BENJAMIN DISRAELI

SYBIL, OR THE TWO NATIONS

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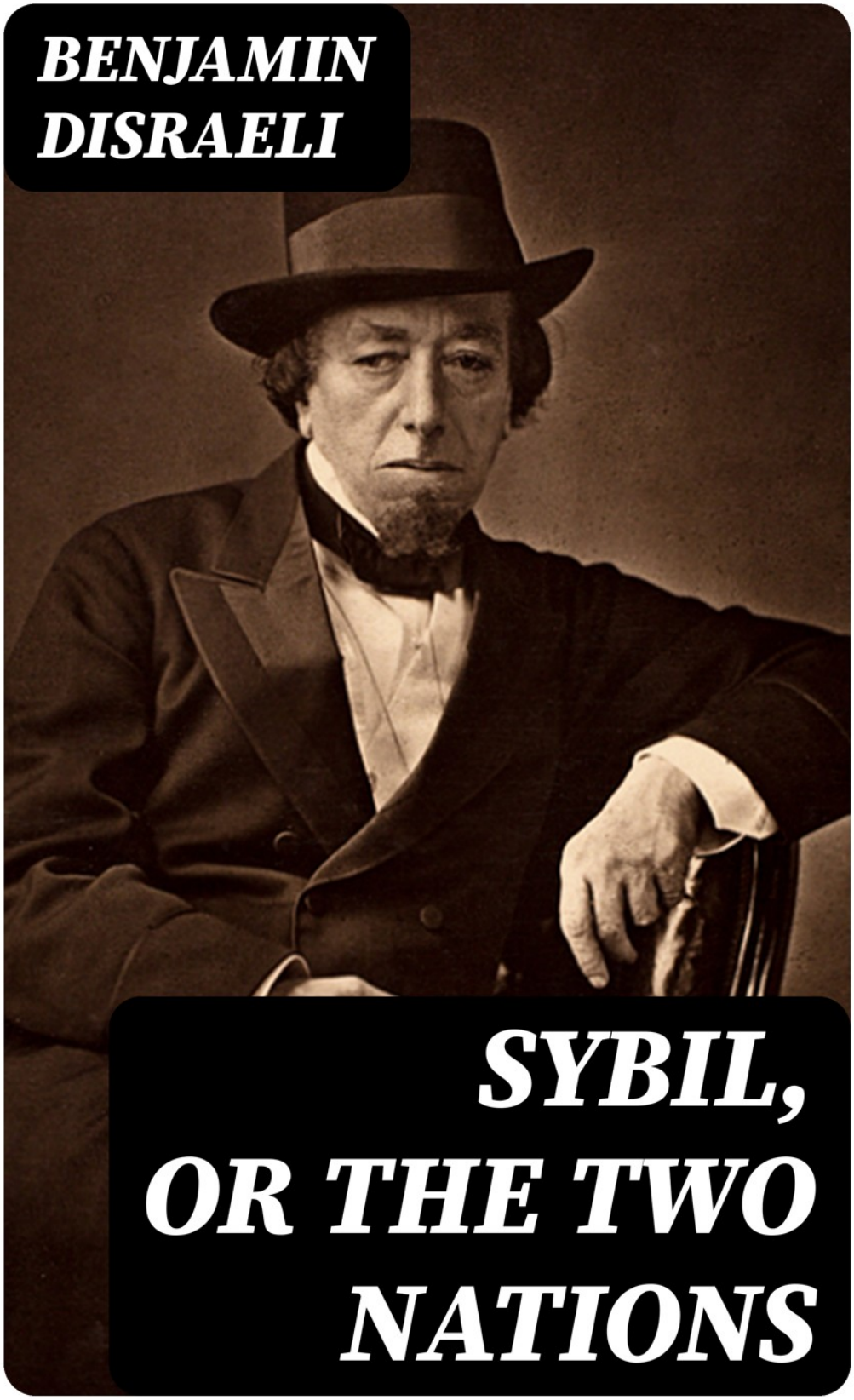

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Benjamin Disraeli

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The general reader whose attention has not been specially drawn to the subject which these volumes aim to illustrate, the Condition of the People, might suspect that the Writer had been tempted to some exaggeration in the scenes which he has drawn and the impressions which he has wished to convey. He thinks it therefore due to himself to state that he believes there is not a trait in this work for which he has not the authority of his own observation, or the authentic evidence which has been received by Royal Commissions and Parliamentary Committees. But while he hopes he has alleged nothing which is not true, he has found the absolute necessity of suppressing much that is genuine. For so little do we know of the state of our own country that the air of improbability that the whole truth would inevitably throw over these pages, might deter many from their perusal.

