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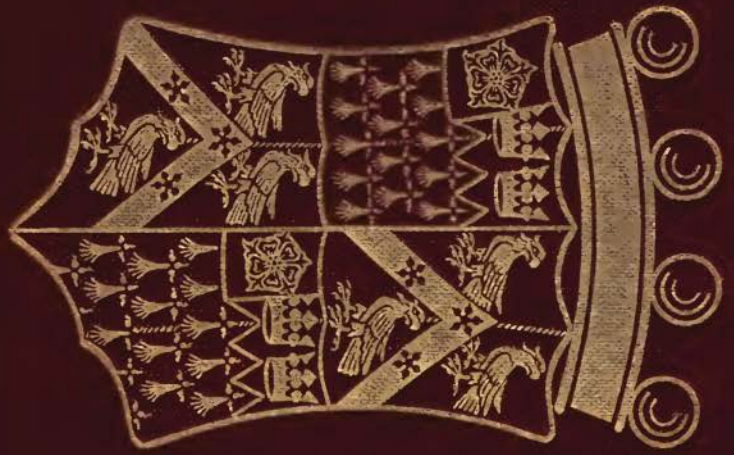

E. M. Ward R. A. del.

Emery Walker Sc.

Lord Lytton

1869

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THE LIFE

OF

EDWARD BULWER

FIRST LORD LYTTON

BY

HIS GRANDSON
THE EARL OF LYTTON

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
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BOOK IV

LITERARY

ELEVEN YEARS OUT OF PARLIAMENT

1841–1852

Literature became to him as art to the artist—as mistress to the lover—an engrossing and passionate delight. He loved it as a profession—he devoted to its pursuits and honours his youth, cares, dreams—his mind and his heart and his soul.

Ernest Maltravers.

CHAPTER I

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS, HEALTH AND HABITS

1836–1845

His heart was too solitary. He lived without the sweet household ties. The connections and amities he formed excited for a moment, but possessed no charm to comfort or to soothe.

The wear and tear of the brain—the absorbing passion for knowledge which day and night kept all his faculties in a stretch, made strange havoc with a constitution naturally strong.

Ernest Maltravers.

THE preceding book carried the story of Edward Bulwer's public life, as author and politician, from the date when his autobiography ends down to the year 1840. Having now arrived at the period when he passes from early manhood into middle life—the period when he himself began to review his career and make autobiographical notes, it may be well to devote a chapter to a few details of a more personal character. 1836. ÆT. 33.

To take up the thread of his personal life it will be necessary to go back to 1836—the year of his separation from his wife. In the mental distress which he suffered then, and in the succeeding years, when his wife began to pursue him with publications of a libellous character, Bulwer

1836. had at least one friend from whom he never
ÆT. 33. failed to receive sympathy and consolation. This friend was Lady Blessington. Her admiration of his writings was perhaps too generous for her to serve him as a helpful critic, but in all the troubles and difficulties of his private life the genuine affection of so intelligent and experienced a woman of the world, gave him the greatest possible support.

The following letters, selected from many which passed between them on this subject, will serve to illustrate the cordiality of their relations :—

Lady Blessington to Edward Bulwer.

[*End of April or beginning of May*, 1836.]

My dearest Friend—I have thought of you often during the last weeks, and not unfrequently of Mrs. Bulwer. I pity her exceedingly, because to understand her wrong-headedness, one must be Irish. If you belonged to that country you would feel as I do the difficulty of conquering the violence inherent to all who owe their birth to it, a violence originating in imagination so excitable and temper so irascible, that poor Reason can but rarely govern its victims. You cold English cannot excuse the faults of us hot-headed Irish, but we have many victims to atone for them. Still, I admit, that though I should like an Irishwoman for my mother or sister, for Irishwomen are naturally *chaste*, I should be afraid to have one for my wife, because they are all cursed with fiery tempers. I have seasoned mine down since I have become old, but when young I was most, most impetuous.

Edward Bulwer to Lady Blessington.

How kind in you, my dearest and most considerate of friends to write to me in a strain that you knew must be so acceptable. Mrs. Bulwer may deserve pity, but she has worn out and trod away all such moss and herbage from my heart, though it took a long time. However, I am glad that she goes out and amuses herself. I think there is a difference between violence of feeling and violence of temper, a passionate heart and a furious head; that you may have had the first I will not doubt. I give up to you the feeling and the heart. But permit me to remain a sceptic as to the head and the temper. Be sure that I shall not forget your invitation for the 8th of May. 1836. Æt. 33.

For my feelings, they are like those of a man who has been upon precipices, and amidst storms, and pursued by tormenting imps for a long night. In his despair he jumps down a rock, and the spell vanishes. He is bruised, sore, lacerated by the shock, but he is still grateful for the release. I desire no wound to Mrs. B. I would yet do all I can to leave her harmless, and I should feel this desire yet stronger if her friends had not thought it due to her to vilify me. But all this will pass away, even from my own memory; and as peace returns to my Ark it will bring the olive bough of my forgiveness to all others.—Most afftly. & gratefully yrs.,

E. L. B.

Lady Blessington to Edward Bulwer.

Thursday, June 16, 1836.

My dearest Friend—It is because I know how shattered your nerves are (and no wonder), and how much your health must consequently suffer, that I wished you to enjoy a fair day's quiet and fresh air.

1836. Æt. 33. Had I not both to offer you, I should positively have advised you to go to some retired and quiet Inn, as I know you require air, and solitude, to recover from the depression recent events have occasioned. Be assured I understand your feelings too well to allow you to be intruded on with me. You shall have a quiet room free from all interruption, breakfast alone, nay, dine alone, if you do not feel equal to our society, and the garden to yourself. You shall have your writing table and ingress and egress to the garden without meeting a soul. Only fancy yourself at an Inn, and not on a visit, and be assured a few days of quiet and fresh air will do more to recover your enfeebled health and depressed spirits than any other remedy. Neither Alfred nor I will expect you to make the agreeable, or fatigue you with attentions which, under your present feelings, would be, I know, insupportable. Only consider Gore House an Inn kept by a landlady that attends to the comfort of her guests, but does not wish to intrude on them, and come to it when you like.

If it be any consolation to you to know that there is one heart that truly and warmly feels for the pangs inflicted on yours, then be assured that mine does. I have met unkindness and ingratitude from some near and once dear to me, and for years the wounds inflicted could not and would not heal. Judge then how well I can understand your feelings, and how well I know the utter uselessness of commonplace consolations.

All that you say or write to me shall be sacred, for I am too proud for you to let others know what they could not understand, namely, that the fine sensibility that belongs to genius gives poignancy to every disappointment of the affections, and makes what appears trifling to others, misery to the so fatally gifted.—Ever your affte. and devoted friend,

M. Blessington.

Edward Bulwer to Lady Blessington.

KNEBWORTH, *Oct.* 20, 1836.

MY DEAREST FRIEND—Pray indulge me with a line to let me know how you are. I cannot bear the idea of your over-fatiguing yourself, and it seems to me as if the action of the mind had completely fallen on the nerves. I know what those nervous complaints are when produced by study. You must guard against them at the outset, and for Heaven's sake, don't do anything for the present. Lay your mind on the shelf. 1836. ÆT. 33.

My dearest Lady Blessington, there is hardly any person in the world I esteem and regard so much as yourself, or for whom I feel so grateful and warm an interest, and to prove this to you, however humbly, would be a delightful vent to my sentiments.

I left London rather suddenly for an appointment with Lord Melbourne upon a matter of some importance, and thence came here. The scene of one's childhood is the true moral bath of youth. One laves away years and cares in its quiet.

Dear D'Orsay! Only think, there is a family here (one of whom was always with Mrs. B. in her latter days of melancholy irritations, and who now corresponds with her) who, I understand, have got it into their heads that D'Orsay had some influence over me in my separation. D'Orsay, with whom from that day to this I have never spoken on the subject! I shall manage to dispel that notion, but I will not renew my tiresome invitation to him at present, lest it should seem to give colour to a notion which might expose him to figure in Mrs. B.'s meditated book. It would be too severe a penance in return for passing some dull days here to be subjected to a malice so unmerited. I had looked forward with so much pleasure to seeing him and felt so much his

1836. kindness in thinking of what must have been a great
ÆT. 33. bore to one so brilliant, that I feel this privation and persecution sensibly. But whatever Mrs. B. may do against *me*, I cannot bear the notion that she should wound me through my friends. God bless you, my dearest friend.—Most affecty. & faithfully yrs.,

E. L. B.

Lady Blessington to Edward Bulwer.

GORE HOUSE,
Sunday Evg.,
Oct. 23, 1836.

MY DEAREST FRIEND—The kindness of your letter melted me to tears, not that I am unused to kindness, for I have much to be grateful for, but that yours is so thoughtful, so delicate, so like yourself, that it affected me more than a thousand acts of friendship from others. The first day I ever saw you, I told Alfred that I would resign all my pretensions to physiognomy if yours was not the noblest and kindest nature that ever animated a human form. This opinion every year's knowledge of you has confirmed, and I do assure you I have thought better of mankind ever since I have known you.

Alfred desires me to offer you his most cordial regards. He feels the kindness of your motives, and is indignant that anyone could judge you so falsely as to imagine that you could be influenced by any human being on such a point as the one in question, in which your delicacy and dignity would alike preclude those even who most esteem you from hazarding an opinion. Mrs. B., be assured, is the dupe of persons envious of your fame, who use her as an instrument to assail you. Unhappily, she has not had prudence enough to foil such enemies, enemies still more injurious to her true interests and happiness than to yours.

Edward Bulwer to Lady Blessington.

MARGATE,
Oct. 3rd, 1837.

1837. Æt. 34.

MY DEAREST FRIEND—Many thanks for your most kind and flattering critique on *Maltravers*. I am charmed by your approbation, and hope the second series may please you as well. I have been whiling away the time here with nothing much better than the mere enjoyment of a smooth sea and fair sky, which a little remind me of my beloved Naples. Margate and Naples—what association! After all, a very little could suffice to make us happy, were it not for our own desires to be happier still. If we could but reduce ourselves to mechanism, we could be contented. Certainly, I think as we grow older, we grow more cheerful, externals please us more; and were it not for those dead passions which we call Memories, and which have ghosts no exorcism can lay, we might walk on soberly to the future, and dispense with excitement by the way. But for me, I cannot long be alone with the Past. I must ever be busied with little anxieties created for myself, in order to escape from the terrible stillness within. Hence an industry and restlessness not really natural to me. Once I was idleness itself. I hate my *métier*, but I go on with it, and still fancy, like the tradesman behind his counter, that the day will come when I may be happy and retire. Vain hope! but it helps to steal the ground from under us, and bring us nearer to the Grave. If we cannot stop time, it is something to shoe him with felt and prevent his steps from creaking.

The subject of his domestic trouble mentioned in these letters is also referred to at the beginning of a diary of his daily thoughts and occupations, which Bulwer began to write in 1838. Un-

1838. Æt. 35. fortunately, this was only kept up from the 22nd of May till the 4th of June, and therefore affords the briefest possible record of his personal life. It is nevertheless an interesting revelation of his inner thoughts at this time.

"I begin this journal," he says, "in a critical and anxious period of life. On one side there is much that is bright and prosperous, but doubt, care, and even terror on the reverse. I am in the prime of life; I have made a name; I have but few rivals in literary reputation. I have mastered, especially during this session, the most arduous difficulties in a political career. I have won a not inconsiderable station in Parliament. This is one side of the medal. On the other, I am uncertain whether I can keep my position in letters. My foes are numerous, and the public, I fear, will get weary of my name. But that thought vexes me not. Again, my worldly prospects are clouded and uncertain. Neither does that thought vex me. Again, my health is precarious; my constitution, always delicate, has upon it incessant demands of labour and excitement; London does not agree with me; Parliament fatigues and exhausts me. I may die before I have fulfilled my destinies or unfolded half my powers. I may die before I have realised a fortune necessary for the claims of those most dear to me. I may die before I have raised in my behalf the charitable and just judgments of the world against the calumnies and falsehoods which the woman who slept upon my bosom will engrave upon my tomb. But this, too, is no very haunting thought. No, the grief and the fear that gnaw me, that darken the day, and sour enjoyment, honours and hopes, are in the conduct of the mother of my children. Passions that never listen to reason, a

crafty and deliberate malignity are ever at work against me. I tremble every day lest my domestic sores should be dragged still more into light, and all that is most sacred in men's hearths and homes exposed to all that is most galling in public gossip. True, I can defend myself, but my defence is against the bearer of my name, the mother of my children. Heaven knows what I have borne and how forborne, what sacrifices I made in marriage, what indulgences I showed afterwards, how often I forgave before I was stung into separation, and how anxiously even then I desired to secure peace of mind and an unspotted name to my bitterest foe. My return has been slander industriously circulated, secrets indecently exposed, letters of the most solemn privacy treacherously revealed, garbled and glossed to make love itself bear the designs of hate."

1838. Æt. 35.

The journal continues with a daily record of engagements, literary and political labours, and personal incidents. One entry is interesting in the light of recent developments in shipbuilding :—

Drove to Limehouse to see the largest steam vessel yet built. Glad old England has the start of America. Crowds of people. Got into the vessel and went a little way up the river. Miss Landon and her affianced on board. Poor dear girl, I pity her.

The following day he describes a dinner at Frederick Byng's :—

Moore most charming, full of anecdote and flowing with wit like a fountain with wine. Fonblanque there —the English wit *versus* the Irish—dry, sharp, pungent. When with good talkers I like listening. I have no

1838. Æt. 35. impulse to shine in *salons*, tho' now and then I have my vein. Fonblanque most eulogistic of my speech.[1] Took Sheil to the House. He, too, most encomiastic. He says Stanley declares the Government would do anything for me if I would suggest what. No, I will wait till my fruit is riper. I will not be a subordinate. Besides, I don't quite agree with these men. The House immensely full. Two nights occupied about a polling booth in Roxburghshire! Noble party question! Delaying tithes in Ireland, Municipal Corporations, the lives and properties of thousands in the West Indies for a polling booth in Hawick; and then they wonder that I dislike Parliament. Divided at half past 12. Home. Proofs for *Chronicle*.[2] Bed.

The following entry may perhaps be given as an illustration of his occupations :—

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, four days I have omitted from the register—either too idle or too busy. I have sent a short review to *The Edinburgh*; have read correspondence of the Duchess of Marlboro'; her bitter experience saddens yet pleases; she knew the world of public men; have played with a few Greek books and read a charming French novel—*Riche et Pauvre*. In the world, crowds of engagements as usual. Saw the young Queen at the Duke of Sussex's. What grace she has, what fairy royalty; in a rose coloured dress she seemed the rose herself, Queen of the flowers. Saw Kean in Othello, external vigour great, no metaphysics in conception.

Friday, June 1st. Showers and gloom. In vain I strive to write. I am unsettled. Abused in *The Times* for my defence of the Negroes in a phrase reflecting on

[1] On the Emancipation of the W. Indian Slaves.

[2] *The Monthly Chronicle* which he was editing at that time.

"mysteries at the Albany." Mrs. B.'s calumnious falsehood again! How great a lie that was, confessed to be so in her own writing—yet can it ever be contradicted? Well, well, I shall go out and shake off the nightmare. Dined with my Mother—went thence to Lady Osborne's, who asked me if I had not originally been shy, and fancied she saw a struggle between my real nature and my artificial career. 1838. Æt. 35.

The last entry which I shall quote is of interest for its reference to the dandyism of the day :—

Went to Holland House. Lady Cowper[1] there in widow's weeds, still handsome and very intelligent and interesting. She is associated with my first *beaux jours*, the early tickets for Almacks and my first fine lady love. Lady Holland asked if Boz was presentable, and became the condescending with a man of genius, a thing not to be forgiven; so I growled and snapped. Talked by the window of the long library looking on the moonlight of sentiment and politics—dreams both. A few years hence and from the same place will be talked the same matters, as if our hearts had never beat. Drove thence to Babbage's[2] all the world and his wife. Lady Osborne curious touching the shyness and the dandyism. As for both, both are natural. God gave my soul an exterior abode, and the very fact that there is a soul within the shell, makes me think the shell not to be neglected. There is a poetry in dress. All our great ancestors who were gentlemen had something of the Beau—Aristotle as well as Alcibiades. A Greek was an exquisite for excellence. So again the Romans, and so the Elizabethan heroes,

[1] Afterwards Lady Palmerston.

[2] Charles Babbage (1792–1871), the mathematician, author of the famous "calculating machine."

1838–1843. Ætat. 35–40. Raleigh, Sidney, etc. Look to their portraits. I have it in my Norman blood. The Normans were the gentlemen of the world. As for conceit in manner or conversation, of that they acquit me. Let them fall foul of the garb if they will. Like the camel-driver, I give up my clothes to the camel, let him trample on them and fancy he crushes me.[1]

This journal, although it covers a very short space of time, serves to throw some light upon the manner in which its author's time was occupied, and the hours which he devoted to serious literary work. Throughout his life his industry was incessant. His published works alone afford sufficient evidence of this fact, but his note-books and private correspondence show that he was also a voluminous reader and letter writer. Moreover, the number of incomplete works — novels, essays, plays, poems and undelivered speeches, which are to be found among his papers—are almost as numerous as those which were completed and published.

Bulwer hardly seems to have been conscious himself of the amount of time which was consumed in these labours, if one may judge from his own account of his methods of work contained in a speech which he delivered to a boys' school in 1854 :—

"Many persons," he said, "seeing me so much engaged in active life, and as much about the world as if I had never been a student, have said to me 'When

[1] See *Ernest Maltravers*, Book vi., chap. v., p. 250, Knebworth Edition.

do you get the time to write all your books? How on earth do you contrive to do so much work?' I shall perhaps surprise you by the answer I make. The answer is this—'I contrive to do so much, by never doing too much at a time.' 1838–1843. Æt. 35–40.

"A man, to get through work well, must not overwork himself—or if he do too much to-day, the reaction of fatigue will come, and he will be obliged to do little to-morrow. Now, since I began really and earnestly to study, which was not till I had left college and was actually in the world, I may perhaps say that I have gone through as large a course of general reading as most men of my time. I have travelled much, I have mixed much in politics and in the various business of life, and in addition to this, I have published somewhere above sixty volumes, some upon subjects requiring much special research. And what time do you think, as a general rule, I have devoted to study—to reading and writing? Not more than three hours a day, and when Parliament is sitting, not always that. But then, during those hours I have given my whole attention to what I was about. Thus, you see it does not require so very much time at a stretch to get through a considerable amount of brain work, but it requires application regularly and daily continued. If you pour once a week a whole bucketful of water on a stone, you leave no impression behind. But if you continually let fall a drop on the stone, the proverb tells you that you wear a hole in it at last.

"When a certain political adventurer who had made his way through all the prisons of Europe was asked how he managed it, he said:—'A very small file will eat through iron bars, if you file an hour or two every night'; and so, in the stern dungeons of mortal ignorance, file at the bars—steadily when alone; and no prison

1838–1843. Æt. 35–40.

can detain you long from escape into free air and celestial light."

This was excellent advice to give to a boys' school, but although it professes to be based upon personal experience, it is entirely at variance with the facts of his own life as revealed by other evidence. It is true that he worked continuously and not by fits and starts; true also that during his hours of study he gave his whole attention to what he was about; but it is certainly not true that he never worked more than three hours a day, or that he never overworked himself. At many periods of his life he must have worked almost day and night for weeks together. By no other means could he have accomplished what he did. I have already recorded that his two most important dramatic works, *Richelieu* and *The Lady of Lyons*, were written in little over a fortnight each, and the novel of *Harold* was completed in less than a month. He was frequently engaged upon two novels simultaneously,[1] and, apart from his literary and political work, his life was as fully occupied as that of most people with social engagements, reading, foreign travel, and recreations.

His chief form of physical exercise was riding. Wherever he happened to be living, he nearly always managed to keep a horse, and his daily rides or walks did much to counteract the strain on his health created by excessive brain work.

[1] *Eugene Aram* and *Godolphin*, *Lucretia* and *The Caxtons*, *Kenelm Chillingly* and *The Parisians*, were written simultaneously.

Of his personal appearance I ought, perhaps, to say something. The portraits reproduced in these volumes will give a general idea of his physiognomy. As a young man he was clean shaven except for the side-whiskers, so characteristic of that period; between 1840 and 1855 he had a moustache as well as the whiskers; after 1855 he grew a small imperial, and from 1865 to the end of his life he allowed his beard to grow in full. In his youth he was most extravagantly dressed in the gaudiest fashions of the dandy of that day; later in life he grew less careful of his appearance. The mornings he would spend in dressing-gown and slippers, either at work in his study, or wandering in profound reverie, like a sleep-walker. At luncheon-time he would appear well-groomed and affable. 1838–1843. Æt. 35–40.

My mother has thus described her recollection of him:—

He was of middle height, about 5 feet 10, I should think; but a very tall hat and a habit of throwing back his head made him appear taller. His hair and beard were dyed a reddish-brown. He had piercing eyes, and a large, generous mouth, which opened wide when he laughed, and showed large and very white teeth. His feet and hands were small and well-shaped, the fingers long and expressive. He hardly spoke at breakfast-time and was very alarming. After a short time he would throw his tea into a glass and carry it off to his study, where he remained for the rest of the morning. At luncheon-time he reappeared, and was then very sociable. He liked in the early afternoon to

1838–1843. drive round the county in a large open barouche. He
Æt. 35–40. would talk generally at dinner, and in the evening liked to have singing and music. When with a few friends he would make his musical box play, or sit down to a game of cards, which he played with skill. He used a great deal of gesture in speaking, both in private conversation and also on the platform. He was much concerned about the choice of names for the children, and insisted that the characters should suit the names. He wrote to me about the different qualities of milk for babies, and thought that a wet nurse should be Irish.

My mother has also told me of the awe which he inspired in her eldest boy, who used to exclaim with relief when he left the room, "Man gone!"

But all this belongs rather to the end of his life, for my mother's acquaintance with him only began in 1864—the year of her marriage.

So far as I am able to gather from various sources, Bulwer used to work regularly from breakfast to luncheon, and begin again after dinner, often working late into the night. One who knew him intimately during the greater part of his life, says of him :—

He never varied in his habits. Every morning he wrote up till 12 or 1, then dressed and went out and wrote again in the evening till 12, 1, or 2.

Throughout his life he was an inveterate smoker.

"A pipe," he says, in *Night and Morning*, "it is a great soother—a pleasant comforter. Blue devils fly

before its honest breath. It ripens the brain ; it opens the heart ; and the man who smokes, thinks like a sage and acts like a Samaritan." 1843. ÆT. 40.

His smoking habits are thus described by Dr. Garret of Hastings, who attended him occasionally in his later years :—

After breakfast the pipe was brought into requisition in his sitting-room, a weapon, or instrument, some six or seven feet in length.[1] Observing, as I invariably did, a large quantity of Latakia tobacco spread out on his mantel-piece, I said one day :—"You appear to me, Sir Edward, to smoke a great deal ;" to which he replied, in his usual cheerful, good-humoured way, "Well, indeed, I do not. I take a few whiffs, and then I put my pipe down." Not being exactly satisfied with this denunciation, I took the freedom of inquiring of his valet how much tobacco his master really consumed. He informed me that Sir Edward usually smoked from eight to ten ounces of tobacco in a week, "and," said he, "I always place seven cigars on the little table beside Sir Edward's bed, and when I go into his room at eight o'clock in the morning (for being rather deaf the servant's footsteps were not readily heard), if I see two cigars left I awake him, and take his orders ; if I find that he has smoked them all, I let him lie another hour."

To the continued strain imposed upon his health by his intellectual labour, was added in 1843 the burden of a great sorrow. On December 19 of this year his mother died, and for a time he was quite prostrated by the sorrow of this bereavement. To his mother he had

[1] See illustration on p. 440.

1843. Æt. 40. been united by the closest ties of sympathy and affection from his earliest childhood. Only once had any serious disagreement arisen to mar the perfect harmony of their relations, and the bitterness caused by his marriage had long since been forgotten. The love and reverence which he had felt for her, and the sincerity with which he mourned her death, may be gathered from the following letters :—

Edward Bulwer to Lady Blessington.

I feel deeply and from my heart your kind letter. Hereafter it may console me, now nothing can. Every hour deepens the conviction of my loss. No one else knew my mother as I did, and I never till now knew half her great qualities and noble heart. In her I have lost a thousand ties in one. It was almost the great affection of my life. Her weary death-bed was sad beyond words, and yet it was no disease from which one can say "Happy are those released." She was so young of heart and mind, so full of energy and will. The soul seemed to live on when the body was a shadow. All about her was so high-hearted even in suffering and death. Hitherto I have had one shelter in this dreary world—it is now gone for ever. Nothing that reminds me I have ever been young is left. Every hour that poor face is before me. In vain I had preparation ; to the last I clung to hope. After they said she was dead I felt her hand press mine. I have but one comfort, such as it is, that I am comfortless. I should loathe myself if I grieved less. I believe and I hope that that grief will last ; it is the last earthly link between us. I would not break it for all the joys or triumphs I dreamed of at sixteen. People now-a-

days seldom mourn for parents, they think it natural the old should die. But between me and the dead there was so much more than between parent and son generally, and it was scarcely possible to associate so much elasticity and freshness with the idea of age. God bless you for your kind word in season.—Your affte. friend, 1843. Æt. 40.

E. L. B.

Edward Bulwer to Lady Osborne.

All that I have met in the world of sympathy, generosity, and faithful friendship, is identified with the name of Mother. The thought of that loss seems to me like the taking away of the candle from a child who is terrified at the dark. It is a protection and a safety gone, a dreary solitude begun ; and all we have left is to wish the night were gone and the morrow come.

Edward Bulwer to Mrs. Hall.[1]

My dear Mrs. Hall—Believe me grateful for your kind sympathy and condolence, and sincerely grieved to hear you anticipate an affliction similar to my own—an affliction for which no preparation prepares—which is never known in its vast irreparable extent till all is over. Do not talk to me of that hateful, bitter thing called Literature, the vying with little men which shall be calumniated the most. No generous mind ever cared for the brawls and broils of reputation, but as their result pleased some other. Who can take—not laurels (nowadays there are no such things)—third editions and Quarterly Reviews to the grave? From my head the great shelter-roof of life is gone. It may

[1] Anna Maria Hall (1800–1881), the wife of Mr. S. C. Hall and the authoress of many once-popular novels.

1844. Æt. 41. be mine to succour others—the sole being who succoured me is no more. The tie that is rent was not the common one, holy as it always is, between child and parent. In that tie were enwoven half the links that make life endurable. My mother proud of me! No, I was proud of *her*. All I have gained, all I have, were hers—education, knowledge, the little good, the little talent, that may be mine, all are but feeble emanations from the most powerful mind, the greatest heart, I ever knew. No one understood her as I did, and in the bitterest moments of my grief I have felt that I never mourned her enough, a mourning, nevertheless, that my heart will wear till it cease to beat. God grant that your own fears may not be realised, and that you may be long spared the anguish for which, in me, fortitude is a vain pretence and comfort a hollow word.—Yours faithfully,

E. B. Lytton.

Hertford Street,
Monday.

This additional burden produced in 1844 a complete breakdown in health. The causes of this illness and the manner in which he recovered from it, Bulwer has recorded in an article (afterwards published as a pamphlet) entitled *Confessions of a Water Patient*, which he contributed to *The New Monthly Magazine* (then under Mr. Harrison Ainsworth's editorship) in 1845 :—

I have been a workman in my day. I began to write and to toil, and to win some kind of a name, which I had the ambition to improve, while yet little more than a boy. With a strong love for study of books—with yet greater desire to accomplish myself in the knowledge of men, for sixteen years I can con-

ceive no life to have been more filled by occupation than mine. What time was not given to action was given to study; what time not given to study, to action—labour in both! To a constitution naturally far from strong, I allowed no pause nor respite. The wear and tear went on without intermission—the whirl of the wheel never ceased. 1844–1845. Æt. 41–42.

Sometimes, indeed, thoroughly overpowered and exhausted, I sought for escape. The physicians said, "Travel," and I travelled. "Go into the country," and I went. But at such attempts at repose all my ailments gathered round me—made themselves far more palpable and felt. I had no resource but to fly from myself—to fly into the other world of books, or thought, or reverie—to live in some state of being less painful than my own. As long as I was always at work it seemed that I had no leisure to be ill. Quiet was my hell.

At length the frame thus long neglected, patched up for a while by drugs and doctors, put off and trifled with as an intrusive dun, like a dun who is in his rights—brought in its arrears, crushing and terrible, accumulated through long years. Worn out and wasted, the constitution seemed wholly inadequate to meet the demand.

The exhaustion of toil and study had been completed by great anxiety and grief. I had watched with alternate hope and fear the lingering and mournful death-bed of my nearest relation and dearest friend—of the person around whom was entwined the strongest affection my life had known—and when all was over, I seemed scarcely to live myself.

At this time, about the January of 1844, I was thoroughly shattered. The least attempt at exercise exhausted me. The nerves gave way at the most ordinary excitement, a chronic irritation of that vast

1844–1845. surface we call the mucous membrane, which had defied
Æt. 41–42. for years all medical skill, rendered me continually liable to acute attacks, which from their repetition, and the increased feebleness of my frame, might at any time be fatal. Though free from any organic disease of the heart, its action was morbidly restless and painful. My sleep was without refreshment. At morning I rose more weary than I laid down to rest.

Without fatiguing you and your readers further with the *longa cohors* of my complaints, I pass on to record my struggle to resist them. I have always had a great belief in the power of WILL. What a man determines to do—that in ninety-nine cases out of the hundred I hold that he succeeds in doing. I determined to have some insight into a knowledge I had never attained since manhood—the knowledge of health.

After describing the failure of all his attempts to recover his health by attention to diet, exercise, early hours, and suspension from study, he mentions the interest aroused in him by reading an account of the "Water Cure" practised by Priessnitz at Gräfenberg in Austrian Silesia. He at once resolved to try the cure; but in his feeble state of health felt quite unequal to a journey to Germany. The difficulty was removed by the discovery that the same system was being practised by Dr. Wilson at a hydropathic establishment at Malvern; and thither he went for a nine weeks course of treatment, which completely restored him to health.

For an account of the cure, and the almost magical transformation which it effected in his health, I must refer the reader to the pamphlet

itself, which is published in his collected works ;[1] but I cannot resist giving a few quotations here as illustrations of the fact that, on the subject with which the pamphlet deals, Bulwer was a pioneer much in advance of his time. In the days when bleeding and drugs were the usual remedies prescribed by doctors for human maladies, he discovered for himself, and in the teeth of professional opposition, the salutary effect of living nearer to nature, which forms the basis of most of the modern reforms in the study of health and the treatment of disease :— 1844–1845. Æt. 41–42.

I resolved then to betake myself to Malvern. On my way through town I paused, in the innocence of my heart, to inquire of some of the faculty if they thought the water-cure would suit my case. With one exception, they were unanimous in the vehemence of their denunciations.

Granting even that in some cases, especially of rheumatism, hydropathy had produced a cure, to my complaints it was worse than inapplicable—it was highly dangerous—it would probably be fatal. I had not stamina for the treatment—it would fix chronic ailments into organic disease—surely it would be much better to try what I had not yet tried.

What had I not yet tried? A course of prussic acid! Nothing was better for gastrite irritation, which was no doubt the main cause of my suffering. If, however, I were obstinately bent upon so mad an experiment, Doctor Wilson was the last person I should go to. I was not deterred by all these intimidations, nor seduced by the salubrious allurements

[1] *Pamphlets ana Sketches.* Knebworth Edition, 1875. Messrs. Routledge & Son.

1844–1845. Æt. 41–42.

of the prussic acid under its scientific appellation of hydrocyanic.

A little reflection taught me that the members of a learned profession are naturally the very persons least disposed to favour innovation upon the practices which custom and prescription have rendered sacred in their eyes. A lawyer is not the person to consult upon bold reforms in jurisprudence. A physician can scarcely be expected to own that a Silesian peasant will cure with water the diseases which resist an armament of phials. And with regard to the peculiar objections to Doctor Wilson, I had read in his own pamphlet attacks upon the orthodox practice sufficient to account for—perhaps to justify—the disposition to depreciate him in return.

Still my friends were anxious and fearful ; to please them I continued to inquire, though not of physicians, but of patients. I sought out some of those who had gone through the process. I sifted some of the cases of cure cited by Doctor Wilson. I found the account of the patients so encouraging, the cases quoted so authentic, that I grew impatient of the delay. I threw physic to the dogs, and went to Malvern.

. . . . .

The remedy is not desperate ; it is simpler, I do not say than any dose, but than any course of medicine—it is infinitely more agreeable—it admits no remedies for the complaints which are inimical to the constitution. It bequeaths none of the maladies consequent on blue pill and mercury, on purgatives and drastics, on iodine and aconite, on leeches and the lancet. If it cures your complaint, it will assuredly strengthen your whole frame ; if it fails to cure your complaint, it can scarcely fail to improve your general system.

. . . . .

When I now see some tender mother coddling and physicking, and preserving from every breath of air,

and swaddling in flannels, her pallid little ones, I long to pounce upon the callow brood, and bear them to the hills of Malvern, and the diamond fountain of St. Anne's. With what rosy faces and robust limbs I promise they shall return. Alas! I promise and preach in vain—the family apothecary is against me, and the progeny are doomed to rhubarb and the rickets. 1844–1845. Æt. 41–42.

. . . . .

Let him who has to go through severe bodily fatigue try first whatever—wine, spirits, porter, beer—he may conceive most generous and supporting; let him then go through the same toil with no draughts but from the crystal lymph, and if he does not acknowledge that there is no beverage which man concocts so strengthening and animating as that which God pours forth to all the children of nature, I throw up my brief.

. . . . .

And now, to sum up—I desire in no way to overcolour my own case; I do not say that when I first went to the water-cure I was afflicted with any disease immediately menacing to life—I say only that I was in that prolonged and chronic state of ill-health which made life at the best extremely precarious. I do not say that I had any malady which the faculty could pronounce incurable. I say only that the most eminent men of the faculty had failed to cure me. I do not even now affect to boast of a perfect and complete deliverance from all my ailments. I cannot declare that a constitution naturally delicate has been rendered Herculean, or that the wear and tear of a whole manhood have been thoroughly repaired.

What might have been the case had I not taken the cure at intervals, had I remained at it steadily for six or eight months without interruption, I cannot do more than conjecture; but so strong is my belief that the

1844–1845. result would have been completely successful, that I
ÆT. 41–42. promise myself, whenever I can spare the leisure, a long renewal of the system.

These admissions made, what have I gained meanwhile to justify my eulogies and my gratitude?—an immense accumulation of the capital of health. Formerly, it was my favourite and querulous question to those who saw much of me, "Did you ever know me twelve hours without pain or illness?" Now, instead of these being my constant companions, they are but my occasional visitors. I compare my old state and my present to the poverty of a man who has a shilling in his pocket, and whose poverty is therefore a struggle for life, with the occasional distresses of a man of £5000 a year, who sees but an appendage endangered, or a luxury abridged.

. . . . .

To such, who will so far attach value to my authority, that they will acknowledge, at least, I am no interested witness, for I have no institution to establish, no profession to build up; I have no eye to fees; my calling is but that of an observer—as an observer only do I speak, it may be with enthusiasm, but enthusiasm built on experience and prompted by sympathy; to such, then, as may listen to me, I give this recommendation: pause if you please, inquire if you will, but do not consult your doctor. I have no doubt he is a most honest, excellent man, but you cannot expect a doctor of drugs to say other than that doctors of water are but quacks.

. . . . .

Since that day the number of doctors who, because they have departed somewhat from old traditions, are contemptuously dismissed by the medical world as cranks or quacks, has largely

increased, and consequently much of the argument contained in this pamphlet is now generally accepted. Though reliance upon drugs is still prevalent both among doctors and their patients, yet the value of fresh air, simple diet, temperate habits, and physical exercises, is now recognised to a degree undreamt of in 1845. The open-air treatment for consumption, the teaching of Dr. Haig on diet, the manual treatment of the Swedish doctors for every variety of complaint, the provision of baths in even the poorest homes, the attention devoted to physical training in the National Schools—all these things are familiar to the present generation ; and the study of health is beginning to be recognised as the duty of every individual instead of merely the profession of a few. In the period covered by this biography, however, such ideas were completely unknown, and nothing has struck me more, in the many letters which I have had to read, than the ever-recurring allusions to ill-health, and the amazing treatment prescribed for it, which appears to-day even worse than the maladies themselves. The remedy recommended in this pamphlet must have appeared to the generation for which it was written as strange and unconvincing as the advice given by the Hebrew prophet to the Syrian leper, to dip three times in Jordan and be clean.

1844–1845. Æt. 41–42.

CHAPTER II

ZANONI AND OCCULT STUDIES

1842

Of all the weaknesses which little men rail against, there is none that they are more apt to ridicule than the tendency to believe. And of all the signs of a corrupt heart and a feeble head, the tendency of incredulity is the surest. Real philosophy seeks rather to solve than to deny.

Zanoni.

1842. ÆT. 39. WITH the object of keeping together the more personal incidents recorded in the last chapter, I have omitted to mention the literary work on which Bulwer was engaged since 1840. The period of his retirement from active political life was in some respects the richest period of his literary career. He reached at this time the summit of his attainment in no fewer than three of the varied directions in which he employed his literary faculties. In purely imaginative and romantic composition he produced what he regarded as his masterpieces, in *Zanoni* (1842) and *King Arthur* (1848), the one in prose, the other in verse; to his historical romances he added *The Last of the Barons* (1843) and *Harold* (1848), whilst in *The Caxtons* (1849) and *My Novel* (1853) he

struck out an entirely new line, and these two books are probably the best and most durable of all his works. 1842. Æt. 39.

After the production of *Money* in 1840, Bulwer returned once more to the domain of fiction. In January 1841 he published *Night and Morning*, a melodramatic story of adventure in his most flamboyant style. I remember the breathless interest which this book excited in me when I first read it as a boy, and the description of the discovery of the gang of coiners and the death of Gautrey their leader, still remains one of the most vivid impressions which I received when first reading my grandfather's works. The sensational character of the story, however, and the extravagance of its style, make it more difficult of appreciation by a later generation. Though few will now be found to attach much value to this novel, it is interesting to note that it elicited a strong tribute of praise from Macaulay :—

"I cannot end," he wrote, in a letter to the author, "without telling you with how much pleasure and interest I have just read one of your books, which I did not read, I scarcely know why, at the time when it first appeared—*Night and Morning*. It moved my feelings more than anything you have written, and more than a man of forty-three, who has been much tossed about the world, is easily moved by works of the imagination."

In the following year was published the first of the important works of Bulwer's extra-

1842. Æt. 39. parliamentary period. *Zanoni*, his first mystic novel, though not completed till the beginning of 1842, was conceived several years earlier. In 1835 his reading had included some mediæval treatises upon astrology and the so-called "occult sciences"; and while his mind was occupied with these studies, the character of Mejnour and the main outlines of the story of *Zanoni* were inspired by a dream. The ideas thus received were first embodied in an unfinished sketch of the subsequent novel, and contributed to *The Monthly Chronicle* in 1838 under the title of *Zicci*. In no letters do I find any reference to the original dream, nor to the author's ideas at the time he was writing *Zanoni*. The first mention of the book occurs in the following letters to John Forster :—

Edward Bulwer to John Forster.

CRAVEN COTTAGE, FULHAM,
Feb. 12, 1842.

It is an age, my dear Forster, since I have seen or heard of you, wherefore I write, fearing lest you might have strayed into one of those huge folios and disappeared for ever from the outer world. I know by experience that those wizard old books are full of holes and pitfalls. I myself once fell into one and remained there 45 days and 3 hours without food, crying for help as loud as I could, but nobody came. You may believe that or not, just as you please, but it's true!

I have been taken up with my children for the last two or three weeks, and have anxiously left Teddy at

what seems to me an excellent school. I go to Knebworth. When I return shall I have "cakes and ale?" 1842. Æt. 39.

I saw Macready in all the pomp of an overflowing house, a most successful afterpiece, a most triumphant opera, and a most gorgeous private box. But in his pomp was sadness! He sighed at congratulations and complained of the harassments of greatness, and the uncertainty of success. Unhappy Man! When he gets a million, he will have arrived at the summit of his sorrows.

I *had* thought at one time of a comic subject for him, but I feel that it would be almost an insult to talk of comedy while his melancholy overflows with his houses. By and by, if ever thinning boxes lighten his heart—*nous verrons!*

You will receive *Zanoni* next week. I don't know whether *you* will like it. But it is wonderful, read in the proper spirit—nothing like it in the language. If you want to spite me, and convince the world of Mr. Pelham's modesty, publish that opinion as fresh from himself.

Can you tell me where I can get the fullest particulars of the great Earl of Warwick—temp: Edw. IV.? Has one of the modern compilers arranged the various authorities into a readable whole—any life of him? But no! I suppose in order to spite me.

Letters to Knebworth will find me and will, I hope, report of your progress thro' the Great History and your escape from the folios.—Adieu, Yrs. ever,

E. L. B.

The same to the same.

My dear Forster—I shall be at Fulham next week and shall be happy to fix a day then to take a chop

1842. Æt. 39. with you, and if your avocations permit, to see Gisippus. I cannot go the first night, and the second is always flat. But I hope the third. Your anticipations of *Zanoni* from my fond report, are little likely to be gratified. I do not fancy that anyone will see him with the eyes of the author. It is not till the last page that its merits as a whole, in conception, can be seen; and even then few will detect them. It shoots too much over the heads of people to hit the popular taste. But it has given me a vent for what I long wished to symbolise and typify, and so I am grateful to it.

I am thinking of turning into a fiction what I once meant for a drama—had Macready been less overstocked with gravities, viz. :—the Last of the Barons, Warwick, the King maker. The time is full of philosophical movement, and I think I shall give a new reading of Richard the Third's crimes and character—new, but I hope not untrue.

Can you recommend me any books of that time for manners and costume? agst. we meet.

You say nothing of your History. When appears it?—Yours most truly,

E. L. B.

KNEBWORTH, *Saturday*.

The same to the same.

MY DEAR FORSTER—With regard to *Zanoni*, your lengthened criticism is most kind, and holds a flattering medium between the praises of the *Literary Gazette*, which, no doubt, arise from partiality, and the disparagement of the *Athenæum*. I am probably the only one who can see that my prophecy was right, that you don't very deeply like or thoroughly comprehend its puzzles. How can I expect that there is any man, however friendly, who will see *Zanoni* with the eyes of

the author, or agree with him in believing it to be the loftiest conception in English prose fiction! Moreover, I see, O Forster brother, that thou art enamoured of Mrs. Mervale, and truly with her filbert nails and aquiline nose she deserves all thy passion. A finer woman never trod! Joking apart, you have gone quite as far as would have been judicious, seeing that *Zanoni* will be no favourite with that largest of all asses—the English Public.—Adieu. Thine ever and truly,

1842. Æt. 39.

E. L. B.

C. C., *Monday.*

A more serious correspondence on the subject of this book took place between the author and Miss Harriet Martineau :—

Miss H. Martineau to Edward Bulwer.

TYNEMOUTH,
July 2nd, 1842.

DEAR SIR—No one makes war upon, or hates more vehemently than I do, the ordinary flatteries of literary life; but heart-felt thanks, coming from a sick-room, are not flattery. I think, too, that while ready enough to acknowledge other sorts of obligation, we are apt to be too slow in avowing our debt to those who render us the highest service of all, in giving us noble ideas, and rousing our best emotions. So I thank you for *Zanoni*. I write before the surprise this book has given me is well over; but I am certain that the thankfulness will not pass away with the novelty.

I say "surprise"—not only because all the reviews I have seen seem perfectly insensible to the very nature of the book, unaware, even, that it contains any doctrine—but because, though not one of the least admiring

1842. Æt. 39. readers of your former works, I own I did not anticipate from you a gift so inestimable as this book. I did not expect to meet, in our own language, in this year /42, a book worthy of Schiller's meditations, and such as his disciples can joyfully take to their hearts. You will not be offended at the plain truth of this avowal. The event proves that I did you injustice. If, for some long time to come, you find the world preferring your earlier works, or a hundred reading *St. Leon*, for one that takes new life from *Zanoni*, you will be satisfied with the earnest of recompense you must already have had—certain moments and hours spent in conceiving and working out such a problem of sacred philosophy. Nor will it, I trust, be either a brief or trifling satisfaction to see some who think now that they have read it awakening to its full reality; and some few more who appreciate it now growing more attached to it continually, as one does to old friends, whose truth is more and more fully brought out by time. Without specifying to yourself very clearly wherein particularly my personal obligation for it lies, I assure you I deeply felt it; and you will not despise my thanks, if, as I believe, no one of us who has undergone the toils of genuine authorship is above the need of sympathy, or too proud to bear to be thanked, though mere praise may be dispensed with.

Pray do not think of answering this. I know your avocations are out of all proportion to your leisure, and it is for my own sake that I write.—Believe me, very sincerely,

HARRIET MARTINEAU.

You will smile at my being so many months behind the world. Our village here is still half a century in the rear.

The same to the same.

TYNEMOUTH,
August 8th, 1842.

MY DEAR SIR—As to *Zanoni*. It has much occupied the friends about me since I first read it. Seeing that they were not habituated to the sort of contemplation necessary to the full understanding of the book, and not being satisfied that they should admire it only for its portions, missing the coherence, I made out, partly for their guidance, partly for my own pleasure, a very brief analysis—an epitome of its doctrine. This was after a hasty, circulating-library reading. I have since read it leisurely, with increased pleasure and confidence in my interpretation. But certain of my friends would like to test it by your own, and I really do rate so highly the importance of the book that I should be glad if you could tell me that there exists anywhere—in any review or analysis that I may not have seen—a statement of your doctrine which you yourself would not object to endorse. If it surprises you that your full meaning should not appear plain to all (I confess that to me it seems perfectly clear), you will remember how new this sort of poem is to English readers, who are not conversant with the German, and to whom the language of the Ideal region may be more unfamiliar than its thoughts. 1842. ÆT. 39.

A single line of reference to any interpretation which you can authorise may so much deepen the impression of your book, that I think it is worth while to trouble you so far. The noble moral of the whole, no one can miss; but I wish that the steps to it should be as clear to all as the conclusion. I do adore Schiller, and have worshipped him from my girlhood. I shall never forget the day that I lighted upon *Die Künstler*, which I had never heard of, but which I took care that all *my* world

1842. Æt. 39. should presently hear of; and pleased was I to find so many as I did to share my delight.—Believe me, very truly yours,

H. MARTINEAU.

Bulwer appears to have replied to this letter in some such sense as the note which is attached to the later editions of *Zanoni*, namely, that as the book was not an allegory, it was impossible for the author to supply a key to its meaning—as well expect Goethe to explain *Faust*, or Shakespeare *Hamlet*. The interpretation of such books, and the meaning which they express beyond their words, it is for each reader to supply according to his own taste and temperament. He therefore asked his correspondent to supply him with her own version of the mysteries of the book. To this Miss Martineau replied :—

I send you what you ask for. I cannot say "with pleasure," for there is no pleasure in sending an author such a mockery of his work; but you will remember that my object was not to elaborate your whole subject, but to supply leading hints to unpractised readers. I trust you to tell me if I have misinterpreted you in any material point. I own the argument is, on the whole, as plain to me as that a map of Norfolk is meant for Norfolk and not Cornwall. But all do not think so; and I may be quite wrong.

Bulwer thought sufficiently highly of Miss Martineau's interpretation of *Zanoni* to print it as a note to the 1853 edition of the book, although the name of "the distinguished writer" is withheld.

With regard to the old bookseller of Covent Garden, mentioned in the introduction, he writes to a friend: "Denby, the old magic bookseller in *Zanoni*, was a reality. He is dead." 1842. Æt. 39.

From Thomas Carlyle he received the following acknowledgment of the book:—

5 Cheyne Row, Chelsea,
23 *Feby.*, 1842.

My dear Sir—Yesternight your kind, unexpected gift was handed in to me, and received with hearty welcome. As my wife laid instant hold of the book, and still busily reads in it, I have yet got but a few hasty glances and snatches here and there; but I will not delay returning many cordial thanks for so distinguished a mark of your attention, which is and will be very valuable to me.

By various indications I confidently gather, and indeed could have concluded beforehand, that this book, like its predecessors, will be read and scanned far and wide; that it will be a liberating voice for much that lay dumb imprisoned in many human souls; that it will shake old deep-set errors looser in their rootings, and thro' such chinks as are possible let in light on dark places very greatly in need of light! I honour much the unwearied, steadfast perseverance with which you prosecute this painfullest but also noblest of human callings, almost the summary of all that is left of nobleness in human callings in these poor days. I cordially wish you a long career, and a more and more victorious one, and am always—With many thanks and regards, Yours most truly,

T. Carlyle.

Exactly to what extent Bulwer's mind was occupied by a study of occult subjects, is a matter

1842. Æt. 39. on which different opinions have been expressed. Some have thought that his "magic" was nothing more than author's copy, that he employed the ideas contained in *Zanoni*, *A Strange Story*, *The Haunted and the Haunters*, and *The Coming Race*, merely for the sake of giving his readers a thrill—a literary device of very questionable taste, and nothing more. Others believe that these books prove their author to have been a spiritualist and a believer in the supernatural. I have even been told wild stories of ridiculous positions into which he was led by his imagined possessions of occult powers; that he would pass through a room full of visitors in the morning, arrayed in a dressing-gown, believing himself to be invisible, and then appear later in the day very carefully and elaborately dressed, and greet his guests as if meeting them for the first time.[1]

I believe both these views to be erroneous. I have ample proof that his study of occult subjects was serious and discriminating; and that traces of this bent of his mind should be apparent in his books is natural enough. The range of his writing was extremely wide, and one might almost say that he emptied his mind into his books as fast as he filled it. A careful reader of all his writings would probably be able to find amongst them some expression of nearly every idea which his mind

[1] I can well imagine how such a story originated. It was a habit with Bulwer to spend the morning in his dressing-gown engaged upon literary work. If, during that time he had chanced, in going from one room to another, to meet one of his guests, it is extremely likely that, either absorbed in reverie or from shyness, he would have passed him by unnoticed. Out of such materials a good story would soon be manufactured.

received. He certainly did not study magic for the sake of writing about it; still less did he write about it, without having studied it, merely for the purpose of making his readers' flesh creep. 1842. ÆT. 39.

On the other hand, I have found amongst his papers a sufficient number of references to psychical phenomena to satisfy me that he was under no illusions regarding them. Spirit rappings, clairvoyance, astrology, etc.,—he investigated them all, and found them all disappointingly unconvincing and unprofitable. His attitude of mind on these matters appears to have been exactly that of the members of the Psychical Research Society of the present day—anxious to learn something that would extend the horizon of human knowledge and experience, yet forced to confess that nothing which he had witnessed himself really justified any definite conclusions. He was himself a member of the Society of Rosicrucians and Grand Patron of the Order. As this was a secret Society, it is not surprising that among Bulwer's papers there should be no documents which throw any light on his connection with it, nor any mention of it in his correspondence. I am, however, indebted to Mr. Hargrave Jennings, author of a history of this order,[1] for the following letter, which he received from Bulwer (then Lord Lytton) in 1870, acknowledging the receipt of his book which had just been published :—

[1] *The Rosicrucians, Their Rites and Mysteries*, 1870, by Hargrave Jennings.

12 Grosvenor Sqre.,
July 3, 1870.

1842. Æt. 39. Dear Sir—I thank you sincerely for your very flattering letter, and for the deeply interesting work with which it is accompanied. There are reasons why I cannot enter into the subject of the "Rosicrucian Brotherhood," a Society still existing, but not under any name by which it can be recognised by those without its pale. But you have with much learning and much acuteness, traced its connection with early and symbolical religions, and no better book upon such a theme has been written, or indeed could be written, unless a member of the Fraternity were to break the vow which enjoins him to secrecy. . . .

Some time ago a sect pretending to style itself "Rosicrucians" and arrogating full knowledge of the mysteries of the craft, communicated with me, and in reply I sent them the cipher sign of the "Initiate" —not one of them could construe it.—Believe me, Sincerely your obliged,

Lytton.

The following references to psychic phenomena are selected from letters written at various dates during his life :—

Edward Bulwer to his Son.

About 1853.

I have had the American rappers and Media with the spirit world, as they call themselves, here. It is very curious, and if there be a trick, it is hard to conceive it. There are distinct raps given to a table at which they sit, and by rapping at the letters of the alphabet which the supposed spirits select, they hold distinct dialogues, you merely thinking or writing your questions on slips

of paper which you hold concealed in your hand. 1842.
They profess to be spirits of the dead, but I much ÆT. 39.
doubt, supposing they are spirits at all, whether they are not rather brownies or fairies. They are never to be relied on for accurate answers, tho' sometimes they were wonderfully so, just like clairvoyants. Altogether it was startling. A spirit promised to communicate with me alone, and named day and place, but never did so.

It does not inspire awe, but rather heightens the spirits and produces a gay humour.

The same to the same.

About 1853.

I have been interested in the spirit manifestations. They are astounding, but the wonder is that they go so far and no farther. To judge by them, even the highest departed spirits discovered seem to have made no visible progress—to be as uncertain and contradicting as ourselves or more so—still with answers at times that take away one's breath with wonder. There is no trick, but I doubt much whether all be more than some strange clairvoyance passing from one human brain to another, or if spirits, something analogous to fairies or genii. Emily[1] comes often, generally most incoherent, as when, poor thing, she died, but I asked her the last name she thought of, and she answered Carl Ritter. No Medium can know that, and the question was only put in thought. Shakespeare has come to me, and gave me most thrilling advice as to the future and other predictions. Afterwards he came again and flatly contradicted himself; yet I asked him to prove that he was a good spirit sent by God, by telling me the closest secret I have, and he gave it instantly!

[1] His daughter, who died in 1848.

1842. Æt. 39. Still, whatever these communicants be, as yet they "palter with us in a double sense," do not enlarge our knowledge, and I doubt if any practical end can be gained. I shall now, therefore, in all probability dismiss for ever these researches. Their interest is too absorbing for human life and true wisdom. I have been looking, too, into astrology, which subject I know not what to make of, but incline to disbelieve it. I have also examined into the old sorcery, divination by lot (sors), and have read all the works on it. It is a most complicated science, derived from lots taken apparently by chance akin to astrology, and like astrology as yet it leaves me dubious. But eno' proves that there are wonderful phenomena in our being all unknown to existing philosophy. I incline to believe that the future is not predecreed to individuals, and that is why it cannot be ascertained; that it varies from week to week according to the change of circumstance and our own conduct, Providence working out the same grand results, no matter what we do, how we prosper or how we suffer.

But all is dark. I keep a book of my communications and researches—it will be curious.—Adieu, God bless you, Yrs. ever most affly.,

E.

To Lord Walpole.

June 13, 1853.

I have been pursuing science into strange mysteries since we parted, and gone far into a spiritual world, which suffices to destroy all existing metaphysics and to startle the strongest reason. Of this when we meet, O poor materialist!

To Lady Combermere.

Oct. 3, 1854.

DEAR LADY COMBERMERE—I am much obliged for your correspondent's interesting communication, which I return. I do not doubt the accuracy of the statement contained in it. But I see no reason to suppose that the phenomena recorded, strange tho' they be, are necessarily occasioned by spirits without this world; and the usual retort "What else can they be?" seems to be a very childish and irrelative question. We can only answer as yet, as a sensible savage would answer of communications by the electric telegraph—"We don't know yet." We have no business to conclude that whatever we can't account for is therefore supernatural on the one hand, or a trick on the other. 1842. ÆT. 39.

But if these mysterious guidances of hand and thought did come from external agents, spirits or beings of material tho' invisible form—such as animalcules with which Creation abounds, I should not come at once to the notion that they were the bad and perilous demons hostile to the human soul which the old monks too rashly derived from passages in Scripture, ignorantly interpreted. There may be intermediate beings of mixed nature, not deliberately evil nor steadily benevolent,—capricious, uncertain, and only able to get at crude and imperfect *rapport* with humanity. They may amuse themselves with taking feigned names and sporting with mortal credulity, and be delusive and erring prompters or advisers without any settled motive. A Mr. Beaumont about 200 years ago records two visitations that he supposed he had from spirits. They appeared to him in numbers; they spoke to him and made music; they haunted him for months. He asked them what they were—they did not answer that they were good angels or bad, but beings of light and

1842. Æt. 39. mixed nature, in some respects superior to humanity, in others not. His account is very candid. He allows that they may have been delusions. He got rid of them at last, much as your correspondent's informant did.

From the most attentive inquiry I can give to the subject, I believe that these communicants whatever they be, whether impressions which science may hereafter account for (as I think most probable), or imperfect, fragmentary and dreamlike communications from agencies, distinct from humanity, they serve no useful purpose, nor will conduce to any higher knowledge. They may be very injurious to ordinary understandings, and very disappointing to the highest. Nevertheless, I think where they would appear to persons of powerful will and moral courage, resolved calmly to investigate their nature and disregard all their promptings, they would be subjected to a control little dreamed of at present, and might thus subserve both to an increase of our powers over nature and a solution of their true origin and essentials. To such minds, however, they do not appear to be conceded. And their usual communications are made either to sensitive and timid persons whose reason they disorder; or to calm lethargic persons like the ordinary Media, whom they don't influence at all, beyond being reflections and echoes of the phenomena; or lastly to inquirers like Miss Sidney's informant, of fair good sense, who start at the first false or threatening announcements conveyed to them, and give up the whole research just when minds of more iron and persevering nature would perhaps command and subdue the agencies to practical purpose.

I write vaguely and doubtfully, for the subject is vague and doubtful. At present all we can say is that independently of all imposture, which nevertheless

is sometimes admitted, there are agencies of communication which no philosophy has yet solved, but which bear out the universal and immemorial traditions of mankind, and are analogous to the boasted powers which the philosophical magician of old assumed; and some of them, such as the later Platonists—Agrippa, Albertus Magnus, &c.—with a degree of earnest detail which the gravity of their characters and their general observation of science and nature do not permit candid inquirers to dismiss as invented lies.—Believe me with all consideration, Yours truly,

1842. Æt. 39.

E. B. Lytton.

To John Forster.

Dec. 3, 1861.

My dear Forster—I am very much gratified and in much relieved by your kind letter.

In regard to the supernatural—what I really wish to imply is this—without taking up mesmerism and spirit manifestation. I want to intimate that in their recorded marvels which are attested by hundreds and believed by many thousands, things yet more incredible than those which perplex Fenwick[1] are related, and philosophers declining thoroughly to probe these marvels, they have been abandoned for the most part to persons who know little or nothing of philosophy or metaphysics, and remain insoluble.

I wish to make philosophers inquire into them as I think Bacon, Newton, and Davy would have inquired. There must be a natural cause for them—if they are not purely imposture. Even if that natural cause be the admission of a spirit world around us, which is the extreme point. But if so, it is a most impartial revelation in Nature.

[1] In *A Strange Story*.

1842. Æt. 39. I do believe in the substance of what used to be called Magic, that is, I believe that there are persons of a peculiar temperament who can effect very extraordinary things not accounted for satisfactorily by any existent philosophy. You will observe that the constitution or temperament is always more or less the same in these magicians, whether they are clairvoyant or media; the wonders are produced thro' them and cease in their absence or inactivity. In their constitution I find a remarkable agreement—it is only persons who are highly susceptible of electricity who have it, and their power is influenced according as the atmosphere is more or less charged with electricity. This all Media and Mesmerists will acknowledge.

But here we get a commencement for philosophical inquiry. Electricity is in inanimate objects as well as animate; hence the power of media over inanimate objects. In my final scene I suppose an atmosphere extremely electrical—there is a spontaneous combustion in the bush, the soil is volcanic, there is trembling of the earth. I observe that all the newest phenomena in spirit manifestation resemble remarkably in character the best attested phenomena in witchcraft. For instance, Hume floats in the air—this was said of the old magicians. Now I find that the Seeress of Provorst whose story is told by a physician and a very learned man, and who lived in a state of catalepsy, was at times so light that her body floated on water and could not be kept down; that she would also rise in the air as if she would fly out of the window. There again philosophy is on its own ground. There is a cataleptic disease in which abnormal phenomena occur. But all Media and clairvoyants are more or less cataleptic. You will judge by these remarks of my own idea. Abnormal phenomena may solve some great problems in real science. Thus common reasoners reject a good,

well-authenticated ghost story altogether. But real philosophers delight in one; and some of the most interesting chapters in the works of physicians are upon spectral illusions founded on these very ghost stories. The mystery of dreaming is the vexed question to this day between materialists and immaterialists. 1842. Æt. 39.

Spectral phenomena are dreams turned inside out. I write hastily, but this is so much the substance of what I think, that it would appear in my supplementary chapter. . . .

To Mr. Benjamin Coleman.

15 Royal Crescent, Bath,
Decr. 21, [1863].

Sir—I considered my letter to you private, and am surprised you should desire to make any part of it public. But you would misconceive and mistake the whole meaning and gist of that letter, if you were to represent it "as a testimony of the truth of the so-called spirit manifestation," without including the other opinions as to such phenomena expressed in my letter. To prevent misunderstandings, these are my views, succinctly on the matter; and if you make them public at all, which does not seem to me called for, you will express them in my words:—"I volunteer no opinion as to the phenomena exhibited by professional exhibitors receiving money. I have not seen them submitted to tests required by persons who very naturally believe that such phenomena are produced by conjuring, trickery or imposture. Some of the phenomena produced, where the person called a Medium is a person of well-known probity and honor, and those present are of equally high character, I believe to be genuine. All such phenomena, when submitted to the same laws of rational evidence which are adopted

1842. Æt. 39. in Courts of Law as scientific investigation, are found to disprove the wild notion that they are produced by the spirits of the dead or by any cause whatever, to be called spiritual in the proper meaning of the word. Tho' the persons producing such phenomena may not be deceivers, the phenomena are eminently deceptive; they may have interest to a physiologist or philosopher beyond the gratification of curiosity.

"But the intellectual results of any careful examination of them are so poor and meagre, and they so belong to abnormal and exceptional physical organisation, that the man who is best fitted to investigate their nature would probably be much better occupied in other pursuits; and the credulous and indiscriminate temper with which persons even of good education and ability gather round these revivals of that ancient magic which has in former ages duped the human mind, is likely to do much harm, unsettle rational beliefs, engender senseless superstition; and my advice to anyone who is not of philosophical mind and habits, would be to trouble his head as little as possible upon the matter."

Such are my views, and if you like to make them known in these words, you are welcome to do so, tho' I have no wish myself to publish them.—Yours ob.,

E. B. Lytton.

CHAPTER III

LITERARY WORK

1842–1846

When we have commenced a career, what step is there till the grave? Where is the definite barrier of that ambition which, like the Eastern bird, seems ever on the wing, and never rests upon the earth? Our names are not settled till our death; the ghosts of what we have done are made our haunting monitors—our scourging avengers—if ever we cease to do, or fall short of the younger past.

Talk not of freedom—there is no such thing as freedom to a man whose body is the gaol, whose infirmities are the racks of genius.

Ernest Maltravers.

AFTER the publication of *Zanoni* there was no pause in Bulwer's literary output. His studies of the French Revolution, amidst the scenes of which is placed the latter portion of that novel, led him to write an historical essay on the Reign of Terror, its causes and effects, which was published in the *Foreign Quarterly Review* in July, 1842. 1842. ÆT. 39.

On the subject of this essay he wrote to John Forster, to whom it had been submitted in proof:—

CRAVEN COTTAGE,
June 1, 1842.

MY DEAR FORSTER—I am glad you like the article. But if "brilliant" at all, it is so not from style, which is singularly plain, especially for me, addicted as I am

1842. to that which you so eloquently condemned! Its effect
Æt. 39. must be simply from some truths not said before. I could point out a few that I think new and useful. I meant to enlarge a little on the results or benefits since the Revolution, but I never can agree that the Revoln. produced them. Nor can I go further conscientiously in the second page of the article. As to throwing all the blame of the Reign of Terror on the old *régime*, England was as badly governed as France, perhaps, under Charles I., and had a Civil War—but a war of men, and not a butcherdom by devils. Why? Because here it was never Mob Rule! There were no ancient *régimes* to justify the brutalities of our Bristol mob or vindicate the Dutch for their great national crime, the murder of de Wit. There were no ancient *régimes* to excuse the mobs of Corcyra or Jerusalem. In the latter, the *mob*, not Pilate, sacrificed Jesus! Mob Rule will always be vile and bloody, and as such it seems to me it should be exposed. The worst thing of English Patriots is to attempt to excuse French Republicans. So I think, and, therefore, I cannot part with what seems to me the gist and pith of my purpose. But you can easily put an editorial note, disclaiming or qualifying your contributor's dogmas. This I should far from dislike, especially now I have read the other French article. Before I looked at this last, I had meant strongly to urge the impolicy of two French political articles in one number. Now I have a scruple in doing so, for while I think the article very able, I wholly dissent from its views. But if anything is to be altered, pray try and persuade the author to modify his censure on Odilon Barrot—the man acknowledged by all factions to be the most lofty character in the French Chamber. Good Heavens, who would mix in politics if that spotless and noble name is to be thus slurred and sneered at!

I will return my article as soon as I get the MS. You

have, I trust, received ere this my little volume.— 1843.
Yours truly, ÆT. 40.

E. L. B.

The little volume here referred to was a book of poems entitled *Eva and other Poems*, which was published at the end of May, 1842. Writing to John Forster about them, he says :—

These poems are the blossoms of a branch which has grown out of my mind since the tendency of the plant towards public or active life has been checked. This stream being dammed in its way to Fleet Street, has taken its rivulet path towards "fresh fields and pastures new." From this going back from the real world, in short, come somewhat simultaneously *Zanoni* (a kind of poem) and this little volume.

Bulwer's next literary production was the historical romance *The Last of the Barons*, published in February, 1843; and this was followed in March, 1844, by a translation of *Schiller's Poems and Ballads*, accompanied by a biographical sketch of Schiller, for whom he entertained the highest possible opinion, ranking him as a poet above Goethe.

Of *The Last of the Barons* he writes to Mrs. Thomson[1] :—

Many, many thanks for your friendly criticism, which gave me real and uncommon pleasure. You, who have so well written the historical fiction, know its difficulties and can allow for them. I am glad you like Warwick at last. I love him! It is one of the few characters I have conceived that I take a personal affection for

[1] Mrs. Antony Todd Thomson (1797–1862) published many historical and biographical works, sometimes under the pseudonym of "Grace Wharton."

1844. Æt. 41. —Alice is another. I still think Sybil a bore—no charm about her.

After the completion of these works, Bulwer appears to have contemplated a retirement from regular authorship. In the small volume of poems he speaks fretfully of contemporary critics, and in the preface to *The Last of the Barons* he announces that this will probably be his last work of fiction. His mother's death and the breakdown in his health already referred to, no doubt, strengthened this wish for a cessation from literary work ; but by the time Dr. Wilson of Malvern had finished with him, and the water cure had done its work, he was able to return to his writing with redoubled energy.

Miss Martineau, with whom a most interesting correspondence had been maintained ever since the publication of *Zanoni*, wrote to him kindly in January 1844, after hearing of his mother's death :—

I ordered the book to be sent to you because I heard—not merely the fact of your loss, but that you were very unhappy ; and I thought I would take the chance of anything in that volume being acceptable to your present feelings. I am glad now that I ventured.

And I am glad to see your handwriting, for I have had some sorrowful thoughts about you ; and when that is the case, one is thankful to know anything of the mind for which one is anxious. I may know little of the case, and I may judge ill from what you have told of it ; but I will tell you, as a friend, that I do not understand, and do not like, your declaration that *The*

Last of the Barons is your farewell work in fiction— 1844.
attended and preceded, as that declaration is, by ÆT. 41.
symptoms of discontent with society, or a portion of it. But for these symptoms, I should suppose that you merely preferred some other equally noble path in literature ; and though I might doubt, I should have no right to regret till I saw what you were doing. It may yet be so, and if so, I have only to give you my hearty good wishes and blessing.

And if you had not previously been rising, I should not have seriously cared—nor if you were a dreamer, who had done emptying yourself of your dreams. But so immeasurably superior as *Zanoni* and *The Last of the Barons* were, in their different ways, to your former works—so magnificent a course as either of them indicated for you, your stopping short is a painful mystery. You cannot be idle. The test and seal of your powers is your wonderful industry—together with a growing freshness. Putting together some of your words in your prefaces, with the facts before us, I cannot resist the fear that there is discontent at bottom. Now, such a being as you *must not* succumb to any discontent whatever. It is humbling to every one of us to conceive of your being in the least put out of your way by the world—by any kind or degree of opinion. Do you not feel that you can put the world under your feet ? and do you not mean to do it ? And in your case, so different from that of the poor and struggling man, pining to get a hearing, in your case there need be no defiance, and no appeal to or from the world. Independent in your position, sure of a hearing, and in the very strength of your powers, what is to prevent your calmly achieving the greatness for which you were indubitably created ? I believe you think the world hard and unjust towards you. I gather this from yourself. But what if it be ? How does that hinder you ? You

1844. Æt. 41. have no leave to ask to be great, and the world has no such leave to give or withhold. If I am all wrong in this train of observation, so much the better. Whatever work you may have in progress will correct me, and, I am sure, gratify me. If you really are discouraged and hesitating, I trust you have some brave man for a friend who will faithfully stimulate you to fulfil the responsibilities of such powers as yours.

I will not say anything about being impertinent in speaking thus. You have given a sort of claim upon you to all who sympathise in your works; and from this room I may say many things, relying on a true construction, which could not be so plainly said anywhere else.

As for your present grief, may time soften it by strengthening and not loosening the tie between you and her whom you have lost! God comfort you!—Believe me, faithfully yours,

H. Martineau.

After the publication of the Schiller translations she wrote again:—

Tynemouth, *April* 27, 1844.

Dear Sir Edward—Here I have the book at last, and delicious I find it. It has kept me up far too late the last two nights, so that I was afraid to look at my watch; nor shall I tell my doctor to-day, but let him theorise as to why I am so tired.

I am almost afraid to do more than thank you—I have so profound a sense of the worthlessness of my opinion on these matters. And this is from no false humility, but for sound reasons. Intellectual pleasures are so frightfully vivid to a prisoner whose comfort is incessantly spoiled by perpetual *malaise*, that discrimination and moderation are almost impossible; and

besides, I am nothing of a reader, and so disqualified for criticism. My reading all through my life has been adoration of a few authors. Of these, Schiller has been almost the supreme idol—was, in my youth; and the old intoxication comes upon me now, even exaggerated by the contrast of my present circumstances. I have such a longing to-day to get at my own translations, if I did but know where they were. Some were printed, I remember, and a good many more are scattered about somewhere—but I don't know where. I should like to compare them with yours. I did expect, with you, that I should like the Life better than the translation. I do like the Life extremely. To me it is beautiful—but yet the rest occupies me more. I have not half done yet, and I doubted at breakfast whether I should cut the leaves of "The Artists" at all—it used to seem to me so untranslatable, except quite literally, to a friend at one's elbow; but I have read it, and at present I think you have succeeded quite wonderfully. I even think your versification there clearer and smoother than is its wont. But really it raised such a universal throb, that all criticism is out of the question; yet "The Ideal" (one of my great favourites) is beautifully done. So is the "Night of Song." (By the way, I always took the image to be the gossamer—the "tremulous ladder.") The most extraordinary slip (as I take it) that I have met with is the "Partition of the Earth." I do wish you would do that again. If ever there was pathos and music, deep and thrilling, it is in that piece; and look at your last stanza of it! There is a certain cheerfulness in the original, in the pictorial part—but surely nothing dactyllic; and the conclusion is of a solemn pathos. "The Assignation" is charmingly done. How you must have enjoyed doing these! I have always thought Schiller's hours of composition must have been some of the divinest

1844. Æt. 41.

1844. Æt. 41. experiences on earth; and we taste something of the bliss in translating him. I wonder what surprised you in my pleasure in *Zanoni*? I rather believe there is no one within our four seas more peculiarly disposed to relish the subject matter of your distinguishing tastes—though our notions part off widely enough on some points. . . .

Another appreciative critic of the Schiller was Thomas Carlyle, who wrote on March 28, 1844:—

My dear Sir—It was not till this morning that I received my book after all. I called yesterday at Blackwood's shop; the shopman was arraigned; the sub-shopman, and finally the porter, with the *corpus delicte* before him, the parcel namely, all wrapped and rightly addressed above a week ago. He, scratching his rough head, could only allege "that—that—he was not sure of finding my house there." He should have tried! The Footguards at Waterloo, getting order to fire, were not sure that the triggers would act, but they made the experiment.

In fine, I return you many thanks for my good book, and mean to enjoy myself upon it this very evening.

The thing I said about humour and Schiller needs many modifications, explanations, and lies open to canvassing on every side. I believe it first of all came to me from Jean Paul, who, for his own benefit, has said many things about humour, with depth enough, but often not with precision enough. Laughter and tears (if they are true, but often enough they are both *false*) seem to me to lie very near together in all men; and for avoiding fanaticism, Rousseauship, &c., I would have them go on *pari passu*, if they could.

You will do me a real pleasure and kindness if you call here any day and talk with me a while. I am at home generally till three, accessible to anybody between two and three, and to you at all hours. A mouthful of rational human speech is certainly the very elixir of life to a human soul—and, alas, it seems to be a very rare possibility for mankind in these epochs. 1844. Æt. 41.

With many kind regards, many thanks and good wishes—I remain always, Sincerely yours,

T. CARLYLE.

And again on April 12 :—

MY DEAR SIR—Last night your servant delivered me the book. As we do not yet meet according to my hope, I feel impelled to write what there is no opportunity of speaking, a more special word of thanks for my Schiller, which is more properly yours and the world's. I did read it on the night appointed, and with very great pleasure. It is many a day since I read so glowing, hearty, and altogether vivid, sympathetic, and poetic a Biography of a man—pity that we have not a hundred such to read! For Biography, I imagine after all, is the real summary of "Poetry," from Homer's *Odyssey* to the *Gospel of St. Matthew*; the grand and truly important writings we have are all "Biographies" spoken or sung! Again, I wish we had a hundred such done in as good a way as this. Many thanks to you, in my own name and that of a multitude of others.

Since you heard of me last I think there have been but two exceptions from my rule as to three o'clock; it was especially unlucky that the very first exception should have been the day when you were so kind as to call here. At Hertford Street my luck was no better—could be no better, so late am I always. I hope there are other days coming. *Non omnes occiderunt soles*—

1844. Æt. 41. that is the universal Gospel in this Place of Hope.—I remain, with many thanks and kind regards, Yours always truly,

T. CARLYLE.

With two other writers, both poets—one at the beginning of his literary career, the other at its close—Bulwer-Lytton[1] had some correspondence in 1844. The first of these was Coventry Patmore, the second Thomas Hood.

Coventry Patmore had just published a volume of Poems[2] for which Bulwer-Lytton had expressed warm appreciation, and the following grateful acknowledgment was the result :—

DEAR SIR—I beg to offer you my grateful thanks for what I feel to be incomparably the most satisfactory as well as the most valuable result that has yet occurred to me from the publication of my first efforts in verse.

Your letter indicates an interest in my little volume which will, I hope, excuse my troubling you (in justice to myself) with a few words touching its private history.

The poems called "The River," and "The Woodman's Daughter" were completely finished more than three years ago (before I was eighteen years old, or had given a single thought to the *constructive* branch of the art of Poetry, or indeed to anything but the mere execution of details). This will sufficiently explain to you the want of any predominating *idea* or *purpose* in the two first poems. I was, at that time, totally unacquainted with Tennyson, or with any other of the

[1] After his mother's death, and in accordance with the terms of her will, Bulwer assumed the additional surname of Lytton, and was thereafter known as Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton.

[2] *Poems* (Moxon), 1844.

poets properly to be called of the present day, except Leigh Hunt. Next to the poets, contemporary with, or immediately succeeding, Shakespeare, my favourites were (and still are) Coleridge and Wordsworth. 1844. Æt. 41.

There followed a period of nearly two years in which I wrote nothing at all in verse, but in that time I read Tennyson and *studied* some of Coleridge's prose metaphysical works. Then I began "Lilian," and when it was about half completed I met with the misfortune of a publisher *volunteering* to produce at his own risk a volume of my poems as soon as I could get one ready. So "Lilian" was concluded with unwarrantable haste, and "Sir Hubert" became the offspring rather of the necessity (which Mr. Moxon urged) of filling fifty pages in half that number of days than of the judgment which, from the experience I had gained, ought by rights to have been brought to bear upon its production, and to have rendered it as much superior as I fear it is now inferior, on the whole, to its predecessors.

Let me, before I conclude, repeat my thanks for a letter which, had it emanated from a much less distinguished authority than it does, would have given me unqualified gratification, by reason of the coincidence of its contents with that knowledge of the right which is always inherent, though sometimes almost latent, in the mind of a poet, and which it is the true business of criticism to render "*objective*" and practical. My gratification at being censored and applauded by you "in the right places" (I particularly allude, as regards the latter, to your remarks on Sec. VI. of "Sir Hubert"; all other critics — except my father, who long ago spoke of it as you have done—having left unnoticed that passage which I have always held to be the best in the book) is not a little enhanced by a comparison of your letter with the miserably inefficient notices which have hitherto appeared of my book in the public prints.

1844. Æt. 41. Not that they have not praised it enough, but that their praises have been almost always in the *wrong* places, and generally their censures too.

In the hope that I may be allowed to ask the favour and the benefit of your criticisms upon any future poems I may attempt, before giving them to the world, —I remain, dear Sir, Your obliged servant,

COVENTRY K. PATMORE.

SOUTHAMPTON ST., FITZROY SQ.,
Aug. 1st., 1844.

His correspondence with Hood was of a more tragic nature. This delightful writer, in whom humour and pathos were so closely blended, had fallen upon evil days. In 1844 he was in great poverty and completely broken in health. Bulwer-Lytton took a keen interest in his affairs and sought through Mr. F. O. Ward, Hood's friend, who was at that time carrying on his Magazine for him, to relieve his distress. He contributed to Hood's Magazine, and was instrumental in securing for him a pension from Sir Robert Peel. For the purpose of obtaining the pension, he had asked for a list of Hood's works to submit to the Prime Minister. Mr. Ward sent Hood's letter in reply, adding: "Do not be deceived by his jocose style. He made jokes on the Friday night, when he said 'I shall scramble on to my birthday (the next day) and no more.' I was putting a mustard poultice round him, and he said: 'Very little meat to so much mustard!' Still he is getting better."

The characteristic letter enclosed was as follows :— 1844. Æt. 41.

VANBRUGH HOUSE,
Tuesday.

MY DEAR WARD—I send you the best list I can of my writings. They make no great show in the catalogue. Small fruits and few, towards what you will call my literary *dessert.* You must trust, I fear, to my negative merits. For example :—That I have not given up to party even a *party*ciple of what was meant for mankind, womankind or children. It is true that I may be said to have favoured liberal principles, but then, they were so liberal as to be Catholic—common to old, young, or new England. The worse chance of any reward from powers political, who do not patronise motley, but would have their very Harlequins all of one colour—blue, green, or orange ; anything but neutral tint.

I have not devoted any comic power I may possess to lays of indecency or ribaldry. "I stooped to truth," as Pope *stoop*edly says, "and moralised my song."

I have never written against religion, anything against pseudo Saints and Pharisees notwithstanding ; some of my serious views were expressed in an Ode to Rae Wilson in the *Athenæum.*

I have never been indicted for libel.

I have never been called out for personality.

I have not sought pleasure or profit in satirising or running down my literary contemporaries.

I have never stolen from them.

I have never written *anonymously* what I should object to own.

I have never countenanced, by my practice, the puffery, quackery and trickery of modern literature, even when publishing for years on my own account.

1844. Æt. 41. In short, though I may not have reflected any very great honour on our national literature, I have not disgraced it, all which has been an infinite comfort to me to remember when lately a *critical* illness induced a retrospective review of my literary career.

Now, in the days when the father of a certain friend of ours was made a superannuated Postman in his cradle at £70 a year, even such negative merits as mine in literature might have deserved a pension ; but in these times of retrenchment and political economy, towards the unpolitical, I sincerely believe, as I told you before, that my strongest recommendation would be what would prevent my insuring my life, but aid me in purchasing an annuity—the moral certainty that I can last but a very few years. That is indeed the *sole* consideration that could induce me to accept anything of the kind, as it might enable me to make some slight service for my children, whom I am but too sure to leave, like the children of literary men in general, to a double lament for the author of their being, and for his being an author. Personally I am not very sensitive on the score of poverty, since it has been the lot of many of those whose names I most do venerate. The reproach clings not to them, but to the country they helped to glorify. My debts and difficulties indeed cost me trouble and concern, but much less than if they had been the results of stark extravagance or vicious dissipation. At the very worst, like Timon, " unwisely, not ignobly, have I spent," and even that to a small amount. But, like Dogberry, I have had losses and been weighed down by drawbacks I should long ago have surmounted, but for the continued misconduct and treacheries of others called friends and relations. Only it provokes and vexes me that my position countenances the old traditional twaddle about the improvidence of authors, their want of business habits,

ignorance of the world, &c., &c. Men can hardly be ignorant in particular of what they professedly study; and as to business, authors *know their own*, as well as your mercantiles or traders, and perhaps something of accounts besides. That they do not thrive like those who seek for money and nothing else, is a matter of course; nor can they be expected to prove a match for those whose life-long study has been how to over-reach or swindle. Their Flights have been in another direction; their contemplations turned towards the beautiful, the just and the good. They are not simply spooney victims, but martyrs to their own code. To cope with Bailys and Flights one must be not merely literary men, but literary scamps, rogues, sharks, sharpers. Authors are supposed too often to be mere ninnies, and therefore plucked especially, in wit men, but in simplicity, mere children. A vulgar error. The first fellow who took me in, victimised also no few friends in trade, bankers and bill-brokers. To my next mishaps I was no party, being abroad, and the tricks played without my knowledge. Baily, a bookseller, had necessarily long odds in his favour against an author, by the force of position, and with the law to help him, which, whatever may be said, protects the wrongdoer—witness my barren verdict and yet costly. Flight you know—a practised pettifogger and money-lender to boot. And yet after all, much as I have suffered from it, I do not repent my good opinion of my fellows. There is a faith in human goodness, to renounce which altogether is, in its kind, an impiety. It is a total loss when a man writes up over his heart "No trust;" one had better lose a few hundreds more, than keep such a pike. For my own part, I would rather be done brown a little than go black for fear of it.

