Sybil

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BOOK 1

Chapter 1

"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 blase!" 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

"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

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 Fitzwilliams, 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 sceptical 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 him from all courts and quarters of Europe: and it was a common phrase, that the minister of the day sent to him often for the important information which the cabinet could not itself command. Lord Shelburne was the first great minister who comprehended the rising importance of the middle class; and foresaw in its future power a bulwark for the throne against "the Great Revolution families." Of his qualities in council we have no record; there is reason to believe that his administrative ability was conspicuous: his speeches prove that, if not supreme, he was eminent, in the art of parliamentary disputation, while they show on all the questions discussed a richness and variety of information with which the speeches of no statesman of that age except Mr Burke can compare. Such was the man selected by George the Third as his champion against the Venetian party after the termination of the American war. The prosecution of that war they had violently opposed, though it had originated in their own policy. First minister in the House of Lords, Shelburne entrusted the lead in the House of Commons to his Chancellor of the Exchequer, the youthful Pitt. The administration was brief, but it was not inglorious. It obtained peace, and for the first time since the Revolution introduced into modern debate the legitimate principles on which commerce should be conducted. It fell before the famous Coalition with which "the Great Revolution families" commenced their fiercest and their last contention for the patrician government of royal England.

In the heat of that great strife, the king in the second hazardous exercise of his prerogative entrusted the perilous command to Pitt. Why Lord Shelburne on that occasion was set aside, will perhaps always remain a mysterious passage of our political history, nor have we space on the present occasion to attempt to penetrate its motives. Perhaps the monarch, with a sense of the rising sympathies of his people, was prescient of the magic power of youth in touching the heart of a nation. Yet it would not be an unprofitable speculation if for a moment we paused to consider what might have been the consequences to our country if Mr Pitt had been content for a season again to lead the Commons under Lord Shelburne, and have secured for England the unrivalled knowledge and dexterity of that statesman in the conduct of our affairs during the confounding fortunes of the French revolution. Lord Shelburne was the only English minister competent to the task; he was the only public man who had the previous knowledge requisite to form accurate conclusions on such a conjuncture: his remaining speeches on the subject attest the amplitude of his knowledge and the accuracy of his views: and in the rout of Jena, or the agony of Austerlitz, one cannot refrain from picturing the shade of Shelburne haunting the cabinet of Pitt, as the ghost of Canning is said occasionally to linger

about the speaker's chair, and smile sarcastically on the conscientious mediocrities who pilfered his hard-earned honours.
But during the happier years of Mr Pitt, the influence of the mind of Shelburne may be traced throughout his policy. It was Lansdowne House that made Pitt acquainted with Dr Price, a dissenting minister, whom Lord Shelburne when at the head of affairs courageously offered to make his private secretary, and who furnished Mr Pitt, among many other important suggestions, with his original plan of the sinking fund. The commercial treaties of '87 were struck in the same mint, and are notable as the first effort made by the English government to emancipate the country from the restrictive policy which had been introduced by the "glorious revolution;" memorable epoch, that presented England at the same time with a corn law and a public debt.. But on no subject was the magnetic influence of the descendant of Sir William Petty more decided, than in the resolution of his pupil to curb the power of the patrician party by an infusion from the middle classes into the government of the country. Hence the origin of Mr Pitt's famous and long-misconceived plans of parliamentary reform. Was he sincere, is often asked by those who neither seek to discover the causes nor are capable of calculating the effects of public transactions. Sincere! Why, he was struggling for his existence! And when baffled, first by the Venetian party, and afterwards by the panic of Jacobinism, he was forced to forego his direct purpose, he still endeavoured partially to effect it by a circuitous process. He created a plebeian aristocracy and blended it with the patrician oligarchy. He made peers of second-rate squires and fat graziers. He caught them in the alleys of Lombard Street, and clutched them from the counting-houses of Cornhill. When Mr Pitt in an age of bank restriction declared that every man with an estate of ten thousand a-year had a right to be a peer, he sounded the knell of "the cause for which Hampden had died on the field, and Sydney on the scaffold."
In ordinary times the pupil of Shelburne would have raised this country to a state of great material prosperity, and removed or avoided many of those anomalies which now perplex us; but he was not destined for ordinary times; and though his capacity was vast and his spirit lofty, he had not that passionate and creative genius required by an age of revolution. The French outbreak was his evil daemon: he had not the means of calculating its effects upon Europe. He had but a meagre knowledge himself of continental politics: he was assisted by a very inefficient diplomacy. His mind was lost in a convulsion of which he neither could comprehend the causes nor calculate the consequences; and forced to act, he acted not only violently, but in exact opposition to the very system he was called into political existence to combat; he appealed to the fears, the prejudices, and the passions of a privileged