Grosvenor-Gate, May Day, 1845.

Chapter 1

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"I'll take the odds against Caravan."

"In poneys?"

"Done."

And Lord Milford, a young noble, entered in his book the bet which he had just made with Mr Latour, a grey headed member of the Jockey Club.

It was the eve of the Derby of 1837. In a vast and golden saloon, that in its decorations would have become, and in its splendour would not have disgraced, Versailles in the days of the grand monarch, were assembled many whose hearts beat at the thought of the morrow, and whose brains still laboured to control its fortunes to their advantage.

"They say that Caravan looks puffy," lisped in a low voice a young man, lounging on the edge of a buhl table that had once belonged to a Mortemart, and dangling a rich cane with affected indifference in order to conceal his anxiety from all, except the person whom he addressed.

"They are taking seven to two against him freely over the way," was the reply. "I believe it's all right."

"Do you know I dreamed last night something about Mango," continued the gentleman with the cane, and with a look of uneasy superstition.

His companion shook his head.

"Well," continued the gentleman with the cane, "I have no opinion of him. I gave Charles Egremont the odds against Mango this morning; he goes with us, you know. By the bye, who is our fourth?"

"I thought of Milford," was the reply in an under tone. "What say you?"

"Milford is going with St James and Punch Hughes."

"Well, let us come into supper, and we shall see some fellow we like."

So saying, the companions, taking their course through more than one chamber, entered an apartment of less dimensions than the principal saloon, but not less sumptuous in its general appearance. The gleaming lustres poured a flood of soft yet brilliant light over a plateau glittering with gold plate, and fragrant with exotics embedded in vases of rare porcelain. The seats on each side of the table were occupied by persons consuming, with a heedless air, delicacies for which they had no appetite; while the conversation in general consisted of flying phrases referring to the impending event of the great day that had already dawned.

"Come from Lady St Julian's, Fitz?" said a youth of very tender years, and whose fair visage was as downy and as blooming as the peach from which with a languid air he withdrew his lips to make this inquiry of the gentleman with the cane.

"Yes; why were not you there?"

"I never go anywhere," replied the melancholy Cupid, "everything bores me so."

"Well, will you go to Epsom with us to-morrow, Alfred?" said Lord Fitzheron. "I take Berners and Charles Egremont, and with you our party will be perfect."

"I feel so cursed blas(!" exclaimed the boy in a tone of elegant anguish.

"It will give you a fillip, Alfred," said Mr Berners; "do you all the good in the world."

"Nothing can do me good," said Alfred, throwing away his almost untasted peach, "I should be quite content if anything could do me harm. Waiter, bring me a tumbler of Badminton."

"And bring me one too," sighed out Lord Eugene De Vere, who was a year older than Alfred Mountchesney, his companion and brother in listlessness. Both had exhausted life in their teens, and all that remained for them was to mourn, amid the ruins of their reminiscences, over the extinction of excitement.

"Well, Eugene, suppose you come with us." said Lord Fitzheron.

"I think I shall go down to Hampton Court and play tennis," said Lord Eugene. "As it is the Derby, nobody will be there."

"And I will go with you, Eugene," said Alfred Mountchesney, "and we will dine together afterwards at the Toy. Anything is better than dining in this infernal London."

"Well, for my part," said Mr Berners. "I do not like your suburban dinners. You always get something you can't eat, and cursed bad wine."

"I rather like bad wine," said Mr Mountchesney; "one gets so bored with good wine."

"Do you want the odds against Hybiscus, Berners?" said a guardsman looking up from his book, which he had been very intently studying.

