me.

To Mr. W. A. Frost, Vicar Choral of St. Paul's Cathedral, I am also under a great obligation for his careful perusal of my manuscript, and for many valuable suggestions. His accuracy in all matters of chronology, and his attention to details, have enabled me to avoid many errors. He brought to my notice some important facts which I should not have discovered without his help; and in many respects he has rendered me valuable assistance.

I am further indebted to Mr. Wilfred Blunt for permission to publish my grandfather's letter describing Swinburne (Vol. II. p. 437), the original of which is in his possession; to Miss Julia Sully for the portrait of my grandfather (Vol. I. p. 254), which she has kindly presented to me; and to Dr. Helen Greene for permission to reproduce the portrait of Miss Mary Greene (Vol. I. p. 160).

LYTTON.

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BOOK I

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL

1803–1825

Men seldom reject an opportunity to talk of themselves; and I am not unwilling to re-examine the past, to reconnect it with the present, and to gather from a consideration of each what hopes and expectations are still left to me for the future.

Falkland.

CHAPTER I

EARLY CHILDHOOD

1803–1810

O beautiful—all-golden, gentle youth !
Making thy palace in the careless front
And hopeful eye of man—ere yet the soul
Hath lost the memories which (so Plato dream'd)
Breathed glory from the earlier star it dwelt in.
Richelieu, Act III. Sc. I.

Youth, Nature's holiday !
Fair time which dreams so gently steal away.
New Timon.

EDWARD GEORGE EARLE LYTTON BULWER was born at 31 Baker Street, London, on May 25th, 1803. He was the 3rd and youngest son of General William Earle Bulwer of Heydon Hall and Wooddalling. The Bulwers were an old Norfolk family and had held the lands of Wooddalling ever since the Norman Conquest, when they had been assigned by Aymer de Valence to Turold Bulver, one of the Knights who had fought with William I. at Hastings. General Bulwer had married in 1798 Elisabeth Barbara Warburton Lytton, the descendant and heiress of the families of Robinson and Lytton of Knebworth in the county of Hertford. The 1803.

1803. children of this marriage were three sons, William, who inherited the Norfolk property, Henry, who became distinguished as a diplomatist and was created Lord Dalling, and Edward, afterwards created the first Lord Lytton, who is the subject of this Biography.

Edward Bulwer has left on record his own reminiscences of his childhood and early manhood, partly in an unfinished autobiography which he began to write in middle life, and which was published after his death, and partly in letters to friends. From these sources it is possible to give a complete narrative of the first twenty-two years of his life in his own words. The two volumes entitled *The Life, Letters, and Literary Remains of Edward Bulwer, Lord Lytton*, in which the incomplete autobiography was first published, are now out of print and not easily accessible to the general public. I have therefore thought it desirable to reprint in the first nine chapters of this book such portions of that autobiography as provide a consecutive story of Edward Bulwer's life down to the year 1825, when he left Cambridge and entered upon the career which he made so distinguished.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

I was born just at the time when my mother's married life was saddest. For in unions, however ill-assorted, so long as there are good qualities on either side, it takes some few years

before one can part with hope. And at first, 1803.
though my father's temper was of the roughest, yet he was very much in love; and love has a good-humour of its own. But gradually the temper rose superior to the love; and gout, to which from early youth my father had been occasionally subjected, now suddenly fixed upon him premature and almost habitual residence. He bore pain with the fierce impatience common to the strong when they suffer; and it exasperated all the passions which, even in health and happiness, that powerful and fiery organisation could but imperfectly control. My father, too, was of a jealous nature; and, having no one else to be jealous of, the jealousy fell upon his mother-in-law. That is too frequent a fault with husbands to be much wondered at. But one great inducement to his wife in marrying him had been the thought that he appreciated and cordially liked her mother; and she had pleased herself in picturing the welcome she should give to that mother at her own home, till the home and the parent became clasped in the same chain of associations.

Perhaps she showed too unwarily the pleasure she conceived from this idea, and made too warm and joyous the welcome she had yearned to give. At all events, my father frowned and growled; and, finally, with his usual promptness of decision, he spoke out his mind so plainly to Mrs. Lytton that she could never set foot in his house again. This was

1803. tearing at the roots of the strongest affection in my mother's heart, and her sorrow thereat was a new offence to jealousy ; a lasting offence, for it never ceased.

What with secret grief, and what with terror (for she had been little accustomed to the loud voice and the lowering brow), my mother's constitution, always delicate, began to give way ; the nerves were shattered. One or two severe feverish illnesses, which endangered her life, and from which she recovered but slowly, assisted to break her spirits ; and to the dejected mind was added the enfeebled frame. You might see, in her old age, that she had passed through some crisis of great fear and great sorrow. At the least surprise or alarm a passing, painful, twitching of the nerves altered the features of the face ; there was on her brow the weight of the old anxiety, and round the corners of her mouth those lines which are never ploughed but by grief.

My eldest brother was less of a tie between both parents than children usually are. My father considered the heir to his name as his special property not to be encroached upon. He regarded the mother's right as a privilege of temporary sufferance ; the nursery was not her empire ; it was a delegation. Henry was gone from her ; his first words were for another's ear, his first caresses solaced another's heart. And, therefore, when a child was born to her, in her darkest hour—a child all her own—a

1804–1807. ÆT. 1–4.

child weakly and delicate, that claimed all her care—a child not destined to the heritage of Heydon, and therefore left undisputed to the government in which woman most desires to reign alone—with the birth of it joy seemed born again, and the dreams that had deserted her own life gathered round the cradle of her infant.

It was not long before, from an object of indifference to my father, I became one of positive dislike. It may be that I shared in the same jealousy which had enveloped my grandmother. But I think that my father had also another cause for the scowls with which he greeted my unconscious aspect. The lands of Lytton, if ever they devolved on my mother, would be at her own disposal; and he must have known enough of my mother's family pride to suspect that she would have a strong desire to keep the distinct representation of her own line apart from that of the Bulwers. William would inherit Heydon; Henry, in all probability, the fortune of his grandmother. It was possible that my mother would think that justice might allow her to select her own heir and representative in me. That was an idea that would have been eminently offensive to my father, who, an eldest son himself, naturally venerated the sanctity of primogeniture, and would gladly have seen every acre in Knebworth under the hammer of the auctioneer, in order that the proceeds might enable him to add to the hereditary domains in Norfolk. Norfolk

1804–1807. men are fond of their natal soil, and my father
ÆT. 1–4. was accustomed to say that he would rather have a rood in Norfolk than an estate in any other county.

Naturally enough, my father's aversion to me, whatever its cause, made my mother cling to me the more fondly.

I have said that my father was ambitious; and "that last infirmity of noble minds" increased upon him as he advanced in his career. It must be owned that it was not without the aliment of success. Shortly after his marriage (although he was then at an age early for such promotion, and un-recommended by conformity with the political opinions of the Government) his reputation as an officer stood so high that he was appointed one of the four Generals to whom, in case of invasion, the internal defence of the kingdom was confided.

The military district over which my father presided had its headquarters at Preston, in Lancashire; and in this post, which, as the centre of an irritable manufacturing population, was not without difficulties, the General obtained credit for the strict discipline in which he kept his men, as well as popularity for large bounty to the poor, and munificent hospitality to the rich.

Raised so high while yet in the prime of manhood, and with the anticipation of being called to command in a larger sphere of action on the Continent, a less aspiring man than General Bulwer might have found it difficult to

limit his expectations in the future. And, even 1807.
in case of peace, or of such inroads of his ÆT. 4.
domestic enemy the gout as to incapacitate the body for due obedience to the energetic mind, it was not likely that he could retire to the ease of his Hall ungraced by the dignity of the peerage. He had raised two regiments for the service of his country at his own expense; and his general claims, both of ancient family and personal repute, were higher at least than the average of Mr. Pitt's peers. He had set his heart upon being Lord South Erpingham—the name of the district in which his property was situated; and, as he had never failed in anything on which that resolute heart had been set, so I have no doubt but that, if his life had been spared, Lord South Erpingham he would have been.

Meanwhile, and in due preparation for such honours, he sought to enlarge his paternal possessions to a territorial domain suited to the inheritance of the ermined representatives of our great landed aristocracy. He bought largely, and bought dearly, whatever lands were to be sold in the neighbourhood of his estates; and, as he never consulted his "womankind" upon such masculine matters as his pecuniary affairs, so my mother naturally supposed such purchases to be made either from the ready money that came to him from his parents, or from what he could spare of his rental and his official emoluments.

Mors sola fatetur
Quantula sint hominum corpuscula.

1807. Æt. 4. In the midst of these dreams and acquisitions, Death smote the aspiring man.[1]

He was at Heydon at the time. He had been suffering some days under one of his attacks of gout, and had taken to his bed, in which he lay amongst hoops that suspended from his body the touch of the clothes; for he could not bear even that pressure. No danger, however, was apprehended, even by himself. For my mother telling him, on the day of his death, that the doctor had ordered William to take wine, he said half jestingly, half peevishly, "that he hoped the doctor had not recommended his own favourite old Madeira, for the bin was low, and would not last two or three years longer." Thus saying, he turned to the wall, and asked for some tea. My mother went to prepare it, and when she returned he was in a gentle sleep. She stole from the room softly, not to disturb him. But from that sleep he never woke; within an hour from the time she left him he was no more. His favourite little spaniel, who sate on his pillow, would not quit his remains; and when they were placed out of sight in the coffin, it crept under the pall, and died.

The executors appointed by my father's will did not find his affairs in that flourishing state which might have been expected from the style in which he lived, and the lands he had purchased. In fact, those ambitious additions to his patrimony had augmented its acreage to the sad diminution of its income. Fatal and frequent fault that, of landed proprietors! How many families have gone to the dogs because one daring ancestor has borrowed at five per cent in order to buy farms which yield two and a half! Would that my father had read more; read Roman history, and learned that the dying recommendation of the wise Augustus to his successor was to beware of increasing the limits of the empire; a counsel as applicable to the Squire as to the Caesar. 1807. Æt. 4.

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[1] July 7, 1807.

I don't doubt but that my father himself, in his acquisitions, had a soldierly eye to all the fair chances of emancipating the estate from the great debt which they laid on it. First, in case of military appointment abroad, with all its certain and contingent emoluments; next, in the probability of his surviving his father-in-law, when, if my mother should refuse absolutely to sell Knebworth, her generosity might be induced to transfer to that property a considerable share of the mortgage on Heydon. Lastly, if misgivings as to the duration of his own life crossed him, his heir might have a long minority, during which a large portion of the incumbrances might be disposed of. With this eye to the future, some part of the debt was made to annul in terminable annuities, and for the rest a sinking fund was provided.

After my father's death my mother did as others in similar circumstances. She consulted the male friends of her family, and, acting on their advice, obtained from the Court of Chancery

7–1809.
r. 4–6.

an order assigning to her the guardianship of her children, with an adequate allowance for their education.

The widow then settled in London, to be near her mother. William went to a famous preparatory school; Henry remained with Mrs. Lytton; so I was alone with my mother. She took a house in Montagu Square, which she afterwards exchanged for one in Nottingham Place. For the purchase of her house my grandfather, who never showed himself so kind and generous to her as in that friendless epoch, made her an unexpected present of three thousand pounds. From that time, a very affectionate understanding continued between father and child, and my mother spent with Mr. Lytton a great part of every year.

The earliest of my infant reminiscences worth treasuring dates from one of these visits, and associates itself with the Scholar and his home.

My grandfather at that time lived in a house at St. Lawrence, near Ramsgate; a house of no ostentatious pretensions, but of fair size for the neighbourhood of a watering-place; a patch of garden in front, and a much larger garden behind. I should know the house well, for it was afterwards tenanted by a gentleman with whom I passed several months as a pupil. My recollection of the place, however, as it was in my grandfather's time, is indistinct. I have a confused perception of a vast number of books —of books that haunted me in every room I

1807–18
Æt. 4–

entered. I think they even lined the landing-place on the staircase. I cannot disentangle my recollection of the house from the presence of the books. Beyond these, I have a vague recollection of green sward and lilac boughs; no doubt the attributes of the back garden. Types are these reminiscences of the tastes of my after life; a passion for books, and a passion for the green sward and the blossom on the bough, even though in the confines of a back garden.

Of my grandfather himself, I can just recall the visions of a short and rather stout man in black. He had been very slight in youth, but expanded in the indolence of after years. Besides the black dress, which was neat and formal, I have also an awful impression of a dignified shovel hat. I can remember, moreover, that my grandfather ate very fast, with a book beside him on the table; that he was extremely short-sighted; that he sate in a quaint, queer-looking, and mightily uncomfortable arm-chair (which I have now), and that in his immediate vicinity there were generally two great globes on mahogany stands.

At that time, I believe, this erudite Scholar had pretty well exhausted such learning as he thought worth the achieving, and that he had become a great novel-reader; but I think the novels were not in English. I rather fancy they were Spanish. He had a collection of books of chivalry which might have satisfied Don Quixote, and for these he had Don Quixote's partiality.

7–1809. There lived then with my grandfather (who
T. 4–6. was much past sixty) and in the capacity of housekeeper, companion, *dame de ménage*, a lady at least middle-aged. I heard, when residing in that neighbourhood, that this co-residence had caused a little scandal among the gossips. I feel sure that nothing could be more unjust. And, indeed, none of the uneducated can conjecture what an indispensable necessity it is to a bookman to have some female creature about him, elevated above the rank of a mere servant; whom he can trust with his money and his papers; who knows in what shelf to search for a book; who has sufficient education for an occasional interchange of idea; and who can cheer and nurse him in those illnesses familiar to the race of bookmen even at the time of Celsus. And if none but the brotherhood can conjecture how necessary is such companionship to the learned man, it is probably only the pure who can conceive how very innocent it may be.

As for my mother, she was pleased to think that her father would be so well attended to when she was absent; and no coarse suspicion ever chilled her friendly politeness to Miss M.

Of this lady, who, by the way, was singularly plain, I have a grateful recollection, for she gave me a very handsome domino box; whereas my grandfather gave me nothing but—hold! what he gave me shall be told later.

I suppose there was something in my mother which made those connected with her set a very high value on her affection, for she never could escape from the compliment of a jealous desire to monopolise it. Through me she was still tormented, and on me the consequences of that jealousy retributively fell. 1809. Æt. 6.

Out of jealousy for my mother's love, my father had positively disliked me; for the same cause my grandmother took me into open aversion—an aversion unsoftened to her dying day; and my grandfather, who ought, if conscious of the future, to have welcomed and petted me, as the one of his grandsons destined to live the most amongst books, did not suffer me to be four-and-twenty hours in the house before he solemnly assured his daughter "that I should break her heart, and (what was worse) that I should never know my A.B.C." He maintained this ill opinion of my disposition and talents with the obstinacy which he carried into most of his articles of belief; and I cannot call to mind ever having received from him a caress or a kind word.

What I did receive from him I shall now relate:—

My mother was called to town for two or three days on some business or other, and she left me with my grandfather, specially recommending me to his tender protection.

During her absence a young midshipman came to dine with Mr. Lytton. I peeped from the staircase when they went in to dinner, and

1809. greatly admired the midshipman's smart uniform.
ÆT. 6. I saw that he deposited something on the slab without the door, as he went into the parlour—something that glittered. My infant curiosity was aroused; so, when the place was clear, I stole down and approached the slab. O Mars! I remember still how thy fierce inspiration shot through my heart when I beheld the prettiest weapon—dirk, cutlass, or miniature sword, I know not what to call it—with its gleaming hilt of mother-of-pearl and gold. I hesitated not a moment; I seized the weapon and ran off with it. Whether I absolutely meant feloniously to steal it, I cannot say. Most probably. But my senses were in such delicious and delirious confusion that my memory cannot metaphysically analyse the ideas of that tumultuous hour! All I know is, that I ran off with the instrument designed for the destruction of the enemies of my country, and instinctively hid it. I cannot even recollect where I hid it. Hide it I did. Neither know I how, nor in what dreams and visions, I passed the hours (musing on that treasure, and wondering if the time could come when I might wear it openly by my side) until the midshipman took his leave, and searched for his weapon. No weapon forthcoming. What on earth had become of it? Was it in the dining-room? in the library? in the entrance-hall, with the hats and cloaks? No, the midshipman was certain he had left it on the slab. The servants were questioned in vain.

"If there were a magpie in the house," began my grandfather. 1809. ÆT. 6.

"Please your honour," said the grim manservant, an austere man, of a sanctified turn of mind who had neither little ones nor bowels for them, "Please your honour, there is a child."

At that answer my grandfather bounded. He hurried to the room in which I was already in bed, but not asleep. Asleep, indeed, when that dagger was dangling before my eyes, and murdering sleep! He hurried in, and caught me by the throat.

"Little wretch!" cried my grandfather, "have you stolen Mr. Somebody's cutlass?"

Now, I did not know what the word "stolen" meant, though practically I might have done the thing. Extremely frightened by the grip at my throat and the roar in my ears, that instinct of truth which Dr. Reid asserts to be innate in the unsophisticated human mind entirely vanished, and I answered "No." Blush for me, O compassionate Reader! My grandfather recoiled, and at that moment a cry rose up from the menial chorus below stairs:—

"Sir, it is found; the cutlass is found!"

My grandfather said not a word more, but left the room—"to darkness and to me." I was very sorry to hear the cutlass was found, for it was clear from that moment that the property I had established in the cutlass—and fondly hoped might be a perpetual property in the cutlass—was gone. But since it was found, there I

1809. Æt. 6. supposed that the matter would end, and that, to use my grandfather's favourite phrase, I should be "troubled no more in the business." So I went to sleep as soundly as if I had the clearest conscience in the world. I woke earlier than usual, and, the thought of my lost and dear cutlass returning to me, felt restless and mournful. The maidservant not coming in to dress me, I rose of my own accord, opened the door, and peeped out to see if the house was yet astir. My grandfather's bedroom was opposite the one I occupied (which was, indeed, the one assigned to my mother), and as I peeped I saw that said grim, sanctimonious man-servant (I remember that the brute wore drab breeches, and never servant of mine has been permitted—nor, please the saints, ever shall be permitted—to wear inexpressibles of that carnificent and hang-dog complexion),—I saw that MAN about to enter his master's room. His right hand was on the handle of the door; in his left was something covered by his apron. The menial monster turned at the noise I made, his eye resting with horrid significance upon mine, and smiled! Smiled, I aver it.

"Master Teddy," quoth he, "I have something here in store for you."

Thinking, in the credulous goodness of my own heart, that my grandfather was about to make it up to me for the loss of my beloved cutlass, by some toy of a peculiarly fascinating nature, I cried joyfully, "What is it? Show it to me!"

The wretch smiled again; and, withdrawing the folds of the concealing apron, held up to my sight a thing I had never seen before, a thing composed of brown horrent sprigs and twigs, a thing "ugly and venomous!" 1809. ÆT. 6.

"But," said I, recoilingly and doubtfully, "is that really for me? I don't think it is at all pretty. It is very like a broom. It must be for Sarah." Sarah was the housemaid.

"It *is* for you, Master Teddy," said the infernal and execrable man (O, that I could remember his name—to transmit it to the just indignation of posterity!). "It is for you, and much good may it do you!"

So saying, he entered my grandfather's room, and closed the door.

I returned to my bed, "much meditating," as my Lord Brougham is wont classically to express himself. The toy I had seen was displeasing to the eye, but it might have in it some secret virtues. I had an indefinite idea that my grandfather was a rich and a wise man; and, as he had never given me anything yet, surely what he would now give (especially as a set-off to my beautiful cutlass) would be proportioned to the means of the donor, and the recent loss of the recipient. Nevertheless, though a child may never before have seen a birch-rod, never have tasted of its qualities, never even heard that such an instrument of torture had been invented by the barbarity of men, there is a secret, indefinable, voice at his heart,

1809. Æt. 6. when that infernal sight is first presented to him, which is not propitiatory and dulcet, but ominous and warning. And, in spite of all my attempts to take a favourable retrospective view of the phenomenon I had beheld, instinct prophesied and nature shuddered.

Wearied with unsatisfactory and gloomy cogitations, I had just fallen into that sweet sound sleep wherein dreams are brightest and bedclothes warmest, when I suddenly felt a sensation of cold; started, rubbed my eyes, saw all the coverings on the floor, and my grandfather bending over me, with that grisly phenomenon in his hand suspended high in the air.

The rest of my recollections vanish in pain. "Cur infandum renovare dolorem?"

The extraordinary part of the operation I then underwent was the perfect silence with which the operator accompanied it. My grandfather did not condescend to the slightest explanation why or wherefore that new and bewildering agony descended on me. That the rose should be the emblem of Harpocrates—well, "kiss, and tell no tales"; but that the birch should be also dedicated to the silent god, my dear grandfather, I find no classical authority for *that*!

When I was once more alone, and had recovered the shock which my nervous system had sustained, the feeling that was strongest in me, prevailing over all sense of pain, was astonishment. Why that fate had befallen me, for what sin ancestral or my own, I knew no more than the man in the moon, nor did my grandfather subsequently elucidate the mystery —to me. When my mother returned, he had the satisfaction of informing her of the verification of his prediction as to my perverseness of character, and as to the judicious—but, alas! he feared, unavailing—means he had taken to arrest me in my evil courses. It might be yet time; I was not yet five years old.[1] Heaven grant it! But Heaven requires human agencies. He recommended the birch.

I don't know how my mother took the intelligence of my misdeeds, and their penance, but I felt my mind extremely relieved when she delivered it from the weight of its amaze—and explained to me that I had been punished because I had taken the goods of my neighbour and told a fib. The moral elucidations which succeeded to that chastisement were, no doubt, made more impressive by the remembrance of the chastisement itself. But for them, I am sure that I should have purloined the cutlass the next time I saw it, and taken care to hide it in a much safer place. Wherefore, O ye parents! take care to impress what you want to convey to your children at both ends. Heads as well as tails, if you please.

I don't know, Reader, whether you will think that I have been too prolix in the recital of my infant affliction. Not too prolix if you look at

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[1] He was six at this date.

1810. Æt. 7. it philosophically, and judge of its probable effect on my after life. For it was not only the first, but the only, flogging I ever received. And that solitary experience associates itself with the elementary principles of *meum* and *tuum*. If the rod had something to say in the respect which I venture to think I entertain for honesty and truth, I ought not to slur over too rapidly the only thing I ever received at thy hands, O my grandfather !

Before I pass to what I consider the most memorable and critical event (not excepting the aforementioned flagellation) in mine infant history, I should commemorate the first glimmerings of whatever light I may have caught from the Muse. I must have learned to read, and with facility, at an age unusually early, for I remember no time in my life in which reading was not familiar to me. It was otherwise with the art of writing, my primary initiation into which I distinctly recall. And labour dire it was and weary woe. Very much like my ideal of the Yellow Dwarf, only older, uglier, and more malignant than that unamiable fiend, was my conductor through the fantastic brambles of pothooks into the wide common of round text. He was very short, he was very withered, he had a tawny complexion and a rusty wig, with vindictive eyes. His hands were never without a ruler, and my knuckles never without a rap. Odious to gods and the children of men, his garments were snuff-brown, and his name was Walker.

1810. Æt. 7.

But at least I resembled Homer in one respect. I did not find it necessary to write in order to compose; for, before the gross materialism of pothooks, mine airy soul had hovered over Hippocrene, strayed through Corycian caverns, and inhaled the fragrance of the blossoms that fell from the garlands of the vine.

O Infancy, thou Imitator! Verse fell from my mother's lips as the diamond and rose from the lips of her in the fairy tale. I marvelled, and I mimicked. I heard "The tale of Troy divine," the deeds and death of Hector, and my soul was on fire. What though the Homer appeared to me as Jove to Danae, not clothed with the lightning, and Lord of the Aegis, but in the soft showers into which his translator, Mr. Pope, hath melted his Olympian terrors; still the showers were gold. What could Homer have been to me if my grandfather had bellowed his ἔπεα πτερόεντα in Greek?

My mother's memory was rich, too, in Goldsmith and Gray, and the ringing melodies of our grand old ballads. She recited well; with a voice sweet in pathos, and not without its swell of Calliope, its *longum melos*, when the theme grew sublime with the lofty thought, or the line rolled large with the heroic deed. Nor think that the effect of these chants limited itself in childhood to the mere emulation of the sound: small would be their worth to the world, slight their influence on mankind, if they increased but the herd of poetasters and rhymesters.

1810. Æt. 7. No, it is the ideas which they call into movement, the thoughts they wake, and the actions they guide; it is not merely the ear which they attune to the sound; it is the character which they form into a comprehension of the substances of Poetry—the Sublime and the Beautiful, to which the poet gives but the voice.

But I am soaring into the clouds, as if, Horace-like, I would strike my front against the stars, when I ought to show you a little boy seated on a stool—his own special throne—with a tapestry cover worked by maternal hands (the stool is extant still, and the design on the tapestry still fresh)—a little boy there seated at his mother's knee, and looking up into her face while he murmurs out his doggerel—ah, such doggerel, doubtless! I remember that the first of my attacks on "Gods and Columns" was in praise of King Henry V. and Agincourt. The second was of the erotic character, and upon the charms of a certain Miss Rose T., who was a year or two older than myself. Poets fall in love precociously but in that poetic privilege I was a match for the best of them. At six years old, Cupid and I were already playfellows; and I declare gravely that love it was, just the love poets sing of; so timid and so happy when I sate near her; and once at blindman's buff, when she ran into my arms, I thought that the earth was gone from my feet, that we were both snatched up into the heavens. With what a beating heart I set out one day, after she went to school, to pay her a visit! and what fine things I fancied I should say when I saw her! and when we met in the cold formal parlour of the prim school, how awkward and shy I was! We stood opposite to each other, both looking down. At last she opened her pretty lips, called me Master Edward, and hoped my mamma was well. I could have beat her, but when I got out, I was much more inclined to beat myself. 1810. Æt. 7.

My poem, however, carefully transcribed by my mother, was sent to Mrs. T., as a paper homage to the charms of the little maid, and a token of the genius of her troubadour.[1] Mrs. T., flattered my vanity by grave compliments, and, thus encouraged, I soon learned to rhyme with the facility of an improvisatore. I regaled the ears of the maids who gathered round me in the nursery with ballads on all conceivable subjects, and they in turn sang their favourite songs to me. I remember that the lady's maid in especial had a pretty voice, and used to say with pride that she had a sister on the stage. She taught me to sing a most lugubrious ditty, which contained these two lines (the only ones I remember):—

> When wreck'd in sight of port, behold
> A hapless cabin boy!

As Nature never intended me to sing, no discord, I should imagine, could have been more grating and doleful than this elegiac lay, screeched out

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[1] The Miss Rose T. here referred to appears to have died about 1819, for in a letter to his mother in that year Edward Bulwer encloses some verses which he had just written entitled, "On the death of Miss R. T."

1810. Æt. 7. in the most mournful tones that my treble could bestow upon it.

Nevertheless, lady's maid and all the lesser lights of the female household thought me a prodigy, and as I lay in my little crib, and they sate at work around me like the weird sisters, I used to hear them prophesy in low tones of the brilliant futurity of Master Edward. There was one legend concerning me that always came out in these vaticinations, and I repeat it because it had probably its lasting effect on my mind, and therefore reacted on my fate. Once, when I was yet in arms, a man with a wild air abruptly stopped my nurse in the streets, and, looking upon me strangely, asked whose son I was. The nurse replied that I was the son of General Bulwer.

The stranger then, with much solemnity, took me in his arms, and uttered a prophecy to the purpose that I was to be greater than my father, and something remarkable. Then, hurriedly looking round him, he threw me back to the awe-stricken nurse, and darted off with such rapidity that, in telling her story in after times, she may probably have said that he "vanished." Poor fellow! he was mad, and had escaped from his keeper. Within half an hour afterwards, he had drowned himself. Considering he had had me in his clutches, he might have uttered a different prophecy as to my fate, and enjoyed the satisfaction, permitted to few prophets, of fulfilling his own prediction.

THE MADMAN'S PREDICTION

In all countries there is a vague belief in the 1810.
second sight conceded both to the insane and Æt. 7.
to those who are on the threshold of death; so that this story, which I have sought to reduce to the primitive elements of its mythic import, passed on from nursemaid to nursemaid with all superstitious exaggerations in the transmission till at last it settled into a kind of oracle that might have suited the infancy of a Caesar or Napoleon. But, hummed and droned as it was into my ears as I lay, between sleeping and waking, in the little crib, perhaps the prophecy stirred into early action my organs of Self-esteem and Ideality. For, as I never remember a time when I could not read, so I never remember a time when I had not a calm and intimate persuasion that, one day or other, I was to be somebody, or do something. It was no feverish desire of fame that preyed upon me, such as disturbs the childhood of the ambitious; it was a confidence in the days to come, which was attended with small curiosity, and never troubled by the modesty of a doubt.

Assuredly I have never been the great man whose image rested on the serene mirror of my childish faith. But I might have been a much smaller one if the poor maniac had never pythonised of my future in my nurse's arms. For when manhood brought me better acquainted with my powers, their scope, and their limit, the infantine belief passed into a conviction that my life had been entrusted with a mission to

1810. Æt. 7. the hearts of beings unborn, and that in the long chain of thought connecting age with age my own being would hereafter be recognised as a visible link. Yet so acutely sensitive was my original nature that, without firm, if credulous, faith in myself and my destiny, I might long since have shrunk from a war in which the wounds were so galling, and the success so denied. With strong tendencies to indolence, with vivid capacities of joy, I might have had little of that endurance or industry which has made my career one attempt to bring into culture all such faculties of my mind as gave the faintest promise of harvest. Wherefore I must thank the prophecy; though, in exaggerating the image of my fate, it may have fostered that fault which has been commonly ascribed to me, viz. too high an opinion of myself.

CHAPTER II

FIRST INTRODUCTION TO BOOKS

1811

They reign,
(In loftier pomp than waking life had known)
The Kings of Thought! not crown'd until the grave.
When Agamemnon sinks into the tomb,
The beggar Homer mounts the monarch's throne!—
Ye ever-living and imperial souls,
Who rule us from the page in which ye breathe,
All that divide us from the clod ye gave!—
Law—Order—Love—intelligence—the sense
Of beauty—Music and the Minstrel's wreath!—
What were our wanderings, if without your goals?

All books grow homilies by time; they are
Temples at once and landmarks.

We call some books immoral! Do they live?
If so, believe me, Time hath made them pure,
In books, the veriest wicked rest in peace—
God wills that nothing evil should endure.

The Souls of Books.

BUT now comes the great cardinal event of my infancy, and, like most new epochs in history, it dates from a death. 1810. ÆT. 7.

One morning there arrived at my mother's house a grave, funereal-looking man, draped in black. I was in the hall at the time, and I heard, after the muttered colloquy between the man and the servant, the words, "An express from St. Lawrence!"

1810. "An express!" The word struck me as Æt. 7. awful, it was said so dismally; and, foreboding something fearful, I stood gazing on the man in black, till my mother came hurriedly down and beckoned him into the parlour, which she had fitted up as a library, and made her usual sitting-room. Then, I saw him come close up to my mother and whisper something, and my mother fell back against the wall, and clasped her hands, and seemed in a speechless agony.

I was led, I know not by whom, from the room, in a state of mysterious terror. I escaped an hour or two afterwards, as I saw my grandmother's carriage at the door, and, creeping downstairs, entered the room behind her, unobserved. I did not hear what passed, so low were the words, until my grandmother in a clear voice said, "My dear, you wish to break it to me by degrees, but I see it all. Poor Mr. Lytton is dead!"[1]

My mother started back with a look of wistful reproach, then turned away, bowed her head, and burst into a passion of tears.

Yes, my grandfather was dead. He had died suddenly, of an apoplectic seizure.

His character may perhaps be guessed at by the acute, from the preceding pages; and if not more fully bodied forth, it is that the materials to judge of it which are afforded to me are scanty and imperfect. Of his extraordinary

[1] December 30, 1810.

1810. Æt. 7.

learning, there was never a doubt amongst the best scholars of his day. Of the degree of intellect which accompanied that learning, there may be a reasonable question. I should think that his abilities were good, but not first-rate. He was not without energy and passion, or he would scarcely have taken so ardent, though silent, an interest in politics. In youth he was a Utopian, and remained to the last much more than a "Whig." That neither in public life nor in letters did he ever give active demonstration of what was in him, may be accounted for without disparagement to his talents, granting them to be below that order which no circumstance can obscure. A small cloud can conceal a star.[1]

In the first place, coming when of age into a fortune so far exceeding all his wants that his

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[1] His grandson says of him elsewhere:—"He loved learning for learning's self. He disentangled himself from the world, from pleasure, from ambition, from all the usual aspirations of a man who unites knowledge and talent to wealth and station. The image of his life was like a statue, cold in its complete repose, and shattered into fragments on his tomb. Nothing remains of it—nothing but a few notes and comments scattered here and there through remote regions and dim recesses of that silent world in which he lived unseen. Yet to me, his grandson, who with my poor acquirements, snatched from perturbed studies in the intervals of an active and unquiet life, have so boldly ventured out upon the stormy sea of popular authorship, in search of that distant haven which so few of the ships of time (as books were called by Bacon) ever reach;—to me, amidst the hum and buzz that accompanies even the feeblest fame, the most fleeting celebrity, there is something unspeakably impressive in the oblivion to which this solitary scholar carried with him all the spoils and trophies of his vast research. I shrink back from it, startled and abashed. I feel that, had I been as wise as my grandfather, I had also been as silent. I feel that there is something infinitely nobler and more august in this mute disdainful passage of the full river to the unknown deep, than in all the fretful noise with which we shallow streams go babbling over the pebbles that obstruct our course. It is greater to live for knowledge than to live by it."

1810. main care was rather to reduce than increase
Æt. 7. it, he wanted that spur which goads on to distinction the large majority of literary men—Poverty. And the same philosophical temper which made him despise all show and parade, and worldly learning, made him indifferent to Fame. He was a singularly shy man, and his object through life was to escape from the notice which your coveter of distinction pursues. In the next place, he was soured and depressed by the consequences of his early and ill-assorted marriage. He fled back to the world of his books, as the changeling of the Fairies to Elfin Land. The still walls opened at his touch, to close on his entrance; and in the busy haunts of men he was seen no more.

His temper, though hasty and choleric, was perhaps not originally severe; but, like a greater pedant than himself—douce King Jamie—he had high notions of discipline and prerogative, and wished to Spartanise his household. To strangers, however, he was generous, and to distress most pitiful. I have heard from those who lived in the neighbourhood of the home in which his age wore away, that he could accommodate his conversation to the average intelligence of the country squires around, and the unpretending colonisers of a watering-place, and that the conversation was most agreeable and fascinating. Therefore, though considered a great oddity, he was popular with his acquaintances, as he was beloved by the poor. Despite his early inclination to what may be called revolutionary politics, he had never any sympathy with the free-thinking philosophers of France; he was always, like his friends Parr and Sir William Jones, a sincere and firm believer in the Christian faith, and in his later years he belonged to that section of our Church which is called Evangelical. He left behind him no manuscripts to attest his erudition, no foot-track told where that eager mind had travelled across the vast wilderness of books. A few letters on private matters, written in the slow and large characters of a hand which has taken patient notes — not rushed athwart foolscap with the haste of impromptu composition; a few copies of verses, neat and correct, but composed on the principle of modern Latin versification—that is, the avoidance of all phrases not warranted by the best authority; and some spare comments upon writers on the margins of his library catalogue, are all that on earth survive the dust and shade of the great Scholar. 1811. ÆT. 8.

But his books were removed to London. Wain and van rolled up the streets of Marylebone, and startled the doze of dowagers in Nottingham Place. You might have thought you saw "the carts of Zagathai laden with houses—a great city travelling towards you." They came, the mighty Nomads—the grand, restless race — the disturbers of all antique landmarks — the convulsers and conquerors

1811. of the globe. They came, the Souls of the
Æt. 8. Dead, file and rank, in the armament of Books!

Behold the great event of my infant life—my Siege of Troy, my Persian Invasion, my Gallic Revolution—the Arrival of my Grandfather's Books!

The learned Deluge flowed into that calm still world of Home; it mounted the stairs, it rolled on, floor upon floor; the trim face of drawing-rooms vanished before it; no attic, the loftiest, escaped from the flood.

Piscium et summa genus haesit ulmo,
Nota quae sedes fuerat columbis,
Et superiecto pavidae natarunt
    Aequore damae.

But the grand reservoir, the Lake Moeris of the whole inundation, was the great dining-room; and there, when the flood settled, I rested mine infant ark.

My mother then spent her days almost entirely either with Mrs. Lytton, who perhaps she still fancied needed soothing and comfort, or with lawyers. So the house, with all its new treasures, was given up to me. Having duly visited all the lesser, if loftier, settlements of the immigration, I finally, as I before said, settled myself habitually in the dining-room, which I regarded as the central camp of the invading hordes. Words cannot paint the sensations of awe, of curiosity, of wonder, of delight, with which I dwelt in that City of the Dead. 1811. Even now, when I think of them, I am in a ÆT. 8. fever, and grope darkly at my meaning through all confusion and change of metaphor, and vague big words, which crumble away as I clutch at them in despair. Books I had known familiarly before, but they had been given me with reserve—taken, one by one at a time, from mahogany cases under lock and key, with cautions not to dog-ear, and an infinity of troublesome restrictions. But here I was a chartered libertine. I might throw the handkerchief as I liked. I was not married to a single volume, in a humdrum-monogynical connection. I was Solomon in all his glory, and surrounded by all his seraglio. Those Greek, and Hebrew, and Oriental, Beauties! I lifted up their veils, but reading nothing in their passionless faces that returned my ardour, and coaxing no reply from their lips in an intelligible tongue, I shook my head and passed on. I lingered longer with the importations from Latium, for Mr. Walker, in addition to the art of caligraphy, had taught me to decline *Musa*, and conjugate *amo*; so I thought I should know something of Latin, and tried hard to flirt with the daughters of Romulus. It was in vain; not a nymph among them warmed from her marble. I was forced to limit my amours to the children of my native land.

Fancy me, again I say, fancy me alone in that vast collection, a little boy of six years or so,[1]

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[1] He was eight.

1811. already consumed with the insatiable desire of
Æt. 8. knowledge, though guessing not at the nature of the desire. Where I found a book in English it sufficed for me, no matter how dry and how far above my reason ; I still looked and lingered —read and wondered. All variety of dim ideas thus met and mingled in my brain. Many an atom of knowledge, chipped off from the block and stored up unconsciously in the mind, was whirled into movement in later years, in the golden dance of those sunbeams, our thoughts.

I must, in this way, have blundered through many defiles of Bookland, deep and abstruse. I remember that I was specially interested in a work upon calculation, which was accompanied and illustrated by a little wooden machine with round balls. I dare say I should make less of it now than I did then. I must certainly have got ankle-deep in the great slough of Metaphysics, for I remember, as if it were yesterday, after sitting long silent and musing, I addressed to my mother the following simple and childlike question :—

" Pray, mamma, are you not sometimes overcome by the sense of your own identity ? "

My mother looked up at me in amazed alarm. Quoth she, " It is high time you should go to school, Teddy." And so it was ; that I might enter into the healthfulness of scholastic Duncedom.

There came a precise, cold-blooded man, who took up the books, glanced at their title-pages, and laid them down again without saying a word. I looked at him with savage eyes; I felt instinctively that his visits would end in my spoliation. And so it proved. One morning my mother and I got into the carriage; we were absent two or three days, and when we returned the books had vanished. 1811. ÆT. 8.

My grandfather had left debts to be defrayed. Everyone, Heaven knows, who comes into possession of an estate long neglected, and a great country-house half tumbling down, wants ready money to begin with. So my mother sold my grandfather's library. It was said to have cost him a vast sum: it sold for a small one. The books were mostly in a bad condition, shabby and torn. Mr. Lytton seemed to have the same dislike as Dr. Johnson to a well-bound book. Moreover, volumes were missing in many of the most valuable works, and, as my poor mother could perhaps ill appreciate the worth of things whose appearance was so much against them, doubtless the bookseller who purchased got them a bargain.

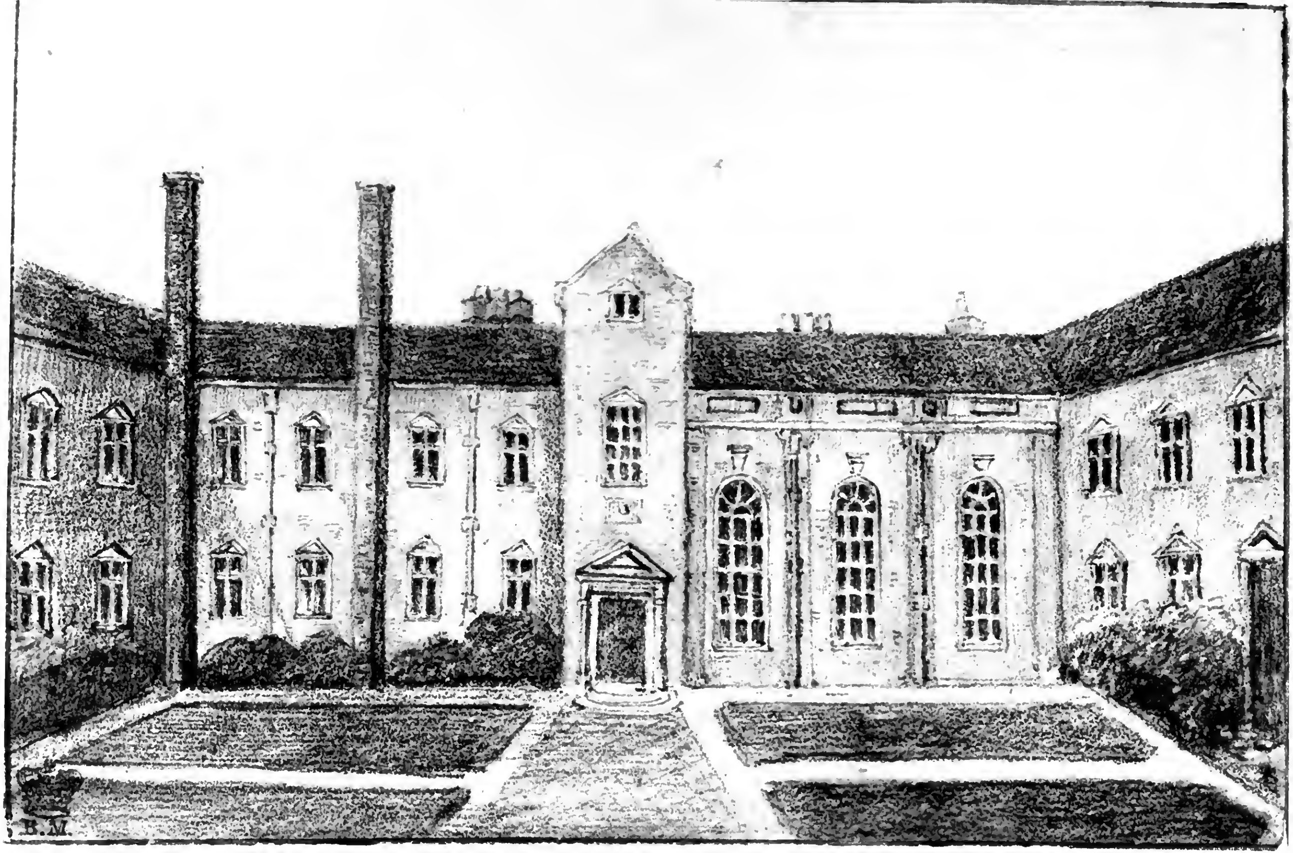
A few only were retained, either as pleasant to look at, or entertaining to read; amongst them Southey's translation of *Amadis of Gaul*, which long made the *deliciae* of myself and my brothers. Out of the classical works in dead languages, my mother only reserved one, and why she reserved that I cannot form the slightest conjecture. It was a very good copy of the *Lives of the Philosophers*, by Diogenes Laertius, in the native

1811. Greek ; and this book, amongst others, is settled
Æt. 8. as an heirloom on the future owners of Knebworth. Probably my mother had a subtle and wise notion that a man plagued with a property in land had need make acquaintance with philosophers.

But we set out in the carriage, while that precise cold-blooded man cleared the rooms in Nottingham Place of their poor tenants, whose time there was so short, and we arrived at Knebworth.

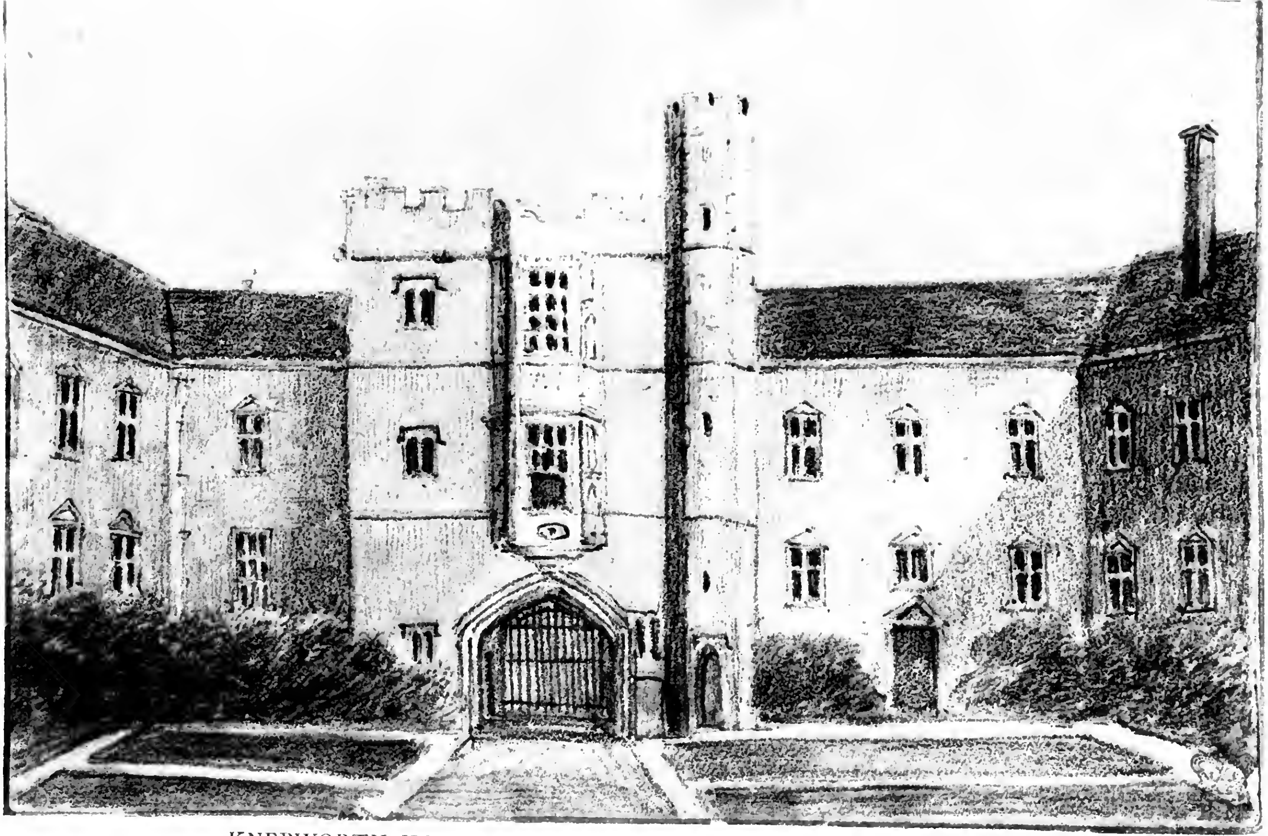
The house with its long outwalls, that seemed to me measureless, emerged on my view as we drove through the park. For the rest, I can only recall broken reminiscences of a deep, gloomy archway, of a long gallery covered with portraits, and chambers in which the tapestry seemed rotting on the walls.

When I again saw Knebworth, the work of demolition was begun. My mother had resolved to pull down three sides of the great quadrangle, and confine the house to the fourth side, which, indeed, was sufficiently capacious for estates so diminished by former proprietors.



KNEBWORTH HOUSE in 1805, from a drawing in the British Museum.

North-east front of Quadrangle



KNEBWORTH HOUSE in 1805, from a drawing in the British Museum.

South-west front of Quadrangle

CHAPTER III

SCHOOL

1812–1818

> I was soon sent to school—that preparatory world, where the great primal principles of human nature, in the aggression of the strong and the meanness of the weak, constitute the earliest lesson of importance that we are taught; and where the forced *primitiae* of that less universal knowledge which is useless to the many who, in after life neglect, and bitter to the few who improve it, are the first motives for which our minds are to be broken in terror, and our hearts initiated into tears.
>
> *Falkland.*

THE first school I went to was at Fulham, kept by Dr. Ruddock, and a Mrs. Bowen, who had more especially charge of the younger children. My mother took me down to this "Preparatory Institution." How my heart sank within me when she gave me her parting kiss, and I stood on the strange floor, striving to stifle my tears and catch the last sound of the receding wheels! Mrs. Bowen good-naturedly sent for two boys, not much older than myself, to spend the rest of the evening with me in the parlour, and explain the nature of the place. These boys seemed to me like fiends. Infants though they were, their language was filthily obscene, and my ignorance of its meaning excited their con- 1812. ÆT. 9.

1812. tempt, which they vented in vague threats and
Æt. 9. mocking jeers. The schoolmistress, wishing to leave us to ourselves to make friends, sat at the other end of the room out of hearing, till at last we were sent to bed. Once in my little crib, I thought I was safe, but scarcely had I cried myself into an unquiet doze, when I was suddenly seized, dragged from bed in the dark, and carried away in the dark, gagged and bound. I knew not what was to happen to me, but had a dim idea that I was to be murdered. I was borne thus into the open air, on a cold winter's night, and, two of my tormentors laying hold of my arms, and two of my legs, I was swung against the trunk of a tree in the playground, to undergo the undulatory operation termed bumping. I do not remember whether I was much hurt, but if I had been, mere bodily pain would have been scarcely felt amidst the storm of terror, and shame, and rage, which made a revolution of my whole moral being. Whatever the alleged cruelties of public schools at that day, I cannot believe that they equalled the atrocity of a genteel preparatory establishment, in which the smallest boy was given up, without any check from the bigger, to the mercies of boys less small, who were yet of the age when it is a delight to mangle flies and pin cockchafers.

Oh, that first night, when my mother was gone, the last kiss given, the door closed, and I alone with the little mocking fiends to whom my anguish was such glee! I was an especial 1812. and singular diversion to them, not having been Æt. 9. brought up with other boys. My utter ignorance of their low, gross slang, the disgust with which their language, their habits, their very looks, inspired me—all this was excellent sport to them. I believe I was the youngest boy in the school. At least, I was the smallest. But I had not read *Amadis of Gaul* for nothing, and I cuffed and scratched in return for cuffs and scratches. The school hours were to me hours of relief, for I was quick and docile, and my master could find no fault with me. But when the school broke up, that hour of release, so dear to others, was regarded by me with unutterable terror. Then the lesser boys would come round me to taunt the griefs which they themselves, I suppose, must once have felt. They had nothing of which to accuse me, except that I was homesick. But in the eyes of schoolboys that is the worst offence. There I learnt betimes that, with the unfeeling, feeling is a crime, and there betimes I sought the refuge of dissimulation. To put a good face on the matter, to laugh with those who laughed, to pretend that a day or two had sufficed to cure all longing for my mother and my home—this was my only policy. And the attempt to practise it cost me more pain than all the tears with which, when I could steal away unobserved, I gave vent to my first sorrows. I remember now, with gratitude, one tall handsome boy, who, indignant at my

1812. Æt. 9. persecution, came up one day to disperse my tormentors. I recollect that, when he had done so, I was particularly anxious to convince him that my sufferings did not arise from fear of my tyrants. "You see," said I, "that I cannot fight them all. But make one of them come out from the rest (any one of them), and let me fight him." The boy smiled, and seemed to consider a little. At last he, very wisely, agreed to my proposal. My tormentors, however, so brave when united, were, like most bullies, no heroes when taken singly, and, with some difficulty, a boy half a head taller than myself was induced to become the representative of the rest. I remember that I was dreadfully beaten. But I did not give in, and that was something. Unfortunately for me, my protector was high in the school, and seldom at hand, so that his interference only increased the malice of my foes.

At last my homesickness became apparent to the good schoolmistress. She was some relation to the master—not his wife. She sent for me, and accosted me with great kindness.

"My dear," said she (I see her now—a comely, plump matron in a stone-coloured silk gown)—"my dear, life consists of perpetual separations from those we love. You pine for your mother. But you will soon see her again. Think how much harder is my fate than yours. I have lost a beloved husband. He is dead. I shall never see him more. But you see I am resigned and comfortable."

"How long ago is it since you last saw him, ma'am?" said I. 1812–1814. Æt. 9–11.

"More than twenty years," said the lady.

"That is a very long time," said I, thoughtfully, "and when I have been twenty years at school, I dare say I shall feel as resigned and comfortable as you do at the loss of your husband."

The good lady never attempted to comfort me again.

I did not remain in that school above a fortnight. My misery was so great that it affected my health; and my mother, coming to see me, was so shocked at my appearance, and at my narrations, that she took me away. But the experience I had undergone, short though it was, had no trivial effect on my character. It long damped my spirits, and chilled that yearning for childish friendships which is an instinct with childhood. On the other hand, it left on my mind a hatred of cruelty and oppression which, I trust, has never faded away.

I was next sent to a school at which my brother Henry was also a pupil—Dr. Curtis's, of Sunbury. It was a very bad school in all ways, and there I wasted two years in learning marbles, and trying to learn the Latin grammar. My brother, being two years older than myself, was scarcely my companion, and I did not there form a single friendship. By the advice of a medical man, I was then removed, for the benefit of sea air, to Brighton—a Mr. Dempster's on the Grand Parade. I have no recollection of any

1814–1818. educational benefit derived from that establishment, but I grew in health and strength. Thence I was removed to Dr. Hooker's of Rottingdean, one of the most celebrated academies in England for the rank of the pupils, the comforts of the school, and the superiority of its training for the great public institutions of Eton or Harrow. Here I made a leap. The place was congenial to me. The habits of the boys were those of gentlemen. I conceived a liking for the master. I applied myself willingly to his lessons. For the first time, at school, I obtained the reputation of cleverness. My early taste for English literature began to reappear. In company with other boys, I started a kind of weekly magazine for the receptacle of poetic effusions, and mine were considered the best, and looked forward to with interest by the school. There, I first read Scott and Byron, greatly admiring the first, and conceding to the last a very limited approbation. I became also fond of athletic pursuits, and was esteemed the best pugilist of the school, though I only fought once, a boy somewhat bigger than myself, named Augustus Moreton. My victory was an easy one. During my last six months at this school, however, I suffered greatly in spirits from a dislike, then unaccountable, which Dr. Hooker had taken to me. I found afterwards that Mrs. Hooker had said I lampooned her, which was not true, but she had a son by a former marriage, who was the biggest boy of the school, and who was my personal enemy,

Æt. 11–15.

though I never gave him any other cause than that of saying I would not take a licking from him. Dr. Hooker wrote to my mother, advising her to withdraw me from his seminary and place me at Eton. He said in one of these letters, "Your son has exhausted all I can profess to teach him. His energy is extraordinary. He has a vital power which demands a large field. He has it in him to become a very remarkable man."[1]

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[1] The following letter from Dr. Hooker to Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton on the subject of her son's character at this time is of some biographical interest. The profuse indulgence in capital letters which afterwards became habitual to the style of his distinguished pupil may have been due perhaps to a taste formed in the first instance from the example of Dr. Hooker, whose peculiarity in this respect is very noticeable in this letter:—

"Rottingdean,
"*September* 18, 1818.

"My dear Madam—I received your long Letter, as you call it; I say, interesting one. I did not answer it because I agree with you that there is plenty of Time for you to make up your mind on the Subject.

"Your Son is as well, and as strong, and in as good Spirits, as any Boy in England. But every Day convinces me more and more that any Private School (whether mine or any other) will be perfect Ruin to him.

"He has a mind of very extraordinary Compass. He has an Emulation rarely found, and an Anxiety, and Attention, and Care about his Business, very uncommon. He has a physique, Force and Spirit, which defy all competition here; and all these things, so desirable, and so fitting him for a Public School, are ruin to him Here.

"No Boy can controul him; and there is no comparative Emulation in a Private School, or any Improvement from other Boys, which he could so well digest and be benefitted by in a Public one. Whoever lives to see him a man, will find his mind employed—not in the minor Elegancies of Life—but in the Higher Branches of Occupation and Ambition. He can, and he will, if led on by a Public School, highly distinguish himself there, and in after life. He is capable of extraordinary Exertion and Self Denial also, for any Object in which he is interested. But such an Object he will not find at a Private School. And, without it, his high Spirits, his Eagerness for Pleasure, and keen enjoyment of it, may prove the ruin of his character. I have, however, no more to say on this Subject, but to assure you my advice is the best I know how to give, and the most calculated for his ultimate advantage. Neither do I see anything that can properly militate against it.—I am, dear Madam, with much gratitude for all your kind attentions, Your obedient servant,

"T. R. Hooker."

1818. Æt. 15. I quitted Dr. Hooker's school, and it now became a question whether or not I should go to Eton. For my part, being older in mind and appearance than my years, I considered myself too much of a man to go to any school whatever. I had formed in my head the much more agreeable picture of a domicile with a private tutor, where one might leap at once from Master into Mister, from the big boy into the young man, dine out in the neighbourhood, and find a Beatrice or a Laura in some young beauty capable of appreciating my precocious susceptibility to the charms with which a boy's imagination already invested the vision of her destined apparition. In fact, I had premature but impassioned aspirations to launch into the real world of men, instead of retrograding to the mimic world of boys at any school, public or private. Nevertheless, my mother and I, early one morning, paid a visit to Dr. Keate, head-master of Eton. I remember that he came out of his breakfast-room with his mouth full of roll, and that, while answering my mother's queries as to the form I could be placed, or the house I could be lodged, in, and listening respectfully to her assurance of my extraordinary abilities, he politely requested me to make a few sapphics upon spring. I remember that he praised them highly, which must have been unmerited courtesy on his part, for though I afterwards wrote prose, both in Greek and Latin, with much fluency, I never succeeded in the verse of those dead tongues—a circumstance which will, no doubt, make the pupils of public schools consider me but an indifferent scholar. The praises did not, however, soften me, ungrateful as I was. I still retained my dislike to a public school, and I argued the matter with my mother so convincingly, that our visit ended without other result than a sight of Dr. Keate and a survey of the lions of the town. 1818. Æt. 15.

I do not know whether or not to regret this decision. I am very sensible of the advantages which follow in life, especially in public life, from a probation at one of our great National Schools. I have often found the want of it in a certain distaste to discipline and co-operation with others, and that kind of shyness, when thrown in company with contemporaries of very familiar social manners, or addicted to the sports of the field, which is seldom the defect of one reared at a public school. Always, throughout my career, I have been too thin-skinned and sensitive—faults which Eton might have cured. On the other hand, I was at that time too far advanced for a *début* at a school; too far advanced, not only in "my studies," for the highest class to which, according to custom, I could have been assigned, but too mature in my sentiments and modes of thought. I had never been flogged, and, after my first two or three years of school, I had never submitted to a blow from any of my companions. In every school-boy fight I had come off victorious. Thus,

1818. Æt. 15. something of arrogance, and certainly of the pride which attaches itself to personal dignity, had become interwoven with my nature, and I am certain that, if I had been flogged by a master or fagged by a boy, it would have produced an injurious consequence on my health and character.

Now came the question of a private tutor. How prodigiously we were embarrassed in the selection! What a number we saw! What a number we rejected! At length, as time rolled on, and my mother perceived that I only kept up my literary acquisitions by devouring the contents of three circulating libraries, the affair was cut short, and I went to a receptacle for young men, near London, until at last the proper Phoenix of a tutor could be discovered. Here, I fancy, I was the best classical, certainly the best Greek, scholar; but then, on the other hand, I was the worst caligrapher and the most blundering arithmetician. Indeed, I had never learnt arithmetic, beyond a weekly lesson which I had always contrived to shirk, and I am sure my writing proved the truth of honest Dogberry's assertion, "and came by nature." I soon, however, conquered the mysteries of figures. As to the noble art of penmanship, that was unattainable, and my franks are yet the admiration of collectors of such autographs.

I did not, alas! long continue in this intermediate state. I had a quarrel with the usher about making a noise; the usher fetched the master; the master was choleric; he became 1818. still more so at finding that his choler did not ÆT. 15. influence me; he gave me a box on the ear. I threw myself back in a pugilistic attitude, and the master, retreating, for no glory was to be gained by the contest, requested me to walk into his study. There immured, with a swelling and indignant heart (it was the first blow I had received unavenged from man or boy since the age of ten) I spent two tedious days. No companion visited me, save the servant with my meals, or coal-scuttle; no book cheered me save a volume of Beloe's *Sexagenarian*, which was lying on the sofa, but which, being soon remembered, was, with the usual didascalic malice, summoned away before I had got through fifty pages. My master wrote to my mother, and so did I. My letter was incoherent and vehement—worthy of a Paladin. A blow—at my age—to one of my ancient birth. My ancestry was invoked with the spirit of a Roman. On the third morning the well-known carriage and its stately long-tailed horses, stopped at the gate. I hailed it from the window. The door was unbolted, my mother entered. Scarcely time for a word, before in marched the pedagogue, grim and tall, sullen and majestic. All attempts at reconciliation were in vain. I demanded the first apology. The master, very properly, refused to give it, and, very improperly, put himself into a violent rage. The scene was admirable. It ended by a proof of that spirit of

1818. Æt. 15. quiet decision with which I have often in later life got out of difficulties. I opened the door, walked through the garden, reached the gate, and ensconced myself in the carriage. What more could be said or done? The affair was settled.[1] So ended my schoolboy days. I now entered prematurely into youth, its sufferings, its memories, its adventures. The stream was crossed, the bridge broken for ever. With what wistful eyes, with what bitter regrets, have I looked back on the irrevocable shore!

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[1] The following letter from an old schoolfellow, addressed to the 1st Earl of Lytton, confirms this incident.

"11 Wimpole Street, Cavendish Square,
"*Jany.* 21, 1884.

"My Lord—You do not seem to have been able to discover the School at which the '*arrest*' of Mr. Bulwer took place, which he mentions at page 128, vol. I. of your most interesting life of the late 'E. Bulwer, Lord Lytton.' I was at the school at the time, and detained after school hours to finish some lesson I had failed to complete in proper time, when the quarrel took place; the only persons present were the Usher, Mr. Toms, Mr. Bulwer, and a boy—I think named Hardman—about 17 years of age, and myself, aged 12; and being now over 76 years of age, I believe I am the only survivor of the party. Mr. Toms was at his desk whistling, Mr. Bulwer and Hardman were playing at chess when Mr. Bulwer called out in a very imperious tone 'Keep that confounded whistling to yourself.' The rest is as described in the autobiography, but my impression is that your father when his ears were boxed, struck the Master a blow. This so terrified me that I bolted out of the school-room, but remained near enough to know that the Master restrained himself and did not return the blow, but ordered Mr. Bulwer to follow him to the house, some 40 yards off, where he was locked in till the arrival of his mother.

"This school was at Upper Homerton in the parish of Hackney, within three miles of St. Paul's—the Master's name, Rev. F. Burnet, D.D., who died only a few years ago, much over 90, Rector of one of the City Churches.

"I have the most distinct recollection of the event of Mr. Bulwer's person and manner, and his after celebrity, and the gratitude I feel for the hundreds of delightful hours he has since given me, have stereotyped them on my memory.—Your obt. servant,

"W. T. Steinmitz."

CHAPTER IV

FIRST LOVE

1819–1820

When true Love comes, it is to close our May.
Well, ere my boyish holiday was o'er
The grim God came, and mirth was mine no more!
New Timon.

O the short spring! the eternal winter! All,
Branch, stem, all shatter'd! fragile as the bloom.
Yet this the love it charms us to recall;
Life's golden holiday before the tomb.
Yea, this the love which age again lives o'er,
And hears the heart beat loud with youth once more.
King Arthur.

A FEW weeks afterwards, I was placed under the roof of a very different preceptor, at Ealing. The Rev. Charles Wallington was an amiable type of the old school of Oxford man. He was a Tory, and High Churchman to the backbone. He took his principles in State and Theology without much examination, as part and parcel of his natural character as clergyman and gentleman. His scholarship was not devoid of taste and elegance, but without depth or range. He could not have fitted an aspiring genius for a first-class at Oxford, but, at least, he could have assisted a 1819. ÆT. 16.

1819. pupil of ordinary capacities towards a respectable
Æt. 16. degree. Long habit had made him familiar with the ordinary classics, Greek and Latin. He did not wander voluntarily out of those beaten tracks. His acquaintance with modern literature was limited, but he wrote in his native tongue with neatness and some grace—wrote like an educated gentleman. Gentleman, indeed, he was *emphatically*, in impulse and in habit, in appearance and in manner.

He was a very handsome old man, with an air more martial than priestly, extremely slight but sinewy, upright as a dart. He wore his black coat buttoned to the throat. Never once did I see a button relaxed, and the coat was padded across the chest like a life-guardsman's. He had a magnificent aquiline nose, almost as large as the immortal Wellington's, but much more delicate. He had blue eyes of great sweetness when pleased, and great vivacity when angry, and a physiognomist would have detected refinement of sentiment in the curves of the mouth. Despite his age, his countenance was free from the lines of care and sorrow, his complexion was clear and brilliant. If you had put on him such a wig as was worn by George IV., he would have seemed in the prime of manhood; but though he was vain of his good looks, he did not affect youth. He wore a very becoming toupet in large Brutus-like curls, but the colour of the toupet was snow white. His height varied, growing gradually taller, perhaps, for weeks, and then some morning he appeared at breakfast suddenly shortened by a couple of inches. This arose from a peculiarity in his habits. Not liking new boots (who does?) it was his custom to appropriate to himself the boots of his second son—a handsome man in a crack regiment, who was sure to have boots well made, and who resigned them to his father after they had lost their first uneasy freshness. The son's feet were larger than the sire's, and, in order to make the boots fit better, Mr. Wallington senior stuffed them every morning with the letters he had received that day. In those boots he kept the correspondence which a less ingenious man would have devoted to the waste basket. This process went on till the boots could hold no more; they were then suddenly emptied, and Mr. Wallington senior diminished proportionately in stature. The boots were not the only things my tutor had appropriated from his son Clement. He took also from that favoured son an old grey charger, a stately and venerable animal. And every day, unless the weather was actually stormy, the old man paraded this war-horse along the highways—his chest thrown back, his seat military, his air collected and stern. Every passer-by, ignorant of his real attributes, mistook him for a general in the Peninsular War. He had one companion in these rides—an ugly, yellowish Scotch terrier. If his son Clement were the object of his pride, the Scotch terrier was the object of his love.

1819.
Æt. 16.

1819. Æt. 16. Sometimes, by forgetfulness, he left this poor dog in the pupil-room, and pounce on the poor dog went the pupils. No favourite with them was that dog, and they knew they must make the most of their time, for very soon was heard the old man's tremulous step hurrying backward along the corridor. An instinct warned him of the woes that were befalling the faithful but unpopular animal, and it always went to my heart to see the pathetic, suspicious, wistful glance which he cast round the room (all the tormentors were then at their desks, looking as innocent as hypocrites generally do), while the dog bounded towards him and then rushed through the open door. This dog was not more a favourite with servants than pupils, and, perhaps for that reason, even on Sundays, the vigilant, tender master did not like to leave the animal at home. The dog went regularly to church with him, paced up the aisle demurely, mounted into the reading-desk, and assisted afterwards in the pulpit. Perhaps the old man loved the dog the more because he seemed to have little happiness in the other ties of his domestic life. His wife and he quarrelled from morning to night; he had no daughters; his two sons were in the army, and rarely visited him. He seemed to have no friends. I never heard him speak of any. To the man thus circumstanced a dog was necessary; otherwise the heart might have suspended its functions. Alas! he must have long survived that Scotch terrier. I hope he found another one, for he lived till he had passed his ninetieth year. 1819. ÆT. 16.

The character of our small society was unusually quiet. The pupils were sober and steady enough, except when the dog was to be teased. We had each our own bureau, purchased with our own money. It was a matter of emulation which should have the handsomer one. In the evening each was set apart, occupied with his own studies or amusements. Our desks were as our separate homes.

I loved my preceptor, who imagined me a genius. I loved my companions. And you, my dear old oak bureau, strewn with books, and literary litter. Ah, who owns you now? Who succeeded to that quiet corner by the snug fireside, and the door opening on the garden close at hand? I would give your weight in gold to possess you once more; you, on whose unconscious surface were written my first attempts at something more than childish rhyming, my first outpourings of love. Satirist and politician though I be, I think I should never write another harsh or ungentle line were you once more the companion of my studies.

With this excellent old man I made rapid progress in the classics, and, what was more, in the love of letters. I read every book I could lay my hands upon, no matter how trifling, no matter how abstruse, the volume. Mr. Wallington was an ardent politician, and Sir Robert Peel was his idol. He never forgave Canning the

1819. Æt. 16. Catholic question. Sometimes he read to us aloud the Parliamentary debates, and he infected us betimes with the passion for public affairs. It was a favourite plan with him (and an admirable one, since we were not to be only readers of books all our lives) to induce us to excite ourselves and our comrades by speaking and discussing aloud, in full conclave, long extracts from Demosthenes, or compositions of our own, either in English or a less familiar tongue. For my part, I caught from this practice quite an oratorical mania, and mouthed out declamations with the enthusiasm of an embryo Gracchus. But my aspirations at that time were poetical rather than political. My mother had shown, with pride, to my preceptor some boyish verses of mine, on the strength of which he encouraged me "to cultivate the Muse." I needed no such encouragement to persuade myself that

Ich auch war in Arcadien geboren.

Poor Horace was robbed of all his classic turns, and my beloved Euripides poured into vernacular verse. Then did I conceive, *audax omnia perpeti*, the Homeric epic of the "Battle of Waterloo," beginning, if I remember right, with "Awake, my Muse!" and then did I perpetrate the poem of "Ismael, an Oriental Tale," beginning, Byron-like, with "'Tis eve," etc., and thronged with bulbuls and palm-trees. In short I was a verse-maker, and nothing more. But my efforts pleased my tutor. He persuaded my mother to publish a little volume of these versifyings.[1] The sale was even smaller than the volume. But— 1820. Æt. 17.

> A book's a book, although there's nothing in't:
> 'Tis something still to see one's name in print;

and among my mother's friends I was regarded as a youthful prodigy. Moreover, about this time Dr. Parr deigned to write to me, and was very kind in his encouragements.[2] This passion

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[1] *Ismael, an Oriental Tale, with other Poems*, by Edward George Lytton Bulwer, written between the age of thirteen and fifteen, published by Messrs. Hatchard, April, 1820. The book reached a second edition.

[2] The following is a specimen of these interesting letters from a man of sixty-four to a boy of seventeen.

Samuel Parr to Edward Bulwer.

"Hatton, *April* 26, 1821.

"Dear Mr. Bulwer—I dictate this from a couch to a friendly scribe. I have this morning arranged all the letters with which you have honoured me; and I assure you that the impression they have made upon my mind can do no discredit to your learning, to your taste, to your ingenuity, and, above all, to the moral character of your mind. I am proud of such a correspondent; and, if we lived nearer to each other, I should expect to be very happy indeed in such a friend.

"Mr. Bulwer, I mean to preserve your letters, and, before I dictate one more sentence, I will put them together. I shall enclose them in a strong envelope, and concisely but significantly write my opinion on their value.

"This promise has just been performed by my Oxonian scribe and myself; and now I shall go on with my letter.

"I have read your poems very attentively. I have ventured to mark every passage I wish you to reconsider, and I rejoice that you will have full time for revisal, correction, and decoration. Really, when I think ot your youth, my delight is mingled with astonishment at your intellectual powers. And, although in our politics we differ widely, yet I feel a pure, and I had almost said a holy, satisfaction in contemplating the moral properties of your mind. It is quite wonderful that such a habit of observation has been formed, and such a rich store of its fruits collected and made ready for use, at your time of life. There are many vestiges of your reading in classical authors; but you have taken a wider range than is generally taken by young men; and there is a secret charm pervading all your writing, which I trace not only to your discernment, but also to your sensibility. But pray, dear Sir, when you speak of Burke and the Three, tell the reader who the three were. And surely in the 'Illustrious

1820. Æt. 17. for verse-making was unfortunate. It carried off the natural eagerness and tenacity of a mind always restlessly active, into very unprofitable channels. It divided the ardour of knowledge, and it made me absent and dreamy. There was nothing in the tuition I received to elevate my ambition towards higher objects, or stimulate it to sterner efforts. My tasks were easy and monotonous. They cost me no trouble, nor did the acquirements or assiduity of my companions inspire me with serious emulation. Mr. Wallington lived not far from London, and there, chiefly, I passed my vacations. I was tall and manly for my age; prodigal of talk, full of high spirits, gay to overflowing, ready alike in verse and compliment. Women smiled on the young poet. Invitations showered upon me. My mother yielded to the flattery so sweet to a mother's heart, and, whilst little more than a child in years, I was introduced into the world

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Friend' you will find ample materials for one or two couplets; but no more.

"I differ from you, and from many of my contemporaries, upon the poetical merits of Walter Scott. Lord Byron stands on the highest pinnacle in my estimation; and Moore, whom you admire, deserves *in secundis consistere*. Crabbe only can be the rival for the second place. I see great excellence, *sometimes*, in Southey; and there are *parts* in the writings of Campbell which lead me to consider him as a Poet.

"Increase your store of poetical imagery. Write whenever you find yourself disposed to write; but collect the whole force of self-command, and let not the *limae labor et mora* discourage you. The largest collection of modern Latin Poets I ever saw is in my own possession; and, if you lived near me, I should often set you a long, but most useful and delightful task in reading them. Remember, dear Sir, how much Milton and Gray were indebted to their learning; and you may be sure that Pope drew very largely from sources little known.—I am, dear Sir, truly your well-wisher, your admirer, and Your obedient, humble servant, S. Parr.

"*P.S.*—BE AMBITIOUS."

as a young man. Dinners, routs, and balls 1820. diverted me from serious study. I was passion- Æt. 17. ately fond of dancing, and amongst the last to leave the ball-room by the light of dawn. The middle-aged ladies took me home in their carriages, for I was but a boy. The young ones did not disdain me as a partner—for I was almost a man. In fact, I forestalled the natural growth of years, and, enjoying my youth too soon, I renounced its tastes when I should have commenced them. At the age of twenty-two I hated balls as much as they are hated by most men of twenty-eight. For experience, which *is* time, had advanced me six years in the progress to satiety. All this might have destroyed in me for ever manliness and depth of character, but for the sorrow in which it closed. Woe is me even now, when I recall the gloom wherein my boyhood vanished!

Vague, wild beatings of the heart, how sorrowfully I now recall you! I longed for some one to love, I cared not whom. There was a pretty village girl, in a cottage near the house of Mr. Wallington, often seen plaiting straw by the threshold. To her I gave a whole romance—never spoken. For I never once uttered a word to her, but I used to pass by the door, and at length she noticed me, and smiled and blushed when I passed. If I saw her alone, I looked on her with longing tenderness, but if ever I saw a young peasant loitering near, I looked such indignant daggers! I was terribly

1820. Æt. 17. jealous of her, and fancied I had a right to be so. Nay, by degrees, from the magnetism, I suppose, that one heart conveys to another, she seemed to accord me that right. For when I looked thus angry, she replied by a deprecatory, sorrowful look, and I have even seen the tears in her eyes. Still we never spoke. She was, no doubt, inexperienced and innocent, and never gave me an opportunity. And certainly I never made one. Nay, I don't think I desired it. The illusion was worth more than any reality. This lasted a whole summer. The next summer, alas! I found elsewhere both reality and illusion.

The country around the village in which my good preceptor resided was rural enough for a place so near the metropolis. A walk of somewhat less than a mile, through lanes that were themselves retired and lonely, led to green sequestered meadows, through which the humble Brent crept along its snake-like way. O God! how palpably, even in hours the least friendly to remembrance, there rises before my eyes, when I close them, that singular dwarfed tree which overshadowed the little stream, throwing its boughs half way to the opposite margin! I wonder if it still survives. I dare not revisit that spot. And there we were wont to meet (poor children that we were!), thinking not of the world we had scarce entered, dreaming not of fate and chance, reasoning not on what was to come, full only of our first-born, our ineffable love. Along the quiet road between Ealing and

Castlebar, the lodge gates stood (perhaps they 1820. are still standing), which led to the grounds of a ÆT. 17. villa once occupied by the Duke of Kent. To the right of those gates, as you approached them from the common, was a path. Through two or three fields, as undisturbed and lonely as if they lay in the heart of some solitary land far from any human neighbourhood, this path conducted to the banks of the little rivulet, overshadowed here and there by blossoming shrubs and crooked pollards of fantastic shape. Along that path once sped the happiest steps that ever bore a boy's heart to the object of its first innocent worship.

She was one or two years older than I. She had the sweetest face, the gentlest temper ever given to girlhood. The sort of love we felt for each other I cannot describe. It was so unlike the love of grown-up people, so pure that not one wrong thought ever crossed it, and yet so passionate that never again have I felt, nor ever again can I feel, any emotion comparable to the intensity of its tumultuous tenderness.

It was then summer. She did not live in the immediate neighbourhood of those pleasant fields which were our place of daily meeting. But, though she was well born, very peculiar circumstances had created for her a liberty almost equal to my own. We were too much children, both of us, to talk in set phrase of marriage. But we believed, with our whole hearts and souls, that we were born for each other, and that nothing could ever separate us.

1820. Æt. 17. And so we had no care for the future. That was the warmest and the brightest summer I ever knew in this country. I can remember none like it. The sky smiled and glowed on us as if it also were full of love. At the Duke's lodge the gardener used to sell fruit. So there, as I passed it, I made my purchases for our little feasts, and, as I was always first upon the spot, I spread them out on the grass, where the stream grew darker, under the boughs of that old dwarf tree.

When I saw her at a distance, my heart beat so violently that I could not breathe without a painful effort. But the moment I heard her voice I was calm. That voice produced throughout my whole frame a strange sensation of delicious repose. The whole universe seemed hushed by it into a holy stillness. Comparing what I felt then with all I have felt since, I cannot say if it was real love. Perhaps not. I think it was something infinitely happier and less earthly. Till that time, my spirits had been high and my constitutional gaiety almost turbulent. But when I sat beside her, or looked into her soft, melancholy face, or when I thought of it in absence, the tears stood in my eyes, I knew not why. I am not sure that she was what others would call handsome. Often now I see faces that seem to me beautiful, and people smile at me when I say so. But, looking close into my impressions of them, I perceive it was a trait, a look, an air, like hers, that 1820. charmed me with them; and my only notion ÆT. 17. of beauty is something that resembles her.

No one ever suspected our meetings, nor even, I believe, our acquaintanceship. I had no confidant in any of my companions. I was well with all, but intimate with none. And the poor girl had no sister, no mother, no friend, I believe, but me. I think it was her desolate state, in its contrast to my own happy home, and ardent hopes, and bright prospects, that first drew me to her. I never breathed her name to a human being. How thankful I am now for my silence! Sweet saint, *your* name, at least, shall never be exposed to the deliberate malignity, the low ribaldry that have so relentlessly assailed my own. If ever I fulfil the hopes I once cherished; if ever I outlive my foes and silence their atrocious slanders; if ever the time should come when your memory will not be reviled because it is dear to me and sacred; when none are left to hate you for the love you gave me, and from those who will have known you only as its sinless martyr, the tale of your long, unrecorded sufferings, may win perhaps tears softer and less bitter than my own; then, if ever, but never till then, shall that tale be told.

The last time we met was at evening, a little before sunset. I had walked to London in the morning, to buy her a book which she had wished to read. I had not written

1820. Æt. 17. my name on the title-page, but I said, half-jealously, as I gave it to her, "You will never lend it to any one? never give it away?"

She shook her head, and smiled sadly, and then after a little pause, she said, without answering my question, "It will talk to me when you are gone."

So then, for the first time, we began to speak gravely of the future. But the more we discussed it, the more disquieted we became. And it ended with the old phrase, "We shall meet to-morrow."

The sun had set, and it was already dark. I could scarcely distinguish her features, as I turned to depart. But when I had left the spot some little way behind me, looking back to it, I could see that she was still standing there. So I turned and rejoined her. She was weeping. Yet she had *then* no knowledge of what was to happen, and she could not say why she wept. I was unable to comfort her, for I shared (though in a less degree) her own forebodings. But I covered her hands with my tears and kisses, till at last she drew them away from my grasp, placed them on my head as I half knelt before her, said in half-choked accents "God bless you!" and hurried away.

It was my turn then to linger on the spot. I cried out "To-morrow! to-morrow we shall meet as before!" My voice came back to me without an answer, and we never met again. Never, never.

1820. ÆT. 17.

The next day she came not, nor the next. Then I learned that she was gone. What had happened I cannot relate. Some months afterwards there came a letter. Not from her. She was married. She, whose heart, whose soul, whose every thought and feeling, all were mine to the last, she who never spared even a dream to another—lost, lost to me for ever![1]

When that tragedy was over, I felt myself changed for life. Henceforth melancholy became an essential part of my being; henceforth I contracted the disposition to be alone and to brood. I attained to the power of concentrating the sources of joy and sorrow in myself. My constitution was materially altered. It was long before I knew again the high animal spirits which delight in wild sport and physical action. Till then I had been irascible, combative, rash, foolhardy. Afterwards, my temper grew more soft and gentle, and my courage was rather the result of pride and jealous honour than the fearless instinct that rejoiced in danger. My ambition, too, became greatly subdued, nor did it ever return to what it was in boyhood.

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[1] In a poem entitled "The Tale of a Dreamer," written in 1824 and printed in *Weeds and Wildflowers*, Bulwer supplies some details which are here omitted. The nameless heroine of his boyish romance was forced by her father into a marriage against which her heart protested. For three years, in obedience to duty, she strove to smother the love which consumed her; and then wrote to Bulwer from her death-bed a letter in which she informed him of the suffering through which she had passed, assured him of her unconquerable devotion to him, and expressed a wish that he should visit her grave. His pilgrimage to that spot, in the neighbourhood of Ullswater, is recorded in a later chapter.

CHAPTER V

COLLEGE

1821–1825

> I went to the University with a great fund of general reading, and habits of constant application. . . . I stayed there three years and did nothing! . . . nor did I attempt anything above the ordinary degree.
>
> *Falkland.*

1821. Æt. 18. It had been a subject of discussion between my mother and Mr. Wallington whether Oxford or Cambridge should be the University selected for the completion of my academical career. Mr. Wallington, of course, strongly advised Oxford, and my mother at first seemed so inclined. For myself, at the time when my choice might have turned the scale, I was wholly indifferent. I was wrapped in my own secret grief, and the future had no place in my thoughts. My mother did not then comprehend the state in which I was, body and mind. To her I seemed sullen and ungrateful, and perhaps it was because she thought that my tutor had failed to render me more amiable, that she suddenly discarded his advice, and resolved that I should go to Cambridge. This was a great mistake. My studies had not been directed to the abstract sciences, which at that day were the principal avenues to distinction at the university thus selected. I did not know even the elements of mathematics. It was resolved to send me to the house of a Cambridge man, to teach me Algebra and Euclid. One evening the coach set me down at the gates of a house at St. Lawrence, near Ramsgate. Young eyes peered at me from the windows, and I passed up the front garden, pale, thin, and careworn, the ghost of what I had been a year before. Mr. Thomson, my new tutor, was as completely the genuine Cambridge man as Mr. Wallington had been the Oxford man. Wallington was a Tory, Thomson a Whig; Wallington was High Church, Thomson somewhat of a latitudinarian; Wallington was dignified and silent, Thomson easy and loquacious; Wallington loved a quotation, Thomson loved a joke. Both of them were excellent men in different ways. Thomson would have called Wallington a prig, Wallington would have called Thomson vulgar. Thomson had a great advantage over Wallington in domestic life. He had chosen a pleasant, good-tempered, affectionate partner, who never answered him when he was cross. I liked Thomson much, Mrs. Thomson more. There were but two pupils besides myself. They were about my own age, but I looked on them as mere children. They had not seen the world, as I had done, in boudoir and drawing-room; they had much less informa- 1821. ÆT. 18.

1821. Æt. 18. tion; they were shorter than I was by half a head, and they did not dress like men. For the rest, they were amiable enough, one of them clever, the other dull, and both played the flute.

I found a peculiar interest in my new residence, for I learned, to my surprise, that it had belonged to my erudite grandfather Lytton. Hence had emerged all those books which so excited my childish wonder. Here had he lived obscure, amassing stores of learning that humbled even the arrogance of Parr, and here had he died, leaving behind no trace of his labouring path through the wide world of knowledge. Many little anecdotes of his eccentric habits, his benevolent simplicity, endeared to me his memory, and made me forgive him the single flogging of my young existence. These anecdotes came back to me when I drew the portrait of Austin Caxton.

The neighbouring watering-place of Ramsgate was gay with dinners and carpet dances. Friends of my family found me out, and invited me often. On pretence of not disturbing my tutor's household by late hours, Mr. Thomson suggested to me to hire a bedroom in the immediate neighbourhood. I rejoiced at that symbol of independence, and I did not abuse the liberty thus improperly accorded to my youth. How I loved that little room in a stocking-weaver's cottage, so homely, and yet all my own! I had much time to myself. Mr. Thomson soon discovered that in classics he could teach me nothing; and I soon discovered that in mathematics I was disposed to learn as little. But in my own quiet room I collected all the books that the neighbouring libraries could furnish, and read them with vague, desultory application. Then, for the first time, the *Confessions of Rousseau*, in a bad English translation, fell into my hands. The book made on my mind a strong impression, and, so far as my estimate of Rousseau as a man is concerned, I fear that impression is indelible. Stripped of the charm of its native style by the dull translator, the book shocked all my notions of human dignity, not more by the meanness of the faults or vices it recorded, than by the shameless cynicism with which they were confessed. My youth could not make those indulgent allowances for the morbidities of a diseased temperament which a wide experience of mankind would compel me to make now. This exhibition of moral paltriness by the side of intellectual grandeur permanently lowered the homage I had till then been inclined to render to intelligence in the abstract, and made me cling with the more loyal reverence to the simple masculine virtues of courage, truth, and honour. A few years afterwards, the other works of Rousseau, more especially the *Nouvelle Heloise* and the *Reveries*, produced on me a different kind of effect. Read in the original, the exquisite grace of their diction, the elaborate melody of their

1821. Æt. 18. cadence, captivated my taste, and I studied them with care as models of style.