1844. ÆT. 41.

I have entered into this matter partly because it may

1844. Æt. 41. seem that with my popularity I ought to have done better, and partly because I am jealous of the honour of authorship, and I do not think we are so imprudent, unwise, ignorant of the world, unbusinesslike, &c., &c., &c., as we are reported. I could prove that on the whole, I have earned more than I have spent, and but for dead robberies should be a living Crœsus—at least for a poet.

I must stop to save the post. Come as soon as you can and let us have a palaver on things in general. I am getting on faster in health than in writing or drawing, for I eat, drink and sleep well, take all the air I can, and greedily, as a man may well do who gasped for it in 16 hour spasms a week or two ago. I am almost spectre enough for the Phantom Ship, but too weak to work my passage. However, I will not strike ; my colours (yellow and white) must be hauled down for me. Meanwhile, I fight on as well as I can —at the very worst, when all is lost, I can *blow up the Magazine.*—God bless you, Yours affectionately,

THOS. HOOD.

Pray convey to Sir E. B. L. my deep sense of his kindness—I will myself as soon as I am strong enough for it. I always stood up for the good feeling of the *Bruderschaft* in spite of the old calumnies about the irritable *genus*, &c., &c., &c. Lo ! the proofs.

To Bulwer-Lytton directly he expressed his thanks in the following letter :—

DEVONSHIRE LODGE, NEW FINCHLEY ROAD,
ST. JOHN'S WOOD,
Saturday.

DEAR SIR—Many thanks for your very kind letter—confirming me in an opinion at which you shake your head. Nevertheless, my experience tells me that besides

liberal appreciation as a writer, I have received more kindness from authors than from others, including relations. Of course, the poor pen and ink people have their common share of human envy, hatred, malice and all uncharitableness — not more perhaps. Two tradesmen who can hardly spell shall exhibit at a vestry meeting as much bad spirit and uncordial compounds as the worst of us. 1844. Æt. 41.

But the immediate purpose of the present writing is to inform you of the result of your friendly interest and good exertions in my behalf. A letter from Lord F. Egerton encloses the quotation from one by Sir R. Peel, of which I enclose a copy.

The arrangement which gives me the option of another life is kind and considerate, and relieves me from a very painful anxiety. I have, of course, accepted it cheerfully and gratefully.

The flattering consideration of those who have helped to this result make me affluent in feeling. For your own share in the work, pray accept again the heartfelt thanks of, dear Sir—Your very obliged and grateful servant,

THOS. HOOD.

In another letter, thanking Bulwer-Lytton for his contribution to his Magazine, he said :—

It is difficult to express how highly I estimate such a token of your great kindness and consideration—the more so remembering your state of health and probable disinclination to literary occupation, with which my own experience made me sympathise so strongly that several times I have been on the point of writing to request you to dismiss the matter altogether from your mind till a fitter season, lest the mere heat of composition and the feverishness of an untimely task should *mull* the cold water cure.

1845. Æt. 42. Pray accept my most heartfelt thanks for this, and the great interest you have elsewhere taken in my behalf. I can accept kindnesses from literary men as from relations, which I could not take from others not endeared to me by admiration, respect, community of pursuit, and that mental intimacy which far transcends a mere personal acquaintance, and makes a name a household word.

Though the pension was obtained, it came too late to be of any service, and the correspondence ends with the following letter from Mr. Ward :—

12 Cork Street,
Burlington Gardens,
Tuesday, Feby. 4th, 1845.

Dear Sir—Your kindness to my poor friend, Mr. Hood, makes me feel it a duty to convey to you the melancholy intelligence that he is dying [1]—violent hemorrhage, extreme emaciation and rapidly increasing dropsy, leave no longer any hope, any doubt of the event. He will never write again—a few more days of misery, and all is done. His genius remains as active and unclouded as ever. In the midst of all his sufferings he still longs to write, if we would let him. He sits plotting his novel, and last night told me how he intended to carry the story on! Yet some instinctive, awful prescience of the approaching end seems indicated in those stanzas beginning "Farewell Life!"—his latest composition. Vague forebodings, restless alternation of despair and feverish hope—the Death flickerings of his genius.

Greater poems than any he has written die with him — appeals on behalf of humanity that would have deeply stirred the times and set his name among the more illustrious of the age. It is all over now.

[1] Hood lingered on, however, until the 3rd of May.

He dies at 45, in the prime of his life, in the height of his power, hunted and harassed to his grave by the fraud and rapacity of publishers. 1845. Æt. 42.

Meanwhile, the seal is about being set to the warrant of his pension! *Laissez faire! laissez passer!* Supply and demand! What matters a snapped fibre, a crushed heart, more or less? His own folly for writing poems! Why not do as we do—sell calico to the Chinese—10 yards stretched into 12? Then he would have lived rich—and died respectable.

What can be said or done? It is too late, and too dreadful. There is nothing to say or do now. A few grapes, a few sponge cakes—and there is an end of it. The two seals will be set at once, the red and the black. May God forgive us all for our selfishness.—Yours,

F. O. WARD.

This kindness to Hood was by no means a solitary instance of Bulwer-Lytton's efforts to lighten the struggles of fellow authors. Among his papers are numerous letters from literary men, gratefully acknowledging the assistance they have received from him; and his attempt to establish a literary benefaction on a more general and organised basis will form the subject of a later chapter.

At the end of 1845 Bulwer-Lytton wrote a long poem called *The New Timon*, which appeared anonymously in four parts. The first part was published on December 23, 1845, and the other three parts followed in rapid succession early in 1846. The poem was a romantic narrative of life in London—a novel in verse; but it also contained, wholly unconnected with the main story, a number of satirical sketches of con-

1845. Æt. 42. temporary men in politics and literature, which attracted far more attention than the poem itself. These portraits are the only passages in the book which have survived the generation for which it was written. Many readers at the present time who know nothing of the romantic adventures of "Mervale" and "Arden," still remember *The New Timon* for the lines, so often quoted, which describe Lord Stanley (afterwards the 14th Lord Derby) and Lord John Russell :—

> One after one the Lords of time advance,
> Here Stanley meets—how Stanley scorns, the glance!
> The brilliant chief, irregularly great,
> Frank, haughty, rash—the Rupert of Debate!
> Nor gout, nor toil, his freshness can destroy,
> And Time still leaves all Eton in the boy;—
> First in the class, and keenest in the ring,
> He saps like Gladstone, and he fights like Spring!
> . . . . .
> Next cool, and all unconscious of reproach,
> Comes the calm "Johnny who upset the coach."
> How formed to lead, if not too proud to please,
> His fame would fire you, but his manners freeze.
> . . . . .
> But see our statesman when the steam is on,
> And languid Johnny glows to glorious John!
> When Hampden's thought, by Falkland's muses drest,
> Lights the pale cheek, and swells the generous breast;
> When the pent heat expands the quickening soul,
> And foremost in the race the wheels of genius roll!

Some of the other sketches, however, were not so good-natured, and a contemporary reviewer described the poem as written "with a degree of rashness, levity, and bad taste almost inconceivable." One of the passages in particular involved

Bulwer-Lytton in the most uncomfortable position in which he was ever placed by his love of anonymity and his proclivity to satire. Tennyson was referred to as "school-miss Alfred," and attacked in the following lines :— 1845. Æt. 42.

> No tawdry grace shall womanize my pen !
> Even in love-song man should write for men !
> Not mine, not mine (O Muse forbid !) the boon
> Of borrowed notes, the mock bird's modish tune,
> The jingling medley of purloin'd conceits,
> Outbabying Wordsworth, and outglittering Keats,
> Where all the airs of patchwork-pastoral chime
> To drowsy ears in Tennysonian rhyme !

As the poetry of Tennyson had then just found general acceptance, this extraordinary dictum was noticed more than any other passage in the book ; and Bulwer-Lytton evidently became apprehensive of discovery. His friendship with Mr. Tennyson d'Eyncourt has already been mentioned, and on a visit to him at this time he rather ostentatiously expressed his admiration of the poet, and added, "How much I should like to know your cousin Alfred !"[1] In a note in *The New Timon*, criticising the pension which Tennyson had received from the Government, he speaks of him as "belonging to a wealthy family," and implies that he was in flourishing circumstances, although he knew from the d'Eyncourts that he was in fact extremely poor. All this was, no doubt, done to remove any suspicion regarding the authorship of the satire.

[1] *Alfred Lord Tennyson, A Memoir by His Son*, vol. i. p. 244.

1846. ÆT. 43. In Bulwer-Lytton's case, however, anonymity was not easily preserved. Tennyson did not see the poem at first, but the passages referring to himself were anonymously communicated to him in a newspaper. He seems to have guessed, or to have been assured by Forster, that Bulwer-Lytton was the author, and immediately wrote in reply: "The New Timon and the Poets," a piece of great satirical merit, which has, at Tennyson's particular desire, never been reprinted among his works. It began :—

We know him, out of Shakespeare's art,
And those fine curses which he spoke,—
The Old Timon with his noble heart,
That, strongly loathing, greatly broke.

So died the Old; here comes the New;
Regard him—a familiar face;
I *thought* we knew him! What, it's you,—
The padded man that wears the stays!

Who killed the girls and thrilled the boys
With dandy pathos when you wrote!
O Lion, you that made a noise,
And shook a mane *en papillotes*!
. . . . .
But men of long-enduring hopes,
And careless what the hours may bring,
Can pardon little would-be Popes,
And Brummels when they try to sting.

An artist, Sir, should rest in art,
And waive a little of his claim;
To have the great poetic heart
Is more than all poetic fame.

Tennyson improvised these lines to relieve his

own feelings, but John Forster, to whom he showed them, insisted on sending them to *Punch*, where they were printed on February 28, 1846.[1] Forster's part in the transaction, as a friend of both parties, is curious. But he may have been piqued with Bulwer-Lytton for not having confided his secret to him, and perhaps thought that the one attack deserved the other. That Bulwer-Lytton regarded Forster as the man most likely to reveal the authorship of *The New Timon* is evident from the following passage in a letter he wrote to him on his way to Florence on March 15, 1846, perhaps, when the circumstances are considered, the most remarkable letter in his whole correspondence :— 1846. ÆT. 43.

I have to complain of you. I have not seen newspapers myself, except an occasional *Galignani*, a rare *Times*, one *Daily News*, and the two *Examiners*, you kindly sent me ; but I am informed by my letters from town that there is a report put out, and it would seem in some spiteful way, that I am the author of the *Modern Timon*, and that the report arose, or at least took its sanction, in a review in the *Examr.*, attributing it, by implication or hint, to me !—everyone supposing from our intimacy that the reviewer in the *Examr.* must be well informed. Now, as I am not the author, the report is extremely disagreeable to me, without disrespect to the poem, whatever it be, good or bad, and I should feel very much obliged to you to repair, as far as you can, the wrong you have done me—indeed, it does seem to me strange that such a charge or sugges-

[1] Tennyson himself said of them : "They were too bitter. I do not think I should ever have published them." *Memoir by His Son*, p. 245.

1846. Æt. 43. tion should have come from you. I am not in the habit of writing anonymously, and even if I had now done so, my reasons for concealment must have been so grave that it could scarcely be a friendly act to proclaim what I had intended to be secret. But I have nothing to do with the poem, one way or the other, and have sins eno' of my own to answer for, without taking up those of any other, who may, for ought I know, catch my style or mannerisms—there are plenty who have done so, and will do so yet, a misfortune inevitable to every writer of some originality.

You have my decided and peremptory authority accordingly to deny the report, whether it honors or asperses me. I am informed at the same time that Douglas Jerrold and the *Punch* clique are libelling me in that publication, in every way most personal and offensive. Why I, who have been as generally kind and good-natured to all literary men whom I could help, as an author can well be to his brethren, who have helped, at one moment or another, almost every popular writer appearing subsequently to myself—poet or proseman, from Elliot the Corn Law bard (whose opinions I abhorred) and Milnes, whose school I disliked —to even the great Boz, who certainly never needed my good word, you will say, but who had all the weight that the most earnest and active eulogy could give him, at the first commencement of *Pickwick*, before the depth beneath its humour was acknowledged —yea, tho' I foresaw and foretold that he of all men was the one that my jealousy might best be aroused by. Why, I say, I should be selected so constantly and so bitterly for the stings and slanders of the literary clique professional, I know not, except because I am a gentleman, and because I have been good-natured. I can't help being the first, but I can at least remedy the second; and wits as these persons think them-

selves, I will try if I cannot pay them off in their own coin. Therefore, let the hunchback look to his own hump! 1846. Æt. 43.

The following week, in the issue of *Punch* for March 7, Tennyson returned to the subject with an "After-thought," in which no direct reference was made to *The New Timon* but "the petty fools of rhyme" were fiercely described :—

> Who hate each other for a song,
> And do their little best to bite
> And pinch their brothers in the throng,
> And scratch the very dead for spite,
> And strain to make an inch of room
> For their sweet selves. . . .
> . . . Surely, after all,
> The noblest answer unto such
> Is perfect stillness when they brawl.

This contribution, like its predecessor, was signed "Alcibiades."

However anxious Bulwer-Lytton may have been to "pay off in their own coin" the critics by whom he was assailed in the press, he must have realised that there was no such justification for his attack upon Tennyson, which had only resulted in bringing a new and formidable critic into the field against him. Indeed, the more he resented the hostility which his own writings encountered, the less excuse was there for his unprovoked attack upon a distinguished fellow author. When, therefore, the authorship of *The New Timon* was acknowledged, he cut out altogether the lines referring to Tennyson. The poem was

1846. Æt. 43. already in its second edition when Tennyson's first reply appeared; but in the third, and in all subsequent reprints, the passage was so completely expunged that, without a reference to the original text, it is impossible to conjecture its context.

CHAPTER IV

CHEQUERED YEARS

1846–1850

He had based his experiments upon the vast masses of the General Public. He had called the People of his own and other countries to be his audience and his judges, and all the coteries in the world could not have injured him. He was like the member for an immense constituency who may offend individuals so long as he keep his footing with the body at large.

Ernest Maltravers.

THE discontent and discouragement which Miss Martineau had detected in some of Bulwer-Lytton's recent publications, and for which she had chided him in so friendly and encouraging a tone, was evidently only a passing phase due to ill-health; for the years which elapsed between the publication of *The Last of the Barons* and his return to political life produced not only his most ambitious poetical work, but also two novels in an entirely new strain, which bear strong testimony to the freshness and vigour of his creative faculties. 1846. ÆT. 43.

In his personal and private life this period, though freed from the drudgery and acute strain of his first ten years of authorship, was not without its struggles, anxieties, and sorrows, and his

1846. Æt. 43. mind was still far removed from that peace and repose which he coveted so ardently, but which he never obtained until the last years of his life. The years 1846 to 1850 were on the whole rather restless years, in which he travelled much in search of health and change of occupation, tried twice unsuccessfully to get back into Parliament, was pursued remorselessly by the hostility of his literary critics, and suffered much from the personal sorrows from which no life is wholly free. Almost within a year of each other he lost by death both his only daughter and his best woman friend, and a year later came very near to losing his son also. The general impression left by a survey of these years is one of struggle—struggle persistently and on the whole successfully maintained, internally with weaknesses both of constitution and character, and externally with the world and fortune. It will be the object of this chapter to indicate the circumstances and mental condition in which some of his very best literary work was accomplished.

At the beginning of 1846, immediately after the publication of *The New Timon*, Bulwer-Lytton revisited Italy at a time when the inhabitants of that country were on the eve of their first abortive attempt to free themselves from the domination of Austria; and already at that time he had the shrewdness to foresee the part which the kingdom of Piedmont was destined to play in the coming struggle :—

ITALY REVISITED

Edward Bulwer-Lytton to John Forster.

NAPLES, *Jan.* 26, 1846.

MY DEAR FORSTER—I can no longer delay thanking you for your remembrance of the absent and for your exertions about the play.[1] I have laid it at present on the shelf, not being inclined to add to my collection of useless MSS., or to swell the dread account of the unacted drama. Whenever I can learn that if written it will be accepted by the manager on the conditions stated, or acceptable to Macready, I will return to and complete it. Meanwhile the *dolce far niente* gains upon me as I breathe the relaxing airs of Parthenope and look on the vacant faces of this lazy population. The weather indeed is severe for Naples, but about as warm as the middle of a fine September in England. My windows look on the matchless bay, and my ride of yesterday gave one the view of the old Baiæ, the isle of Nisita on which stood the villa of Brutus, the site of Cicero's villa, the old cape of Misenum, the peaks of Procida, and the still Hellenic island of Ischia. In the last the Greek dress is worn by the women and Greek words abound. I explored Pozzuoli (six miles hence) formerly the great commercial city of Puteoli. There still remain the amphitheatre—the dens for the wild beasts as fresh as the trapdoors at Astleys and the columns of the Temple of Jupiter Serapis, destroyed by volcanic eruption and inundation.

1846. ÆT. 43.

What amidst these scenes stirs in the mind? Nothing but a dreary contemplation. How be active where Death coils round all trace of the activity of old? Yet much of my old illusory recollections of Italy are disappointed in this second visit. I am more alive than

[1] This play, I think, must have been the comedy of *Darnley*, never completed, but adapted for the stage after his death and produced by Mr. (now Sir) John Hare at the Court Theatre in 1879.

1846. Æt. 43. I was to the creature discomforts. The squalid filth and petty extortion of the populace fret and disgust me. The scarfskin of poetry is less thick on my temper than I suppose it was at six or seven and twenty. The journey was most fatiguing, and I do not feel yet that I am repaid for it. As Johnson said of the Hebrides "this is worth seeing, but not worth going to see." I fancy this will be my last visit to the south.

Peel's return is just what I (and I suppose all) foresaw when the first surprise was over. He wished to release his Cabinet from its pledges to the Agriculturists, and he fancies he has done so by recreating it. I think not—according to the plain tenets of men of honour. If the Corn Laws are to fall, it is not by the hands of men who stirred the country against an 8/- duty. Doubtless Peel cannot propose total repeal. I doubt if any minister could carry such a measure, but another bungling, unsettling change smooths the way to it. In the repeal of the Corn Laws it seems to me that the real consequences have been wholly overlooked by both Parties. Those consequences lie in the next age. The question then to be decided is whether by altering the proportionate labour of the population, whether by augmenting yet more, not the prosperity of commerce and manufactures alone, but the masses of men employed on them, you have not altered for the worse the staple character and spirit of the people. But this is a subject too long for a letter.

Edward Bulwer-Lytton to Lady Blessington.

ROME, *Feb.* 12, 1846.

MY DEAREST FRIEND—According to the promise you were kind eno' to invite from me, I write to you from my wandering camp amidst the *Hosts*, who yearly invade *la belle Italie*. I performed rather a hurried

journey to Genoa and suffered more than I had anticipated from the fatigue, so there I rested and sought to recruit. The weather was cold and stormy, only at Nice had I caught a glimpse of genial sunshine. With much misgiving I committed myself to the abhorred powers of steam at Genoa and ultimately refound about two-thirds of my dilapidated self at Naples. There indeed the air was soft and the sky blue, and the luxurious sea slept calmly as ever round those enchanting islands and in the arms of the wondrous Bay. But the old charm of novelty was gone. The climate, tho' enjoyable, I found most trying, changing every two hours, and utterly unsafe for the early walks of a water patient or the moonlight rambles of a romantic traveller. The society ruined by the English, and a bad set. The utter absence of intellectual occupation gave one the spleen. So I fled from the balls and the treacherous smiles of the climate, and travelled by slow stages to Rome, with some longings to stay at Mola, which were counteracted by the desire to read the newspapers and learn Peel's programme for destroying his friends the farmers. The only interesting person, by the way, I met with at Naples, was the Count of Syracuse, the King's brother. For he is born with the curse of ability (tho' few discover and fewer still acknowledge it), and has been unfortunate eno' to cultivate his mind in a country and in a rank where mind has no career. Thus he is in reality affected with the *ennui* which fools never know, and clever men only dispel by active exertions. And it was melancholy to see one, with the accomplishments of a scholar and the views of a statesman, frittering away his life amongst idle parasites, and seeking to amuse himself by billiards and lansquenet. He has more charming manners than I ever met in a royal person, except Charles 10th, with a dignity that only evinces itself by easy sweetness. He reminded me of Schiller's prince in *The Ghost-Seer*.

1846. Æt. 43.

1846. ÆT. 43. And now I am at Rome! As Naples a second time disappointed me, so Rome (which saddened me before) revisited grows on me daily. I only wish it were not the Carnival which does not harmonise with the true charm of the place, its atmosphere of art and repose. I pass my time quietly eno', with lazy walks in the morning, and the Galleries in the afternoon. In the evening I smoke my cigar in the Forum or on the Pincian hill, guessing where Nero lies buried;—Nero, who in spite of his crimes (probably exaggerated) has left so gigantic a memory in Rome—a memory that meets you everywhere;—almost the only Emperor the people recall. He must have had force and genius as well as brilliancy and magnificence for this survival, and he died so young!

I am now moving homewards. This stupendous treachery of Peel's excites my gall, and recalls my political fervour. I long again to be in public life, though the old illusions are dispelled. However, let politics rest for the present. Pray tell me, my dearest friend, how you are, and if your spirits are recovered from the sad affliction that befell you shortly before I left England.[1] My best address now will be Poste Restante, Marseilles. I expect to leave this for Pisa next week. Hence to Marseilles and slowly back thro' the south of France.

With kindest regards to D'Orsay and my best remembrances to your nieces,—Ever yrs. most aff.,

E. B. L.

The same to the same.

LYONS, *April* 10, 1846.

Your note, my dearest Friend, reached me only yesterday, as I did not come by Marseilles, and was

[1] The death of her sister.

detained longer than I had expected in different towns in Italy. I crossed from Turin (worth seeing and little more than that) by the Mount Cenis—bitterly cold, and in the midst of it a fall of snow—and arrived here, nipped and tired. I rest a day and then proceed to Paris by Fontainebleau and Versailles. I expect to arrive in England the last week of April. I am much struck with Lyons. There are few cities in Italy to compare with it in effect of size, opulence and progress. 1846. Æt. 43.

But Italy has improved since I was there last, life is more astir in the streets, civilization reflowing to its old character. Of all Italy, however, the improvement is most visible in Sardinia. There the foundations of a great state are being surely and firmly laid. The king himself approaches to a great man, and tho' priest-ridden, is certainly an admirable Governor and monarch. I venture to predict that Sardinia will become the leading nation of Italy, and eventually rise to a first-rate power in Europe. It is the only state with new blood in its veins. It has youth, not old age attempting to struggle back into vigour in Medea's caldron.

I have been indolently employing myself, partly on a version of a Greek play, partly on a novel, anxious to keep my mind distracted from the political field which is closed to me. For without violent opinions on the subject, I have great misgivings as to the effect of Peel's measures on the real happiness and safety of England, and regard the question as one in which political economy—mere mercantile loss and gain—has least to do. High social considerations are bound up in it; no one yet has said what I want said on the matter. Nevertheless I was much delighted with Disraeli's very able and, indeed, remarkable speech. I am so pleased to see his progress in the House, which I alone predicted, the night of his first failure. I

1846. Æt. 43. suppose Lord Geo. Bentinck is leading the agriculturists. I cannot well judge from *Galignani* with what success.

This letter has remained unfinished till to-day the 13th, when I conclude it at Joigny—more and more struck with the improvement of France as I pass thro' the country slowly. It is a great nation indeed, and to my mind the most disagreeable part of the population, and the part least improved, is at Paris. To-morrow I hope to see Fontainebleau once more. Adieu, dearest friend.—Ever & most affy. yrs.,

E. B. L.

The "version of a Greek play" referred to in this last letter was an adaptation for the English stage of the *Oedipus Tyrannus* of Sophocles, and the novel was *Lucretia, or the Children of Night*. Writing to Forster from Rome on February 4, he says of the former :—

In a fit of classical fervour I have, since writing to you,[1] completed what I had long meditated—a drama on the *Oedipus Tyrannus*, with the choruses, etc. More than this, I have arranged with the celebrated Mercadante, the composer, for the music to the choruses and overture. He takes to it *con amore* and I have little doubt that his music will be very grand and effective. Now, can you arrange to sell this for me to any theatre where Macready performs? I am convinced that it is a part that will do him good. It always was the greatest part on the Greek stage; and though I cannot flatter myself that I have attained to the poetry of Sophocles, I think that I have improved the mere theatrical effect of the drama, and I have certainly brought out the character of Oedipus in colours more

[1] That is to say in ten days.

adapted for a modern audience. I have followed the march of the actual plot almost exactly, with a few touches and alterations here and there, but I have not translated the dialogue. I have rather built upon it, also upon the choruses. As a poem it is more uniform and sustained than anything I have written. 1846. Æt. 43.

On his return to England he arranged with Mr. Phelps for the production of this play at the Sadler's Wells Theatre at Islington, and the fact that the engagement was not carried out, and the play was never produced, was due to circumstances connected with its companion work, the novel of *Lucretia*.

Lucretia was completed by the end of the year 1846 and published in December. It immediately revived the old attacks on the immoral influence of the author, which had previously been directed against *Paul Clifford*, *Eugene Aram*, and *Night and Morning*. Bulwer-Lytton was intensely sensitive to this particular criticism, and he could never suffer it to remain unanswered :—

"It is useless to argue a question after one party has decided upon it," he wrote to Forster after the publication of *Night and Morning*, "or I might ask if you could really maintain the doctrine, 'that it is a great fault in an author to give a generous principle to atrocious actions,' and arguing thereon that it is dangerous and immoral to excite any sympathy for or interest in a criminal? To me this dogma seems to strike down at a blow the grandest privileges and the greatest masterpieces of Art. What crime more atrocious

1846–1850. than the assassination of a meek and guiltless woman?
ÆT. 43–47. Yet it was the glory of Shakespeare to give the most absorbing interest to the assassin in Othello. What crime baser than Macbeth's? Shakespeare ransacks earth and hell to keep your interest in Macbeth to the last. Before his death the artist stops short from the very action to make the heart yearn to Macbeth in the pathos which he places on his lips. I have before me at this moment a poem of Schiller which Goethe considered the most artistic of his poems for the very reason that he made your pity and sympathy go with the perpetration of a crime from which Nature revolts —infanticide. And all this is true. The element of the highest genius is not among the village gossips of Miss Austen; it is in crime and passion, for the two are linked together. It is the art of that genius to make you distinguish between the crime and the criminal, and in proportion as your soul shudders at the one, to let your heart beat with the heart of the other. It is not immoral, it is moral, and of the most impressive and epic order of morals, to arouse and sustain interest for a criminal. It is immoral when you commend the crime, and this last from the first page of *Pelham* to the finis of *Night and Morning* I have never done."

Again, after the publication of *Lucretia*, he writes:—

I see it presumed that the object of *Lucretia* was that which I said I had in contemplation before the Wainewrights'[1] lives were made known to me, viz.:—

[1] The character of Varney in *Lucretia* is based upon Thomas Wainewright, and that of Lucretia Clavering upon his wife. The following particulars of the former are given in the *The Dictionary of National Biography*:—

Thomas Wainewright, artist, art critic, forger, and poisoner, was born at Chiswick, 1794, and died at Hobart, Tasmania, 1852. He contributed art criticisms to *The London Magazine* from 1820 to 1823. He exhibited

some expositions of money and social impatience, whereas I expressly imply in my preface that I was *diverted* from that design by the lives of those two criminals, and that it was only incidentally and here and there that I could carry out some portions of that original conception, viz. :—in Wm. Mainwaring, for instance, the elder Ardworth, etc. Owing to the omission of certain passages in the original draft of the preface, I have failed to make myself clear. What, however, I intended to say and believe I have said,

1846–1850. Æt. 43–47.

pictures at the Royal Academy from 1821 to 1825. Under pressure of financial distress in 1826 he forged, in the name of his trustees, an order upon the Bank of England to pay him a moiety of the capital sum to the interest alone of which he was entitled.

In 1828 he and his wife went to live with his uncle, Mr. George Griffiths at Linden House. Within a year the uncle died "suddenly," and the house and property passed to Wainewright, who was much in debt at the time. In 1830 he insured the life of his half-sister, Helen Abercromby, for £2000 and £3000 in two separate Insurance Companies, for a short period of 2 to 3 years. He was prevented from increasing the amount by the obstinacy of Helen's mother, who died suddenly in August, 1830. Wainewright then quadrupled the amounts, and at the end of December in the same year Helen also died in agonies, the circumstances of her death being exactly similar to those of her mother and Mr. Griffiths. The Insurance Companies refused payment on account of suspicious circumstances, and Wainewright left the country. For the next 6 years his life was a blank; but during this time he was imprisoned in France and strychnine was found upon his person. In 1835 the case which he had brought against the Insurance Companies was tried and decided against him.

In 1837 he returned to England and was arrested for the forgery of 1826. He pleaded guilty and was transported for life. In Newgate Wainewright is stated to have acknowledged poisoning Helen Abercromby.

He is described as "an over-dressed young man, his white hands bespangled with rings, with an undress military air and the conversation of a smart, lively, heartless, and voluptuous coxcomb."

Besides being the original of Varney in *Lucretia*, his story was also the foundation of Dickens's *Hunted Down*.

Amongst Bulwer-Lytton's correspondence are the following letters from Mr. Henry P. Smith of the Eagle Insurance Office, relative to Wainewright :—

"*May* 19, 1846.

"I will collect and send you all the Wainewright papers.

"There is no record of the forgery, that is, of the offence which sent

1846. Æt. 43. though not clearly enough, is that I had long had in my mind an exposition of certain vices, etc. While occupied with these ideas I became acquainted with the lives of two criminals; it was through their *cultivation* that I thought to trace the phenomena of their crimes. In the old preface I argued this point; now I but state it. But the obvious deduction I designed was that the lives of these criminals and the analysis of their peculiar cultivation formed the staple of the book, having nothing to do with my previous design.

I then stated that various opportunities for elucidat-

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him to Australia, because my duty directed my enquiries solely to the insurances—that is to the deaths.

"He forged five powers of attorney to put himself into possession of the capital of a sum in which he had a life interest, and was allowed by the Bank to plead guilty to the second plea—that of uttering the forged document—which saved his life. . . .

"You are perhaps aware that Wainewright was a writer, a contributor to *The London Magazine*, I think, under the name of James Weathercock, and that he edited a poem of Marlowe's, which edition is in Forster's library. In these works your skilful glance may exercise itself in detecting the poison among the flowers, and therefore I name them to you."

"*May* 26, 1846.

"On making a further search, I found a list of the contents of the forfeit trunks, and this led me to a second packet of papers and books which had escaped my first enquiries. I send them to you, and also our schedule made on the strangely assorted cargo coming into our keeping. (You will see your own *Letter to a Cabinet Minister* was retained among his later treasures.) It will show the books which the combination of his necessities and his tastes had left to him amid the general wreck. The drawings come out better than my memory had traced them to you.

"There is no *proof* of the nature of the poison used, but the general medical opinion of the time pronounced it to be strychnine. . . . Mr. Thompson tells me that W. confessed that he employed strychnine and morphine, and you will gather more of his history from the additional briefs and their notes, now sent to you."

"*May* 2, 1849.

"I have just heard that Wainewright died recently in the hospital at Hobarton. His latter days in the sick ward were employed, I am told, in blaspheming to the pious patients and in terrifying the timid. I think that he never lived to know the everlasting fame to which he has been damned in *Lucretia*."

From this letter it would appear that the date of Wainewright's death is incorrectly given as 1852 in *The Dictionary of National Biography*.

ing that original design (against Mammon and impatience) still incidentally occurred, viz. :—in the history of W. Mainwaring, who suffered his impatience to destroy him in the midst of the fairest prospects, in Ardworth's reckless indifference to money (virtues being ruined in the spendthrift as well as vices engendered in the miser). In contradistinction to these stands Walter Ardworth. But the main staple of the book is meant to be the analysis of certain criminal natures. 1846. ÆT. 43.

The press, as far as I have seen it, sings one chorus of attack as if it was Jack Sheppard out-shepparded. I can say nothing more. After the disgust I feel at seeing the same old assaults whatever I write,—never regarding my right, acknowledged elsewhere, to be judged upon canons wholly different from those brought against me—has subsided, I shall better see what is just or unjust in the manner in which I am treated. No, I was not prepared for such attacks. I do not see why my subject should provoke it. Surely great crime is the highest province of fiction. It has always been so considered from the Greeks to Shakespeare.

To Lady Blessington he writes, on December 24, 1846 :—

I am extremely grateful, my dearest friend, for your kind letter—so evidently meant to encourage me amidst the storm which howls around my little boat. And indeed it is quite a patch of blue sky, serene and cheering, thro' the very angry atmosphere which greets me elsewhere. I view it as an omen, and sure I am at least, that the blue sky will endure, long after the last blast has howled itself away.

Perhaps, in some respects, it is fortunate that I have

1846. Æt. 43.

had so little favour shown to me, or rather so much hostility, in my career. If I had once been greeted with the general kindness and indulgent smiles that have for instance rewarded Dickens, I should have been fearful of a contrast in the future, and satisfied at so much sunshine, gathered in my harvests and broken up my plough. But all this vituperation goads me on. Who can keep quiet when the tarantula bites him?

I write this from a prison, for we are snowed up all round; and to my mind the country is dull eno' in the winter, without this addition to its sombre repose. But I shall stay as long as I can, for this is the time when the poor want us most. My principal excitement is a lawsuit referred to arbitration, and which I am sure to lose; but the question being how much or how little I shall lose, it still has that agreeable stimulant which ceases when we know the worst, write a cheque and have done with it. I suppose this lawsuit will call me to town next week, but am not certain, and my stay will be short if it does—not so short but what I shall call on you. Meanwhile I send my hearty wishes for the season.

Adieu, my dearest friend. With kindest regards to D'Orsay and best remembrances to your nieces—Believe me, Ever yrs. truly & gratefully,

E. B. L.

The immediate result of the hostile criticism raised by *Lucretia*, was to convince the author that it would be inadvisable to produce his dramatic version of *Oedipus Tyrannus*. "If so much indignation," he said, "is produced by the written representation of crime in the novel, what will be said of the actual acted representation of homicide and incest on the stage?" The

play was withdrawn, and has never since been either published or acted. 1847. Æt. 44.

The second result was to induce Bulwer-Lytton to publish an elaborate defence against the charges which had been brought against him in a pamphlet called *A Word to the Public* (1847). No one to-day will consider that such a defence was called for, but the author never seems to have realised that his critics were as little influenced by such vindications as he was by their criticisms. The best answer to all such attacks had been provided by Macaulay four years previously, in a letter acknowledging the receipt of *Eva, and other Poems*.

T. B. Macaulay to Edward Bulwer.

ALBANY, *June* 24, 1842.

DEAR BULWER—I was unable to discover your dwelling-place in either red book or blue book, and fancied that you must have wandered to the Pyrenees or the Apennines, till I learned yesterday from Lady Holland that you were at Fulham. I write therefore to send my tardy thanks for your very pleasing and interesting little volume. You have written more brilliant poetry, but none, I think, which moves the feelings so much.

If I regret anything in the volume, it is that you should, in the last piece, have uttered, in language certainly very energetic and beautiful, complaints which I really think are groundless. It has, perhaps, always been too much the habit of men of genius to attach more importance to detraction than to applause. A single hiss gives them more pain than the acclamations of a whole theatre can compensate. But surely if you

1847. Æt. 44. could see your own position as others see it, you have no reason to complain. How many men in literary history have at your age enjoyed half your reputation? Who that ever enjoyed half your reputation was secure from the attacks of envious dunces? And what harm, in the long run, did all the envy of all the dunces in the world ever do to any man of real merit? What writer's place in the estimation of mankind was ever fixed by any writings except his own? Who would in our time know that Dryden and Pope ever had a single enemy, if they had not themselves been so injudicious as to tell us so? You may rely on this that there are very few authors living, and certainly not one of your detractors, who would not most gladly take all your literary vexations for the credit of having written your worst work. If, however, you really wish to be free from detraction, I can very easily put you in the way of being so. Bring out a succession of poems as bad as Mr. Robert Montgomery's *Luther*, and of prose works in the style of Mr. Gleig's *Life of Warren Hastings*, and I will undertake that in a few years you shall have completely silenced malevolence. To think that you will ever silence it while you continue to write what is immediately reprinted at Philadelphia, Paris and Brussels, would be absurd.—Ever yours truly,

T. B. Macaulay.

This appreciation and sound advice was repeated after the publication of *Lucretia*.

The same to the same.

Pay Office,
December 14, 1846.

Dear Sir Edward—On returning last week from the country I found *Lucretia* on my table, and glad I was to see that you had not taken leave of that species

of composition for which, in my opinion, you are most eminently qualified. In power I should place *Lucretia* very high among your works. I doubt whether it will be so popular as some of them for this reason, that the excitement which it produces sometimes approaches, at least with me, to positive pain. The exhibition of excessive moral depravity united with high intellect in three different forms, with the talents of the great philosopher in Dalibard, with the talents of the great politician and ruler in Lucretia, and with the talents of the great artist in Varney, is frightfully gloomy. It is some years since any fiction has made me so sad. The effect resembles that of Poussin's "Massacre of the Innocents" in the Lucca Collection, or of Salvator's "Prometheus" in the Corsini Palace. It is real suffering to look, and yet we cannot avert our eyes. I hope that we shall not wait long for another work as powerful and more cheerful. Remember your favourite Schiller:— 1847. ÆT. 44.

Ernst ist die Wahrheit; heiter ist die Kunst.

The state of Ireland[1] makes us sorrowful enough without the help of your *Children of Night*.—Ever yours truly,

T. B. MACAULAY.

The same to the same.

ALBANY, LONDON,
February 20, 1847.

MY DEAR SIR EDWARD—I ought to have earlier thanked you for your *Word to the Public*. It was not needed as far as I was concerned. For though, as I honestly told you, the effect of your last work on me

[1] Great distress prevailed in Ireland at this time, owing to the famine which had broken out there in the previous year. The distress had led to an alarming increase in crimes of violence, and the Coercion Bill which Sir R. Peel proposed for dealing with the situation was defeated in the House of Commons in June 1846, and led to the resignation of his Government.

1847. Æt. 44. was like the effect of some fine Martyrdoms which I have seen in Italy, more painful than a great artist should try to produce, I utterly detest and despise that cry of immorality which was raised against you.

The names of those who raised it I do not know, but I cannot doubt that they wrote under the influence of personal enmity. Your vindication is undoubtedly well written and with great temper and dignity. But I am not sure that I should not have recommended silence as the best punishment for malignant scurrility. —Very truly yours,

T. B. Macaulay.

The only reason why I have thought it worth while to dwell on Bulwer-Lytton's extreme sensitiveness to these attacks, which throughout his life were made upon his motives, is that it was highly characteristic of the man, and because it supplies both the explanation and the cause of a certain absence of sympathy and lovableness in his character noticeable in his relations with others. It is often the case that those who have suffered most from opposition and misrepresentation are the most ready to misunderstand and criticise others in their turn. An enforced attitude of self-defence tends to crush out the more generous instincts of human nature, and to foster an uncharitable outlook upon life. We are all susceptible to the opinions of others, and are inclined to grow according to their estimation of us. Bulwer-Lytton has himself handled this theme in his essay upon *The Efficacy of Praise*,[1] and in his own life he suffered

[1] *Caxtoniana.* Knebworth Edition, p. 196.

much from the persistency with which both in private and public his motives and actions appeared to be unfairly judged. His letters to his mother at the time of his marriage show how bitterly he felt her failure to appreciate the motives which led him, on that occasion, to act in opposition to her wishes. In his estrangement from his wife at a later date, it was her constant refusal to appeal to what was best in his character, her repeated provocation of all those qualities which he was most anxious to suppress, that gave him the greatest pain ; and in the public criticism of his writings it was the feeling that he was misjudged and maligned as a man, rather than criticised as an author, which rankled so deeply. 1847. ÆT. 44.

All this had a marked influence upon the development of his character. I do not say that it made him bitter and uncharitable, but it encouraged a natural moroseness in his nature and developed a habit of shrinking from contact with society, which made him less responsive than he would otherwise have been to the claims of sympathy and affection. "The lessons of adversity," he said, in *The Last Days of Pompeii*, "are not always salutary—sometimes they soften and amend, but as often they indurate and pervert. If we consider ourselves more harshly treated by fate than those around us, and do not acknowledge in our own deeds the justice of the severity, we become too apt to deem the world our enemy, to case ourselves in defiance, to wrestle against our softer

1847. Æt. 44. self, and to indulge the darker passions which are so easily fermented by the sense of injustice."

In addition to the pamphlet in answer to the critics of *Lucretia*, the year 1847 was employed by Bulwer-Lytton in preparing a collected edition of his works, which was brought out by Colburn in the following year, and in writing a tragedy on the subject of Brutus. This play, however, though completed, was never published.[1] In the spring he returned to the water cure at Malvern, and in the summer he unsuccessfully contested an election at Lincoln. In the autumn he went abroad and visited Munich, Gastein, Frankfort, Dresden and Aix la Chapelle. Macready had asked him to write a comedy, and he told Forster that he would try and accomplish this during his foreign travels. From Gastein he writes on September 14 :—

> I have had something like the real feeling of health here ; and indeed since I left my mental energy, long half dormant, seems to revive. Nevertheless, though I have tried hard to write the comedy, I have not been able. It baffles me. The hearty laugh of comedy is not natural to my Muse. Had Macready called for tragedy he should have had one long since.

The mental energy which refused to be pressed into the service of comedy, was directed instead to the production of a long epic poem on King Arthur, about which he writes to Forster on November 7, 1847 :—

[1] It was produced by Mr. Wilson Barrett at the Princess's Theatre, London, in 1885, under the title of *The Household Gods*.

My whole mind is absorbed in it. An heroic poem in from 12 to 20 books. *Ma foi!* it is not (good or bad) a plaything experiment. I cannot, as you suggest, publish it together with *The New Timon* without losing my own intensity condensed in it. I own that I look upon this as the grand effort of my literary life, the most earnest and elaborate appeal that I can make to posterity or my own time. You may judge, therefore, of the anxiety I feel that it should come out under the best auspices, and ensure the fullest possible co-operation on the part of the publisher. I have made up my mind, too, as to its appearance, in parts, and the price not to exceed 1/-; but I think with you it is a question whether the two first parts may not come out together or very close upon each other—on the plea that a less quantity does not fairly open the poem. I am particularly anxious to get the thing out as soon as possible—1st, because it is only at this time of year that poetry is read; 2ndly, because if any accident should happen to Louis Philippe, I consider one main chance of success would be gone, and as it is the allusions appeal to feelings now fresh and soon to subside; 3rdly, because till it is out I can think of nothing else.

1847. ÆT. 44.

On November 25, he writes again :—

Arthur (the direst of his adventures) is gone to press *sub auspice Colburno*—2/6 will be the cost for two books.

The poem did not come out, however, till the following year, and in fact exactly coincided with the French Revolution of 1848 and the fall of Louis Philippe, which its author had hoped to avoid. Of this event he writes to Forster on March 1, 1848 :—

1848. Æt. 45. My dear Forster—What a *bouleversement*! I content myself with saying that all which I prophesied has come to pass. I enjoy the triumph over the incredulous donkeys to whom I have (within the last twelve months) said so often—"Louis Philippe must crush, if he live; if not, the dynasty is gone. It can't last two years." And again I hazard the prophecy: France, if she keep a Republic, must go to war, and into that war sooner or later England must be dragged.

I suppose you don't review *Arthur* this week. When you do, will you kindly either say something that may claim attention (as a matter still of interest) to the L. Philippe and Guizot passages, or else pass those passages over altogether. Those passages ought still to be telling and show how those gentlemen stood before their fall. But it is very easy for a hostile criticism to throw cold water on the whole four books, by representing these passages as a more leading portion than they are, and treating them as a day too late for the fair.

Yet, I can't say one has chalked one's day with a white stone or chosen the luckiest moment to bring out a poem! The very day of a revolution! and that poem, in truth, the great crowning work of its author's life.

Send me any news, if there be any.—Yrs. ever,

E. B.

Four days later he writes again:—

March 5, 1848.

My dear Forster—I have just read your notice of *Arthur* in *The Examiner*, and believe me, I feel deeply grateful for it, and sincerely affected by what I consider a real proof of the friendship I have so often tasked. I feel this the more, because I know how many differences of taste there are between us in poetry; and that you should have so generously said all you could in

praise, and nothing in censure, gives me a greater grati- 1848.
fication, as a mark of kindness, than as in promotion of Æt. 45.
a cherished wish. You know how much store I set on *Arthur*, and with true friendship preferred rather to see with my eyes than your own. Everything said must conduce to put *Arthur* in the most favourable light, and my most fastidious and exacting susceptibilities on the subject have been met in the friendliest spirit—*Ça ne s'oublie pas.*

You are quite right as to the French Revolution. If this new Republic does but succeed even partially in the principles with which it has commenced, it will be the grandest experiment ever yet made. Nay, it is that already. But it will upset sooner or later every dynasty in Europe. It is more than anti-monarchic, more than anti-aristocratic, it is anti-middle class, it is the ὕστερον πρότερον, the people themselves turned uppermost. It is what agriculturists call ploughing up the mother earth.

The leading article in *The Examiner* is admirable, but I cannot now think of politics, being wholly occupied with the pleasure you have given me.—Truly & affectly. yrs.,

E. B. L.

Brighton, *Sunday.*

As soon as *King Arthur* was completed, Bulwer-Lytton set to work upon his historical novel of *Harold*, and this book was written in an incredibly short space of time. It was completed by the spring of 1848, but its publication was delayed, owing to a great domestic sorrow which came upon him at this time. On April 29, 1848, his only daughter, Emily, died at the age of twenty in particularly tragic circumstances.

The story of Emily Lytton's short and un-

1848. happy life affords a most piteous illustration of how
Æt. 45. children may be made to suffer by the break-up of their home through the quarrels of their parents.

In 1836, at the time of the separation between their father and mother, Emily was seven years old, and her brother four. From that day the children never knew the meaning of the word home; and whatever love or happiness they met with in their childhood they owed to Miss Greene, who did her best, in very difficult circumstances, to take the place of their parents. Unfortunately, owing to her determination to take no sides in this quarrel and her efforts to keep the children out of it, Miss Greene was never wholly trusted by either parent. Thus, while the children were entrusted to her care, first by the mother and afterwards by the father, she was not supported in her efforts to do what seemed to her best for their health or their education ; and as they grew older they were taken out of her hands.

At the age of fifteen Emily was sent to reside with a lady in Germany, where she suffered much from ill-treatment and neglect. While there she formed a romantic attachment to a young German girl, on whom she lavished all the love and confidence of a nature starved of sympathy. Her love was even extended to this friend's brother, whom she engaged herself to marry. The friendship ended in great sorrow and disappointment, when she found that those to whom she had given her love so unstintingly had only accepted it from worldly motives and had no real affection for herself.

The disillusionment preyed upon her mind and permanently injured her health. A spinal complaint to which she had shown some tendency in her childhood now began to develop seriously, but received no attention. Miss Greene, who did not fully possess Emily's confidence at this time but guessed from the tone of her letters, which were carefully supervised, that she was ill and unhappy, repeatedly urged Sir Edward to bring his daughter home. The lady with whom Emily was staying, however, had prejudiced Sir Edward against Miss Greene, and her entreaties were therefore neglected. Emily was left in Germany for two years; and when at the end of that time her father discovered for himself her true condition, the malady from which she was suffering was too far advanced to be cured. 1848. Æt. 45.

On her return to England she was sent to an English school, and spent her holidays with her father at Knebworth. In these circumstances her life was intensely lonely and forlorn. Separated from her brother, who had been sent to school at the age of eight, deprived of the sympathy and affection of Miss Greene, without friends of her own age, her position in her father's house was destitute of all the influences which are necessary to the happiness of a young girl. From time to time she received long letters from her mother, full of accusations against her father; and the recital of these reproaches only gave her a morbid terror of both her parents. In the spring of 1848 she became seriously ill of typhus fever in London,

1848. and died on April 29. Two days before her
Æt. 45. death she seemed to be making excellent progress, and the doctors had reported most favourably on her condition. That evening her mother arrived at the house and bribed the landlady to let her a spare bedroom on the upper floor. Whether Lady Bulwer-Lytton actually entered her daughter's room, or whether by some other means Emily was made aware of her mother's presence in the house, cannot be determined with certainty, but the next morning she was delirious and never again recovered consciousness. The doctors could offer no other explanation of the sudden change in her condition, and her tragic death became an occasion for fresh bitterness and reproaches between her parents. Sir Edward believed that his wife had entered the room, and that her presence had frightened Emily into the high state of fever which ended her life. Lady Bulwer-Lytton accused her husband of having allowed his daughter to die in a state of absolute neglect in a London lodging without proper medical attendance, and even contended that her illness was due to his selfish ill-treatment of her. Thus round the death-bed of this unfortunate girl was revived all the miserable controversy which had overshadowed her life and embittered her childhood. "She is dead," wrote Sir Edward to Forster, "dead — Emily, my child. Pity me. I am crushed down. I cannot see you yet. So sudden it seems a dream."

That both parents had loved her may be true ;

Emily Lytton

from a water colour drawing at Knebworth

but neither had ever shown her any real affection or tenderness, and both were in a measure responsible for the unhappiness of her short life. The sorrow with which they mourned her loss was now added to the gall of their own embittered lives. The person, however, who missed her the most, and who mourned her with a sorrow untinged by remorse, unclouded by any bitterness, was her brother—the companion of her childhood, the partner of her joys and sorrows. He knew the difficulties of her position, for he had shared the misfortunes of their divided home. These difficulties and misfortunes he had now to face alone, and with this new sorrow in his heart. In the years to come, as will be shown later, he played his part manfully, though unsuccessfully, in the struggle to be loyal to both his parents and to induce each to do justice to the other. Of his beloved sister he retained through life the tenderest though the saddest memory.

1848. ÆT. 45.

O thou, the morning star of my dim soul!
My little elfin friend from Fairy-Land!
Whose memory is yet innocent of the whole
Of that which makes me doubly need thy hand,
Thy guiding hand from mine so soon withdrawn!
Here where I find so little like to thee.
For thou wert as the breath of dawn to me.
Starry, and pure, and brief, as is the dawn.[1]

As at other times in his life, Bulwer-Lytton now sought distraction from his private sorrow

[1] "Little Ella" from *Clytemnestra, and other Poems*, by Owen Meredith.

1848. Æt. 45. in increased intellectual labour. His immediate tasks were the correction of the proofs of *Harold*, which was published in June, and an article on Forster's *Life of Oliver Goldsmith*. He then set to work upon *The Caxtons*, which had already been begun, and the greater part of which had been written before the publication of *Lucretia*. This was completed in the following February and was immediately followed by *My Novel*.

Just as *The Last days of Pompeii*, written at a time of great depression, bears no trace of the mental perturbation of its author, so the works which he wrote in 1848 and 1849 not only show no signs of gloom, but are the lightest and happiest of all his writings. *The Caxtons* and *My Novel* represent the most mature work of Bulwer-Lytton's genius. They are a complete departure from the romantic style of all his previous works, and mark the beginning of a new phase in his writing—a transition from the representation of passion and adventure to the delineation of character and the study of life in more normal surroundings. The atmosphere in these books is one of quiet serenity, the humour is entirely free from satire, and the characters are at once life-like and sympathetic. With the exception, perhaps, of *Kenelm Chillingly*, his last, these are the two works which most truly represent the atmosphere of his own age. Though at the time he was writing them he had not yet passed out of the storms and struggles in which the greater part of his life was spent, his mind was

already beginning to anticipate the calm and repose of his later years. 1848. ÆT. 45.

On the subject of *The Caxtons* he wrote to a friend :—

The art employed in *The Caxtons* is a very simple one, and within the reach of all. It is just that of creating agreeable emotions. This, too, is the secret of the success of *The Lady of Lyons*. Now to do this, we have only to abandon attempts at many subtle and deep emotions, which produce uneasiness and pain, and see that the smile is without sarcasm and the tears without bitterness. That is one branch of art and rarely fails to be popular. Of course there are many other and much higher branches of art, in the cultivation of which popularity may be very doubtful. But one does not always want to be popular. Many a poet, for instance, would rather be a Shelley than a Cowper, or even a Scott. In short, art is so very various and elastic, that each man can make it fit his own capacity and sketch it to his own purpose.

The Caxtons was published anonymously, and its authorship was the subject of much speculation. The following letter, received by the publisher from Mrs. Southey, is of interest on this point :—

Feb. 24/49.

Who is the author of *The Caxtons*? and as some excuse for my over-curious question, I will add that in reading the series of admirable papers still in course of appearance in Maga, I have been so struck throughout with the similarity, sentiment and style, to the writings of the person I most loved and honoured—the author of *The Doctor*—that, but for my knowledge

1848. Æt. 45. that he *did not* write *The Caxtons*, and but for a passage here and there which he *would not* have written, I should have exclaimed over and over again "This is none other than Robert Southey's." I am sure the author would not take amiss if he heard it—this avowal of Robert Southey's widow.

In the autumn of 1848 Bulwer-Lytton again had recourse to the water cure, not in England this time, but in Germany. Amidst the political turmoil then raging on the Continent, he writes calmly to Forster of his experience at Dr. Soüst's hydropathic establishment at Ems :—

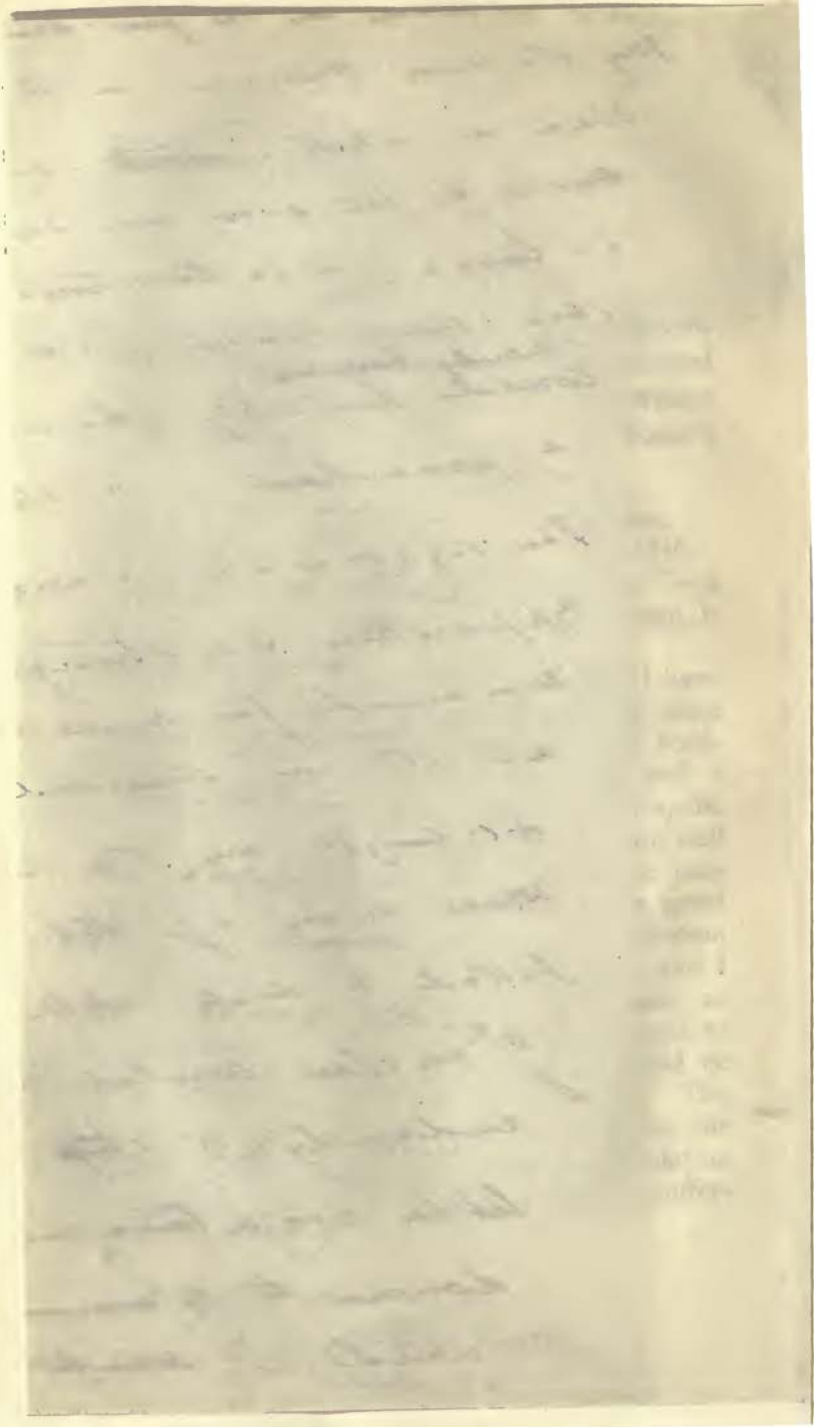
COBLENTZ,
Oct. 18, 1848.

MY DEAR FORSTER—"Better late than never"—a proverb, by the way, much more in vogue than it deserves. . . .

How could I write before? My dear fellow, I have been in one continued yet varied state of suffering since we parted. I arrived at Aix, where a dashing, bold-visaged doctor with his head full of liberty and a National cockade on his hat, swore by Æsculapius, the Goddess of Reason, that he would make me quite well in a fortnight. I had nothing to do but to be performed upon every day for ten minutes by a great douche of iron water, and I should have a constitution of iron. The world, he said, was fast mending, and I should mend as fast as the world! How resist an eloquence which the crisis of the universe seemed to support? If the constitution of an Empire would be reformed in a fortnight, why not that of a man? The *sequitur* was convincing. *Me voilà donc*, under the douche. Alas! both I and the Germanic population had better have gone on in the state of chronic suffer-

there entered in the front-drawing
My Father, Grace in Kate
clad in white, - white - smock,
curls of jet over her shoulders
so large, & so lustrous that
thro' the room as he
merely human
could possibly shine; - the
approached - & stood
The sight was so unexpected
apparition so strange - the
remained for some moments
at it in startled silence
At length my Father, the
wiser man of the two,
fitted to deal with the
of another world had
audacity - to step close
little creature - & bend
down to examine it
said - "what do you

1848.
Æt. 45.



ing. About the end of the fifth day I was in the state of a city *en pleine révolution!* You never saw anything more utterly *délabré*. The head and the stomach were in the last agonies of prostration. If my head, indeed, had been the Emperor of Austria, it could not have been more difficult to find—*Abiit, evasit, erupit.* And the stomach!—it was just such a stomach as you might suppose Howell and James to possess between them in the second week of a Chartist Revolution. In fine, being then convinced that iron douches are as unsuited to weak systems as other preparations of iron are to debilitated populations, I made a frantic rush to the railway and found myself at Coblentz. 1848. Æt. 45.

There I had been recommended to a doctor of high repute, especially among old ladies—a man of a very different idiosyncrasy, mild, bland, insinuating, slow, cautious, and (a wonder for a German) Conservative. This gentleman was all for the *festina lente*—the slow and sure. And he kept me three weeks in his smooth paws, upon herb tea. At the end of that time, as I could scarcely crawl, he thought he had done eno' to check the *movement* of the body physical, and despatched me to Ems, hard by, and still under his surveillance. His name is Soüst. It ought to be Souse, for that is his peculiar *modus operandi*. Having first soused me, internally, with the herb tea, he then soused me externally in the mineral baths. And my whole life has been one souse for the last five weeks.

I am now released and on my way homeward, with the promise that somewhere about Xmas I shall begin to feel the effects of the waters. As to getting any benefit for the present, every hair on his Conservative head starts at an expectation so unreasonable! You would think you heard Peel himself when some one dolorously complains that he does not find himself any the richer for his Free Trade Tariff. Impatient

1848. Æt. 45. and preposterous man! Put things on a sound principle and then wait—for the Millennium! Expect then to see a drowned rat (not Peel, for his fate is not to be drowned, it ought to be quite different, but your unfortunate friend) somewhere in about 14 days. And then a new occupation awaits him. I am ordered to find a mild climate in England for the winter! Had it been the philosopher's stone, I should not have minded, but a mild climate in England!

I have not seen any papers for weeks, save a few odd *Galignanis* that I picked up to-day, which hint at an *exposé* of Young's as destructive to the Whigs, and inform me of Morpeth's rise to the Lords, with the additional information, it is true, that you have the agreeable visit of the cholera in London.

Where are we to turn? It becomes a difficult matter to live at all! Goldsmith, I trust, continues to go on flourishingly, and Prior, I take it, is henceforth only fit for the posterior, a lamentable *vice versa*, which I don't wonder he resented! *À propos* of *vice versa*, do you know that that expression is a barbarism! it ought to be *versa vice*. You have no idea of the transport of rage that that received inelegance occasioned to Parr. He wrote on it, with a pen of thunder. "*Vice versa*!" he would exclaim, "to use the most prosaic of colloquialisms, the most poetic of Latin inversions—the adjective follow the noun! Good God, Sir, is there no Latinity left in England." And yet you see *vice versa* it remains, and will remain till Latin becomes a live language again! Such is the obstinacy of human error!

Give me a line to the Athenæum. I bring with me my "gold son" as the Germans call their ugly little boys—my darling, my Arthur! He is complete —twelve books high! Is that too tall to get into any man's library? The last books you shall like, whether you will or no. *Anch' io son poeta!* Verily, I am

certain of it. There, perk up your brows between scorn and pity and don't imitate the barbarous wretch who cured Boileau's madman of an insane belief that he was in Paradise! Hear not the cry of the sensible unfortunate's despair, *Mais on m'a ôté mon Paradis.* 1848. Æt. 45.

During this and the next two years, Bulwer-Lytton corresponded frequently with Lord Walpole,[1] and some of his letters to this friend give further details of his experiences on the Continent.

His opinion of Lord Walpole is thus recorded in a note with which he has endorsed this correspondence :—"Lord Walpole, now Lord Orford, a brilliant creature thrown away. A very accomplished scholar, of exquisite manners and keen knowledge of the world, but indolent, pleasure-loving and selfish. He might have been a great diplomatist. In spite of all his faults, lovable."

The letters themselves deal chiefly with matters of health, doctors, homeopathy, and various "cures"; but many of them contain allusions to political events and the gossip of the day. The following, dated October 24, 1848, is written from Calais on his way back to England :—

My dear Walpole—Your letter did reach me—may this be equally fortunate in its destination!

How a letter is to find its peaceful way thro' so many dangers, is a matter of philosophical anxiety. The fact that while all other institutions are resolving into chaos, the Post should remain, is a grand proof of

[1] Horatio William, 4th Earl of Orford (1813–1894). He succeeded in 1858. He was the brother of Lady Dorothy Nevill.

1848. Æt. 45. the practical nature of that civilization which you so profoundly consider to be symbolised by round hats and swallow-tailed coats. Thro' the din of arms, over barricades, cannon and ruined thrones—safe flies a letter, from bag to bag and box to box. How many things in the world may be deranged before these four sides of paper pass into your hands. When Madame de Sévigné exclaimed, *La belle chose que la Poste*, she little dreamt, poor woman, that it was the only *belle chose* of her day that would remain. To the best of my recollection Darius was the first who established the invention. Praise be to him! It is pleasant to find something that we owe to those unfortunate Persians. Something for which I suspect we would give up a good half of what the Greeks left us. The Post or Plato! *Utrum horum mavis, accipe.* Plato, I fear, would have a bad chance.

After a lengthy reference to the treatment of Dr. Soüst at Ems, the letter concludes as follows :—

What did Soüst recommend you for an after cure? On me he has inflicted first, a great bundle of herbs *copia narium*, diabolically *graveolens*, to be decocted into what he facetiously calls "tea"; 2ndly, a powder of acorns for breakfast, which he no less wittily denominates coffee! 3rd, and as the great delicacy of the whole, two jars of—guess? Cods fish liver oil! Two tablespoonfuls a day. These agreeable condiments, being accompanied and fortified in their uses by various external applications of plaisters, &c., and a mode of life ascetically philosophical, are to carry me over that interval of vegetation thro' which I am to pass until I again blossom on the shores of the Lakes and under the eyes of Soüst. If you have escaped all this, *ma*

foi, I think you are ill-treated for your £22, tho' as I paid £24, I have a right to £2 additional physicking. 1849. ÆT. 46.

I write this *en route* for England, and from the historical burgh of Calais. Here I have been kept two days, from the inclemency of the weather. In spite, however, of as stiff a gale as would have made another Ode out of poor, dear Horace, no less than 700 of the National Guard of Paris shipped themselves yesterday for England, and 500 the day before. What Regent Street will say to them all, I know not—another Norman invasion. I have no news to give you, and before you receive this all the news of to-day will, alas, be old!

In his search for "a mild climate in England," Bulwer-Lytton went to Brighton at the end of 1848 and to Bournemouth at the beginning of 1849. In the interval between these two visits he tried unsuccessfully to get elected to Parliament for Leominster. The circumstances are thus described in letters to Lord Walpole :—

Edward Bulwer-Lytton to Lord Walpole.

I received your letters, my dear Walpole, just as I was launching that frail bark which Soüst had so carefully caulked and patched, on to the troubled waters of Leominster.

Do you know what Leominster is? A small town in Herefordshire, which returns two Members to Parliament. The question is, whether it will return me.

This venerable constituency, which seems in about the same state of civilisation as it was when Leofric, Earl of Coventry, first ruled over it, was recommended to me as a sure seat—moderate opinions would do (a rare blessing), moderate expense (blessing less rare, but

1849. Æt. 46. almost equally as precious), little trouble, small chance of contest.

Hurried from the voluptuous Baiae of Brighton, and deceived by these false sirens, I went to Leominster, there to find all the worry of a neck and neck contest; Peel's son, my opponent; a constituency that won't promise either way, that expect to be bought, and (damn their impudence) expect one to be as much a Radical as if they gave one their votes for nothing. Two weeks have I wasted on this thankless soil, and here I am just arrived for a respite, uncertain whether I shall stand or not, but hoping I can back out of it.

My dear fellow, you say you are not better. Do you deserve to be better? Have you been sage—have you attended to the gastric juices, and avoided late hours and Mrs. Venus? You know what Soüst says, and, as a farmer, I know one can't go on with a succession of white crops for ever. You must stick to roots or a fallow. *Peste!* now! it is but a winter, and then in the spring you will bud out with the leaves in all the vigour of renewed virgindom. *Soyez sage—soyez sage.* I suspect you don't know what it is to lay by! If not, you have no idea how the rest restores youth to the feelings, as well as to the body—one can be in love again, forget that one was *blasé*, forget that one was deceived, regain "the golden illusions of the dawn," and dream of serenades and pure first kisses under the moon. Does not all this tempt you? Take to the great book I told you of, vent the passions through the thoughts, develop that intellectual *you* that God has so largely given you.

There, I have bored and lectured you enough. But that is the just privilege of a man who likes and admires you as cordially as I do.

What times we live in and how carelessly we take them! What volumes of history, huge as the clouds

of a volcano, roll round us every moment, yet we breathe the air, and crop the flowers, and light our cigars, by the sulphurous reeks! What will be the issue of things in France? I don't believe in Louis Napoleon's Imperial prospects. I don't think he can last long enough for that. But our Funds have risen, and I say thank Heaven for that—as I had just invested in the 3 per cents! 1849. Æt. 46.

The same to the same.

BOURNEMOUTH, *Feb.* 18, 1849.

This place is lonely as a desert, scarce a nursery maid or a baby—animals usually ubiquitous in England. And for amusements a library with about 50 old novels in a glass case, *The Times*, *The Poole Chronicle*, and a weighing machine! Fortunately, I am inured to solitude and dullness; witness the resignation I manifested when abandoned to the donkeys of Ems.

The God Mercury who, as you justly observe, presides over elections, deserted me at Leominster. Plutus offered to help me against him, but I spurned the base alliance, and tho' you may say the grapes are sour, yet I own I was not sorry to escape Parliament, I hope, for another year—trusting to that flatterer Soüst that I shall be all the better for keeping, and that another course or two of the Ems waters is necessary to fit me for the strife of tongues.

In the summer of 1849 Lady Blessington died in Paris, and Bulwer-Lytton thus lost the great friend of his middle life. Ever since he made her acquaintance in London three years after his marriage, their friendship had been more closely cemented with every year. In all the events of his life he had received from this friend

1849. Æt. 46. the greatest encouragement and the warmest sympathy. None had rejoiced more generously in his triumphs, or cheered and comforted him more tenderly in his trials. That which he missed so often in others, even in those most near to him, he never failed to find in her—an understanding heart. If ever any shadow came between them it was at once dispelled by the first explanation.

This friendship was one of Bulwer-Lytton's most precious possessions for nearly twenty years —precious, not only for the affection which he received through it, but also for the opportunity which it afforded him of giving his best in return. Even in his busiest moments, or his hours of greatest distress, he never grudged her a moment of his time. However overworked, however worried, he always made a point of providing some contribution to her *Book of Beauty*, or one of the other annuals which she used to edit. Her demands upon him in this respect were frequent, but not one was made in vain. In the last few years they had rarely met; but their correspondence continued almost up to the time of her death.

He had written to her from Bournemouth on January 25, 1849, in reply to an appreciative letter from her on his poem of *King Arthur* :—

I am very much obliged to you, my dearest friend, for your kind and gracious reception of Arthur. It contains so much of my more spiritual self, whether in the more scattered and outward thoughts, or in those views of life which constitute its interior meanings,

that it is more than the mere author's vanity, it is the human being's self-love, that is gratified by your praise. 1849. Æt. 46.

It is to a hard, practical, prosaic world, that the Fairy King returns, after his long sojourn in the Oblivious Lake; and if he may yet find some pale reflection of his former reign, it will take long years before the incredulous will own that he is no impostor. The singer believes in him, and is contented to wait for the converts.

I am most concerned to hear you have been so serious a loser by Mr. Heath's[1] death. Had you not his bills on giving the MSS. and are they not still honoured? or do his executors not find enough effects to discharge his debts? But I trust at least that the annuals themselves will be continued by some one. They satisfy an elegant want of so large a part of the community that I do not think they can be suffered to drop, and I sincerely and earnestly hope you may get satisfactory terms from some publisher of capital and enterprise.

I was sure that your warm heart would feel much for poor Lord Auckland's[2] sudden and startling death. These funeral bells make the only music of life that is faithful to the last, more and more frequent as we journey on; the deafer heart ceases to hear them, and the most sensitive must accustom itself to the chime.

I spent my son's holidays at Brighton, and now he has left me I have wandered on to this more solitary spot, where the air is milder, tho' I am not sure yet that it agrees with me. I do not forget your most kind invitation, and hope to profit by it when my health will let me. At present I shape my movements as the wand of my physician points, and as the winter

[1] Charles Heath (1785–1848), an engraver who speculated in the publication of fashionable "Annuals," and who survived their popularity.

[2] George Eden, 1st Earl of Auckland (1784–1849), Governor-General of India.

1849. Æt. 46. advances to that colder winter which we call spring, I shall probably wend my way into Devonshire.

The little parcel you are so kind as to name would find me here, but perhaps you will keep it as a hostage till I present myself at your palace gates.

With love to D'Orsay and kind regards to your nieces—Believe me, Ever most truly & afftly. yrs.,

E. B. L.

In April 1849, a financial storm, which had long been gathering, burst upon Lady Blessington's head. Debts had to be met, and there was no money to meet them. The assistance of friends was declined; Gore House with all its contents was sold, and Lady Blessington and D'Orsay retired to Paris. Ruin absolute and complete had overtaken them. Though there was no apparent sign of serious ill-health when Lady Blessington arrived in Paris, she only survived a few weeks the wreck of her fortunes. On hearing of her financial crash Bulwer-Lytton wrote to her on April 21 :—

I cannot say, my dear Friend, how pained, grieved, and shocked I was by your letter, which I did not receive for some days, as I was making some country visits, and indeed it has taken me some time to reason myself into the belief that your removal from a scene of so much anxiety and struggle will be best for your ultimate peace and happiness. I shall certainly do all I can for the sale—alas the word!—at Gore House, and hope it will realise more than you count upon. Phillips might clear something by allowing the house to be seen a week before by persons only who buy the catalogue; but, of course, he will advise you for the

best. I shall be very anxious to hear how you like Paris, and where you settle, and you certainly give me the greatest inducement to visit it when I can. I go into Germany to the baths the middle of May, but my continental *séjour* will depend much on Edward's health. He is delicate though not ill, and I am not quite easy about him. Pray employ me in anything I can do to be useful meanwhile. 1849. Æt. 46.

I hope D'Orsay will get some good appointment to his taste and suitable to his talents.

I only passed rapidly through London on my way hither, where my address will be for the present. I have no heart left to write about anything else but yourself, and must beg you heartily to let me know that you are well and comfortable as soon as you can find leisure.—God ever bless you, my dearest friend, Yrs. most affectly.,

E. B. L.

Kindest regards to Alfred and your nieces.

This was the last letter which she received from him. At the sale of her possessions he bought for her the works of Byron in three volumes, with her arms on the binding and painted landscapes on the leaves. These books he instructed the auctioneer to send to her ; but she died on June 4 before receiving this last tribute of his affection. They are now preserved at Knebworth, as a momento of a truly remarkable and gifted woman.

At the end of May, as indicated in his last letter to Lady Blessington, Bulwer-Lytton went abroad, and he did not return to England for a whole year. He travelled about Germany for some months, took his son to a school at Bonn, and settled at Nice in October, where he

1849. remained until June 1850. Most of the states
Æt. 46. of Europe were just beginning to settle down again from the violent political upheavals of the previous year.

In France the Revolution of 1848 had overthrown the Government of Louis Philippe and his Minister, Guizot, and established a Republic under the presidency of Louis Napoleon. Revolution and Civil War in Austria had led to the abdication of the Emperor Ferdinand and the accession of his young nephew, Francis Joseph, to the throne. The Hungarian rebellion had been suppressed by the end of the summer of 1849, and Kossuth and his fellow exiles from Hungary were being accorded a most sympathetic welcome in England. Among the German states the popular insurrections of 1848 had led to important gains for the constitutional cause in Prussia, Bavaria, and Hanover ; but elsewhere they had been put down by military force, without the accomplishment of any permanent results. In Italy the rising in the north against the Austrian occupation had completely failed. All hopes of Italian independence were shattered for the moment by the crushing defeats of Custozza and Novara. Charles Albert had abdicated in March 1849, and the young Victor Emanuel was now King of Piedmont. In Rome the papal rule, which had been temporarily overthrown in November 1848, was restored in 1849, when the short-lived Republic of Mazzini and Garibaldi was finally destroyed by the troops of

Louis Napoleon, the newly elected President of the French Republic. 1849. Æt. 46.

Reference to these events is made in some of Bulwer-Lytton's letters at this time. To Forster he writes from Ems on June 26, 1849 :—

The world goes on in its iniquities. Rain succeeds to sunshine, and the decrepit spectre of Papacy replaces the brief, grand life of the triumvirate. Summer is flying fast from earth and man's heart, and with the fall of the leaf Kossuth may be what Mazzini is. More and more do we see that our only realm of liberty and improvement is in our own individual natures. *Hoc regnum sibi quisque dat.* Do you not grow sick of building bricks without straw in that Babel of politics week after week? As for me, if I had an *Examiner*, I should make it play strange tricks. It would be a miracle of seeming inconsistency, and would be alternately Democritus or Heraclitus, according as it wept or laughed at the follies of that noisy abstraction called the People.

From Kreuznach in September he wrote to Mr. Baillie-Cochrane (afterwards Lord Lamington) [1] :—

I was much interested in your account of Cabrera. It is the liveliest realisation of romance when we find one of the actual heroes of the Middle Ages in the midst of our modern civilisation. Cabrera and Garibaldi are both men who seem to stalk out of history, and it must be as strange to find oneself standing face to face with them as if one had conjured up a captain who

[1] A. D. R. W. Cochrane-Baillie (1816–1890), first Lord Lamington, was an active member of the "Young England" party, and was drawn as "Buckhurst" in *Coningsby*. He was one of the founders of *The Owl*. In early life he was known as Baillie-Cochrane, his father, Sir Thomas Cochrane, having adopted the surname of his wife's grandfather.

1849. Æt. 46. had fought with the Cid, or an enthusiast who had dreamt with Rienzi. Amidst our child's play between Radicalism and Conservatism there is something vast and grand in those earnest, antiquated types of the rough originals of the contest. Republicanism on the Rampart, and Loyalty on the war horse. Honour to both say I!

Later in the year he writes again:—

Edward Bulwer-Lytton to John Forster.

NICE, *Oct.* 26.

MY DEAR FORSTER—I am arrived at Nice after a long and fatiguing journey, which I did not much regret, partly because I again saw the Lakes Maggiore and Como, and satisfied myself that they would be very disagreeable places of residence, and it is always well to destroy effeminate illusions; partly because my delay in Austrian Lombardy and Piedmont enabled me to look a little practically and dispassionately at the real state of affairs in those battle grounds of Italy. There can be no question as to the universal and almost bold detestation of Austrian rule in Lombardy, but from that very detestation arises much exaggeration. Anecdotes of cruelty mentioned to me with lively horror, proceed, when examined close, to be but the simplest hardships incident on military occupation. Stories of venerable princes, turned out of their homes, their palaces pillaged, &c., proved to have nothing in them beyond the necessary and very quiet billeting of half a dozen soldiers in some situation which a military eye deemed advisable. The Austrians have not, in fact, behaved in Italy as they have in Hungary, nor can one dispassionately enter and survey Austrian Lombardy without being greatly struck by the superiority which a country only can secure from its Government, not only over the greater part of Italy, but over Republican

Switzerland. All that relates to agriculture, to town policy and police, to law and civilisation and progress, all that a brute tyranny would stop, but a polished absolutism cherish, speaks with historical force in favour of this hated Austrian domination. 1849. Æt. 46.

The mass of the people, however, are not yet so cowed as is represented, and would be ready to rise again at the first insurrectionary standard—but not so the nobles, nor the property classes ; most of these latter were neutral before, now they are thoroughly frightened, and it is the absence of any strong, ardent patriotism ready for sacrifice on the part of these classes, that would render abortive any sustained effort on the part of the Austrian Italians.

We all know what the people are without leaders or with only such leaders as lawyers and professional men, *literati*, &c. This, of course, does not apply to Venice, where the nobles and the populace loved, thought and fought as with the pulse of one great heart.

In Piedmont there is great bluster, but any sensible well-informed Piedmontese, however patriotic, at once despises the bluster and deplores it. I arrived at Turin just after the grand funeral procession in honour of poor Charles Albert. I went to see the chapel, still lighted up and tricked out, wherein his bier had reposed. A temporary Gothic façade had been erected, wherein was written what I thus verbally translate and which seems to me fine :—"Italians—who ever ye be—enter and pray to the God of Warriors and of Martyrs that He may admit to His glory the great soul of that King—Carlo Alberto—who did so much and suffered so much to obtain for Italy the supreme good of nations —Independence."

I entered the chapel with the crowd. It was decorated as in boxes, like a theatre, ermine and velvet and gold fringe. As I came up the steps to the gilded

1849. Æt. 46. dome in which the King's coffin had been placed, I felt a thrill and tears in my eyes. But turning round, I saw the Italian congregation cold and indifferent; only at the outskirts one or two old peasants praying—the rest might have been in the saloon at Covent Garden. Nevertheless, Charles Albert has left a beloved and honoured name, but rather with civilians than the military. They lay the fault of their defeat on his shoulders; and they, too, are generally disgusted with war and have had "their bellies full."

There seems no respect for the Chamber nor the Constitution. The most popular newspapers, those that are posted on columns and bought by the operatives, are anti-democratic. There is a general feeling, rather hinted than spoken openly, in favour of retrogression rather than progress. The admirable executive of Charles Albert is missed, and the people as yet don't care three straws for franchise and parliament.

A long and tedious journey across the Col di Tenda (an Alpine pass I had not yet seen, but which, though little traversed, comparatively, has details of more bold and striking beauty than either the St. Gothard, the Simplon or the Mount Cenis) brought me here last night. This morning I send for my letters and find none from you. Monster!

I am delighted to see Macready had so brilliant a reception. I wish it might induce him to prolong "the leaving of it." To-day I have been hunting for houses or villas, and hope in a few days to be settled here for the winter among orange groves and aloes. The air is perfectly languid with sweets and the sea calmer than the Thames at Richmond. Can nothing tempt you? My house, whatever it be, will have rooms to spare, and here are epicurean attractions. The journey through France is nothing! I expect very agreeable people here this winter, so that if you can come—but you won't! Monster again!

I see that Blackwood has brought out *The Caxtons*,

with what success I know not yet. My only letter thereon is one from Macaulay whose critical eye has detected a sad blunder certainly of mine, which I can't think how I made—a Roundhead mob is somewhere or other called a malignant mob, an epithet of course only applicable to the Cavaliers—very like Macaulay to fasten on that blunder! I don't know whether I thanked you for your proposed re-review of *Pelham*. Should you have space and leisure for it, perhaps a few short extracts of any expressions or similes, or individual lines that please you might serve to help it, seeing that with most of the reviews extracts are spurned. Colburn gives a pretty good account of its progress on the whole. I am very much better as yet, and hope you are well and thriving.—I am, Ever yrs. most affy.,

1849. Æt. 46.

E. B. L.

The same to the same.

Nice, *Nov. 10th*, 1849.