"All I want is some supper, and as you are not using your place—"

"You shall have it. Oh! here's Milford, he will give them me."

And at this moment entered the room the young nobleman whom we have before mentioned, accompanied by an individual who was approaching perhaps the termination of his fifth lustre but whose general air rather betokened even a less experienced time of life. Tall, with a well-proportioned figure and a graceful carriage, his countenance touched with a sensibility that at once engages the affections. Charles Egremont was not only admired by that sex, whose approval generally secures men enemies among their fellows, but was at the same time the favourite of his own.

"Ah, Egremont! come and sit here," exclaimed more than one banqueter.

"I saw you waltzing with the little Bertie, old fellow," said Lord Fitzheron, "and therefore did not stay to speak to you, as I thought we should meet here. I am to call for you, mind."

"How shall we all feel this time to-morrow?" said Egremont, smiling.

"The happiest fellow at this moment must be Cockie Graves," said Lord Milford. "He can have no suspense I have been looking over his book, and I defy him, whatever happens, not to lose."

"Poor Cockie." said Mr Berners; "he has asked me to dine with him at the Clarendon on Saturday."

"Cockie is a very good Cockie," said Lord Milford, "and Caravan is a very good horse; and if any gentleman

sportsman present wishes to give seven to two, I will take him to any amount."

"My book is made up," said Egremont; "and I stand or fall by Caravan."

"And I."

"And I."

"And I."

"Well, mark my words," said a fourth, rather solemnly, "Rat-trap wins."

"There is not a horse except Caravan," said Lord Milford, "fit for a borough stake."

"You used to be all for Phosphorus, Egremont," said Lord Eugene de Vere.

"Yes; but fortunately I have got out of that scrape. I owe Phip Dormer a good turn for that. I was the third man who knew he had gone lame."

"And what are the odds against him now."

"Oh! nominal; forty to one,—what you please."

"He won't run," said Mr Berners, "John Day told me he had refused to ride him."

"I believe Cockie Graves might win something if Phosphorus came in first," said Lord Milford, laughing.

"How close it is to-night!" said Egremont. "Waiter, give me some Seltzer water; and open another window; open them all."

At this moment an influx of guests intimated that the assembly at Lady St Julian's was broken up. Many at the table rose and yielded their places, clustering round the chimney-piece, or forming in various groups, and discussing the great question. Several of those who had recently

entered were votaries of Rat-trap, the favourite, and quite prepared, from all the information that had reached them, to back their opinions valiantly. The conversation had now become general and animated, or rather there was a medley of voices in which little was distinguished except the names of horses and the amount of odds. In the midst of all this, waiters glided about handing incomprehensible mixtures bearing aristocratic names; mystical combinations of French wines and German waters, flavoured with slices of Portugal fruits, and cooled with lumps of American ice, compositions which immortalized the creative genius of some high patrician name.

"By Jove! that's a flash," exclaimed Lord Milford, as a blaze of lightning seemed to suffuse the chamber, and the beaming lustres turned white and ghastly in the glare.

The thunder rolled over the building. There was a dead silence. Was it going to rain? Was it going to pour? Was the storm confined to the metropolis? Would it reach Epsom? A deluge, and the course would be a quagmire, and strength might baffle speed.

Another flash, another explosion, the hissing noise of rain. Lord Milford moved aside, and jealous of the eye of another, read a letter from Chifney, and in a few minutes afterwards offered to take the odds against Pocket Hercules. Mr Latour walked to the window, surveyed the heavens, sighed that there was not time to send his tiger from the door to Epsom, and get information whether the storm had reached the Surrey hills, for to-night's operations. It was too late. So he took a rusk and a glass of lemonade, and retired to rest with a cool head and a cooler heart.

The storm raged, the incessant flash played as it were round the burnished cornice of the chamber, and threw a lurid hue on the scenes of Watteau and Boucher that sparkled in the medallions over the lofty doors. The thunderbolts seemed to descend in clattering confusion upon the roof. Sometimes there was a moment of dead silence, broken only by the pattering of the rain in the street without, or the pattering of the dice in a chamber at hand. Then horses were backed, bets made, and there were loud and frequent calls for brimming goblets from hurrying waiters, distracted by the lightning and deafened by the peal. It seemed a scene and a supper where the marble guest of Juan might have been expected, and had he arrived, he would have found probably hearts as bold and spirits as reckless as he encountered in Andalusia.