In the meanwhile, however, my spirits became more and more dejected, my health more and more enfeebled. I wandered alone for hours, in a state of desolate sadness impossible to describe. I flew eagerly to Religion for her comforts, and my prayers were murmured through burning tears. But it was long before I found the consolation that I sought. My nerves were so shattered, that Religion oppressed me with her awe, rather than soothed me with her mercy. I can remember some snatches of poetry I wrote under that state of mind. They are the first lines I ever wrote that gave promise of originality, for they were the expression of feelings peculiar to myself. They were the wail of a soul alone, and severed from its race.

About this time I fortunately contracted an acquaintance with a young man some years older than myself. Indeed, he had just taken his degree at Cambridge, where he gained the Chancellor's Medal for a poem on Jerusalem.[1] He had, moreover, published a volume of poetry.[2] Chauncy Hare Townshend[3] (such was his name) was still staying at Ramsgate with his parents and a fair young sister. He was very kind to me, and I accompanied him in long boating excursions on the sea. The breezes did good to my health, and my companion's conversation benefited my mind. He impressed me with the idea of being singularly calm and pure. In spite of a beauty of face, which at that time attracted the admiration of all who even passed him in the streets, his manners and converse were characterised by an almost feminine modesty. He used to say, smiling, that he did not believe he was susceptible to love. Withal, he had a pervading sense of his own existence. With an egotism not uncommon to young poets, he thought, wrote, and talked of himself—his own peculiarities and feelings. Thus, unconsciously, I became attracted from *my* sorrows, and gazed on the portrait of another, not the mirror of myself. Townshend, too, had made the acquaintance of eminent poets. He had visited Wordsworth, and he corresponded with Southey. Stars that before had been scarcely visible on my horizon, loomed near through his anecdotes, and their grand influence reached me. I felt, too, a brotherly interest in his pretty sister, who had lately passed through a deep disappointment in love. Sympathy drew me towards her, and her presence soothed and calmed me.

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[1] 1817.

[2] *Poems*, 1821.

[3] Of Chauncy Hare Townshend a short biography has been written by Charles Dickens. He was an accomplished man with many intellectual tastes; an amateur painter, musician, and poet.

1821.
Æt. 18.

Poor thing! she married a year or two afterwards, and died young, from the after effects of childbirth.

Towards the later autumn, my mother came to pass a few months at the neighbouring Broadstairs. She was strongly opposed to my lodgment out of the tutor's house, but to this

1822. Æt. 19. liberty I clung with obstinate vehemence, and finally carried the point.

I left Mr. Thomson's house, after the Christmas holidays, somewhat improved in health and spirits, but still sickly and dejected. I had gained very little in knowledge of books under his direct care, though I had picked up a few things of value, here and there, from the waifs I had myself collected. But, languid and objectless, indifferent to ambition, not dreaming of honours, shunning companionship, averse from noisy pleasures, I went into the animated, restless world of the University.

The college selected for me was Trinity, at which my two brothers had preceded me. My private tutor, Mr. Fisher, was especially distinguished as a Greek scholar. His versification in that language was excellent. He was not, however, a very skilful or attentive teacher. In our lecture-rooms one face instantly arrested my eye; a face pale, long, worn, with large eyes and hollow cheeks, but not without a certain kind of beauty, and superior to all in that room for its expression of keen intelligence. The young man who thus attracted my notice was Winthrop Mackworth Praed, the editor and the most sparkling contributor to a magazine set up at Eton, and called *The Etonian*; a scholar of remarkable eloquence and brilliancy, carrying off, in the course of his University career, prizes in Greek, Latin, and English, the readiest and most pungent speaker at the Union Debating

Society; the liveliest wit in private circles; in 1822. a word, the young man of whom the highest ÆT. 19. expectations were formed, and who, from the personal interest he excited, was to the University what Byron was to the world. The first term I spent at Cambridge was melancholy enough. My brothers had given me a few letters of introduction to men of their own standing, older than myself, but not reading men. Quiet and gentlemanlike they were, but we had no attraction for each other. I found amongst them no companion. I made no companion for myself. Surrounded by so many hundred youths of my own years, I was alone. The formality of the crowded lecture-rooms chilled me. No occupation pleased. When I returned home, I resolved to make a desperate effort to obtain for my listless mind some object of intellectual interest. I chose the *History of England*. I had no one to direct my studies or enlighten my views. But I took Rapin's dry, grand, work for the main road of my researches, and diverged by the way into chronicles and memoirs, seizing, wherever I could lay my hands on them, upon the authorities referred to. I filled commonplace books with comments and abridgments. This was the first subject to which I had ever grappled with the earnest spirit of the scholar.

My second brother, Henry, who had quitted the University, now resolved to return to it. He had before him the prospect of the handsome

1822. fortune bequeathed to him by his grandmother. Æt. 19. On returning to Cambridge his object was not distinction but enjoyment. He would no longer be a pensioner at studious Trinity, but a fellow-commoner at extravagant Downing — a new college, at which the fellow-commoners were considered to be the "fastest men" of the University.

I too had taken, from other causes, a deep and most unreasonable disgust to Trinity. Its numbers alone sufficed to revolt the unsocial and shrinking temper that had sicklied over my mind. The enforced routine of lectures, in which I found (proud fool that I was!) little to learn, stupefied me for the rest of the day. One of the college tutors, a rude and coarse man, had said something to me (I forget what) which I thought unjust at the time, and, as the tone was offensive, I had replied with a haughtiness that augured ill for a quiet life with that dignitary, who has since become an archbishop. In a word, I urged my mother to let me remove to a smaller college as a fellow-commoner. Long was the debate on this point, but at length I carried it, and with the ensuing term I entered myself at Trinity Hall.

I had not been three days in that comparatively small society before I found the benefit of the change. As a fellow-commoner at a non-reading college, I found ready dispensation from the morning lecture-rooms. I had my forenoons to myself in quiet, comfortable chambers, and peace and the sense of dignity returned to me with the consciousness of liberty and independence.[1] 1822–1823. ÆT. 19–20.

My brother Henry became my chief companion. He led a gay life at Downing. His passion then was in horses and landau-driving. He had the handsomest stud, perhaps, Cambridge ever saw. He mounted his friends, myself amongst the number, and in our long brisk rides I felt once more that I was young. But he only stayed at Downing one term, and not long afterwards his love of rambling and action led him into a journey to Greece, upon an undertaking which connected him with political affairs. After he went, my principal friend was a pupil with myself at Trinity Hall (the only reading pupil there), Alexander Cockburn. His father was British Minister at Stuttgart, and at the time I write he himself is Attorney-General under the administration of Lord Aberdeen. He is very little altered in appearance, perhaps not much in mind. Cockburn was the first young man combining both superior intellect and studious temper with whom I had ever associated. My brother William, indeed, possessed no inconsiderable natural powers, weighty sense, clear judgment, capacities for whatever business he undertook, fair acquaintance with the classics, and a facility for expressing himself with ease and polish in his native language. But he had no pretence to be a reading man. He was

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[1] It was at this time that Edward Bulwer wrote his second book. It was entitled *Delmour, or a Tale of a Sylphid, and other Poems,* and published anonymously in 1823 by Messrs. Carpenter and Son.

1822–1823. essentially indolent. Henry had then given
Æt. 19–20. little indication of the remarkable abilities he has since developed. Life has been his best preceptor. Though not without the ardour for knowledge, his reading was extremely capricious and desultory, and at that time horse-dealers, coach-makers, and tailors absorbed the larger share of his attention. Cockburn was older than myself, had seen much of the world, been originally intended for the diplomacy, knew intimately French and German. Deficient in classical information, he now toiled hard to acquire it. And his mornings and nights were spent in diligent methodical study, but in the hours of recreation he was singularly joyous and convivial. He had a frankness of manner and a liveliness of conversation that stole away all my reserve. Nor was he without gravity and tenderness of sentiment. His companionship was eminently useful to me at that critical period of my life.

And now occurred an event which has had much to do with my subsequent career in the world. Cockburn belonged to the Union Debating Society. At his persuasion I entered it. An attack of a personal nature, for some alleged misdemeanour in the honorary office of Treasurer to that famous Club, was made upon Praed, and the attack excited more sensation because it was made by one who had been his intimate personal friend—Robert Hildyard, now eminent as a barrister. The interest I felt in Praed animated me to the effort to defend him, and I rose late one evening, and spoke in public for the first time. My speech was short, but it was manly and simple, spoken in earnest, and at once successful. 1823. Æt. 20.

At the close of the debate, the leading men of the Union introduced themselves to me. I had become, as it were, suddenly one of their set. I had emerged from obscurity into that kind of fame which resembles success in the House of Commons. The leading men in the Union were the most accomplished and energetic undergraduates of the University. From that time, I obtained what my mind had so long unconsciously wanted—a circle of friends fitted to rouse its ambition and test its powers, an interchange of stirring practical ideas. I did not speak again at the Union till the following term, and then I fairly broke down in the midst of my second speech. So much the better. Failure with me has always preceded resolution to succeed. I set myself to work in good earnest, and never broke down again, but, although my speeches were considered good, and more full of knowledge than those of most of my rivals, it was long before I could be called a good speaker. I wanted the management of voice, and I was hurried away into imperfect articulation by the tumultuous impetuosity of my thoughts. My first signal triumph was on the Conservative side of the question. The subject of debate was a comparison between the English and American political Constitutions. Praed, and most of the

1823. Æt. 20. crack speakers, asserted the superiority of Republican institutions. Poor Great Britain had not found a single defender till, just as we were about to pass to the vote, I presumed to say a word in its favour. Then followed the rapturous intoxication of popular applause, and the music that lies in the uproarious cheers of party. From that hour I took rank among the principal debaters of the Club, and I passed through the grades of its official distinctions, as Secretary, Treasurer, and President.

There was then excellent speaking at that Club. Men came from London to hear us. First in readiness and wit, in extempore reply, in aptness of argument and illustration, in all that belongs to the "stage play" of delivery, was unquestionably Praed, but he wanted all the higher gifts of eloquence. He had no passion, he had little power, he confided too much in his facility, and prepared so lightly the matter of his speeches, that they were singularly deficient in knowledge and substance. In fact, he seemed to learn his subject from the speeches of those who went before him. Cockburn came next in readiness, but, though he had more vigour than Praed, he wanted his grace—was sometimes too florid, sometimes too vulgar. Charles Villiers, renowned in Corn-Law polemics; Charles Buller, clever, but superficial—always wanting earnestness and ironically pert; Wilson and Maurice, since honourably known in literature; Tooke (who died young), the son of the Political

Economist; all gave promise of future distinction. Later there came to the University an ardent, enthusiastic youth from Shrewsbury, a young giant in learning, who carried away the prize from Praed—Benjamin Hall Kennedy, now headmaster of the school he had distinguished as a pupil. He, too, spoke at the Union.

But the greatest display of eloquence I ever witnessed at the Club was made by a man some years our senior, and who twice came up during my residence to grace our debates—the now renowned Macaulay. The first of these speeches was on the French Revolution, and it still lingers in my recollection as the most heart-stirring effort of that true oratory which seizes hold of the passions, transports you from yourself, and identifies you with the very life of the orator, that it has ever been my lot to hear, saving, perhaps, one speech by O'Connell, delivered to an immense crowd in the open air. Macaulay, in point of power, passion, and effect, never equalled that speech in his best day in the House of Commons. His second speech, upon the Liberty of the Press, if I remember rightly, was a failure.

During these visits to Cambridge, I became acquainted with Macaulay. I remember well walking with him, Praed, Ord and some others of the set, along the College Gardens, listening with wonder to that full and opulent converse, startled by knowledge so various, memory so prodigious. That walk left me in a fever of

1825. Æt. 22. emulation. I shut myself up for many days in intense study, striving to grasp at an equal knowledge: the trophies of Miltiades would not suffer me to sleep.

I took my degree at a by-term, and, I believe, with more approving marks than any of the others who passed that very easy examination. But though I did not try for honours, I had established among my contemporaries a general reputation for ability and somewhat extensive reading. I took my leave of the Union in a speech on the Game Laws,[1] long remembered and cited as among the most effective which had been heard in my time at that famous debating club. Shortly before I quitted the University I tried for the gold medal accorded to the English prize poem, the subject "Sculpture," and it was adjudged to me after my departure and while I was in the midst of the London season. I went down to Cambridge to deliver it.[2] I had more pleasure, perhaps, in that first literary success than in any I have known since. But my chief pleasure was in the thought that I had at last done something my dear mother was proud of. It was somewhat ominous of the reception I have met with all my life, up to this day, from the writers of the periodical press, that, contrary to all precedent as to the passive indulgence shown to academical prize poems, my verses were selected for a lampoon in the earlier numbers of *Fraser's Magazine* —a lampoon not confined to the verses, but extending to the author. That magazine, under the auspices of Dr. Maginn and Mr. Thackeray, long continued to assail me, not in any form that can fairly be called criticism, but with a kind of ribald impertinence offered, so far as I can remember, to no other writer of my time. 1825. ÆT. 22.

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[1] April 19, 1825, according to the minutes.

[2] In July 1825.

About this time I sketched the outline of the tale of *Falkland*, and wrote the commencing chapter of *Pelham*. I do not think that the idea of publishing either was then in my mind, but they were begun as experimental exercises in the two opposite kinds of fiction—the impassioned and sombre, the light and sportive.

CHAPTER VI

TRAVELS AT HOME

1824

> He loved at frequent intervals to disappear from the great world, to get rid of books, and friends, and luxury, and wealth, and make solitary excursions, sometimes on foot, sometimes on horseback, through this fair garden of England.
>
> *Ernest Maltravers.*

1824. ÆT. 21. AT the commencement of a long summer vacation, I accompanied one of the friends my share in the Union debates had procured me, on a visit to his parents in Northumberland. Poor William Ord! I see him now — his small stature, his dark, intelligent eyes. He was an instance of a mind cultivated beyond its powers, of ambition disproportional to the usual faculties that advance it—except application and hope.

His parents moved in the best Whig society, and my young friend, from his childhood, had been brought up among wits and statesmen. He had already that tone of conversation which characterised the literary coteries of the day, at Holland House and Lydia White's. That mixture of the worldly and the intellectual, anecdote and *persiflage*, scorning political economy and statistics, a would-be freedom from prejudice, but such a contempt for the understanding and the honesty of those entertaining opposite opinions! 1824. Æt. 21.

I spent a fortnight at his father's house, and thence I went to Penrith, and proceeded to travel on foot over the scenery of the English Lakes. Leaving my portmanteau, to follow me when settled where the whim might seize me, with my knapsack on my shoulders, I took my way along the shores of Ulleswater.

I had one object in this tour, far beyond any thought of pleasure and adventure. There was a spot amidst these districts which I had long yearned to visit, with such devout and holy passion as may draw the Arab to the tomb of the Prophet; a spot in which that wild and sorrowful romance of my boyhood, which had so influenced my youth, lay buried for evermore. And until I knelt alone, and at night, beneath the stars at that shrine, I felt that my life could never be exorcised from the ghost that haunted it—that my heart could never again admit the love of woman, nor my mind calmly participate in the active objects of men. I performed that pilgrimage. What I suffered, in one long, solitary night, I will not say. At dawn I turned from the place, as if rebaptized or reborn. I recovered the healthful tone of my mind, and the stage of experience and feeling through which my young life had passed contributed largely to render me whatever I have since become.

1824. ÆT. 21. The sun shone brightly over the Lake of Windermere as I came to its gradual shores. I stood long by the margin, the gentle waves surging at my feet, and the trees reflected dark and deep upon the mirror. And "Here," I said, "peace revisits me; here will I fix myself for a time."

As I walked on towards the inn at Ambleside, I passed by a solitary house, in the window of which was written "Lodgings to Let." I entered, was shown by a dark-eyed, smiling maid-servant, into an old-fashioned parlour, that looked along the still greensward towards the still blue lake, and a roomy, clean bedroom on the first floor. The apartment pleased me. I inquired the terms. The maid could not say—the master was out. I said I would call in the evening, and went on to my inn. At dinner I asked the waiter, who lived in the house I had thus seen.

He stared at me, and changed colour. "One Mr. W.," he said, after a pause.

"Any family?"

"No, he is quite alone."

The waiter was hurrying out of the room.

"Stop, I think of lodging there for some weeks."

"Better not," said the waiter quickly, "you are very young, sir."

Away he went, and in a few minutes the landlady entered.

"The waiter says you want lodgings, sir," said she, eyeing me with an attention that gradually became more respectful. "Will you allow me to recommend you what I think would suit?"

1824. ÆT. 21.

"You are extremely kind, but I have taken a great fancy to an apartment I have already seen."

"Mr. W.'s? Oh! don't go there, sir."

"Why not?"

"Mr. W. has a bad character. Nobody speaks to him."

"That proves nothing. Pray go on."

"They say he was a smuggler or pirate once."

"Is that the reason why nobody speaks to him?"

"No, there are worse stories."

"What of?"

"Murder!" said the woman, whispering, and left the room.

That word certainly gave me a chill, and I resolved to renounce the lodgings. Meanwhile, I strolled forth, and, wandering along the margin of the lake, passed by a small boat moored to the side. I stood there, gazing on the placid water, and lost in reverie, when a voice behind me said:—

"Would you like a row? Shall I lend you the boat, sir?"

I turned, and beheld a man, middle-aged, and striking from the muscular development of his frame and the rugged power of his features.

"I am very much obliged by the offer, and will accept it."

1824. The man began to unfasten the boat. As he
ÆT. 21. presented to me the oar, he surveyed me wistfully.

"I beg your pardon, sir, but are you the young gentleman who looked at the rooms to let in the house yonder—my house?"

My eye followed the direction towards which he pointed, and I saw the quiet, dull, house which I had visited, half hid amidst heavy foliage.

"Yes," said I shortly, "but I think I shall now take a lodging elsewhere."

"I understand—they have set you against me." The man spoke bitterly. "But it is no matter, you are welcome to the boat all the same; it will be at your service whenever you like to use it. Be good enough to moor it in the same place. Good-evening, sir."

"Stay—I will look again at the lodgings; perhaps I may be your tenant after all."

"Tenant to wicked W.!" cried the man, with a hollow laugh. "Don't think of it." And he strode away.

I entered the boat, and pushed from the shore. The man's voice and manner moved me much. I felt an irresistible desire to become his lodger. So, when I had made my excursion I refastened the boat, and walked up the grassy fields towards the house. The maid-servant was again at the threshold, and welcomed me with a smile. She had a lively but innocent expression of countenance that prepossessed me. She did not look as if she would have served a very wicked man. 1824. ÆT. 21.

After a second glance over the rooms, I asked to see Mr. W., in order to know the terms, and Mr. W. appeared. He named a price for board and lodging, which I thought moderate, and I agreed to enter the next day. Then, leaning towards him, I held out my hand.

"Mr. W., it is true they have given me a bad character of you, but it does not seem to me possible that you can have any wish to harm me. At all events, though you are a very strong-looking fellow, I don't fear you."

I laughed as I spoke. The man coloured. He pressed my hand roughly.

"I wish you could guess what I feel," said he, with a voice that trembled. "But if ever I can serve you——" He hurried away.

The next day I was settled in my new apartments. I wrote to Penrith for my luggage, and soon made myself at home.

I had hoped that I should see much of my host, and hear his own account of his life—his own version of the stories against him, but in this I was disappointed. He systematically avoided me as much as possible. When I made some pretext to send for him, he confined himself strictly to replies to my questions, and showed, in short, a reserve that would have baffled a curiosity and damped an assurance much more obstinate than mine. I now ceased to trouble my head about him. I had brought

1824. Æt. 21. with me few books—the works only of two authors: Musgrave's edition of Euripides (a very bad one), and a pocket Shakespeare, without note or comment. Upon these two great masters I lavished all my attention. I read and pondered over them again and again, with that earnest assiduity which leaves behind it durable, though often unconscious, influence. They who view my fictions with a partial criticism may perceive, perhaps, the effect that study has produced upon their character: a desire to investigate the springs of passion and analyse the human heart, which is begotten in one who contemplates Shakespeare as a model, and a tendency to arrest narrative, often to the injury of its dramatic progress, by moralising deductions and sententious aphorisms, which the young student of Euripides might naturally contract. It might be supposed that these authors would incline any attempts at composition towards poetry; but I had now made a resolute compact with myself to face the future, and poetry led me back to the past. I determined to see what I could do in prose, and, without a single prose book at hand, sat down to form for myself a style. I found it exceedingly difficult, but the difficulty piqued my pride and nerved my perseverance. I wrote at first very slowly, turning and returning sentence after sentence, never satisfied till the thought I desired to convey found its best expression, and the period in which it was cased glided off into harmonious cadence. At first, I considered a page a day to be a grand achievement, gradually ease came. But it was not till years afterwards that I attained to rapid facility, and in doing so, forced myself to resign much that would better please the taste, in order not to lose that dash and intrepidity of diction by which alone (at least in works of imagination) we can hurry the reader into passion. For art in fiction is somewhat like art in oratory; the language it uses must often, with purpose, be rough, loose and slovenly. The evidence of impulse must preponderate over that of preparation. 1824. ÆT. 21.

In these first essays of prose composition I wrote much that has since been turned into use. A slight tale called "Mortimer" made the groundwork of *Pelham*, and some "Sketches of Men and Manners" will be found incorporated in *England and the English*.

These studies occupied me till the afternoon, when I dined simply enough. Afterwards, I either pushed my boat into the lake, or wandered forth amidst the hills and valleys—a volume of Shakespeare or Euripides always with me, to take out if my thoughts, in spite of myself, became gloomy. By the moonlight I returned home, and, seated by the open window, studied again till I heard the clock strike one. I did not seek acquaintance with the great men who then adorned those scenes. What I sought, and what I wanted, was solitude—the quiet comporting, as it were, of my own mind. This was what I found.

1824. Æt. 21. I did not remain long in those beautiful districts. When I took leave of my landlord, on paying the bill, he said to me with some embarrassment:

"I doubt if I have not charged you too high, sir; I did not think you would be contented with such simple fare."

"Indeed, my fare has been excellent, and your charge most moderate."

Wicked W. still seemed embarrassed.

"You are very fond of reading, sir?"

"Yes, that is true."

"And young gentlemen must want money for their studies. In short, sir, if you would only pay me half, and keep the rest to buy books, I should be very much obliged to you, and much better satisfied. You see, sir, you have been kind to me, and came here in spite of what was said of me, and other lodgers will come now."

"Mr. W., you have a good heart; I believe nothing said against you. I only wish you had let me see more of you. Why did you avoid me so much?"

"It might have done you harm, if people hereabouts said you had grown intimate with wicked W.; otherwise, I did wish to talk to you very much. But do take back this money!"

"I will take back one sovereign, and buy some books with it, as a memorial of you and Windermere. I would do as you wish, but I am well off. And now, will you tell me something of your history, and explain why people say of you what I am sure you do not deserve?" 1824. ÆT. 21.

But Mr. W. sighed, and shook his head.

"If ever you fall in love, sir," said he, after a pause, "don't be too much in love—not enough in love to be jealous. Jealousy makes a man mad, and brings the devil into his heart, so that if he does not commit crime, he may think it."

So saying, he left me musing.

I set out on foot as before, bending my way northward. The pretty little maid-servant bade "God bless me" with tears in her eyes. My host did not appear, but I saw him at the window. He waved his hand to me kindly.

And so hey for the Borders! and on with firm step into Scotland. But I did not walk all the way. On the last stage or two towards Edinburgh I took a place in the coach, and made acquaintances with two brothers, who seemed to be in trade. One, much older than the other, was evidently snubbing the cadet, but to me they were both of them pleasant, and I found their conversation instructive. We took up our abode in the same inn at Edinburgh—an excellent inn it was. I am sorry to say I forget the sign.

I came to the Falls of Clyde, and was shown over the grounds that then belonged to Lady Mary Ross. The guide took me to see the leap across the river which Scott, in *Old Mortality*, ascribes to Morton, on escaping from Burley's Cave.

1824. Æt. 21. "The leap does not strike me as very formidable," said I.

"I should like to see you take it!" replied the guide sneeringly.

The sneer put me on my mettle. Without a moment's reflection, I drew back a few paces, and sprang lightly across. When I was on the other side, and looked at the depth of the stream below, and remembered that I could not swim, a sort of *ex post facto* terror came over me. I turned sick and trembled. I would not have leapt over again for a king's ransom.

I went thence to the house of Mr. Owen, the celebrated philanthropist. I had no letter of introduction to him, but I had heard enough of his hospitality to know that I should be received with welcome, as a student of Cambridge. Mr. Owen was from home at his mills. Mrs. Owen, with great courtesy, pressed me to stay to dinner. I talked to her about her husband's schools and his schemes. She did not seem, poor woman, to approve much of either. By-and-by Mr. Owen came in, a man of singular simplicity in appearance and manner, with a quiet, low, voice, a logical mode of arranging his sentences, and altogether as unlike an enthusiast as a man could be. I listened with wonder to his projects for upsetting society and remodelling the world. To upset society and remodel the world might be very desirable. I did not wonder at the idea. I wondered at the sublime confidence with which Mr. Owen anticipated its speedy realisation.

"I have made great progress within the last year," said he, with a sobriety of tone that was very imposing. "Before 1830, Parliament will have come round to my opinion. All men are guided by self-interest; my system is for the interests of all men." 1824. Æt. 21.

Mr. Owen insisted on my passing the night at his house, and the next morning he accompanied me over his schools. It was a spectacle worth the seeing. The education seemed to me admirable. Never at any more aristocratic school have I beheld so many intelligent faces, or witnessed the same general amount of information. And the children, in their neat, uniform dresses, looked so clean and so happy! I stood by his side observing them, with the tears starting from my eyes. Involuntarily I pressed the hand of the kind enthusiast, and began to think he was here, in good earnest, laying the foundations of a system in which evil passions might be stifled from childhood, and serene intelligence govern the human race without Kings, Lords, or Commons.

Towards the afternoon I left the philanthropist and renewed my pedestrian tour. I stopped at a cottage to rest and refresh myself on the way. An old woman reading her Bible received me very hospitably.

Full of Mr. Owen and his schools, I began talking of both in high praise. The old woman fired up.

"Eh, sir, a vera bad man!"

"Bad man!"

1824. Æt. 21. "And has done a deal of mischief. The bairns turned out vera ill!"

"How is that?"

"They have never been taught *this*," and she laid her locked hands on the Bible. "They have no religion, and what is to support them, I should like to know, when they go into the world?"

I was silent. Mr. Owen, indeed, had said tranquilly, that he would not be so wrong as to instil belief. Belief was voluntary; it should be left to the judgment of men full grown. I fear the old woman was right, and that few of those poor happy children kept the promise with Fortune that their intelligence had pledged to her.

"Edina, Scotia's darling seat,
All hail thy palaces and towers!"

I chanted these words aloud as I entered beautiful Edinburgh! I was sensible at once to the poetry of the capital. All youth, nurtured by Romance, must love Scotland. Her stormy history, her dark legends, her passionate poets, her luminous philosophers, all inspired me with tender veneration as I stood gazing across the stream upon the tall gables of the old town.

"I wish," said I to myself, "that I had some Scottish blood in me, that I was something to this city and this people." I little thought then that a day would come when literature would give me the tie that birth denied; that I, lone and obscure young Englishman, should one day be elected by the Scottish youth president of the renowned University which was the boast of that famous capital, and in preference to the Ducal head of the Campbells. After a short sojourn at Edinburgh, I proceeded towards the Highlands, still on foot. 1824. ÆT. 21.

I lay down to rest one night under a hedge in the field of Bannockburn. My enthusiastic reveries kept me from sleeping. I remember that night well—the moon was so clear and splendid, the wide landscape looked so still and ghostly. And there I lay, wide awake yet dreaming—dreaming back the glorious battle, and, fonder of Liberty than of England, calling up the image of victorious Bruce! Indeed, I often passed the nights (in the Highlands especially) in the open air—and happy nights they were! Ah, youth, youth!

I did not penetrate far into the Highlands—for a very good reason. The money I had brought with me from Cambridge (about £16) was expended, and, retracing my steps, I found myself one day in the streets of Glasgow without a shilling in my pocket. Musing what to do in that dilemma, all of a sudden, to my astonishment, I saw my eldest brother walking leisurely towards me. He, too, had been visiting Scotland, in a more aristocratic fashion than I—paying visits, etc. He laughed at my penniless condition, and lent me all I wanted to continue my travels. But I was now bound

1824. Æt. 21. homeward. I returned to Edinburgh, and, resolving to reach London by sea, engaged a place in a vessel from Leith. I suffered, however, so much from sea-sickness one dreary night, which seemed the commencement of eternity (and not a blissful eternity) that I made them put me on shore at Scarborough. Myself and my luggage were conveyed to a small commercial inn. I was too dead to the things of this world to care what they did with me. After an hour or two's repose in a very small, dingy bedroom, I heard a bell ring and a dirty waiter came to tell me that dinner was served. I then learned that it was the custom at the inn (as it was at most inns at Scarborough) to take one's meals at a *table d'hôte*, and the waiter obligingly informed me that I was at no great expense for my livelihood—board and lodging (three meals in twelve hours besides tea) at 3s. 6d. a day.

Much marvelling whom I should meet at the *table d'hôte*, and finding, to my great surprise, that my stomach had recovered its late loathing of all suggestion of food, I descended into the dining-room and took my place at the bottom of a long and crowded table. A gentleman seated next to me, who (as I afterwards learned) had "a good business in the hat line," began to break the ice sociably :

"A foreigner, I presume, sir ?"

"Who is a foreigner !" said I, looking round innocently.

"Beg pardon, surely you are; but you don't speak English amiss. Something betrays you in the accent, though!" 1824. ÆT. 21.

Accent! the man was talking broad Yorkshire, which I do not pretend to render in my translation of his dialect.

I resolved to humour his mistake, and replied, in half-broken English, that I did not think he could have found me out before I had opened my lips. My gentleman was mightily pleased at his acuteness.

"We Yorkshiremen are keen," said he, rubbing his hands and chuckling.

What was there about me that betrayed the foreigner?

My long, curling hair, I suppose, and my moustache, which last I had suffered to grow, with a virginal pair of whiskers, during my travels.

"But surely you ben't a Frenchman?" he said, rather in alarm and disgust.

"No."

"A German? He knew many Germans at Manchester, very like me—that is, they had all fair hair and blue eyes."

"No."

"A Pole, then, banished by that horrid tyrannical Emperor of All the Russias?"

I sighed and nodded assent. My friend, with this, became very compassionate and friendly. "How did I support myself? Did I teach languages? Did I play the piano, or what?"

1824. Æt. 21. I supported myself by—conjuring! The man stared aghast, and I took that opportunity to monopolise the last potato in a dish which the waiter was about to hand to my new friend. The act was in character with my profession.

"Was it a good livelihood?"

"Very!"

"What could I do?"

"Creep into a quart bottle. I had crept into one when the armies of the Czar were in pursuit of me."

Here the Yorkshireman began to look incredulous, but I ate my potato with imperturbable gravity, and, to change the conversation, began to admire the ladies, of whom there was a goodly array of all sizes, shapes, costumes, and ages.

"Well," said the hatter, "I should think you had better conjure yourself a rich wife; you are a good-looking young fellow enough!"

"The very thing I want to do. I'm not mercenary, but still, some money, just to keep the pot boiling."

"To be sure. You see that lady opposite in the yellow turban? she's a young widow—rich as a Jew! Her husband was a great tinman, and left her lots of——"

"Tin," said I, dryly.

The fun pleased my friend mightily, and he offered to present me to the lady, in return for which courtesy I promised that he should be my bridesman, if ever I came to marry her.

His young widow was about the same age as my mother, looking very hot and very swarthy, but a fine woman—as women go—much too good for a Polish conjuror. 1824. Æt. 21.

After dinner a formal introduction between myself and the lady took place, and I flatter myself that I might, had the stars consented, have been her second choice. But "life is thorny, and youth is vain," and the next day I conjured myself off to the head hotel of the place. Here, if I lost the love of the widow, I made the acquaintance of a very disconsolate widower, who served me afterwards as a hint for Mr. Graves, in the comedy of *Money*. He seemed the most melancholy of men, and secured my interest by his pathetic allusions to his recent irreparable loss—his sainted wife—and the indifference with which he henceforth regarded all womankind. A handsome, portly man, nevertheless, with a good appetite. Shortly afterwards, I formed a familiar flirtation with a pretty and lively girl, who informed me that I must take great care not to speak to her if she met me in the streets, for she had "a friend" who was very rich, but very jealous.

One day, as I was walking along the sands with the inconsolable widower, and striving in vain to comfort him, this young lady tripped by us. Forgetting her admonition, or rather looking upon my friend, the widower, as a man who had no eyes on this side the grave, I smiled and nodded at her. She made no reciprocal

1824. signal of acquaintance, but blushed scarlet, and
Æt. 21. hurried on.

"I am shocked at you, young man!" said the widower, very abruptly.

"Shocked? young man? what do you mean?" said I, my dignity much offended.

"At your age—a profligate already! I grieve for your poor mother's sake—a most excellent woman! My lost wife's uncle, the bishop, knew her well."

"Really, sir, you will provoke me to say something rude. What have I done?"

"Done! Ah! what indeed? How did you know that young woman? Are you trying to seduce her?"

"Seduce her, no! But you must excuse me if I say that, though I respect your griefs—and years——"

"My years, sir!"

"We shall quarrel, I see, if we talk longer. Good day."

"Good heavens!" cried my young flirt, when we next met, as appointed, in the dusk of eve, "how could you behave so cruelly? I am afraid you have ruined me."

"What now?"

"Why, you nodded to me when you were walking with——"

"A disconsolate widower?"

"My friend!"

CHAPTER VII

LIFE WITH THE GIPSIES

1824

> Oh, the rapture of shaking off the half friends and cold formalities of society, and finding oneself all unfettered, with no companion but nature, no guide but youth, and no flatterer but hope!
>
> *The Disowned.*

Once more on foot, homewards. Time, sunset. 1824. Scene, the highway road, so curving as to be ÆT. 21. lost from sight at the distance of fifty yards, between a wood on one side, a broad patch of common sward on the other.

"Shall I tell you your fortune, my pretty young gentleman?"

The voice, young and silvery, startled me from my reverie, and by my side stood a gipsy girl. She was so handsome! The most beautiful specimen I have ever seen of a race often beautiful in youth.

"Pray do!" said I, and I crossed her small palm with silver. "Only pray, give me a sweetheart half as pretty as yourself."

The girl was, no doubt, used to such compliments, but she blushed as if new to them. She looked me in the face, quickly

1824. Æt. 21. but searchingly, and then bent her dark eyes over my hand.

"Chut! chut!" she said with a sound of sorrowful pity, "but you have known sorrows already. You lost your father when you were very young. You have brothers, but no sister. Ah! you have had a sweetheart when you were a mere boy. You will never see her again, never. The line is clean broken off. It cut you to the heart. You nearly died of it. You have conquered, but you'll never be as gay again."

I snatched away my hand in amaze.

"You are indeed a witch!" said I, falteringly.

"Did I offend you? I'll not say any more of what has passed; let me look for your good-luck in the time to come."

"Do so, and say something pleasant. Conceal the bad fortune as much as you can."

I felt very credulous and superstitious.

"Chut! chut! but that new star thwarts you much."

"What new star?"

"I don't know what they call it. But it makes men fond of strange studies, and brings about crosses and sorrows that you never think to have. Still, you are a prosperous gentleman, you will never come to want, you will be much before the world and raise your head high, but I fear you'll not have the honours you count on now. Chut! chut!—pity! pity!—you'll know scandal and slander, you'll be spoken ill of where you least deserve. That will vex you much, but you are proud and will not stoop to show it. Your best friends and your worst enemies will be women. You'll hunger for love all your life, and you will have much of it, but less satisfaction than sorrow. Chut! chut! how often you will be your own enemy! but don't be down-hearted, there is plenty of good fortune and success in store for you—not like me. Look at my hand. See here, where the cross comes against the line of life!" 1824. ÆT. 21.

"What does that mean?"

"Sorrow—and it is very near!"

"Nay, you don't believe for yourself all that you say to others. Our fortunes are not written in the palm of our hands."

"For those who can read them—yes," said the gipsy. "But very few have the gift. Some can read fortunes by fixing their eyes on anything—the gift comes to them."

I don't pretend to give the exact words of the girl. They were spoken quickly, and often in florid phrases, but, to the best of my recollection, I repeat the substance. We continued to walk on, and talk; we became familiar, and she interested me greatly. I questioned her as to the women of her caste, their mode of life, their religion, their origin, their language. Her replies were evasive, and often enigmatical. I remember that she said there were but two genuine clans of gipsies in England, and that the one bore the generic name of Fahey, the other

1824. of Smith, from the names their first dukes or
Æt. 21. leaders bore. She said that many of their traditions as to their origin and belief were dying out—that some of them had become what she called Christians, though, from her account, it was but a heathen sort of Christianity. She took great pains to convince me that they were not wilful impostors in their belief that they could predict the future. I have since learned that though they placed great faith in the starry influences, their ideas were quite distinct from the astrology known to us. Nor was their way of reading the lines in the hand at all like that described in books of chiromancy.

From these subjects we passed on to others more tender and sentimental. The girl seemed to have taken a liking to me, but she was coy and modest.

"I should much like," said I, abruptly, "to pass a few days with you and your tribe. Do you think I might?"

The young gipsy's eyes brightened vividly.

"That I am sure you can, if you can put up with it—the like of you, a real born gentleman. Grandmother does as she will with the men, and I have my own way with her. Oh, do stay! Stop—I don't see that in the lines in my hand—I only see the cross."

I could not help kissing the little hand. She would not let me kiss the lips, which were pursed up in pretty, wistful doubt.

By-and-by, on a broader patch of the

common land, and backed by a deeper mass of the woods, I saw before me the gipsy encampment. Just then the sun set. The clouds around it red and purple, the rest of the sky clear and blue, and Venus, the love star, newly risen. 1824. Æt. 21.

We passed by some ragged, swarthy children lolling on the grass; they rose and followed us. Three young men, standing round an older gipsy, who was employed in tinkering, stared at me somewhat fiercely. But the girl took me by the hand and led me into the spacious tent. A woman, apparently of great age, sate bending over a wood fire, on which boiled a huge pot. To this woman my young companion spoke low and eagerly, in a language at which I could not guess my way to a word—the old woman looking hard at me all the time, and shaking her head at first in dissent, but gradually she seemed talked into acquiescence. The dear little gipsy, indeed, seemed to me irresistible, the tones of her voice were so earnest yet so coaxing. At length she turned round to me and said joyfully:

"You are welcome to stay as long as you like. But stop—what money have you got about you?"

I felt as if an illusion was gone. It went to my heart to hear the girl refer to money. Was her kindness, then, all sordid? Was I to buy the hospitable rites proffered to me?

I replied very coldly, that I had enough money to pay for any civilities I might receive.

1824. The girl's face flushed, and her eyes sparkled Æt. 21. angrily.

"You mistake me. I did not think you could. I spoke for your safety. It may be dangerous to have money. Give it all to grandmother's care. She will return it to you, untouched, when you leave us."

With an inexpressible feeling of relief and trust, I instantly drew forth all the coins about me (about £14) and gave it to the old woman, who took what must have seemed to her a large sum without showing any emotion, and slid it into her pocket.

"You don't think I shall let you lose a sixpence?" said the girl, drawing up her stature proudly.

"Oh, no! I wish it were thousands."

Poor child! At these words the pride vanished, her eyes moistened.

Then the old woman rose and took some embers from the fire, and strewed them on the ground, and bade me stand in them. She said something to the girl, who went forth and called in all the other gipsies—men, women and children. There were about a dozen of them altogether. As soon as they were assembled the old woman, taking my right hand in hers, and pointing to the embers beneath my feet, began to address them in the gipsy tongue. They all stood listening reverently. When she had finished they bowed their heads, came up to me, and by word and sign made me understand that

I was free of the gipsy tent, and welcome to the gipsy cheer. 1824. ÆT. 21.

Resolved to make myself popular, I exerted all my powers to be lively and amusing—hail fellow, well met! The gipsies said little themselves, but they seemed to enjoy my flow of talk and my high spirits. We all sate round the great fire—a primitive oriental group. By-and-by the pot was taken off, and its contents distributed amongst us; potatoes and bread, fragments of meat stewed to rags, and seasoned with herbs of a taste before unknown to me. Altogether I thought the podrida excellent.

The old crone, who seemed the Queen of the camp, did not, however, partake of this mess. She had a little dish of her own broiled on the embers, of odd, uncouth form. I did not like to be too inquisitive that night, but I learned from my young patroness the next day, that her grandmother was faithful to the customs of the primitive gipsies, and would eat nothing in the shape of animal food that had not died a natural death. Her supper had been a broiled hedgehog found in a trap.

I spent with these swarthy wanderers five or six very happy days, only alloyed by the fear that I should be called on to requite the hospitality I received by participating in some theft upon poultry-yard or drying-ground, that would subject me to the tread-mill. Had I been asked, I very much doubt if I should have had the virtue to refuse. However, the tempta-

1824. Æt. 21. tion, luckily, was never pressed upon me, nor did I witness anything to justify the general suspicion of gipsy errors as to the *meum* and *tuum*. Once only a fine goose, emerging from the pot, inflamed my appetite and disturbed my conscience. The men generally absented themselves from the camp at morning, together with a donkey and their tinkering apparatus, sometimes returning at noon, sometimes not till night.

The women went about fortune-telling, the children watched on the common for any stray passenger whom they might induce to enter the camp and cross with silver the hand of the oracle, for the old woman sate by the fire all day. My young gipsy went forth by herself—also on pretence of telling fortunes, but we had fixed a spot on the road at which I always joined her, and we used then to wander through the green lanes, or sit on some grassy bank, talking to each other with open hearts.

I think that the poor girl felt for me, not exactly love, but that sort of wild, innocent fondness a young Indian savage might feel for the first fair face from Europe that had ever excited her wonder. Once the instinctive greed of her caste seized her at the sight of a young horseman; and she sprang from my side to run after him, not resting till he had slipped from his horse, crossed her hand, and heard his fortunes.

When she came back to my side she showed me half-a-crown with such glee! I turned away coldly, and walked off. She stood rooted to the spot for a moment, and then ran after me and threw her arms round my neck. 1824. ÆT. 21.

"Are you angry?"

"Angry, no, but to run after that young man——"

"Jealous? oh, I'm so happy! then you do care for me?"

As if with a sudden impulse, she raised herself on tiptoe, clung to me, and kissed my forehead. I clasped her in my arms, but she glided from them like a serpent, and ran off, back to the encampment, as if afraid of me and of herself.

One morning she was unusually silent and reserved. I asked her, reproachfully, why she was so cold.

"Tell me," she said abruptly,—"tell me truly, do you love me?"

"I do indeed." And so I thought.

"Will you marry me, then?"

"Marry you?" I cried, aghast. "Marry? Alas! I would not deceive you—that is impossible."

"I don't mean," cried she impetuously, but not seeming hurt at my refusal, "I don't mean as you mean—marriage according to your fashion. I never thought of that, but marry me as we marry."

"How is that?"

"You will break a piece of burned earth with me—a tile, for instance—into two halves."

"Well?"

1824. Æt. 21. "In grandmother's presence. That will be marriage. It lasts only five years. It is not long," she said pleadingly.

"And if you want to leave me before, how could I stay you?"

Poor dear child! for child after all she was, in years and in mind; how charming she looked then! Alas! I went further for a wife and fared worse.

Two days after this proposition, I lost sight of her for ever.

That evening and the next day I observed, for the first time, that I had excited the ill-will of two out of the three young gipsy men. They answered me when I spoke to them with rudeness and insolence; gave me broad hints that I had stayed long enough, and was in their way.

They followed me when I went out to join my dear Mimy (I don't know her true name, or if she had any—I gave her the name of Mimy), and though I did join her all the same, they did not speak as they passed me, but glared angrily, and seated themselves near us.

The girl went up and spoke to them. I saw that the words on both sides were sharp and high; finally, they rose and slunk away sullenly. The girl refused to tell me what had passed between them, but she remained thoughtful and sad all day.

It was night. I lay in my corner of the encampment, gazing drowsily on the fire. The gipsies had all retired to their nooks and recesses also, save only the old woman, who remained on her stool, cowering over the embers. Presently, I saw Mimy steal across the space, and come to her grandmother's side, lay her head in her lap, and weep bitterly. The old woman evidently tried to console her, not actually speaking, but cooing low, and stroking her black hair with caressing hands. At length they both rose, and went very softly out of the tent. My curiosity was aroused, as well as my compassion. I looked round—all was still. I crept from my corner, and went gently round the tent: every one seemed fast asleep, some huddled together, some in nooks apart. I stepped forth into the open air. I found Mimy and the old crone seated under the shadow of the wood, and asked why Mimy wept (she was weeping still). The old woman put her finger to her lips, and bade me follow her through a gap in the hedge into the shelter of the wood itself. Mimy remained still, her face buried in her hands. When we were in the wood, the old woman said to me:

1824.
ÆT. 21.

"You must leave us. You are in danger!"

"How?"

"The young men are jealous of you and the girl; their blood is up. I cannot keep it down. I can do what I like with all—except love and jealousy. You must go."

"Nonsense! I can take care of myself against a whole legion of spindle-shanked gipsies; they'll never dare to attack me, and I don't mind

1824. ÆT. 21. rude words and angry looks. I'll not leave Mimy. I cannot——"

"You must," said Mimy, who had silently followed us, and she put her arms fairly and heartily round me. "You must go. The stars will have it."

"'Tis not for your sake I speak," said the old woman, passionately; "you had no right to touch her heart. You deserve the gripe and the stab, but if they hurt you, what will the law do to them? I once saw a gipsy hanged—it brought woe on us all! You'll not break her heart, and ruin us all. Go!"

"Mimy! Mimy! will you not come too?"

"She cannot, she is a true-born gipsy. Let her speak for herself."

"No, no, I cannot leave my people!" she whispered. "But I will see you again, later. Let me know where to find you. Don't fret. You'll have crosses enough without me. I will come to you later, I will indeed!"

She had drawn me away from the old woman while she spoke, and with every word she kissed my hands, leaving there such burning tears.

At length I promised to depart, believing fully in Mimy's promise to return—the promise that we should meet again. I gave her my name and address. She pledged herself to find me out before the winter.

They were both very anxious that I should set off instantly. But my pride revolted at the idea of skulking away from foes that I despised, in the dead of night. I promised to go, but openly and boldly, the next day. I was in some hopes that meanwhile the old woman would talk the jealous rivals into good behaviour. She assured me she would try. I told her to give them all my money, if they would but let me stay in peace for a week or two longer. She nodded her head, and went back with Mimy into the tent. I remained without for an hour or so, sad and angry, then I crept back to my corner. The fire was nearly out—all around was dark. I fell into an uneasy, haunted sleep, and did not wake till an hour later than usual. When I did so, all were assembled round the tent, and, as I got up, the three young men came to me and shook hands, their faces very friendly. I thought they had taken the bribe, and were going to bid me stay. No.

1824.
Æt. 21.

"You leave us!" said the tallest of the three. "And we stay at home to accompany you part of the way, and wish you speed and luck."

I turned round. No Mimy was there. Only the old woman, who set before me my breakfast.

I could not touch food. I remained silent a few minutes, then whispered to the crone, "Shall I not even see her again?"

"Hush!" she said, "leave her to take care of that."

I took up my knapsack sulkily enough, and was going forth, when the old woman drew me aside and slipped my money into my hand.

1824. "But you must take some."

ÆT. 21. "Not a penny. Mimy would never forgive it. Off, and away! There will be storm before noon. Go with light heart. Success is on your forehead!"

The prediction did not cheer me, nor did the talk of the gipsies who gathered round me, and went with me in grand procession to the end of the common, which, I suppose, they considered their dominion. There they formally took leave of me. I might have gone some three miles, when the boughs of a tree overhanging the neighbouring wood were put aside, and Mimy's dark eyes looked cautiously forth. Presently she was by my side. She only stood a minute, holding me tightly in her arms, and looking me in the eyes, then drawing back her hand and kissing fondly my face and my hands—my very garments. At last she sprang away, and, pointing with her forefinger to her open palm, she said, "This is the sorrow foretold to me. See, it begins so soon, and goes on to the end of life!"

"No, no, Mimy! you have promised we shall meet again."

"Ha, ha! a gipsy's promise!" cried Mimy, between a laugh and a screech.

She darted back into the wood. I followed her, but in vain. From that day to this I have never seen, never heard of her. I have sought gipsies, to inquire after her fate, but one told me one thing, one another. I know it not. Probably she was consoled sooner than my vain young heart supposed, and broke the tile with one of her kin. How, even if we met again, should I ever recognise her? Gipsy beauty fades so soon—fades like all illusion and all romance!

1824.
ÆT. 21.

CHAPTER VIII

LADY CAROLINE LAMB

1824–1825

> There was this double peculiarity in Lady Clara; whatever her faults, there was always in them a touch of the Natural, and whatever her merits, there was always in them a touch of the Dramatic.
>
> *Lionel Hastings.*

> In his boyish days Rupert had formed a visionary childish attachment to a person of singular talent and still more singular character who lived in the neighbourhood of his own estate. His mind was not unresponsive to the charm of virtue, though, from its susceptibility to excitement, it was easily fascinated by vice. He had been, in these boyish days, enchanted by some trait of benevolence in the conduct of Lady Melton. She exercised her benevolence in a manner somewhat eccentric, but the eccentricity gave to it a novelty and curious grace. The boy had expressed in some verses, after the fashion of Lord Thurlow, the feelings excited in him by the exhibition of this peculiarity in Lady Melton's character; and, with the timid vanity of fifteen, he sent them to the lady of his lyre. The lady was not displeased with the offering, humble as it was; and from that moment there had existed between them a friendship, animated on Rupert's part by a certain romantic feeling, which was no unlikely parent of love.
>
> *Rupert De Lindsay.*

1824. Æt. 21. I RESUMED my wanderings, still on foot, and meeting with no adventures worth recording, till at last I took my place in a stage-coach starting from one of the northern towns, and arrived in London, on my way to join my mother at Broadstairs. While in London my eye was caught by the singular beauty of an

Andalusian jennet for sale. The price was not high, but far exceeded the money I had about me; however, I had the courage to ask my mother's banker to advance it, which he kindly did, and I rode my new purchase down to Broadstairs. I mention this incident, because I have formed few friendships among my fellow-men so intimate and so enduring as I formed with this black-maned Andalusian. It lasted me for more than twenty years, and died then, not of old age, but of an inflammatory disorder, preserving its beauty and spirit to the last. It was small, but of that Arab form and constitution which can go extraordinary distances without evincing fatigue. I have ridden it above seventy miles a day, and the next morning it was equally fresh and full of fire. I never found another horse which I had the same pleasure in riding, and, indeed, I have cared little to ride at all since its loss.

1824.
Æt. 21.

The life at watering-places was much more gay and sociable at that time than it is now. At the little village of Broadstairs, which affected select gentility, the Assembly Rooms formed a place of general reunion. They were open every evening for cards and conversaziones, and two or three times a week for dancing. Nor was dancing itself at that day the listless operation it is now. To combine spirit with dignity, was an art of movement that held high rank among the accomplishments of young men. The best male dancer of my day was the present

1824. Lord Hertford; the next best was a Mr. Reynolds.
ÆT. 21. The style of dress worn of an evening by gentlemen contributed, perhaps, to forbid slovenliness of step and maintain a certain stateliness and grace. Tight pantaloons or knee-breeches with the chapeau bras (the same dress still worn at Court as evening undress) was then almost universal; and a fine shape, with correspondent elegance of movement, was more admired than even a handsome face. Fast talk and slang came in with trousers and turned-down collars.

I enjoyed the quiet gaieties of this little watering-place, with its innocent flirtations—as was natural to my youth, and the companionship of my mother sufficed for all graver interest. She was at that time more thoughtful and melancholy than usual, and her reflections found vent in verse and prose tinged with deep religious sentiment.

On quitting Broadstairs, I was under an engagement to pass a week or so with Lady Caroline Lamb of Brocket, before returning to Cambridge. My acquaintance with this singular woman had commenced in my childhood. Some poor man had got injured in a crowd, and, with the impulsive benevolence that belonged to her, she had had him placed in her carriage and took him to his home. Knebworth and Brocket are but a few miles distant from each other. The story reached and touched me. I wrote some childish verses on it and sent them to her. She was pleased, wrote to my mother, begging her to bring me over to Brocket, and, when I came, took a fancy to me, and even painted my portrait—as a child seated on a rock in the midst of the sea, with the motto under it, *Seul sur la terre.* From that time to the date at which my record has arrived I had seen little of her, beyond a visit for a day or so, once or twice a year. 1824. Æt. 21.

The more familiar intimacy that commenced with the visit I now made to Brocket was destined to have a marked effect on my future life.

Lady Caroline Lamb was then between thirty and forty, but looked much younger than she was, thanks, perhaps, to a slight, rounded figure and a childlike mode of wearing her hair (which was of a pale golden colour) in close curls. She had large hazel eyes, capable of much varied expression, exceedingly good teeth, a pleasant laugh, and a musical intonation of voice, despite a certain artificial drawl, habitual to what was called the Devonshire House Set. Apart from these gifts, she might be considered plain. But she had, to a surpassing degree, the attribute of charm, and never failed to please if she chose to do so. Her powers of conversation were remarkable. In one of Lord Byron's letters to her, which she showed me, he said, "You are the only woman I know who never bored me."

There was, indeed, a wild originality in her talk, combining great and sudden contrasts, from deep pathos to infantine drollery: now sentimental, now shrewd, it sparkled with

1824. anecdotes of the great world, and of the eminent Æт. 21. persons with whom she had been brought up, or been familiarly intimate; and, ten minutes after, it became gravely eloquent with religious enthusiasm, or shot off into metaphysical speculations—sometimes absurd, sometimes profound—generally suggestive and interesting. A creature of caprice, and impulse, and whim, her manner, her talk, and her character shifted their colours as rapidly as those of a chameleon. She has sent her page the round of her guests at three o'clock in the morning, with a message that she was playing the organ that stood in the staircase at Brocket, and begged the favour of their company to hear her. Strange to say, it was a summons generally obeyed, and those who obeyed did not regret the loss of their sleep; for, when the audience had assembled, she soon relinquished the solemn keys of the organ, and her talk would be so brilliant and amusing, that the dawn found one still listening, spell-bound, without a thought of bed.

She interested me chiefly, however, by her recollections and graphic descriptions of Byron, with whom her intimacy had lasted during the three most brilliant years of his life in England, and whom, when they had fiercely quarrelled, she had depicted in a wild romance, *Glenarvon*, as a beautiful monster—half demon, and yet demigod. He never forgave it, though he ought to have been flattered, for it represented him very much as, during the zenith of his social fashion, he had wished the female part of the world to believe him. At the time I now speak of, there was no bitterness in her talk of him, and whatever faults she found in his character, she fired up in his defence if any one else abused him. Of the hideous calumnies concerning himself and Mrs. Leigh (indeed, of all calumnies involving the charge of crime) she certainly acquitted him. She thought, with most others who knew him well, that from an affectation of *rouerie*—which was by no means uncommon with the fine gentlemen of that day, especially if they belonged to the political creed of the Mirabeaus and Foxes—he had pleasure in shocking people, and making himself out worse than he was. She was no mean judge of human character, and, viewing Byron then from a point of view no longer obscured by the passions, I think her estimate of him was sound—as a being somewhat akin to herself in strange caprices and wild affectations—spoiled by too early a reputation for other things besides genius—but, on the whole, with many redeeming qualities, lovable and noble. And I am bound to add that, in his letters to her, despite the evident passion that dictated and coloured them, there was no trace of the selfish and heartless libertine; rather a desire to save her, as it were, from herself, and a consideration for her happiness chastening and predominating over the thought of his own. Whatever the connection between them, and however blameable, regarded from the mildest point of view, I cannot think him the seducing party ; and certainly, from her own confession, he was not the betraying one.

During the few days I stayed at Brocket, a very intimate friendship grew up between this singular woman and myself. We corresponded regularly on my return to Cambridge, and in our correspondence there was a great deal of sentiment and romance which looked like love, but it never came to that. Indeed, it was not many months before this correspondence was brought to a close, and any feeling beyond the interest which a clever woman, with time heavy on her hands, and systematically (though perhaps not always consciously) a coquette, might have conceived for a youth of some promise was absorbed in a livelier sentiment for another.

I was invited to come from Cambridge to join a party assembled at Brocket for the purpose of going to a ball given at Panshanger.[1] I arrived, and before the evening was over I saw that I was supplanted. A singularly handsome man, in the prime of life, Mr. Russell, a natural son of the Duke of Bedford, was among the guests. I had wit enough to see that Lady Caroline and this gentleman were captivated with each other.

I was not then jealous of him, for I was conscious of my own superiority to him in everything but good looks. But I imagined (for, like most women, she was fond of coquetry)

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[1] January 1825.

that she was only trying to make me jealous. 1825.
At the ball she took his arm, walked about the ÆT. 22.
room with him, and never spoke to me till the end of the evening. I was very angry and very sarcastic when she did speak to me. I said to her, when we were all going to bed, "I go to-morrow, before you are up. Good-bye." She sent to my room a short note about 9 o'clock the next morning, imploring me not to go till I had seen her. I went to her room. She entreated me to forgive her, threw her arms about me, and cried. Of course she persuaded me to stay. We rode out. R. went with us. Although she certainly did not try to make me jealous, I soon saw that she felt for him that love of the imagination which she had felt before for me. She could not help liking me still, in an affectionate way, but he was the idol of the moment. I was miserable. I left her before she got home, and repaired to my room. I was in one of my stormy paroxysms when she came into my room. She implored me not to give way to my passions, and not to be deceived. I said to her "I will believe you, and be happy, if you will only say that I have no reason to be jealous of Mr. R. Say this, and I will never again insult you by being so." She would not answer me. She said that she had known Mr. R. for a very long time, and had once felt a love for him, but not the sort of love she felt for me. I was, she said, in all respects more worthy of her affections. I went downstairs. Russell sat

1825. Æt. 22. opposite me. He wore a ring. It was one which Lord Byron had given Lady Caroline, one which was only to be worn by those she loved. I had often worn it myself. She had wanted me to accept it, but I would not, because it was so costly. And now *he* wore it. Conceive my resentment, my wretchedness! After dinner, I threw myself upon the sofa. Music was playing. Lady Caroline came to me. "Are you mad?" said she. I looked up. The tears stood in my eyes. I could not have spoken a word for the world. Then she said aloud, "Don't play this melancholy air. It affects Mr. Bulwer so, that he is actually weeping." My tears, my softness, my *love*, were over in a moment. I sprang up, laughed, talked, and was the life of the company. But when we broke up for the evening I went to her, and said "Farewell for ever. It is over. Now I see you in your true light. Vain and heartless, you have only trifled with my feelings in order to betray me. I despise as well as leave you. Instead of jealousy, I only feel contempt. Farewell. Go, and be happy." I left Brocket the next morning very early, and went straight to Brighton, where I knew I should find a college friend whose conversation was the antidote of all morbid sentiment.

Frederick Villiers was a natural son of a gentleman of ancient birth by a young lady of rank, whom he had seduced when on a visit at the Duchess of D.'s. He was pledged to marry her, but broke the pledge, and died later of an accident in hunting. Two sons, of whom Frederick was the younger, were the issue of this unhappy *liaison*. The secret of their birth was carefully kept by the families concerned. The sons were sent, under the name of Villiers, to Eton. On leaving that school the elder was put into the army, and went to India with his regiment; the younger was destined for diplomacy, and sent abroad to learn foreign languages. But the death of a Minister, who was a friend of the mother's family, destroying the hope of advancement in the diplomatic career, Frederick was recalled from the Continent, and placed as a fellow-commoner at Trinity College, Cambridge, with a view to his ultimately adopting the profession of the Bar. 1825. ÆT. 22.

He was somewhat older than the generality of freshmen, and his premature experience of life in foreign capitals, conjoined with a familiar acquisition of modern languages and a wonderful raciness of humour in his conversation, here obtained for him at once a kind of social ascendency amongst his contemporaries, and a ready admission into our "set," which was composed of the *élite* of the young men likely to make some figure in future life. This young man, however, if he flashed on us as a meteor, vanished from us as a meteor, and was now amusing himself at Brighton, leaving it doubtful whether he should return to Cambridge or not.

I joined him in his lodgings; and his high

1825. Æt. 22. animal spirits, and the gay, worldly philosophy of his talk, soon effaced from my mind the pangs I had felt at the resignation of my Platonic romance. I returned to the University in a healthier and manlier mood than that in which I had quitted it.[1]

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[1] The chronological sequence of events has not been strictly maintained in this autobiographical narrative, for the events recorded in Chapters VI., VII., and VIII. occurred before the author's departure from Cambridge, mentioned at the end of Chapter V. It was, therefore, between the close of this chapter and the beginning of the next that the events recorded on page 80 occurred, namely, the debate on the Game Laws on April 19; the departure from the University; the winning of the prize poem on Sculpture, and the reading of the poem in July.

In some autobiographical notes Bulwer mentions that during the end of the summer he stayed in London at Berkeley Square, where he had a severe illness before going abroad.

CHAPTER IX

TRAVELS ABROAD

1825

> What a glad awakening from self — what a sparkling and fresh draught from a new source of being — what a wheel within wheel, animating, impelling, arousing all the rest of this animal machine, is the first excitement of travel.
>
> *Devereux.*

IN the autumn of 1825 I went abroad for the first time. Frederick Villiers was then staying at Boulogne, engaged, he said, in the study of Political Economy. And early one morning I burst into his room. 1825. ÆT. 22.

"My dear friend," he exclaimed, "you have come just in time to do me an essential service. I must fight a duel, and you must be my second."

Herewith he commenced a narrative which I thus briefly condense.

He had been staying at a boarding-house near Boulogne. Among the boarders was General Wemyss, a tall, stout man, between fifty and sixty, accustomed to enforce authority, and fitted to exact deference. One day at dinner, my lively friend contesting one of his opinions,

1825. and having the best of the argument, General
Æt. 22. Wemyss said petulantly :

"Mr. Villiers, you talk too loud and too fast."

"Sir," answered Villiers, who occasionally stuttered, "that is a very imper-pertinent observation."

Therewith the General waved his long arm so as to touch insultingly my friend, who was seated next but one to him.

Villiers rose, bowed to the company, and passed by the General to quit the room. Wemyss, perhaps mistaking his quiet silence for faint-heartedness, rose also, and struck him as he passed. Villiers then paused, and said :

"Sir, when a gentleman forgets himself so far as to strike me in the presence of ladies, my proper course is to retire and call him out ; but when a gentleman strikes me a second time, it becomes a matter of self-defence, and, instead of calling him out, I knock him down." Suiting the action to the word, he felled the General.

The General sent a Colonel Knight to him, demanding satisfaction. A young friend of Villiers's named Shafto happened to be passing through Boulogne, and Villiers put the affair into his hands. Shafto was little more than a boy in character as in years, and no match for a veteran like Colonel Knight, who induced him to subscribe an apology to General Wemyss, without exacting a suitable apology in return.

Villiers was furious on hearing this, but the second had bound the principal, and there was an end of the matter. The General, however, being, I fear, somewhat of a Bobadil, went about the *cafés*, boasting of the humiliation he had inflicted on the young hero, and reviving, in fact, the extinguished quarrel by those aspersions on courage which in that day no young man was accustomed to submit to. These aspersions had just been conveyed to Villiers, and with an intimation that they were beginning to prejudice him in the eyes of the chivalry of Boulogne. Thus stood the affair on the morning of my arrival, and the service exacted from me was to demand of General Wemyss a written denial or retraction of the injurious words ascribed to him, failing which—satisfaction. 1825. Æt. 22.

New as I was to the philosophy of duelling, I saw that the affair was complicated, and that it would be difficult, on the strength of words reported by the gossips of *cafés*, to induce a wary and elderly soldier either to commit himself to any written declaration of a nature to content my friend, or to reopen a quarrel which had been formally closed. However, sympathising with my friend's indignant feeling, and aware of the stigma which at that time rested upon any gentleman who at the onset of life was suspected of showing the white feather, I undertook the mission, and waited upon General Wemyss. I found that gentleman (just as I had expected) very indisposed to enter into the

1825. Æt. 22. matter at all, striving to treat me as a boy, boasting much of his own military reputation and services, magisterial, dignified, sullen. At length, however, thanks chiefly to some unguarded expressions indicative of disrespect to myself (which I took up very sternly—implying that if he escaped my friend, he would have to account with me) I forced him to change his tone, and he ended by referring me to his former second—Colonel Knight. I repaired to that warrior. He was as hard to manage as the General. But I succeeded at last, not in obtaining any written retractation or denial of words uttered before many witnesses, but in arranging a hostile meeting for the next morning. My friend's thanks and joy on my return with this intelligence were evidently unaffected, and strongly contrasted with my own anxiety and fear for his safety. But the practice of these encounters (especially abroad) was then so general, that every young man of fashion visiting France made up his mind beforehand that he must pass through the ordeal of single combat. The next morning my friend, who was (and is to this day) a consummate epicure, took especial pains in ordering the *déjeuner à la fourchette* to which we were to return from the encounter, after which we repaired to the field—I, grave and silent, my friend, light-hearted and voluble.

After waiting a few minutes, the two hostile warriors appeared. But what was my surprise, when the General approached me as I was measuring the ground, drew me aside, and said, with a fatherly air, at once lofty and tender, "Sir, you are very young; do not have the blood of your friend on your hands. It will be a subject of remorse to you throughout life. My aim is unerring. Do not provoke it. Say that your friend is sorry for the mistake he committed in sending you to me, and I pardon him. I can afford to pardon him. My courage is proved. My breast is scarred with wounds in the service of my country!" 1825. ÆT. 22.

"General Wemyss," said I, "I am not so young as not to know that a principal who addresses words like these to the second of his adversary is sinning against every rule which a General should inculcate on his officers. And you almost tempt me to believe that the wounds you boast of were received rather on the back than on the breast."

The General stood speechless for a moment, and then faltered out:

"Enough, your friend is a dead man!"

After this terrible prediction he slowly allowed Colonel Knight to place him at his post.

Two shots were exchanged. My friend's failed. That was natural, seeing that, before that day, I doubt if he had ever handled a pistol. But that a hero whose aim was so unerring should fire at least forty yards wide of the mark was more singular. Here Colonel Knight

1825. interposed, declaring that the laws of honour
ÆT. 22. were amply vindicated, and that his principal
was withdrawn.

"Not till he has either retracted or amply apologised for the words he has publicly uttered."

Colonel Knight hesitated, but the tall General approached with a majestic step.

"Young gentleman," he said to Villiers, "it is true that I doubted your courage. I may so have expressed myself. I was in error. You have exposed yourself to face a British officer not unknown in the annals of his country. I retract. I apologise. I am deeply sorry for my mistake. Can I say more? If so, I say it." Tears rushed to his eyes, and coursed his manly cheeks. "Young men, may you both be spared to serve your country, as I have done! Accept an old man's blessing, and his hand."

Thus ended the first duel in which I was engaged. We returned to the *déjeuner* Villiers had so carefully ordered. Naturally enough, my friend rose greatly in my estimation after this adventure. The sang-froid that characterised his courage—free from all nervous excitement and all truculent swagger—was a quality that, however misapplied in the instance of duelling, might well in itself be admired. Indeed, I should doubt if a man more constitutionally brave than Frederick Villiers could be found. I have seen him on many occasions in positions of danger that might somewhat shake the hardiest nerves, and in these his fearless

and cool self-possession was perfect. Much 1825.
in this and other attributes of the man—such Æt. 22.
as his lively humour, his playful satire on "common people," contrasted by a logical philosophy that made him, if aristocrat by temper, democrat by reason, assisted me in finishing and completing the character of Pelham. He differed from that worthy chiefly in the utter absence of the ambition which supplies motive power to Pelham, and impresses the reader with the belief that he is destined to outlive and redeem all his more frivolous feelings and affectations. But nothing could ever have induced Frederick Villiers to undergo the persevering trouble necessary to a successful career. *Le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle* was his answer to all encouragement to him to develop and put forth his natural abilities. Perhaps the circumstances of his birth had something to do with this spirit of inaction. His mother and aunts, poor women, were always afraid that he should do something that would make the world inquire who he was.

After a short sojourn at Boulogne, during which neither of us made much progress in Political Economy, I hired a carriage and persuaded Villiers to accompany me on a tour through the principal Flemish towns, including Brussels, intending to close at Paris.

In this journey we might have enjoyed ourselves much as other young men, but for the chilling nature of my companion's philosophy.

1825. He had a good-natured sneer for everything
ÆT. 22. that inspired me with interest. Monuments of art in painting and architecture, associations connected with the general history of Flanders and liberty, even the ordinary sentiment of pride any Englishmen might feel in exploring the battlefield of Waterloo, were to him subjects of contempt—half epicurean, half cynical. In short I was an enthusiast in company with a man older than myself, and in many things cleverer, but who mocked at enthusiasm; and thus by degrees his very gaiety depressed me.

We concluded our tour at Paris, and I was not sorry when my friend took there an apartment and left me free to muse in the solitude of mine.

I found my brother Henry at Paris. He had quitted Cambridge without taking a degree, and entered into the Life Guards, but soon sold out, meditating that diplomatic career in which he has since been so distinguished. He did not stay long at Paris, and while he was there we did not see much of each other.

I soon found admission into circles of French society not often open to foreigners of my age. I became intimate at some of the most brilliant houses of the old *noblesse* domiciled in the Faubourg St. Germain, and was received with marked courtesy at the select *soirées* of the principal members of the Administration. I owed some of my best introductions to a very remarkable man, who took a fancy both to

Henry and myself, and expressed a warm interest in our future career. He was an Irishman and a priest, of the name of Kinsela, and bore the title of Abbé. He was, if I remember rightly, the confessor of Madame de Polignac, wife of Charles X.'s Minister, and was held in great respect by the chiefs of the Legitimist party. He was a Jesuit. He had much of the learning which distinguishes that great fraternity, and still more of their knowledge of the world and *savoir-vivre*. He was a very busy and, I should think, a very able politician, but, so far as I could judge, free from all personal ambition or self-seeking. He appeared poor, and lived very modestly, but on one or two occasions, when I guessed that he was in want of money, I could not persuade him to accept it, whether as gift or loan. He had, however, an intense enthusiasm for the interests of his order, and made no secret of it. 1825. Æt. 22.

Among the houses to me most agreeable, and always to me most kindly, at which the Abbé Kinsela's introduction served to ensure my welcome, was that of the Marquise de la Rochejacquelein, the heroine of La Vendée—a lady of imposing presence, but with that frank and almost homely good-nature, combined with high breeding, which constituted the charm of manner in the old *régime*. She had two daughters, both very pleasant, and one, to my taste, very good-looking. They spoke English

1825. perfectly, which was a great aid to our friendly Æt. 22. intercourse, as I then spoke French very ill, and, indeed, to this day I express myself awkwardly in that language. There is no trace in English society of the peculiar *bon ton* which characterised the surviving representatives of that World before the Flood—the *ancien régime.* Once familiarly admitted into their society, and it seemed as if you were made one of the family. Their cordial sweetness of manner was irresistible, and whatever their political prejudices, there was that genuine elevation of sentiment in their familiar converse that could scarcely fail to exercise a favourable influence over young men not indisposed to recognise the obligations imposed on gentlemen. Courage, honour, truth—a high but not obtrusive self-respect, which allowed neither greed nor ambition to infringe on their pecuniary, or their political, independence—were qualities that came out in their talk as naturally as perfume comes out of a flower. Their misfortunes had no doubt served to correct many of their ancestral faults. They retained, indeed, the old French sprightliness and gallantry, but I think there were very few of their *salons* in which religion was ever turned into ridicule, or in which any immorality was paraded. Their ease of manner was always noble; their freedom of talk admitted wit and shunned indecorum.

Among these distinguished families there was a young lady who had passed her childhood in England, who had a marked preference for English ways and literature, who had a very good fortune, and boasted a very illustrious historical name. I soon discovered that it was the great desire of the Abbé Kinsela to form a matrimonial alliance between that young lady and myself. At last he fairly proposed it to me. 1825. Æt. 22.

"Pooh!" said I, "a girl of so high a rank, and with such great pretensions of fortune and person, must look much higher than me. I appear richer than I am; I am but a younger son, living chiefly on an allowance from my mother. And though, I suppose, I am of a family old enough to satisfy a Frenchman's pride of pedigree, I have neither inherited nor made a position in the world that would qualify my presuming to Mademoiselle ——'s hand."

"You know my footing in the family," replied the Abbé, "and you will not disbelieve me when I say that, if you propose you will be accepted both by the lady and her parents."

"But she is Roman Catholic, and I am Protestant. *Entre nous*, I mean to remain Protestant."

"That as you please; I don't pretend to convert you. But the difference of religion will be no obstacle, unless you make it one."

This conversation set me thinking. I was not in love with Mademoiselle —— but I felt that I could easily become so. Her person and manners

1825. were exceedingly attractive. I liked her conversation, and discovered in her turn of mind much that was congenial to my own. She had been admirably brought up, and belonged to a family in which all the women were chaste as all the men were brave. In a social and worldly point of view Mademoiselle —— would have been a suitable match for an English duke. After some reflection I wrote to my mother fully on this subject, saying that if such a marriage would please her, I proposed to ascertain for myself how far the Abbé's overtures were justified by the predisposition of the lady and her parents, and that, if so, I thought I could be very happy in the union. But that, if she disliked the idea of my marrying a foreigner, my heart was not yet irrevocably gone, and, for fear it should be, I should discontinue my visits to the house. My mother's reply decided me. She had a great horror of Popery, and could not endure the thought of my marrying a Roman Catholic.

ÆT. 22.

I found it required a stronger effort than I had first supposed to wrench my thoughts from the prospect that had been so alluringly held out to me. But I felt that honour and duty compelled me to persevere in the effort. I ceased to visit at the house where I had been so familiar a guest, and sought distraction of thought partly in the world, partly in literary occupation.

About this time one of those visitations of great melancholy to which I was subject during all my younger life—and from which to this day

I am not wholly free—came upon me, and grew strong and stronger, deep and deeper. Gradually I withdrew myself much from the gaieties natural to my youth, and lived greatly alone. I wrote some poems, which I privately printed at Paris, under the name of *Weeds and Wildflowers*.[1] They have never been published, and I do not think ten copies have been given away. I also recast and nearly completed the sombre tale of *Falkland*. Besides these achievements, I studied with critical attention the standard French authors. At last, finding that literary occupation of this nature only fed my melancholy, I made a determined resolve to wrestle with myself against it. I left Paris abruptly, took an apartment at Versailles, where I did not know a soul, and tried the effect of healthful physical exercise in restoring the mind to that cheerful view of life which is essential to its just equilibrium. I had with me my favourite Andalusian horse, and, rising early, I forced myself to ride out daily, in all weathers, for nine or ten hours, till it grew dark. I returned home sufficiently fatigued to ensure a good appetite and a sound sleep. All my life through, I have found the necessity of intervals of complete solitude for the cure of the morbid symptoms which half solitude engenders.

END OF THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY

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[1] Some of these poems, however, were written before he went abroad, as their dates indicate.

BOOK II

PERSONAL AND DOMESTIC

THE STORY OF A MARRIAGE

1825–1836

Alas ! alas ! why on the fatal brink
Of the abyss—doth not the instinct shrink ?
The meaner tribe the coming storm foresees—
In the still calm the bird divines the breeze—
The ox that grazes shuns the poison'd weed—
The unseen tiger frights afar the steed—
To man alone no kind foreboding shows
The latent horror or the ambush'd foes ;
O'er each blind moment hangs the funeral pall,
Heaven shines—earth smiles—and night descends on all.

New Timon.

CHAPTER I

LIFE IN PARIS

1825–1826

> Young, well-born, tolerably good-looking, and never utterly destitute of money, nor grudging whatever enjoyment it could procure, I entered Paris with the ability and the resolution to make the best of those *beaux jours* which so rapidly glide from our possession.
>
> *Pelham.*

THE autobiography from which the preceding chapters have been taken comes to an end at the period when Edward Bulwer passed from youth into manhood, at the very moment, in fact, when he first entered upon the career which makes the story of his life of interest to the general public. Though the record of his own reminiscences was laid aside it was always his intention to complete it. That this intention was never fulfilled may be accounted for by two reasons. In the first place, the story of his marriage and its disastrous consequences was one which he must have found it difficult, if not impossible, to relate; and those who read that story in the pages of this book will readily understand how he must have shrunk from approaching so delicate and so painful a subject. 1825. ÆT. 22.

1825. Æt. 22. In the second place, the autobiography was begun on the erroneous supposition that his public activities were likely to be greatly diminished, if not entirely suspended.

That Bulwer contemplated retirement from the field of active literary labour at the time when he began to write the record of his reminiscences is evident from a passage in one of the autobiographical fragments which he left among his papers. "It is a crisis," he says, "in the career of an author when he begins to collect his works. It is usually a sign of his retirement from the profession—a tacit avowal that he feels the time has come when he must chiefly rest his hopes of reputation upon the labours he has already performed. It is a compliment that he pays to the past, but it is a confession that he hopes little from his abilities in the future. In recalling our capital and investing quietly what we possess, we proclaim, as it were, our intention to live hereafter upon the gains, be they much or little, that our industry has acquired. It is thus, in some measure, with myself. I do not bid to the public that everlasting farewell, which, with authors as with lovers, is something like the assurance of everlasting fidelity. But I am contented to break off the constant intercourse. Our communications will be less frequent and more distant. I do not forswear the idol, but the surest proof of declining ardour is when the wooer can subside into the visitor. To speak more plainly, as soon as I have completed one or two engagements of some standing, it is my intention to abandon the cares or rewards of habitual authorship, more especially in that department of prose fiction in which I have been most generally known to the Public." 1825. ÆT. 22.

The resolution here expressed to curtail his literary activities and to diminish the productions of his creative imagination was never fulfilled. In fact, not only his most important political work but also his most popular literary productions were subsequent to the meditated close of his active connection with politics and literature. The continuation of the Autobiography was therefore postponed in favour of more immediate demands.

The story must now be resumed from other sources. During his visit to Paris in 1825 Bulwer spent his time in making himself acquainted with every phase of life in the French capital. In company with the Abbé Kinsela, he visited schools, orphanages, convents, factories, hospitals and public institutions of all kinds. He was also received at the houses of the best French families of the day, and his experiences of French society are described in the pages of *Pelham*. "I drained," says his hero in that work, "with an unsparing lip, whatever enjoyment that enchanting Metropolis could afford"; and amongst its enjoyments he counts "the feverish excitement of the gambling-house." But that from which

1825. Pelham derived enjoyment was the means of Ӕt. 22. teaching the author of *Pelham* a lesson which he never forgot, as may be gathered from the following anecdote which he used often to relate :—

Early one morning he returned to his hotel from a gambling-house in which he had been passing the last hours of the night. For the first time in his life he had played high, and, with the insidious good fortune so frequently attendant on the first steps along what would otherwise be the shortest and least attractive pathway to perdition, he had gained largely. The day was dawning when he reached his own rooms. His writing-desk stood upon a console in front of a mirror, and, pausing over it to look up his winnings, he was startled and shocked by the reflection of his face in the glass behind it. The expression of the countenance was not only haggard, it was sinister. He had risked far more than he could afford to lose ; his luck had been extraordinary, and his gains were great. But the ignoble emotions of the night had left their lingering traces in his face ; and, as he caught sight of his own features still working and gleaming with the fever of a vicious excitement, he, for the first time, despised himself.

It was then he formed a resolution that, be the circumstances of his future life what they might, no inducement, whether of need or greed, should again tempt him to become a gambler. This resolution was never broken or relaxed.[1] 1825. ÆT. 22.

It was at this time that he made the acquaintance of Mrs. Cunningham, an accomplished woman of the world, who proved herself a very wise and affectionate friend to him during the next few years of his life. Mrs. Cunningham was the daughter of a Cornish baronet, Sir John Call, who had extended hospitality to several of the exiled Bourbon Princes during their sojourn in England. After the battle of Waterloo and the restoration of Louis XVIII. to the French throne, Mr. and Mrs. Cunningham were among the first English visitors to Paris, and they were living there in 1825 when Mr. Bulwer arrived. Many years afterwards their daughter, Miss Cunningham, wrote the following account of her recollections of these days :—

Edward Bulwer was constantly at our house, whenever he came to Paris, during the years 1825 and 1826. My mother was his most intimate friend and cherished companion. The difference of their ages gave freedom to their intercourse, which was rendered mutually attractive by the similarity of their tastes and pursuits. She understood him, which few then did. She was clever enough to appreciate his genius, while her high moral character put their friendship above the world's blame. She joined a most sensitive and kindly nature to a sprightly wit. Her

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[1] This remark only applies to games of chance. So far as I am aware, my grandfather never again indulged in gambling of this kind ; though throughout his life he played games of skill for money. Whist was a favourite game which he played both at clubs and at home ; and I believe he added appreciably to his income by his winnings at this game.

1825–1826. Æt. 22–23. amusing repartees delighted him, and her knowledge of the world was useful to him. He often, even whilst in Paris, wrote to her asking her opinion on the books he was reading, or the politics of the day. She introduced him to her friends, both English and foreign.

His recollection of those times has given colour and animation to the descriptions, in his later works, of the peculiarities of Parisian life, its charms and follies, its vanities and virtues. But those of his own early life at Paris are vividly described in *Pelham.* He was at that time particularly sensitive to the praise or blame of the world. He adopted a style of dress and manner different to that of other people; and he liked to be noted for it. My mother often laughed at him for this vanity, and his "beautiful curls" were a standing joke amongst his friends.

But to him prolonged dissipation was distasteful; and from this life of excitement he would often retire to Versailles, wandering there for weeks about the then deserted palace, still resplendent with remembrances of the *Grand Monarque*, or the solitude of the *Trianon*, so full of sad memories of Marie Antoinette. I suppose he sought retirement to complete *Pelham*, for it was published shortly afterwards. My mother received many letters from him while he was at Versailles; but he maintained a strict secrecy as to his work. On its appearance, he sent her a copy of it, saying he wished her to see he had not forgotten her, and how much he owed to her friendship and society.

No doubt, however, one motive for his frequent, often prolonged, and generally sudden, disappearances from the society of his friends, was his love of reading, which was, even then, remarkable. Much of his correspondence with my mother at that time related to the books he was studying, and contained his criticisms upon them, inviting hers in return. He also sent her, in almost every letter, verses which were never published. I remember his return from one of these solitary trips, upon my fifteenth birthday. He jestingly pretended that he had been consulting the stars about my future; and he handed me its horoscope in a poem which he had signed "Magus." He took an interest in all our pleasures, like an elder brother. I don't know why we considered him so old and wise. I was not out: but sometimes my mother took me to dances at the houses of her intimate friends; and then he always danced with me—which I was very proud of.

During his visits to Versailles at the beginning of 1826 Bulwer wrote frequently to Mrs. Cunningham about all the matters which occupied his mind at that time. The earliest date which I can find on such of these letters as have been preserved is February 17, 1826; and in this letter he strictly enjoins her to destroy such of his letters as are of an intimate character and contain references to other persons. The few, therefore, which have survived deal only with generalities, but it is clear from the tone of them that the writer was in a very restless and unsettled frame of mind, subject to fits of great despondency and thoroughly discontented with his surroundings. In one of them he says:—

> You doubt not but that I shall marry some dissipated and worldly woman. Never! and that is one reason why I shall probably not marry till late in life (supposing, what is very unlikely, that I ever shall be late in life). My mother, who, like most parents, is rather proud than fond of me, has set her heart upon my

1826. Æt. 23. making a worldly match. I am not only too dependent on, but too grateful for, her kindness, to disappoint her by making one she would condemn. But at least a negative liberty is left to me, and I shall employ it. Love, I mean that of the soul, not of the sense, is dead to me for ever. The feelings which unfold young are soon blighted; and how shall they bloom again? Like the burnt child, we do indeed shrink from the fire which has scorched us; and when I perceive the growth of any passion which promises to be real, I do not rest till I have destroyed it to the very root. Once only of late I have been in danger; but to the young and pure heart which had never awakened from its innocence and repose, that heart would indeed have been an unworthy offering which had lost for ever its best and purest emotions, and had purchased the vacuum and satiety of age by a sacrifice of the greenest and most holy sensations of youth.

You are laughing at my sentiment! it is no use to deny it! and it is that laugh, and your own indifference, which probably saves me from finding danger in *you*. Laugh on then, and preserve *yourself* from poetical flowers and romantic reflections. Send me your sonnet I implore you—nothing would refresh me so much as poetry—I mean by any one else, for I am surfeited with my own, in spite of its exceeding and ineffable beauties! I have just finished the first part of one for which Mr. Murray, a great bookseller, and a great friend of mine, is to give incredible sums.[1] It is a tale to suit the day. Ireland the scene — full of rebels and banshees and scaffolds, and interspersed with various profound observations, satirical and political, upon the state and government of that peaceable little province; but I long eagerly for your sonnet, and shall feel seriously disappointed if it does not come in your next note. In the meanwhile, I wander thro' the forest which has a great many crooked, as well as straight, walks; cautiously turning into a new path whenever (which is very rarely) I see a human being approaching. Brought up from my childhood to love solitude, I still cling to Nature as a mother; but *le vrai livre de la nature est pour moi le cœur, et la preuve que je sais lire est dans mon amitié pour vous.—Adieu!*

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[1] *O'Neill, or the Rebel.*

E. B.

Of Mrs. Cunningham's replies there is no record, with the exception of the following letter, written in February 1826:—

My dear Childe Harold—Your letter, just received, relieves my mind. I had great doubts whether, in your Diogenes mood, you would ever think of sending to the Post Office. But, as you have done so, I shall venture to reply. Your letter is now, according to your wish, consuming in the most wonderful of all elements. But I cannot agree with you about many things in it. You will love again, and be very vext at yourself for it. Your lost love will fade into the past. As, however, you do not mean to marry till your hair is grey, our friendship may last, for I think a man's wife should be his only female friend. And by that time I shall be dead.