class, revived the old policy of the oligarchy he had extinguished, and plunged into all the ruinous excesses of French war and Dutch finance. If it be a salutary principle in the investigation of historical transactions to be careful in discriminating the cause from the pretext, there is scarcely any instance in which the application of this principle is more fertile in results, than in that of the Dutch invasion of 1688. The real cause of this invasion was financial. The Prince of Orange had found that the resources of Holland, however considerable, were inadequate to sustain him in his internecine rivalry with the great sovereign of France. In an authentic conversation which has descended to us, held by William at the Hague with one of the prime abettors of the invasion, the prince did not disguise his motives; he said, "nothing but such a constitution as you have in England can have the credit that is necessary to raise such sums as a great war requires." The prince came, and used our constitution for his purpose: he introduced into England the system of Dutch finance. The principle of that system was to mortgage industry in order to protect property: abstractedly, nothing can be conceived more unjust; its practice in England has been equally injurious. In Holland, with a small population engaged in the same pursuits, in fact a nation of bankers, the system was adapted to the circumstances which had created it. All shared in the present spoil, and therefore could endure the future burthen. And so to this day Holland is sustained, almost solely sustained, by the vast capital thus created which still lingers amongst its dykes. But applied to a country in which the circumstances were entirely different; to a considerable and rapidly-increasing population; where there was a numerous peasantry, a trading middle class struggling into existence; the system of Dutch finance, pursued more or less for nearly a century and a half, has ended in the degradation of a fettered and burthened multitude. Nor have the demoralizing consequences of the funding system on the more favoured classes been less decided. It has made debt a national habit; it has made credit the ruling power, not the exceptional auxiliary, of all transactions; it has introduced a loose, inexact, haphazard, and dishonest spirit in the conduct of both public and private life; a spirit dazzling and yet dastardly: reckless of consequences and yet shrinking from responsibility. And in the end, it has so overstimulated the energies of the population to maintain the material engagements of the state, and of society at large, that the moral condition of the people has been entirely lost sight of.

A mortgaged aristocracy, a gambling foreign commerce, a home trade founded on a morbid competition, and a degraded people; these are great evils, but ought perhaps cheerfully to be encountered for the greater blessings of civil and religious liberty. Yet the first would seem in some degree to depend upon our Saxon mode of trial by our peers, upon the stipulations of the great Norman charters, upon the practice

and the statute of Habeas Corpus,—a principle native to our common law, but established by the Stuarts; nor in a careful perusal of the Bill of Rights, or in an impartial scrutiny of the subsequent legislation of those times, though some diminution of our political franchises must be confessed, is it easy to discover any increase of our civil privileges. To those indeed who believe that the English nation,—at all times a religious and Catholic people, but who even in the days of the Plantagenets were anti-papal,—were in any danger of again falling under the yoke of the Pope of Rome in the reign of James the Second, religious liberty was perhaps acceptable, though it took the shape of a discipline which at once anathematized a great portion of the nation, and virtually establishing Puritanism in Ireland, laid the foundation of those mischiefs which are now endangering the empire.