Chapter 2

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"Will any one do anything about Hybiscus?" sang out a gentleman in the ring at Epsom. It was full of eager groups; round the betting post a swarming cluster, while the magic circle itself was surrounded by a host of horsemen shouting from their saddles the odds they were ready to receive or give, and the names of the horses they were prepared to back or to oppose.

"Will any one do anything about Hybiscus?"

"I'll give you five to one," said a tall, stiff Saxon peer, in a white great coat.

"No; I'll take six."

The tall, stiff peer in the white great coat mused for a moment with his pencil at his lip, and then said, "Well, I'll give you six. What do you say about Mango?"

"Eleven to two against Mango," called out a little humpbacked man in a shrill voice, but with the air of one who was master of his work.

"I should like to do a little business with you, Mr Chippendale," said Lord Milford in a coaxing tone, "but I must have six to one."

"Eleven to two, and no mistake," said this keeper of a second-rate gaming-house, who, known by the flattering appellation of Hump Chippendale, now turned with malignant abruptness from the heir apparent of an English earldom.

"You shall have six to one, my Lord," said Captain Spruce, a debonair personage with a well-turned silk hat arranged a little aside, his coloured cravat tied with precision, his whiskers trimmed like a quickset hedge. Spruce, who had earned his title of Captain on the plains of Newmarket, which had witnessed for many a year his successful exploits, had a weakness for the aristocracy, who knowing his graceful infirmity patronized him with condescending dexterity, acknowledged his existence in Pall Mall as well as at Tattersalls, and thus occasionally got a point more than the betting out of him. Hump Chippendale had none of these gentle failings; he was a democratic leg, who loved to fleece a noble, and thought all men were born equal—a consoling creed that was a hedge for his hump.

"Seven to four against the favourite; seven to two against Caravan; eleven to two against Mango. What about Benedict? Will any one do anything about Pocket Hercules? Thirty to one against Dardanelles."

"Done."

"Five and thirty ponies to one against Phosphorus," shouted a little man vociferously and repeatedly.

"I will give forty," said Lord Milford. No answer,—nothing done.

"Forty to one!" murmured Egremont who stood against Phosphorus. A little nervous, he said to the peer in the white great coat, "Don't you think that Phosphorus may after all have some chance?"

"I should be cursed sorry to be deep against him," said the peer.

Egremont with a quivering lip walked away. He consulted his book; he meditated anxiously. Should he hedge? It was scarcely worth while to mar the symmetry of his winnings; he stood "so well" by all the favourites; and for a horse at forty to one. No; he would trust his star, he would not hedge.

"Mr Chippendale," whispered the peer in the white great coat, "go and press Mr Egremont about Phosphorus. I should not be surprised if you got a good thing."

At this moment, a huge, broad-faced, rosy-gilled fellow, with one of those good-humoured yet cunning countenances that we meet occasionally on the northern side of the Trent, rode up to the ring on a square cob and dismounting entered the circle. He was a carcase butcher, famous in Carnaby market, and the prime councillor of a distinguished nobleman for whom privately he betted on commission. His secret service to-day was to bet against his noble employer's own horse, and so he at once sung out, "Twenty to one against Man-trap."

A young gentleman just launched into the world, and who, proud of his ancient and spreading acres, was now making his first book, seeing Man-trap marked eighteen to one on the cards, jumped eagerly at this bargain, while Lord Fitzheron and Mr Berners who were at hand and who in their days had found their names in the book of the carcase butcher, and grown wise by it, interchanged a smile.

"Mr Egremont will not take," said Hump Chippendale to the peer in the white great coat.

"You must have been too eager," said his noble friend.