Once more Bulwer returns to the same subject:—

Two sides of your letter are about that phantasmagoria of your imagination, that Lady Mary, whose life, birth and parentage are only to be found in your luxuriating fancy, though I could find it in my heart to be tired of her; yet the respect due to her as a creation of yours, makes me desire, like Molière's doctors, to

1826. Æt. 23. put an end to her in the most delicate and orthodox manner. Now then! If you remember, I said my mother wished me to make a worldly match, *i.e.*, for money or parliamentary interest; as Lady Marys seldom have either and are moreover extravagant in proportion to their poverty, my mother did not think of them. Now also, if you remember, I said that as *I* was determined *never to make* a worldly match, I should not marry till late, that is either when I had succeeded to the property which is destined for me, or till my mother had given up the idea in despair; so that you see *I* never thought of Lady Marys and neither did my mother; consequently, to use a proverb, "They are none of our children." For the rest, I quite agree with you in thinking that when my fortune, education, prospects and probabilities of sinking, rather than rising, in life, are considered, if I had the misfortune to marry a Lady Mary, it would be "*toujours* Lady Mary and never *Monsieur*." There now, she is dead, buried, and will, I hope, find no resurrection from either of us!

Talking (excuse blots by the bye), talking of resurrection, my course of thought and reading have led me lately thro' some of the less generally known parts of metaphysics. From these I imagined I could deduce, by very clear and unanswerable proofs, the existence of an eternal, all perfect, provident Creator, and while I was engaged in this idea yesterday, *voici* my Abbé! He came to see me. I made him stay the evening, and we sat up all last night discussing the question. Never did I see a priest argue so fairly and evince such logical precision, such freedom from cant and sophistry, such profound erudition. He cleared my way, gave me new lights, and I trust soon to have my proofs clearly sketched out and demonstrated.

See how I talk to you, as I would not only to a man, but to a man of thought, research, elevation of mind above the level of the world, and even the comprehension of ordinary people. The greatest compliment a man can pay to a woman is to remember that her mind is equal or superior to his own; and this because men have some vague idea that women are not to be reasoned with—all folly, but then men are such fools. 1826. Æt. 23.

In another letter he says: "As to my poem, it will not be published till May, but you know I am printing a few others for particular friends only, and they will be on your table in a few days."

The reference here is to a small volume called *Weeds and Wildflowers*, consisting of four pages of prose and ninety-eight of verse. In it were included two poems, "The Tale of a Dreamer," and "To Thee," which referred to his Ealing love affair, the poem of "Milton" written at Cambridge, and that on "Sculpture," which had obtained the Chancellor's Medal in the previous July; also "A Satiric Sketch" of Almack's which contained personal portraits of Lady Cowper, Lady Jersey, Lady Ellenborough, Mrs. Norton (then Miss Sheridan), Lady Uxbridge, Madame de Lieven, Lady Grantham, Lady Gwydir, Lady Belfast, Lady Exeter, and Lady Caroline Lamb.

The chief biographical interest in this volume is the part which it played a few months later in establishing the intimacy between its author and the young lady who was destined to become his wife.

CHAPTER II

ROSINA WHEELER

1826

> But yestermorn, with many a flower
> The garden of my heart was drest;
> A single tree has sprung to bloom,
> Whose branches cast a tender gloom
> That shadows all the rest.
>
> *Love's Sudden Growth.*

1826. Æt. 23. At the end of April, 1826, Edward Bulwer left Paris and made his way to the coast on horseback. This journey is described in letters to Mrs. Cunningham, the last of which is written from Boulogne on April 19th. The very day of his arrival proved to be a turning-point in his career, for it introduced him to the woman to whom, for good or ill, his fortune became tied for the remainder of his life.

He arrived in London in the evening, and on his way to his hotel he called at Upper Seymour Street to inquire after his mother. Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton was preparing to go out to an evening party and begged her son, as a special favour to herself, to accompany her. He consented, and a little later, while they were engaged in conversation in one of the rooms at Miss Benger's, Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton suddenly drew his attention to a remarkably beautiful young lady who had just entered the room in company with an elderly gentleman. Bulwer turned in the direction indicated and beheld "his fate before him."[1] 1826. ÆT. 23.

Rosina Doyle Wheeler, the young lady in question, was at this time twenty-four years of age and strikingly beautiful. In addition to her physical charm she had considerable wit and a lively disposition. After an entirely unhappy

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[1] In the incomplete biography of Edward Bulwer published by his son in 1883, it is stated that he returned to England in the spring of 1825, met Miss Wheeler on the evening of his arrival, became intimate with her during the summer, and, after being assured of his mother's displeasure at the growth of this intimacy, severed himself from Miss Wheeler's society and returned in the autumn to Paris, from which, on receiving news of her ill-health, he hurried back to England at the beginning of April 1826. After a careful study, however, of all the documents which throw any light on these events, I am convinced that Bulwer only made one visit to Paris, which lasted from September 1825 till April 1826, that it was on his return from there in April that he met Miss Wheeler at Miss Benger's tea party, and that his first love letter to her from Brocket was written towards the end of August. The proofs of the dates to which I have assigned the events recorded in this chapter are numerous, but I need only mention the following, which appear to me to prove conclusively that the first meeting between Edward Bulwer and Miss Wheeler could not have taken place before the spring of 1826: 1. Bulwer's poem *Sculpture* received the Chancellor's medal in the summer of 1825 and he was himself at Cambridge to read it in July. 2. *Weeds and Wildflowers*, which contains this poem, was not printed till 1826. 3. This volume formed the topic of conversation between Miss Wheeler and Edward Bulwer at their earliest interviews. 4. Miss Wheeler in her account of this meeting mentions that she had just finished reading *Vivian Grey* before setting off with her uncle to Miss Benger's house, and *Vivian Grey* was not published till April 1826. 5. One of Miss Wheeler's earliest notes to Edward Bulwer on the subject of *Weeds and Wildflowers* is dated "Monday evening, June 12th." Though no year is mentioned, this letter must belong to 1826, when June 12th was on a Monday.

Their first meeting was incorrectly described in the earlier biography as having taken place at the house of Miss *Berry*, owing to a misreading of the name in some MS. notes.

1826. Æt. 23. childhood, she had just made her escape from a home that was destitute of any tender or softening influences, and had come to London with the firm determination to have a good time among the new friends to whom she owed her introduction into society. The love of pleasure taught her at an early age to cultivate the art of pleasing others, and, aided by the primitive instincts of her sex, as well as a hearty contempt for conventional prudishness, she soon acquired complete proficiency in the art. But the school of life exacts more than one accomplishment from those who seek to qualify in it, and to command success there must be no pause in the process of learning. Rosina had learnt earlier than most girls the art of captivating, but the qualities necessary to hold and utilise what she captured she never acquired. Beauty will win a man's love; but it cannot keep it. Wit may fascinate a new acquaintance or excite admiration in a lover; it is not sufficient to make a home or satisfy a husband.

At the time when Rosina Wheeler first met Edward Bulwer she was a beautiful and fascinating young woman on the threshold of a life which her instincts told her was meant for happiness, with all a child's eagerness to make the most of whatever chance might throw in her way, but with no more than a child's power to shape her own destiny from day to day.

Looking back now to that eventful meeting at Miss Benger's party, with a knowledge of all that followed from it, it is interesting to try and detect those features of Rosina Wheeler's character which caused her to become such a helpless victim in the hands of a pitiless fate. One such feature noticeable already, the effect of which may be traced in all the subsequent stages of her life, was a certain strain of commonness, an absence of refinement in her intellectual equipment. A critical eye might detect a slightly jarring note in the taste of her appearance and in the quality of her wit—a lack of modesty in the former and of charity in the latter. To new acquaintances her unconventionality and the liveliness of her conversation were irresistible; but a closer intimacy disclosed an absence of dignity in her nature, and a want of respect either for herself or others. At the same time, the indulgence of a rather malicious humour and the constant straining after comic effects, though they enlivened an occasional conversation, became wearisome and irritating to live with. 1826. ÆT. 23.

Such defects, whether of taste or character, as were perceptible in the personality of Rosina Wheeler, were at this time only in the germ. They might easily have been corrected by the influence of a wise and sympathetic friend. Neither from parents, friends, nor husband, however, did this unfortunate woman ever receive the moulding which her nature required. All the influences with which she came in contact from the moment of her birth were provocative of the very qualities which most needed

1826. Æt. 23. suppression, whilst the softer attributes of her sex which required development withered in the bud.

The circumstances of her childhood were intensely sad. Her father, Francis Massey Wheeler of Lizzard Connel, in the county of Limerick, had married at the age of seventeen a very beautiful girl two years younger than himself. This marriage between a boy of seventeen and a girl of fifteen ended in a separation after the birth of six children—five daughters, three of whom died in infancy, and one son who also died young. Mrs. Wheeler, who had received the custody of her two surviving daughters, Henrietta and Rosina, by the deed of separation, went with them to Guernsey, where she lived some time as the guest of her uncle, Sir John Doyle, who was then Governor of the Island. In consequence of the violence of her temper, she was obliged to leave her uncle's house about the time that Rosina was twelve years old. She then went abroad and settled at Caen. Here she became the centre of a small group of socialists and freethinkers; and it was in such society that her two daughters grew up.

At the age of seventeen Rosina left the home where she had never found either happiness or affection and returned to Ireland on a visit to a lady, considerably older than herself, who became for many years her most intimate and devoted friend. This lady, Miss Mary Greene, was the daughter of an English family settled in Ireland since the days of Cromwell. Taking compassion on the friendless young girl who had come to visit her, she offered her the protection of a home, and a full measure of the love and sympathy which her own mother had withheld. 1826. ÆT. 23.

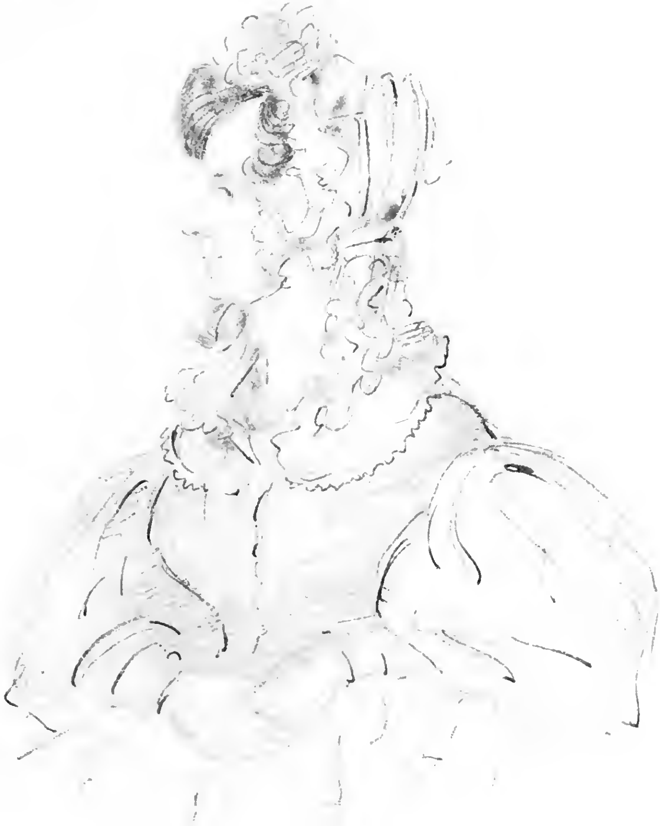
In a private memoir, written many years later, Miss Greene has left a detailed record of her relations with Rosina Wheeler, both before and after her marriage. From this moment, therefore, she becomes an important witness in all the circumstances of Edward Bulwer's domestic life, and frequent allusion will be made to her memoir. The bias of a rather narrow, puritanical mind is evident throughout this document; it is, nevertheless, the narrative of a very genuine woman who had exceptional opportunities of judging the characters of those about whom she writes.

The following extracts give a picture of Rosina Wheeler at the date when Miss Greene first made her acquaintance:—

> From the character we had heard ot Mrs. Wheeler, and the way in which the young lady had been brought up, we were all far from anxious for her acquaintance. Our regard for Mr. Doyle, however, and a certain interest which had been excited about this poor, oppressed, and ill-educated girl, made us consent; and her uncle and she came to dine with us quite in the family circle. The first sight of her I shall never forget; her figure, face, and air were so superior to anything I had ever seen before, that I was quite charmed with them, as well as with her sweet

1826. Æt. 23. voice and manners. The ease with which this fine "London lady" adapted herself to our quiet *coterie* could not fail to attract us all. What most astonished and pleased me was her manner to my mother—then much advanced in years, though still lively and intelligent. Miss Wheeler's quick perception and appreciation of her was the first thing which showed me she was no common character. My mother and sister were also much pleased with her, though there was one thing which we did not quite approve of. This was that on the very first day she dealt out to us in no measured terms a free and clear account of how shockingly she had been, as she said, "dragged up"—how neglected, hated and ill-used, owing to her mother's vanity and ill-temper, and the amiable weakness of her good old uncle in submitting to her mamma. All this, we thought, to say the least of it, was bad taste; but as we knew it was true we made allowances for her bad education, and picked out whatever we could see of good in her character and disposition.

After some days of great intimacy with her, I began to see some good in her, and hoped there was still more. I was much disappointed to find that she was merely making a pretence of filial duty in saying it was a wish to be introduced to her father which was the cause of her coming to Ireland. She confided to me that her real reason was to follow a young officer who had been an admirer of hers in England and whose regiment had been ordered to Ireland; and I, who was nearly old enough to be her mother, was perfectly shocked when she told me she corresponded with him, and when I saw the impassioned manner with which she kissed his letter which she always carried in her bosom. All her faults, however, I regarded as the natural consequence of her bad education, and hoped



Miss Mary Greene
circa 1845

Emery Walker Ph. sc.

on—encouraged by the admiration she expressed for everything right which she either heard or saw amongst us. 1826. ÆT. 23.

Soon the day arrived when her father was expected at her uncle's, where he had come from Limerick to see her, and both she and Mr. Doyle begged that I would go to Kilsalaghan and remain with her for a few days, which I did. I shall not forget the extraordinary excited feeling I had whilst sitting at dinner with this girl of seventeen, who had never seen her father since she was three years old, added to which it was the first time I had dined in that house since the death of my much-loved and dear friend, Mrs. Doyle; and the end of it was I was so much affected that I was obliged to leave the table. I confess that all my romantic admiration of my new acquaintance received a terrible shock when the first words she said to me when alone were "Don't you think Papa very vulgar? Did you see his worsted stockings." He, poor man, seemed very nervous and affected whilst at dinner, and appeared much pleased with her appearance, etc., etc.

I returned home at the end of a day or two, not at all pleased with the conduct of the young lady to her father, but again made allowances and said, as did my mother, that she had been much prejudiced against him, as all her life she had heard him abused. The end of their meeting was that there was a quarrel, the truth of which I never knew, as she only told me her version, and of course attributed all the blame to her father. He died about two years later and left most of his small property to her sister.

From the letters which I received from her after her return to London, she appeared much improved in sentiments and practice, and had even begun to see the necessity of attending to her education. In every letter I could perceive an improvement in her spelling

1826. Æt. 23. and handwriting, and she mentioned the books she was in the habit of reading, which were indeed very different from those which had been her study before. She, in fact, educated herself more in the next three years, and learnt more, than she had ever done before. She expressed herself with such gratitude and affection towards us all that it was no wonder I allowed myself to like her.

Mrs. Wheeler refused to receive her daughter back into her house after she had once left it; and for the four years which followed her first visit to Miss Greene in Ireland, Rosina lived with her great-uncle in London. She mentions in her letters having made the acquaintance of several literary people, amongst others, Thomas Campbell, Miss Landon, and Lady Caroline Lamb. In this society she had no doubt heard Edward Bulwer spoken of as a young man of ability whose poem had recently won the Chancellor's medal at Cambridge, and her interest in him was therefore already aroused when they met for the first time.

It was a strange irony of Fate that had prompted Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton to require her son's company at that evening party, and thus made her the first person to call his attention to the beauty of the woman from whose charms she afterwards fought so hard to save him. At this very first meeting she invited Miss Wheeler to visit her in Upper Seymour Street, thus providing an opportunity for a fuller acquaintance between the two young people.

During the summer they met frequently both in London and at Brocket and their intercourse, which began by an interchange of compliments on the subject of *Weeds and Wildflowers*, rapidly developed into the intimacy of lovers.[1] 1826. Æt. 23.

In a letter to Mrs. Cunningham, written on June 25th, Bulwer asks:—

> Pray did you ever hear in Paris of a Mrs. Wheeler? Do find out about her. Reasons in my next. I beseech you not to forget it. I believe she is a Liberal and the widow of a Col: Wheeler—tell me all you can find out.

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[1] Mr. S. C. Hall, with whom Bulwer was afterwards associated in the editorship of *The New Monthly Magazine*, has placed on record his recollection of Miss Wheeler at this time, in his *Retrospect of a Long Life*, vol. i. p. 264:—

"Lady Caroline Lamb was also accompanied by a young and singularly beautiful lady, whose form and features were then as near perfection as art, or even fancy, could conceive them. Lively, vivacious, with a ready, if not a brilliant, word to say to every member of the assembly—displaying marvellous grace in all her movements, yet cast in a mould that indicated great physical strength—she received in full measure the admiration she evidently coveted, and did her utmost to obtain. Her abundant hair fell over the whitest of shoulders; her complexion was the happiest mixture of white and red; in fact, she was as perfect a realisation of the beauty whose charm is of the form, and not of the spirit, as poet ever set forth in words or painter upon canvas.

"It was not difficult, however, to perceive in this handsome young invader of Miss Spence's drawing-room something that gave disquieting intimations concerning the spirit that looked out from her brilliant eyes—that he who wooed her would probably be a happier man if content to regard her as we do some beautiful caged wild creature of the woods — at a safe and secure distance. The young lady of whom I have thus spoken was Miss Rosina Wheeler, not long afterwards Mrs. Lytton Bulwer. By her side, and seldom absent from it during the whole of the evening, was a young man whose features, though of a somewhat effeminate cast, were remarkably handsome. His bearing had that aristocratic something bordering on hauteur, which clung to him during his life. I never saw the famous writer without being reminded of the passage, 'Stand back; I am holier than thou.' Mr. Lytton Bulwer was then in the dawning of that fame, to the full meridian of which he afterwards attained—at the foot of that steep which led to the 'proud temple.'"

1826. Æt. 23.

In this same letter he says :—

> I have already commenced and made active progress in three or four works. The first (solely for my own advantage) is upon universal history and the Corn Laws. The rest, intended for the advantage of the world, for next season I shall commence regular authorship, are three light prose works and one poetical tale. With one of the prose works, which is a sort of Werter taken from fact, I am tolerably pleased;[1] the other two are satirical and I don't think much of them.[2] The Poem[3] is nearly finished.

At the end of July he was staying at Margate, and there received the following letter from Lady Caroline Lamb, written from Brocket, on August 2 :—

> I should have answered your letter long ago, had I ever had an innate idea. But I am convinced there is no such thing. How, then, can I write? Even imagination must have some materials upon which to work. I have none. Passions might produce sentiment of some sort, but mine are all calmed or extinct. Memory—a waste, with nothing in it worth recording. Happy, healthy, quiet, contented, I get up at half-past four, ride about with Haggard, and see harvestmen at work in this pretty confined green country, read a few old books, see no one, hear from no one, and occasionally play at chess with Dr. Goddard, or listen to the faint high warblings of Miss Richardson. This contrast to my sometime hurried life delights me. Besides, I am well. And that is a real blessing to one's self and one's companions. When you were so kind to me, how ill, how miserable I was! If there be a place of punish-

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[1] *Falkland.*

[2] One of these must have been *Pelham.*

[3] *O'Neill, or the Rebel.*

ment hereafter, assuredly the lost souls must feel as I did then. Pray write to me as you wrote then ; even though your opinion of me, and affection—boyish affection—be utterly changed. Your letters were then beautiful and soothing. I detest wit, and humour, and satire. I fear you are now given to all this, and have lost the freshness of youthful feeling, the noble sentiments, and the warm vivid hopes and aspirations of an uncorrupted and unworldly heart. I drew my Good Spirit, in *Ada Reis*, from you, as I then imagined you. Pray do not turn into a Bad Spirit. What are you writing now? May I not be allowed to know? Farewell.

Bulwer returned to London on August 10, and writes to Mrs. Cunningham from there on the 11th and again from Knebworth on August 24. Although neither of these letters make any mention of his relations with Miss Wheeler, it must have been before the end of August that their love became an acknowledged fact between them, as I find among his papers a pathetic little note in Miss Wheeler's handwriting, referring to a conversation they had had in the shrubbery at Brocket, on Sunday afternoon, August 27, 1826. About this time, too, must have been written his first love letter at Brocket, in which he says :—

Years have passed since I experienced any emotion like that which I feel for you at this moment. Better perhaps for me if I had still been successful in subduing my heart.

I came here—a spell was upon me—I dared not express to you what I felt. I talked with levity in order to obtain an escape from the more serious subjects

1826. Æt. 23. in which Feeling is engaged—I could not trust myself with those. I said that I discovered the nature of your sentiments to me. I saw that there was not one of the nature which could alone satisfy my heart; and I should have left you with my own unuttered (at least by the lips) and with the resolution to forget you, had not all the coldness of previous reflection been destroyed yesterday by the imprudence of a single moment. I touched you, I held your hand in mine, and I felt as if you alone were all the world. What were Reason, Resolution, the wisdom of Premeditation, to the impulse of that unguarded instant? I saw then that it was due to you to express myself more clearly. I did so. Oh God! that in that brief but memorable conversation which ensued, I could have overcome the chilling impression that, even amid the gentleness and kindness of your manner, my feelings were unshared. Yet what could I expect? A mind and heart like yours are not lightly won, and yet I had left nothing to Time. I told you that I adored you; I repeat it. Examine your own feelings and tell me candidly what I may dare to expect. I do not ask if the sensations I would excite *are* awakened. I only ask if they are capable of being so. For the happiness of both of us, answer me this from your very heart.

I have disclosed to you the great, the perhaps unreasonable, return which my own requires; consider *that*, when you give me your reply. I turn from the feelings I experience to the circumstances under which I am placed.

I am my mother's favourite son. I was brought up solely by her, when my brothers spent their childhood chiefly with other relations. She considers me, therefore, as the one whose fate will more immediately reflect upon her, and perhaps for that reason she is particularly ambitious respecting it. Her affection makes her desire that I should be happy, but her pride that I should find my happiness in the distinctions of the world. As yet I have been indifferent to these, for I have had no object in obtaining them ; and it is from despair at my indolence that my mother has wished that my marriage at least should, as it is termed, advance me in the world. UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, I feel too well that she would not give her consent to a marriage which, while she acknowledged it as most honourable, would still appear to her imprudent ; but it is only under PRESENT circumstances. If I had once attained the distinction she desires for me, Fortune and Connection in marriage would cease to be an object.

She has even told me (and I know her generosity and kindness too well to disbelieve it) that I might then consult my happiness according to my own ideas ; and when no longer biassed by a previous prejudice she would perceive and acknowledge what reason she would have for pride and exultation in that connection which is the first desire of my Heart. I said that I had no object in earning reputation. Suffer me, my beautiful and adored Friend, to derive it from *you*—tell me for *your sake* to exert myself, and from that instant a new spirit shall possess me. What could I not hope for, what could I not achieve, if your smile was my inspiration and your love my reward? I do not speak from the romance of a momentary impulse, or the too sanguine expectations of an inexperienced ambition. Hard as it is for persons depressed by poverty and birth to obtain distinction, to those in a more fortunate situation it requires little but the stimulus and exertion. Tell me to hope for *you*, Rosina, and every other object of ambition will appear easy and mean in comparison.

1826. Æt. 23. On receipt of a note from Miss Wheeler saying that both he and his mother would live to hate her if she were to stand in the way of his career, he concludes as follows :—

Sunday Morning.—So far had I written, when I received and read your note. Oh! never, never, Rosina, let there be this separation between our hearts. Will what I have written explain my sentiments and my wishes? I pause—I become embarrassed—I know not what I would express. Hate *you*, Rosina! At this moment the tears are in my eyes, my heart beats audibly! I stop to kiss the paper consecrated by your hand—can these signs of love ever turn into hatred? But let me collect myself. I will speak to you calmly. All that you have said about my mother I have already replied to. What you say to me of a brilliant career only tells me how joyless it would be unendeared by an affection which I no longer despair of obtaining, and by one who would bless domestic, even more than adorn public, life. You have awakened already the desire to place you in a situation higher than I yet can offer you, and more worthy of yourself; but, oh, in the solitude which shall no longer be that of indolence, but exertion, or in the world, from whose pursuits I shall for your sake no longer turn away, will it be too much to hear from you, when circumstances forbid me to see you? Will you suffer me occasionally to write to you, to communicate to you my hopes and schemes, and to be encouraged at times by your opinion in return? Do not, Rosina, I implore you, do not refuse me this! In the coldness of the ordinary affections which will surround me in the gloom which circumstances and solitude have rendered habitual to my temper—in that weary and oppressive sensation of loneliness which absence from you will alone be sufficient to occasion, do not, I implore you, deny me the strength of this consolation! I go to London to-morrow. I await your answer with feelings I can neither analyse or express. Reply to me fully and candidly, as I have written to you—tell me if I am one whose feelings you can understand, whose lot you could partake, whose love you would return; and remember, at all events, that I bind you to no promise, that I demand from you no faith. Say to me at once, if you meet with one more worthy of you, and whose love you would sooner reward, say to me at once that my misfortunes are full, and I release you from that instant and for ever from my importunities.

Touched, penetrated to the very soul, by your generosity, believe me in every circumstance and scene of life, whatever be the result of this correspondence, your steadiest and most devoted friend. You may render life doubly valueless to me, but I shall not cease to cherish the hope that it may ultimately be useful to you, and even if you take from me the last anchor which attaches me to existence, I shall remember you as one who brought back to me my earliest and best affections; and whether in the loneliness of retirement, the wanderings of a darkened and blighted spirit, or the more unquiet resources of Ambition, I shall not cease to consecrate your remembrance with all the holiness of veneration, and to cling to it with all the tenderness of regret.

Edward Lytton Bulwer.

Brocket Hall,
Sunday.[1]

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[1] In the volume called *Letters of the late Lord Lytton to his Wife*, published by Miss Devey in 1884 and immediately suppressed, this letter bears the date Sunday, April 1826. Although I have never seen the original I am convinced that the word "April" is a later addition due to an erroneous belief, either on the part of Miss Devey or Lady Lytton, that the first meeting of the latter with Edward Bulwer had taken place in the previous year. My

1826. Æt. 23. Although he did not admit to his mother the extent to which his affections were involved, he did speak to her at the beginning of September of his marriage prospects in general, for on September 6, 1826, he writes to Miss Wheeler from London:—

> On my way to town yesterday I met my mother and returned to Knebworth with her; but before 4 o'clock this morning I rode up here in the eager expectation of your letter. The confidence you place in me you shall never repent, and though you will not speak to me too sanguinely of the future, yet I cherish as the most precious of my hopes that of rendering it to you a recompense for whatever you have suffered in the past. . . . I have spoken to my mother in general terms of any marriage I may subsequently form, and I have this answer: "*Distinguish yourself*, and I will ask from you no consequence reflected from your wife. When you have succeeded in public life, I promise you that *money alone* shall never make me withdraw my consent to your marriage." Now tell me, Rosina, if I have not every reason to be sanguine. With the single exception of money, could I find any person who could satisfy like you the warmest expectations of a mother?

From London he must have written to his mother more fully on the subject of his relations with Miss Wheeler, and received an unsympathetic reply, for the first letter which I can

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belief that the letter did not originally contain the word "April" is strengthened by the fact that Miss Devey first quoted certain passages from this letter in an article in the *Athenæum* of March 1, 1884, before the publication of her book, and that on that occasion it bore no date other than Sunday, 1826. I believe from other evidence that this letter was really written on August 26 and 27, 1826.

find bearing on the subject was written on September 9 :— 1826. ÆT. 23.

Edward Bulwer to his Mother.

My dearest Mother — Many thanks for your letters, which I take no time in answering, tho', to-day being Saturday and after the departure of the post, you will not receive this before Monday.

Your first very eloquent and well-written letter only shows me how even the most sensible persons judge hastily and fall thro' prejudice into error—for instance, you say R. W. should have gone to her mother, and take up more than a page in charging her very severely for not having done so. Now the fact is that R. W. has *repeatedly entreated* her mother's permission to live with her and in vain. Her mother's favourite child is the other sister, and Mrs. W., being still vain of her beauty, is jealous of the youth, &c. of R. It was to attend her father in Ireland at his express command and when on his death-bed, that she left her mother who was separated from her husband. Since that time Mrs. W. has always refused to receive her. Allow at least that if this story be true, R. W. is not to blame. Convince me that the story is not true, and I promise to break with her entirely.

I wish, my dearest mother, that you would lay aside prejudice and judge fairly of a character which I believe capable of candour, and at the same time that I tell you so it is from no selfish wish of my own. I repeat that I have not the least desire or design to *marry* her, and I promise you now once and for ever, *promise* you *sacredly* and upon my honour as a man and my duty as a son, that I will *never marry without your consent.* This is due to you for all you have done for me, and this at least you may depend upon—after this do justice

1826. Æt. 23. to R. W.'s character, not as a woman ever likely to be connected with you, but as you would to the character of Miss Hinde or Miss Cheshyre.

I am going to Brocket to-day upon my new horse, but must be in town to-morrow in order to go to Cheltenham on Tuesday. If I can call at Knebworth I will; if not it will be because it will be too much for my horse, not because of myself. I go to Brocket principally to ask Lady Caroline to get Murray to publish *Almacks* for me, and to ask for some hints about it.

On the same day that this letter was written Bulwer must have met Miss Wheeler at Brocket. What transpired at that interview can, of course, only be conjectured, but it is probable that he said something about the necessity of obtaining his mother's consent, and of the conditions which she was likely to impose. Miss Wheeler evidently did not appreciate the prospect of waiting till her young lover had achieved sufficient distinction to satisfy his mother; and the meeting must have ended sadly, for he writes four days later on his way to Cheltenham:—

I am detained in town a day or two longer than I had expected. My direction will be at the Post Office, Cheltenham, but I ought not to wish to hear from you, and I sit down to write under the full impression that your happiness requires that this should be the last of our correspondence.

Never for a moment, since that last evening I saw you, have I ceased to reproach myself. Never once have I ceased to recall those tears, every one of which went to my very heart. I sat by you almost in silence.

I could scarcely attempt to console you. What was 1826. my conviction at that moment? That in desiring your ÆT. 23. happiness I had only prepared your misery. I became fully aware of the feelings I had not even analysed before. The sickness of hope deferred, the weariness of pursuits which the heart loathed while the head conceived, the labour of years and the waste of youth in the occupations which should belong only to age, doubt and uncertainty at the best, the probability of disappointment, the possibility of treachery, to all these I had looked forward as *my* fate, and all these I felt that I could bear. But I had not reflected on the lot I was preparing for *you.* I did not remember that the best and most beautiful years of your life might possibly pass away in the vain expectation of an uncertain future; that you would have the anxiety, the fear, the separation — but not the union, the consolation, the enjoyment of love. I did not remember that I was wasting the affections which you might have bestowed freely and happily on another, and that, if at last our hopes should be destroyed, and our separation rendered final, I should have embittered your youth without finding a recompense for your later years; your attachment to me (*returned* indeed how ardently, but repaid how ill) would have prevented your forming ties under auguries more auspicious; years not to be recalled would have been darkened, and opportunities of happiness and independence suffered to escape which it would be no longer in the chances of the future to renew. All this, if you link your fate with mine, you must have the misery to fear; all this it is possible you may suffer; and *I*, who ought to shield you from the smallest evil, I shall have the eternal remorse of being the cause and the origin of all. "If love be an episode in men's lives, it makes indeed the whole *history* of a woman's"; all her affections, hopes, desires, all the treasures of her

1826. nature are hoarded *there*. And *there*, where you garner
Æt. 23. up your heart, let it not be through me if you meet with disappointment and despair.

Had fortune been more kind to either of us, the customs of the world would not have prevented our union. Had she been less so, we might have dispensed with the customs themselves, and have found in our own hearts a retreat from the censure of the prudes we had offended. As it is, oh! Rosina, I dare not look to the future any longer! Formerly I regarded it only *for myself*, and I smiled at every evil I could foresee. Our last meeting has awakened me from selfishness to reflection. I now look to the hereafter, and I tremble at the prospect, because I look no longer for myself, but for *you*. Separate yourself from me before it be too late, and your affection has not yet become more powerful than your reason. Many bright years may be in store for you, but not with me. I know from the gloom and despondency which have become to me a second nature, I know that I am fated to be wretched; avoid me, shun me, and be happy! Save yourself from a love from which you yourself only anticipate disappointment and regret, and where the very passion that can alone afford us the strength to hope may only end in your despair.

I write incoherently, for I reason against myself, but you will understand and appreciate what I would express. I am alone, alone upon the world again! All seems darkened before me, and my heart seems to break when it tears itself from its latest tie, and feels that in bidding you farewell, your own happiness demands that it *should be for ever*.

E. L. Bulwer.

On arrival at Cheltenham he writes to his mother thanking her for having generously increased his income, and adds :— 1826. Æt. 23.

> God knows that in spite of that great dejection and despondency of spirit which makes me at times alternately so silent and so querulous, I do feel most warmly attached and grateful to you, and that even now I have sacrificed much that is most dear to me from my wish in all the great events of life to secure your approbation and to make you at least not ashamed of the kindness and affection you have shewn me.

On this occasion, however, though he was able to talk to his mother about the sacrifice he was making, he was not prepared to face the reality ; for on receipt of Miss Wheeler's answer to his letter, in which she stated that she would not marry him, he hurried back to London for a few days and ardently implored to be accepted again as her lover. After explanations, a complete reconciliation was effected, and on his return to Cheltenham, he writes : "I give myself up to the sweet hope that there is now nothing to bar the confidence and the commune of our hearts."

The fact is, that in talking of separation and final farewells, neither of the two lovers had been really sincere. It was the prospect of a courtship which might last for years that troubled them, and the remedy for this was not eternal separation but more immediate union. The only way of accomplishing their marriage was to secure the consent of Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton. To his mother, therefore,

1826. Æt. 23. Bulwer now appealed once more with passionate entreaty.

Unfortunately, Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton was not in the least disposed to countenance in any way an attachment which she regarded with the utmost repugnance. Not only did she consider her son still too young to marry at all, but she was even more emphatic in her condemnation of the woman whom he had selected. The girl's age, parentage and upbringing, were insuperable objections to such a union. The daughter of Mrs. Wheeler, whose mode of living, whose friends and whose principles, were all detestable to her; a penniless girl whose education had been so flagrantly neglected, who was vain and flighty, with a mocking humour and a conspicuous lack of principle; the spoiled pet of Lady Caroline Lamb, was not a fit life-companion for her favourite son, nor a woman whom she could accept as a daughter-in-law. She stated her objections most emphatically and urged her son to bring this dangerous intimacy to an end. That Miss Wheeler's beauty should excite his admiration, and her forlorn and unprotected position arouse his pity was natural; but she warned him against allowing such sentiments to lead him into a marriage which would incur her bitterest displeasure and lead to life-long unhappiness for himself. Immediate separation from the young lady in question was her advice.

Bulwer was deeply pained and full of resentment at this letter. To Miss Wheeler he writes on October 12 :— 1826. ÆT. 23.

I have just received an answer from my mother. Oh, Rose, such a letter! You were right and I was mistaken when I imagined that my mother felt for me any affection unconnected with vanity, or that she cared a single straw for my happiness, so long as it did not reflect lustre and credit upon herself. There is not in this letter one kind expression to redeem its want of all human consideration for my feelings ; and it ends with saying that if I marry I should have, not her consent but her curse.

He then proceeds to discuss the alternatives before them :—

1. Marriage against his mother's wishes.

This is out of the question. Comparative poverty and obscurity I might have been selfish enough to ask you to share, but not absolute want. Even were you less dear to me, you should never link yourself only to privation and distress.

2. A private marriage kept secret from his mother.

Deceit, doubt and anxiety—the probability of the loss of character, the chance of my dying with our marriage unacknowledged and yourself unprovided for, the possibility of children—all this we might both overlook in the blindness or delirium of the moment; but this in the calmness of reflection I never will prepare for your destiny.

3. Separation.

Do not say that we have only an entire and final separation. Give me one hope, one comfort, however

1826. Æt. 23. weak and doubtful, and you will indeed be my redeemer from despair. . . . Pause, I beseech you, before you exclude all hope. As for me, I am so bowed to the dust that I cannot dare to look up. I am so wretched that I almost think I have lost the common energies of existence. . . . But if we are indeed to part, I have not the power to give *you* up—it is for you to resign me. Do not do so too kindly, or you will break my heart; but if you are at a loss for words I will supply them.

Do not tell me, as you did before, that I ought not to reproach myself, and that you have shared my fault, but tell me that I should never have attempted to gain your affections without the *certainty* of ultimately enjoying them. Tell me that I have endangered your permanent happiness in seeking for the selfish rapture of obtaining your love. All this, all your reproaches, I should deserve. One only excuse can I offer. I do most solemnly declare that I always imagined, from the first to the last, my mother would ultimately consent. I thought she might ask delay, and trial, and probation, but never till I received this letter did I foresee her unqualified and continued disapprobation. Had I done so, Rose, you should never, never have shed one tear for me. And now I beseech you again and again to pause before you answer me; give me, I implore you, some solitary hope. Never were you so dear to me as you are now, my own, own Love. Is this the last time I am to call you so?

Miss Wheeler accepted a rupture of their engagement as the only possible alternative in the circumstances, and their correspondence for a time was concluded by the following letter:—

I entreat, I conjure you, dearest Rosina, by every recollection of the past which still remains to us, and by every hope of the future which we once ventured to form, to take the greatest care of your own health, and to remember that thro' every circumstance of absence and time your welfare and interest will concentrate everything that is most dear to me. I have only to add this, that if I can earn such a reputation as to repay my obligations to my mother by satisfying her wishes on my account, and such an independence as to realise our ideas of content, then this letter will not be the last I shall write to you, nor will it contain the latest prayer and appeal that I shall venture to make to your remembrance of what has been. And now, if there be really some Diviner Being who contemplates and ordains the individual interests of Earth, may He preserve you from every evil and bestow on you every good! May you find in the affection of your mother all that you have lost in me, and may some portion of that love and desire for your happiness which *I* am forbidden to show you be scattered and diffused among all the ties and connections that surround you! 1826. Æt. 23.

E. L. Bulwer.

To his mother he replied as follows:—

I lose no time in answering your letter; and this, I trust, will close our correspondence on the subject. You say that if I have not deceived myself I have grossly deceived you. I thank you for the kindness of the opinion. In answer I shall merely observe that I did *not* at first intend to marry Miss Wheeler—that I saw much in her *manner* which I disliked, but that *I* was not governed and blinded by prepossessions at first sight. An after-acquaintance showed me the great and sterling qualities which more than compensated for minor defects,

1826. Æt. 23. and which made me anxious to secure my happiness by obtaining her. As to being deceived, I cannot help thinking, with all due deference to your penetration, that a person who had seen a woman several times and in trying situations, must know her better than another who has only seen her four times in ordinary society, and is therefore less likely to be deceived. It was upon discovering that she was not the woman I thought her first that I altered my own previous intentions. I know well that *I* have not been deceived.

I shall now merely show you how *you* have been deceived by answers to what you say respecting her. You say that she does not live with Sir John Doyle. You are mistaken ; she does. You say that she is not in mourning for her sister ;[1] she is. You say (and here you accuse us both) that I continue my correspondence with her ; I do not. It is but justice to a woman whom I know only to respect and revere to add that all your own prepossessions are as unfounded as the above. With regard to female excellence, the very mention of Miss Shee in the same breath with Miss Wheeler is quite sufficient to convince me that our notions on that subject will never agree.

I shall say nothing more on the tone you have taken in this correspondence. If it has satisfied you, it is enough. I do earnestly hope that we shall never speak again of a person on whose character we have such opposite opinions, and that a subject will not be renewed which can only awaken in my mind bitter and painful recollections. I am, my dear mother, Your dutiful and affectionate son,

E. Lytton Bulwer.

So ended the first phase in Edward Bulwer's struggle to reconcile his feelings as a lover with his duty as a son. For the moment the mother had won; but her triumph was short-lived, for in the battle which she was fighting the forces at her command were no match for those which were arrayed against her. It was a battle between youth and age, between love and duty; and in such a contest age, with all its experience, has no chance unless it can also enlist the services of sympathy. This ally Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton neglected to secure, and consequently she was doomed to failure.

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[1] Miss Wheeler's sister, Henrietta, had died in Paris in September while Bulwer was at Cheltenham.

1826.
Ær. 23.

To his friend Mrs. Cunningham, Bulwer wrote from Knebworth on October 25:—

> Since I wrote last much has occurred to me. My fate has been nearly altered entirely and forever, but the die has been cast differently and I am still unchanged. This is a long story and now an idle one. . . . It is a dim, heavy, desolate evening, the trees quite breathless, one deep cloud over the sky, the deer grouped under my window, and the old grey tower of the Church just beyond. I am here only for a few days, and I shall leave these scenes with the more regret because I am now going to enter into a new life. Within the last few days I have made myself an opening for the House; in all probability I shall enter it in December. There is still some doubt on the subject, so that I will say nothing further till all is decided. However that may be, I shall devote myself to society the whole of this year. I have made enemies to laugh at their weakness. I am now going to make tools to profit by their folly. We govern men not by our own strength but by their imbecility.

CHAPTER III

MARRIED

1827

> CLARA. A marriage of privation—of penury—of days that dread the morrow! I have seen such a lot!
>
> . . . . . .
>
> EVELYN. We should have shared it.
>
> CLARA. Shared? Never let the woman who really loves, comfort herself with such delusion! In marriages like this, the wife cannot share the burden; it is he, the husband, to provide, to scheme, to work, to endure, to grind out his strong heart at the miserable wheel! The wife, alas! cannot share the struggle—she can but witness the despair.
>
> *Money.*

1826. ÆT. 23. WHEN Edward Bulwer broke off his engagement in October, 1826, he fully believed, as he told Mrs. Cunningham, that the die had been cast against him, and that there was no alternative left to him but to try and stifle the longings of his heart by a strenuous life of public engagements. His reason forbade him to contemplate marriage without his mother's consent, and all hope of obtaining this seemed at an end. He had yet to learn, however, what so many others have found who try to terminate an intimacy which their heart approves but their head condemns, that in such a situation the happiness of two people, and not merely of one, is involved.

How often in every generation does a man discover that considerations of prudence compel him to put an end to his intercourse with a woman who is dear to him, because he realises that such intercourse must inevitably develop into a relationship which can only be justified by marriage. With a supreme effort of will he stifles the voice of his heart and cuts through the bonds of sympathy and affection which are binding him to that other whom he at once loves and fears. The pain of severance, the bitterness of renunciation, the disappointed hopes, the torments of regret—these can be borne manfully, and, were there no other considerations, time would heal them all. But the calm reason, at whose bidding he submits to this sacrifice, is all the time playing the tyrant to that other whom his heart defends. The sacrifice, the sorrow, and the pain are not his alone; he is inflicting them on the very person whom he is bound to shield. The ties which he has severed were rooted in another's heart as well as his own, and echoes of the pain which their severance has caused come back to trouble and condemn him. The very authority for his action is then undermined. The voice which says that the man has done well for himself is shamed into a confession that he has behaved badly to the woman. And so it comes about in nearly all such cases that the heart triumphs and that reason is put to flight. 1826. ÆT. 23.

Thus it was with Edward Bulwer. News

1826. reached him that Miss Wheeler had been ill, Æt. 23. and immediately all his resolutions were scattered to the winds. His separation from her, which had hitherto seemed only an act of self-sacrifice, was suddenly revealed to him as an act of desertion. Fate, which he had thought to escape, now reassumed command and sent him back to Miss Wheeler's side.

Their engagement, which at the end of the last chapter appeared to have been broken off irrevocably, was renewed within a month ; and their love, which had thus reasserted itself over every obstacle, now impelled them to a course from which there was no escape. Though there is no contemporary record of the vital change which took place in their relationship about this time, evidence of a later date leaves no doubt that in the ardour of their reconciliation they were led into contracting a tie which made marriage a necessity. From this moment Bulwer felt that his honour and his conscience as well as his heart compelled him to marry Miss Wheeler, whatever the consequences might be.[1]

The later months of 1826 and the early ones of 1827 were employed by Bulwer in completing for publication two books to which he had referred in his letter to Mrs. Cunningham (p. 164). The first of these was a long poem,

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[1] In a private memorandum written in 1846 Bulwer says : "I married my wife against all my interests and prospects—not from passion, but from a sense of honour. She had given herself to me nearly a year before, and from that moment I considered myself bound to her."

O'Neill, or the Rebel, which he had described as "full of rebels, banshees and scaffolds"; the second was *Falkland*, his first romance. The latter was published by Colburn in March 1827, the former not till June of the same year. 1826. Æt. 23.

His correspondence with Miss Wheeler during these months deals chiefly with the publication of these two books and with preparations for their marriage. Writing at the end of 1826 he denies her suggestion that *Falkland* bore any resemblance to himself:—

"He is quite a different character," he says, "and meant as such. I have not drawn a person even whom I should be flattered to resemble. My object in writing and publishing a book of that description was to open some field for the introduction of Poetry. Now if I had merely written an ordinary novel, however good of its kind, there would have been nothing at all in its nature analogous to poetry, and nothing therefore presenting a good opening for its display. . . . Now if *Falkland* succeeds at all, it will do so sufficiently to obtain a reading for 'Poems,' and perhaps it may from its singularity gain that reading for itself which its *stupidity* might otherwise deprive it of. With regard to the want of incident, I am disposed, upon a recollection of popular books, to imagine that the most popular are those which abound rather in thoughts than events, and for this reason—thoughts come home to all people, events to very few; everyone has thought, hardly any *acted*. However, I own that I am not the least sanguine in *Falkland*. I own more, I am exceedingly disappointed, now that I have finished it, with my attempt. Literally and seriously, it falls very,

1826. very far short of the plan I had intended to execute.
Æt. 23. But to finish this subject, the book, after all, is only a trial. It has cost me little trouble, and yet much more than any other book of the sort ever would again."

The chief biographical interest in this book is the manner in which it reflected his mental agitation at the time when it was written. In the preface to the 1835 edition of *Pelham* he says of it:—

> On my return from abroad I sent to Mr. Colburn for publication, a collection of letters which, for various reasons, I afterwards worked up into a fiction, and which (greatly altered from their original form) are now known to the public under the name of *Falkland*. While correcting the sheets of that tale for the press, I became aware of many of its faults, but it was not till it was fairly before the public that I was sensible of its greatest fault—namely, a sombre colouring of life and the indulgence of a vein of sentiment which, though common enough to all very young minds in their first bitter experience of the disappointments of the world, had certainly ceased to be new in its expression, and had never been true in its philosophy. The effect produced upon my mind by the composition of that work was exactly similar to what Goethe says of the relief given to his thoughts and feelings after he had thrown off the morbid excitement of them in the production of *Werther*. I had rid my bosom of the perilous stuff. I had confessed my sins and was absolved. I could return to real life and its wholesome objects.

When writing to Mrs. Cunningham a year after the publication of *Falkland*, he says of it:—

> It has horror-stricken the Prudes and Canters. I am anxious to console myself by your opinion of it, for I am in hopes that you, who have felt, may find in it the only merit I claim for it—*truth*, in the delineation of feeling. Its fault is that it is too stilted. That is a fault in the style, not in the sentiment of it. But one does not become perfect in a day.

As one example of the "Prudes" who were shocked, Miss Greene may be mentioned, for she writes in her memoir:—

> I was much disappointed in the book—his first work—that horrid *Falkland*, which may be clever in point of style, but shocked us all, from the bad sentiments it contained and infamous morals. It was written, too, in a loose and daring strain, as if the author scarcely knew any better. Alas! thought I, is this the man who is to guide poor Rosina, and counteract all the faults of her education?

A more generous critic was his mother, who wrote to him on receipt of the book the following letter:—

Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton to her Son.

> I cannot wait till I see you, for the expression of my sentiments about *Falkland*. Yet I know not how to express my astonishment at the really wonderful power of your imagination. In reading a book of this kind one expects to be gratified by sentiments well and gracefully expressed, and by a tale told with interest and pathos. But interested as I was about the *dénouement* of *Falkland*, almost every page of it has forced me to pause by the way in amazement at the

1827. power with which it is written, and I may say that I
ÆT. 24. am still lost in wonder at such a production by so young a man. I cannot better express my ideas about your exquisite delineations of character than by comparing them to a beautiful portrait by one of our first masters. So startling is the insight of its whole conception, and so fine the delicate finish of all its details, that your work is, to others of its kind, what one of their masterpieces is to a signboard daub. Compared with it, they all seem coarse and clumsy, and untrue to nature. Any person who does not feel this must be incapable of feeling the charm of intellectual power ; and I don't think any woman could read *Falkland*, without being startled by its insight into the innermost nature of a woman's thoughts and feelings. There are some of those feelings, so unlike a man's, which a woman when she feels them most is perhaps least able to express or even understand. But we can all of us tell by instinct or experience, when we read of them in a book, whether its author has truthfully represented and interpreted them. *Falkland* is certainly the production of an imagination of no common order.

And yet, proud as I am of its being written by you, in one respect it has disappointed and grieved me. Ah, my dear Edward, how delighted I should be to behold in you a champion of Christianity. Of those to whom much is given much is required. You may be sure of that. Consider, dear child, the parable of the talents. When I began this letter I had not read the whole of *Falkland* ; not that part of it where he is in Spain. I have now finished the book. And oh, what a pity the end of it should not assimilate with the rest ; that in that soliloquy of the author's, after Falkland's reflections upon death, so little of the spirit of Christianity should be visible ! What impression can these sentiments make upon the mass of your readers? that the author has no belief in a state after death which has any relation to the conduct of life, and that he rejects the religion which commands us to regulate the conduct of life in the faith that it will be judged after death. Certainly too much speculation puzzles and confuses the mind. It is best to love and obey. By seeking fruitless knowledge man lost Paradise, and when, by the aid of such knowledge alone, he sought to reach the heavens, his language was confounded, and the unity of his life dispersed. 1827. ÆT. 24.

My dear Edward, what a different, what a much better, moral you might have given to your book had you only altered the last two pages of it! How I wish I could have seen them in manuscript! What sort of a moral does it contain now? None that points to any reason why a man should greatly care by what road he reaches annihilation. There can be no purpose in life without faith in death, and no moral worth where there is no moral purpose. You paint your hero as superior to the rest of his species. You wish us to recognise his superiority, for you have no right to interest us so powerfully in his feelings and his fate, if they are not those of a person entitled to our admiration or our sympathy. But what does his superiority consist of? And what does it all come to? Presumptuous egotism! selfish vanity in attachments that do no good to their possessor, and do harm to others. Child, this is unworthy of you. Appreciate yourself better. You have a life full of purpose because you have a soul full of power. Why write as if you thought that power could exist without purpose, or purpose without belief? Vain are all the acquirements of learning, vain all the aspirations of genius, if the only superiority they can achieve is a superiority of wretchedness.

1827. Æt. 24. On the other hand, Lady Blessington afterwards said in one of her letters to the author: "At Paris in 1830, during the very heat of the Revolution, when balls were striking against the walls of my dwelling, I forgot all danger while reading *Falkland*."

At the same time that he was engaged in completing this work for publication, Bulwer was also making preparations for his marriage with Miss Wheeler at the earliest possible moment. Having resolved upon this step he again tried to overcome his mother's resentment. Several letters passed between them on the subject; but Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton was not to be shaken by any entreaty, and her lack of sympathy with her son's distress only hardened and embittered him without in any way altering his determination.

In a long letter to her, in which he began by championing Miss Wheeler against some of her criticisms, he concludes:—

> Having said these few words in vindication of Miss Wheeler, I shall add in regard to my own conduct respecting her, that it has been very much to blame. I most certainly should not at first have given way to the impulse of passion. I should not have allowed myself to be in love with her. I should not have endeavoured to win her affections, but should have left her directly I found myself or her in any danger. I own this most sincerely, I repent it most bitterly. Wretched and miserable as I am, this makes the most rankling and painful recollection of all. The only

thing to be said is that I fell in love insensibly, that I did not perceive how far I had gone till the unpremeditated impulse of a moment betrayed me; that I did speak to you as soon as I found she really loved me; that I did separate from her on hearing your answer; and that nothing but my own extreme misery, joined to the hurt and galling feelings excited by your view of a measure which I felt to be so deep and bitter a sacrifice; and more than either of these, the natural remorse I felt at hearing of Miss Wheeler's very dangerous illness, could have induced me to come up to London and torment her into a renewal of our former terms of correspondence, etc. I mention these as extenuations, not as excuses. I feel that this step was very wrong, and God knows that my own feelings have sufficiently punished me for it. But while I own that this first part of my conduct is inexcusable, I do most conscientiously say that I do not see what other course than that of marrying Miss Wheeler is now in common duty left to me. I have (however rashly and wrongly) won this woman's affections. I have implicated her happiness most seriously. I have involved her character as well as her happiness. What other course than reparation and atonement is in common honour and conscience left to me? 1827. ÆT. 24.

I am perfectly aware of all the worldly disadvantages (tho' I think them not so great as you imagine). I am perfectly aware that I justly incur your displeasure, not for marrying Miss W., now, but for having, by winning her affections, left myself no other course. I know that I can hereafter have no claim whatsoever upon you, and that, under every circumstance, I owe you unabated gratitude for what you have hitherto done; but I am perfectly sure that, were you now in my situation, you would act as I must. I do not marry from any headstrong passion, nor from any

1827. sanguine hope of happiness. I am far too wretched, Æt. 24. and have had too severe a contest with myself, not to look to the future rather with despondency than pleasure ; and the view you take of the matter is quite enough to embitter my peace of mind. But I am fully convinced that of the two evils I choose the least, that if I do not act right I adopt that course which is the least wrong. All that I ask you to remember on my behalf is, that I do not act against your wishes from the petty desire of worldly aggrandisement, from the balancing between interests, from preferring to your favour any scheme of pleasure or advantage ; but that I differ from you in the most important and influential action of my life under—I say this from my very soul—under the full impression that my heart and conscience can point out to me no other alternative.

I should not end this letter without saying something of my regret at displeasing you and (I must say for the first time) acting against your wishes, if I did not think you likely to doubt my sincerity. As it is, I shall only most heartily wish you, whatever may become of me, all health and happiness, and assure you that I am both now, and under every change and circumstance always shall be—Your most affectionate son,

Edward Geo. Bulwer.

To Miss Wheeler he writes in March, 1827 :—

I will not disguise from you, my dearest Rosey, that I see less hope than ever of my mother's consent. We are by no means cordial. There is injustice and unkindness in her conduct which I will not submit to. If, moreover, nothing is to be got by waiting, we will *not* wait ; it is useless to make sacrifices, if they are neither returned nor appreciated.

And again—

1827. ÆT. 24.

I saw my mother to-day—we are certainly cool, we have never been perfectly reconciled. It is her own fault, and she ought to see *her* loss. I can go anywhere, and gain friends and form ties, but woe to those who, in the decline of life, will not endeavour to preserve the affections of their own children! I shall never forget the *nature* of her fondness for me—its *effects* it is not in my power to forgive; to forgive *any* injury from an enemy is easy enough—the smallest from a friend is unpardonable; one cold word, one bitter look, smites deep into my heart and rankles there for years.

Although he thus criticised his mother freely, and confessed the bitterness which her attitude caused him, this was a privilege which he would not allow any one else to share. Similar criticisms from Miss Wheeler were strongly resented, and even before their marriage any expression from her which he thought disrespectful to his mother always occasioned a quarrel.

On May 21, 1827, he wrote to Mrs. Cunningham:—

My dear Friend—I have much to say to you, much that would require your advice and consideration, for I own myself very unhappy and—but of what avail are any complaints at this time and this distance? And I am apt to think you would deem me a very unreasonable person to be dejected and wretched at the very moment I ought to be most joyous and light-hearted. Prepare, *ma belle amie*, prepare! I am going to be married!!! And that very soon, perhaps in less than a month. My intended is very beautiful, very clever,

1827. very good, and I believe likes me passing well. Moreover she is well born and well connected (tho' not a Lady Mary). But, alas! the human heart is most inscrutable and I feel at this moment only one bright and cheering consolation, viz. :—that I have for once in my life acted well. But enough of this. My plan is, after marriage, to hire a large old-fashioned house in the country, live very retired for three years, give myself wholly up to literature, in which I hope to earn somewhat of that breath of fools which the knaves wisely called reputation; at the end of that time to travel over Europe for three years more, and then to settle in London and turn M.P. and politician.
ÆT. 24.

I want very much to send you a little work I have published and another just coming out. Tell me how I can send them to you free. The first[1] has created some sensation and more enemies here. The religionists and pseudo-moralists are furious against it. *N'importe!* My conscience acquits me of all evil design. But you must read it and judge. I think it will please you, for it's very thoughtful and philosophical. The forthcoming work[2] is a poem, and a great part of it was written at Versailles. I have been very quiet all this season; tired as I always was of society, it has tired me more than ever this year; "Othello's occupation's gone!" I had no object, and I feel more broken-hearted, despondent and sated than any old valetudinarian who has seen all his old hopes and friends drop off one by one, and finds himself left for the rest of his existence to the solitary possession of gloom and gout.

The marriage, however, which he speaks of in this letter as imminent was postponed for three months. Though he tells Mrs. Cunningham that he has found "a large old-fashioned house," 1827. this place, like many others, proved to be unsatisfactory. ÆT. 24. All through the year he had made frequent expeditions into the country in search of some suitable house for his new home, but they were all either too large or too small, or too far from London, and it was not till the month of August that he found at last a place that satisfied him. Their wedding was now definitely fixed for August 29; and in the few days that remained an embittered correspondence took place between mother and son concerning this event. Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton tried to persuade him that Miss Wheeler had deceived him as to her age, that she was much older than he had supposed her, and that she had already been engaged to some one else. Bulwer replied that the story of her previous engagement in no way altered his feelings towards her, and that with regard to her age, he had sent a man to Ireland to make inquiries which would place the actual date of her birth beyond dispute.

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[1] *Falkland.*

[2] *O'Neill, or the Rebel.*

The following were the last letters which he wrote to her on the subject:—

Edward Bulwer to his Mother.

Let me once for all answer what I think neither with generosity nor justice you have brought up so often against me, viz.:—the promise which long since out of the warmth and sincerity of my heart I so incautiously gave you not to marry without your consent. In order not to do so when I received your

1827. Æt. 24. first letter from Sandgate I immediately broke off with Miss W. I went to Knebworth. You treated me afterwards certainly with harshness and injustice while I was writhing beneath the sacrifice I had made to you and to you only; you accused me of the meanest and most unworthy motives. It was this only which brought me again to Miss W. I could not help feeling that the wrong you then did me was no recompense for the loss I had sustained; and being as I was in the first flush and violence of my attachment, it was natural enough that, so goaded and so incensed, I should return to what I was every instant learning more bitterly to regret. This was the great epoch of my present situation. From that time it was impossible for me or for any man with human feelings, not to be led on step by step till return was impossible—impossible, not from any consequences brought on me, but those in which Miss Wheeler was involved.

It was during this time that when you spoke to me twice of this promise, I twice said, "but it is your approbation, not your consent, that you withhold. You cannot take upon yourself the responsibility of positively withholding the latter." Twice I understood you that you also recognised this distinction. I mention this because it has been always kept in view by me, and I have constantly thought that when you perceived how deeply and seriously my happiness was involved, your objections would cease. In this hope I was strengthened by occasional kindness in you when speaking on the subject, and more especially once at Bayswater, when you believed I was actually married to Miss W. But while I mention this distinction between consent and approbation, I candidly confess that I lay little stress upon it, for I certainly made the promise meaning at the time the most comprehensive sense of the words; and though I think that a promise made at a time when by no circumstances could I foresee all that has since happened, cannot be classed under the head of absolute and regular promises, yet I own that the strongest regret I have in the marriage I am about to make, is the necessity I am now under of not acting up to this promise. 1827. Æt. 24.

I say necessity, for I now submit the case to you as it stands.

I am placed between two duties. 1st. This promise to you and my desire to comply with your wishes, and 2ndly, my engagement with Miss W. If I break the first duty I hurt no one—I cost you a momentary uneasiness and disappointment, it is true, but I do nothing seriously affecting and injuring you yourself. On the other hand, if I break my engagement with Miss Wheeler, I injure her reputation—I blast her happiness for life—I destroy the health which my unfortunate attachment has already so much impaired. This is the case in which I am placed. Let any man decide which is the most important duty of the two alternatives and whether I am not justified in saying I am under a necessity to adopt the one I have.

I say nothing about myself and my own honour with the world; that I put out of the question, and I really do not care so much about public opinion, but that I would readily sacrifice *that* to satisfy you. I do not wish in what I have said with respect to the situation in which I am placed to vindicate my conduct from all blame. I have confessed before, I am perfectly willing to confess still, that I was wrong originally in yielding to impulse and passion, but not surely now, when in opposition to my most permanent and important interest I yield to what I believe to be my duty. This also I will say with respect to that promise, that the very circumstance of my having given it, is a proof of my wish and desire to gratify you, and a token that

1827. nothing but a necessity could have caused me to disobey Æt. 24. you. The sincerity of this you cannot deny, because by insincerity we mean a falsehood uttered for our own interest, but *my* interest lies so wholly on the opposite side of the question that you cannot imagine for a single instant that I have consulted *that.* All that you say about Miss W.'s necessarily having formed a previous attachment is obviously unfair; it only tends to prove this—that no man must marry a handsome woman of 24. Surely this is unreasonable, and surely it is the unjustest maxim in the world to judge people only by what we imagine to be probabilities.

With respect to your going to Miss W., I have only to say that if you consider it beneath you to visit one whom I believe to be one of the warmest and finest-hearted beings in the world, and one who is to be the wife of your son, I am far from wishing it. Otherwise I should wish you to see her, being fully confident that the more (under any circumstances) you did see her, the more your objections would cease. I have no objection to the object for which you see her, but I think it also candid to tell you that I conceive no arrangement you make with her relative to resigning me, binding. Several times she has renounced me, rather than injure my interests—it was always by my entreaty that the tie has been renewed; and if you were to extort from her love for me a promise to forsake me, I should be acting a base and self-compromising part to yield to it. To see her, however, at all events, would be satisfactory to me, and if you resolve to do it, you had better inform me of the day and hour that I may not call. I promise you that I will not prepare her for your visit.

In conclusion, I have only two things to say—1st, that when you speak of marriage as the most important point in which a son can compliment a parent, and when I *allow* that there is some justice in the remark, you will also allow that marriage is a step which only and solely concerns the persons who marry, and that therefore, however a parent may be disappointed, they have but a small ground for displeasure. Moreover, just reflect for a moment whether, if a person makes a good marriage in order to compliment his parents, he does not do it only to further his own interests, and therefore whether parents ought not to look to the motive before they can rationally be pleased with the action. Secondly, I have to say that, however poor, disappointed, or embarrassed I may myself be hereafter, neither you nor any human being can have any cause for "humiliation" or "mortification" at a relationship with me. Up to the hour of my marriage, and inclusive of that event, I have committed perhaps many imprudent, but not one discreditable action. I venture to assert that this will always be the case. It is useless to add anything further. I believe I have answered your letter fully. God bless you, my dear Mother. Believe me, I am much more grieved than you can be at disappointing you in anything. 1827. Æt. 24.

E. L. B.

The same to the same.

Aug. 16, 1827.

My dear Mother—For God's sake, spare me! I have neither health of body nor strength of mind to bear half—no, not one-tenth part of what I do suffer. Put yourself in my place for one moment. Imagine that you make no part of my feelings—only suppose that I see every hope, every object of ambition which I have had for years and years, cut down at one stroke; that I see myself condemned in the very spring of my age, with every aspiration restless within me, to a life of seclusion and poverty for ever, struggling

1827. Æt. 24. against every evil, deprived of the hope of any advantage—put yourself in the certainty of such a fate. Recollect my nature, never contented, never at rest, and ask yourself whether I am blind to such a prospect, whether I want any aggravation from you to its miseries, or whether it must indeed be a powerful inducement that can make me enter it—that inducement I have told you in every letter. I repeat it—it is this—I *most solemnly declare* it to be nothing but the most full and conscientious conviction that it is an imperious and an unavoidable duty.

All you can say, therefore, only makes me more wretched without moving me one iota from the necessity I am under. I have told you constantly that nothing but Miss W.'s unworthiness can release me from her. It is now eleven months since I first wrote to you about her. In that time you have had, if ever you can have it, full time to discover any one instance of it. You have not discovered one particle, one iota against her; not one report has been true, not one charge proved. Even in your last letter you mention one that I know myself to be false, viz.:—her being ever engaged to another man. Prove this, prove anything, and you release me from Miss W. If you cannot, in common humanity spare me. I know now scarcely what I write. Go to town, if you wish it. Go and see Miss Wheeler. If the ties between her and me are to be broken, she is the only human being who can break them.

E. L. Bulwer.

The same to the same.

Aug. 18, 1827.

My dear Mother—The die is irrevocably cast. I have procured and enclose the most positive evidence that can be obtained in the want of the register. You will see that it is proved that the youngest child was born in 1802—4th Nov.—and that the name of the youngest child was Rosina. It is useless to comment further upon this evidence—it is indisputable. I have, however, written to him to obtain the legal forms for your entire satisfaction. 1827. Æt. 24.

With respect to what you say about Miss W.'s being able, owing to the want of the register, to fix any age she chose, I cannot help remarking how prejudice blinds the clearest-sighted people. A dispassionate person would have said on the contrary. No wonder that when none of the relations can tell, when the mother—the only one who could—has deceived herself (Her mother told me she had only turned 20), no wonder the girl herself should not know the exact date of her birth, for how do we know when we were born—we cannot remember the day—we are told it by our relations—we have no other earthly method of knowing it, and if, therefore, none of our relations tell us true, it is impossible to ascertain it.

I have this moment received your letter of to-day. I am very much touched by its kindness. You will see now that on this subject there can be no further discussion. The honour which binds me to Miss W., is not that one you suppose—there are two sorts of honour—the one regulates our conduct to the world, the other to an individual. The 1st only is what is usually called honour, the second is conscience. It is the 2nd which now binds me to Miss W. I have no claim—I never advanced any upon you—whatever my future fate is, I must support it.—God bless you, my dear Mother, and farewell.

E. L. B.

From the "Morning Post" of Thursday, August 30, 1827.

1827. Æt. 24. On Wednesday last, the 29th inst., was married at St. James' Church, by the Hon. and Rev. W. Bentinck, Edward Lytton Bulwer, Esq., third son of the late General Bulwer, of Heydon Hall, Norfolk, and of Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton, of Knebworth Park, Herts, to Rosina Doyle Wheeler, of Lizzard Connel, in the county of Limerick, only surviving daughter of the late Francis Massy Wheeler, Esq., of Lizzard Connel and Ballywise.

The bride, who is remarkably beautiful, was given away by her uncle, General Sir John Doyle, Bart., and the happy pair, partaking of a cold collation at the house of Colonel Doyle, Montagu Square, set off for their seat, Woodcot House, in Oxfordshire.

Thus was concluded the first Act of the tragedy which Fate was weaving out of the lives of these two young people. To an outside observer with a knowledge of their respective characters, tastes and temperaments, the conclusion of the story could already be foreseen. Two people could scarcely be found less qualified to make a successful partnership in life than the man and the woman whom Church and Law had thus bound irrevocably to one another. Each had clearly realised in early days the hopelessness of their successful union, and on two occasions they had mutually agreed to abandon the experiment. Yet weakness of purpose, combined with force of circumstance, had driven them together again along a road from which there was no escape. On the man's part the marriage was dictated as much by honour and conscience as by love. 1827. He was not blind to the hazardous nature of ÆT. 24. the step he was taking, he knew well that poverty would necessitate on his part the most unremitting mental exertions, but he faced the prospect undismayed rather than abandon the girl whom he knew that he had already compromised by his attentions, and in the years that followed the obligations of honour and conscience were faithfully fulfilled. Almost every marriage, however, which is dictated by such considerations is doomed to failure, because the contracting parties do not enter it upon free and equal terms. There is introduced from the first into the relationship between husband and wife an element of dependence which, though love may conceal it for a time, is destructive in the long run of perfect mutual esteem. The man instinctively expects gratitude from the woman, and the woman resents the implications that in their relationship there should be anything to be grateful for.

It is doubtful, therefore, whether, even if the external conditions had been favourable, Edward Bulwer and Rosina Wheeler could have fulfilled for long the vows which they had made to each other at the altar; but these conditions from the first were anything but favourable, and it will be seen, in the chapters which follow, how every circumstance in their relationship is maliciously perverted by Fate into an agency for their destruction.

CHAPTER IV

WOODCOT

1827–1829

> Two persons in love with each other, how congenial they appear! . . . Seen by the enchanting moonlight of delicious passion—all that is harsh or dissonant is mellowed down; the irregularities, the angles, sleep in shadow; all that we behold is in harmony with ourselves. . . . And, fools that we are, we imagine this sympathy is to endure for ever. But Time—there is the divider!—by little and little, we grow apart from each other. The daylight of the world creeps in, the moon has vanished, and we see clearly all the jarring lines and sharp corners hidden at first from our survey.
>
> *The Student* (*Want of Sympathy*).

1827. Æt. 24. The preceding chapter carried the narrative of this biography down to the date of Edward Bulwer's marriage with Rosina Wheeler on August 29, 1827. As was foreshadowed in the concluding words of the last chapter, the marriage had disastrous consequences, and after six years of comparative domestic happiness, it resulted in a lifetime of the bitterest domestic misery. The love which had drawn this ill-assorted couple together, and which each had solemnly sworn to maintain to their life's end, was not of the kind to stand the test of time, and it soon developed into an implacable hatred, which the intimate relationship of marriage only served to intensify. No two people ever exemplified more tragically the power which that relationship gives to its partners, when love, sympathy and respect have vanished, of inflicting torture upon each other, and none ever paid more heavily the price of an imprudent choice. 1828. ÆT. 25.

Immediately after the wedding Edward Bulwer and his wife took up their residence at Woodcot House in Oxfordshire, a large country house about six miles from Reading, and here for nearly two years they lived in happy seclusion.

In April 1828, Bulwer writes to Mrs. Cunningham:—

My dear Friend—Your letter gave me great pleasure—but that I need not tell you. As to your affirmation of being not my debtor but rather my creditor in our epistolary balance, I yield an incredulous assent. *Se non e vero e ben trovato.* You are right in your cautionary admonitions. It is quite astonishing what a false interpreter the world is. We live in an atmosphere of lies, and whatever we breathe becomes a lie directly it is breathed by another. Lies, lies, lies, wherever one turns! I begin to believe, with Bishop Berkeley, that the world itself is a lie, and that there is nothing true in the universe but one's own mind. At all events there never was a wiser precept than that which advises us to live with our friends as if they were one day to be our enemies. Pity that like all those sayings, it is so unpleasant to practise. I would sooner be always calumniated than always suspicious. I thank you for wishing to know my Rose. You would like her much. Indeed she is so good, amiable, and warm-

1828. Æt. 25. hearted, that it would be impossible not to like her. I say nothing about her beauty, but that you shall one day judge of yourself. Meanwhile she is in your style. Dark hair, bright complexion, dazzling teeth. My quiet woodlands, as you call them are anything but tame. They are so wild and waste that you might imagine yourself in a desert. Judge how delightful such scenery is to me.

Don't frighten me with your malevolent predictions of a numerous tribe. Nothing is so hideously uninteresting as an author with a large family. Tell me what you think of Leigh Hunt's *Life of Byron*. People here are furious against it. My brother is settled in our neighbourhood. His wife is a very nice creature, and a great friend of Rose's. "Interesting news!" you will say. But what better can you expect from a hermit who sees less of the living than the Egyptian sorcerer saw of the dead:—that is to say, one a month? Your account of Miss Cunningham's health gives me the greatest pain. So beautiful and innocent as she is, it is impossible not to feel deeply interested in her. Pray remember me most respectfully and truly to her, and let me hope that your next letter will assure me of her convalescence.—God bless you, and yours.

E. L. B.

To his mother also he writes:—

The place I have come to is exceedingly retired and affords every facility for living according to my fortune. I hope the land will pay for the house.

These words were no doubt intended to justify a choice of residence which must have appeared extremely rash to his mother, as indeed to any one else with a knowledge of his circumstances at that time. By marrying against his mother's wishes Bulwer had cut himself off from the only reliable source of income on which he could count at that time, and nothing but literary labour of the most arduous kind could save him and his wife from a life of extreme poverty. His elder brother offered him assistance, but he replied :— 1828. Æt. 25.

> No, I incur the step on my own responsibility, and Rosina is prepared with me to run the risk of poverty. —To use the vulgar phrase—as I bake so will I brew.

His own fortune consisted of a small capital of £6000, secured to him by his father's will, and his wife's income did not amount to more than £80 a year. Pride, which was at all times one of his strongest characteristics, forbade him to contemplate the only scale of living which was compatible with such slender resources. He lived in an age when appearances counted for much more than they do to-day, and he was determined that the woman of his choice should enjoy the social position to which she was entitled as his wife. Whatever might be the cost to himself, she, at any rate, must not suffer any degradation from her marriage with him. The choice of Woodcot, therefore, for their first home was made with a courageous disregard of his actual poverty, and with a heroic determination to meet by his own exertions the expenses of that standard of life which he had resolved to maintain. The house and grounds were unnecessarily large; they kept a carriage and two

1828. or three saddle horses, and entertained their
Æt. 25. friends on a lavish scale.

Miss Greene, the early friend of Mrs. Bulwer, to whom reference has already been made, came to visit them in their new home in June, 1828, just before the birth of their daughter Emily, and in her memoir she thus describes her arrival at Woodcot :—

> I arrived at Henley, Nettlebed, a small town within a few miles of their country house, Woodcot, when Mr. Bulwer came in his carriage for me. The first sight of him pleased me much, but I said to myself, he is too young, for young as he was, he looked still younger. He was dressed most elegantly, quite as a man of fashion, and left all arrangements to his own man, who sat at the back of the carriage. We had a drive of about an hour, and I found him most conversable and agreeable. His manners were not at all those of the boy he looked, but quite those of a man of the world. He talked with great admiration and affection of his beautiful wife. It was nearly dark when we drove up the pretty lawn which led to the very handsome house which was elegantly lighted up, and in the Hall I was met by certainly the finest and handsomest woman I ever saw (except her mother). She was most beautifully dressed and very much improved, both in appearance and manner, since I had seen her. After a few moments spent upstairs with her, we came down to a dinner of every rarity of the season, served in the most superior style, she taking the head of the table most gracefully. Her whole object seemed to be to save her husband trouble, and she attended to every thought, word and deed of his. Upon a more intimate acquaintance I was not surprised at her devoted attention, and thought he

well deserved it. I would often see bursts of admiration, attention and affection from him, which reconciled me to all she did for him.

While Miss Greene was at Woodcot their first child was born, on June 27, 1828, and the circumstances of this event are fully described in the memoir. Immediately after its birth it was sent out of the house to nurse. Mrs. Bulwer was not able to nurse her child herself, but she was naturally anxious that it should be brought up by hand in her own house. Her husband, however, engaged the services, as a wet nurse, of a farmer's wife who lived several miles away, and to this woman the child was entrusted soon after its birth. The mother grieved bitterly at being thus parted from her baby, and this separation from it, at a time when all her motherly instincts were most strongly awakened, may in some measure account for the marked absence of motherly tenderness towards her children in after years.

After Miss Greene's visit came to an end, Mrs. E. Bulwer, who was suffering from a painful weakness of the eyes, was ordered by the doctors to try a change of air. She accordingly went with her husband to Weymouth, and Woodcot was let for a few months to Mr. and Mrs. William Bulwer.

Their arrival at Weymouth is thus announced in a letter to Miss Greene :—

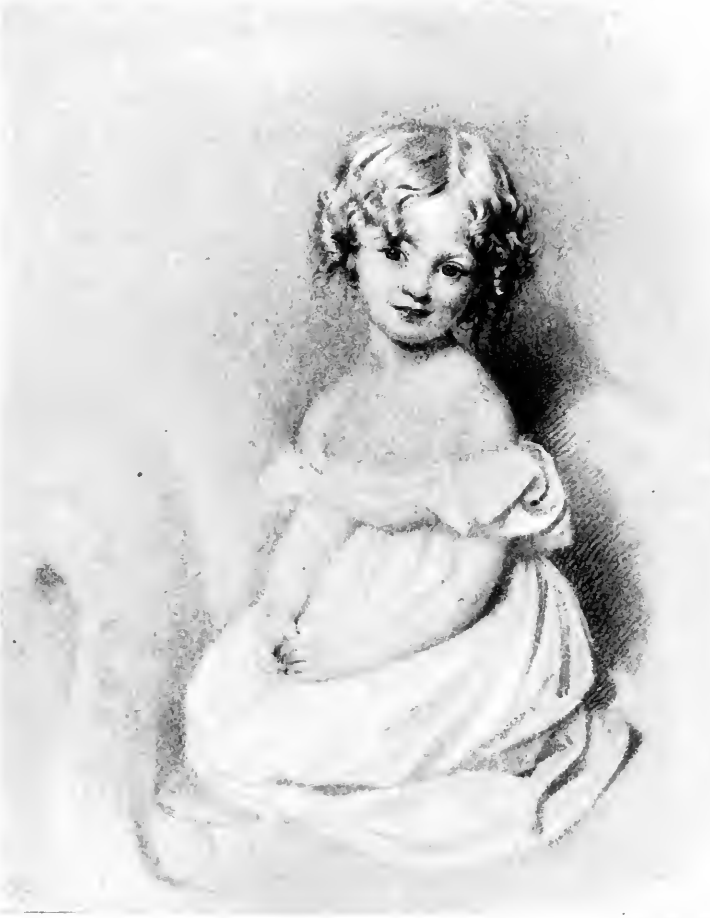
Mrs. Edward Bulwer to Miss Greene.

5 Frederick Place, Weymouth,
Sept. 27, 1828.

1828. Æt. 25. My dearest Mary—We were delighted to hear that you got safely to Cheltenham without feeling any bad effects from the journey, and I should have told you so long ere this but that your letter found me very unwell; my eyes more painful, my sight more dim than ever, and myself as busy as possible preparing for our departure for this place which is very hot and very full. We have got into a very pretty house, though for so small a one it is rather dear, being eight guineas a week.

Edward is just gone to the Play, and as I am strictly forbidden to write on account of my eyes, and he watches me like an Argus, I, like a dutiful wife, take the opportunity of his absence to do what he won't let me when he's present. You will be glad to hear that poor little darling Emily was baptized the Sunday before we left Woodcot. In the next place you will be glad to hear that her father, whenever he speaks of her (which he does pretty often), always calls her Little Boots. Poor, good-natured Mrs. Van asked to have her every fortnight while I was away to stay with her from Wednesday till Thursday; and William's and Emily's parting speech to me was that she should be very often with them, and that they would write me constant accounts of her. In the third place you will *not* be glad to hear that Marshall ordered me to be bathed, blistered, bled, and electrified (the prescription is quite electrifying enough).

This morning's post brought a letter from William who said he had told his Mother that Edward had come here on account of my health, and that I had quite lost the sight of one eye. He then copies the following paragraph out of his Mother's letter in answer—" I felt



Emily Bulwer
("Little Boots")
circa 1838
from a drawing by D. Maclise R.A. at Knebworth

shocked at hearing that Edward's wife has met with so 1828.
serious a misfortune as losing the sight of one of her eyes Æt. 25.
—how much she is to be pitied! What, is there no remedy? and has she not advice? how did she lose it? is the eyelid closed over it or open? a great deal depends on that towards the recovery of the sight, as well as the cause of losing it is by that in some degree ascertained. Is she likely to lose the sight of the other? Do let me know."

This is really very kind of her and is taking, for one who hates me, much more interest about me than many belonging to me have done. I feel grateful to her and wish she did not think so badly of me as she does.

Miss Landon's brother sent me a most beautiful little Blenheim the day before we came away, which Master Edward had *instantly sent out to nurse!* However, I am to have all my pups when I go back. In the meanwhile, Edward is regaling himself with a frightful tudor white poodle that he bought in London. God bless you, my dearest Mary, write soon, tell me all about yourself, and believe me ever—Your affectionate friend,

Rosina Lytton Bulwer.

On November 1 she writes again:—

The only domestic news I have to tell you is that we have got into a much larger and better house. Poor darling little Boots has been staying at Woodcot. I will copy a paragraph out of her aunt's last letter about her—"She really is (and it is no flattery) the most engaging little thing I ever saw. She has such a truly sweet disposition and yet apparently so observing. The Miss Trittens, who were staying with me, pronounced her the finest baby they ever saw, and they, having several nephews and nieces of their own, are much more competent judges than I am." After she has completed her visit to Woodcot she is to pay one at Cane End,

1829. where good, kind Mrs. Van has got a nursery ready Æt. 26. for her. She was baptized with the names Emily Elizabeth. Edward is very anxious to have her brought here, but I am afraid of running the risk, for Mrs. Parr would not come, and it would be gross selfishness in me when she is so well and has Mrs. Van to look after her, to endanger her health by travelling in the depth of winter and changing her nurse, so I must only haste back to her.

I am surprised the *Disowned* has not reached Dublin yet, as it is now a fortnight since it was published. It is in high repute here. The King sent for it twice before it came out, and my uncle has heard from Lord Conyngham that he is delighted with it. Walter Scott wrote to his son-in-law, Mr. Lockhart, a letter in which there was a whole page dedicated to enthusiastic praises of *Pelham*, but he (Scott) adds :—" It is a pity he has such a twist in his politics ; it is doubly a pity coming from so very able a pen." Of course, nothing but rank Toryism will do for Walter Scott.

The Spring of 1829 was spent at Tunbridge Wells, after which they returned to Woodcot for the summer. On September 8 they left Woodcot for good and spent the remainder of the year at Vineyard Cottage, Fulham, while the house which they had chosen in London was being decorated.

From Tunbridge Wells Mrs. Bulwer writes:—

This place is dull, dear, and disagreeable. We pay twelve Guineas a week for a very indifferent house, and every day I regret poor dear Woodcot more and more, which I fear I shall never see again except to remove our plate and books when we get a house in London.

When you write never allude to my amiable brother-in-law, or his petrified carrot of a wife, for I have told Edward in very plain terms that I would not brook the *slightest interference* from him. Poor Mrs. Van is rejoicing at the noted fame of this place for "Faisant L'Enfant," and to end her hopes in certainty as I shall probably do yours, I have confessed to her, though with regret, that we are likely to have an increase in our family—for Terror for the third time within the last eight months is going to pup ! ! 1829. ÆT. 26.

Edward went to town on Wednesday to go to Almacks and has stayed for two or three parties, for which he has my leave, for in a place like this, where every second woman you see looks as if she was going to have twins, it is rather a relief, my heart, to get rid of one's darling precious husband for a short time.

Again from Fulham four months later she writes :—

This being only two miles and a half from London, *of course* Edward is off directly after breakfast and is quite in his element about the house which we shall be able to get into by the 27th of October. I have plenty of time for walking about with little Boo-Boo as Teddy never returns till dinner, when he always brings one or two of that giant genus of bores yclep'd "young men about town" with him.

These last quotations are the first indications of any cloud upon their peaceful horizon, the first faint warnings that the luxuries in which they indulged were being bought at the price of their domestic happiness. Yet even in these early days, while their love was still fresh, the circum-

1829. Æt. 26. stances in which the marriage had taken place were already providing material for the ultimate disaster which Destiny was preparing. The nature of the husband's work deprived the wife ever more and more of his society and companionship. Not only were health and peace of mind irretrievably mortgaged to provide an income, but the income itself was spent with a reckless disregard of the heavy sacrifices by which it was earned. Although by nature economical and even parsimonious, Edward Bulwer in these early days seems to have regarded no expenditure as too extravagant which could add to the comfort of his home or the enjoyment of his wife. Nor was Mrs. Bulwer insensible of her husband's constant wish to please her in this respect. Her early letters to Miss Greene make frequent and affectionate mention of it.

Writing from Weymouth on January 17, 1829, she says :—

> How do you think my audacious husband has spent his time since he has been in town? Why, he must needs send me down what he termed a little Christmas box, which was a huge box from Howel & James's, containing only 8 *gros de Naples* dresses of different colours not made up, 4 *gros des Indes*, 2 merino ones, 4 satin ones, an amber, a black, a white and a blue, 8 pocket handkerchiefs that look as if they had been spun out of lilies and air and *brodée* by the fairies, they are so exquisitely fine and so beautifully worked. 4 pieces (16 yards in each) of beautiful white blonde, 2 broad pieces and two less broad, a beautiful and very large blue real cashmere shawl, a Chantilly veil that

would reach from this to Dublin and 6 French long *pellerines* very richly embroidered on the finest India muslin, 3 dozen pair of white silk stockings, one dozen of black, a most beautiful black satin cloak with very pretty odd sort of capes and trimmed round and up the sides with a very broad band of a new kind of figured plush. I forget what they call it (it came from Paris), and a hat of the same—such a hat as can only be made in the Rue Vivienne. You would think that this "little Xmas box" would have been enough to have lasted for some time. However, he thought differently, for on New Year's morning before I was out of bed, there came a parcel by the mail, which on opening proved to be a large red Morocco case containing a bright gold chain, a yard and a half long, with the most beautiful and curious cross to it that I ever saw—the chain is as thick as my dead gold necklace, and you may guess what sort of a thing it is when I tell you that I took it to a jeweller here to have it weighed, and it weighed a pound all but an ounce. The man said it never was made for less than fifty guineas, but that he should think it had cost more.

I tell you all this in the hope that you will abuse him for it when you write to me, as it is really too bad of him when he never will spend a penny on himself, poor darling, not even the silver penny I gave him some time ago. He meets me and little Boots at Woodcot on Wednesday, indeed he goes there on Monday; there is but one drawback to all my visions now—which is that he has seen some abominable house in Cavendish Square, with pictures and statues and a blue and gold Boudoir, and seems bent on taking it and going to town. However, I won't begin envisagering misfortunes.