My dear Forster—Your two letters reached me the same day. A thousand thanks for your hearty mention of *The Caxtons*, which gave me more pleasure than I can well express. I suppose there is a great deal in Colley Cibber's theatrical observation, that if you represent villains the public think you must be a villain, if amiable characters, they give you some credit for amiability. I have always remarked that Macready does not like your up-hill parts, and no doubt owes a great deal of the esteem which accompanies his reputation to the admirable manner in which he expresses domestic virtues, whereas if he had played nothing but Shylocks and Richard the Thirds the English would have thought the Yankee attempt to burn him natural, perhaps excusable!

I am writing to you as if from the garden of

1849. Ær. 46. Hesperides. In all Italy I have seen nothing to my mind like the environs of Nice. They have a variety denied to Naples and a vegetation that equals those old poetic haunts of the Roman voluptuaries. The palm tree shadows your window, the aloe hangs over your wall, the strange shapes of the cactus divert you at your threshold. You lose your way mile after mile, amidst orange groves and forests of olive, and alleys of arching vine, through which, as you ascend some unfelt hill (unfelt, because your senses are so charmed), gleams the sea, sparkling in sunlight.

My own residence is a little apart from the town, yet near enough for "gaiety" when I want it. I command the most extensive view of land and sea—breakfast at the open window, gazing on the butterflies, and now and then flying from the wasps, and walk out in summer trousers and silk jacket, with an umbrella—not against the rains, O Londoner! but the glare of the hot November sun! But for the gnats there would be no *amari aliquid* in this *medio fonte leporum*. And a capital opera box twice a week for £8 the season! of six months! I wish I could add *his utere mecum*. But your *Examiner* and dinners and politics and expected Kossuths—ah, miserable man!

I am reading some Latin authors I have never read before (except in shreds and fragments); getting fast through Seneca's prose works. By Jove, he is a most Christian writer! I admire him exceedingly, though sometimes he proses awfully and comes out with the oddest expressions. What do you think he calls Alexander the Great? After citing one of the anecdotes usually narrated in honour of that distinguished Macedonian, he burst forth *Tumidissimum Animal*. "Swollenest Animal!" I laughed for a quarter of an hour. I thought of Alexander's astonishment if anyone had so addressed him in life. I have pretty nearly

cleared my way through all the Minor Latin poets— 1849.
Claudian, exquisitely lovable, and such pretty diction. Æt. 46.
Silius Italicus—fine bits—but the most curious of all I have read (or rather am now reading for the first time) is the *Satyricon* of Petronius. What a light it throws upon the age, what a glossary to Tacitus! The finest gentleman in Nero's Court—a man of the most scholarly and refined taste, no doubt, in the opinion of his age—stringing together, with an easy humour which reminds one of Le Sage, the most horrible depravities, one after the other, quite as things of course, specimens of the manners of the day. After reading that book, how thankful one feels to the stout old Gauls for coming and sweeping away such a rot of civilisation.

But I must now come to business. You put last in your kind wishes for my literary occupations, the desire that I should write another Caxtonian book! My dear Forster, *that* is already in great forwardness, and indeed I have been so wrapt in it that I put aside all letter writing till I could come to the end of Vol. I. or Part 5, which I did this morning. This is the reason why I did not write to you before. I take the earliest opportunity after my confinement! If I can but make it end well I think it will be the *chef-d'œuvre* of my novels, but I suspect that will be very difficult. I have never yet ventured so boldly on humour. But disagreeably enough, the story seems to require a tragic end, after a purely comic conduct, and that won't do, though as yet I see no help for it; *more meo* I lay aside the book to cool on it, and in the interim am ready for *Brutus*, and will try my hand again on the *Sea Captain*. I don't expect to satisfy myself at all with the last, but the *Brutus* could be very easily done, as you suggest, if I could have the play again. (I have no copy.) Could you not send it to me through the Foreign Office to the care of La Croix, Consul, Nice? Fonblanque is

1849. always seeing Stanley, who would do it. In that case,
Æt. 46. enclose with it the letters you have for me and Edward. If I had it for a week I could finish off and return the third act, as you suggest. But there—you must consider well before you entrust it to the stage. The money is a very good thing, but my reputation, Sir Knight, think of that, and a half success at Sadler's Wells, for which, I suppose, you design it, would be "a heavy blow and a great discouragement" to that frail vested interest.

I will return with it the Poems arranged for two vols.; and if I can do the *Sea Captain*, he will come too.

To Lord Walpole, who was then in Rome, he writes towards the end of 1849 :—

Edward Bulwer-Lytton to Lord Walpole.

You interest me in the Romans by your account of their good conduct. But what is to become of the Pope ? and what were his real faults ? Did he reform too much or not enough? or was he really in that state of Society when a man ceases to be more than a foot-ball for Fortune to kick a little while about the play-ground, and then leave rolled up in a corner?

I don't know whether I envy your semi-military, semi-philosophical amusements, in what appear now to be unmetaphorically the *fumum strepitumque Romae*. I remember that Scipio says he never enjoyed any battle so much as one he saw merely as a spectator when he was on a visit at Carthage. But I should fancy it rather like looking on at whist, which always makes me more fidgety than if I was playing myself. Those Romans seem, however, to have played their cards so beautifully that I fancy you must have been giving them a hint—told Garibaldi when to trump out, and

when to give that politic trick to the French. Unmetaphorically, the sending back the prisoners was exceedingly wise. 1850. Æt. 47.

I was extremely amused by your philosophical regrets that the cannon balls should suspend the excavations, and your interest in the feuds of the three *Savants* amidst the *impia proelia—auditumque Medis Hesperiae sonitum ruinae.* It is the best practical illustration of the æsthetic ethics I know of—soaring up into the regions of art and beauty from the terrors and crimes of this vulgar world below.

I expect to hear from you all about Garibaldi and Mazzini. I am at present quite an enthusiast for them. I hope you will not disenchant me. But in all Europe I have seen nothing so heroic and with so good a cause; but, alas! so hopeless.

The same to the same.

NICE, *March* 25, 1850.

I can't say how grieved I am, my dear Walpole, to see that you were under the influence of those demons called blues (why blue, I wonder?) when you wrote to me, and I fear you have been sadly hipping yourself in that city which more than all others seems to me to require a mind at ease, for enjoyment. For there is something so serene and still in all that belongs to the classical world, whether its literature, its art, or its architecture, the ghost-like solemnity of its remains, that one must be free from all the worry of this actual positive life to enter into its tomb-like ideal. I feel this even with books. I was at peace here for some time, and read the classics with pleasure; things have occurred to annoy and fidget me, and lo, Seneca has grown the dullest of bores, and the Elegiasts (on whom I had been taking notes *con amore*), the most maudlin

1850. Æt. 47. and insipid of triflers. And as the literature there appears to me, so must Rome—that great book of stone—seem to you. In worry one must have the calm of living nature, or the distraction of the positive world. However, this goes to find you at Milan; and though I have no great faith in the charm of mere travelling, I heartily hope that the change of scene and bustle of movement will have done you great good.

You make me very proud by what you say so kindly as to my scribbling, and the associations you connect with it. I am a believer in the duality of the mind—all of us really have two minds, one which we take into the world, carry into the clubs, walk the streets with, and use every day—a mind which contains in it such portion of common sense as Nature is pleased to give us, together with a large number of sour, cynical notions that our experience has contrived to pick up. This is the mind that enables us to make, or disposes us to squander our money—the mind that says worldly witticisms and does sometimes prudent things, sometimes bad actions, is rather ashamed to be good, and makes us seem either wickeder or wiser than we are. Then there is another mind in which we pack up such sentiments as the world has not spoiled, our poetical emotions, our conceptions of what is pure or heroic—a mind that vanishes altogether when we walk into Bond Street, and are mere men amongst men!

Now this last-mentioned mind of mine delights in the country (the country of England)—the green lanes and the hawthorn tree; and after a certain time, out peers the other mind and says "Now, it's my turn—you waste your life in green fields, you only shave every other day. Order yourself a new coat, put your poetry and your conscience into its pocket—go to town—play at whist—play the devil!" . . .

The real secret at our age (if I may, sinking some

years' difference, indulge in that plural) would be the proper arrangement of one's life into something like orderly method, avoiding the passions, but not the affections, getting rid of false excitements and the necessity of that stimulant—change—whether in persons or things. In short, trying to concentre one's existence so that one might get into the circle the enjoyments most to our individual tastes, and least injurious to other people. 1850. Æt. 47.

Moreover, I have a great idea that one ought to play at life as one does at backgammon, and cover the blots; if one must do a bad action, look about to find out a good one, and so make ourselves square. For it's a strange thing that though many of our worst afflictions arise from our most generous and high-minded intentions, yet I find that those afflictions never make us regret the intentions that caused them. It is a great thing to say, "Damn it, I did it for the best."

In a letter to Forster, dated May 20, 1850, Bulwer-Lytton announces his intention of returning home, and adds :—

I return to England with a reluctant spirit; hard stepmother has that *arida nutrix leonum* been to me. When I see how Whigs and Liberals have united to thrust me from Parliament, and critics and authorlings from my due place in letters, I find little to reconcile me to the fogs and east winds of the White Isle—little but the pleasure of greeting such friends as you, who are not to be found abroad.

The querulous tone of these words represented but a passing mood. Within a year he had again resumed an active interest in politics, and soon afterwards won for himself a distinguished position in the public life of the country.

CHAPTER V

THE GUILD OF LITERATURE AND ART

1851

It takes much marble to build the sepulchre—how little of lath and plaster would have repaired the garret!

Night and Morning.

Some fortress for youth in the battle of fame;
Some shelter that age is not humbled to claim;
Some roof from the storms for the pilgrim of Knowledge—
Not unlike what our ancestors meant by a college.

Epilogue to *Not so Bad as We seem.*

1850. Æt. 47. BULWER-LYTTON returned to England in June 1850, and resumed the occupations of a country squire at Knebworth. He wrote to Lord Walpole from there on August 11:—

My time at present is occupied in repairing farms, opening schools, etc. There are two things in life which bring a man in connection with that grave happiness called Duty. One is a fortunate marriage, the other a landed property. As I missed the one, I am pleased to see that the other compels one, *nolens volens*, to rouse oneself from one's egoism, and to one's amaze act for other people. You will find this some day, and find it still more, perhaps, in being also a hereditary legislator.

I often think over the wisdom of a saying of Goethe's, "Nothing keeps the mind more healthful

Emery Walker Ph. sc.

Sir E. Bulwer-Lytton, Bart.

from the painting by D. Maclise R.A. at Knebworth

than having something in common with the mass of mankind." Property and politics both help to do this, whereas literature takes one away from it. 1850. Æt. 47.

In the autumn he arranged a great theatrical performance at Knebworth, in which Dickens took a very prominent part. Three private performances were given of Ben Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour*,[1] and the success of the

[1] The amateur cast at these theatricals was as follows :—

BEN JONSON'S COMEDY

of

EVERY MAN IN HIS HUMOUR.

KNOWELL, an old Gentleman	Mr. Delmé Radcliffe.
EDWARD KNOWELL, his Son	Mr. Henry Hawkins.
BRAINWORM, the Father's Man	Mr. Mark Lemon.
GEORGE DOWNRIGHT, a plain Squire	Mr. Frank Stone.
WELLBRED, his Half-brother	Mr. Henry Hale.
KITELY, a Merchant	Mr. John Forster.
CAPTAIN BOBADIL, a Paul's Man	Mr. Charles Dickens.
MASTER STEPHEN, a Country Gull	Mr. Douglas Jerrold.
MASTER MATHEW, the Town Gull	Mr. John Leech.
THOMAS CASH, Kitely's Cashier	Mr. Frederick Dickens.
OLIVER COB, a Water-bearer	Mr. Augustus Egg.
JUSTICE CLEMENT, an old merry Magistrate	The Hon. Eliot Yorke, M.P.
ROGER FORMAL, his Clerk	Mr. Phantom.
DAME KITELY, Kitely's Wife	Miss Mary Boyle.
MISTRESS BRIDGET, his Sister	Miss Hogarth.
TIB, Cob's Wife	Mrs. Charles Dickens.

The Epilogue by Mr. Delmé Radcliffe.

To conclude with Mrs. Inchbald's Farce,

ANIMAL MAGNETISM

THE DOCTOR	Mr. Charles Dickens.
LA FLEUR	Mr. Mark Lemon.
THE MARQUESS DE LANCY	Mr. John Leech.
JEFFREY	Mr. Augustus Egg.
CONSTANCE	Miss Hogarth.
LISETTE	Miss Mary Boyle.

Stage Manager—Mr. CHARLES DICKENS.

1851. undertaking led Dickens to suggest that a re-
Æt. 48. petition of such an entertainment might be used to further a scheme in which the two authors were deeply interested. The object of this scheme was the endowment of a literary guild to serve as a sort of College and Home of Rest in the country for authors and artists who were prevented by poverty from producing really good work.

Bulwer-Lytton had known in his own life some of the struggles imposed upon an author who has to write for his living, and he had witnessed many painful experiences among his less fortunate friends in the literary world. One such experience had impressed itself very painfully on his mind a few years previously. This was the tragic death of Laman Blanchard—the most genial and lovable personality in the literary world of that day. Blanchard was one of those who received their first recognition and encouragement from Bulwer-Lytton at the time he was editing *The New Monthly Magazine* ; and in later years he became the intimate and much-loved friend of Dickens, Thackeray, Forster, Harrison Ainsworth, Douglas Jerrold, and indeed of most of the successful authors of the day.

Bulwer-Lytton said of him in a little memoir which he wrote after his death for the benefit of Blanchard's family :—

> To most of those who have mixed generally with the men who, in our day, have chosen literature as a profession, the name of Laman Blanchard brings

recollections of peculiar tenderness and regret. Amidst a career which the keenness of anxious rivalry renders a sharp probation to the temper and the affections—often more embittered by that strife of party of which in a representative constitution few men of letters escape the eager passions and the angry prejudice—they recall the memory of a competitor without envy, a partizan without gall; firm as the firmest in the maintenance of his own opinions; but gentle as the gentlest in the judgment he passed on others. 1851. Æt. 48.

Who among our London brotherhood of letters does not miss that simple cheerfulness, that inborn exquisite urbanity, that childlike readiness to be pleased with all, that happy tendency to panegyrise every merit and be lenient to every fault? Who does not recall that acute and delicate susceptibility, so easily wounded and therefore so careful not to wound, which seemed to infuse a certain intellectual fine breeding of forbearance and sympathy into every society where it insinuated its gentle way? Who in convivial meetings does not miss, and will not miss for ever, the sweetness of those unpretending talents, the earnestness of that honesty which seemed unconscious, it was worn so lightly—the mild influence of that exuberant kindness which softened the acrimony of young disputants, and reconciled the secret animosities of jealous rivals? Yet few men had experienced more to sour them than Laman Blanchard, or had gone more resolutely through the author's hardening ordeal of narrow circumstance, of daily labour, and of that disappointment in the higher aims of ambition which must almost inevitably befall those who attain ideal standards of excellence, to be reached but by time and leisure, and who are yet condemned to draw hourly on unmatured resources for the practical wants of life. To have been engaged from boyhood in such struggles, and to have preserved,

1851. undiminished, generous admiration for those more
Æt. 48. fortunate, and untiring love for his own noble yet thankless calling—and this with a constitution singularly finely strung, and with all the nervous irritability which usually accompanies the indulgence of the imagination —is a proof of the rarest kind of strength, depending less upon a power purely intellectual, than upon the higher and more beautiful heroism which a woman, and such men alone as have the best feelings of a woman's nature, take from instinctive enthusiasm for what is great, and uncalculating faith in what is good."

This was a fine tribute from one literary man to another, yet, judging from the degree of affection which Blanchard aroused amongst his very varied acquaintance, it was not overstated.

Laman Blanchard's experience of the hardships of professional literature, and of the trials of the literary temperament, was typical of many others. He was born at Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, on May 15, 1803—the same year and the same month as Bulwer-Lytton himself—the son of a painter and glazier who afterwards settled in Southwark. The boy distinguished himself at St. Olave's School, but his father could not afford him the advantages of a university education ; and at the age of thirteen he obtained employment in the office of Mr. Charles Pearson, a proctor in Doctors' Commons. At this age he had already begun to write and publish poetry, both lyrical and dramatic. The drama specially attracted him, and shortly afterwards, abandoning his uncongenial and

unpromising employment in the proctor's office, he tried his fortunes on the stage. He did not succeed as an actor, but he owed to this experiment the friendship of Mr. Buckstone, the celebrated comedian. He then became a reader in the office of Messrs. Bayliss in Fleet Street, and first a contributor, afterwards sub-editor of *The Monthly Magazine*. To this appointment was added the editorship of another literary journal called the *Belle Assemblée*. From the literary he passed to the political press, and was associated in the editorship of *The True Son*, *The Constitutional*, and other papers of that kind. He also directed *The Court Journal*, was an habitual contributor to *Ainsworth's Magazine*, and was employed during the later years of his life upon the *Examiner*. 1851. ÆT. 48.

In 1828, when he was twenty-five years old, he had published *Lyric Offerings*, a small volume of poems, which in 1832 he sent to the editor of the *New Monthly Magazine*. "I was," says Bulwer-Lytton, "so delighted with the promise of these poems that I reviewed them in terms of praise which maturer reflection does not induce me to qualify." The sudden loss of the editorship of the *Courier* (owing to a change in the proprietors and politics of that journal) deprived Blanchard of an income which was for him considerable, and he was thrown into great pecuniary difficulties, having by this time married and become the father of four children. Bulwer-Lytton endeavoured, without success, to

1851. Æt. 48. obtain for him some small appointment from the Whigs who were then in office. His struggles rapidly grew harder and his health weaker. Bulwer-Lytton, who had several times sent him anonymous assistance through Forster, fearing that Blanchard's affairs were not going well, offered to him and his family, rent free, a house which then belonged to him in the neighbourhood of London. But Mrs. Blanchard was too ill to be moved. Shortly afterwards, on December 16, 1844, she died. Her husband was completely prostrated by her death. Not only his health but his mind gave way; and a few weeks later he died in circumstances which are thus described by Bulwer-Lytton in the memoir from which I have already quoted :—

> Towards 4 o'clock in the afternoon of Friday [February 14, 1845] hysterics came on with great vehemence. He required several people to hold him down. On the visit of his usual medical attendant he recovered, but the reaction left him completely exhausted. Towards night he thought he could sleep. He dismissed his family to bed, and affectionately bade them good-night. A kind-hearted woman, who had attended Mrs. Blanchard in her last illness, now officiated as nurse to himself. He requested her to remain in the next room, within hearing of his knock on the wall if he should want her. His youngest boy, since his illness, had slept constantly with him. The nurse had not retired five minutes before she heard his signal. On her going to him, he said, "You had better not leave me ; I feel a strong desire to throw myself out of the window." The poor woman, who had rather consulted her heart than

her experience in the office she had undertaken, lost her presence of mind in the alarm these words occasioned. She hurried out of the room in order to call up the eldest son. She had scarcely reached the staircase when she heard a shriek and a heavy fall. Hastening back she found her master on the floor, bathed in blood. In the interval between her quitting the room and her return (scarce a minute) the unhappy sufferer, who had in vain sought protection from his own delirious impulse, had sprung from his bed, wrested himself from the grasp of the child beside him . . . in the almost total darkness of the room found his way, with the instinct of the sleepwalker or the maniac, to his razor, and was dead when the nurse raised him in her arms. The mind, ground into unnatural sharpness by over-fatigue and over-grief, had, not worn, but cut through the scabbard. Thus at the early age of forty-one, broken in mind and body, perished this industrious, versatile, and distinguished man of letters.

1851. Æt. 48.

I have described at some length the circumstances of Laman Blanchard's life and death to illustrate the kind of case which was in the mind of Bulwer-Lytton and Dickens when, five years later, they embarked upon their ambitious scheme of trying to lighten the hardships and relieve the minds of such literary toilers. Bulwer-Lytton thus commented upon the story which I have just summarised :—

Born at an earlier day, Laman Blanchard would probably have known sharper trials of pecuniary circumstances ; and instead of the sufficient though precarious income which his reputation as a periodical writer afforded him, he might have often slept in the

1851. garret and been fortunate if he had not as often dined
ÆT. 48. in the cellar. But then he would have been compelled to put forth all that was in him of mind and genius; to have written books, not papers; and books, intended not for the week or the month, but for permanent effect upon the public. . . . On the other hand, had he been born a German, and exhibited at Bonn or Jena the same abilities and zeal for knowledge which distinguished him in the school at Southwark, he would, doubtless, have early attained to some competence which would have allowed full leisure and fair play to a character of genius which, naturally rather elegant than strong, required every advantage of forethought and preparation.

In criticising Blanchard's early poems in the *New Monthly* he had said :—

Let him not forget that periodical writing is the grave of much genius. It leads men to write more than they reflect. All great works require stern and silent meditation. We must brood deeply over what we wish to last long. The power of genius is increased by the abundance of fuel that supplies it.

This criticism elicited from the poet journalist a letter in which he spoke of his looking forward to a time when he might realise the cherished dreams of his youth, escape from his hurried compositions for the day and the hour, return into his inner self, and there meditate the production of some work which might justify his critic's belief in the promise of his early efforts.

Such a time never came to Laman Blanchard; but Bulwer Lytton and Dickens were determined that, if they could prevent it, no struggling author

or artist should again be placed in the same predicament. By the establishment of their "Guild of Literature and Art" they hoped to be able to supply to the authors of the future that period of rest and freedom from mental anxiety which is necessary to the production of really durable work. Their new institution was to take the place of the professional chairs in Germany which "had not only saved many a scholar from famine, many a genius from despair, but, by offering subsistence and dignity to that valuable class of writers whose learning and capacities unfit them by reason of their very depth for wide popularity, had given worthy and profitable inducements to grave study, and more than all else had maintained the German fame for patient erudition and profound philosophy." 1851. ÆT. 48.

With these thoughts in their mind, Bulwer-Lytton and Dickens now laid their plans. It was agreed between them that the former should write a comedy, and that it should be produced by an amateur cast first in London and then in the provinces, the proceeds being devoted to the endowment of their cherished scheme. The play, a five act comedy, called *Many Sides to a Character, or Not so Bad as We seem*, was finished early in 1851 and proved worthy of the cause which it was to serve. Macready, who had just retired from the stage, wrote enthusiastically on seeing the MS. "I have read," he said, "with very great delight, the comedy. I have the highest opinion of it. Alas! things of this sort

1851. Æt. 48. would have kept me on the stage. Wilmot is a splendid part. The comedy is a hit, and no mistake."

The play was first produced at Devonshire House on May 16, 1851, before the Queen, the Prince Consort, and a large fashionable audience.[1]

[1] DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Original Cast.

THE DUKE OF MIDDLESEX (Peers attached to the son of James II., commonly called the First Pretender.)	Mr. Frank Stone.
THE EARL OF LOFTUS	Mr. Dudley Costello.
LORD WILMOT, a young man at the head of the mode more than a century ago, son to Lord Loftus	Mr. Charles Dickens.
MR. SHADOWLY SOFTHEAD, a young gentleman from the city, friend and double to Lord Wilmot	Mr. Douglas Jerrold.
HARDMAN, a rising Member of Parliament, and adherent to Sir Robert Walpole	Mr. John Forster.
SIR GEOFFREY THORNSIDE, a gentleman of good family and estate	Mr. Mark Lemon.
MR. GOODENOUGH EASY, in business, highly respectable, and a friend of Sir Geoffrey	Mr. E. W. Topham.
LORD LE TRIMMER (Frequenters of Will's Coffee House)	Mr. Peter Cunningham
SIR THOMAS TIMID	Mr. Westland Marston.
COLONEL FLINT, a Fire-eater	Mr. R. H. Horne.
MR. JACOB TONSON, a Bookseller	Mr. Charles Knight.
SMART, valet to Lord Wilmot	Mr. Wilkie Collins.
HODGE, servant to Sir Geoffrey Thornside	Mr. John Tenniel.
PADDY O'SULLIVAN, Mr. Fallen's landlord	Mr. Robert Bell.
MR. DAVID FALLEN, Grub Street Author and Pamphleteer	Mr. Augustus Egg, A.R.A.

Coffee-House Loungers, Drawers, Newsmen, Watchmen, etc., etc.

LUCY, daughter to Sir Geoffrey Thornside	Mrs. Compton.
BARBARA, daughter to Mr. Easy	Miss Ellen Chaplin.
THE SILENT LADY OF DEADMAN'S LANE (LADY THORNSIDE)	

Date of Play—The Reign of George I. *Scene*—London.

Time supposed to be occupied, from the noon of the first day to the afternoon of the second.

Its success was complete, and after a number of performances at the Hanover Square Rooms the Company started on a tour through the provinces, visiting most of the chief towns in England. In all these proceedings Dickens was the life and soul of the undertaking. He made himself responsible for all the business arrangements, and whilst he was thoroughly practical and efficient in the capacity of Actor Manager, he was all the time on fire with zeal for the cause in which he was engaged. This enthusiasm he contributed not only to his fellow actors, but to the large audiences who crowded to see him and applauded him wildly. 1851. ÆT. 48.

To Bulwer-Lytton he wrote on February 15, 1852 :—

MY DEAR BULWER—I left Liverpool at 4 o'clock this morning, and am so blinded by excitement, gas, and waving hats and handkerchiefs, that I can scarcely see to write ; but I cannot go to bed without telling you what a triumph we have had. Allowing for the necessarily heavy expenses of all kinds, I believe we can scarcely fund less than a thousand pounds out of this trip alone, and more than that. The extraordinary interest taken in the idea of the Guild of "this grand people of England" down in those vast hives, and the enthusiastic welcome they give it, assure me that we may do what we will, if we will only be true and faithful to our design. There is a social recognition of it which I cannot give you the least idea of. I sincerely believe that we have the ball at our feet, and may throw it up to the very Heaven of Heavens. And I don't speak for myself alone, but for all our

1851. Æt. 48. people, and not least of all for Forster, who has been absolutely stunned by the tremendous earnestness of these great places.

To tell you (especially after your affectionate letter) what I would have given to have had you there, would be idle, but I can most seriously say that all the sights of the earth turn pale in my eyes before the sight of three thousand people with one heart among them, and no capacity in them, in spite of all their efforts, of sufficiently testifying to you how they believe you to be right and feel that they cannot do enough to cheer you on. They understood the play (*far better acted this time than ever you have seen it*) as well as you do. They allowed nothing to escape them. They rose up when it was over with a perfect fury of delight, and the Manchester people sent a requisition after us to Liverpool to say that if we will go back there in May, when we act at Birmingham (as of course we shall), they will joyfully undertake to fill the Free Trade Hall again. Among the Tories of Liverpool the reception was especially enthusiastic. We played two nights running to a Hall crowded to the roof, more like the opera at Geneva or Milan than anything else I can compare it to. We dined at the Town Hall magnificently, and it made no difference in the response. I said what we were quietly determined to do (when the Guild was given as the Toast of the night), and really they were so noble and generous in their encouragement that I should have been more ashamed of myself than I hope I ever shall be if I could have felt conscious of having ever for a moment faltered in the work.

I will answer for Birmingham, for any great working town to which we choose to go. We have won a position for the idea which years upon years of labour could not have given it. I believe its worldly fortunes to have been advanced in this last week, fifty years at

least. I fully express to you what Forster (who couldn't be at Liverpool, and has not those shouts ringing in his ears) has felt from the moment we set foot in Manchester. Believe me, we may carry a perfect fiery cross through the North of England and over the border, in this cause, if need be—not only to the enrichment of the cause, but to the lasting enlistment of the people's sympathy. 1851. Æt. 48.

I have been so happy in all this, that I could have cried on the shortest notice any time since Tuesday, and I do believe that our whole body would have gone to the North Pole with me, if I had shown them good reason for it.

I strongly question now whether it is expedient to contemplate as yet any specific time for discontinuing these exertions. I will think of it between this and Saturday, when we meet, but I am very much disposed to put it to the rest that we *must* go on while great towns remain open to us.

I hope I am not so tired but that you may be able to read this. I have been at it, almost incessantly, day and night, for a week, and I am afraid my handwriting suffers. But in all other respects I am only a giant refreshed.

The company are going to dine with me on Monday the 1st of March, at a quarter past 6. I will not ask you to come, fearing you may not be well enough.

We meet next Saturday, you recollect? Until then and ever afterwards, believe me, heartily yours,

C. D.

Birmingham, Sheffield, Derby, Newcastle, Sunderland, were visited in turn, and the provincial tour was closed by a public dinner at Manchester, at which Bulwer-Lytton and Dickens were both present, and explained their scheme.

1851. Æt. 48. "Bulwer spoke brilliantly at the Manchester dinner," wrote Dickens to Forster, "and his earnestness and determination about the Guild were most impressive. It carried everything before it. They are now getting up annual subscriptions, and will give us a revenue to begin with. I swear I believe that people to be the greatest in the world."

The necessary funds, about £4000, were at last collected, though it was still some years before the scheme was complete. In 1854 Bulwer-Lytton carried a Bill through Parliament[1] to incorporate the Guild of Literature and Art with the following objects:—(1) To aid those of its members who follow Literature or the Fine Arts as a profession, and to obtain insurances upon their lives; (2) to establish a Provident Sickness Fund for its members; (3) to provide dwellings for its members, and to grant annuities to them or their widows. In 1863 he made a free gift to the Guild of a site of land upon his estate on which the houses were built.

It is sad to have to record that the scheme which had been set on foot with so much enthusiasm and hard work proved a lamentable failure. All that its promoters could do was done; but the co-operation of those for whom the Guild was established was not forthcoming. Its membership did not increase, and when the original founders died there were none to take their places. The houses had to be let to others than members, and

[1] He was returned as member for Hertfordshire in 1852.

eventually in 1897 another Act had to be passed through Parliament providing for the dissolution of the Guild and the partition of its endowment between the Royal Literary Fund and the Artists General Benevolent Institution. The preamble of this Act is a melancholy recital of the failure of all the bright hopes and generous intentions of the idealists who founded it. In their anxiety to provide against the misfortunes of their impecunious brothers they had left out of their calculations some obvious facts of human nature. The men of real genius which the Guild was to foster were not to be found; and artists and writers to whom pecuniary assistance would be welcome were too sensitive to acknowledge themselves openly the recipients of public charity.

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Some at least of the causes of this failure were foreseen by Macaulay when he was first invited to give the scheme his support. He wrote to Bulwer-Lytton on May 17, 1851, the day after the performance at Devonshire House :—

DEAR SIR EDWARD—Thanks for your pamphlet,[1] which I have read, and for your play,[2] which I saw yesterday night. If the play amuses and interests me as much in the perusal as it did in the representation, I shall rate it much higher than the pamphlet, though the pamphlet is what everything that you write must be.

As to your scheme, I am not aware that, except to four or five people in very small societies, I have

[1] *Letters to John Bull* (see page 164).

[2] *Many Sides to a Character; or, Not so bad as We seem.*

1851. ÆT. 48. expressed any opinion respecting it. But I certainly do believe that its tendency is to give encouragement, not to good writers, but to bad or, at best, middling writers. And I think that you would yourself feel some misgivings if you would try your plan by a simple practical test. Suppose that you succeed beyond your expectations as to pecuniary ways and means. Suppose ten or twelve charming cottages built on the land which you so munificently propose to bestow. Suppose funds to be provided for paying your Warden and ten or twelve Fellows. And suppose that you then sit down to make your choice. Whom will you choose? Form a list of the thirty best writers now living in the United Kingdom. Then strike off from this list first all who require no assistance, and secondly all who do indeed require assistance, but who actually receive from the State pensions as large as you propose to give. I believe that you will find that five or six and twenty, if not more, of your thirty will fall into one or the other of these classes I apprehend, therefore, that you will be driven to fill your Guild with, to use the mildest term, second-rate writers; and this I say on the supposition that the selection is made with the greatest judgment and with an impartiality which the history of literary institutions hardly warrants us in expecting.

There is no analogy between the case of authors and the case of actors. A theatrical fund is a very good thing. For to the existence of the theatrical art it is necessary that there should be inferior performers. That Garrick may act Hamlet, he must have a Rosencrantz and Guilderstern. That Mrs. Siddons may perform Lady Macbeth, she must have a waiting-woman. Nothing can be more reasonable than that those who derive pleasure from the exertions of genius should encourage that subordinate class of artists without

whose help genius would be unable to exert itself. 1851.
But there is no such connection between the great and ÆT. 48.
the small writer as exists between the great and the small actor. In literature, I am afraid, it will always be found that a bounty in mediocrity operates as a fine in excellence.

I could say a great deal more. But I have already plagued you too long. I need not say that I do justice to your motives, and to the motives of those who are joined with you in this undertaking ; and you, I am sure, will not suspect me of wanting sympathy for men of merit in distress. If your project turns out well, I shall have real pleasure in taking to myself the shame of an erroneous prediction. Hitherto you have every reason to congratulate yourself. The success of yesterday night was complete. The principal criticism which occurred to me was that the scene in the coffee-room suffers from the crowding of the actors into so small a space. It seems hardly necessary to employ a spy for the purpose of watching conspirators who talk loud treason in so thick a press of people. It is not easy to set this right. Yet perhaps you might a little thin the room of company while the most important and secret things are said. In general the stage effect was admirable ; and I was particularly delighted with Lord Wilmot.—Ever yours truly,

T. B. MACAULAY.

Bulwer-Lytton and Dickens had intended their scheme to be something more than a mere distribution of charity. They meant it to be a Guild or Brotherhood of Literature, the membership of which was to be at once a privilege and an honour ; it was in some measure to serve the purpose of a college fellowship. This object,

1851. however, was never attained. It became, in
Æt. 48. fact, a mere benevolent fund, and its houses merely almshouses for those in narrow circumstances. As such it failed, because it was too public, and too openly exposed its members to the slur of literary pauperism. Benevolent work of that kind was then and still is being done by the Royal Literary Fund, from which the donations and annuities are privately administered. And so the only result of this noble dream was that forty-six years later a sum of about £2000 and the proceeds of the sale of the Guild houses were added to the funds of the two Benevolent Institutions that, from long experience and careful study of human nature, are best qualified to deal with the pecuniary difficulties of authors and artists.

CHAPTER VI

POLITICAL CONVERSION

1841–1852

It is true that when in Parliament some years before the politics of Maltravers had differed from those of Lord Raby and his set, but Maltravers had of late taken no share in politics—had uttered no political opinions—was supposed to be a discontented man — and politicians believe in no discontent that is not political. Whispers were afloat that Maltravers had grown wise, had changed his views; some remarks of his, more theoretical than practical, were quoted in favour of this notion. Parties, too, had much changed since Maltravers had appeared on the busy scene—new questions had arisen, and the old ones had died off.

Alice.

ALTHOUGH the eleven years of Bulwer-Lytton's exclusion from Parliament were mainly devoted to literature, they also mark an important stage in the development of his political opinions. He left the House of Commons in 1841 a supporter of a Whig Administration; it was as a Tory that he returned to it in 1852. In the interval his own circumstances had changed. He had inherited his mother's property and become the owner of a landed estate. His political opinions, too, had undergone some modification. But during these years the whole political situation had also altered completely; new combinations had taken place, new leaders had sprung up,

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new questions divided parties. In order to explain the reasons which induced Bulwer-Lytton to change his political allegiance, it will be necessary to give a short summary of the political history of these years.

In the election of 1841, when he lost his seat at Lincoln, the Whig Administration of Lord Melbourne was defeated, and immediately after the reassembling of Parliament Sir Robert Peel became Prime Minister for the second time. The agitation for the Repeal of the Corn Laws was then at its height, but in spite of the vigorous campaign in the country conducted by Cobden, Bright, and the Anti-Corn Law League, the Free Trade resolutions introduced by Charles Villiers were annually defeated in the House of Commons. At the end of 1845 the famine in Ireland suddenly lifted the whole controversy out of its academic stage, and the Government was faced with an actual emergency of a very acute kind. Emergency meetings of the Cabinet were held, and Sir Robert Peel proposed to his colleagues that, in view of the distress in Ireland, the ports should be opened and all duties on imported food should be removed. To this proposal Lord Stanley and some other Ministers were resolutely opposed and Sir Robert Peel resigned. The Queen sent for Lord John Russell, who was unable to form a Government, and Peel once more resumed office. Lord Stanley refused to join the reconstituted Ministry, and Mr. Gladstone took his place at the Colonial

Office. Parliament reassembled on January 19, 1846, and Sir Robert Peel announced his conversion to the policy of Free Trade. The Repeal of the Corn Laws was passed in the House of Commons on May 15, and in the Lords on June 22. Great was the consternation and fury of the Protectionists at what they regarded as Peel's betrayal of their cause. Disraeli attacked him with the utmost bitterness in the House of Commons, and a new Protectionist party was at once formed under the leadership of Lord George Bentinck. It was not long, however, before the Protectionists had their revenge. On June 26 a Bill introduced by the Government for the protection of life in Ireland was defeated in the House of Commons by the combined votes of the Whig Opposition, the Irish, and the Protectionists, and the resignation of the Ministry followed. At the very moment when the supreme act of his political life was accomplished, Sir Robert Peel was driven from office, and Lord John Russell stepped into his shoes.

Bulwer-Lytton, who was strongly opposed to the Repeal of the Corn Laws, and sympathised with Disraeli and the Protectionists in their attacks upon Peel, was at this time in a very unsettled state of mind with regard to politics. Since his retirement from the House of Commons he had lost touch with the political parties with which he had previously acted, and no party had as yet arisen with which he was much in

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sympathy. He had never had any affection for the Whigs, and the Radicals with whom he had co-operated in the House of Commons had proved themselves quite unpractical and incapable of forming themselves into a strong parliamentary organisation. He still regarded the Tories with traditional hostility, and the recent action of Sir Robert Peel seemed to him an act of political perfidy. With that large body of questions connected with social and industrial improvement and included under the comprehensive heading of Social Reform, his interest and sympathies were now, as always, bound up, and he looked to the new Ministry for some expression of their determination to make these questions their own. For Lord John Russell, personally, he had a great regard, and on his assumption of the office of Prime Minister he addressed to him a series of open letters on matters not immediately connected with the party controversies of the hour. These letters were not published at the time, and they remain among his papers in an unfinished state. They were subsequently embodied in a political memoir prefixed by his son to a collected edition of Bulwer-Lytton's speeches. As they have been already printed I do not reproduce them here, but on account of the valuable evidence which they afford of their author's political opinions at this time, they are included in an Appendix to this volume.

These letters represent the last phase of

Bulwer-Lytton's Liberal period in politics, and are the reflection of a mind far removed from the actual controversies which divided parties at the time they were written. The first letter summarises the situation as it was left by the defeat of Sir Robert Peel's Government in 1846, and indicates the task which awaited the new administration of Lord John Russell. The last letter does not deal with politics at all, at least not with politics as understood by politicians, but it represents the literary man's view of the functions of the State in the domain with which he is more particularly familiar. It complains of the inadequacy of State patronage of contemporary art and literature, uses many arguments which are often urged by those who favour the establishment in this country of a Ministry of Fine Arts, and concludes by recommending the establishment of a new decoration, which would in some measure correspond to the Legion of Honour in France, and be available for recognising the services of those who have distinguished themselves in art, literature, science, commerce, or industry. Some of the criticisms in this letter are now out of date and have been met by recent changes, but the greater part of the argument is as applicable to the present day as it was to the generation for which it was written.

When Bulwer-Lytton again resumed active connection with the House of Commons, it was among new associates and under the influence

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of a man who had brought a new principle into the political world. What he had failed to find among the Whigs, what he had hoped to create among the philosophical Radicals, what he now looked for anxiously from Lord John Russell's Administration, he found later in the Tory Democracy of Benjamin Disraeli.

At the time he composed his *Letters to Lord John Russell*, though detached from active party politics and differing profoundly from his party on the question of the Corn Laws, Bulwer-Lytton was still a nominal supporter of the Whig Government, and he hoped that Lord John Russell's Administration would initiate a policy of social reform of which he could cordially approve. In this he was disappointed, and two years later he had become thoroughly disgusted with the Whigs and only desired to see their destruction.

This change in his political sympathies, rather than in his political opinions, was due to several causes, some of them personal and others public. A serious difference of opinion on a single important question, if that question happens to be one of the chief political issues of the moment, often leads to complete disagreement on general policy. Party ties, though loose enough to admit of differences on minor questions or details of legislation, become violently strained when differences arise over a fundamental item in the party programme. At such times attacks which cause little or

no ill-feeling when made by political opponents are bitterly resented and seldom forgiven when they proceed from political friends; and the mutual recriminations which ensue have the effect of throwing the dissentient members into the arms of the opposite party. Recent history has provided two conspicuous examples of this tendency :—In 1886, when Liberals who differed from Mr. Gladstone on the question of Home Rule joined the ranks of his political opponents and eventually became completely merged in the Conservative party; and again to a lesser degree in 1903, when Mr. Chamberlain's declaration in favour of Tariff Reform sent many Unionist Free Traders over to the Liberal party.

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It is true that in 1846 the Repeal of the Corn Laws had been carried by a Conservative Government, but it was only with the help of Liberal votes that this had been done; and while the Liberals were united in favour of Free Trade, the Conservative party as a whole was, as it has at the core been ever since, a Protectionist party. It was, therefore, difficult after 1846 for a Protectionist to get into Parliament as a Liberal, and Bulwer-Lytton had to choose between the three alternatives of abandoning all hope of getting back to the House of Commons, adopting the Free Trade doctrines of his party, or standing as a Conservative. His first inclination was to adopt the first, but circumstances gradually drove him to the last.

1841–1852. Æt. 38–49. Had the Whigs shown any desire to retain him as a supporter or to help him to obtain a seat in Parliament, he might have ended his life in the political faith in which he began it. But party wire-pullers are never disposed to make things easy for men of independent opinions; and though the influence of the political caucus was not as strong at that time as it has since become, yet such power as it possessed was effectively used against him. On two occasions subsequent to 1846 he tried without success to recover his seat at Lincoln—once in July 1847, and again in the spring of 1848—and had the matter been left entirely in the hands of the local people, he might have succeeded. The circumstances of his second failure are thus described in a letter to Forster :—

March 24, 1848.

My dear Forster—The history of Lincoln is short. All the electors, except Seeley's party, whether Liberal or Conservative, had agreed that I should walk over the course if Seeley was unseated. But on the very evening of the decision against him, without consulting or apprising me who had been fifteen years in possession of the ground, the Whig Secretary of the Treasury agreed with Seeley to send down Mr. Hobhouse to occupy my position. This was done secretly and taking advantage of my being at Brighton.

The Tories, finding that Seeley's defeat was followed by the instant appearance of a Whig Cabinet Minister's brother, conceived naturally that I could not entertain the idea of standing, and deeming themselves duped, hastened to bring forward a Tory. The Tory thus

standing on one side and Hobhouse on the other, I, of course, had no chance. I went down, therefore, merely to allay the irritation of my own friends and induce them to vote for Hobhouse, rather than let a Tory come in. I secured, therefore, his seat and lost my own. Such is the treatment I have received from the courtesy and gratitude of the Whig Government. —Ever yrs. truly,

E. B. L.

The feeling that he had been badly treated by his own party, and his strong sympathies with the Protectionists, who formed the fighting strength of the Conservative party, predisposed Bulwer-Lytton to take advantage of any opportunity which might arise of actively supporting the latter. Such an opportunity, however, did not occur for some years, and in the meanwhile he settled down into the attitude of disgust with all political warfare, which is the characteristic frame of mind of the man whose political convictions are temporarily unsettled.

In reply to a letter from Forster inviting him to contribute some political articles to *The Examiner*, he writes :—

My dear Forster—I heartily wish you had asked me anything else, to contribute to any other kind of literature—nay, if a translation of Sanscrit. I would rather have gone to Haileybury and learned Sanscrit than received this request, for I know that here you wholly overrate my possible power to serve you ; you mistake the peculiarities of my capacity in this kind of writing. It is only where a special object has moved me by a strong impulse that, even in that phase of my life when

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I most looked on the world practically, I could write politics—periodically. Now nothing seems to me more strange and repulsive. It is right that I should here frankly and confidently open my whole heart to you in this matter. I loathe politics. They are associated in my mind with the most bitter feelings. I am thrust out of my natural sphere in them. I have met with what I call gross ingratitude from the leaders and the people. I may be mistaken in this, but such is my rooted persuasion. After my last defeat, seeing myself probably thrust out of all fitting career in public life, I have shut myself up in my shell, or rather I have entered into views and currents of mind wholly opposed not only to politics, but to that temper of mind in which practical politics only should be approached. I never look at a leading article if I can help it. I am profoundly ignorant of all that at the day moves others, and if I were to correct the ignorance I still could never participate in the movement. In much that unites the Liberal party, too, whether from prejudice or not, I have the misfortune to differ. Free Trade I regard as a delusion. Even in the Austrian question, I believe that Austria is in her strict rights; and as for the Government, my only feeling towards it and the Whigs is that if anything could excite me to interest, it would be an opportunity that would allow me conscientiously to destroy or help to destroy them.

How in this condition of mind can I possibly serve *The Examiner*? I look with a mournful despair at your proposition! I know not which way to glance to see any hope of being useful. To write weekly requires a vigilant interest in public affairs, and an intercourse, I assure you, with the fresh notions of public men, or political thinkers, to which (use what spasmodic efforts I might) I could not rouse myself.

The only thing I could do—can do—I will certainly. 1841–1852.
That is, if you can find or suggest the subjects, I will ÆT. 38–49.
treat them as I can. For instance, if there were any political books to review, in a spirit not at variance with my convictions, and not in defence of these Ministers, I will try and brighten up to the best my obsolete rusty armoury. But these Whigs! they united to thrust me from my own country, to intrigue against me in every place that was open, to exclude me from Parlt., and they have succeeded. Enough of this. See, then, how in this state I can serve your purpose. Don't rely on my finding subjects. Find the subjects yourself—tell me where to cram the materials, and expect no more from me than a machine which affection for you can alone rouse from loathing inertness.—Adieu, Yrs. ever,

E. B. L.

Two circumstances, however, gradually served to reawaken his active interest in politics, and to bring him more decidedly into sympathy with the Conservatives.

The first of these was the increasing predominance of the Cobdenite or Manchester school of politics. It was through the influence and in the interests of the middle-class manufacturing portion of the population that Free Trade had been carried, and the narrow doctrinaire principles of the Cobdenites were becoming increasingly applied to the whole range of politics. The political creed of this school was markedly selfish, and dictated by purely commercial considerations. In foreign and domestic questions alike their sole regard was for the maintenance and promotion

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of industry and commerce. As England at that time virtually enjoyed a monopoly in most manufacturing processes, foreign competition had no terrors for them; all import duties, therefore, they regarded as merely vexatious hindrances to trade, and they cheerfully contemplated a future in which England would supply the world with manufactures, receiving in return cheap food and raw material. This mutually satisfactory interchange of commodities was to lead to the establishment of international friendship and fraternity, when every nation would realise the irreparable damage to commerce caused by armaments and wars. Colonies were regarded with the utmost suspicion and aversion, as affording many causes for international complications and frictions. The conception of a world-wide Empire had no place in their dreams, and they hoped that as soon as the colonial populations were ripe for self-government, they would sever their connection with the mother-country and set up as independent free-trading states. The doctrine of *laissez faire* was as rigidly applied to industrial conditions at home as to foreign trade. All State interference with industrial contracts, conditions of labour, and the free bargaining between employers and employed was inconsistent with the ideas of liberty entertained by this school, and emphatically condemned by them. The whole of their political creed was, in fact, summed up in the immortal Sam Weller's definition of free competition as "Each for himself and God

for us all, as the donkey said when he danced among the chickens." 1841–1852. Æt. 38–49.

To Bulwer-Lytton these doctrines were anathema, and the sanctity with which they had come to be held by the entire Liberal party finally convinced him that he could no longer keep company with such a party. He writes to Forster in 1848 at the beginning of the political upheavals, which in that year shook every Government in Europe :—

Those miserable Cobdens! and visionary Peace Dreamers! What fools they are, and these are the men by whom England herself has been half driven to the brink of revolution. Wise Daniels indeed. The babyism of giving up indirect taxation, to be driven to direct in a country like this, the insanity of going on preaching about customs and lowering taxes on the comforts of the people, &c., when the only substitutes are direct taxes or loans, unless indeed they will come to a proper reduction, not of Army and Navy, but of *Monarchy* itself. *A la bonne heure!* A Republic is cheap, but if ever that hour arrives it shall not be, if I and a few like me live, a Republic of millers and cotton spinners, but either a Republic of gentlemen or a Republic of workmen—either is better than those wretched money spiders, who would sell England for 1s. 6d.

The Government are morally gone. Nothing can save them long. What imbeciles—so audacious and so craven. What talent the French Provisional Government have shown, *as yet.* Their promise to the workmen is their only dangerous point. If out of Socialism they can pick up something that will enable them to keep that promise, it will be fire amongst flax—here

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and all over Europe. But if Socialism fail them, and they can do nothing for the *ouvriers*! why then God help them—War—war—war—is the only mode to cut the Gordian knot.

The other circumstance which contributed to his political conversion was his increasing friendship with Disraeli. They had corresponded for some years at fitful intervals, but only about literary subjects. About this time they began to find a new common interest in politics. On August 3, 1850, Bulwer-Lytton invited Mr. and Mrs. Disraeli to stay with him at Knebworth. "I don't think the wonder-monger," he said, "will find much to cavil at in our conjunction. After all, I am a Protectionist—and authorship is neutral ground."

The invitation was accepted, and during this visit the foundations were laid of a political friendship firmer and more intimate than the literary friendship which had preceded it.

Disraeli's political opinions afforded Bulwer-Lytton a convenient bridge from the Liberal to the Conservative party. This brilliant and eccentric man was a very different type of politician from the Tory leaders who were the objects of Bulwer-Lytton's scorn when he first entered Parliament; and the two friends soon found that they had much in common. Their protectionist opinions were by no means the only bond of sympathy between them. Both were men of strong imagination, which in each of them produced high notions of national honour

and marked imperial instincts. To both the insular prejudices of the Cobdenite school were equally repugnant, and to both the prospect of uniting the country gentlemen and the artisans of the great industrial towns in a common attack upon the middle class manufacturers, and the exclusive Whig aristocracy who now composed the Liberal party, was equally attractive. Both were imperialists and reformers at heart; and the Tory Democracy created by Disraeli was just such a policy as his friend could conscientiously support. 1841–1852. Æt. 38–49.

Bulwer-Lytton's first public declaration on re-entering the political arena was contained in a pamphlet which he published in 1851.[1] On the 27th of February he wrote to Disraeli :—

My dear D.—If you make up your Government, or even if you don't, I think of writing a short pamphlet which will contain my own honest views of the state of affairs and parties; and in which there may probably be something that, consistently with those views, might do you some service, if the pamphlet proved a hit. A thing of that sort at this time coming from me, as from one who could neither expect nor take anything, and who would be likely to view things impartially, might really be useful to the country, which is in what I consider to be a very critical and dangerous state. Now can you spare me any time for a quiet chat, thoroughly private, either at my hotel or at your own house. I think of getting to Knebworth on Monday, and if I do this pamphlet I shall knock it off as soon as possible. I should add that my view of

[1] *Letters to John Bull.*

1841–1852. matters is that of a Conciliator of all the rival interests.
Æt. 38–49. —Yrs. ever,

E. B. L.

This pamphlet, which consisted of three letters addressed to John Bull, is an able statement of the Protectionist case. The last two letters which deal exclusively with the effect produced upon agriculture by the Repeal of the Corn Laws, and advocate a low, fixed duty upon imported wheat do not require any special mention. The case with which they deal is well argued, but the argument of the Protectionist, when stated exclusively from the point of view of any single industry, is always easy to enforce, and is unanswerable from the same point of view. It is unquestionable that a particular industry can be, and often is, if not destroyed, at least greatly injured by foreign competition, and that it can be revived and maintained by the imposition of protective duties. The only answer to such a case which a Free Trader can make is either that it is economically unsound to protect artificially an industry which cannot flourish without such assistance, or else to point out that the cheap foreign import of which the producer complains is a great boon to the consumer. Neither answer brings any comfort to those interested in the particular trade in question. Bulwer-Lytton's case, therefore, was an easy one, partly because agriculture is an industry which for many reasons cannot be abandoned, and partly because the injury which

it had suffered was clearly demonstrable. No one could deny that in 1846 the landed interests had been sacrificed to the manufacturing interests, and that agricultural depression was the price which the country had to pay for the policy of Free Trade. The fallacy in his argument was the assumption throughout that the interest of the food producer is identical with that of the food consumer, whereas in fact they are different. It may be debateable which of these two interests should receive the most consideration, whether either should be entirely sacrificed to the other, or whether by any compromise something may be conceded to each. But it is not sufficient for a full statement of the problem that the case of the producer alone should be established.

The first letter deals more generally with the point of view from which the writer approaches the discussion, and contains some very sound propositions regarding the study of political economy and its uses for the statesman :—

> I shun in these letters all mere party questions. I stand alone from all party. I will not attack the Minister. I will not panegyrise the rival. I leave to those whose support, as the representatives of manufacturing and urban populations, Lord John Russell unhesitatingly preferred to all terms with the agricultural constituencies—the grateful task to extenuate his merits, and enforce his offences. To me his name is identified with the memory of imperishable services ; and I feel too much regret to differ from him, not to be reluctant to blame. If in him could yet be supplied what appears to me the main want of the time, there is

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no man should be so proud—what?—to follow as a leader? No. To support as a conciliator. What the time now demands is, not the leader; it is the conciliator. Wherever I turn, I dread the chance of a chief who is to represent all the passions of class or the selfishness of interests; wherever I turn, I see cause to desire that the coming man may covet, not the bays of the conqueror, but the oak wreath of the citizen.

. . . . .

Everywhere you behold divisions between classes; jealousies, and feuds between national interests; and victory, pushed too far by the one against the other, will be a victory achieved over the country itself by its own sons, far worse than the fears of Lord Ellesmere could ever anticipate from the fleets and hosts of the foreigner. Penetrate the smoky atmosphere through which rise the tall chimneys of countless factories; examine the heart of those mighty towns, in which all theories that affect the interests of labour are discussed with the passions which numbers speed and inflame; where the spirit of an eternal election agitates the mass of the everlasting crowd—say, if there be not yet reserved for the coming man the consideration of social questions which no Factory Bill has yet settled; which no Repeal of the Corn Laws, after its first novelty is worn away, can lull into rest; and tell me whether it be better for the solution of these that the man shall come as the leader or the conciliator?

. . . . .

Having proved by historical references that the free importation of foreign corn lasted throughout "the dark ages," and that Protection dates from "the dawn of civilisation," when Edward IV. "a King who himself was a merchant, began the sagacious favour to the

trading middle class, as a counterpoise to armed aristocracy," he went on to argue that other countries also had prospered and built up their commerce under a protective system. Then follows a vigorous condemnation of the unpatriotic speeches of the modern Liberals :— 1841–1852. Æt. 38–49.

But I own to you, O my honoured and somewhat antiquated John, I own to you, that the school in which I learned to love liberty seems now as old-fashioned as yourself. For I learned that love in the school of the great patriots of the past; I learned to connect it inseparably with love of country; and it would really seem as if a new school had arisen, which identifies the passion for freedom with scornful indifference for England. And when, in a popular meeting, which was crowded by the friends of the late Corn-Law League, and at which one of the great chiefs of that combination presided, an orator declared, in reference to the defences of the country, that "he thought it might be a very good thing for the people if the country were conquered by the foreigner"; and when that sentiment was received with cheers by the audience, and met with no rebuke from the Paladin of Free Trade seated in the chair, I felt that, however such sentiments might be compatible with Free Trade, in the school in which I learned to glow at the grand word of Liberty, they would have been stigmatised as the sentiments of slaves.

Another passage sounds strangely familiar in our ears to-day, being the stock-in-trade of nearly every Tariff Reform speaker :—

It is clear, therefore, that what is one man's meat may be another man's poison. It is natural that the

1841–1852. Æt. 38–49. Cracovian corn-grower should be desirous of competing with the English; it is natural that the English corn-grower should be unwilling to have that honour thrust upon him. *A State can adopt no dogma for universal application, whether of Protection or Free Trade.* In those branches in which it produces more or better supplies at less cost, it must naturally court Free Trade; in those branches where its produce is less or its cost greater than that of its neighbours, it must either consent to the certain injury, the possible ruin, of that department of industry, or it must place it under Protection. Free Trade, could it be universally reciprocal, would therefore benefit Manchester *versus* Germany, and injure Lincolnshire *versus* Poland. The English cotton manufacturer thoroughly understands this when he says, with Mr. Cobden, "Let us have Free Trade, and we will beat the world!" But the world does not want to be beaten! Prussia, France, and even America, prefer "stupid selfishness" and protected manufactures to enlightened principles and English competition. When the English manufacturer says, "he wants only Free Trade to beat the world," he allows the benefit of Protection to his rivals, and excuses them for shutting their markets in his face.

But whether Free Trade be, in all cases, right or wrong, every one has allowed that we can't have it. To Free Trade, fairly and thoroughly carried out, there are more than fifty million obstacles to be found —in the Budget.

That we must lay certain duties on certain foreign articles of general consumption, and cramp the home producer by the iron hand of the exciseman, are facts enforced upon our attention every time the miserable man doomed to hold the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer goes through the yearly agonies of his financial statement. Free Trade, too, in the proper

acceptation of the term, by all the laws of grammar and common sense, requires two parties to the compact —the native and the foreigner. Between you and me, John, I see no hope of the foreigner. I wish, however, to raise no argument upon this, against the policy of our tariffs. Reciprocity may be good; but I allow that it is not essential. Wherever it is for our interest to open our markets, it would be idle to wait till the foreigner, against his idea of his interests, opened his own. All that I would observe is, that such one-sided liberality may be judicious and politic, but it has no right to the appellation of Free Trade.

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The best argument in the letter is that with which it closes. Having disclaimed any intention of attacking political economy, he points out that though its professors arrogate to it the title of a science, yet the investigations of political economists do not proceed on the inductive principle :—

It has rather, I think, proceeded in "that opposite way" which Bacon has condemned, and in which, according to him, no subtlety of definition, and no logical acuteness, can suffice to avail for the establishment of truth. It has rather commenced with the abstract principles, and then selected the experiences on which to support them—resembling somewhat that ingenious philosopher of whom Condillac informs us, who blessed himself with the persuasion that he had discovered a system that was to explain all the phenomena of Chemistry, and hastened to a practical chemist to communicate his discovery. "Unhappily," said the chemist, "the chemical facts are exactly the reverse of what, in this most luminous and ingenious discovery, you suppose them to be." "Tell me," then

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cries the philosopher, nothing daunted, "what the facts are, that I may explain them by my system!" But whether or not political economy be a science rather than a system, and a science based upon induction rather than logic, it is a study affording the most valuable suggestions, throwing light upon much that had been hitherto obscure; it is allied to researches with which I have for years been familiar; I have pondered it with attention, I would speak of it with respect; and it is the more my interest to do so now, for I shall rest much of my case on reference to its maxims and the admissions of its authorities. But I must be permitted to observe, that it is a common mistake with the ordinary run of students in political economy, to mistake altogether the nature of that science, and the reservations imposed upon the practical adoption of its principles. *Political economy deals with but one element in a state*, viz. *its wealth*; and the soundest political economists will be found cautiously stopping short of what would seem the goal of an argument with some such expression as "But this belongs to national policy." Political economy goes strictly and sternly, as it were, towards the investigation of the rigid principle it is pursuing; it has only incidentally to do with the modifications which it would be wise to adopt when you apply the principle to living men. Of living men, their passions, and habits, and prejudices, it often thinks no more than Euclid does when he is demonstrating the properties of a triangle. All this is out of the province of the political economist, and within that of the statesman.

Far from blaming political economy for this, it could not be what it professes to be if it were otherwise. The persons to blame are those who insist on applying all its principles, as if they were describing lifeless things, and not dealing with human beings;

and hence innumerable mistakes, made by hasty readers, not only in the application, but we may say also in the comprehension, of the principle itself. 1841–1852. Æt. 38–49.

. . . . .

Suppose that I write a treatise on Architecture, wherein I geometrically establish the fact that the Parthenon is a most beautiful building. If my neighbour, Squire Hawthorn, who lives in an old-fashioned, irregular, country-house, as unlike the Parthenon as a house can be, runs to me out of breath, transported to enthusiasm by my admirable treatise, "My dear Sir, I have read your work; you have proved to my satisfaction that no building on earth is so perfect as the Parthenon. Pray, would you advise me to pull down Hawthorn Hall, and build a country-house exactly on the model of which you have so lucidly given the geometrical designs? Shall I turn Hawthorn Hall into a Parthenon? What's your advice?"

"Sir," I should answer, unless I had a sinister interest to answer otherwise, "I am not the proper person of whom to ask that advice; whether it is for your interest to pull down your very irregular old house; whether, if you did, you would be as comfortable in a Parthenon, and, however beautiful that edifice, find that it could be adapted to the wants of your family, and the difference of your climate; whether you could even live in it, without catching your death of cold, are all considerations with which I had nothing to do when I wrote my treatise. My object was but to explain the true principles of Architecture, and establish the excellence of the Parthenon upon geometrical principles!"

Squire Hawthorn would have no right to blame me for having written my treatise and disturbed his mind; but he would be a monstrous great fool if he turned his old hall into a Parthenon!

1841–1852. Æt. 38–49.

The pamphlet was published in the spring of 1851 and had a wide circulation. Soon after its publication Bulwer-Lytton writes to Disraeli :—

My dear D.—I have ordered the printers to send you the 4th edition of my pamphlet which I have revised, not having had the leisure, in the call for the pamphlet, to revise the former ones. In this I have strengthened some of the positions, and made more clear the reasons why wages may long fall in one district and not in another. The most flattering compliments that have reached me, strange to say, have been from political economists. I have had one very remarkable letter from the living chief of them, though I did not know him—moved to it, I suppose, by the impertinence of the *Morning Chronicle*. But as yet I don't know how the Protectionists receive the pamphlet and its views (rather odd that no Protectionist journal, except the *Standard*, has noticed it, nor have I heard from any save one Protectionist on it). I cannot judge if it is really effective or not, despite a tolerably rapid sale. I should be very glad of your opinion or of any brief suggestions for subsequent editions. The 4th edition, not yet out, will be a large one. If it moves beyond that it is a sign that it begins to penetrate the country.

I see the Free Traders charge me with avoiding detail and statistics. But don't you agree with me that I am right so to shun them? If you have a moment to write to me, direct Knebworth, Stevenage.—Yrs.,

E. B. L.

The sale of the pamphlet fully came up to its author's expectation, for it went into ten editions. Disraeli's appreciation was expressed in the following letter :—

GROSVENOR GATE, *May* 2, 1851.

MY DEAR BULWER—I have now had very considerable opportunities of ascertaining public opinion respecting the *Letters*, and I have no hesitation in saying that it is one of high, and very extensive, approbation. I am not speaking merely of the great politicians, but I find the large-acred squires your warm appreciators; none more impressed, for example, than Sir Charles Knightley. 1841–1852. ÆT. 38–49.

I won't attempt to give you a catalogue of those whose opinions I have gathered (the last Lord Forester, who was enthusiastic both as to the style and the effect it must produce) because you might then infer the approbation was confined merely to them. It is, on the contrary, universal, and I can't doubt, from what hourly reaches me, that the success of the *Letters* will be fully proportioned to the occasion and the fame and status of the writer.—Yrs. ever, D.

Bulwer-Lytton's increased friendship with Disraeli and the political conversion which accompanied it, threatened at first to bring about an estrangement from his old and trusted friend John Forster, who, as editor of the Liberal *Examiner*, could not but regard with feelings of keen distress the publication of opinions from which he differed so strongly. That the relations existing between these two great friends should be to some extent affected by the political differences which had come between them, was inevitable; but when once the subject had been frankly faced and each had expressed his fears and re-affirmed his affection, their intimacy was preserved in all its essential features.

1841–1852. Æt. 38–49. The matter was first raised by Forster at the end of a long letter dated November 1, 1851, which was chiefly concerned with literary matters and concluded as follows :—

So much for business. And now I will say simply a word as to that odd remark in your note on there being "no chance of my going to you—no getting over the Corn Laws."

Since I was last at Knebworth I have had no invitation of any kind from you except one which reached me on a Friday to go to you the next day—I being then bound to Ramsgate. What on earth then can you mean? As for the Corn Laws, I shall, of course, always regret the separation in point of opinion, because I know the natural and constant tendency of such a schism to gape and extend itself insensibly into other directions. But if I have been silent hitherto respecting it in the *Examiner*, it would be hard that you should attribute that to any motive but the proper one. Indeed, if I might take the opportunity of your old friendship to speak exactly what I feel, I would say that I have felt not a little what has seemed something like a reserve and indifference to me on your part, ever since the play came out. But no such feeling can ever affect the regard with which I must always subscribe myself,—Yr. old & sincere friend,

JOHN FORSTER.

Bulwer-Lytton replied on November 5 :—

MY DEAR FORSTER—To come at once to the point in your letter which is to me most important—I mean that which involves any possible cause, I will not say of estrangement, but of coldness, in a friendship which has lasted so many years, which I so cordially appreciate. Let me say frankly, that if there was anything in my

manner, implying "reserve or indifference since the play came out" I was most wholly unconscious of it, and most deeply regret it. 1841–1852. Æt. 38–49.

As to the play, I could only feel very warmly all your pains, trouble and sympathy about it; and if I had any other feeling, it could only be that of regret that a part which we both thought, in perusal, effective and striking, should not work out in the business of the stage in a way worthy of your powers. But certainly that could produce no coldness on my part, and I never dreamed till you wrote that there was a hitch here. I thought—pardon me, if I fear still—that a difference in political opinion which involves a separation in party, could alone occasion what was apparent to me, a certain alienation on your side. Politicians so earnest as yourself and so accustomed from week to week to dwell upon the vexed questions of politics, are too apt perhaps to consider that the *vera amicitia* can only be found in the *idem velle idem nolle de Republica.*

I have never so considered politics—to me they form but one, though large, element in human thought and human happiness, and this is natural to me who have had to divide thought among so many topics. Therefore, let us differ ever so much here, it cannot shake my really brotherly love for you, my deep and unceasing gratitude for a thousand obligations which I have never had it in my power to repay. Let it shake as little as possible your regard for me, and do what justice you can to my sincerity in my belief. Believe me, I never thought of the *Examiner*, I thought only of the private friend, and never let there be any *gêne* created by your necessary combination of two capacities —the public journalist, the private friend. I know that if I enter Parliament, and take any active part therein, the *Examiner* must perforce notice to blame and censure opinions offered to it. But even where there

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exists no private acquaintance, the *Examiner* is so free from the personal allusions which wound and irritate that I have no fear that I shall ever read any animadversions on myself with illiberal and ungenerous resentment. So let that matter rest. But before I wholly dismiss these questions of politics and the consequences they entail, let me unbosom myself fully and say this—that when it has been urged upon me by parties likely to come into power, that I may have office offered to myself, no inducement has ever so strongly forced itself on my mind to shake my aversion to the thraldom of official life, as the prospect that I might possibly then have it in my power to offer to you, not as politician, but as man of letters, some such place as you could take without compromise of opinion or loss of dignity. And that thus some other party might have the power of repairing what seems to me the distinguishing injustice of your own. This, at present, is mere words. I may not come into Parliament, I may fail there, I may never have the power referred to. But in all sincerity and truth of heart I say what has always been uppermost in my mind, and would so remain, if our private intimacy ceased to-morrow! Who shall predicate of the future? But the past nothing can efface—that is in truth the *κτῆμα ἐς ἀεί.*

As to invitations to Knebworth, why, I always flattered myself you never needed them, but would come when you liked, as to a home.—Ever most affectly. yrs.,

E. B. L.

This answer completely removed all trace of ill-feeling and was gratefully acknowledged as follows :—

My dear Bulwer-Lytton—I should find it very difficult to say to you with what feelings I read your

letter, and now send you these few words in reply to it. It is better, perhaps, that I should not attempt to do so. 1841–1852. Æt. 38–49.

As to the misapprehension I laboured under, there is no more to be said respecting it, but that I am little likely to fall into any such mistake again.

In the matter of the *Examiner*, I will only now put this question. As matters stand, would you rather that the silence hitherto observed as to the pamphlet should continue, or that an opportunity should be taken of stating broadly and frankly the difference between us—with regret that on a question involving now the very existence of the old Liberal party, we should thus have lost your services and name?

It is a great loss, but also a very wide difference. That must be said. For as I see your argument, you would strongly dissent even from the course which Disraeli sees to be the only one at present open to him.

In talking of your services as a loss, I do not mean that they had ever been given to that particular question, except in the general sense of supporting a Liberal policy and party, from which your withdrawal, I cannot but see, must become more and more marked, more and more to be regretted by us. It is needless for me to add, with the view I take of these matters, that I see no possibility of any successors to the present men on other ground than that of a compromise of the claim for any direct reimposition of a duty on corn.

Between you and me, I shall never cease to remember what you have said. It is enough for me that you have said it. The act would not be of greater value. I can imagine it infinitely less. That therefore is already my κτῆμα ἐς ἀεί which you have given me, and no one can take from me.—Your old and always grateful friend,

JOHN FORSTER.

1841–1852. Æt. 38–49.

Forster was justified in his conviction that a difference so fundamental was certain to lead to a complete separation of political interests. The *Letters to John Bull* were in fact the bridge over which their author passed from one political party to the other. The most important result of their publication was an invitation from the electors of his own county that he would become their representative in Parliament. The invitation was accepted; and at the General Election of 1852, Bulwer-Lytton re-entered Parliament as Conservative member for Hertfordshire. He continued to sit for this constituency until his elevation to the Peerage in 1866.

BOOK V

POLITICAL

RETURN TO PARLIAMENT

1852–1866

Political faction loves converts better even than consistent adherents.
A man's rise in life generally dates from a well-timed *rat*.

Alice.

CHAPTER I

M.P. FOR HERTFORDSHIRE

1852–1854

But what's party? Mere cricket—some out and some in.
Walpole.

FOR the purposes of this chapter the reader may find it convenient to have a summary of the chief political events which immediately preceded and followed Bulwer-Lytton's return to Parliament in 1852. 1852. ÆT. 49.

On December 2, 1851, by a *coup d'État* in Paris, Louis Napoleon made himself master of France, and paved the way for his assumption of the Imperial Crown. This event produced immediate and important results in England. Lord Palmerston, who was at that time Foreign Minister, in the course of a private conversation with the French Ambassador, expressed his approval of the *coup d'État*, and this opinion was forwarded to Paris as an official recognition of the new position of the Prince President. Such an expression of opinion was contrary to the policy of strict neutrality which the Queen and the Government were anxious to maintain in this

1852. Æt. 49. matter. Lord John Russell, therefore, insisted on the resignation of Lord Palmerston, and Lord Granville was appointed Foreign Secretary in his place.

The dismissal of Lord Palmerston was not the only result of Louis Napoleon's *coup d'État*. It also aroused a wave of national sentiment in England, which eventually swept the whole Government from power. The prospect of the establishment of a second Napoleonic Empire in France created almost a panic amongst a generation of Englishmen who could still remember the dread with which the first Napoleon had inspired their fathers, and a general demand was raised for special measures of defence and the reorganisation of the militia for home defence against a possible French invasion. Though the Government must have known that such a contingency was highly improbable, yet the national enthusiasm rose so high that they were obliged to take it into account.

When Parliament met on February 3, 1852, Lord John Russell gave a full account of the circumstances which had led to the dismissal of Lord Palmerston, and public interest in politics, which during the previous year had been completely overshadowed by the great International Exhibition in London, immediately revived. On February 9 Lord John Russell introduced a Reform Bill which had been promised in the Queen's speech, and which had a very cold reception, both in the House and in the country.

It proceeded no further, for on February 16 was introduced the Government Bill for strengthening the militia, which immediately superseded it in public interest. This measure gave Lord Palmerston an opportunity of taking his revenge on the chief by whom he had so recently been dismissed. He welcomed the introduction of the Bill, but criticised it as inadequate. His criticisms were received with great enthusiasm in the House; and when a few nights later he moved a hostile resolution to substitute the word "regular" for the word "local" in the Bill, he was supported by both the Protectionist Opposition and the Peelites. The result was that the Government was defeated by a majority of nine. The Russell Ministry immediately resigned, and Lord Stanley, who, on the death of his father in the previous year, had now become Lord Derby, was called upon to form the new Government.

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Lord Derby announced his policy in the House of Lords on February 27. The organisation of the militia was to be proceeded with, reform of the franchise was to be abandoned, and a policy of non-intervention with foreign countries would be pursued abroad. The most significant passage in his speech was his reference to the Corn Laws: "When the entire supply of an article comes from abroad," he said, "the whole increase of the price falls on the consumer; but that is not the case when the article is partly of foreign and partly of home supply,

1852. ÆT. 49. and I will not shrink from declaring my opinion that there is no reason why corn should be the solitary exception to the rule."

Knowing that his Government did not possess a majority in the House of Commons, Lord Derby spoke with caution, and the remainder of his remarks, with regard to finance, were vague and indefinite; but this one passage was taken to imply an intention on the part of the new Ministers to reimpose the Corn Laws in some form or other. The Free Traders throughout the country were thoroughly alarmed. Protests were made in Parliament, and a meeting was held in Manchester for the purpose of re-forming the Anti-Corn Law League. On March 15 specific questions were asked in both Houses of Parliament as to the intentions of the Government. Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli both replied that they did not intend to revert to a protective policy during the present session, and that they would dissolve Parliament in the course of the year.

The new Militia Bill was introduced on March 25, and with the support of Lord Palmerston and the Peelites was passed by a substantial majority. On May 30 Mr. Disraeli, who was Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the House of Commons, introduced his budget, which merely continued the financial system then in existence; and as soon as the business of the session could be completed, Parliament was dissolved on July 1.

The General Election which followed left the

balance of parties practically unchanged, and therefore, when Parliament met again on November 4, the Government was still in a minority. Their defeat was only a question of time, and Disraeli did not hesitate to proceed at once to the issue which was to decide their fate. 1852. Æt. 49.

The recent General Election had shown unmistakably that the country was not prepared to return to Protection. The Free Traders were in a majority in Parliament, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer had not the remotest chance of securing sufficient support for his financial policy. His position, however, was not what it had been in the previous session. An appeal to the country had taken place ; the supporters of the Government were avowedly Protectionists, demanding some relief for their landed interests, and Disraeli did not care to owe his continuance in office to the support of political opponents. His financial policy was ingenious and skilfully framed. He proposed to reduce the malt duties as a relief to the Agriculturists, and to make good the deficit thus created by an increase in the inhabited house duty. The speech in which he summed up the debate and replied to his critics was a personal triumph, and made a deep impression on the House. He was immediately followed by Mr. Gladstone, who had re-entered Parliament at the recent election as a Peelite converted to Liberalism. Mr. Gladstone completely effaced the impression created by the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and demolished his financial proposals.

1852. Thus commenced the life-long duel which, for
Æt. 49. nearly thirty years, was carried on between these two great protagonists. The great debate which followed ended in the defeat of the Government by a majority of 19 (305 to 286). The next day Lord Derby's Ministry resigned, and a coalition Government was formed under the leadership of Lord Aberdeen in which Lord John Russell went to the Foreign Office, Lord Palmerston became Home Secretary, and Mr. Gladstone Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The avowed policy of the new Government was the preservation of peace coupled with continued defensive preparations, a strict adherence to the principles of free trade, education, and legal reform, parliamentary reform to receive careful consideration. The next session was chiefly remarkable for Mr. Gladstone's first budget. At the end of it the Government appeared to be firmly established and the country prosperous, when suddenly the Eastern question loomed up on the horizon, the pacific intentions of the Government were swept aside, and the country drifted into one of the most senseless and profitless wars in which it has ever engaged.

Such were the circumstances in which Bulwer-Lytton re-entered Parliament. Lord Derby's declaration of policy in February, 1852, had finally decided him to throw in his lot with the Conservatives, and at the General Election in July, he was returned as member for Hertfordshire. When Parliament met his leaders were

in office but not in power, and before the end of the year they were again in opposition. 1852. Æt. 49.

His first speech in the new House was delivered during the debate on Disraeli's financial statement. He warmly supported the reduction of the malt duties and the increase in the house duty, as being both consistent with Free Trade principles and also an act of grace to the agriculturists.

"I grant," he said, "that we shall not obtain anything like a proportionate advantage from the reduction of half the malt tax that would accrue from its total repeal. I grant that we shall retain the costly and vexatious machinery of the excise restrictions, and that by retaining half the tax you will still cripple the farmer in the direction of his capital, and in the preparation of malt, whether for fattening his cattle or for brewing his own beer. But what then? It is a bold step in the right direction. It is so considering the state of the revenue, and considering the feelings of gentlemen on this side of the House, who never desire to forget the claims and interests of other parties."

Having proved by quotations from leading economists that the reduction of the tax was strictly in accordance with Free Trade doctrines, he continued :—

But because this question is accompanied indirectly with benefit to the farmer, and is accompanied by a double house tax, we are told that this is a question of town against country. No, Sir, it is a question of Free Trade against restriction; it is a question whether

1852. Æt. 49.

you will attempt to lower the price of an article of popular subsistence—whether you will remove a check which operates directly against an important branch of the industry of the country—and it is accompanied with a direct tax which would be fair and just, and as such is recommended by all political economists, even if it were not accompanied by any reduction of the malt tax at all. . . . You say you object to the house tax being doubled for the benefit of the farmers, but that is simply to say that you object to the further extension of Free Trade when it operates against the other classes whom you represent.

The speech concluded with a personal explanation of the reasons which had induced him to change his political party :—

Now, one word with regard to myself, for it applies equally to gentlemen on this side of the House whose adherence to the cause of Free Trade you have somewhat ungraciously received. The opinions which I entertained upon the subject of a repeal of the corn laws gradually estranged me from a party to which I formerly rendered some trifling service—a party in which I still recognise not only private friends, but many accomplished politicians and statesmen of consummate talents and experience. But it was not on that single question alone that I transferred my very humble support to the party and policy represented by the present Government. I did not make that transfer so long as the late Administration lasted. I did not do so till that Administration—I hope I may say so without offence—died from its own exhaustion. Not until the noble Lord, the late Premier, looking at the state of parties, could see no other person but Lord Derby to

suggest to her Majesty as his successor—not till, regarding the position of affairs at home, still more the position of affairs abroad, I myself believed that it might be for the welfare and perhaps for the safety of the country, to give to Lord Derby's Government a fair and a cordial trial. It was first to that trial that I bounded my support; but I did so with full allowance for all the difficulties which the Government would have to encounter, and a firm belief that it would unite a conciliatory policy towards a class in which prolonged distress had produced a deep-seated sense of injustice, with that rational respect for public opinion which Lord Derby frankly expressed so soon as he acceded to office. 1852. Æt. 49.

In that school where I learnt the meaning of constitutional liberty, it was never considered a disgrace to a Minister of England to regulate, not indeed his private doctrines, but his political conduct, according to the opinions of his time. Nor did I ever think I should hear a taunt on the expediency of bowing to public opinion from the very men who have threatened to change the constitution itself in order to bring us still more under the influence of popular control. But that which has sanctioned and confirmed the support which I now tender to the Government is not any question connected with agriculture; it is not any party consideration; it is simply this—the disposition they have shown to promote general measures for the improvement of the laws, and for advancing the welfare of the people. I do not allude alone to reforms of the Court of Chancery, nor to the programme of useful measures announced in her Majesty's gracious Speech, nor to the financial projects now before the House—of which I sincerely approve—but I must look also to the liberal and enlightened speech of the Right Hon. the Chancellor of the Exchequer the other evening. I see there, for the first time, the pledge from a Minister

1852. ÆT. 49. of the Crown for economy and retrenchment, in the implied promise of large administrative reform. I see there a capacity to deal with the most complicated of social questions—that connected with criminal punishment. I see a general understanding of what I conceive to be the great want of this time—for I believe the great body of the intelligent public is disposed to favour the policy of a Government which, while it will be conservative of the great principles of the constitution, will make that constitution suffice for all purposes of practical reform. It is by measures and sentiments like these that the Government have shown already that they do not come into office as the exclusive advocates of a single class, or the inert supporters of a retrograde policy. On the contrary, the more they can mitigate the sufferings of every class, whether commercial or agricultural, the more worthy they will be of the support of that House of Commons to which every section of the community that contributes to the supplies has a right to come for the redress of grievances; and if they can so contrive that no large portion of the community shall be left excluded from that prosperity which is paraded before our eyes, the more they will unite all classes and interests to co-operate with them in that calm but continuous progress in which it is the duty of every Ministry to maintain our hereditary place in the foremost rank of European civilisation.

Therefore, for my part, I declare that the satisfaction with which I shall give my vote in accordance with the intrinsic merits of the question immediately before us, will be increased by thinking that it is one vote amongst many which may serve to continue this Government in its career of useful and liberal legislation; believing, as I do, that those same causes of dissension which before rendered a Ministry formed

from the opposite benches so weak and ineffective, in spite of the honesty, the virtues, and the genius of the men who composed, and the Premier who presided over it, do still exist, and will still prevent that unity and firmness of purpose which can alone render effectual the desire to preserve—perhaps against attacks from its own supporters—that balance between safe reform and hazardous experiment on which I believe, in my conscience, depend the continuance of our prosperity and the stability of the Empire.

1853. Æt. 50.

At the beginning of the year 1853, Bulwer-Lytton suffered much from ill-health, and for a time was deprived of the use of his right hand by a serious inflammation. On April 6 he wrote to his son :—

I am still suffering from my hand and have only imperfectly the use of it. I have had nothing but illness, pain, and sorrow since the year 1853 began. Perhaps as yet the unhappiest year of my life. I am not at all up to Parliament, and to add to my misfortunes, am so deaf as not to hear the speakers. *My Novel* has been very successful—more so as to favour and general popularity than all its predecessors.

By the end of the month he seems to have recovered sufficiently to resume his parliamentary duties, for on April 25 he spoke on Mr. Gladstone's first budget. This speech dealt exclusively with the income tax, and contained a defence of the principle of differentiating between earned and unearned incomes, which at that time was condemned by Mr. Gladstone, but which has since been recognised.