The ring is up; the last odds declared; all gallop away to the Warren. A few minutes, only a few minutes, and the event that for twelve months has been the pivot of so much calculation, of such subtile combinations, of such deep conspiracies, round which the thought and passion of the sporting world have hung like eagles, will be recorded in the fleeting tablets of the past. But what minutes! Count them by sensation and not by calendars, and each moment is a day and the race a life. Hogarth in a coarse and yet animated sketch has painted "Before" and "After." A creative spirit of a higher vein might develope the simplicity of the idea with sublimer accessories. Pompeius before Pharsalia, Harold before Hastings, Napoleon before Waterloo, might afford some striking contrasts to the immediate catastrophe of their fortunes. Finer still the inspired mariner who has just discovered a new world; the sage who has revealed a new planet; and yet the "Before" and "After" of a first-rate English race, in the degree of its excitement, and sometimes in the tragic emotions of its close, may vie even with these.

They are saddling the horses; Caravan looks in great condition; and a scornful smile seems to play upon the handsome features of Pavis, as in the becoming colours of his employer, he gracefully gallops his horse before his admiring supporters. Egremont in the delight of an English patrician scarcely saw Mango, and never even thought of Phosphorus— Phosphorus, who, by the bye, was the first horse that showed, with both his forelegs bandaged.

They are off!

As soon as they are well away, Chifney makes the running with Pocket Hercules. Up to the Rubbing House he is

leading; this is the only point the eye can select. Higher up the hill, Caravan, Hybiscus, Benedict, Mahometan, Phosphorus, Michel Fell, and Rat-trap are with the grey, forming a front rank, and at the new ground the pace has told its tale, for half a dozen are already out of the race.

The summit is gained; the tactics alter: here Pavis brings up Caravan, with extraordinary severity,—the pace round Tattenham corner terrific; Caravan leading, then Phosphorus a little above him, Mahometan next, Hybiscus fourth. Rat-trap looking badly, Wisdom, Benedict and another handy. By this time Pocket Hercules has enough, and at the road the tailing grows at every stride. Here the favourite himself is hors de combat, as well as Dardanelles, and a crowd of lesser celebrities.

There are now but four left in the race, and of these, two, Hybiscus and Mahometan, are some lengths behind. Now it is neck and neck between Caravan and Phosphorus. At the stand Caravan has decidedly the best, but just at the post, Edwards, on Phosphorus, lifts the gallant little horse, and with an extraordinary effort contrives to shove him in by half a length.

"You look a little low, Charley," said Lord Fitzheron, as taking their lunch in their drag he poured the champagne into the glass of Egremont.

"By Jove!" said Lord Milford, "Only think of Cockie Graves having gone and done it!"

Chapter 3

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Egremont was the younger brother of an English earl, whose nobility being of nearly three centuries' date, ranked him among our high and ancient peers, although its origin was more memorable than illustrious. The founder of the family had been a confidential domestic of one of the favourites of Henry the Eighth, and had contrived to be appointed one of the commissioners for "visiting and taking the surrenders of divers religious houses." It came to pass that divers of these religious houses surrendered themselves eventually to the use and benefit of honest Baldwin Greymount. The king was touched with the activity and zeal of his commissioner. Not one of them whose reports were so ample and satisfactory, who could baffle a wily prior with more dexterity, or control a proud abbot with more firmness. Nor were they well-digested reports alone that were transmitted to the sovereign: they came accompanied with many rare and curious articles, grateful to the taste of one who was not only a religious reformer but a dilettante; golden candlesticks and costly chalices; sometimes a jewelled pix; fantastic spoons and patens, rings for the fingers and the ear; occasionally a fair-written and blazoned manuscript—suitable offering to the royal scholar. Greymount was noticed; sent for; promoted in the household; knighted; might doubtless have been sworn of the council, and in due time have become a minister; but his was a discreet ambition—of an accumulative rather than an aspiring

character. He served the king faithfully in all domestic matters that required an unimpassioned, unscrupulous agent; fashioned his creed and conscience according to the royal model in all its freaks; seized the right moment to get sundry grants of abbey lands, and contrived in that dangerous age to save both his head and his estate.