Again four months later she writes:—

1829. Æt. 26. The last time we were at Storrs, while he was getting me a gold thimble, which he had actually the absurdity to go and design with precious stones, and the still greater absurdity to pay fifteen Guineas for, I, under the pretence of ordering some Mulberry forks, stayed behind and could not resist ordering him a gold Toilette, which he had long wished for, but which, of course, he denied himself as he does everything else. When you see it, as I hope you will one of these days, I think you will admire it — the basin and ewer are particularly handsome, such very classical shapes. Round the rim of the basin and the handle of the ewer I have ordered a wreath of *narcissus* in dead gold, which for Mr. Pelham, you'll own, is not a bad idea. I should have liked one round the looking-glass, but that would have been too expensive. The other things are plain, bright gold, with merely the arms and crests engraved on them.

During all this time Bulwer was ceaselessly at work with his pen earning the money for these extravagances. The task which he had undertaken left him not a moment's rest. Every hour which he spent in his own house was absorbed in literary work, and when he was not actually writing he was engaged in London disposing of his work and seeking fresh outlets for his industry. He was writing not for fame nor for pleasure, but literally for bread. The single object for which he worked was to pay his way through the world from year's end to year's end, owing no man anything.

The spending of the money which he earned by his pen was left entirely to his wife, who was unfortunately without any knowledge of its value and without any experience in the management of it. From her parents she had received no training in such matters. Her own tastes were extravagant, and, to judge by the extracts quoted above, they only received encouragement from her husband. 1829. ÆT. 26.

Bulwer was a careful business man himself, and throughout his life showed a remarkable faculty for making money go far and getting the most for it. He took an interest in the details of domestic economy, and in the early years of his married life wrote many essays on such subjects as *Domesticity, or a Dissertation upon Servants*; *House-hunting*; *Peculiarities of London Tradesmen*; *The Kitchen and the Parlour, or Household Politics*; *Long Journeys with Short Purses*, etc. Yet the example which he set to his young and inexperienced wife in all these matters could not well have been worse. The choice of their scale of living was his choice; he deliberately taught her to cover poverty by extravagance; and whilst he wasted himself in heroic labours to earn the means of defraying their expenses, he was at no pains to teach her the value of the money which was so hardly earned. He liked his house to be comfortable and well appointed, his table well served, and his whole establishment well conducted. His wife knew his tastes and tried to gratify them, but she had no skill in the management of household expenditure, no natural frugality in her temperament, and a marked dis-

1829. taste for the duties of house-keeping. Her views
Æt. 26. of domestic economy are indicated by a passage in one of her letters to Miss Greene, written at this time :—

"For want of something better," she says, "I have been reading for the first time (and certainly the last) Mrs. Grant's *Letters from the Mountains*—it certainly was a most unparalleled piece of vanity to think of publishing such stuff. Such perfect platitudes. I might as well think of publishing my letters—and indeed now I think of it I don't think you could do better. They would bring 2 or £300 if published under the following fitting and gormanic title—'Letters from the wife of a highly talented Man! to a Sublime friend.' I no longer wonder at Certainly's setting off to Scotland to see her. She is quite worthy of being one of her cloud and rush-light friends after that letter she wrote to a Mrs. McNoodle or Mack something at Glasgow, saying that it is quite impossible for a woman to manage her house well and do anything else, for that in order to be a good housewife she must be about her domestic affairs morning, noon and night. I only know that I should be very sorry to give more than an hour every morning and two of a Monday to the management of the largest establishment that ever was; and if I do not cultivate my time the rest of the day, it is my own fault, as I have it as completely to myself as if I had no house; but people like Certainly think it quite necessary to starve, and disgust you into a conviction of their being highly talented by asking you to dine off raw veal and a dirty table cloth and a pap-boat and something worse on every step of the stairs, while the master and mistress of the house sit alternately thumbing Shakespeare and muttering Ossian."

The strain and anxiety of pecuniary embarrassment, the grinding mental drudgery which it rendered necessary, and the divergent temperaments of husband and wife in the management of business matters—these were the elements which soon began to threaten the happiness of the home at Woodcot; and all these in turn were accentuated by the attitude of Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton, whose hostility to the marriage, and whose conduct towards her son at this crisis of his life, were largely responsible for all that was to follow. 1829. ÆT. 26.

CHAPTER V .

ESTRANGEMENT BETWEEN MOTHER AND SON

1827–1830

> We dare say the reader has observed that nothing so enrages persons on whom one depends as any expressed determination of seeking independence.
>
> *Paul Clifford.*

> All our friends, perhaps, desire our happiness, but, then, it must invariably be in their own way. What a pity that they do not employ the same zeal in making us happy in *ours* !
>
> *The Disowned.*

1827. ÆT. 24. THERE is probably no crisis in the relationship between parent and child more serious than that which occurs when the child wishes to make a marriage which the judgment of the parent condemns. However intimate the relationship which has existed up till that moment, however affectionate the parent, however dutiful the child, when the claims of the younger generation first assert themselves in a matter of the heart, a situation is created which of all situations in life is the most difficult to deal with. The parent has experience, the child none ; the parent is clear-sighted, the child blind and prejudiced ; the parent is moved by reason, the child by emotion. In all these respects the judgment of the parent is apt to be the better of the two, but there are other considerations, which of necessity weaken the parent's claim to decide the matter. In the first place, it is a life companion for the child, not for the parent, which has to be chosen, and he who has the largest share of the consequences must have the chief responsibility for the choice. Secondly, in choosing a husband or a wife, it is not the head—which constitutes the strength of the parent—but the heart that dictates the choice. Lastly, there is the inevitable law of sex, which impels each generation forward, and overcomes every effort to hold it back; the child's life belongs to the future, the parent's to the past, and the love of a man for a woman, or of a woman for a man, is a stronger force than the gratitude or affection of a child towards its parent.

1827.
ÆT. 24.

In every generation this crisis recurs, and while each in its turn presents its own special difficulties, and demands its own special treatment, yet there is one rule which applies to all. The struggle between parent and child may be continued until one or other is successful, until the marriage is either accomplished or abandoned; it may never be prolonged beyond that point without disastrous consequences. Parents may adopt whatever means they may think desirable, either by way of reasoning, entreaty, or downright opposition, to prevent their son or daughter from making an undesirable marriage; but if they fail, and the marriage takes place in

1827. Æt. 24. spite of them, refusal to recognise it, a continuance of hostility and anger beyond that point, cannot fail in any single instance to make matters worse. The son-in-law or the daughter-in-law is then a member of their family, whether they like it or not. They cannot unmake the marriage, they can only to some extent control it. To stand upon pride, to show anger and resentment, is only to embitter three lives, whereas acceptance of the inevitable and a generous resolve to make the best of it, may in most cases lay the foundations of a new and entirely happy relationship.

In the case before us we have already seen how Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton struggled to save her son from a marriage of which she entirely disapproved. She did not, perhaps, adopt the wisest method to achieve her object, but whether through her own fault or through the force of circumstance she had failed, and there was now only one course left to her consistent with the happiness of her son—to do everything in her power to make the marriage a success. This she refused to do. She allowed pride and resentment to get the better of her affection. Any mistake in tact or judgment, any hastiness of temper, any want of sympathy, which she had shown before the marriage, were trifling errors compared with her great and fundamental mistake in refusing to countenance the marriage when once it was accomplished. Upon her, therefore, rests perhaps the largest share of responsibility for its disastrous consequences.

The story may now be resumed in Bulwer's letters to his mother during the first years of his marriage. They show how bitterly he felt her displeasure, and yet how the difficulty of a reconciliation was increased by the knowledge of his pecuniary dependence upon her.

Soon after the wedding he wrote to her :—

Woodcot, *Sept.* 2, 1827.

My dearest Mother—I heard from Henry with the greatest regret that I had offended you by sending you cake. The fact is, I could not bear the idea that you and your most intimate friend, Mrs. Sherbrooke, should be the only persons I knew to whom that compliment was not to be paid, and therefore (contrary to Rose's opinion, who was afraid you might be offended) I wrote your name with my own hand. Pray forgive me if this did offend you. I assure you it was an error of judgment, and not done without great consideration. For God's sake write to me one line to say something—not *very* harsh !

I do not like to write more now. But I could not help writing one line of remembrance, and to implore you to let me hear from you. God bless and keep you.—Your most affectionate son,

E. L. B.

Receiving no answer, he wrote again two months later :—

Marshall Thomson's Hotel,
November 1827.

I cannot leave town without writing to you one line. I am deeply unhappy that you have not only

1827. refused to see me but that you still refuse even to hold
ÆT. 24. any kind of direct communication with me. Perhaps, hereafter, when you do more justice to yourself, your own kind feelings will be more just to me also. But, after all allowance for any natural anger and disappointment, I cannot but feel that your conduct to me is more than harsh. It is unjust. All my letters unanswered. All your messages to me of the most uncompromising nature, and made in the most contemptuous terms. The very least memorial of me returned as if to exclude from your house every relic and from your thoughts every remembrance of me; and your door inexorably shut in my face. This is the last time I shall mention or revert to these things. If I have a right to feel, I have none to intrude, and I will do so no more.

You cannot, however, but be sensible that, if I really *have* erred in the action which has offended you, that action brings with it its own punishment; and that such implacable unforgiveness on your part is no more required as an addition to the many evils and privations I must have to contend with, than it can possibly be judged hereafter by your juster gentler feelings, as a duty to yourself.

If, also, at any time previous to my marriage, my happiness made your motive for dissenting from it (as you led me to believe), it is quite clear that this motive could not dictate the unmitigated harshness you adopt. For if I am unhappy, that motive would make you sympathise with, rather than exclude, me; and, if happy, your object is gained.

E. L. B.

The year 1827 closed without any change for the better in their relations. Early in the following year he wrote again on a matter of business, and used the occasion for a further effort at reconciliation. His mother replied in reproachful terms, and he writes to her as follows :— 1828. Æt. 25.

Marshall Thomson's Hotel, *Saturday*.

I have this moment received your letter, which was forwarded to me from Woodcot. Although you say that all further correspondence between us would be painful to you, yet I cannot be the first to drop it. Nor can I resist expressing the great satisfaction that any opening, even so faint a one as your letter, affords me. I am truly and deeply sensible of your former kindness and affection ; and although I cannot look upon past events with any feeling that I have acted towards you with the ingratitude and want of affection for which you condemn me, yet I have not been free from self-reproach, nor have I suffered myself to indulge that satisfaction in my choice which with *your* approbation I should have felt. I regret, deeply regret, that I ever gave you a promise I was afterwards unable to keep. But, at least, the promise shows how earnestly I meant to comply with your wishes when it was given. Reflect for one moment whether you or I have been the sacrifice. What did you lose ? Nothing. What did I lose ? Everything. You put the question wrong when you say that you offered me the choice between relinquishing Rose and relinquishing you. It was not Rose you asked me to relinquish. It was my duty to Rose. You think I have mistaken my duty. But even so, you cannot think me misled by the promptings of self-interest or self-indulgence. I have relinquished fortune, freedom, ambition, enjoyment—all except my sense of truth and right. Could you esteem me if I had relinquished these ? If not, why do you now seek to deprive me of my only consolations, my best titles, if not to your affection, at least to your esteem?

If I said I would receive nothing from you when I married, do justice to the obvious meaning of my words—words I would still repeat, and let me put aside from both our minds all idea of "interest" and "advantage." I assure you that all I ask, all I desire, is that exchange of affection and good-will which I now implore you not to renounce.

But, if I said I would not see you after I married, suffer me to retract words which could only have arisen in that warmth and eagerness of temper so habitual to me, and let me assure you that I feel it is something more than a hardship to find myself excluded from your house.

For the rest, I would wish to avoid all appearance of speaking to your feelings rather than to your judgment. Why do you think it wise to look only at what has offended or disappointed you in my conduct? Why, even if you will concentrate all your observation only on these aspects of it, do you refuse to take into consideration those extenuating circumstances, or to admit those redeeming motives, of which even the worst errors are not wholly destitute? Look round the world. Where do you find in it that perfection of judgment, or that warmth of heart you reject in your son? Is society so full of affectionate ties, of enduring remembrances, of tender associations, that we can afford to squander them away, or shut our hearts upon those we have loved, and who love us, even for greater cause of offence than any I have given you? Was not the father in the Parable (I do not mention this as an authority, for I do not believe all that you believe; I mention it only as an illustration), but was not he held out to us as a wise example, though his son had sinned against him? Did he shut the door upon that son's advances and return? Did he not think there is far more joy in reconciliation than in the remembrances of offences? 1828. ÆT. 25.

I should now conclude this letter if I did not think it right to say one word, so far as it concerns yourself, about one whose feelings I have now the most intimate opportunities of knowing.

In spite of all your opposition to our marriage, in spite of all the garrulous officiousness of those *third persons* who are always ready to retail stories from one to another, in spite of wounded feelings which might be termed natural and human, I assure you that Rose has never spoken of, or alluded to you, otherwise than in terms of goodwill and respect. Nor has she ever ceased to lament the breach our marriage has occasioned between you and myself. God bless and preserve you.

E. L. B.

This letter found Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton very unwell. It consequently remained unanswered, and a few weeks later her son wrote to her again:—

WOODCOT, *Feb.* 9, 1828.

I have heard with feelings I cannot possibly express, that you have still the remains of illness, and that you do not think or speak of me quite so unkindly as I had imagined. God knows that, if I had not thought you were utterly steeled against me, I would not have written to you as I have done, even to defend myself. But when one thinks there is no affection left, and that all one's overtures are thought mercenary and selfish, writing is indeed a difficult and a delicate task. My dear, dear mother, do not think, do not believe, that I could be such a wretch as not to feel the deepest and truest anxiety for your health; or that new ties and

1828. relationships of any kind could ever efface those that
ÆT. 25. subsist between us. Do not believe also that I have reconciled myself to your displeasure, or that any selfish motive could have induced me to incur it. But this I won't talk of now. I write with my heart full, and I will make haste to finish what I have to say. William tells me you are gone to Knebworth, and have all kinds of annoyances there. I cannot bear the idea that you should be there only with servants and strangers. Do, for God's sake, let one of us—*me*, if I might ask it—come to you. We could at least save you some trouble and be of some assistance to you. For my part, I will not consider it in any way compromising you to a reconciliation with me, if you are not willing to it ; nor ever speak to you on any subject but business. All I would wish is to be of use to you. God bless and keep you, my dearest, dearest mother.

E. L. B.

This offer was not accepted, and Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton showed no signs of relenting.

Writing on July 2, 1828, to announce the birth of his daughter Emily, Bulwer made yet another appeal :—

In informing you of a new tie, it is a great happiness to me to feel convinced that everything which tends to open or soften the heart makes it more deeply sensible of former claims upon it, and that every fresh affection only strengthens and confirms that which is the earliest and the most ineffaceable.

This letter, like most of its predecessors, remained unanswered.

On December 1, 1828, he writes again from

Weymouth, with a copy of *The Disowned*, which had just been published :— 1828. ÆT. 25.

MY DEAREST MOTHER—Some time ago when you wrote to me about *Falkland* I mentioned that I had another work in the press which would contain a moral tendency likely to please all people. This circumstance makes me venture to send you the accompanying volumes, and it will give me great pleasure if you like them.

I cannot avoid the opportunity of adding that it is now a year and three months since you have seen me, and that I feel the most increasing concern at your continued displeasure. May I hope at last that when I come to London it will have abated sufficiently for me not to consider myself quite proscribed from your house, or quite an alien from your affections? Often and often, notwithstanding your refusal to see me, or even to hear from me, I have been tempted to intrude myself more on your remembrance than I have done. But I have been placed in peculiar circumstances, and you cannot consider those circumstances without feeling that I had to struggle against any misconstruction of motives, or any suspicion of being actuated in my conduct by other causes than affection for you. At length let me hope that I need no longer do so. A year and three months have passed, and I have been enabled by my own exertions, not only to obtain for myself an independence, and a fair ground of calculation that in time this independence will become affluence, but also to have paid off debts previously incurred to the amount of several hundreds. I say this only with the view of freeing all concession to you (and I am willing to make every concession you can wish) from the shadow of any feelings but those which can alone be pleasing to yourself and honourable to me.

1828. Æt. 25. I cannot but think that it will be to you not quite ungratifying to feel and know that it is from the most real affection, and from the bottom of my heart, that I beseech you to suffer me once more to see you, and to subscribe myself, my dearest mother, with every sentiment of love and respect—Your most affectionate son,

EDWARD L. BULWER.

This time the book accomplished what all the previous letters had failed to do. The very title of the novel had an ominous sound for the hard-hearted mother, and some passages in it began to alarm her conscience. Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton at last showed signs of relenting, and wrote to her son making an offer of pecuniary assistance to save him from the toil which was wearing out his strength. To this he replied on December 23, 1828 :—

Most truly happy should I feel to be indebted to you for *any* mark of kindness, to be dependent upon you for *anything* calculated to assist me in this world. But unless favours proceed from affection, what could be so unworthy as to receive them? My dearest mother, how, if I were grinding my very heart out in toil, how *could* I touch a sixpence of your money so long as you forbid me to see and to thank you? For the love you have formerly borne me, for the sake of your own intended generosity, for the sake of what, not as a son but as a human being, I have a right to request—a hearing, I beseech you to see me. Do not think I wish to press this hastily upon you. Take your own time, name the place, fix the manner, the conditions, let it be when, where, and how you will, I only ask you to let me have this interview. It is the greatest favour you can do me, the one most worthy of yourself, the one for which I shall ever feel most truly and deeply grateful. 1829. Æt. 26.

Though unwilling as yet to receive him at Knebworth, Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton consented to see him in London, and in January, 1829, they met for the first time since the marriage had taken place. The estrangement had been too complete for an entire reconciliation to be achieved at once; and though the old cordiality between mother and son was not re-established, the dropped allowance was restored for a short time. The circumstance is thus described by his wife in a letter to Miss Greene :—

You must know that about a month ago Edward got a letter from his mother that I thought was a relenting one, upon which he went to town. She saw him, and he has been there every day since. He tells me in his letter of yesterday that she said she had heard that both my eyes were affected, and that if this had been the case she would have asked him and me to go and live with her, as she should not like me to be dependent upon servants. This is really very kind of her and I feel very grateful to her; but above all I feel grateful to God that they are reconciled.

When Mr. and Mrs. Edward Bulwer came to live permanently in London at the beginning of the following year, a new difficulty arose. Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton, though partially reconciled to her son, had hitherto declined to receive his wife. This situation became impossible when

1830. Æt. 27. both had houses in town and many friends and acquaintances in common, and in the following letter the position is explained at length :—

Edward Bulwer to his Mother.

Hertford Street.

My dearest Mother—I cannot but think that in some conversation that has taken place between us relative to my request that you should visit at my house, I must have expressed myself so ill that the real nature of the request has not struck you in its proper light.

I therefore think it worth while to restate the question dispassionately, addressing it to you on the two points I have already put before you. First, that of kindness to me as my mother (a kindness which the generous offer you have already made me proves I can still rely upon) and, secondly, that of principle, as a conscientious and right-minded person, which I sincerely think you are to a very uncommon degree. I feel assured by this conviction that you will not be offended if I appeal to the latter as well as the former. I know very well that the subject is unpleasant to you. So it is to me—pre-eminently unpleasant. But it is one which we *ought* both of us, to force ourselves to consider. To *me* its importance is incalculable, and when you have read all I am about to write, you will perceive that it is a subject which by *you* can no longer be avoided, either in kindness or in conscience.

There are two ways of viewing the request I now renew. Looking at it from the first point of view, that of kindness, if you said :—"Edward, I have no kind feeling for you. Don't talk to me of wounds or affronts, I don't care how much I wound or affront you!" then on this point I could say nothing. I could not appeal to feelings which did not exist. But you

say you do feel kindly towards me, and would do 1830.
anything to serve me. Well, then, you can serve me ÆT. 27.
in no point so materially as this; and without this all else is vain. What is it that I ask? First, that you will not put upon my wife a public affront which gives me sensible and constant pain, and, secondly, that you will allow me to be with you upon those terms of unreserved affection and entire confidence which (as I will presently show you) are rendered impossible by the existing nature of our relative positions, however greatly we may both of us desire them.

The affront I complain of is this:—I live in the same town with you. You refuse to visit my wife or enter my house. My brother also displeased you by his marriage, but you enter his house, and visit his wife. You say you distinguish between the two cases. But the world cannot take the trouble to understand such a distinction. It merely sees that, the two brothers being both of age, and having both married gentlewomen, you are sufficiently reconciled to our marriages to see both William and myself, but that your visiting the wife of one, and not the wife of the other, is a marked insult to the wife unvisited. And, even supposing that I cared not a straw for my wife, an insult to her is none the less a double insult to me. The interests of married people (whether they themselves agree or not) are identical.

You say the world does not occupy itself about the matter. But unfortunately that is not the case. In the first place, the world always gossips about dissensions in families, however humble; in the next place, forgive me if I say that I am a very marked person. Every man who writes is talked of more or less; and when once a man is talked of, all that belongs to him, or that he belongs to, is talked of also. The affront to me is therefore more known, and so more wounding,

1830. than it would be if I myself were less known. Besides,
Æt. 27. what can it be but galling in the last degree for our carriages to pass, and no salutation? For me to come to your house, and attend your receptions alone, and you never to be seen at mine? For my wife to be asked about you by persons who do not know the matter, whilst your name is sedulously avoided by those who do? It is an affront, not offered once and then over, but of daily, hourly occurrence, which perpetually occasions me the greatest unhappiness and the deepest mortification.

In family differences, moreover, the world always takes two sides, and makes two parties. One will side with you, another with me. Whichever be the one defended, the result is equally injurious to both of us. I cannot but be deeply hurt by a defence which blames my mother. And any disrespectability thrown upon me is inevitably reflected upon you. This is the necessary condition of our relationship. If a person praising your conduct says "I daresay there is something against Mrs. Edward Bulwer which we don't know, but which justifies her mother-in-law's refusal to visit her," and then begins guessing, conjecturing, and inventing, every word said against my wife falls with a slur upon all her connections; and you, as one of them, suffer with the rest. But how cruel a wound would such a gossip inflict upon *me*, how deep, how lasting an injury should I then sustain, because you had refused to my earnest entreaties the sacrifice of—what? A resentment only. I understand your reluctance to call here. But what does it arise from? A dislike, a sore and angry feeling. It can arise from nothing else; for there is not a single circumstance in which it could have any other origin. And, therefore, all you would sacrifice in taking from me a perpetual source of misery which embitters all my life, is a feeling not in itself so commendable, but what morality and magnanimity, apart from kindness, are opposed to its encouragement. 1830. Æt. 27.

The next point I beg you to consider is the obvious impossibility of our ever being, while this situation continues, on those terms of entire friendship and confidence with each other which I ardently desire, and to which I know you are not disinclined. The domestic affairs of the house you refuse to enter are topics which can never be touched on between us. But consider what this involves. Upon all that to every man is dearest and most familiar, all that lies closest to his heart, I cannot open mine to you. If you are prejudiced against a person who is bound up, not only with my affection, but my honour, it is clear that, throughout our intercourse, I must keep a perpetual guard upon my tongue in reference to all that concerns her, lest by an impulsive word, or careless expression, I do her some involuntary wrong. Yet how few things of an intimate and confidential nature can happen to a married man in which his wife is not more or less concerned. I am persuaded that you have not yet realised how perpetual is the pain caused me by a slight which no principle forbids you to remove. But if the matter were not (to myself at least) of an importance which transcends all reticence in alluding to the essential conditions of it, I would refrain from saying a word upon what I must call Duty. Duty, however, is exactly what demands the most detailed consideration in reference to those points on which the best and wisest persons are liable to be misled—I mean points of feeling.

And on this side of the question, first let me say that it is not fair to reply to me, "You talk of duty, but did you fulfil your duty to me, by marrying against my wishes and entreaties?" Wrong done by one

1830. Æт. 27. person is no justification for what is wrong in another. Still less can the maintenance of an indefensible sentiment or judgment by a person of mature age and experience be justified by the mistake of a young one, committed at that age when all conduct is impulsive. Even to me, what was excusable at twenty would not be excusable at thirty. It would be still less excusable at forty, and so on.

There is a second way of looking conscientiously at this question. All systems of morality, whether Pagan or Christian, concur in forbidding us to harbour feelings of deliberate and unreasoning unkindness towards anyone. We have no warrant in conscience or duty for rejecting any opportunity of ascertaining whether our ill opinion of another is a *just* one. Such an opportunity I offer you, I urge it upon you, I entreat you not to reject it. Its claim to attention is specially strong when there is any reason to believe that the dislike or ill opinion it may tend to remove, has been groundless. Here there is such reason. I will tell you why. Some of the original causes for your ill opinion of Rosina are now proved to be erroneous. You imagined that if I married, I should at a year's end (these were your words) "be the most miserable of men." That fear has not been realised. At least, if I am miserable, it is not from any disappointment in my wife's affection, or her conduct. This alone is sufficient reason why you should not refuse the means of testing by your own observation the truth of my assurance. To do so would be a duty, in the like circumstances, even to a person you had known for years, with ample opportunities of observing her character. It is doubly a duty towards one with whom you have had but the slightest possible acquaintance, when your dislike to her is admittedly founded upon rumours and reports. Every day brings forth instances of the falsity of such reports, and the person injured by them here is the wife of your son.

Thirdly, and this is the last point I shall urge, if Slander, which spares none of us (not even the wariest and best guarded) *did* whisper, if Envy, from whom none of us are free, *did* utter lies, against a friendless and unsheltered woman, placed in very unfortunate circumstances towards a mother of peculiar habits and tenets, who voluntarily abandoned her, and possessing attractions sufficient to waken those jealousies which prey upon all but the stupid and ugly—if, I say, this did happen, and if it was in your eyes a just objection to my marriage with her, that woman is now my wife. Her cause is mine. By refusing to visit her, you are the first and only person to give substance to these false and cruel rumours. You are putting a handle to any lies my enemies (and *I* at least have many) may invent. Our relationship admits of no neutrality. Not to visit my wife is to affront me. Now, ask yourself, I conjure you, if this should set afloat lying and malignant gossip, could your conscience absolve you from having helped, not only to embitter my life irremediably, but, what is far worse, to injure in the most vital point an innocent and unoffending person, who is disposed in all ways to show affection to you, and whose only fault, as regards yourself, is that she is my wife? It is in vain to say you do not do all this by refusing to visit her. I repeat, and the truth is clear, our relationship allows no neutrality.

I have now said all I wish to say. I have purposely put the matter mainly on the grounds of reason and duty, for on these grounds it is surest of your full consideration; I have purposely appealed to your strong sense of justice and rectitude rather than to any other feeling; because, knowing how conscientiously in all parts of your life you have ever sought your duty, and

1830. how unflinchingly you have followed it, I feel assured Ær. 27. that you will not resent my present reliance on that knowledge. But none the less do I ask this of you as a great favour, and none the less lasting will be my gratitude for an action, which, at all times, and in all events, I know you will be able to recall with conscientious satisfaction.—Believe me, my dearest mother, Your most affectionate son,

E. L. Bulwer.

The arguments contained in this filial lecture proved irresistible. Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton, in response to it, paid a visit to her daughter-in-law; but unfortunately this concession, which had been so hardly obtained, only proved to be the source of further bitterness. Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton was dissatisfied with her reception, and complained of it to her son when he was staying with her at Knebworth. He replied in his wife's defence, and in the course of explanations she used words which implied that she was "maintaining" his wife. Stung by this taunt, he left the house and wrote to her another long letter of reproach.

The same to the same.

Hatfield.

When, some time ago, you informed me of your intention to allow me so large an income, I was perfectly aware of the great generosity of the offer. Nothing could have induced me to agree to your making so considerable a sacrifice but the conviction that, as the proposal could only arise from affection, so I could not more wound that affection than by refusing it. I felt, too, that my health was weak and reduced ; that it had been greatly overstrained ; that it required a long and considerable relaxation from mental harassment, for its recovery ; that, without your proposal, I should not be justified in giving myself that relaxation, and that, as you were so sensible of this that your offer seemed, in great measure, to spring from the knowledge of it, so it would give you, I thought, a far greater pleasure to relieve me from the necessity of exertions which had become injurious, than to be withheld by me from a sacrifice for which nothing could repay you but my sense of its exceeding generosity and kindness. To have refused it at that moment would have been false pride. I accepted it with the warmest gratitude, and it was a pleasure to me to think I owed you so much.

But I must take leave to say, distinctly, that I did not consider this (I did not for a moment believe that *you* considered it) in the light of a "*maintenance.*" Maintenance I required from no human being. My own exertions had, and my own exertions yet could, maintain me and mine in all we required. I took it in this light (and in this light I thought it was given), that, whereas I could, alone, and always, but only by labour, confinement, and great mental anxiety, make more than £1000 a year, it was your wish, in offering me this sum, not to maintain me, for I was then (and for nearly three years I had been) maintaining myself, but to save me from that labour, confinement, and mental anxiety by which alone I could continue to do so.

Neither my wife nor myself were about to receive any more comforts than we had hitherto been enjoying. In accepting your kindness I proposed to surrender for the future (or, at least considerably to lessen) the income which my literary exertions had till then procured me.

We should not have been better off in a worldly

1830. Æt. 27. point of view. *She* would not have gained a single fresh advantage. *I* it is true would have gained something, nay much, but not in money. I should have gained an increase of tranquillity and health.

Viewing the matter in this light, as a proposal which it was neither discreditable nor dependent in me to accept, I was never more dismayed or humiliated than I felt at finding I had committed a great error in reasoning; that *you* viewed the matter in a wholly different light and that what *I* thought only (it was for *this* I was grateful) the substitution of an easy income for a hard one, *you* regarded as a maintenance, and one, moreover, which rendered me so dependent that it gave you the right to taunt me with it.

I am not above an obligation. I think that to be grateful is a feeling as honourable and delightful as to be dependent is mean and revolting. But, in all obligations of money, the money itself must be so subordinate, that it is the generosity, the self-sacrifice, the delicacy of the benefactor, and not the money by itself, for which obligation is felt without reluctance or loss of self-respect by a really grateful and honourable mind. If you had said that you maintained *me* I should have felt it far less. But that I should subscribe to any arrangement which enables you to think that you maintain one whom you dislike and reproach, would imply in me so base and paltry a spirit, that I cannot help again and again recalling that sentence with the acutest pain. It does not fall upon my wife, though spoken *of* her, and *at* her. The whole humiliation of it falls on me. *Mine* is the reproach, not *her's*, if any person (much more, any person who does not love her) boasts of maintaining her, while I yet live and can work. I had still some faint hope that you would allow it was only in a moment of vexation you said words so mortifying to me, and that you would disavow all permanent or serious meaning in them. I have been disappointed.

What remains to me to do is obvious. I feel still persuaded that at the time you made to me so generous a proposal, you did not see the offer as, according to your words, you now see it; and I shall always remember the affection which then dictated it with a gratitude much warmer, I fear, than I should have felt for it had you said these words some years hence, after I had incurred the unconscious meanness of contracting a debt I had not the ability to pay.

Firmly, then, and respectfully, I now return to my own resources and my own exertions. The sum you were so kind as to transfer to my account will have been paid back to yours before you receive this letter. The feelings that occasion this decision do not lessen my affection. They only render me, I hope, more worthy of yours. *Maintenance* is a word confined solely to *charity*; and no person who retains the use of his limbs and brains deserves esteem if he stoops to receive charity for himself. Still less does he deserve it if he suffers his wife or children to be dependent on the charity of others.

I have now thrown off the most important part of that burden of vexation I still feel, on my own behalf. But I must say one word on the subject of that vexation which you tell me I have caused *you*.

My sole offence was illness. I had been ill, very ill, for two days. I came to you ready to drop with sickness and exhaustion, without a moment's rest from a fatiguing journey, when I ought to have been in bed. Nor did I then say a single one of the words you are displeased with until after you had made to me many painful observations which, in the peculiar circumstances of our meeting, I think you might have spared me. And what *did* I say that you can justly be surprised at?

1830. Æt. 27. "Could you," I said, "have wished my wife to come to the door to receive you with *empressement* after you had for three years refused to meet her?" I said, and I still say, that she would have been wanting in decorum, in good taste, in good feeling, ay, and also in respect both to yourself and to that disapproval which your absence had so strongly marked, if on such an occasion she had manifested either the worldly ease of a lady receiving a stranger, or the cordial familiarity of a kinswoman welcoming a kinswoman. She ought to have been strongly affected and overcome; and she was so.

I have said this much on her behalf, though the main part of my letter relates to an expression only wounding to myself. I am prepared for everything. I thank God that I am. Exertion finds me not quite what I was some three years ago, but it finds me still more resolved, and still more persuaded that harassment, labour, broken health, yes, even a prison or death itself, are better than the sense of degradation.

E. L. Bulwer.

This letter put an end to the only means by which the sorrows of the future could have been averted. Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton did not offer to retract the words she had spoken in a moment of pique; and though during the next few years her relations with her son gradually resumed their old affectionate footing; though also on several occasions she showed acts of kindness to her daughter-in-law which were gratefully acknowledged, the allowance was not at once restored.

I have purposely reproduced in full the correspondence on this subject which took place between Edward Bulwer and his mother, because 1830. their relations in the years immediately following ÆT. 27. his marriage are the root cause of the bitterness which subsequently separated him from his wife. His mother had predicted that after one year of marriage he would be the most miserable of men; and if her forebodings were eventually realised, it was only because she herself had withheld the helping hand which could alone have saved him from the disaster which she foresaw.

For three years she shut him out of her heart altogether, and refused to hold any communication with him. During that time, with the utmost courage, industry and perseverance, he had won for himself independence in his private life and a high reputation in the world of letters. Then, when she saw that his independence could only be maintained at the sacrifice of his health and by means which threatened the happiness of his home, she opened her heart to him again and offered him the means of slackening his mental exertions. But although there was a foundation of love for her action, she still allowed herself to stand too much upon ceremony and to be too mindful of her magnanimity. Too proud to retract words spoken in haste, she sent her son back to the life of toil which eventually ruined his health, broke up his home, and destroyed his happiness.

When the evil consequences at last overtook him, she did her best to encourage and console him. She even befriended his wife, and used her

1830. Æt. 27. best efforts to prevent the final rupture between them. All the bitterness of the present quarrel was then forgotten, all recriminations set aside. To the end of her life he was her best loved son, and at her death she left him her Knebworth property and the greater part of her personal fortune.

He also, in after years, forgot everything but the love which she had borne him and the help which she had given him. He never reproached her with having caused his misfortunes, and never admitted that she had any share in the responsibility for them. Only those who read the story of these years with a knowledge of the events which followed, can see how a little more sympathy and a little less pride at the right moment on the part of the mother, could have saved the son whom she dearly loved from the suffering which embittered the whole of his life. When she did at last restore her affection and support, it was already too late.

CHAPTER VI

SEEDS OF DISCORD

1829–1834

> O let man beware of marriage until he thoroughly know the mind of her on whom his future must depend. Woe to him, agony and woe, when the wife feels no sympathy with the toil, when she soothes not in the struggle, when her heart is far from that world within to which her breath gives the life, and her presence the sun.
>
> *House of Darnley.*

> When once in a very gay and occupied life a husband and wife have admitted a seeming indifference to creep in between them, the chances are a thousand to one against its after-removal.
>
> *Godolphin.*

EARLY in the spring of 1829 Bulwer was busily engaged in trying to find a house in London. Writing to Miss Greene from Tunbridge Wells in May, 1829, Mrs. Edward Bulwer says :— 1829. ÆT. 26.

I believe I told you in my last letter that we were looking for a house. There was a very fine one in Dover Street that Edward particularly liked. It belonged to old Nash the architect, and Edward wanted him, before we took it, to alter the outside, enlarge the library, make a bathroom and another window to the Boudoir, for all which £500 a year instead of four, the original rent—which for an unfurnished house is high, let the house be ever so fine ; but Nash being very

1829. obstinate I went with Edward the morning I left town Æт. 26. to see if both together we could manage him better. We found that worthy sitting in his own splendid library, or rather gallery, which is half a mile long and done in mosaic in imitation of the Vatican at Rome. What Edward proposed was to give him £500 for the first five years and £450 after, but Nash was more obstinate than ever—declaring with an oath that he would not abate a farthing, and then changed the subject altogether. At last he said suddenly—"Pray, Sir, are you any relation to that very wonderful young man who wrote that delightful novel *Pelham?*" "Allow me, Mr. Nash," said I, "to introduce you to that very wonderful young man, *in propria persona*." Upon which Nash got up and made him a low bow, saying, "Well, then, Sir, for Pelham's sake, you must have the house on your own terms, and I'll make it one of the handsomest houses in town for you, with the best library; and if you ever again write anything half as good as *Pelham*, I shall be proud to think that I planned the room you wrote it in." After this fine speech he offered him castes from all his statues, showed us all over his house, or rather Palace, and finished by throwing open the doors of another suite of rooms in which Mrs. Nash sat ensconced, saying, "MY dear, I have brought you the author of *Pelham* and his wife for you to *look at*," upon which we put out our paws, wagged our tongues (in default of tails) and walked to and fro in the most docile manner possible to be stared at as the first Pelham and Pelhamess who had ever been caught alive in this country. At this juncture of affairs old Nash began fumbling in his pockets (which he has a great trick of doing). "Oh, never mind," said I, "paying now. I'll take the bronze chimney-piece to my Boudoir instead." "Very well," said he, laughing, "so you shall—and anything else you like." Well, will you believe that after all this he has gone back and wants to screw us down for a continuance of the £500 a year. I do hope that, much as Edward likes the house, he will have nothing more to do with it. However, he has the furnishing mania so strong upon him that he has already bought at Lord Gwydyr's sale, some pictures and statues. I only fear our house will be too Pelhamish by half. 1829. Æt. 26.

Owing, presumably, to the impossibility of coming to terms with Mr. Nash, the house in Dover Street was abandoned; and a few days later Bulwer decided to buy another house, No. 36 Hertford Street, which had lately been occupied by Sir Wathen Waller. On May 30 he writes to his wife to say that he has agreed to pay £2570 for this house. Although this must have absorbed a large proportion of their capital, they managed to spend a further sum of £820 in decorations; and it was not until January 1830 that the house was ready for them to inhabit.

In this house Mr. and Mrs. Edward Bulwer lived for the next three years; and here, in November 1831, was born their son, Edward Robert.[1] It was the last house which they occupied together on terms of intimate friendship, for already the sunshine of their love was becoming darkened by the clouds of domestic quarrels. Miss Greene, who came to visit them in 1832, was again struck by the luxury of their establishment and the brilliance of their society.

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[1] November 8, 1831.

"I was most kindly received," she writes, "and quite dazzled with the beauty of the house, and the elegance with which everything was conducted. I met many talented and agreeable people there, but upon the whole I did not like the way things went on, as I did not see any appearance of what I would call family sociability, as Mr. Bulwer always breakfasted alone in his library, and she and I in her dressing-room. He never dined at home unless there was company."

The absence of family sociability here alluded to, was the result of the prodigious literary toil in which the husband was engaged. They were living at this time at the rate of not less than £3000 a year, and nearly the whole of this sum had to be earned in the course of each year. In the ten years from 1827 to 1837 Bulwer completed ten novels, two long poems, one political pamphlet, one play, the political sketches in *England and the English*, three volumes of the *History of Athens* (only two of which were ever published), and all the essays and tales collected in the *Student*. At the same time he was Editor of the *New Monthly Magazine*, to which he contributed regularly. He also wrote anonymously in the *Edinburgh Review*, the *Westminster Review*, the *Monthly Chronicle*, the *Examiner*, the *Literary Gazette*, and other periodicals. In addition to this, from 1831 onwards he was an active Member of Parliament.

It was impossible for such labours to be accomplished except at enormous sacrifice both of physical health and family ties. Under the

1830–183
Æt. 27–3

strain his nerves became highly irritable, and he was subject to violent outbursts of temper. The most trivial incidents would give rise to angry recriminations and humiliating "scenes," and these in turn were followed by the keenest remorse and passionate self-reproaches. Robert Louis Stevenson has written in one of his essays[1] of the profession of authorship: "The practice of letters is miserably harassing to the mind. After an hour or two's work, all the more human portion of the author is extinct, and he will bully, backbite, and speak daggers." So it was with Edward Bulwer. "He seemed," says Miss Greene, "like a man who has been flayed, and is sore all over." As he has said himself in *Ernest Maltravers* :—

> The poor author! how few persons understand and forbear with and pity him! He sells his health and youth to a rugged task master. And O blind and selfish world, you expect him to be as free of manner, and as pleasant of cheer, and as equal of mood, as if he were passing the most agreeable and healthful existence that pleasure could afford or medicine invent to regulate the nerves of the body.

Fighting always against time, every hindrance and interruption was a provocation, and petty household worries were magnified into serious grievances. In the crowded, fevered life he was leading his wife had no place. When he was not actually writing or meditating in

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[1] *Virginibus Puerisque.*

30–1833. preparation for it, he sought recreation and
T. 27–30. mental stimulus in the society of those whose presence and conversation helped to break the monotony of his perpetual drudgery. Thus, he either dined out or invited others to his own table whose tastes and interests were most congenial to his own.

Rightly or wrongly, he felt that his wife took no interest in his work and was unsympathetic to his friends. Little by little they drifted apart. They seldom met, and when they were together his nervous irritability vented itself at every unwelcome circumstance in complaints or taunts or fits of anger. At first Mrs. Bulwer exercised great forbearance. To harsh words and unjust reproaches she returned meek replies. She was studious to please him, and endeavoured as far as possible to anticipate his wishes. Her attitude increased his gratitude and devotion to her, and he reproached himself bitterly whenever he realised that he had wronged her ; but the pangs of conscience only added to his mental strain, and the exigencies of his daily existence left him no time to make amends. Their quarrels were followed by reconciliation and apologies, but each one left a scar behind upon the delicate surface of their affections, which served to remind them of the wounds by which their love was being gradually destroyed.

Bulwer was probably too absorbed in his work to be conscious of the subtle change which was taking place in their relations, but his wife was beginning to realise that her marriage was a bitter disappointment. She was a woman to whom excitement was an essential condition of happiness. Previous to her marriage she had found this element in her relations with Edward Bulwer. To him she had given all the love of which she was capable, and she had given it with the impulsiveness of her Irish nature. Her heart, her head, her vanity, her senses, all had been fascinated by the homage of her young, brilliant, graceful wooer—a man admired by other women, overflowing with sentiment, witty yet tender, and romantically devoted to her. 1830–1833 Æt. 27–30

As soon as they were married and settled down to a joint domestic existence, the lover at once subsided into the husband. The excitement began to fade. All the charming attentions and compliments of courtship were replaced by the dull routine of matrimony, the monotony of which was only relieved by their struggles with poverty. Instead of the fascinating lover who was content to pass hours at her feet, who stole so tenderly to her side, or rushed so passionately into her arms from the world that strove to keep them apart, there was now only the preoccupied and inattentive husband, absorbed all day in his den over his books and papers, ready to growl at her whenever she interrupted the occupations which had become the necessity of his life—occupations in which she had no share and no interest.

During the two years at Woodcot, the ties

30–1833. which bound them to each other were still
r. 27–30. strong. His mother's attitude of irreconcilable opposition and unfriendliness helped to strengthen Bulwer's affection for his wife, and the constant delicacy and ill-health of the latter aroused his pity and caused him to seek opportunities for giving her pleasure. When they removed to Hertford Street and he was partially reconciled to his mother, his attentions to his wife became rarer, and her life became proportionately more and more lonely. All the romance, all the poetry, all the charm of their relationship had fled, and there was no companionship between them to take the place of these.

If Mrs. Bulwer could have sympathised with the work, or understood the character, of the man she had married, or if, again, she could have formed friendships or found occupations of her own, this change would not have been to her the bitter and bewildering disappointment which it was. If she could have felt that her husband was working for *her*, that he was not really indifferent to her, that she was now interwoven into the hard realities of his life, she might have found a new interest, a new romance even, in her own life. That she could not do this was her misfortune rather than her fault. Very few women are able to be, with complete happiness to themselves, the housemate of a preoccupied and overworked man of genius with a fretful temper.

All that she did understand and feel was that her husband did not seem to love her, that her own life was unoccupied, that she was not only neglected but scolded. And why the change? She had not changed. She still loved him. She was herself just what she had always been. She tried hard to please and yet he never seemed pleased. She had much to suffer and endure, and it is a striking proof of her affection for him at this time that, notwithstanding many deep-rooted defects in her character, she did suffer and endure it uncomplainingly for four years.

The following letters written by Mrs. Bulwer at this time, will serve to illustrate the nature of their relations.

Mrs. Edward Bulwer to Miss Greene.

Hertford Street, *May* 26, 1830.

What with parties at home and parties abroad I am quite worn out, but nevertheless I keep growing fatter and fatter. We have another large dinner at home on the 5th June, among the literary part of which we shall have Master Tommy Moore, young D'Israeli—the author of *Vivian Grey*, Washington Irving, Mr. Galt, the author of *Laurie Todd*, which if you have not read is well worth reading. It is astonishing what bores I find all authors except my own husband, and he has nothing author-like about him, for this reason, that his literary talents are his very least.

I went to the House of Commons the other night when I had the gratification of hearing O'Connell vociferate with such a full-blown scarlet and yellow brogue that I have heard nothing to equal it or even approach it since the days when I used to be pounded in poor Charley's old gig from Kilsalaghan to the fish market in Dublin. If you can fancy the largest *Irish*

1831. sunflower that ever blew talking in a high sharp north-
Æt. 28. easterly wind, you will have a perfect idea of O'Connell's oratory. *Apropos* of the land of potatoes, Mrs. Norton said to Edward at dinner the other day that if Tommy Moore had been half as fascinating as his own heroes, he would have demoralised half England and peopled all Ireland by this time.

The same to the same.

Broadstairs, *May* 30, 1831.

Edward is very grateful for your congratulations.[1] Poor darling, he is looking very well just now, but I dread his first session. As you know, he is not a person to take anything quietly, and what others would think even brilliant success he in his own person would think a failure, never being satisfied with anything he does. He will send you the book when he gets to London. Have you seen the picture of him that is in the last number of *The New Monthly Magazine* for May?[2] I think it is very like him—tell me if you do.

The same to the same.

Broadstairs, *June* 26, 1831.

I have never been so ill in my life as I have been here. You must know that a day or two after I last wrote to you I was bled, and strange to say, though it was so difficult to make any blood come at the time that the man gashed me in five or six different places, yet for a week after my arm did nothing but gush out

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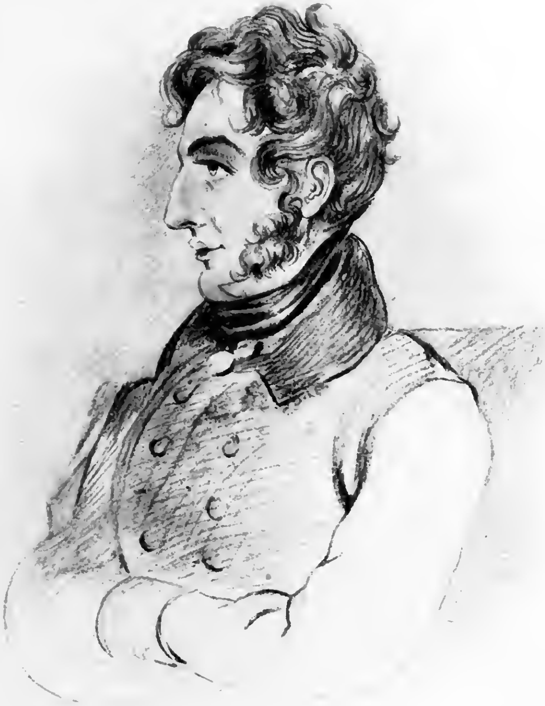
[1] On his election to Parliament.

[2] The portrait here referred to has been reproduced on several occasions, but I have never seen the original. The one which appears on the opposite page must have been done about the same time and strongly resembles it. It was made from life by Robert M. Sully, a pupil of Sir Thomas Laurence, at an evening party at Lady Blessington's. When it was finished, Bulwer put it against the wall and wrote his signature below it. It remained in the artist's family till January, 1913, when it was presented to me by his granddaughter Miss Julia Sully.



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Edw Lytton Bulwer

Emery Walker Ph. sc.

bleeding, which weakened me dreadfully. I have had 1831. a great deal of fatigue in house-hunting too, as I am ÆT. 28. obliged to give this up on the 30th. I have at length got a very nice cottage with a very pretty garden which is indispensable to me when I *am* in the country. All the lodging people here think I am married to a banker's clerk, for I say I must have a bedroom with a dressing-room to it, as my husband comes down to see me on a Saturday.

The same to the same.

PINNER, *Sept.* 5, 1831.

I have not yet read Moore's *Life of Lord Edward Fitzgerald*, not I'm sure from not having time, as I have more than plenty and am dull enough to boot. For five days in the week Master Edward is in town, and the two that he is down here he is finishing a novel, so that I have not much of his company. However, thank Heaven there is not above one more chapter to do now.

The same to the same.

PINNER, *Feb.* 11, 1832.

No, my dear Mary, it was certainly not I who gave the £100 to the Missionary Society; first, because if I had £100 or half £100 to spare, I know so many poor starving wretches to whom it would be salvation were it divided among them; and it is, I am sorry to say, too well ascertained that the sums given to Missionary Societies go (like the monies collected for the Irish peasantry) to enrich the craft of individuals, and not one tithe of them are disseminated according to the very praiseworthy and conscientious wishes and intentions of the donors. £100! indeed, if I ever had such a sum at my disposal I am not sure that I should not have been wicked enough to let you experience my generosity in the shape of sundry pretty *cadeaux* before the

1832. Æt. 29. Missionary Society. It was Edward's mother who gave it, and she is a very generous as well as a very conscientious good woman. But poor me, ten thousand a year would not be a penny too much to live in London with, and three thousand requires all the management that can be bestowed upon it, for which reason my very humble charities never extend beyond bibles to those whom I know receive them and can read them, necks of mutton, loaves of bread and flannel petticoats.

With regard to the fashions about which you inquire, I can only tell you that silks are at the present time of the year almost exploded for morning dresses, and nothing but black satin (made high) and French merinos and cashmeres worn. They wear the dresses lined throughout now, which is very ruinous, and ten breadths in the skirts, which looks almost as full as a hoop. There is little or no change in the make—the sleeves perhaps not quite so large. The bodies both of morning and evening dresses *drapée* both in the front and the back, or else tight bodies with capes. The cloaks, I suppose you know, are chiefly of cashmere; the newest are richly embroidered in floss silk of the same colour as the cloak and the one cape comes down as low as the knees, so that it looks like a short cloak over the long one. The bonnets are very small and chiefly of velvet, *velour épinglé* and plush. The hair is dressed chiefly *à la Grecque*, that is the narrow thick Greek plait at the back of the head with a cluster of curls falling over like the statues. *Ferronières* still worn but not so much—short sleeves very short and not quite so full.

I send you in another frank a letter Teddens got from a gentleman in Devonshire some time ago, but mind you send it back to me. *Apropos* of other franks, whenever you have letters to enclose to me, pray put them in separate half sheets of paper, for your last letter of Jan. 30, being greatly overweight, came to five shillings & sixpence. Be it known to you, my dear Sublime, that the uttermost limit of a common frank is two sheets and a half of thinnish letter paper, and one seal more makes it too heavy. A Government frank may take any quantum from a young child up to an old elephant. 1832. Æt. 29.

Mrs. Edward Bulwer to Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton.

Hertford Street,
Aug. 15, 1832.

It is indeed, my dear Madam, very melancholy to think of poor Edward's rash continuing so long; but while he will slave himself and lead the feverish excited life he does, there is, I fear, no chance of his getting rid of it. He undertakes a degree of labour that positively, without exaggeration, no three persons could have the health and time to achieve. So incessantly is he occupied that I seldom or never see him till about two or three in the morning for five minutes, and then if I implore him to do less and study his health more, if I tell him that he will defeat every object he has in life by attempting more than he can compass, it only makes him angry; and, poor fellow, all this irritability increases the rash. So I can only lament, endure and be silent. But it makes me so thoroughly wretched that I would gladly give my right hand to prevent him doing the injurious things he does. He has, I believe, given up the intention of going to Paris, but still means to go as far as Boulogne. I have just got a letter from him in which he says:—"The weather is delightful, but I have not been out since I came here, as I have too much to do." This is really quite dreadful, for a galley slave has one day in the week to rest, but he has none. Fairy is on my bed, and every time I cough

1832. the poor little thing moans till the tears roll down his
ÆT. 29. cheeks. There is no love like the love of a dog.

Whilst deprived almost entirely of her husband's society at this time, Mrs. Bulwer possessed none of the qualities which enabled her to build up a life of her own with independent interests. Her household duties were merely irksome, and in no way served to occupy her mind. With extravagant tastes and no capacity for business, she found it hard enough to manage with the income which was being supplied to her at so great a cost. At the same time she missed the personal relationships which are so necessary to a woman's happiness. In times of disappointment and trouble men have an escape, commonly denied to women, in their capacity to live amongst abstract ideas. But in nine cases out of ten the happiness of a woman's life (nay, even the whole tendency of her nature) depends almost entirely upon the character of its personal relations; and if these are unsatisfactory, the injury as well as the suffering they involve are aggravated by the narrowness of her interests and the extreme personality of all her feelings.

Mrs. Bulwer did not care for her children, and they played no part in her life. Her affections, which found no outlet in human relationships, were throughout her life bestowed upon the dumb animals which were her constant companions. To her dogs she was really devoted, and they held a place in her estimation far above human beings. She had their names printed upon tiny visiting cards, which she used to leave with her own upon her friends and neighbours; and the whole of her correspondence with her husband, from the first days of their courtship until the final breach in their affections, was carried on in terms of canine endearment. He was "Pups" and she was "Poodle," and these pet names recur in their letters during the brief periods of their reconciliation, right up to the date of their final separation. 1832. Æt. 29.

But though her dogs were a great comfort to her and received a full measure of her love, they could not give her anything in return, nor supply the mental occupation which she so sadly needed. She had few friends, and none that were really helpful to her. Miss Greene came to live with her frequently, and though she served as an affectionate confidante, she was not the kind of woman who could supply either the companionship or the guidance which Mrs. Bulwer required at this anxious crisis of her life. Though the soul of kindness, Miss Greene was a woman of narrow ideas, with strong Evangelical prejudices and a somewhat puritanical view of life, whom Mrs. Bulwer took a pleasure in shocking upon every occasion, either by her extravagance, her recklessness, or her mocking humour. Miss Greene's influence, therefore, however unintentionally, was provocative rather than restraining. What was needed at this time was a sensible married

1833. Æt. 30. woman with a knowledge of the world, who could have helped the injured and neglected wife to forget her troubles, make the best of her situation, and find mental occupation and recreation within her own sphere. It is one of the saddest facts in the tragedy of Mrs. Bulwer's life that at no time did she benefit by the assistance of wise friends, while in later years she suffered at the hands of many whose influence was altogether harmful.

In 1831, at the General Election of that year, Bulwer was returned for the borough of St. Ives, and thus added to his literary labours the duties of an active member of Parliament. With the exception of a brief interval when they hired a small cottage at Pinner, the life in Hertford Street was continued for three years, with unremitting toil on the husband's part and increasing *ennui* and disappointment on the wife's.

At last, in 1833, Bulwer's health broke down altogether, and they decided upon a journey through France, Switzerland and Italy for the sake of rest and change. They found neither, for they carried with them the seeds of the evils from which they sought to escape. The children were left in the charge of Miss Greene, to whom Mrs. Bulwer wrote the following letter on the eve of her departure :—

Mrs. Edward Bulwer to Miss Greene.

My dearest Mary—Many thanks for your kind note and the flowers which came beautifully fresh yesterday. Thank Mary Anne for her note and tell her we shall be happy to see her and Mr. Wilkinson at any time. I only hope to know the day they will come that I may not be out. Mary Anne is the only one who has the decency to enquire after that darling Dog Faizy, who is a greater darling than ever and who goes out to strawberry-and-cream parties of an evening which she enjoys very much. She sends 20 licks to Bonnie. 1833. ÆT. 30.

Remember you are only to have Emily on *one* condition—*i.e.*, that of not *confirming* every fault in her *disposition* by way of kindness. Defects of manner or dulness of capacity never trouble me, as there will be time enough to rectify *them*; but with regard to a child's *disposition* and frame of mind, I think time may be lost at a month old. Remember, too, that the only way to work upon Emily is through her pride. In order to have any chance of rooting out faults in so young a child, the best way is first to try and turn those very faults to account, and then time and common sense may do more towards banishing them than all the precepts in the world. All I ask is that if she is going out in ever such a hurry, and *orders* a servant to tie her shoes, put on her bonnet, or anything else, you will not allow it to be done till she asks in an humble and proper manner; and that when she makes an unfeeling speech about any one, or anything, you will not let her see you laugh at it because it may be worded in a clever or worldly manner. Poor, dear child, it is *much*, *much* kinder to check these things in her now, than to let the world break her spirit for her hereafter, as it most assuredly will; and with Emily the best way is to show her the *impolicy* of being selfish and unamiable, and how much it *deprives herself* of. With most children it would be best to show them how unhappy they made those who loved them. In a child's education we must only use the means within

1833. our power if we wish to alter a nature which it is
ÆT. 30. beyond us to unmake; and I am so far sanguine that I think our very faults with *incessant* attention may be turned to good account, which if left entirely to themselves can only lead to destruction. One thing in especial I wish to guard against in Emily, and never let it pass. I mean a way she has of joining against a person who has done wrong to please or oblige her. For instance, if Phasi were to give her fruit or cake and you blamed Phasi, she would instantly join in it; or if you blamed Emily for something she had done, she would instantly lay the blame on some one else. But you will be tired to death of this tirade. Yet, though I do not pretend to the gormanic agonised feelings of a mother, I *do really* and *sincerely* feel that sort of affection for my children which would make me do anything for their present, and above all, their future welfare.

All the Breretonism of my nature is roused by that audacious Pups, who has been to Oxmanton's sale and bought a bronze Apollo as large as life, two Louis Quatorze Clocks, and other things which we did *not want*; and, as you know, "them's the matters that provoke me." So as for all this, I must attend doubly to the material matters—I must say good-bye, having plenty to do.—Ever most affectionately yours,

ROSINA LYTTON BULWER.

Edward Bulwer's mind could not rest even on a holiday, and the temporary release from labour involved no cessation of the causes which made labour the necessity of his life. A few weeks in Rome and Naples provided material for two new novels—*Rienzi* and *The Last Days of Pompeii.* Mrs. Bulwer scarcely got more of her husband's society than when they were at home, and her letters during her travels bear little evidence of enjoyment :— 1833. ÆT. 30.

Mrs. Edward Bulwer to Miss Greene.

Florence,
Hôtel des Quatres Nations,
Tuesday, October 14, 1833.

Neither of us are in love with Italy, and therefore I devoutly hope that we may be back in dear England by the end of December. The travelling here may be divided into three classes—plague, pestilence and famine. Plague—the mosquitoes. Pestilence—the smells, and Famine—the dinners. Nevertheless Pups, who is never satisfied with anything at home, seems to thrive upon the abominations here, as he grows quite fat, or as Byrne[1] says:—"Mr. Bulwer out of contradiction seems to enjoy the bad beds and bad dinners," while I am getting quite thin upon lemonade and lamentations. Poets ought to be strangled for all the lies they have told of this country. "Mother of Paintings and Sweet Sounds" it certainly is, but not sweet *smells*.

After I wrote to you from Milan we spent two days very pleasantly at the Lake of Como in which I was also disappointed in all except in Pliny's Villa and its spring of diamond water which he eulogises in his letters, and whose praises, for a wonder, he does not exaggerate. We stayed some time at Venice and I should have liked it very much but for those unprincipled mosquitos whose depredations upon my unhappy person were as boundless as they were bare-faced. My face was in such a state with them that I looked as if I had had the small-pox. The Gondoliers at Venice speak with the greatest affection of poor Lord Byron

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[1] Her maid.

1833. and tell you with such pride that he made a tragedy out Æt. 30. of Marino Faliero. The Doge's Palace exceeds anything one could dream of in the splendour of its architecture and its paintings in the Council Chamber where are the pictures of all the Doges. Where that of Marino Faliero ought to be, is painted a black banner with an inscription about traitors. From the Palace you pass over the Bridge of Sighs to the dungeons of the Inquisition. These were not half as horrible as I had expected except *one*, where the criminals used to be beheaded and to which is a stone door, through which are round holes for the blood to drain out at. This door opens under a black shiny arch, with innumerable sluggish slimy reptiles crawling like fiend-like sentries up and down. To this black arch is moored a black boat which, with the black hollow sounding water splashing against it, was, by the torch-light with which we saw it, more horrid than anything you can imagine. This boat was to take the dead bodies out to sea.

The Churches in Venice are quite as if Alladin had ordered the Genii of the Lamp to build them—they are so very splendid, to say nothing of the marble porphery, gold and precious stones in which they abound. They are rich in the *chef d'œuvres* of Titian, Leonardo da Vinci, Paul Veronese, Julio Romano, and the two Corregios at the Barbarini Palace. They show you the room in which Titian died, and wherein are his first and last pictures, the latter not finished. I think St. Mark's the least handsome of all the churches—it is very like the pictures of St. Sophia at Constantinople, and the loads of Turks you see walking up and down the Piazza make it still more like.

The Duchesse de Berri was at Venice while we were there, making herself very rediculous by wearing a large crown on her bonnet. Her baby was with her, but no one knew who or where its father was. The Admiral of the Fleet gave a Grand Fête. She sent to him requesting he would allow her to go on board to see the preparations, and he refused. She and her suite took up an entire hotel and lived at the rate of £150 a day, but going away she only gave the poor man of the hotel a promissory note!

On leaving Venice we slept and breakfasted at Ferrara, where my friends the mosquitos recommenced their attacks. While I was making breakfast, Pups went to see the cell in which Tasso had been confined. Poor Lord Byron had carved his name upon the wall, but it was nearly effaced, while those of Colonel Clough and Mr. Jackson!! stood out in bold relief.

In the dungeons of the Inquisition at Venice some of the poor wretches had carved their names and lamentations, but the guide told us they were nearly effaced till Lord Byron had spent two days re-cutting them into the walls. The entrance into Florence is certainly beautiful, being completely crowned with vineyards, plantations of silver olives and orange, lemon and pomegranate trees; and with the Grand Duke's Gallery, no one can be disappointed; but excepting these, Cheltenham or any other little watering place in England is twenty times a prettier town. Oh, and the flowers—I forgot those. They are splendid. How I wish I could send you some of the beautiful violets, myrtle, carnations and magnolias that are now before me. Our windows look upon the Arno. How fine that sounds, and yet it is a dirty little, narrow, ugly, muddy river, covered with little ugly Feluccas in which are coarse, ugly men in more than a state of demi-nudity, shovelling up the mud all day long. In short, even the Westminster Bridge part of the Thames is a hundred times handsomer.

One thing I do like in the travelling here, which is a little sort of Pomeranian dog belonging to the pos-

1833. Æt. 30. tillion, which often rides a whole post on the off horse, and keeps its seat perfectly. I was admiring the jockeyship of one of these dogs the other day to our courier who said quite gravely:—"*Oui, Madame, ce sont les chiens les plus respectables de toute l'Italie.*" But pray tell pretty, darling, darling Faizey that I never kiss or even pat these dogs, only order them to be fed, but I have written to Faizling by Mrs. Leigh—darling, darling little dog.

The same to the same.

Albergo della Vittoria,
Naples, *November* 23, 1833.

My dearest Mary—I should have written to you from Rome, only that I was so knocked up with sightseeing, and so thoroughly disappointed and disgusted with the whole place, that I could not do anything. It is without exception the most *dirty*!! barbarous and dismal place I ever saw, and its magnificent buildings, and still more magnificent ruins, look as incongruously out of place as if you were to see rubies and diamonds the size of a pigeon's egg upon a very coarse, very dirty, and very ragged kitchen rubber. The Vatican, St. Peter's, the Colosseum, the Capitol and the Church of San Giovani Maggiore are splendid beyond conception, and so are the innumerable fountains about Rome; but all the water in them would not suffice to purify the disgusting filth of its streets.

All heathen temples being abolished, there is not one in the whole place dedicated to Cloacina: *par conséquence* she has established a sort of Augustine era in every street where all the world pays tribute, so that unless one had made up one's mind to be *chasséed* out of every room as a "nuisance" one could not obey the proverb which tells you that when you are at Rome, you should do as Rome does. The Palace of Titus is miraculously well conserved, and the colours in the little of the frescoes that remain are brighter than those done yesterday. The Halls of Nero's Golden House are now full of reeds and brambles, and little remains of this once wonder of the world but stones and rubbish.

At San Giovani Maggiore they show you the staircase (*soi disant*) that our Saviour descended to be crucified, which they pretend the Emperor Constantine brought from Pontius Pilate's house at Jerusalem. People are only allowed to go up these stairs upon their knees. They also show you half of the table off which our Saviour ate the Last Supper, and as many pieces of the true Cross as would suffice to build a man-of-war. Then there is the dungeon where St. Peter was imprisoned, and the spring of water that miraculously sprang up when he wanted to baptise the jailor. As for the Pope, you, who are in the habit of going regularly to the play, have only to recall the features of "Jack Reeve" of the Adelphi in the part of Cupid, and you will have him before you, as he is a facsimile of him.

A few days before we got to Rome, they had found the coffin and skeleton of Raphael; and after sacriligiously raking up those poor bones, they got up a magnificent ceremony in the Pantheon to re-inter them; which ceremony was as gorgeous as Cardinals, choristers, torches, incense and a procession of all the living artists could make it. Considering the life Raphael led and, above all, the manner in which he died, it was rather a curious ceremony for those Revd. dignitaries of the Church to assist at, who pass their lives in inveighing against all artists. The skeleton was re-interred under a statue of the Virgin, and many were the indecorous jests that flew about, purporting that had Raphael been alive he would have chosen his position *vice versa.* (I hope Mr. Wilkinson is not within 10 miles!)

1833. Æt. 30. The Campagna of Rome is as ugly as Rome itself—including their far-famed Albano, Frascati and Tivoli, with the exception of Domitian's Palace at the former and the water-falls and ruins of the Temple of the Sibyl at the latter which are really beautiful. I never felt so glad to leave any place as I did to leave Rome—which we did six days ago. We got over the Pontine Marshes very well by taking them at sunrise, and were amply repaid for their disagreeables by the exquisitely beautiful drive from Terracina to Naples.

Picture to yourself the most bold and beautiful sea possible, girt with rocks crowned with arbutus and heath and broom in full bloom, a smooth, silver-sanded beach with literally dwarf forests of myrtle and rose geraniums in full bloom. Sloping down to it you will see Terracina—then comes Mola Gaeta with its myriads of terraces one above the other, of orange, lemon, magnolia and pomegranate trees with their golden fruit, silver blossoms and emerald leaves; in short, all their fairy-tale paraphernalia on at once, making the air one long breath of flowers.

Then for Naples; it is beautiful, and the only place in Italy that we have not both been disappointed in. It would be a charming place even without the patent it has got to have violets and green peas all the year round, as it has a November sun and sky that beats our June one, with flowers and fruits growing in the open air that would shame the produce of our July hot-houses. Our windows look upon the Bay, and are now all open with the French blinds down, and yet the heat is intense.

This hotel is beyond comfortable—it is luxurious. The man who keeps it has been all over the world and spared no expense in fitting it up. The furniture is quite magnificent with loads of Persian carpets, ottomans, sofas, tabourets, easy chairs—in short, he has put the cooks and furniture of France, the comforts and cleanliness of

England and the fine arts of Italy, into his house, which, after the *dirt*, misery and starvation of all the other Italian inns, is not a little delightful. 1833. Æt. 30.

We had an adventure about our rooms. We found them too magnificent—that is, too dear—and settled to have others less expensive, when the next day up comes mine host (very like Gil Blas) with his hands upon his heart, bowing down to the ground, and saying that when he had asked that price for his rooms he was not aware whom he had the honour of having in his house; but now that he did know, he should feel too happy if he would occupy the rooms for nothing.

We also had another adventure at the library. The old woman there is exceedingly crabbed, and Pups wanted her to give him a book more than his subscription entitled him to. She refused. He said he had never been used so cruelly at any library before, upon which she said, "Much indeed I should think such a chap as you can know about libraries." He laughed very much at this, which put her into an additional fury; and snatching the book out of his hand in which he had written his name for the subscription, she put on her spectacles to read it. She had no sooner done so than she exclaimed "*O, se questo è uno spectacolo veramente grato!*"—"Now, I shall be happy," and throwing her arms round his neck (a proceeding he would willingly have dispensed with), said:—"Take all the books in my shop—*Miracoloso Giovanestro*," and still holding him tight by the coat called in her daughters, three pretty black-eyed girls, and vociferated to each, "*Ninetta, questo Pelham; Beatrice, questo Eugene Aram; Elizabetta, questo Devereux.*" A lanky youth of a son now joining the group, she added:—"*Giuseppe, questo l'Inghilterra, e gli Inglesi;*" and then wiping the pen he had written his name with, she told the aforesaid youth to lock it up carefully. As the young ladies did not

1833. repeat their Mamma's salutation, he made his escape as
ÆT. 30. soon as he could.

We have not yet been to Vesuvius or Pompeii, for I want to rest after the endless sights of Rome, where every evening I was so knocked up that I felt more and more the truth of Mrs. Ready's observation that I "had seen too much."

Will you tell pretty darling, darling, innocent put-upon Faizey, with his Mammy's best love, that the first night we arrived here I saw a Diogenes of a dog with a lantern in his mouth, looking, I suppose, for an honest dog, which he would find it difficult to meet with in this or any other part of Italy. I thought what a nice footman he would make for Fay and wished to hire him for that purpose; but tho' I offered him double the bones and two new lanterns a year, he would not leave his present master. Tell her also that her papa has bought a black Pomeranian dog for a ducat, a good dog enough in his way, but sadly addicted to eating slippers, shawls, pocket handkerchiefs and walking sticks, which plebeian propensities make a good foil for Fay's little lady-like thorough-bred aristocanine manners. Sir William Gell the antiquary and *enfant gâté* of this place—and to whom Lord Byron has given a niche in the Temple of Fame by calling him "Mild Classic Gell," has got a seraglio of dogs, one of which he has taught to speak, but no sooner was he taught to speak than he taught himself to swear—not the first clever dog who has perverted his talents.

I send you a little note of Sir William Gell's which I want you to send to Miss Hutton. Her address is Bennet's Hill, near Birmingham. Write a line with it reminding her that you are "the lady she met at our house"; and will you say that I should have written myself but am not very well, which is true, for a pain in my chest which I brought with me from England gets worse and worse every day in spite of this delicious climate. Be sure you get a frank for Miss Hutton, and say I hope she has got the Queen's autograph by this time; and as I know she is fond of Kings and Queens upon paper, I will get her the King and Queen of Naples. I think I can get the Dey of Algiers for her, too, if she is not afraid of admitting so formidable a personage into her maiden *ménage*. When you see dear Mrs. Leigh, tell her I have got a little bit of marble for her that Torwalsden gave me out of her brother's statue, which is nearly finished, and give her my best love. 1834. Æt. 31.

At Naples, as this letter indicates, Mrs. Bulwer found herself in surroundings more to her taste; and during a series of social engagements she obtained consolation for her wounded feelings in the attentions of a Neapolitan Prince. From this man she received the praise, the flattery, the affection which she had missed for so long. She could not help contrasting the tender attentive attitude of her new admirer with that of the cross, ungrateful husband, on whom she felt she had thrown away the riches of a nature which he himself had so often extolled for its depth and beauty. In a short time she persuaded herself that she was thoroughly in love. Her husband, when he discovered it, took a ridiculously serious view of the matter. He flew into a violent rage, and in a stormy interview upbraided his wife for her infidelity. She replied that all her affection for him was dead, and that she had given her heart to her new

1834. friend. He then brought her post-haste back
Æt. 31. to England, and vowed that he would never live with her again. To her this was like going back to prison. She looked into her heart and found in it a hell of disappointment, anger and bitterness.

Their journey home was a long protracted nightmare, a period of violent emotions, of passions in revolt, of bitter recriminations, at the end of which they arrived in Hertford Street in a very hysterical and exhausted condition. They at once sent for Miss Greene, who did her best to bring about a reconciliation. After long interviews, first with the wife and then with the husband, Miss Greene at last succeeded so far as to induce them to continue to occupy the same house, and to abandon for the moment their talk of an immediate separation. A few days later, Mrs. Bulwer went to stay with Miss Greene at Hounslow, and there recounted to her friend the whole sad story of her brief happiness and its disastrous conclusion. Time was thus gained for violent emotions to subside, and soon afterwards an interchange of friendly letters led to a reconciliation. Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton then invited them to Knebworth in the hope of making this reconciliation complete. But the visit was a failure. The circumstances of their recent quarrel were unfortunately revived, which led to fresh recriminations, and they returned to London in an embittered frame of mind. It was then agreed that they should try the effect of living apart for a time. Mrs. Bulwer went to Gloucester with her children and Miss Greene, and her husband went to Ireland. 1834. Æt. 31.

At this first serious crisis in their relationship, one may pause for a moment to consider the treatment which it received, since, from the mistakes which were then committed, resulted consequences that endured for a lifetime.

Hitherto Mrs. Bulwer's married life had been devoid of those little personal attentions which are so essential to a woman's happiness—the indulgences, the flatteries, the tendernesses—little things in themselves, yet, as indications of affection, infinitely precious. Outside her home she found little to compensate her for the deficiencies within. She was fond of society, of amusements, of social gaieties, and missed them all. Her husband had been too preoccupied to pay attention to those wants. Money and presents he had provided, even lavished upon her, but these could not satisfy the needs of the heart, and in a sense they were but reminders of her dependent position. His own manner was unsympathetic; he expected marks of affection which he did not show himself. He, too, required recreation, and obtained it, but it was not of the kind which his wife could share. The intellectual society which he cultivated was not that which she could appreciate; and whilst he complained that she neither took interest in his work nor cared for his friends, he did not

1834. realise that the requirements of her life were
ÆT. 31. less satisfied than his.

It was not strange, therefore, that when at last in the society at Naples Mrs. Bulwer found herself appreciated, courted, and flattered, she should have abandoned herself eagerly to so rare a pleasure. That her heart was seriously or permanently engaged is unlikely, for her feelings were never deep, and at no time in her subsequent life did her admirer of these days reappear. That it might have become so, however, if the intimacy had longer continued, is probable, and that her husband should have exercised the power which his position gave him of speedily putting an end to it was both natural and expedient. But though right to bring his wife away from Naples, Bulwer in every other respect mismanaged the situation. His wife's confession that she loved another should have opened his eyes at last to his own shortcomings as a husband, and this realisation should have tempered his action with some sympathy and humility. To win back her heart would not have been difficult, had he only shown her some evidence of genuine affection, some sympathy or tenderness. As the injured party, this should have been the easier, and yet how rare a thing it is to find a man who in such a situation can stifle jealousy, suppress his wounded pride, and take any blame to himself for the strayed affections of his wife. Bulwer's attitude was the very reverse. He expressed no sympathy, no pity, and only offered forgiveness on the condition that his wife should retract her confession and reaffirm her love for himself. Failing to receive any such assurances, he refused ever again to live with her as a husband, and in the two years which followed between this incident and their final separation, his adherence to this determination was probably the root obstacle to any complete reconciliation. Thus, in the story of this marriage, though infidelity came first from the wife, the example of how not to behave in the circumstances was set by the husband. 1834. ÆT. 31.

The Naples affair was not in itself very serious, and in normal circumstances it might soon have been forgotten. Unfortunately, the circumstances were not normal, and with a fatal disposition on either side to make a tragedy out of it, this incident proved to be the beginning of a breach which was never healed.

Where the fundamental relations between husband and wife are satisfactory, a divergence in their tastes and temperaments is no barrier to affection ; but when the bond of love is loosened and each becomes critical of the other, such divergence is an almost daily source of irritation. So it was with Mr. and Mrs. Edward Bulwer at this time. Though living apart, and mutually desiring reconciliation, their letters show how great were the differences which really divided them, and how impossible it was for them without love to avoid new causes of offence.

1834. Æt. 31. Edward Bulwer belonged essentially to the age in which he lived. He shared both the faults and the merits of his generation. He breathed the same atmosphere as his contemporaries, thought the same thoughts, mixed easily with them in society, and sought to serve them in all his public actions.

Mrs. Bulwer, on the contrary, was never in sympathy with her age—in many respects she was in advance of it—and the independent atmosphere in which she had grown up made her impatient of its conventions and critical of its pretensions. She was entirely the slave of impulse; her mind had never been disciplined by education, whilst it had been embittered by neglect.

In the cruel circumstances of her loveless childhood and forlorn girlhood are to be found the first causes of all that is saddest in the record of her after years. Never was the bitter law which visits upon the children the sins of their parents more terribly enforced than in that long train of suffering which had its origin in the worse than motherless childhood of this unfortunate woman. Her life was poisoned at its source, her character hardened in the germ, by the disastrous influence of a home from which all tenderness, reverence, and confidence were excluded. Jealousy and suspicion were her earliest teachers, and the best gifts of her nature were prematurely employed in the hard science of self-defence. By the parent from whom she had inherited not only wit, beauty, and high animal spirits, but also a temper not easily controlled, she had been brought up in an atmosphere totally destitute of self-restraint. If character is the parent, it is also the offspring, of destiny. The misfortunes of our lives are due no doubt to the defects of our characters; but our characters are also to some extent the inevitable and predetermined outcome of lives not ours, and of circumstances and environment antecedent to the responsible exercise of our own will. In the conditions of Mrs. Bulwer's maiden life there was nothing to inculcate either self-restraint or respect for others, whilst in those of her married life there was everything to render the exercise of such qualities indispensable to her own happiness and the happiness of those around her. Her attitude towards life was essentially irreverent. From childhood she had shown a pleasure in shocking others, and as her misfortunes increased, this habit grew upon her. She employed it, as she thought, in the service of truth, but it was hardly calculated to win the affection or soothe the inflamed nerves of an overworked and hypersensitive husband. 1834. Æt. 31.

Another difference between the two was also productive of friction. In the husband the family instinct was strong. He had been brought up in close personal intimacy with a mother to whom he was devoted. He took great pride in the lineage from which he was

1834. descended, and ardently desired to add distinction
ÆT. 31. to it in his own person. The wife, on the other hand, was insensible to any family ties. She was the child of separated parents, for neither of whom she entertained either love or respect. Her father she had seen but once, when she was seventeen years old, and the only impression which she derived from the interview was that he was "very vulgar and wore worsted stockings." Her mother had never shown her any affection, given a thought to her education, or filled any place in her life. Her brother had died when she was still young, and between herself and the sister with whom she grew up there had never been any intimacy or affection, owing to the barrier which their mother had erected between them by her strong partiality for Henrietta and her prejudices against Rosina. Of one of her uncles she once wrote to Miss Greene: "I hear that he is dirtier than ever. This can scarcely be possible, as he always looked like a chimney-sweep in a vapour bath."

Even to her own children Mrs. Bulwer was drawn by no maternal instinct. She desired them to be happy and well-behaved, but she never showed them the affection which she bestowed upon her dogs, or expressed any wish for their company until after she was separated from them.

Having no respect for her own relations, she naturally had none for those of her husband. She abused or caricatured his mother and brothers, ridiculed his family pride, and was continually wounding him just where he was most sensitive. In all his letters to her preceding a fresh reconciliation Bulwer implores her to abstain from this particular cause of offence. "I am a very proud person," he writes; "I look upon all belonging to me as parts of myself—I imagine that as merely belonging to me they ought to be safe from ridicule and abuse from those I love." 1834. ÆT. 31.

His public opinions were attacked with the same unsparing criticism. Whether as husband, writer, or politician, she discovered and condemned his affectation. For romantic sentiments and honourable professions she cared nothing. Without a corresponding performance they seemed to her mere hypocrisy. Having learnt by experience the faults and weakness of his character, she ceased to believe in its merits.

The result was that in all their efforts to recover their lost affections and to re-create the happiness which they had destroyed, Bulwer and his wife were ever at cross purposes. He would write strong appeals to her heart, her generosity, her forbearance—to all, in fact, that he considered best in her character, at the same time making passionate protestations of the noble sentiments by which he was actuated. These appeals, however, fell on ears that were already prejudiced against them. To her they were disingenuous and insincere, and she replied by reminding him of past actions or words which

1834. were inconsistent with his professions and belied
ÆT. 31. his sentiments.

With a little more sacrifice of personal pride on both sides, a little more frankness in acknowledging faults, and a little more sympathy, they might have arrived at least at a mutual understanding and a satisfactory working agreement, even after their love was dead. But neither would condescend to be the first to make concessions which each expected to receive from the other. Each avoided as flattery what the other would have welcomed as sympathy. All their efforts at reconciliation were, therefore, foredoomed to failure, and the story passes on to its inevitable conclusion.

CHAPTER VII

QUARRELS AND RECONCILIATIONS

1834–1835

The wrongful word will rankling live
    When wrong itself has ceast;
And love, that all things may forgive,
    Can ne'er forget the least.
. . . . .
Repentance often finds, too late,
    To wound us is to harden;
And love is on the verge of hate
    Each time it stoops to pardon.

Lovers' Quarrels.

Ah, do not fancy that in lovers' quarrels there is any sweetness that compensates the sting.

Ernest Maltravers.

In May, 1834, Edward Bulwer visited his mother at Knebworth, and the following letter, written from there to his wife at Gloucester, is evidence of the beneficial effect of country air and of a temporary cessation of the toil which he had been undergoing in London :— 1834. Æt. 31.

My dearest Love—I thank you most cordially for your kind and long letter, and also for all the trouble you have so promptly and considerately taken about the books and notes, etc. I am most sorry if I should ever appear insensible to any marks of kindness from you. I know not how it is, but the complete

1834. Æt. 31. quiet I enjoy here—the freedom from business and care, and the feverish harassments of public life, soothes me inexpressibly. I seem to breathe in a new nature, or, perhaps, a return to a former and less anxious existence. Nothing in all this delights me half so much as the kind and most affectionate feelings towards yourself which rise within me when the suffocating load of an artificial London life with its labours and disappointments is taken away.

I think that we both seem to have been rejecting the happiness within our reach. I have been no doubt too exacting, feeling so acutely a variety of things which you can scarcely comprehend. I have asked perhaps a degree of sympathy which no one being has a right to expect from another. I have felt, perhaps more justly, pain and inquietude at fancying you became too attached to the frivolity of society, and to those trifles connected with a London life which I think both of us are worthy enough to despise. It seems to me, too, as if you reject all overtures of affection, all those yearnings and kindly emotions towards you which spring up in me constantly; and often, by appearing to judge me harshly, to impute to me mean motives and interested views, you tend to make me that which you suspect. Ah! judge of me with charity, with justice; let us both endeavour to keep up that exalted opinion of each other which incites the character so judged to be worthy of the standard by which it is estimated.

My dearest Rose, believe me that I love you deeply and truly, but so many things in life fatigue, sicken, revolt me—so much do I find myself alone and unsupported in all that I undertake—that I cannot help growing morbid at times, and an unkind word, a sharp tone, a careless look, rankle in me for days together. Forgive this—if you know how I live and move like a man crushed by some great burden upon his shoulders, you

> would feel how every straw adds to the weight. Oh, that the purer and better and more tolerant nature I feel now could last. But life does not allow it, and I have only the consolation of thinking that in such moments my heart turns to you, and that, forgetting all harsher recollections, all petty annoyances, I only wish now, as we all wish in the first romance of Love, that we could constitute the sole happiness of each other. My dear wife, may God bless you—and so I quit these thoughts.

1834. ÆT. 31.

There is no record of any answer to this letter, but writing to her mother-in-law on Wednesday, May 28, 1834, Mrs. Bulwer refers to it as follows:—

> I am very grateful to you, my dear Madam, for the good care you are taking of Edward. He says he feels quite a different person for the quiet and fresh air of Knebworth. Poor fellow, it must be a delightful change to him after the feverish and hurried life he leads here, and the incessant occupation he has, which literally does not give him time to breathe. Horace Walpole used to complain of having lived post all his life, but Edward outdoes him, for I am sure he lives *steam*. If you could but lock up the library, hide *all* his papers, not leave a pen or pencil within his reach, and not let him have any dinner till he had ridden seven or eight miles, I am sure he would have cause to feel everlastingly obliged to you.

This rest, with everything that it implied to heart and brain and nerves, was all too short; and with his return to London the grinding toil was renewed and the black cloud descended once more. A month later occurred the most

1834. Æt. 31. violent scene which had yet taken place between them. What exactly happened is not now of consequence. Husband and wife both gave different accounts of it, and there is no profit in discussing an incident which was admittedly a humiliating exhibition of passion, and, as such, a symptom rather than a cause of the strained relations which existed between them at this time. I only mention it at all, because in after years it was distorted by the imagination of the injured wife into a legend even more degrading than the truth itself, and described in language far less creditable to herself than her own letters written at the time. For this reason I give the contemporary letters which, though deeply painful, are nevertheless of value as revelations of character.

Edward Bulwer writes from the Castle Hotel, Richmond, dated July 4, 1834,[1] a long letter which, though it makes full admission of his offence and the shame which it has caused him, expresses only resentment against the provoker of his passion, and mortification at having placed himself so completely in the wrong, instead of contrition or apology to the wife whom he had in his own words "cruelly outraged."

It is with the greatest disadvantage that I now write to you, labouring as I do under the most painful feelings, and knowing that I shall have, in you, a harsh judge and an unjust interpreter. But the task must be done, and I will only beseech you, in the first place, not to arouse yourself more against me than is necessary on the many topics on which I shall have to touch. You have been cruelly outraged, and I stand eternally degraded in my own eyes. I do not for a moment blame you for the publicity which you gave to an affront nothing but frenzy can extenuate. I do not blame you for exposing me to my servants, for seeking that occasion to vindicate yourself to my Mother, nor for a single proceeding of that most natural conduct which has probably by this time made me the theme for all the malignity of London. All this was perfectly justifiable after what had taken place, and I have only myself to blame for having been betrayed into such madness and giving myself, in a moment of passion, so wholly into the hands of my enemies. . . . 1834. ÆT. 31.

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[1] This date cannot be correct, since Mrs. E. Bulwer's letter acknowledging it (see p. 286) is dated July 3.