1853. ÆT. 50. "There is this marked difference," he said, "between the Rt. Hon. Gentleman and those who have supported Lord Derby's Government, namely—that when the late Government proposed to deal with the income tax, they made it an indispensable condition to remove from that impost the elements of unpopularity, and to establish a clear distinction between precarious income and income derived from realised property. The Rt. Hon. Gentleman, the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, refuses to make that distinction. He proposes to leave the principal objections untouched. Now it is precisely because I concur in the two fundamental premises of the Right Hon. Gentleman, that I am compelled to come to a different conclusion. I agree with the Rt. Hon. Gentleman, first, that the income tax is a mighty financial resource, which should be kept available in all times for future need; and, secondly, that it ought not to be regarded as an habitual feature of our taxation. But exactly because I wish to have this tax available, with the ready assent of the people, in any future need, that I ask the House to remove from it those features which now make it so unpopular; or, if it be held unwise to correct the machinery of the tax, we should at least endeavour to console those who are ground down by this tax, by showing them we will not maintain it a single year longer than we can help."

The attack on the income tax failed, and the Government carried their proposals by a majority of 71. The illness and sorrows of this year continued to the end of it, and as it was the most unhappy, so also it was the least productive year in Bulwer-Lytton's life. The autumn was spent at Harrogate in search of health; in December

he wrote to his son again in melancholy mood, and remarks—"I have not touched a literary subject for a year." 1854. Æt. 51.

At the beginning of 1854 he was again active. In January he was elected Honorary President of the Associated Societies of the University of Edinburgh, and on the 18th delivered a long address to the students of the University, in the course of which he upheld the value of a classical education, and more especially of the study of Greek.

"The genius of Greek letters," he said, "is essentially social and humane. Far from presenting us with a frigid and austere ideal, it deals with the most vivid passions, the largest interests common to the mass of mankind. In this sense of the word it is practical—that is, it connects itself with the natural feelings, the practical life of man, under all forms of civilisation. That is the reason why it is so durable—it fastens hold of sympathy and interest in every nation and every age. Thus Homer is immeasurably the most popular poet the world ever knew."

After tracing the influence of Greek literature from Homer to Plato, he devoted a few words to a comparison of Greek and Latin writers :—

In the Greek literature all is fresh and original ; its very art is but the happiest selection from natural objects, knit together with the zone of the careless Graces. But the Latin literature is borrowed and adopted, and like all imitations, we perceive at once that it is artificial—but in this imitation it has such

1854. Æt. 51.

exquisite taste, in this artificiality there is so much refinement of polish, so much stateliness of pomp, that it assumes an originality of its own. It has not found its jewels in native mines, but it takes them with a conqueror's hand, and weaves them into regal diadems. Dignity and polish are the especial attributes of Latin literature in its happiest age; it betrays the habitual influence of an aristocracy, wealthy, magnificent, and learned. . . . In short, the Greek writers warm and elevate our emotions as men—the Latin writers temper emotions to the stately reserve of high-born gentlemen.

The lessons to be derived from a study of this literature of the past have their application to the problems of the present, and the words in which he pointed this out to his young audience represented the mature political convictions of a contemplative mind.

"You whom I address," he said, "will carry with you, in your several paths to fortune, your national attribute of reflective judgment and dauntless courage. I see an eventful and stirring age expand before the rising generation. In that grand contest between new ideas and ancient forms, which may be still more keenly urged before this century expires, whatever your differences of political opinion, I adjure you to hold fast to the vital principle of civilisation. What is that principle? It is the union of liberty with order. The art to preserve this union has often baffled the wisest statesmen in stormy times; but the task becomes easy at once if the people whom they seek to guide will but carry into public affairs the same prudent consideration which commands prosperity in private business. You have already derived from your ancestors an immense

capital of political freedom ; increase it if you will—but by solid investments, not by hazardous speculations. You will hear much of the necessity of progress, and truly ; for wherever progress ends, decline invariably begins ; but remember that the healthful progress of society is like the natural life of man—it consists in the gradual and harmonious development of all its constitutional powers, all its component parts ; and you introduce weakness and disease into the whole system, whether you attempt to stint or to force the growth."

1854. Æt. 51.

Two days later Bulwer-Lytton was entertained at a public banquet in the Hopetoun Rooms at Edinburgh, and his speech on that occasion contains many passages of autobiographical interest. His own experiences as an author, for instance, are thus described :—

When I first commenced the career of authorship, I had brought myself to the persuasion that, upon the whole, it is best for the young writer not to give an exclusive preference to the development of one special faculty, even though that faculty be the one for which he has the most natural aptitude, but rather to seek to mature and accomplish, as far as he can, his whole intellectual organisation. I had observed that many authors, more especially, perhaps, writers of imagination and fiction, often excel only in one particular line of observation ; nay, that, perhaps, they only write one thoroughly successful and original work, after which their ideas appear to be exhausted ; and it seemed to me that the best mode to prevent that contrast between fertility in one patch of intelligence and barrenness of the surrounding district was to bring under cultivation

1854. Æt. 51. the entire soil at our command. This subjected me at first to what was then a charge, but which I have lived to hear as a compliment, namely, that I had attempted too great a variety of authorship; yet, perhaps, it was to that conviction that I owe the continuance of whatever favour I have received from the public; for that favour no writer can hope long to retain unless he prove that he is constantly taking in a fresh supply of ideas, and that he is not compelled to whip and impoverish invention by drawing from the same field a perpetual succession of the same crop. And perhaps it may encourage younger writers if I remind you that I was not successful at first in any new line that I thus attempted. My first efforts at prose composition were refused admittance into a magazine. My first novel was very little read, and it is not included in the general collection of my works. My first poetry was thought detestable, and my first play very nearly escaped being damned. Thus, perhaps, few writers have been less intoxicated with the rapture of first success; and even when I did succeed, perhaps few writers, upon the whole, have been more unsparingly assailed by hostile critics. If I had relied solely upon my intellectual faculties, I must long since have retired from the field disheartened and beaten; but I owe it to that resolution which is at the command of all men who will only recollect that the first attribute of our sex is courage—the resolution to fight the battles of literature and life with the same bull-dog determination with which I, and no doubt all of you, fought our battles at school—never to give in as long as we had a leg to stand upon—that at last I have succeeded so far as to receive this honour in a capital renowned for its learning, and at the hands of a people who may well sympathise with any man who does not rely so much upon his intellect, no matter

what the grade of that intellect may be, as upon his stout heart and his persevering labours.[1] 1854. Æt. 51.

[1] The following account of this speech is given by Principal Story, on page 19 of his *Life*, published by his daughters :—

"It was on 6th Jany., 1853, that Moncrieff brought forward his motion in the Diagnostic, proposing the appointment of some personage, eminent in literature or public life, as Honorary President of the Associated Societies. The proposal, approved by this Society, was submitted to the others, and after much deliberation, and interchange of ideas between delegates from each, was formally ratified. The mode of election was arranged, and at a general meeting Mr. Skelton nominated as first President Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton. Sir Edward accepted the office which we offered him, and came down to address us in Jany. (the 18th), 1854. A Committee, of which I was Secretary, was appointed to conduct the arrangements for the delivery of his speech. We had some trouble with fussy and stiff-necked members, who found fault with our plans, and were rigidly opposed to expenditure, but we contrived to carry out our ideas of a becoming ceremonial to the satisfaction of every one, I think, except an indignant member of the Town Council — in those days, the patrons of the College, who, on finding no special place reserved for the civic dignitaries on the platform or in the Hall, denounced our neglect of the powers that be, and retired dramatically from the scene. Our wish was that Lord Cockburn should have taken the chair, and I and a colleague were deputed to invite him to do so.

"The old man received us very kindly, but asked us to excuse him, on the ground of such duties being too much for him at his age. 'I'm such a confoundedly old fellow,' he said in his pleasant, homely voice, and bade us good-night with cordial wishes for our success. We got the Lord Advocate, the present Lord Moncrieff, to take the Chair, and the facetious Peter Robertson, of famous memory, to move a vote of thanks to the President after his address, and the meeting was a great success. The Queen Street Hall was crammed with students, and all the most distinguished people in Edinburgh, with many friends of Sir Edward's from elsewhere, such as Alison, Perrier and Stirling of Keir. Sir Edward spoke for a full hour, without ever halting for a word or looking at a note, and when the reporters asked him afterwards for his MS., blandly assured them he had none. They came to me in some perturbation, and I went to Professor Aytoun, who had throughout all our preliminaries and negotiations been our steady friend and adviser. Aytoun assured me he would make it all right, and in a short time produced the MS. Sir Edward had not deviated by a word or a phrase from what he had written, except at a single point, where, pointing to a Scottish lion, which formed a prominent feature of the decoration of the gallery in front of him, he said no blazon had kept farther in the van of human progress than 'that old lion of Scotland.' The MS. was 'than the white cross of St. Andrew.' I have always thought the delivery of an address so long and elaborate from unaided memory a wonderful intellectual feat. Such a mnemonic triumph impressed itself on my mind, all the more vividly because when, next evening but one, Sir Edward was entertained at a public dinner in the

1854. ÆT. 51. These speeches called forth a generous tribute of praise from Macaulay, who at that time represented Edinburgh in Parliament.

"Thanks for the addresses," he writes on March 1; "I have already read them with much interest and admiration. I really do not think that my judgment is corrupted by your praises when I say that I have seen no compositions of the sort that have pleased me so much. My constituents were delighted, as I hear from all quarters, and no wonder."

From Edinburgh Bulwer-Lytton proceeded to Leeds, where on January 25 he delivered an address to the members of the Mechanics' Institution. He began by contrasting the audience which confronted him with that which he had just left at Edinburgh :—

Knowledge there is the task work; knowledge here is the holiday. But in both these communities, in the quiet University and in the busy manufacturing town, I find the same grand idea; I mean the recognition of intelligence, as the supreme arbiter of all those questions which a century ago were either settled by force or stifled by those prejudices which are even stronger than law.

Hopetoun Rooms, I had to reply to the toast of 'the Associated Societies.' I had never before spoken to a greater auditory than the select circle of the Diagnostic, and dreading the effects of publicity, novelty of position, and dinner, I did what I have never done since, and took the precaution of writing out my speech and learning it off by heart. When I had to get on my legs, I confided my MS. to my friend, James Muirhead, who sat beside me, with instructions that if I showed symptoms of collapse, he was to prompt me. I did not need the prompting, but I felt how great a man and orator Sir Edward was, who could carry on imperturbably for over an hour, while I could barely struggle through five minutes. I may add what I was very proud of at the time, that Sir Edward, with great good nature, sought me out after dinner, and complimented me on my maiden speech."

He then proceeded to examine some of the characteristics of the age. Foremost amongst these he placed what he called "the milder spirit of humanity." It was this spirit, he maintained, 1854. Æt. 51.

> . . . which has raised up all those new questions, not heard of before this century, affecting the condition of the people; it is this which seeks to carry health and cleanliness into the abodes of misery and squalor; it is this which has directed merciful attention even to the foes and outlaws of society, seeking to reform criminals rather than punish them; it is this which has introduced hopeful discipline into our prison houses, and, except in the rarest cases, has struck the punishment of death out of our criminal code.

Arising from this tendency was noticeable another great principle "honourably characteristic of our age," the desire to educate the masses of the people—"to level the disparities of instruction." Whilst forced to admit that in comparison with recent developments among the German and French people State-regulated instruction was somewhat backward in England, he, nevertheless, contended that there was a silent education distinct from that of schools ever at work among the people of this country, "which, when it comes into action, exhibits an intellectual power not yet found in those whom State policy may more instruct as children, but whom civil institutions less nerve and discipline as men." As proof of this he instanced "the ease with which our English intelligence has

1854. Æt. 51. gained by reforms, all which German mystics and French fanatics have lost by revolutions." Then followed a passage which raises considerations well worthy of careful study to-day.

> For my part, I trust that education in this country will never be altogether paid for and regulated by the State. I hope in this, as in all, that we shall never part with the vital principle of self-government in contradistinction to centralisation. But I hope I shall live to see the day when here in England, as in America, the education of the people may come from the desire of the people, consenting in local districts to levy a rate upon themselves for education, thus interested in seeing that the education is of the best kind that their money can produce, and adapted not to some rigid and inflexible State machinery, but open to every improvement which the experience of one district can suggest to the emulation of another.

Since these words were uttered, the tendency of educational development in this country has been unhappily rather in the direction of centralisation than of State-aided local experiment. Schools are now everywhere provided by the State; education is at once compulsory and free; and whilst the resulting gain to the present generation has been great in some respects, it can scarcely be denied that much has also been lost which was worth preserving. On the one hand the highest attainments of scholarship are placed within the reach of the poorest of the land, but on the other hand the education received is less appreciated by those

who receive it, and in the case of large numbers of the children, it is by no means suited to the requirements of their after life. Consequently, two features are becoming more and more apparent in the present system of national education; one is the indifference of the majority of parents to the instruction which their children receive in the national schools, and for which they feel no responsibility; and the second is the uniformity in the curriculum which is taught with little or no regard to local conditions or the requirements of different classes of the population. What has been done cannot be undone, and no one would now propose to go back to the days when education was left to voluntary effort alone; but the problem of avoiding the evils of over-centralisation is one which must increasingly occupy the attention of all earnest educational reformers.

1854. Æt. 51.

Bulwer-Lytton's speech continued with a timely reminder that education is by no means confined to schools alone.

"I think you will see," he told the mechanics of Leeds, "that a good education includes the school—but it requires something more; and here don't let me forget, amongst our other advantages, the habits of our domestic life. . . . There are few of us who have succeeded honourably in the world that will not acknowledge that we owe far less to the school than to the precepts and examples that we found at home, and especially to the precepts of a mother's lips and the stainless example of a mother's life. I rejoice, therefore,

1854. Æt. 51. to comply with the request of a gentleman who said to me, on entering the hall :—'Say something in favour of adding a female class to this institution.' Perhaps there is not a town in this country in which the females of the working classes appear less to require new facilities for education than they do at Leeds. I am told that there is scarcely a manufactory to which there is not a school for girls attached. Nevertheless, it would be an honour and a credit to this institution if you could add female classes, and endeavour as far as possible to fit women to be the worthy companions of intelligent men."

Arguing that education is the work of a life and must be continued to the man after he leaves school, he paid a tribute to institutions such as that which he was addressing, and concluded with a fine oratorical image :—

Sure I am that the surest mode, under Providence, of bringing all problems of existing civilisation to a favourable issue is to proportion intelligence to power. And perhaps it may be through institutions like this that every year Leeds and Manchester may contrast more and more the alternate ferocity and submission which have been the reproach of Lyons and Marseilles. I have often thought that the ancients endeavoured to convey to us a type of the true moral force in their sublime statue of Hercules in repose. You see there the gigantic strength which has achieved such glorious labours, evincing the consciousness of its power by the majesty of its calm ; while in those mighty arms which have purified earth from its monsters, the artist has placed an infant child smiling securely in the face of the benignant God. Keep that image ever before you —it is the type of that power which should belong to

knowledge, and which is always gentle in proportion to the victories it achieves. 1854. Æt. 51.

Two months later the long peace which Great Britain had enjoyed without interruption for nearly forty years came to an end, and immediately all other public affairs were overshadowed by the anxiety with which the whole nation turned to watch the fortunes of the contending armies in the Crimea.

The part which Bulwer-Lytton took in the Parliamentary debates connected with the war will form the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER II

THE CRIMEAN WAR

1854–1855

> The misfortunes of one generation are often necessary to the prosperity of another. The stream of blood fertilises the earth over which it flows, and war has been at once the scourge and the civilizer of the world. . . . What adversity is to individuals, war often is to nations—uncertain in its consequences, it is true that with some it subdues and crushes, but with others it braces and exalts.
>
> *Athens: Its Rise and Fall.*

1854–1855. Æt. 51–52. THE diplomatic negotiations which preceded the outbreak of the Crimean war, the military operations of the war itself, the sufferings of the soldiers, and the achievements by which they added fresh glory to the British army, are beyond the scope of this book. Some reference, however, must be made to the Parliamentary discussions of the years 1854 and 1855, for the only record of Bulwer-Lytton's activities during these years is to be found in the speeches which he made in the House of Commons on the subject which then occupied men's thoughts to the exclusion of everything else.

A short summary of the chief events of the Crimean war may help the reader to understand the matters with which this chapter deals.

The insignificant dispute between the priests of the Greek and Latin Churches regarding the control of the Holy places in the East, which eventually involved the three chief Powers of Europe in war, was first taken up in 1852 by Napoleon III., on whom, therefore, rests the responsibility for all that followed from his interference. The dispute rapidly developed into a personal conflict between the respective champions of the two Churches, the Czar Nicolas I. and the Emperor of the French. The Sultan of Turkey, who exercised suzerainty over the territory in which the dispute had arisen, found himself called upon to mediate between these two Powers, and, unable to satisfy the demands of one without risking a conflict with the other, he contrived as long as possible to avoid a settlement. In 1853 Nicolas sent extraordinary envoys to Constantinople to claim for Russia a religious protectorate over all Greek Christians in the Turkish dominions, and at the same time proposed to make with England a partition of the Ottoman Empire. The British Government refused to entertain his proposition, and decided to support the Sultan in resisting the Russian demands. The quarrel then developed into a rivalry between the East and West, between two opposing schools of thought, which had been developing in Europe ever since 1815. Both in England and France public opinion, wholly uninstructed as to the real issues involved, became violently excited. The

1854–1855. Æt. 51–52.

1854–1855. Æt. 51–52. Czar was denounced as the autocratic supporter of doctrines of Government and methods of aggrandisement opposed to the modern political thought of Western Europe; the Sultan was represented as a model of religious toleration, and the integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire was declared to be necessary for the political stability of Europe. The three special champions of these ideas were Napoleon III., Lord Palmerston, and Lord Stratford, the British Ambassador at Constantinople. Each of these men, for different reasons, was determined to bring about a war with Russia, and within a few months their object was accomplished. The best opinion, both in England and France, was opposed to the war. Lord Aberdeen, the Prime Minister, laboured strenuously to preserve peace, and though anxious to resign, remained at his post, in the belief that only by keeping his Government together could war be averted. But the peace party, though strongly represented in the Cabinet, was in a minority in the country. Public opinion was too strong for them, and the country drifted into a war from which nothing was to be gained, and which is difficult to justify by any consideration for British interests.

Supported by Lord Stratford, the Sultan refused the demands of the Czar, and in October, 1853, war was declared between Turkey and Russia. Diplomatic negotiations were continued for some months between the other European

Powers, but no settlement was arrived at; and in March, 1854, England and France both declared war on Russia. A treaty of alliance between Great Britain and France was signed on March 10, by which they bound themselves to fight against Russia for the rights of the Sultan and "the independence of the Ottoman Empire." 1854–1855. Æt. 51–52.

Mr. Gladstone's first war budget was introduced on March 6, and a second one on May 8. On March 31 the Queen's message of war was discussed in Parliament. These were the first occasions on which the opinion of different sections in the House of Commons found expression as to the policy of the war. The majority, of course, reflected the opinion of the country, which was strongly warlike. A small but fearless minority of Radicals, whose opinions were voiced by the fierce eloquence of John Bright, frankly opposed the war as a crime on civilisation. Disraeli, who led the Conservative opposition, did not share either the popular delusions with regard to Russia, or the popular enthusiasm for war. In his heart he disliked the war because it made the position of the Government impregnable; but he realised that from the moment hostilities had actually broken out, the country would not tolerate any criticism of the policy of the war, or any action which could be interpreted as an embarrassment to the Government which was responsible for it. In the early days he accused the Government of

1854–1855. drifting into a course of which they did not
Æt. 51–52. themselves approve. "You are going to war," he said, in the first budget debate, "with an opponent that does not want to fight, and you are unwilling to encounter him"; but in all the subsequent debates he refrained from any criticism which might be regarded as hostile to the policy of the war, knowing that such would be considered an unforgivable offence by the public, with whom a belief in the righteousness of the quarrel and a determination to bring it to a successful conclusion had become sacred obligations of national honour. He led his party in many attacks on the Government for their mismanagement of the campaign, but refused to accept their challenge to a direct vote of no confidence.

Owing to the withdrawal of the Russian troops from the Danubian provinces, caused by the fear of the Czar that Austria intended to join the allied forces, diplomatic negotiations were resumed during the summer; and it was not till after the failure of these that the invasion of the Crimea began in September. The battle of the Alma took place on September 20, and was immediately followed by the siege of Sebastopol. Balaklava and Inkermann were fought on October 25 and November 5. On November 14 a great storm occurred, which destroyed many of the transports, filled the trenches with mud, and was the beginning of the acute sufferings which the allied troops

endured for the rest of the severe Russian winter. 1854–1855.
Severe criticisms of the management of the Æt. 51–52.
campaign, damaging to the reputation both of the generals at the front and of the Government at home, were sent to *The Times* by their war correspondent, Mr. Russell. The publication of these letters aroused the greatest indignation in England, and the prevailing discontent was loudly voiced in the House of Commons when Parliament reassembled in December. On December 19 the Government introduced a Bill, giving them power to enlist foreign soldiers to assist their army in prosecuting the war. This measure was strenuously opposed, but was eventually passed by a majority of 39. When Parliament reassembled after Christmas, Mr. Roebuck gave notice that he would move for the appointment of a Committee to inquire into the management of the war. Lord John Russell, who had from the first been a constant source of embarrassment to Lord Aberdeen, now declared that he could not oppose this motion and resigned. On January 29 Mr. Roebuck's motion was carried against the Government by 305 to 148, and Lord Aberdeen at once resigned.

As the Opposition had supported Mr. Roebuck's motion and were therefore responsible for turning out the Government, the Queen sent for their leader, Lord Derby, who, to Disraeli's great disgust, refused to take office because he could get no support from any member of the Government which he had just destroyed. Lord

1854–1855. Æt. 51–52. John Russell was then sent for, but found that none of his recent colleagues would forgive him for what they considered his treachery to Lord Aberdeen, or consent to serve under him. Lord Palmerston eventually became Prime Minister and formed a new Whig Administration. Lord John Russell was not included in the Government, but was sent soon afterwards as British representative to the Congress of the Powers which had assembled at Vienna to discuss the possibility of terminating the war. Lord Palmerston at first refused to accept the appointment of the Roebuck Committee, but when Disraeli insisted that the House should adhere to its decision, he gave way and allowed the Committee to be appointed. Gladstone and three other Peelites, who had joined the Government on the condition that the Committee should be resisted, thereupon resigned; and Lord John Russell, then at Paris on his way to Vienna, agreed to accept the vacant post of Secretary of State for the Colonies without abandoning the mission on which he was engaged. A ministerial statement on the subject of these changes in the Cabinet was made in the House of Commons on February 23, and during the debate which followed, Bright renewed his advocacy of peace in a speech containing the famous reference to the "Angel of Death."

On the Continent the chief events of 1855 were the dispatch in January of 15,000 troops

from Sardinia to aid the allied armies in the Crimea, the diplomatic negotiations at Vienna, and the death of the Czar Nicholas, which took place on March 2. The Congress of Vienna put forward four points as the basis of an honourable peace :— 1854–1855. Æt. 51–52.

1. A European protection of the Danubian provinces.
2. The free navigation of the Danube.
3. The termination of Russian preponderance in the Black Sea.
4. The establishment of a European protectorate over the Christian subjects of the Sultan.

The only one of these points which offered any difficulty, and on which the Congress finally broke up, was the third. It was suggested that the Black Sea should be declared neutral and closed to the warships of all nations, or as an alternative, that the number of Russian ships admitted to it should be limited by a fixed proportion to the ships of other countries. Russia refused to accept either proposal, and the negotiations were suspended.

The failure of the Congress of Vienna somewhat modified the war feeling in England. Neither to the Emperor Napoleon nor to Lord Palmerston were the suggested terms at all acceptable, and they were not yet prepared to terminate the war, although the proposals had been accepted both by Lord John Russell and

1854–1855. Æt. 51–52. by the French representative, M. Drouyn de Lhuys; but the peace party in England now obtained valuable recruits from such men as Mr. Gladstone and the other Peelites who had resigned from the Cabinet—Mr. Roundell Palmer, Lord Stanley, and Lord Robert Cecil (afterwards Lord Salisbury). These men considered that the objects of the war had been satisfied, and regarded insistence on the limitation of Russian ships in the Black Sea as unreasonable. The Austrian Chancellor, Count Buol, irritated at the rejection of the Austrian proposals, made public the fact that they had been supported by the French and English representatives. This led to a storm of indignation in England against Lord John Russell, which forced him to resign. Lord Raglan died in June. The Sebastopol Committee issued their report in July, severely criticising the conduct of the war. Public opinion strongly condemned the Government, both for their maladministration and for the favouritism which they had shown to the members of their own privileged class. They were subjected to numerous attacks from the Opposition in the House of Commons, and only narrowly escaped defeat on more than one occasion. The session finally closed at the end of July.

On August 16 the battle of Tchernaya took place, in which the Sardinian soldiers greatly distinguished themselves, and on September 8 Sebastopol fell. The last event of the war was

the capture by the Russians, on November 28, of the fortress of Kars, which had been gallantly defended for many months by General Williams. At the beginning of 1856 a Conference of the Powers met in Paris, and the war was brought to an end by the Peace of Paris, which was signed in March. 1854-1855. Æt. 51-52.

In most of the parliamentary events referred to in the foregoing summary, Bulwer-Lytton took a prominent part. His speeches during these years differ somewhat from those which he made at other periods of his life. In the main his parliamentary utterances are remarkable for their detached point of view. They nearly always contain some line of argument which is peculiar to himself, and they are chiefly interesting as revelations of his own individuality. His speeches during the Crimean war, however, are remarkable rather for their embodiment of the sentiments and opinions of the day than for any originality of thought. In times of great national crisis most men's minds are tuned to the same key, their hearts beat in greater harmony than at other times, and their common anxiety binds them in closer fellowship. During the war there were, it is true, a few men who did not share the prevailing opinions, who were out of sympathy with the temper of the public, whose voices were raised in opposition to the policy which the rest of their countrymen applauded, and who were stigmatised as "Russians," just as their successors of a later

1854. Æt. 51. generation were stigmatised as "Pro-Boers." Bulwer-Lytton was not one of these, and his speeches in 1854 and 1855 are a reflection of the sentiments of the great majority of the English people at that time. He justified the war as thousands of others justified it, he attacked the mistakes of the Government as thousands of others attacked them, and like the rest of his countrymen he repudiated any suggestion of peace until some substantial result had been achieved to compensate the nation for sacrifices which would otherwise appear merely wanton.

His speeches are not the less interesting on that account, and deserve an examination for the very qualities which I have mentioned.

On May 15, 1854, he spoke on the second Reading of the Excise Duties Bill, and on behalf of agriculturists bitterly complained of the increase of the malt tax, which formed part of Mr. Gladstone's war budget. Although the tax itself was one which fell wholly on the consumer, he argued that by diminishing the demand for barley the tax had a specially injurious effect upon the farmers. He also criticised the reluctance of the Government to meet the expenses of the war by means of a loan, thereby placing part of the burden upon the shoulders of posterity.

"So much has been said about our not saddling posterity," he argued, "that it seems as if it were intended to insinuate that this is not a war to be waged on behalf of posterity, but for some fleeting and selfish

purpose of our own. If that be so, I call on our Ministers to recall our fleets and to disband our armies—a war which is not for posterity is no fitting war for us. But surely if ever there was a war waged on behalf of posterity, it is the war which would check the ambition of Russia, and preserve Europe from the outlet of barbarian tribes, that require but the haven of the Bosphorus to menace the liberty and the civilisation of races as yet unborn. It is not our generation that need fear if the flag of Russia waved to-morrow over the ruins of Constantinople. The encroachments of Russia are proverbially slow; it would require a quarter of a century before she could recover the exhaustion of her own victories, and tame into convenient serfs the brave population she had conquered. It is for all time that we wage the battle. It is that the liberties of our children may be secured from some future Attila, and civilisation guarded from the irruptions of Scythian hordes. On this ground, then, we might fairly demand the next generation to aid us in the conflict we endure for their sake."

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The concluding words of a speech made in the following year may also be quoted here in further illustration of the views of that generation, respecting the policy of the war :—

The noble Lord (Lord Archibald Hamilton) who has just spoken with so much honesty of conviction, ventured to anticipate the verdict of history. Let me do the same. Let me suppose that when the future philanthropist shall ask what service on the human race did we, in our generation, signally confer, some one trained, perhaps, in the schools of Oxford, or the Institute of Manchester, shall answer : "A power that commanded myriads—as many as those that under

1854. Æt. 51. Xerxes exhausted rivers in their march—embodied all the forces of barbarism on the outskirts of civilisation. Left there to develop its own natural resources, no State molested, though all apprehended its growth. But, long pent by merciful nature in its own legitimate domains, this Power schemed for the outlet to its instinctive ambition; to that outlet it crept by dissimulating guile, by successive treaties that, promising peace, graduated spoliation to the opportunities of fraud. At length, under pretexts too gross to deceive the common-sense of mankind, it prepared to seize that outlet—to storm the feeble gates between itself and the world beyond." Then the historian shall say that we in our generation—the united families of England and France—made ourselves the vanguard of alarmed and shrinking Europe, and did not sheathe the sword until we had redeemed the pledge to humanity made on the faith of two Christian sovereigns, and ratified at those distant graves which liberty and justice shall revere for ever.

It is always rash for the politicians of one generation to anticipate the judgment which later generations will pass upon their actions, and the verdict of history on the policy of the Crimean War is not precisely a fulfilment of Bulwer-Lytton's grandiloquent prophecy. Nevertheless, his words have an interest to-day as an illustration of the extraordinary prejudice which the people of that generation had been taught to feel against Russia.

Bulwer-Lytton's next intervention in Parliament was on December 19, 1854, when he led the attack on the Government by moving the rejection of the Bill for the Enlistment of

Foreigners. He had little difficulty in making out a strong case against this ill-advised measure, and prophesying some of the embarrassments which would follow from its adoption. Following Lord John Russell, who had moved the second Reading of the Bill, he contended that no case had been made out "why we should henceforth prefer to win our victories by proxy." 1854. Æt. 51.

"What is it," he asked, "on which you now mainly rely to continue this war with vigour, no matter at what sacrifice and cost? Not so much on the extent of our territory, the amount of our population, the wealth of our resources, as on the ardour of the people; on that spirit of nationality which, we are told by the Minister of War, rises against every danger, and augments in proportion to the demand on its energies. It is that ardour you are about to damp—it is that spirit of nationality to which this Bill administers both discouragement and affront. The noble Lord says our difficulty is at the commencement. What is the commencement? One burst of popular enthusiasm! And in the midst of that enthusiasm, at a time when we are told by the Secretary at War that you get recruits faster than you can form them into regiments—you say to the people of this empire, 'Your rude and untutored valour does not suffice for the prowess of England, and we must apply to the petty principalities of Europe for the co-operation of their more skilful and warlike subjects.' I say that this is an unwise, and I maintain it to be an unnecessary, blow upon the vital principle that now sustains your cause, and brings to your army more men than you know how to employ. And if anything could make this war unpopular, it would be the sight of foreign soldiers quartered and

1854. Æt. 51. drilled in any part of these kingdoms, paid by the taxes extorted from this people, and occupying barracks of which the paucity is your excuse for not having embodied more of the militia of our native land. . . .

Now as to the precedents cited by the noble Lord. I am almost ashamed to repeat what everyone knows—namely, that the precedent you would draw from the enlistment of Germans in 1804 and 1806 is wholly inapplicable to the present case. Look to the period of the great French war. Our sovereign was not only King of Great Britain—he was Elector of Hanover. His interests and ours were identified with the German Powers, except, indeed, Prussia, which at that time, influenced first by her guilty designs on the partition of Poland, and afterwards by the hope of obtaining Hanover as a reward for neutrality, did, in the opinion of all dispassionate historians, by her selfish inertness and procrastination, paralyse the army of the other allies, and give to the common foe that gigantic power of which Prussia was afterwards the most signal victim. I trust that Prussia is wiser now ; that she will not again amuse other and nobler confederacies by her tortuous diplomacy, cripple their energies by dissimulating lethargy, nor require, at the last, the assistance of their arms to free herself from the ruin in which selfish indifference to the common cause once involved her very existence as a nation. But at that time the enlistment of German soldiers in this country was at least natural enough, though even the memory of their gallantry in the field, which deserves all we can say of it, has not, you see, sufficed to render that enlistment popular. The noble Lord refers to the debate of 1804, in which Mr. Francis, afterwards Sir Philip, took part. Ay, but he did not tell you the excuse which the then Secretary at War made to the objections Mr. Francis indignantly urged. The excuse was this :—'The enlistment of

German soldiers was only a measure of providing for a certain number of men who were subjects of the same sovereign, and had been forced to leave their country.' Who can say that this is a parallel instance? It is true that other foreigners were enlisted, but they were chiefly from those German nations which had the most cordial sympathy with the English cause. But now, indeed, although we should be proud to have a sincere and hearty alliance with the German courts, it is at least premature to believe that their interests, their objects in the war, are cordially and permanently identified with our own. And if we would render the Germans as popular in England as I hope they may yet be, we could not more defeat that object than by exhibiting German soldiers as substitutes for English valour upon English ground. But the noble Lord goes back to the time of Marlborough—nay, he says that in all our former wars foreign troops have been employed. Yes; but when they were employed with honour, they were the auxiliary forces of our open allies, and officered by the rank, the chivalry, the military renown of nations in the closest sympathy with ourselves, and were not mere free lances, under unknown and mercenary captains. I say, when they have been employed with honour. For where, indeed, an aid similar to that which you now demand has been obtained wherever foreign princes have been subsidised, and their subjects hired by English gold to take part in the struggles with which they had no English sympathies—there the historian pauses to vent his scorn on the princes who thus sell the blood of their subjects, and his grief at the degradation of England in the blood-money she pays to the hirelings: these are not precedents to follow, but examples to shun. . . .

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Whatever way I look at this proposed Bill I can see nothing to justify and excuse it. I have said that there

1854. Æt. 51. is no parallel case of precedent. Now, let us ask, What is your plea of necessity? And here, Sir, I find my own opinions so lucidly and moderately stated by a great man whose authority must have the utmost weight with gentlemen opposite, that I will read what was said in this House by the late Lord Grey, then Mr. Grey. He said: —'On urgent occasions it may be proper to introduce foreign troops into this country, but it should never be done except in cases of extreme and proved necessity, and never should be suffered to be done without being watched with that constitutional jealousy which is the best part of the character of this House, and the best security for the rights and liberties of the people.' Now, let me pause, and appeal to the generous candour of hon. gentlemen opposite, if these words, from one of the greatest statesmen who ever adorned your opinions, do not justify the jealousy with which we regard this Bill, and whether we are right or wrong in that jealousy, if they do not amply vindicate us from the unworthy charge of wishing to obstruct the general preparations for the war, because we cavil at the introduction of foreign soldiers. Mr. Grey went on to observe that 'Though he was not ready to deny that for the purpose of our own defence we should sometimes employ foreign troops, yet he could not help thinking that the wisest course for us would be to rely on what had been emphatically called the energy of an armed nation.' So, then, where is this case of urgent and proved necessity—necessity for our own defence? You *have not argued it as a necessity*; the noble Lord has not done so; he is too much of an Englishman for that. It is only argued at most as a question of convenience—the convenience of drilling or organising the troops in this country; and I say that it does not seem to me a convenience that is worth the purchase."

LETTER TO FORSTER

At the beginning of January Bulwer-Lytton wrote to John Forster :— 1855. Æt. 52.

Jan. 1855.

My dear Forster—Many happy New Years to you, and may the coming stranger be more propitious than he is to me. I am unable to shake off a worrying bronchitis and serious cough, and am again tormented with sciatica, which nailed me for three months and more last year. Altogether I am hipped and lifeless.

Is it Emerson Tennent whom you refer to as speaking kindly of my parliamentary effort? I can't make out the name. All these things come too late, and how evanescent they are at the best. Oh, to be a raw recruit of 18, setting off for the dismal swamp of the Crimea, full of hope, dreamless of sciatica and pining for a word in a despatch. *Eheu, fugaces, Postume, Postume, labuntur anni.* But that army, what a state! how one's heart bleeds. What blame attaches somewhere. Is it Raglan really?—Yrs. ever,

E. B. L.

In spite of the physical infirmities complained of in this letter, he again took an effective part at the end of the month in the debate on Mr. Roebuck's motion for the appointment of a Committee to inquire into the condition of the army before Sebastopol, which led to the defeat and resignation of Lord Aberdeen's Government; and his speech on this occasion dealt with most of the charges which public opinion in favour of the war brought against the Government responsible for its conduct.

1855. Æt. 52. "And first," he said, "we accuse you of this: that you entered—not, indeed, hastily, but with long deliberation, with ample time for forethought, if not for preparation—into the most arduous enterprise this generation has witnessed, in the most utter ignorance of the power and resources of the enemy you were to encounter, the nature of the climate you were to brave, of the country you were to enter, of the supplies which your army would need. This ignorance is the more inexcusable because you disdain the available sources of information. . . . It has indeed been said that the public were no wiser than the Government—that the public underrated the power of Russia, and demanded the premature siege of Sebastopol. If this were true, what then? Why do we choose Ministers? Why do we give them salaries, patronage, honours—if it is not to have some men wiser than the average of mankind, at least in all that relates to the offices they hold? It may be a noble fault in a people to disregard the strength of an enemy when the cause is just. Who does not love and admire this English people more when they rose as one man to cry 'No matter what the cost or hazard, let us defend the weak against the strong'? But if to underrate the power of an enemy was almost a merit in the people, it was a grave dereliction of duty in a Minister of War. But I deny that the public, fairly considered, were not wiser than the Government, and there is scarcely a point which you have covered with a blunder on which someone or other of the public did not try to prepare and warn you."

The next charges were that they failed to take possession of Odessa,

. . . the great depot of the Russian enemy, the depot of ammunition, provisions, troops for that Crimea which

you had already resolved to invade. . . . This first proof of feeble incapacity links itself with all that has followed. You thus forbear the easiest and the wealthiest conquest of all, in order afterwards, in the very worst time, at the very worst season, to attempt an achievement the most difficult in itself, and which that forbearance to Odessa rendered more difficult still. 1855. ÆT. 52.

He then proceeded to read extracts from the letters of a young officer, who had died of cholera on landing in the Crimea, to show that the army was not equipped or provisioned as it should have been, and that no allowance had been made for the Russian climate at that season of the year; and he ascribed these blunders to a lack of unity in the Cabinet itself and to the Whig exclusiveness, under which "a small hereditary combination of great families" had obtained "a fictitious monopoly of Liberal policy and a genuine monopoly of lethargic Government." Time which might have been spent on raising and adequately equipping British troops had been wasted by the Government on their ill-conceived Foreign Enlistment Bill.

Here again, the same eternal want of information! You go to Germany for foreign troops, and Germany declares your overtures illegal, and rejects them with scorn. I ventured to tell you that if you carried the Foreign Enlistment Bill you would never be able to use it. And now Parliament meets again with fresh accounts of almost incredible suffering—9000 of our surviving soldiers enfeebled, I fear, by disease; the huts that should shelter the rest still at Balaklava; and Lord Raglan, according to the despatch we read this

1855. Æt. 52. morning, still without men and vehicles to land and fix them. Men look to us, half with hope, half with despair. "What is to be done?" is the cry of every voice.

The answer to this question was suggested in the concluding words of the speech—dismiss the Government and save the army. And the House of Commons, acting on the advice, dismissed the Ministry by a majority of 157!

Had Lord Derby accepted the responsibility incurred by his party in contributing to the defeat of the Government and undertaken to form an Administration, Bulwer-Lytton would have found a place in the new Government. This fact was publicly announced by Lord Derby himself in the House of Lords on February 8. In the course of a personal explanation of the reasons which prevented him from taking office, he indicated the support which, had he done so, he might have counted on in the House of Commons, and added :—

> And when I speak of new blood, I am sure not one of my friends in this or the other House will deem it invidious in me to say that I should have received—and in a high office of the Administration I should have been proud to have received—the support and assistance of the unrivalled eloquence and commanding talents of Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton.

With the exception of a speech on the abolition of the stamp duties on newspapers, to which reference will be made in the next

chapter, Bulwer-Lytton did not again take part in the debates of this session until June 4, when he spoke on Disraeli's vote of censure on the Government. The negotiations at Vienna having broken down in the meanwhile, his speech on this occasion was chiefly concerned with the reasons for continuing the war and the terms on which alone peace could honourably be accepted. He criticised the attitude adopted at that time by Gladstone and the Peelite members who had resigned in the spring from Lord Palmerston's Government :— 1855. ÆT. 52.

The Right Honourable Gentleman complains that the terms in which our object is to be sought are now unwisely extended? Who taught us to extend them? Who made not only the terms, but the object itself, indefinite? Was it not the head of the Government of which the right hon. gentleman was so illustrious a member? Did not Lord Aberdeen, when repeatedly urged to state to what terms of peace he would apply the epithets "safe" and "honourable," as repeatedly answer, "That must depend on the fortune of war; and the terms will be very different if we receive them at Constantinople or impose them at St. Petersburg?" Sir, if I may say so without presumption, I always disapproved that language; I always held the doctrine that if we once went to war it should be for nothing more and nothing less than justice (Mr. M. Gibson—Hear, hear). Ay, but do not let me dishonestly catch that cheer, for I must add, and also for adequate securities that justice will be maintained. No reverses should induce us to ask for less—no conquests justify us in demanding more. . . . The right hon. gentleman dwelt in a Christian spirit, which moved us all, on the gallant

1855. Æt. 52. blood that had been shed by us, our allies, and even by our foes, in this unhappy quarrel. But did it never occur to him that all the while he was speaking, this question was irresistibly forcing itself on the minds of his English audience—"And shall all this blood have been shed in vain? Was it merely to fertilise the soil of the Crimea with human bones? And shall we who have buried there two-thirds of our army, still leave a fortress at Sebastopol and a Russian fleet in the Black Sea, eternally to menace the independence of that ally whom our heroes have perished to protect?"

And would not that blood have been shed in vain? Talk of recent negotiations effecting the object for which you commenced the war! Let us strip those negotiations of diplomatic quibbles, and look at them like men of common-sense. Do not let gentlemen be alarmed lest I should weary them with going at length over such hackneyed ground—two minutes will suffice. The direct question involved is to terminate the preponderance of Russia in the Black Sea; and with this is involved another question—to put an end to the probabilities of renewed war rising out of the position which Russia would henceforth occupy in those waters. Now, the first proposition of Russia is to open to all ships the passage of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. "That is the right thing," says the right hon. Member for Manchester. Yes, so it would be, if Russia had not the whole of that coast bristling with her fortresses; but while those fortresses remain it is simply to say, "Let Russia increase as she pleases the maritime force she can direct against Turkey, sheltered by all the strongholds she has established on the coasts; and let France and England keep up, if they please, the perpetual surveillance of naval squadrons in a sea, as the note of the French Minister well expresses it, 'where they could find neither a port of refuge nor an

arsenal of supply.'" This does not, on the one hand, diminish the preponderance of Russia; it only says you may, at great expense, and with great disadvantage, keep standing navies to guard against its abuse; and, on the other hand, far from putting an end to the probabilities of war, it leaves the fleets of Russia perpetually threatening Turkey, and the fleets of England and France perpetually threatening Russia. . . . The second proposition, which retains the *mare clausum*, not only leaves the preponderance of Russia exactly what it was before the war began, but, in granting to the Sultan the power to summon his allies at any moment he may require them, exposes you to the fresh outbreak of hostilities whenever the Sultan might even needlessly take alarm; but with these differences between your present and future position—first, that Russia would then be strengthened, and you might be unprepared; and next, that while, as I said before, now not one Russian flag can show itself on those waters, you might then, before you could enter the Straits, find that flag waving in triumph over the walls of the Seraglio. . . .

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And now I put it to the candour of those distinguished advocates for the Russian proposals, whose sincerity I am sure is worthy of their character and talents, whether the obvious result of both these propositions for peace is not to keep four Powers in the unrelaxing attitude of war—one of those Powers always goaded on by cupidity and ambition, the other three always agitated by jealousy and suspicion? And is it on such a barrel of gunpowder as this that you would ask the world to fall asleep? "But," say the hon. Gentlemen, "the demand of the Western Powers on the third article is equally inadequate to effect the object." Well, I think there they have very much proved their case—very much proved how fortunate it was that negotiations were broken off. However,

1855. Æt. 52. when a third point is to be raised again let us clear it of all difficulties, and raise it, not in a Congress of Vienna, but within the walls of Sebastopol.

Having argued that those who were now advocating peace on unacceptable terms were only weakening the power of their country to wage the war successfully, and encouraging Russia to hold out still longer, he concluded :—

In order to force Russia into our object we must assail and cripple her wherever she can be crippled and assailed. I say with the Right Hon. gentleman, the member for the University of Oxford, do not offer to her an idle insult, do not slap her in the face, but paralyse her hands. "Oh," said a noble friend of mine the other night (Lord Stanley), "it is a wretched policy to humble the foe that you cannot crush ; and are you mad enough to suppose that Russia can be crushed?" Let my noble friend, in the illustrious career which I venture to prophesy lies before him, beware how he ever endeavours to contract the grand science of statesmen into scholastic aphorisms. No, we cannot crush Russia as Russia, but we can crush her attempts to be more than Russia. We can, and we must, crush any means that enable her to storm or to steal across that tangible barrier which now divides Europe from a Power that supports the maxims of Machiavelli with the armaments of Brennus. You might as well have said to William of Orange, "You cannot crush Louis XIV. ; how impolitic you are to humble him!" You might as well have said to the burghers of Switzerland, "You cannot crush Austria ; don't vainly insult her by limiting her privilege to crush yourselves!" William of Orange did not crush France as a kingdom—Switzerland did not crush

Austria as an empire, but William did crush the power of France to injure Holland—Switzerland did crush the power of Austria to enslave her people; and in that broad sense of the word, by the blessing of Heaven, we will crush the power of Russia to invade her neighbours and convulse the world. 1855. Æt. 52.

This speech created a very favourable impression in Paris, and was much praised by the friends of Napoleon III., who, like Palmerston, was strongly opposed to the suggested terms of peace. In acknowledging some words in praise of it from John Forster, Bulwer-Lytton wrote :—

Thanks for what you say of my speech both in your note and the *Examiner*. As it was not made for a party, it was not for the moment, I think, so effective as my former ones, though it was as much so when men thought over it. I am still very far from contented with my delivery, though I suppose it will become better by practice. Bright made a wonderful *effect*. What a thorough Anglo-Saxon he is.

The only other speech of Bulwer-Lytton on the Crimean war to which I shall refer was that which he made on July 16, in support of his motion of censure against Lord John Russell for his conduct in connection with the Vienna negotiations. The circumstances in which this speech was delivered were peculiar and caused no little embarrassment to the speaker. As has already been mentioned, Lord John Russell had been sent as the British Plenipotentiary to the Vienna Conference in the spring of 1855. His position there was a difficult one, for

1855. Æt. 52. while he considered himself empowered to agree on behalf of his Government to any terms which he considered acceptable, Lord Palmerston and his colleagues could not in fact accept any terms which were not agreeable to their ally Napoleon III.

Napoleon III. was entirely dependent for his imperial throne upon the support of the French army. For no consideration could he forfeit that support, and finding that the Austrian proposals would not satisfy the army, he refused to entertain them. As soon as it became publicly known that Lord John had agreed to proposals which were afterwards repudiated by the Government at home, an embarrassing situation was created, which the Opposition at once took advantage of. The public was not aware at the time of the delicacy of the situation, and neither Lord John Russell nor his colleagues could admit in their own defence that they were continuing the war for the purpose of keeping their ally on his throne. On such of the facts as had then been made public the Opposition had a strong case. Either the Cabinet were disunited on the all-important question of peace or war, in which case Lord John Russell ought to have resigned, or if they were all agreed, they could not be sincere in advocating a vigorous prosecution of the war, when a few weeks previously they had been prepared to accept the Vienna proposals for the conclusion of peace.

Bulwer-Lytton accordingly gave notice of a

motion that Lord John Russell's conduct had 1855.
"shaken the confidence of the country in those to ÆT. 52.
whom its affairs are entrusted," and the Opposition prepared to enforce their case against the Government. On the day allotted for the discussion of this motion, however, Lord John rose and informed the House that his resignation had been tendered and accepted, and in the course of a personal explanation he made the best defence which was possible under the circumstances. At the very last moment, therefore, the whole situation had changed, and it was in one of those unexpected situations so trying to speakers in the House of Commons that Bulwer-Lytton had to deliver his attack.

His speech on this occasion, though a bitter attack on Lord John Russell's public action, judged by the light of what was then known, was made in perfectly good taste. After acknowledging the change created in the situation by Lord John's resignation, he proceeded to justify his action in bringing forward a charge "against a man so eminent, and against a Government so justly entitled to the indulgence of compassion," by describing the situation.

The position of the noble Lord on Thursday last was this, and he must pardon me if I state it frankly, because in the whole course of his speech he does not seem to have understood how that position is viewed by his countrymen. Here was a great and distinguished statesman, who had held the office of Chief Minister of the Crown, who was sent to Vienna to negotiate terms

1855. Æt. 52. of peace, or to report to us honestly the necessity for continued war. . . . He apparently fails in his object; he returns; a suspicion gets abroad that the noble Lord is inclined to favour the proposals of the Austrian Government. That suspicion is mentioned in this House on the 24th of May, and the noble Lord rises to make a speech to dispel that suspicion, to vindicate the breaking off of negotiations, and the continuance of the war; and although the noble Lord does not refer to the Austrian proposals at all, he does in that speech, which I do not think he has successfully defended to-night, speak with marked disdain of the propositions which embodied that main principle of naval counterpoise which we have since learned the Austrian propositions contained. . . . The general impression then was that that speech of the noble Lord was somewhat extravagant in its zeal. But we, who advocated the vigorous prosecution of the war, pardoned that extravagance for the sake of its high spirit. . . . Suddenly there appeared in the public prints the circular of the Austrian Minister, in which Count Buol states that this very statesman had not only inclined to a peace upon the terms proposed, and which he appeared to us indignantly to scout, but that he had actually promised to lay before his Government definite proposals for peace so framed, and to back those terms in the Cabinet with all his power. The thing seemed incredible; but the question on Friday week was put to the noble Lord, and he then rises, confirms the statement, and informs the House that he had brought back propositions of peace which he did conscientiously recommend as likely to end the war "with honour to the Allied Powers, and on terms calculated to afford security for the future," and that thus thinking peace both possible and honourable, he did, nevertheless, when the question was brought before this House, while the peace in

question was being actually discussed by the Cabinet, abuse the station he took from the favour of his Sovereign, and the confidence the people placed in his honesty and truth, and join with his colleagues to urge us to sacrifice the best blood of England in a war that he deemed no longer necessary, and to disdain the peace that he himself recommended. 1855. ÆT. 52.

The remainder of the speech is a bitter condemnation of the position thus exposed, and of the degrading effect in Europe of such a spectacle of ministerial insincerity and dissension.

"Let us have peace," he said, "even upon Austrian terms, and let us hope that the energies of our commerce may atone for the failure of our arms; or let the Ministers and the people join with one heart and one soul to carry on this war to a speedy and triumphant end, by the earnestness of their purpose, and the worthiness of their preparations. . . . There is something, however, which ought to be more lasting than any peace, and more glorious than any war—I mean that high standard of public integrity, without which nations may rot, though they have no enemies, and with which all enemies may be defied."

Lord Palmerston, who replied for the Government, having a weak defence, indulged in one of those fits of blustering ill-temper, which were characteristic of him, and for reasoned argument substituted mere personal rudeness. The following is an example of his schoolboy-like retorts :—

The Hon. Baronet told us that these repeated changes in the Ministry expose us to the ridicule of Europe. Why, Sir, there might be a change of

1855. Government that would render us still more the
ÆT. 52. ridicule of Europe; I mean if a man like the Hon. Baronet were to be placed in a high position in it.

The motion was withdrawn after a short debate, in which Disraeli replied for the Opposition, and declared that the Prime Minister's "reckless rhodomontade" was unworthy of one "who is not only leader of the House of Commons—which is an accident of life—but is also a gentleman."

In the autumn of 1855 a series of articles appeared in the *Press*, a newspaper which was then regarded as the mouthpiece of the Conservative Opposition, condemning the continuation of the war, and advocating the claims of the peace party in a very pronounced manner. These articles were supposed, though apparently without justification, to have been inspired by Disraeli. Bulwer-Lytton, who still believed that no terms of peace had yet been suggested which satisfied the objects for which the war had been undertaken, wrote in great anxiety to his political chief. I will close this chapter with the interesting and characteristic correspondence which passed between them on this subject.

Edward Bulwer-Lytton to Benjamin Disraeli.

Oct. 15, 1855.

I cannot say, my dear Dis., how anxious I feel as to your views on the policy to be adopted with regard to the Peace and War question. Pray don't think me

presumptuous if I most earnestly entreat you to pause long before you in any way commit yourself to the Gladstonian theory and sect. My convictions on that head are of the strongest. I do not say more now, not knowing how far you have made up your mind on this all-important question. But if it be at all doubtful, I earnestly beg you to give me the occasion to communicate my own ideas and adduce some of the arguments to be urged against any connection with the Anti-War parties, or any insistence upon peace, in the present state of the struggle and the determined temper of the public. I say no more at present, but if you think it worth while to discuss the matter confidentially, send me a line to Paris, under cover to Robert Lytton, Attaché, British Embassy, and I will liberate my mind thereon. I am sure you know how cordial and brother-like my affection for you is, and how great my interest is in your fame and career. Pause—pause—pause, I entreat you again, my dearest fellow, before you lend your name to any of those argosies gone astray in the Pacific.—Yours most affectly,

1855. ÆT. 52.

E. B. L.

PARK LANE, *Sunday night.*

Benjamin Disraeli to Edward Bulwer-Lytton.

HOCHE BEAUCHAMP, TAUNTON,
Nov. 6, 1855.

MY DEAR BULWER—Passing thro' town, I saw Henry, and was surprised to hear that you had arrived, or were arriving, in England.

Had I been aware of this, I would have modified my engagements, and have had the advantage of meeting you, and conferring together on the subject of your last letter. I greatly appreciated it, and have well and continually considered it, but have every day

1855. ÆT. 52. felt it more difficult to reply to it in the shape or limits of an epistle.

As regards myself personally, your views were founded on a misconception. Since the prorogation I have taken refuge in inertness and silence, which I think becomes the position of our party. I have not said, done or written, anything which could give any indication of my views or feelings, either publicly or privately, and I should never have thought of taking up any new position with respect to so great a subject as the war, without previously consulting with those friends with whom I act, and certainly with yourself.

With respect to the subject generally, without attempting to enter into any controversy, or pretending, with any precision or completeness, to express my views, I would make one or two suggestive remarks.

There appears to me, in your views of the subject, however just their general scope, the omission of an important element in forming an opinion as to the practical conduct of a political party.

You are apt to forget, and I am not surprised at it, for I constantly feel its mortification, that you are an eminent member of a great party which has shrunk, or which, at any rate, is believed by the country to have shrunk, from the responsibility of conducting the war.[1]

One might be inclined to believe that a party in this pitiable position, were bound to prepare the public mind for a statesmanlike peace. I do not very clearly comprehend how a war Ministry and a war Opposition can coexist.

An Opposition must represent a policy, and if it represents the policy of the Minister, it ceases to be an Opposition.

To shrink from conducting the war and then to

[1] Owing to Lord Derby's refusal to take office at the beginning of the year.

stimulate it, seems to me to reduce us too much to the level of the little boys who will cheer Palmerston on Lord Mayor's Day. 1855. Æt. 52.

These are rough hints, but they will convey to your intelligence what is passing thro' my mind.

Something like this I intimated to Henry, and I cannot say that his exposition of the situation satisfied me. As there is scarcely any judgment I hold superior to his, I fear our present position is less satisfactory than I could hope. I trust your son is quite right again.—Ever yours, D.

You cannot communicate to me too often and too freely. Everything you say, as you must know, weighs with me—and deeply.

Edward Bulwer-Lytton to Benjamin Disraeli.

Nov. 12, 1855.

My dear D.—I am much obliged by your letter. I had ascribed your silence to the reasons you state. It is quite true that it is difficult by letter to enter into a question so complicated, but tho' much in your note disquiets me, I rejoice to find that you do not consider yourself personally committed to the line of the *Press* articles, which, however able, have to my mind, considerably tended to damage the party, and force on that discord which your extraordinary tact and sagacity smoothed over last session. A concurrence with the views in those articles would either alienate from you or (if they were converted) oust from Parliament the most staunch and reliable of your friends, whose Constituencies are warlike to the core. Pardon me, my dear Dis., if I cannot attach the weight you seem, I hope ironically, to do to the suggestion that the party you so gallantly led against all pacific waverers last session, shrank, or is supposed by the country to have

1855. shrunk from the responsibility of conducting the war!
Æt. 52. Certainly, I never so considered it, and certainly, after Lord Derby's refusal to form a Govt. that was not the tone we took. Not on that ground did we oppose the Austrian proposal and move against Lord John. Warlike did the country hold the majority of our party (as warlike I am sure the majority are) and increasing rapidly was the popularity of the natural succession to Palmerston, till those *Press* articles and the inference drawn from them, fastened upon Palmerston the very repute he denied, viz. :—that of being the only representative of the martial sentiment that pervades the population.

Now, as to the theory that an Opposition must have a policy, and if it coincide in the policy of Ministers it ceases to be an Opposition, with all deference to you, I think that theory might be fatal if pushed too far. This was the theory that wasted Fox's life out of office. The proper position for us to take seems to me not that of Fox in the French War, but that of Pitt *versus* Addington. Treat Palmerston as Pitt treated Addington—outwar him. Rely on it, that at this time, the country would allow no pacific advisers either to form a War Government, or to come in as a Peace one. *The Country will never take peace from a peace party*. It will take peace only from those whom it feels to have been thoroughly in earnest when the business was fighting. I own I feel most deeply anxious for the state of the country. I see more reasons to desire peace than even the peace party put forward, but I see in those reasons additional arguments for throwing one's whole soul into the war, in order to conquer that peace and not creep out of the contest, leaving behind, in the *opinion of France*, such an idea of our military incapacity as would be sure, ere long, to subject us to a struggle with a far worse antagonist than

Russia, and for our very existence. Henry shares my views, and far from thinking despondently of our prospects, he agrees with me in believing that nothing could prevent the Conservatives coming into power, but a profession of peace policy and a junction with peace politicians. If that were to happen and we were to outvote Palmerston as too warlike, Palmerston would become the most popular Minister since Chatham. He would not resign, he would dissolve, and a Dissolution would scatter his opponents to the winds. Look at Lord John's reception in the Guildhall! Hissed in the City of London! Can anything more significantly warn us, or more extinguish the practicability of the *Press* recommendations. 1855. ÆT. 52.

"Much meditating," as Brougham phrases, and what is more to the purpose, much feeling, I have written a letter to a constituent containing my views that I should like much to publish in the *Times*.[1] I have an idea that it will do great good to the party at this moment, and (without, of course, referring to the *Press* articles or the rumours they occasioned) remove the suspicion and unpopularity those articles and rumours have engendered. Of course, I should only speak for myself, I should commit neither you nor anyone else. On the contrary, I am sure I should *serve you*, and yet leave you perfectly free. Fancy, I met Stanley to-day, and told him frankly the purport of what I meant to write. To my surprise he said "that he went entirely along with my views and ideas, and that nothing therein could offend the Peacemen." That last I believe, for I should be careful to offend none—I should be general, English and hearty, because I feel English and hearty. I should point out the inadequacy and feebleness of preparations, &c., but without attacking anyone by name. In short,

[1] *Letter to Delme Radcliffe, Esq.*, published in Collected Speeches.

1855. Æt. 52. without boring you further, I think I see my way to a decided effect, good for the country, good for the party. At all events, it would serve as a feeler—if it did good, *tant mieux*, if it did harm, it could only harm myself; if it fell flat, it would be a *coup manqué*, that's all. Now if this be published, the right moment is *now*. Do you think you can trust to my tact and discretion not to commit a blunder therein, or would you rather first see the article?

Pray write to me by return of post, as I should not like to do anything till I hear from you—and yet time presses. What would strike one week would be feeble the next. If you desire to see it, say where it is to be sent, and return it forthwith. And if you say "No, burn it," burned it shall be. Yet I think you may trust my instincts. I feel something of the kind is wanted and *speedily*. The object at the moment is not to attempt to damage Palmerston, but to save from damage the leaders, to whom in default of Graham, Gladstone, Russell, &c., the country would necessarily look to succeed him, unless they get into the same mess as has disabled all their rivals.—Yrs. aff.

E. B. L.

Disraeli must have replied immediately to this letter deprecating publication of the suggested article, for Bulwer-Lytton wrote again on November 14 as follows:—

The same to the same.

KNEBWORTH,
Nov. 14, 1855.

MY DEAR D.—Many thanks for your kindness in answering my note so promptly. The expression of your opinion, however moderately conveyed, suffices to deter me from publication. Certainly I would not on any account force on divisions amongst us, or a belief

in their existence. My hope and aim in publishing would have been to prevent divisions, dispel the belief in them, and secure to us even some share of popular enthusiasm. From what I hear amongst influential supporters (I don't mean in Parliament), both personally and by anxious correspondents, I do think there is at this moment a dangerous uneasiness in the party, which it would be good to dispel as soon as might be. I may be wrong, but I do heartily hope that we shall, before Parliament meets, make up all our differences. Now that I resign the idea of publishing, I should like you to see what I proposed to write, and in a day or two it will be ready. I could then come up to town with it, if I found you there. Tell me your plans. My object in asking you to see it simply is because it at once embodies all the views that I ill express by letter, and will allow you to see at once whether there be any radical difference between your idea and mine, than which nothing could pain me more deeply, but which I really don't think exists, when we come to confer.—Most truly yrs.,

1855. ÆT. 52.

E. B. L.

Athough Bulwer-Lytton was probably right in describing the feeling in England as still warlike, France was by this time tired of the war. Napoleon III. was now as anxious to conclude peace as in the summer he had been anxious to avoid it; and as the attitude of Napoleon III. was throughout the key to the situation, the definite proposals for terminating the war which were again put forward from Vienna before the end of November were this time seriously entertained and resulted in the Peace of Paris, which was signed in March 1856.

CHAPTER III

ACTIVITIES IN AND OUT OF PARLIAMENT

1855–1858

The heart loves repose, and the soul contemplation, but the mind needs action.

My Novel.

1855. Æt. 52. Bulwer-Lytton's speeches on the Crimean war greatly increased his parliamentary reputation and marked him out as a certain office-holder in the next Conservative administration. It was not, however, till three years later that the expectations held out by Lord Derby in 1855 could be fulfilled. Mention must now be made of the work of those three years.

In order not to interrupt the narrative of the last chapter, I passed by a political event of some interest in connection with this biography. On March 26, 1855, Bulwer-Lytton again, and for the last time, defended in Parliament the abolition of the stamp duties on newspapers. He had the satisfaction at last of seeing the removal of those "taxes upon knowledge," against which he had protested so pertinaciously in his youth. It will be remembered that in 1835, on the third occasion that he had pleaded

with the Government to repeal the stamp duties on newspapers, both Lord Melbourne, then Prime Minister, and Lord Althorp, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, had held out hopes that this might be done in the next session. Since then twenty years had passed, and it was reserved for Sir George Cornewall Lewis to redeem the pledge which had been given to a former generation. During that time Bulwer-Lytton had changed his political allegiance; yet when a Liberal Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1855 proposed to carry out this fiscal change, he defended it against the protests of some of his own party with the same vigour as of old, and with an additional twenty years' experience to enforce his arguments. 1855. ÆT. 52.

The opponents of the repeal now took their stand on a different ground. There was no exact counterpart in 1855 to the Sir Charles Wetherall of 1835; and the main argument put forward in opposition to the Government proposal was that it was an act of folly to sacrifice £200,000 of revenue at a time when new taxes were being imposed to carry on the Russian war. It is indeed an ironical fact, and one which invites considerable mistrust of ministerial arguments, that a change which on financial grounds alone was resisted by one Liberal Chancellor of the Exchequer in a year when the country was at peace, and the state of the revenue flourishing, should actually have been proposed by a subsequent Liberal Chancellor when the country was at

1855. Æt. 52. war, the income tax at 1s. 4d., and every penny which could be raised was required to meet an enormous new financial liability.

In defence of Sir George Cornewall Lewis's proposals, Bulwer-Lytton restated the principle for which he had contended all his life, "that you ought not in a free country to lay a tax on the expression of political opinion—a tax on the diffusion of that information on public affairs which the spirit of our constitution makes the interest and concern of every subject in the State. Still more, you should not, by means of that tax, create such an artificial necessity for capital that you secure the monopoly of thought upon the subjects that most interest the public at large to a handful of wealthy and irresponsible oligarchs." "The question," he added, "is this—whether it is not time that we should enforce that great principle of the constitution of civil liberty, and of common sense, which says that opinion shall go free, not stinted nor filched away by fiscal arrangements, but subject always to the laws of the country against treason, blasphemy, and slander."

George Jacob Holyoake, in his *Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life* (1892), has given a description of this debate, from which I extract the following allusion to Bulwer-Lytton's speech :—

> On the famous night when the stamp fell, when the 10th of Queen Anne was put to death, I was in the House of Commons. It was on the 26th of March, 1855, and I was present from four o'clock in the afternoon until nearly one o'clock next morning.

Mr. Bouverie had vacated the chair, the usher raised the mace, the Speaker took his seat, and announced with a voice reverberant as the Long Parliament—loud enough to reach into innumerable sessions to come—that the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Bill would be proceeded with. 1855. Æt. 52.

While Mr. Deedes moved an amendment (in a dull, insipid, gaseous speech, of the carbonic acid kind) to defer the second reading of the Bill, a fashionably-dressed, slenderly-built Member appeared on the right of the gangway, taking notes. From the Speaker's Gallery he seemed a young man. Before the dull Deedes had regained his seat, the elegantly-looking lounger from the Club threw down his hat and caught the Speaker's eye. Rebuking his "honourable friend" (Deedes) for assuming that the House had not had time to understand the Bill before it, he announced that 20 years ago he (the lounger) had introduced a similar Bill into Parliament. Strangers then knew that Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton was the Member addressing the House. It was said that Sir Edward purchased his baronetcy by compromising the Newspaper Stamp Bill of 1836. Be this as it may, he nobly vindicated his liberal and literary fame by his brilliant speech this night. "Do not fancy," he exclaimed, "that this penny tax is a slight imposition. Do not fancy that a penny paper is necessarily low and bad. Once there existed a penny daily paper—it was called *The Spectator*. Addison and Steele were its contributors. It did more to refine the manners of the people than half the books in the British Museum. Suddenly a penny tax was put on that penny paper, and so one fatal morning the most pleasing and graceful instructor that ever brought philosophy to the fireside, had vanished from the homes of men. A penny tax sufficed to extinguish the *Spectator* and divorce that

1855. Æt. 52.

exquisite alliance which genius had established between mirth and virtue."

This fine passage was worthy of the occasion. Nothing comparable to it was said during the debate. . . . Those who say old convictions are never shaken, nor votes won by debate, should have stood in the lobby at midnight after this division. A burly country squire of the Church-and-King species—fat and circular as a prize pig—a Tory "farmer's friend," born with the belief that a free press would lead to an American Presidency in St. Stephen's, and that the penny stamp was the only barrier in the way of a French Convention in this country, and that Gibson, Cobden and Bright, were counterparts of Danton, Robespierre and Marat in disguise—this obese legislator, nudging a Liberal who had voted in the majority, said, "I gave a vote on your side to-night! Lytton convinced me." A triumph of oratory that for Sir Edward! 215 voted for a free press on this night —161 against; majority 54.

During the year 1855 Bulwer-Lytton was at work upon his translation of the *Odes and Epodes* of Horace. In a letter to John Forster he wrote :— "I am translating Horace's *Odes* in rhymeless metre for amusement—my first literary impulse for four years." A letter to his son also gives some explanation of the circumstances in which this work was undertaken. After describing a private worry which had preyed upon his mind for two years, he adds :—

It was to force my mind into something wholly different that I plunged into this Horatian Bath—*Fonte Bandusiae!* And do not forget, in after life, if you

have the same kind of torment immediately bearing on the present, affecting the future, irritating, stinging, haunting, irreparable—to try the same effect of entering into that still classical world of the dead past. I do not think original poetry would have the same effect, because that would still bear on one's own feelings, re-excite imagination, and recall one's own individuality. But the classical world has ideas wholly apart from one's own ; one insensibly transmutes oneself on entering into it. The petty and trivial difficulty of hunting after the right word—the immersion in disputes of grammarians and commentators—all gradually interest the mind, and call out counterbalancing powers not usually employed. It can't last long, it is true, with a nature of large passions, but it may be the ferry boat your own lyrics allude to, to carry one over "the fatal moment" and leave one on the "farther shore." Shakespeare is too small for the grief, but Horace or Homer serves as a draught or sip of Lethe. 1855. ÆT. 52.

In another letter to his son, undated, but apparently belonging to this time, he says :—

I shall be anxious to hear your prospects of Naples. A nice place indeed. Ah, enviable young man, youth, Naples, poetry and hope ! a paid attaché and cheques on the vast Bank of the Future, which genius and perseverance so rarely leave dishonoured. I go to-day to Knebworth. There, I hope to get up the American case for debate thoroughly, and, perhaps, also complete my first instalment of Horace.

I find incessant occupation the only thing now for me. I build a wall round myself in which I seek not to leave a cranny for one hostile thought or treacherous memory ; the bricks are always in the kiln and the trowel in the hand—poor bricks but stout cement !

1856. Æt. 53. The task thus undertaken as a mental sedative, and without any regard to publication, continued to provide an interesting literary occupation for many years, and it was not till 1869 that this work was eventually published.

At the beginning of 1856 he was occupied by extensive structural alterations at Knebworth. On May 1 he spoke in the House of Commons in the debate on the capitulation of Kars, and in August he was again seeking health from the waters of Malvern. Though he speaks in his letters of being "profoundly idle," he was at work at this time upon the novel *Pausanias, the Spartan*, which was not published till after his death (1876).

Of this work he writes to his son in the summer :—

I am slowly getting on with my Spartan story and am weaving many of the old Greek lyrics into use in rhymeless metre. I send you one, not, however, borrowed from the actual Greek author, but I think it has the Greek spirit. It is a song supposed to have been sung by a Laconian singer accompanied with Dorian flutes, before the first appearance on my stage of the Spartan Pausanias—the conqueror of Plataea.

And again a few weeks later :—

My *Pausanias* stops. I don't see my way through it. I have been horribly idle, or rather energy and invention stop with me. I may hark back to the Horace. My literary vein seems quite dry. Nothing original comes to me. I have made some galvanic

KNEBWORTH HOUSE, from a lithograph by F. W. Hulme, published in 1847

attempts at Tales and Essays; all run aground after a few pages. 1857. ÆT. 54.

In the same letter he says :—

I have been busy among my constituents, speaking, etc. I addressed the boys at Bishop Stortford School, (an excellent one), and I am not sure whether it was not the most effective speech I ever made. A middle class school, but how superior to schools for us in the general teaching. If one learnt nothing out of school at Eton and Harrow, would what one learns at the school enable one to keep up with the sons of traders? I doubt it.

Another and more important engagement was fulfilled at the beginning of 1857. In the year 1856 Bulwer-Lytton had been elected Lord Rector of Glasgow University. The election of the Lord Rector at that time took place annually, but many of the Rectors remained in office for two years, very few for three. Bulwer-Lytton had the exceptional honour of being elected to this office for three years in succession—1856–1858.

On January 15, 1857, he delivered his Rectorial Address to the students, the success of which was thus announced in a letter to his son written a few days later :—

The effect in Glasgow was astounding. Never such a sensation before, even from Peel or Macaulay. Nor did I ever before see my own reputation face to face as I did in that wondrous city, which is awful from its wealth and its splendour.

1857. Æt. 54. The literary vein which seemed to have run dry in the summer of 1856 must have been replenished by new ideas before the end of the year, for early in 1857 he was able to send to Forster the first chapters of a new novel, *What will he do with it?*, and received a very encouraging verdict in reply.

John Forster to Edward Bulwer-Lytton.

46 Montague Square, W.,
April 27, 1857.

My dear Bulwer-Lytton—Nothing could be better for the opening of the story. The interest springs up at once and takes hold of you. I can answer for myself at least.

And if I am not greatly mistaken, you have hit upon something new in grandfather Waife. I see, or fancy I see, germs of infinite growth in him—sensitive, sarcastic, humorous, tragic, the high and the low in all possibilities of contrast and combination—a character of as many sides as would satisfy Polonius himself, give him only room and verge.

The Cobbler's crystal I cannot quite see into, but notwithstanding that, and his unsettling a theory of mine about the radical propensities of cobblers (originating in their wish, I have fancied, to cobble everything), you make me love the good old heart already.

I hugely like the beginning of your story, and heartily wish you health and spirits to go on as you have begun. Make as much lamentation as you like about your gone youth, but continue to write as you now do, and the epitaph will be worth all it is written over.

You must let me see more of the story as soon as

you can. "What *will* he do with it?" is a thought now pressing sorely on your old friend, 1857. Æt. 54.

JOHN FORSTER.

The completion of this novel occupied the remainder of the year 1857, and it appeared as it was written in monthly parts in *Blackwood's Magazine*. As the story developed the author continued to receive the most flattering encouragement from his friend Forster, who wrote on May 15:—

I had much to say of the earlier portion of these chapters, but the later knocked it all out of my head. You have done nothing finer, nothing fuller of subtle touches of genius and wisdom and humanity, than Darrell and his surroundings, and that young Lionel. I cannot criticize it. My only feeling is the eagerness to get on. I never felt so impatient of the piecemeal publication. And yet the curious thing is that both sides of the interest yet shown have a certain sort of completeness, of fullness, in the expectation they have wakened in me, that seems to check the impatience, both as to Waife and Darrell, no matter what the current of story may be, the character is so well laid.

And again on December 21:—

What will he do with it? which by your kind intercession I now get regularly from Blackwood, immensely interests me. My wife is in despair about the separation of Waife and his grandchild, but this I bear heroically for the story's sake and the finished art of the narrator. We must pay something for our enjoyments. To me the peculiarity of this story is the extraordinary sustainment of wit and knowledge in the

1857. writing—not simply in the remarks or reflections where
Æt. 54. you lay yourself out for such display, but in the texture of the narrative, the woof out of which the whole is spun.

The book was finished at the beginning of 1858, just before the author undertook the new and arduous labours of a Cabinet Minister ; and on February 21, 1858, in a letter announcing that Lord Derby had been sent for and had agreed to form a Government, he adds, " My book is done and in Blackwood's hands."

Although the year 1857 was chiefly devoted to literary work, Bulwer-Lytton was not inactive in politics. The chief topic of public interest at the beginning of the year was the trouble with China occasioned by the action of Sir John Bowring, the British Plenipotentiary at Hong-Kong. In a letter to his son, he writes on February 26, 1857 :—

I have been absorbed in politics or I should have written before. To-day we have a debate on the Chinese question. I think I have mastered the question, and I have the idea of speaking to-night. But I feel nervous and may not do so.

This question arose out of an act of the most wanton aggression committed under Sir John Bowring's orders, and afterwards upheld by Lord Palmerston and the Government at home. The history of the incident was as follows.

China was at this time almost entirely closed to Europeans, and there were no diplomatic

representatives at Pekin; but by the treaty of Nankin, 1842, five ports were to be opened to foreign trade. The terms of the Treaty had only been complied with in respect of four of these ports, and Canton, the fifth, still remained closed to Europeans, the excuse given being that the Chinese Government would not accept responsibility for the safety of foreigners in that city. The British Plenipotentiary in Hong-Kong, Sir John Bowring, resented his exclusion from Canton and awaited some opportunity of forcing the Chinese Government to carry out their treaty obligations. On October 8, 1856, an incident occurred at Canton which he seized upon for the purpose of enforcing his claim. 1857. Æt. 54.

The *Arrow*, a small Chinese ship, built and owned by Chinese and with a Chinese crew on board, was lying in Canton harbour, and flying the British flag, when she was boarded by the Chinese authorities, and her crew arrested on a charge of piracy. The British Consul, Mr. Parkes, demanded their release on the ground that they were under the protection of the British flag. As a matter of fact, the *Arrow* was not in any sense a British ship, and though she had had a licence to fly the British flag, the licence had expired, and, therefore, no justification existed for the British Consul's demand, which was not unnaturally refused by the Chinese authorities. Mr. Parkes referred the matter to Sir John Bowring, who, only too glad of an opportunity to assert himself, replied that though

1857. Æt. 54. the licence of the *Arrow* had expired, the Chinese were not aware of this fact, and an apology must be demanded of them within forty-eight hours. When no reply was received, he ordered the British Admiral, Sir Michael Seymour, to attack the forts of Canton. His instructions were carried out and the forts were destroyed on October 28. Yeh, the Governor of Canton, then released the crew, but refused to make any apology. Sir James Bowring thereupon advanced the claims which he had been waiting to make, and demanded that he should be admitted to Canton in accordance with the terms of the Treaty of Nankin, and failing to get any satisfaction, he gave orders for a further bombardment of Canton. Governor Yeh retaliated by offering a reward for the murder of any Englishman and the destruction of any British ships. This led to a series of outrages and atrocities on the part of the Chinese, and these were afterwards claimed in England as a justification of the utterly indefensible proceedings, of which they were in fact not the cause but the result.[1]

As soon as the Blue Book describing these

[1] In a short biographical memoir of Sir John Bowring, attached to his own autobiographical recollections, the only justification for his action on this occasion is contained in the following words :—"Most unprejudiced persons will admit that it was an error to allow the British flag to be abused by unscrupulous Chinese traders, and it is evident that the vessel in question had no right to carry it, the term of registry having expired. The dispute was in fact regarded as a means to an end, that end being the free admission of foreigners to the city of Canton ; and although Yeh's conduct was defiant throughout, and his resolute determination not to hold intercourse with high European officials at his Yamun exhibited a lamentable perversity, it is a subject of regret that a better cause of quarrel was not found than the *Arrow* affair."

events was published in England, votes of censure were moved against the Government in both Houses of Parliament. The debate in the House of Lords began on February 24, and was adjourned till the 26th. Though Lord Derby made out an overwhelming case and was strongly supported in debate, his resolutions condemning the Government were defeated by a majority of thirty-six. In the House of Commons the matter was introduced by Mr. Cobden on February 26, and the debate lasted four nights. Bulwer-Lytton spoke on the first night immediately after Mr. Labouchere, the Colonial Secretary, in support of Mr. Cobden's resolution, and thus found himself, for the first and only time in his life, acting in concert with the Manchester Liberals—"those miserable Cobdens and visionary peace-dreamers," as he had called them in 1848. 1857. Æt. 54.

His speech began with an admirably reasoned statement of the case, from the point of view of international law and international equity, and ended with a vigorous denunciation of the Government. He pointed out that the original demand of the British Consul for the surrender of the crew was unjustifiable, because since the *Arrow* was not a British vessel within the meaning of the Treaty, it was impossible for the Government to avail themselves of another clause of the Treaty which declared that if any Chinese malefactor be on board a British vessel, and the Chinese authorities wish to arrest him,

1857. Æt. 54. they shall not forcibly enter upon such British vessel, but shall make application to the British Consul. The argument that the Chinese did not know the true position of the *Arrow* he swept aside with scorn.

"Why, Sir," he said, "a falsehood does not exist only in the telling a lie, but in the wilful suppression of truth; and this suppression of truth Lord Clarendon, a Minister of the Crown, does not hesitate to re-echo and approve. In the magniloquent appeal with which the Colonial Secretary concluded his peroration, he talked loftily of vindicating the honour of the nation. The honour of the nation! Sir, prevarication and falsehood have nothing to do with the honour of the English nation; they appertain rather to the honour of an Old Bailey attorney. We have heard a great deal about the dissimulation and duplicity of Russia. How Russia will chuckle at this! Here is a Minister of the Crown, the austere negotiator of the Paris Conference, the rebuker of Russian duplicity, approving colonial agents in the maintenance of a claim which they knew to be illegal, and the assertion of a fact which they knew to be untruth!"

In conclusion, he argued that whatever might have been the mistakes committed in the initial stages, the whole responsibility rested with the Government at home, from the moment they supported and approved the action of their agent on the spot.

With regard to Sir John Bowring, we all know that he is an able and accomplished man; but he is also a man of enthusiastic temperament, and, like all men of genius, is very desirous of carrying out his own

wishes. From the first he was seized by a strong ambition to obtain an entrance into Canton; and although I do not doubt that Sir John Bowring is as humane and honourable a man towards his own countrymen as any amongst us, yet when agents of European Governments come in contact with oriental nations, they are apt to be gradually warped from the straight line of humanity and justice they would adopt at home. It is then that we look to a wise Government to guard against the over-zeal of agents by salutary cautions which foresee and prevent their errors, and by temperate rebuke when the errors are first incurred. When a Government forsakes this duty—when it places before us nothing but unqualified approval of actions like those recorded in the papers laid on our table—all subordinate agents, like colonial superintendents and consuls, vanish from our eyes, and it is only with the Government that we have to deal. Here, then, in my place as a representative of the people, it is the Government that I charge. I charge them with sanctioning an ordinance which, unknown to Parliament, has turned into a dead letter that grand Act of the Imperial Legislature which regulates the whole trade and navigation of the country. I charge them with approving the enforcement of that ordinance by measures that equally violate the laws of nations and the spirit of English honour. I charge them with lending the authority of the Crown to homicide under false pretences, belying the generous character of our country, and offensive to every sentiment of right and justice which our nature receives from Heaven!

1857. ÆT. 54.