The Greymount family having planted themselves in the land, faithful to the policy of the founder, avoided the public gaze during the troubled period that followed the reformation; and even during the more orderly reign of Elizabeth, rather sought their increase in alliances than in court favour. But at the commencement of the seventeenth century, their abbey lands infinitely advanced in value, and their rental swollen by the prudent accumulation of more than seventy years, a Greymount, who was then a county member, was elevated to the peerage as Baron Marney. The heralds furnished his pedigree, and assured the world that although the exalted rank and extensive possessions enjoyed at present by the Greymounts, had their origin immediately in great territorial revolutions of a recent reign, it was not for a moment to be supposed, that the remote ancestors of the Ecclesiastical Commissioner of 1530 were by any means obscure. On the contrary, it appeared that they were both Norman and baronial, their real name Egremont, which, in their patent of peerage the family now resumed.

In the civil wars, the Egremonts pricked by their Norman blood, were cavaliers and fought pretty well. But in 1688, alarmed at the prevalent impression that King James intended to insist on the restitution of the church estates to

their original purposes, to wit, the education of the people and the maintenance of the poor, the Lord of Marney Abbey became a warm adherent of "civil and religious liberty,"—the cause for which Hampden had died in the field, and Russell on the scaffold,—and joined the other whig lords, and great lay impropriators, in calling over the Prince of Orange and a Dutch army, to vindicate those popular principles which, somehow or other, the people would never support. Profiting by this last pregnant circumstance, the lay Abbot of Marney also in this instance like the other whig lords, was careful to maintain, while he vindicated the cause of civil and religious liberty, a very loyal and dutiful though secret correspondence with the court of St Germains.

The great deliverer King William the Third, to whom Lord Marney was a systematic traitor, made the descendant of the Ecclesiastical Commissioner of Henry the Eighth an English earl; and from that time until the period of our history, though the Marney family had never produced one individual eminent for civil or military abilities, though the country was not indebted to them for a single statesman, orator, successful warrior, great lawyer, learned divine, eminent author, illustrious man of science, they had contrived, if not to engross any great share of public admiration and love, at least to monopolise no contemptible portion of public money and public dignities. During the seventy years of almost unbroken whig rule, from the accession of the House of Hanover to the fall of Mr Fox, Marney Abbey had furnished a never-failing crop of lord privy seals, lord presidents, and lord lieutenants. The family had had their due quota of garters and governments and

bishoprics; admirals without fleets, and generals who fought only in America. They had glittered in great embassies with clever secretaries at their elbow, and had once governed Ireland when to govern Ireland was only to apportion the public plunder to a corrupt senate.

Notwithstanding however this prolonged enjoyment of undeserved prosperity, the lay abbots of Marney were not content. Not that it was satiety that induced dissatisfaction. The Egremonts could feed on. They wanted something more. Not to be prime ministers or secretaries of state, for they were a shrewd race who knew the length of their tether, and notwithstanding the encouraging example of his grace of Newcastle, they could not resist the persuasion that some knowledge of the interests and resources of nations, some power of expressing opinions with propriety, some degree of respect for the public and for himself, were not altogether indispensable qualifications, even under a Venetian constitution, in an individual who aspired to a post so eminent and responsible. Satisfied with the stars and mitres and official seals, which were periodically apportioned to them, the Marney family did not aspire to the somewhat graceless office of being their distributor. What they aimed at was promotion in their order; and promotion to the highest class. They observed that more than one of the other great "civil and religious liberty" families,—the families who in one century plundered the church to gain the property of the people, and in another century changed the dynasty to gain the power of the crown,—had their brows circled with the strawberry leaf. And why should not this distinction be the high lot also of the descendants of the

old gentleman usher of one of King Henry's plundering vicar-generals? Why not? True it is, that a grateful sovereign in our days has deemed such distinction the only reward for half a hundred victories. True it is, that Nelson, after conquering the Mediterranean, died only a Viscount! But the house of Marney had risen to high rank; counted themselves ancient nobility; and turned up their noses at the Pratts and the Smiths, the Jenkinsons and the Robinsons of our degenerate days; and never had done anything for the nation or for their honours. And why should they now? It was unreasonable to expect it. Civil and religious liberty, that had given them a broad estate and a glittering coronet, to say nothing of half-a-dozen close seats in parliament, ought clearly to make them dukes.