I am now convinced of what I have long believed: I am only fit to live alone. God and Nature afflicted me with unsocial habits, weak nerves and violent passions. Everything in my life has tended to feed these infirmities until they have become a confirmed and incurable disease, which nothing but a gentle pity, a forbearing, soothing, watchful compassion—as of a nurse over a madman—can render bearable to me or to others. God forbid that any should so sacrifice herself for me! Willingly I retire from a struggle with the world, which I have borne so long and with such constitutional disadvantages. Half—less than half—of what I have gone thro' for the last two or three years made Scott an idiot, and Galt a driveller; and yet both those men, tho' older, were probably stronger than I am, had better regulated habits of labour, far fewer cares, hardier nerves, and more cheerful minds. . . .

I do not ask your forgiveness, which I know you would readily give, but which would neither remove

1834. my own soreness nor raise my pride. I ask no forgiveness from Human Being. Such as I am, I will be to the last, my own Judge. I have been my own accuser and my own punishment. I have not one particle of angry feeling against you; all my bitterness is for myself. The only favour I beg—do not write to me, and acquiesce at once in all I have suggested. Do not write, for I am not in a mood to bear either kindness or reproaches. The first would only humble me, and the second is unnecessary. Why trample more upon a fallen man? I shall probably have left this before, indeed, you could answer this letter.
Æt. 31.

And now, farewell. I wish you every comfort, and after the first nervousness of "a break-up" is over, I know you will find a great relief in our relative change of position.

For six years you have been to me an incomparable wife. That thought alone is sufficient to make me judge you leniently in the last year. Whether the change arose from too harsh a misconstruction of my faults, from an erroneous estimate of my character, from that utter difference of tastes, habits and pursuits, which time, that wears away all gloss and all concealment, made more obvious and more irksome—whatever be the cause of the change that has taken place in your affection and your kindness, I make no complaint, I call for no defence. Let us both rest in peace.

Mrs. Bulwer's feelings and action on receipt of this letter are recorded in two letters written to her mother-in-law:—

Mrs. Edward Bulwer to Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton.

July 3rd, 1834.

My dear Madam—I have just received a letter from Edward, the first part of which steeled me against him. He did not seem to feel what he had done, but in the latter part I think this seems to arise from extreme humiliation. He then talks of going abroad immediately and leaving his country for ever—he says perhaps before I get his letter. This, of *course*, I cannot bear. There is but one course for me to pursue—to humble myself as I have ever done. So I have sent for horses and am going to Richmond directly. The only reason I do not send you his letter is that I think it would humble him if he thought even you saw it. Poor fellow, God knows I feel for him from my heart. God bless you, my dear Madam, and reward you for your kindness to poor wretched me. I am so agitated, ill, and miserable, that I know not what I write. I only know that I am and ever shall be your grateful and affect.

ROSINA BULWER.

Thursday night,
12 *o'clock.*

The same to the same.

Saturday, July 5th, 1834.

MY DEAR MADAM—I lose no time in letting you know the result of my going to Richmond, where I arrived about two o'clock in the morning, and got back late last night. Edward was not gone (as he had said he should be), but I found the greatest possible difficulty in persuading him to return here again, as shame was the predominant (indeed the only feeling) in his mind. After assuring him that before I left town I had prevailed upon all the servants to remain, and moreover told them that I alone was to blame in this quarrel, and so by taking all the odium on myself, warded it from him, I at length succeeded in convincing him that the only way of refuting the reports, which he seemed to dread had got abroad,

1834. would be for him to return with me to London, as if
ÆT. 31. nothing had happened. He is coming to town to-day as he is engaged out to dinner. He never said a word to me about your letter, so, of course, I did not allude to it, for even when I said how very kind you had been to me, he seemed to think it a reproach to him, so I could not say half I wished on the subject. I think, my dear Madam, when you write to or see him, it will be best not even to hint at anything that has past. You know pride is his besetting sin, which I grieve at from my heart, as it causes him to pass his life in a series of mortifications without humiliation. The more I see of him, the more I am convinced he does not care one straw or feel one atom for *me*, but this shall not prevent my doing my duty by him to the uttermost, and to the last, and in His own good time, perhaps God will see fit to take me. Perhaps by the 22, or 23rd you will allow me to avail myself of your kind invitation to Knebworth? I wish I could persuade *him* to go there sooner, but you know he is not a very persuadable person, and I think he feels ashamed to see even *you*. I do not attempt to *thank* you for all your kindness to me, for words, which express too much when we don't feel and *far too little when* we *do*, are not the coin by which to repay such kindness as you have shown me. But that God may reward you will, believe me, my dear Madam, be the constant prayer of your very grateful and affectionate

ROSINA BULWER.

P.S.—I think you had better not answer this letter for fear Edward should see it.

Their relations for the remainder of this year may be gathered from the following extract from Miss Greene's diary:—

Whilst we were thus getting over our time at Gloucester, both from Ireland and afterwards from London Rosina was receiving the most clever and bitter answers to her letters of the same kind in which she taunted him in the most violent manner with everything terrible she had ever said or thought of him. However, he kept supplying her with money in the most surprising manner, which she spent in a most wasteful and unprofitable way upon clothes, etc., etc. I used to warn her that he could be but trying her to see how much she could spend. One day I said to her, upon the arrival of a large hamper of cherry brandy from Mr. Bulwer, "Now comes my time for raillery—I think this the worst thing I have ever known him do." She laughed and said it was the best. 1834. ÆT. 31.

This last reference has a somewhat tragic significance, for it was during her residence at Gloucester that Mrs. Bulwer first acquired the fatal habit of resorting to stimulants as a remedy for ill-health and mental depression. This failing was first encouraged by a very mischievous acquaintance whom she met at Gloucester, and the extract just quoted suggests that it was rather paraded at this time for the purpose of shocking Miss Greene. But the habit, once acquired, naturally increased in after years. It probably aggravated considerably the physical and mental sufferings which Mrs. Bulwer had to endure, it provoked many fits of violence, and was responsible for the final deterioration of her character.

On October 11, Mrs. Bulwer says in a letter to her mother-in-law :—

1834. Æt. 31. I have not heard anything of or from Mr. Bulwer. Were it anyone else I should be uneasy, but as I know that he never writes to *me* but when he wants me to do something for him, I take it for granted that he is amusing himself, and too happy to remember the great calamity of his life—that of being hampered with a wife. Have you read his new book *The Last Days of Pompeii* yet? I am perfectly enchanted with it, and think it shows more genius by far than any he ever wrote. The interest is perfectly breathless. One cannot lay the book down for a moment.

The silence complained of in this letter was soon broken, for a few days later Bulwer writes sympathetically from Dublin on hearing that his wife has been ill:—

I am most sincerely and heartily grieved to hear you have suffered so severe an attack and to find you speak so despondently of its effects—yet I cannot but hope that now your mind is at ease, and you are freed from a connection which seems to have occasioned you, God knows how unwittingly, so much pain, you will rapidly recover your health and spirits. Since I cannot make your happiness myself, it will be at least a comfort to me to think that you can make yourself happy. I thank you for the calmness of temper and good sense of your last letter, as well as for a disposition to think and to write kindly. At the same time I see in that letter the same fatal misinterpretation of my character, the same unconscious but utter injustice to me which has been the main cause of our estrangement. You do not even quote my letter then lying before you, fairly, but pervert and garble it in a manner which proves how completely it has become your habit to judge of me unfairly.

After two or three pages of reproaches, he then concludes the letter as follows :— 1834. Æt. 31.

> But enough of a subject upon which we may as well shut the gate for ever. We blame each other, we vindicate ourselves, and both perhaps unfairly ; yet we are the same as when we were peerless in each other's eyes, the same in all but the love that concealed the fault and magnified the virtue. Could we restore the love, we could again be united—a vain hope, and a bitter thought ! I thank you deeply for what you say respecting the children. I fully believe you. Let the separation be as you wish, as if it were not. I will mention to no one that we are separated ; your health can be the excuse for not returning to town, and if ever, on looking back, you can feel that you have wronged my heart, if ever you can honestly say to me "I feel once more for you as I have felt ; I judge of you as I once judged ; I am willing to live with you upon our former terms, indulgent, kind, forbearing as before, your friend, your comforter" ; then how gladly, how gratefully, would I bury the later past in oblivion, and how earnestly in our reunion would I endeavour to appreciate, as I know I should return your love. But this, if it ever happen, must be the work of time.

This letter apparently had no softening effect, and their correspondence continues to be embittered until the end of the year. On December 30 he writes on his way to Lincoln :—

> I send you £100 from which you can pay any London bills you owe. I do not reply to your last letter because violent recriminations are useless and not worthy of either. I only repeat calmly and dispassionately, that I cannot think myself the bad husband and

1834. Æt. 31. the heartless man you declare me to be, and that my only wish in the separation between us is to secure to you every comfort in my power.

On Christmas Day 1834, Mrs. Bulwer travelled to town to consult her relation, Sir Francis Doyle, about the terms of a public separation from her husband, which she seemed to desire at that time. After talking the matter over with him, and receiving some friendly advice, she returned to Gloucester, and soon afterwards sent a message of peace to her husband with the words, "Poodle wishes Pups a happy New Year." A soft reply was returned, and for the next few days letters were exchanged of a conciliatory nature. In one of these, dated January 16, 1835, Bulwer writes:—

You say that you plainly perceive I would like as far as possible to loosen the shackles of marriage by being freed from your presence and the expenses of an establishment. Undoubtedly we had both agreed to a separation from a conviction that the "presence" of each other had ceased to be a blessing. As to the expenses of an establishment you know very well that I can only afford them by unremitting toil and great anxiety; the toil and the anxiety I bore cheerfully while we were happy together, but with weakened spirits and decayed health I am not equal to them when all my labour was unrewarded, and only served to decorate misery, not to increase your kindness or conduce to your enjoyment. I have allowed you every farthing I have clear in the world. Why in God's name all these most unmerited insinuations of miserly conduct? the very last reproach that you can make against me. This is what I feel bitterly, that in appealing to me you always appear to appeal to unworthy and paltry motives. After asserting that my only motive for separation would be freedom from your presence and the "saving of money" (forgetting all that for the last year has passed between us—forgetting the accusations you have made against me, and the injustice and unkindness you have shown me), you proceed to invoke, as a reason why I should not persist in a wish for separation, the existence of reports—so as to counterbalance the selfishness of the miser by that of the coward. Rosina, Rosina, would to God that you would know me better. . . . 1835. ÆT. 32.

If instead of writing to me as only swayed by vile motives, you had written as to a generous high-spirited man, what acrimony, what regret, what misery you would have saved us both. You go on to say you are bitterly aggrieved. My dear wife, this is the great, the real obstacle between us—unless we can both melt it down. Both feel bitterly aggrieved—even amidst all our wishes for reconciliation it will force itself forth—and unless we can make mutual concessions, unless we can retract all unkind words, unkind feelings, unkind thoughts, we should not be reunited a single day but what the latent venom would burst out, and we should part more bitterly, more irrevocably than before. God is my judge, my dearest Poodle, that I would cheerfully concur in our reconciliation—but then it must be full, complete, entire, and with every promise of performance. And how can this be unless you can esteem as well as love me. Go back, Rosina, do not view things with the eyes of passion, feel that you have wronged me by appealing to mean motives on my side, retract the unkind expressions you have used, tell me of something besides my faults, tell me you are sensible I have my redeeming qualities—read the first letter I wrote to

1835. ÆT. 32. you from Ireland [p. 290]; feel, acknowledge that it was not written by an ungenerous man; throw yourself on the heart that still loves you, and you will find it can yet forget and forgive all things. But if you really wish for a reconciliation, be careful when you answer not to irritate with one word while you soothe with another. Banish all unkind, all recriminatory expressions, but banish still more the thoughts. Come out openly, fairly, fully, as befits our relative situations, our long love, and (if you wish a reunion) your sense of your future happiness and mine. Do this, my Poodle, and we may yet be to each other what we have been.

On the following day Mrs. Bulwer proposed to her husband that he should pay her a visit.

"MY DEAREST PUPS," she writes, "I am too sick at heart to be either proud, or resentful; and God knows if I had ever wronged you in thought, word or deed, I would humbly beg your pardon and acknowledge my fault. I may have used harsh language, for memory is a bitter prompter, but forgive me if I have. You are quite mistaken if you think I wish, or ever did wish, to live in London. The only things I like London for are what I seldom, or never, get to,—the Opera and the Play. I did indeed *last year* make it a point to go out everywhere, because I felt I owed it to myself so to do, as in moments of excitement you had said to me things that some women perhaps would never forgive, and none could *forget*, but I don't wish to recur to the past in words any more than I do in thought. Only believe that wherever your occupations may keep you, or wherever Fate may throw me, you will always have an affectionate and considerate wife, in all things anxious for your well being, if you will only *trust in* and believe her. I send this by a parcel, as no post goes into London on Sunday; to make up the parcel, I send you a very good little book which I wish you had time to read. Pray come down here for a few days." 1835. ÆT. 32.

The invitation was accepted; but the visit could not take place at once, and in the interval several letters were interchanged in which all the causes of their separation were fully reviewed. Mrs. Bulwer had been the first to make advances, but in this correspondence she could not refrain from indulging in provocative phrases which nearly prevented the very object which she was anxious to achieve. Her husband replies at great length with elaborate self-vindication and earnest appeal on January 22:—

HERTFORD STREET, *Thursday*.

At length I am enabled to write to you. In a few days I trust satisfactorily to explain the reason of my delay. My dear wife, I am not going to speak of the past, but of the future; yet the one is so much overshadowed by the other, that in writing frankly and openly as it is necessary to do, I may touch upon some of those sores which are not yet healed. I will endeavour successfully to do so as little as possible, for on the healing of those sores in both our breasts depends our only chance of happiness hereafter.

In the first place, most delightedly will I, for one, make that experiment to which our later correspondence has tended, that of our reunion. But let us not come to it unprepared. If we do we only rush upon failure, upon separation more bitter, more hopeless than before. Unhappily Life is not like a Comedy in which after quarrels thro' the 3rd and 4th act all is suddenly recon-

1835. ÆT. 32. ciled at the 5th, and we are left to believe that the reconciliation is eternal. What we have most to dread and most to guard against is this—that the little disagreements, the momentary irritabilities that must occur between all persons living together, will no longer (as they once did, on my side at least) pass away without leaving rankling and stinging reminiscences. We have to dread lest in such moments, even in the slightest differences, all our causes of mutual complaint, real or imaginary, should rise up again, give new and exaggerated interpretation to the present difference, and mingle all the reproach and bitterness of the past with what otherwise would have been the most trifling and momentary dissensions. Then all the floodgates of memory become unlocked, violent recriminations ensue, and we shall only have met to bury every vestige of kindly feeling, and part without charity and without hope. I think then that against this possibility we ought mostly to guard. I will do my best not to incur new differences, and above all not to unbury the old. But, my dear Rosina, I am by constitution and nature far more irritable than you; the task for you is far easier; on you the experiment mainly rests. In all such cases it does mainly rest with the wife. "A soft answer turneth away wrath." And I ask you if I have ever been long passionate, if I have ever been the last to apologize and concede, when, as formerly, you have wisely and kindly forborne the answer that exasperates, but never amends.

Two years ago I could not have doubted of our complete renewal of affection, but may I say frankly without offending you—I think independent of all causes of complaint, your temper is not what it was then. It may not be your fault—a thousand circumstances of constitution may lead to it—we are the puppets of our nerves. But two irritable tempers, like flint and steel, only clash to produce fire. On my part, with every firm resolution to consider and consult your happiness, and to curb any hastiness of temper, how much harder is the task when I have to curb memory also, when I have to forget all the expressions you have applied to me in Naples, in London, at Knebworth, and unceasingly in those cruel and insulting letters you have written to me since we parted ; when instead of conceding to one who, I thought appreciated, admired and loved me, I concede to one who has denied me truth, heart, honour and who has neither shown nor professed for me affection for more than 18 months. 1835. ÆT. 32.

And this leads to another most probable source of dissension and misery. You have allowed yourself so long to look to what you consider the faults of my character that you see in it no merit. You may think that you love me, you may wish to be united to me again, but it is from no esteem for a single quality I possess. And unhappily the good qualities that do belong to me are precisely those which do not attract you, which you have long learnt to misconstrue and dislike.

Now judge of what must be felt by a man proud, tenacious of esteem, persuaded he deserves it, who finds his nearest and dearest and most familiar companion his most harsh and unjust interpreter. Vain, against this perpetual and galling consciousness, are the little offices of a half contemptuous love, offices otherwise so dear and grateful. It perpetually preys upon his self-esteem, it diminishes his confidences, it eats away his regard. Could you believe, my Rosina, how much at times you have disheartened and discouraged all my best wishes, all my most generous impulses, all my purest motives, by construing them wrong, by sneering at their nature, you would feel indeed remorse at the pain you have occasioned. And the worst is that by so doing you not only occasion pain, but you insensibly warp the character

1835. Æt. 32. itself. If our poor attempts at kindness or at goodness are ridiculed or belied, it is in human nature to sicken at the effort. If on the contrary they are praised and appreciated we are charmed into doubling our exertions. Our very selfishness then calls forth our least selfish qualities, for where is the reward like the approving eyes that tell us we are understood ?

You have often said "You could govern me if you condescended to flatter me." Alas, what you call flattery I might call appreciation. This mode of judging me you carry from private into public life ; you not only take no interest in my objects, in my ambition, my career, but you take every occasion, to me and before others, to attack and ridicule the principles I profess. Oh, if you could know the comfort a man feels when he is attacked, calumniated, misjudged everywhere else (as must be the case with all public men), to know that there is one person who always watches him with interest, supports him in doubt, and loves his principles for his sake if not for their own; if you could know this, perhaps you might be sorry to think how utterly that comfort has been denied to me.

Miss Edgeworth says somewhere that a wife who loves her husband must take interest in any occupation that engages him, even to the cutting of turnips. But when that occupation is at once the most exciting and the most painful, the most glorious and the most wearing that can fall to the lot of man, how much greater should be the interest and, also, how much more is its solace required. Among the sources of discontent we should guard against is that want of occupation which women of your talents are so liable to feel, and especially in the country. Would this be the case, if you could learn to make my occupation yours, if you could feel that you are connected with one whose destiny it is no dishonour to share, if you could feel interest in what interests me, and take in my life as a part of yours? After all, what other woman would not do so? I stand above all those of my own age not only in literary, but political rank; if I live, my career will interest strangers; is it only my wife who yawns at its progress and sneers at its motives? Ah, how much better if you would enter into my heart, if you would see how much I desire to be good, how much I wish to keep myself unsullied and pure, and if you could sustain and support me amidst all the trials which often shipwreck the strongest.

But all this is asking too much. I reduce the purport of what I have said to this—1st. For the sake of our only chance of happiness, we must be careful, for a long time at least, of petty quarrels, and should they occur we must be still more careful to avoid resolutely both in thought and word to recur to the past. This, I repeat, I will bear my share in, but I repeat also that the task is easier for you than myself, and on you the result will principally rest.

Secondly, there is little chance of happiness if you cannot learn yourself to view my actions and my character, not in the harshest, but the most favourable light. You will rouse a devil in any one whose self-esteem you are perpetually wounding.

Thirdly, if you do not like my public principles do not tell me so, and do not sneer at them. Do not say that you are sorry that the Tories are in power because of the expenses of an election, but not otherwise. Why espouse without thought, without knowledge, the cause of my public enemies? To espouse their cause is to condemn me.

And now let me add one other request, and let me implore it of you most earnestly. Spare all my relations! Half our quarrels, and certainly our worst, have arisen from your speaking disrespectfully of them. Should I be a man, should I be a gentleman, if, even if I did not

1835. Æt. 32. care a straw about them, I could tamely hear them vilified or in the least degree assailed? Could you know my character (which I utterly despair of), you would know that I can hear myself abused far more temperately, than anyone belonging to me, and it exasperates and excites me still more, if those who for my sake alone ought to be sacred to those I love, are precisely the most bitterly attacked by the one who should the most spare them. Anger is in this case only increased by the sense of impotence, for you are the only person in the world who can assail *mine* as well as *me* with impunity. I implore you, Rosina, as the greatest favour you can bestow, to promise me sacredly and with the fullest and most solemn resolve to keep the promise, to avoid directly or indirectly saying anything disrespectful of my mother or either of my brothers. Knowing your prejudices, I shall know how to appreciate this promise if it be kept. And if you make it frankly and freely, so it will become a point of honour and of conscience not to infringe it. Such a promise will be an unspeakable comfort to me. Tell me if you make it. And what do I ask? Can you esteem me less for demanding it? And would it not be base and mean in me, if, after all that has passed, I did not consider that promise essential to the happiness which I trust may yet be in store for us?

And now my dear Love, I have said the greatest part of what has weighed upon me—the most important consideration remains. All that I have asked or touched upon is easy if you love me; if not, they are perhaps impossible and certainly useless. Examine therefore well your own heart, and if you trust only to the chance of your renewing affection now no more, shun so fatal and so certain a failure. Alas, with the best part of youth gone, with exhausted hearts, with hopes no longer sanguine and elastic, and with recollections so darkly coloured, it is impossible to sit calmly down, and begin again the work of love. If, therefore, it is out of other feelings than those of attachment, that you wish us to unite, be sure that the experiment will fail, suddenly and certainly, and only hasten our separation till the grave, making that separation full of all that intense and revengeful character which at this moment we can deprive it of. But if you feel in spite of all that has past, and all (pardon me) your exaggerated notions of my faults, that you really, truly love me, that that love alone—or mainly—makes you desire our union, that that love can make you cherish, forbear, forgive, forget, then there can be no doubt of the full happiness of the experiment we shall make. And if that love should lead you to adopt the course I have ventured to sketch in this letter, all that my gratitude, my love, my esteem can do to set a guard upon my faults and to render your life happy will seem to me insufficient to reward you. 1835. ÆT. 32.

And now, forgive me for having spoken thus plainly; better now than hereafter. Looking to the past, how much of fear and foreboding *must* mix with our most sanguine hopes of the future. It is well that we should see clearly what lies before us, and judge how far we can steer aright. Above all, if we unite, no worldly, no concealed motive should actuate either. If you wish it for the sake of station, of respectability, of consequence, of gaiety, of avoiding reports (never by the bye to be avoided), or of serving our children, the motives are reasonable enough but success is impossible. Nothing but Love can make us pass thro' the ordeal unscathed. And if the experiment fails this last time, woe to us both! A million times better to remain as we are with a sure hope of reunion some time or other before us, a gradually coming round to kindly feelings, than rashly and prematurely to rush upon new quarrels, certain abhorrence, and the gulf of an eternal separation.

1835. Æt. 32. Pause therefore, my own—yet my own Love—commune with your own heart, examine it well, probe its secrets and learn its strength. And if you can calmly acknowledge the sense of this letter, and firmly resolve to take the brighter side of the alternative, I will join you at Gloster the first moment I am able (I mean *able* in the literal sense of the word). And above all, forgive me if I seem too doubtful and too cautious. Recollect it is but the other day suddenly and without apparent cause that you made me any advance. And the consequences of haste or want of forethought in the choice before you are awful. God bless you and guide you to the best.

E. L. B.

The patronising tone of a superior to an inferior being, the tendency to preach and to expect more than he was ready to give in the way of reverence, devotion, and sympathy which is apparent in this, as indeed in all his letters to his wife, did much to counteract the conciliatory spirit in which it was written.

This feature of Bulwer's correspondence, which was characteristic of the age as much as of the writer, prevented any complete reconciliation from ever taking place between them. Qualities which he regarded as merits in himself were in the highest degree odious to his wife. No human being likes to be eternally lectured, least of all by one who can never see his own faults. In the daily intercourse of their lives Mrs. Bulwer knew her husband only as an overworked, irritable companion, intensely sensitive, easily provoked, and extremely selfish in a thousand small matters where her happiness was concerned. This experience in no way coincided with the injured innocence and honourable sentiments contained in the long letters which she received from him, and she remained quite unmoved. 1835. Æt. 32.

The fact is, that when he took his pen in hand Bulwer always conjured up before himself an image of the man he wished and believed himself to be; for materials he drew upon all the finer qualities of his nature, and with an artist's hand he fashioned them into the figure of a tragic hero, maligned, misunderstood, but ever ready to forgive. In his letters, in his private memoranda, and doubtless in his own thoughts, this image perpetually recurs. But to his wife it had too little of the substance of reality; and he would have succeeded better if in these appeals he could have revealed a little more of the erring human being who, though struggling always, had become humbled by many failures.

Two more long letters in the same strain follow on January 24 and January 28, 1835, referring in the main to his relations with his mother and brothers since his marriage, and pointing out how much he had sacrificed for his wife's sake. At the end of the second letter he speaks of the ill-health from which they have both been suffering, and which in his case may prevent him from visiting her at Gloucester for a time.

1835. Æt. 32. "The journey is long," he says, "and the weather severe, and if any disagreement does ensue which, if you talk to me as you write to me, there certainly will, it may not only throw me back but produce unpleasant consequences to our, I hope, fortunate experiment of reunion. Both the dogs, my dear Poodle, are sickly at present, and sick dogs are always snappish. Therefore get well as soon as you can in order that we may not worry each other. Parliament meets soon, and the first month I shall be confined to town, but afterwards I can get away and see you. Meanwhile our plans can be arranged. We shall probably lose the remembrance of past bitterness by thinking and writing kindly to each other. We shall both be stronger and our nerves less irritable. Therefore, I repeat, my dear Poodle, nurse yourself quietly in your kennel, get well and strong, let nothing rest upon your mind. Don't weaken yourself by blisters, it is a nervous attack upon your chest which air and exercise will remove. So pray get out on the warm days and bask in the sun."

When Bulwer's visit to Gloucester, which had been so carefully prepared and so anxiously awaited, at last took place, it proved a most tragic failure. His wife received him with coldness and hauteur; and after several days of incessant quarrelling he left the house, intending to return to London. As soon as he was gone, Mrs. Bulwer was seized with remorse and sent Miss Greene after him with entreaties that she would bring him back. On his return, Mrs. Bulwer met him on the stairs, and received him with the affection which she had failed to show on his first arrival. A reconciliation then took place, and for some time they continued on terms of complete friendliness. Eventually Bulwer returned to London to look out for some country place where his wife and children could live, and where he could spend with them as much time as he could spare from his work in London. On his return to town he wrote to his mother as follows:— 1835. Æt. 32.

I cannot say how much I feel your kindness. I have a better account than before to give. Feeling deeply disappointed, and indeed indignant, at R.'s manner, I drove to Cheltenham, meaning to proceed at once to town and arrange for our legal separation. While I was there Miss Greene arrived and represented R. as so ill and unhappy at my abrupt departure, and so anxious for our reconciliation, that I returned. This led to a long and satisfactory explanation, and I think things are now so smooth as to promise more favourably than I had ever anticipated. I am therefore going to hire a house near town, and I hope to be able to let this, and have only some little chamber near Parliament. Believe me, I feel most gratefully and deeply your kindness at a very critical period, and am sure you will be glad to learn that there is now a probability of my enjoying a more settled state of mind than heretofore.

In her reply his mother wrote:—

From the pain so long caused me by your sadly altered spirits and appearance, you will know how much I must rejoice at any circumstance in which your own judgment recognises a prospect of peace and comfort. I always told you that a separation was not among Mrs. E. B.'s real wishes. I felt sure that what-

1835. Æt. 32. ever may be, or have been, her feelings in other respects, she has too much sense not to appreciate the advantage of a husband's protection, and the respectability of living under his roof. This, too, would certainly be the advice given her by all her true friends, of whom Miss Greene has proved herself one. But since I never supposed her to be indifferent to such considerations, set it down only to my affection for you, if I own how much I lament the waywardness and inconsistency that so long delayed an explanation which, had it come earlier, would have spared much suffering to you, and probably to herself also. Now that the explanation has come, I do anxiously hope that it has given you solid ground for a genuine and lasting reconcilement. Your judgment should be assured of this before you make your proposed arrangements.

If you take my advice, you will do all in your power to excite and encourage your wife's affection for her children. Believe me, it will be the best means of increasing her affection for their father, and it will help to disengage her thoughts from any future subject of contest between you—at the very thought of which I tremble. I earnestly entreat you not to let any such contest arise out of words or thoughts which ought to be under your own control. If it arises out of any words which may not be under Mrs. E. B.'s control, resist all temptation to enter into it. It is not in any man's power to avert provocation if a woman is bent on provoking him, but to a man of your excellent understanding and right feeling it should be possible to remain calm and collected even when provoked. But God grant there may be no such trial upon either side. Let it be as a new marriage between you. Let the waters of Lethe wash in oblivion all the past, which by neither of you must ever be reverted to, in order to secure to both a brighter future.

These, my dear Edward, are the suggestions which, after serious consideration of your letter, my duty and affection lead me to urge upon you. Do not attribute them to any other cause. You do me no more than justice when you say that I have uniformly been your firm and faithful friend, and you know that my confidence and affection have clung to you even under the remembrance of the great and acute misery I endured, which seriously injured my health, and brought on a dangerous illness. You must be sensible that in all the advice I have ever given you I had truly your happiness in view. This and nothing else. And if, as I was bound, I did all in my power to prevent a union which, for your sake, I had every cause to dread, both your wife and you must acknowledge that since then I have spared no effort to soften to both of you the disappointments I foresaw, and to avert its dissolution. 1835. ÆT. 32.

Excellent sentiments and sound advice! But they came too late. The disease in this home was already too far advanced to be arrested. The mischief caused by overwork and lacerated nerves could not be undone; and instead of the waters of Lethe closing over the past it was in the waters of Marah that the future became engulfed.

CHAPTER VIII

SEPARATION

1835–1836

> Two lives that once part are as ships that divide
> When moment on moment there rushes between
> The one and the other a sea;
> Ah, never can fall from the days that have been
> A gleam on the days that shall be.
>
> *Poems. A Lament.*

1835. Æt. 32. For a time it seemed as if this new experiment was likely to be successful. The place selected was Berrymead Priory, Acton, and in May, 1835, Mrs. Bulwer went to live there. She wrote to Miss Greene "delightful accounts of the beauty of the house and of the great kindness and affection of her husband," who was living at the Albany, but came to visit her from time to time. The letters which passed between husband and wife during the early summer months were of the most affectionate kind, and slowly they began to build again the shattered fabric of their common life.

But Fate had decreed otherwise; and this brief spell of comparative happiness lasted barely two months. In July another violent outbreak occurred. Some mischievous gossip about her husband's infidelity came to Mrs. Bulwer's ears and immediately provoked one of those fits of passion to which she was subject. She thereupon wrote to her husband a letter of insult and abuse in words so outrageous as to put an end for ever to any possibility of their permanent reconciliation. Bulwer on receipt of this letter resolved to abandon all further attempts to maintain the appearance of peace. To his wife he replied calmly, and at the same time sought the intervention of her relation, Sir Francis Doyle, to whom he submitted a draft agreement for their formal separation. 1835. ÆT. 32.

Mrs. Bulwer's outbursts of passion, however, were usually brief in proportion to their violence, and were succeeded by fits of remorse almost as extreme. In a few days all her angry feelings had subsided, and gave place to a mood of helpless misery before the prospect of a permanent separation. Miss Greene, who in these periodical crises was usually summoned to Mrs. Bulwer's side, writes in her memoir :—

> I found Rosina as I had often seen her before, saying that she wished for this separation, but evidently terrified and miserable lest it should take place; and she hoped that I should be able again, as I had often done before, to prevent it.

After a few days of agonized conflict with herself, and assisted by the advice of Miss Greene and Sir Francis Doyle, Mrs. Bulwer decided to make the fullest apology for her violence and sent to her husband a letter of which Miss Greene says :—

1835. Æt. 32. Sir Francis Doyle told me that the only fault he could find with it was that it was too abject, and he added that nothing could have been handsomer than Mr. B.'s conduct.

The contents of this letter were as follows :—

Edward, Edward, my own Edward, I do not ask you to forgive me *now*, for that would be impossible, but on the knees of my heart I implore you to try and forget that horrid letter, and I assure you I will ever remember it.

Once, once, I was a good wife to you and you loved me, and then no friends tried to poison us against each other; they could not, for it is only the absent that are traduced, and then we were always together, and if we heard evil of each other we *saw* that it was not true. All that I ever was to you I will be to you and more, if you will but try me again. And if ever you say anything to me that I feel as cutting or unjust, I will remember that horrid letter and think it is not half you owe me. I will study every hour of my life to make you so happy and contented that you shall have no room to recollect it, and if you leave me a year alone, I will be deafer than stone to anything I hear. But I shall not hear, for it is only the unhappy that have ears in their very souls.

Indeed, indeed, I was stung and goaded into madness when I wrote that letter. I would not write, I would go to you, but that I fear you would hate the sight of me just now, and really my appearance might frighten you. Your soft answer has turned my wrath in upon myself, and it will consume me unless you give me more reason still to hate myself by forgiving me. Your doing so will only be an additional proof of how much I have injured you, for only the injured can always the more readily forgive. If not for my sake, you will, I am sure, for that of your children. Then there will be three to try and atone to you for what I have done. But whether you grant my request or not, I will say now and ever—God bless you, God Almighty bless you. 1835. Æt. 32.

R. Bulwer.

This pathetic appeal was irresistible. It is impossible to read it now, after the lapse of so many years, unaccompanied by any of the deep emotions with which it was written, and with which it must have been received, without a profound pity for the misery which men and women are capable of inflicting upon each other. The resolutions contained in it were perhaps sincere when they were written; they were soon forgotten. Had they been kept, what bitterness and strife and suffering would have been prevented! But this little flickering flame of love and contrition and earnest resolve had no chance to live. It was quickly smothered by the materials on which it sought to feed.

The violent letter was forgiven. It could not so easily be forgotten. The day had gone by when the words which either used to the other could materially alter the situation; it was the feelings which prompted the words that had to be, yet could not be, repaired. Both husband and wife were already fast bound by a chain of circumstances which for some years they had been forging for their own enslavement.

Although Mrs. Bulwer's bitter and offensive language had placed her in the wrong, she was in fact fully justified in the suspicions which she had expressed. Ever since her confession to her

1835. Æt. 32. husband at Naples that she loved another man, he had regarded himself as freed from his conjugal vows, and by this time he had become deeply attached to another woman, who gradually acquired that place in his affections which he considered had been forfeited by his wife.[1] During the last two years neither Mr. nor Mrs. Bulwer had in heart been faithful to the other ; and when a marriage contract is broken in spirit, it is always easier for a husband than for a wife to bestow his affections elsewhere. If, however, the wife had been able to live up to the resolutions which she now expressed, to stifle jealousy by faith, not only to unsay but to unthink all the bitter expressions in which she had so freely indulged, to wait with patience and self-control for the return of a love which had once been precious, she might even yet have recovered what she had lost. A woman may win back her husband's love even after it has passed from herself to another, but to do so requires qualities which are as rare as they are precious, and above all it requires the presence of an unchanging love in herself. Such a love Mrs. Bulwer did not possess, and without it she was powerless to retrieve her lost happiness. 1835. ÆT. 32.

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[1] This attachment was not a mere passing flirtation, like that of Mrs. Bulwer at Naples, but a relationship in all respects equivalent to marriage except in the legality of the tie. Writing about it five years later, Bulwer says in a private diary :—

"I have one comfort, though not without sore alloy. I am loved, I believe, honestly, deeply, and endearingly, by one who is indeed to me a wife. It is true that there is sin in the tie, and *there* is the alloy. But if ever such sin had excuse, it is in our case. She lone and friendless save me—no family, no name, dishonoured ; and I in the flower of manhood, with a nature that demands affection as its food, utterly shipwrecked of all love at home, my heart bruised and trampled upon—and never forming this tie, till in despair of all harmony in one more lawful. And if in love itself there be a redeeming sanctity, surely it is in ours—mutual honour, loyal fidelity, perfect respect, unwavering confidence. Had we but been married, we should have been cited as models of domestic happiness and household virtues. We have both been better since we loved each other, and I have sought to atone by more active kindliness to others for the sin that exists here."

Some doubt as to his wife's ability to translate into action the resolutions which she had framed in words, seems to have been expressed at this time by Bulwer, for though his answer to her letter is not in my possession, I find a second letter from his wife as follows:—

> I may be sensitive, I may be violent, but I am not a liar, and I will not break faith with you. *Never* again will I believe anything against you, even though I should not see you for ten years. As for your mother, so far from wishing that you should be wanting in anything to her, my feeling has always been (*for your sake*) to make up to her as a daughter all those little nameless nothings that constitute the gospel of a woman's affections, and yet are undreamt of by men. I have felt so much my inferiority to you that I have resented your not feeling it less. I have seen, at least I have fancied, that you have sacrificed me to those who would not sacrifice the hundredth millionth part for your salvation of what I would for your slightest whim, and I have been maddened. But this shall not be the case any more. You shall buy me at your own price, and I will love and serve you at mine—£100,000,000.
>
> I will not, indeed I cannot, say more now, but if I see you to-morrow I will try and make you believe how sincerely, how affectionately, I am yours.
>
> ROSINA BULWER.

The negotiations for a separation were suspended, and once more these two unhappy people

1835. Æt. 32. agreed to give each other another trial. The experiment was no more successful than those which had preceded it. Within a few days Mrs. Bulwer again took offence, and this time without any justifiable provocation.

At the time of his marriage Bulwer had made a settlement of £1000 in favour of the survivor of the marriage. This sum could not have been enjoyed by his wife until after his death, and if she died first it would have returned to him. Some years later both Mr. and Mrs. Bulwer mutually agreed to release this £1000 for the purpose of defraying debts which had been contracted in connection with their joint household. The release could not take place without the assent of all parties, that is to say, both husband and wife and their respective trustees. No objection was raised at the time, though Mr. William Bulwer, the husband's trustee, refused to give his consent until after that of Sir John Doyle, the wife's trustee, had been obtained. In August, 1835, Mrs. E. Bulwer, in the course of a conversation with her mother-in-law, made it a kind of reproach that her husband's trustee should have consented to this release, although she herself had agreed to it, and thereupon Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton, in the hope of pleasing her daughter-in-law, offered to settle £1000 upon Emily Bulwer. This sum was accordingly so settled by a deed dated August 15, 1835. Mrs. Bulwer, however, was far from pleased by this arrangement. She felt that it implied some slight upon herself, and made it the occasion for a fresh quarrel with her husband. 1835. ÆT. 32.

This incident proved how insecure was the foundation of their recent reconciliation, and gradually the old habit of mutual recriminations was resumed.

> "Mr. Bulwer came but seldom to visit us," writes Miss Greene, "but expecting him and preparing for him was his poor wife's greatest pleasure and amusement. Yet I was often provoked to find that, notwithstanding, we would not have sat down to dinner five minutes, before she would say the most insulting things to him. These I often saw him try to bear, and when they at last produced the effect of putting him in a rage, she was sorry."

While Miss Greene remained in the house, at any rate the outward appearance of peace was maintained, and the time passed smoothly. But when towards the end of the year Miss Greene was called away to Ireland on business, the situation again became intolerable. In December Bulwer went to Paris, and wrote to his wife from there on the 21st :—

Edward Bulwer to his Wife.

PARIS, *Dec.* 21, 1835.

For the contents of this letter you will naturally be prepared. You must be no less convinced than myself that all hope of our constituting the happiness, or even the comfort, of each other, is over ; that every new experiment has been more fruitless than the last. For more than two years I have had at your hands harsh unkindness, bitter taunts, constant bickering, accusation and complaint.

1835. Æt. 32. No man equally oppressed and over-laboured ever exacted, perhaps, less from the soothing and care of love ; but we are all human, all demand some person to foster us with indulgence, to look upon us with gratitude and tenderness and respect, to be proud of our virtues, to be indulgent to our faults. The very reverse of this I have found in you. I may not be without my failings (who is?), but you were not the person to exaggerate and resent them. To you I surrendered all that one human being could for another. I speak not only of whatever I might or might not have forfeited in our marriage, and the pain of acting against my mother's consent was greater to me than the probable poverty to which I might have been condemned ; but for you my youth has been consumed in struggles, my constitution broken by labours, and if I am now dead to common amusements and indifferent to the usual pleasures of life, it is because the toil of eight years has exhausted within me all the youth and zest and freshness that ought yet to be mine, and made my heart old before my body. The money I thus made I have never spent on my own enjoyments. I have spent it on my house, my establishment, on all that could be shared and enjoyed with you. I have never, that I know of, denied you a single wish it was in my power to gratify.

I pass over repeated affronts and repeated scenes. After a letter which it was impossible to receive and to forgive, so elaborate, pointed and premeditated were the insults it contained, and after your interview with Sir Francis Doyle, you wrote to me again. You apologised, as I thought, sincerely. You said "I will study every hour of my life to make you so happy and contented that you shall have no room to recollect that horrid letter." You kept this promise *well* ! In a few days you drove me again from my house, and the cause was that my mother had given my daughter £1000. I again resolved to separate. I was again weak, again yielded to your professions, again returned. Since then every day and every hour produced some bitter fruit. 1835. ÆT. 32.

I shall submit no longer to continued disrespect and the gnaw and tooth of eternal reproach. My mind is made up finally and irrevocably. We must part. You shall no longer complain that I keep you in a "County jail." Take your own residence where you will. I grudge not your happiness or liberty. I demand only no more to sacrifice my own. You have no longer affection for me—*you have completely and eternally eradicated all mine for you*, but I have still the memories of the Past, and still wish most sincerely to make you as comfortable as I can.

I shall not now enter into details of business with you. On this I shall correspond fully with Sir Francis Doyle, and ample provision shall be legally secured to you. Learn now only that my resolution is unalterable, and no threats, no violence, on the one hand, no unreal and mocking attempts at reconciliation on the other, can shake it. I desire that it may be effected in the course of this month. The Priory is at your service till it suits your convenience to change it for a more agreeable residence. For the rest, I will take care that no blame attaches to you. I will take equal care to secure you an honourable independence. Every arrangement for your interest and welfare I shall be rejoiced to make. After this letter, the feelings of which it is impossible to mistake, I need scarcely again tell you not to attempt to shake a resolution taken calmly, deliberately and irrevocably, and by which I can alone secure to the rest of my life something of tranquillity and peace.

E. L. Bulwer.

1835. ÆT. 32. The letter was thus acknowledged :—

Mrs. Edward Bulwer to her Husband.

Wednesday, 23rd December, 1835.

I have received your letter. Your will be done. You left me in torture which I had endured for four nights. I felt hurt at your not appearing to even notice the pain I was in, and expressed this when you were leaving me *all alone.* I beg your pardon for this and all other offences. I have now been ten days in a rheumatic fever, suffering perfect agonies, but I am ready to go when and where you wish. You need neither fear my reproaches nor my entreaties. I shall not mention the subject to your mother or anyone else. It is your own deed and therefore it is but fair you should conduct the matter entirely to suit yourself. If I do not interfere, actively or passively, I can neither thwart nor offend you, and *believe* me (for I speak it *sincerely*), tho' I have been such a "thorn in your side," and so bad a wife, I should be very sorry, now that you have determined upon repudiating me, that my last acts should be of the above nature.

God bless you, and may your own reflections henceforth make you happier and be to you a better friend and kinder companion than I have been.

Rosina Bulwer.

On the same day that she wrote this letter to her husband, Mrs. Bulwer made the following entry in her diary, which perhaps more accurately described her feelings :—

Dec. 23. A letter from Mr. B.—overflowing with morbid sensibility for himself and repudiating me! Be it so. How foolish it is of me to let these reptiles irritate me as they do, nor would I, but that with their abominable assumption of knowledge and superiority they have the power of crushing and injuring me every moment. 1835. Æt. 32.

A few days later Bulwer wrote again :—

Edward Bulwer to his Wife.

Dec. 27, Poste Restante, Paris.

It gives me most real and sincere concern to hear you suffer so much from illness, and the impression made on me by your letter shows how much bitterness and pain might have been spared to both, had you pursued a different policy towards me ere it was too late. You leave the matter to me. In return I have thought anxiously how to make the arrangements in a manner as little unpleasant to yourself as possible. I propose to you now the following plan :—wait at Acton till you are better and till Miss Greene can join you ; then take James and one woman, and if the carriage (as I fear) is not strong eno' for the journey, take either the whole inside of the coach or make arrangements where we have post horses, by which for a trifle they will lend you a carriage or a good chaise all the way. Then go to any place you like. I venture to suggest Bath ; the society there is respectable and good, the place warm, coals and lodging cheap, and as carriages there are not used, a moderate income goes further than elsewhere. At Bath, too, they let suites of apartments so that you need not encumber yourself with a house, at all events at first. You can see if you like the place, if not, it is easily left. You can hire a cook there, or take our present cook (or Anne if you prefer it) as well as Davis.

1835. Æt. 32. In this plan there is no "repudiation." We need not do more than separate for the present, if you agree to it. I will not (unless you desire it) say anything to Sir Francis Doyle. I will not speak to a lawyer. It will be unnecessary to declare any formal separation. Nothing need be made public; nothing need prevent our coming together again if we desire it. You are but gone to Bath or elsewhere to amuse yourself, as I may amuse myself here, or be chained by Parliament to London.

After two or three months you can then consider whether it will be better that the separation should be disclosed. In the meanwhile you can see upon what you can live comfortably and with proper dignity and ease, and I will then arrange so as to secure it to you, in the one case by an honourable understanding, in the other by a legal agreement. You *must* keep a man-servant, but I think, in apartments for the present, two maids will be enough.

I trust that this arrangement will suit your wishes. If it does, be kind eno' to inform me what time you are likely to leave, that I may make the necessary pecuniary preparations with respect to the carriage. If you prefer any other place whatever to Bath, consult entirely your own inclinations. Go only to some cheerful place where you may have something of relaxation and society without trouble. Tho' to be happy together is, I am finally and fully convinced (at all events for the present), impossible, yet, believe me when I say solemnly and honestly that it will always be the deepest gratification to me to know you enjoy comfort and happiness wherever you go, and to contribute to that enjoyment as far as I have the power.

E. L. B.

This was followed by four letters from the miserable wife in an ascending scale of piteous appeal:— 1835. ÆT. 32.

Mrs. Edward Bulwer to her Husband.

Wednesday [*Dec.*] 30*th.*

I have received your letter and am much obliged by the good wishes you express. I sincerely regret being still confined to my bed, which will prevent my leaving this as soon as you could wish, but the chimney having been on fire the other night, I was obliged to go into a cold room, which has increased my pain almost to madness. However, the moment I am able to make the exertion I will; but let me be explicit on the subject. You can as you say "amuse yourself at Paris," which I am very glad of, and wish you every pleasure, but you must excuse *me* from settling in any English country town. I feel capable of but one exertion and that must be a final one; therefore, when I do move, it will be to Germany, where I shall live and die.

You talk of my taking a manservant, two maids and the carriage!! but that would be all but one, exactly the same establishment you keep here, and as your health and purse have already been so much exhausted by this expenditure, you cannot suppose I would continue to tax you to this amount, merely for myself.

I think in Germany I might (without the children, whom, of course, you will provide for and see brought up as *you* would like—I have, poor little things, done *my* part by them to the uttermost)—live for £100 a year, and should my health permit, I can easily earn my own subsistence. But if, as I hope, and still more as I feel, I shall not so very much longer encumber the earth, then this £100 a year even will not be long a tax on you.

As for people knowing that we are finally separated, it cannot have a worse, or even so bad an appearance, as the *actual* and constant and ever-recurring separations that are always taking place. I am quite willing to brave all the world will say, and there will be always one comfort, that you cannot twice turn me out of your house. Your mother has been very kind to me, and I am very grateful to her for it, as a little kindness is very healing to a lacerated body and mind.

Wishing you all the delights Paris can afford and assuring you that I will get ready to leave this the moment I am able,—I remain, etc., etc.

Rosina Bulwer.

P.S.—I do not quite understand what you mean by my "pursuing a different line of policy towards you," unless you mean that I should not have presumed to be in agonising pain when you were going to Paris to amuse yourself.

The same to the same.

New Year's Day, 1836.

I have just heard by a letter from Paris that you were seen in the street and looked ill and not happy. I am uneasy about the first, and if the latter be true, pray forgive anything I may have done or said to offend you. At all events, let me wish you many, many happy New Years. I am sure this will be a lucky one to you, for I do not think it possible I can see the end of it, having now, in addition to my torturing pain, a cough that would kill a Hercules. I do not think it right to be as ill as I am and bear malice to anyone, much less towards you. Therefore, I pray that God may bless and make you happy in your own way. Pray, when you write, thank your mother from me for all her kindness, which I shall ever feel grateful for. Pray take care of yourself this bitter weather and believe in the sincere good wishes of your affect. wife,

Rosina Bulwer.

The same to the same.

January 7th, 1836.

1836.
Æt. 33.

My dear Pups—I am quite prepared for your thinking me the meanest wretch alive, that upon the fourth time of your expressing your determination to get rid of me, I should cringe and beg of you to try me once more; but this is more a weakness of body than mind. I am quite unable to move. I am now wincing under my third blister. My cough is very little better, and sleep unattainable. For God's sake don't imagine me guilty of the folly of saying this to try and make you feel for me, for indeed I have not been delirious these three nights. I crawl about the room with great difficulty. I can do nothing but sit down and cry when I think of finally leaving this place, incapable as I am of all exertion, and not a human being to exert themselves for me. What I mean to say is this—that God must effect the separation you so pant for very soon, as permanently as you can desire, and I faithfully promise you that should I unexpectedly get better, I will not think of thwarting your pleasure for one moment in this instance. Before I got your first letter, which I did not receive till a fortnight after you went, I had drawn a plan for the gardener to alter the lawn. I am told it looks very pretty. The man he has had to help him I have regularly paid and also the osiers he has had to make the baskets with; so whatever happens they have no bill to bring in to you. You will not even have to fee the *sexton*; for not liking to trust to contingencies, he has very prudently dunned me beforehand for a Xmas box. God bless you, and may you hereafter be as happy as I have made you the reverse, and may I soon be at rest.

R. L. Bulwer.

My medicine, blisters, leeches and embrocations, are all paid for.

The same to the same.

Friday, January 8th, 1836.

1836. Æt. 33. My dearest Pups—I don't know whether I explained myself clearly in my letter yesterday. I am afraid not, as my head was swimming and throbbing so terribly that the paper seemed like dancing fire before me. What I meant to say was—to beg you to forgive poor old sick, dying Poodles, and try him again. Otherwise he could not stay here on sufferance. Indeed, indeed, you may with safety, for this cruel illness has drawn all his teeth and claws and left him as harmless and *abimé* as Spagniol, the poor old dog at Rome. Remember the fable of the merciful man who was going to kill his dog for doing a great mischief, but he stopped and said, "No, you have been a good dog in your day, and on that account I will not harm you." Ah, if you could for one moment feel the wearing, burning, agonising pain I feel in every part of my poor body, I don't think you would feel so hardened against me, whatever I might have done. If God was as inflexible, Heaven help us all! My head is going round the room again, so I must leave off. If I die before you return to England, will you give an order to have poor, darling Fairy sent to Lady Westmeath, as she is the only person I know who would love her enough; and whenever the poor little, darling creature dies, *pray*, *pray* let her innocent bones be buried with mine. God bless you, Pups, prays poor old Poodle.

The picture of great bodily and mental suffering contained in these letters had its effect upon her husband. Once again he softened towards her, and had not the heart to enforce the decision at which he had arrived and which he had vowed was unalterable. He replied in a spirit of weary helplessness :—

Edward Bulwer to his Wife.

PARIS, *Jany.* 18*th*, 1836.

Altho' I am convinced that if you once made the effort, you would feel yourself happier separated from me —altho' I know too sadly that it is in vain to hope that you will sacrifice to me the indulgence of any momentary feelings of anger, or vexation, or that you will avoid perpetually and needlessly wounding my pride and my *amour propre*—altho', too, I feel assured that in your present sentiments there is neither affection nor esteem for me—yet, God knows, I do not and cannot desire to occasion you the anguish you seem to feel at our parting, from whatever sources it arises. Remain then at Acton, and let us forget the object of our late correspondence ; we will try once more. If the experiment is to succeed, let me entreat you, first, to have some indulgence for my habits and pursuits ; secondly, not to complain so often of being a prisoner, and dull and so forth ; and thirdly, not to think it incumbent upon you to say, or insinuate, everything that can gall or mortify me, by way of showing you don't condescend to flatter. Parliament will commence soon after my return. It need be no subject of complaint or grievance, if I am necessarily absent some days in the week, as I was before. As I never wish to shackle your liberty or grudge you amusement, I trust you will not (both to me and to others) call it a crime in me to attend, in the one case to a toilsome career, or, in the other, to seek occasionally something like a holiday of relaxation.

I have now done with this subject. Let us not renew it.

1836. Pray take care of yourself, and do not neglect medical
ÆT. 33. advice. Get well as soon as you can, and do have horses to enjoy a little change of air. I shall be in town in, I think, about a fortnight.—Yrs.

E. L. B.

In editing the story of this domestic tragedy I have tried as far as possible to present fairly the case of both husband and wife, and in the pursuit of this object I have been obliged to quote a great many letters, some of which may strike the reader as redundant. The task is not an easy one; for while the case of the husband is contained in countless documents at my disposal, that of the wife is necessarily incomplete. Her case has been stated with an intemperance and a disregard for historical accuracy which destroys its value, in a volume published after her death,[1] but not now accessible to the public. This book contains some passages from a diary which she wrote during the miserable days of December, 1835. Whether it has been published as it was written, or whether certain selections only have been given by her biographer, I have no means of knowing, as I have not seen the original; but, although I feel that the reader may be getting impatient to reach the end of this chapter, I cannot refrain from quoting such extracts from Miss Devey's first text of this diary as represent Mrs. Bulwer's character at its best, with its strange mixture of mocking humour, pathos, and bitterness.

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[1] *Life of Rosina, Lady Lytton*, 1887.

MRS. BULWER'S JOURNAL

Berrymead, Acton, *Dec.* 13*th*, 1835.

I have always remarked that everyone in solitary 1836.
confinement, from Baron Trenck down to Fieschi, has ÆT. 33.
taken refuge in a Journal, I suppose on the same principle that madmen talk to themselves. They have no one else to talk to—at all events, it is an innocent substitute for Society, with this advantage, that it inflicts one's egotism on no one but oneself, the only being to whom it would not be obnoxious. So much for "the fitness of things." We have had Journals from Purgatory; *vide* Fanny Kemble's, begun on board an *American Steam Boat*; but I know of none from the other place, unless the *Divina Commedia* can be considered as such. Young D'Israeli has given us *Ixion in Heaven* with infinite *ju*cundity, but these are all wide fields to journalise upon, except the Baron's and Fieschi's, with whose may rank the ingenious Frenchman's most ingenious little book "*Le voyage autour de ma chambre.*" Now the circumnavigation of one's own room may suit the patient perseverance of a Cook, but I doubt it's being palatable to the enterprising genius of a Columbus, and in Life's Masquerade we all would rather play the part of the latter. But necessity has no law, except that of chamber counc*il* in the present instance, and the only way in solitude to have "thoughts that breathe" is to read them aloud, as soon as one has written them, and as for "words that burn" they are easily secured by committing one's Journal to the flames, as soon as it is finished.

Poor Mary,[1] how I miss her! The house seems like a body without a soul, now that she is gone and I am literally "Alone"! I would fret more about her

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[1] Miss Greene.

1836. chances and changes, but that I am convinced God is
ÆT. 33. as much for her, as she is with and for Him. Poor little Emily too! poor child, she is happy with her little friend and companion. This is as it should be, we ought to get a little happiness on account in childhood—it prevents Fate being too much in arrears to us.

What a life has mine been! A sunless childhood, a flowerless youth, and certainly a fruitless womanhood—the few good qualities I possess utterly wasted, or rather despised! I hate looking back to the last eight years of my life. I so thoroughly despise myself for having wasted so much affection, zeal and devotion on so worthless an object. I forgot that nothing ever takes root in a stone but weeds; those of pride and selfishness are rooted there with a vengeance, and yet the eternal complaining of *want of sympathy*! Sympathy must be given before it can be received—just as *respect* must be paid, before it can be expected in return. Above all, sympathy, like electric fluid, must find a corresponding vein before it can be communicated, and therefore self-love annihilates all sympathy—because self-love is indivisible.

It would amuse me if I were not sick at heart to hear——(who cannot remain two days at home, and who, the moment he for a short interval dismounts from the whirlwind of his ambition, instantly busies himself in providing some *new* but solitary enjoyment, which would be marred for him if another shared it) complain, like a poor domestic home-rid man, of having his Household Gods shivered about him and his Hearth devastated, because he has the misfortune to be tied to one who does not think it an all-sufficient honour to share his *name* in perfect and uninterrupted loneliness, or to see him at distant intervals, when like a Sea Captain he puts in occasionally to his home harbour, and makes his house like a tavern with a few boon companions, eating, drinking, smoking, then blustering about the bills and off again, till convenience or necessity once more drives him homeward. 1836. ÆT. 33.

My boy is but four years old ; he came this morning to me praising himself for having kept some grapes and given them to his nurse. I told him he had better not have given them, if he thought so much of it as to boast about it. He had been reprobated hitherto for being a selfish child and sharing with no one ; so he stared at me, and did not seem to know what I meant. No matter, I hope he will fully understand it and act upon it by the time he is 20. I'm sure the secret of forming really *estimable*, *loveable*, characters, is not to *praise* children for doing right, but to make them very much ashamed of doing *wrong*.

I dread going to bed, for there this gnawing pain and low-fever consume me. I cannot sleep, and therefore cannot dream, which makes loneliness doubly lonely, for dreams are a sort of phantasmagoria of life, they are kind things, for, even if horrid, we wake, and so are thankful it was but a dream, whereas, if they are happy ones, they are to us sleeping what letters are to us waking, and bring tidings of those we love from the happy sunny past into that miserable, barren little segment of life, *the Present* !

Monday, 14*th*. Poor little Teddy told me a piece of sentiment *de sa part* to-day, which, if worked by a skilful lover into a sonnet to his mistress, would not in tenderness and delicacy be exceeded by anything Boccaccio ever *felt* towards his Fiammetta, or Petrarch ever *invented* about Laura. He said he went every morning to feed the birds at his sister's window.

I asked him why he did not feed them at his own nursery window ?

"Oh," said he, "because I wish dem to tink dat Emily still feeds dem ; for she has fed dem so long,

1836. Æt. 33. dat dey must love her de best, and dey might not eat de crumbs if dey thought she was gone!"

I can think of nothing better than this, and so will leave off. . . .

Wednesday, 16*th*. I am called away to Thomas Millar, the English Burns and Nottingham basket-maker.[1]

Well, I have seen him!—in person he is like a hazel-nut—said the *Pooblick* had indeed appreciated his works—he had the authorly egotism strongly upon him, and seemed to labour under what Pope and Swift so bitterly complained of in Gay, and which the latter designated as "a painful intenseness about his own affairs." He said he had had "a very sweet" (that was his phrase) letter from Moore, and had seen all the live authors worth seeing, from my *sposo* downwards; but that it had not at all turned his brain! (No, to be sure, for he had only *seen* them!) Next to his own poems, he spoke more *con amore* about Newstead Abbey, Lord Byron, and his Mary (Mrs. Musters) than anything else. He said her beauty was perfectly angelic and unearthly, and that her husband was a perfect brute —*cela va sans dire*, if she was an angel. He talked fanatically about woods and flowers and violets, yet he never even noticed mine that were breathing out their purple souls from their golden baskets round the room; he said, when he had written many hours together, he could neither eat nor sleep, and could not account for the burning pains in his head. I told him I could, for that the body was a sort of wife to the mind, and would not allow it to go gadding, amusing itself and others, and reaping fame and profit to the eternal injury of *her* health, from want of exercise and starvation, without twitting and worrying him, when he at length thought fit to remember her existence. . . .

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[1] Thomas Miller—not Millar—(1807–1874) enjoyed a brief notoriety as a rural genius. He was removed from the trade of basket-making to a bookseller's shop, was pensioned by Disraeli, and was then forgotten by the public.

21*st*. What another dreadful night I have had!—no sleep, and in torture the whole time! My nature must be a happy mixture of asbestos, cast iron, and feline unkillability, for no fever will consume me, no illness break me, and worst of all, no grief will kill me.

Had a note to-night from Count D'Orsay, offering me his box at the Adelphi on Thursday; very good-natured of him to think of me. Answered it in bad French and worse humour, at not being able to avail myself of the offer, for as my Lord and Master takes such infinite pains to assure me that I am older than any of the ladies of 38 and 40 now extant, I don't see why I should not have some of the benefits of my antiquity, and issue forth like the Prayer Books *cum privilegio*—for, for the sort of life I am compelled to lead, I might as well have the misfortune to be a beauty of fifteen. So, had I been well enough, I should certainly have accepted the box. . . .

22*nd*. Went out for the first time these ten days, described to the gardener about making the flower-pots into baskets, and dug the first circle of the Northern Star myself; kissed and talked to poor darling Fiddlestick, who licked my hand, rubbed his innocent head against me, bleated, and in short, appeared more delighted to see me than any *other* relation I have in the world; came home; had a greater bevy than ever of robins in the room, and that fat red-hooded Cardinal of a fellow that always eats the most and flies upon the bed and even upon Faizey's head of a morning, jumped upon my shoulder. Played on the guitar for an hour, and sang—a blaze sprang up in the fire, and fell full upon the picture of Napoli da Posilippo—I flung down the guitar; again was I returning from the dear, balmy, happy, sunset drive, on the Strada Nuova; again did I

1836. feel the soft breeze on my cheek from across the bay, Æt. 33. freighted with a warm kiss from Vesuvius; again did I cast my eye along the ciaja, and as I saw Ld. H[ertford]'s Palazzo, where the ball was to be held at night, call to poor stupid, often scolded, but still more often regretted Francesco, to order another wreath with more myrtle and fewer roses. Ah! Naples, dear Naples! you are the *only* place in which I ever *felt* young (for I did not do so as a child)—and what was the result? Did I commit more follies? No—*mais qui vit sans folie n'est pas si sage qu'il pense.*

The passages in this diary are specially interesting when the date at which they were written is considered. They show how pitiably Mrs. Bulwer was dependent for her happiness upon the man whom she had married, and how incapable she was of making any interests or occupations for herself independently of him.

She was at this moment at a supreme crisis in her life, yet she does not seem to have realised it. The past could not be recalled, nor its mistakes unmade, but the future was still to a certain extent in her own hands. She could not expect any material change in their relations so far as her husband's feelings or conduct were concerned. It was for her now to determine how best to dispose of her life apart from him. This she appears to have been incapable of doing. She could not make up her mind to live either with him or without him, and merely drifted helplessly towards a future which she refused to face. The diary shows the extreme *ennui* and loneliness of her existence, yet at the very moment when she was thus describing it, she was also writing letters to her husband imploring him to allow it to continue. Though she recoiled from the prospect of a final separation from him, she found it quite impossible to restrain herself when in his presence; and this last attempt to avoid the inevitable ended as all the previous ones had done. 1836. Æt. 33.

As late as February 13, 1836, I find a letter from Bulwer to his wife, beginning "My dearest Love," and inviting her to accompany him to "Babbage's"; but before the end of the month occurred an incident which brought matters to a rapid conclusion.

Mrs. Bulwer, who was expecting a visit from her husband at Acton, hearing that he was prevented by illness from coming, travelled to London in the evening and called at his rooms in the Albany. Her husband, too ill to leave the house, had been expecting his friend Frederick Villiers to tea. His servant was out, and Mrs. Bulwer failed for some time to get an answer to her knocking. At last her husband himself opened the door, and Mrs. Bulwer, seeing two tea-cups on his tray and his dressing-gown on the chair, which she took to be a woman's shawl, immediately made a violent scene in the passage, and accused him of having grossly deceived her. On her return to Acton she repeated these accusations, and an embittered correspondence followed.

The negotiations for their separation were

1836. immediately resumed, and the deed was finally
Æt. 33. completed and signed on April 19, 1836. Mrs. Bulwer received an allowance of £400 a year, which was secured to her by Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton, and an additional £50 for each of the children who were left in her charge. Her two trustees were her mother's cousin, Sir Francis Doyle and Sir Thomas Cullum. They expressed themselves satisfied with the arrangements, and placed their opinions on record in the following terms:—

> The cause of the separation which has unhappily taken place between Mr. and Mrs. E. L. Bulwer is incompatibility of temper. The pecuniary terms contained in the Agreement, to which Mr. Bulwer has legally bound himself, are, with reference to the permanent means at his disposal, in our judgment, liberal, and the conditions generally of the arrangement, as proposed by him, honourable to both the parties concerned.

The following letter, written by Bulwer to his wife at the time of the separation, is evidence of the feelings which he then entertained, and of his hopes that, divided, they might find the peace which, united, they had so signally missed :—

Albany, *April* 14, 1836.

I can assure you, if simply, at least most earnestly and sincerely, that I was deeply affected by that part of your letter which referred to your health. I firmly trust, however, that the repose and quiet which will follow the agitation of the present business will restore you ; and I can honestly add that I believe, so far from my having any duties of survivorship to perform, you will live to find by my will that I am far indeed from those feelings which you attribute to me. There are many points in your letter to which I think it better for both of us not to reply. But I will assure you that there is not a kind feeling expressed in it for which I am not grateful (tho' surprised). I am pleased also to think that I did not form wrong impressions of your character when I supposed you, long since, incapable of the violent, hostile, exacting and selfish course which lately has been falsely sheltered beneath your authority, and which very nearly drove me to extremities I never otherwise would have dreamt of. I am far more gratified on your account than mine at the generous sentiments you now express. But on *my* account also I am gratified, for I shall now be enabled to prove to you that, tho' indeed separation is unavoidable for the present, yet that it will be my dearest luxury to contribute as far as I can to your comforts, and that every kindly concession on your part will meet with the fullest return on mine.

I regret that I *could* not legally secure to you the additional £100 a year that I understand you to require. But believe that I will never have the commonest luxury for myself until I have voluntarily laid by that sum to add to your income. So much have you been misrepresented to me as to your alleged resistance to the conciliatory mode of separation suggested, that I have felt it necessary, since your letter, to say that you did not entertain the hostile and angry feelings ascribed to you and to insist that the draft of the agreement should be submitted to you. In that agreement my mother's security for the allowance was proposed on one side, an indemnity against debts on the other. The last being withheld, there was some difficulty in arranging the first. But I doubt not that that security can be given, if you consent to the rest.

The true advantage of the agreement is on your

1836. side rather than mine. It secures to you a legal
ÆT. 33. provision of which you are always sure, and which covers nearly the whole of my real and permanent income. I might *starve* if literature failed, but you would still have your allowance, so long as we lived separate. For the rest, if ever we both wished to live together there is nothing to prevent us in that strip of parchment. You will not contemplate that chance—pardon me if I do—should our separation, as I hope it may, be conducted on kindly terms and not on the inimical, worrying and odious system of uncharitable war which I believed you to prefer.

This was acknowledged on April 16 as follows :—

I thank you for your letter, and am sorry that poor Mary's zeal and kind feelings for me should have offended you. But be not angry that I have *one* friend on earth : it is not long that I shall want even that one. For the rest I do not wish to have blame imputed to anyone which is solely due to me.

Upon the first intimation of your casting me off, I did say I would not take less than £600 a year, for that I could not support and educate my children upon a smaller sum. I felt bitterly too, at the time, as I had seen your banker's account, by which it appeared I had had £180 in eight months, and in six you had spent two thousand some hundred and odd pounds, and that without appearing to have paid any heavy debts. But this and every other feeling of resentment have now, thank God, subsided, and I solemnly assure you so far from *now* wishing to tax your luxury of getting rid of me at so dear a rate as the sacrifice of half your tangible income, I would not, were my *poor little unhappy children out of the question*, under any persuasion take more than £200 a year from you. As it is, I beg explicitly to state that *no* illness, no want, no privation, shall ever induce me to accept *one farthing* from you beyond the stipulated £500. If I live I can make more. 1836. ÆT. 33.

And now, do not, I implore you, attribute to vindictive or unforgiving feelings *my unalterable determination* of never again "cursing your existence with my presence." Upon reflection you must feel convinced that without any feeling of *resentment* no woman of common delicacy, no woman of the most latent and dormant pride, could, when once publicly expelled from her husband's house, ever under *any circumstances* return to it, especially when that husband had spoken of her to a third person, in the terms you have of me—for which, however, I most *freely* and sincerely forgive you.

I do not contemplate the possibility of being able to leave this before Midsummer, as housekeeping being out of the question, it will not be so easy to find the sort of thing I want. I hope you have let this place for a great deal more than you gave for it, as the house which had not a window or door that would shut, is now in good repair, and the garden that was knee deep in weeds, and destitute of even a potato when I came here, is now in perfect order, and thoroughly stocked with everything.

And now, once for all, may God bless you and prosper you. May those new ties which make it indispensable for you to part with me, be to you all that I have failed to be. May your friends be as zealous in promoting your interests and your comforts as I *tried* to be, and may they have none of the irritability of temper and easily wounded feelings which in me destroyed and cancelled all my best intentions. In short, may you henceforth be as happy as I have made you the reverse is the sincere hope and will be the constant prayer of her who was your wife,

ROSINA BULWER.

1836. Æt. 33. At every stage in this unhappy story may be traced the working of a relentless fate which dogged its victims from the moment when it first brought them together.

Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton, who, with a mother's insight, had realised the folly of her son's marriage and who, with more sympathy and tact, might have prevented it, became, as we have seen, a direct instrument in bringing it about. When it was an accomplished fact, she still retained the means of preventing it from being a failure, yet, however unconsciously or unwillingly, she was largely responsible for its disastrous consequences. Deprived of his mother's support, Bulwer did all that any man could do—and more than most men could have done—by his own exertions to save his wife and himself from the poverty to which they had condemned themselves. But again those very exertions became instruments of destruction, for while they provided his wife with all the material comforts of life, they gave her at the same time an irritable companion and an unhappy home. The holiday trip to Italy in 1833, which was to have been a sort of second honeymoon and to provide an escape from the harassing conditions of their London life, proved instead to be the origin of the first serious breach in their relations. In the last act of the tragedy the same evil influence pursues them.

The hope expressed in their last letters was destined to be cruelly disappointed in the years that followed. The separation, far from being the end of their domestic unhappiness, was but the beginning of a new period of "uncharitable war" which lasted to the end of their lives, and far exceeded in bitterness all that had gone before. Hitherto Bulwer's public life, his literary and political labours, had overshadowed his private life and destroyed the peace and happiness of his home; henceforth his domestic life and his relations with his wife were to invade his public life and overshadow all his literary and political successes. The love which hitherto each had struggled in vain to keep alive was now finally converted into the most deadly hatred, and pursued them remorselessly to their graves. Whatever may have been the faults on either side, and wherever the responsibility may have rested for the tragedy of these two lives, the penalty at least was paid to the uttermost farthing by both. Neither could escape the Nemesis of their own actions. 1836. ÆT. 33.

The story which has been told in full down to this point is one of infinite pathos and of deep human interest. Those who read it may draw their own conclusions, and extract from it what moral they please. It is at once the oldest and the newest story of human frailty. In every generation men and women are to be found who marry for love and find their love grow cold. In the warfare of opposing natures which then ensues some live to achieve victory, and succeed

1836. Æt. 33. in establishing upon the ruins of their passions a mutual understanding and a lasting agreement which secures for them at least a tranquil home and a measure of companionship which is worth preserving. Others, as in the case before us, fail pitiably to avoid disaster, and from the seeds of tragedy which they have sown themselves reap a rich harvest of pain and sorrow. For this reason, however painful may be the recitation, I have told the story of Edward Bulwer's marriage, and tried to show as fairly as I can the causes of its failure. To his relations with his wife subsequent to their separation I shall have to refer again at a later stage. They may be briefly summarised here.

In all cases where a husband and wife are separated the position of the woman is infinitely more difficult and harder to bear than that of the man. Especially is this the case when she has no independent means of her own, and has to be supported by the man whom she hates. The very qualities which made it impossible for Mrs. Bulwer to live amicably with her husband made it equally difficult for her to live alone. With no property of her own, without settled occupation, with extravagant habits and tastes, with a sharp tongue and vindictive thoughts, without friends, and with bad health, her position was from the first a hopeless one. To the end of her life she had but one thought—to be avenged on the man whom she held responsible for her misfortunes, and but one occupation—by abusive libels to blacken his character, poison his happiness, and blast his career. 1836. ÆT. 33.

In later years she entirely forgot the sentiments of affection which she once felt for her husband. Her private and public attacks upon him represent him as a man who brutally ill-treated her almost from the day of their marriage, and she invented facts which are entirely at variance with the tone of her own letters down to the very year of their separation.

The indulgence of her hatred became at last such an obsession that it completely deranged her intellect, and her words and acts were those of a frenzied maniac. Owing to the public character of her husband's work, her opportunities for wounding him were numerous, and she never lost one. Every book that he wrote, every play that he produced, every time that he appeared at a public meeting, every new honour which he received, provided her with fresh occasions to remind him of the poison which could never be eradicated from his life. In publications of her own as well as in the public press, she pursued him with coarse and scurrilous libels, and in later years she poured the same abuse upon her son, who made great sacrifices, and incurred the temporary displeasure of the father whom he loved and revered, to do her justice. The only extenuation of her conduct is to be found in her own sufferings, which were acute. She was possessed by a fiend that never let her rest. Embittered, disappointed, with a

1836. fevered mind and tortured body, she outlived Ǽt. 33. her husband, and died at an advanced age in poverty, loneliness, and obscurity.

Bulwer lived his life out as a public man, and its story will be told in the pages that follow; but no one can rightly appreciate his public life without knowing the price which was extorted from him by his private tragedy. In all the branches of the work in which he was engaged, he achieved success and won distinction; but all the time there was a spectre which never left him, which clouded his happiness and embittered his life. Proud and sensitive beyond the average, the atmosphere of private scandal in which he lived caused him the most poignant suffering. But though it poisoned his peace of mind and impaired his health, he never sank under the burden; his industry never flagged, and his courage never gave way. He worked to the end, and though attacked and calumniated throughout his life, he nevertheless succeeded in winning the love of his children and the admiration of his contemporaries.

BOOK III

LITERARY AND POLITICAL

A TWOFOLD CAREER DEVELOPED

1827–1840

Still young—not youthful—life had passed through all
Age sighs, and smiles, and trembles to recall.

New Timon.

CHAPTER I

EARLY LITERARY ACTIVITIES

1827–1830

> Two years sufficed to produce a revolution in his fate. He had lost the happy rights of the private individual; he had given himself to the Public; he had surrendered his name to men's tongues, and was a thing that all had a right to praise, to blame, to scrutinise, to spy. He had become an author.
>
> *Ernest Maltravers.*

1827–1828. ÆT. 24–25.

IN the preceding chapters reference was frequently made to the literary labours in which Edward Bulwer was engaged during the early years of his married life. It now becomes necessary to give a more detailed account of his work during this period.

The first few months of his life at Woodcot were spent in literary drudgery of the dreariest and most arduous description. Short stories, reviews of books, political articles, imaginary letters and dialogues, hasty sketches of men and manners—most of them anonymous, were contributed to the periodical press of the day. During all this time, however, there was lying in his portfolio a work that was destined to lift him at one leap out of that morass of literary trivialities in which the conditions of his life

1828. Æt. 25. seemed leagued to sink him. This work was *Pelham*, and the circumstances of its publication are related in a biographical sketch prefixed to a collected edition of his works that appeared during his lifetime.

Mr. Colburn, seeing in *Falkland* the promise of better things, offered the author £500 for a novel in three volumes.

"I will give you one that shall be sure to succeed," was the answer.

Pelham had been begun late in 1825. It was finished early in 1828 and sent at once to Mr. Colburn. Mr. Colburn placed it in the hands of his chief reader, Mr. Schubert, by whom it was emphatically condemned as utterly worthless. He then submitted it to his second reader, Mr. Ollier, whose more favourable opinion induced him to read it himself. Three or four days later Mr. Colburn called Schubert and Ollier into his room and remarked, "I have read Mr. Bulwer's novel, and it is my decided opinion that it will be the book of the year." Having delivered his judgment on it, he immediately despatched a messenger with the cheque. The clerk who acted as messenger on this occasion has recorded that when Bulwer received the cheque he said that if this novel had been declined, he would never again have written another, but would have devoted himself entirely to politics.

Pelham was published without the name of the author on May 10, 1828. For two months the book created no impression on the public and seemed destined to perish prematurely, but in the third month it suddenly sprang into favour, and rapidly acquired enormous popularity. It was translated into French, German, Spanish, and Italian, and within a year it had become a text-book about English society and was read with avidity throughout Europe. 1828. Æt. 25.

One day the author was stopped before the door of the Senate House at Cambridge by a friend of an earlier generation, George Burges,[1] who exclaimed, "I had no idea, Bulwer, that you had it in you to write such a book!"

"Well," replied the author, "no man knows what he can do till he tries."

From henceforth Bulwer's literary reputation was firmly established. One of the immediate effects of the publication of *Pelham* was a supersession of the Byronic cult by a new fashion which, though equally affected, had at least the merit of being more cheerful than its predecessor. Writing of *Pelham* in 1840 Bulwer says:—

> Whether it answered all the objects it attempted I cannot say, but one at least I imagine that it did answer. I think that, above most works, it contributed to put an end to the Satanic Mania—to turn the thoughts and ambitions of young gentlemen without neckcloths, and young clerks who were sallow, from playing the Corsair and boasting that they were villains. If, mistaking the

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[1] George Burges (1786–1864) was a well-known Trinity man, who at this time had a high reputation as a private tutor in Cambridge. He was one of the most active classical editors of his day.

irony of Pelham, they went to the extreme of emulating the foibles which that hero attributes to himself, those, at least, were foibles more harmless, and even more manly and noble, than the conceit of a general detestation of mankind, or the vanity of storming our pity by lamentations over imaginary sorrows and sombre hints at the fatal burden of inexpiable crimes.

A change in the fashion of dress which took place about this time has also been attributed to the influence of *Pelham.* Till then the coats worn for evening dress had been of many colours —brown, green, or blue, according to the fancy of the wearer. These were eventually discarded for the black coat, which has survived to the present time, and it is said that the change was brought about by Lady Frances Pelham, who was made to say in a letter to her son :—

> *Apropos* of the complexion ; I did not like that blue coat you wore when I last saw you. You look best in black, which is a great compliment, for people must be very distinguished in appearance to do so.

At the end of the same year, 1828, Bulwer published another novel *The Disowned. Devereux* followed in 1829, and *Paul Clifford* in 1830. During the same period he also wrote the greater part of another novel called *Greville*, which was never finished, and only appeared as an incomplete fragment after his death.[1]

The chief interest connected with the publication of *The Disowned* is the fact, already mentioned, that it was the means of bringing about a reconciliation between the author and his mother. The book was conceived and written in less than a twelvemonth, at a time when its author's mind was oppressed by many causes of anxiety, and when the compulsory production of much ephemeral work was inflicting a severe strain upon his faculties. Though it was rated higher than *Pelham* when it first appeared, the judgment of posterity has decided otherwise.

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[1] *Life, Letters and Literary Remains of Edward Bulwer, Lord Lytton,* by his son, vol. i.

1829.
Æt. 26.

Devereux, his first historical novel, dealing with the reign of Queen Anne, was written with the greatest confidence of success and was the most immediately popular of all Bulwer's works, but its early popularity has not survived. Writing later in life the author said :—

> I have always found that one is never so successful as where one is least sanguine. I fell into the deepest despondency about *Pompeii* and *Eugene Aram*, and was certain, nay presumptuous, about *Devereux*, which is the least generally popular of all my writings.

The contemporary reviews hailed the book with enthusiasm, but the world of readers dissented from the verdict of the critics, and the author's own maturer judgment coincided with theirs. It was published on the 9th of July 1829, when the author was just twenty-six. An intelligent critic in *The Examiner* expressed his belief that "Mr. Bulwer had written *Pelham* for his own pleasure, *The Disowned* for his bookseller, and *Devereux* for the support of his fame

1829. Æt. 26. with the public." But the truth is he had written *Devereux* for the support of his wife and child. In this respect it succeeded and in this alone. His name had risen steadily in market value, and whereas he got £500 for the copyright of *Pelham*, and £800 for *The Disowned*, for *Devereux* he received £1500.

Among the letters which Bulwer received at this time from admirers of his works, some from the notorious Harriette Wilson, whose memoirs, published in 1825, made such a sensation in society, are of special interest. They are endorsed by Bulwer as follows :—

> These letters were written to me when I first came up to town, after my marriage, and in my second year of authorship. Of course I never acceded to her wish to know me.

After the publication of memoirs in which her intimate relations with most of the leading men in society had been shamelessly revealed, Harriette Wilson was no longer a person whose acquaintance would have been very eagerly sought after.

> Sir—Though I have disliked reading all my life unless it be Shakespear's plays, yet I got to the end of *Pelham*. It was not a book to my taste either, for I thought the writer was a cold hearted man, and his light chit-chat was pedantic, smelling of the *Lamp*—not so good as my own. But then it was a sensible book, the fancies brilliant, the thought deep, the language very expressive. In short I got to the end of it. *The Disowned* I liked better still, and felt *very much* obliged

to you for writing one of the few books I *can* come to the end of, with all my desire for amusement. But that imbecile [Mordaunt] who allow'd his wife to be starved like a helpless blockhead, *his* want of French philosophy made me *sick*. Do you consider that man virtuous or sensible whose *little* soul makes him ashamed of doing his duty in that state of life into which it may please God to call him? He had arms and legs, health and intelligence —why did not he clean his wife's room and white-wash the walls, earn her by his daily work a mutton chop, and then fry it for her *à la maintenon*? There's no such thing as starving in England for an intelligent man who will *turn his hand to anything* rather than endure to see the beloved of his soul die of hunger. No, that man ought to have been sent to the tread mill.

1829.
ÆT. 26.

Now for *Devereux*, I have nearly finished the first vol. and am so charmed with it, that I have laid it aside to tell you how proud I should be if you felt disposed to honor me with your acquaintance. I merely *suggest* this to you because life is too short and too miserable for us to afford prudently to risk the loss of a possible pleasure for want of asking for it, and it is just *possible* that we might derive pleasure from being acquainted—not very probable, however, because I am not a bit agreeable except to those who are predisposed to like me, and who appear to feel and understand all that is original or eccentric or amusing or likeable in my character at once. I am very shy, and when people do not flatter and encourage me by making me feel sure of their predisposition to like me, I am not a *bit amiable* because I am *gênée*. I am *not*, and never was, a general favourite; but nobody likes me a *little* or forgets me when they have once liked, understood and been liked by me. I am very ignorant and can't spell, but there is this advantage in not reading, you are all of you copies and I am the thing itself. You are sure if I say anything to strike or please you that it came out of my own little head.

What do you think about it? *qu'en pensez vous?* Perhaps you would like my society better than I should like yours. After all, *entre nous*, I like *contemplative* people, and so far you would suit my taste; but if there's no *comedy* in your composition, no genuine Falstaff (and I doubt it), none of the amiable folly of romance without which no man has a good heart, we should bore each other. I could write you a much neater scrawl by copying, thinking and using my dictionary, but I can't take the trouble; it's such a *forlorn hope* that of your choosing to make my acquaintance. The chances are five hundred to one against me. However I am *not* ugly as they describe me in the papers; but on the contrary rather handsome, particularly by candle-light when I am amused—although I was born at ten minutes before eight o'clock, the 22 February 1788 and christened at St. George's Church—I love to be particular.

The beginning of *Devereux* is quite perfect in my humble opinion. I would not change a *line*, and I believe firmly that Walter Scott could not improve *one line* or thought up to page 266. You always fall off in love scenes, perhaps because your heart is dry and you want the romance, the thrill, the *body* of the thing to mix up with your visions; therefore, you don't excite desire for *your heroines*, no man wants their sweet favours. Matilde (of Malechadel) is *pure enough* for *your high flown notions*, yet she is drawn *the woman* and she excites passion. No matter, the fault (as I said to the Duke of Beaufort) "is not in your heart but in your *want of heart*."

I never heard your person described, but can *fancy* you a little fright just like Ld. Dudley and Ward. No matter, I am sick of beauty, and the only small caprice I have encouraged for some time past is for a little fat, snub-nosed old gentleman of *high degree*, high in place too, whom I never beheld but once and that was 12 years ago. He was then at least five and forty, but his public character has *tête montéd* me, and me *only* perhaps. You would be surprised that his Lordship should make any woman's dream of love, and yet I am *always* dreaming of the dear little fat old gentleman. I have told him in more charming letters than this that I adore him, and he only answers thus :— 1829. ÆT. 26.

"MY DEAR MADAM—Yours of the date of . . . came to hand on the 30th of . . . and I return you my sincere thanks for the many obliging expressions it contains, etc."

Cut me, Mr. Pelham, if you will, but give me no cut and dried "*dates of.*" Oh ! ! to think that ever tender enthusiastic elderly gentlewoman should be doom'd to love a little *fat man*, who in return gives her nothing but "Yours Madam of the date of . . ." ! ! ! However, I shall take a voyage to . . . where he resides and make an attack on him, unless you make me like you better. At present I have not a distant *presentiment* that it would be possible; I am only in love with your *last* work as far as I have read it, and have pleasure in expressing to the author my perfect glowing admiration of every line up to page 266. I have not begun the 2d vol. yet, as I only got the work yesterday.

I am not my own mistress, but if *en tout bien et tout honneur* you were to write me word that you would not object to favor me with a visit some day—or will you take a walk with me some evening ? I am much pleasanter to *begin with* when I am walking, because if it is dark I thus get rid of the shyness or nervousness which is constitutional with me and renders me a bore to strangers until I am encouraged delightfully by a

1829. Æt. 26. certain inward conviction that they like me enough to be indulgent.—Yours truly, and with high respect for your superior talents,

Henriette Rochfort,
Author of *The Memoirs of H. Wilson.*

As a sensible man who can use your own excellent judgment, I know you will not like me more or less because I am abused; nor will you cause me any unpleasant tracasseries by the little vulgar trick of talking about me to others. Mr. Rochfort would not mind my trying to make your *acquaintance*, because he would know my motive to be really innocent; and so it was with Lord Byron, who did not refuse my bold request except in the *first* instant; but I shall not ask you a second time—although if we never meet I shall always think of you with a feeling of such high respect as nobody but you and my little fat old gentleman "*of the date of*" can inspire. I love *solitude* luckily, therefore I shall not die though both of you are cruel.

I hope you are not afraid of me. Why should an honest man be afraid of doing what he pleases? My safest address is "Mrs. Rochfort, under cover to Miss Jane Du Bochet,[1] 42 Chapel St., Edgeware Road."

The second letter indicates the kind of answer which she had received to her first:—

October 1st, deux heures après minuit.