The debate was concluded on March 3. In the division thirty-five Liberals, including Mr. Gladstone and Lord John Russell, as well as the

1858. greater number of the Conservatives, followed
Æt. 55. Cobden, with the result that the Government was defeated, and the resolution carried by a majority of sixteen.

Two days later Lord Palmerston announced that he had advised the Queen to dissolve Parliament. A General Election followed, and resulted in a personal triumph for Lord Palmerston. Exactly what Bulwer-Lytton had prophesied in his letter to Disraeli would have been the result of a dissolution at the end of 1855 now took place. The election was fought as much on the Crimean war as on the Chinese question. Lord Palmerston was regarded as a national hero, the champion of British rights abroad, and the vindicator of British honour. When the new Parliament assembled on April 30, the Government had a substantial majority. Before the year was out, however, they were again defeated in the House of Commons and resigned.

This sudden and unexpected event was the result of the attempt on the life of Napoleon III. by the Italian Orsini, which took place on January 14, 1858. For the second time in his career Lord Palmerston was driven from office by circumstances connected with the French Emperor. When it was discovered that Orsini and his fellow-conspirators had hatched their plot in England, and that their bombs had been made in Birmingham, a great outcry arose in France against this country for the asylum granted to criminals of this character. Repre-

sentations were made to the British Government, 1858.
through the medium of the French Ambassador Æt. 55.
in London, urging that some action should be taken to prevent the preaching of murder under the sanction of the English law. At the same time some very offensive language about Great Britain was used by the Colonels of certain French regiments in presenting congratulatory addresses to the Emperor on his escape. Public opinion in England was deeply incensed, and the relations between the two countries became strained.

In the midst of this popular excitement, Lord Palmerston introduced into the House of Commons, on February 8, a Bill for the punishment of conspiracy to murder. The Bill was intensely unpopular, and when it came up for second Reading on February 19, Mr. Milner Gibson moved a resolution which, while it expressed detestation of Orsini's crime and a readiness to remedy any defects in the Criminal Law, concluded by expressing regret "that Her Majesty's Government, previously to inviting the House to amend the law of conspiracy at the present time, have not felt it their duty to make some reply to the important despatch received from the French Government, dated Paris, Jan. 22, 1858, and which has been laid before Parliament." This was a subtle vote of censure on the Government in terms calculated to secure the maximum of support, and it succeeded in its object. Lord Palmerston, realising the dangerous nature of the resolution,

1858. turned upon his critics with the fiercest indigna-
ÆT. 55. tion. All the domineering insolence which made him so popular in the country, but which was always resented by the House of Commons, found vent in a personal attack upon Mr. Gibson, and contributed to his defeat. Lord John Russell and Mr. Gladstone, as well as several independent Liberals, again voted against the Government, and the resolution was carried by a majority of nineteen.

The result of the debate was announced by Bulwer-Lytton in a letter to his son. He writes on Saturday, February 20 :—

You will see by the date of this that I write the day after the defeat, and, of course, resignation of Palmerston on Milner Gibson's motion. At present it is uncertain what is to be done, or who will succeed. Probably Lord John and the Liberals. This seems the natural result, the motion having emanated from their side and they having a large majority in the House. If the Liberals come in under Lord John, it would serve to unite the Conservatives, and probably increase their numbers in a short time. John Russell's difficulties with France would be great.

If the Government is offered to Derby, he would take it, but could be turned out in a day and his difficulties would also be very great.

Palmerston's fall last night gave occasion for the vent of all the hoarded animosities and contempt he has been long provoking. His last speech was uttered in a violent rage, with the most indecorous gesticulations ; and from all sides of the House there were disdainful groans of disgust. I never yet saw

a Prime Minister so greeted. Gibson spoke amazingly well. Gladstone really like a great orator; the House being with him, gave him the passion he often wants. 1858. ÆT. 55.

Perhaps, before I send this on Monday, I shall be able to tell you how things are decided. But it will be uphill work for any Government, and there will be a reaction towards Palmerston now he is out. The things that have hurt him most have been Clanricarde's appointment[1] and the whole of his conduct in this wretched French affair.

Sunday. Lord Derby is sent for and has accepted. Whether this will personally affect me, I know not. If it does, you will hear.

Bulwer-Lytton did not immediately take office in Lord Derby's Government, but a few weeks later, on Lord Ellenborough's resignation, he was offered, and accepted, the post of Secretary of State for the Colonies. His elevation to Cabinet office was associated with private embarrassments and afflictions of the most poignant kind, which will be explained in the next chapter.

[1] Lord Clanricarde was appointed Lord Privy Seal in succession to Lord Harrowby in January 1855. The appointment caused great public indignation, owing to the part which Lord Clanricarde had played in the unpleasant Handcock case.

CHAPTER IV

THE HARVEST OF BITTERNESS

1836–1858

There is no anguish like the hour,
Whatever else befall us,
When one the heart has raised to power
Exerts it but to gall us.

Lovers' Quarrels.

1836–1838. Æt. 33–35. It will be necessary in this chapter to make a final allusion to Bulwer-Lytton's relations with his wife subsequent to their separation, to show how bitter was the harvest produced by those seeds of discord which were sown while they lived together. It has already been mentioned that Lady Bulwer found it a task beyond her powers to live within the income of £400 a year, which was secured to her by the deed of separation. She accordingly sought to add to her means by writing. As, however, her pen was merely employed in the abuse of her husband and his mother, and as her mode of living in the two years which followed their separation caused her husband to regard her as an unfit guardian for her young children, he removed them from her keeping in 1838, and transferred to Miss

Greene the £100 a year which was allowed to her for their maintenance and education. This naturally still further embittered Lady Bulwer's feelings, and all the hatred which she felt for her husband was now extended to her old friend. The knowledge that Miss Greene had been the one true friend of her unhappy girlhood, her confidante and champion in early married life, her only comforter at the time of her separation, and the devoted guardian of her children since 1836, merely served to increase her rage and mortification, now that she regarded her as the servile agent of the man she hated. 1838–1844. Æt. 35–41.

After trying to console herself for her matrimonial misfortunes, first in Dublin and afterwards in Bath and Paris, in company which very seriously damaged her reputation, Lady Bulwer went to Switzerland in 1840 and lived for some years quietly at Geneva.

In 1844 the news that her husband had succeeded to his mother's estate revived once more her passionate resentment against him. This was still further intensified by receiving a communication from his lawyer that she was not entitled to adopt the surname of Lytton which her husband had assumed on his mother's death. Her own legal adviser not only assured her that she was within her rights in defying her husband's wishes in this matter, but urged her to return to England and sue him for an increased allowance on the grounds of his improved pecuniary position. Though she had not sufficient means to carry out

1847–1851. Æt. 44–48.

this suggestion at the time, it became from that moment the set purpose of her life. With the help of friends she returned to England in 1847, and spent all her energies and most of her income in repeated attempts to force her husband to pay her debts and increase her allowance.

The £400 a year which she received had been from the first secured to her by Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton on the proceeds of the Knebworth estate, and the transference of this property to her husband did not really increase his ability to pay it. Even if he had profited by his new inheritance to the extent which she believed, the campaign of blackmail by which she pursued her husband was the method least calculated to secure for herself any share of the profits. Owing to diminished rents caused by the heavy fall in the price of wheat, and the increasing cost of his children's education, Bulwer-Lytton's settled income was not in fact materially increased by his succession to his mother's estate ; and such additional means as he earned by his literary labours he was naturally little disposed to share with his most implacable enemy and bitterest traducer. In old days he had slaved himself almost to death to provide a comfortable and luxurious home for the wife whom he loved. The sacrifice of his own health for this object had then been willingly made ; but he was not likely to continue any such sacrifices now for a woman who lost no opportunity of assailing him both in public and private. To her threats,

therefore, he replied by counter-threats ; lawyers' letters continually passed from one to the other, and every species of insult was indulged in. Lady Lytton's language, however, became so violent, and her methods of attack so outrageous, that each of her many advisers sought in turn to restrain her. The moderating counsels of her friends were quite unsuccessful, and only brought down on their own heads the wrath which they tried to appear. One by one they were successively repudiated and replaced by others, so that Lady Lytton came to be almost exclusively engaged throughout her life in finding new champions and abusing her old ones.

1847–1851. Æt. 44–48.

The only means of terminating this miserable matrimonial feud was to be found in divorce. Whatever views may be held as to the sacredness and irrevocability of the marriage tie, few, I think, would deny that, in a case like this, the dissolution of the bond, with all the unpleasant publicity attaching to it, would have been preferable to the life-long campaign of hatred which the maintenance of the marriage entailed. But owing to the strange anomaly in the English divorce law, which refuses to dissolve a marriage where faults are committed by both the parties to it, divorce in this case was impossible. Either party was in a position to produce evidence sufficient to secure a divorce, but since the charges would have been mutual, the remedy, which by common sense was doubly required, was by law denied.

1847–1851. Æt. 44–48.

A perusal of all the papers relating to this unhappy quarrel leaves no possible doubt that Lady Lytton's mind became at last completely unhinged by the continued indulgence of her hatred. She was obsessed with the idea that she was being hunted and persecuted. Almost every one who spoke to her she took for an agent or spy of her husband, and this delusion sometimes led her into making the most libellous attacks upon perfectly innocent persons unacquainted either with herself or her husband. On one occasion, for instance, a lady whom Sir Edward had never seen or even heard of, came to Taunton for the purpose of giving some lectures, and she sent a prospectus to Lady Lytton among other persons residing in Taunton, whose patronage she desired to obtain. Lady Lytton, on receipt of this lady's card and the prospectus, immediately accused her of being a discarded mistress of her husband and a person of notoriously evil life, masquerading under a false name.

A favourite practice of hers was to address letters to her husband, the envelopes of which were covered with scurrilous and obscene inscriptions, and she sometimes dispatched as many as twenty of these in one day, all duplicates, and addressed to the House of Commons, to his clubs, to town and country addresses, to hotels—anywhere, in fact, where they were likely to be seen by others. She did not even confine this particular form of attack to her husband, but sent similar letters

to all his friends. Lord Lyndhurst, Sir Francis Doyle, Dickens, Forster, Disraeli, and others all received these scandalous documents, with the result that they appealed to Sir Edward to place his wife under restraint. 1847–1851. Æt. 44–48.

The impression created upon me by the sight of some of the letters, which it has been my painful task to read through, is that of opening a drawer full of dead wasps. Their venom is now powerless to hurt, but they still produce a shudder and feeling of disgust. The shame with which I have read them to-day, my strong desire to have them buried out of sight, my dread lest they should be seen by any other eyes, enable me to form some conception of the abhorrence which they must have excited in the mind of their recipient.

In 1851, on the occasion of the performance of Bulwer-Lytton's play at Devonshire House, in aid of the Guild of Literature, Lady Lytton wrote to the Duke of Devonshire stating that "she would enter his house disguised as an orange woman and pelt the Queen with rotten eggs," and accusing Her Majesty of being "the cold-blooded murderess of Lady Flora Hastings." At the same time she wrote a longer and even more outrageous letter to Charles Dickens in similar terms. The Duke of Devonshire was consequently obliged to employ detective police to guard against this outrage.

The scandal of these proceedings at last became insupportable. The knowledge that

1851–1858. it was the sacrifices which he had made for
Æt. 48–55. her sake, the love which he had once felt for her which gave this woman the power to wound him so deeply; the realisation that the chains by which, in defiance of his mother's warnings and advice, he had bound himself to her could never be loosed; that it was his money which she was paying to unscrupulous lawyers, obscure publishers, and newspaper editors for the purpose of defaming his character; that it was his name which she was dragging through the mire—all this was peculiarly bitter to a man of Bulwer-Lytton's temperament. To live with this skeleton in his cupboard was a trial requiring all the courage and endurance of one so sensitive to criticism, so proud, so shy—one who had an even exaggerated horror of public scandal, whose social, literary and political position caused him to be much talked about, and whose public duties necessitated constant intercourse with others. But when the cupboard door was forced open, when the skeleton walked abroad, mocked him in the streets, insulted him wherever he went, shrieked at him from the daily press, and molested even his friends and acquaintances, the trial was beyond endurance. If he went into society, his friends met him with fresh evidence of the scandal which hung round his life. He could not enter the House of Commons or attend the meetings of the Cabinet, without the fear that one of his colleagues might hand him some obscene and abusive communication just received from his wife.

In these circumstances, and as much for the protection of his friends as of himself, Sir Edward began to make inquiries as to the powers which he might possess of placing his wife under restraint. At the end of March, 1858, he drew up a statement of Lady Lytton's conduct since their separation, and submitted this, together with specimens of her written libels, to several medical men. They all agreed that these documents furnished undeniable proofs of the derangement of her intellect. Amongst his papers I find written opinions from six different doctors that Lady Lytton was of unsound mind and ought to be placed under medical supervision. The inquiries were not completed when Bulwer-Lytton was subjected to the most galling public insult which he had yet received. 1851–1858. Æt. 48–55.

When in 1858 Lord Stanley was transferred to the India Office, vacated by the resignation of Lord Ellenborough, Lord Derby invited Bulwer-Lytton to join his newly formed Ministry as Secretary of State for the Colonies. The acceptance of this office necessitated an election at Hertford, and, in his new capacity of Minister of the Crown, Bulwer-Lytton went to meet his constituents. The seat was not contested, and the nomination was fixed for June 8. On the 7th Lady Lytton left Taunton and travelled *via* Oxford to Bedford; from there she drove by night to Hertford, taking with her about one hundred large poster bills inviting the electors to meet her in the Town Hall at noon. She arrived at Hertford

1858. Æt. 55. at four in the morning of June 8, and at once engaged a bill-sticker to attach her bills in various parts of the town. As soon as the Under-Sheriff heard of this, he ordered the posters to be taken down, and took possession of the remaining ones.

All this was done in the early hours of the morning before the inhabitants were astir. The election took place not in the Town Hall but in a field outside the town. At the moment when Sir Edward was returning thanks for his re-election, Lady Lytton arrived upon the scene. Advancing hurriedly through the crowd, she called out in a loud voice, "Make way for the member's wife." She then addressed some very violent language to Sir Edward, shaking her fist at him and shouting, "It is a disgrace to the country to make such a man Secretary for the Colonies." Her husband, overcome with shame and horror at the sight of this wild apparition, left the field. Lady Lytton then mounted the platform and harangued the assembled crowd in a very excited manner, exclaiming, "How can the people of England submit to have such a man at the head of the Colonies, who ought to have been in the Colonies as a transport long ago. He murdered my child and tried to murder me. The very clothes I stand up in were supplied to me by a friend." After this scene she returned to London and took the night train back to Taunton.

Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton now determined to take immediate steps to have a medical ex-

amination of his wife's mental condition, with a view to preventing a recurrence of these outrages. He sought the assistance of Mr. Hale Thomson, and after submitting to him the documents which he had put together, asked him to pay a visit to Taunton, and in conjunction with Mr. Woodford, a local doctor, to examine Lady Lytton and give an opinion as to her sanity, at the same time cautioning him to certify nothing which he could not support. The two medical men had a three hours' interview with Lady Lytton; and on his return to town Mr. Hale Thomson said he was not satisfied as to the extent of the unsoundness of her mind. As he was leaving she gave him the following letter. 1858. Æt. 55.

CLARKE'S CASTLE HOTEL, TAUNTON,
June 12, 1858.

DEAR SIR—I have only to repeat to you in writing what I had said *viva voce* and what has been represented to him, alas, in vain so often before, that let Sir Edward Lytton pay the debts of sixteen years' standing which his ceaseless persecutions have entailed upon me—to wit £2500, and allow me £500 a year for the remainder of my miserable existence (not his), pledging himself stringently, that is legally, not to molest or malign me directly or indirectly, and I solemnly pledge myself (being at full liberty to live and go where I please) never even to mention his name verbally or otherwise. Believe me, dear Sir, Yours truly,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

In the course of the following week Mr. Hale Thomson received four long letters from

1858. Æt. 55. Lady Lytton of a violent and excited kind, full of the most monstrous allegations, and rambling reiterations of her imagined persecutions. In the last letter, dated June 22, she threatened to come to London on the following day, and, unless her terms were accepted, to collect a crowd outside the Colonial Office and denounce her husband.

On receipt of this letter, Mr. Hale Thomson communicated with Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton, and expressed his opinion that the extent of his wife's insanity was such that it was his duty to have her placed under restraint. Sir Edward had to attend a Cabinet meeting that morning and left the matter in the hands of his son, his solicitor, and Mr. Thomson, giving them full authority to act as they thought fit. Robert Lytton and the solicitor therefore called on Dr. Gardiner Hill, who kept a private nursing home for mentally defective patients at Inverness Lodge, Brentford, and arranged with him to be in London with proper assistance at 5 o'clock to receive Lady Lytton into his house as a patient. When she arrived at Mr. Hale Thomson's house by appointment in the afternoon of June 23, Lady Lytton was informed that arrangements had been made for her removal to Inverness Lodge as a person of unsound mind, on the medical certificate of Mr. Thomson and Mr. Ross. She naturally protested vehemently against such action, but, since the requirements of the law had been complied with, she was powerless to resist and therefore drove off quietly with Dr. Gardiner

Hill to his Home at Brentford. She was kept there for three weeks and treated with the utmost kindness and consideration. Her Taunton landlady, Mrs. Clarke, accompanied her; her solicitor and Miss Ryves, her friend of those days, had access to her whenever they wished; she made great friends with Dr. Hill's little girl, who kept her company most of the day; and in fact she enjoyed as much liberty as was compatible with the necessary supervision of a certified lunatic. 1858. Æt. 55.

Although there was nothing harsh, cruel, or tyrannical about Lady Lytton's treatment at Inverness Lodge, it was an act of supreme unwisdom on her husband's part to send her there. That his wife's mental equilibrium was thoroughly unsettled, that she suffered from delusions, that her libels and obscenities constituted a form of molestation from which he felt it his duty to protect not only himself but his friends and colleagues in the Government is indisputable. But the question was not whether two doctors could be found to certify her as a lunatic, for probably much more eminent and authoritative men than those actually consulted would have been prepared to do this, but whether the unsoundness of her mind was of the kind to justify her forcible detention even in a private home, and whether it would be possible to keep her there in face of the outcry which would inevitably be raised as soon as the fact was made public. It was a matter for lawyers and men of

1858. Æt. 55. the world rather than for doctors, and as subsequent events proved, Bulwer-Lytton was singularly badly advised in the course which he adopted.

After three weeks the mistake was apparent even to its authors. The matter had been taken up by the London and provincial press. Articles appeared in the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Somerset Gazette*, and the *Hertfordshire Gazette*, demanding a public inquiry into the circumstances of Lady Lytton's detention, and severely criticising the action of the Colonial Secretary. To appear in Court with public opinion prepossessed in her favour and unfold before a jury the story of her wrongs, to force her husband to appear and answer her charges, to cross-examine him upon all the incidents of his private life, and obtain a wide publicity for her accusations against him, was the very course which Lady Lytton would most have welcomed, and which consequently Sir Edward most desired to avoid. His colleagues in the Ministry became apprehensive of a sensational social scandal which might render his resignation inevitable, and all those who were at first most eager for the restraint of the "tigress of Taunton" were now the most concerned to find a means of escape from the consequences of their advice.

In this crisis Robert Lytton came to his father's rescue. He had witnessed the scene at the Hertford Election, which was the first occasion on which he had seen his mother since his

childhood. He had himself suffered from the same kind of persecution as his father, for he had received letters from her in his various diplomatic posts addressed to "that white-livered little reptile, Robert Lytton," and he shared the responsibility for her detention as a lunatic. He now offered, if his mother could be released, to take her abroad and try and bring her to a calmer frame of mind. The suggestion was welcomed by both his parents; the doctors who three weeks previously had certified Lady Lytton insane now certified that she was fit to be released, and that a journey abroad with her son would probably have very beneficial results on her state of health; a public scandal was avoided and everybody was satisfied. 1858. Æt. 55.

Lady Lytton's acceptance of the arrangement was the more readily obtained because Sir Edward at last consented to pay her debts and increase her allowance to £500 a year.[1] She left Inverness Lodge on July 17, and in company with Miss Ryves and her son, she travelled *via* Paris to Bordeaux, where they stayed about a month, proceeding at the end of August to Luchon.

If kindness, gentleness, patience, and sympathy could have healed the wounds in Lady Lytton's heart she had found at last one who was ready to administer to her lavishly all these salves. If the disputes and misunderstandings, the accumulated charges and countercharges of twenty-

[1] After the death of her husband in 1873, Lady Lytton's allowance was further increased to £700 a year by her son.

1858. five years could have been disposed of finally by
Æt. 55. the judgment of a perfectly just and unprejudiced judge, both parents might without reserve have submitted their case to the son who now volunteered his services as mediator. But the trouble was too deep-seated for any such treatment. Each parent wanted a champion, not an arbitrator, and their test of championship was unrestrained abuse of the opposite party.

The only terms, however, on which Robert Lytton could accept the rôle of *deus ex machina* was the immediate cessation on the part of both his parents of their mutual recriminations, and neither would agree to these terms. Had he combined in his own person all the knowledge of the most experienced man of the world, all the skill of the most highly-trained brain specialist, and all the resourcefulness of the most accomplished lawyer, he could hardly have succeeded in these circumstances. As the offspring of the two warring natures whom he wished to reconcile his task was impossible. His father wrote to him by almost every post long and bitter recitals of the events which had darkened his life and turned his love into hatred, accompanying them all with the assurance that nothing would satisfy him but a complete recantation and apology which it was now the duty of his son to obtain. His mother, on the other hand, poured into his ears daily the story of her grievances in language of the bitterest invective.

Placed thus between Scylla and Charibdis,

Robert Lytton tried at first to steer a middle course. In replies to his father he pointed out the partial and one-sided nature of the communications which he had received from him, and insisted that peace in the future could only be obtained by a mutual determination to bury the past. To his mother he replied equally emphatically that the only condition on which he would consent to remain in her company was that she should refrain from all abuse of his father. The result was that instead of reconciling either parent to the other he only lost the confidence of both. 1858. Æt. 55.

Utterly miserable though this situation made him, he would not abandon his mission or accept definitely and finally the cause of either mother or father until circumstances decided the matter for him, leaving him no choice.

The ultimate issue was brought about by Lady Lytton herself. She had left the custody of Dr. Gardiner Hill ostensibly as a free agent, in full possession of her faculties, and having voluntarily undertaken a journey on the Continent in company with her son and a female friend. By the doctors, however, her conditional release had only been sanctioned in the belief that it would have a more calming effect upon her mind than her continued detention; and the journey was regarded as a curative experiment upon a patient who still required careful attention. As subsequent events proved, Lady Lytton was not really in a condition to be treated as a rational

1858. Æt. 55.

human being.[1] Her feelings at first were a mixture of triumph at the failure of her husband's plans, and excitement at the prospect of the foreign journey with a man to look after her and provide for her. Both these feelings were no doubt intensified by the knowledge that that man was her son whom she might perhaps succeed in withdrawing from his father's influence and binding to her own cause. She wrote to her friends expressing herself as entirely happy and satisfied, and she assured her son that in the sunshine of his presence all the shadows of her life had melted away.

By degrees this new affection, like all the emotions of her nature, grew into a passion. She wrote to her son, almost daily, effusive expressions of her love, little notes after parting with him at night or to greet him in the morning. Then suddenly one day without the slightest provocation the weathercock of her passions veered completely round; she received him with a paroxysm of rage and poured upon him such a torrent of abuse that he was obliged to leave the house and take posthorses to Toulouse. There he delayed for a few days, and letters were interchanged which painfully recall the correspondence of husband and wife just before their separation. For one moment Lady Lytton is abject in her misery and contrition, the next she resumes her torrent of vituperation. Eventually

[1] Lady Lytton's condition is exactly described in the words Macaulay applies to George Fox, the founder of the sect of Quakers: "With an intellect in the most unhappy of all states, that is to say, too much disordered for liberty, and not sufficiently disordered for Bedlam."

Robert Lytton made his way to Paris, where his mother rejoined him. There a last unhappy interview took place between them, and they parted never to meet again. The son returned to The Hague to resume his official duties, and the mother returned to Taunton to resume the story of her blighted life. To the tale of her sufferings, real and imaginary, was henceforth added the chapter of her kidnapping and forcible incarceration in a lunatic asylum. In the eyes of those who heard only her version of the facts her husband became a greater fiend than ever, and between these implacable foes no truce was ever called on this side of the grave. 1858. Æt. 55.

Since their death [1] a whole generation has passed away, and of the fire of controversy in which their lives were consumed the last sparks are now extinguished. It is not for me, the grandson of both, to pass any judgment. I can only put together such materials as have survived to assist others to do what was not possible to the contemporary partisans, namely, to base their judgment upon a full knowledge of the facts. No human judgment can be wholly just, because all human knowledge is necessarily incomplete. In our own concerns it is impossible to divest ourselves of the partiality of an advocate, but the more we learn of the tragedies of other lives the more clearly we see that the highest justice consists not in blaming or forgiving but in understanding.

[1] Lady Lytton died at Upper Sydenham on March 12, 1882, in her eightieth year.

CHAPTER V

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES

1858–1859

> Were you ever in public, my dear reader? Did you ever resign your private comforts as man in order to share the public troubles of mankind? If ever you have so departed from the Lucretian philosophy, just look back—was it life at all that you lived? Were you an individual existence—a passenger in the railway?—or were you merely an indistinct portion of that common flame which heated the boiler and generated the steam that set off the monster train?
>
> *My Novel.*

1858–1859. Æt. 55–56.

BULWER-LYTTON's tenure of the Office of Secretary of State for the Colonies was short and not particularly eventful. The Government of which he was a member was in a minority during the whole period, and was kept in power only by the dissensions among their Liberal opponents. Most of their work, therefore, consisted in carrying on the measures which had already been commenced by their predecessors. The new Colonial Secretary gave the closest attention to the work of his Department, and established the friendliest relations, both with his permanent officials and with the Colonial Governors with whom he was brought in contact. His Under-Secretary was Lord Carnarvon, of whom he had the highest opinion. His opinion is recorded in

the following terms in an endorsement of their correspondence made in 1869 :— 1858–1859. Æt. 55–56.

Lord Carnarvon was Under-Secretary of the Colonies to me. Very accomplished, very honourable, very hardworking, very ambitious, very sensitive to praise or censure. He has, therefore, the qualities that ensure no mean success in public life. If he attain the highest hereafter it will be in spite of a certain want of vigour in his style of speaking, and of virile grasp of thought in difficult occasions, as compared with one or two of his contemporaries. But he is a safer man than any of them that has yet appeared in tranquil times.

He also wrote to one of his permanent officials at the Colonial Office in the spring of 1859 :—

Lord Carnarvon demands my warmest thanks and praise for his generous uncomplaining industry—*il ira loin*—by far the first young man of his rank in public life.

The permanent Under-Secretary at the Colonial Office at this time was Sir Frederick Rogers (afterwards Lord Blachford) who, in a letter to his daughter, thus refers to his political chiefs :—

Both Lord Carnarvon and Sir Edward Lytton work very hard ; Sir Edward writes perfect volumes of minutes, and then tells me that he learnt two great maxims in life, one to write as little as possible, and the other to say as little as possible !

Bulwer-Lytton was, in fact, a writer by profession. It was as a man of letters that he is

1858–1859. Æt. 55–56.

known to fame, and, though he earned a great reputation as an orator, his speeches were rather the products of a literary mind than of political genius. They were written out in full, and delivered from memory with elaborate and studied gestures. The manuscripts of those which were delivered, and of many others which were never spoken, are preserved among his papers, and may be regarded as oratorical essays on the various matters with which they deal, remarkable for their sound common sense and vigorous expression. Of his manner of speaking a very interesting description is given in William White's *Inner Life of the House of Commons*.[1] White was for many years doorkeeper of the House of Commons, a position which enabled him to study the individual habits and peculiarities of the chief speakers of that day. Of Bulwer-Lytton he writes :—

> . . . He always walks about in that abstracted manner, rather stooping, his hat on the back of his head, his hands thrust into his trouser pockets, and his eyes cast downwards—looking for all the world as if he fancied that he had lost something, and was searching on the ground and feeling for it in his pockets at the same time. It is generally known about the House when he is going to speak, as he then wanders about more abstractedly than usual. The Hon. Baronet is not an effective speaker ; not, however, because his matter is not good, but because his action spoils all. It is well known that he studies his speeches carefully

[1] Edited, in 1897, by Justin MacCarthy.

beforehand—would that he would, under proper guidance, study how to deliver them! His manner is this: He begins a sentence, standing upright, in his usual tone; as he gets to the middle he throws himself backwards, until you would fancy that he must tumble over, and gradually raises his voice to its highest pitch. He then begins to lower his tone and bring his body forwards, so that at the finish of the sentence his head nearly touches his knees, and the climax of the sentence is lost in a whisper; and yet, notwithstanding this serious drawback, there are but few members whose speeches are comparable to Sir Edward's. Strange that a man who thinks it worth his while to get up his matter carefully should pay so little attention to his manner.

1858–1859. ÆT. 55–56.

White's criticism of Bulwer-Lytton's articulation is not exactly corroborated by others who have described his speaking to me. All accounts agree that his gestures were somewhat extravagant, the most common of which was to raise his arm straight up above his head and bring it down again with a kind of sawing motion, and I have also heard that his voice was loud and not well modulated. But the complaint that he was difficult to hear is new to me; such a defect is hard to reconcile with the enthusiastic applause which his speeches undoubtedly evoked. A speech which is not well heard is seldom well received, and the reception given to Bulwer-Lytton's speeches was always in the highest degree appreciative. They were not only loudly cheered by his own side, but also praised by his opponents.

1858–1859. Æt. 55–56.

His year of Office was but an incident in a literary career, and though his departmental work was conscientiously fulfilled, it was thoroughly uncongenial. During the whole time he was harassed to distraction by the painful circumstances described in the last chapter, and this private affliction, combined with the arduous labours of Parliament and Office, so affected his health that by the end of 1858 he was quite unfit to continue his official work. While he was Secretary of State, however, several important changes took place in Colonial administration, of which some mention must be made.

The two Colonies which chiefly occupied his attention were Australia and Canada, and in both these Colonies there are flourishing towns to-day which bear his name. Almost his first official act was the abolition of the old mail contract with Australia, which had proved ineffectual and troublesome, and one of his last acts was the separation of Queensland from New South Wales, and the appointment of Sir George Bowen to the Governorship of the new Colony.

The letter confirming this appointment was described by Sir George Bowen as "an admirable compendium of the duties of a Colonial Governor," and he added: "I attribute in no slight degree the success of my career to my strict adherence to the advice given in this letter. It would be well that it should be published, if it were only that future Colonial Governors may have the advantage of studying it."

LETTER TO SIR GEORGE BOWEN

1858–1859. Æt. 55–56.

Although this letter has been quoted in the Prefatory Memoir prefixed to Bulwer-Lytton's collected speeches, I think it well for the sake of the completeness of this Biography to reproduce it here :—

Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton to Sir George Bowen.

GREAT MALVERN,
April 29, 1859.

DEAR SIR GEORGE BOWEN—I have the pleasure to inform you that the Queen approves of your appointment to Moreton Bay, which will henceforth bear the appellation of Queensland. Accept my congratulations, and my assurances of the gratification it gives me to have promoted you to a post in which your talents will find ample scope.

There is not much to learn beforehand for your guidance in this new colony. The most anxious and difficult question connected with it will be the "squatters." But in this, which is an irritating contest between rival interests, you will wisely abstain as much as possible from interference. Avoid taking part with one or the other. Ever be willing to lend aid to conciliatory settlement; but, in order to secure that aid, you must be strictly impartial. Remember that the first care of a Governor in a free colony is to shun the reproach of being a party man. Give all parties and all the ministries formed the fairest play.

Mark and study the idiosyncrasies of the community; every community has some peculiar to itself. Then, in your public addresses, appeal to those which are the noblest;—the noblest are always the most universal and the most durable. They are peculiar to no party.

Let your thoughts never be distracted from the

1858–1859. Æt. 55–56.

paramount object of finance. All States thrive in proportion to the administration of revenue.

You will, as soon as possible, exert all energy and persuasion to induce the colonists to see to their self-defence internally. Try to establish a good police; if you can then get the superior class of colonists to assist in forming a militia or volunteer corps spare no pains to do so.

It is at the commencement of colonies that this object can be best effected. A colony that is once accustomed to depend on imperial soldiers for aid against riots, &c., never grows up into vigorous manhood. Witness the West Indian colonies.

Education the colonists will be sure to provide for. So they will for religion.

Do your best always to keep up the pride in the mother country. Throughout all Australia there is a sympathy with the ideal of a gentleman. This gives a moral aristocracy. Sustain it by showing the store set on integrity, honour, and civilised manners; not by preferences of birth, which belong to old countries.

Whenever any distinguished members of your colony come to England give them letters of introduction, and a private one to the Secretary of State, whoever he may be. This last is not sufficiently done in colonies; but all Secretaries of State who are fit for the office should desire it. You may quote my opinion to this effect to my successors.

As regards despatches, your experience in the Ionian Islands will tell you how much is avoided in despatches that may be made public, and done in private letters. This practice is at present carried to inconvenience and abuse. Questions affecting free colonies may come before Parliament, of which no public documents whatever afford the slightest explanation.

The communications from a Government should be fourfold :—

1st. *Public* despatches.

2nd. *Confidential*—intended for publication if at all required.

3rd. *Confidential* — not to be published unless *absolutely necessary* for defence of *measures by yourself and the Home Department.*

4th. *Letters strictly private*—and these, if frank to a Minister or to an Under-Secretary like Mr. Merivale, should be guarded to *friends*, and touch as little as possible upon names and parties in the colony. A Government may rely on the discretion of a Department, never on that of private correspondents.

5th. As you will have a free press, you will have some papers that may be abusive. Never be thin-skinned about these ; laugh them off. Be pointedly courteous to all editors and writers—acknowledging socially their craft and its importance. The more you treat people as gentlemen the more "they will behave as such."

After all, men are governed as much by the heart as by the head. Evident sympathy in the progress of the colony ; traits of kindness, generosity, devoted energy, where required for the public weal ; a pure exercise of patronage ; an utter absence of vindictiveness or spite ; the fairness that belongs to magnanimity—these are the qualities that make governors powerful, while men merely sharp and clever may be weak and detested.

But there is one rule which I find pretty universal in colonies. The governor who is the least *huffy*, and who is most careful not to overgovern, is the one who has the most authority. Enforce civility upon all minor officials. Courtesy is a duty public servants owe to the humblest member of the public.

Pardon all these desultory hints which I daresay

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may seem to you as old as the hills; and wishing you all health and enjoyment in the far land, believe me,—Yours very truly,

E. B. Lytton.

P.S.—Get all the details of the squatter question from the Department—master them thoroughly. Convert the jealousies now existing between Moreton Bay and Sydney into emulation. Your recollection of the old Greek States will tell you what strides States can take through emulation. I need not say that the sooner you go out to the new colony the better.

You are aware that since I have been in this office I have changed the old colonial uniform for the same as that worn in the imperial service. I consider it a great point to assimilate the two services in outward emblems of dignity. The Queen's servant is the Queen's servant, whether at Westminster or at the antipodes. You will have, therefore, to get a new dress. When do you wish to go?

E. B. L.

The most important act of Bulwer-Lytton's Colonial administration was the incorporation of British Columbia as a new Colony on the North American Continent. This step was prompted by the necessity of providing some form of government for the preservation of order among the immigrants who had lately been attracted to this district by the discovery of gold on the banks of the Fraser River. Vancouver Island had been placed under the jurisdiction of the Hudson Bay Company in 1849. The Company were given a monopoly of trade as well as all the responsibilities of Government in the Island for a period

of ten years, but their jurisdiction did not extend to the mainland, the territory of which had not as yet been colonised. This territory stretched from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean, and from the sources of the Fraser River to the American boundary. It was known to be rich in minerals, well covered with timber, and to contain valuable fisheries, as well as good agricultural soil ; but until 1856 there had been no attempt to develop the country, which was almost exclusively inhabited by Indians. In that year it was announced that gold had been discovered along the Fraser, Thompson, and Columbia rivers, and soon afterwards an immigration of gold-seekers from America took place. 1858–1859. Æt. 55–56.

In December, 1857, the Governor of Vancouver Island issued a proclamation, declaring the rights of the Crown to the gold in this district, establishing licence fees for diggers, and prohibiting any digging without authority from the Colonial Government. As, however, the Governor had no jurisdiction whatever upon the mainland, his proclamation was ignored ; the immigration of gold-diggers rapidly increased, and the Hudson Bay Company appealed to the Home Government to establish some authority to preserve order and protect life and property among the new settlers.

On July 8, 1858, therefore, Bulwer-Lytton introduced a Bill into the House of Commons for this purpose. The Bill proposed to empower the Crown for five years to make laws for the

1858–1859. district, with a view to the establishment of a
Æt. 55–56. representative Government at the end of that period.

The passing of this Bill led eventually to the establishment of a new Colony and the development and settlement of one of the richest districts in the present Dominion of Canada. In the concluding words of his speech on the second Reading of the Bill, the new Colonial Secretary foreshadowed the future prosperity of the new territory :—

"I do believe," he said, "that the day will come, and that many now present will live to see it, when a portion at least of the lands on the other side of the Rocky Mountains being also brought into colonisation, and guarded by free institutions, one direct line of railway communication will unite the Pacific to the Atlantic. Be that as it may, of one thing I am sure—that though at present it is the desire of gold which attracts to this colony its eager and impetuous founders, still, if it be reserved, as I hope, to add a permanent and flourishing race to the great family of nations, it must be, not by the gold which the diggers may bring to light, but by the more gradual process of patient industry in the culture of the soil, and in the exchange of commerce ; it must be by the respect for the equal laws which secure to every man the power to retain what he may honestly acquire ; it must be in the exercise of those social virtues by which the fierce impulse of force is tamed into habitual energy, and avarice itself, amidst the strife of competition, finds its objects best realised by steadfast emulation and prudent thrift. I conclude, Sir, with a humble trust that the Divine Disposer of all human events may afford the

safeguard of His blessing to our attempt to add another community of Christian freemen to those by which Great Britain confides the records of her empire, not to pyramids and obelisks, but to states and commonwealths whose history shall be written in her language." 1858–1859. Æt. 55–56.

The interest which Bulwer-Lytton took in the new Colony and the high hopes which he formed of its future prosperity, are further illustrated by a speech which he made to a detachment of Engineers on their embarkation at Portsmouth for British Columbia. After attending a Council at Osborne, summoned for the purpose of ratifying the new arrangements, Bulwer-Lytton went on board the ship at Portsmouth, and addressed the following words of encouragement to the sappers and miners who were about to sail in her :—

Soldiers—I have come to say to you a few kind words of parting.

You are going to a distant country, not, I trust, to fight against men, but to conquer nature ; not to besiege cities, but to create them ; not to overthrow kingdoms, but to assist in establishing new communications under the sceptre of your own Queen.

For these noble objects, you, soldiers of the Royal Engineers, have been especially selected from the ranks of Her Majesty's armies. Wherever you go you carry with you not only English valour and English loyalty, but English intelligence and English skill. Wherever a difficulty is to be encountered which requires in the soldiers not only courage and discipline, but education and science, sappers and miners, the Sovereign of England turns with confidence to you. If this were

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a service of danger and bloodshed, I know that on every field and against all odds, the honour of the English arms would be safe from a stain in your hands; but in that distant region to which you depart, I hope that our national flag will wave in peaceful triumph on many a Royal birthday, from walls and church towers, which you will have assisted to raise from the wilderness, and will leave to remote generations as the bloodless trophies of your renown.

Soldiers, you will be exposed to temptation; you go where gold is discovered, where avarice inflames all the passions, but I know that the voice of duty and the love of honour will keep you true to your officers, and worthy of the trust which your Sovereign places in Her Royal Engineers. For my part, as one of the Queen's Ministers, I promise that all which can conduce to your comfort and fairly reward your labours, shall be thoughtfully considered. You have heard from my distinguished friend, your Commanding officer, that every man amongst you who shall have served six years in British Columbia, and receives at the end of that time a certificate of good conduct, will be entitled, if he desire to become a resident in the Colony, to thirty acres of land, ay, and of fertile land in that soil which you will have assisted to bring into settlement and cultivation. In the strange and wild district to which you are bound, you will meet with men of all countries, of all characters and kinds. You will aid in preserving peace and order, not by your numbers, not by mere force, but by the respect which is due to the arms of England, and the spectacle of your own discipline and good conduct. You will carefully refrain from quarrel or brawl. You will scorn, I am sure, the vice which degrades God's rational creature to the level of the brute—I mean the vice of intoxication. I am told that is the vice which most tempts common soldiers.

I hope not—but I am sure it is the vice which least tempts thoughtful, intelligent, successful men. You are not common soldiers—you are to be the Pioneers of Civilization. 1858–1859. Æt. 55–56.

Nothing more counteracts the taste for drink than the taste for instruction, and Colonel Moody will endeavour to form for your amusement and profit in hours of leisure a suitable collection of books. I beg to offer my contribution to that object, and I offer it not as a public Minister, out of public monies, but in my private capacity as a lover of literature myself, and your friend and well-wisher.

Farewell. Heaven speed and prosper you. The enterprise before you is indeed glorious. Ages hence industry and commerce will crowd the roads that you will have made; travellers from all nations will halt on the bridges you will have first flung over solitary rivers, and gaze on gardens and cornfields that you will have first carved from the wilderness; Christian races will dwell in the cities of which you will map the sites and lay the foundations. You go not as the enemies, but as the benefactors of the land you visit, and children unborn will, I believe, bless the hour when Queen Victoria sent forth her sappers and miners to found a second England on the shores of the Pacific.

In the following year, 1859, the monopoly of the Hudson Bay Company expired, and Bulwer-Lytton had to carry through the difficult and delicate negotiations of restoring to the Crown the administration of those districts which had hitherto been controlled by the Company.

The other chief items of his Colonial policy included the passing of an Encumbered Estates Bill for the West Indian Colonies, the settlement

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of a long-standing dispute with France by the exchange of Portendio for Albuda, and the despatch of Mr. Gladstone on a special mission to the Ionian Islands.

The High Commissioner of these Islands was at that time Sir John Young, and the inhabitants, who were under a British Protectorate, but ardently desired to be united to Greece, expressed their dissatisfaction with Sir John Young's administration. It was necessary to investigate these complaints, and Bulwer-Lytton was extremely fortunate in persuading Mr. Gladstone to undertake the task. The negotiations on the subject of this mission, and the correspondence with the Queen, Lord Derby, and Mr. Gladstone about it, form the greater part of the papers which Bulwer-Lytton has preserved, relating to his official work. The details of the mission, however, belong rather to the life of Mr. Gladstone, by whose biographer they have been fully described,[1] than to this story ; and all that need be mentioned here is that Mr. Gladstone, finding the Islanders bent upon incorporation with Greece, and having no authority to satisfy their wishes in this respect, returned to England and reported the facts to the Government. Both Gladstone and Bulwer-Lytton had strong Hellenic sympathies, and realised that the wishes of the Islanders could not be ignored, but there were difficulties in the way of satisfying them at that time. A change of Governors, therefore, was

[1] *Life of Gladstone*, by John Morley, Book iv., chap. x.

the only result. Sir John Young was recalled, and Sir Henry Storks was sent out as High Commissioner in his place. 1858–1859. Æt. 55–56.

The question of the Ionian Islands occupied the autumn months of 1858, and by the end of the year occurred the breakdown in Bulwer-Lytton's health already referred to. On December 16 he wrote to Lord Derby, tendering his resignation. He explained that having been increasingly ill ever since the end of the session, his doctor had now definitely warned him that the consequences would be serious if he did not immediately take a complete rest, and added :—

> I feel, therefore, whatever my personal regrets may be, that it is due to you and to the Government rather to retire at once, while you have deliberate leisure to make arrangements for my successor, than incur the too probable danger of failing to yourself and the public service at, perhaps, the very time when any kind of change might carry with it the greatest inconvenience.
>
> In quitting a post in which I had hoped to be useful, and colleagues for whom I entertain every sentiment of esteem and sympathy, while I do not attempt to conceal my mortification and regrets, I am not without some consolations. I trust that the zeal and assiduity by which, in my Department, I have sought to remedy defects of experience, will be generally acknowledged. I believe that I have smoothed some difficulties from the way of my successor ; and I am not aware of any measure adopted by me which Parliament will think to the discredit of the Ministers by whom I was recommended to the choice of the Sovereign.

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I shall venture also to indulge a hope, from which I derive indeed no slight support under the pain the present letter costs me—that, by sufficient repose while yet in time, I may so far recover health and strength as to be enabled, during the debates of the session, to render some little aid to the Government as an independent Member of Parliament.

Let me conclude by sincerely thanking you for all the kindness I have received at your hands during my tenure of office, and leaving it to your Lordship to tender my resignation to her Majesty.

At the same time he wrote to Disraeli:—

My dear Disraeli—I will ask you to read the enclosed note from Dr. Reed, the physician who has attended me for nearly twelve years. It is the key to the letter I have felt reluctantly compelled to address to Lord Derby, and of which also I enclose you a copy. In quitting office, I trust that I may yet often, at need, be found near you in the field of party strife; and with the most affectionate wishes for your prosperity and fame in the official career in which my physical strength foils the earnest desire not to part from your side, that has long assisted me to suppress the sense of physical suffering,—Believe me, most truly yours,

E. B. Lytton.

His letter to Lord Derby was acknowledged as follows:—

Knowsley, *Dec.* 19, 1858.

My dear Sir Edward—I need hardly say with how much regret I have received the unexpected intelligence brought me by your messenger this morning. I regret it, not less for the cause which you

assign, than for the loss which the Government will sustain by your retirement, and the embarrassment which would be caused by any change at this time, but more especially by one which deprives us of the services of a colleague who, during the short time he has held Office, has performed the duties of his Department with so much ability and success as you have done. Still, the reasons which you assign for your decision are such as it would probably be in vain, and perhaps would hardly be justifiable in me, to endeavour to combat. Only let me *entreat* you not to make your determination known to anyone, and take no step towards carrying it into effect, until I shall have had time to look about me, and to consider in what manner I may best mitigate the serious inconvenience which must be caused by a change. You will, of course, allow me to communicate confidentially with Disraeli, who, as Leader of the House of Commons, has the deepest interest in this matter, hardly second to my own. I shall not at present name it to any other of our colleagues, and I will not even yet abandon the hope that if the difficulties of a new arrangement should be found as formidable as I anticipate, the comparative relaxation which you may obtain between this time and our meeting again, may produce such an improvement in your health, that, even if we may not look to a permanent continuance of your valuable services, you may be induced to delay their withdrawal till the present critical period for the Government shall have passed by.

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It is obvious that the present is a moment when there will be a great and very natural unwillingness to enter on the responsibilities of Cabinet Office; while credit will hardly be given to the real causes which have led to your proffered retirement, and rumours of "dissensions in the Cabinet" on the eve of meeting

1858–1859. Parliament, will both weaken the Government in public
Æt. 55–56. opinion, and increase the difficulty of filling up the vacant office. While, therefore, I will lose no time in considering anxiously the possibility of making a fresh arrangement to meet your wishes, I must repeat my very earnest hope that, for the present, you will consider your letter as in abeyance, and say not a single word which should lead to a suspicion of your intentions.—Believe me, dear Sir Edward, Yours very sincerely,

DERBY.

Disraeli replied in a strain of vigorous reproach :—

DOWNING STREET,
Dec. 20, 1858.

MY DEAR BULWER—I am entirely knocked up by your letter, received on my hurried return from Knowsley.

I have no opinion of Dr. Reed, or of any Doctors. In the course of my life I have received fifty letters from physicians like that which you enclosed to me, and which I return. Had I attended to them, I should not be here, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and in robust health.

Men of our temperament, at our time of life, ought not to require Doctors. I am quite alarmed that you have been so long under Dr. Reed, who, in some degree, explains your state.

It is quite impossible that a man more than fifty, who has accomplished such great work as you have done, and endured such unparalleled and supernatural labour, can experience any real deficiency of nervous energy. It is not organic or natural, and must be the result of some quacking.

I hope you will reconsider your position, and not sacrifice a political career at a public emergency, and when you have gained, on all hands, credit for the masterly administration of your Department. It will cause you regret hereafter. 1858–1859. Æt. 55–56.

I say nothing of the effect on the position of the Government by the retirement of any of its members at this moment. The true motive will never be credited.

Whatever your illness may be, your secession will be a paralytic stroke to the Ministry. The retirement of the most insignificant would be serious now.

It has been one of the objects of my public life to find a colleague in an old friend, with whom, in our youth, I had pursued a congenial course, and I cannot express the pain it costs me to contemplate the possibility of our separation.

My direction is *Torquay*. We had meant to have gone there this morning, but I have stayed a day on account of this business.

At all events, I trust the affair may be kept quite close at present, so that we may look about ourselves, and breathe, and think.—Yours ever,

D.

To a statesman who made politics the business of his life, and who derived from the excitement of party conflict a stimulus which enabled him successfully to accomplish incessant labours both parliamentary and departmental, the thought of retiring from the field for reasons of health savoured of incredible weakness and even cowardice. Where, as in Disraeli's case, a man's whole mental energies are absorbed by his profession, he has no time to consider whether he be well or ill, and

1858–1859. unless he has some organic disease, he can under-
Æt. 55–56. take an amount of work which no physician would sanction or even believe to be possible. Naturally, therefore, Disraeli was not impressed by the cautious advice of a medical man, and seeing nothing in Dr. Reed's letter which justified the step which his friend proposed to take, he did not hesitate to tell him so with characteristic bluntness and energy. But with Bulwer-Lytton the case was different. Politics did not constitute the business of his life, but only imposed additional burdens upon a physique already seriously impaired by years of excessive literary toil. Even so, he was not a man to shirk work, nor to be easily overcome by mere brain exercise. It is doubtful whether the work of the Colonial Office imposed upon him any greater intellectual strain than the literary labours which had been voluntarily undertaken and unremittingly continued for thirty years. But the real cause of his collapse at this time was not known to Disraeli, and was not even fully realised by Bulwer-Lytton himself. The complete loss of nerve from which he was suffering was not caused by any brain work, either literary or political, not by the late hours and unhealthy atmosphere of the House of Commons, nor even by the anxiety of ministerial responsibility. These things aggravated but did not originate a mischief which had its roots in the misery and humiliation of his domestic trouble. Reference to the dates of the events mentioned in the last

chapter will remind the reader that the brightest moment of Bulwer-Lytton's public career coincided with the darkest hour of his private affliction. The shame and horror which he felt at his wife's conduct, the sting of the hatred with which she pursued him, the torment of doubt as to what his own action should be, remorse too, perhaps, for a past which could not be recalled—all this provoked a wild longing to escape and be free, to wake from the nightmare which haunted him. These memories and anxieties had to be suppressed daily before he could set about his public duties; they had to be banished from his thoughts before he could employ his mind upon official business, and it was with the fear of the hunted rather than with the stimulus of ambition, that his new and arduous work was undertaken. The effort at last proved too much for him; he lost heart, became too conscious of his infirmities, and asked to be relieved of responsibilities which he felt no longer capable of sustaining. 1858–1859. Æt. 55–56.

These facts could not be explained to Lord Derby, nor even to Disraeli, and though Bulwer-Lytton wrote again to both his chiefs that his malady was more deep-seated than they imagined, he consented out of consideration for the welfare of the Government as a whole, to leave his resignation in abeyance for the time being, and to continue in office. He tried his best by living as much as possible in the country, and by visits to Malvern, to stave off a complete

1858–1859. breakdown ; but he could not get rid of the fever
Æt. 55–56. and sleeplessness from which he was suffering, and during the last months of his official career, the business of the Department was left largely in Lord Carnarvon's hands.

The reason why Lord Derby was especially anxious not to give any additional ground at this moment for rumours about dissensions in the Cabinet, was that he was then preparing his Reform Bill, and wanted as much authority as possible behind it. The Bill was introduced by Disraeli on February 28, and received a very mixed reception. Some Conservatives objected to it for going too far, while the advanced Radicals ridiculed it as wholly inadequate. Lord John Russell moved a hostile amendment to the second Reading of the Bill on March 21, and the debate lasted for seven nights. Bulwer-Lytton spoke on the second night, and his speech on this occasion was regarded by many of his friends as his oratorical masterpiece. Lord Palmerston, an opponent, who, as we have seen, was by no means partial to his merits, afterwards told the Queen that it was one of the finest speeches he had ever heard spoken in the House of Commons.

The speech was thus described by William White, in one of his letters to *The Illustrated Times* :— [1]

When the Colonial Secretary rose to deliver his

[1] *Inner Life of the House of Commons*, by William White, p. 88.

views on the subject of Reform, we knew we might anticipate one of his "great orations." We all know here when Sir Edward is going to speak as well as we know that the sun is about to rise when a streak of light appears over the eastern hills, or that it is going to rain when thick, heavy clouds slowly roll up from the south-west. When Sir Edward has made up his mind to speak he is restless, uneasy, and wanders about the House and the lobby with his hands in his pockets and his eyes upon the ground. The Right Honourable Baronet has lately made some change in the appearance of his outward man. He used, until he took office, to wear a formidable moustache and a long ragged "imperial," but he has now clipped and trimmed these hirsute ornaments, and looks neater and more like an Englishman than he did last year. Sir Edward's speech is said to have been a grand oration. Nay, one enthusiastic member declared that it was "one of the grandest orations which have ever been delivered in the House of Commons." To this, of course, we should demur, though we are not competent fully to decide upon its merits; for, in truth, though we listened attentively, we could not catch more than half of what the Right Honourable Baronet said. The voice we heard, but, alas, before it reached us it was only a voice; the articulate sounds, by the manner in which they were projected from the mouth, were, before they reached us, most of them inarticulate —mere sounds, conveying no meaning. On looking over Sir Edward's speech as reported in the *Times*, we find the following passage, than which few things finer have been uttered in the course of the debate :— "The popular voice is like the grave; it cries 'give, give,' but like the grave, it never returns what it receives." Well, the condition in which this remark came up to us was something like this—"The popular

1858–1859. ÆT. 55–56.

1858–1859. Æt. 55–56.

yah ! is like the grah ! it cried yah ! yah ! but like the grah ! it never returns." At the close of the sentence Sir Edward dropped his head so low that the last word or two went under the table. Members down below, we apprehend, must have heard Sir Edward better, for they cheered vociferously. Indeed, at the close of this remarkable harangue, the cheering was beyond everything that we ever heard in the House or indeed elsewhere. It was literally a "tempest of applause," and seemed to us to come from all parts of the House. It burst forth as the orator sat down, like a hurricane, was renewed and re-renewed, and then, when it seemed to have died out, was started again, and once more the whole House appeared to join in chorus. And all this was rendered more effective by the members rising just then to go to dinner, and cheering as they rose. A proud man was Sir Edward that night as members came up to congratulate him on his success, and probably he went home and dreamed, either waking or sleeping, that he had secured a great parliamentary name, and that future historians will say of him that, in addition to being a most successful novelist, he was one of the greatest orators of his time.

At the conclusion of the debate on March 31, Lord John Russell's amendment was carried, and Lord Derby advised the Queen to dissolve Parliament. In the General Election which followed the Government gained thirty seats, but this was not sufficient to give them a majority in the House of Commons; and when Parliament reassembled at the end of May, a vote of no confidence, proposed by Lord Hartington, was carried against them. Lord Derby thereupon

resigned, and the short Tory interregnum came to an end. 1858–1859. Æt. 55–56.

Bulwer-Lytton, who had again pressed his resignation upon Lord Derby, but continued to hold office until a successor could be found, obtained his release in the defeat of the Government, and soon afterwards went abroad to a German watering-place. He writes to his son:—

As to my health, it continues very weak and variable. I never intend to take office with Lord Derby again. My present interest and ambition in politics are gone. Of course, I feel for the country, but it will probably be long before I am well enough to take any active part. Till then I shall be laid on the shelf. . . . I am disenchanted in all ways with politics, public and private. Nothing but a strong conviction that I could do any good to the country, or that the country was in danger, would rouse me into much activity.

From Stevenson Arthur Blackwood, his Under-Secretary at the Colonial Office, he received the following kind letter of regret at the severance of their official connection :—

53 Upper Brook Street,
14 *June.*

When servants turn their masters off they don't express any concern at parting. But I, who have been your slave for a matter of a year, shall form an exception. For I cannot forbear saying, from the fullness of my heart, that I mourn over an event which deprives me of a chief whom it is impossible to serve under without admiring and loving ; and who has imported into official drudgery a charm which I, at least, will never forget.

1858–1859. Æt. 55–56.

In grieving for myself, I rejoice for you. I congratulate you on your undeserved "vote of censure," which liberates you easily from an employment too laborious for your present state of health. Your year of office has achieved success for you and added to your renown. What can a man wish for more in that line? And thus you will retire into a life of liberty—my grand desire, but unattainable—and be spared the task of appending that wondrous hieroglyphic at the foot of so many dull despatches when you are in a hurry to be off.

Spare yourself the trouble of noticing this in pen and ink. I daresay I shall catch a glimpse of you before you depart from our blessed roof in D. Street. —Believe me, dear Sir Edward, Sincerely yours,

A. Blackwood.

CHAPTER VI

POLITICAL REFORM

1859–1867

The People's a very good thing in its way.
But what is the People ? the mere population ?
No, the sound thinking part of this practical nation
Who support peace and order, and steadily all poll
For the weal of the land. . . .
Of a people like this I've no doubts nor mistrustings,
But I have of the fools who vote wrong at the hustings.

Walpole.

THE defeat of Lord Derby's Government on the question of Parliamentary Reform, and the General Election of 1859 which followed it, mark an important turning-point in the political history of this country. From this moment the differences which had weakened the Liberal party for so long, and which had twice enabled Lord Derby to hold office without the support of a Parliamentary majority, began to disappear ; the personal animosities between rival leaders subsided, the alliance between Peelites and Liberals became complete, and all minor factions became gradually merged into the two compact and powerful parties, soon afterwards ranged under the leadership of Gladstone and Disraeli. 1859. ÆT. 56.

Bulwer-Lytton had the sagacity to realise the

1859. Æt. 56. nature of the change which was about to take place in the political life of the country. On the day following the defeat of the Government of which he was a member, and immediately after the decision of the Cabinet to dissolve Parliament, he wrote the following note to Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, who was then acting as his private secretary :—

Downing Street, *April* 1, 1859.

Remember my words. From this day dates a change that in a few years will alter the whole face of England. From this day the extreme Liberals are united; the great towns will be banded for Democracy, and Democracy in England is as sure as that we are in this room. Nothing like this day since Charles I. did much the same as we are doing.

The meaning of the last sentence is rather obscure, but the prophecy has been accurately fulfilled, although the consequences of the change have not been precisely what Bulwer-Lytton imagined. The period of aristocratic government was virtually ended, that of democratic government was about to begin. The Reform Bill of 1832 did not immediately alter the character of parliamentary government. The results of great constitutional changes in this country are slow to make themselves felt; and though political representation in 1832 passed out of the hands of what had till then been a comparatively small governing class, the machinery of government still remained under

their control. Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century—in fact, till the death of Lord Palmerston in 1865—the government of the country was predominantly aristocratic. Just as the decline of Aristocracy was gradual, almost imperceptible, so the growth of Democracy, which has been the work of the latter half of the nineteenth century, has been equally gradual. It may be said to have begun with the Reform Bill of 1867, and the process is not yet complete. Both the two political parties, which became consolidated in 1859, recognised the inevitable change which was taking place, and both Gladstone and Disraeli, in their separate ways, helped to accelerate it. 1859. Æt. 56.

Bulwer-Lytton belonged essentially to an aristocratic age, and the termination of his political career coincided with the close of that age.[1] In early life he had been an advanced Reformer, and to the end his political views were on many questions more Liberal than those of the majority of the Conservative party, with which he had associated himself. The true Conservative policy he defined as "the conservation of organic principles" in every political society.

"All that Conservatism regards," he once wrote, "is duration for the body politic. It is not averse to

[1] He once wrote to a friend *à propos* of the political upheavals in Europe in 1849, "Show me a class of gentlemen, an Aristocracy in short, and I will form a conjecture as to the duration of any free constitution; without that, between Crown, soldiers, traders and mobs, I am all at sea."

1859. change—change may be healthful; but it is averse to
Æt. 56. that kind of change which tends to disorganisation. Whatever there be most precious to the vitality of any particular State, becomes its jealous care. As but one thing is more precious to a State than liberty (social order), so where liberty is established, Conservatism is its stubborn guardian, and never yields the possession, save for that which it is more essential to conserve. But liberty is diffused throughout a people by many varieties of constitution—the monarchical, the aristocratic, the democratic, or through nice and delicate combinations of each. Conservatism tends to the conservation of liberty in that form, and through those media, in which it has become most identified with the customs and character of the people governed. And if it seems at times opposed to the extension of freedom, it is not on the ground of extension, but from the fear that freedom may be risked or lost altogether by an incautious transfer of the trust."

The last sentence is a key to Bulwer-Lytton's views on the difficult question of Parliamentary Reform; and as the only important speeches which he made in the House of Commons after his retirement from office were on this subject, it may be worth while to make a short reference to them at this point.

The Act of 1832 had enfranchised the great body of the middle class, and though its authors at the time spoke of it as a final settlement, very few could really have regarded it as such. It was inevitable that sooner or later representation would have to be extended to the labouring class also. The manner in which this extension was

ultimately brought about forms one of the most extraordinary chapters in the political history of this country. 1859. Æt. 56.

Between the years 1832 and 1866 there was no popular enthusiasm in favour of Reform. Advanced political thinkers advocated a moderate extension of the franchise, but, without pressure from without, Parliament was indifferent to the question. Lord John Russell, Lord Derby, and Mr. Gladstone were all genuine Reformers at heart, and made several unsuccessful efforts to induce Parliament to accept their proposals. Reform Bills were introduced in 1852, 1854, 1859, 1860, and 1866, but none of them could make any progress against the general apathy of the country. The death of Lord Palmerston in 1865 removed the chief obstacle to Reform in the House of Commons, and by the following year the efforts of John Bright and the members of the Reform League had succeeded in arousing a formidable agitation in the country against the inactivity of Parliament.

The qualification for the borough franchise at that time stood at a rental of £10, and for the county franchise at £50. The various Reform Bills introduced by different Governments only differed slightly from each other in the extent to which they proposed to reduce these qualifications. The Bill of Lord Derby's Government in 1859 proposed to equalise the borough and county franchise, the latter being reduced to £10 and the former left at the same figure. At

1859. Æt. 56. the same time it set up a number of special qualifications or "fancy franchises," designed to secure some test of responsibility from the electorate: University graduates and members of the learned professions were to have a vote as such, and also any man who possessed an income of £10 a year from invested funds, a pension of £20, or £60 in the Savings Bank. The Russell-Palmerston Bill of 1860 lowered the county franchise to £10, but at the same time reduced the borough franchise to £6. The Russell-Gladstone Bill of 1866 was even more moderate, and proposed to reduce the county franchise to £14 and the borough franchise to £7. All these Bills were rejected by the House of Commons, because they were either too moderate or too extreme. But this continued trifling with a serious question eventually produced that impetus of popular enthusiasm which neither statesmanship nor eloquence had hitherto succeeded in arousing; and in 1867 the impatience of the country extorted from the Conservative party a far more radical measure than the one which they had themselves rejected a few months earlier.

The *dénouement* was highly dramatic. The Derby-Disraeli Government of 1867, after introducing yet another moderate and cautious measure, allowed it to be transformed by their opponents into a Bill establishing complete Household Suffrage, and extending to the working class an adequate representation, stripped of

all the safeguards with which they had sought to surround it. 1859. ÆT. 56.

Bulwer-Lytton took part in all these discussions, and some of his best speeches were delivered on the subject of Parliamentary Reform. Such of his arguments as were confined to mere points of debate it is not necessary to mention here, but some reference must be made to passages which indicate his general attitude upon the subject.

He defended the Bill of 1859 as a member of the Government responsible for it. He explained that, while the Bill was avowedly a compromise based upon a consideration for the temper of the public, which was mild, and the extent of the evil to be remedied, which was small, he himself had no superstitious dread of any of those questions which were raised by the most ardent Reformers among his political opponents.

"Some of those questions," he said, "I espoused myself many years ago; one or two of them I still individually favour; and if on others I have since modified or wholly altered the opinions I then held, I have done so with no uncharitable prejudice against those who believe now what I myself once believed, or may even believe a little more than my political creed ever permitted me to do."

Whilst not unwilling to extend the franchise to such of the working class as proved themselves capable of exercising it wisely, he was not pre-

1859. Æt. 56. pared to give them a preponderating voice, and to "place capital and knowledge at the command of impatient poverty and uninstructed numbers." The character of the Bill and his own reason for supporting it were thus explained :—

> For myself, I cannot but think that at heart I go farther than the noble Lord (Lord John Russell); I go farther than most of the great republican writers, ancient and modern. I go in theory as far as Mr. John Mill, and I would not object to the widest possible suffrage, if you can effect a contrivance by which intelligence shall still prevail over numbers. If that be impossible, then I say, at least, the first step towards anything that approaches to universal suffrage should be something that approaches to universal education. . . . One moment more to this Bill. It is said not to be final. No Reform Bill can be. The fault you allege is its merit. It is its merit if it meets some of the requirements of the day present, and does not give to-day what you may regret to-morrow that you cannot restore. Democracy is like the grave; it perpetually cries, "Give, give"; and, like the grave, it never returns what it has once taken. But you live under a constitutional monarchy which has all the vigour of health, all the energy of movement. Do not surrender to democracy that which is not yet ripe for the grave. Gentlemen employ much sarcastic cavil in the dispute as to what is the main principle of this Bill. I say, as Lord Macaulay said in the debate on the old Reform Bill, I care little for technical definitions on that score. I would not base the defence of this or of any Reform Bill upon an abstract dogma on which special pleaders may differ. I would take that which was our main object for the backbone and life-spring

of the Bill. That main object was, irrespectively of party interests, to confirm and extend to the middle class the political power which, during the last twenty-seven years, they have exercised, so as to render liberty progressive and institutions safe; but at the same time to widen the franchise the middle class now enjoys, so that it may include all belonging to the class who are now without a vote; and instead of bringing the middle-class franchise down to the level of the workmen, lift into that franchise the artisan who may have risen above the daily necessities of the manual labourer by the exercise of economy and forethought.

1860. Æt. 57.

In attacking the Bill of 1860, on the ground that it gave an undue share of representation to the most excitable and least instructed section of the population, he restated his principle as follows:—

A free State will be best sustained and advanced by securing to its legislative councils the highest average degree of the common sense of the common interest. For this intelligence is requisite, but not intelligence alone; you might have a legislative assembly composed of men indisputably intelligent—nobles, lawyers, priests—who might honestly believe they used their intelligence for the common interest, when, in fact, they used it for their own. Hence it follows that no one class interest must predominate over all the others, or the common interest is gone; gone, if that class be the great proprietors; gone, if that class be the working men. But there is this distinction between the working class and every other that, granting their intelligence to be equal to that of others, granting that it be not more likely to be misdirected, still, when it is misdirected, the consequences are, if they are invested

1860. ÆT. 57. with the electoral power that determines legislation, immeasurably more dangerous, both to the common interest and to their own. For they are the roots of society, and it is the roots of society that their errors will affect; while their numbers are so great that their votes could overpower the votes of all the other classes put together. When this happens, the instinctive safeguard of the rich is corruption; and the instinctive tendency of ambition, if it be not rich, is towards those arts which give dictatorship to demagogues. . . . The working class have virtues singularly noble and generous, but they are obviously more exposed than the other classes to poverty and to passion. Thus in quiet times their poverty subjects them to the corruption of the rich; and in stormy times, when the State requires the most sober judgment, their passion subjects them to the ambition of the demagogue.

The whole of Bulwer-Lytton's argument on this occasion, and again in 1866, was directed towards proving that the Bills under consideration would not improve the House of Commons, and would probably cause its degeneration.

"How," he asked, "will this Bill improve the representation? Will it make the House of Commons wiser? Will it make our Councils more enlightened? Will it increase the knowledge, the integrity, the pecuniary independence, and the mental discipline, without which we should have no strength in public opinion, if ever we had to protect our freedom against an able tyrant and a standing army? . . . How will this measure improve the constituent body? When that question was asked in the debates on the great Reform Bill, the answer of the reformers was crushing. You then got rid of the borough-monger, who sold

his borough ; of the pot-walloper, who sold his vote ; and your substitutes were trade, commerce, manufactures, that combination of various interests which is found in the middle ranks of society, which cannot be called a class, because it comprises all classes, from the educated gentleman to the skilled artisan, and which, therefore, does represent a high average of the common sense of the common interest. You then did not merely extend the franchise. . . . To use the words, I think, of the late Lord Grey, 'You purified, you exalted the constituency.' But when you are asked, 'How does the little Reform Bill purify and exalt the constituency?' what will you answer? You will say, 'It is true we found many persons of respectable means and excellent education who complained that they were without a suffrage ; we did not attend to their complaint, but where we found persons living in lanes and alleys, at a rent which afforded the fair presumption that they had little property and less education, we conferred our new franchise exclusively on them. And so we purified and exalted the constituency!'" 1860. Æt. 57.

This argument was developed, illustrated, and enforced with great vigour in a speech which lasted for two hours, and won the highest praise, not only from those on whose behalf it was made, but also from some of those against whom it was directed. Writing to his son on May 9, 1860, Bulwer-Lytton says :—

After I dined with Dickens, I went to Buckingham Palace (a concert). Lord John Russell came up to me and said : "I thank you very much for what you said about me in your speech."

"What I said was sincere ; let me think your foreign

1860. ÆT. 57. policy belongs to all time; your Reform Bill is but for a session."

His answer :—"Ay, I often think of what you once said to me two years ago in this room: 'The old Reform Bill proves its merit, because it is so hard to improve it.'"

Mine :—"Yes, we then both agreed that to use my words—it was a block of granite; you can't chip it with a small chisel, you may make another block. But dare you do so? or does the country want one?" He seemed struck, and I gather from his tone that the Reform Bill will drop.

Five minutes after Charles Villiers brought up the Duke of Argyll, whom he introduced to me. The Duke said: "I wish to tell you how much I admire your speech." Villiers added this: "The Ministers bring forward a Bill and admire the arguments against it!"

The Bill was dropped, and it was six years before another one was introduced. Two more attempts were made "to chip the block of granite with a small chisel" before Parliament made up its mind "to make a new block." The new block (the amended Bill of 1867) was not at all to Bulwer-Lytton's liking, but as his own political friends, by whom he had just been made a Peer, were responsible for it, he had to give it a reluctant support.

"I confess," he said in a speech prepared for but never delivered in the House of Lords, "for my part, that I consent, or rather submit to it with great reluctance, and I am only reconciled to it by the conviction that the time has come when the question of

Reform must be settled, and that the scheme to which both parties have agreed in the House of Commons has become the only mode by which that settlement can be practically effected. Still, though I regard the probable results of the measure with deep anxiety, I have not hitherto shared in those fears which have been expressed here and elsewhere with that eloquence which is never more imposing than when it assumes the attributes of superstition and peoples the dark with spectres."

1860. Æt. 57.

The line of argument adopted by Bulwer-Lytton in the discussions on the reform of the franchise of his own day was widely employed by members of both political parties at that time, and indeed it invariably recurs whenever the distribution of the franchise is under discussion. Reformers and anti-Reformers alike are apt to consider the character of the representative body rather than the needs of the classes who demand representation.

Throughout his speeches there is only one passage which recognises the true principle of representation, when he said in 1860 :—

> If you reflect a moment you will own that the true representation of the working or poorer classes must be more or less perfect in proportion to the knowledge which may exist in this House of the inseparable connection between their interests and all our legislative functions.

The admission was a valuable one, although for the purpose of his argument he destroyed

1860–1867. Æt. 57–64

its value by going on to claim that the interests of the working man were truly represented by

> . . . every wise legislator who stimulates trade, who strengthens credit, who exalts the standard of society in which the working man rises with every step that raises the common interest of us all ; by every profound lawyer who renders justice more accessible ; by every enlightened philanthropist who ameliorates the condition of humanity ; by every naval or military officer whose professional science suggests sounder defences, not only for the land we inhabit, but for the protection of the commerce which employs the millions.

It is only true, of course, that any class is *represented* by legislators, lawyers, philanthropists, soldiers, etc., if that class has had a share in the selection of such men for the duties which they perform. A Government, however formed, may be a good Government or a bad one, but it cannot be representative, unless it is chosen by some elective machinery, and when elected it is only representative of those who are entitled to elect it. I do not suggest that a Government necessarily neglects the interests of any class which is unenfranchised, any more than it necessarily advances the interests of every class which is enfranchised. The House of Commons down to the year 1832 may have passed many laws for the benefit of the middle or the working class, but it did not represent them ; between 1832 and 1867 it may have studied the best interests of the artisans and the agricultural labourers, but it did not represent them, just as

to-day the House of Commons may be scrupulously considerate of the special interests of women, but it does not represent them. 1860–1867. Æt. 57–64.

In considering, therefore, the efficiency of a representative institution, the first question is whether or not it does represent all those for whom it legislates—I do not, of course, mean every individual; no Parliament professes to represent every individual, because no Parliament legislates for individuals. But every Parliament, to be truly representative, must give some votes at least to every class or section of its citizens which is specifically differentiated as such in its legislation. Universal suffrage is not necessary to secure a truly representative Parliament, because the number of voters in each section of the electorate might be limited by various qualifications without infringing the principle of representation. An electorate of four or five million might be accurately representative of the whole population, while an electorate of ten million might not be so. But the process of selecting the voters from each section in a limited electorate necessarily involves a complicated system of registration, which Reformers at all times seek as far as possible to avoid; and the natural development, therefore, in all democratic countries, is in the direction of universal suffrage.

The dangers anticipated by Bulwer-Lytton and others from the large extension of the franchise which was made in 1867, have been to a great extent avoided by three facts :—

1860–1867. Æt. 57–64.

1. His own condition that universal suffrage should be preceded by universal education has been fulfilled.

2. The establishment of the ballot has minimised the dangers of corruption.

3. Though a preponderance of the voting power has been given to what he called "impatient poverty and uninstructed numbers," yet no distribution of the franchise can take away the influence of wealth and intellect. Apart altogether from direct bribery, wealth must always command a powerful influence, even under the most democratic constitution. So also with intellect; however uninstructed the average voter may be, he is still susceptible to the arguments of reason, and is capable of exercising a shrewd judgment between the rival claims of those who ask for his favour. It is inevitable that where political power is vested in the People, there should arise the same class of flatterers and sycophants as those who fawned upon the Crown or the aristocratic families in the days of their ascendancy. The demagogues and the mob orators are the modern substitutes for the Court favourites of the past, but their influence is as precarious as that of their predecessors. Extravagant promises and delusive phrases may secure them popularity and power for a time, but it is by performance rather than professions, that such power is maintained; and personal character, honesty of purpose, sincerity of conviction, have the same value in a democratic

age as they had at any other period of the world's history. 1860–1867. Æt. 57–64.

Looking back, therefore, to those controversies of the past, we see that the robust faith in the political instincts of the British people, expressed by the Reformers of that day, was more justified than the gloomy forebodings of others, who could only see in the changes which were taking place the inevitable ruin of their country.

CHAPTER VII

PEERAGE AND RETIREMENT FROM POLITICS

1859–1866

I do confess that I have wished to give
My land the gift of no ignoble name,
And in that holier air have sought to live
Sunn'd with the hope of fame.
The Desire of Fame.

A name in the deep gratitude and hereditary delight of men—this was the title Literature bestowed.
Ernest Maltravers.

1859. Æt. 56. In the last chapter I have rather forestalled events, and must return to pick up the threads of Bulwer-Lytton's life outside the House of Commons, from his retirement from Office in 1859 to his elevation to the Peerage in 1866.

At the end of the Parliamentary session in 1859 he went to Wildbad, and once more resumed his literary occupations. He was engaged for the remainder of the year upon the poem of *St. Stephens*.

One of the earliest and most satisfactory results of Bulwer-Lytton's release from official duties was the re-establishment of his intimacy with John Forster, which had been interrupted during

the last few years. There was never any real breach between these two firm friends, but circumstances had occurred which had checked the intimacy and frequency of their intercourse. Their friendship had its roots in literature, and in politics they did not agree, but from 1854 to 1859 Bulwer-Lytton had been chiefly engrossed with politics, and consequently during these years they had drifted apart. Their correspondence never wholly ceased, but for a time it was meagre and more or less formal. In 1853 Forster had written at a time when he was mourning his sister's death :— 1859. Æt. 56.

I was disappointed not to see you before you left town, but I grow acquainted with disappointments. . . Yet an old friend's face would have been very welcome to me just now, and I have seen very, very little of you for a long time. But I never doubt your friendship, though circumstances appear to separate us just now. I could never bring myself to think you strange to me. Some of the whitest stones in my memory mark the steps of our friendly intercourse, and I cannot look back into a single year of my life since I came to manhood in which your kindly and familiar image does not stand more prominent than any other.

Once again in 1858 Bulwer-Lytton had written :—

Old friend, I fear there is a something between us. It is not my fault, I am sure. Perhaps it is only Fate's. But can't we root it thoroughly away?

1859. Æt. 56. Though both were conscious of some subtle change in their relations, though both regretted it, it seemed for a time beyond the power of either to remove the cause. The preoccupations of their lives, ill-health, and difference of opinion, both public and private,[1] kept them apart. Towards the end of 1859 their correspondence began to resume its old cordial tone, and by degrees their common interests in literature helped to re-establish an intimacy which lasted, with only occasional gaps, until they were separated by death. On November 4, 1859, Forster wrote :—

I hear with the greatest possible pleasure the better news of your health. There is nothing in life I miss so much as the old pleasant intercourse. It is a time of life when nothing can replace it, or supply the associations of such a friend. So I will hope that with better health and less exacting employments we may meet a little oftener in the year coming.

Bulwer-Lytton replied :—

My dearest Friend—A thousand thanks for your kind letter. I, too, have always missed our old familiar

[1] One of these differences had reference to Bulwer-Lytton's relations with his wife. In *The Personal and Literary Letters of the Earl of Lytton*, vol. i. p. 91, occurs this passage : "Under the influence of the misery which this (Lady Lytton's attack) caused him, he (Sir E. B. L.) listened to the very unfortunate advice of his friend, John Forster, who was then Secretary of the Lunacy Commission, of which Lord Shaftesbury was the Chairman, and took steps to have his wife declared a lunatic." This statement is not accurate, and in justice to Forster requires correction. Lady Betty Balfour, knowing the intimacy which existed between Bulwer-Lytton and Forster, and knowing also the latter's official position, doubtless concluded that Bulwer-Lytton had acted on Forster's advice. Forster's own letters, however, at the time, show conclusively that this was not so. He advised strongly *against* the step, always maintaining that Lady Lytton was "more bad than mad."

friendship, and nothing in life would delight me more than to renew it. 1859. Æt. 56.

Their correspondence for the remainder of the year deals chiefly with the poem of *St. Stephens*, "my prose verses on our nation," as Bulwer-Lytton described it. This book contained a more elaborate series of sketches of British statesmen and orators from the time of the Civil War until the death of Sir Robert Peel, on the same lines as the few which were previously included in *The New Timon*. It concludes with an appreciation of Macaulay, who died at the end of 1859. It was published anonymously in the first three monthly numbers of Blackwood's Magazine, in 1860.

The next subject of discussion between Bulwer-Lytton and Forster was provided by a work of the latter. Forster had just published two volumes of essays,[1] dealing with the events of the Great Rebellion, and Bulwer-Lytton undertook to write a critical article upon them for the *Quarterly Review*. Finding, however, as the article proceeded, that he differed widely from Forster's view of some of these events, he felt considerable hesitation in completing his task. I give the following letters which passed between them on the subject, as an indication of Bulwer-Lytton's views on an important matter of constitutional history. These views are better and more fully expressed in the article itself, for those who are sufficiently interested to read it.

[1] *The Debates on The Grand Remonstrance.*

Edward Bulwer-Lytton to John Forster.

1860. Æt. 57. My dear Forster—I find myself in a dilemma with regard to the review of your works in the *Quarterly*, and think it right to place it before you. As I come with attention to re-examine the time of the great struggle, I find I arrive at a point in which I widely diverge from your views.

My dislike to Charles Ist is indeed confirmed, and with the earlier conduct of the Parliamentarian Chiefs I have no grave fault to find. I can find in Strafford's crimes enough to render his sentence just in itself, tho' I am strongly against its legality. But where I begin to differ from you sensibly, is in all that relates to the Great Remonstrance. I accept your narrative, on the whole, of the arrest of the 5 Members. As far as I have yet examined, I think you substantiate the strong points of the case you so ably urge. But I am dead against the Parliamentarian claims as to the Militia, and the 19 points presented to the King. These claims no Constitutional Sovereign ought to have accepted, and I do not for these accept the excuse of Charles's insincerity. The insincerity of one King may be an excuse for deposing him, but not for changing the entire fabric of a Constitutional Monarchy. I think our obligations to Pym and his party stop abruptly here, —that we are in no way indebted to them for further services to freedom. On the contrary, we owe it to their violence, not only that the country was deluged with blood, but that liberty was swept away first by Cromwell, and then by Charles II. And neither their Militia Bill nor their 19 points form any part of our Constitution at this day. Therefore, they gained nothing for posterity, supposing these demands would have been gains. They had effected all that now forms the basis of English liberty, and Charles, after his failure in the

arrest of the 5 Members, was really powerless for evil —at least, as powerless as such a man could have been while on the throne. 1860. Æt. 57.