But the other great whig families who had obtained this honour, and who had done something more for it than spoliate their church and betray their king, set up their backs against this claim of the Egremonts. The Egremonts had done none of the work of the last hundred years of political mystification, during which a people without power or education, had been induced to believe themselves the freest and most enlightened nation in the world, and had submitted to lavish their blood and treasure, to see their industry crippled and their labour mortgaged, in order to maintain an oligarchy, that had neither ancient memories to soften nor present services to justify their unprecedented usurpation.

How had the Egremonts contributed to this prodigious result? Their family had furnished none of those artful orators whose bewildering phrase had fascinated the public

intelligence; none of those toilsome patricians whose assiduity in affairs had convinced their unprivileged fellow-subjects that government was a science, and administration an art, which demanded the devotion of a peculiar class in the state for their fulfilment and pursuit. The Egremonts had never said anything that was remembered, or done anything that could be recalled. It was decided by the Great Revolution families, that they should not be dukes. Infinite was the indignation of the lay Abbot of Marney. He counted his boroughs, consulted his cousins, and muttered revenge. The opportunity soon offered for the gratification of his passion.

The situation of the Venetian party in the wane of the eighteenth century had become extremely critical. A young king was making often fruitless, but always energetic, struggles to emancipate his national royalty from the trammels of the factious dogeship. More than sixty years of a government of singular corruption had alienated all hearts from the oligarchy; never indeed much affected by the great body of the people. It could no longer be concealed, that by virtue of a plausible phrase power had been transferred from the crown to a parliament, the members of which were appointed by an extremely limited and exclusive class, who owned no responsibility to the country, who debated and voted in secret, and who were regularly paid by the small knot of great families that by this machinery had secured the permanent possession of the king's treasury. Whiggism was putrescent in the nostrils of the nation; we were probably on the eve of a bloodless yet important revolution; when Rockingham, a virtuous magnifico, alarmed and

disgusted, resolved to revive something of the pristine purity and high-toned energy of the old whig connection; appealed to his "new generation" from a degenerate age, arrayed under his banner the generous youth of the whig families, and was fortunate to enlist in the service the supreme genius of Edmund Burke.

Burke effected for the whigs what Bolingbroke in a preceding age had done for the tories: he restored the moral existence of the party. He taught them to recur to the ancient principles of their connection, and suffused those principles with all the delusive splendour of his imagination. He raised the tone of their public discourse; he breathed a high spirit into their public acts. It was in his power to do more for the whigs than St John could do for his party. The oligarchy, who had found it convenient to attaint Bolingbroke for being the avowed minister of the English Prince with whom they were always in secret communication, when opinion forced them to consent to his restitution, had tacked to the amnesty a clause as cowardly as it was unconstitutional, and declared his incompetence to sit in the parliament of his country. Burke on the contrary fought the whig fight with a two-edged weapon: he was a great writer; as an orator he was transcendent. In a dearth of that public talent for the possession of which the whigs have generally been distinguished, Burke came forward and established them alike in the parliament and the country. And what was his reward? No sooner had a young and dissolute noble, who with some of the aspirations of a Caesar oftener realised the conduct of a Catiline, appeared on the stage, and after some inglorious tergiversation

adopted their colours, than they transferred to him the command which had been won by wisdom and genius, vindicated by unrivalled knowledge, and adorned by accomplished eloquence. When the hour arrived for the triumph which he had prepared, he was not even admitted into the Cabinet, virtually presided over by his graceless pupil, and who, in the profuse suggestions of his teeming converse, had found the principles and the information which were among the chief claims to public confidence of Mr Fox.

Hard necessity made Mr Burke submit to the yoke, but the humiliation could never be forgotten. Nemesis favours genius: the inevitable hour at length arrived. A voice like the Apocalypse sounded over England and even echoed in all the courts of Europe. Burke poured forth the vials of his hoarded vengeance into the agitated heart of Christendom; he stimulated the panic of a world by the wild pictures of his inspired imagination; he dashed to the ground the rival who had robbed him of his hard-earned greatness; rended in twain the proud oligarchy that had dared to use and to insult him; and followed with servility by the haughtiest and the most timid of its members, amid the frantic exultation of his country, he placed his heel upon the neck of the ancient serpent.