That the last of the Stuarts had any other object in his impolitic manoeuvres, than an impracticable scheme to blend the two churches, there is now authority to disbelieve. He certainly was guilty of the offence of sending an envoy openly to Rome, who, by the bye, was received by the Pope with great discourtesy; and her Majesty Queen Victoria, whose Protestantism cannot be doubted, for it is one of her chief titles to our homage, has at this time a secret envoy at the same court: and that is the difference between them: both ministers doubtless working however fruitlessly for the same object: the termination of those terrible misconceptions, political and religious, that have occasioned so many martyrdoms, and so many crimes alike to sovereigns and to subjects.

If James the Second had really attempted to re-establish Popery in this country, the English people, who had no hand in his overthrow, would doubtless soon have stirred and secured their "Catholic and Apostolic church," independent of any foreign dictation; the church to which they still regularly profess their adherence; and being a practical people, it is possible that they might have achieved their object and yet retained their native princes; under which circumstances we might have been saved from the triple blessings of Venetian politics, Dutch finance, and French wars: against which, in their happiest days, and with their happiest powers, struggled the three greatest of English statesmen,—Bolingbroke, Shelburne, and lastly the son of Chatham.

We have endeavoured in another work, not we hope without something of the impartiality of the future, to sketch the character and career of his successors. From his death to 1825, the political history of England is a history of great events and little men. The rise of Mr Canning, long kept down by the plebeian aristocracy of Mr Pitt as an adventurer, had shaken parties to their centre. His rapid disappearance from the scene left both whigs and tories in a state of disorganization. The distinctive principles of these connexions were now difficult to trace. That period of public languor which intervenes between the breaking up of parties

and the formation of factions now transpired in England. An exhausted sensualist on the throne, who only demanded from his ministers repose, a voluptuous aristocracy, and a listless people, were content, in the absence of all public conviction and national passion, to consign the government of the country to a great man, whose decision relieved the sovereign, whose prejudices pleased the nobles, and whose achievements dazzled the multitude.

The DUKE OF WELLINGTON brought to the post of first minister immortal fame; a quality of success which would almost seem to include all others. His public knowledge was such as might be expected from one whose conduct already formed an important portion of the history of his country. He had a personal and intimate acquaintance with the sovereigns and chief statesmen of Europe, a kind of information in which English ministers have generally been deficient, but without which the management of our external affairs must at the best be haphazard. He possessed administrative talents of the highest order. The tone of the age, the temper of the country, the great qualities and the high character of the minister, indicated a long and prosperous administration. The only individual in his cabinet who, from a combination of circumstances rather than from any intellectual supremacy over his colleagues, was competent to be his rival, was content to be his successor. In his most aspiring moments, Mr Peel in all probability aimed at no higher reach; and with youth and the leadership of the House of Commons, one has no reason to be surprised at his moderation. The conviction that the duke's government would only cease with the termination of his public career was so general, that the moment he was installed in office, the whigs smiled on him; political conciliation became the slang of the day, and the fusion of parties the babble of clubs and the tattle of boudoirs.

How comes it then that so great a man, in so great a position, should have so signally failed? Should have broken up his government, wrecked his party, and so completely annihilated his political position, that, even with his historical reputation to sustain him, he can since only re-appear in the councils of his sovereign in a subordinate, not to say equivocal, character?

With all those great qualities which will secure him a place in our history not perhaps inferior even to Marlborough, the Duke of Wellington has one deficiency which has been the stumbling-block of his civil career. Bishop Burnet, in speculating on the extraordinary influence of Lord Shaftesbury, and accounting how a statesman, so inconsistent in his conduct and so false to his confederates, should have so powerfully controlled his country, observes, "HIS STRENGTH LAY IN HIS KNOWLEDGE OF ENGLAND."

Now that is exactly the kind of knowledge which the Duke of Wellington never possessed.