Unfortunately, these views of mine are not limited to a past period in history over which I could pass lightly, but they link themselves to future contingencies and permanent policy. They are consonant to a theory I have held for a great many years, indeed nearly all my political life, viz. :— 1st, that while popular revolutions usually commence in the faults of the Govt., yet when they arrive at a certain point, they are liable to be, in much, robbed of their legitimate fruits by the violence of the popular party ; that a revolution of force and blood can nearly always be prevented by a compromise, when the popular party are uppermost ; and that, if they disdain this and go further, a reaction is sure to follow, which throws back liberty and leaves its after triumph very much at the hazard of new circumstances. Thus, I think, and always have thought, that terms might have been obtained, and indeed were, from Louis XVI. which ought to have prevented the terrors of the after revolution, and would have founded national freedom, whereas the French have never had national freedom since.

I think again they ought to have kept the House of Orleans on the throne, and reformed their Chamber in accepting Louis Philippe's abdication. And so here, I think, still more decidedly, that the Parlt. made a great mistake in the trial, and assault on the Monarchy in the person of Charles, the results being that the Parlt. itself soon became despicable and odious in its own day ; and had Charles II. possessed a Richelieu or a Strafford for Minister, I doubt if absolute Monarchy might not have been established. No thanks to the Militia Bill and the 19 points if it has not been.

1860. Æt. 57. This is my dilemma. Shall I proceed in the review? I feel as if I had better not. I feel that I must not only abandon my cherished political convictions, but appear to accept views against them which might afterwards be quoted against myself, if I did not explicitly state where I differ from you; and ought not the review to be in the hands of some one who agrees with you? I need not add that I should not fail, in writing the review, to attest your high and rare merits as a writer, and to cite your graphic account of the arrest. (I should be more curt as to your view of the Remonstrance.) But in a controversy like this, to which you have given so much research and feel such earnest convictions, and which, moreover, is in itself one into which a good degree of the warmth of existing party predilections is apt to enter, I feel a sort of nervous fear that I might write something which might rather vex you than please, and that the acknowledgment of your merits might not atone for a clash with your opinions.

I have now put the matter before you, frankly and loyally, and will go on or back out, as you may decide. —Ever yrs. most afftly.,

E. B. L.

P.S.—Perhaps you may see the difference between us more clearly when I say that I think more highly of Falkland than I did, and believe that he has not been generally appreciated. I believe him to have wanted that strange force of will by which some men impress their opinions on others, and without which a man in such days cannot be a very efficient actor in events; but I equally believe him to have been a much sounder reasoner than the Pyms and Vanes, and that his politics were much more in harmony with those of safe reformers in our day.

AN HISTORICAL DISCUSSION

John Forster to Edward Bulwer-Lytton.

46 Montagu Square, W.,
9th July 1860.

1860. Æt. 57.

My dear Bulwer-Lytton—I have a difficulty in answering your letter in so far as it opens up the personal question of what value there may be in the additions I have attempted to make to our horoscope of an important period of English history. . . .

Of course, I widely differ from you in the views indicated in your letter. If, at the point named by you, Falkland's and Hyde's views had been suffered to prevail, I believe that everything gained up to that time would ultimately have been lost, and the cause of national liberty deferred for perhaps two centuries—to be then achieved, not as in 1688, but in far more terrible fashion. Forty-four years is but the portion of the age of a man; it is the measure of the interval between the drawing the sword against Charles I. and drawing the Bill of Settlement from William III.; and happy the nation that can right itself in such brief space, and with so little needless shedding of blood. That we owe, as I solemnly believe, mainly under God, to Pym and Hampden. If at any time they violated forms, they did it to preserve the spirit, and the spirit survived to vindicate itself and them, and overthrew even the tyranny established in its name.

These are questions, however, which, though feeling deeply respecting them, I have not opened in my recent volumes. I have restricted myself very carefully to the section of those comprised in the subjects of my narrative. I have not discussed the 19 propositions, nor, as I believe, rendered it necessary that this should be discussed in any review of those volumes.

As you have kindly invited my opinion, I would ask your permission to state it thus:—that, if you feel

1860. upon reflection that you cannot conscientiously do more
ÆT. 57. for these books of mine than make them a peg upon which to hang a disquisition of which the drift would be to damage and discredit, as far as might be, the cause of Charles the First's opponents, with such occasional compliment to myself as one of the "graphic" extracts might convey—while I have no right to object to your taking this line, and it would make no difference in the hearty affection and grateful regard I entertain towards you, I yet cannot honestly say that it would give me pleasure. On the other hand, if you feel that, notwithstanding our marked and strong difference of opinion, you can conscientiously speak of what I have lately written as important in an historical sense, and for its mere additions to what it is at least right that all our countrymen should know—if, while you enter as strong a caveat against my opinions as you may think called for, and set forth your own on every point as warmly on the other side, you can still find in the books themselves, and the incidents dwelt on and detailed, sufficient for the substance of a review, I should be proud indeed, no matter how severely dealt with in points of opinion, to be so handled by such a writer as yourself. . . .

Whatever your decision, it can only leave me grateful to you.—Always most truly and afftly. yrs.,

JOHN FORSTER.

P.S.—Telegrams which arrived this morning after the paper was published announce the evacuation of Sicily by the Neapolitans—the holding of Castellamare by the English Admiral as referee of both parties until conditions of armistice are carried out, and the formation of a regular Government by Garibaldi! What a great deed it has been!

AN HISTORICAL DISCUSSION

Edward Bulwer-Lytton to John Forster.

12 *July* 1860.

MY DEAR F.—I am very much obliged by yours. 1860.
As to opinions on the *historical value* of your works, ÆT. 57.
I have no fear but what I shall truthfully say what will content you.

As to the views I am in sad doubt. I feel I shall please no one, and I suspect that the readers of the *Quarterly* will very little like the condemnation of Charles's whole character, which I believe to be just. He was a bad gentleman as well as bad King.

But I think it is so important for this age and all future ones to indicate where I honestly think popular passion overshoots its mark, that I cannot stop at the Remonstrance, which I feel sure was a mistake, but must touch on the demands of the Parliament, which made a civil war inevitable.

I separate Falkland from Hyde. Falkland, if the King had triumphed, would have been no party to despotism. Hyde would have been. Falkland was eventually at Oxford, urging moderate courses on the King, and very ill looked upon in consequence.

I propose at present to get on where I can, and before finally determining will again confer with you.

Garibaldi is the best fellow going. He is the party of Lamartine, put into soldierly action. But what is to be done with Sicily ?—Yrs. ever,

E. B. L.

In another letter, a few days later, in which the same arguments are repeated at length, Bulwer-Lytton concludes :—

The subject is immense, its issues eternal, and after several weeks hard labour at it, I am seized with awe

1860. Æt. 57. and despair at my presumption in dealing with it at all. I would fain, therefore, drop the effort, and I am sure you will feel that I have not done so without great regret and reluctance. It really is that I foresee in my venture only a rough pebble thrown into the current of our friendship, likely to chafe its course, which has more and more vexed and embarrassed me as I have proceeded. It seems useless writing to Elwin. How shall I venture to send in my resignation?—Yrs. ever,

E. B. L.

John Forster to Edward Bulwer-Lytton.

46 Montagu Square, W.,
21 *July* 1860.

My dear Bulwer-Lytton—It seems right that I should make some reply to your letter, but I hardly know what to say. We have been of old time in such apparent sympathy on subjects as to which you now discover such gulfs yawning betwixt us, that I really find it difficult to apprehend the nature of the objection, which, after resuming the subject upon the conditions put to me in your former letter, compels you finally to cast it aside.

It is due, however, to myself, distinctly to repeat what I said in the letter I formerly wrote, that no difference of opinion upon the broad historical facts, however strongly stated by you, however earnestly enforced, would have been made matter of the remotest objection by me. If you had found my books worthless, I could have understood your objection. If I had made any false pretence of discoveries which were not as I stated them, if the books had contributed no new facts to the history of the period, but were simply the old hashed-up arguments and

statements, if the opinions expressed in them had been wildly exaggerated, or the facts grossly misrepresented, if, for any or all these reasons, I challenged condemnation and exposure, I could well understand that a friend should shrink from the task. But I venture to believe that this is not the case. . . . 1860. Æt. 57.

As to the *Quarterly Review*, they would gladly have received such a paper from you as you originally proposed to write, and the wider the departure from me, the more agreeable probably to them, in respect to points of opinion. There needn't have been any fear as to that — however little of a "martyr" you were disposed to make of the King. Of course, however, the matter takes quite another character and colour if the object of the article to be written was to be something quite other than the books which formed its subject. Upon the latter humbler level, I can imagine few pleasanter articles than you might have written, if you had merely taken (for a brief paper) such incidents to the theme as what I have disclosed, from entirely new sources, of the usages of the House of Commons in that day, of the details of their proceedings, of the character and peculiarities of speakers and speeches—the picture, in short, I have attempted to give. . . .

I cannot wonder at your displeasure with Elwin, and I now take leave of the thing for ever, with no feeling really at heart, but that of a sort of conviction that our differences in opinion will turn out to be by no means so great as you suppose. I am expressing myself clumsily, but, in giving you the assurance that your abandonment of this review (on which I confess I had built very much), makes no change whatever in my private regard. I wish also to say that I entertain not less firmly the assurance that the sympathies we used to have in common on great historic questions and

1860. characters, may yet prove to be strong and unbroken.—
Æt. 57. Ever yours,

JOHN FORSTER.

Edward Bulwer-Lytton to John Forster.

July 22, 1860.

MY DEAR FORSTER—Your letter gives me a good deal of pain. I hardly know how to act for the best. My strong belief is, however, that an article by someone else will be sure to please you better, and the good to the book is derived from the weight of the *Quarterly* and not the pen of the writer.

I did not mean to "make use of your book" to pen an essay on it, Macaulay-like. But the unlucky thing is this—that it is impossible to extract without comment—that the comment will do ample justice to you as a writer, &c., in the way you refer to, but will state those differences of view which I can see even by this note of yours will displease.

You speak of our former sympathy as to the time and incidents of the Civil disturbances. I think that we have never much discussed these particular events and dates. Generally, I still agree with you as to the character of Charles Ist, and as to the conduct of the Parliamentary chiefs up to a certain time. This special time I never very closely examined before—it is the importance to which you yourself raise the Remonstrance and the new interest you give to the exact crisis, which naturally made me look into all the circumstances with more serious care, and with a fresh mind. But still the view that as far back as 25 years ago I took of the French Revolution, becomes equally applicable to our English one, viz.:—that all requisite for liberty could have been achieved by peaceful reforms, and that in going beyond them, liberty was injured. To myself the mortification

of stopping short of the task I undertook is extreme— 1860.
it has been my only literary work all the summer. I ÆT. 57.
have devoted many weeks to it, and it is much time and work that I throw away, rather than incur the risk of a difference between us, and fail to make the time and work really effect the object with which they were alone commenced, viz.:—contribute somewhat of service to your writings, in the way that you would wish that service rendered.

I leave off because that object fails me, and I see that another writer could much better effect it. Your books have placed me so thoroughly in the time that I have been living in it. I feel that I myself must have made the same choice as Falkland. I feel, too, that all my discipline and train of thought as a politician in events, present and contingent, forbid me to approve the Remonstrance, or the course taken by Pym, etc., just before the Remonstrance, or subsequent to the Arrest of the five members.—Yrs. ever,

E. B. L.

The same to the same.

July 26, 1860.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND—I have received yours. I will throw aside what I have done. I will look again to the subject and see if I can treat it in some briefer and simpler way. Next week I hope to be at leisure and perhaps somewhere by the seaside. Till then I will defer sending in my resignation of the article. If I find after a second attempt that I cannot contrive it, I will tell you so frankly, and you will be sure that I have at least given all thought to my conclusions, however— Ever yrs. truly,

E. B. L.

John Forster to Edward Bulwer-Lytton.

46 MONTAGU SQUARE, W.,
27th July 1860.

1860. ÆT. 57. MY DEAR BULWER-LYTTON—I am very deeply touched indeed by your note of yesterday.

I will not reproach myself for having given occasion to such generous kindness on your part, but begin now to feel as if I had been wrong and selfish in the letters I have written.

Forgive me if I have been. Whatever now is the result, I can have but one feeling in the matter. I could almost wish that you should be unsuccessful in this kind attempt, if only to show how thoroughly grateful I shall be to you all the same.

Have no doubt as to that, or of the true and profound sense I carry always in my heart of hearts, of your tried friendship and affection, and many kindnesses to me.—My dear Bulwer, I am ever gratefully & affectly. yrs.,

JOHN FORSTER.

The article was completed and appeared in the October number of the *Quarterly Review* for 1860. The points of difference between the writer and Forster are stated in it with perfect frankness, without in the least detracting from his genuine appreciation of the latter's work, and the susceptibilities of the readers of the *Quarterly Review* are carefully respected! Indeed it seems strange that he should ever have had any anxieties about either of these points. The article is to be found under the title of "Pym versus Falkland," in the volume called *Quarterly Essays* in the Knebworth edition of his collected works. It is

an admirable piece of historical criticism as well as an interesting sidelight on the author's views of certain political questions. 1860. ÆT. 57

In the autumn of 1860, Bulwer-Lytton visited the Ionian Islands, the affairs of which had occupied so much of his attention while at the Colonial Office. He writes to his son from Corfu on October 24 :—

MY DEAR ROBERT—Here I am! after a lovely passage, sea smooth as glass. On the morning after the second night the old Acroceraunian rocks rose before me—*infames*, Horace calls them, considering a man must have a breast of triple brass and oak to undertake such a voyage as would permit him to behold them. Out of the clear sea they stood, seemingly harmless. May they look so and be so when I leave.

The isle is beautiful, chiefly from sky and colour, with undulating olive woods. I have been here in Storks' palace three days. I move into the villa he lends me to-day. It was quite unfurnished ; with much trouble and some expense I have furnished two or three rooms and got together two or three servants. I shall be lonely and, I expect, bored there, but the view from it is superb. The town is wretched, like a wild village near Naples, with a mixture of the back slums of Portsmouth. The Palace magnificent—Royal indeed, and Storks lives in great pomp and state.

My nephew goes in a day or two to his lone isle. I propose staying only two or three weeks, and think then of returning to Trieste and wintering either at Venice or Nice. I give up Alexandria and Athens with regret, but the season is advanced and people here say the voyage might be rough. I am a timorous sailor. I doubt whether the climate be healthy, but at least it is

1860. summer, and it is something to have glimpses of summer
Æt. 57. in this year of 1860.

I hope I may get on with my mystic story—now at a standstill.

And how are you and the rheumatism? And how do poetry and politics get on? Here we have all the aspect of preparation for war—3 line of battleships, 6 more expected, 3000 soldiers in this little town, and sailors, drunk and joyous, everywhere. There seems no society, no box to be got even at the little Opera—a few thin wives of officers—flirtations—none! I begin to believe that after a certain age capitals are necessary for winters, but capitals that have the attractions of landscape, like Nice and Naples. Discomfort, which seems to abound here, becomes an evil, large in proportion as romance fades away.

I have no news and no letters and no books. I think, if I can summon eno' energy, to take a master for Italian. Greek modern seems hopelessly arduous. The island under a good constitution and good laws ought to be most wealthy, and the winter residence of the English, but as it is, there is no accommodation for English—bad inns, no lodgings, and one shop! Classic life, however, seems to revive in one's mind like a dream here; one imagines old Greece back. If I had my tale of *Pausanias* here I should finish it—the sky would suggest colouring and supply the want of books. But, please Heaven, I think I shall finish *Pausanias* next year.

Have you seen Otway?—Yrs. ever affectly.,

E. B. L.

The mystic story referred to in this letter, like its predecessor *Zanoni*, originated in a dream, and as such it was first told by the author to his son, who used to say that this first sketch

was even more interesting and striking than the longer story which was afterwards founded upon it. The inspiration thus received was elaborated by Bulwer-Lytton into *A Strange Story*, and this work occupied him for the next twelve months. 1860. Æt. 57.

Before leaving England he had received the following letter from Charles Dickens :—

GAD'S HILL PLACE,
HIGHAM BY ROCHESTER, KENT,
Friday, 3rd August 1860.

MY DEAR BULWER-LYTTON—Is there any possibility of your being induced to write a tale for *All the Year Round*? It has the largest audience to be got that comprehends intelligence and cultivation, but that audience is already your own, and *that* is no temptation.

It would gladly pay any price for the distinction of having your assistance, and it can well afford to do so, but you can get what price you please anywhere, and *that* is no temptation.

If you could by any means reconcile the doing of such a thing with your inclination and convenience, it would give me strong heart and unspeakable gratification. That is the only speciality I can put before you.

What I most want, is such a tale as you could republish in three volumes, a week or two before its completion in *All the Year Round.* Such a book portioned out from week to week, would occupy in its periodical publication, six or eight months.

In mere pecuniary return it could be made very profitable to you, and we could get a price for the proofs from week to week in America, that I doubt your being quite prepared for. But the mere business matter—I repeat—is not, *I know well*, the first

1860. ÆT. 57.

question. If you were to do it at all, you would do it for me.

Now, is that possible? Any time within a year? I know how much I ask. You will tell me at your leisure. Neither of us will misunderstand the other. —Yrs. faithfully,

CHARLES DICKENS.

Bulwer-Lytton does not appear to have accepted the suggestion at once; but before the end of the year he was already at work on the mystic story which grew out of his dream, and offered it to Dickens for his magazine. The acceptance of the story and the terms offered for it are contained in the following letters :—

Charles Dickens to Edward Bulwer-Lytton.

GAD'S HILL PLACE,
HIGHAM BY ROCHESTER, KENT,
29th November 1860.

MY DEAR BULWER-LYTTON—I need not tell you that I have received your letter with the strongest interest, and with the liveliest desire that a result I should so highly prize, may be brought about somehow or other.

This hasty note is written to let you know that I will immediately enter into every detail of calculation and enquiry, and will write you the fullest particulars on every head, by *next Tuesday's post from London.*

In the meantime, I only add that there is no publisher whatever associated with *All the Year Round* —I and Wills, my sub-editor, are the sole proprietors; therefore, implicit reliance may be placed in the journal's proceedings. That the subject is as interesting to me

as to any one alive, and would unquestionably be attractive, and that I will make every possible and impossible point clear, and set forth with plain figures, when I write on Tuesday.—Meanwhile and ever, Believe me, Affectly. yrs., 1860 Æt. 57

CHARLES DICKENS

The same to the same.

GAD'S HILL PLACE,
HIGHAM BY ROCHESTER, KENT,
4th December 1860.

MY DEAR BULWER-LYTTON—All the intelligence I am going to give you proceeds on the following assumption. If it should be wrong, I will correct my intelligence on your explaining it to be wrong. But I hope and believe it to be quite right.

When you use the expression 350 "pages of close writing, chiefly on foolscap paper like that on which I scribble," I assume that you mean pages of foolscap paper, written on one side, each page being half a sheet, not a quarter of a sheet—that is, not a sheet of foolscap paper torn in two.

This quantity I have had carefully estimated at the printer's and cast off. It would make about 150 printed pages of *All the Year Round.*

The publication of such 150 pages in the weekly quantity we usually consider the best for a serial work in *All the Year Round*, would occupy about thirty weeks. In other words, seven months, or from six to seven months.

For the right of such publication in *All the Year Round*, I would gladly pay you £1500—fifteen hundred pounds. I could at once conclude in your behalf a bargain with an unimpeachable publisher, who would pay you for the right of re-publication in a

1861. collected form for two years (at prices not to interfere
Æt. 58. with the subsequent transfer to Routledge, but well within his figure) £1200—twelve hundred pounds. For the transmission of proofs to America week by week for simultaneous publication there—of course without damage to copyright here—I could get you (as our American transactions are on a very good footing) £300—three hundred pounds.

This would make in all £3000—three thousand pounds. The tale to be published as yours, with your name, and the bookseller's two years to commence, of course, from the time of publication in a complete form; which would be a week or so before it ended in *All the Year Round.*

As I have just begun a story of my own in *All the Year Round*, we could not begin advantageously to publish yours before the 1st of August, which would bring the publication of the book to the very best time of the year. But all the agreements could be immediately made, and the *All the Year Round* money is ready to be paid down.

Not to overload the plainness of these statements with other matter interesting to us as private friends, and not associated with a question of business, I break off here, and hope to hear from you soon.—My dear Lytton Bulwer [sic], Ever affectionately yours,

CHARLES DICKENS.

The story was completed by the end of 1861 and began to appear anonymously in *All the Year Round* on August 10.

To Forster, Bulwer-Lytton writes on July 29, 1861 :—

I am revising and finishing the story for Dickens. It is original and a psychological curiosity. But I am

by no means sure of its effect either with the few or the many; 1861. ÆT. 58.

and again on September 14, to his son :—

I am in the agonies of finishing my book—in the last chapter, I hope, and whenever you read it you will see what throes that chapter must have caused in parturition. I fancy this will be my best work of imagination. I fancy it deals with mysteries within and without us wholly untouched as yet by poets. It is not my widest work, but I think it is perhaps the highest and deepest. However, it is not yet completed and *finis coronat opus.*

The following letters still further explain the author's views concerning this book :—

To Charles Dickens.

(Undated, but written from Ventnor at end of '61 or beginning of '62.)

My dear Dickens—Cordial thanks for your trouble and hints. No doubt every story should contain in itself all that is essential to its own explanation—and to a thinker I hope mine does. The question is only how far it is necessary to anticipate the objections of those who don't think. I had already thought how far it would be possible to effect this in the body of the work, by adding something to one of the later conversations between Faber and Fenwick, and can do so to a certain extent, viz.: — why the supernatural is a legitimate province of fiction. But also, how the supernatural resolves itself into the natural when faced and sifted. But that does not meet the case *in toto.* Because the parts which would seem most to require explanation

1861. Æt. 58. are the concluding scenes, which appear those of demonology, and no previous conversation must anticipate those, or their effect would be lost, and vanish in philosophical unreality.

Now, in truth, it is in the latter science that for the first time the interior or symbolical meaning, that contains the true philosophical explanation, is carried out. Margrave is the sensuous material principle of Nature. Ayesha, with her black veil, unknown song, and her skeleton attendant, Death, is Nature as a materialist, like Fenwick, sees her.

Fenwick is the type of the intellect that divorces itself from the spiritual, and disdaining to acknowledge the first cause, and the beliefs that spring from it, is cheated by the senses themselves, and falls into all kinds of visionary mistakes and illusions, similar to those of great reasoners, like Hume, La Place and La March.

Lilian is the type of the spiritual divorcing itself from the intellectual, and indulging in mystic ecstacies which end in the loss of reason. Each has need of the other, and their union is really brought thro' the heart—Fenwick recognising soul and God, thro' love and sorrow, tho' he never recognised them till the mysterious prodigies which puzzled him, had passed away. Lilian struggling back to reason and life, thro' her love and her desire to live for the belov'd one's sake.

But all this could only be implied, either by something supplementary or by a preface. But if in a preface, the interest of the book would be gone.

Now there is a course that has just occurred to me. Zanoni was symbolical, and Miss Martineau divined the key to it, which she gave and which is appended to the popular editions of the book.

2ndly, whether some such key, as if suggested by a third person, a friend, might be added to the

story (very short). If you thought this desirable then return me this letter with any comment on it you like. 1862. Æt. 59.

I don't see how Mrs. Poyntz can be reintroduced into the story. How could she come to Australia? She could only come into a supplementary chapter, as talking over the book, Mr. Vigors arguing for the supernatural, she pooh-poohing, and some third person, a friendly critic, giving the key suggested above. This might be done in a half-humorous vein round Mrs. Poyntz's tea-table.—Yrs. ever,

E. B. L.

To his Son.

April 15, 1862.

My dearest R.—Your letter about *A Strange Story* reached me just as I am starting for Buxton. I can't, however, lose a post in thanking you for it and expressing my admiration of the critical depth of your remarks. You find the beauty which belongs to your own thoughts in the book—it is your own pearls that you insert into my oyster shell. . . .

I shall have something to say as to the Faber dialogues; in poetry they would be inexcusable. I am not sure that in prose they are justified. But still they are essential to the very design you so well appreciate —1st, because they do not explain, tho' they use all the best known arguments in physiology and metaphysics. The supernatural in man is inexplicable by the natural sense of man.

2ndly. They show that philosophers getting rid of soul and 1st cause, indulge in more romance and fantastic chimera than any novels can do. Margrave is a trifle compared to Lornosch's and Laplace's theories of man and creation. It is clear that Goethe thought

1862. (as an artist) that prose narrative might include these
ÆT. 59. dissertations which partially belong to essay. Thus in *Wilhelm Meister* he treats of an immense range of subjects which he only flashes over in *Faust* and his other dramas.

But an artistic narrative demands that these dissertations should be strictly pertinent to the main conception for which the characters are created; that they should be as necessary to the moral or intellectual narrative as the incidents are to the external; that they are not episodical but essential.

Now I think that Faber's conversations belong to this character, and strictly obey its laws. If you strike out those conversations, you strike out all that part of the story for which Fenwick and Margrave and Lilian are created. They carry on the history of soul. It is said that they will be skipped and, therefore, not conduce to the end proposed. True that they may be skipped by the first rush of novel readers; but if the book lives, they will not and cannot be skipped. They will be read first by a few, then the few will communicate them to the many. You might as well say that Goethe's criticisms on art would be skipped in *Wilhelm Meister*. So they were at first; but now it is thro' them that *Wilhelm Meister* lives and is studied. In my arguments for the immortality of the soul, I have taken the most popular and modern objections now current, and the arguments are not old hashes-up. I believe that the argument which rests our immortality on our special capacities to comprehend abstract ideas connected with immortality to be a great advance on metaphysical science. At all events, I should be very glad to see that part quoted.

The attempted explanations of Faber serve to bring together a great variety of ideas of all schools of

physiology and in reality do not explain the phenomena of marvel—no philosophy yet formed does—but they still tend to show that a thing is not inexplicable because men can't explain it. 1862. Æt. 59.

And the true moral here is in Faber's final conclusion after the catastrophe, viz.:—that what signifies whether these magic marvels are true or not — how small is their marvel compared to the growth of a blade of grass. The common sights before us are inexplicable and are therefore the true magic. When Faber recognises this, then he recognises the Creator and becomes serene in that recognition.

The caldron scene can only be thoroughly understood by those who are made to perceive that it is there the story obtains its diæresis in summing up all the symbolical truths of the work.

There in the scene of the new world, where the cave bride hides the bones of the antideluvian world, there where youth grows out of age in the universal Cosmos, there man seeks to renew his own youth, and there the magician, long estranged from Nature, finds her (Ayesha). Nature whether she be mother or mistress, or both—mistress when science first wooed her, mother when science fades away in her lap behind her veil.

The art of the story must be judged by remembrance of its interior meanings. Vulgar critics say I dismiss Mrs. Poyntz too soon. So I do, if the novel is only a novel. But if you look into its deeper meanings, Mrs. Poyntz (the polite world) vanishes exactly where the polite world does vanish to the intellectual seeker, viz.:—Fenwick, for he escapes from it to solitude, and, as he thinks, to Nature ; but Nature cannot enlighten him so long as he ignores Nature's God.

Thus have I rambled on. Now I enclose a criticism from the *Eclectic Review*, the organ of the Non-

1862. Æt. 59. conformists, which is the most favourable I have seen of the book and myself generally, and certainly by some writer who enters into the work. This from a religious quarter will do the book much good. It will justify you with the religious reader in *Blackwood.* I enclose you also a review from the *Guardian* which is the High Orthodox Church, much less civil and more shallow, but still civil and useful.

I confine this letter to the one subject and will treat of others in another letter. With a thousand thanks, —Most affectly. yrs., E. B. L.

P.S.—Scott was attacked for the "White Lady of Avenel," but that was a very poor attempt at the supernatural. My defence of the supernatural is obvious—it is simply this :—that no one not an ignoramus can deny to the poet the fullest use of the supernatural; the only question raised is—But what we concede to the poet can we concede to the romance writers? Of course you must concede it. You can't here distinguish between verse and prose. Fiction is fiction in both and the romance is to be praised, not censured, if it lifts itself up to those realms of imagination which are considered by every critic the highest. What critic ever denied that the supernatural element was the highest in poetry, viz.:—fiction.

I suppose you have my book complete with the preface?

It was hardly surprising that this work was little understood or appreciated by contemporary reviewers, and with few exceptions the notices which it received were generally very mortifying to the author. In another letter to his son, undated, but probably written very soon after the one just quoted, he says :—

I am at present under the damp of the general critical outcry against my own *Strange Story*, and I think I see the same danger for you arising much from the same causes, namely, the dislike of our practical public to mysticism and allegory. . . . I think "the unsafe" is a hazard rarely to be admitted by an author who consults his peace during his life, and when hazarded, that he should be in a position to be as little shaken as possible. Even with my long authorship, if I had my time over again, I would not have published *A Strange Story*, nor do I think if I had shown it, on the whole, to an anxious friend, that he would have counselled me to publish it. Yet I have no doubt in my own mind that it is my highest, though not my broadest work, of prose fiction ; 1862. Æt. 59.

and again :—

Thanks for your kind and encouraging word about *A Strange Story*. It is just one of those things in which I did want some aid from critics, to explain and vindicate it to the Public. But the critics seem to attack it ruthlessly, even one's friends among the reviewers seem shy of praising it. The Public don't know exactly what to make of it, whether to admire or condemn. A powerful review by a great critic, such as a German might write, would at once decide the public in its favour—none such is likely to appear. It sells well, is discussed much, has a few earnest admirers, but generally I should think, was no favourite. Time may right it or not. Who can say ? For the present I think it has hurt my reputation, and I have not seen so many impertinent personalities in the reviewers for many years as blossom out now. But I am not so thin-skinned as I was once. Nothing to be done in Parlt. I go there but little.

1862. Æt. 59. Before *A Strange Story* was completed, Bulwer-Lytton was already engaged upon another work, which was completed in 1862. This was a series of essays which appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine*, and were afterwards collected into one volume entitled *Caxtoniana*. These essays are reflections upon a large number of every-day matters, and show Bulwer-Lytton's excellent common sense, sound judgment, and insight into human nature at their highest point. Writing to his son from Ventnor in December 1861, he says :—

> I have been reading really hard and writing my essays. . . . I have been fagging hard at much in science—gone through a vast amount of physiological and metaphysical reading, and a little of the mathematical. I find that the great thing in the voyage of life is to stop very often to *take in coals*—to get a complete stock of new ideas, and one only gets that by new studies or pursuits. If out of Parliament I should try the Drama again. I think I could do much better now than in my former attempts, which are but sketches. I should probably also take up some branch of science seriously—not chemistry, I am not prudent enough for that, and should blow myself up.

He did not wait till he was out of Parliament before again taking to the drama, but in 1862 began a rhymed comedy on the subject of Walpole, but he was mistaken in thinking that he could eclipse his former achievements in this line. His best dramatic work had already been

done, and he never again reached the same level. 1862.
To Forster from Aix la Chapelle he writes on Æt. 59.
September 1, 1862 :—

My dear Forster—I have been staying six weeks at Spa ; thence I came on here for some douche baths, for an obstinate lumbagoish sort of pain. At this place I wrote *Money—eheu fugaces*, *Postume*, *Postume*, *labuntur anni*. I shall stay but a short time, as short as I can for the alleged "cure," for I dislike the place heartily and shall most probably return to England in the course of this month, tho' I can't decide as yet whether to winter among the native fogs or not.

I saw Shaftesbury at Spa, who seemed philanthropically excited against the North American cruelties. Civil War is always more or less cruel, and a young people have hot heads.

At Spa I commenced a long cherished idea of making Sir R. Walpole the subject of a comedy in rhyme. I wrote a scene which I think very epigrammatic and telling, convincing me that rhyme in comedy would be a new and strong effect. But I stopped at that scene on remembering that we have no stage. I had an idea if we could revive our amateur corps, that it would suit them. But they, like other pleasant things, seem scattered far and wide on that sea of life on which ships never sail long together. For the rest, I have been lazily mumbling my essays, and do not find a Helicon in these sulphurous springs. My health is better generally than when I left, and the symptom which alarmed the doctor has, I hope, vanished.

I have been reading nothing but Hegel and Pigault le Brun—an odd combination. Pigault has immense *vis comica*, but I see nothing to crib from him, which is a pity. I want to find a new well for a novel, and

1863. Æt. 60. can't find anything less common than the parish pumps. —Adieu, Ever affly. yours,

E. B. Lytton.

Did I tell you I have bought a property eight miles from town, very pretty? I am not sure whether I shall let the house or live in it part of the year. I farm the land myself.

The property mentioned in the postscript was Copped Hall, Totteridge, which turned out to be a good speculation. He kept it till 1867, when he sold it advantageously and bought No. 12 Grosvenor Square. In 1864 he also bought Bredalbane House, No. 21 Park Lane, which became his London residence for eighteen months. He sold it to Lady Palmerston in November 1865.

For the years 1863–1866 there is little to record. From November 1862 to April 1863 he was at Nice, writing a little and reading much. Whilst there he received some private communications, asking if he would be prepared to accept, if it were offered to him, the throne of Greece, left vacant by the abdication of King Otho, and refused by Prince Alfred. This honour had also been offered to Mr. Gladstone and to Lord Stanley, neither of whom could be otherwise than amused at the suggestion. In the latter case Disraeli had written to a friend on hearing of it :—

The Greeks really want to make my friend Lord Stanley their King. This beats any novel; but he will not. Had I his youth, I would not hesitate, even

with the earldom of Derby in the distance. . . . It is a dazzling adventure for the house of Stanley, but they are not an imaginative race, and I fancy they will prefer Knowsley to the Parthenon and Lancashire to the Attic plains. 1863. Æt. 60.

Bulwer-Lytton appears to have had the same feelings. However much his imagination might have been fired at an earlier date, he, too, preferred Knebworth to Athens! Writing to his son from Nice, he says :—

Certes if I were to accept I should defy 'the Great Powers' to turn me out, and I would, if I lived ten years, make Greece a very important State. But it would require trouble, and perhaps money, to organise and concentrate the parties and the machinery of the election, and seems to promise a thorny and laborious exile among strange tongues, even if successful. Therefore, I have thrown iced water on the propositions that have been secretly conveyed to me. . . . For my part, the thing seems far from alluring. A country without roads, without revenues, over head and ears in debt, an unhealthy capital subject to fevers, a language one could never learn to speak, a horrible travesty of a European free constitution ; with subjects profoundly orientalised, corruption universal—all this looks dismal beside the calm Academe of Knebworth.

In the same letter he speaks of the arrival in England for her marriage with the Prince of Wales, of Princess Alexandra of Denmark :—

The Princess seems to have bewitched the English world. Our Speaker, writing to me the other day, says that there was not a man in that London crowd

1864. who would not have gone through fire and water to
Æt. 61. serve her.

After the lapse of fifty years, the same thing might be said with equal truth to-day of the lovely and lovable Queen who has never lost the place in the hearts of the British people which she won on the very day of her arrival.

With the return of health, and after a long spell of literary work, Bulwer-Lytton's interest in politics began to revive, but at the beginning of 1864 he received a painful reminder of the perpetual check imposed upon his ambitions in this direction. Writing to his son on January 20, 1864, he says :—

> This morning I received a letter from Disraeli, which conveyed the thunderbolt that L[ady] L[ytton] has resumed attacks—written, he says, to my colleagues and friends, making horrible and nameless accusations. I can conceive how annoying and humiliating these letters would be, especially if to Derby and others of that class, as I suspect from Dis's letter. This horrible calamity weighs on me, but I know not what to do. Of course, it will prevent office. I cannot go through such public scandals again as an official character. I have heard nothing from her myself, nor of her, except accidentally from a person living at Taunton, that she had been out to a concert and seemed well. I know not what to do. But the thing effectively damps the ardour I was beginning to have for politics.[1]

[1] "It is said that politics are a jealous mistress—that they require the whole man. The saying is not invariably true in the application it commonly receives—that is, a politician may have some other employment of intellect, which rather enlarges his powers than distracts their political uses. Successful politicians have united with great parliamentary toil and triumph

The reopening of this wound produced its usual effect, and his letters for the remainder of this year complain of ill-health and great depression of spirits. He was chiefly occupied with correcting a collected edition of his poems, and working at the novel of *Pausanias* and the comedy of *Walpole*. The winter was spent at Hastings, Bath, and finally at Torquay, which latter place became his usual winter quarters for the remainder of his life. 1864. Æt. 61.

In 1864 public opinion in England was much exercised about the quarrel between Denmark and Germany concerning the Schleswig and Holstein Duchies, and a long correspondence on the subject took place between Bulwer-Lytton and his son. The latter, who was then at Copenhagen, naturally sided very strongly with the Danes, and held that after the encouragement given to Denmark by the British Government, Great Britain was in honour bound to support that country in her quarrel. Bulwer-Lytton, on the other hand, held that to go to war with Germany for the retention by Denmark of two Duchies, the population of which was largely German, was an impossible policy for England.

"My opinions," he said, "no doubt seem to you very moderate and milk and water. But yours seem

legal occupations or literary or learned studies. But politics do require that the heart should be free, and at peace from all more absorbing anxieties —from the gnawing of a memory or a care, which dulls ambition and paralyses energy. In this sense politics do require the whole man. If I returned to politics now, I should fail to them, and they to me."

What will he do with it?

1864. Æt. 61. to me much more fiery than justice warrants or policy justifies—if it mean our fighting Germany with the handful of men we have, and in support of a cause beset with doubts from the first, and aggravated by the gallant but stolid obstinacy of Denmark. . . . All the difficulties that have occurred were visible from 1860, and commenced with the Schleswig Petition. And I think our wise course would have been to have interfered only to the same extent as other Non-German parties to the Treaty. Or, if we resolved to interfere, then in a wholly opposite direction, viz.:—instead of rigidly enforcing upon both parties a Treaty which it was clear was pregnant with war, and intolerable to both, to have summoned a conference to consider how the Treaty should be modified. As it is now, I believe if all Europe made Denmark a battlefield, it would come to the same result at the end, viz.:—that what is German should be German ; what is Scandinavian, Scandinavian. I see no other solution, and all others are but patchworks of rotten tissues. The error of 1852 was the forgetfulness of the first rule in the grammar of politics—the interests and wishes of the people governed — in this case Holstein and south Schleswig. And that error must be corrected, or the whole construction will be unsound and perilous."

Of his own health and occupations he writes on April 24, 1864 :—

I continue very unwell, but I believe there is no doubt that I am mending, but slowly—*so* slowly ! My cough hampers me terribly, at night in especial, and I am quite incapable of the least exertion, beyond taking a drive for an hour or two, which I do daily and get out of the carriage when I find a warm place in a suburb and walk for a few minutes. Still, I am

certainly not so weak as I was, and that is the best sign; I think, D.V., I may be really convalescent in about a fortnight. But I doubt if I shall be up to Parliament all the session, or make any ostentatious use of my big house. No doubt this has been a stroke, and impresses on me the necessity of studying climate during the winter and spring in future years. 1864. Æt. 61.

In the summer of 1864, his son, whilst on a visit to England after leaving Copenhagen and before taking up a new diplomatic post at Athens, became engaged to Miss Edith Villiers and was married to her on October 4. This marriage was for various reasons distasteful to Bulwer-Lytton. As a niece of Lord Clarendon, Miss Villiers belonged to a family not only opposed to him in politics, but with a powerful political influence in the county for which he was a member. From a pecuniary point of view, also, the marriage was a disappointment to him. Knowing how great was the financial drain of his Knebworth estate, Bulwer-Lytton had hoped that his son's marriage might bring enough money into the family to render its upkeep an easier task, and he found it hard to reconcile himself to the failure of these expectations. Once the matter was settled, however, and he came to have a personal acquaintance with his daughter-in-law, he found her charm irresistible, and before the end of his life came to feel for her a deep affection.

In a letter to his son written towards the end

1865. ÆT. 62. of the year following his marriage, he explained the reasons for his feelings at the time :—

> I simply said that the ancient house or estate required money, that ever since I have had it I have sacrificed many enjoyments to myself which money would have given, if not spent on the place, as I spent it. And all I said with regard to yourself was not in reproach, but in explanation why I could not feel so much satisfaction in your marriage as you seemed to think I ought to have done. . . . Estates need money and Knebworth consumes all I ever get from it and more. For the rest, I do make every allowance for differing circumstances, differing associations and differing duties. All I say is, without reproaching you, I do not think it fair to reproach me for want of sympathy in a marriage which annihilated views of my own, at a time when I did not even know your wife.
>
> Let us dismiss the rest of this argument, it ends in reality when you say you are quite contented with your marriage and that is all I ever desire. I can but be delighted that your reason approves a very hasty marriage, or at least a very hasty engagement, when you had none of the time to study character, &c. . . . Sometimes, tho' rarely, Providence, in mercy rather than in punishment, directs a man's choice, whatever the previous circumstances were, so as to make him happy. And it appears that Providence has been kind in your case. Antecedent circumstances go for nothing. In love there is no wherefore. . . .

On February 10, 1865, Bulwer-Lytton wrote in a letter to his son :—

> I am in town, but doubt if I shall stay. Nothing to do in Parlt., only I don't know where to go.

Torquay is the best place, but it is so far and I hate railways. Weather here raw and dull, not very cold. My poems are on the whole receiving more attention and a little more praise than I expected. I am glad I collected them. Yours, I suppose, will be soon out. I am glad to hear you are doing justice to Byron. He is certainly an extraordinary born poet, but the odd thing about him is that instead of acquiring art as he got older, he continued to lose the little he ever had. . . . I have been going through Horace with increased delight. He is the model for popular lyrics, and certainly the greatest lyrist extant. I fancy Alcæus had more genius, but we have nothing of him but scraps and tradition. He must have been a sort of Byron, I should think. . . . Pam is in full vigour and means to settle the newspaper controversy as to whether people really live to a hundred. He will be Prime Minister when your intended *Neogilus*[1] is 21, and you are in the vale of years with a white beard. *Apropos*, I am letting my beard grow, which I find very comfortable, and it sprang up quite dark and not at all grey—to signify. Derby's *Homer* has had immense success and sale. In fact, the book of the season.

1865. ÆT. 62.

After the close of the Parliamentary session of 1865, he went to Mont Dore in Auvergne, and there began another volume of Poetry—*The Lost Tales of Miletus*. This book was finished by the end of the year, and was published by Murray at the beginning of 1866. He writes to his son on September 21, 1865 :—

I have been scribbling and may send you some

[1] Mrs. Robert Lytton was then in England, expecting her first confinement.

1865. proofs for your criticism. There is none that I should
ÆT. 62. value more highly.

The proofs were sent on October 17, and in the letter accompanying them, he says :—

You will see, I think, that there is merit in construction and dramatic treatment, but I daresay the diction is flat and prosaic. . . . "The Wife of Miletus" I suspect to have been a genuine Milesian story ; if so, it is curious as giving us in more human proportion the she-fiends of Greek drama. I think I have made much of the materials in creating the characters of the Gaul and Erippe, and placing between them the careless civilisation of Xanthus, who seems very generous and really is so ; and yet Erippe's accusation against him of sensual selfishness is not untrue. . . . While I am writing, the report is that poor Palmerston is dying at Brocket, not expected to live many hours.

The next day he writes :—

I have felt a strange shock at Pam's death, expected as it has been for days. Something has gone out of the world that one had looked upon as part and parcel of it.

The following letters throw some light on the subject of *The Lost Tales of Miletus* :—

To his Son.

December 26, 1865.

I am glad you prefer "Sisyphus"—so do I. But I do not think it is the favourite with the few who have seen the poems. The one most popular seems "The Secret Way," because, perhaps, of the fuller story and the prettiness of the original legend in making

two persons fall in love with each other, as seen in dreams. 1865.
But it is more melodramatic than most of the others. Æt. 62.
"The Wife of Miletus" is the most tragic, and with some is the favourite. I suspect this to be a genuine Milesian tale. But the characters of the Gaul and Erippe are mine. "Cydippe" is entirely rewritten in a different metre.

Your observations about the interest of short narrative pieces call forth my idea of their artistic treatment. In the first place, I think they resemble a drama in this —that they require a backbone, namely: —a single leading idea or purpose, which should not be obscured by episodical ornament. This is best secured where one does not invent the germ of the story, because, before sitting down to write, the original mainspring of the story being followed, has become clear and forcible to one's own mind, and it so comes out, almost unconsciously, in transfusion.

2ndly, I think that vigorous treatment requires terseness and a pruning of superfluous blossoms, the study of compression.

3rdly, that as some purely poetic passage may be required, it should be well considered what it should be, and the poetry then thrown pre-eminently into that passage, so that it stands out as a picture from the frame.

Now in these two last named peculiarities, Horace's lyrics seem to me unrivalled as hints for narrative. 1st, observe how wonderfully he compresses and studies terseness, as if afraid to bore an impatient, idle audience; 2ndly, when he selects his picture, how it stands out— Cleopatra's flight, the speech of Regulus, the story of Europa, the vision of Hades in the ode on his escape from the tree, &c. He never has two plots, and rarely two pictures in his lyrics.

The writer most resembling him in these respects, tho' of a genus so opposite as to be almost antagonistic,

1865. Æt. 62. is Schiller—in his narrative poems. In "Fridolin," how he emphasises the picture of the forge. In the "Diver," the horror of the depth in the sea, &c.

Now lastly, as to character, I think this must be studied according to the nature of the interest you desire to create. A character may be very slight, very shadowy, and yet no elaboration could make it better for the peculiar interest. Take Alp in the "Siege of Corinth." How slightly sketched his character, how easy to sneer at it, a sort of dandy renegade, yet for the peculiar interest of the story the character is perfect. Shakespeare could not have improved it for the special purpose. I name the "Siege of Corinth" because to my mind, it is the most animated by real narrative in the language. And the one great picture of Alp's walk by moonlight is the realisation in large of the Horatian mode of dealing with episodical ornament.

If I may presume, after speaking of such great masters, to advert to my own treatment of character in these stories, I think you will see on reflection that for at least some of the stories the interest would have been wholly changed to disadvantage, but for the characters as sketched. Take the Gaul in the "Wife of Miletus"—civilise him a little more, and his grandeur would become brutal. Take the lovers in "The Secret Way." Let Zariades, instead of a hardy conquering emulator of Cyrus, be a poetic dreamer; let Argiope assume some attributes that detract from the insistance on her shame-faced modesty, and this love between the two, as created by dreams, would certainly lose in depth and purity of conception.

In "Cydippe," the character (here I am speaking of the corrected version, which you have not seen) rests much on the father. His wish that his son should marry, his piety and submission to the Gods when he believes that wish to be rejected. At the beginning

you wish the father to be contented, before you even know anything about the son's love affair, yet the character of the son, as essentially cold, and averse to love, is an element of interest. Cydippe's readiness to receive any lover in submission to her father, and growing rebellious when she does love, help the story, tho' these attributes of character in both are not interesting in themselves. I really must beg pardon in alluding to my own practice and in poems which are very likely to fall still-born, but that is my conviction of the way character should be adapted to short narratives. 1865. ÆT. 62.

In respect to metres, I can say nothing. Mine is an experiment, it may take a century to test. But, putting aside rhyme, as having nothing to do with the question, I think if you fairly examine, you will see that you obtain in rhythmical quatrain a compression and terseness, and some lyrical quality that you cannot obtain with heroic blank verse. I think, speaking honestly, that for the perfect success of these innovations of rhythm, it requires a more perfect master of form and expression than I am. I have been so accustomed by prose fiction to consider large effects, that like an infinitely greater master of fiction, Scott, I have dulled myself to the requirements of verbal form, and I do not sufficiently care for the delicacies of musical cadence. But I think that the addition of rhymeless quatrain (the Horatian strophe) to our modes of versification, will, for certain kinds of narrative, and especially lyrical narrative, and even lyrical poetry itself, be found, some day or other, to contain a vein of poetry in new directions, prompting new modes of treatment, and quite in harmony with the genius of the Anglo-Saxon language. Imagine what Milton could have done with such forms at the age in which he wrote the *Comus*!

1866. Æt. 63. But I certainly do not ask that rhyme should be abandoned, nor do I say that for most things rhyme may not be better. I don't remember Shelley's rhymed translation of the (so-called) Homeric Hymns. But before I could decide whether for verses from the Greek, I should not prefer rhymeless metre, I should like to have seen Shelley undertake translations without rhyme.

Finally, I will say one thing. I think it would be a great step gained by a really great poet meditating to "be the first that ever burst into a silent sea," to invent some form of metre not so used up as our blank verse, and imposing more difficulties of treatment. For the Drama, heroic blank verse is perfect (except for comedy). But for epic, narrative and didactic, it has great defects, the chief of which is that it courts to tediousness and dilution. Even Milton's *Paradise Lost* is infinitely too lengthy—compare it in that respect with the stern terseness of Dante's Strophe. Strophe necessitates a certain brevity. Take "Alastor" (beautiful specimen of blank verse) but it is dull—because the facility of the metre is too indulgent to the exuberance of the poet. It is a great thing to impose difficulties on oneself, and I believe this to be one of the merits of rhyme.

But I am certainly not setting an example of compression now, so I hasten to the end.—Affectly. yrs.,

E. B. L.

To the same.

Feb. 13th, 1866.

Many thanks for your letter and flattering opinions of the *Lost Tales.*

Despite a singularly unfair and carping article in *The Saturday Review*, I think they are making

way and are, at all events, generally favoured by the critics. 1866. Æt. 63.

What you say about love as not being an effective dramatic element, is perfectly true, and I have often said it myself—that is love *pur et simple*—and yet love as a mixed ingredient is almost an essential element of Drama. Generally speaking, it necessitates opposing struggle. Love *versus* duty, *versus* pride, *versus* fate, &c. Then it becomes effective.

I agree with you that love between husband and wife is more effective than between lovers. But that is from various reasons, scarcely perceptible to an audience or even a reader. One reason is the fixed and permanent nature of the tie, and the terrible consequences of rupture there as compared in real life with the rupture between a youth and a maid. Romeo forgets Rosalind when he sees Juliet. He might forget Juliet also, if he did not marry her. There would be little interest in the quarrel between man and wife, if man had fifty wives. It is our domestic associations that give this dramatic interest to married folks. But tho' love as between two lovers *pur et simple* is not very serviceable on the stage, it is very interesting in all narrative, whether prose or poetry. Take Lucy and Ravenswood (in *The Bride of Lammermoor*) for prose narrative; and what would be Lara if you took away Kaled. It is the moving passion in lyrics. Lyrical poetry as between husband and wife, is, to my mind, detestable. Domestic lyrical poetry in praise of one's baby, makes one sick, yet parental and filial love on the stage is effective. Therefore, I think you must amend your critical errors and separate altogether genuine Drama, that is Drama for the stage, from poetry or fiction in which the dramatic element is admitted. In the former love *pur et simple* not being a first-rate agency of interest, but in the latter it is.

1866. When Lord Derby formed his third Admini-
Æt. 63. stration in the summer of 1866, after the defeat of the Liberal Reform Bill, he offered a peerage to Bulwer-Lytton, who gratefully accepted it. This honour had been the summit of his ambition from the earliest days, and with the attainment of it, the strenuous period of his life comes to an end. Not only did he welcome the distinction as a recognition of his own achievements in literature and politics, but he valued it especially as an honour to the family of which he was ever proud. It was to him a tribute which he could dedicate to the memory of his mother and leave as a legacy to his son.

To the latter he writes :—

July 31, 1866.

My dearest Son—All the letters of congratulation I have received put together do not give me the delight which I derive from your letter[1] of July 20th, just come to hand and heart.

With that marvellous gift of sympathy which belongs to you, and in which lies the secret at once of your personal popularity and your intellectual comprehensiveness, you have touched the key of every sentiment far remote from individual vanity which endears to me an hereditary honour. On one of these sentiments alone you have been modestly reserved—you comprehend fully my satisfaction at feeling as if I were paying a debt to those who have gone before me. Add largely to that satisfaction the joy of a father proud of his son, and knowing into what worthy hands the

[1] This letter is published in *The Personal and Literary Letters of Robert, First Earl of Lytton*, 1906, vol. i. p. 211.

representation of all honours he may acquire, will pass in the course of Nature. 1866. Æt. 63.

Do you remember in the earliest years of my coming into the possession I owe to my mother's love, you, then a schoolboy, and I, then woefully crippled by the unexpected discovery that I was poorer with Knebworth, if it were kept up, than I had been without it, and then, not only out of Parliament, but not seeing my way back into it? Do you remember the evening when you and I were riding together, and I said:—"We must have the Peerage. I can but be a Baron—higher grades I leave to you"?

I remember it all as if it were yesterday. When the thing was done and in the *Gazette* you have read, certainly my first thought was of my poor mother, and I said as if she were living still on this earth, or wherever she be, caring for such matters:—"How it will please her." My second thought passed quick as lightning to you, and among the somewhat more complicated sentiments therein mingled, was this:—"It will please him to think he gives to the woman who chose him out of mankind the station that all women value—the station for which women sell themselves, even noble-hearted women." Nothing we men care for more than to give a something or other to the woman we love.

Now, as to this thing itself, practically speaking—it is a strange mixture of feeling. In large, political life, apart from that family or individual sentiment which you and I understand—it is a fall. One ceases to be a power. One is shelved. A member for the smallest boro' who has the ear of the House of Commons has more influence with the public than the richest peer. Again, I know of no instance in which a man passing from the Commons to the Lords without office at the time has ever done anything in the Lords. Why, I know

1866. Æt. 63. not yet, but so it is. I have taken my seat and only been once in the House of Lords. I left it in dismay—on only one point, but that point awful—the consciousness of deafness. I never was in a public room in which hearing was so difficult. I sat next a man who seemed trying his best to hear Derby, whose voice is the most audible, and I said to him—"Do you hear?" "Only a word or two here and there," was the encouraging answer. It is time that I was on a modest back bench. I see but one place where I could hear (not being in the Ministerial front row) and that is the Cross Bench. But the dons of routine say that to sit there would be to proclaim some hostility to the Govt. —my independent neutrality. Still, to that Cross Bench I must converge, or I must relinquish all idea of "further progress." At present my belief is that I must make an immense struggle to conquer deafness, and I think of going to Paris to consult a doctor there.

Sir Henry is in England, thin as a spectre. But so redundant of life, energy and restless ambition, that he is the finest incarnation of youth I have seen since I left school. Write to him as often as you can. He complains of your silence. I can't give you his address, for he is ever on the wing, but you can enclose to me.

My own plans are to stay here thro' August, then go to Paris to consult the aurist, and be guided by the result as to staying there. But to winter at Nice.

Love to Edith and respects to *Neogilus*.[1]—Yrs. most aff.

L.

At the time when he accepted the peerage, Bulwer-Lytton hoped that with a seat in Parliament secured to him without the expense and trouble of a contested election, he would be

[1] Edward Rowland John, born September 19, 1865.

able to render valuable service to his party by occasional speeches in the House of Lords; and with the object of rendering himself more competent for such a task, he consulted a celebrated aurist in Paris about his deafness. This man—a Dr. Turnbull—seems to have helped him considerably, for he writes from Paris in December 1866: "I have been trying an aurist and my hearing has been much improved"; and in March of the following year he speaks of the infirmity as having "tolerably ceased." 1866. Æt. 63.

Whether it was that this improvement in his hearing was only temporary, and that his deafness proved an insuperable difficulty, or whether he failed to overcome the nervousness occasioned by the chilling atmosphere of the House of Lords, Lord Lytton never spoke in that assembly. He prepared speeches on several occasions during the last years of his life, but none of them were ever delivered, and his active political career was closed in 1866.

For nearly forty years his life had been one of incessant labour and strenuous mental activity. It had been spent in an atmosphere of conflict and struggle. He had been assailed throughout by hostile criticism, both literary and political; he had been laughed at for his affectations, attacked for changing his politics, and, in short, had met with even more than his share of the misrepresentation common to all public men. In spite of opposition, however, and the handicap of constant ill-health, he had worked on with

1866. Æt. 63. courage and persistency to the goal of his ambition. The comparative repose of his later years had been fully earned. His literary work was only interrupted by death, but from this moment his life ran on calmly and peacefully to the end.

BOOK VI

LITERARY AND PERSONAL

LAST YEARS

1867–1873

If I have borne much, and my spirit has worked out its earthly end in travail and in tears, yet I would not forego the lessons which my life has bequeathed me, even though they be deeply blended with sadness and regret. No! were I asked what best dignifies the present, and consecrates the past; what enables us alone to draw a just moral from the tale of life; what sheds the purest light upon our reason; what gives the firmest strength to our religion; and whether our remaining years pass in seclusion or in action, is best fitted to soften the heart to man and elevate the soul to God, I would answer with Lassus—it is EXPERIENCE. *Devereux.*

CHAPTER I

FATHER AND SON

1836–1865

'Tis human nature and sacred ties—one's own flesh and blood, and besides one hand rubs the other, one leg helps on the other, and relations get on best in this world when they pull together; that is, supposing that they are the proper sort of relations, and pull one on, not down.

My Novel.

HAVING arrived at the last stage in Lord Lytton's life, I feel that this is a convenient place to interrupt the chronological narrative for the purpose of dealing in greater detail with one or two aspects of his life and character which are of sufficient importance to occupy a chapter to themselves. The first of these concerns his relations with his son.

From the correspondence contained in previous chapters, the reader will have been able to form a general idea of Lord Lytton's character, and to estimate both its strength and its weakness in his capacity as son, husband, writer, and statesman. It is the object of this chapter to complete the picture by giving additional evidence of his personality as a father.

While his children were still young, Lord Lytton had no part in their home life ; he was little with them, and beyond an occasional holiday visit he does not appear to have contributed much to their happiness or to have derived much happiness himself from intercourse with them. He wrote them most affectionate letters and took an interest in their studies and characters, but he did not possess the qualities which arouse affection in very young children. His separation from his wife as well as his own occupations prevented him from giving them the advantages of a happy home or of intimate family life, and it was not till well past middle life that he began to know the luxury of an intellectual companionship with his son fuller, more intimate and more affectionate than any which he had enjoyed with his own contemporaries.

Lord Lytton's life was on the whole a singularly lonely one. Neither in literature nor in politics did he belong to any intimate set. He went little into society and he never stayed for many months in the same place. During the parliamentary season he was usually in London ; at the end of the summer he always went to some health resort, generally on the Continent, to recover from the fatigues of the London life which was most distasteful to him, and the winter months were spent either in the south of England or the south of France. He had great affection for his Knebworth home, and

spent several months there at intervals in each year, but the large empty house only increased his sense of loneliness, and after entertaining a few friends there, he was soon off again to some other residence. His chief literary friend was John Forster, and his chief political friend Disraeli, but his intimacy with both these men was on an intellectual rather than a personal basis. In his whole correspondence the only letters which are of a really intimate personal character are those which passed between himself and his son. Yet even this intimacy took many years to establish, it was chequered by many misunderstandings, disagreements, and causes of friction, and that it became firmly established at last upon a basis of mutual love and admiration was largely due to the exceptional degree in which the son possessed those qualities of tenderness and sympathy which were lacking in the father.

If Emily Lytton's life had been spared ; if she had outlived the sorrows of her girlhood, and learned to know her father through the medium of common intellectual interests, and the mutual knowledge of each other's experiences ; had she made a happy marriage and had children of her own, she would doubtless have established with her father a close and affectionate companionship, precious alike to him and to her. There would then have existed in Lord Lytton's life a softening influence to counteract the hardening effect of his own experiences. Her early death

deprived him of the last chance of knowing in his own home the affection of a woman who could reign there by right. He had had no sister, his wife had become a living nightmare that threatened him from without, his daughter a dead memory that haunted him within.

It might be expected that after his daughter's death, Lord Lytton would have been drawn more closely to his surviving child, but the same qualities which prevented him from understanding his daughter and entering into her thoughts and feelings also prevented him for many years from having any better knowledge of his son.

In all the early difficulties of his life Robert Lytton found his father strangely lacking in sympathy and understanding. At the time of his sister's death he was a boy of sixteen at Harrow. Almost immediately afterwards he was taken away from school and sent to a private educational establishment at Bonn. Whilst there, he got into a boyish scrape which caused him the acutest suffering. Here was an occasion when a father's love and sympathy and advice would have been of inestimable value to him ; but if he looked for it, he looked in vain. The elder Lytton was at Nice when he received the news of his son's trouble, and far from well himself at the time. He entirely misjudged the situation, greatly overestimating the gravity of the scrape, and greatly underestimating the mental distress of his son. By the harsh letters which he wrote at the time, he showed how

completely he had failed to understand the character of the boy, and it was only through the kindness and sympathy of two older friends —Chauncey Townshend and John Forster—and by the inherent strength and beauty of his own nature, that Robert Lytton was able to survive without any moral harm, an incident trivial in itself, but which from the treatment which it received, might permanently have embittered his character. When father and son met and talked the matter over, all misunderstanding was removed, and the circumstance is only mentioned here to show through what vicissitudes the story of this relationship had to pass before it reached the stage of perfect understanding and deep affection.

The next cause of estrangement between father and son was occasioned by the painful circumstances which have been described in a previous chapter.

When in 1858 Lady Lytton's violent attacks upon her husband led to her temporary detention in a private home, Robert Lytton, as has been already mentioned, came to the assistance of both his parents in a most generous and self-sacrificing manner. For several months he attempted the hopeless task of mediating between his father and mother. That he did not succeed was in no way due to any fault of his own. In the circumstances the task which he had undertaken was an impossible one, but his difficulties were immensely increased, and his failure rendered doubly

bitter, by the extraordinary letters which he received from his father at that time.

These letters were at first very grateful and encouraging, but later, when the father began to fear that his son was falling under his mother's influence, their tone became hard and menacing. The father spoke of disowning his son altogether, and even suggested that on his return they might meet as strangers in the street. Finally, when the son's moment of bitterest disappointment and despondency arrived, when he had to acknowledge the failure of his efforts, and turned his back on his mother for ever, the cup of his misery was filled to overflowing by receiving letters from his father upbraiding him for his extravagance, and reproaching him for having come away from Luchon and left his mother behind. Robert Lytton, although he felt "stunned and stupified" at finding himself thus addressed in language which he himself "would reluctantly use even towards a dishonest menial," replied in a spirit of gentle and patient remonstrance. Never were the beauty and tenderness of his character more conspicuous than in his dealings with both his parents during those bitter months of 1858. Some of the passages in his father's letters must have appeared to him almost as insane as anything which he experienced from his mother; and yet he never failed to express in reply the utmost patience, gentleness, respect, and affection, and this forbearance was richly rewarded.

UNJUST REPROACHES

There is nothing more remarkable in the character of the first Lord Lytton than his readiness to accept apologies and explanations from others, and on receipt of them to retract any harsh or unjust expressions which he had himself employed. To his wife, to his children, to his friends, he repeatedly exhibited the most astonishing irritability, and sometimes became positively offensive, but on receipt of a soft answer, a satisfactory explanation, or an appeal to his heart, he immediately melted into a mood of tender contrition. So now. His unkind letters to his son in 1858 probably surpassed in the error of their judgment, the injustice of their reproaches, and the harshness of their language all other mistakes in his human relationships. Had they been answered in the same spirit, a life-long estrangement might have ensued between two men who were capable of giving to each other the most precious affection of their lives. Fortunately, they only served to reveal to the father the depths of his son's nature, which, when so revealed, were generously acknowledged. Here, for instance, is the letter which closed this particular incident :—

My own darling boy—my noble, tender-hearted, matchless son—my all in all—the only one in the world left to me to love—God in his great mercy bless and strengthen and cheer and watch over you. I have just received your kind letter after the long one I wrote to you yesterday, and I hasten now to write these few

lines to say that if there be a word in mine that wounds and pains, know that there are tears in my eyes now that should wash such words away for ever—tears of unspeakable gratitude, confidence, and the love that must sanctify. Yes, let me hope that Heaven will and does sanctify it. Remember, things and events so vary that letters will vary too ; but remember also that if words imply soreness and pain or reproach or doubt, still my substantial trust in you after the letter received to-day, is absolute and steadfast. I know that there are in you watching over me, watching over all, as beautiful a heart and soul and intellect as the Maker can furnish to man. I know your enormous difficulties, I know all the complications of duty that may perplex you. I will do my best to relieve and aid you in such a task.

After this time, though there were disputes leading to some coldness over the question of settlements at the time of Robert Lytton's abortive engagement to a Dutch girl in 1859, and in 1864 at the time of his marriage, yet nothing serious occurred again to disturb the intimacy of their relationship, which was strengthened in later years by circumstances in Robert Lytton's own life. His marriage, which was at first a disappointment to his father, became, through the tact and gentleness of his wife, a new bond of sympathy. To this was added a common joy in the birth of his children, a common interest in watching their growth, and lastly—most potent of all—a common grief occasioned by the early death of his eldest boy in 1871. In that grave were buried the hopes

Charles Mercier del. 1836 Emery Walker Sc.

Robert Lytton
aet. 20

and aspirations which father and grandfather had cherished for the generation that was to succeed them; but buried there, too, was every trace, every memory even, of the shadows which had clouded their own past.

The correspondence which passed between these two men ranged over the widest possible field. As they were much separated from each other, their letters are numerous, occupying many volumes. Every subject was discussed between them—literature, politics, religion, as well as their own personal interests. Letters which bear on particular incidents connected with this biography have been quoted in other chapters. The following, of a more general kind, have been selected here in the hope that they may help to illustrate further the character and opinions of their writer.

The first two letters were written in 1853, when Robert Lytton was at Florence and enjoying a very friendly intercourse with the Robert Brownings. The third belongs to 1856, and is in answer to one which he had written to his father expressing dissatisfaction with his profession, and his anxiety to leave it.

HARROGATE,
Oct. 7th, 1853.

MY DEAREST SON—I am delighted with your letter, most of all with its warm affection, which fills me with gratitude, and for which I invoke on your young head a father's tenderest blessing.

Next, with all the evidence of a rich mind pushing itself forth in true directions, your intellect seems to have taken a great start since I last saw you, and I should guess that you must have been aided therein by close intercourse with superior and original minds—a little, perhaps, too Utopian and struggling against the grand calm equilibrium of the social and the practical; but youth should go through that phase of airier idea, and may as well do it in company with minds not likely to leave the balloon in the mud. Perhaps the Brownings may have contributed to this. However, whether wrought out alone, or whether some other man's heifer be occasionally yoked to the plough, the seeds spring strong from furrows made far below the surface.

I quite think with you that publish your poems you must.[1] The vent is required, only keep the incognito strictly till we agree to lift the bars of the vizor. But before we publish, send me a list of the poems selected, of your principal corrections, the title of the book and the pseudonym of the author. I should avoid anagrams, and take as intelligible a type for the poems, and as unaffected tho' impressionable a name for the author, as your invention dictates. For my small poems lately collected, I took the title of "Cornflowers," illustrated by the lines :—

> The cornflower blossoms when the sheaves are ripe ;
> Song is the twin of golden Contemplation—
> The harvest-flower of life,

meaning, of course, to denote that those poems were the later growth of my mind.

So, perhaps, this may serve you as a hint for a metaphorical title for your verses, conformably to what you felt to be their spirit. . . .

[1] *Clytemnestra, and Other Poems.*

As to what you say about study to be original, leave all study alone—it will come, but not yet—you should, after this, repose the mind altogether from verse, storing it quietly with other ideas. These will spring up naturally into original forms, as the growth of the mind and the eclectic collection of opposite ideas makes your whole compound original. No! don't study Shakespeare. His form is too contagious, and has been too much transfused into all modern shapes. It will only lead you back to the Keatses, Tennysons, &c. The Elizabethan School has been overworked. Leave it alone. Dryden might do some good, but not yet. If you must read poetry, avoid as models for the present all in your own language. The poets of other tongues have this advantage, that you are not sensible of their mannerism sufficiently to copy it unconsciously ; it is their grand essences only that you take.

If you would take up Greek as an earnest study, avoiding all cribs and translations, working your way thro' the raw language, with lexicon, grammar and a good master, it would be of more service than any other language. Begin chronologically : — Homer, Hesiod, Anacreon, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides. But Homer is the man to study *au fond*, because he shows you (as by far the most popular poet that ever lived) the essentials of practical popularity. Observe that he is never subtle. He takes hold of the passions most common to the human heart in all ages, and thus Nature itself makes his combinations essentially artistic. Would he move you more to terror for his Achilles, and yet let the fiercest qualities of that hero still leave him human, and wind themselves thro' the undulations of sympathy, he unites this indomitable strength and valour with the presentiment of early death, he connects it with unspeakable sorrow in the fate of Patroclus. Would he interest you in the defence of Troy in spite

of the sacrilege to the marriage hearth which dooms it, he brings forth the marriage hearth itself in aid of your pity, and makes you forget Helen in the poetry of Hector and Andromache. The guilt of Troy vanishes before the lovely valour of Hector. So again, would he present the picture of human reverse, so as to strike all hearts—he draws a King with all that can give honour and reverence to power, old age, numerous children, &c., and then shows you Priam a suppliant for the body of Hector. Wherever you look at Homer you see the poetic secrets of popularity eternal and universal. Ruminate on this, and you will discover your own most prevalent deficiency, and that of the subtle modern schools, with their lust for dainty expressions, hairsplitting fancies, &c.

Next to Greek comes German, but that rounds back into modernism again. You will find Italian verse, perhaps, too cold and elegant for your purpose or taste. Yet still on that school Milton and Spenser founded themselves. And tho' they borrowed largely and copied much, yet you see they continued to be original. In fine, the poets of other tongues help us to originality, those of our own *force* us into imitation.

Now as to the Magazine. When you present the argument pecuniary before me, I have nothing to say. Sweet is the money we earn for ourselves, and I have no right to say "Don't add £120 to your income," unless I could say also "I make up the loss." I can only leave it to your own consideration to weigh the *pros* and the *cons*. The anonymous may save you from frittering away your name, but not from frittering away the growing strength of your mind, freshness of style and of thought. A certain degree of chastity is necessary for every muse. Magazines, if not brothels, are—ballrooms.

This is different with majestic Quarterlies. I don't dislike your modest doubt thereon. But I am sure that you could write well and tellingly for a Quarterly. Think only of some good, effective subject that you understand, read conscientiously for it, submit your article to private persons, who understand the subject, have it copied, so that your old vice of misspelling (not yet conquered) does not break out, and I think we shall do some grand thing. Why not the present political state of Italy, or the new religious spirit in Italy? Theories of religious reform afloat there. If you could but hit on a subject, more or less connected with *your profession*, and it told respectably, it would serve immensely to expedite your advance—might get you in another year to be paid attaché, and be remembered to the advantage of your career all your life. . . .

There is one thing in literature I would always do, namely, from time to time connect literature with your practical profession and career. Macaulay has done this well. Henry did it in his works on France, which, whatever their merit, greatly served him in his career. As a general rule writers in the Quarterlies are much honoured, writers in Magazines depreciated. And looking round to my contemporaries, I observe those who were distinguished in the first have all got high positions; those rather brilliant in the last, have all sunken down into the repute of small *littérateurs* and have no positions at all. *Verb. sap.*

My dear Boy, I wish I were with you to receive your confidences, tho' in all affairs of the heart I fear that our relative positions and differing ages would always impose a certain restraint on frankness. But take this as a general rule—that what in the slack morality of the world are called *liaisons* in Society, tho' very pleasing excitements at first, invariably lead to anxiety, tortures, disappointments, scrapes, heart-

pangs, wherever a man is not a mere cold-blooded *roué*. They may do well for a light Frenchman, they play the devil with an earnest Englishman, and they render one always liable to an *esclandre* or a compelled engagement, that inflict ruin or misery on one's whole life. Youth, I know, must be youth, man man, and the world must be turned topsy turvey before the relationships between the sexes can be adjusted to any harmonious ethics that reconcile virtue with the passions and the senses. But no man ever does much who gives up much of his thoughts and time to women; and no man who gives up much of his time and thoughts —I don't say to poetic dreams, but to grand masculine studies and pursuits, is inclined, as a habit, to let women over-stimulate his brain and wear out the fibres of his heart. . . .

My dearest R.—I received yours to-day, and order Scott to write to the Florence bankers to pay to your order £50, exclusive of the allowance, which, I hope, will set you right. I don't in any way blame you for assisting an artist or any man—to be generous belongs to humanity—to be occasionally taken in is the lot of youth, and the noble misfortune of a gentleman. But I do entreat you never in future to sign a bill either for yourself or another. In the first place, all signing or endorsing bills lowers and damages one's respectability, and it is really a blow when a bill is dishonoured. Next, the thing once begun may induce a habit and that habit is the fatal cause of ruin. 3rdly, it really mortgages, as it were, the future. One knows what one has, one does not know what one may have three months hence. I have owed much in life to the principle of never endorsing a bill for any friend, however intimate. I have often crippled myself by lending him at the time, but being responsible for him—No! I did it once about your age

for Cockburn, my earliest intimate friend, and it occasioned me great annoyance and lost me his friendship to this day, because when the bill was dishonoured, I ventured to remonstrate.

That served me as a lesson for life. I should be rejoiced if you would let this little bother be your warning too. Accept these rules when you lend a man money: consider it a gift—it is a God-send if he repay you—and if he don't, make up your mind that it is lost; don't ask for it when you know he can't repay you, and count beforehand your resources with the conviction that—it, *nummus*, like *tempus*, *nunquam revertitur*.

2ndly, if you lend, let it be your money, never your name, credit, character and honour, all of which are pawned in a Bill. It is the more necessary to be firm on this point, because it is a very common temptation, being so much the habit of young men. Your best excuse will be to say you promised me never to do it. In future, if you can't get out of some slight loan which you can't conveniently spare by a self-sacrifice, much better ask me. . . .

VENTNOR, *Dec.* 10, 1856.

MY DEAREST ROBERT—I pass at once to what I conclude to be the substance of your letter, tho' you leave it a little hazy. You are discontented with foreign society, weary of its temptations, revolted by its sins; you would see more of your own country and have a hankering to leave your profession. Well—all society of the same rank is alike; you would find life in English drawing-rooms just as insipid, just as vicious, with these differences:—1st. that a great portion of it has tastes much less suited to yours than rough talk—the turf, Henley, &c.; 2nd, that "a scrape" here may be ruin for life. But I think it natural

that you should wish to see more of England, and right that you should do so. Let us then contrive the best way. Give up your profession. Put me out of the question, and let us think of *that*. I never knew any man leave a profession who did not repent it heartily. You have got thro' the worst stages; if you throw it up, you throw up so many years of your life, and return to the place you started from at 17. Now much of what you feel now, belongs to a crisis in life which I know well. Supposing instead of Diplomacy you had gone to the Law and fagged at it. You would not have had nearly so many sores of the sentiment, nor such moments of despondency as you have now. Why? Because you would have had a labour more apart from what is called pleasure, from society, &c. Such pleasure would have been seized as a joyous recreation. But you chose, and I was pleased you should choose, a profession which allowed you to have the true season of youth. Lawyers can never have it. By this you have known sorrows and errors, but by this you have deepened your wisdom, added to your genius, and on the whole, rather heightened, perhaps, than deadened your moral perceptions. But now, suppose you throw up this profession and have none, but are quite free, and an income not below that of most young men well-born? Well —you will then feel satiety still more; just as you would have felt it less as lawyer than attaché, you will feel it less as attaché than as nothing.

But you will give yourself up to literature and poetry, &c. I doubt whether you would do so half so much, or at all events, half so well. When a poet or man of letters is not urged on by the positive want of money, I know by experience, man of letters as I am now grown by custom, that invention flags and industry grows dull. But if, with the instincts of literature, you compel me to do something else which I don't like as

well, then suddenly my mind would fly cravingly back to literature as yours, perhaps, does to poetry when you are bored with desk or *salons*. Of this I am pretty confident. At all events, I would not advise you formally to throw up the profession. Keeping in it may be a wonderful thing for you hereafter—leaps up the ladder you don't now foresee, not only in diplomacy but public life. . . .

I should be delighted if we could arrange that you could come to England for some time, and I could much more talk than write to you as to your present state of feeling. Much of what you feel as to your profession and companionship I still feel hourly to the House of Commons and the London life it forces me to. I hate it. No success rewards me, and failure, always probable, is a horrid idea. But still I go on. We cannot make the grooves of our own life. Happy, indeed, they whose heart and conscience get into those ruts which suit best with the wheels. But still life is doing—to live is to do ; and as we thus live and thus do, we fulfil that task which Heaven meant for us. Chauncy Townshend's life has been my beau-ideal of happiness—elegant rest, travel, lots of money—and he is always ill and always melancholy. When Duty chooses our life for us, it is a hard road and one is jolted dreadfully, but I suspect that we have on the whole a larger sum of enjoyment and fewer deductions from *ennui* and remorse than one has when one chooses one's life for oneself, and sends Duty to the Devil. If one has talents in the former case, one is a fact in one's age—in the latter case, one first says :—"But I don't care for success," and afterwards enviously regards one's busy contemporaries and is miserable from the sense of failure. Thus is it with Villiers and Lord Walpole—two accomplished, clever men—cut business and enjoyed themselves, while I fagged ; and now, tho'

to this day they say they never had ambition, Villiers positively weeps when he talks of my successes and what a fool he has been. And Walpole is gnawed with contempt for himself and told me he would give anything to have been a clerk in an office.—Adieu,

E. B. L.

P.S. — As to income, you gather from my letter that instead of withdrawing £100 a year if you retire, should you feel that your health and happiness require it, and £400 a year not eno' for you in England—all I can say is—put your hands in my purse—it is open to you.

In 1860 Robert Lytton published his poem of *Lucile*, the story of which was taken from George Sand's novel *Lavinia*. As it was on his father's advice that the preface containing an acknowledgment of this fact was suppressed, and a charge of plagiarism incurred, the following letter may be read with interest as containing his father's views on the subject :—

1860.

My dear R.—With respect to the charge of plagiarism in *L. Gazette*, I have not seen the article, but saw an allusion to it in some journal. My strong impression is that you must not think of noticing it yourself; that if noticed at all, it should be by a friend in a competent journal. Forster could do it in the *Examiner*. When I go to England I could get it done in some others if necessary; possibly in some note in some future preface or work you may allude to it, and give what reply is best in five lines, perhaps by a sarcasm or irony.

The fact is that plagiarism is one of the charges most difficult to answer, because the rights of authors are not yet very clearly decided in respect to borrowing. In your particular case I hold that the charge is groundless, but it would require some subtlety in criticism to show it to be groundless, no matter how much you took from a novel.

As a general rule, a poet has a right if he so please, to take his whole plot and principal situations from a prose writer, and that is not plagiarism. Shakespeare has done so wherever he could, and a novelist in turn has a right to take similar liberties with a poet. Where this is done in either case, acknowledgment is a mere matter of option, but it would be always better to lay down a general rule, where it is not applied, to vindicate oneself from a special charge. *Qui s'excuse, s'accuse.* I should like to see the article. In my early days I fell into the error of answering attacks—it did no good. I should doubt if the *L. Gazette* had any weight as a journal. Still, I should see the article and judge calmly. My present conviction is that Forster will dispose of it in the *Examiner*.

True plagiarism is in borrowing the form of another. Imitators of Pope, Byron, or Tennyson, are plagiarists, tho' they may not borrow a single thought or a single line. Borrowing is a beauty of scholarship and taste, and can't be done too largely. All great poets do borrow in proportion to their own wealth. Dryden has observed in one of his prefaces, that the sole condition of borrowing is to improve what you take. That is not always possible—Byron's line—"They make a solitude and call it peace," is, as you well know, a latent translation from Tacitus, *Quum solitudinem faciunt pacem appellunt.* It is not an improvement, yet the line is an exquisite beauty. He did not acknowledge it in a note, to have done so would have been pedantry.

But if he had taken it from a contemporary poet, he ought to have acknowledged it.

My own theory is that the less a poet, especially a dramatist, makes his own plot, the better. All the ancient dramatists took their fable from well-known myths. I very much doubt if Shakespeare ever invented his own story. The poet accepts certain premises and from them builds up. The story is so and so—the characters such and such—the poet then makes the story pleasing and explains the characters according to his own metaphysics. . . .

Some of the elder Lytton's letters in the following year, 1861, contain interesting comments on various literary matters :—

VENTNOR, ISLE OF WIGHT,
2 MARINE PARADE,
Oct. 28, 1861.

MY DEAR R.—I have already given you all the hints I can upon Lever.[1] You may smooth the difficulty as to his later works by allowing, perhaps justly, the merit he doubtless assigns to them, of more purpose and better construction of plot, while you could urge his persevering in the merit of the earlier works—in dash and gusto. I don't pity you having to read Smollett, whose vigour is astonishing. You can raise the tone of your critique by making it general, beginning with the advantage of high spirits in narrative composition. In ancient times Homer has them to matchless degree. In later times Ariosto. They characterise French fiction more than English. Voltaire has them, so in a lower degree have writers like Pigault le Brun—it is the prevalent merit of Paul de

[1] Robert Lytton was at this time writing a critical article upon the works of Charles Lever.

Kock and Dumas. Farquhar has them in comedy contrasted with Congreve. Fielding has them, but not quite to such degree as Smollett in *Roderick Random* and *Peregrine Pickle.*

Then come to Lever (whose works you need not read thro')—cite a few instances out of *H. Lorriquer* and others, quote as an instance of the philosophical humour that may sometimes be compatible with high spirits, Lever's story of the Irish person getting his father's soul out of purgatory—I forget where it is found. Lever will tell you, it is capital.

His fun sometimes runs away into farce, but so it does even with Molière, as in his *Malade Imaginaire.* Authors as they proceed in a career, become sensible of their own faults, but in getting rid of them, are apt to get rid of the merits that go along with faults. Thus Lever curbing extravagance may not sufficiently remember that he may lose the rush that made extravagance itself pleasing. Where the author really improves he should concentre waste force upon some point. Thus Smollett lost much of his "go" in his *Humphrey Clinker*, but then he concentred his creative power on much more complete development of humourous character, as in Lismahago and Matthew Bramble. Look to Sir J. Reynolds' lectures, you will find a passage or two on gusto that will help you.

In respect to *Servian Poems*,[1] I have read them with attention. They will come in well in the ultimate summing up of your poetic powers, but not in themselves advance your reputation at present. At this stage of your career you should study what is popular, what will strike and interest the largest number of readers, later you can fill up crevices with scholastic mortar.

[1] *Serbski Pesme or National Songs of Servia*, by Owen Meredith Chapman and Hall, 1861.