Among the whig followers of Mr Burke in this memorable defection, among the Devonshires and the Portlands, the Spencers and the Fitzwi]liams, was the Earl of Marney, whom the whigs would not make a duke.

What was his chance of success from Mr Pitt?

If the history of England be ever written by one who has the knowledge and the courage, and both qualities are equally requisite for the undertaking, the world would be more astonished than when reading the Roman annals by Niebuhr. Generally speaking, all the great events have been distorted, most of the important causes concealed, some of the principal characters never appear, and all who figure are so misunderstood and misrepresented, that the result is a complete mystification, and the perusal of the narrative about as profitable to an Englishman as reading the Republic of Plato or the Utopia of More, the pages of Gaudentio di Lucca or the adventures of Peter Wilkins.

The influence of races in our early ages, of the church in our middle, and of parties in our modern history, are three great moving and modifying powers, that must be pursued and analyzed with an untiring, profound, and unimpassioned spirit, before a guiding ray can be secured. A remarkable feature of our written history is the absence in its pages of some of the most influential personages. Not one man in a thousand for instance has ever heard of Major Wildman: yet he was the soul of English politics in the most eventful period of this kingdom, and one most interesting to this age, from 1640 to 1688; and seemed more than once to hold the balance which was to decide the permanent form of our government. But he was the leader of an unsuccessful party. Even, comparatively speaking, in our own times, the same mysterious oblivion is sometimes encouraged to creep over personages of great social distinction as well as political importance.

The name of the second Pitt remains, fresh after forty years of great events, a parliamentary beacon. He was the Chatterton of politics; the "marvellous boy." Some have a vague impression that he was mysteriously moulded by his great father: that he inherited the genius, the eloquence, the state craft of Chatham. His genius was of a different bent, his eloquence of a different class, his state craft of a different school. To understand Mr Pitt, one must understand one of the suppressed characters of English history, and that is Lord Shelburne.

When the fine genius of the injured Bolingbroke, the only peer of his century who was educated, and proscribed by the oligarchy because they were afraid of his eloquence, "the glory of his order and the shame," shut out from Parliament, found vent in those writings which recalled to the English people the inherent blessings of their old free monarchy, and painted in immortal hues his picture of a patriot king, the spirit that he raised at length touched the heart of Carteret born a whig, yet scepticai of the advantages of that patrician constitution which made the Duke of Newcastle the most incompetent of men, but the chosen leader of the Venetian party, virtually sovereign of England. Lord Carteret had many brilliant qualities: he was undaunted, enterprising, eloquent; had considerable knowledge of continental politics, was a great linguist, a master of public law; and though he failed in his premature effort to terminate the dogeship of George the Second, he succeeded in maintaining a considerable though secondary position in public life. The young Shelburne married his daughter. Of him it is singular we know less than of his

father-in-law, yet from the scattered traits some idea may be formed of the ablest and most accomplished minister of the eighteenth century. Lord Shelburne, influenced probably by the example and the traditionary precepts of his eminent father-in-law, appears early to have held himself aloof from the patrician connection, and entered public life as the follower of Bute in the first great effort of George the Third to rescue the sovereignty from what Lord Chatham called "the Great Revolution families." He became in time a member of Lord Chatham's last administration: one of the strangest and most unsuccessful efforts to aid the grandson of George the Second in his struggle for political emancipation. Lord Shelburne adopted from the first the Bolingbroke system: a real royalty, in lieu of the chief magistracy; a permanent alliance with France, instead of the whig scheme of viewing in that power the natural enemy of England: and, above all, a plan of commercial freedom, the germ of which may be found in the long-maligned negotiations of Utrecht, but which in the instance of Lord Shelburne were soon in time matured by all the economical science of Europe, in which he was a proficient. Lord Shelburne seems to have been of a reserved and somewhat astute disposition: deep and adroit, he was however brave and firm. His knowledge was extensive and even profound. He was a great linguist; he pursued both literary and scientific investigations; his house was frequented by men of letters, especially those distinguished by their political abilities or economical attainments. He maintained the most extensive private correspondence of any public man of his time. The earliest and most authentic information reached