When the king, finding that in Lord Goderich he had a minister who, instead of deciding, asked his royal master for advice, sent for the Duke of Wellington to undertake the government, a change in the carriage of his grace was perceived by some who had the opportunity to form an opinion on such a subject. If one might venture to use such a word in reference to such a man, we might remark, that the duke had been somewhat daunted by the selection of Mr Canning. It disappointed great hopes, it baffled great plans, and dispelled for a season the conviction that, it is believed, had been long maturing in his grace's mind; that he was the man of the age, that his military career had been only a preparation for a civil course not less illustrious; and that it was reserved for him to control for the rest of his life undisputed the destinies of a country, which was indebted to him in no slight degree for its European pre-eminence. The death of Mr Canning revived, the rout of Lord Goderich restored, these views.

Napoleon, at St Helena, speculating in conversation on the future career of his conqueror, asked, "What will Wellington do? After all he has done, he will not be content to be quiet. He will change the dynasty."

Had the great exile been better acquainted with the real character of our Venetian constitution, he would have known that to govern England in 1820, it was not necessary to change its dynasty. But the Emperor, though wrong in the main, was right by the bye. It was clear that the energies that had twice entered Paris as a conqueror, and had made kings and mediatised princes at Vienna, would not be content to subside into ermined insignificance. The duke commenced his political tactics early. The cabinet of Lord Liverpool, especially during its latter term, was the hot-bed of many intrigues; but the obstacles were numerous, though the appointing fate, in which his grace believed, removed them. The disappearance of Lord Castlereagh and Mr Canning from the scene was alike unexpected. The Duke of Wellington was at length prime minister, and no individual ever occupied that post more conscious of its power, and more determined to exercise it.

This is not the occasion on which we shall attempt to do justice to a theme so instructive as the administration of his grace. Treated with impartiality and sufficient information, it would be an invaluable contribution to the stores of our political knowledge and national experience. Throughout its brief but eccentric and tumultuous annals we see continual proof, how important is that knowledge "in which lay Lord Shaftesbury's strength." In twenty-four months we find an aristocracy estranged, without a people being conciliated; while on two several occasions, first, the prejudices, and then the pretensions of the middle class, were alike treated with contumely. The public was astonished at hearing of statesmen of long parliamentary fame, men round whom the intelligence of the nation had gathered for years with confidence, or at least with interest, being expelled from the cabinet in a

manner not unworthy of Colonel Joyce, while their places were filled by second-rate soldiers, whose very names were unknown to the great body of the people, and who under no circumstances should have aspired beyond the government of a colony. This administration which commenced in arrogance ended in panic. There was an interval of perplexity; when occurred the most ludicrous instance extant of an attempt at coalition; subordinates were promoted, while negotiations were still pending with their chiefs; and these negotiations, undertaken so crudely, were terminated in pique; in a manner which added to political disappointment personal offence. When even his parasites began to look gloomy, the duke had a specific that was to restore all, and having allowed every element of power to escape his grasp, he believed he could balance everything by a beer bill. The growl of reform was heard but it was not very fierce. There was yet time to save himself. His grace precipitated a revolution which might have been delayed for half a century, and never need have occurred in so aggravated a form. He rather fled than retired. He commenced his ministry like Brennus, and finished it like the tall Gaul sent to murder the rival of Sylla, but who dropped his weapon before the undaunted gaze of his intended victim. Lord Marney was spared the pang of the catastrophe. Promoted to a high office in the household, and still hoping that, by the aid of his party, it was yet destined for him to achieve the hereditary purpose of his family, he died in the full faith of dukism; worshipping the duke and believing that ultimately he should himself become a duke. It was under all the circumstances an euthanasia; he expired leaning as it were on his white wand and babbling of strawberry leaves.

Chapter 4

"My dear Charles," said Lady Marney to Egremont the morning after the Derby, as breakfasting with her in her boudoir he detailed some of the circumstances of the race, "we must forget your naughty horse. I sent you a little note this morning, because I wished to see you most particularly before you went out. Affairs," continued Lady Marney, first looking round the chamber to see whether there were any fairy listening to her state secrets, "affairs are critical."

"No doubt of that," thought Egremont, the horrid phantom of settling-day seeming to obtrude itself between his mother and himself; but not knowing precisely at what she was driving, he merely sipped his tea, and innocently replied, "Why?"

"There will be a dissolution," said Lady Marney.