Though my sister gave me your letter before dinner (in answer to mine of "the six weeks ago instant") I had no opportunity of reading it till this moment. I am sleepy and my fire is out, and yet, the matter having hold of my thoughts, I should not rest till I had expressed to you my regret that *you like me*, since you 1829. refuse to shake hands with me. *On sait à peu près ce* Æt. 26. *qu'on veut*, I had therefore philosophically made up my mind to endure your silent contempt, but since you are benevolently inclined towards me, it is really rather hard upon me this—*dead cut*. From your style of writing I did not expect to find you a very agreeable companion for a post-chaise, etc., nor did I desire that we should meet under the impression that it was at all incumbent on us to be more agreeable than our neighbours. The very thought and fever of such a wish would only serve to redden our noses and damp our spirits. I conceived, as a sensible man, you might perhaps be amused with the novelty of a woman who is *always* true to nature, no matter how bizarre may be her thoughts, creed, or wishes. However, if you won't make friends with me you *won't*, and I must stick to my "*Yours of the 15th came safe to hand on the, etc.*"

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[1] "Harriette Wilson" was a pseudonym and "Mr. Rochfort," perhaps, a myth. The lady was the daughter of a shopkeeper in Mayfair, Jean Jacques du Bouchet or Bochet.

Apropos! I have got another letter by this week's bag in which his Lordship varies a little. It begins thus:—"*DEAR MRS. ROCHFORT—On reading yours of the fifth instant I must plainly tell you that I have some reason to complain.*" Bravo!! chide on, dear little fat man!! I'd rather hear you chide than others woo. *Entre nous*, scolding is certainly *one* step on the ladder of such a diplomatic man's feelings—I've gained a *grade*!!! I'm Ensign in his books instead of Cornet!!!! I wish *you* would begin to scold me.

In sober seriousness, I must observe that you are quite justified in declining my acquaintance since it is your humour—I can only say with the Archbishop in *Gil Blas*—"*Je vous souhaite toute sorte de prospérité avec un peu plus de goût.*"

If, however, you believe I wished you to neglect *others* for so *insignificant* an individual as myself, you have done me injustice. Believing you married, I

1829. Ær. 26. only desired the honor of your acquaintance under the impression that love or desire for me *now* was entirely out of the chapter of possibilities, and that no wife would pay me the compliment to object to my occasionally enjoying the benefit of a little chat with her husband. I should have been proud and obliged if hereafter you would have been at the trouble of looking over my unfinished new Work—the only thing I have ever written at all to my own satisfaction with regard to the romance, the language and the spirit of it. But why should I have presumed to expect so much condescension from you? The work must take its chance; I'll publish it with all its blunders of ignorance, because I like it myself, and expect others may do so too, since everybody tells me I had never had any vanity. True I am the most *unread* and truly *ignorant* woman in His Majesty's dominions, but then heart and feeling will come at the right expressions by intuition. The memoirs were written in a sort of shorthand, the first vol. in six days. I wanted to look over all that dirty paper, but Stockdale called on me every morning and tucked my foolscap MS. *à mesure* under his arm, so that when I saw it in print I was really agreeably astonished and puzzled to guess why it was not worse still. What I am now writing (a sort of female Gil Blas not *quite* so *loose* as Faublas) gives me much more trouble. It appears that we grow humble and difficult to be pleased as our eyes open on the glare of our own vast and melancholy deficiencies. No matter, you *won't*, and nobody else shall, meddle with my novel. I will tell you what would make a perfect novel—you write it all but the love scenes and send them for me to draw.

The papers *forced* me to allude to my *person* and voice, since who would like the few they admire to be impressed with the false idea of their hideousness and their *coarse voice*?—knowing that my voice is *very good* and that no time can quite spoil a fine face, though it may a pretty one. I told you the exact truth, namely that I am forty-three, very *journalière*, often *joliment abattu*, *grâce à dieu*, particularly when I can't sleep, which happens four nights out of six, handsome (for those who like the Sidonian expression) occasionally when I have slept, never *very ugly* in the face, and as pretty as ever in person, which, by the bye, does not appear under the disguise of my costume which is as loose as my morals—to use the newspaper's expression, while in fact I am a true, faithful wife leading about as innocent a life as a hermit can well do. If Mr. Rochfort was to learn that you had allowed me the advantage of making your acquaintance it would give him pleasure that the dull life my ill-health obliges me to lead was occasionally enlivened by a person whose talents he admires as much as I do; and whatever you, as a stranger, may think of me, no one can know me long and not place confidence in my *truth*. . . . 1829. Æt. 26.

If you will send me your work I shall be proud, and still more so if you will sometimes write to me. I am tired of the world in general and care little for *any society*, but I should have been refreshed, or I fancy so, by the conversation of the most sensible young man I know. "*But you don't know me, Madam.*" Yes, I do; with my tact I can read you in your book, and shall consider that we are old acquaintances whether you like it or not.

You say you are six foot broad. I should from my ear (not my grammar) say "six feet"; which word is right? I know from your writing that you are thin and bilious and severe, I should say dry, not graceful; but one wants variety, I should like your shrewd wisdom for a change; harsh it might sound to a lady's ear, after the gentle, voluptuous, graceful luxurious Argyles or Ponsonbys, but the rude scenes of age and

1829. Æt. 26. harshness *must come* and is to *nous autres* who have been loved and doted on, the *tax upon beauty*. The contrast of neglect must be borne, and borne by me like a man, for Lord Ponsonby used to say of me that my advantage over other *sweet fair ones* was that besides my pretty bosom and effeminate qualities, softness of temper, etc., I really was "an *excellent fellow*" (*bon camarade*). So to preserve the impression in my favour, now I'm growing old I must be a *better fellow* than ever, in which character I forgive your cut and wish you every success, every possible happiness that can be obtained in a world *fait exprès pour nous enrager*.—Adieu,

Harry.

There is a third letter in much the same strain, apparently written about the same time. None of them are dated, though from internal evidence the first three appear to have been written in 1831. The following, which closes the correspondence, is evidently of a much later date.

2 North Cottages, Princes St., Cadogan St., Chelsea
(near the Catholic Chelsea Chapel).

Dear Sir—When I was a sinner, and a *good-looking* one, I thought you were quite right to refuse me the honor of your acquaintance; but I have been "born again" as the Methodists say, and am now a Saint ! ! ! What's more I am *very sick*, *very old*, and shall soon die. I was duly received into the Catholic Church by baptism, confessions with confirmation, etc., nearly a year ago, after six months' hard study. I did not think I could have read so hard or so many books of controversy, Protestant and Catholic. So intense was my curiosity that I neither slept nor dined for many months without a pile of Catholic books on one side of me and one of Protestant *larger still* on my left. Once or twice a week a most amiable Catholic priest and preacher came to hear and answer all my objections by the hour together with the patience of a *true Saint*. Our interviews lasted three or four hours. To conclude, I am now a strict Catholic on conviction. 1829. ÆT. 26.

Faith is a supernatural gift; I could not get rid of mine if I would, and I should be wretched without it. I can do nothing and love nothing *coldly*, I was created for love, and now that all the love that my heart is capable of has turned towards God, you will easily believe that I am no longer a *sinner*, for it is not in nature to desire to offend or disobey what we love with our whole heart, soul, and strength. I was never taught religion either by parents or lovers, neither was I encouraged to study the scriptures; I was always what I am still, a bigot as to my distaste to the Protestant creed and all the other sects. For a time I disliked popery according to the *fashion*, but I could not ultimately resist my priest, Dr. Wiseman's Lectures, and the whispers of my own conscience that said to me "Your destiny is to *die a* Catholic. I go to Mass daily, to the Communion table twice a month, and have as much *distaste* to all worldly things as if I were a nun. I live as a hermit, and as my dear, good, innocent, Virgin priest has so little time to visit me (he does not want inclination, for he holds me up as an example for good Catholics), and as I do hate stupid society, I am denied to every one, yet it would much *honor and gratify me* if I might be refreshed by a little of your conversation, though it were but once a year. I would swear to you, but that the priest says "Swear not at all," that I now think with horror on sin of any kind however slight.

I think you are too clever to be a genuine Protestant, but if you are I should like to know *why*. Will you

1830. Æt. 27. let me have the honor of a little chat with you with your lady's consent? You will find me intelligent and lively, though quite old and sick. I would run no risk of sin, but I was always firm and I *know* that there *is* no risk of my ever being unchaste again even by the encouragement of *thoughts.* This you will say is being too bold, but when was I unfaithful to my love? and I never loved any of you as I love God. I will not believe that any can wilfully offend what they *perfectly* love.

But you'll say you've no time; well, it is very shabby of you, for you may appoint any hour on any day after twelve, and I will wait your leisure. I have no object but the gratification I know I should feel in talking to a person who could understand me, and as to *regard*, if we are both honest and single-hearted we must command the goodwill and respect of each other; but as to love! ! if I felt a spark stealing over me for any man alive I would avoid him from that hour. *Nothing* shall induce me to go into temptation again, but I am marble, and if I were *not*, the priest who taught me to love God would be the man I should cry willow for. . . .

Viendrez-vous un de ces beaux jours? but you must appoint the hour and shew your note to your Lady. I tell everything to my confessor, and I told him I should like of all things to converse with you. He is not a stupid bigot and he knows I am steady. —Yours truly, dear Sir,

H. Du Bochet,

rechristened Mary Magdalen by my own desire at the Catholic Confirmation.

Paul Clifford, of which the first edition was published on May 4, 1830, and the second on August 27 in the same year, was the first of that class of fictions, now common enough in

England and elsewhere, which the Germans designate *Tendenzstücke*. The ostensible object of the book was, as stated by its author in a preface to a later edition of it, "to draw attention to two errors in our penal institutions, viz.:—a vicious Prison Discipline, and a sanguinary Penal Code." To appreciate this object it is necessary to recall the condition of the criminal law and the system of prison management at the time when it was written. 1830. ÆT. 27

Horse, sheep, cattle, and letter-stealing were offences still punishable by death. Only a few years earlier men had been hanged for stealing five shillings worth of property; and a prisoner's counsel was not permitted to address the jury in capital cases.

The statistics quoted in the postscript to the fourth volume of the "Newgate Calendar" show that in the seven years from 1819 to 1825, both inclusive, 7770 persons were sentenced to death, an average of 1110 a year, and of this number only 579 were actually executed, an annual average of nearly 83. Their offences were as follows:—

Arson and other wilful burning of property, 10. Burglary, 128. Cattle-stealing, 2. Maliciously killing, 1. Forgery and uttering forged instruments, 62. Horse-stealing, 21. House-breaking in the daytime and larceny, 9. Larceny in dwelling-houses to the value of forty shillings, 27. Secreting and stealing letters containing bank-notes, 5. Murder, 101. Shooting at, stabbing, and administering poison with intent to murder, 30. Rape, 31. Riot (remaining assembled with rioters one hour after the Riot Act had been read), 1. Robbery from the person on the highway and other places, 95. Sacrilege, 2. Sheep-stealing, 29. Unnatural offences, 15. High treason, 5. Total number of persons executed on the above charges, 579.

From these figures it appears that of all the persons who were hanged in England between the years 1819 and 1825 inclusive less than one-fifth were guilty of the crime to which capital punishment is now confined.

The publication of *Paul Clifford* did much to stimulate public opinion in favour of Criminal Law Reform. Though the conditions against which it protested can hardly be imagined at the present day, they were not only familiar to but defended by the generation for whom the book was written. The idea of associating reformation with punishment was then quite unknown to the public mind. Even to-day the reformatory principle makes but slow progress, because it is always mistrusted by the highest legal authorities, and the same arguments in support of the deterrent effect of retributive punishment are still repeated, regardless of the fact that the experience of the past has proved them to be false.

In 1832 Lord Eldon declared his conviction that the fear of death was a most effectual preventive of minor offences, and that after the experience of half a century he had never known a lawyer or a politician able to point out to him a satisfactory substitute !

Three years later the prisons of England and Wales were described by the Committee on whose Report the Bill of 1835 was founded as places where old offenders were confirmed in iniquity and young ones trained up to it. 1830. Æt. 27.

Now, after another seventy-eight years, and in spite of many administrative improvements, the same description may still be applied to most of our prisons.[1] We have had many zealous prison reformers in that time and they have accomplished much. That more has not been done is due to the Lord Eldons who are always with us.

"With the completion of this work," says Bulwer, in his preface to the edition of 1848, "closed an era in the writer's self-education. From *Pelham* to *Paul Clifford* (four fictions all written at a very early age) the author rather observes than imagines—rather deals with the ordinary surface of human life than attempts,

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[1] The Report of the Departmental Committee on Prisons, 1895, of which Mr. Herbert Gladstone was Chairman, quotes Sir Godfrey Lushington as follows:—

"I regard as unfavourable to reformation the status of a prisoner throughout his whole career: the crushing of self-respect, the starving of all moral instinct he may possess, the absence of all opportunity to do or receive a kindness, the continual association with none but criminals and that only as a separate item amongst other items also separate; the forced labour, and the denial of all liberty. I do believe the true mode of reforming a man or restoring him to society is exactly in the opposite direction of all these; but, of course, this is a mere idea. It is quite impracticable in a prison. In fact the unfavourable features I have mentioned are inseparable from prison life."

And the Committee adds:—

"As a broad description of prison life we think this description is accurate; we do not agree that all of these unfavourable features are irremovable."

The Annual Report of the Borstal Association for 1908 says that "Prison tends to produce fitness for nothing but further terms of imprisonment."

1830. however humbly, to soar above it, or to dive beneath.
Æt. 27. Looking back at this distance of years, I can see as clearly as if they were mapped before me the paths which led across the boundary of invention from *Paul Clifford* to *Eugene Aram.* And, that last work done, no less clearly can I see where the first gleams from a fairer fancy rose upon my way, and rested on those more ideal images which I sought with a feeble hand to transfer to *The Pilgrims of the Rhine* and *The Last Days of Pompeii.*"

The following appreciative letters on the subject of *Paul Clifford* were received by the author from two interesting men whom he counted among his friends at this time—William Godwin, author of *Caleb Williams*, and Ebenezer Elliott, the Corn Law rhymer :—

William Godwin to Edward Bulwer.

I have just finished my perusal of *Paul Clifford.* I know that you are not so wrapped up in self-confidence as not to feel a real pleasure in the approbation of others ; and I regard it as a duty not to withhold my approbation where I am morally certain that it will be received as it is intended.

There are parts of the book that I read with transport. There are many parts of it so divinely written that my first impulse was to throw my implements of writing into the fire, and to wish that I could consign all I have published in the province of fiction to the same pyre. But that would be a useless sacrifice ; and, superior as I feel you to be in whatever kindles the finest emotions of the heart, I may yet preserve my place so far as relates to the mechanism of a story.

This is but little, and does not justify my self-love; but I am capable of a sentiment that teaches me to rejoice in the triumphs of others, without subjecting me to the mean and painful drawback of envy. I am bound to add that the penetration and acuteness you display are not inferior to the delivery.—I remain, my dear Sir, ever faithfully yours,

WILLIAM GODWIN.

May 13, 1830.

Ebenezer Elliott to Edward Bulwer.

You have ruined me by advising me to read *Paul Clifford.* Adieu, Jeremy Bentham. One of my boys—and young persons are no bad judges of these matters—thinks your comic scenes and characters as good as Shakespeare. I thought dramatic wit had died with him. The meeting of Brandon and his wife is equal to anything in Dante, but there are others who can paint such scenes. Your forte is wit, of all things the one which I most envy, because it never can be mine. Your Tomlinsoniana seem to have excited some righteous indignation here. In our library copy, Nos. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, are much torn, and as carefully glued together again. I was sorely tempted to rip No. 23. Your social picture is too true.

January 13, 1832.

CHAPTER II

EDITOR OF *THE NEW MONTHLY*, EARLY FRIENDSHIPS

1831–1833

> Periodicals form an excellent mode of communication between the public and an author already established . . . who either upon politics or criticism seeks for frequent and continuous occasions to enforce his theses and doctrines. But upon the young writer, this mode of communication, if too long continued, operates most injuriously both as to his future prospects and his own present taste and style. . . . Here I speak too politically; to some the *res angustae domi* leave no option.
>
> *Ernest Maltravers.*

> Genius makes many enemies, but it makes sure friends—friends who forgive much, who endure long, who exact little; they partake of the character of disciples as well as friends.
>
> *Eugene Aram.*

1831–1833. Æt. 28–30. In the year 1831, Bulwer assumed the editorship of *The New Monthly Magazine*, in succession to Thomas Campbell, Mr. S. C. Hall, who had carried on the magazine for a few months, becoming his sub-editor. The first number under Bulwer's management appeared on November 1. Mr. Hall, in his *Recollections of a Long Life*, speaks of the qualities which his editor exhibited at the time when they worked together on the magazine. "Bulwer's industry," he says, "was wonderful. I have known him write an article for *The New Monthly* overnight which I well knew he had not touched before late in the evening, but which was ready in the morning when I called for it." 1831–1833. Æt. 28–30.

In after life Bulwer constantly insisted on the injurious effect upon a young writer of too frequent contributions to periodical literature. In the early days of his own authorship, journalism played a very large part, and he probably had many bitter recollections of the harassing strain of this form of writing; he may also have been conscious that his literary style suffered at the very outset from the necessity of producing a great deal of journalistic work at very high pressure. Nevertheless, the period of his editorship of *The New Monthly* was a not unimportant stage in his career. Though it involved much mental drudgery, it also brought him into contact with many interesting persons both in literature and politics, and most of the friendships of his early years date from this time. His acquaintance with O'Connell and Sheil, with Lord Mulgrave (afterwards the Marquis of Normanby), Lord Melbourne and Lord Durham, was formed in this period. To the last of these he became warmly attached, and during the next few years exerted himself vigorously to secure for him support from the younger Liberals with whom he was associated when he first entered Parliament.

The most important friendship, however, and one which had its roots both in literature and politics, was that which he formed with Benjamin Disraeli. They first became acquainted in 1829 and had exchanged civilities about their respective literary productions. In 1830 Disraeli sent to Bulwer the manuscript of *The Young Duke* for his criticism. The criticism which it received, though friendly, was candid and directed chiefly against the excess of antithesis which seemed to mar its composition. This candour, though it temporarily discouraged the author, had not impaired the relations between the two friends, and in the following year, after Disraeli returned to England from his journey in the East, the columns of *The New Monthly Magazine* offered opportunities for the renewal of their intercourse.

Edward Bulwer to Benjamin Disraeli.

Hertford Street,
November 8, 1831.

My dear Disraeli—If I am not among the very first, let me, at least, not be the last, to congratulate you on your safe return. I only heard of it yesterday from our common ally, of the Burlington Street Delphos.

"Mr. Disraeli, sir, is come to town—young Mr. Disraeli! Won't he give us a nice light article about his travels?"

Of that hereafter. But, while at present neglecting the hint of our worthy publisher, I do not forget it.

I don't know if you ever got a long letter I sent you to Constantinople, acknowledging the safe receipt of your slippers, your tobacco-bag and your epistle. A thousand thanks for all three.

Mrs. Bulwer has, this day, "presented me with a son," as "the polite" express it. So I have a good reason for being brief in my communications to you. But pray write and let me know how you are.—Yours, etc. 1831–1833. ÆT. 28–30.

E. L. B.

P.S.—Congratulations on the success of *The Young Duke*, whom I had the pleasure of seeing before his *début.*

The same to the same.

(Undated.)

My dear Disraeli—I seize the only scrap of paper I can find to tell you how delighted I am by your kindly opinion of *Paul Clifford.*

I am less charmed, as you will imagine, by your news of *The Young Duke.* Such communications, however, are merely in the way of business. I was overwhelmed by them in the matter of *Pelham.* "Its obscenity was only equalled by its dulness, &c., &c." I feel quite sure he will do well, and shame these printer's devils and their masters.

Adieu, my dear fellow. Take care of yourself, and believe me—Always and sincerely yours,

E. L. B.

Disraeli's contributions to *The New Monthly* included "The Speaking Harlequin, or The Two Losses; in One Act," "The Wondrous Tale of Alroy," and "Ixion in Heaven."

"Mr. Colburn has sent me nine guineas," wrote Bulwer, "for your little paper on Egypt, and the present paper of 'Harlequin'—this being at the rate of twenty guineas a sheet, his highest pay. Fie on these money matters! They shall have nothing to do with the new Parallelogram World."

1831–1833. Æt. 28–30. The sympathy which existed at this time between the two young friends, each of whom was at the beginning of a double career of literature and politics, is shown by the following letter written by Disraeli in a moment of domestic trouble :—

Benjamin Disraeli to Edward Bulwer.

My dear Bulwer—When I wrote to you the other day certain domestic annoyances that had been long menacing me, and which I trusted I might at least prevent from terminating in a disgraceful catastrophe, had burst upon my head with triple thunder. I fled to a club for solace, and then, from what I heard, it seemed to me that all the barriers of my life were simultaneously failing, and that not only love was vanishing but friendship also. You have unfortunately been a sufferer; you will therefore sympathise with one of too irritable a temperament, and whose philosophy arrives generally too late.

I confess to you, my dear fellow, that I am and have been for some time, in a state of great excitement.

I am ready to take the rooms when you please and am obliged by all your kindness. Write when you wish me to settle the business. I shall be glad to be there as soon as possible, but wish you entirely to consult your own convenience.

My dear E. L. B., our friendship has stood many tests. If I analyse the causes, I would ascribe them in some degree to a warm heart on my side and a generous temper on yours. Then let it never dissolve, for my heart shall never grow cold to you, and be yours always indulgent to—Your affectionate friend,

Dis.

The two authors of the *Rejected Addresses* (Horace and James Smith) remained under Bulwer's editorship, as they had been under Campbell's, regular contributors to *The New Monthly*. From these literary relations a warm friendship was established and continued until Horace Smith's death in 1849. Writing to him in 1831 Bulwer says :—

> I do not agree with you that the temper of the times is averse from any tales of historical interest. I hear that the book trade is reviving, and do not doubt your full success if your new work[1] bear the stamp of former ones. These are times in which we may labour, I think, with hope as well as zeal in the cause of human improvement, and I feel convinced that we shall live to see the triumph of the opinions for which both of us are fighting.

Of Edward Bulwer's early literary acquaintances Sheridan Knowles was one with whom his relations were first established, not quite pleasantly, when he was editing *The New Monthly*. The dramatist appears to have sent for publication in that periodical a petition to Parliament on some literary question in which he was personally interested. But immediately afterwards he withdrew it, and wrote to the editor the following letter :—

> Sir—My object in requesting you to return my petition was to avoid incurring an obligation where I thought that I had not received justice. I allude to

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[1] The reference must be to Horace Smith's novel of *Reuben Apsley*, published in 1831.

831–1833. your article on "The Hunchback." This, I know,
ÆT. 28–30. is a matter of opinion, but, thinking as I do, it is impossible for me to act otherwise than I have done. As my friend Forster was the means of forwarding my petition, I think it right to state that my letter was written without any communication with him.—I have the honour to be, etc.

James Sheridan Knowles.

Bulwer makes the following comment on this incident in one of his earliest letters to John Forster:—

Mr. Knowles withdrew his petition because I had not praised his play enough: I having said of it that in many respects it was "a great performance," that Julia was the most perfect female character the modern drama has produced, and on the whole said as much of it as Schlegel would say of the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Mr. Knowles declared I had not done him justice. Mr. Knowles must be —— but I won't go on.

The correspondent to whom this letter was addressed was the most intimate and most constant of all Bulwer's literary friends. From the year 1834 onwards he corresponded with him regularly, and there is scarcely an event in his life unmentioned or unexplained in that correspondence. To the letters which he received from Forster, Bulwer has attached the following note:—

John Forster, author of *The Statesmen of the Commonwealth*, *Life of Oliver Goldsmith*, etc. A most sterling man, with an intellect at once massive and delicate.

Few indeed have his strong practical sense and sound judgment; fewer still unite with such qualities his exquisite appreciation of latent beauties in literary art. Hence, in ordinary life there is no safer adviser about literary work, especially poetry; no more refined critic. A large heart naturally accompanies so masculine an understanding. He has the rare capacity for affection which embraces many friendships without loss of depth or warmth in one. Most of my literary contemporaries are his intimate companions, and their jealousies of each other do not diminish their trust in him. More than any living critic, he has served to establish reputations. Tennyson and Browning owed him much in their literary career. Me, I think, he served in that way less than any of his other friends. But, indeed, I know of no critic to whom I have been much indebted for any position I hold in literature. In more private matters I am greatly indebted to his counsels. His reading is extensive. What faults he has lie on the surface. He is sometimes bluff to rudeness. But all such faults of manner (and they are his only ones) are but trifling inequalities in a nature solid and valuable as a block of gold.

The life-long friendship had its commencement in a joint effort to alleviate the pecuniary troubles of Leigh Hunt:—

"I am very sorry," Bulwer wrote to Forster on Dec. 2, 1831, "that I cannot fix a time for the pleasure of seeing you, for I am over head and ears in business. But you may be sure, dear sir, of my cheerful co-operation in your generous and praiseworthy exertions for Leigh Hunt. It is indeed pleasant to turn to any evidence of high and pure feeling in this low world of literary jealousy and abuse."

1831–1833.
Æt. 28–30.

On the 10th he wrote again :—

I send you four letters for Leigh Hunt. Kindly dispatch them with his circular.

And a little later :—

I enclose two letters, Praed's and Mahon's—both unsuccessful—about poor Hunt. Don't show them, they might hurt his feelings. I will continue to do quietly all I can for him.

This was shortly followed by a donation of £50, of which he wrote :—

I think it best to send it to you instead of to him, or if you object, to entrust it to some third person for his benefit. But keep it a profound secret.

All the letters written to him by Leigh Hunt himself at this time relate to pecuniary and literary difficulties, applications for, and acknowledgments of assistance and advice, etc. I give the following as a specimen :—

Leigh Hunt to Edward Bulwer.

5 York Buildings, New Road,
Feb. 27.

Dear Sir—Your letter which arrived on Saturday evening, and in which I fully appreciate all the consolatory attentions implied as well as the kindness shewn, receives my warmest acknowledgments. You may imagine the good it did me, when you learn that it arrived during one of those frightful intervals, to which authors are liable who have nothing but the employment of their pen to trust to, and which circumstances conspire to render peculiarly painful in my instance. The letter made me pass a very different night than I had had since Wednesday. The proprietors of a new weekly paper, which they had altered two or three times, and had just got me to edit, suddenly, with a preposterous levity of purpose, dropped it for some other whim, having expected that I was to make it flourish in the course of three weeks! It was the most horrible compliment, and heaviest rebuke, which I ever received. A little while after the receipt of your letter, another came from the proprietors of another new paper, about to be set up, asking me to write theatrical criticisms for them. Glad as I was of it, as another proof that employment was not to fail me, it made me heave a sigh from the very bottom of my heart, for I happen, among other things, to have suffered for some years past under a weakness of the muscles of the head and neck, accompanied by a ringing of the ears, the consequence of over-work, and these symptoms are greatly aggravated by theatres and the night air. You have made me, my dear sir, talk to you with a full heart, and must be prepared for my being very explicit. If I step beyond the right line, my excuses must be the little people about me, who are apt to make me forget everything but themselves; but it would be a great blessing to me, if I could do without this night-work; therefore I should be glad to know whether I could reckon upon a certain portion of employment in *The New Monthly Magazine*, and a certainty of a non-return of the articles, in case there were nothing unsuitable or unreasonable to it in opinion. To this portion I could join, perhaps, a similar one in some other periodical work, and I will even venture to ask you whether it would be unbecoming your position or your convenience to signify to Colburn that he might as well occupy me with some other book. I do not care what it is, if I can do it, provided I can escape theatres and late hours, which have twice nearly killed me. To *novel*-writing, in the true sense of the word, I give up all pretensions to those whom I will not here name; but I can make books of some sort, not unconvincing, and I would go hard to try for a plot, if novel it must be. I do not like to ask Colburn myself, though we have always been on good terms; but I refused to write a novel when he first asked me, and afterwards had some difficulty to make him patronise one, when it became necessary; and I should now come to him under a similar disadvantage —which he is not bound to know how to treat otherwise. Could I make my case out with magazines and articles *ad libitum*, I should much prefer it, but this is hardly to be looked for, so I should like to earn ten or twelve guineas a week at least, considering my large family, and this *you* will think small enough at last! But my wants are very few, except of health and repose! A supply of those I fear I can hardly look for in this world, and have made up my mind, well or badly, to do without them; but it is my duty to husband what strength I have, and under all the circumstances I feel that you will at least excuse this letter, whether it be all within the pale of the very proper, or not.

I cannot tell you how much you please me by what you say of *The Indicator*. It has had compliments before, from two or three persons that I shall never forget, and that I occasionally comfort myself with, when my heart has little else to warm it, and I have now to add this other most welcome and flattering one. It set me upon thinking that I would propose to you to write more Indicators for *The New Monthly*—an Indicator Redivivus; but I have twenty projects in my head about the magazine, respecting which I should like to speak with you, if you shall be disengaged any morning this week. I would come at any hour you might appoint. I have lived so hermit-like for some years past that I have almost been destitute of intellectual acquaintance, and thankfully accept the prospect you hold out to me of seeing the face of the man who has given me so much pleasure in his writings. It is like realising a pleasure spiritual, in a bodily shape.

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One word about the proposed articles. I did not mean, by what I said about the book of mine lately published, to signify that I should like to write anything more about the times of Charles the Second. I have had enough of them! and so, I fear, must the public. It only struck me that some studies of mixed history and fiction, introducing the wits and beauties of *other* periods, might perhaps please the reader. I was thinking of beginning with Chaucer and his friends, John of Gaunt, Lady Blanche, &c., who, if one had power to do it, might be made as brilliant and quaint a set as people in a painted window. But I have a preposterous conscience which induces me to take too much pains with people in history; and perhaps, in the goodwill you are kind enough to entertain towards me, you might suggest something at once better for the magazine and easier for myself.—Believe me, dear Sir, Your truly obliged and faithful servant,

Leigh Hunt.

Of Leigh Hunt's literary merits Bulwer has recorded his opinions in an essay on Charles Lamb, written in 1867 and republished in the volume called *Quarterly Essays* in the Knebworth Edition of his collected works. In a note on their correspondence he says of him :—

Leigh Hunt was always in pecuniary difficulties and had little of that sort of pride which rejects alms ;

1831–1833. Æt. 28–30. but he was a most charming converser and lovable companion.

Among the many applications for employment on the Magazine which were addressed to the new editor by "entire strangers," is one which may still, perhaps, be read with interest, as it tells in her own words the sad story of a very unfortunate woman—Mrs. Mardyn the actress, whose name was so injuriously and unjustly connected with the separation between Lord Byron and his wife :—

PARIS.

SIR—A letter from an entire stranger is a presumption such as may only be extenuated by its sincerity. Though unknown to you by person, it is still possible that my name may have sometimes met your ear. I was formerly known in England as *Mrs. Mardyn* an actress of some popularity. Thirteen years ago I withdrew myself not merely from the stage and from public life, but from my country altogether. It was under the age of 25—in the full career of fortune and applause, with a liberal increase of terms offered by rival theatres for a new engagement—that I decided on this step. The causes which impelled me to it were as painful as they were extraordinary. My spirit was wounded, well-nigh broken, through the prevalence of a slander which imputed to my wickedness the separation of Lord Byron from his amiable wife. The falsehood of that report has long since been declared from quarters which were beyond suspicion. But alas! the public verdict of acquittal was pronounced too late for the victim's peace of mind—*that* had already been immolated irrevocably. Without assuming to myself a sensitiveness which (in an actress) might border upon affectation, let me say any *ordinary* scandal I could have borne with resignation, as the lot of my profession, and as a liability from which any young female who once enters a green-room can scarcely hope to be exempted ; but in my inconceivable case it was no longer the common-place tale of a light woman's indiscretion. I was pointed out from amongst my sex, as a *female Iago*—the destroyer of married happiness, and the base assassin of a high-born lady's peace. I felt that such a character in another I should have abhorred ! and I therefore imagined that I must in my own person be regarded as a monster even by the very crowd who nightly applauded me upon the stage. My profession became odious to me. In brief, I fled from an ordeal, the continuance of which my *nerves* would no longer permit me to sustain.

However brilliant and lucrative my term of popularity, it had been so very brief that I had barely saved out of my splendid income a sufficiency for the mere decencies of private life. Nevertheless, I scrupled not to exchange affluence for comparative poverty, provided tranquillity might be insured by the compromise. My choice has not disappointed me. The intervening years have been those of travel and of study. I have seen much—reflected more, and by unwearied application to literature have endeavoured to remedy the deficiencies of a neglected education. How far I have succeeded is an anxious doubt with me ; *here*, surrounded by kind and partial friends, all my efforts are sure to be reflected in *couleur de rose*. I hope and I fear alternately. In this uncertitude I venture—bold, presumptuous and unwarranted as I feel the action to be—yes, I venture upon addressing myself to *you* ! Self-parted so many years from "England and the English" it has been *you*, sir, who have revived the dormant recollections of my country, and the ambition to be once more recognised by it.

1831–1833. Æt. 28–30. Mrs. Norton,[1] another literary acquaintance of this time, and a contributor to *The New Monthly*, Bulwer must have met before his marriage, for some of his earlier letters contain allusions to "the handsome Miss Sheridan," and she is also mentioned in his boyish verses upon Almacks. But his real acquaintance with her was apparently subsequent to her separation from Mr. Norton, for in one of her letters to him she says :—

I think some spirit should more frequently remind you of me : for I am sure that since the days when Lord Melbourne used to describe to me *his* impression of your genius in your early youth—which was before I knew you — I have always been glad of every opportunity of meeting with you and hearing you.

On January 5, 1832, she writes to him :—

Dear Mr. Bulwer—I see in the papers that *The New Monthly Magazine* is under your guidance ; will you be kind enough to tell me whether I am to address my contributions to you ? Has Mr. Hall ceased to hold any interest in the periodical ? and where is my beloved story "The Coffinmaker" which I enclosed to him ? On your answer to the above queries depends much of my peace of mind, quiet, &c., and if my "Coffinmaker" be lost, I shall be tempted to regret that which gives so much satisfaction to others—your editorship. I trust Mrs. Bulwer and the contemporary of my second son are well, and with kind remembrances to her,—Believe me, dear Sir, Yours truly, 1831–1833. ÆT. 28–30.

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[1] Caroline Elizabeth Sarah Sheridan (1808-1877), who had been since 1827 the Hon. Mrs. Norton. She separated from her husband in 1836, and her matrimonial affairs were before the public for nearly twenty years. She enjoyed great popularity as a poetess.

C. NORTON.

In another letter about this time she says :—

I shall be glad of books always, but must still leave it to you to choose what to send. I will only say that I don't care about their being "new books," as the fatal truth is that perhaps no one of my age has read so little. Marrying from school, and then scribbling instead of improving myself (for the unholy purpose of obtaining pin money),.I have read and been read to —but only the great standard works of English literature. You will hardly send me anything that will not be a novelty to me. I was really sorry to see you looking so ill. I hope you will remember that you belong to England and take care of yourself.

It was also at this time that Bulwer established the intimate friendship with Lady Blessington which lasted without interruption until her death. In spite of his literary and political activities he found time to frequent the brilliant gatherings at Seamore Place, and afterwards at Gore House, where most of the literary celebrities of the day assembled, and where he found the only kind of society which was congenial to him. His personal opinion of this remarkable woman he has recorded as follows :—

Lady Blessington was essentially sympathetic, and admired with enthusiasm. She had all the Irish cordiality of manner, and a peculiar grace of her own. She was benevolent, kindly and generous to a rare degree. She understood her critical position and never tried to force herself on female society. She commanded the best male society, and her house was agreeable. Whatever her faults she was undeserving of much that scandal has laid to her charge. She has been accused of making up the marriage of D'Orsay and her daughter-in-law Lady Harriet. There is no foundation for this story. She was against it. Lord Blessington enforced it, and Lady Harriet herself pleaded her affection for D'Orsay, when he tried to evade Lord Blessington's importunity. To all appearance the affection between her and D'Orsay was that of a mother for a spoilt child. I feel a strong conviction that, at least after D'Orsay's marriage, there was never any criminal connection between them. Nor, indeed, any love of that kind, especially on her part. She was confessedly of a very cold temperament, though most affectionate to her friends, and most true to them. She was middle-aged when I first knew her, and much of her early beauty was then gone. But she had a singularly sweet and gracious face, and a wonderful symmetry of form, till she grew too stout.

Some of these observations are touchingly illustrated and justified by the letter which Lady Blessington wrote to Bulwer after his separation from his wife, when his own character was the subject of the bitterest calumny :—

"I do assure you," she says, "that I never permit myself to question the motives or feelings of those for whom I entertain affection and esteem. The duty of friendship is to defend and adhere to a friend through evil report and good report. Happy is it for those who, like me in the present case, find their reason completely satisfied while following the natural dictates of their regard, and who know that the persons who censure you are prompted by envy and jealousy, only at all excusable from their entire ignorance of the facts you have not stooped to disclose. Perhaps I may sink in your esteem when I tell you that, even had you been faulty, I should, whilst lamenting it in soul, have espoused your interests in public no less fearlessly and warmly. This is my nature. A sort of silent respect for myself and contempt for the world has, throughout life, induced me to set its laws at defiance whenever I found them based on hypocrisy, and to laugh to scorn its opinions when I knew them to be founded on despicable sentiments and mean considerations. I am now an old woman, and I have never for a moment repented the independent line of conduct I have adopted. It has saved me from ever compromising my own dignity, and freed me from that intercourse with society which few pass through without tarnishing the honesty and freedom of their views. But this line of conduct has had another and no less valuable advantage. It has exempted me from all suspicion of worldly motives in my friendships, and has gained for my sentiments a respectful hearing when I have defended those dear to me. You will forgive this egotism and not like me the less because I dare to be honest in avowing opinions that few of my sex have the moral courage to acknowledge. Count on me, therefore, to the death. For, as I have no battle to fight for myself, I am at liberty to fight without any *arrière pensée* in the cause of those I love and honour. You will smile at this rhapsody. But *n'importe*, so long as you never doubt the true regard of your affectionate and faithful friend."

Another friend of these years was Laetitia Elizabeth Landon (L. E. L.). Though now almost forgotten, this accomplished young woman was a familiar figure in the literary

1831–1833. Æt. 28–30. circles of that day. Her poems were appreciated by a large number of readers, and among her friends were most of the distinguished literary men of her time. But though she had many loyal friends and admirers, she was pursued through life by gossip and slander, which poisoned her happiness and drove her at last, after many disappointments and afflictions, to seek protection by marrying a man whom she did not love, and in whose house she soon afterwards met her death in tragic and mysterious circumstances.

Bulwer was one of her warmest friends, and it was by him that she was given away at her marriage on June 7, 1838, with Mr. M'Lean, who was then Governor of the Gold Coast. On the 5th of July she sailed with her husband to Africa, and two months after landing there she was dead. The verdict of the Coroner's inquest was that she died from having accidentally taken a dose of prussic acid. She was buried in the evening of the day on which she died, and it remains an unsolved mystery by whose hand the poison was administered. Her friends believed that she was murdered by a native mistress of her husband.

The editorship of *The New Monthly* was continued until 1833, when it had to be abandoned, owing to pressure of more important work. These years 1831–1833 were perhaps the most laborious of Bulwer's life, and the disastrous effect of this excessive toil, both upon his health and upon his domestic happiness has already been recorded. 1831–1833. ÆT. 28–30.

During this time, in addition to his editorial duties and his other contributions to periodical literature, he wrote *The Siamese Twins*, a poem which was published in 1831, three novels —*Eugene Aram*, *Godolphin*, and *The Pilgrims of the Rhine*[1]—and the sketches of contemporary institutions, customs, and habits entitled *England and the English*, described by John Stuart Mill as "much in advance of its time." He also successfully contested two elections and was an active member of Parliament.

Eugene Aram, which followed *Paul Clifford*, was written in 1831 and published at the end of that year. Like its predecessor it was a story of crime, but unlike *Paul Clifford* it had no reforming tendency; it was merely a study of a very complex and interesting character. Both these novels were vehemently attacked at the time for no other reason than that they dealt with crime, which was considered a subject unfit for elevated fiction. The author replied to his critics in the preface which he prefixed to the edition of 1840:—

> "The crime of Eugene Aram," he says, "belongs to those startling paradoxes which the poetry of all countries, and especially of our own, has always delighted to contemplate and examine. Whenever crime

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[1] *The Pilgrims of the Rhine* was completed and ready for publication by the end of 1832; but, owing presumably to the delay caused by the illustrations, it was not published till the beginning of 1834.

> 1831–1833. appears the aberration and monstrous product of a great
> Æt. 28–30. intellect, or of a nature ordinarily virtuous, it becomes not only the subject for genius, which deals with passions, to describe, but a problem for philosophy, which deals with actions, to investigate and solve:—hence the Macbeths and Richards, the Iagos and Othellos."

Both the criticisms and the reply are only interesting to-day as illustrations of the complete change in public opinion which has taken place since 1840. Such novels, if published to-day, might be criticised in respect of their art, their style, or their composition; but it would never occur to any one to condemn them merely on the ground that the hero was an outlaw or a homicide; and no author would now be called on to defend his choice of subjects by arguments such as those just quoted. Such prudery in matters of this kind is extinct to-day, and Bulwer contributed largely to the formation of the public opinion which has superseded it.

The circumstances which first aroused the author's interest in the story of Eugene Aram are also related in this same preface:—

> "It so happened," he says, "that during Aram's residence at Lynn, his reputation for learning had attracted the notice of my grandfather—a country gentleman living in the same county, and of more intelligence and accomplishments than, at that day, usually characterised his class. Aram frequently visited at Heydon (my grandfather's house) and gave lessons, probably in no very elevated branches of erudition, to the younger members of the family. This I chanced to hear when

I was on a visit to Norfolk some two years before this novel was published, and it tended to increase the interest with which I had previously speculated on the phenomena of a trial which, take it altogether, is perhaps the most remarkable in the register of English crime."

Before the completion of the novel Bulwer published in *The New Monthly* the sketch of a drama on the same subject. Although he says in the original preface to the novel that the design of the drama was abandoned when more than half completed, it appears from one of Mrs. Edward Bulwer's letters, which describes its representation, that it was actually performed at one of the London theatres previous to the production of the novel. Upon this drama the following letter was written to Bulwer by Ebenezer Elliot:—

I have just been reading your fragment of a drama in the present number of *The New Monthly*. It contains passages which, as poetry, have never been excelled and rarely equalled—except by two authors. There is, however, a radical fault in it. Your hero ought to have been made the victim of his mere physical necessities in a moment of temporary delirium. Call the drama "Hunger and Crime." Make it ideal, not historical, and give your hero any name but that of Eugene Aram. Let him appear in the first act, as he does appear, beset with duns. Let him talk wildly and mutter his consciousness that his sanity is giving way. Then let the tempter Botcher wring from him the secret of his utter destitution; and, like a worse Iago, or the devil, without pause urge him to the commission of the crime—under the instant influence of temporary madness, which hunger, when extreme, is known to produce. These excuses, with which human nature knows how to deceive itself, will then command our sympathies, and you will unlock the terrible with the true key. Scene IV. must be Scene V.; and instead of saying "If it were done," your hero must say "Now that it is done," etc. But your criminal learnedly and coldly exculpates the deed before it is done. It is not his poverty, but his will, that consents. Do not defeat what ought to be a masterpiece. Your hero, instead of being a most repulsive being, may just as easily be the reverse. After having, in the agonies and too real madness of hunger strong as the fates, become a murderer, let him then display his hapless sophistries, his unavailing tenderness, his high intellectuality, and spectator and reader alike will be heart-broken. But why call him Eugene Aram? Why choose difficulty? Why throw away an advantage? He may be of any country, of any time, of any name. Although it is plain that you are to do great things as a dramatist, you must not think of abandoning this drama. As a subject its capabilities are the very highest, and you can make it equal in interest to *Faust.* Pray excuse me. Fools will teach though they cannot learn.—I am, yours very truly,

EBENEZER ELLIOT.

In spite of these compliments the drama was abandoned in favour of the novel. But the criticism was doubtless of service, for the Eugene Aram of the novel differs from the hero of the drama in the very way suggested in this letter. The crime is not represented as the premeditated act of a cold-blooded criminal, but rather that of a quiet, thoughtful, and gentle scholar, goaded by illness, poverty bordering upon famine, and intense labour of the brain into one terrible act of violence at variance with his whole nature.[1]

The book brought Bulwer a curious compliment from another writer of a very different type. Pierce Egan, author of *Life in London* and *Tom and Jerry*, appears to have regarded the author of *Pelham* and *Paul Clifford* with the sort of mild approbation that a retired prize-fighter would bestow upon a promising young student of "the noble science," and called upon him one day shortly after the publication of *Eugene Aram*. After a long, mysterious, and magniloquent exordium, in the purest dialect of the Seven Dials, he stated that he had called for the purpose of bestowing upon him a curiosity of the greatest interest and value—a unique treasure, of which, said the author of *Tom and Jerry*, the author of *Eugene Aram* was of all literary men the only one worthy to become the possessor. He then produced a silk bag, opened it, drew from it, and unfolded with great pride and admiration a repulsive object, which was, he declared—the genuine caul of Thurtell the murderer!

The year 1832 produced three more books, which were ready for publication before Bulwer left England for his Italian journey in the autumn of 1833,[2] and were all published in the course of that year.

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[1] Bulwer afterwards became convinced that Aram had no share in the actual murder, and altered the story accordingly in the edition of 1851.

[2] *Godolphin* (1833), *England and the English* (1833), *The Pilgrims of the Rhine* (1834).

CHAPTER III

ENTRY INTO PARLIAMENT

1831

> The House of Commons life has a peculiar excitement scarcely understood out of it; but you may conceive its charms when you observe that a man who has once been in the thick of it feels forlorn and shelved if he lose his seat. Try that life, Chillingly.
>
> *Kenelm Chillingly.*

1831. Æt. 28. THE year 1830, when *Paul Clifford* was published, is memorable as a year of great political excitement.

During the first twelve years of Edward Bulwer's life England had been occupied in the defence of her own shores and colonies, and in assisting the rescue of Europe from the despotism of Imperial France. During the next fifteen years the attention of the nation was absorbed, first in the painful discovery that the blessings of peace are not unmixed benefits, and subsequently in a discussion of domestic questions stimulated by the cessation of foreign hostilities.

The war, while it lasted, had acted upon the agricultural and manufacturing production of the country like a system of protection more effectual than any which could be maintained in history

time of peace by the most exclusive fiscal policy. When the war was over, all classes and interests connected with productive industry suffered severely from the sudden loss of this artificial protection.

The later circumstances of her long struggle against Napoleon had excluded England from commercial intercourse with America as well as Europe, and left her almost entirely dependent for her food-supply upon the produce of her own soil. The rent of land rose immensely under these conditions, but the prosperity was not confined to the owners. The farmer's profits were porportionally increased by the high prices of his produce ; and the demand for soldiers and sailors raised the wages by reducing the competition of the agricultural labourers.

The manufacturing interest had profited no less largely from these abnormal conditions. A vast amount of capital and industry was employed upon markets maintained by the war for the supply of the wants it created ; and when the peace came, the manufacturing suffered even more than the agricultural population from the distress that came with it. The whole community (capitalists and labourers alike) had been living up to its income. Rents fell, wages fell. Labourers were thrown out of employment. Landlords and farmers were unable to meet their liabilities. Large manufacturing populations lost the markets which had hitherto supported them. Rich tradesmen were ruined. Debtors became in-

1831. Æt. 28. solvent, and creditors unable to realise their securities. Mercantile millionaires were reduced to bankruptcy.

This universal distress was aggravated by the Act passed in 1819 for the resumption of cash payments—a measure which altered the whole debtor and creditor account of the country, greatly to the disadvantage of the debtors.

The suffering of the agricultural community had received some mitigation from the protective Corn-law passed four years before (1815) by a large majority of both parties in Parliament; but that law was deeply resented by the manufacturing and mercantile classes.

Altogether, the social condition of England for the first few years after the peace of 1815 was wretched in the present and full of anxiety for the future. But time, the physician of circumstance, gradually healed it. Capital and industry, flowing into new channels, began to form fresh accumulations; and their revived activity was destined to find, not many years later, a powerful stimulus, wholly unforeseen, in the rise of railway enterprise.

Meanwhile, these fifteen years of peace were marked by a great fecundity in literature, accompanied by a diffusion of popular knowledge which enlarged the circle of lettered influence. This opening of what had hitherto been almost a sealed book to the masses was assisted by the application of steam, not only to locomotion, but to printing; and attention was diverted from foreign to domestic questions by a succession of vigorous writers. The collective tendency of the intellectual ferment was to strengthen in the public mind a vague desire for Parliamentary reform, and a disposition to seek in constitutional changes a panacea for the cure of every popular discomfort. 1831. ÆT. 28.

The remedial efficacy of reform had been preached in his telling language by William Cobbett; and in 1826 *The Twopenny Register* was the staple literature of the labouring classes. Deeper and more sober thinkers had arrived at the same conclusion. An enlargement of the representative system was indirectly suggested, as the first condition of more scientific legislation, by Jeremy Bentham and the school of political economists who followed him under the guidance of Ricardo and James Mill. So far as it went, the influence of such imaginative writers as Godwin and Bulwer was also conducive to the growth of ideas which strengthened the desire for Parliamentary reform, and encouraged popular faith in the benefits to be expected from it.

Nevertheless, the demand for a Reform Bill might have been repeated year after year by speculative publicists and interested demagogues, without eliciting any active support from the great body of the English people, had it not received a fortuitous impetus from the domestic affairs of a foreign country.

The cry of Reform raised in 1831 was not

1831. Æt. 28. the expression of a want *definitely* felt, nor the result of an enthusiasm previously shared by any considerable portion of the community. From the end of 1803 to the beginning of 1830 not a single petition in its favour had been presented to Parliament from any part of the country, although throughout that period there were abundant petitions upon other subjects. The Whigs, to whom the question furnished a theoretical exercise-ground for the training of their Parliamentary troops, had tacitly abandoned it, after a few sham fights, when they associated themselves with Mr. Canning. During the earlier years of the Duke of Wellington's Administration, the continued hope of office still acted as a practical check upon their theoretical creed; and Lord Althorp then declared in the House of Commons that the people of England had become perfectly indifferent to the question, and he had no intention of ever again bringing it forward.[1]

The circumstances which in 1830 suddenly converted a relinquished watchword into a passionate demand are among the most striking illustrations of the influence of French events upon English politics. The "great and stupendous question of Parliamentary reform," as Pitt called it—the question which that all-powerful minister had declared to be "nearest to his heart"—was indefinitely shelved by the French Revolution of 1793, and unexpectedly invested with irresistible activity by the French Revolution of 1830.

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[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1832.

Not long before that event many things had contributed to put the country out of humour with the Wellington Administration, but none so much as the erroneous impressions of the Duke's foreign policy. Lord Aberdeen, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and his chief, were regarded, both at home and abroad, as the friends of the Holy Alliance; and, though Mr. Canning was dead, his bold and spirited foreign policy still lived in the approving recollections of his countrymen. What they supposed him to have suffered from the Duke's dislike of him, increased the resentment with which they regarded the presumed desertion by the Duke's Cabinet of Donna Maria di Gloria and the constitutional cause in Portugal.

In France, ever since his accession to the throne, Charles X. had been endeavouring to stultify the Charter of Louis XVIII. That charter represented the only liberties retained by a people who, for the sake of unlimited liberty, had soaked their country in blood, and irrevocably destroyed all its historical institutions. In the press, in the chambers, in the *salons* of the Chaussée d'Antin, in the clubs, and even in the shops of the Faubourg St. Honoré, the Battle of the Charter was carried on by the French with all the wit and eloquence of a nation which was still one of the wittiest and most eloquent in the world.

This struggle attracted to the national party

1831. Æt. 28. in France the sympathy of every Liberal in Europe. But by the people of our own country, whose constitutional liberties no sovereign had ever successfully opposed, it was watched with peculiar interest; not only because the cause in dispute was that of Parliamentary institutions menaced by arbitrary government, but because the English middle classes perceived that the fall of the Polignac Ministry would be the triumph of the middle classes in France, and thus, as it were, a vicarious victory gained by the interests of which they themselves were the representatives in England.

But when the Prince de Polignac was ambassador to the Court of St. James, his relations with the Duke of Wellington's Government had been particularly cordial, and it was popularly supposed that he had been recommended by the Duke to Charles X. as the minister most capable of enforcing the policy of the "Ordonnances." English Liberals professed to fear that a *coup d'état* in France would be the signal for another in England; and from that moment the Liberal parties in both countries were as one. Their leaders corresponded with, and encouraged, each other.

The English Cabinet had discontented the Protestants, without satisfying the Catholics. It had alienated or disappointed many of its supporters without conciliating any of its opponents. Canningites, Radicals, Independent Liberals, Moderate Reformers, country squires whose old English love of liberty was revolted 1831. by the high-handed proceedings of the Ministère Æt. 28. des Ordonnances, rich manufacturers whose new English love of power was stimulated by the gallant struggle of their order in France, all looked upon the cause of the opposition across the Channel as their own.

The Whigs saw, and seized with great ability, the opportunity to make themselves the mouthpiece of an all but universal sentiment. They nicknamed the Polignac Ministry "The Wellington Administration in France"; and they skilfully concentrated all their powers of literary and social ridicule upon the "reactionary" Cabinet which had removed Catholic disabilities, retrenched the public expenditure, improved the commercial legislation, reformed the criminal procedure, and created the metropolitan police of the country.

In the autumn of this year the French monarchy fell with a crash which resounded throughout Europe; and the thousand discontents and sufferings, which had been till now inarticulate, simultaneously found passionate utterance in the cry for Parliamentary reform.

Edward Bulwer, for the last two years, in contributions, chiefly anonymous, to the political press, had been actively urging the opinions he shared with the majority of his countrymen on reform and the foreign policy of Canning; and he was now bent on securing an opportunity of more openly supporting them in Parliament.

The Reform agitation was increasing daily;

1831. Æt. 28. and he had received overtures from Penryn, which, however, he declined, not seeing much prospect of success in that direction. Shortly afterwards he was warmly pressed to stand for Southwark. The only person he consulted was Dr. Bowring,[1] who urged him to open his canvass at once, and promised him his hearty support with the electors. On July 11 he wrote to Godwin :—

My dear Mr. Godwin—You might reasonably believe me lost, so long is it since I had the pleasure of seeing you, had I not the excuse of those besetting avocations among which the still small voice of academic inquiry is little likely to be heard. In pursuance of the "selfish system," as it is commonly interpreted, I have been advocating my cause among some worthy gentlemen who have the power of choosing a member of the "National Council"; and ever since, and indeed some time before, the death of the late King, I have been so engaged in this matter as to prevent my calling on you. I go into the country, and start in the course of the week for the place I am so anxious to represent. I trust I have your good wishes on this point, as on all others interesting to you you are sure of mine. You will see me on my return.—Believe me, my dear Sir, very faithfully yours,

E. L. B.

Sunday, July 11, 1830.

Godwin replied :—

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[1] Dr. John Bowring (1792–1872), an eminent linguist, was at this time much employed on foreign commercial missions. Later he entered Parliament, and in 1854 was knighted. He was the author of innumerable translations from little-known languages. As British Plenipotentiary in China, he was responsible for the war of 1856, to which reference is made in Book V. Chapter III.

July 14, 1830.

My dear Sir—I need not tell you that I am much gratified that, when you have the concerns of the "nation" on your hands, you can think of so humble an individual as myself. I write these lines at random, not knowing when they will reach you, but taking for granted you will receive them sometime before the meeting of the next Parliament.

You say that you "trust you have my good wishes in your present pursuit." You have my good wishes, certainly, in everything that can conduce to your real welfare; but whether that is the true description of the thing you now announce is somewhat doubtful.

That, if you succeed, it will form a new bar against our familiar intercourse, I am willing to put out of the question. I told you, in our long conference, that I wished I had had the gratification of knowing you five years sooner. I might then have been of use to you—or, it may be, that what I should have intended for benefit, might have turned out for injury. But now your projects are formed you know what you elect, and what you desire, without a monitor; and I have only the precarious hold of you which depends on whether I can contribute to your pleasure.

But, waiving this, to go into Parliament is a serious thing. It must materially affect the colour of all your future life. If you succeed, you can never, in the same sense, be your own man again; and I have scarcely any materials to judge whether it will prove a good or an ill thing. I scarcely know anything about your political creed; I know less of what it is, being in Parliament, that you propose to effect. He that does nothing there does worse than nothing. It is like marrying a wife, or going into the Church, or being called to the Bar; it is for life. He that takes any one of these steps upon a mere cold calculation of profit and loss is so far degraded.

1831. Æt. 28. Excuse this presumption. If I am disposed to play the part of Minerva under the figure of Mentor, I know you are not disposed to enact the character of Telemachus. Your design is to launch your bark yourself, and to guide it by your own discretion. I have therefore only to wish you smooth seas, favouring gales, and a prosperous voyage. Hoping, therefore, that we shall meet again hereafter, I remain, dear Sir, very faithfully yours,

W. Godwin.

P.S.—I think in what I have written above I have expressed myself too coldly. I know that you have abilities of no ordinary magnitude. You have that enthusiasm without which great things can never be achieved. I ought, therefore, to anticipate that if you succeed in the first step the final result will be glorious.

Southwark was one of the many boroughs for which Lord John Russell had been put in nomination as a popular tribute to his services in the cause of Reform. It was understood that he would not represent the borough if elected. Bulwer's letters, however, mention as his reason for retiring from the contest that, as a name so eminent had not yet been withdrawn, he was convinced that his canvass would be hopeless as well as costly. He therefore closed it with the issue of an address, which elicited from Godwin the following characteristic letter:—

William Godwin to Edward Bulwer.

September 10, 1830.

My dear Sir—I remember a recorded speech of Lord Chatham, at the appointment of the Rockingham

Administration in 1765, in which he says, "Confidence is a plant of slow growth in aged bosoms." Allow me to apply that maxim to myself. 1831. Æt. 28.

I have known you but a short time. I knew you as the author of *Pelham*, a man of eminent talents, and devoted, as it seemed to me, to the habits of high life. I heard from your lips occasionally high sentiments of philosophy and philanthropy. I was to determine as I could which of these two features formed the basis of your character.

I now avow myself your convert. Your advertisement in this morning's paper[1] is a pledge for your future character; you have passed the Rubicon; you must go forward, or you must go back for ever disgraced. I know your abilities; and I therefore augur a career of rectitude and honour.

With respect to the acquaintance I shall have with you, I can dispense with that. If in these portentous times you engage yourself with your powers of mind for the real interests of mankind, that is everything. I am but the dust of the balance.

And yet—shall I own?—the slowness you manifested in cultivating my acquaintance was one of the circumstances that weighed with me to your disadvantage. But I am nothing. Run the race you chalk out for yourself in this paper of yours, and I am more than satisfied.

Allow me, however, to add here something in allusion to our last conversation. It must be of the highest importance to an eminent character which side he embraces in the great question of self-love and benevolence. I tolerate, and talk and think with much good humour towards the man who embraces the wrong side here, as I tolerate a Calvinist or a Jew; but in the public cause he labours with a millstone about his neck —no, not exactly that; but he is like a swimmer who has the use only of his left hand. Inexpressibly must he be disadvantaged in the career of virtue who adheres to a creed which tells him, if there be meaning in words, that there is no such thing as virtue.

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[1] His election address to the electors of Southwark.

I am desirous to have the advantage of your judgment and advice upon a particular point, but that can wait.

To this letter Bulwer replied from Bognor :—

Edward Bulwer to William Godwin.

Bognor, Sussex, *September* 17, 1830.

My dear Sir—I am greatly obliged and pleased by your letter, and I am unexpectedly rejoiced that my address to the people of Southwark should produce one effect—an increase of your good opinion. You surprise and grieve me, however, by thinking so ill of my judgment as to imagine me slow in seeking your acquaintance. The fact is that you a little misconceive my character. I am in ordinary life very reserved, and so domiciliated a person, that to court anyone's good opinion as I have done yours is an event in my usual quietude of habit.

With respect to the utilitarian, not "self-love," system of morals, all I can say is, that I am convinced that, if I commit a blunder, it is in words, not things. I understand by the system that benevolence may be made a passion ; that it is the rule and square of all morality ; that virtue loses not one atom of its value, or one charm from its loveliness ; if I err, I repeat it is in words only. But my doctrine is not very bigotedly embraced, and your essay has in two points let in a little scepticism through a rent in my devotion.

My advice, or rather opinion, such as it may be, is always most heartily at your service, and you will flatter and gratify me by any desire for it.

I am living here very quietly ; and what doing, think you? Writing poetry. After that, it may be superfluous to tell you that Bognor is much resorted to by insane people.—Ever and most truly yours,

E. Lytton Bulwer.

He at the same time wrote to Dr. Bowring:—

Bognor, *September* 17, 1830.

Dear Bowring—You perceive by the *Times* that I have for the present withdrawn from Southwark. The fact is that the appearance of any man not a public character, possessing Liberal opinions, only seems to me to split and distract the independent interest. A man of great political reputation might concentrate and engross it; but I have the first steps to climb. I am very glad, however, that I examined the field, for it has not only led to a foundation which may be worth building on hereafter, but has given me those recollections so peculiarly pleasurable, namely, recollections of personal kindness. Among these I shall carefully hoard the remembrance of your trouble and good-nature on my behalf.—Believe me, very truly yours,

E. L. Bulwer.

In the meanwhile, revolution in France had been followed by revolution in Belgium; and Mr. Henry Bulwer had been entrusted by Lord Aberdeen with a secret mission to that country, for the purpose of watching (and confidentially reporting, from a point of view practically inaccessible to our official representatives at Brussels) the progress and prospects of the Belgian Revolution.

When the Provisional Government was formed by the leaders of the successful national

1831. Æt. 28. movement in Belgium, it despatched Monsieur Van de Weyer to this country, with instructions to solicit English intervention on its behalf; and in the month of November, 1830, he came to England, bringing with him a letter of introduction from Mr. Henry Bulwer to his brother, who was then at Heydon. A letter written by him from thence to Dr. Bowring, in explanation of his inability to meet Monsieur Van de Weyer in town, bears witness to the restless condition of the country.

In the previous year, 1829, serious disturbances had broken out in the manufacturing districts. At Macclesfield, Huddersfield, Coventry, Nuneaton, Bedworth, Barnsley, and many other important seats of industry, strikes had occurred on a then unprecedented scale, and riots which compelled the authorities to call out the troops for the suppression of what was described as "a reign of terror." In these commotions the houses of unpopular manufacturers had been attacked, pillaged, and fired by the mob. In the present year, 1830, the disturbance of the labouring population spread to the agricultural counties.

There had been no fall in wages, no diminution in the demand for labour, no rise in the rate of interest on money, to account for disorders, which were officially ascribed to a political, and probably foreign, conspiracy.[1] The discontent was more probably the product of an excitement 1831. that generated vague wild hopes of changes ÆT. 28. which would for ever "scatter plenty o'er a smiling land."

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[1] Mr. Roebuck, in his history of the Whig Administration of 1830, also adopts this explanation, and observes: "Looking back to those times,

Edward Bulwer to Dr. Bowring.

HEYDON HALL, AYLSHAM, NORFOLK,
November 12, 1830.

MY DEAR BOWRING—I have received a letter from my brother at Brussels, mentioning a Monsieur Van de Weyer,[1] to whom he had given a letter introducing him to me. Unfortunately I am at some considerable distance from London, and not likely for some weeks to visit "the great City." But as my brother mentions you in his letter, and says that you will give me some explanation of M. Van de Weyer's business, I trouble you with a line, merely to say, that if anything occurs to you in which, at this distance from town, I can be useful, I shall be very happy, and you can convey to M. Van de Weyer my regret at being from home.

I suppose you are enjoying yourself in the surrounding hubbub of London, "riding on the whirlwind, and directing the storm." For me, at this distance from the roar of events, I am at a loss to know whether our thanks for considerable excitement are due to patriots or to pickpockets; at all events, it were well if they would drop the suspicious cry of "No police," and

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our wonder is indeed excited by finding party spirit attributing these proceedings of an ignorant peasantry to their discontent at the continuance of the Tory Administration in office, and the conduct of Parliament respecting the Civil List. These poor creatures had probably never heard the words "Civil List," and certainly never understood their meaning if they did hear them."—*Roebuck's History of the Whig Administration of 1830*, p. 336.

[1] Bulwer says of him: "Van de Weyer had precisely those qualities which ensure success and rarely achieve fame."

1831. Æt. 28. the disgraceful habit of throwing stones at old gentlemen on horseback.

As for the tricolour, 'tis a pity that sentiments really free cannot be acquired as easily as the colour of a ribbon may be assumed. The march of conflagration has extended hitherwards. Last night we were treated with the sight of a burning haystack. We understand that this new periodical is to be carried on every other night with considerable spirit. Adieu, my dear Bowring.—Yours, with great truth,

E. L. Bulwer.

These agricultural disturbances were not allayed by the folly of some of the local magistrates, who encouraged the labourers to believe that the general rate of wages might be raised in accordance with their demands. The agitation continued; and a more detailed description of the form it assumed in Norfolk is given in the following letter from Mrs. E. Bulwer, written also from Heydon, a month later, to Mrs. Vanderstegen:—

Mrs. Edward Bulwer to Mrs. Vanderstegen.

Heydon, *December* 5, 1830.

I am truly grieved to hear such bad accounts of Berkshire, but I hope that you and yours individually have not suffered any loss or fright, and that the bad reports are altogether much exaggerated.

This part of the country, like every other, has been in a terrible state of disturbance. Meetings of five or six hundred desperadoes in every village. About ten days ago there was a meeting of this sort at a place called Reepham, which all the noblemen and gentlemen in the county went to try and put down, by telling the people that their wrongs should be redressed, their wages raised, and employment given to them. Upon which the mob shouted, "It is very well to try and talk us over, but we will have blood for our suppers!" They then began pelting the magistrates and gentlemen with large stones. Edward lost his hat, and came home with his head tied up in a handkerchief, which gave rise to a report that his brother was much hurt; but this, like most other reports, was totally false. 1831. Æt. 28.

The other day, as we were returning from Lord Orford's, on our way to Sir Jacob Astley's, we heard that Melton (his place) was burnt to the ground, but on our arrival we found this was false. During the week he was there everything was tolerably quiet; but since then there has been a terrible riot, and Sir Jacob was obliged to send for a troop of cavalry from Norwich, who have been there ever since.

If London were but in half the disturbed state that every county in England is, the country might be fairly pronounced in a state of actual revolution. The burnings are dreadful, but every house in this part of the world is in a state of defence, and all the farmers, shopkeepers, servants, &c., &c., sworn in special constables.

All the popular fury is now directed against the clergy on account of the highness of the tithes, which they obstinately persevere in not lowering, although the landlords have lowered their rents, and the farmers have raised their wages.—Yours, &c.,

R. Lytton Bulwer.

Thus, amidst general discontent and disturbance, the year 1830 came to an end, without bringing to Bulwer any fulfilment of his increasing wish for a seat in Parliament.

1831. Æt. 28. When Parliament reassembled on the 3rd of February, 1831, Lord Grey announced his intentions with regard to the Reform Bill, which was shortly afterwards brought forward by Lord John Russell on the 1st of March. It passed the second Reading by a majority of only one in an unusually full house. The Government, however, did not resign till, on the 22nd of April, it was defeated by a majority of eight on General Gascoigne's amendment on going into Committee. The King having refused to accept the resignation of his Ministers, Parliament was dissolved, and a General Election took place.

All over the country the excitement was now intense. Reform Unions and Associations were everywhere organised. The Liberal Press surpassed itself in the language of personal menace, detraction, and vituperation. The noblest characters, the most exemplary lives, the finest intellects, and the greatest public services, failed to shelter from its aspersions those who had the courage to express opinions adverse to the popular demand.

The mob became the executor of the denunciations pronounced by the Press. In London it was contented with smashing the windows of the Duke of Wellington, Mr. Baring, and other anti-Reformers. But in Ireland the Reformers, in their enthusiasm for that kind of liberty, always popular, which consists of savage assaults upon the characters, properties, and lives of political opponents, were not slow to act upon the advice given them by *The Times* "to plaster the enemies of the people with mud, and duck them in horse-ponds." In England some persons were killed, and several severely wounded, in the attempt to vote for anti-Reform candidates. In Scotland a murderous assault was made upon the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, and the dying Sir Walter Scott was hooted by the Liberal ruffians of Jedburgh.[1]

Every man and woman, nay, every boy and girl, in England, who wanted something, confidently expected to get it from the Reform Bill.

> "All young ladies," said Sydney Smith, "expect that, as soon as this bill is carried, they will be instantly married; schoolboys believe that gerunds and supines will be abolished, and that currant tarts must ultimately come down in price; the corporal and sergeant are sure of double pay; bad poets expect a demand for their epics; and fools will be disappointed, as they always are."

An amusing instance of the intoxicating effects of this popular credulity is described in the following letter:—

Mrs. Edward Bulwer to Miss Greene.

BROADSTAIRS, *June* 26, 1831.

The infatuation of the common people all over the country about this Reform Bill is astonishing. They

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[1] "I care for you," he said, "no more than for the hissing of geese."—Alison, *Hist.*, vol. iv. chap. xxiii.

1831. Æt. 28. seem to look on it as a sort of patent steam-engine miracle-worker. The other evening a ragged fellow who was crying out the King's speech, announced it with the following appendages: "Good news for the poor! Great and glorious speech of His Most Gracious Majesty William the Fourth! The Reform Bill will pass. Then you'll have your beef and mutton for a penny a pound. And then you'll all be as fine as peacocks for a mere trifle. To say nothing of ale at a penny a quart, in which you may drink His Majesty's health, and His Majesty's Ministers' health, and the glorious Reform Bill's health, all without a ruining of yourselves!"

I opened the window the better to hear this piece of oratory, when my beloved little Blenheim set up a furious barking at the man, and I could not make him be quiet. "Lor' bless his sweet pretty face," said the street Cicero, "he won't do no hurt. He be like them there Tories as makes a big blusterin' row, thinking to frighten the People. 'Cause why? 'Cause they be mortal afeared of the People themselves. But Lor' love ye, when we gets this here Reform Bill through the Hupper Ouse, maybe we'll have a reform among the dogs likewise, and they'll *all* be like that pretty red and white black-eyed cretur."

All the common people are now persuaded that the Reform Bill will feed and clothe them for nothing. Poor geese!

In this General Election Scotland returned a majority of two-thirds against the Bill. In Ireland the hostility to the existing constitution had become so universal that the Bill, which promised the destruction of it, received from that part of the United Kingdom the passionate support of Protestants and Catholics combined. A significant historical comment on the Catholic Relief Bill. Throughout England the constituencies, rural as well as urban, were almost unanimously in favour of the Bill, and of eighty-two members elected by the counties only six were anti-Reformers. 1831. Æt. 28.

In this election Bulwer received an invitation to stand for St. Albans, but finding that his mother had strong objections to his soliciting as a Reform Candidate the suffrage of a borough so near to her own abode, he abandoned this constituency and soon afterwards found another opportunity elsewhere. At the end of April he writes to his mother :—

> I write in *very great* haste, to beg a *very great* favour. I am just about to leave town for St. Ives. My election is certain. Will you in this case help me out with the expenses by lending me any sum you conveniently can, from £500 to £1000? I will fully and faithfully repay it in less than a year.

The loan was at once accorded, but not without an expression of his mother's misgivings about his style of living, and the increased expenditure he seemed to be courting by this eagerness to get into Parliament. To this he replied :—

> Your very kind loan is fortunately not required. When I wrote I was worried by the shortness of the time. But I am none the less cordially obliged to you, and I perfectly understand your scruples. I set off

now in two or three hours by the mail. You are mistaken, my dearest mother, in thinking that I have overlived my income. That I have paid for a house, that I have furnished it, and that I have also paid for a year's seat in Parliament, without being in debt, except to yourself, for what you have so kindly lent me, are clear proofs which may satisfy you that I have not outlived my income. On the contrary, I have saved from my income and invested the savings. Of course in the word income I include what I annually receive from my books, which are to me what rental is to others. Your kindness has now enabled me to make writing no longer the heavy toil it has been, and I shall do what, in your generosity, you meant me to do —slacken work, and attend more to my health. God bless you, dearest mother!

P.S.—With regard to Mr. —— I see no reason, so far as regards my brother or myself, why you should not express any sentiments you entertain. My return is now beyond the reach of injury, and Henry's will be so before such a circumstance could travel to Coventry. But I see great reason why, for your own sake, you should not actively oppose the reform. The people are so unanimous and so violent on the measure, right or wrong, that I do not hesitate to say that persons who oppose it will be marked out in case of any disturbance. I might give many other reasons; but I think this sufficient for anyone in your position, who regards life and property in very critical times; and I would not, were I you, allow Mr. —— or anyone else, to make the smallest use of your name.

On May 1, 1831, Mrs. E. Bulwer wrote to Mrs. Vanderstegen:—

Mr. Bulwer is gone to St. Ives, for which place he stands. They say he is sure of coming in; but I never believe anything to be sure about an election till it is over. His brother Henry is also getting on well at Coventry. 1831. Æt. 28.

And on the following day she reopened her letter to add to it this postscript :—

MONDAY, *May* 2.

I have just got Mr. Bulwer's first frank. He is returned for St. Ives.

On April 30, Bulwer had already written to his mother :—

MY DEAREST MOTHER—I write to you forthwith. I am returned to Parliament this day and hour. Post waits. This is my first frank.—Yours most affectionately,

E. L. B.

CHAPTER IV

THE REFORM BILL

1832

The rapid succession of short-lived administrations, the leisure of a prolonged peace, the pressure of debt, the writings of philosophers, all, insensibly, yet quickly excited that popular temperament which found its crisis in the Reform Bill.

Godolphin.

Insurrection,
Worse than that Civil War! at all risk, at all cost
We must carry the Bill, or the nation is lost.

Walpole.

1832. ÆT. 29. THE new Parliament was opened by the King on June 21, 1831. On June 24, Lord John Russell introduced his second Reform Bill. On the previous day Bulwer wrote to his wife at Pinner:—

> I am better, but the medicine affects my head and stomach dreadfully. This morning, immediately after breakfast, I had to go with the address to the King. There were about 200 of us. The King looked old and ill, but read his answer well and very distinctly. To-morrow is the great Reform Day, but I don't expect to speak yet—not till the 2nd Reading a week hence.

The second Reading, however, was not taken till the 4th of July, in order to allow time for the introduction of the Scottish and Irish Reform Bills. 1832. Æt. 29.

Bulwer, speaking on the second night of the debate immediately after Sir E. Dering, who opposed the Bill, made his maiden speech. It was short, and very moderate in tone. The grounds on which he placed his support of the Bill are characteristic of the point of view from which he habitually approached all questions of constitutional change. It was unnecessary, he observed, to support by appeals to popular sentiment a measure on which popular sentiment insisted. His argument would therefore be confined to the objection that the Bill was calculated to affect not only the illegitimate influence, but the wholesome power of the aristocracy. This objection he should ask leave to consider in a spirit not yet so imbued with political partisanship as to make him feel his regard for principles strengthened and embittered by habitual conflict with persons. He trusted, therefore, that he should not forfeit the sympathy of those with whom he sat, if he abstained from exciting it by the harsh vituperatives they had so lavishly bestowed on their opponents. No political power could in these days long continue to exist without the support of public opinion; and it was only, therefore, in proportion as it lost or gained in public opinion that the power of an aristocracy in a free State could really be lessened or increased. But it was notorious that in reference to this question the demarcation of

1832. sentiment between the aristocracy and the people
Æt. 29. had become so deep, that to declaim, however ignorantly and foolishly, against aristocratic privilege was now sufficient to obtain the popular suffrage. Anti-Reformers admitted this and libelled the English aristocracy by likening its situation to that of the French. The analogy had no evidence in fact. The upper classes of England were not open to any of the charges brought against those of France by the apologists of revolution in that country. Nor was their unpopularity in relation to this question due, as alleged, to the growth of Liberal opinion. For in England Liberal opinion did not favour the equalisation of rank and property, nor did the people hate their superiors because they disliked superiority. What the people justly resented was an illegitimate influence exercised over legislation through the agency of nomination boroughs. Abolish these, and enlarge the representation of the great industrial and commercial centres of population. The odium and the animosity would then disappear, for it would no longer have any practical cause; but the legitimate and salutary influence of the aristocracy would remain, acting through constitutional channels, and strengthened by the alliance of that class which fills up the vast space between the highest and the lowest, a class opposed to revolutionary changes by all the habits of commerce and all the instincts of wealth. He voted for the Bill, therefore, as a

measure—not for the theoretical improvement, but for the practical stability, of the Commonwealth.

The debate lasted three nights, and the second Reading was carried on July 7 by a majority of 136 in a House of 598. The third Reading debate commenced on September 19; and finally, in the early morning of September 22, the Bill passed the House of Commons by a majority of 109.

Bulwer has left on record his impressions of that memorable occasion in the following sketch, which is unfortunately very incomplete.

The Last Night of the Reform Bill in the House of Commons

It was not till about ten o'clock on the night of the twenty-first of September that it was generally known in the House that a division was certainly to take place. Before that hour many members of consideration on the Ministerial Benches had professed some intention of speaking,—Sir Francis Burdett and Mr. Sheil among the most prominent. But at the conclusion of a very long speech from Mr. Grant—a speech extremely beneficial to the cause—there was an impatient cry for Sir Charles Wetherall who, after a few vehement remarks from Lord Valletort, girded up his loins and sprang to his post. Then full well did the hapless aspirants to oratory, who had arisen night after night by sixes and sevens, but had not yet caught the Speaker's eye, feel that for them all hope was over. A two hours' speech from the Ex-Solicitor General brought the time to midnight—and Lord

1832. Æt. 29. Althorp to reply. Perhaps that fine-hearted, fine-minded, noble, man never distinguished himself more than by that speech; and it was something like the entrance of a new world into active politics when a Minister condescended to be a Philosopher. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said:—He trusted the time was come when the wisdom of mankind would render them less eager to plunge into war, would force upon Nations the conviction that the phantoms of national glory and national triumph were not worthy the expense of blood and treasure by which they must be purchased.

Compare that sentiment with the memorable warlike bursts of Canning—Yes! we have gained wonderfully upon civilisation in the last ten years.

Sir Robert Peel commenced in a tone of great solemnity, declaring that he was about to put aside all details and embark at once on the grand principle of the Bill. He kept his promise not only by reading thro' every detail in the Reform Bill, but by creeping also into the details of the Beer Bill, and at last settled himself, to the great delight of his supporters, on the Bill for setting Spring Guns. Nevertheless, the speech was the speech of a great Master—it would be unfair to deny it; it showed remarkable ingenuity and address, not without passages of a far higher order of eloquence than many men could arrive at. Lord John Russell's reply, which did not commence till after three o'clock in the morning, was the finest speech he has made since the Bill was first introduced.

. . . . .

Amidst great confusion Mr. Hunt rose and regaled the House for some ten minutes with assurances that the Bill had ceased to be popular. Unhappily he let fall some remarks about the Livery of London, and up sprang Alderman Wood—we were well off with only one Alderman. At half-past four in the morning the debate closed on the most important Act that for a century and a half had passed the National Assembly. The last words spoken on the subject were an assurance as to the number of Liverymen that had constituted a Common Hall. 1832. Æt. 29.

The Ayes (the Reformers) went forth, and the Lobby was crowded to excess. When we returned (the writer of this was among the majority) there was a scene of somewhat picturesque and imposing character. The writer was one of the first who re-entered the House, and he seated himself at the back of the Benches under the Reporter's Gallery. From thence was obtained perhaps the best view of the whole tide of members that flowed in till the body of the House was completely covered. The candles, with the exception of the centre lustre, were burnt down to the sockets, and the continued fatigues and the series of late hours we had undergone for so many weeks made themselves strikingly visible at that hour and by that light in the persons of most of the dark mass that filled the chamber ("that old oak chamber" as it is called by one of Horace Walpole's correspondents).

From the place where I sat it was curious to note here and there conspicuous in the crowd the most eminent supporters, the most eminent antagonists of that Great Measure about to pass from our Tribunal. Just to the left of the doors about half way up the House, the first who arrested my eye was the great Irish Agitator—Daniel O'Connell; his broad hat slouched over that remarkable countenance so indicative of strength of will, resolution, and perseverance. Having raised my eyes—I am opposite and standing near the entrance of the House—I saw a face that presented the strongest possible contrast, the calm serene features of the "reverent old Man"—the author of the *Vindiciæ*

Gallicæ.[1] Farther on, you might just catch a glimpse of Lord Althorp turning round with that same imperturbable expression of honesty and kindness on his face, which no one can mark without loving the man as well as honouring him. Then Murray's chivalrous head, with its sad, proud look. Peel I could not discover. But just below me (one of the Tellers) was the keen, cunning-like face of Croker—the bald head and working mouth and dark, fine, eyes—handsome enough in their way, but I would not trust them. However Croker is an indisputably unappreciated man; his powers are brilliant. I do not know whether the features of Macaulay, one of the most rising men in the country, are familiar to many—there is something very peculiar about them. At a distance the full forehead, the firm lips, the large, cloven chin, the massive, bald brow that overhangs an eye small but full of deep, quiet light. I scarcely ever saw a head so expressive of intellectual grandeur. At that moment I saw his face looking up among a press of much taller men, and close to him was old Burdett. It was curious to see in such juxtaposition ambition commencing its career and ambition retiring from it—one who might see in this vast and difficult measure the commencement of a new era, and another who could only see in it the extinction of the old. Everyone knows Burdett's person.[2] Who would have thought that he saw in that tall, patrician figure, with the gentle bearing, the mild eye, the serene bare brow, the restless pupil of Horne Tooke, the mob's darling—the Gracchus of the hustings. 1832. ÆT. 29.

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[1] The *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*, of Sir James Mackintosh (1765–1832), was a defence of the French Revolution against the attacks of Burke, which, on its publication in 1791, produced a great sensation. But after the execution of the French king, Mackintosh repented of his advocacy, and confessed that later events in France had taught him, by "a melancholy experience," that his enthusiasm had been misplaced.

[2] Sir Francis Burdett (1770–1844), the famous politician, since 1807 M.P. for Westminster. He was identified with all the extreme proposals of the Radical party, and had been imprisoned more than once for the expression of his revolutionary opinions. In later life, and especially after the Reform Bill, his views underwent great modification, and for the seven last years of his career he was the Tory member for North Wilts.

I could not for a long time see the introducer of the Bill, Lord John Russell. At last he appeared. Just fancy a small, spare man, with delicate, well-cut features, a handsome curved lip, a good forehead, thin, darkish hair—that is Lord John Russell. What a light events may give to that name.

But Wetherall, where's Wetherall? the broad, bluff, humorous, muscular-minded, lame-thinking Ex-Solicitor-General, the most resolute of Anti-reformers, the most long-winded, yet how often the most effective, of orators, now all fury, now all levity, now the brave, now the buffoon, always odd, always great, always Wetherall. There he is. His person sustains his character. You see the humourist, you also see the genius; a deep-lined, sagacious countenance, plenty of courage in the forehead, plenty of honesty in the face, plenty of shirt between the waistcoat and breeches.

. . . . .

I stopped a short time in the lobby, and Peel passed through. One of his supporters came and shook hands with him. Certainly Peel did not look happy, nor pleased, nor triumphant. We went forth into the open air; it was broad daybreak, a grey, chill mist floated round the old Abbey. "Thank Heaven," said we all, "we have done with the Bill at last!" And I believe our Posterity will not be ungrateful either!

The news of this night's debate was received by the populace of London with acclamations which lasted long after daybreak; and as it spread throughout the country it set the bells ringing and the flags flying from town to town.

1832. Æt. 29. But the fate of the Bill now depended on the action of the Upper House, and the universal question in the country was, "What will the Lords do with the Bill?"

On October 7, 1831, the Bill was rejected by a large majority in the House of Lords. The Ministry, supported by a strong vote of confidence in the Commons, decided to retain office, and the King on their advice prorogued Parliament. The popular feeling in favour of the Bill was evinced by riotous agitation throughout the country. Parliament reassembled on December 6, and the third Reform Bill was introduced by Lord John Russell on December 12.

On Friday, March 23, 1832, the Bill passed for the third time in the House of Commons. On Monday the 26th it was carried up to the Lords by Lord John Russell and Lord Althorp. In the early morning hours of April 14 the second Reading was carried in the Lords by a majority of nine. When the House went into Committee Lord Lyndhurst led the opposition, and carried by a majority of thirty-five a motion giving the enfranchising clauses precedence over the disenfranchising clauses. Lord Grey, on behalf of the Government, regarded the motion as fatal to the Bill, because it took the control of the measure out of the hands of its promoters and transferred it to those of its opponents. When the motion was carried the Government immediately adjourned the debate, and appealed to the King for an exercise of the royal prerogative to create a sufficient number of Peers to secure the passage of the Bill. William IV. refused his consent to the creation of Peers, and the Government resigned. The King consulted with the Duke of Wellington, with Lord Lyndhurst, and with Sir Robert Peel; but in view of the violent agitation in the country, and the impossibility of securing an anti-Reform majority in the House of Commons, none of these gentlemen could undertake to form a Government. The King had no alternative but to recall Lord Grey and agree to the terms demanded of him. The Government resumed office, and a piece of paper was given to Lord Brougham, containing the statement that "the King grants permission to Earl Grey and to his Chancellor Lord Brougham, to create such a number of Peers as will be sufficient to insure the passing of the Reform Bill." The opposition was now at an end. The Duke of Wellington and his followers retired from the House. 1832. Æt. 29.

On June 4, the Bill, with a few unimportant amendments, was read a third time in the House of Lords, and received the Royal assent on June 7, 1832.