Altogether it was a fine exercise, and if it does you no good now, does you no harm and will do you good ultimately. It increases objective experience in poetry. Browning's poems I have received too. Thank him very heartily from me for sending them. Tell him that I not only read but study them, and he must consider every admiration I yield as the higher compliment, because it overcomes an obstacle in a taste formed and hardened in opposite theories, while whatever I may not fully appreciate, I feel arises from that obstacle—my own taste may spoil that of the wine. Privately to you, I may add that I can't yet attain your enthusiastic estimate of him as a poet. I think he has a great deal of intellect, but that his form is very faulty. It seems to me that he does not finish what he carves. But there must be a force and originality about him more perceptible to a younger man than myself, because I recognise in him a great deal that has served to form your own theories and influence your own style. More so, I should think, than even Tennyson has.

What I should advise you to cultivate steadily in future is breadth of manner. Taking the largest emotions and feelings—those that men have most in common, with a certainty that you will, on taking them, add refinement and novelty in the detail of expression. And again, all writers to be popular must be national. You are not broadly English eno'—at least to my fancy. But still, in all I say, I speak with the prejudices of a taste too old to alter, and which has never guided me to popular success in verse. And after all, each genius must hit on its own way out. Only I do fancy that if you would forbear to read the living, would confine your reading to the writers among the dead, who have been the most extensively popular, you would be more original and striking—viz.:—Homer, Horace, Ariosto, Goethe, Scott. If you would study Scott, and then say

to yourself, "Why not have all his merits and add to them a little more thought and purpose, with a polished vocabulary instead of so much slovenly slip-slop," I think you might do wonders. But were I you I would try and forget that Browning and Tennyson ever wrote. Wordsworth—I think wisely—told a young poet never to read contemporary poetry.—Yours most truly,

E. B. L.

A few weeks later he wrote again :—

I will get the poem of yours you mention and tell you about it. I am convinced myself that if you would slip from all poetry for two years and "take in coals" constantly, you would be startled at your own improvement ; but that if you continue constantly writing poetry meanwhile, you will go on mechanically repeating or merely improvising the same form. I wish from you now a great work, thoroughly original, and in poetry form must be original. It is no use having only original conceptions. I want Tennyson and Browning to be entirely forgotten. Nothing, believe me, like lying fallow and meanwhile studying things quite new to preconceived ideas.

I advise you, nevertheless, to read constantly Homer, Shakespeare, and the popular works of Goethe, viz. :—*Werter*, *Faust*, not the others. There you have the three greatest minds in the known world made familiar to the widest possible circle. What Bentham makes his axiom in politics, helps to the axiom of the poetic art. He says, "The greatest happiness of the greatest number should be the object of Govt."

I say "The greatest delight of the greatest number" should be the object of poetic art. I add—which Bentham does not—for both,—"And for the *longest possible period.*" Without that, both theorems are in-

complete. It is for the greatest happiness of the greatest number, for the moment, to burn witches or to get a triumph over the Tories; it is the greatest delight of poetic art for the moment to read Eugene Sue or Dumas. But we must look to the long run, and in the long run intellect prevails over numbers. Take my maxim, ponder it, and with your wonderful taste in poetic vocabulary and spirit, you will be the greatest poet in Christendom of your time. Omit it, and fritter away your genius by driblets, and you will end in mortification. Strike at the highest, the widest range for the longest period, that is to say, imagination and intellect adapted to the delight of the greatest number, but also to the finest minds, and therefore for the longest period.

Am I not right? Think of Shakespeare and Homer—Goethe in his two popular works. And to judge what I mean, think what Scott would have been if he had had the intellect of Shakespeare or even the vocabulary of Shelley. Get rid, in your aspirations, of the metaphysical poets, commencing with Cowley and ending with Tennyson. Say to yourself, "Broad effects, opinions, humours, feelings, thoughts that every man in Oxford St. knows." Do you understand? . . .

The references in these letters to the "popular element" in poetry were not clearly understood by Robert Lytton. He interpreted the advice to mean that he was to study the popular taste and write what would please the public rather than himself. This suggestion he was unwilling to accept, and vindicated the right of every author to be above all things true to himself. In a letter of a later date the elder Lytton explains his meaning further :—

"POPULAR ELEMENT" IN POETRY

I don't think we quite understand each other as to the meaning of the words popular element. I don't mean any pandering to popular codes, whatever they may be. What I mean by the popular element is that which I find without one exception all the poets whom posterity recognises to be great eminently possess, in fact, it is their chief quality. Homer has it above all poets; Virgil and Horace have it (and it makes their pre-eminence over Catullus and Ovid); Milton has it, and it makes his pre-eminence over Spenser. And the first proof of the popular element is its nature being so independent of form that it is cosmopolitan—pleases all races and all times. The essential of the popular element is the expression of a something which comes home to the greatest number of human hearts and souls. Breadth of type, whether in creation of character or utterance of sentiment, is the fundamental attribute of this popular element. Of course, therefore, the passions are the most available agencies and the highest as well as widest, provided they be the passions that all either feel or can approach by human sympathy,—love, hate, revenge, jealousy, &c.; and the heroic type is that which, after all, the masses best comprehend, and in the heroic type is pathos, the pathos of generosity and self-sacrifice. But the passions are not the only agencies of popular element. The sentiment is an agency also, as in Byron, who has more sentiment than passion—in Horace, in a lower degree in Goldsmith or Gray's *Elegy*—in the highest degree in Dante, who is severe and restrained in the use of passion, tho' you feel that he individually is all passion. That is the best form which most pellucidly delivers to the ordinary eye the beauties of the poetic types, and that never can be the highest form which cuts up large effects into small ones, and overstudies expression. The over study of expression is the fault of the new school in form, and

the neglect of large types common to mankind, for eccentric and exceptional types of thought, sentiment or character. . . .

The completion of *A Strange Story* in this year, led to an interesting correspondence between father and son on the subject of religion :—

VENTNOR, *Nov.* 19, 1861.

MY DEAREST ROBERT—I am most touched and grateful for your kind and affectionate letter. And, indeed, I cannot be too grateful to Heaven for the blessing of such a son. God grant you may be happy! And now, you say you are at the age of 30, which seems to me incredible. I am reminded that you are in the year which the Spartans thought the best for marriage. Would that you might find someone with whom that bond would be congenial and felicitous.

In what you say about art I agree on the whole. Genius, in fact, makes art, not art genius. As soon as we have laid down all the best rules of art, up rises some genius who alters them all, and the work of criticism has to begin again. The presence of the *Mens divinior* is the essential, in poetry especially. Where *that* is, it is the enchanter's wand. Has Browning got it? Probably. You are a much better judge of that than I. Unquestionably there is a massiveness and substance about him that I don't find in Tennyson—still taste is taste, and somehow he doesn't often please mine. I will read the poems you speak of with care when quite in the humour for them, which I am not now. . . .

I am correcting the final sheets of *A Strange Story*. Towards the end I have a conversation to which I have given much weight, on the proof of soul distinct from mind, *i.e.* from the thinking faculty. I have

shown how the metaphysicians who have argued Man's immortality solely from mind—as immaterial must give immortality also to the brutes, for all true naturalists allow that brutes and insects have mind as well as man. Every definition of mind includes an ant and an earwig. From this I have built out a theory, not wholly new but I think never so plainly put before, viz. :—that the evidence of man's soul is not in his mind, *i.e.* not in his ideas as received thro' the senses, but in his inherent capacity to receive ideas of God, soul, etc., which capacity is not given to the brutes.

I think when you see this chapter it will strike you, and it is argued out thro' analogies in all the laws of Nature.

The question you raise is not met, for that touches rather the duties of soul than its existence, viz. :—its responsibility, and also enters into all the difficult questions of variety in life, mind, and circumstance. But these seem to me minor corollaries to the fundamental problem—soul itself.

I don't think the ending as I now have it is too fantastic—it is written with too much power for that, and is, I imagine, the finest thing in point of interior meaning I ever wrote. Margrave, at the close, comes out with a certain pathos, and even, perhaps, mental (not spiritual) grandeur. I leave the whole to be solved either way, viz. :—entirely by physiological causes, or by the admission of causes that may be in Nature, but physiology as yet rejects as natural. . . .

VENTNOR, *Dec.* 17, 1861.

MY DEAREST ROBERT—Your interesting letter is so full and, to return your compliment, suggestive that I fear I shall be only able to touch on it briefly (!) and piecemeal.

1st, About your own poetical aspirations. You are

quite right, having done so wonderfully well, to persevere, and not at all with the idea of giving up if you don't satisfy yourself. I hope you will never satisfy yourself. I am sure I never satisfied myself, and what is far more to the purpose, I am still more sure that Shakespeare never satisfied himself. All who do well have an archetype of the perfect in their minds, which they can never accomplish—a truth I work out in one of my essays, and at present, therefore, leave "suggested." . . .

You are wrong in thinking you want imagination. What would be true is this:—your imagination does not make its first object—invented plot and story. This, perhaps, it never will do. Your imagination creates other things, creates new trains of idea ; to create ideas is quite as imaginative as to create persons. Is not Lucretius more imaginative than Virgil? When I compare what I did up to 30 with what you have done, I would willingly swop with you, and I think your reputation quite as high as and much less contested than mine was at 30. The difference between us is that I built with bricks and you have been building with marble. That is the real difference between imaginative works in prose and verse. The last excels in the material chosen, and retains a value from the material independent of the architectural merits, which may be as great in the brick. . . .

I can't go into the enormous question of the soul's essence and immortality at this moment, but what I mean about capacities is this :—Put aside ideas altogether whether innate or formed thro' the senses (with the meagre and rococo philosophy of Condillac) or thro' experience (with Locke). But the living thing that receives ideas must, before it can receive them, be made capable of receiving them. A piece of marble is not capable of being impressed by a touch—a piece of

wax is—all substance, then, can only receive impressions according as it is capable of receiving them.

Before the infant can have the idea, or instinct, of applying its lips to the teat, it must be capable of having that idea. My inkstand is not capable of applying itself to the teat. Very well then, capacities to receive ideas must precede ideas. In the capacities of man to receive ideas of the soul lies the certain proof of his soul! Why? Because of uniform analogy throughout Nature. Nature only gives to each organised life capacities to receive instincts or ideas which are suited to its destiny. The ostrich receives the idea to bury her eggs in the sand, the linnet to build in the tree, the duck brought up by the hen to take to the water, and so forth. Each thing after its kind has the capacity to receive ideas or impressions *that correspond with its destination*. Man alone receives ideas that carry on his being to a life beyond the world, and curiously eno', interwoven with those ideas, are all the more abstract ideas (not given to inferior animals) of space, weight, proportion, essence, substance, &c., by which he distinguishes himself from brutes in seeking to improve, embellish, nay, subdue to his uses, the Nature he finds around him. He could not build, legislate, write, for the future beyond his grave—if a future beyond his grave was not positively (tho' insensibly) stamped on his receptivity (*i.e.* on his passive power to receive active impressions). No animal, however gregarious or constructive, improves for posterity. What an ant's nest is now it has been since the deluge.

It may be said, and has been said by materialists, "But all these abstract ideas which we grant are peculiar to him, including those of soul and hereafter, may be given to him simply because they are useful to his destiny here; and the ideas of soul and hereafter may be false in themselves, but vindicated for utility,

by the moral restraints they impose or the intellectual aspiration they venerate!" Not so—according to all inductive philosophy, inducing from analogical experience. And why not so? Because Nature is singularly truthful, and rather parsimonious than liberal of the capacities she allots to each thing according to its destiny. She will shape the capacity of a brute to novelties that conduce to its self-conservation here, but not more. That is—suppose a hawk in this country is accustomed to search for its prey in partridges—the hawk may swoop in preference over stubble and turnip fields. Transport it to another region where there are no turnips and stubble, and its prey is found in forests or the margins of streams. That hawk or its posterity has the capacity to shift its range to the places where its food is to be found. But man alone has capacities to take in every region ideas that connect themselves with soul and hereafter. Therefore, according to the invariable truthfulness and parsimony of Nature in giving capacities suited to each thing, and not more than such capacities, soul and hereafter are proved to man by his capacities to entertain their idea. The defective faculties of man here, with his consciousness that here they *must* be defective, and that only in a higher state of being can they be developed, form additional proof of his destiny. He has given to him perceptions of a hereafter, but none of its nature. And why? because if he knew more of the next world, he would be unfitted for this. And his destiny comprehends his being here before he comes to the hereafter.

He resembles the Foetus in the womb. The Foetus must have capacities suited to its state in the womb, but with those capacities are others, chiefly dormant, adapted to his state when he quits the womb. Suppose for a moment that he could reason. He might say :—

"What is the good of these eyes—I am in the dark! Or these ears—I can hear nothing!" And the answer would be "Nature gives you nothing in vain—it is quite true that your ears and eyes are of no use to you at present, but since you have ears and eyes, it is quite clear they are meant for use some day!"

"When?" says the Foetus.

"When you are out of the womb!"

"When of use to me all these capacities to comprehend a hereafter?" says man.

Answer :—"When you are in the hereafter."

But the above argument is only one out of a thousand in philosophical proof of soul and another life. I have been reading of late an immense variety of physiological and metaphysical works, speculating on the subject *pro* and *con*. And the more I read, the more the great truth grows out; but the proofs of it are so multiform that no letter can contain them.

With regard to the souls of animals, many great thinkers support that notion. Anaxagoras, Descartes, etc. Erigena is the most unqualified arguer for it. And no doubt all living things have souls, but that the souls of the inferior races preserve the sense of identity and continue the *ego* after death is quite another question. St. Augustine says that if they had the sense of identity, they would be immortal like man. He denies that they have. But no one can be quite sure of this, since, as you justly say, "We are outside of their existence." We can see eno' of them, however, to see that they have no worship of an invisible Being, they don't pray. The dog has an immense capacity for veneration and gratitude to a being different from himself, viz.:—to man. He supplicates man, but we see no sign that he supplicates a God. In fact, I think we may assume that man alone has capacities to comprehend soul—God—hereafter, and therefore we may

give to him an immortality, which may or may not be given to the brutes. It is eno' for man to take care of himself in that respect.

I have not touched on other parts of your letter which, treating of consciousness, responsibility, &c., lead to other branches of the subject, viz.:—less "Is there a soul?" than "What is a soul?" and "what its attributes and duties?"

Now by soul I mean a something in man that lives on, and in truth soul really means the living principle. And the mistake to my mind of metaphysicians has been to confine it to the thinking faculty or mind. Now, I am not quite sure that the mind, which we now have, necessarily lives again with the soul. A silkworm has one mind adapted to its state, a chrysalis another mind, adapted to the state of chrysalis, a butterfly another mind, adapted to the state of butterfly—meaning by mind the perceptions or ideas of the living organised matter, whether obtained thro' instinct or experience.

Much of the most valuable part of a man's mind here may not be of the slightest use to him hereafter. Raphael has a mind that so arranges its ideas as to produce beautiful pictures; Lord St. Leonards, a mind to grapple with an intricate lawsuit; I, a mind to write tolerable novels, and so forth. But if, in the next world, we don't make pictures, go to law, or write novels, these three minds would have to be entirely reconstituted, if they were to preserve anything like the rank obtained by them here. And even the mind of a Newton or a Shakespeare, fitted to problems interesting to this world, might not necessarily have the faculties suited to another. Suppose a silkworm of the most admirable intelligence as a silkworm, it does not follow that his intelligence as a silkworm will be of use to him as a butterfly. Hence I think it may be that the New Testament (which the more I look into and ponder

over it, the more unutterably deep I find its truths) differs so much from Plato and the great philosophers who make virtue an intellectual study and only, therefore, accessible to philosophers. Christ says nothing about the cultivation of the intellect—Christ coming to announce a future world, and not to expatiate upon all that can civilise this one. Christ, therefore, reduces His precepts to two very simple ones :—"Love man, and believe in God." All the rest will follow. And certainly in these two principles we have the substance of that which we can suppose the soul to retain, tho' it may not retain the talents which paint pictures, write plays, and puzzle lawyers.

The problem of consciousness, viz.:—whether the proof of soul is to be sought in the conscious *ego*, is at this moment a vexed question with metaphysicians. Browne makes a great deal of it. Tissot, a French writer, whom I am now reading, and who, tho' extremely learned, seems unacquainted with Browne, says very truly, however, that the soul is not always conscious. The soul has two states, conscious and unconscious. Tissot contends, as I incline to contend, that soul is the living principle. But he pushes that doctrine too far, and into that vice of system which spoils most French reasoners.

Finally, I entreat you to hold fast to the conviction of soul and hereafter, and the connecting link between which is found in habitual prayer. You may answer in the aphorism of the last writer that belief is involuntary, that you cannot say to a man "Believe this or that." This aphorism, pushed to its full extent, is eminently untrue. Aristotle says much more truly, "What we wish for—that we believe!"

The truth, however, as to belief lies in this—our belief is formed like anything else, in the conceptions formed by our own studies.

If, having heard, read, or conceived yourself, plausible objections to imperishable soul, you *there stop*, you may believe there is no soul. But if you say " this is too important a question to be so left : how are these objections to be met? " and go on reading, enquiring and meditating, you will find all these objections vanish. There is no objection made by a materialist that has not been satisfactorily answered by one author or another. And having thus widened your knowledge into the belief of God, soul and prayer, then habitually pray, and you will find the belief enter into all your reasoning faculties, and become an incorporate part of your intellect. Now prayer, being a universal impulse of man, is a truthful one. It helps him wonderfully thro' his destiny in this life. When I look back to the times when I did not pray, and compare them with the time in which I do pray, I can't say that I find prayer prevents my sinning, but I find on the whole that I am a much better and a more sound-thinking person for prayer, and decidedly happier for it.

I would rather, in order to get the habit of prayer, pray for the merest trifles, provided they were not sinful, so as to habituate oneself to think of God as a living, kindly, powerful friend, who, by giving the impulse to pray to Him, means that you should exercise it and that the exercise should do you good. Especially, I recommend the habit of thanking God for any little piece of comfort, any blessing that may seem to you small. It may be irrational to supplicate for trifles, but it can't be irrational to thank for any trifle. For three days I have been nailed in bed to one position by a kind of agonising cramp in the muscles—a sort of lumbago. And the other night, growing intolerably weary of the same position, and seeing in that position sleep was hopeless, I began to amuse myself by devising how to coax a corner of the pillow about three inches

farther towards me, so that I could get the balance of the whole body somewhat relieved by a new position for the head. With great slowness and caution I at last contrived this. The sense of relief was instantaneous and I felt I could then have a chance of sleep. With that relief there came a sudden joy, and in the sudden joy I thanked God! The moment I had so thanked God there settled upon me a train of thoughts, lulling, soothing, a sense of security, a gratitude to think that in that dark lonely night there was an ear I could address. I felt my soul! Now I would not have given up that capacity of prayer, tho' called forth by such a trifle, for millions.

There—for the present I must leave this vast subject. . . .

Lastly, I approach the subject of the *res angusta* which peeps out in your letter. In the middle of January, when I get my rents, I shall beg your acceptance of £100, which you will find at your account at Scotts. Next, talk to me about your "embarrassments." Do you still owe debts? What are they? Frankly?

To sum up this subject, I wish you to have the fair enjoyments of your age and station. I am not a very good judge of a single man's expenses nowadays. I mean those that should give him a gentleman's margin for enjoyment. Things are dearer now than when I was young. But what I should wish for you are these —good apartments, reasonable hospitality to friends, without ostentation indeed, but still with the neat elegance of a gentleman. Dress, of course (a young man's most pleasing luxury), and all the winter at least, a carriage, leaving fair margin for pocket money. I should like to add a saddle horse.

Now, can these be had with your income at Vienna? If not, make your calculations and let me see them.

And think how far I can enlarge your means of comfort, &c.

At all events, my dear boy, let us go into the matter with a view to save you from "embarrassments." I don't object to your adding to your income by anonymous writing, but I would rather it were in prose criticism than in verse. I think Tennyson has owed much of his position to a choiceness and coyness in publication. But independently of that motive, a man who is always fribbling with a muse or a woman will find that he loses power to get a hearty child from either, and—dividing one's faculties as one divides a farm—I would always let the land from which you expect your valuable corn crop lie fallow from time to time, and keep up the culture which will ultimately enrich the fallow itself, by attention to the root crops on the other parts of the farm.—And so now, *adieu*, Ever yr. most aff. father,

E. B. L.

VENTNOR, *Jan.* 22, 1862.

MY DEAR R.—I must give but a short answer to the heads of your long letter,[1] being much pressed for time.

As to the most important part of your interesting epistle, the religious, I am quite satisfied. The essential things to hold to, you seem to hold to—God, soul, hereafter, prayer, reverence for, and acceptance of, the hopes and ethics of Christianity.

In what sense you interpret Christianity is a minor matter for a man who is not going to set himself up as a theologian. It would be a very serious matter for your peace and reputation in this life if you did.

The conclusion I myself have come to is this—that

[1] See *Personal and Literary Letters of Robert, 1st Earl of Lytton*, vol. i. p. 136.

after accepting so much as I have stated above, it is best not to puzzle one's head further. I accept the Church to which I belong, because I think it immaterial to me here and hereafter whether some of its tenets are illogical or unsound, and because, before I could decide that question, I must wade thro' an immense mass of learning for which I have no time, and then go thro' a process of reasoning, for which I have no talent. And when I have done all this, *cui bono*? I take many things in life and in thought as settled, or if to be unsettled, I am not the man to do it. It is not my *métier*; it does not belong to my τὸ πρέπον nor to yours. Browning's Bishop is right in his way. But what he says as a cynic I say as a gentleman and an artist. I have not read the works you name about St. Paul, nor wish to do so. Scriptural criticisms I avoid on system. I have not read Strauss and probably never shall, nor "Essays and Reviews," &c.

I am not even scientific eno' to criticise the law of gravitation, which I should like to do, for I suspect it to have a hole in it. My mind is, therefore, wholly unfitted to solve such mysteries as the Trinity, the Redemption, &c. Meanwhile, I take gravitation on Newton's authority, and as Newton gave up a great part of his time to the study of scripture, and decided on accepting the Trinity, Redemption, &c., I am content to take his authority as that of a man better able to comprehend such matters than I am.

Now as to "Vanini"[1]—I think the part sent very fine, very thoughtful, full of grave merits, and to be completed some day. But not the sort of thing to suit the next step in your poetic career. My belief is, and I cannot too rudely enforce it, that you should study the *popular*. You are in that very stage of repute that requires the attempt at independence from

[1] In *Chronicles and Characters*.

critics, by seizing hold of a large public. Later you can write for the few when you please, and the many will follow you. But first get the many.

As to the Drama, whatever objection I see to it vanishes before any strong predilection of yours. Genius sees its own way and must take it. The subject you suggest I perfectly apprehend. It is magnificent. But confoundedly difficult, and I doubt if it can be made popular. . . .

There are certain stages in every career when it is better to write a trifle that charms the public and secures its friendship, than a grand thing which the public can't understand and the critics will depreciate. I think you are in that stage. Not that I attach the slightest importance to what you tell me about the charge of plagiarism. The public will not care if you plagiarise or not, provided you please them ; but if you don't please the public, then, whether for plagiarism or for anything else, the critics have it their own way against you.

There are ten years of an author's life when he ought to consider critics to be his enemies. Tennyson and Dickens have continued to avoid those ten years, so did Scott. Tennyson, I know not why, but Dickens and Scott because they pleased the public so much that the critics did not dare go against the public. . . .

The reference to the *res angusta* at the end of the long letter of 1861 reminds me that something should be said of the financial side of the relations between father and son. Throughout his life Lord Lytton had a hard struggle to earn the means to live up to his financial obligations. With the exception of what he received from his estate, which never did much

more than pay its expenses, his income and his savings were entirely the result of his own exertions, and the labour of earning taught him the value of money. His essay on "The Management of Money" [1] contains much sound advice on the subject, and the principles there laid down were repeated in many letters to his son. Robert Lytton, whose constant changes at short intervals from one diplomatic post to another involved the sale of furniture and the disposal of leases, generally at a loss, frequently found himself in financial straits, and was obliged to apply to his father repeatedly for pecuniary help. These appeals were not pleasant to make, as they necessitated long personal explanations, and were usually answered by parental lectures on the necessity for economy. But, on the whole, they usually met with a generous response, and the only criticism suggested by these letters is that it would have been a sounder policy if the father had given his son a slightly larger allowance in place of the continual extra doles with which it had to be supplemented.

This was particularly apparent at the time of Robert Lytton's marriage, when his cost of living was necessarily increased. Unfortunately, however, his father was at that time in somewhat straitened circumstances himself. He had recently embarked upon two rather large speculations, namely, the purchase of Copped Hall and of Breadalbane House in Park Lane. Though

[1] *Caxtoniana*, Knebworth Edition

both these properties were afterwards disposed of at a profit, they absorbed for a time all his available capital, and diminished his income. In a letter written on December 26, 1865, these circumstances are explained.

TORQUAY, *Decr.* 26, 1865.

MY DEAREST ROBERT—I have just received yours of the 16th relative to pecuniary matters. I had already written to you thereon, stating that your balance at Scott's at present was £100 in your favour, and that when your bill of the 25th became due, leaving £150 against you, I had arranged with Scott to withdraw that sum from your current account, so that you might draw as if it did not exist. I stated that the £150 was withheld till April, when I would assist, at all events, in great part. I now write to say that I will take upon me the whole, so that you may consider that debt cancelled.

I do not, I own, gather from your present letter whether that help is sufficient, or whether you require more. If so, do not trouble yourself with particulars, but state how much you want, and when it would be required. I am quite aware that the first year or two of your marriage must be a time of chief pressure, and only regret that it happened so peculiarly to be a time of rare pressure with me, and that not having been able to foresee your marriage, I had encumbered myself with Copped Hall and Breadalbane House, which, tho' good speculations in the long run, were in the meanwhile very heavy expenses.

I shrink from alienating more of my little capital than I can possibly help, because the interest derived from it is essential to my income, and the capital itself enables me to make ventures that ultimately increase

it, so that when I do withdraw it, I make it a rule to strain every nerve to replace what I withdraw. But if necessary, to set your mind quite at ease on money matters, I shall consider it a pleasure to sell out for a time. . . .

This aspect of their relations can perhaps be summed up best in the words of another of the father's letters :—

It gives me the greatest pleasure to comply with your request, and I enclose the cheque. I need not say there can be no loans between you and me, and you will accept the sum as a birthday present. I am indeed peculiarly fortunate in having a son who, in his pecuniary relations with myself, has always shown the greatest delicacy, and who, when perhaps a little heedlessly overstepping his income, has the talent and the manliness to make up deficiencies by his own exertions. Both these considerations heighten my natural pleasure in meeting any wish of yours. . . .

I conclude this chapter by a quotation from a letter written in 1865, which bears in a general way upon the subject of the chapter itself :—

I don't quite agree with what you say very eloquently, that the parent owes greater duties to the child than the child to the parent, because the parent has summoned the child into being. In the 1st place, I presume that sound philosophy will allow us to suppose that, on the whole, the Supreme Being is benevolent, and that a state of being is therefore, on the whole, and under general circumstances, rather good than bad, better than nullity. If so, the child has no right to be angry or ungrateful that it was

brought into a state of being according to the laws of Nature. If, indeed, you dispute the premises, and say the Deity is not benevolent, and it is better not to be than be, all duties on every side cease for want of an arbitrator—that arbitrator is a God.

But I don't think the case of relative duties rests on the coming into the world, but on the pains and care that every parent more or less bestows on a child. And I do not think that children, in general, ever in any way requite these, nor, according to modern civilisation, can they well do so. On the broad fact, it is eno' to observe that every known nation above the savage has recognised as a cardinal law of piety the reverence due to parents from children, and said very little about the duties parents owe to children. And for a very good reason—Nature takes care that parents in general amply discharge all these elementary duties to children. But it requires a higher principle than brute Nature to make children do their duty to parents, and any philosophy that should weaken by questioning that principle would be demoniacal.

Many of Lord Lytton's letters to his son in later years bear on the same points, but those already quoted are sufficient to illustrate the purpose of this chapter, which is to show how, through many vicissitudes and misunderstandings, and in spite of many errors on the father's side, there was gradually established between these two men an intimate relationship, precious alike to the father and the son.

CHAPTER II

OPINIONS ON MEN AND BOOKS

Nothing more conduces to liberality of judgment than facile intercourse with various minds.

Caxtoniana.

In Lord Lytton's correspondence with his son, and also in letters to friends written at different times of his life, are to be found opinions upon various authors and their books, which provide a general indication of his tastes in literature. They are for the most part hastily expressed and with greater frankness than he would have permitted himself had they been intended for publication ; but for that very reason they possess a special interest. In order to interrupt as little as possible the chronological narrative of his active life, I have reserved some of these letters for treatment in a separate chapter, where they may be studied not as considered judgments, but as indications of the tendency of his reflective opinions.

Lord Lytton was throughout his life a constant and extensive reader. From earliest childhood he devoured eagerly whatever books

he could obtain, and even in the years when he was most busily engaged in original composition he always found time for reading. Some of his novels, of course, especially the historical ones, necessitated a vast amount of research, but apart from special study of this kind, he was regularly engaged in some course of serious reading. It was his method of "taking in coals," and it kept his mind constantly supplied with fresh ideas. With the great classical writers in Latin, Greek, English, French, German, and Italian, he had an intimate acquaintance and for most of them an unstinted admiration. In the field of purely imaginative literature, whether in prose or verse, his taste, as might be expected from the character of his own writings, was governed to a great extent by his love of the romantic.

From the days when as a boy of eight he was first captivated by Southey's translation of *Amadis of Gaul*, and Spenser's *Faery Queen*, found among his grandfather's books, to the end of his life his inclination was always towards the description of human actions or human passions. In poetry especially he was impatient of all authors whose chief characteristic was either delicacy of humour or beauty of diction.

His appreciation of Schiller and Horace is, of course, known to every one from his own translations of these authors and his published opinions of their works. Other writers who appear from his letters to have been special

favourites are Homer, Virgil, Goethe, Chaucer, Pope, Coleridge, Scott, and Byron.

On Chaucer he writes to his son in 1860 :—

. . . . I carried down with me to Richmond for a day or two, a new edition of Chaucer in his original shape, but with a convenient glossary, and I am amazed at his wonderful accuracy of rhythm ; according to his own accentuation, there are as few lines with a defective foot as there are in Dryden. His metre, too, is extremely artful. As a general rule, he always has his stop at the end of a couplet, does not break into verses as blank verse does. But he makes his pause of the ultimate sense, by a preference so marked that he must have arrived at it by a rule of art, at the end of a first line ; cantering on with wonderful ease and vigour thro' the couplets, and then unexpectedly pulling up with a full stop at the end of a first line. The effect of this is both surprise, and with him it is music ; the relief from the rhyme has a melody, and I only regret that I had not studied his rhythm when I was young, for I think I could then have formed on it one that would have escaped the Pope sameness, and yet been as correct and smooth in its cadence, and would have had the charm of originality tho' old.

The allusion to Geomancy that we read in Dryden's *Palamon and Arcite* is in Chaucer—Puella and Rubeus in the temple of Mars. But he makes a mistake—Puer is the sign of Mars, Puella is the sign of Venus direct. As Chaucer borrows from the Thebaids of Boccacio, I suppose the geomantic allusion is there. The whole of that fine description of the temple of Mars is in the poem of Boccacio, and he borrowed it from Statius. What next surprised me in Chaucer was his extreme civilisation of thought—what he says, a modern dandy might say. 3rdly, I was surprised at

the remarkable degree of opulence and elegance that he gives to small traders, carpenters and millers. He represents their wives as dressed in silks, &c. I suspect the lower part of the middle class was better off then than it is now. When we meet—I hope some day at Knebworth—I anticipate much pleasure in looking over Chaucer together under the old hereditary trees. . . .

His opinion of Coleridge is fully set forth in a Quarterly article on *Charles Lamb and some of his Companions* (1867), and the following letters are also interesting on the same subject :—

To his Son in 1863.

. . . . Did I tell you that I went thro' the 21 vols. of Coleridge before I left Knebworth, allured to it by my admiration of *The Ancient Mariner*?

He seems to me to have had by far the largest mind of his age. Scott and Byron as minds look thin and narrow beside his. He is singularly creative as a poet. But unluckily he rather creates other poets than completes his own poems. All the germs of the poetry that blossomed after him seem to me in his verse. We must remember that *Christabel* preceded *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, *The Siege of Corinth*, &c., and in *Christabel* is their originating idea. A wonderful embryo it is, but nothing more than an embryo. Again, in his meditative verse (which I take last) is the germ of the new reflective school in all its varieties. In his combination of metaphysics and theology we have all the movement of the High Church. In short, wherever the leviathan moves either his head or his tail, there is "a stir" in the ocean felt miles and leagues off. But he wants many of the elements of a first-rate thinker—chiefly, he wants the practical or popular

element. His taste, too, is defective. He has no sense of proportion. He elaborates his small beauties to the neglect of great ones, which has been, I think, the fault of the last new schools altogether. And like Shelley, his genius can but make fragments, but he makes grander fragments than Shelley, and his fragments are fairer representations of the great whole.

After reading him, like a small serpent who has munched up a great bull, horns and all, I remain in a state of torpor and can read nothing; it will take me a year, I suppose, to digest my bull. . . .

To Mrs. Halliday, 1872.

I am much pleased to hear you like what I said about Coleridge. He is not done justice to, but I think he was the most remarkable mind of our century, combining the most original imagination with the most cultured intelligence. No doubt he wants a something necessary to the reaching of the universal heart or understanding, the something which Goethe praises in Schiller as "the practical."

What I wrote on Gray is a great many years ago, and I fancy now that I was not quite just to him. . . .

The following opinions expressed in various letters throw further light on his preferences among classical authors :—

To John Forster (undated, but about 1850).

. . . I have been reading with attention Voltaire's tragedies, and am greatly struck with his dramatic power. In the great element of the drama, conduct of the plot, with its accessory, suspense, he seems to me unrivalled. He also seems thoroughly master of

the great secret of uniting domestic interest with grand subjects. The balance between relations, brother and brother, parent and child, parent, wife and child, he uses with admirable invention and exquisite skill. This is very apparent in one of his worst tragedies, *Catiline*. He has continued to give great domestic interest and passionate vigour to this subject, which is certainly not dramatic in itself; and his immense superiority over Ben Jonson in the dramatic construction is startling. Certainly, he seems the greatest dramatist France has ever known from Corneille to Hugo, tho' in merits detached from the dramatic art, he is often excelled by others. He is worth re-reading if you have leisure to do so, and will, of course, make allowance for his frenchness—that indescribable fault which prevents all his countrymen from understanding any national characters but their own—equally striking in Voltaire's *Cassandre* and Hugo's *Ruy Blas*. I have also been reading an Italian philosopher, whom a French school, including Michelet, try to elevate into a great thinker —Vico—and I am amused to see what ideals the spirit of party can set up. His leading idea is to prove Catholicism the grand development, the flower and crown of the stem of human history; and his superficiality is as remarkable as his prejudices. Of the latter there is an entertaining example in his life. Grotius had produced a very great effect upon him, and he had thought of writing a comment on him, when it occurred to him that it would be a sin in a good Christian "to ornament a heretic"!

To his Son, 1859.

. . . I incline to think Johnson the greatest writer in the language next to the poets and the philosophers —that is, there is no English writer in *belles lettres*

that equals his union of intellect, learning, and form. The style of the *Lives* is very superior to Macaulay's; Macaulay founded his style on that of the *Lives*, but, with more simplicity and better English, never approaches to the same high grade in beauties. Johnson says finer things in a finer way. His grammar is often incorrect—to my surprise. But I know not any English writer whose grammar is perfect—curious; every good French writer seems to write good grammar as a thing of course. Macaulay makes fewer slips than any I can remember, but the niceties and elegancies of English construction and style are little known to him. . . .

To the same, 1861.

. . . I don't wonder that you admire Ariosto's gusto, but he is not a complete whole—he is desultory and fragmentary. Whoever read what remains of him thro'? Not so Tasso. Tasso has the art of construction, of design, of completeness; the best constructor in verse, I think, between Homer and Walter Scott. But I allow to you that he is often feeble, has few great bursts, no vast depths, and is sometimes tag [*sic*]. But all this may be said of Virgil; and he is a better story teller than Virgil. In fine, he is the culminating flower of the chivalrous troubadour spirit—love and sentiment, and fighting and religion. His finest passages, to my mind, are the descriptions of his good enchanter. But everywhere, what musical lines, and what lovely bits of tenderness and grace! . . .

To the same, 1871.

. . . What a wonderful book Gibbon's is. After all, there is something grand in the elaborate rhythmical prose style of the last century, both in France and

England. Gibbon, Johnson, Junius, and in his own way, Goldsmith, whose sentences abound in careful music. And in France Buffon, Volney, Rousseau and the French Goldsmith, St. Pierre. Strange that generally in the history of literature in the age in which the poetry inclines towards the mechanism and form of prose, and does not cultivate "expression," the prose inclines towards poetry and is rich in "expression." The last century is remarkable for this in France and England, and we observe it in the difference between Greek and Latin forms. The Greek prose is generally very slovenly and often thoroughly ungrammatical, while the poetry is super-poetical in "expression." And the Latin prose is so measured and rhythmical, so artistic and so bold, compared with its verse. Cicero seems to me the great poet of the Latins as Rousseau is of the French ; they both satisfy the poetic something in men's souls and men's ears more than their contemporary versifiers do. . . .

To Mrs. Halliday, 1872.

. . . I fully subscribe to your admiration of Michael Angelo. The loftiness of his character is in harmony with the grandeur of his works ; and few indeed have ever been at once so high and so wide in genius. He seems to embrace the whole realm of Art in painting, sculpture, architecture, and to touch the height of achievement in the first two, and almost in the third. That a man in labours so great should also be a poet at all, would seem a rare phenomenon to those who do not understand the truth that the poetic temperament and even the poetic faculty, to some degree, is essential to the full development of all genius in arts that have affinity to poetry—even the art of oratory. I should doubt if there ever existed any great orator

who had not at one time or other written poetry, tho' not of the higher order which necessitates the absorption of the whole intellect, imagination and study of the man—at least while he "dons his singing robes." Bolingbroke, Chatham, Pitt, Fox, Sheridan, Canning, Macaulay, all wrote verses. M. Angelo's sonnets are full of a grace not often found in his sculpture or painting. But it is easy to see that while his genius and personal character were austere, he had in his composition wonderful veins of tenderness and sweetness. . . .

Racine is nearly read through, and I am glad to owe to you the great pleasure of re-perusing at leisure and with mature judgment a writer so illustrious. The re-perusal has confirmed my former opinion that Racine is very inferior to Corneille in the grander elements of art; but that he is nevertheless a very great tragic writer, and has a wonderful gift of telling his story, of contriving his plot, and of inventing dramatic positions. I think him greater as a dramatist than as a poet; his *Athalie*, in especial, is a very fine poem, despite a certain poverty of expression in the choruses. . . .

Of later writers Lord Lytton's opinions were curiously captious. His taste made him incapable of appreciating some of the best works in English literature, which belonged to what he called "the modern school"—the chief fault of which he repeatedly described as overstudy of expression. In early life he could see nothing in Jane Austen but "village gossips;" in Keats and Shelley nothing but "verbal conceits" and "filigree of expression." These opinions, however, were somewhat modified in later life, and writing to Mrs. Halliday in 1871 and 1872, he

corrects the impatience with these writers expressed in his earlier letters. "Yes," he says in one letter, "I admire Miss Austen immensely so far as she goes. But I don't think she is more than a half-sovereign of purest gold and clearest mintage, as compared to a whole sovereign." Of Keats he says in another letter :—

I return the Keats, and again thank you for the pleasure I have had (than which I know few greater) of revising in maturer judgment an illiberal estimate of a transcendant genius, formed in earlier years when one has not learned to have charity in taste.

I have ventured (in fact, I could not resist it) to note down in pencil on the margins (easily rubbed out) some critical remarks of blame or praise. But were the occasions for blame infinitely more numerous and more grave than I have found them, the impression left on my mind would be the same, viz. :—that I have been in company with one who overflows with the essences of poetry in imagination and diction ; and, to judge by the *Hyperion*, he might, if spared, have composed poems to which I accord the name of "great." I accord that name very sparingly. But it is impossible to predict a future from performances of a genius not wholly completed. I think, for instance, that in earlier years Coleridge gave promise of an ascendancy in poetry which he failed to attain. But he originated in other minds the ideas he never carried out himself. Still, with all my admiration for Keats, I think his influence on later poets has been unfortunate, and that we owe to it the effeminate attention to wording and expression and efflorescent description which characterise the poetry now in vogue. I will not enter into the irritating differences of taste which are involved in discussing the

elements of poetry really great, as distinct from those of the poetry that, however it be lauded, is incessantly small, its very beauties being those in which small poetry abounds and great poetry adopts very sparely and expresses very tersely.

I entirely agree with Hegel in ranking "descriptive poetry," viz. :—description of inanimate Nature, or even of brute Nature, in the last degree of genuine poetry. Of course, great poets in great poems resort to it at times, and must do so, but in great poems it is very briefly expressed and very much generalised. There is no going into minute details. When you speak of leading from Nature up to Nature's God, I agree with you if you speak of man as included in the word Nature, not otherwise. I think that great poetry deals with the thoughts and passions and destinies of man, and thro' man arrives at Nature's God ; and I believe that this is the ladder by which all great poetry ascends to the Most High.

Connect Marathon and Thermopylæ with the men who give interest to the places, and the flat and the defile assume dignity which is denied to Mount Skiddaw or the river Dove. But then a great poet would very briefly give the picture of the localities, even of Thermopylæ and Marathon, and only as the "painted scene" to the human actions which shed glory on the places.

Now the reason why I rank Pope high (tho' of course, not among the highest) is that he does deal with man and not with daffodillies, and "patient asses." The range of humanity he comprehends is not large, it is true, but it is wonderfully well scanned, and what he did do he completed so thoroughly and so artistically that all Europe cannot find his equal in it. To improve on Pope in his own way is impossible, even in the mere rhythm of his couplet—own how deplorably bad all attempts to break it up, and run it on like blank verse

(as in *Endymion* and elsewhere) are. But far beyond the unimprovable symmetry of his form, is his mastery over the great components of civilised life in capitals. There, in the height and breadth of his satire and his philosophical mode of sentiment, he has no English equal, and elsewhere, only one superior—Molière, unless, indeed, we say Horace; but tho' his epistles and satires are paraphrases from Horace, they are to my mind, great improvements on the original. Of course, he is not up to the standard of Horace altogether, because Horace is a great lyrical poet, and lyrical poetry is in itself a much higher grade than any in which Pope takes his immoveable stand. . . .

To his son he also writes about the same time :—

Did I tell you that I have reperused all Keats this winter—perfectly astounded by the luxuriance of his purely poetic fancy; but he wants what is essential to the highest order of poet—the prose side of the poet. However, he is a prodigy. Pity that he could not help founding a villainous school, different there from Coleridge, who began all the modern modes of poetic expression and founded vigorous schools in Scott and Byron.

Among French writers it is curious that while he had unbounded admiration for Lamartine, he did not appreciate Victor Hugo, a writer with whom he might be expected to have great sympathy :—

To his Son, 1863.

Pray, have you read Alfred de Musset? I am reading him—a real poet, much more nature and fire than Tennyson, but occasionally maudlin and amatorily extravagant. His form is charming and rather Horatian

than French. Have you read also *Marie* by Brieux ?[1] If not, pray get it ; read attentively, and tell me what you think. I did not conceive French poetry could be so naive. A thorough poet—not great, but as great as Goldsmith, and a study.

Hugo is a great *monstrum* indeed and *informe*, but still *ingens*.

I never read a worse book than *Les Misérables* by a man of genius (as far as I have gone—vol. 8). But still it is not the bad writing of a Frankenstein, but of the colossal creature Frankenstein made, reminding me of that vast wretch by its junction of all the worst members of the Sues and Dumas, &c.—as Frankenstein's giant was made out of bones and fibres stolen from graves, but the whole meant to be larger and grander than humanity and becoming hideous, yet with the hideousness of a tremendous genius. . . .

In another letter in 1869, he says :—

. . . Have you read *L'Homme qui rit* ? Judging by the extracts, I shall not attempt the hideous pain of a perusal. I begin to doubt whether V. Hugo ever did write well. I daresay none of his works will bear a second reading, at least, so as to endure comparison with any classical work, even by a third-rate genius. I fancy one was duped at first by his spasms and gasps and jerks into a belief that he had at least prodigious vigour, whereas I suspect he was but an epileptic dwarf in a state of galvanism. The dramas are really vulgar and improbable tales set into strained versification ; and even the romance of *Notre Dame* is essentially full of untruths in character and art, with the exception of Cap. Phœbus, and any ordinary novelist might have created him. But authors nowadays seem like spoiled

[1] Julien Auguste Pélage Brieux (1803-1858), the Breton poet. His novel in verse, *Marie*, appeared in 1836.

babies, and the more they kick and scream, the more they get their own way.

Of his English contemporaries Lord Lytton's judgment was no doubt influenced to a certain extent by personal considerations. For Dickens, a close personal friend, he entertained the highest admiration, whilst of Thackeray, who for many years was associated with the group that attacked him unsparingly in *Fraser's Magazine*, his opinion was almost wholly adverse.

In poetry the modern school was entirely distasteful to him. Though his letters to his son abound in generous praise of many of his (Robert Lytton's) poems, he is for ever complaining of the influence of the poetry of the day. Two great contemporaries in particular, Browning and Tennyson, he was quite unable to appreciate. Browning he respected as his son's friend, but could not share the latter's enthusiasm for his genius, as will be apparent from letters quoted in the last chapter. His opinion of Tennyson has already been mentioned in connection with the publication of *The New Timon*, and this opinion does not appear ever to have been modified. In 1864 he speaks of him as "a poet adapted to a mixed audience of school-girls and Oxford dons;" and his last opinion, recorded in 1871, is in much the same strain. Writing to Mrs. Halliday, he says :—

I agree with you entirely in admiring the music in certain of Tennyson's lines. I am not sure that I admire

it in sustainment to any great length. I admire also many felicities in expression, in despite of many vulgarities and conceits which his hunt after such prettiness often incurs. But to my mind he has in him less of the masculine quality than any English poet of repute. I can scarcely understand how any *man* could reconcile himself to dwarf such mythical characters as Arthur, Lancelot and Merlin, into a whimpering old gentleman, a frenchified household traitor and a drivelling dotard. Neither can I admire *Enoch Arden*, the subject of which has been used up in so many novels, and which, at the best, is in the false sentiment of Kotzebue.

Still, I am not a fair judge of any contemporaneous poetry. I despair of fellow-feeling with an age which says Pope is no poet and Rossetti is a great one.

I quote these opinions as illustrative of certain limitations in Lord Lytton's literary taste, and as having, for that reason, a biographical interest. Tennyson's place in English literature is now so well established, that lovers of his poetry should have no cause to resent the publication of these criticisms.

Of one young poet of his own day, Algernon Swinburne, Lord Lytton had a rather unexpected appreciation. He probably became acquainted with Swinburne's poetry through the medium of their common friend, Monckton Milnes. *Atalanta in Calydon* was published in April 1865, and Milnes, who was anxiously spreading Swinburne's reputation among his literary friends, may have sent Lord Lytton a copy. A letter of appreciation accompanied by a copy of *The Lost Tales of*

Miletus, in January 1866, elicited the following acknowledgment from Swinburne :—

HOLM WOOD,
SHIPLAKE, HENLEY-ON-THAMES,
Jan. 17, 1866.

SIR—I should have written before to thank you for a double kindness, had your book and letter been sooner sent on to my present address. As it is, you will no doubt understand how difficult I feel it to express my thanks for your gift, and for the letter, to me even more valuable, which accompanied it. To receive from your hands a book which I had only waited to read till I should have time to enjoy it at ease as a pleasure long expected, and deferred for a little (on the principle of children and philosophers), was, I should have thought till now, gratification enough for once ; but you contrived at the same time to confer a greater pleasure—the knowledge that my first work, written since mere boyhood, had obtained your approval. Of the enjoyment and admiration with which I have read your book, I need not say anything. Pleasure such as this you have given to too many thousands to care to receive the acknowledgment of one. Such thanks as these I have owed you, in common with all others of my age, since I first read your works as a child ; the other obligation is my own, and prized accordingly as a private debt, impossible to pay, and from which I would not be relieved.—Believe me, Yours very sincerely,

A. C. SWINBURNE.

Though *Chastelard* (published in December, 1865) was literally Swinburne's "first work *written* since mere boyhood," *Atalanta* was the first published, and this was evidently the book

referred to, because Lord Lytton wrote to his son on February 13, 1866 :—

Have you read Swinburne's Poems? I have only read the *Atalanta*, which I think promising and vigorous. But he has a good deal to unlearn, in order to attain simplicity and calm, which are quite compatible with fire of style. There is more fire in a tranquil summer sun than in the conflagration of a frightened village.

A little later he writes again, in answer to some criticism of his son :—

What you say about your dislike to moral purpose in poetry (referring to Swinburne) seems to me questionable. I grant that in lyrical poetry there should be the free song of the bard, and your remark chiefly applies to lyrical poetry. Yet in much of the best lyrical poetry, there is a latent moral purpose. The first six odes, book iii. Horace, are all written with a moral intention and purpose, and are perhaps his finest odes.

I suspect there is moral intention in much of Pindar. Milton professes it in *Paradise Lost*, "To vindicate the ways of God to man."[1] And didactic poetry necessitates it. No one can despise, however, Pope's *Essay on Man*, or say it is not a finer poem than most lyrics. The fact is that there is no rule, but that the poet can rarely escape from a moral purpose, except in some joyous outburst; it forces itself on him as a part of plan and interwoven with conception. The Drama certainly has it, especially the old Greek; punishment of pride in Œdipus, etc. And in Comedy it is essential. What is the *Misanthrope* or *Tartuffe* without it? . . .

[1] Milton's line was "justify the ways of God to man." It was Pope who introduced the word "vindicate" in adopting the line.

Towards the close of April 1866, Swinburne published his *Poems and Ballads*, which was denounced with great violence in the Press. In July of the same year the attacks became really serious, and under threat of prosecution, Moxon, the publisher, determined without communication with the author, to withdraw the volume from circulation. In this difficult crisis Swinburne received very welcome encouragement and assistance from Lord Lytton, who, on seeing the violent attacks on *Poems and Ballads*, wrote to him, so Mr. Edmund Gosse informs me, expressing his sympathy and recommending him to be calm. At the same time Lord Lytton invited him to Knebworth to talk the matter over, adding that John Forster would be present.

The following letters now take up the tale :—

Algernon Swinburne to Lord Lytton.

22A DORSET STREET, PORTMAN SQ., W.,
Aug. 6th [1866].

DEAR LORD LYTTON—Your letter was doubly acceptable to me, coming as it did on the same day with the abusive reviews of my book which appeared on Saturday. While I have the approval of those from whom alone praise can give pleasure, I can dispense with the favour of journalists. I thank you sincerely for the pleasure you have given me, and am very glad if my poems have given any to you. In any case, I with the rest of the world, must remain your debtor for much more—and a debtor without prospect of repayment.

Nothing would give me more pleasure than to

accept your kind invitation, should it be convenient to you to receive me for a day or two in the course of the next fortnight. For some ten days or so I am hampered by engagements, difficult to break even for a day.—Believe me, with many thanks for the kindness of your letter, Yours very truly,

A. C. SWINBURNE.

The same to the same.

22A DORSET ST., W.,
Aug. 10*th* [1866].

DEAR LORD LYTTON—I will come on the 16th if that day suits you. I shall be very glad to see Mr. Forster, for whose works I have always felt a great admiration. I cannot tell you how much pleasure and encouragement your last letter gave me. You will see that it came at a time when I wanted something of the kind, when I tell you that in consequence of the abusive reviews of my book, the publisher (without consulting me, without warning, and without compensation) has actually withdrawn it from circulation.

I have no right to trouble you with my affairs, but I cannot resist the temptation to trespass so far upon your kindness as to ask what course you would recommend me to take in such a case. I am resolved to cancel nothing, and (of course) to transfer my books to any other publisher I can find. I am told by lawyers that I might claim legal redress for a distinct violation of contract on Messrs. Moxon's part, but I do not wish to drag the matter before a law court. This business, you will see, is something worse than a scolding, to which, from my Eton days upwards, I have been sufficiently accustomed.—Yours sincerely,

A. C. SWINBURNE.

The same to the same.

22A DORSET ST., W.,
Aug. 13*th* [1866].

DEAR LORD LYTTON—I am much obliged by the letter of advice you wrote me, and if Lord Houghton had not gone off to Vichy, I should certainly take counsel with him. As it is, I am compelled to decide without further help. I have no relation with Messrs. Moxon except of a strictly business character; and considering that the head of their firm has broken his agreement by refusing to continue the sale of my poems, without even speaking to me on the matter, I cannot but desire, first of all, to have no further dealings with anyone so untrustworthy. The book is mine; I agreed with him to issue an edition of 1000 copies, he undertaking to print, publish, and sell them; and if the edition sold off, I was to have two-thirds of the profits. He does not now deny the contract which he refuses to fulfil; he simply said to a friend who called on him as my representative that, on hearing there was to be an article in the *Times* attacking my book as improper, he could not continue the sale. As to the suppression of separate passages or poems, it could not be done without injuring the whole structure of the book, where every part has been as carefully considered and arranged as I could manage; and under the circumstances, it seems to me that I have no choice but to break off my connection with the publisher.

I have consulted friends older than myself and more experienced in the business ways of the world, and really it seems to me I have no alternative. Before the book was published, if my friends had given me strong and unanimous advice to withdraw or to alter any passage, I should certainly have done so—in two instances I did, rather against my own impulse, which

is a fair proof that I am not too headstrong or conceited to listen to friendly counsel. But *now* to alter my course or mutilate my published work, seems to me somewhat like deserting one's colours. One may or may not repent having enlisted, but to lay down one's arms except under compulsion, remains intolerable. Even if I did not feel the matter in this way, my withdrawal would not undo what has been done nor unsay what has been said.—Yours truly,

A. C. SWINBURNE.

Swinburne went to Knebworth on August 17. Three days later Lord Lytton wrote to his son the following interesting description of his eccentric young guest :[1]—

KNEBWORTH,
Aug. 20th, 1866.

MY DEAR ROBT.—The Forsters are with me, and, to my great regret, leave the day after to-morrow.

Staying here also is A. Swinburne, whose poems at this moment are rousing a storm of moral censure. I hope he may be induced not to brave and defy that storm, but to purgate his volume of certain pruriences into which it amazes me any poet could fall. If he does not, he will have an unhappy life and a sinister career. It is impossible not to feel an interest in him. He says he is 26[2]; he looks 16—a pale, sickly boy, with some nervous complaint like St. Vitus' dance. But in him is great power, natural and acquired. He has read more than most reading men twice his age, brooded and theorised over what he has read, and has

[1] This letter was enclosed by my father in an interesting letter of his own dated Oct. 1, 1866, to Mr. Wilfred Scawen Blunt. The originals of both letters are still in Mr. Blunt's possession.

[2] He was really 29 at this date.

an artist's critical perceptions. I think he must have read and studied and thought and felt much more than Tennyson ; perhaps he has over-informed his tenement of clay. But there is plenty of stuff in him. His volume of poems is infested with sensualities, often disagreeable in themselves, as well as offensive to all pure and manly taste. But the beauty of diction and mastership of craft in melodies really at first so dazzled me, that I did not see the naughtiness till pointed out. He certainly ought to become a considerable poet of the artistic order, meaning by that a poet who writes with a preconceived notion of art, and not, as I fancy the highest do, with unconsciousness of the art in them, till the thing itself is written. On the other hand, he may end prematurely both in repute and in life. The first is nearly wrecked now, and the 2nd seems very shaky. He inspires one with sadness ; but he is not so sad himself, and his self-esteem is solid as a rock. He reminds me a little of what Lewes was in youth, except that he has no quackery and has genius. I thought it would interest you to dot down these ideas of a man likely to come across your way, and may serve to warn you first against his mistakes, and also against much intimacy with him personally. I suspect he would be a dangerous companion to another poet. And he seems to me as wholly without the moral sense as a mind crammed full with æsthetic culture can be. —Yours ever,

L.

Swinburne remained at Knebworth till August 25th. While he was there, Lord Lytton looked into his affairs, and arranged for the re-issue of *Poems and Ballads* by a more courageous publisher than Moxon. Swinburne was greatly cheered

by Lord Lytton's sympathy, and full of admiration of the novelist's firmness and promptitude in business arrangements. He spoke afterwards of his "very pleasant visit."

The friendship does not appear to have gone any further, as I have no later letters from Swinburne, and Lord Lytton's subsequent references to him in letters to his son and to John Forster, suggest that his admiration for the young poet was somewhat modified by their hostile criticisms. The letters which I quoted are endorsed by Lord Lytton as follows :—

A. Swinburne, of very doubtful chance of real fame at this date, 1869. He has in him much material as a Poet—great reading and much study of art. But his self-conceit is enormous—his taste in all ways impure. In his passions he is not masculine, in his reasoning not sound. Still he is young, has true stuff in him, and may mellow into excellence in later life if he be spared.

CHAPTER III

PEACEFUL YEARS

1867–1870

The feet of years fall noiseless ; we heed, we note them not.
Pilgrims of the Rhine.

His was the age when we most sensitively enjoy the mere sense of existence ; when the face of Nature, and a passive conviction of the benevolence of our Great Father, suffice to create a serene and ineffable happiness, which rarely visits us till we have done with the passions ; till memories, if more alive than heretofore, are yet mellowed in the hues of time, and Faith softens into harmony all their asperities and harshness, till nothing within us remains to cast a shadow over the things without ; and on the verge of life the angels are nearer to us than of yore. There is an old age which has more youth of heart than youth itself.
Alice.

1867. Æt. 64. At the end of 1866 Lord Lytton went to Nice and remained there till April 1867. His letters from Nice make mention of a novel which he has begun but cannot get on with, and of an article on Charles Lamb and some of his companions, which was contributed to the *Quarterly Review* in January, 1867. He also writes on March 11th : "I am slowly finishing my *Horace* with critical notes, but I don't know what to do with it when finished. All I can say is the work amuses me and hurts nobody."

At the end of April he returned to England and spent the summer at Knebworth, coming

E. M. Ward, R.A. pinxit

Emery Walker Ph. sc.

Lord Lytton in his study at Knebworth

up to London for Parliamentary and social engagements. 1867. Æt. 64.

In September he went to Eaux Bonnes in the Pyrenees, and wrote to his son from there on September 5: "I shall try and write something here, but must get well first." Later in the month he writes to Forster :—

EAUX BONNES,
Sept. 20, 1867.

MY DEAR FORSTER—I shall direct this to your office to be forwarded, not knowing whether you may have left Ross. Ah! those lost days of *la jeunesse dorée*, when we launched our boat in the Wye and you addressed a sonnet to Henry Marten![1] Nothing we ever gain in after life compensates for the loss of youth. For youth grasps hope, and hope embraces the infinite and the eternal. We best understand what youth is when we remember that in all creeds of the future state the souls of the blessed are to be always young. No one would trouble himself much to be an eternal soul of 70. Eternally 70—wish that to the wicked!

I expect to be back the first week of October. Write to me in St. James' Place about October 5 to say where you will be. I want much to consult you about a play I have been writing here. The place is so dull that I was compelled to write. It is in the rough as yet—from a comedy of Plautus which Molière spared, and which is, so far as I know, abandoned by every Englishman. The dramatic situation in the original is superb. I think I have not spoilt it. It

[1] Henry Marten (1602–1680), the regicide, Carlyle's "indomitable little pagan," who was imprisoned for the last fifteen years of his life in Chepstow Castle, on the Wye.

1867. Æt. 64.

has great parts for the chief actor (Fechter) and a girl (who?), good parts for the others. But nevertheless, it is full of drawbacks and difficulties, and I really don't know as yet whether it is good or bad. It is written like *The Lady of Lyons* with great gusto, and as a drama rather than as a literary work.

Dickens seems to have been most friendly about *The Lady of Lyons*. I have no idea except from his letter about Fechter's success in it. *Schiller's Life* can wait till I come back.

These waters make me worse now; of course the doctors say that is a good sign and that I shall feel the benefit in the winter.—Ever yrs.,

LYTTON.

The play referred to in this letter—a prose comedy called *The Captives*—was completed on his return to England, and forms the subject of most of his letters for the remainder of this year. It was submitted to Dickens and to Fechter for their opinion, which appears to have been unfavourable, on the ground that its Greek setting and Greek names would militate against its popularity in England. It was, therefore, abandoned with reluctance, and was never either performed or published.

Lord Lytton returned to England in October without having derived any benefit from the French watering-place. The cough from which he was suffering was, if anything, rather worse, and it continued to trouble him increasingly during the remaining years of his life. He only once went abroad again for his health, and his remaining winters were spent at Torquay.

He occasionally visited Bath and Buxton, but nowhere did he succeed in getting rid of this troublesome ailment, which afflicted him at all seasons of the year, and at times completely prostrated him. In spite of increasing physical infirmities, however, his mental activity continued to the end. 1867. Æt. 64.

On November 2 he presided at the farewell banquet to Dickens just previous to his departure for America, and in proposing the toast of the evening, paid an affectionate tribute to his great literary rival and personal friend, who had helped to refine humanity "by tears that never enfeeble and laughter that never degrades." In the course of his speech he also referred appreciatively to another distinguished writer, who was present among the guests,[1] and received the following grateful acknowledgment two days later :—

Matthew Arnold to Lord Lytton.

ATHENÆUM CLUB,
Nov. 4th, 1867.

MY DEAR LORD—You said to me on Saturday that though you had seen extracts from my new volume of poems, you had not yet seen the book itself, so I trust you will do me the honour of accepting a copy, which I have desired my publishers to send you.

I hardly know how to thank you for your most

[1] "I see before me a distinguished guest, distinguished for the manner in which he has brought together all that is most modern in sentiment, with all that is most scholastic in thought and language—Mr. Matthew Arnold. I appeal to him if I am not right, when I say that it is by a language in common that all differences of origin sooner or later are welded together."

1867. Æt. 64. unexpected and gratifying mention of me in your admirable speech on Saturday night. I have had very little success with the general public, and I sincerely think that it is a fault in an author not to succeed with his general public, and that the great authors are those who do succeed with it. But if the kindest, most generous, and most flattering marks of esteem from the most distinguished of his contemporaries, can console a man for not succeeding with the general public, this consolation I have had; and the kindest, most generous and most flattering instance of it I have ever met with, was your Lordship's mention of me on Saturday night.—Believe me to be, my dear Lord, with great truth and regard, Your faithful and obliged servant,

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

At the end of November 1867, Lord Lytton went to Torquay for the remainder of the winter. To Forster he wrote from there at the end of the year: "I am laboriously idle, correcting the proofs of my *Miscellaneous Prose Works*, and sending off proofs of the *Horace* to Blackwood, to whom, after all, I have given, or rather, sold it."

The *Miscellaneous Prose Works* were published at the end of January 1868, in three volumes, by Richard Bentley. The first volume contained essays contributed to Quarterly Magazines at various times; the second, the early essays and tales which had first appeared in *The Student*,[1] together with two not previously published, and

[1] In the *Miscellaneous Prose Works* the essays and tales from *The Student* were considerably altered and revised. In the Knebworth Edition of Lord Lytton's works the original text has been preserved.

the third, the later essays originally published in the volume called *Caxtoniana*. 1868. Æt. 65.

Lord Lytton's reference to Matthew Arnold at the Dickens Banquet in the previous autumn led to a correspondence between these two writers, and their intercourse gradually developed into a very cordial friendship. No two authors could be more dissimilar in their published works, yet each had a genuine admiration for the other; and it is interesting to find that Matthew Arnold acknowledged that his own literary tastes had been influenced by Lord Lytton's writings. At the beginning of 1868 he writes :—

2 Chester Square, W.
January 7th, 1868.

My dear Lord Lytton—If I did not answer your kind letter sooner, it was because I have been sadly occupied for the last fortnight with the illness of my youngest child, whom we have just lost. Even at this sad time, your letter was a great pleasure to me; it was a fresh instance of the cordial and gratifying kindness which my productions have met with at your hands, and which, I assure you, I gratefully value. About the rhythms, you are probably quite right. If I have learnt to seek in any composition for a wide sweep of interest and for a significance residing in the whole rather than in the parts, and not to give over-prominence, either in my own mind or in my work, to the elaboration of details, I have certainly had before me, in your works, an example of this mode of proceeding, and have always valued it in them.—Believe me, my dear Lord Lytton, Gratefully and sincerely yours,

Matthew Arnold.

1868. Æt. 65. A few months later Lord Lytton sent him the collected edition of his *Miscellaneous Prose Works*, which had just been published, and Matthew Arnold writes again :—

2 Chester Square,
February 22nd, 1868.

Dear Lord Lytton—A thousand thanks for your magnificent present, which I shall value extremely. I am delighted to think that a good deal in it will be quite new to me; articles in the *Quarterly* which appeared without your name and which I have missed reading. Other parts of it, well-known and familiar to me, carry me back to the happiest time of my life—*The Student*, the *Life of Schiller*, came into my hands just at the moment I wanted something of the kind. I never shall forget what they then gave me—the sense of a wider horizon, the anticipation of Germany, the opening into the great world—just what Macaulay, with his unmixed Englishism and metallic manner, could not give me.

Like the poor fallen man in *Godolphin*, I am going to the suburbs, not to Brompton, as he did, but to Harrow, to bring up my boys at the School there; it is the only way in which I can send them. But I hope not to have left London before you return to it, and if I have not, I shall certainly venture to call and repeat my thanks in person.—Believe me, dear Lord Lytton, with great truth, Your faithful and obliged,

Matthew Arnold.

In February 1868, Lord Lytton writes to his son from Torquay, in criticism of an article which the latter had written on the subject of classical education :—

Since writing this morning I have seen your article in the *Edinburgh Review*. I think it very able, well argued and weighty. I put aside my own views in so judging, for my views are not the same as yours, and I also think you attach consequence to authorities whom on such a subject I scarcely regard as authorities at all —such as Mill. The best judges would be successful men of action and really great authors. Few amongst these would not think Latin and Greek, even superficially acquired, an inestimable blessing for which nothing else could atone. I very much doubt, too, whether composition in Greek or Latin does not more rapidly help to teach them than any other mode; and in this respect, for boyhood, verse in any language is better than prose. But not arguing the case, I think your article extremely to your credit and very reviewish. 1868. ÆT. 65.

My town house[1] is far from ready. I like Torquay much in a lazy way.

The house in Grosvenor Square was ready for occupation by the spring, and Lord Lytton came to live there for the Parliamentary session. He writes to his son in May :—

I have been immersed in the vortex of fashionable life since Easter with scarcely an hour to myself. I am much pleased that you like my collection. Few as yet have read it. Its chief merit seems to me to consist in a larger range, comprising both sentiment and reflection and critical survey of men and books, than any other collection of English essays by one author which I can remember. In this it is excelled by Montaigne, but Montaigne excels in almost

[1] 12 Grosvenor Square.

1868. Æt. 65.

everything else and is essentially the arch-poet of essayists.

At one of his social parties he met Disraeli and writes :—

Disraeli was there and wonderfully cordial to me. He talked of old days and kept pressing my hand, which is not his wont. However, I feel steely to him and his Government.

The social engagements in which Lord Lytton took part during the years that he lived in Grosvenor Square were in a large measure undertaken at the instance of Lady Sherborne,[1] with whom he became very intimate at this time. He writes about her to his son in July 1868 :—

Lady Sherborne is an enigma. She is not young. She would generally be considered very plain. She is not clever. She is not a flirt. She is very good, with a religious temperament. But she certainly has charm. She is so quiet and feminine, with a wonderfully sweet voice in talk as well as song. We are great friends. Lord Sherborne is, however, an infliction—dull and cross, but a fine man, and she seems a very good wife, takes his scoldings and governs him with a silk rein.

During the last years of his life, this lady was Lord Lytton's most intimate woman friend. They corresponded regularly and met frequently. She gave him sympathy and encouragement,

[1] Susan Elizabeth Block of Charlton, 2nd wife of the 3rd Baron Sherborne. She died March 7, 1907. Lord Sherborne died in 1883, aged 79.

shared his interests, helped in correcting the proofs of his last works, comforted him in his illnesses, and revived in him a taste for social intercourse which he had not felt for many years. 1868. Æt. 65.

He writes to her from Grosvenor Square on June 13, 1868 :—

My dear Lady Sherborne—I was so glad to get your letter. You remember what we said of the happiness of the religious temperament. I rejoice to think that that blessing rests over you and your household at this hour. Human nature attains to its highest heroic standard where the grave has no victory and death no sting.

I dined with Henry yesterday, where I met your friend Lord Albemarle, who was very pleasant. Chiefly "literary coves." My enemy the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*,[1] with whom I had the hypocrisy to shake hands, Kinglake, and the editor of the *Quarterly*, etc. Then I went to the queerest little old gentleman rejoicing in the monosyllabic name of Bebb, who has come into a great fortune and sets up for youth and gives balls in a house he has made very pretty in Gloucester Place. I did not stay there very long.

To-day I have to dinner the Carnarvons, Stanhopes, Dufferins, Sir R. & Lady E. Peel, etc. On Monday I have another party. Tuesday I dine with Lady Combermere ; Wednesday with an M.P. who has a glass eye and sees the Political askew. Thursday I expect my eldest brother and his family to dine here—and so on. The Irish Church Bill comes on in the Lords the 25th, and debate will last two nights. I hope to fly to Knebworth the first week in July and to

[1] Frederick Greenwood.

1868. Æt. 65.

carry you there on my wings. We can be as quiet as you like.

It is a great comfort to me to think your sister is with you, and if you and she like it, I hope she will also nestle down at Knebworth—though how I shall amuse Lord Sherborne, having no trout near, I know not.—Ever yr. affte.

LYTTON.

On August 1 he writes to her from Knebworth :—

My guests leave me to-morrow. They profess to have enjoyed themselves much, perhaps because I have left them so much to themselves, plunged in the work of that melancholy play which I hope will leave me to-night. I have been writing upstairs, as I am now, and immensely untidy, owing to an arrear of unanswered letters, in order to get off the play.

The play here referred to was *The Rightful Heir*, which was a rearrangement of *The Sea-Captain*, and completely rewritten. It was performed at the Lyceum Theatre on October 3. He writes to his son about it on October 19 :—

The Press has been very civil about my play, more so than about any work I ever wrote. But I doubt if it will have a long run. It has four parts requiring great actors, and only the two Vezins act well. Bandmann, from whom much was expected, falls short. Beaufort and Eveline are very weak and ineffective, and the play itself, though allowed to be good in composition, etc., has not the agreeable emotions that bear repeating, like *The Lady of Lyons*. Worst of all, a lettered audience scarcely exists, and though it might be created,

it would require years to do so, aided by good actors. And anything more worrying and troublesome than attendance on actors and green rooms, with their quarrels and jealousies, can't be conceived. It is a world of its own and requires very skilful administration on the part of the author. I am now returning to my *Horace* which is preparing for the press. I don't feel up to any travelling. I have had a very ailing summer. Perhaps an English winter may do me good. I shan't interfere in politics, but am anxious to see the temper of the new House of Commons. 1869. Æt. 66.

The winter of 1868–69 was spent quietly at Torquay, and the only literary work of these months was the preparation for the press of his translation of *Horace*, on which he had been engaged off and on ever since 1853, and the rhymed Comedy of *Walpole*. The former first appeared in the April number of *Blackwood's Magazine* for 1868, and as a separate volume in October 1869. The latter was published in December 1869. Both were well received, and in one letter Lord Lytton tells his son: "The *Horace* sells better than any of my original poetry has done of late years."

In February 1869 he received the following letter from Matthew Arnold, which again expresses the latter's sense of indebtedness :—

THE ATHENÆUM,
Feb. 24th, 1869.

DEAR LORD LYTTON—I often now am many days together without coming to London, and this is why your kind note has remained without an answer till

1869. Æt. 66. now. Your sympathy and approbation give me great pleasure; the more so, because I am conscious, as I think I have told you before, of a very considerable debt of gratitude to a certain European tone of reflection and sentiment in your writings, which impressed me and suited me from the first times when I began to read at all, and before I found anything of the same kind anywhere else. I very much agree with you that self-government, in our sense of the word and that of the Americans, is likely to prevail more and more, and I am not at all sure this is not a good thing; only one may with advantage labour to clear this habit from much of the quackery and self-delusion with which we and the Americans are at present prone to invest it.

When you come to London, I shall some day—if you will permit me—come and pay my respects to you in Grosvenor Square.

Till then, I am, with great truth, dear Lord Lytton,
—Your sincerely obliged

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Three months later Matthew Arnold took the young Duke of Genoa, who was living under his charge at Harrow, down to Knebworth on a visit. He wrote to his mother (May 12, 1869) :—

This place of Lord Lytton's stands well on a hill in the pretty part of Hertfordshire. It is a house originally of Henry VII.'s reign, and has been elaborately restored. The grounds, too, are very elaborate, and full of statues, kiosks, and knick-knacks of every kind. The House is a mass of old oak, men in armour, tapestry, and curiosities of every description. But, like Lord Lytton himself, the place is a strange mixture of what is really romantic and interesting, with what is

tawdry and gimcracky. . . . It might be a much more impressive place than it is if it had been simply treated. Lord Lytton is kindness itself, but theatrical in his reception of us, and in his determination to treat the Prince as a Royal personage. The Prince, who is a dear boy, of whom I am getting quite fond, behaves admirably, but would much rather be let alone. . . . The most pleasing thing about Lord Lytton is his humanity. He goes into the cottages of the poor people, and they seem to adore him. They have known him ever since he was a boy, and call him "Sir" and "Mr." instead of "My Lord"; and when they correct themselves and beg pardon, he says:—"Oh, never mind that!"[1] 1869. Æt. 66.

The summer was again spent in London in the same way as the preceding year, and Lord Lytton writes to his son on July 6:—

I have a thousand apologies to make for my remissness as a correspondent. I have no better excuse than that of being whirled away in the London vortex. From breakfast till 2 I have had either visitors or pressing work, from 2 I have been out either till our House meets or till dinner, and after that one is fit for nothing. A wearisome and exacting life enough. Till I got into the Lords my life never had a holiday; and now, somehow or other, I find the holiday hard work.

The same letter describes the circumstances which prevented him from delivering a speech which he had prepared for the House of Lords on the subject of the Irish Church Bill:—

"As to my speech," he says, "the affair is this. I wanted to speak early the first night, but was requested

[1] *Letters of Matthew Arnold*, vol. ii. pp. 6, 7.

1869. Æt. 66. to adjourn the debate by the Whips of both parties, and the leaders—Cairns, Granville, Salisbury. I agreed. When I rose to do so, Grey rose also, close by the Clerk's chair, and mumbled something inaudible. Cries for me being loud, he then gave way. I moved the adjournment, but in his mumbling tones he had already moved it, and therefore had legal precedence. This he declined to waive, and I was thus thrown out of the course, the debate having been all arranged and parcelled out before, Bishops and Irish Lord Lieutenants, etc., having each their appointed claim and hour. I was sorry for it, as I think I had good things to say. But, at all events, the general disappointment at not hearing me was, perhaps, a greater success than my speech might have been. I had no idea there would be so great a wish to hear me.

"I am immersed in social engagements. I have, unhappily, agreed to be President of the Archæological Society which visits Hertfordshire this year, and must give an inaugural address and a breakfast to include the County, and devote a week to these learned brutes! This begins August 2nd, and I must leave town for Knebworth before."

A letter to his son, on the subject of the Irish Church, though undated, probably belongs to the summer of 1869 :—

. . . I say nothing about the Irish question. The subject is too long. But in your ideas, as with foreign philosophers, you confound the powers of a free Parliamentary state with those of an autocrat. An autocrat could settle the Church question and might allow Catholic Bishops to sit in Parlt. A Minister who proposed the latter to the House of Commons, or made any attempt to sanction a R. Cath. Church as an establish-

ment, would be gone in a jiffy and even lose his seat in Parliament. The great difficulty in the Protestant Church question is less that of disestablishment than its endowments. Its chief riches are not State property, but derived from private bequests since the Reformation; and it is an awful thing to begin confiscation of private property, however public the purposes to which it is devoted. It unsettles all real property. Another difficulty is that the chief part of Protestant Church property is in the midst, not of Catholic, but of purely Protestant populations, as in the north ; a third is that if the population generally are Catholic the vast majority of property is Protestant, and it is not statesmanship to alienate the proprietors of a country where you can't attach the population. 1869. Æt. 66.

Nothing can attach the Irish population, short of independent severance. It is the Ionian Islands on a large scale. The mere residence of a Royal Prince without power or patronage would do little to conciliate sentiment. With power and patronage he would become a party man and soon be obnoxious, while he would create the jealousy of the monarch. The problem is insoluble save by time and material prosperity with a powerful police.—Yrs.,

L.

Two letters to Lady Sherborne, written in 1869, on the subject of religion, may also be quoted here :—

My dear Reine des Animaux—I obey your commands and send you two autographs for the Monks of Canada. Pray don't imagine that any theory in your letter seemed to me too grave. I admire and revere the sentiment that comes from the truly religious nature—such as yours. There is no perfect beauty of

1869. character without it. I sympathise entirely with that
Æt. 66. cry of the soul which you express when you say, "We do not love God eno'" nor that wonderful representation of the Divine tenderness for humanity which the Father vouchsafed to us in the Image of our Lord. We all must feel at times how feeble and lukewarm is our love for God, and reproach ourselves for ingratitude. But then, on reflection, we become aware that the Creator has set bounds to this yearning of the soul while on earth—bounds which are rarely, if ever, passed with safety to our human reason and human uses in this world. The Brahmin Dervish who devotes himself to the contemplation of the Divine goodness and seeks thro' the love it inspires to absorb himself in divinity itself, is, perhaps, the oldest and the most earnest type of this religious yearning. The early Roman Catholic Church affords types more familiar to us in St. Teresa, Simon Stylites and others.

But we are compelled to consider these devotees irrational visionaries and fulfilling less the objects of life than many an erring struggler in the great arena of action, who serves the Father in his rough way, without dwelling over much on the love that he cannot fathom. It is a sun on which we cannot gaze long without becoming blind or suffering the sunstroke.

The most striking instance of the love you mean, accompanied by active engagements in objects purely human, has always seemed to be David. It is difficult to conceive a more erring mortal, and yet I understand why he is called after God's own heart. He has established so fully the link between himself as the naughty, affectionate child and the Divine Creator as the indulgent Father, to whom he comes in every difficulty, utters his every joy and his every sorrow, and never allows his greatest sin to intercept his communion with the All-perfect. Did we find such a man now

in life, the Public would call him a hypocrite and im- 1869.
postor. But to my mind, he is presented to us as an Æt. 66.
example of the efficacy of prayer. His life is one encouragement to pray, no matter how unworthy we make ourselves of an approach to God, if regarded only as the Judge and not as the Father.

And there seems to me a mysterious symbolical signification in the genealogy which makes the all-spotless Saviour the son of the passionate, faulty David, since both so maintain and enforce the appeal to the one Father in every trouble, in every trial. As on earth the heart is really part and parcel of the soul, and through the affections and errors of the heart we must still preserve the upward tendency of the soul. Because David does this, he is after God's own heart, even when to the Spirit of God he is most displeasing, just as if we had several children, and one was always getting into scrapes from which the others were free, but in each scrape came to us confident of our pity and indulgence and sympathy, pouring out his whole heart to us. Somehow or other, he would be more after our own hearts than the other children who deemed us too aloof from their lives or too severe for their approach, who gave us no trouble and showed us no affection. But let us be satisfied that we do love God, if we thus approach Him, like David, with supreme confidence in His fatherly regard for us, rejoicing in His smile and not overawed at the thought of His power.

I am sure after this long letter you will not say that I thought your letter too grave. . . .

Saturday.

I feel so grateful, dearest Lady, for your tender and beautiful letter. I accept it quite in the earnest spirit in which it is written.

I am, you know, a firm believer in the efficacy of

1869. prayer, and I feel in it a great comfort and a great
Æt. 66. support. But as I think I have said before, the "religious temperament"—that exaltation or ecstasy of spirit which makes "the joy of the heart" you describe, which turns pain and sorrows into loving messages from God, and can absorb itself into Heaven when the body is stretched on the rack—is, I believe, a constitutional gift and no more to be acquired than the gift of poetry is. You may as well say to an ordinary man, "See what delight the poet feels in Nature; see how in trouble he forgets the world he inhabits and dwells in the world he creates!" as say to him, "Test that spiritual poetry in religion which you marvel at in another; which is not bestowed on Christians alone, on a St. Augustine, a St. Teresa, a Robert Hall, a Calvinist, if he feels himself 'in grace,' but which is also granted to the Brahmin, the Dervish, the Mohammedan Faquir, all of whom can inflict tortures on their flesh and feel them not, in the rapture which fuses their souls in the contemplation of divinity."

I believe that the last persons to whom this gift is usually granted are men accustomed, like myself, to the culture of reason, the strife of active life, the balance between judgment and imagination which the student of literature, the politician, the man of the world, seeks to maintain. In a word, I have not that gift, no doubt a blessed one, but wholly incompatible with the elements of my character; nor do my beliefs in the relations between this world and the next tend to attempt the pale imitation of an enthusiasm which I cannot sincerely feel. However, I am, I trust, deeply grateful to the Divine and merciful Father for all the blessings He has given me; and if I repine at the want of some others, it is not habitually, and only when under that depression of spirits in which the body overcomes the manhood I strive to maintain in the mind. . . .

The death of Lord Derby in 1869 created a vacancy in the order of St. Michael and St. George which was offered to, and accepted by, Lord Lytton. He was gazetted a G.C.M.G. on January 15, 1870. 1870. Æt. 67.