CHAPTER V

MEMBER FOR LINCOLN

1832–1833

> Few who at ease their members' speeches read
> Guess the hard life of members who succeed;
> Pass by the waste of youthful golden days,
> And the dread failure of the first essays—
> Grant that the earlier steeps and sloughs are past,
> And Fame's broad highway stretches smooth at last;
> Grant the success, and now behold the pains;
> Eleven to three—Committee upon Drains!
> From three to five—self-commune and a chop;
> From five to dawn, a bill to pass or stop
> Which stopt or passed, leaves England much the same.
> Alas for genius staked in such a game.
>
> *St. Stephens.*

1832. ÆT. 29. THE constituency of St. Ives was one of those which were swept away by the Reform Bill, and Bulwer represented Lincoln in the reformed Parliament. He had selected this constituency, out of three for which he was invited to stand, because the Liberal electors of Lincoln were, like himself, opposed to the repeal of the Corn Laws. His warmest supporter at Lincoln, for which borough he continued to sit until his temporary retirement from political life in 1841, was Mr. Tennyson d'Eyncourt (uncle to Lord Tennyson the poet), who in the new Parliament represented Lambeth. Apart from their Parliamentary relations and political sympathies, they had many tastes in common—amongst them a great love of archæology, genealogy, and early English literature, and the intimacy between them soon ripened into a warm friendship. Mr. D'Eyncourt's library at Bayon's Manor in Lincolnshire contained one of the finest private collections of early English chronicles, the study of which was of great value to Bulwer when, several years later, he wrote at his friend's house the historical romance of *Harold*.

The following letter, received by Bulwer towards the close of the General Election of 1832 from one of the leaders of the Irish parliamentary party, whose oratorical reputation was established in the Reformed Parliament, is interesting for its prediction of the power of Irish obstruction—a prediction abundantly fulfilled during the sixty years that followed :—

R. S. Sheil to Edward Bulwer.

Templeton, *Novr.* 17.

My dear Bulwer—I will, if possible, send you an article for January. I did not receive your letter till yesterday in consequence of my having been engaged in a noisy canvass of Tipperary. My election is, I believe, certain for this great county. Why did you not tell me whether you are secure of beating Sibthorp ?[1] The Anti-Union feeling has made wonderful way here. There will be a large body of turbulent Irishmen in the

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[1] His opponent at Lincoln.

1832. Æt. 29. House, whom it will be impossible to put down. They will be sufficient to encounter the "bellowing" of the House and keep each other in countenance. Some forty determined Hibernians will make a formidable body, and will be quite adequate to the obstruction, the annoyance, and even the disturbance of the Government. I do not see how business will be carried on. O'Connell will have his pike perpetually in the Ministers' side.—Believe me, Yours most truly,

R. S. Sheil.

Of the writer of this letter Bulwer says (in an endorsement on his correspondence with him):—

> He was, for immediate effect, perhaps, the most effective Parliamentary speaker of my time. As the intellect in the substance of his speeches was very slight compared with the art bestowed on the arrangement, diction and delivery, he left no enduring impression on the mind of his audience. But he had an inborn gift of oratory, and he cultivated it with great care and nicety, so that he triumphed to an inconceivable degree over defects of person, voice, brogue, and at times taste; rarely failing to carry away even a hostile audience.

In addition to his editorship of *The New Monthly Magazine* and his more serious literary work, Bulwer was by no means inactive as a Member of Parliament at this period. He was a member of the Parliamentary Committee on the Monopoly of the East India Company. He took an active part in opposing the Coercion Bill for Ireland, and in promoting the reform of the Factory Laws and the Poor Laws; he supported the relief of Dissenters from Church rates, and the removal of Jewish disabilities. He was 1832. also a warm supporter of Lord Durham, and ÆT. 29. co-operated with the small group of advanced Radicals in the House. His efforts, however, were more especially directed to legislation on behalf of the interests of literature and art, to measures relating to the Royal Academy, to the reduction of the tax upon newspapers, to the creation of dramatic copyright, and to the suppression of the monopoly then held by the two great theatres at Covent Garden and Drury Lane.

At the time when Bulwer brought forward his motion for a Committee of Enquiry into the laws affecting dramatic literature and the condition of the drama, these two great theatres were the only ones at which genuine dramatic works could be legally performed. Nowhere else could such performances take place without an infringement of the patents granted to the Drury Lane and Covent Garden Theatres, and all persons assisting in such performances elsewhere were liable to serious penalties. This monopoly was too inconvenient and unjust to be strictly enforced. The minor theatres existed, but they existed outside the pale of the law, and subject to prosecution if they attempted any dramatic entertainments of a higher order than those of St. Bartholomew Fair. The practical effect of this state of the law was to degrade the character of the unlicensed, without elevating that of the licensed theatres. Dramatic

1832. Æt. 29. copyright there was none. A dramatic author had no property in his own work. "The commonest invention in calico," said Bulwer, in his speech on this subject, "a new pattern in the most trumpery article of dress, a new bit to our bridles, a new wheel to our carriages, may make the fortune of the inventor; but the intellectual invention of the finest drama in the world may not relieve by a groat the poverty of the inventor. The instant an author publishes a play, any manager may seize it, mangle it, act it, without the consent of the author, and without giving him one sixpence of remuneration."

Another feature of the law attacked in this speech was the dramatic censorship. Quoting the remark of Lord Chesterfield, that it invested the Lord Chamberlain with a power more absolute than that of the monarch himself, Bulwer affirmed that the true censor of the age is the spirit of the age. He pointed out that whilst habitually suppressing the smallest political allusion in a new play, the censor had no power to strike out the grossest indecencies from an old one; and he contended that, inasmuch as the moral tone of the stage will always reflect that of society itself, public taste and the vigilant admonition of the public press might safely be trusted for the preservation of theatrical decorum.

The proposal for a Committee of Enquiry which he submitted on the 31st of May, 1832, was agreed to by the House; and, with the exception of those relating to the dramatic censorship, the views urged by him upon the Committee were carried into law. He obtained the abolition of the patented theatres, and the establishment of a dramatic copyright which eventually led the way to an international copyright. English dramatic authors of the present day owe to his exertions that property in their own works, which, to the great benefit of the national stage, has rendered successful dramatic authorship an increasingly remunerative investment of intellectual labour. To him, also, the minor theatres are indebted for their existence on a recognised and equitable legal footing, and the public for the generally high class of dramatic entertainment to which the majority of them are devoted.

As regards the satisfactory performances of first-class plays, the abolition of the patented theatres has not fulfilled all the expectations with which it was advocated by Bulwer. During the first few years which succeeded the abolition of the exclusive monopoly of the Drury Lane and Covent Garden theatres, it was still possible for a great actor, like Macready, to group about him at some one theatre actors of superior talent in every department of the higher drama. But, in the gradual development of free competition amongst all theatres, the natural ambition of every successful actor to have a theatre of his own has led to the dispersion of dramatic talent and to the establishment of the "Star" system, under which every theatre secures

1832. Æt. 29. the services of one leading actor, while first-rate talent in the minor parts is rarely seen. At the same time the best interests, both of theatrical art and dramatic literature, have been subordinated to purely commercial considerations.

A remedy for these defects in our theatrical system could, of course, be supplied by making one or two theatres financially independent—not by that worst form of protection, an exclusive legal right to the performance of serious drama, but by means of a moderate subsidy from public funds.

It is probable that the members of the Committee of 1832 did not fully appreciate all the consequences which would result from the establishment of free competition between theatres. But it is interesting to note that Bulwer did recommend at that time some kind of approach to the Continental system of State-subsidised theatres, as may be seen from the following passage in a report which he drafted for the consideration of the Committee :—

> Whatever may have been the failure of the conductors of the said theatres in preserving the honour of the legitimate drama, and a taste in the public mind for its representation, it seems to your Committee the consequence of the system of monopoly, and not the fault of the monopolists. Your Committee are therefore of opinion that, in consideration of the current belief in the probable duration of the monopoly, and the ruinous expenses entailed by a system too long permitted, it should, from the date of the licensing of

> other theatres for the performance of the regular drama, be respectfully recommended to H.M. Govt. to remit the fragment of the taxes upon these two theatres. The amount of the taxation thus remitted constitutes a very inconsiderable addition to the public income ; but if a prudent system of expenditure be hereafter adopted in the theatrical management, it will furnish a considerable increase to that of the proprietors. And if, by the more general encouragement of the drama which will, your Committee believes, be the result of the alterations they suggest, a new impetus should be given to the stage, and the proprietors of the two houses be enabled to diminish somewhat the size of them, it is probable that those theatres may, by this means, retain such a pre-eminence over other competitors, that the assistance afforded them will not only be a service to individuals, but, through the drama to the public itself.
>
> Your Committee have the greater willingness to recommend to the Government this small pecuniary sacrifice, since it appears from the evidence of M. de la Poste that the French Govt. devotes little short of £80,000 to the support of the theatres in Paris.

In that form the proposal did not meet with approval ; and it has been left for the present generation to renew the demand, in connection with the tercentenary of Shakespeare's death, for some public recognition of the influence of the stage upon national thought and character. In default of any direct subsidy from imperial or municipal funds, efforts are to-day being made to secure by public subscription the endowment of at least one theatre reserved under certain conditions for the performance of a higher class of drama, and the encouragement of a higher

1832. Æt. 29. standard of dramatic authorship than those which the public taste can be expected to appreciate spontaneously.

The dramatic censorship, which was submitted to Bulwer's Committee of Enquiry in 1832, has also remained unaltered to the present day ; and the survival of this institution significantly illustrates the fallacy of a good deal of popular eloquence about the free expression of opinion. Of all the institutions of Great Britain, freedom of the press is the most popular, and we are apt to measure the liberty of other nations in proportion to the licence permitted to journalism in the criticism of political affairs and persons. But we ourselves do not permit the free expression of opinion through any organs unfamiliar to our habits. We do not permit it on the stage. No play that treats of political affairs or public characters with the freedom of a newspaper is suffered to appear on the English stage. For this distinction between the press and the stage excellent reasons have been given, and to all these reasons excellent answers have been supplied. But so long as the dramatic censorship continues, it is proof that in our own, as in other countries, legislators are afraid of giving to opinion vents of which the results are uncertain ; and that in no country does the public insist upon having any vent for opinion which custom has not rendered essential to its theories of freedom.

Bulwer's motion of the 31st of May, 1832, was seconded by O'Connell and warmly supported by Brougham, Campbell, Sheil, and Hume. It was opposed by Sir Edward Lugden and Sir Charles Wetherall, and it received a somewhat qualified support from William Lamb who, whilst agreeing to an inquiry, predicted that it would be found impossible to enforce dramatic copyright, objected in the interests of literature and morals to the multiplication of theatres, and protested against any alteration of the law calculated to sever the connection between the monarchy and the drama. He concluded by observing that "the drama was the flower of the Crown—the child of monarchy—and he did not think it would ever flourish under any other parent." Mr. Hume supported the motion because he objected to monopolies of all kinds, and therefore to theatrical monopolies. Mr. Brougham, who also supported it, pointed out that, under the unaltered state of the law, any actor assisting at a minor theatre in the performance of any pieces except burlettas, was liable to a fine of £50, whilst at the same time public opinion against the law was so strong as to give practical impunity to its nightly violation.

In the following month Bulwer brought forward his motion against the taxes upon newspapers. These taxes consisted in the year 1832, firstly, of a paper duty of 3d. on every pound-weight of paper; secondly, of a fourpenny duty on the newspapers themselves, subject to a dis-

1832. count of 20 per cent upon daily papers only; and Æt. 29. thirdly, of a tax of 3s. 6d. on every advertisement. The paper duty he was content to leave untouched till the revenue derived from it could be better spared, although he regarded it as a tax indirectly injurious to the public interests. But of the taxes on newspapers and advertisements he demanded the immediate abolition. The first he denounced as a taxation of opinion and a persecution of poverty; the second as an engine for obstructing business and restricting trade. The amount of revenue which would be lost by the abolition of these imposts on the diffusion of knowledge he proposed to make up, partly by a penny post (of which, apparently, his speech on this occasion contains the first suggestion ever made in Parliament[1]), and partly by an augmentation of the excise duties. "Any tax," he said, "is better than the one which corrupts virtue, and the other which stifles commerce, which makes knowledge dear and gin cheap, choking the source of intelligence and throwing open the means of intoxication."

It was urged against these proposals that the stamp duty was a protection to the great newspapers, whose capital enabled them to sustain it. To this argument Bulwer opposed another which is characteristic of his general political tendency. "There was no slight danger," he observed, "that in relation to a reformed Parliament the existing newspapers might, if they retained this monopoly, become what the close boroughs had been to the unreformed Parliament. The Ministry of the day would depend too much on their support. Why exchange an oligarchy of boroughs for an oligarchy of journals? Let the press be as powerful as unrestricted enterprise, intellect, and honesty could make it; but let its power be that of a free press, not of a monopoly, a representation of opinions, not an oligarchy of interests." And he concluded by an appeal which re-echoes the keynote of *Paul Clifford*—"Is it not time," he asked, "to consider whether the printer and his types may not provide better for the peace and honour of a free State, than the jailor and the hangman—whether, in one word, cheap knowledge may not be a better political agent than costly punishment?"

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[1] A later reference to the subject of a penny postage is contained in a letter to William Andrews of Lincoln, dated May 9th, 1839: "I did not," he says, "go up with the deputation on the penny postage, for I was seriously ill that day with an inflammatory complaint on the chest. But I regretted this the less as I have taken so many other occasions to press the question upon different members of the Government, that my sentiments were well known to them. I have no doubt that if Lord Melbourne had stayed in, the penny postage would have been carried. I cannot foresee what Sir Robert Peel will do. . . . I may observe here that I seconded Mr. Wallace's first motion for an enquiry into the Post Office, from which the question of the penny postage has indeed emanated." This reform was carried out in the following year.

To the principle and object of this motion no objection was made by Lord Althorp; but to the motion itself he objected on the ground that it was premature, and that in the existing condition of the revenue the obnoxious taxes could not be immediately abolished. The House accepted this assurance, and the motion was withdrawn. But copies of the speech introduc-

1833. ing it were widely circulated throughout the
ÆT. 30. country, at a time when the town of Manchester possessed a thousand gin-shops and not one daily paper; and the facts and arguments set forth in that speech powerfully promoted the growth of a public opinion, which eventually crowned with success the efforts afterwards renewed by Bulwer for the removal of what he called the "taxes upon knowledge."

His opinions at this time on the subject of domestic legislation generally may be gathered from the following passage in *England and the English* on the functions of Government:—

> Can the mind surrender itself to its highest exertions when distracted by disquietude and discontent? The mind of one individual reflects the mind of a people, and happiness in either results from the consciousness of security; but you are never secure while you are at variance with your Government. In a well-ordered constitution, a constitution in harmony with its subjects, each citizen confounds himself with the state; he is proud that he belongs to it; the genius of the whole people enters into his soul; he is not one man only, he is inspired by the mighty force of the community; he feels the dignity of the nation in himself, he beholds himself in the dignity of the nation. To unite, then, the people and the Government, to prevent that jealousy and antagonism of power which we behold at present, each resisting each to their common weakness, to merge, in one word, both names in the name of state, we must first advance the popular principle to satisfy the people, and then prevent a conceding government by creating a directive one.
>
> At present, my friends, you only perceive the

Government when it knocks at your doors for taxes; 1833. you couple with its name the idea not of protection, ÆT. 30. but of extortion; but I would wish that you should see the Government educating your children, encouraging your science, and ameliorating the condition of your poor. I wish you to warm while you utter its very name, with a grateful and reverent sense of enlightenment and protection. I wish you to behold all your great public blessings repose beneath its shadow. I wish you to feel advancing towards that unceasing and incalculable amelioration which I firmly believe to be the common destiny of mankind, with a steady march and beneath a beloved banner. I wish that every act of a beneficent Reform should seem to you neither conceded nor extorted, but as a pledge of a sacred and mutual love; the legitimate offspring of one faithful and indissoluble union between the power of a people and the majesty of a State.

This is what I mean by a *directive* Government; and a Government so formed is always strong—strong not for evil, but for good. . . .

From my boyhood to this hour, it is to the condition of great masses of men that my interest and my studies have been directed; it is for their amelioration and enlightenment that I have been a labourer and an enthusiast. Yes, I say enthusiast! for when a man is sincere, enthusiasm warms him; when useful, enthusiasm directs. Nothing can sustain our hopes for mankind, amidst their own suspicion of our motives and misconstructions of our aims, amidst the mighty obstacles that oppose everyone who struggles with old opinion, and the innumerable mortifications, that are as the hostile winds of the soul, driving it back upon the haven of torpor and self-seeking; save that unconquerable and generous zeal which results from a hearty faith in our own honesty, and a steady conviction of that tendency

1833. Æt. 30. and power to progress, which the whole history, as well of philosophy as of civilisation, assures us to be the prerogative of our race.

Early in the year 1833 Bulwer introduced a bill for carrying out the alterations he had previously recommended, in the law relating to dramatic performances and copyright. He also spoke, once on the address, and a second time on the Suppression of Disturbances Bill, strongly in favour of the policy of conciliation without coercion.

CHAPTER VI

JOURNEY TO ITALY AND VISIT TO IRELAND

1833–1834

Flower of the world's garden—Fountain of delight—Italy of Italy—Whoever visits thee, seems to leave earth and its harsh cares behind—to enter by the Ivory Gate into the Land of Dreams.

Last Days of Pompeii.

There will be no peace for England while Ireland remains as it is. . . . I have just returned from that country. I have seen matters with my own eyes. Having assuredly no sympathy with the question of Repeal, I have not sought the judgment of Repealers . . . and I declare solemnly, that it seems to me the universal sentiment of all parties, that God does not look down upon any corner of the earth in which the people are more supremely wretched, or in which a kind, fostering, and paternal Government is more indispensably needed.

Letter to a late Cabinet Minister.

THE strain of combined political and literary work produced the breakdown in health to which reference has already been made in an earlier chapter. The doctors recommended a complete rest, with change of scene and a warmer climate. Accordingly, in September 1833, Bulwer and his wife left England and travelled through France and Switzerland to Italy. They remained abroad till the end of February 1834, and then returned home hurriedly, owing to the circumstances already described. Bulwer kept a journal during the greater part of this journey, in which he has left on record his impressions of 1833. ÆT. 30.

1833. Æt. 30. the places he visited, some of which were afterwards worked up into articles which appeared in *The Student*, whilst his studies in Naples and Rome produced the two historical novels of *The Last Days of Pompeii* and *Rienzi.*

One passage in his journal is of interest as showing how the title of his most famous novel was first suggested. Speaking of the collection of pictures in the Brera Gallery at Milan, he says :—

> Some by P. Veronese, and one by Castiglione are particularly fine. But the modern pictures are wretched—out of drawing, and in the worst colouring of the worst French School. One picture, however, I except. It is making a considerable sensation at Milan, and the subject of it is "The Last Days of Pompeii." This picture is full of genius, imagination, and nature. The faces are fine, the conception grand. The statues toppling from a lofty gate have a crashing and awful effect. But the most natural touch is an infant in its mother's arms :—her face impressed with a dismay and terror which partake of the sublime ; the child wholly unconscious of the dread event—stretching its arms towards a bird of gay plumage that lies upon the ground struggling in death, and all the child's gay delighted wonder is pictured in its face. This exception to the general horror of the scene is full of pathos, and in the true contrast of fine thought.

There can be no doubt, therefore, that the author who wrote *The Last Days* derived his first inspiration from the painter who painted *The Last Days of Pompeii*, and finally the same inspiration found its way into music in the opera of *Ione*. The companion novel of this period also impressed itself upon the imagination of another composer. Many years after its publication, Richard Wagner assured the author's son, who was then an Attaché at Vienna, that his first opera, *Rienzi*, was the direct outcome of Bulwer's romance of the same name. 1833. Æt. 30.

There is no record in the Italian journal of the impressions which Bulwer received from his first visit to Rome, and there are no letters written by him to friends in England which throw any light upon the subject. It was there that he began to write and made considerable progress with the novel of *Rienzi*; and it was probably on this visit that he first became acquainted with John Gibson, the sculptor, two of whose works are at Knebworth, and to whom *Zanoni* was afterwards dedicated. The epitaph on Gibson's monument was written by Bulwer, and the terms of it give genuine expression to his affection and esteem for this artist.

Though there is no contemporary record of his impressions of Rome and Naples, the novels which each of those two cities inspired are proof of the strength and character of the influence which they had upon the imagination of the writer. Bulwer also told his son in after years, that he had been disappointed to find in Rome hardly any traces of the republican and but few important remains of the Augustan age; most of the buildings now visited by tourists not having been excavated at that time. "The

1833. most imposing monument of Roman antiquity,"
Æt. 30. he once said, "is the Coliseum, and that is only a wild beast show." He appears to have been more impressed and attracted by the mediæval than by the classical associations of the place; and hence, no doubt, his selection of the story of Rienzi for the subject of the fiction which he began to write there.

But before *Rienzi* was finished he went on from Rome to Naples, in search of warmer air, and without having as yet derived from his journey any appreciable benefit to his health. At Naples *Rienzi* was cast aside in favour of a new conception. The *genius loci* which he had sought and missed among the ruins of Rome he found haunting the buried streets of Pompeii, and at once its influence took complete possession of his imagination. And no wonder! From Pompeii "the parting genius" was not "with sighing sent" by that slow change which converted the gods into the saints, and the temples into the churches of Rome; but here in its native dwelling-place, with no time for escape, it was sealed up by the sudden act of a single catastrophe, and here it remains for ever undisturbed. Hun and Vandal have not entered this city. Gothic barbarism and Christian art have written no record on its walls. Rome is a palimpsest, Pompeii a classic tablet, from whose surface nothing has effaced the mark of the stylus. There the past is still the present, and antiquity has all the aspect of novelty. The excavations at that time were comparatively recent, having only been begun in 1755, and it was not surprising that such records of an extinct civilisation as were then being slowly unfolded from the earth, should have inspired Bulwer to write the first and certainly the best known of his purely imaginative works. The intimacy he formed at Naples with Sir William Gell, and not improbably a haunting recollection of the picture he had seen at Milan, stimulated the fancies which the sight of them created in his mind; and those fancies rapidly embodied themselves in a work which has imperishably associated his name with Pompeii. 1834. Æt. 31.

The Last Days of Pompeii was completed soon after his return to England and published in the early autumn of 1834. It is interesting to note that although this book was written at a time of great mental depression, and in the midst of the first serious crisis in his relations with his wife, a marked gaiety of tone is its chief characteristic.

The following letters give some indication of the impression which the book created upon the author's friends and contemporaries:—

From Isaac Disraeli to Edward Bulwer.

Bradenham House, Wycombe,
14 *Novr.* 1834.

Dear Mr. Bulwer—I am positive that long ere you receive this, you will have had the most effectual demonstration of its truth, viz.:—that your last work

1834. Æt. 31. is the finest and the most interesting fiction that we have had for many years. *The Last Days of Pompeii!* Now they will be no more the *last* days. You have done more than all the erudite delvers have done. We can enter the city when we choose. We can follow the blind flower-girl as she threads its streets. We can join the pugilists at the tavern, and take a look at that female Amazon with any of them. I was present at the tremendous tragedy of nature—a trembling spectator, I watched the artists till I was overcome by the phantasma, and was glad to find myself once more in the solitude of my armchair. In my own mind I can only decide on a work of imagination by what it leaves behind. The memory is the great halter. How many a work—if indeed such things deserve the name, when placed in that sieve leaves nothing—all has vanished! The firm and wholesome grain alone will remain. A month has now passed since I had your volumes, and that but for a short time. Yet all their vital parts are as living as ever. Farewell. Continue to delight, and believe me with the highest regard, &c.,

I. D'ISRAELI.

From Mrs. Hemans to Edward Bulwer.

I cannot help imagining that I see in this work thus far the revelation of a higher *art* regarding the conceptions of genius, and also a treasury of richer, deeper, and more wide-reaching thought, than you have ever yet offered to the world. I am delighted too with the golden brightness of its classic imagery, so finely chastened by a subduing taste; and I think the scene between Glaucus and Nydia—where he reveals to her his love for Ione—one of the most delicately beautiful in all the literature of fiction. It reminds me in its spirit both of Goethe and of some of our own early dramatists. Those fine and slight indications of profound emotion by which you have there suggested, rather than unveiled, the abyss of passion underneath, are indeed the work of a master hand.—&c., 1834. ÆT. 31.

FELICIA HEMANS.

From John Auldjo.[1]

NAPLES, 26 *July*, 1836.

MY DEAR BULWER—I have long intended to inflict upon you the torture of three pages, but some one of your guardian spirits has hitherto warded off the blow; but fall it must—and now—for I have to thank you for your kind and beautiful epistle prefixed to *Devereux*. A copy arrived here yesterday, and as I read the sentiments and opinions it so feelingly expresses, my heart warmed with pride to find its unworthy owner coupled with them, and basking in the sunshine of your friendship and esteem. . . .

Splendid and soul-stirring as is *Rienzi*, I like *The Last Days* better. It is a beautiful creation—Ione will live as long as Juliet, Nydia as long as Jeanie Deans, and the lovely bust in the Museum has an interest thrown over it which never can leave it again. A small copy of it is now before me; the idea of beauty must ever be improved by each glance at that divine relic. I have had a translation of *The Last Days*, published in Milan, reprinted in a cheap form here, and the sale is very fair for Naples. It is published in numbers, and when all are out the sale will increase, and I shall send you a copy to show you what sort of a thing has been made of it. Of the Paris edition about 120 copies have been sold to *Italians* by Glass, and several of the French translation. Will it not gratify you to know that people begin to ask for

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[1] To whom *Devereux* had been dedicated.

1834. Ione's house, and that there are disputes about which
Æt. 31. was Julia's room in Diomed's villa? Pompeii was truly a city of the dead; there were no fancied spirits hovering o'er its remains, but now you have made poetical its very air, you have created a new feeling in its visitors. In the dusk, wandering through its deserted streets, the rapt antiquarian startles at the rustling of the vine leaves, and fancies he sees the shade of Arbaces the Egyptian beneath the luxuriant festoons; or as the peasant girl tramps her way home, singing her evening song, pictures to himself Nydia feeling her way through the Forum and singing, "Come, buy my flowers." . . .

From Lady Blessington.

London, *Oct.* 13, 1834.

There is more true poetry in your *Pompeii* than in fifty epics, and it alone would stamp its author as the genius *par excellence* of our day. Let me now tell you what I heard of it. It is in everyone's hands. Hookham told me that "he knows of no work that has been so much called for" (I quote his words), and the other circulating libraries give the same report. The classical scholars have pronounced their opinion that the book is too scholarly to be popular with the common herd of readers—but the common herd, determined not to deserve this opinion, declare themselves its passionate admirers, so that it is read and praised by all classes alike, each expressing surprise that so powerful an interest can be excited for so remote an age—forgetting that human nature is always the same, and that it requires only the hand of a master who understands human nature to render it as interesting in the past as it is in the present. Fonblanque told me to-day that he never heard a work so universally

praised as *Pompeii*, without even one dissenting voice. 1834.
Last week, when in Suffolk, I lent my copy of it to an ÆT. 31.
ultra Tory, a most accomplished man, who occupied the chamber next to mine, and the partition was so slight that I could hear his frequent exclamations. He confessed to me that, though much fatigued from shooting, he could not lay down the book, and that he considered it to be the finest specimen of art that he has ever read—but of art always subservient to genius. Gell will be proud of the dedication, and no wonder, for it will send him direct to posterity by a railroad instead of leaving him pottering about along the by-paths and crossroads which he has mistaken for avenues to it, but which are only *culs de sac* leading to halting places on the way.

Soon after his return from Italy Bulwer wrote to Disraeli :—

HERTFORD ST., 6 *March*, 1834.

How are you, old fellow ? Well, strong and hearty, I hope. Let me know. I have returned from the South without any very great admiration for it. One is so d——d old now, one enjoys nothing. An opportunity occurs for you to be generous—and wise. *The Examiner* is in certain straits. A hundred subscribers are to agree to take it for the next ten years—paying the subscription in advance now, but on better terms, *i.e.* instead of paying £15 or £16, which they would do in ten years, they are to pay £10 *now*, and for the next ten years to have the paper *gratis*. The list is nearly full. About three or four names only are wanting. Let me advise you to send yours. It will serve a good paper, a brilliant writer, and on the whole may serve yourself. *Verb. Sap.*

P.S.—If you do subscribe send me a line to show

1834. Æt. 31. Fonblanque, avoiding, however, the appearance of conferring a favour, on the Tacitus principle, the Latin of which I forget.

He seems to have interested himself actively in the rescue of *The Examiner*, and no doubt his sympathy with the political principles of that journal was quickened by a warm regard for the personal qualities of its editor; for about the same time he writes to Lady Blessington:—

> D'Orsay has been most kind about *The Examiner*, and I am rejoiced that Lord Durham admires Fonblanque as he deserves. "Honour, wisdom, and genius"—what a combination to reconcile one to mankind! and *such* honour, such wisdom, and such genius as Fonblanque's! the three highest attributes in the highest degree!

Illustrated Annuals, Keepsakes, and Books of Beauty were the literary (or perhaps one should rather say, social) fashion of this time, and in the list of literary contributors to those ephemera may be found the names of the most eminent imaginative writers of the brief period during which they flourished. Amongst poets, Moore, Campbell, W. S. Landor, Miss Landon and Mrs. Hemans; amongst novelists Disraeli, Washington Irving, and Bulwer. The genius of Dickens and Thackeray, Tennyson and Browning, was still in the spring when the annuals were shedding their last leaves; but even by these rising favourites of a later day, their fading bloom was not altogether disdained. Lady Blessington had asked Bulwer to contribute to Heath's *Book of Beauty*, which she was then editing, and he replies as follows :— 1834. ÆT. 31.

My dear Lady Blessington—I cannot disguise from you that I have strong objections to writing for an annual, of which a principal is that in writing for one I am immediately entangled by others, who, less kind than you, conceive a refusal to *them* when not given to *all*, a special and deadly offence. . . . Another objection is that unless you *edit* a work of that nature you have all sorts of grievous remonstrances from your publisher, assuring you that you cheapen your name, and Lord knows what. And therefore, knowing that you greatly exaggerate the value of my assistance, I could have wished to be a reader of your *Book of Beauty* rather than a contributor. But the moment you seriously ask me to aid you, and gravely convince yourself that I can be of service, all objection vanishes. I owe you a constant, a generous, a forbearing kindness, which nothing can repay, but which it delights me to prove that I can at least remember. And consequently you will enroll me at once amongst your ministering *Genii of the Lamp*. You give me my choice of verse or prose—I should prefer the first—but consider well whether it would be of equal service to you. That is my sole object, and whichever the most conduces to it will be to me the most agreeable means. You can therefore consider and let me know; and lastly, pray give me all the time you can spare. To prove to you that I am a mercenary ally, let me name my reward. Will you give me one of the engravings of yourself in the *Book of Beauty*? It does not do you justice, it is true, but I should like to number it among those mementos which we keep by us as symbols at once of

1834. Æt. 31. Reality and the Ideal. . . . Alas, all inspiration dies—except that of Beauty.—Adieu, Faithfully yrs.,

E. L. Bulwer.

In another letter written to her shortly afterwards he says :—

Nothing makes me happier than the thought that I can in anything aid your objects or wishes. When shall you want the promised papers? Tell D'Orsay that I am going to dedicate to him the new edition of *Godolphin*—if he will let me.

Bulwer's first contribution to the *Book of Beauty*, in fulfilment of these promises, was the short story of "Chairolas," afterwards republished in *The Student*, which elicited from Prosper Mérimée the following letter :—

Dear Sir—I have read with infinite pleasure your philosophic tale of "Chairolas." I join here the titles of some books which you may find useful for your present researches :—

Jupiter, par Eymeric David.
Monuments inédits de l'Antiquité, par Raoul Rochette.
Musée Blacas, par Panofka.
Metafronte, par M. le duc de Luynes.
Rome au temps d'Auguste, par Dezobry.
Mémoires de Lebretonne (chez Didot).

If the second volume of Rolle appears I will send it you. Will you permit me to give you this little book[1] of mine, written a long time since, and intended for a hoax, which succeeded beyond my hopes, for though it was not read by more than a dozen amateurs of

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[1] The "little book" mentioned in this letter (which bears no other date than Thursday, 21st) was the *Guzla* (a pretended collection of Illyrian ballads), published in 1827.

couleur locale in France, it was translated into German and Russian, and gave me the glory of taking in three persons who know the Sclavonic language—Bowring, your friend, Mr. Gerrhart, a German, and Pushkin, the Russian poet. All three wrote me to ask the originals of my Illyric poems. This easy success has proved to me how exaggerated is the importance that some critics nowadays attribute to a more or less accuracy in what they call *couleur locale*, a merit of which the best authors are generally deficient.—I remain, dear Sir, Your most obliged Servant,

Prosper Mérimée.

In the business of the Parliamentary Session of 1834 Bulwer took a moderately active part. He was one of those who spoke most strongly against Sir Andrew Agnew's Bill "for the better observance of the Sabbath"—contending that Sabbatarianism has absolutely no warrant, either in Scripture or the writings of the Fathers—that it is contrary also to the early teaching of the Reformed Church in England, and no less anti-Christian in spirit than it is anti-Social in effect. On Sir Robert Heron's motion for leave to bring in a bill exempting members of Parliament from the obligation to vacate their seats when appointed to office under the Crown, he urged a proposal that Ministers of the Crown should be invested by Act of Parliament with the *ex-officio* right to sit and speak in Parliament, but not to vote unless that right were expressly conferred upon them by an act of their constituencies. In opposing a motion for the repeal of the Septennial

1834. Æt. 31. Act he expressed his abstract preference for short Parliaments, but insisted on the impolicy of disturbing the great resettlement of the Constitution effected by the Reform Bill of 1832 by frequent constitutional changes of a minor character not distinctly demanded by the practical requirements of the country.

Towards the close of May he again, in a long and elaborate speech, brought forward his motion against the stamps upon newspapers, and was beaten upon it by a majority of 32 in a division of 148. In the course of the following month (June) he spoke once more, briefly explaining the grounds on which he advocated certain reforms in the administration of the Post Office.

On the 9th of July, Lord Grey's Government was brought to an unexpected end by the indiscretion of Lord Brougham, the negotiations with O'Connell, and the misunderstandings in the Cabinet about the renewal of the Coercion Act. Bulwer must have taken in this event a personal as well as a political interest, for personally as well as politically he was warmly attached to Lord Durham, whose views on the subject of the Coercion Act were well known to be in disaccord with those of his father-in-law. But from attention to public affairs his mind was now distracted by the increasing strain of his domestic vexations, and, on the 4th of September, he wrote to Disraeli :—

A thousand thanks for your letter. I am busy in town, among books and proofs; the restless spirit having drawn me from Knebworth. I, too, have been, on the whole, idle—"much meditating," like Lord Brougham, and "little doing," like Lord Grey. I am now hovering on the wing for Ireland. I wish you would come with me, visiting Manchester, Birmingham &c., by the way. I should be delighted to visit *you* for a day or two, were it not for this plan. Better you should come with *me.* Grateful homage to your fair sister.—*Tout à vous,*

1834. ÆT. 31.

E. L. B.

This invitation seems to have been conditionally accepted, for on the 8th he wrote again :—

You enchant me. I wished to go any day at the end of this week, but you shall fix your own day, if you will come, though I trust it will not be later than Monday, this day week. I can give you a bed here for the night or two previous to our departure. *Je suis seul avec ma bonne*, as Fontenelle said.

The proposed arrangement, however, did not come off; and shortly afterwards Bulwer started for Ireland alone, taking with him letters from O'Connell.

On October 12, 1834, he wrote again to Disraeli from Limerick :—

My dear Disraeli—Now I am really going to be virtuous and friendly. I am going to write you a letter! You had no loss in Birmingham—a sort of kitchen, covered with red flock paper, a pewter substance glaringly lacquered—vulgar, Yankee, vicious all over! Yet England was once very nearly being Brummagemed into a republic. And this may still happen, though

1834. "God forefend," as Brougham and Sheridan Knowles Æt. 31. would say. The Welsh scenery is fine—the Apennines in miniature. And Dublin, with its bay, its bustling, dirty streets, its cheating, lying, filthy, clever, begging, fierce, cringing population, is Naples without its heaven. An Irish Naples—very Irish indeed! People are very civil—Government, Orangemen, and Catholics, wanting to *fêter* and patronise. But I eschew vanity and try to look at things with my own eyes, which, indeed, behold but a melancholy and despondent prospect. Property and intelligence all on one side. Ignorance, Pauperism, and the Irresistible People on the other. The course of things imperatively demands moderation, and yet moderation is but a licence for two parties to shoot—Capital! Sooner or later this must end in a Despotism or a Republic. Perhaps both. The Orangemen are the true link between the English Government and the Irish; and yet that link *must* be broken. The time is not even come when a great statesman could save Ireland—I mean, reform it. It can't support bad, and it won't appreciate good, government.

The Vale of Avoca, Wicklow, &c. are pretty-*ish*. But we, my dear fellow, have seen the moonlight on Mola di Gaeta, and sunset on the Alps. I have no longer any emotions for petty beauties. Let me know what you are writing, and all about your plans. I think of leaving this place for Spain or Paris in November. That month is not to my taste in England; and, to say truth, I am moody and have fog enough in my own thoughts.

Tell me if you have read *Pompeii*, and what you, your father, sister, and mother think of it. I hear from England that it is thought my best work. I am no judge, but fear it won't please the women. They don't appreciate elaborate plots, and artful management. They want sentiment or wit, and *Pompeii* has neither. But your candid opinion I wish for, whatever it be. Meanwhile, I propitiate the Dragon by declaring my delight at your "Elysium." It is one of the best things you ever did—original, witty, glowing, profound. You must republish it. Direct to me at Dublin, where I shall be in two or three days, being now bound to Killarney with the expectation of being horribly bored there. God bless you, *mon cher.—Tout à vous,* 1834. Æt. 31.

E. L. B.

His mother had written to him, exhorting him to struggle against his despondency, and to mix more in the lighter amusements of Society. He replied to her from Cork :—

Your advice is as excellent in itself as it is kindly meant. I will endeavour to follow it. But gaiety affords me no pleasure, it only augments my dejection. I am wearied of society, and have long found that I am least unhappy in business or in solitude. However,, I will nerve myself to take your prescription, for I feel how necessary it is for me to divert my thoughts, anyhow and anywhither, from myself and my own situation, which, from whatever point of view I look at it, is dark without one ray of comfort. Your simile of the child pursuing its ball is beautiful and true. Yet if we had *not* this habit of looking forward and deceiving ourselves with hope in one pursuit, after disappointment in another, we should soon be broken-hearted. Our pleasantest hours are spent in castle-building, and it is only by living in the future that we escape death in the present. This habit of self-deceit, therefore, is not so unwise as it seems. It is the gift of a divine benevolence, and belongs to those feelings which enable us when worn out in this world, to anchor our hopes upon the next.

1834. Æt. 31. I have been much charmed with the scenery here. For grandeur and variety, it beats anything in England. But the wretchedness of the people makes your heart ache. And yet—if an English gentleman, fond, like William, of field sports, were to invest some capital here, it is astonishing how cheap he could buy an estate and how productive he could make it. A man bought 1200 acres for £2500, and by draining it judiciously he got from it in two years an income of £1500. This speculation seems invariably successful. The commonest Irish are so kind to *strangers* that you might walk by night from one end of Ireland to another without the least molestation, even if your pockets were filled with gold. But the Parson of the Parish cannot set his foot out of his garden without a chance of being shot. All the crimes you read of are from hatred of the Church and Tithe system which is most unjust and oppressive. But I do not myself believe that the *tendency* to crimes of this sort will die out with the removal of the injustice or the oppression against which the crimes are directed. From a population to which they have become habitual lawless instincts hostile to life and property are not eradicated (they are not even appeased) by the alteration of laws which have long been established in defence of obnoxious privileges possessed by unpopular classes, or connected with unpopular forms of property. To some extent they are indirectly encouraged by every redress of grievances which follows upon a course of criminal agitation against established laws, however bad those laws may be. And this seems to me a danger which greatly complicates the whole problem—a danger so difficult to deal with, so necessary to bear in mind, and so likely to be quite lost sight of in applying even the most indispensable reforms to a country in the condition of Ireland.

You surprise me greatly by your dislike of *Emma* and the other books. They enjoy the highest reputation, and I own, for my part, I was delighted with them. I fear they must have been badly read aloud to you. Their charm is in being so natural and simple. At all events, they are generally much admired, and I was quite serious in my praise of them. I have neither read, nor written, anything since I have been in Ireland. I have had one letter from Rosina. It came the other day, and in it she speaks of your kindness in sending her fruit, game, and a beautiful shawl. God bless and keep you, prays your most grateful and affectionate son, 1834. ÆT. 31.

E. L. BULWER.

This letter was dated the 23rd of October, and on the same day he wrote to Lady Blessington :—

Your very kind letter reached me at this place yesterday evening, and I cannot tell you what pleasure I felt in my solitude, first at the sight of your handwriting, next at the praises, and above all at the sympathy—of a friend! That I feel at times thoroughly overpowered, not by any ordinary melancholy, but by a profound dejection which leaves me literally crushed and helpless, will not seem strange hereafter, when I am dead, if all I have suffered and struggled against is ever known (as then, perhaps, it may be). Yet I do not willingly yield to what I feel to be unworthy of myself, and ungrateful for the many counterbalancing blessings vouchsafed to me. I know and feel, as a prophet feels and knows, that if God spare my life and reason, I shall obtain what, when I was a boy, I made the object of my life—a career of some honour and a name that shall not die. But in the terrible gloom that gathers over me I have a thousand obstacles to over-

1834. ÆT. 31. come. In politics where I ought to have done much I have done nothing; and this year in which I meant to devote myself boldly and entirely to action, I have found it as much as I could do to preserve my senses, my resolution unimpaired,[1] and to continue to *live on.* At one time my whole constitution seemed to be giving way under the strain upon it. I felt like a man walking on ice that cracks and splits at every step. Thank God I fancy that I have now gained the land, and that slowly and gradually I am becoming myself again. Myself! What is self? A thing that changes every year and month. The self of last year has no sympathy with the self of the one before. O God, what would I not give to feel and be what I was ten years ago! But that—who can be? We must plod on, and forget that there is a past. All of us deceive ourselves in our persuasion of what destiny has in store for us. The dwarf thinks he has but to live to become a giant. My fatuity is a common and a vulgar one. But, if I did not feel a solemn conviction that I was yet to be marked among men for a token and record of my age, I should not have left the smallest consolation upon earth. As it is, I must cling to this, and as this is all I have left to cling to, my depression is not miraculous.

When you say that you also have lately been suffering from depression, I will not reply to you by the commonplace compliments addressed to common minds. Anyone can tell you that you have all the great and solid blessings of life. Anyone can remind you of admiration and adulation, and so forth. But those who seem to have most cause of happiness are often the least happy; and I can so far enter into your heart as to feel that it may be susceptible to a thousand wounds it is not for the vulgar to comprehend. Yet I implore you not to give way to the *indulgence* of sadness, however reasonable the causes of it may be. No one who has not been its victim can tell what an *awful* thing is despondency when it has grown into a habit. It then becomes a part of the mind itself. It cannot be resisted; it cannot be separated from our other thoughts; it is an element of the very air we breathe, that blackens and poisons all existence. You must resist it at the outset. And in this I rejoice that you are a woman, and that you have that wonderful versatility and self-control which only women (and of them but few) possess. Your "salon" still recalls its brilliant mistress from that melancholy "dressing-room." Ah, that dressing-room! What a cell worthy of La Trappe it often is even to *our* sex—how much more, then, to *yours*! We men force ourselves into society, but women enter it as their province. It is their field of action—their ambition, their politics, their camp, their Bar, their Parliament. And there is this difference between your individual sphere of action and mine. You go at once to conquest, and I through a wild of failures. But enough of this. All I entreat of you is not to let depression become a habit. Resist it, I repeat, at its outset. When I was a boy there were two old lines about a miller that I was always repeating. They seem to me now tenfold more philosophical than they did then, and they run thus:—

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[1] Hark! the awe-whisper'd prayer "God spare my mind!"
  Dust unto dust, the mortal to the clod;
But the high place, the altar that hath shrined
  Thine image, spare, O God!
Mind and Soul. Poems by Sir E. B. Lytton.
John Murray, 1865.

> I care for nobody, no not I,
> For nobody cares for me.

This is the great elixir, the alchemist's stone of life—if we can but attain to it! To generous minds there is no sorrow but what comes to them from their

1834. connection *with others.* We might be restless, but we
Æt. 31. should never be miserable, if we did not give other people the power to make us so. Our affections are our curses. The only wisdom is to "care for nobody." Our misfortune is that, when disappointed in one place, we fly to another ; we have not the courage to be alone. Once disappointed, we ought to be wiser. "Love nobody, care for nobody." That is the rule I strive to make mine ; and I have felt happier ever since I have found myself growing into a shellfish. In a few years I shall be as hard as an oyster, and laugh with a robust geniality at those who talk of unhappiness.

And now from all this "Entymosay," as poor Byron spelt or called it, to the real world.

My first impressions of Ireland remain unchanged. Juvenal is said to have been one of those who, viewing mankind, "laughed and hated." I, viewing the Irish, love and despise. They have qualities that win affection but never esteem. You cannot depend upon them. They are a people wholly unlike the English, and yet the English are to legislate for them. They are not to be legislated for at all upon abstract principles. They are to be curbed and humoured, but both honestly. The Irish are clever children to whom you must teach elementary morals ; tell them not to lie, and, as a first step, never lie to them yourselves. They are not grown men like the English.

I am enchanted that you like *Pompeii.* It is no great favourite of mine. I could not be egotistical enough in it, and while I wrote it I was longing for a confessional. Its merit is perhaps in its *art* ; and it is to this rather than to what is called genius that I owe whatever success I obtain. People often say to me "I shall write a novel." If I ask "On what rules ?" they stare. They know of no rules. They write History, Epic, the Drama, Criticism, by rules ; and for the

Novel, which comprises all four, they have no rules. 1834. What wonder that there is so much talent *manqué* in ÆT. 31. half the novels we read? In fact we ought to do as the sculptors do—gaze upon all the great masterpieces of our art till they sink into us, and we are penetrated by the secret of them. Then, and not till then, we write according to rules without being quite aware of it. You say nothing of your own novel, nor of the *Book of Beauty*. I hope they are both forthcoming. . . .

Only think of burning down the two Houses! I am so delighted. We shall now be able to breathe, I hope. Will they give us Buckingham Palace? I leave for Dublin in a few hours, and there I shall probably take up my abode with Littleton[1] who has pressed it on me with a most unwhiggish cordiality. How do people like Henry's book?[2] I have been enchanted with the Upper Lake of Killarney, and a place called Glengariffe; and I think I never saw a country which Nature more meant to be great. It is thoroughly classical, and will have its day yet. But man must change first.

This letter, my dear friend, at least all of it that relates to myself, is for *your* eyes only. I do not wish, beggar-like, to gain compassion by exposing my sores. That is a grand and a true saying of yours, "*There are so few before whom one would condescend to appear otherwise than happy.*" Bright heroism of a woman! It echoes all my wish, but exceeds all my power. Adieu! —Ever admiringly and truly,

E. L. B.

Lady Blessington, in her reply to Bulwer's inquiry about the Houses of Parliament (which

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[1] The Ex-Chief Secretary for Ireland.

[2] *The Monarchy of the Middle Classes in France*, by Henry Lytton Bulwer.

1834. were destroyed by fire on October 16, 1834),
ÆT. 31. mentions, as a characteristic anecdote of Hume, that in the midst of the confusion caused by the conflagration "when the pioneers of the Guards were called to the scene, he exclaimed, 'There ought to be ten pioneers to each regiment, and I see only eight. How is this, Lord Hill?'" Her letters to him at this time also make allusion to some accident having happened to him in the course of a pedestrian or equestrian excursion about the Irish lakes, but no mention of it is to be found in his own letters.

One personal incident, however, of his experiences in Ireland seems to have impressed him as a pleasing trait of Irish character, for he often referred to it in after years when speaking of the Irish peasantry. The scene was described by him at the time in the following words:—

> The Irish people have in them a vein of sentiment different from any we find in the English. I remember that in the days when I acted with the O'Connell Party I was staying at an hotel some little distance from Dublin, and, wanting a pastime for the evening, I hired a famous piper to pipe to me. It was a sultry evening, and I strolled on to my balcony for a breath of air, but quickly returned, for there I met a sight that astonished me. The green plain stretching wide beneath my window, had become black with masses of human beings, waves upon waves of them silently heaving from end to end of it, a real black sea.
>
> "What is the meaning of this?" said I to my piper.
>
> "Oh, they have all assembled to get a sight of you."
>
> "How can I can get rid of them?"

"You must do something to please them. Make them a speech, or something of that sort." 1834. Æt. 31.

"I am not at all disposed to speechify to this unexpected multitude, but to please them and get rid of them I must. In England it would be beer to drink my health in, but beer for all these would be a serious affair."

"Allow me to suggest a course," said the piper.

"Well, what's your suggestion?"

"Offer them their choice between the beer and a tune from me."

"Pooh! as if the choice were not a foregone conclusion!"

"Never mind. Try."

I took his advice, addressed the crowd from the balcony, and thanking them for the compliment of their presence, ended by offering them the beer or the tune as a finale.

At once they chose—the tune! And, after listening to it with intense attention, they dispersed as noiselessly as they had collected. This silent gathering and silent dispersion was very impressive.

Bulwer, writing to Disraeli just after his arrival in Ireland, had talked about passing the winter in Spain. But in the autumn of this year he was unexpectedly recalled to England by another change of Ministry, followed by a dissolution of Parliament; and with renewed interest in public life he threw himself into a struggle which threatened the discomfiture of his political friends as well as his political principles. Of those friends Lord Durham was the chief. Lady Blessington had written to him on October 15:—

1834. Æt. 31. Lord Durham is becoming every day more popular. It is in agitation here to give him a public dinner before the meeting of Parliament, and to ask you to preside at it.

To which he had replied :—

All here seem as much impressed with the shadow of Lord Durham's coming premiership as you are in England. Certainly they ought to give him a dinner in London, and, wherever I may be, I will come to attend it. But they should not ask *me* to preside at it. There are a thousand more worthy. Mulgrave, if he had not been in office, would have been the man. As it is, I think Sir Henry Parnell would be the best. They ought *not* to select any City or Metropolitan Member, for then it would appear too local and *commercial*, and Lord Durham should carefully avoid committing himself about the Corn Laws or against the Agricultural Interest. But this to ourselves. He ought certainly to have the dinner, and it matters not a rush whom they choose for president, so long as his name is known. For even if they set up a man of straw, the room would be equally crowded, and with persons equally respectable. Durham has written his horoscope on the people's heart, and they only want the occasion to tell him of his destiny.

This was after the famous banquet given to Lord Grey at Edinburgh, on September 15, which had been the occasion of an historical quarrel between Lord Brougham and Lord Durham. In that quarrel Edward Bulwer's sympathies went with Lord Durham, as indeed is shown by the letter I have quoted, as well as by two which in the autumn of the following year were addressed to him by Lord Brougham. 1834. Æt. 31.

The first of these, after referring to a misunderstanding which had risen between them on the subject of a recent literary criticism, continues:—

> The reason why I am anxious to give you this explanation is the sense I have of the want of proper feeling which any such commentaries on your works would betoken, after the kindness I experienced from you last winter and the equally kind manner in which you always were pleased to speak of my conduct while you conducted a periodical publication.

This letter was followed, ten days later, by another, in which he said:—

> I hope you will excuse me for offering you a suggestion which I think of use to the cause we both have so much at heart. I mean that of Liberal principles. I never imagined that your remarks in your book (respecting which I wrote to you ten days ago) would have given rise to any newspaper observations. I find, however, that they are doing so, and that we are represented to have been quarrelling. Now to quarrel there must be two parties, and I certainly have none with you for saying what you thought of my speeches and books. Indeed, were I to take that opinion ill, in which for aught I know most men concur, I might be like a pirate whom the lawyers call *hostis humani generis*. But nothing *can* be more hurtful to the Liberal Party than the notion getting abroad of their being divided among themselves. I *know* that Lord Durham's unaccountable attacks on me last autumn were represented as a controversy between him

> 1834. Æt. 31. and me, and had a very great effect in causing the change of Government which has proved so prejudicial to our party by giving the Tories a body of 300 instead of 120. It behoves us to avoid carefully a repetition of the same error, and I therefore strongly recommend to you that it should be made known in all quarters that there are no *hostilities* between us—the expression I observe used in the papers.

Whether the controversy between Lord Durham and the Lord Chancellor did or did not, as Lord Brougham alleges in this letter, produce the downfall of the Melbourne Ministry, it certainly preceded that event very closely. The object of the public dinner spoken of in Lady Blessington's letter to Bulwer was to give Lord Durham a marked manifestation of the extent to which the sympathy of his political friends and followers had been increased by the charges made against him by Lord Brougham after the Edinburgh banquet. The dinner, however, did not take place in London, but at Glasgow on the 29th of October. Lord Brougham had challenged Lord Durham to meet him in the House of Lords on the subject of the dispute between them, and Lord Durham replied on this occasion :—

> I know well the meaning of the taunt. He is aware of his infinite superiority over me in one respect, and so am I. He is a practised orator, and a powerful debater. I am not. I speak but seldom in Parliament, and always with reluctance in an assembly where I meet with no sympathy from an unwilling majority. He knows

full well the advantage which he has over me, and he knows, too, that in any attack which he may make upon me in the House of Lords, he will be warmly and cordially supported by them. With all these manifold advantages, almost overwhelming, I fear him not, and I will meet him there if it be unfortunately necessary to repeat what he is pleased to term my criticisms.

It has been suggested[1] that the action of the King in dismissing the Ministry at this time, was dictated by a desire to put a stop to this personal squabble, and by feelings of alarm at the popular enthusiasm which it had concentrated round Lord Durham. There is little evidence to support such a view ; but whether or not the quarrel between Lord Brougham and Lord Durham had any influence upon the King's mind there were other and deeper causes to account for his action at this time.

In the fragment of a memorandum made for a part of his Autobiography, which was never written, Bulwer says that the fervour which carried the Reform Bill of 1832 completely confused the political ideas of the young Reformers of his generation. This was natural enough. The political change inaugurated by that measure was preceded and produced by an immense social, intellectual, and industrial change ; and this change in the character of the community had till then no expression in the constitution of Parliament. Consequently the great bulk of the community was discontented

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[1] By Miss Martineau in her *History of The Thirty Years' Peace.*

1834. Æt. 31. with the existing House of Commons, and eager for its reform. But the temporary fusion of so many different social and intellectual interests in the support of one political measure, necessarily involved a corresponding confusion of political ideas and aims on the part of its supporters. Thus a momentous and irrevocable change in the constitution of the country was decreed with uncommon unanimity, and enforced with great pertinacity by persons who were by no means agreed amongst themselves as to the results to be expected, or even to be desired, from the consummation of it.

The majority of its supporters regarded the Reform Bill of 1832 as a means rather than an end ; and it was as a leverage for the acceleration of further reforms that they chiefly prized it. Not so the responsible authors of the Bill. Lord Grey and his colleagues might reasonably have reckoned, and probably did reckon, on the change which they had effected in the size and character of the electorate to keep the Whigs in office for many years to come ; but it is certain that they did not anticipate the full extent to which it would render the power of the Whig Party dependent on concessions to the growing demands of their Radical allies. Writing to Lord Durham at the beginning of 1835, Bulwer said of the new Parliament :—

> It will be a very ticklish one for the Whigs as well as for the Tories. For the Whigs will be far less powerful than before, and must take up with the move-

ment, or gently amalgamate themselves with the Tories, in order to stand. Yet I am not sure that many of the Whigs feel this. At Lord Holland's the other day one or two of the old set were saying that "when they had beaten the Tories, there might be some difficulty in handsomely getting rid of the Radicals"—(by which designation they mean, I suppose, everyone who sees an inch further than they do). "Not at all," said the old lady, "the Radicals have behaved very well. They are now thoroughly convinced of their former impatience etc., etc., only want to return exactly the same men, and will give them more indulgence in future as to their measures."—I fancy this is a general supposition amongst them, but they are much mistaken. 1834. Æt. 31.

Like the wizard who could not dismiss the spirit he had raised, the Whig Cabinet of 1833 was alarmed by the strength and vehemence of the immense power it had suddenly acquired. It was conscientiously unwilling to employ that power in furtherance of the purposes for which it had been bestowed. Perceiving this, and not liking to be "handsomely got rid of," the Radicals denounced its inactivity. The Tories hated and opposed it. Its popularity rapidly evaporated. As enthusiasm chilled in the country, a divergence of aims, hitherto suspended or concealed, began to reveal its existence in the ranks of the Cabinet itself. The King, mistaking the unpopularity of his Ministers for a popular reaction against reform, turned more and more against them, and waited for an opportunity to exchange them for other advisers. This opportunity was provided by the death of Lord

1833-1834. Spencer and the consequent transference of Lord Æt. 30-31. Althorp to the House of Lords. William IV. thereupon bluntly informed Lord Melbourne that the Cabinet no longer enjoyed his confidence. Destroyed at last by the work of its own hands, after a short, uneasy life, the great Reform Government, which two years previously had come into existence with unprecedented popularity, was ungratefully deserted by the people, and ignominiously dismissed by the King.

On the advice of the Duke of Wellington, who, in the meantime, held all the offices of State in his own hands, Sir Robert Peel was summoned back from Rome to form an Administration. The political crisis thus precipitated, and the prospect of an early General Election, obliged Bulwer to abandon his projected journey to Spain and to hurry back from Ireland, in order to meet his constituents at Lincoln.

CHAPTER VII

THE CRISIS

1834

> We are standing on a present, surrounded by fearful warnings from the past. The dismissal of a Ministry too liberal for a King—too little liberal for the people, is to be found a common event in the stormiest pages of human history. It is like the parting with a common mediator, and leaves the two extremes to their own battle.
>
> *Letter to a late Cabinet Minister.*

EDWARD BULWER was not altogether exempt 1834. himself from that confusion of ideas which he ÆT. 31. attributed to the Reform movement of 1832, and he was consequently one of many to whom subsequent experience and reflection gradually revealed the incompatible character of some of the political tendencies and opinions of the party with whom he was associated in early life. At the time when he first entered Parliament he was totally opposed to the Toryism of the day—but, unconnected with any of the great Whig houses, proud, shy, sensitive, and impatient of the somewhat supercilious patronage bestowed by them on all Liberals who were not of their own set, it was to the ranks of the Radical Party that he found himself attracted. Like the other

1834. members of it he regarded the Reform Bill as an Æt. 31. instrument to be used for further reforms—not of the Constitution, for to further constitutional reform he was opposed, but of an administrative character, and he co-operated with them in urging these reforms upon the more cautious and hesitating Ministry.

When he arrived in London from Ireland in the midst of the crisis of November, 1834, he found the political situation the chief topic of discussion. The Whigs were in consternation, and the Radicals strongly excited. Great doubts were apparently entertained as to whether Sir Robert Peel would venture upon the task he was asked to undertake. Some of the late Ministers were sanguine that he would not; but all felt that if he did not decline it, his first step would be to dissolve Parliament. In that case the General Election would be preceded by a Tory manifesto, which, if skilfully framed, might be effective with many of the constituencies where the late Government had become unpopular. The great danger anticipated by the Whigs was that a Peel Cabinet might receive support from genuine Reformers, which would thus give some guarantee to leading Liberals that the new Government would not be of a very reactionary character.

Bulwer was not long in making up his mind as to what he himself should do in this crisis. Although he shared the dissatisfaction felt by the Radicals with the want of reforming zeal which they attributed to the Melbourne Administration, he was nevertheless convinced that the cause of the Whigs was still identified with that of Radical principles, and that those principles were menaced by the prospect of a Tory Administration, if such Administration were supported by the people as well as by the Crown. For the Whigs personally he had little liking, but he resolved that their case should be effectively stated to the public before the General Election took place, and he forthwith wrote for immediate publication in pamphlet form a *Letter to a Late Cabinet Minister on the present Crisis.* 1834. Æt. 31.

This pamphlet, published by Messrs. Saunders & Otley on the 21st November, 1834, was written in two days, though up to its 4th edition it continued to receive corrections. Its success was immediate and unprecedented. No fewer than twenty-one editions of it were sold in six weeks. Copious extracts from it were published in all the provincial papers. It elicited ten published answers, and its most telling points formed the basis of most of the speeches and addresses of the Whig candidates during the General Election, which followed shortly after its publication. The rapidity and extent of its circulation, as well as the influence which it exercised at the moment, were unique. Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution* is said to have had a circulation exceeding that of all political pamphlets published before or since. But Burke's pamphlet, though of incomparably

1834. higher merit, was more than a year in reaching
ÆT. 31. the sale attained by Bulwer's in a month.[1]

"It was all luck," said Bulwer, "for it had no particular merit." The particular merit of this pamphlet, however, lay in the promptitude and completeness with which it met the requirements of the situation. It appreciably influenced opinion at a critical moment, and rendered to the Whigs a service which was warmly acknowledged by Lord Melbourne after his return to office.[2]

Political polemics, when the occasion for them has passed away, are rather profitless reading; but, owing to the importance of this pamphlet, I think it worth while to give a few extracts from it here, as an indication of its character, and as evidence of Bulwer's political opinions at this period. It may be read in full in his collected works.[3]

The main object of the pamphlet was to impress the electors with the fact that the issues which had been raised in the great Reform struggle of two years before, were still at stake. The late Government had fallen out of favour, not because it had gone too far, but because it had not gone far enough; because it had not made sufficient use of the powers which the new electorate had given to it. Rumours were afloat that, if the Tories were to win the coming election, the new Ministry would include a number of moderate Reformers and undertake a progressive policy. This theory, which was being assiduously circulated in the constituencies, strengthened the chances of the Tories winning the election. Bulwer, therefore, set himself to dispel it, and to prove that those who were responsible for passing the Reform Bill, were the only people who could be entrusted to carry out a Reform policy. 1834. ÆT. 31.

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[1] In a letter written much later, Bulwer says: "The largest sale I ever had for anything I ever wrote on its first publication, was a political pamphlet called 'The Crisis'—now dead and out of print. It sold in a dear form nearly 30,000 copies in 6 weeks, and about 60,000 more in a cheap form afterwards."

[2] Writing to Forster on January 18, 1841, he says: "More than 12 Members in the Peel Parliament told me they owed their seats to my pamphlet. If this be true, but for that pamphlet the Tories would have gained the majority and the Liberal Party would now be in opposition."

[3] *Pamphlets and Sketches.* Knebworth Edition. Routledge.

The pamphlet begins by explaining the cause of the crisis, and the issue which the electors would have to decide:—

> The King has dissolved Lord Melbourne's Administration, and the Duke of Wellington is at the head of affairs. Who will be his colleagues is a question that admits of no speculation. We are as certain of the list as if it were already in the *Gazette*. It is amusing to see the now ministerial journals giving out that we are not on any account to suppose that it must necessarily be a high Conservative Cabinet. God forbid so rash a conjecture! "Who knows," say they, "but what many Whigs—many Liberals, will be a part of it! We are only waiting for Sir Robert Peel, in order to show you, perhaps, that the Government will—not be Tory!"
>
> So then, after all the Tory abuse of the Whigs—after all the assertions of their unpopularity, it is nevertheless convenient to insinuate that some of these most abominable men may yet chequer and relieve the

1834. Æt. 31. too expectant and idolatrous adoration with which the people would be imbued for a Cabinet purely Conservative. . . .

The hypothesis may be convenient—but, unhappily, no one accepts it. Every man in the political world who sees an inch before his nose, is aware that though his Grace may have an option with respect to measures, he has none with respect to men. He may filch away the Whig policy, but he cannot steal the Whigs themselves without their consent. And the fact is notorious, that there is not a single man of liberal politics—a single man, who either belonged to the late Government, or has supported popular measures, who will take office under the Duke of Wellington, charm he never so wisely. . . .

Having shown how a conflict between the two Houses was inevitable on the subject of the Irish Church, and how the King had taken the earliest decorous opportunity of preventing the collision, "not by gaining the Lords, but by dismissing the Commons," a highly satirical and amusing description follows of the actual circumstance which had precipitated the crisis :—

Supposing then the King, from such evident reasons, to have resolved to get rid of his Ministers at the first opportunity — suddenly Lord Spencer dies, and the opportunity is afforded. There might have been a better one. Throughout the whole history of England, since the principles of a constitutional Government, and of a responsible administration, were established in 1688, there is no parallel to the combination of circumstances attendant upon the present change. A parallel to a part of the case there may be; to the whole case, there is none. The Cabinet assure the King of their power and willingness to carry on the government ; the 1834. House of Commons, but recently elected, supports that Æt. 31. Cabinet by the most decided majorities ; the Premier, not forced on the King by a party, but solicited by himself to accept office ; a time of profound repose ; no resignation tendered, no defeat incurred—the revenue increasing—quiet at home—peace abroad ; the political atmosphere perfectly serene :—when lo, there dies a very old man, whose death everyone has been long foreseeing —not a minister, but the father of a minister, which removes, not the Premier, but the Chancellor of the Exchequer, from the House of Commons to the House of Lords ! An event so long anticipated, does not confound the Cabinet. The Premier is not aghast, he cannot be taken by surprise by an event so natural and so anticipated (for very old men *will* die !) ; he is provided with names to fill up the vacant posts of Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Leader of the House of Commons. He both feels and declares himself equally strong as ever ; he submits his new appointments to his Majesty. Let me imagine the reply. The King, we are informed by the new ministerial organs, expresses the utmost satisfaction at Lord Melbourne and his Government ; he considers him the most honourable of men, and among the wisest of statesmen. Addressing him, then, after this fashion :—

> He does not affect to dissemble his love,
> And *therefore* he kicks him downstairs.

"My Lord—You are an excellent man, very—but old Lord Spencer—he was a man seventy-six years old ; no one could suppose that at that age, an Earl would die ! You are an admirable minister, I am pleased with your measures ; but old Lord Spencer is no more. It is a sudden, an unforeseen event. Who could

1834. imagine he would only live to seventy-six? The revenue
Æt. 31. is prospering, the Cabinet is strong—our allies are faithful, you have the House of Commons at your back, but alas! Lord Spencer is dead! You cannot doubt my attachment to Reform, but of course it depended on the life of Lord Spencer? You have lost a Chancellor of the Exchequer; you say you can supply his place—but who can supply the place of the late Lord Spencer? You have lost a leader of the House of Commons; you have found another on whom you can depend; but, my Lord, where shall we find another Earl Spencer, so aged, and so important as the Earl who is gone! The life of the government, you are perfectly aware, was an annuity on the life of this unfortunate nobleman—he was only seventy-six! my love of liberal men, and liberal measures, is exceeding, and it was bound by the strongest tie,—the life of the late Lord Spencer. How can my people want Reform, now Lord Spencer is dead? How can I support reforming ministers, when Lord Spencer has ceased to be? The Duke of Wellington, you must be perfectly aware, is the only man to govern the country, which has just lost the owner of so fine a library, and so large an estate. It is true that his Grace could not govern it before, but then Lord Spencer was in the way! The untimely decease of that nobleman has altered the whole face of affairs. The people were not quite contented with the Whigs, because they did not go far enough, but then—Lord Spencer was alive! The people now will be satisfied with the Tories, because they do not go so far, for—Lord Spencer is dead! A Tory ministry is necessary, it cannot get on without a Tory Parliament; and a Tory Parliament cannot be chosen without a Tory people. But, Ministry, Parliament, and people, what can they be but Tory, after so awful a dispensation of Providence as the death of the Earl of Spencer?

My Lord, excuse my tears, and do me the favour to take this letter to the Duke of Wellington." 1834. ÆT. 31.

Well, but it may be said, that it was not the death of this good old man that so affected the King's arrangements; it was the removal of Lord Althorp from the Commons. "What, is not that cause enough?" cry the Tories. About as much cause as the one just assigned. "What, did not Lord Melbourne himself say, at the retirement of Lord Grey, that the return of Lord Althorp was indispensably necessary to his taking office?" Very possibly. But there is this little difference between the two cases; in the one, Lord Melbourne said he could not carry on the Government without Lord Althorp as leader of the Commons, and in the other he assured the King that he could. The circumstances at the time which broke up Lord Grey's Government, were such as raised the usual importance of Lord Althorp to a degree which everyone saw must subside with the circumstances themselves. . . . But what circumstances in the late changes are analogous to these? Is Lord Althorp now removed from office by popular sentiments, which rendered his return necessary for the triumph of his sentiments—not the use of his talents! Is the Cabinet broken up? Is the House of Commons declaring that not even death shall tear it from its beloved leader? What absurdity to follow out the parallel! Lord Althorp was called by the death of his venerable father to the House of Lords. His loss created no alarm for an alteration in our policy, broke up no Cabinet, and disturbed no measures; the Prime Minister was perfectly resigned to the event, and perfectly prepared with his successor—a successor of the same principles, and if of less conciliatory manners, of equal experience, more comprehensive knowledge, and greater eloquence. The King has a right to exercise his prerogative—no one disputes it. It is only

1834. Æt. 31. a misfortune that other Ministers have not also fathers of seventy-six! Old Sir Robert, good Lord Mornington—would that *they* were alive!

Bulwer next proceeded to scout the idea that, because the Duke of Wellington had accepted Catholic Emancipation, he might change all his other opinions and champion the cause of reform:—

> Even were I able to persuade myself that the new Tory Government would rival or outbid the Whigs in popular measures, I would not support it. I might vote for their measures, but I would still attempt to remove the men. What! is there nothing at which an honest and a generous people should revolt, in the spectacle of Ministers suddenly turned traitors by the bribe of office—in the juggling by which men, opposing all measures of reform when out of place, will, the very next month, carry those measures if place depends upon it? . . .
>
> I do not think so meanly of the high heart of England as to suppose that it would approve, even of good measures, from motives so shamelessly corrupt. And, for my own part, solemnly as I consider a thorough redress of her "monster grievances" necessary for the peace of Ireland, a reform of our own Church, and our own Corporations, and a thorough carrying out and consummation of the principles of our reform, desirable for the security and prosperity of England, I should consider these blessings purchased at too extravagant a rate, if the price were the degradation of public men—and the undying contempt for consistency, faith and honour—for all that makes power sacred, and dignity of moral weight—which such an apostasy would evince. Never was liberty permanently served by the sacrifice of honesty. . . .

Then follows a reference to the late Administration :— 1834. ÆT. 31.

And now, my Lord, before I speak of what ought to be, and I am convinced will be, the conduct of the people, who are about to be made the judge of the question at issue, let me say a few words upon the Cabinet that is no more. I am not writing a panegyric on the Whigs—I leave that to men who wore their uniform and owned their leaders. I have never done so. In the palmiest days of their power, I stooped not the knee to them. By vote, pen and speech, I have humbly but honestly asserted my own independence; and I had my reward in the sarcasms and the depreciation of that party which seemed likely for the next quarter of a century to be the sole dispensers of the ordinary prizes of ambition. No matter, I wanted not their favours, and could console myself for the thousand little obstacles by which a powerful party can obstruct the Parliamentary progress of one who will not adopt their errors. I do not write the panegyric of the Whigs; and though I am not one of those who can be louder in vituperation when the power is over, than in warning before the offence is done, I have not, I own, the misplaced generosity to laud now the errors which I have always lamented. It cannot be denied, my Lord, or at least I cannot deny it, that the Whig Government disappointed the people. And by the Whig Government I refer to that of my Lord Grey. Not so much because it did not go far enough, as with some ill-judged partizans is contended, but rather because it went too far. It went too far, my Lord, when its first act was to place Sir Charles Sutton in the Speaker's chair—it went too far when it passed the Coercion Bill—it went too far when it defended Sinecures—it went too far when it marched its army to protect the Pension list. It might have denied many popular changes—if it had not defended and enforced unpopular measures. It could not do all that the people expected, but where was the necessity of doing what the people never dreamt of? Some might have regretted when it was solely Whig—but how many were disgusted when it seemed three parts Tory! Nor was this all—much that it did was badly done; there was a want of practical knowledge in the principle and the details of many of its measures—it often blundered and it often bungled. But these were the faults of a past Cabinet. The Cabinet of Lord Melbourne had not been tried. There was a vast difference between the two administrations, and that difference was this—in the one the more liberal party was the minority, in the other it was the majority. . . .

. . . With Lord Melbourne himself it was my lot in early youth to be brought in contact, and, though our acquaintance has now altogether ceased (for I am not one who seeks to refresh the memories of men in proportion as they become great), I still retain a lively impression of his profundity as a scholar—of his enthusiasm at generous sentiments—and of that happy frame of mind he so peculiarly possesses, and of which the stuff of Statesmen is best made, at once practical and philosophical, large enough to conceive principles—close enough to bring them to effect. Could we disentangle and remove ourselves from the present, could we fancy ourselves in a future age, it might possibly be thus that an historian would describe him :—"Few persons could have been selected by a king, as Prime Minister, in those days of violent party, and of constant change, who were more fitted by nature and circumstances to act with the people, but for the King. A Politician probably less ardent than sagacious, he was exactly the man to conform to the genius of a particular time;—to know how far to go with prudence—where to stop with success; not vehement in temper, not inordinate in ambition, he was not likely to be hurried away by private objects, affections, or resentments. To the moment of his elevation as Premier, it can scarcely be said of his political life that it affords one example of imprudence. 'Not to commit himself,' was at one time supposed to be his particular distinction. His philosophy was less that which deals with abstract doctrines than that which teaches how to command shifting and various circumstances. He seldom preceded his time, and never stopped short of it. Add to this, that with a searching knowledge of mankind, he may have sought to lead, but never to deceive them. His was the high English statesmanship which had not recourse to wiles or artifice. He was one whom a king might have trusted, for he was not prone to deceive himself, and he would not deceive another. His judgment wary—his honour impregnable. Such was the minister who, if not altogether that which the people would have selected, seems precisely that which a king would have studied to preserve. He would not have led, as a more bold and vigorous genius, Lord Durham, equally able, equally honest, with perhaps a yet deeper philosophy, the result of a more masculine and homely knowledge of mankind, and a more prophetic vision of the spirit of the age, might have done; he would not have *led* the People to good government, but he would have marched with them side by side."

1834.
Æt. 31.

Such, I believe, will be the outline of the character Lord Melbourne will bequeath to a calmer and more remote time. And this is not my belief alone. I observe that most of those independent members who had been gradually detached from the Cabinet of Lord

1834. Æt. 31. Grey, looked with hope and friendly dispositions to that of his successor. In most of the recent public meetings and public dinners where the former Cabinet was freely blamed, there was a willingness to trust the later one. And even those who would have wreaked on the Government their suspicions of the Chancellor were deterred by Lord Durham's honest eulogium on the Premier.

The pamphlet concluded with a vigorous appeal to the electors to stand by the men who were fighting the popular cause. Foreign and Colonial politics, Irish and domestic questions, were all reviewed in turn, and the policies of the two parties contrasted. Between the two there should be no hesitation which to support:—

> It is madness itself in you, who have now the option of confirming or rejecting the Duke of Wellington's government, to hesitate in your choice. They tell you to try the men; have you not tried them before? Has not the work of reform been solely to undo what they have done? If your late government could not proceed more vigorously, *who opposed* them?
>
> Recollect that it is not for measures which you can foresee that caution is necessary, it is for measures that you *cannot* foresee; it is not for what the Duke may profess to do, but for what he may dare to do, that you must not put yourselves under his command. . . .
>
> Remember that you are not fighting the battle between Whigs and Tories; if the Whigs return to office, they must be more than Whigs; you are now fighting for things, not men—for the real consequence of your reform. In your last election your gratitude made you fight too much for names; it was enough for your candidates to have served Lord Grey; you must

now return those who will serve the people. If you are lukewarm, if you are indifferent, if you succumb, you will deserve the worst. But if you exert yourselves once more, with the same honesty, the same zeal, the same firm and enlightened virtue as two years ago ensured your triumph, wherever, both now and henceforth, men honour faith or sympathise with liberty, there will be those who will record your struggle, and rejoice in its success. . . .

And, my Lord, that the conduct and the victory of our countrymen will be, as they have been, the one firm and temperate, the other honourable and assured, I do, from my soul, believe. Two years may abundantly suffice to wreck a Government, or convert a King—but scarcely to change a People!

The Cabinet Minister to whom the pamphlet was addressed was Lord Mulgrave, afterwards the Marquis of Normanby,[1] who had been Privy Seal in the Melbourne Administration. It was submitted to him in proof before publication and was acknowledged in the following words:—

Your sheets arrived at an hour when I was almost thinking of taking to my own, but I have since read through the brochure with the most sincere and unaffected admiration. It is not merely the talent of the writing, for to that from you we are accustomed, but the discretion with which so delicate a topic is handled,

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[1] Bulwer endorsed his correspondence with Lord Mulgrave as follows: "He had graceful accomplishments, real cleverness, knowledge of the world, good nature, and exquisite high breeding. But there was about him a certain something which created a general opinion that he was rather frivolous and very artificial. I do not believe that he was the last."

1834. Æt. 31. the kindness with which past errors are touched in consideration of general good, and the tempered steadiness with which the future is sketched.

The statement in the pamphlet that Lord Melbourne had informed the King of his ability to dispense with Lord Althorp's leadership of the Commons was challenged ; and Lord Mulgrave, to whom Bulwer referred the matter, replied :—

As to the first question, as it happened before I was a member of the Government, I may say that my impression has *always* been that Melbourne told the King upon first being required to form a Government that he considered the continuance of Althorp as leader in the House of Commons essential to the stability of the Government. The requisition and the motion to which you allude having induced A. to consent, I do not conceive that the question ever arose as to what would have been done had he pertinaciously refused. As to the present moment, there was not for an instant the slightest hesitation on Melbourne's part as to his ability to carry on the business with his remaining colleagues, relying on the measures we were preparing (and which were already far advanced) for the support of the Commons and the confidence of the people. You will see at once, even supposing the first assertion to be true, which I do not believe it to be, that it is a very different thing to undertake the Government with the support and services of an important colleague voluntarily and ostensibly withdrawn, and to continue it when he is withdrawn by fate. We none of us had a doubt on the subject. I was delighted with what you say of Melbourne. He well deserves it, and (after your whispered confidence to me) it will be appreciated by his noble nature.

"The whispered confidence" had reference to a matter in which Bulwer thought himself slighted by the Premier. 1834. ÆT. 31.

The pamphlet elicited from Lord Melbourne himself the following characteristic letters:—

Lord Melbourne to Edward Bulwer.

MELBOURNE, 28 *Nov.* 1834.

MY DEAR BULWER—I thank you much for your pamphlet. I have not yet had time to read it through, but I have naturally turned to that part of it which relates personally to myself, and my friends must be kind and partial indeed if, as you expect, they are dissatisfied with what you have said of me. You must be sufficiently acquainted with me to know that I despise flattery and detest exaggeration, and that I prize nothing so highly as the temperate expression of real opinion. I am sorry to learn that you think yourself in any respect aggrieved with respect to the correspondence which took place between us, I believe now more than three years ago. . . . I think you give way a little to those thick-coming fancies to which poets and men of genius are generally subject, and against which, by the way, they should be unceasingly upon their guard, when you say that the leaders of the Ministerial Party sometimes misrepresented, and always depreciated, you. I am not aware of anything of the kind. You often condemned us in debate and voted against us in divisions; a conduct which no Ministry likes, and which certainly does not lead their partizans to take the most favourable view either of the talents or the character of him who pursues it. For myself, I am sure you will admit that I was one of the first to perceive and recognise those powers which have since displayed themselves so conspicuously. I can assure you that

1834. Æt. 31. I have observed their development with the greatest pleasure and satisfaction, and that I gratefully feel how opportune and disinterested has been their exertion upon the present occasion.—Believe me, my dear Bulwer, Yours faithfully,

Melbourne.

The same to the same.

Decr. 12, 1834.

Nobody appreciates the talent of *The Examiner* more than I do, and I daresay you are right in holding its influence to be more extensive than its circulation. What Mr. Fonblanque says of union and unity is all very well, but how long is the alliance to continue? Is it intended to last only until the Tories are out of office, and then to be broken up and succeeded by the most bitter hostility against the new Ministry, whatever it may be? They have overthrown us by their violence, and by hurrying us along too far and too fast; and now, when the battle is lost, they talk of union! Pray tell Mr. Fonblanque from me that a little steady support of a Minister, when he is in office, is worth a ream of panegyric after he has retired from it. By steady support I mean support in difficult emergencies and upon unpopular questions. Support upon popular questions is not worth a d—n. Those will support themselves. Here is some philosophy for you, though I am not *à la profondeur ni à la hauteur de Lord Durham.*

To Lord Durham's congratulations on the success of the pamphlet he replied :—

Praise from Sir Hubert Stanley!—ahem! you know the rest. Seriously, though, your Lordship owes me a little, for it was all but a miracle that my pamphlet did not perish by fire, and through *you*. I was just correcting it for the press when your Newcastle speech arrived, and you had said in so masterly a manner all that I had put forth at greater length, that I was tempted to destroy it. The part you have taken at this moment is worthy of you. It will maintain and justify the enthusiasm you have created. 1834. ÆT. 31.

To a letter from Lady Blessington he replied :—

I cannot say how kind I feel it was in you to send me so agreeable a note. How *unlike* a friend! Lord Durham wrote me a line last night praising *The Crisis*. When *he* likes it I feel the pleasure of esteem. When the mere Whigs praise it, I only feel that they entitle me to say to them—"When you were up in the world you abused me; now you are down I can give you a lift." And that I suppose is the common vengeance of proud men. You say you think I am less pleased by all these sudden praises than you are on my behalf. I know not that. But this I do know—that *kindness* does more than please, it conquers, it subdues me; and in yours I find enough to falsify a thousand theories, enough to deprive me of the only true philosophy—indifference to all things.

Sir Robert Peel returned to England on December 21 and undertook the task of forming an Administration. Parliament was immediately dissolved, and in the General Election which followed, the Whigs retained a sufficient number of seats to give them a majority in the House of Commons. Bulwer's pamphlet, which had largely contributed to this result, made its author's return for Lincoln a certainty; but

1834. Æt. 31. although he secured a large majority, the exertions of a contested election in the depth of December, coupled with the mental strain of his domestic troubles which at this time were at an acute stage, seriously impaired his health. To Lord Durham's congratulations he replied :—

> Ten thousand thanks for so kindly thinking of me, and making my success more pleasant by your congratulations. Your letter finds me regularly laid up with a violent attack on the chest, and one of those catholic colds which contrive to include the whole of the human frame within their charitable embraces. Not a single part of me but what insists upon aching. I am like a Tory Government ; all my atoms are firmly united for the purposes of mischief, and have taken their stand upon the feeblest parts of the constitution.

CHAPTER VIII

CHOICE BETWEEN LITERATURE AND POLITICS

1835–1838

> I hear that you wish to enter literature as a calling, and no doubt to study it as an art. . . .
>
> When I first came up to London, I made the same choice that I hear you have done. I have no cause even in a worldly point of view to repent my choice. It gave me an income larger than my wants. I trace my success to these maxims which are applicable to all professions :—
>
> 1. Never to trust to genius for what can be obtained by labour.
> 2. Never to profess to teach what we have not studied to understand.
> 3. Never to engage our word to what we do not our best to execute.
>
> With these rules literature is as good a calling as any other. Without them, a shoe-black's is infinitely better.
>
> *My Novel.*

THE new Parliament met on February 19, 1835. 1835. As a result of the recent election the Government Æt. 32. was in a minority in the House of Commons. Sir Robert Peel, however, did not immediately resign. He determined to meet Parliament in the hope that some of the moderate Reformers who shared his views on other questions might be willing to support him. Such a hope was speedily dispelled. On the opening day of the session the Government was defeated over the election of the Speaker. A few days later a hostile amendment to the Address, criticising the dismissal of the late

1835. Ministers by the Crown, was carried against
ÆT. 32. them; and the Address was sent to the King containing an unusual clause expressing the discontent of the House of Commons. Even this did not produce the fall of the Government, and it was not till he had sustained two more defeats on the questions of the Irish Church and Irish tithes that on April 8 Sir Robert Peel at last announced his resignation. The King, after a vain attempt to induce Lord Grey to form a Government, was obliged to send for Lord Melbourne; and thus the Whig Ministers who had been so summarily dismissed by the Crown in the previous November found themselves again in office.

Bulwer, who had taken so prominent a part in the recent crisis, now found himself called upon to make a decisive choice in his public career. Lord Melbourne offered him a minor post in the new Government in recognition of the services which he had rendered to the Whig Party by his political pamphlet. The post offered was not in itself an important one, but it was an opening to an official career and necessitated a definite choice between literature and politics. Like his friend Disraeli, Bulwer began life with the intention of using his pen as a means of securing for himself an introduction into the world of politics. When in 1831 he entered Parliament, a political career was still the main object of his ambition, and now for the first time the opportunity had arrived of realising that ambition. A few years earlier he would 1835. probably not have hesitated to accept the ÆT. 32. proffered opportunity with the hope of adding a new reputation in politics to that which he had already achieved in literature. But time and circumstance had somewhat sobered the impetuosity of youth. Though still young in years, he was already old in experience. Nine years of literary drudgery and two years of acute domestic worry had permanently impaired his health and cooled the ardour of his early ambition. He was, therefore, less disposed to adopt the adventurous course. There is no record of the precise reasons which guided his choice; but they may easily be surmised. Doubtless he felt disinclined to surrender his freedom of action for the sake of an unimportant official position, and possibly he may have considered himself too little in sympathy with the general policy of the Whig Government to justify him in becoming so closely associated with it. But these are not reasons which would have weighed at such a moment with a young and ambitious man who had set his heart upon a political career. The mere sacrifice of political independence, however unattractive it may have appeared to him, could not have been more than a minor consideration. The real sacrifice which would have to be made if he now accepted office was considerably greater. Hitherto his public career had been twofold. He had been engaged both in literature and politics. In both he had

1835. been successful though not to the same degree.
Æt. 32. In literature he had already acquired a very high reputation; in politics he was only just beginning to make his mark. Though never a ready debater, his speeches compelled attention, and sometimes reached a high oratorical level. Though not an orthodox party politician, his recent pamphlet showed that he could intervene in party polemics with telling effect; and at the moment he enjoyed the reputation of having turned an election and saved a Ministry.

Lord Melbourne's offer brought him to the parting of the ways. The double career could no longer be sustained. He must choose between them. The acceptance of office would not merely terminate the journalistic work to which he had been driven as a means of earning a livelihood, but would also necessitate the abandonment of the more serious literary pursuits in which hitherto his talents had found their chief employment. The choice lay between a profession in which he was already an acknowledged master and one in which he was but a promising pupil. Material considerations were also pressing at this moment. Literature was in a very real sense the staff of his life. Apart from the earnings of his pen he had no settled income; he had not yet inherited his mother's property and could not count definitely upon the resources which he afterwards received from that quarter, whilst the separation from his wife which he was contemplating at this time would place upon him a new liability which would have to be punctually met each year. With practice had come proficiency; rapid composition which he had found so difficult at first had now become easy; his imaginative qualities were highly developed; in a word, writing had become the business of his life, and he could not face the prospect of giving it up. Lord Melbourne's offer was refused, and for the moment a political career was definitely abandoned. His interest in politics never ceased at any period in his life; in after years he was again prominently connected with them and even held office for a short time as a Secretary of State; but it is on his achievements as a writer and not as a politician that his fame rests, and the decisive choice was made in the spring of 1835. 1835. ÆT. 32.

Though he retained his seat in Parliament till 1841, Bulwer's political activities during these years were not specially remarkable, and they may be briefly summarised in this chapter.

In the new Parliament he again sought to co-operate with the small group of philosophical Radicals in the House of Commons, and during the early months of 1835 he contemplated joining with them in the formation of a new party for the purpose of urging upon the Government the policy of political reform in which they were interested.

The following correspondence with Lord Durham on this subject took place immediately after the election.

Edward Bulwer to Lord Durham, January 21.

Private and Confidential.

HERTFORD STREET,
SATURDAY, *Jan.* 21/35.

1835. Æt. 32. MY DEAR LORD—I am about to ask of you a favour of that nature which, alas, I have too little solicited in the course of my very solitary life. It is Advice.

You are probably aware that arrangements are making for the formation of a new party. The Whigs are to form one section of the Liberals—O'Connell and his tail another. And now comes the third, assuming the title of Whig-Radicals. All this your Lordship doubtless is perfectly acquainted with. I think the notion of this party is admirable. I see no objection to the party itself, but I see some objections to *my* joining in it. And it is upon this point that I venture to ask your advice which will entirely guide me. I do not call myself a Radical, though I am generally called so. Now nearly all of this party go greater lengths than I do—nearly all are, for instance, for the separation of Church and State — not actively or not immediately, perhaps, but as a philosophical theory.

This is one objection I have to joining them. Another is the very disreputable names which I foresee this party will include, and which, while they increase its numbers, will harm its respectability. For the present, it is true, these names are not included. I have remonstrated strongly against some—they are suspended —but I see the general opinion is for obtaining them by and by. Now I think Wakley alone (who is one of these) eno' to throw discredit on the whole party; Whittle Harvey, it is clear, cannot be left out, and yet his character poisons his talents. We have no Aristocracy to support us, and ought, therefore, to be doubly careful to select honest reputations.

This is my second objection. A third is that I do not believe that we can select a leader with whom I should long agree. Grote or Warburton will, I imagine, be the selection, and I do not consider either of them very accurate and practical judges of mankind. Grote is a most respectable—prig ! one it is impossible not to esteem, but very hard to like and very difficult to follow. This is my third objection. I had hoped that the Whigs would have advanced by their defeat, and, by open and explicit declarations of principle, allowed one to join them. If they do so their party is the best ; if they do not, why take such exertions to restore them to power ? 1835. ÆT. 32.

These, my Lord, stated to you privately, and in the *strictest confidence*, are my objections not to the party itself but to my joining it. And all these objections would vanish at once if you advocate the purposes of the party, if you think it instrumental to that cause which in my opinion can only in your triumph be thoroughly triumphant, and if on the whole you counsel me to join it, or if it have in any way the sanction of your name.

I have attended two of the preliminary meetings, stating that I cannot yet promise to belong to it, and indeed that I have many objections to doing so, but promising a positive answer next Wednesday, by which day I may hope to have your reply. I can only add, my dear Lord, that publicly no man admires you more enthusiastically than I do—that privately I shall not easily forget that of the Whigs, you alone seemed to think favourably of my abilities (such as they are) and, what I value a thousand times more, kindly of myself ; and therefore that both publicly and privately I have every reason to be guided by your advice, and to wish zealously to promote our common objects by the means that your experience and foresight deem the most expedient.

Knowing you will pardon the liberty I take with you,—I am, my dear Lord, with regard and respect,
Faithfully yours,

E. L. BULWER.

Lord Durham to Edward Bulwer, January 26.

Confidential.

LAMBTON CASTLE,
Jany. 26, 1835.

DEAR BULWER—You are always welcome to the best opinion I can give on any subject which you may do me the honour of submitting to me.

Generally speaking, I am a great advocate for union and combination. They make a little go a great way, and much quite irresistible.

This it is that has enabled the Tories to go on struggling against their inevitable fate with much perseverance and occasional success.

We ought to take this leaf out of their book and combine for good purposes as they do for bad. As for the party to which you allude, I fairly confess that *I never before heard of its existence, or rather, of its being about to exist.* Until I know, therefore, of whom it is likely to be composed, and what are the avowed objects of its formation, I cannot advise any friend to join it.

Perhaps it will be your wisest plan to keep aloof at present, until we see what tone the Whigs assume. If they are, regardless of all experience, mere timid, wavering and shabby place-hunters, the exigencies of the times will call forth such a party as you may fairly and honourably belong to. If, on the other hand, they head the public feeling gallantly, you, from your great talents, will be better included amongst the practicals, than amongst the theorists.

I expect to be in London about the 6th or 7th February.—Yrs. very truly,

D.

Edward Bulwer to Lord Durham, February 2.

HERTFORD STREET,
Feb. 2, 1835.

I have delayed, my dear Lord, thanking you for your very kind and friendly letter, until I could ascertain somewhat more clearly the components of the embryo party. In another envelope I enclose the circular, considered yet as confidential, which has been addressed to those members whom the originators of the plan considered it advisable at first to secure. In this letter I enclose a list of the names which Warburton informs me he has already enrolled. 1835. ÆT. 32.

A principal objection of mine would at once vanish if they would content themselves with names as respectable as the present; and I am quite sure that no good they could obtain from the votes or speeches of Wakley, Whalley and Harvey, could compensate for the odium those additions will draw upon them from a people so sensitive to character as the English. But this discretion it is in vain to hope for.

I have of course adopted your advice, excused myself from attending the meetings, and declined for the present pledging myself to join the association.

I confess your Lordship surprised me by saying you were ignorant of the formation of this new party (by the by, it disavows the name in creating the substance); for I understand from Parkes, one of the great Archimages of the scheme, either that he had written to your Lordship respecting it, or that he was about to write. This was more than a fortnight ago. Indeed I was more fearful, if I may say so, for you than for me, for I am persuaded that for any party to be permanent and powerful, great care must be taken not to alarm the Agriculturists, now so formidable a body in the House of Commons; and I fear a little that the present party

1835. Æt. 32. would be considered by the County gentlemen as entirely composed of persons hostile to them. However, I have now only to repeat that, if you will allow me, I will leave my vote in your Lordship's hand, to belong to whatever party is the most identified with you. Perhaps I shall be out of town when you return, as I have been seriously ill since the Elections, and am strongly recommended a week's change of air. I propose, therefore, joining Mrs. Bulwer in Gloucestershire for a few days.

Believe me, my dear Lord, with regard and consideration—Yours very obliged and truly,

E. L. Bulwer.

P.S.—Wood is the best acquisition they have made, and would be very encouraging if they did not intend to counterpoise him by Wakley. But they are as much bent upon scare-crows as decoys.

Shortly before the resignation of Sir Robert Peel, it had been rumoured that Lord Londonderry was to be appointed to the post of British Ambassador at St. Petersburg. Immediately such a storm of criticism arose, owing to the well-known reactionary views of that nobleman, that the appointment had to be abandoned. A debate took place in the House of Commons, in which it was strongly urged that Lord Londonderry, the violent anti-Reformer at home, the vigorous defender of the most arbitrary acts of absolute monarchy abroad, and, more especially, the upholder of Russian oppression in Poland, could not accurately represent the opinion of Great Britain in St. Petersburg; and though Sir Robert Peel defended his manliness and military qualifications, it was evident that the appointment would be thoroughly unpopular. It was one of the numerous rebuffs which this short-lived Ministry had to endure ; and on the following day Lord Londonderry announced that he felt it impossible to act with advantage at a foreign court while he was disowned as a representative by any considerable portion of political opinion at home. 1835. ÆT. 32.

The post was then offered to Lord Durham, and accepted by him. Bulwer was thus deprived for a time of the advice of the man who was his chief patron in politics, and who would otherwise have become his chief friend in the new Ministry. Had Lord Durham remained in England, Bulwer would certainly have sought his advice on the question of joining the Government, and possibly his decision might have been different. Their correspondence at this time closes with the following letter :—

Lord Durham to Edward Bulwer, March 20.

Private. St. Petersburg, *March* 20, 1836.

My dear Bulwer—Your letter of the 1st, which arrived by last week's messenger, was a very welcome one to me. It proved that you had not forgotten me, and by its contents made me forget for a time sorrow and sickness, both of which have heavily pressed on me of late. In this last fortnight I have been so unwell as to be nearly confined to my bed, but I am a little better now.

When you have a leisure moment, bestow on me another—it will be a charity, and will be, as the last,

1835. Æt. 32. gratefully acknowledged. Indeed, thanks must form the whole amount of my acknowledgement, for I have little to tell you from hence. I never go out—illness and misery have long driven me from society. I work hard, it is true, professionally, but in secret, and others will reap the advantage and glory—if anything of either exist—but such is the condition and bond of Diplomatic Service.

I can only therefore say generally that I have been more successful than I could have dared to hope. I have removed old prejudices, softened enmities, personal and political, and placed the influence of England higher with Emperor and Ministers than it has been for many a long year.

With this, I have asserted the supremacy of my country, and have spoken in a tone not to be misunderstood, and obtained a disclaimer of all hostile and ambitious designs, which satisfies me that the peace of Europe, in the East, will not be disturbed now by any movements from hence.

This you will allow is a consummation highly desirable, especially as it is effected without war. I could do more good yet, if I was not merely an agent. As it is, I must content myself with faithfully executing that which is permitted by others.

Now for home matters: things look well, but yet may be better. This Club is a great measure. You may remember how strongly I urged its formation, as well as that of the Registration Committee. We want organisation and efficient communication with all our brethren in the Empire—this we shall attain through these two instruments, I hope. We shall soften the rugged and strengthen the weak and timid.

Your anecdotes of Paris amused us all extremely—they are "eminently French," as Ellen says:—"They are a funny people."

Pray remember me to Lady Blessington, and to the amiable pigeon fancier. Has she forgotten her promise to write to me occasionally? I hope not, and yet no *signes de vie*, or rather *de plume*, have yet reached me.

How I envy you your powers of creation!—for such your novels are, calling into life again the heroes of ages long past—identifying yourself and your readers with their feelings and their actions—placing before our eyes the manners, customs and scenery of other times and lands; you have an enjoyment surpassing all our matter of fact routine of common life.

In August 1835, Bulwer again brought forward his motion for the reduction of the stamp duty on newspapers. Lord Melbourne, with whom he had had some correspondence as to the date on which the motion should be brought forward, wrote to him as follows:—

I hope the state of the revenue will enable us to settle the question next session, and indeed I feel little doubt but that will be the case. At the same time I do not quite rely upon some of the arguments upon which the measure is pressed. I do not conceive that the violent talk, etc., of the unstamped press is to be attributed entirely to its contraband and smuggling character, and for this reason—that there is a part of the stamped press, viz.:—*The Satirist*, etc., which appears to me to be in every respect worse in malignity than any of the unstamped publications. I am afraid that Brougham in the close of his evidence before the House of Commons points out the real reason of this, viz.:—the public appetite and demand for writings of this character; and that that appetite will always be satisfied, whatever may be the state of the law.

1835. Æt. 32. In the course of his speech Bulwer again reviewed the position of the English press and the disastrous effect of the existing heavy taxation, justified his proposal from the point of view of the revenue, and appealed to the Government both on party and national grounds to reduce the stamp duty on newspapers to one penny. He pointed out the absurdity of having only five or six morning papers for the active, thoughtful, and stirring population of this country, whereas in America a single district supported as many morning and evening papers as the whole of England. In 1792, there had been thirteen morning and twenty evening papers published in London alone, but they had been killed by taxation amounting to 200 per cent. The *Spectator* had been extinguished by a tax of one penny! If the eloquence of Addison and Steele could not make head against a penny tax, what chance was there for the talent of the day against a tax of four times the amount? Some people defended the stamp duties because they instituted a kind of indirect censorship of the press, but against such a suggestion Bulwer emphatically protested.

His argument on this point is worth quoting, because it illustrates very well his attitude towards all attempts to put artificial checks upon freedom of expression in any branch of literature, and it is not inapplicable to the present day, when people are still to be found to advocate in the public interest a censorship not only of plays but of books. In reply to those who suggested that if the press were made free many dangerous and revolutionary political doctrines might be published, he said :— 1835. ÆT. 32.

> Doubtless, there will be, as now, doctrines of all sorts—the good and the bad. But who is to decide what is good and what bad—what is useful and what is revolutionary? None can do so; scarcely time itself can decide it. In the words of an able writer, "Truth requires no inscription to distinguish it from darkness; and all that truth wants is the liberty of expression." Has not the terror of the propagation of dangerous doctrines been used against the progress of enlightenment? Is it not for this that censors have been placed upon books, and inquisitors upon opinions? What effect have these prosecutions produced? The French Court prohibited the works of Voltaire, and Voltaire became at once endowed with the power to shake old opinion to its centre. Geneva burnt the Social Contract of Rousseau, and out of its ashes arose the phœnix of its influence. Tom Paine had not sold ten copies of his notorious work, when the English Government thought fit to prosecute him, and within a week from that period there were sold 30,000 copies. Government never has prevented, and never can prevent, the propagation of dangerous doctrines by prohibitions, either in the shape of a tax or a law—the only effect of persecution is to render the doctrines more dangerous, and the people more eager to learn them.

Bulwer's motion was seconded by Mr. Hume, who pointed out that there was scarcely a single large town in England that had not petitioned for the repeal of this tax, and that from the time when the existing Government had come into

1835. office up to March 1834, no less than 511
ÆT. 32. persons had suffered imprisonment for a breach of these laws.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, who followed, explained that he accepted fully the principle of the motion, and agreed with many of the arguments by which it had been defended. If the state of the revenue permitted it, he would be glad to reduce the tax, which on grounds whether of policy, or morals, or of the protection of sound political doctrine, was indefensible. It was on financial grounds, and financial grounds alone, that he was unable to agree to its immediate reduction. At the close of the debate Bulwer declared that he regarded the Chancellor of the Exchequer as pledged to the principle of reduction, and in the confident expectation that the objectionable tax would be reduced in the following session he withdrew his motion.

The subsequent history of this question affords a striking proof of the patience demanded of those who advocate reforms in Parliament. The case, which was overwhelmingly established in 1835, had to wait for a further twenty years before it received legislative recognition. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, who accepted the principle of an untaxed press, declared the arguments in support of it to be unanswerable, and pledged himself to carry it out, never fulfilled his pledge; and it was not till 1855 that the stamp duty on newspapers was finally repealed.

During the year 1836 Bulwer was entirely occupied with literary work and with the harassing details of his domestic trouble, and he took no active part in the political debates of that year. On June 20, 1837, King William IV. died; and at the Coronation of Queen Victoria in the following year, Lord Melbourne again signified his appreciation of Bulwer's services, both political and literary, by recommending the new Sovereign to confer upon him the title of Baronet. 1836–1837. ÆT. 33–34.

Among his correspondence at this time I find the following letters from John Stuart Mill, which are of interest, as showing the aims and policy of the small group of politicians with whom Bulwer co-operated in Parliament.

J. S. Mill to Edward Bulwer.

INDIA HOUSE,
23rd November, 1836.

MY DEAR SIR—I have just returned from an absence of nearly four months on the Continent, rendered necessary by an obstinate, though in no way alarming, indisposition, which has lasted for more than a twelvemonth, and which, together with another far more melancholy circumstance, had obliged me during that period to put aside all occupations which *could* be dispensed with, and among other things to leave my friend Molesworth's Review[1] very much to shift for itself. Now, when I am sufficiently recovered to be able to revert to my former interests and pursuits, one of the things I am most concerned about is how the greatest value and efficiency may be given to that Review; and I am sure that I speak the sentiments of all connected with it, when I say that nothing would conduce so much to either end as your hearty co-operation, if we could be so fortunate as to obtain it.

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[1] *The London and Westminster Review.*

I have, since my return, read your article on Sir Thomas Browne with an admiration I have seldom felt for any English writings on such subjects. I did not know at the time that it was yours, and could not conceive what new accession had come to the *Edinburgh Review*. I first thought it might possibly be Macaulay, but as I read on I felt it to be far too good for him—it has much of the same brilliancy, but not his affected and antithetical style, and above all a perception of truth, which he never seems to have, and a genuine love of the True and the Beautiful, the absence of which in him, is the reason why among his thousands of clever things and brilliant things, there are so few *true* things and hardly one which is the whole truth, and *nothing but* the truth. I could not help saying to myself, who would look for these qualities in the *Edinburgh Review*? How the readers of that Review must be puzzled and bewildered by a writer who actually takes decided views, who is positively in earnest, and is capable of downright admiration and even enthusiasm! I am sure your writing must be lost upon them; they are not people who can recognise or care about truth; your beautiful things will be to them merely clever things, and amusing things *comme tant d'autres*. Among us you would at least find both writers and readers who are in earnest. I grant that you, and such writing as yours, would be nearly as much out of place in our Review *as it has been*, as in the *Edinburgh*; but not, as I hope it will hereafter be. As good may be drawn out of evil, the event which has deprived the world of the man of greatest philosophical genius it possessed, and the Review (if such little interests may be spoken of by the side of great ones) of its most powerful writer, and the only one to whose opinions the editors were obliged to defer[1]—that same event has made it far easier to do that, in the hope of which alone I allowed myself to become connected with the Review, namely to soften the harder and sterner features of its Radicalism and Utilitarianism, both of which in the form in which they originally appeared in the *Westminster* were part of the inheritance of the 18th century. The Review ought to represent not Radicalism but Neoradicalism, a Radicalism which is not democracy, not a bigoted adherence to any form of government or to one kind of institution, and which is only to be called Radicalism inasmuch as it does not palter or compromise with evils, but cuts at their roots, and a Utilitarianism which takes into account the whole of human nature, not the ratiocinative faculty only—the Utilitarianism which never makes only peculiar figures as such, nor would ever constitute its followers a sect or school, which fraternises with all who hold the same *axiomata media* (as Bacon has it), whether their first principle is the same or not, and which holds in the highest reverence all which the vulgar notion of utilitarians represents them to despise—which holds feeling at least as valuable as thought, and poetry not only on a par with, but the necessary condition of, any true and comprehensive philosophy.

I hope you will believe that if the Review has hitherto been too much in the old style of Radical-Utilitarianism with which you cannot possibly sympathise very strongly (nor I either), it is because the only persons who could be depended upon as writers, were those whose writings would not tend to give it any other tone. My object will now be to draw together a body of writers resembling the old school of Radicals only in being on the movement side, in philosophy, morality, and art as well as in politics and socialities, and to keep the remnant of the old

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[1] Jeremy Bentham.

1838. school (it is dying out) in their proper place, by letting
Æt. 35. them write only about the things which they understand. But the attempt must fail unless those who *could* assist it, *will*. Why should you not write for us a series of articles on the old English writers, similar to that on Browne? They would be quite invaluable to us: we have not among our habitual writers any who could be trusted to write on such subjects; those who would have enough of the requisite feelings and talents have not the requisite reading.

Do pray think of it and tell me the result of your thought. The time is evidently approaching when the Radicals will once more be a distinct party, and when people will look to the Review as their organ; and much will depend upon its being an organ which represents the best part of them, and not the narrowest and most repulsive.—Ever yours faithfully,

J. S. Mill.

The same to the same.

India House,
3rd March, 1838.

My dear Sir—I have read *The Monthly Chronicle* with deep interest and I hasten to make my acknowledgements to you for the feeling which prompted the very complimentary expressions with which you have accompanied your strictures on my article in *The London and Westminster Review.*

I agree entirely in the greater part of the views set forth in the first article of *The Monthly Chronicle*, and especially in the general character you have given of the policy suited to the middle class. On the points in which I differ from you, or perhaps I should rather say, on which I would add to or qualify what you say, there would be much to be discussed between us at a suitable time and place. But I am much more desirous at present to express my great delight at the complete recognition which I find in that article, of its being advisable for the moderate Radicals to form themselves openly and avowedly into a distinct body from the Whigs—to shake off the character of a *tail*, and to act together as an independent body. My only quarrel with the parliamentary Radicals has hitherto been, that they have not done this, nor seemed to see any advantage in doing it. But whenever I see any moderate Radical who recognises this as his principle of action, any differences which there can be between me and him cannot be fundamental, or permanent. We may differ as to our views of the conduct which would be most expedient at some particular crisis, but in the main principles of our political conduct we agree.

I have never had any other notion of practical policy, since the Radicals were numerous enough to form a party, than that of resting on the *whole body* of Radical opinion, from the Whig-Radicals at one extreme to the more reasonable and practical of the working classes, and the Benthamites, on the other. I have been trying ever since the Reform Bill to stimulate, so far as I had an opportunity, all sections of the parliamentary Radicals to organise such a union, and such a system of policy; not saying to them, adopt my views, do as I bid you—but, adopt *some* views, do *something*. Had I found them acting on any system, aiming at any practical end, I should not have stood upon any peculiar views of my own as to the best way of attaining the common object. The best course for promoting Radicalism, is the course which is pursued with most ability, energy and concert, even if not the most politic, abstractedly considered; and for my own guidance individually, my rule is—whatever power I can bring in aid of the popular cause, to carry it where I see strength—that is, where I see, along with adequate ability and numbers, a definite

1838. Æt. 35. purpose consistently pursued. Therefore, if I find all that among you (and if I do not, I am quite aware that I shall find it nowhere else), you will find me quite ready to co-operate with you, should you think my co-operation worth having. I am no "impracticable," and perhaps the number of such is smaller than you think. As one of many, I am ready to merge my own views, whatever they may be in the average views of any body of persons whom I may choose to ally myself with ; but not unless I have full opportunity of bringing my own views before the body, and giving to those views any degree of influence which their own intrinsic character may obtain for them, over its collective deliberations. You cannot wonder that having always been obliged to act alone, I act in my own way. As long as that is the case, I must struggle on, making mistakes and correcting them, doing the best I can under all the disadvantages of a person who has to shift for himself, and raising up allies to myself where and how I can, as I have already done and am doing with a success which shows that I cannot be altogether in a wrong way.—Ever yours truly,

J. S. Mill.

The same to the same.

India House,
5th March, 1838.

My dear Sir—In answer to your question as to what I would be ready to do if my friends, as you call them, will not consent to what I think reasonable—if a party can be formed, for the Durham policy, including such men as yourself and those whom you mention, and pursuing its objects by means which I think likely to be effectual, even though not exactly those I should myself have preferred—I am ready to give such a party all the aid I can, and as a necessary consequence, to throw off, so far as is implied in that, all who persevere in conduct either hostile to the party, or calculated to diminish its strength. But I do not think that any Liberal party out of office, can be strong enough to beat the Tories, without a degree of popular enthusiasm in its favour, which could not be had without the support of some of the men who, in the same proportion as they are thought impracticable, are thought honest. I have a personal knowledge of the men far exceeding any which I believe you have, and from that knowledge I have no doubt that such a party as I am supposing could carry with it all of those men who are worth having, if, in the first place, real evidence is afforded them that popular objects, to the extent of those which Lord Durham is pledged to, are sincerely pursued; and if, secondly, their *amour-propre* is not irritated by personal attacks—such, for instance, as that in *The Chronicle* of this morning, or some recent ones in *The Examiner*. Both on public and private grounds I am not only precluded from joining in such attacks, but must defend them against any such; and I must do so all the more, in proportion as I separate myself from them in my political course. The October number of the Review was the first in which I systematically advocated a moderate policy, and it was consequently the first in which I personally complimented the extreme politicians. The Canada question then in an evil hour crossed the path of Radicalism; and my difference of opinion from you on the course of conduct required by Lord John Russell's declaration made me again apparently one of them, which I regretted at the time, but could not help. But I have never swerved from my intention of detaching the Review, and myself, from all *coterie* or sectarian connection, making the public see that the Review has ceased to be Benthamite, and throwing myself upon

1838. the mass of Radical opinion in the country. All this
Æt. 35. I determined to do when I had no hope of a Radical party in Parliament; and if such a party be formed I would, of course, prefer to ally myself with it, rather than run a race against it for the moderate Radicals. I could only enter into such a party as a representative in it of opinion more advanced in Radicalism than the average opinions of the party—but, in my idea of the principles on which such a party ought to be constituted, it cannot do without the support of persons considered ultra in opinion, provided they are not impracticable in conduct.—Ever yours faithfully,

J. S. Mill.

Amongst the minor measures which came before Parliament at this time, was one which touched Bulwer very closely on that side of his life which had brought him the most disappointment and pain. This was a Bill, introduced by Mr. Talfourd in 1838, to give to a wife who was separated from her husband the right of access to her children.

As the law then stood, in cases of separation the father alone was entitled to the custody of the children; but at the time of his own separation Bulwer had not insisted upon his legal right, and had allowed his wife to keep their two children. It was only after she had proved herself, in his opinion, an unfit guardian for them, and had begun to publish offensive attacks upon himself and his mother, that he removed them from her keeping, but allowed them to remain in the charge of her friend, Miss Greene, with whom she had herself placed them.

The remembrance that his own concession to the natural desire of a mother to retain the custody and companionship of her young children had been abused, and the knowledge that his own wife had neither been grateful for the privilege which had been granted to her nor valued it while she possessed it, made him somewhat sceptical of the sad stories of other women's hardships and sufferings, which were quoted in support of the Bill. His instinctive love of liberty and the realities of his own experience were thus at variance ; and the painful associations which the whole subject evoked naturally made him disinclined to take part in the debate on the Bill, which passed the House of Commons in May, 1838, was rejected by the Lords, and became law in the following session. He neither spoke nor voted on the subject at any stage. 1838. Æt. 35.

The chief promoter of this Bill, and its most able and vigorous champion outside Parliament, was Mrs. Norton. She had first drawn attention to the subject in a pamphlet entitled, *The Natural Claim of a Mother to the Custody of her Children, as affected by the Common Law Right of the Father* ; and she induced Mr. Talfourd, who had been her counsel in her trial with Lord Melbourne, to take up the matter in Parliament.

The doctrine of "Women's Rights" and the political equality of the sexes had already begun to be preached by a few women. Mary Wollstonecraft's book, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, had been published in 1792, but

1838. her ideas had few supporters in those days.
Æt. 35. The Infant Custody Bill was the first occasion when anything approaching to the agitation with which we are so familiar to-day found any expression in Parliament. The opponents of this measure based their opposition upon the fear that if it passed it would have the effect of encouraging separations between husband and wife. The great tie which prevented the separation of married persons, they argued, was their common children. A wife would submit to the temper of a capricious husband for the sake of her children; but if she knew that after leaving him she would still have access to them, separations would become frequent. It does not seem to have occurred to those who so argued that if this powerful lever were removed from the husband, he, in his turn, might be more careful to avoid causing a breach with his wife. The whole question was discussed throughout solely from the man's point of view.

Mrs. Norton herself, though in this case the most powerful advocate of the mother's claim, and in many respects in advance of her years, was always careful to dissociate herself from the pioneers of the Woman's Movement who were just beginning to make themselves heard.

> "The wild and stupid theories," she once wrote, "advanced by a few women of 'equal rights' and 'equal intelligence' are not the opinions of their sex. I for one (I, with millions more) believe in the natural superiority of man, as I do in the existence of a God.

The natural position of woman is inferiority to man. 1838. Amen! That is a thing of God's appointing, not of ÆT. 35. man's devising. I believe it sincerely as a part of my religion. I never pretended to the wild and ridiculous doctrine of equality."

On this letter her biographer makes the following comment:—

> These sentiments sound strangely now, especially from a woman who did such good practical service towards making women equal with men, at least before the law. But they are very characteristic of her type of mind, English, I may say, even more than feminine—practical rather than speculative, impatient, or even a little scornful of the theory, while most busy tinkering at the reforms of which the theory is the soul and spirit.[1]

In this connection the following letters written by Mrs. Norton to Bulwer are of interest:—

Mrs. Norton to Sir Edward Bulwer.

March 2/38,
24 BOLTON STREET.

DEAR MR. BULWER—I trust you will excuse, both my troubling you and the cause of my intrusion. There is a bill before the House (The Custody of Infants Bill) in which circumstances have taught me to take a deep and painful interest. May I hope, from your own generosity and kindness in permitting Mrs. Bulwer to have her little ones under her care, that you are against the separation of mother and child? May I hope that from the tenor of your feelings on other and more important public topics, you are against all tyrannies, even this, which men defend as *a right*?

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[1] *The Life of Mrs. Norton*, by Miss Perkins (1910), p. 150.

1838. Æt. 35. I will not speak of myself, for I cannot guess what your opinion is of me and my affairs—but there are so many bitter examples of what has been done under this law of the father's right, that there needs not one more; examples, some of them (like Lady H. de Blaquiere who only learnt her infant's death by reading it in the newspapers, so completely was all communication prevented) never come to the knowledge of "the world," but are inflicted and suffered *in the shade.*

I hope to Heaven that the attempt *slightly* to modify the unbearable rule which exists, will not be utterly baffled, and that you will add weight to a cause which ought not to be so feeble as it is, by giving it your countenance and support.

If you have time to write a single line on this subject in answer to my note you will do me a great favour, for I am very ill and very unhappy.—Yours truly,

Caroline Norton.

The same to the same.

24 Bolton Street.

Dear Mr. Bulwer—I hope you will not think me absurd or presumptuous if I venture to write once more on the subject of Sergeant Talfourd's Bill, in spite of the disappointment of your note. It is not as if the Bill proposed to create a new sort of litigation, because *already*, where the point is disputed and cared for, it has been the custom for the mother to appeal to the Court of King's Bench and Court of Chancery, besides all the cases decided by judges in Chambers. There would be no publicity *that is not already incurred whenever a woman chooses to appeal;* but there would be a recognition of power on the part of the law, to interfere as well on her behalf, as for the protection of

property and other causes where the Courts assume 1838.
superior power over the father. I do not know if the ÆT. 35.
cases quoted by Sergt. Talfourd are familiar to you, but they are surely more or less arguments in favour of the existence of such a power of protection as he wishes to establish? That in the majority of cases matters are more humanely arranged, I cannot deny; but is not *all* legal protection required in cases of exception only? Ought it not rather to smooth the difficulty of such a change, that most men (and they the better natured) have agreed to act as if the change in law had *already been made*?

I hope you will allow Talfourd an opportunity of explaining his measure to you—he is, I suppose, absent on the circuit at present, but I should be loth to think that you are to take even a *neutral part*, when I had hoped so much the reverse would have been the case.

Do not forget, with respect to this law of custody, that it has lately been repeatedly baffled by the women (finding how the law stood) carrying their children out of the kingdom in defiance of the decisions of the Courts. *That* evil, at least, would be obviated. I do not say that in any circumstances I would seize *mine*—make them beggars—and force them to share our warfare—but it has been done very lately in another case—and in my own, I solemnly swear that I scarcely care whether I live or die, so intolerable is the forced blank in my existence which parting from them has created. No woman loves her children with the same intensity as the woman who (justly or not) thinks herself unhappy in marriage. All the devotion—the sacrifice of love, which should have been laid on another altar—all that her heart *would* have given to companionship, she gives to this *lower love*, and gives it the more recklessly, and the more entirely, because

1838. Æt. 35. the natural current of affection has been turned out of its course.

You say to me you hope at least *I* will have access to mine—you would not say so only *in compliment*, in the midst of all this dreary distress—yet if it is right and just a man should have and exert this power to part mother and child, why should you wish that right yielded up in my individual case? Or if it is allowing the exertion of that right to be sometimes harsh and *un*just, why not allow the law to meet those instances?

Even were they of much rarer occurrence than they are, the law should meet them—as it meets other rare cases of wrong and oppression.—If a governor were to write from a new colony, that he had not yet put the penal laws into force, because murder and theft were exceedingly rare occurrences in comparison with the extent of population, it would be thought strange reasoning—but I will not attempt to *argue* my point; you will perhaps only smile at the attempt, and my note has already grown into a letter.

I only hope you will hear someone who takes the same side, and is more able to support it than I. I think Mr. Charles Buller is for the Bill, and has taken a personal interest in one of the cases—do not wait till there is a great majority of examples to be quoted.

Forgive this long appeal—I can only offer for excuse, the wearing and incessant anxiety I feel on this subject.—Believe me, dear Mr. Bulwer, Yours truly,

CAROLINE NORTON.

Bulwer's last speech in Parliament as a Liberal member was the occasion of his greatest oratorical triumph. On May 22, 1838, Sir John Eardley-Wilmot submitted to the House of

Commons a resolution for the immediate abolition of Negro Apprenticeship. When in 1833 Lord Stanley brought in his five resolutions which put an end to slavery in the West Indian Colonies, he proposed that in order to prevent the possible evils of too rapid a change from slavery to complete emancipation, and to prepare the slave population of these colonies for their ultimate freedom, there should be a transition period of twelve years, during which the slaves should work as apprentices with the rights of free men, subject only to the restriction that they should labour under certain specified conditions for their existing owners. This proposal was strongly condemned at the time by the Anti-Slavery speakers, but was eventually carried, largely owing to the support which it received from Macaulay, though the period was reduced from twelve to seven years, and the negroes were allowed to receive wages for their labour during the time of their apprenticeship. A sum of £20,000,000 was voted as compensation to the slave-owners, and certain other conditions were made to safeguard the interests of the planters. This system had now been in operation for five years, but the published reports showed that it had been greatly abused, and that the condition of the apprenticed negroes was little better than it had been when they were complete slaves. Sir John Eardley-Wilmot's resolution was a protest against the continuance of the apprenticeship system, and demanded the immediate and

1838. Æt. 35. complete emancipation of all the West Indian negroes.

Bulwer spoke at the end of the debate, and the speech which he delivered, in support of the resolution, was afterwards described by O'Connell (no mean judge of oratory) as one of the most vigorous efforts of impassioned reasoning that he had ever heard in the House of Commons. It is even related, though I am unable to verify the anecdote, that at the close of Bulwer's speech, O'Connell, who had himself intended to speak, tore up his notes and cried out: "The case is made out—there is nothing to add—divide!"

A few passages from this speech may be quoted as specimens of a type of eloquence which is almost extinct at the present day. Bulwer's contention was that, though Parliament had kept faith with the planters, it had not kept faith either with the negroes or with those in England who had accepted the proposals of the Government of the day on the strength of Lord Stanley's declaration, "that the slave should retain no taint of his former servile condition." He pointed out that the slave-owners had violated their part of the compact, that nearly all the old abuses continued, and that cruelties of the most hideous kind were still perpetrated.

> "I assert," he said, "that with the planter we have kept faith; that there was no adulteration, no paring and filching of the gold he received; perfect it was in tale and weight. You have kept faith with the planter; but I tell you with whom it is you ask us to break

faith—with the thousands and tens of thousands whom you mocked with the name of free—with the majesty of the Imperial Parliament, whose acts have been trampled under foot—with the people of England who paid their millions, not to abolish the name slavery, but the thing slavery. You ask us to break faith with justice, with humanity, with Heaven itself, in order that you may keep faith with Mammon. . . . Can you tell us fairly and boldly that this apprenticeship has been that mild and hopeful interval between slavery and freedom which you contemplated when the Act was proposed? Can you tell us, that if we had possessed the gift of prophecy, and foreseen with what records these Parliamentary documents were to be filled —can you tell us, that one man in this House would have dared to insult the English people with the proposition of purchasing such a system at such a cost? . . . Yes, to us compensation is indeed due; but if to us, how much more to the negro! No, not to *him*—the very magnitude of his wrongs denies even the possibility of compensation. No gold can buy back to him the agonised years already wasted since that act of mockery was past; no gold can buy back human life itself! Will twenty times twenty millions compensate to the son for the mother who has died beneath the torture, and whose very death the officers of planter-justice have imputed to the visitation of God? Compensate to the mother, who, in the very agonies of childbirth, found no exemption from the grinding toil and the lifted scourge, and who has been robbed of a hope, cherished, perhaps, amidst all her own anguish of giving birth to an offspring happier than his sires? No! we cannot demand compensation for the negro—we cannot call back the past. But justice and sympathy for the future—*these* at least are in our power! . . . Depend upon it, all attempts to relax and mitigate

1838. slavery are hopeless and absurd. There are no ways of
Æt. 35. patching up the everlasting distinction between slavery and freedom; all that you can do is to diminish the interest of the planter in the health and life of the negro, and leave the wretch more exposed to the jealousy, because more obnoxious to the fears, of the tyrant. I cannot understand this one-sided niceness of conscience, this terror of violating by a hair's breadth your compact with a planter, and this deaf and blind indifference to the equal obligations due to the other parties of the compact, the negroes and the people of these realms."

The speech concluded with these words:—

I accuse not the planters; I accuse the system; men are but the tools of the circumstances that surround them. Where tyranny is made legal, I execrate the tyranny, but I acquit the tyrant. You have heard from me no individual cases, branding individual persons—you have heard from me no doubtful references to anonymous authorities. My charge is against communities, not persons—my facts are in the books you appeal to as undeniable records. If the despatches of your governors, if the reports of your magistrates, if this whole mass of parliamentary evidence be not one lie—I tell you that your arguments against this motion are shivered to the dust! I have proved, that not individuals, not minorities, but (where legislative assemblies exist in your colonies) whole communities have been, from first to last, invaders of your law, violators of your compact. I have proved that faith is due, not to the planters, but to their victims and their dupes. I have proved that there is no danger in the course we recommend—proved it by reference to actual experience in Antigua, to the assertions of your governor in Jamaica, where all parties would abandon 1838. the system for compensation—proved it by your own ÆT. 35. recommendations to the colonies. Answer all this if you can; if you answer it to your satisfaction, you belie your governors, you impeach your witnesses, you condemn yourselves. Year after year, and session after session, we debate on the mere forms and ceremonials of our religion, whether this oath may be abolished—whether this distinction may be removed—whether by one law or by another we can best preserve the husk and shell of religion—its ecclesiastical establishment. I honour all men's consciences upon these points; but here we come to the fountain of Christianity itself—its all-protecting brotherhood, its all-embracing love. When scholars and divines have summed up the blessings that our common creed has conferred upon mankind, first and foremost of those blessings they have placed the abolition of that slavery which stained and darkened the institutions of the Pagan world. I know of no Pagan slavery worse than this Christian apprenticeship. Here, then, we fight again the same battle as our first fathers, the primitive Christians, from whom all our sects and divisions have emerged. Here is a ground upon which Catholic and Protestant, and the wide families of Dissent, all may unite; and I do believe that he who votes against this dark hypocrisy of slavery in disguise will obtain something better than the approval of constituents—something holier than the gratification of party triumph and political ambition—in the applause of his own conscience, and in those blessings that will not rise the less to the Eternal Throne because they are uttered by the victims of human avarice and pride.

The division followed immediately after the close of this speech, and resulted in a majority of

1838. Æt. 35. three for the resolution, the numbers being 96 for and 93 against. Immediately after the division three members assured Bulwer that they had intended to vote against the resolution, but that their intention had been changed by his arguments. The speech was published as a pamphlet, and widely circulated by the Anti-Slavery Society, whose members expressed their cordial thanks to the author for the signal service he had rendered to their cause.

Bulwer did not speak again in Parliament, though he retained his seat as member for Lincoln till 1841, when, owing to his opposition to the repeal of the Corn Laws, he retired from Parliament for eleven years.

CHAPTER IX

DRAMATIC AUTHORSHIP

1836–1840

> There is that in theatrical representation which perpetually awakens whatever romance belongs to our character.
>
> *Godolphin.*

In the last chapter Bulwer's political activities 1836.
were described down to the year 1838. Mention Æt. 33.
must now be made of his literary work during those years. In 1835 he published in a volume called *The Student* a collection of essays and tales which had previously appeared in *The New Monthly Magazine*, *The Amulet*, Heath's *Book of Beauty*, and other periodicals of the day. Some of these articles and tales are amongst his best work, and may be read to-day with greater pleasure than many of his more popular novels. They are little known to the present generation, and a selection of them would bear republication in a separate volume. *Rienzi* was published at the end of the same year, and immediately acquired great popularity. Though it is by no means the best of his historical novels, it had a greater sale during the author's life-time then any of his works.

1836. Æt. 33. Three other publications belong to the period covered by the last chapter. Two volumes of *Athens, its Rise and Fall* appeared in 1837. A third volume was completed at this time, but never published, and the work was ultimately abandoned on the publication, in 1846, of the first two volumes of the more complete and elaborate history of Mr. Grote. It is interesting, however, as evidence of the wide range of Bulwer's studies. *Ernest Maltravers* was published in the same year, and its sequel *Alice* in 1838. This novel—it was really one novel in two parts—was the best of its kind which Bulwer had written up till that time, and it has a special interest as containing many autobiographical features.

In 1836 began a new chapter in his literary career. The year of his separation from his wife was also the year in which he made his *début* as a dramatic author. This new literary departure was the result of a friendship which he had lately formed with Mr. Macready. Their first meeting is thus mentioned in Macready's diary:—

> *October* 31*st*, 1834. Met at Col. d'Aguilar's Bulwer whom I liked very much. I urged him to write a play; he told me he had written one, great part of which was lost, on the death of Cromwell.

This chance meeting had an important result, though it was two years before it took effect. The play of *Cromwell* was first completed and submitted to Macready, who criticised it somewhat severely. Bulwer continued to work at it for some years, and many alterations were made in it to meet the criticisms of Macready and Forster. Eventually, however, he came to the conclusion that it was unsuited for the stage and abandoned it.

On February 23, 1836, Bulwer and Macready met again at the former's chambers in the Albany. After recalling their former conversation of two years previously, Bulwer told Macready that he had written another play, *The Duchess de la Vallière*, and had dedicated it to him. Macready describes himself as "affected to tears" and too much overcome by emotion to read the terms of the dedication. He took the play away with him, read it carefully and undertook to produce it. The remainder of the year was spent in discussing terms, alterations of the text, etc., and the play was produced on January 4, 1837.[1] The first night is thus described by Macready in his diary:—

> Acted Bragelone well with earnestness and freshness; some paragraphs deficient in polish. Being called for, I did not choose to go on without Miss Faucit whom I led forward. The applause was fervent, but there had been considerable impatience throughout the play, which did not end till 11 o'clock. Dow, Fitzgerald, Browning, Talfourd, C. Buller came into my room. They all seemed to think much of my performance. Bulwer came in when they had gone, and in the most

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[1] It was published in the autumn of 1836, and reached a 2nd edition before the end of the year.

1837. Æt. 34. energetic and ardent manner thanked me for my performance and for making him cut out the 1st Scene of the 5th Act. Mr. Standish took Forster and myself to Lady Blessington's to supper. Count D'Orsay and herself received me most warmly. Bulwer drove me home; all his talk was *La Vallière.*

The play did not fulfil the promise of its first night, and after a few more performances was withdrawn. The following letter from D'Israeli to Lady Blessington, though not dated, appears to refer to this play:—

Benjamin D'Israeli to Lady Blessington.

Bradenham, *Thursday* [*Jan.* 12, 1837].

My dear Lady—We have all here been dying of an epidemic; Tita and myself being the only persons who have escaped. I trust that it has not reached K[ensington] G[ore]. All this district are prostrate. I fear for you. D'Orsay, I know, immortal youth, is never indisposed. I ascribe my exemption to a sort of low gentleman-like fever that has had hold of me ever since I came down here, and which is not very inconvenient. I have in consequence never left the house, scarcely my room, and it has not incapacitated me from a little gentle scribbling. I am about something in a higher vein than the last; what you and E. L. B. would call "worthy of me," alias unpopular.

I am sorry about B[ulwer]'s play. I would not write to him, as I detest sympathy, save with good fortune; but I am sorry, very, and for several reasons. 1st, because he is my friend; 2ndly, because he is the only literary man whom I do not abominate and despise; 3dly, because I have no jealousy on principle (not from feeling), since I think always the more the merrier, and his success would probably have assisted mine; 4thly, because it proves the public taste lower even than I imagined it, if indeed there can be a deeper still than my estimate; 5thly, because from the extracts which have met my eye (in the *Examiner*) the play seems excellent, and far the best poeshie that he has yet relieved himself of; 6thly, because there seems to have been a vast deal of disgusting cant upon the occasion; 7thly, because he is a good fellow, and 8thly—I forget the 8th argument, but it was a very strong one. However, the actors of the present day are worse even than the authors—that I knew before, But Ed. B. would not believe it, and I could pardon his scepticism. As for myself, I have locked up my melodrama in the same strong box with my love-letters; both being productions only interesting to the writer.

I have received several letters from Lord L[yndhurst] who has sent me H[enrietta] T[emple] from Paris, price 4s. and 2d.; an agreeable present, proving the value of our copyrights to London publishers. It is a vile trade, but what is better? Not politics. I look forward to the coming campaign with unmitigated disgust; and should certainly sell out, only one's enemies would say one had failed, to say nothing of one's friends. The fact is I am too much committed to the fray to retire at present, but, oh! that I had the wings of a dove, etc.

Lord L. will be with us in a week. I feel interested in his career, more than in my own, for he is indeed the most amiable of men, tho' that is not very high praise, you will say. Ah, *méchante*! I see the epigram on your lips.

I really grieve if I said anything which deserved the lecture you gave me, tho' I am almost glad I merited it, if only for its kindness. I was rather harassed when I was last in town, as you know, and have a disagreeable habit of saying everything I feel; but I love my friends

1838. and am not naturally suspicious or on the alert to
ÆT. 35. quarrel about straws. I am here pretty well and have my rooms and my time to myself, but still there *is* a family, tho' an amiable and engaging one; and the more I feel, the more I am convinced that man is not a social animal. Remember me to D'O. and E. L. B.; to nobody else, and—Believe me, Yours

DIS.

Undeterred by this failure, Bulwer immediately set to work upon another play, which by the end of the year was finished and was submitted to Macready, who had now undertaken the management of Covent Garden. The first title given to the new play was *The Adventurer*, but this was condemned by Macready, and *The Lady of Lyons* was substituted for it. In other respects Macready's verdict was favourable and encouraging. On January 3, 1838, he writes:—

COVENT GARDEN THEATRE,
Jan. 3rd, 1838.

MY DEAR SIR—You have taken from me long since all power of thanking you by the accumulated obligations you have laid upon me. I have had a strong motive for wishing you to persevere in your task, and I may truly say it is unmixed with any selfish consideration. It has been my earnest desire to see you triumphantly vindicate your genius from the ungenerous treatment of the press, and I should glory in lending my humble assistance to the accomplishment of such an object. You may therefore rely upon my caution with regard to its production. You shall have my own frank opinion, and I will use the power I possess to obtain for you those which may correct or confirm mine. Rely

upon me, that I will not commit you. Nothing could 1838.
recompense me for the pain it would cost me, should ÆT. 35.
any but the most decisive success follow the experiment. You have bound me to sincerity, and even were I otherwise disposed, I must, at even a risk, be faithful to your injunctions.

There is only one point of your stipulation to which I object, and I hope in the issue, if not at once, I may over-rule you. You have already so drawn upon my gratitude that I *wish* you would spare me the clause of non-remuneration. At all events, I *beg* that may stand over till our case is tried.

I shall look anxiously to Sunday, and on Wednesday will send you my own opinion with an account of the impression made upon a limited audience by it.—Yours,

W. C. MACREADY.

A few days later he writes again :—

8 YORK GATE, REGENT'S PARK,
Jan. 11*th*, 1838.

MY DEAR SIR—My hopes rise, as my intimacy with Melnotte grows—I wish I was younger and that my *chère amie* and myself had put our heads out of the window when it was raining beauty ; but, as Falstaff says, "That's past praying for."

Pray do not have any fear as to the *managing* of the play—I mean, as to using every means to sustain its course, etc. Believe me, I shall be much more tender of it than if it were my own. My feelings (I hate to add the truth, my interests also) are all enlisted in its cause. I intend to read it to the actors, and distribute the parts on Tuesday next.

I had thought of the very kind of dress you mention —except that your suggestion of the change of colour to green is an excellent amendment.

It is necessary to have a name to elude inquisitiveness —we are constantly liable to detection without someone to rest upon. Curiosity is not awakened for an anonymous author, witness the first night of the *Provost of Bruges*! It is not the *first night* that decides the attraction of a play—witness our new opera! I think in all *the policy* of our proceeding you had better trust to my care and zeal. I will use the means I possess to pique curiosity about it before it appears, but little can now be done in that way. My confidence is in the originality of the play—its interest, poetry and passion, added to which it is the first new play produced under my management, which will add something to the expectation of play-goers. I hope to have it produced either on Thursday, Feb. 1st, or Saturday, Feb. 3rd, but I must work hard for this.

I cannot wonder at your fatigue—my astonishment is that you keep your health and mind under the labours you impose upon yourself.—Always, my dear Sir, most truly yours,

W. C. Macready.

The reference towards the end of this letter is to Bulwer's wish that the play should be produced anonymously. Having failed once he was anxious that his second venture should be judged on its merits, and determined to see how it was received before acknowledging himself as its author. To this determination he adhered in spite of Macready's contrary advice.

The play was produced on February 15, 1838, and was a conspicuous success. It rapidly acquired great popularity, and kept its reputation throughout the author's lifetime. Though its sentiment is now out of date, and it is rarely seen on the stage to-day, yet for two generations it was the ambition of every rising actor and actress to play the parts of Claude Melnotte and Pauline Deschappelles. 1838. Æt. 35.

The following anecdote is told in most of the biographical sketches of Bulwer, and as some of them were published during his lifetime, it is probably substantially accurate, though I have no means of verifying it. The night when *The Lady of Lyons* was first produced, Bulwer was detained in the House of Commons, where he made a speech in support of Mr. Grote's Bill for the Establishment of the Ballot at elections. At the conclusion of his speech he left the House and hurried to Covent Garden to learn the result of the performance. On the way he met Sergeant Talfourd, a fellow member and fellow author, whose play *Ion* had been produced in 1836. Talfourd was himself returning from Covent Garden, and was eagerly questioned about the new play by Bulwer, whom he little suspected of being its author. "Oh, it went very well indeed—for that sort of thing," was the reply. Bulwer arrived at the theatre just in time to see the last act, at the conclusion of which the curtain fell amidst the enthusiastic applause of the audience. To the loud cries of "Author" no reply was forthcoming. Everyone began discussing the play and its unknown author. "What do you think of it?" said Lady Blessington to Bulwer. "Oh, very good

1838. —for that sort of thing," he replied. Lady
Æt. 35. Blessington was shocked and said, "That is the first time I have seen you jealous."[1] A few days later, when the authorship was announced, she wrote him the following letter :—

Lady Blessington to Edward Bulwer.

Gore House,
Saturday.

My dearest Friend—I confess, that I have rarely in my life enjoyed so great a pleasure as on finding that a play, which excited my feelings and delighted my imagination more than any other I had ever beheld, was from your pen. My proudest anticipations are fulfilled, for the success of *The Lady of Lyons* leaves all competition behind, and this, too, without the prestige of its authorship being known. When I read the extracts in the *Examiner* last Sunday, I said that I thought there was only one man in England or in the world, who *could* have written them. The thoughts, the language, struck me as being yours and yours only, but yet on reflection, I thought that you would have entrusted me with the secret, and knowing also your numerous other avocations, I fancied it was impossible that you could have found time to have written this exquisite play. 1838. Æt. 35.

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[1] In connection with this anecdote, it is an interesting fact that the published edition of *The Lady of Lyons* was dedicated to Sergeant Talfourd who acknowledged the honour in the following letter :—

"Stafford, 11 *March*, 1838.

"My dear Bulwer—I have only just received the printed *Lady of Lyons*, and enjoyed the realisation of the pleasure which you led me to hope for, when you honoured me by expressing an intention to inscribe it to me. It is an honour of which any writer, living or dead, might have been proud ; and it is peculiarly gratifying to me, not only as associating my humble name with one of the greatest of our time, but as connecting me with his prompt and timely and successful aid to the cause of the Drama, and to the generous enterprise of the artist in whose prosperity it is involved. Although this delightful Play has only just reached me in this remote region, I rejoice to see it has already reached a second edition, and have no doubt that it will be as cordially welcomed by its readers as by its spectators.—Believe me to remain, Yours truly and gratefully,

"T. N. Talfourd.

"E. L. Bulwer, Esq., M.P."

Now shall I confess a weakness to you? I felt the charm of the high-souled and beautiful sentiments, and the eloquent words in which they are dressed, so strongly, that I was jealous for your fame, and pained that another could so write. When I heard everyone I met proclaiming *The Lady of Lyons* to be perfection, nay some adding:—"Oh, if your friend Bulwer wrote a piece like this, he might be as unrivalled in his theatrical as in his novelist reputation,"—I have felt envious of the author of this piece, which has won all praise, and wished that so dangerous a rival to you had not sprung forth. And yet I never can give up my honest and heart-felt admiration for *La Vallière*, which, had it been brought out without your name, which served as the watchword for political animosity to take the field against it, and had it been properly cast, must have obtained a most brilliant success, for it richly merited it. The political attacks against *The Lady of Lyons can do it no harm; everyone feels the motives.* Heaven bless you, and preserve to your country a genius that enobles it, prays Your affectionate and proud friend,

M. Blessington.

Edward Bulwer to Lady Blessington.

My dearest Friend—The moment you liked *The Lady of Lyons*, I was satisfied. The wish to prove that your and Alfred's[1] kind belief that I could hit off the

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[1] Count D'Orsay.

1838. Æt. 35. dramatic knack, impelled me to the attempt, as much as anything else. But I should not like you to have known the pain of a second failure on my part, and therefore was silent till I thought you would be pleased—not pained.—Yours ever,

E. L. B.

The following appreciative letter was also received from Mrs. Shelley, the poet's widow:—

Dear Mr. Bulwer—Do excuse my writing a few lines to say how very much *The Lady of Lyons* pleased me. The interest is well-maintained, the dialogue, natural, one person answers the other, not as I found in *Werner* and *Sardanapalus*, each person made a little speech apart, or one only speaking that the other might say something; the incidents flow from the dialogue, and that without soliloquies, and the incidents themselves flow naturally one from another. There is the charm of nature and high feeling thrown over all.

I think that in this play you have done as Shelley used to exhort Lord Byron to do—left the beaten road of old romance, so worn by modern dramatists, and *idealised the present*; and my belief is that now that you have found the secret of dramatic interest, and to please the public, you will, while you adhere to the rules that enable you to accomplish this necessary part of a drama, raise the audience to what height you please. I am delighted with the promise you hold out of being a great dramatic writer. But (if I may venture to express an opinion to one so much better able to form them—an opinion springing from something you said the other night) do not be apt to fancy that you are less great when you are more facile. It is not always the most studied and (consequently) the favourite works of an author that are his best titles to fame

—the soil ought to be carefully tended, but the flower that springs into bloom most swiftly is the loveliest. 1838. ÆT. 35.

I have not read your play. I would not till I saw it, for a play is a thing for acting, not the closet.

I hope you will remember your promise of calling on me some evening, and believe me—Yrs. truly,

M. SHELLEY.

41D PARK ST.,
Sunday.

No terms had been agreed upon between Bulwer and Macready for the production of *The Lady of Lyons*. In the previous year, when *La Vallière* was produced, Macready was not the manager of the theatre, and Bulwer tried to secure the most favourable terms for himself, first from Mr. Bunn, the manager of Drury Lane, and afterwards from Mr. Osbaldiston of Covent Garden, by whom the play was produced. *The Lady of Lyons*, however, was written specially for Macready, who was now the manager of Covent Garden; and Bulwer regarded the undertaking rather as a tribute of friendship to the actor than as a financial speculation. "Sympathising with the enterprise of Mr. Macready, as manager of Covent Garden," he writes in the preface, "and believing that many of the higher interests of the Drama were involved in the success or failure of an enterprise, equally hazardous and disinterested, I felt, if I may so presume to express myself, something of the Brotherhood of Art; and it was only for

1838. ÆT. 35. Mr. Macready to think it possible that I might serve him, to induce me to make the attempt."

A month after the first night of *The Lady of Lyons* Macready wrote as follows :—

8 York Gate, Regent's Park,
March 21st, 1838.

My dear Sir—When you first proposed to lend the powerful assistance of your name and talent to my attempt, I reserved the subject of pecuniary compensation for a later consideration. Let me hope that the first class in my scale of payment to authors, though far below what I would wish to offer you, may not meet with objection from you. By this scale in a run of forty nights an author would receive the sum of six hundred pounds, and I have the pleasure of enclosing you a cheque for the amount with which I have credited you upon our first fourteen. I will not here repeat expressions of obligation, with which I must almost have wearied you, but merely assure you that I am and always must remain, my dear Sir—Sincerely and most gratefully yours,

W. C. Macready.

Bulwer refused to accept this remuneration, and to his letter returning the cheque, Macready sent the following grateful reply :—

8 York Gate, Regent's Park,
March 23rd, 1838.

My dear Bulwer—The favour you conferred upon me in your dedication of *La Vallière* impressed me with a sense of obligation that will continue with life. In associating my name with your own you graced me with a lasting honour, and rendered me an important service. I was already sufficiently indebted to you to be conscious of my own inability ever to requite your kindness. What then am I now to say to you? or how can I attempt to thank you for your letter of yesterday? After what I have already known of you, it would be an injustice to say it surprised me. I was quite overcome by it, and whatever may be the issue of the struggle I am engaged in, this one occurrence will prevent me from regretting the attempt I have made. 1838. Æt. 35.

I accept this act of friendship from you, I hope, in its own spirit. I cannot dwell upon it; it is an event in my life, of which, I believe, my children will be proud.

Pray translate what you think should be my feelings into your own language, and let me, with the full credit of always retaining them, subscribe myself—Your grateful and devoted friend,

W. C. Macready.

After the production of *The Lady of Lyons*, Bulwer informed Macready that though he had no intention of writing any more for the stage, he would at any time be willing to do so if his friend considered that he could render him any assistance by so doing. The fulfilment of this promise was soon demanded, as is shown by the following entries in Macready's diary:—

July 25. Sir E. Bulwer came into my room and I talked with him about a play for next season. He wants a subject and will go to work.

Sept. 17. Letters from Bulwer about subject.

Sept. 24. Bulwer came and talked about a subject of which he is thinking.

1838. ÆT. 35.

On October 3 Bulwer writes to Forster :—

> The play stands dead still. Not a subject to be found, though I have read for it like a tiger. Just finished Goethe's novel of affinities. Do read it ; it is wonderful. What a giant beside all other fictionists, Cervantes alone excepted and hardly he. Such effects with such ease, such perfectly pure *art.* The interior meaning (without which no romance, no novel is worth much) so delicate, so noble ; and yet the crowd of readers would call it the most ridiculous nonsense ! I mean, of course, English readers. Our countrymen only understand the broad splosh, the thick brush, lots of outline, and a burly chap in the foreground. If I were not in politics I would learn another language, in order to be understood.

The subject of the play, when once decided upon, must have been executed in the shortest possible time, for on October 24, Macready records :—

> Received a letter from Bulwer informing me that he had made out a rough sketch of a play, an historical comedy, on the subject of Richelieu. I answered him, delighted with the news.

On November 4 Bulwer writes to Forster from Knebworth : "The children have been with me. We have all been sad truants with balloons and boats, and none of us have done our lessons properly. Nevertheless *Richelieu* will be given up to Macready next week." And again on November 11 : "This morning I put the last stroke to *Richelieu.*"

When it is remembered that *The Lady of Lyons* and *Richelieu* are both 5-act plays in blank verse, that the former was written in a fortnight and the latter in about the same time, under the conditions indicated by the above quotations, some idea may be formed of the astounding rapidity of Bulwer's composition. The first draft of each play, however, was subjected to constant revision, and in this work he received most valuable assistance from the actor for whom they were written. On November 17, Macready writes:— 1838. Æt. 35.

> Called on Bulwer and talked over the play of *Richelieu*. He combated my objections and acceded to them as his judgment swayed him; but when I developed the object of the whole plan of alterations he was in ecstasies. I never saw him so excited, several times exclaiming that he was "enchanted" with the plan, and observed in high spirits "What a fellow you are!" I left him the play and he promised to let me have it in a week! He is a wonderful man.

On the very next day Bulwer brought back two scenes which he had rewritten, and by November 21, three days later, the whole was completed. At the end of a letter to Macready enclosing some alterations, he writes:—

> Fortunately I had done my corrections to-day before the news of poor L. E. L.'s death, which I have just seen in the paper. It has quite overcome me, and I cannot write now the many little things that occur to me. So young, so gifted, and I found a letter from

1838. her yesterday in high spirits. I have not been so
Æt. 35. shocked for years.

On the 24th the play was read to a few friends,[1] when an amusing incident occurred which might have had unfortunate consequences. During the reading of the third act Forster fell asleep, which considerably offended the sensitive author. Fortunately the interchange of the following letters completely removed all unpleasantness between the two great friends :—

John Forster to Edward Bulwer.

58 Lincoln's Inn Fields,
Nov. 27, 1838.

My dear Bulwer—I have to apologise most deeply for what occurred on Sunday night. Is it necessary for me to say that any act of apparent rudeness from me to you was most unintentional and has ever since its occurrence been deeply regretted. I will not trust myself to describe indeed the pain I have suffered since. I offer no extenuation of this unfortunate matter—most unfortunate for me. I merely ask you to forgive it and to forgive me, and with this confidence I ask it, that during the many years I have known and admired your writings, and been honoured by your friendship, this is the first occasion in which I have seemed indifferent to what interested you. God knows with how little truth I seemed so then, or with how much sincere sorrow I write this note to you.—Believe me, Yours most faithfully,

John Forster.

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[1] Robert Browning was among them and was the first to pronounce the verdict that *Richelieu* was "a great play."

Edward Bulwer to John Forster.

8 Charles Street,
Nov. 27, 1838.

My dear Forster—I am very much obliged by your kind and friendly letter. I do not deny that I felt pain. But it was rather that of a friendly feeling hurt than a vain one wounded. Your letter has done more than remove the impression, it has substituted another of unalloyed pleasure and satisfaction. Pray think no more of it unless as a new lease of esteem and regard between yourself and, my dear Forster,—Yours very truly, 1838. Æt. 35.

E. L. Bulwer.

If only some of his domestic quarrels, founded on events as trivial, could have been settled as promptly, as frankly, and as completely!

Richelieu was produced at Covent Garden on March 7, 1839, and was well received, though Macready himself was not satisfied, for he writes in his diary:—

> Acted *Richelieu* very nervously; lost my self-possession and was obliged to use too much effort; it did not satisfy me at all, there were no artist-like touches through the play. How can a person get up such a play and do justice at the same time to such a character? It is not possible. Was called for and very enthusiastically received; gave out the play for every night. Its success seemed to be unequivocal.

Before the end of 1839 Bulwer had another play ready for Macready. It was called *The Sea-Captain*, and was produced at the Haymarket on October 31, 1839. It was well received, and

1839. continued to run at the Haymarket for some
ÆT. 36. weeks. On December 3 Macready writes:—

1 YORK GATE, REGENT'S PARK,
Dec. 3rd, 1839.

MY DEAR BULWER—My report of our progress is not so satisfactory as I could wish—our houses have trained off considerably. Webster showed me the last week's receipts last night. We averaged £95 per night (which is not a winning game) through the last week. This week he has put up *The Lady of Lyons* for the Monday (last night when the house was very good) and *The Merchant of Venice* for Thursday; *The Sea-Captain* on the other four nights. I asked him last night what he anticipated, and he informed me that he expected *The Sea-Captain* to carry us on to the end of the season, but not without intervening plays. It is very difficult to get at the truth about Covent Garden receipts, but I believe them, from the individual reports made to me, to be greatly exaggerated. As to the question of the policy of altering *The Sea-Captain*, I know no instance of the success of such an experiment. Mr. Webster (of whose judgment and penetration I have no opinion whatever) would be well pleased to have it altered for the next season; but until you can alter Mrs. Warner, Mr. Strickland and Mr. J. Webster, I can see little real benefit to be derived from altering their parts. The mother must be the person whose passions are moved the most strongly, and there must be agency employed *on* Norman, and not through him. Therefore, whatever may be added to his words, his actions must still be subservient to stronger persons. I therefore cannot see that the result would recompense the labour. I read your preface to the 4th edition, and my impression was that you had left a record of the ignorance and spite of your assailants. I thought too that it was argumentatively put, and without temper; but I hear angry observations on it, and a pretty general opinion among your friends, that it was not worth your while, though they sympathise entirely with you. I shall look at it again, though I scarcely expect to change my opinion, for I read it with great attention. 1839. Æt. 36.

Webster asked me if I would speak to you about another play, which he is anxious about for the next season. Have you any thought of one? I think that if you could light upon a promising subject, it would be by far better policy than an alteration of *The Sea-Captain*.—Always and ever yours,

W. C. Macready.

This play, and more especially the preface to it, referred to in Macready's letter, called forth Thackeray's bitter attack upon its author in the *Yellowplush Papers*. Thackeray had indeed for a long time been one of Bulwer's most unsparing critics in the pages of *Fraser's Magazine*. So virulent and abusive were his attacks, that in later life he confessed himself ashamed, and on three separate occasions made apologies to Bulwer. One of these apologies was made to Forster in 1861, when he said that he would have given worlds to have burnt some of his writings, especially some lampoons written in his youth, which were the result of youthful jealousy. He then added that he greatly wished to see Bulwer and express his contrition to one for whom he had a boundless admiration.[1] The

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[1] I have no record that this wish was ever fulfilled.

1839. Æt. 36. other two apologies are contained in the following letters :—

W. M. Thackeray to Lady Blessington.

Kensington,
The Morning after.

Dear Lady Blessington—I whish to igsplain what I meant last night with regard to a certain great author. I have no sort of personal dislike (not that it matters much whether I have or not) to Sir E. L. B. L.; on the contrary, the only time I met him at the immortal Ainsworth's long ago I thought him very pleasant, and I know from his conduct to my dear little Blanchard that he can be a most generous and delicate-minded friend.[1] But there are sentiments in his writing which always anger me, big words which make me furious, and a premeditated fine writing against which I can't help rebelling. My antipathy don't go any further than this. What does it matter one way or the other, and what cause had I to select Sir H. Bulwer of all men in the world for these odious confidences? It was very rude. I am always making rude speeches and apologising for them, like a nuisance to society.

And now I remember how Sir B. Lytton spoke in a very different manner to a mutual friend about your very humble servant,

W. M. Thackeray.

W. M. Thackeray to Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton.

36 Onslow Square, Brompton,
June 21.

Dear Sir Edward Lytton—Looking over some American reprints of my books, I find one containing a preface written by me when I was in New York[1] in which are the following words:— 1839. Æt. 36.

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[1] See Vol. II. p. 134.

"The careless papers written at an early period and never seen since the printer's boy carried them away, are brought back and laid at the father's door, and he cannot, if he would, forget or disown his own children.

"Why were some of these little brats brought out of their obscurity? I own to a feeling of anything but pleasure in reviewing some of these juvenile, misshapen creatures, which the publisher has disinterred and resuscitated. There are two performances especially (among the critical and biographical works of the erudite Mr. Yellowplush) which I am very sorry to see reproduced, and I ask pardon of the author of *The Caxtons* for a lampoon which I know he himself has forgiven, and which I wish I could recall. I had never seen that eminent writer but once in public when this satire was penned, and wonder at the recklessness of the young man who could fancy such satire was harmless jocularity, and never calculate that it might give pain." κ.τ.λ.

I don't know whether you ever were made aware of this cry of *peccavi*; but with the book in which it appears just fresh before me, I think it fair to write a line to acquaint you with the existence of such an apology, and to assure you of the author's repentance for the past, and his present sincere goodwill with which he is—Yours most faithfully,

W. M. Thackeray.

Macready in his letter of December 3, 1839, deprecated the suggestion that *The Sea-Captain* should be altered, and recommended a new play as a preferable alternative. *The Sea-Captain* was, in fact, recast, and reappeared at a later date

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[1] In 1856.

1840. Æt. 37. under the title of *The Rightful Heir*; but in the meanwhile Bulwer adopted Macready's suggestion and set to work upon a new play. Having achieved conspicuous success in two serious dramas in verse, he now tried his hand at light prose comedy. In this new line he proved himself as successful as in his former efforts, for *Money*, the last of the series of plays which belong to this period, acquired a reputation quite as great as that of *Richelieu* or *The Lady of Lyons.* Though by no means equal to its predecessors in artistic merit, yet in popularity and durability it even surpassed them. As a comedy of manners it holds its own at the present day, and was selected by the present King as a typically English drama for representation at the gala performance given in honour of the visit of the German Emperor during the Coronation festivities of 1911. The play is first mentioned in a letter from Macready dated July 25, 1840.

"I hope," he says, "that you have not given up the comedy with which, as Forster described the story to me, I was very much struck. A successful comedy would achieve quite a sensation. Pray make one."

Soon after this Bulwer went abroad for his health, and he writes to Forster from Aix-la-Chapelle on August 26:—

I have at last succeeded in fixing a character on the young man (Macready), and the comedy is at least cast at present in the proper mould. Whether it will go on well I can't say yet. But the 1st Act and a half are really, I hope, good. The character is that of a half misanthrope, soured by past poverty and despising the world that rallies round his new fortune. The surface, irony and a half careless wit; beneath, a strong and passionate temperament. 1840. ÆT. 37.

Two days later he writes again:—

Aix-la-Chapelle is detestable; but I continue to improve, though gradually. All literary labour is sternly interdicted—but I creep on two or three pages a day with the Play. I fancy it is comedy and so far in a new *genre* that it certainly admits stronger and more real grave passion than the comedy of the last century. But is not that true to the time? Are we not more in earnest than our grandfathers? I want most especially Mrs. Glover. I have a widow, always gay and good-humoured, in love with Mr. Doleful,[1] always cynical and wretched. Mrs. Clifford could not do it, for there must be some comeliness, or something to do instead. Is Mrs. Orger available? but nothing like Mrs. Glover. Macready's part[2] is individualised, but difficult to act at present, alternations too quick from gaiety to passion. I shall oil him all over before I've done. I am now in Act 3, which I intend to end with Crockford's or some other Club. I must have an exact picture of a real Club. I have admitted many allusions to present manners, etc., throughout. But whether the whole will do I cannot say till I come to Act 5, where I see great difficulty and the want of a sudden catastrophe.

On September 1 he writes to say that he has reached the 5th Act, and gives to Forster an outline of the various characters. An inquiry

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[1] Name first given to Mr. Graves.

[2] Alfred Evelyn.

1840. ÆT. 37. from Forster as to whether the play was to have a prologue called forth the following letter :—

KNEBWORTH, STEVENAGE, HERTS,
Nov. 5, 1840.

Miserable Man ! What *insana rabies*, what gloomy and sinister frenzy, inspired thee with the thought of a prologue ? Prologue—I would as lief thou would'st talk to me of rat's bane ! Hast thou no remembrance, unfortunate being that thou art, of the fatal apparition of Mr. H. Wallack with his hat under his arm (would his head had been under it) stepping forward to pronounce the funeral oration upon La Vallière ? Dost thou not remember how from his ominous jowl slowly circled the ineffable and Stygian vapour which grew stiller and colder as it rolled from pit to gallery, and finally left the wretched listeners numbed and lifeless on their dewy seats ? Prologue ! And who, O Inspired One of Nox and Erebus, who was to better that solemn and mortiferous exordium, who was to ring that ghastly knell, ushering in the burial of the living ! Hang thyself, O Infante Forster — Sexton Webster or Sexton Phelps ! ! !

Never recur to that black and horrible suggestion, at which I vow that my hair bristled and my knees knocked, and the damps of death gathered on my brow. Prologue — why not a Sermon — a long, a grave, a funereal Sermon ? Go to—Go to—I see the blush of shame already mantling over thy ingenuous face. I spare all aggravation of the remorse which, if thou hast a conscience, if thou dost acknowledge reverence of the Gods, must already be busy at thy heart. Return thanks to the Powers that watch over human destinies that thy friend's innocent nursling has escaped thy murderous propositions—that the crime of deliberate infanticide is not added to thy sins. Repent—Amend —Redeem! 1840. ÆT. 37.

Having thus discharged on thee some of the vials of my pious indignation, I first ask thee if thou hast any thoughts of repairing thine iniquities by a visit here, where, despite thy guilt, thou shalt be warmly welcomed — yea, as if nothing had happened! I shall abide here yet several days, finding the air agree with me. Next, hast thou seen the rehearsals? Strickland, Wrench, Lacy, Webster, what are they? Have they a glimmering? Is there hope?

The play was produced at the Haymarket on December 8, and continued to run at that theatre till the end of Macready's engagement in the following May. Bulwer writes about it to a friend :—

I am sincerely rejoiced that you liked the play, especially the first night, when I own I thought it badly acted. The principal comic part in the play was Sir John Vesey whom Strickland made a dead weight throughout; Macready himself was a little unnerved by his own afflictions, and the whole thing was much too long. I hear it has gone more smoothly since. I am also peculiarly glad that you like Clara. I own I had an object in her delineation. It is so common for a young woman of a generous and romantic temper to think that there is something very noble in an imprudent marriage, that I wished to show that there were two sides to think of.

The first letter from Charles Dickens to Bulwer which I can find among his correspond-

1840. Æt. 37. ence was written immediately after the first performance of *Money*.

Charles Dickens to Edward Bulwer.

1 Devonshire Terrace,
York Gate,
Twelfth Dec. 1840.

Dear Sir Edward—Let me thank you for the copy of your comedy received this morning. I told Macready when he read it to me a few weeks since that I could not call to mind any play since *The Good-Natured Man*, so full of real, distinct, genuine character; and now that I am better acquainted with it, I am only the more strongly confirmed in this honest opinion.

You may suppose that "I was there to see" last Saturday. I most heartily and cordially congratulate you on its brilliant reception and success, which I hope will encourage you to other efforts in the same path. I feel assured that you will tread it alone.—Faithfully yours,

Charles Dickens.

In a preface written for a collected edition of his early plays, but not, so far as I am aware, ever published, Bulwer has put on record his own reading of the historical periods with which they deal. This chapter may therefore be concluded in the author's own words:—

The three Plays of *Richelieu*, *The Duchess de La Vallière*, and *The Lady of Lyons*, are illustrative of three periods, perhaps the most remarkable in the History of France, and may be said to constitute a dramatic series. In the time of Richelieu the French

Monarchy was consolidated on the ruins of a haughty and independent Noblesse—in that of Louis XIV. the policy was consummated, and the seigneur was humbled to the courtier. In the time which Claude Melnotte illustrates, the picture is completed—seigneur and courtier are alike merged in that aboriginal character from which they both proceed—the enthusiastic and successful soldier. In the time of Richelieu the people, in its own person awed and sullen, recedes from the stage, as the minister and the noble play their desperate game for power. In that of Louis XIV., effeminate and corrupted, the people stand, not invisible indeed, but in silence and shadow, behind the gorgeous throne which the victorious minister bequeathed to the successor of the monarch he ruled and humbled. In the time of the French Republic noble and king, coronet and crown, are alike gone; and the people reappears for a brief time in the character of a second youth, impetuous and ardent, capable of doing all things for glory, unwise to accomplish anything for self-government, resisting a world for the defence of freedom, and tendering freedom to the first warrior who dazzled its imagination and flattered its self-love. Compare the one man with the multiform people. Compare Richelieu with the Republic. How much wiser in his generation is the one man! Richelieu with his errors, his crimes, his foibles, and his cruelties, marches invariably to one result and obtains it. He overthrows but to construct. He destroys but to establish. He desired to create a great monarchy, and he succeeded. The people, with crimes to which those of the one man seem fair and spotless, with absurdities which turn the tragedy of massacre into farce, with energies to which all individual strength is as the leaf upon the whirlpool, sets up a democracy as the bridge to a despotism. The people vanishes as the trick of a pantomime, and the soldier

1840. with the iron crown of the Lombard, fills, solitary and
Æt. 37. sublime, the void space where the loud democracy roared and swayed. And this because in the individual there is continuity of purpose. The *one* is a man—the *many* a child.

Take the time of Richelieu, and we see the monk, the spy, the headsman, the dungeon, opening at one door on the scaffold, on the other to the king's closet. The Minister is the State—where the People? It has no existence in itself save at riotous fits and starts—it has a representative, capricious, frivolous, brave, cruel, but not without a justice in its cruelty, and that representative is the State—in other words, Armand Richelieu. Like all men who rise to supreme power, the great cardinal had the characteristics of the time and the nation that he ruled. In his faults or his merits he was eminently French. He represented the want of the French People at that precise period in their history. He reduced provinces into a Nation. He forced discordant elements, whether plebeian or patrician, into order. He did not make the people free, nor were they fit for it. But out of riotous and barbarous factions he called forth orderly subjects and a rough undeveloped system of civil Government. He never once appeared as the Enemy to the multitude. His cruelty was directed to their enemies.

In all those contests for power in which we see the worn, anxious, solemn image of the Cardinal Minister, with his terrible familiars of spy and hangman, he is still on that side where the French Nation should have ranged, building up the school beside the throne, and making at least a state, tho' the time and the men had not yet arrived for the creation of a People.

In the age of Louis XIV., whatever was best and highest in the national spirit, is to be found, not in the city or the court, but in the old provincial chivalry in whom something of the ideal qualities of the Norman or the French yet survived. It is a mistake into which the mighty but irregular genius of Victor Hugo and his inferior disciples have strangely fallen, to suppose that it is by a peasant or plebeian that the People are alone represented. When the poet of *Ruy Blas* actually places a philosophising valet on the stage as the representative of the brave, haughty and priest-ridden people of Spain, it is impossible not to feel that art and nature are alike debased. A people is not a class but a nation. The national spirit and the popular spirit are one and the same. In a prince, a noble, or a priest, we may often find the ideal of a generation more marked and illustrated than in a bricklayer or a carpenter, and sometimes indeed *vice versa*. 1840. Æt. 37.

In the time of Louis XIV., as in that of Richelieu, what we call a People did not yet exist. But a Nation did. Of that Nation the most heroic attributes were to be found, not in the lowest class—they were frightened slaves, not in the burgher class—they were servile imitators, but in those of the old warrior nobles who yet preserved the distinct and independent character of the ancient comrades of Henri Quatre, to whom yet belonged the essentials of chivalric poetry, honour, love and religion, the sword, the favour, and the cross.

Some such creation I have endeavoured, however feebly, to shadow forth in the Bragelone of *La Vallière*, which, take it altogether, is, I am convinced, the highest and the completest delineation of ideal character which I have yet accomplished either in the drama or romance.

In taking the period of the French Directory for the third play in this series, two ways of treating the time suggested themselves. One, being the larger and the loftier, was to make Paris itself the scene of action and the little great men of the brief day, pulling carelessly at those strings which at a distance moved and brought

1840. nearer to them, that machine of iron which under the Æt. 37. calm eyes of the young Corsican was already changing the world into a Camp. But for success on the stage, it may be doubtful whether the interest in such a mode of representing the time and circumstances, would not be too vague and general; whether the personages employed would not be too immediately near our own time; and whether, finally, if manners were admitted as one element of interest, the manners of that loose period were such as could safely be presented upon the stage. The humbler and the easier way of treating the subject was by recurring to passion rather than to humour, and let one man, selected from the people as their representative, show in his own irregular passions, his discursive but strong ambition, his dreams of equality, his melting into ardour for that martial life in which all equality is lost, something of that young and eager France which had sprung up from the Republic to die under the Empire. The old story which gave me the first suggestion of *The Lady of Lyons* appeared to me capable of being directed to such a purpose.

Of these three plays, perhaps I may be allowed to say that two, *Richelieu* and *The Lady of Lyons*, have met with a more than ordinary success, and appear still likely, some years after their first appearance, to retain their hold on the stage. *The Duchess de La Vallière*, the most polished in point of diction, and the highest in point of character, went the first night thro' an ordeal which a play a thousand times better could not have braved unscathed. The practical dramatist knows that there is no fault more perilous to a play than that of being too long; but from some grievous error in stage management the length of mine had been overlooked, and the curtain did not fall till half past eleven! viz.:—nearly two hours after the proper and orthodox close of a five-act play. In the next place, the important parts of Lauzun and 1840. Louis XIV. were performed by gentlemen whose very ÆT. 37. ability in their own more peculiar lines made the public less lenient to any failure they might incur in the representation of characters for which they were unsuited. In the composition of the play itself, the court intrigues occupying the 4th Act are unfamiliar and therefore uninteresting to an English audience; and the catastrophe of taking the veil wants on the stage to which Protestants are spectators, the awe which probably any reader has felt in the simplest narrative of that dreary close to the sins and sufferings of Madame de La Vallière. In spite of these defects, inherent and incidental, the extraordinary power which Mr. Macready threw into the part of Bragelone preserved the play from positive failure. It was performed nine nights and the manager wished to have continued it for twenty, but the author thought it had already served its purpose in affording him the experience of what to avoid in future. It is possible, however, that by a few alterations, *La Vallière* might be restored to the stage, with the same theatrical good fortune as has attended the later offspring of the same family; and perhaps at a future period the experiment will be at least adventured.

Of the comedy of *Money* which completes the volume, I may be allowed to say that it should be judged as one of that school of comedy which finds its material, not in wit but in character, and it is to any merit it may have in the latter that it probably owes its success on the stage. In the closet the comedy of wit usually pleases more than that of character, because in the closet sparkling dialogue at once catches and attracts the eye, while it requires some abstract reflection to ascertain those merits or defects in the delineation of character which the actor, if aware of the author's conception, brings immediately and visibly

1840. before an audience. Sheridan certainly has united with
Æt. 37. a rare and unapproachable felicity the two qualities, very antagonistic in themselves, of wit in dialogue and humour in character. Yet still, every sound critic and every student of human nature must allow that if *The School for Scandal* had less wit, it would have more truth. The harmony and genuineness of the characters are marred when we find that each is made an oracle for *bons mots.* If a character not meant to be witty is always uttering witticisms, it is not the character that speaks, it is the author.

It has been made an objection to the comedy of *Money* that it contains grave scenes, which from the excellence of the acting move even to the pathos of tears ; and some critics, not very well acquainted, I apprehend, with the elements and indeed with the general literature of comedy, have held the doctrine that a play thus mixed and varied is not entitled to the distinction of pure and genuine comedy. Voltaire, who was an excellent critic on all that belong to the philosophy of wit, has examined this question with great acuteness. In that comedy of Molière which ranks second amongst his masterpieces, viz. :—*The Misanthrope*, Voltaire, after noticing the general gravity of the conception and the plot, in answer to those who contend that comedy must necessarily be uniform either in the lightness or the exuberance of its gaiety, instances that great scene between Alceste and his Coquette, which, when adequately acted, moves to tears derived from even a painful source, and asks well if the introduction of such a scene, almost tragic in itself, mars the purity and completeness of the comedy? No, without it the developments of the dramatic passion portrayed would be weak and partial. "If all the comedy," he says, "were composed of such scenes, it certainly would cease to be comedy ; but without one such scene, the moral of this comedy, even the comic of this comedy, would be defective and unfulfilled." 1840. ÆT. 37.

But this is not all; the comedy of a time must be faithful to the character of the time itself. In this age men are more earnest than in that of the old artificial comedy. No matter in what department, the essence of the drama is still the faithful representation of life; and in 1840 we know that all life at least is not a jest. In the Old Comedy there is a laugh at everything most serious. But in that day (as an Edinboro' Reviewer has well remarked) the fashion in real life ran in the same direction. In Shakespeare the dishonour of a husband is the material for revenge and tragedy—in Molière and in Wycherly it is the most fruitful food for ridicule and burlesque. But these last writers as artists have their excuse. They are not writing for the pulpit or the academies, but for the stage; and they must embody the manners and morals that they observe around them, or their plays are not representations of the time. It is precisely because the age is more thoughtful that comedy, in its reflection, must be more faithful to the chequered diversities of existence, and go direct to its end thro' humours to truth, no matter whether its path lie thro' smiles or tears. All that can fairly be asked of comedy for the maintenance of its genuine character, is that the pathos it admits should not be derived from tragical sources—that it should spring naturally from the comic incidents and comic agencies in which its general spirit must exist. And if this be conceded, it will, I think, be found that whatever of serious sentiment belongs to *Money*, is not only neither episodical nor superfluous, but flows immediately from the most humorous portions of the play—the quackeries of Sir John Vesey and the comic intrigue of Evelyn.

From this volume the drama of *The Sea-Captain* is excluded, because it is my intention at some future

1840. opportunity to reconstruct it, and for that purpose I Æt. 37. have suffered it to fall out of print. For the rest, the plays now collected are to be considered always in reference to the one end, that they are written for the stage. Dramas not written for that object have the advantage of more uniform melody and polish of diction, of episodical passages of pure poetry or abstract philosophy, which the rapid and vivid passion of the stage admits but rarely, and therefore ordinary readers often imagine that fine lines are a proof of a fine play. But dramas that cannot be acted are not dramas, nor is it just to compare them with the actual and practical literature that sustains the ordeal of a miscellaneous audience. You may print them in 5 Acts, and you may call them what you please; but I for one can no more allow them to be good plays, unless actively delivered to the boards, than I will call a speech a good oration unless it is actually spoken.

With the publication of *Money* Bulwer's career of successful dramatic authorship came to an end. He did not immediately abandon the work of writing plays, but none of his later compositions in this field come up to the standard reached in the works mentioned in this chapter. His chief incentive in writing for the stage had been his friendship for Macready. He had already supplied his friend with three successful dramas which attracted crowded houses, and continued to hold the stage during the remainder of Macready's career as an actor. This service met with the most grateful appreciation, and until their deaths, which took place in the same year, a friendly correspondence was kept up between author and actor. 1840. Æt. 37.

During the next ten years Bulwer was a good deal abroad, and their intercourse was considerably interrupted. In this period he made one or two attempts to provide Macready with another play; but though he finished two and nearly completed a third, they were all abandoned for reasons which will be explained hereafter. With Macready's retirement from the stage in 1851 the motive for further efforts in this direction was withdrawn. The truth is that Bulwer's genius was never employed for long in any one channel. He was continually taking in a fresh stock of ideas; his marvellous imagination was always leading him into new directions. His retirement from Parliament in 1841 gave him more leisure for quiet study; and his writings, therefore, assumed during the next ten years a more contemplative character. He was now, in fact, at the commencement of the ripest and richest period of his literary career, to a consideration of which the next Book will be devoted.

END OF VOL. I

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