And so the months passed peacefully away. There remains little to record. His letters from Knebworth or Argyll House, Torquay, speak of idleness and contentment, happy friendships and quiet reading. The busy life was nearly finished, and repose attained at last. The sorrows and regrets inseparable from old age as friends and relations drop out, health fails, and the world moves on as it were over one's head, recur from time to time in his correspondence, but on the whole these last years were happy and uneventful. To his son he writes from London on February 14, 1870 : " I came to town meditating all sorts of political action, but the cold and gloom of the weather have stricken me into inertia, and I am longing to get back to Torquay if I can, and stay there through March. In youth one says, ' What would I do were I in the position time gives to some senior.' One gains the position and then says :—' Ah, what would I do now, if I were but young.' "

CHAPTER IV

LAST LITERARY WORK

1870–1872

> Life has always action ; it is our own fault if it ever be dull ; youth has its enterprise, manhood its schemes ; and even if infirmity creep upon age, the mind still triumphs over the mortal clay, and in the quiet hermitage, among books and from thoughts, keeps the great wheel within everlastingly in motion.
>
> *The Pilgrims of the Rhine.*

1870. Æt. 67. THE winter of 1869–70 was unusually severe, and even at Torquay Lord Lytton could not escape the rigours of the climate. He says in one of his letters : "I am not only idle, but all literary exertion is repugnant to me, so none of my irons in the fire are a bit hotter. The fire is gone out for the present."

The fire, however, was by no means extinguished. It did not even smoulder for long, and the last two years of his life were busily spent in literary work.

John Forster was also very ailing at this time, and Lord Lytton's letters to him in the early months of 1870 express the most affectionate solicitude for his friend's health. One of these letters makes mention of his satisfaction at having received an offer to act his play of

Walpole at a morning performance at the Gaiety. For some reason which is not explained, the arrangement fell through, and at the end of March he writes to Forster :— 1870. Æt. 67.

ARGYLL HOUSE, TORQUAY,
March 28, 1870.

MY DEAR FORSTER—I am very much obliged by your letter and entirely approve your refusal to let my ill-starred play be acted under such malign auspices. I am utterly amazed that Langford should have urged the thing on me, seeing that he said the manager was his friend, and therefore I presumed that he was cognisant of his friend's intentions. If not, his friend deceived him, as (ourselves excepted) most friends do deceive their friends where they see the way to twopence. This is a disappointment, but one so in the groove of my disappointments that it scarcely disappoints me. I have long since resigned the last lingering hope of fair play in my life-time, and as I believe in (or rather, am immutably convinced of) a future state in another form of being, any success given to me after I have left this world, any failure, provided that it affected only intellect and not honour, would please or mortify me no more (even if in the future life we are allowed to know what passes in this) than it would please or mortify you and me to learn what was thought of us in an infant school. But so far as this life is concerned, and any pleasure mere intellectual effort can bestow—O, that I had been born in any Christian land except that in which I was born.

Having so vented myself, I feel free to go to matters which affect me much more nearly. How are you? Do say; your last note is silent thereon, and

1870. to know you better would please me immeasurably
Æt. 67. more than could the greatest praises bestowed on my most favourite works.—Yrs.,

L.

One of the "irons in the fire" at this time was the story of *The Coming Race*. This book—a fantastic story of an imaginary race living in the interior of the earth with a very highly developed civilisation—was an entirely new departure, unlike anything which Lord Lytton had written before. It was not merely an excellent tale of adventure, but had a definite satirical purpose. In it he imagines a community in which most of the utopian philosophies of the day were realised to their fullest extent. Universal peace, perfect liberty of the individual, and equality both of class and sex, the highest development of mechanical invention, perfect physical well-being of the individual, and social well-being of the community—all these were attained, and resulted in a race that was at once mild and terrible, highly intellectual, and insufferably dull.

It was a state in which war, with all its calamities, was deemed impossible—a state in which the freedom of all and each was secured to the uttermost degree, without one of those animosities which make freedom in the upper world depend on the perpetual strife of hostile parties. Here the corruption which debases democracies was as unknown as the discontent which undermines the thrones of monarchies. Equality here was not a name; it was a reality. Riches were

not persecuted, because they were not envied. Here 1870.
those problems connected with the labours of a work- Æt. 67.
ing class, hitherto insoluble above ground, and above ground conducing to such bitterness between classes, were solved by a process the simplest,—a distinct and separate class was dispensed with altogether. Mechanical inventions, constructed on principles that baffled research to ascertain, worked by an agency infinitely more powerful and infinitely more easy of management than aught we have yet extracted from electricity or steam, with the aid of children whose strength was never overtasked, but who loved their employment as sport or pastime, sufficed to create a Public wealth so devoted to the general use that not a grumbler was ever heard of. The vices that rot our cities, here had no footing. Amusements abounded, but they were all innocent. No merry-makings induced to intoxication, to riot, to disease. . . . The vigour of middle life was preserved even after the term of a century was passed. With this longevity was combined a greater blessing than itself—that of continuous health. Such diseases as befell the race were removed with ease by scientific applications of that agency—life-giving as life-destroying—which is inherent in Vril. . . . All that our female philosophers above ground contend for as to rights of women, is conceded as a matter of course in this happy common-wealth. . . . Lastly, among the more important characteristics of the Vril-ya, as distinguished from our mankind, is their universal agreement in the existence of a merciful, beneficent Deity, and of a future world; while with that agreement is combined another—namely, since they can know nothing as to the nature of that Deity beyond the fact of His supreme goodness, nor of that future world beyond the fact of its felicitous existence, so their reason forbids all angry disputes on insoluble questions.

1870. Æt. 67. Thus they secure for that state in the bowels of the earth, what no community ever secured under the light of the stars—all the blessings and consolations of a religion without any of the evils and calamities which are engendered by strife between one religion and another.

It would be, then, utterly impossible to deny that the state of existence among the Vril-ya is thus, as a whole, immeasurably more felicitous than that of super-terrestrial races, and realising the dreams of our most sanguine philanthropists, almost approaches to a poet's conception of some angelical order. And yet, if you would take a thousand of the best and most philosophical of human beings you could find in London, Paris, Berlin, New York, or even Boston, and place them as citizens in this beatified community, my belief is, that in less than a year they would either die of *ennui*, or attempt some revolution by which they would militate against the good of the community, and be burnt into cinders at the request of the Tur [Chief Magistrate].

The development of this theme gave plenty of scope for the indulgence of quiet satire, and for ingenuities of invention. The manuscript of the story was sent to Forster at the beginning of March 1870, and the following letters on the subject throw light on the author's opinions concerning the work :—

Lord Lytton to John Forster.

A.H., Torquay,
March 15, 1870.

My dear Forster—The MS. does not press for publication, so you can keep it during your excursion

and think over it among the other moonstricken productions which may have more professional demand on your attention. Perhaps some suggestion may occur to you. The only important point is to keep in view the Darwinian proposition that a coming race is destined to supplant our races, that such a race would be very gradually formed, and be indeed a new species developing itself out of our old one, that this process would be invisible to our eyes, and therefore in some region unknown to us. And that in the course of the development, the coming race will have acquired some peculiarities so distinct from our ways, that it could not be fused with us, and certain destructive powers which our science could not enable us to attain to, or cope with. 1870. Æt. 67.

Therefore, the idea of electrical power occurred to me, but some other might occur to you.

The same to the same.

A.H., Torquay,
March 16, 1870.

My dear Forster — With regard to the MS., return it here and place in pencil marks at all the passages you object to. I don't quite understand about the romance interfering with the satire. There must be romance of some kind, and there must also be some organic peculiarity in the coming race to distinguish them from ourselves and give them some destroying powers that our mere science could not attain. For, if they had only learnt to develop agencies in electricity, not yet known to us, we could acquire that knowledge as readily as one nation has acquired from another the use of the electric telegraph. But I will attend to any suggestion you may make, or put aside the MS. altogether.

1870. Æt. 67. Robert seems to have been making an oration at Vienna in praise of the Americans. I don't agree with him in a crow over the gentlemen of the south—but that is matter of opinion and taste.

Heaven set you up soon.—Ever yr. affte.

L.

The same to the same.

, *March* 20, 1870.

My dear Forster—It is most kind of you to write me so long a letter while still so unwell.

I am a little startled at your doubt if a publisher will take the book as an anonymous one—my notion having been that if it could appear unbeknown, it would create a sensation and have a large sale, but that with my name it would be a failure. However, on the former supposition I suppose I err; in the latter I feel sure I am right. I would not on any account give my name to it.

I did not mean Vril for mesmerism, but for electricity, developed into uses as yet only dimly guessed, and including whatever there may be genuine in mesmerism, which I hold to be a mere branch current of the one great fluid pervading all nature. I am by no means, however, wedded to Vril, if you can suggest anything else to carry out this meaning—namely, that the coming race, though akin to us, has nevertheless acquired by hereditary transmission, etc., certain distinctions which make it a different species, and contains powers which we could not attain to through a slow growth of time; so that this race would not amalgamate with, but destroy us. And yet this race, being in many respects better and milder than we are, ought not to be represented terrible, except through the impossibility of our tolerating them or they tolerating us, and they possess some powers of destruction denied to ourselves.

Now, as some bodies are charged with electricity like the torpedo or electric eel, and never can communicate that power to other bodies, so I suppose the existence of a race charged with that electricity and having acquired the art to concentre and direct it—in a word, to be conductors of its lightnings. If you can suggest any other idea of carrying out that idea of a destroying race, I should be glad. Probably even the notion of Vril might be more cleared from mysticism or mesmerism by being simply defined to be electricity and conducted by those staves or rods, omitting all about mesmeric passes, etc. Perhaps, too, it would be safe to omit all reference to the power of communicating with the dead. 1871. Æt. 68.

I hope to have a good account of yourself.—Ever affectly. yrs.,

L.

Lord Lytton adhered to his determination to produce the book anonymously, and events proved that he was justified in so doing. It was published by Blackwood in the spring of 1871, and was read with great interest. Considering the stage of development which electrical science had reached at the date when *The Coming Race* was published, and the extent to which it has since developed for practical purposes many of the powers exercised by the Vrilya, it must be admitted that Lord Lytton showed remarkable gifts of foresight in this work. The anonymity of the book was strictly preserved. Besides John Forster, only Lady Sherborne and his son were admitted into the secret of its authorship. To the latter Lord Lytton wrote on May 19, 1871 :—

1871. Æt. 68. *The Coming Race* is out, and on its road to you by book post. As yet I have seen no opinions about it, except in letters to Blackwood from Max Müller and Sir A. Grant, another philosopher, very eulogistic. But it has not come before the public yet, and it seems uncertain whether it will be a great hit or a failure. It is improved in point of humour since you saw it, and I think you will like its solemn quiz on Darwin and on Radical politics.

In June 1871 he says :—

I don't think people have caught or are likely to catch the leading idea of the book, which is this :— Assuming that all the various ideas of philosophical reformers could be united and practically realised, the result would be firstly, a race that must be fatal to ourselves ; our society could not amalgamate with it ; it would be deadly to us, not from its vices but its virtues. Secondly, the realisation of these ideas would produce a society which we should find extremely dull, and in which the current equality would prohibit all greatness. Of course in the handling of the main idea there are collateral veins of satire or reflection.

Blackwood tells me that the opinions he hears privately are very enthusiastic, chiefly from professors and scholars, and the papers usually most hostile to me are wonderfully civil to it, *Spectator*, *Examiner*, *Athenæum*, *Scotsman*—all my wonted foes. Nevertheless, it does not seem to get fairly before the public, and I do not hear it discussed or see it about. I daresay its sale will be limited.

Before the end of the year 1871 the reputation of this book was fairly established, and on January 30, 1872, the author says of it to his son :—

The Coming Race has had a great sale—five editions, and is now going into a cheaper one, stereotyped, which shows the advantage of the anonymous. It owes its sale chiefly to the praise of the reviewers, and precisely the reviewers who would have been most uncivil to the author if they had guessed him. I think when you hit on a popular subject you will do well to try the anonymous too. 1871. Æt. 68.

Another literary task of these years was the revision and republication of *King Arthur*. The subject was first mentioned in a letter to Forster of March 9, 1870 :—

A Mr. Charlton Tucker, who is setting up as a publisher in Northumberland Street, Strand, has distinguished himself from the rest of mankind by expressing admiration of my ill-treated *proles King Arthur*, and has offered me liberal terms for leave to bring out a new edition. Now my intense fatherly love for *King Arthur* does not so cloud my general knowledge of the world as to dim my eyes to the fact that a man setting up as a publisher might like to secure an old-fashioned respectable name like mine; and that in republishing *King Arthur* at a probable loss, he pays for my name and establishes a claim on my gratitude or on my vanity. Vanity is often a better basis whereon to build than gratitude. Therefore, not rejecting his offer, I have put it aside to be considered. Meanwhile, having always had it on my mind, in packing up wares for posterity, that I ought to launch forth a new edition of *King Arthur*, I have been looking over that poem with a sternly critical eye, and, barring some faults of taste and declamatory form of diction, I am amazed to find, after a long forgetfulness of every line, how good it seems to me on the whole,

1871. Æt. 68. and the higher the flight the better it seems to me. Of course, seeing the neglect it has undergone, the chances are that I am mistaken. I try to bring before my eyes the mortifying recollection of much greater men enamoured of their own bad verses. Richelieu and Cicero to wit. But in vain I set those examples before me; at every page I read, my impression strengthens that the poem has been unjustly ignored, and should it ever find favouring critics, must establish a high and permanent place in literature. Possibly when I have finished correcting it I may ask you to look impartially at certain parts, and from a point of view distinct from that which accepts as poetry the verbal mannerisms of the day. Possibly also I may ask your advice, whether if I venture a new edition under the auspices of this virgin publisher, I may expose myself and my venture to the disparaging sneer of not having found an older bird than Mr. Jackson to be caught by that unremunerative chaff. Meanwhile, I mean to finish the revision of the work.

Now, having cleared my decks of this egotistical lumber, I must express my heartfelt pleasure at thinking that though this iron weather has been so against you, you are apparently making strides, slow but sure, towards convalescence. When the sun begins to smile, and the buds to bloom, I hope the stride will be rapid.

The Queen of Holland has been taking up and spoiling my time here. I gave up to her talk two mortal hours on Sunday, met and took her into dinner at Lady Brownlow's yesterday, and am again summoned to meet her at ten this evening at Lady Sherborne's. She is very clever, very liberal, more philosophical than sentimental—such a Sovereign as Voltaire might have liked, but restless as quicksilver, and makes one un-

comfortable by her infectious fidgetings of thought and body. 1871. Æt. 68.

After re-reading the poem, Forster wrote to him very encouragingly about *King Arthur*: "It is a masterly piece of construction," he said, "high and buoyant to the last, and brimming over with life and fancy. Loftier or more various power than in this book you have not shown anywhere." Mr. Tucker's offer was therefore accepted, and a very unattractive, badly illustrated, edition of the book was published in the autumn of 1870. The preface to this edition gave Lord Lytton a great deal of trouble. His first draft of it contained some critical passages of Tennyson's treatment of the same subject, and it concluded with others of querulous protest against the injustice he had received from contemporary critics. On the advice of Forster, these passages were wisely omitted before the book went to press. In reply to his friend's criticism of the preface, Lord Lytton wrote on August 29, 1870:—

My dear Forster—I am very much obliged by your letter. Your doubts in much express my own, but there is one point I feel to be essential, namely, the vindication of my throwing over the Mort d'Arthur, and constructing my own fable and characters. I want to do that. At the same time, I want equally to avoid impugning Tennyson's different mode of treatment. That is the great difficulty, which I hoped you or Robert would help me to solve. I must say something,

1870–1872. too, about the distinction between my Guenevere and
Æt. 67–69. the French one.

The second point I should like to keep in view and think politic, is some assertion of my own estimate of the poem, even if it provoke ridicule; but I feel that it ought to be done more briefly, and with more modesty and dignity.

That horrible preface has cost me more trouble than a three volume novel, and I return to it with weariness and nausea. . . .—Afftly. yrs.,

L.

To Mrs. Cosway[1] he wrote, at the end of 1870, about this book :—

My dear Mrs. Cosway—You don't like me to say "flattered," and I really do not know by what words I can express my sense of the distinction you bestow upon my pet child. Ever since I began what is called "a literary career," I have had against me more inveterately than any other author of my day, the cliques which supply criticisms to the journals. When I have written books like novels, which need not their intervention to obtain a fair reading from the public, these cliques could not do me all the harm they wished to do. But there are some kinds of writing which the general public do not take to unless they are somewhat forced to it, by the recommendation of reviews. Poetry is of that kind, and especially a poem so lengthy, so unfamiliar in subject, and so little modern in style, as *King Arthur*. And the reviewers there have certainly contrived to discourage the most benevolent reader from the effort of perusal, with the exception of one notice in the *Fortnightly*.

[1] Afterwards Mrs. Halliday, a friend of his last years, some of his letters to whom have already been quoted in a previous chapter.

At my stage of life it matters little to me whether I am right or wrong in any estimate I may form of *King Arthur*, or anything else I may have written. I feel so like a boy about to leave a preparatory school in which his themes and exercises can be of no value except so far as they influence his grade in the higher school destined to continue his education. But praise of the "exercise," snubbed and disparaged by the other little boys and the ushers, coming from one so intimately conversant with great masterpieces, cannot but exhilarate my spirits on looking round the familiar schoolroom which I must so soon leave behind me. 1870–1872. Æt. 67–69.

No, if I don't like talking about my books, I certainly shrink yet more from the thought of reading them to others. I am the loneliest person in the world as to composition. "Le Moineau Solitaire" sits on the housetops in order that no one may guess that he has a nest in the hollow of a tree. I agree with you in disliking exceedingly the illustrations. But after being out of print nearly twenty years, except in a wretched ill-printed, uncorrected, cheap edition by Routledge, an admiring publisher urged me to let him issue the present edition of the poem revised, and contracted for illustrations. Unluckily, it is a very large edition, but it is going off slowly. When gone, I shall probably, if alive, launch forth another unillustrated, and if so, you shall have the earliest copy.—Very gratefully & truly yrs.,

LYTTON.

Another letter to the same correspondent, undated, but written, I think, at the end of 1870, has an interesting reference to Byron :—

MY DEAR MRS. COSWAY—I shall be happy to dine with you on Thursday next. Schiller rocked

1870–1872. Æt. 67–69.

me to sleep last night on the boundless deep of the aesthetics.

I dare not for a moment think of myself in comparison with any of the great names which you so graciously place near me. But I have a general notion that every original genius stands within his own magic circle, that no one else ever drew a magic circle exactly like it, that one finds on trying to institute a rival comparison between circle A and circle B, that the magicians baffle one, and immediately begin shifting the tints and outlines of the rings that gird them, so that where one moment we detect a similitude in the next we are startled by a contrast, and thus all points needed for just comparison, disappear.

Byron is especially unique. I know no genius before or since his time that has taken the same ground and cultivated it in the same manner. That he is a passionate nature, as you observe, is strikingly true, and yet he fails where most passionate natures gifted with poetic invention succeed, viz. :—in the struggle between contending passions. This is why he is not a great dramatist. I think, however, that he has "intensity," but his intensity, like his passionateness, is concentrated in the utterance of himself. He is intensely and passionately personal, and his character "pierces" thro' his genius. We have nothing but tiny fragments left of Alcaeus, but I fancy that his nature must have had more resemblance to Byron's than that of any other poet. Both made poetry out of their own lives as men, and both seem to have had attributes of fate and character in common, amorous and combative and stormy, and always in hot water and trouble—exiled nobles ; passing both to the shades, leaving behind them a fame identified with the personal interests they created, and always, when we think of them, revealed to us in aspects of youth. One can't

fancy that either of them could have lived to be sober, elderly artists. Whenever I gaze on that beautiful portrait of Byron in a sailor's dress, standing by the seashore, I am reminded of the description of Alcæus mooring his bark on the wet sand and singing of love, whatever his hardships in shipwreck and war and exile. —Truly yrs.,

1870–1872. Æt. 67–69.

L.

The chief event of the year 1870 was the war which broke out in the summer between France and Germany. On September 2, Napoleon III. surrendered to the Germans, after the battle of Sedan, and the French Empire was at an end. The Revolution in Paris, which followed this event, and the horrors of the Commune in March and April 1871, provided the world with another striking example of the results of mob rule, animated by radical philosophy, on which Lord Lytton had so often passed judgment in connection with other Revolutions of the past, and which had been a special object of his satire in *The Coming Race*. His letters in 1871 contain frequent references to these events.

To his son he writes on January 29, 1871 :—

. . . Before this reaches you I suppose that you will know all about the Peace, &c., so I need not touch upon that. In a clever letter I have just received from one who is rather a good authority, knows France and her parties well, and sees much of the Orleanists, it is said that the Orleanists are in great fear that the Emperor will be restored, that his partisans are far

1870–1872. Æt. 67–69.

more numerous and influential than appears on the surface—1st, all the civil officers, Préfets, &c., promoted by him, identify with him for the most part their ambition. Many of them are young, energetic and with great local interest. They have nothing to gain from either a Republic or the Orleanists. They have the bond of party to the Emperor. 2ndly, The Députés and Senate are more or less for him. 3rdly, A large proportion of the peasants and the majority of the Priests. 4thly, The chief military officers are revolted by the insolence of Gambetta & Co. They feel humiliated by the idea of being governed by the Pékins and lawyers whom a Republic would throw up, and, whatever the military faults of the Emperor and the late Ministers, still they recognise in the Emperor the "army's friend," the man whose heart is most with them. So that if McMahon declares for the Emperor and can influence the bulk of the captive army, the other armies would not venture to oppose, and indeed be likely to join.

In that case, the Emperor, never having been legally deposed, would, on release, go up to Paris with his released armies, summon the old Chamber and Senate, and appeal to another Plébiscite with the aid of his Préfets to work it.

All this seems plausible eno', but it is impossible to predict anything in a state of affairs so anomalous and with a people so capricious. If, however, he goes back, I suspect it will be to resume his pristine personal domination. His partisans say, not unnaturally, "All went admirably till the Emperor put power into the hands of a Press which misled the people, and weakened the Executive by radical measures not fitted for France." Probably his restoration would be the best thing for England. A Republic would lead to much infectious evil here, and the Orleanists would be too weak to

resist any impulse of the French to avenge upon England the sufferings they have undergone from the Germans. 1870–187 Æt. 67–6

As to the union between France and Belgium, in electing the Belgian King over both, it would indeed be a standing menace against our shores with that vast seaboard facing us.

The Government here is terribly out of favour with all parties, and Gladstone distrusted and almost despised. Nevertheless, a few speeches of his when Parliament opens may bolster up his Cabinet for a time. Certainly not for long, if the growing ardour for military defence and European prestige should continue, in the face of those dampers—the taxes! . . .

To the same.

May 19, 1871.

. . . There is no doubt of the immense value of the German mind and literature and its massiveness compared with the French. But it would be too much to say that the French borrowed its really national and classical masterpieces from the German—rather the contrary, I should say that the German had borrowed somewhat from the French, especially the Berlin School of thought.

What can be more French or less indebted to German than Montaigne, Charron, Voltaire, Corneille, Molière, La Fontaine, Béranger? I don't think Rousseau and his followers (like Chas. Le Brun and G. Sand) are so purely and distinctively French as the others I have named, but they certainly are not indebted to German, and the Germans are certainly indebted to them. In our present disgust of French follies, we must not allow ourselves to follow out a natural impulse to depreciate them altogether. Their misfortune was their great Revolution, from which they have never recovered,

1870–1872. Æt. 67–69.

and never, I fear, can. That Revolution destroyed all the great foundations of calm and durable Government—all that stands between popular passion and a master. It could not destroy a nobility, but it destroyed aristocracy and made a *noblesse*, without dukes and property, a dangerous instead of a salutary class. It destroyed all the true bonds of religion, tho' it could not wholly suppress a Church, and it rendered a Republic and a Constitutional Monarchy alike impossible—at least for duration. In the cause of the Commune there is, of course, a something sound in a vague instinct of decentralisation, and establishing urban influences over rural, but it is mixed up with such absurdities and vices that no thinker can respect it. This is always the case where philosophy unites with the working class. The working class accept such notions of philosophy as they think suit their interest, and being inevitably unphilosophical themselves—make a hell-broth of the elixir—just as Mr. Mill and Mr. Bradlaugh would do if they were brought together in the ferment of revolution. Baser trash than Mill has been uttering lately on the land question, I can't conceive. . . .

To the same.

May 24, 1871.

. . . I agree with and admire most of what you say in your letter upon Morley, politics, &c. That Morley, Mill, and all that school are impracticable, is not their worst feature. Their doctrines, safe enough when addressed to you and me, are terribly dangerous when dropped among artisans. Not that such doctrines can be carried, so long as existing civilisation lasts, but that the struggle to carry them causes so much unsettlement, such fanatical excesses and such futile revolutionary spasms. The Parisians, Communists, etc., are an in-

stance of this, and in their general wrongdoing their nucleus of right vanishes into the background. 1870–187 ÆT. 67–6

Of course, there is much to be said in favour of their one strong point, that rural populations should not swamp urban electors, and that municipalities should be freed from central dictation. But these are reforms not to be fought at the cannon's mouth, and could easily have been attained by argument. But once let heated actors take up philosophical truths, and they so muddle and adulterate them, that truths become fallacies, and, of course, the bulk of these Parisian rioters lost sight of the nucleus, some wanted to depose God and get rid of all religion, some wanted their neighbours' shops, some wanted one thing or another which the good of society would no more allow than I hope in England it will ever allow Mr. Mill's wild projects against private property in land to do more than increase the number of fools and rogues in the cesspool of great towns.

I suppose with you that Henri V.[1] has the best chance now, but the whirligig of time in Paris is so rapid that a month hence he may have no chance at all. It will be a great thing for England and for all Monarchies if H. V. can be chosen and stand his ground. . . .

To Mrs. Cosway.

ARGYLL HALL, *Dec.* 27, 1871.

MY DEAR MRS. COSWAY—Many thanks for your friend's interesting letter, which I return. The French have so destroyed all durable elements of good Govt., that they must to the last remain a signal example of how well on the whole a clever people, geographically blest, can get on, however bad their Govt. may be.

[1] The Comte de Chambord, grandson of Charles X.

1870–1872. Æt. 67–69.

The old Romans are a proof of that truth, for I defy political philosophers to concoct a worse Govt. than they had from the time of Scipio Africanus to the final fall of their Empire.

I believe that, like the Romans, the only thing left for the French is autocracy in some shape or other. It is laughable to imagine either a Republic or a Constitutional Monarchy taking root in that shallow layer of hothouse dry leaves and fine loam and the refuse of the stables. I know a little of the Duc d'Aumale and the Count de Paris. The last is, to my mind, the beau-ideal of a popular Constitutional Monarch. His manners so simple and gracious, his life so orderly and domestic, his sympathies so manly, and his abilities being just what they ought to be for such a post, neither too great nor too small. The Duc d'Aumale is of another mould, but the position assigned to him is terribly critical. Even the House of Orleans cannot afford to furnish the world with another example of household treason, and it is idle to talk of anyone being President of a Republic in which there are no republicans, except prigs and fanatics. . . .

The events of the Siege of Paris and the War of the Commune, provided Lord Lytton with material for one of his last novels. During the years 1871 and 1872 he was engaged upon two books, one of which, *The Parisians*, though not completed, had begun to appear anonymously in *Blackwood's Magazine* during the author's lifetime; the other, *Kenelm Chillingly*, was finished but not published till after his death.

As the secret of the authorship of *The Parisians* was guarded as jealously as that of *The Coming Race*, no mention of it is made in any

of Lord Lytton's letters except those to his son. It is first referred to in one of these dated January 30, 1872—the same letter which tells of the successful sales of *The Coming Race* :— 1870–1872. Æt. 67–69.

"The author of the C.R.," he says "(pray always continue to guard his secret) has done more than 3 vols. of an odd sort of novel, which is, however, now at a standstill—he finds it so difficult to finish. Its present title is *The Parisians* and it ought to end with the Communist siege, *ignes suppositos cineri doloso*. I fear, however, that the author of the C.R. would be detected in this book, and yet there are good reasons for not publishing it in his own name. This is a matter to be considered when finished. I don't think it very interesting, because of its merits in another way, which consist in digressive dialogues on the local and political aspects of Paris."

To *Kenelm Chillingly* there are more references in his letters, but only as to the progress which he is making with it, and none bearing on the subject matter of the book. On September 9, 1872, he writes to Mrs. Halliday from Knebworth :—

I have finished two vols. of *Chillingly*, which are sent to Blackwood. I don't know how you will like it. The hero is very strange-humoured, I think original, and there are more poetic bits in it than in most of my later writings, but the end of it is difficult and not yet approached.

The third volume was begun a few days later, but was delayed during the whole of October

1870–1872. Æt. 67–69.

owing to illness. The remainder of the winter of 1872 at Torquay was devoted to its completion.

"I am grown enamoured of monotony," he writes, towards the end of 1872, "and am disinclined by a pebble to disturb the still current of daily life." In another letter he speaks of finishing *Chillingly* in the spring, but that spring never came. The sands had run out, and as if conscious that his time was limited, he worked steadily on at this book, and when in the following January his long and laborious life came to an end, it was finished and ready for publication.

CHAPTER V

WESTMINSTER ABBEY

1873

God has mercifully ordained it as the customary lot of nature, that in proportion as we decline into the grave, the sloping path is made smooth and easy to our feet; and every day as the films of clay are removed from our eyes, Death loses the false aspect of the spectre, and we fall at last into his arms as a wearied child upon the bosom of its mother.

Ernest Maltravers.

THE last months of the year 1872 were probably the happiest of Lord Lytton's life. His son and daughter-in-law were staying with him at Torquay in November and December, and this little family circle was united by every sentiment of sympathy and affection. Father and son enjoyed long and intimate talks on all the interests of their respective lives. Not for years had they spent so long a time together, and never before were all three more completely intimate and happy. Between Lord Lytton and his daughter-in-law there had always existed a certain amount of shyness, as they met but seldom, and generally in company with others, and Lord Lytton's deafness made him a difficult companion. During this visit all shyness was removed, and the sorrows which both had passed through so

1873. ÆT. 70.

1873. Æt. 70. recently introduced a tenderness and sympathy into their relationship which had never been there before. It was thus in a calm sunset glow that Lord Lytton's life passed to its close.

In the evenings he read aloud the last chapters of *Kenelm Chillingly*, on which he was then engaged ; and his son has thus recorded the effect upon his father of the revival in this book of his boyish romance at Ealing :—

> My Father read the manuscript of *Kenelm* to my wife and myself, and at particular parts of it he could not restrain his tears. Throughout the day (it was New Year's Eve—the eve of the year of his own death) on which he finished the chapter describing Kenelm's sufferings above the grave of "Lily," he was profoundly dejected, listless, broken ; and in his face there was the worn look of a man who has just passed through the last paroxysm of a passionate grief. We did not then know to what the incidents referred, and we wondered that the creations of his fancy should exercise such power over him. They were not the creations of fancy, but the memories of fifty years past.[1]

The visit came to an end on January 4, 1873, and when Robert Lytton and his wife left Torquay, Lord Lytton was apparently in sound health. On the day of their departure he wrote to his daughter-in-law :—

> My dearest Edith—I am so delighted to have seen so much of you this time, and feel so touched and grateful for all your affectionate kindness to me. I

[1] *The Life, Letters, and Literary Remains of Edward Bulwer, Lord Lytton*, vol. i. p. 287.

could not see anything here for a little New Year's gift to you and Robert and the children. I venture to ask you to buy something for yourself and the children with £30 of the enclosed cheque; the other £20 is to be invested in a gift for Robert such as he may like.—God bless you, my dear child. Ever yr. affte. father, 1873. Æt. 70.

L.

Again the next day he wrote :—

Certainly I hope that there will never be shyness again between either of us. I fancy I am the shyer of the two. Of course, I missed you very much—sulked, would not drive out, and have been reading the lives of St. Francis de Sales and Montalembert, as examples of patience under loss.

To Lady Sherborne he wrote more fully of these books on January 5 :—

I have read vol. I. of Oliphant's *Montalembert.* She has contrived to make him in all the earlier part a horrid little coxcombical prig. But I suppose vol. II. will bring him out better. He was certainly an effective orator and a very fine character, taken altogether. I saw him once when he must have been young—not at all the angelical countenance she insists on—a short, ill-shaped, rather common-looking man with a face too large for his body, not unlike Mendelssohn—aquiline nose (of course that is always handsome !), rather florid, rather full-cheeked, auburnish hair.

I also read last night in bed *The Life of St. Francis de Sales*—a much higher type of the R.C. hero than Montalembert, and, judging by short, terse aphorisms of his in the book, I should think a much higher intellect. But that R.C. faith, between you and me, does produce very fine specimens of adorned humanity

1873. Æt. 70. —at once so sweet and so heroical. I suspect the Brahminical faith does the same. Both agree on this—the desire to keep before them, and melt into, a diviner essence than the human. And, therefore, both are at once more human and more divine. We members of the Protestant Established Church are always bringing Heaven into our parlour, and trying to pare religion into common sense. Who can pack the infinite into the finite, or the ocean into a silver teaspoon?

To the same correspondent was written on Saturday, January 12 one of the last letters he ever wrote with his own hand :—

I can only write you a little line, dear Lady. I am in great pain—earache with violent noises in both ears, like blood to the head, and worn out for want of sleep. Altogether *beaucoup misérable.*

The poor Emperor's[1] death has affected me more than I could have supposed. He is associated with the gayest and most active, but at the same time with the most troubled and combative part of my career.—Ever yr. faithful friend,

LYTTON.

The great pain complained of in this letter continued all that day. In the evening, though still suffering much, he kept an engagement to dine with his friend Mrs. Halliday. The next day he described himself as feeling intensely tired, and remained lying down on the sofa. On Tuesday two doctors attended him, and succeeded by hot fomentations in giving him some relief. The pains on the right side of the face and neck,

[1] Napoleon III.

however, gradually increased. On Thursday he dictated some letters to his publishers, but by Friday both sight and hearing were almost gone and his mind had begun to wander. 1873. ÆT. 70.

Robert Lytton was summoned by telegram that day, and arrived between five and six in the evening. Lord Lytton had only had intervals of consciousness during the day, but when he heard that his son had been sent for, he said, "What nonsense. Why send a telegram? I am not so ill." When his son arrived he said, "Is it Robert?" and added, "There's no danger. When there has been so much pain I am told there is no danger." He asked for his letters and tried to read them, but complained that it was too dark. His son then read aloud to him some of the letters, and he dictated answers to them, which were, however, not coherent. During the night he had a series of epileptic fits and convulsions, between forty and fifty in all, with only a few minutes' interval between each. In the morning he became calm, but never again recovered consciousness. He gradually sank and died quite peacefully at 2 P.M. on Saturday, January 18, 1873.

The cause of death was inflammation of the membranes of the brain, resulting from the disease in the ear from which he had suffered for many years. The courage, the industry, and great mental activity, which were the characteristics of his life, remained with him till death, which came as a merciful release from labour and

1873. Æt. 70. suffering. He did not express any consciousness of his approaching end, but for some time past he had contemplated it with perfect equanimity. His last letters, as well as published works, express repeatedly his firm conviction that death was but the gate of life. On a stray sheet among his papers I have found the following words, which must have been written towards the very end of his life :—

The act of dying reminds me of the traveller who has long been absent from his father's home and is recalled to it perhaps more suddenly than he anticipated or wished for. He leaves uncompleted designs and enterprises on which he had engaged his love of adventure, or his hopes of power or fortune. He calls to mind commissions of grave import which his father had entrusted to him, and which he has not fulfilled. His cheek pales as he reflects on many a folly, many a fault, against which he had been warned in vain. He cannot go back to his father and say :—"Thy son has been always heedful of thy lessons and worthy of thy love."

Fain would he linger on the road.

What greeting shall he receive at the bourne ?

Whom of those dear to his memory, but of whom he has long lost sight, shall he find reunited to welcome him at the threshold ?

Still, as nearer and nearer he comes to the sacred precincts, farther and farther fade away his regrets for the things left behind uncompleted. Softer and softer sinks into his soul the tender remembrance that none ever so loved as the father whom he has so often forgotten. It is to a father's judgment that he is to render the account of his wanderings—it is to a father's home that he returns.

From most of the chief men in literature and politics Robert Lytton received letters of sympathy with himself, and of admiration for his distinguished father. Many of them, like Disraeli, Gladstone, John Morley, John Forster, etc., were also personal friends of himself or his father, and wrote, therefore, with genuine feeling. All these letters are of great interest to Lord Lytton's descendants, but they contain little that make them of interest to the public. One letter, however, I think it worth while to quote because of the simple and generous tribute which it contains from a great man who might with justice have felt that he had been insufficiently appreciated:— 1873. Æt. 70.

19 Warwick Crescent,
Upper Westbourne Terrace, W.,
Jan. 21, 1873.

My dear Lytton—It is very sad that I should only have to write to you on such occasions as the present. I feel profoundly the loss of a great and gracious man who, besides what he was to all the world, was ever kind to myself when I had the good fortune to be in his presence.

I don't know whether I ever told you that he was the very first who ever said an encouraging word to me in print—using the expression that "my genius might be safely trusted" to do this or the other thing one day. I never forgot it, amid many more things that call for astonishment and admiration in his career, and I should have brought myself to say thus much, however inadequate, to anybody who cared to hear it. How then can I help telling *you* that my sympathy is complete, while regrets of my own are abundant and, I believe, enduring? I rejoice that you have the best

1873. consolation in yourself and about you. May either
ÆT. 70. have its full effect.—Ever affectionately yours,

ROBERT BROWNING.

Lord Lytton had expressed a wish to be buried very quietly in the grounds of the family mausoleum at Knebworth, but when the honour of a public funeral in Westminster Abbey was offered, his son could not refuse such a national recognition of the great place which his father had occupied in the public life of his generation.

He is buried in the Chapel of St. Edmunds, next to the grave of Humphrey Bourchier, whose death at the Battle of Barnet had been mentioned in *The Last of the Barons*, among warriors and royal personages of a much earlier date, but close to The Poets' Corner, where lie many of his fellow-workers in literature. The stone above his grave bears this inscription :—

EDWARD GEORGE EARLE LYTTON BULWER LYTTON.
Born 25 May 1803. Died 18 January, 1873.

1831–1841. Member of Parliament for St. Ives and for Lincoln.
1838. Baronet of the United Kingdom.
1852–1866. Knight of the Shire for the County of Hertford.
1858. One of Her Majesty's principal Secretaries of State. Knight Grand Cross of St. Michael & St. George.
1866. Baron Lytton of Knebworth.

Laborious and distinguished in the field of intellectual activity,
Indefatigable and ardent in the cultivation and love of letters,
His genius as an author was displayed in the most varied forms,
Which have connected indissolubly
With every department of the literature of his time
The name of Edward Bulwer Lytton.

The funeral service took place on Saturday, January 25, 1873. On Sunday, February 2,

a funeral sermon was preached in the Abbey by Professor Jowett. His words were simple and sincere. After describing his first and only meeting with Lord Lytton three weeks before at Torquay, he said :— 1873. Æt. 70.

He left upon me an impression of genuine kindness, of endless activity of mind, of great knowledge, and of a noble interest in literature and literary men. You felt that he was a true man, who had nothing to conceal, who was willing and able fearlessly to impart himself to others. His voice is silent now—never more to be heard by his family or friends. But in his writings he still speaks to us. We read them over again and refresh the memories of our youth, with mournful interest, now that the author of them is taken from us. We are astonished at their number, their variety, and their excellence. In all three respects, taken together, they are hardly to be paralleled, except by one other writer in the English language. . . .

We may think of him now, after his long life of toil, as laying his head on a pillow and taking his rest ; and to us, who have not the gift of his genius, he has left a splendid example of what may be effected by continuous purpose in the course of many years. . . .

The omissions and shortcomings of his life he would have been himself the first to confess and to lament. "That which I have done may He, within Himself, make pure." And so, with deep and affectionate remembrances, as we believe he would have wished, and not with formal panegyric, we bid farewell to one of England's greatest writers, and one of the most distinguished men of our time—and leave him to rest, where his hope was, in the mercy of God.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND RETROSPECT

> Calmly to time I leave these images
> Of things experienced, suffer'd, felt, and seen ;
> Fruits shed or tempest-torn from changeful trees,
> Shells murmuring back the tides in distant seas—
> Signs where a Soul has been.
>
> *Poems.*

In the foregoing pages I have endeavoured to trace the development of Lord Lytton's character through a long life of incessant labour and mental activity. The story which this book contains, if read in conjunction with his own published works, should enable the public to form a final and correct judgment of the manner of man he was. It only remains for me now to close my narrative with a few words of general summary.

Lord Lytton undoubtedly ranks among the leading men of his generation, remarkable rather for the universality of his genius than for his supremacy in any one particular sphere. He was not supreme either in politics or literature, yet in one respect he was unique. No other man of his generation reached so high a level of attainment in all the varied departments of his

activities. Distinguished as a novelist, as a dramatist, and as an orator, he was also essentially a man of the world. In business capacity,[1] in judgment, in imagination, in brain power, in industry, he was equally remarkable—in the last quality almost unrivalled. When the number and variety of his works are considered, one is struck with amazement at the amount of intellectual labour which he crowded into the seventy years of his life.

An old woman, who had once been one of Lord Lytton's trusted domestic servants, is still living in a cottage at Knebworth. One day she was talking to me about my grandfather, and inadvertently used an expression which quaintly summed him up more perfectly than any elaborate description could have done. She was describing his house at Copped Hall, where she had been employed as caretaker, and added, "In one of his attacks of fluency I nursed him there for many weeks." "Pleurisy," I believe, was what she meant, but "an attack of fluency" was a delicious expression, and often while writing this book it has occurred to me how frequently my grandfather must have been subjected to such attacks. Fluent he certainly was, and whether in private correspondence, in official minutes, in verse, in prose, or in public speaking, words seem to have

[1] Mrs. Schuster, in a long letter to my father written from Torquay in March, 1873, gives an account of her acquaintance with the first Lord Lytton. In the course of this letter, she says, "My husband, who was a great financier, used to say he would rather talk on financial subjects with Lord Lytton than with most of the financial men in London."

flowed from him with an ease and abundance that is truly astonishing.

In his *Letters to John Bull*, Lord Lytton described himself as a Labourer and a Landowner. He might have claimed that his life as a whole was that of a Labourer and an Artist, but he was not equally successful in each capacity. As a labourer he was magnificent. No man ever worked harder for so many years, or employed more fully the talents which he possessed. As an artist he had great merits, but also great faults. Most men, however talented, are apt to fail in something, and Lord Lytton's chief shortcoming was in matters of taste. This defect was conspicuous in his writings; it vitiated his style and led him into that "premeditated fine writing" which infuriated Thackeray. It was apparent in the decoration of the houses which he occupied—in his "Pompeian room" at Craven Cottage, and the ornate Gothic "embellishments" of his Hertfordshire home. It is also traceable at times in his dealings with his wife, and it may be seen here and there in his correspondence. The faults in taste which we condemn to-day were largely characteristic of the age in which he lived. He was an artist in a bad period; but the blemish was also inherent in the man, and to a certain extent it affected all his work, so that while his other qualities compel admiration, his lack of taste diminishes affection. Mr. S. C. Hall says of him with some truth :—

He was a man more to be admired than loved;

the sentiments he excited were not those of love ; if he aimed at popularity it was not by winning his way through the heart. Many men, vastly his inferiors in intellectual and personal gifts, and in other advantages that are great in the race for fame and fortune, left him far behind.[1]

It must not be supposed, however, that Lord Lytton was incapable of inspiring affection, for there were many who loved him dearly. Many of the letters from John Forster quoted in this book are striking tributes of affection from that prince of friends. Another of his contemporaries, and his greatest rival in literature, Charles Dickens, used these words when proposing his health at the farewell banquet to Macready, in 1851 :—

In the path we have both trod I have uniformly found him from the first, the most generous of men, quick to encourage, slow to disparage, ever anxious to assist the order of which he is so bright an ornament, and never condescending to shuffle off and leave it outside State rooms, as a Mussulman might leave his slippers outside a mosque.

Among his papers I have found a large number of letters from less distinguished men, which speak in terms of the warmest affection and gratitude of the assistance and encouragement which they have received at his hands. Lastly, in his own son he inspired a veneration and love which amounted to a positive

[1] *Recollections of a Long Life.*

worship. Writing to a friend after his father's death, Robert Lytton said of him :—

> He was more to me than a father to a son. The strongest, wisest, truest friend, and we were bound together by many peculiarities—ties woven out of very bitter circumstances, in which affection had yet learnt much sweet and tender consolation. I have been accustomed to lean so implicitly on him for guidance and support in all the difficulties and responsibilities of life, that my forty years of personal experience have virtually indeed been forty years of childhood—and this is the first great trouble of my life which finds me without my "ever present help in trouble."

All these tributes prove that though Lord Lytton was not one of those authors who are generally beloved, he was, at least, the truest of friends to the few who were privileged to know him intimately.

Lord Lytton's chief merit as an artist lay in the fertility and power of his imagination, his weakness in the observation and delineation of human character. In an essay on "The Normal Clairvoyance of the Imagination," he points out how a writer may "see through other organs than the eyes ; describe with an accuracy that astounds a native the lands which he has never beheld ; and read the most secret thoughts in the hearts of men who lived a thousand years ago." In the same essay he says of himself :—

> I am not sure, indeed, that I could not describe the things I imagine more exactly than the things I

habitually see. I am not sure that I could not give a more truthful picture of the Nile, which I have never beheld except in my dreams, than I could of the little lake at the bottom of my own park, on the banks of which I loitered out my schoolboy holidays, and (could I hallow their turf as Christian burial-ground) would desire to choose my grave.

The truth of this observation is evident throughout his work. It was in the clairvoyance of his imagination that he excelled ; in personal observation and accurate description he failed. In his purely fanciful compositions like *Zanoni*, *The Coming Race*, and some of his shorter tales, his imagination attained its highest expression. As a master of plot he was supreme ; and in his historical novels his history is sounder, his political insight deeper, than those of most authors who have attempted this department of fiction. In all his work he is remarkable for the rich stores of information which he acquired on an infinite variety of subjects, the vast range of his general reading, and the suggestiveness with which his mind plays over so many and such diverse fields of thought and knowledge.

Thus, wherever Lord Lytton relied for his strength upon a brilliant imagination and conscientious study, his work is that of a great master. His weakness is more apparent, apart from the defects of taste and style already mentioned, in those books which depend rather upon the truthful presentation of contemporary life. His best character-drawing is to be found

in his later novels, more especially in *The Caxtons* and *My Novel*; and the study and presentation of *intellectual* character was a special feature of his work. Even here, however, the art belongs rather to the department of imagination than of observation.

Sympathy with mankind was not the mainspring of his literary genius, and consequently it was not in the subtle analysis of human character and motives that he excelled. When he comes to deal with contemporary life, the descriptions of politics and society in which his actors play their parts, as well as the personalities of the actors themselves, are for the most part ineffective and unreal. His heroines are stage heroines rather than critical studies of human nature; they seem to be based more often on an ideal conception of womanhood, which he fashioned out of his boyish romance, than on any profound study of living women. His heroes, too, are stage heroes, the same type often recurring under different names, with such variations only as the differing circumstances require. None of them are, strictly speaking, autobiographical studies, yet they all contain some characteristics of the author. On this point he makes Ernest Maltravers say: "I wish I *could* draw myself. What author ever could mimic his own features? We are too various and too complex to have a likeness in any one of our creations." The fact is that though Lord Lytton never portrayed himself, for

few of his characters are real portraits of any human being, his typical hero was to a large extent the embodiment, in imagination, of many of his own sentiments and moods.

I have ventured to make these criticisms, and they are made as personal impressions, which my readers may or may not agree with, because the romantic vein, so much in vogue in the early nineteenth century, and generally unsympathetic to the present generation, explains much in the circumstances of Lord Lytton's own life. Most of his troubles and sorrows arose from the fatal tendency to exaggerate incidents that were comparatively small. Having filled many books with the imaginary tragedies of other people's lives, it was not to be wondered at that he should have shown too great a readiness to make real tragedy out of the circumstances of his own. It has been seen how the pride that took offence at a mere expression, the over-insistence upon points of "honour," and the indulgence in long verbal explanations and recriminations, led to a temporary estrangement from his mother, occasional misunderstandings with his son, and a life-long feud with his wife. It is impossible to read the story of his life without feeling that much, if not all, of the bitterness which it contains might have been prevented by a determination to avoid heroics and to maintain a true sense of proportion between the various incidents which go to make up a situation. People have more control over their own destinies than is generally

admitted. Those who are on the look-out for tragedy will find easily enough material at hand out of which to make it, whilst those who make up their minds at all costs to avoid it will generally succeed in doing so. Unfortunately, Lord Lytton belonged to the former class, and bitter was the price which he had to pay in consequence.

His faults in style laid Lord Lytton open to the censure of literary critics, and his desire to escape their criticisms, which he always believed were based upon personal hostility to himself, induced him to publish many of his works anonymously. It is an interesting fact, however, that while he has never found favour with the critical few, he has never lost his popularity with the general reading public. One may say of him, as he said himself of Ernest Maltravers: "In return for individual enemies, what a noble recompense to have made the Public itself your friend, perhaps even Posterity your familiar!" From the day when *Pelham* first sprang into favour to the end of his life every successive publication passed through a great many editions. His first novel, *Falkland*, and his first play, *The Duchess de la Vallière*, were failures, so also was *The Siamese Twins*; but with these exceptions every one of his works was successful with the public, and from first to last enormous sums were paid for his copyrights. Of his last work, *Kenelm Chillingly*, 3150 copies were sold on the day of its publication. This

remarkable success was reached in every department which he touched. His novels are known all over the world, and have been translated into many languages. His plays held the stage throughout his lifetime, and some of them have been revived with success in the present generation. Though his reputation as a poet is not great, yet the political portraits in *The New Timon* are still remembered and quoted ; and Colburn, its publisher, told the author that this poem had had a larger sale than any poem since Byron. His pamphlet on *The Crisis* reached a phenomenal and unprecedented sale, and had the reputation of deciding an election. In politics he held high office as Secretary of State, and some of his speeches take rank among the highest specimens of Parliamentary oratory.

Of Lord Lytton's reputation as an orator it is now only possible to judge from the statements of contemporaries and from reading his printed speeches. The excellence of the latter is certainly of a very high order. Their arguments are well arranged, their reasoning is broadly sensible rather than subtle, and their language is always extremely forcible. That they made a great impression upon the audiences to which they were delivered is undoubted. Justin MacCarthy, who was by no means partial to his merits, makes the following admission in his preface to William White's book, from which I have already quoted :—

You might try to analyse away as long as you chose

the reality and the merit of Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton's success as a speaker, but you could not reason away the fact that he was for the time a great success, and that he crowded and held the House of Commons in a manner never surpassed by any parliamentary orator within my recollection.

When all these facts are remembered, it is impossible to deny that Lord Lytton was one of the giants of his day. We may criticise him freely, but no criticism can deprive him of the commanding position which he occupied. The most remarkable fact, indeed, about his public life was its success. His private life was in striking contrast. This book contains little record of real happiness. Ill-health and great loneliness are prominent features in it. Though Lord Lytton had a few friends of high intellectual ability, he associated chiefly with persons intellectually his inferiors. While his remarkable talents and wide reading made him a most interesting acquaintance, his deafness, his sensitiveness, and his irritability made him a difficult companion to live with. In early life his excessive literary occupations left him little time for social recreation. His tastes were naturally domestic, and if he had chosen for his wife a woman of a more conventional and phlegmatic temperament, who would have provided him with a tranquil home, his character might have developed on wholly different lines. Though subjected to the flattery of amorous admirers and to the temptations common to all

young men who achieve success in any public capacity, he remained indifferent to them. With the break-up of his domestic happiness everything became changed. He was then forced to seek outside his home the consolations of love which could not be obtained within, but such consolations were not without their bitter fruit. Married to a woman he had ceased to love, and by whom he was pursued with vindictive hate, debarred from ever obtaining a release from this bondage and marrying again where his heart was bestowed, he could never know the peace and happiness of a home life, nor the love of woman unaccompanied by sin and scandal. In a sketch of his own character, written at the age of forty-three, there is a passage which expresses the pathos of such a situation.

"That which I desire," he says, "is affection, and this it is which captivates me. I cannot exist without the interchange of affection, and I can find affection nowhere so strong and so pure as in the heart of a woman. Therefore a woman's love has been necessary to my existence, and I have paid for it the usual penalty, in error and in scandal. This *besoin d'aimer* has involved me in the most serious errors of my life, embarrassed me in complicating all my duties, and often placed me unhappily at war with the world. I grant this ; yet had I, when I could no longer love and esteem my wife, somewhere about the age of 26,[1] shut my

[1] It was in 1833 that Lord Lytton first became seriously estranged from his wife. He was then thirty years old, but he was always mistaken as to his own age—*vide* the Autobiography.

heart to the want it craved for, sure am I that though in the eyes of the world I should have been a more respectable man, I should have become a much more unamiable one. It has been the interchange of affection with some loving and loyal nature that has kept me from becoming a cold and ambitious egotist, and in reality reconciled me with the world with which, in seeming, it often placed me at war."

Side by side with this private confession may be placed a passage in *The New Timon*, which expresses rather more crudely the average man's view of actions which he commits, yet knows to be indefensible :—

> I tell of guilt—and guilt all men must own,
> Who but avow the loves their youth has known.
> Preach as we will, in this wrong world of ours,
> Man's fate and woman's are contending powers ;
> Each strives to dupe the other in the game,—
> Guilt to the victor—to the vanquished shame !
> Nay, I approve not of the code I find,
> Not less the wrong to which the world is kind.

This is a common but mischievous attitude, and so long as men continue to describe and accept as "found" a code of morals which in reality they establish though they cannot defend, so long will such a code be preserved and condoned as "the way of the world."

My task is now finished, and the picture which I have drawn I leave to others to examine and criticise. Though the personality which stands revealed in Lord Lytton's private correspondence is not essentially different from that which may be deduced from his published

writings, it is at least more genuine and more human. Of his errors he was quite conscious himself, and for most of them he paid the price. I have not attempted to conceal them, because from the errors of great men one can usually learn more even than from their virtues. Looking backward through his life from its close, one must acknowledge the accuracy with which it was foreseen and summarised by Mimy, the gipsy girl who interpreted the lines in his hand when he was yet but twenty-one. "You are a prosperous gentleman. You will be much before the world. There is plenty of good fortune and success in store for you. You'll hunger for love all your life, and you will have much of it; but less satisfaction than sorrow."

His life, if not a happy one to himself, was full and useful, and has given happiness to thousands of others. He had many noble qualities which were faithfully employed in the service of mankind. Having studied for two years, with the sympathy of a relation, but also with the impartiality of a stranger, the record of his achievements, my final impression is one of admiration and gratitude for the splendid inheritance which he has bequeathed to those who come after him.

APPENDIX I

LETTERS TO LORD JOHN RUSSELL

1846. ÆT. 43

LETTER I

"DEAR LORD JOHN RUSSELL—In the midst of circumstances not encouraging to ordinary Politicians, yet not unanalogous to those in which great men have laid the foundations of solid power, you have assumed the reins of Government. Hitherto, in our time, each new Administration has been the result of fierce contest between strongly marked and long hereditary parties, ending in the passionate triumph which the Aristocracy have forced upon the popular faction, or the popular faction carried over the Aristocracy amidst the fears of Property and the formidable irritation of the Church. Your Government proceeds not from the victory of your own party but from the dissolution of that which has opposed it. Hostile elements have crumbled away. Like Ivanhoe you do not win the victory by force of arms. Your adversary, suffocated in his helmet, yields without a blow.

"It is not my intention to review the causes which have led to this peaceful surrender of the *maxima opima* of office. I shall pass no judgment upon the startling inconsistencies which achieved the boldest experiment

yet made upon the complicated interests of a mixed community, and broke up the powerful party which the principle of resistance to that experiment (in forms however modified and cautious) had animated with passion and disciplined into unity. Those inconsistencies justified the resentment of men who saw in them perfidy to obligations and contempt of pledges, while unquestionably the same inconsistencies are elevated from errors into virtues in the eyes of such as can regard them as the manly, if protracted, recognition of truth and the sacrifice of rooted prejudices, of party considerations, of vulgar ambition, nay, even of some portion of what Englishmen value most, the reputation of good faith and steadfast honour, to solemn convictions of the welfare of our common country.

"I do not address to you, my Lord, this letter with the views of a partizan. As slightly as possible would I refer to an angry and stormy past. My desire is to escape from its strife to that serener future which the breaking of the cloud opens to our survey. Standing aloof from all recent discussions on the Corn Laws, I have not been subjected to the influences which heat opinion into the passion of the adversary, or the zeal of the convert. I believe still, as I have believed ever, that on both sides of the question there is great exaggeration; that the benefit will be less to commerce, the evil less to agriculture, than stated by the eloquence of leaguers, or proved by the calculations of Protectionists. The effect upon the capital invested in land and upon the condition of that part of the population whose existence rests upon the prosperity of the farmer, must depend upon the rapidity or the slowness with which foreign land can be brought into sufficient cultivation to influence materially the prices of the Home market. For this cultivation capital is requisite, and seeing that even in England our greatest difficulty

is to obtain an adequate investment of capital in land, that what our farmers want most is not skill but money, that what our landlords are without is not the desire for improvement but the funds to bestow on it, I do not think that capital can be so promptly and so largely applied to the corn fields of our poor and distant neighbours as to force an abundance prematurely. According to the ordinary progress of nations, while land abroad is gradually redeemed from the waste, and its produce brought easily to the sea-port, our own population will increase, new products will be won from our soil, labour at home will adapt itself to the demand, labour and price abroad will rise with employment and improvement—and if a crisis of suffering and panic come, it will be brief and merciful. I have rather the hope that our free havens will form depots for the supply of corn to other nations, that the American and Polish harvests, transported indeed to our shores, will be destined to feed the increasing populations of our allies and neighbours, and that while we exchange our manufactures for corn, we shall exchange again that corn for the bullion which will improve our own factories and mature our own soil.

"Still, I regard the experiment as one of vast hazard —one of which no experience justifies us in predicting the result, one which may bring social alterations little thought of amidst the clamour for that mere commercial aphorism—'Buy in the cheapest market, sell in the dearest;' one which, in spite of the contempt with which the assertion has been met, depends for safety and success upon the peace in Europe which no human wisdom may suffice to preserve, and the fortune of our fleets which no human valour can guarantee.

"I allude to the debates which occupied and the transactions which closed the parliamentary proceedings of 1846, simply to show how natural is that neutrality

with which by the great body of the Public an administration so formed is as yet regarded. If the minds of some men have been greatly exasperated, it is not against the new Government but the old. Those whom you have displaced have no just resentment in your success. They fell not from the vigour of your opposition, but amidst your support; you and your friends swelled the majority which carried their own measures. The measures carried, their power expired of itself. Your administration, therefore, provokes no bitterness in the supporters of the late Government, while it fulfils but the end for which the real opposition represented in the Lower House by Lord George Bentinck mainly strove. On the other hand, it has been no special triumph to that vigorous band of free traders to whom the credit of the recent changes has been so popularly conceded. Their triumph was achieved in the conversion of Sir Robert Peel, and their tone is less that of congratulation to his successor than of condolence with his fall. Hence no administration was ever commenced with less angry invectives or less noisy rejoicings.

"Most administrations enter office with a programme of the proceedings which are to characterise their policy and record its benefits. It is not your fault that this programme is less stirring and animated than that of your predecessors. It is not your fault if reforms with which you have identified an illustrious career are now effected, and you have reduced the number of abuses which you can promise to remove.

"The utmost verge to which the spirit of progress will bear you, supported by Property ever cautious, and Intelligence never rash, you have well-nigh reached —so far, at least, as that progress is directed to objects purely political, ameliorations purely constitutional.

"Rightly, to my judgment, therefore, have you turned

your attention to those evils which lie below the surface of party. The ground is clear of weeds, but the richness of the harvest will depend on upturning the subsoil. Wisely have you seized the occasion, whilst party voices are mute, to address yourself to the wants of a nation. Nobly, if you fulfill the mission you announce, will you have crowned a life which, more than any other man's life since the Restoration, has so connected itself with truths vindicated and things done—that your biography is the history of great events. Nor will your latest be your least achievement, if you warm into action those words so dead and cold on the lips of sciolists, and in the pages of dreamers—SOCIAL REFORM.

"Social Reform! Your lordship could not be disappointed if the phrase created a languid expectation. It is a sound to carry delight to the heart of some earnest philanthropist, or to set in movement the restless brain of some speculator in moral problems. But the mass of the public says 'Good,' and settles back to the business of life. You, with your large experience of mankind, were doubtless prepared for this apathy. You knew that interest in Ministerial announcements is proportioned, not to the gravity of the undertakings proposed, but to their connection with the questions which most angrily divided our opinions, or recently animated our passions.

"The working classes in our towns have been hitherto aroused only by reforms connected with constitutional change. They have been so impressed by their favourite orators with the belief that you must change a constitution in order to effect a reform, that they have neglected even to think about reforms which the present machinery suffices to effect. They have been told so often that the storm clears the air, that they look upon storms as the only purifiers of the atmosphere.

"The middle class, into which it has been the object

of all recent legislation to throw the preponderating power, and for which, indeed, we have of late years almost exclusively legislated (rendering, it is true, benefits to other orders, but only indirectly, and as the contingent results of liberal concessions to the one essentially favoured)—the middle class, I say, engaged as it is in money-making, and not seeing exactly how social reforms are to influence the money markets, or enlarge its sphere of pecuniary speculation, limits its expectations to some scheme for the regulation of railroads.

"The more privileged orders—in whom the spirit of party is, rigidly speaking, the strongest, foresee in legislation for purely moral ameliorations no opening for the appeal to prejudice and the stimulus to passion which are the immemorial resources of party chiefs.

"But below the surface-public, is ever that important and thoughtful essence of the life of nations—the tranquil people. Too much do we confound the public with the people. As well confound the cuticle with the heart, or the wave with the ocean."

The end of this letter and the beginning of the next are missing, but the following fragment gives a sufficient indication of the argument which he was developing :—

Letter II

(*Fragment*)

"Heaven forbid that I should undervalue the blessings of a free Government or underrate the benefits of commerce, yet day by day we grow more convinced that these suffice not for themselves. They hallow the ground, they build the temple, they do not ensure the

purity of the worship nor the presence of the Gods. But when you enlighten the liberty you have effected, when you ennoble that desire of gain which impels your commerce, you do more than improve institutions, you elevate a race. Give universal suffrage, and if ignorance is prevalent, what profit in the votes of a million fools? Open all harbours to your trade, and what profits to your operatives, if their limbs are stunted and their frames rotted under the fierce exactions made upon their toil? Exalt the standard of opinion, elevate the condition of the masses, and liberty becomes the privilege of thoughtful minds, commerce the natural leveller of social inequalities."

The letter evidently went on to deal with the problems of national education, for it concludes as follows :—

"To the people two kinds of education are necessary —1st, the intellectual; 2nd, the industrial. It would be well if, in the last, one establishment in every district could, though not wholly maintained by the Government, receive its encouragement and support. Such establishments would vary in the details of instruction, according to the habits of the surrounding population. In provinces purely agricultural, the best modes of agriculture would be taught; in provinces bordering on manufacturing towns, the instruction would assume a higher class, and comprehend mechanical philosophy and the arts of design.

"In the metropolis itself (too much neglected) such schools would inculcate various branches of industrial knowledge to the unfortunate children of both sexes who now are literally sent to the house of correction, or transported to penal settlements, 'to keep them out of harm's way.' It is but the other day that I read

in the newspapers an account of three young girls charged with some petty theft for which one, as the oldest offender, was sentenced to transportation for seven years; the other two were let off with three months' imprisonment. The one transported drops her most grateful courtesy; she thanks the Court for sending her from this country where she can come to no good; she declares that it was from the hope of that sentence that she committed, and induced her accomplices to commit, the offence. The other two hear the mild sentence of three months' imprisonment with dismay; they burst into tears; they implore the Court to send them abroad; they say in the same words as the envied convict, 'We can come to no good; we are poor creatures, without father or mother; we can't get our bread honestly; transport us.' Moved by this prayer the Court positively assents, and those poor young Englishwomen, whose very petition shows their hatred of vice, are sent out from our community. My Lord, if we had such establishments as I describe, do you not think it would have been better to have sent them to school, to have taught them how to get their bread in their own land, and to have taught their children after them to thank heaven that they had been born under a Government which aided the homeless and the orphan in the struggle not to sin? Such a Government you have the power to make your own."

Letter III

"Dear Lord John—Permit me now the natural corollary from the propositions in my last.

"I enter upon a field hitherto generally neglected by statesmen, lying remote from party discussion, and not at the first glance comprehended in the chart of popular reform.

"Yet this is the true nursery-ground from which all that can fertilise the mind, and enrich the industry of thought, is gathered and transplanted.

"You do not complete by a sound scheme the moral and intellectual culture of the nation if you neglect the parent-ground of all cultivation. Consummate the survey of popular schools by considering the arch-normal school of all—the literature, the art, the science, which furnish the materials of all education, which constitute the province and provide the nourishment of moral and intellectual growth. These are the domain of the mind. Instruction is but the implement that tills it.

"Is it not a trick and a delusion to the young student to coax and decoy him on to that point in which he may become a useful craftsman, an intelligent drudge, but to hold before him, as a terrible example of punishment for excess, the rewards you will bestow on him if his zeal kindle him to genius, if his toils swell to the originality of knowledge? Maintain your present modes of rewarding literature, and you do not act fairly to the multitude if you do not proclaim that, if one of the pupils you summon to your schools should so far excel the rest as to be in his turn the diffuser of instruction and delight, you have for him no employment in your State, no prize amongst its honours; and that when life, health, industry, and talent are fairly worn out, and the fragments of them left, all you can offer him is the chance of an annuity which you would apologise for offering to your valet!

"You count upon awaking a moral ambition for intellectual eminence amongst the people—you need their co-operation. Are these to be gained while you hold up the beggary of literature to public pity and disdainful wonder? No, my Lord; if you invite your acute and practical countrymen to share in the banquet

of letters, you must give some honour to those who find the feast.

"Nor do I believe that a much more popular act even with the populace could be conceived than one which should deal with the peaceful civilisers of the nation in a spirit more worthy of their merits and our obligations. For the literary man, beset with rivals in his own sphere, persecuted as he often is by the opinions he disturbs, calumniated by the jealousies he provokes, is always popular with the masses. Like themselves, he is a workman. There is a secret but an imperishable bond between the writer and the people. Not the silkworm lives more for the weaver than the author for mankind. If in his own character he be the most selfish of egotists, in his character of writer he exists but for others. There is no people where there are no writers. I submit to you, therefore, my Lord, some extension of the Fund set apart for art, literature, and science. It is not for me to presume to suggest the sum requisite for such a purpose, though I think a sum not larger than that devoted by the State to a single one of its principal officers will suffice. I would only venture to suggest a wider range between the maximum and the minimum of the existing limit. You cannot at present give more than £300 a year to your greatest poet, or your ablest philosopher. You do not give to the last, and he is not necessarily the least upon the list, a smaller pittance than £50. Would it be too much to hope that the maximum might reach £500 a year, and the minimum not dwindle below £100?

"Yet I cannot consider that this pension list, whatever its amount, does of itself suffice for the object in view, viz. :—the exaltation of intellectual advantages in the eyes of those whom you summon to cultivate them. Observe that here, and indeed throughout, I argue less

on behalf of literary men themselves than of the people, whom you would allure to partake of the benefits conferred by them. Literature may exist in its highest forms, though a Government give no honour to the work, and though the nation starve the professor. *Don Quixote* is not the less genially produced, though Cervantes composes it as a prisoner, and goes to his grave a pauper. But it is wholly another question if you desire to make literature universal. In that case, the multitude are attracted by the honour it receives. No State can busy itself in exciting genius to masterpieces—all that it should do is to excite the people to mental exertions, and prove to them that whatever is excellent interests the State, and has a claim to its distinctions and rewards.

"I do not advance the absurd doctrine that because a man is a writer he is therefore fit for public employment. I only complain that it often happens that because he is a writer all public employment is shut out from him. I know a melancholy instance, not a rare one, of a man who had not only pleased the public, but who had materially served the Government by his compositions. A periodical in which he was engaged changed its politics; with that change (for he changed not) he lost the sole certain source of his existence.[1] I loved this man, and respected him. I knew from his inalienable probity, his intense application, his great adaptability of resources, his ready promptitude, and his docile understanding, that he could become an invaluable public servant. My Lord, I wearied such friends as I possessed in the Government of that day on his behalf. They acknowledged his services, they recognised his talents; even for my sake, I believe, they were willing to assist him. But their answer was, 'What is in our gift for a literary man? Had he been

[1] Laman Blanchard. See Vol. II. p. 135.

a lawyer, had he been a clergyman, had he been a soldier or sailor, something might be found. For a writer we have nothing.' And nothing my poor client obtained.

"What are the results of education, carried to the highest? Art, literature, science. These are the triple flowers of the divine plant, and these flowers in return give the seed from which the plant is eternally renewed. Do not deceive yourself with the belief that you can make intellectual culture the noble necessity of the community, unless you can show to the community that you are prepared to honour the highest results to which culture can arrive. Is it so now? Look to the encouragement which the State gives to art, literature, and science. To art, beyond the mere grant to a society wholly irresponsible, it affords no encouragement at all. You have a National Gallery for the dead—a fitting institution to which I give all the homage that is due. But you have no gallery for the living. Of late (and this is an era) you have afforded some stimulus to one branch in art, that of fresco-painting. But this, you are already aware, is extremely partial in its effects. You do not find, I apprehend, the highest of your artists amongst the competitors, partly because it hardly suits their dignity to submit their works to a tribunal, the judgment of which is not precisely as sound as that of the Medici; partly because fresco-painting is not perhaps that kind of painting in which their genius has been taught to excel. I do not blame this attempt to encourage one department of art—I applaud it. But do not think this is analogous to a generous and genuine homage to art's haughty and multiform divinity. We are told by an old Greek author of some wise man who thought to save his bees the trouble of a flight to Hymettus—cut off their wings and set the flowers before them. The bees did not

flourish upon the allowance. Let art select its own flowers at its own will, then buy the honey if you please. In a word, add to your National Gallery for the old masters a gallery for the living. Be not led away by the notion that the public are all-sufficient patrons. The public buy what they require, and that is all. Those individuals that compose the public have no houses large enough for historical pictures. They have not always the taste for high art. They have not always the money to pay the high prices that modern painters are compelled to charge if they really devote long time and patient labour to their *chefs-d'œuvre*. Hence most painters, depending solely on the patronage of the public, either turn portrait painters (for every one likes a portrait of himself, his wife, his baby, or even his pet dog); or they find that, while the large or elaborate picture obtains no buyers, the small squares of canvas hastily struck off, coming more within the means of the public, bring large returns. The public love names. A man likes to say, 'I have a picture by Tinto or Finto,' and he thinks that equivalent to saying, 'I have Tinto's masterpiece;' or, 'This picture took Finto three patient years to complete.' It is but just to our artists to give them that higher field of emulation which every other State professing to honour art liberally bestows.

"I have already touched, my Lord, as connected with this part of my subject, the main blot upon the justice of the State and the gratitude of the people. It is the provision at present allowed to the literature, art, and science of three nations—a yearly pension list of £1200 a year. Just conceive the false position of a statesman calling aloud upon the people to read, and write, and study, while he is forced (if he speak truth) to acknowledge that the worst thing that can happen to any pupil so encouraged, is to read deeply enough to instruct

others, write well enough to charm multitudes, grow entitled to the gratitude of his country, and be referred by it in old age and sickness to a claim upon the Pension List!

"Surely, if your Lordship will look somewhat narrowly into the various departments of State patronage, some places may be found for which literary capacities may be no disqualification, which, as a general rule, might be set apart for those familiarised to the habit of acquiring details with ease, and conveying information with vigour and precision. I should not expect to see such places fall to the lot of the higher and more popular authors, to whom, not from merit so much, but from the choice of subject, literature is an available profession; the choice would be better made from writers of a graver class, and to whom business would not be incompatible with the occasional exercise of their abstruse studies. His duties at the India Board have not unfitted Mr. J. Mill for the composition of his noble *History of Logic*, and the *History of Logic* did not unfit him for the India Board. A few such selections made with judgment and discretion would do much to render literature a thing less apart from the State, would afford to the writer the easy leisure for many a valuable work, give to the Government many a competent and intelligent administrant, and afford to the people no uninstructive examples of your sincerity in the homage you assert to knowledge.

"Beyond this, and with far greater diffidence, I venture to hazard two suggestions. 1stly, In any great scheme of national education, you will scarcely suffer, I think, your endeavours to cease with the age of childhood. Man, when engaged in labour, always remains a child. Always do we have something to learn; but mostly those employed in practical pursuits, in which everyday science hints some improvement, or startles prejudice

with some innovation. Hence, imperceptibly—hence, in the recognition of this truth—arose the Mechanics' Institutes, colleges for the labouring adult.

"Of these auxiliaries already founded, but far from maturely efficient, I apprehend your scheme for diffusing knowledge will scarcely neglect the valuable co-operation.

"There is nothing (your observation has doubtless already made you aware) which is more readily sought after in these societies than lectures by competent persons. Would it be possible to establish a certain number of professorships, with moderate salaries, but some social designations of respect, whose duty it might be to teach to audiences so prepared to favour, and so interested on the subject, all that science in its rapid progress can bring to bear upon their calling. In manufacturing towns or in agricultural districts, I need scarcely say that such discourses from authorities of high repute would signally facilitate the admission of improvements, would communicate the experiences and inventions of other countries, would diffuse and circulate truths that come home to the business of the listeners, and add to the wealth of the nation. Salaries so given would be repaid to the public in every field where a new crop is produced or the old increased; in every factory where the improvement of a machine lightens the labour or refines the work. That in such an undertaking, if put on its right footing, and treated with dignity by the State, you would have the cheerful assistance of the first scientific teachers who have turned their philosophy to such practical uses, I have no doubt. And here again you would effect that which to satiety I seek to impress, viz. connection between the highest intellect and the most popular instruction.

"2ndly, My Lord—and this proposition I make still more timidly than the first; aware as I am of the

ridicule which, in a system profoundly aristocratic, attaches to all attempts to claim for merit some slight share in the distinction monopolised by rank—or in a community mainly occupied by traffic, to inculcate the doctrine, that there are other rewards than money.

"The distinctions of honour that England affords are two-fold—that of titles—that of decorations. With the exception of knighthood, titles are hereditary. They require, therefore, and justly, the possession of a certain fortune to save any privileged order from the worst curse that can befall it—the sullen pride or the abject neediness of beggared rank. Necessarily, then, such titles are not open to all merit; they are open only to merit accompanied with wealth; they are almost at the command of wealth without the merit. Sir Robert Peel offered Mr. Southey a baronetcy, which Mr. Southey sensibly refused on the plea of want of fortune to support the dignity. So obvious is it that these hereditary titles cannot answer the purpose of awarding merit or honouring intellect independent of fortune, that I need waste no words in support of so evident a proposition.

"The order of knighthood unconnected with decorations has been so perverted from its original character and intention — so separated from all dignifying association, and appropriated to civic offices, to some legal appointments, with now and then an exception in favour of medical men—that it would be far easier to give weight to a new title than to restore its noble character to an old one so long degraded.

"The Crown has next at its gift the decorations of the Garter and the Bath. The first, in its origin an essentially military distinction, is now almost the exclusive property of royal foreigners and the heads of our great houses. A Garter is vacant; you have but to consider who is the man belonging to the party of

the Minister of the highest rank, to be sure that the vacancy will fall upon him. He has a right to complain of slight if he is overlooked. The Order of the Bath, which was at its origin an almost purely civil dignity, now supersedes the Garter, and becomes a military distinction, with some reservations in favour of diplomatists. The orders of Scotland and Ireland are the privileges of the nobles in those sections of the empire.

"For the people there is, then, no distinction whatever. Every other Government, even under absolute monarchies, has at its disposal various dignities which are objects of emulation to the mass of the people. In that country which boasts itself most free, in which the people are professedly the most regarded—in which certainly the people are the real source of all greatness and all wealth—in that country alone the people are excluded from every participation in the testimonials to merit or the marks of honour. Howsoever a man may have adorned or served his country, unless he is comparatively rich, you can give him no title. Unless he is an earl, you cannot give him the Garter; unless he is soldier, sailor, or diplomatist, you cannot give him the Bath; and even the dignity of Doctor is conferred by the Universities, not the State. Would it be against the spirit of the constitution, against the temper of the age, against the principles by which ambition is stirred and emulation aroused, if the Crown were advised to institute a new order, open to the mass of this great people, and to which merit, comprehending indeed birth and fortune, but wholly independent of them, should constitute the sole claim? An order which the Marquess of Northampton might share with Professor Airy or Mr. Babbage; Lord Mahon with Mr. Moore; Lord George Hill, who has improved the population of a district, with the manufacturer who has invented

some signal improvement in a machine. I pass over, as wholly irrelevant, the ridicule of would-be sages upon medals of silver and shreds of ribbon. All things, even to gold itself, have their value, as the tokens of what society admits them to represent. I could understand the ridicule, if in England you had no titles, and no decorations at all; but I cannot understand that you should admit their partial application—that you should allow how powerfully such incentives act upon men of one rank, and yet suppose them no incentives at all to men of another; that you should allow that their hope animates the noblest heart that beats beneath a uniform, and suppose it would be silent in the heart which human nature influences under a frock-coat. The question is not whether the State should have the gift of conferring marks of distinction—it has them already; but whether in a free country they should be confined to wealth, rank, and military achievements; whether, at a time when you exhort the people to intellectual cultivation, intellectual eminence should be excluded from the favour of the Sovereign; whether alone to art, letters, and the peaceful improvers of mankind, the fount of honour shall be sealed.

On these considerations I hazard the suggestion of an order to which merit shall give the claim—an order emanating from the Sovereign, but accessible to all her people—its decorations not given exclusively to the merit which is poor and low-born, or society, at once aristocratical and commercial, would not value them. But he indeed knows little of our higher orders who will not allow that no aristocracy, except the Athenian, ever produced in all departments so large a proportion of eminent men. There will be selections enough from them to give to such a brotherhood whatever grace merit may take from high station; only let these lists be open to all competitors who write upon

their shield, 'Service to Great Britain,' whether that service be rendered in arts, letters, inventive improvement, great virtue, or useful deeds, let no party favour promote the undeserving or slight the meritorious. Surely such an institution is in harmony with the age. When Napoleon made himself member of the Institute, he said—'I am sure to be understood by the lowest drummer.' If one distinguishes men into the classes of military and civil, one establishes two orders, while there is but one nation ; if one decrees honour only to soldiers, the nation goes for nothing—*La nation ne serait plus rien ;* so said Napoleon when he founded the Legion of Honour—an institution which the subsequent abuses that have perverted its intention and lowered its dignity do not the less prove to have been based upon the profoundest views of human nature, and in the true spirit of generous legislation.

" Here, my Lord, I close these suggestions—all, from the establishment of a village school, to the honours due to those deserts which each pupil sent to that school may attain—all belonging, I believe, to any scheme, wide, sound, and comprehensive, for the encouragement of education and the diffusion of intelligence.

" Found schools and starve the scholar—declaim on the rewards of intellectual accomplishment and civil virtue, and then exclude the highest specimens your declamation can produce from the service of the State and the honours of the Crown, and I warn you that you will place your edifice upon a hollow foundation, whilst you reject your surest co-operator in the moral spirit your system should animate and evoke ; and that the common-sense of mankind will see that your object is not for the advancement of knowledge, but to contract its height whilst demarking its circumference. As the Chinese dwarf their oaks, you place a hoop of iron round the roots which you plant ; and thus you will

have stunted into a toy the branches which should be vocal with the birds of heaven, and the stem that should shoot the loftier with every storm that assails it.—I have the honour to be, dear Lord John Russell, &c., &c., &c.,

EDWARD LYTTON.

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LIST OF RESIDENCES

31 Baker Street, London	May 25, 1803
Dr. Ruddock's School at Fulham	1812
Dr. Curtis's School at Sunbury	1812–1814
Mr. Dempster's School at Brighton	1814–1815
Dr. Hooker's School at Rottingdean	1815–1818
Dr. Burnet's School at Upper Homerton, Hackney	1818
The Rev. Charles Wallington, tutor, at Ealing	1819–1820
Mr. Thomson, tutor, at St. Lawrence, near Ramsgate	1821
Trinity College, and afterwards Trinity Hall, Cambridge	1822–1825
5 Upper Seymour Street, London (Mother's House) Berkeley Square, London	1825
4 Craven Hill	1826
24 St. James's Square	1827
Woodcot, Nettlebed, Oxfordshire	1827–1829
Weymouth and Tunbridge Wells	Sept. 1828–May, 1829
Vineyard (or Vine) Cottage, Fulham	Sept.–Dec. 1829
36 Hertford Street, London	1830–1835
Pinner Wood, Pinner, Middlesex	June, 1831–March, 1832
Allen Cottages, Hounslow	1833
2A Albany	1835–1837
Berrymead Priory, Acton	1835–1836
8 Charles Street, Berkeley Square, London	1837–1839
36 Hertford Street, London	1839–1840
105 Piccadilly, London	1840
Craven Cottage, Fulham	1840
23 Bryanston Street, London	1840–1841
37 Curzon Street, Mayfair, London	1842–1843
36A Hertford Street, London	1843–1846
Knebworth House, Hertfordshire	1844–1873
19 James Street, Buckingham Gate	1846–1849

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4 Hereford Street, London	1851–1852
1 Park Lane	1852–1861
35 St. James's Place, London	1862–1864
21 Park Lane	1864–1866
35 St. James's Place	1866–1868
Copped Hall, Totteridge, Hertfordshire	1862–1867
Argyll House, Torquay	1867–1873
12 Grosvenor Square, London	1868–1873

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