"What are we coming in?"

Lady Marney shook her head.

"The present men will not better their majority," said Egremont.

"I hope not," said Lady Marney.

"Why you always said, that with another general election we must come in, whoever dissolved."

"But that was with the court in our favour," rejoined Lady Marney mournfully.

"What, has the king changed?" said Egremont. "I thought it was all right."

"All was right," said Lady Marney. "These men would have been turned out again, had he only lived three months more."

"Lived!" exclaimed Egremont.

"Yes," said Lady Marney; "the king is dying."

Slowly delivering himself of an ejaculation, Egremont leant back in his chair.

"He may live a month," said Lady Marnev; "he cannot live two. It is the greatest of secrets; known at this moment only to four individuals, and I communicate it to you, my dear Charles, in that absolute confidence which I hope will always subsist between us, because it is an event that may greatly affect your career."

"How so, my dear mother?"

"Marbury! I have settled with Mr Tadpole that you shall stand for the old borough. With the government in our hands, as I had anticipated at the general election, success I think was certain: under the circumstances which we must encounter, the struggle will be more severe, but I think we shall do it: and it will be a happy day for me to have our own again, and to see you in Parliament, my dear child."

"Well, my dear mother, I should like very much to be in Parliament, and particularly to sit for the old borough; but I fear the contest will be very

expensive," said Egremont inquiringly.
"Oh! I have no doubt," said Lady Marney, "that we shall have some monster of the middle class, some tinker or tailor, or candlestick-maker, with his long purse, preaching reform and practising corruption: exactly as the liberals did under Walpole: bribery was unknown in the time of the Stuarts; but we have a capital registration, Mr Tadpole tells me. And a young candidate with the old name will tell," said Lady Marney, with a smile: "and I shall go down and canvass, and we must do what we can."
"I have great faith in your canvassing," said Egremont; "but still, at the same time, the powder and shot—"
"Are essential," said Lady Marney, "I know it, in these corrupt days: but Marney will of course supply those. It is the least he can do: regaining the family influence, and letting us hold up our heads again. I shall write to him the moment I am justified," said Lady Marney, "perhaps you will do so yourself, Charles."
"Why, considering I have not seen my brother for two years, and we did not part on the best possible terms—"
"But that is all forgotten."
"By your good offices, dear mother, who are always doing good: and yet," continued Egremont, after a moment's pause, "I am not disposed to write to Marney, especially to ask a favour."
"Well, I will write," said Lady Marney; "though I cannot admit it is any favour. Perhaps it would be better that you should see him first. I cannot understand why he keeps so at the Abbey. I am sure I found it a melancholy place enough in my time. I wish you had gone down there, Charles, if it had been only for a few days."
"Well I did not, my dear mother, and I cannot go now. I shall trust to you. But are you quite sure that the king is going to die?"
"I repeat to you, it is certain," replied Lady Marney, in a lowered voice, but a decided tone; "certain, certain, certain. My authority cannot be mistaken: but no consideration in the world must throw you off your guard at this moment; breathe not the shadow of what you know."
At this moment a servant entered and delivered a note to Lady Marney, who read it with an ironical smile. It was from Lady St Julians, and ran thus:—
"Most confidential.
"My dearest Lady Marney,
"It is a false report: he is ill, but not dangerously; the hayfever; he always has it; nothing more: I will tell my authority when we meet; I dare not write it. It wil l satisfy you. I am going on with my quadrille.

"Most affectionately yours,
"A. St J."
"Poor woman! she is always wrong," said Lady Marney throwing the note to Egremont. "Her quadrille will never take place, which is a pity,

as it is to consist only of beauties and eldest sons. I suppose I must send her a line," and she wrote:
"My dearest Lady St Julians,

"How good of you to write to me, and send me such cheering news! I have no doubt you are right: you always are: I know he had the hay fever last year. How fortunate for your quadrille, and how charming it will be! Let me know if you hear anything further from your unmentionable quarter.
"Ever your affectionate
"C.M."

Chapter 5

Lord Marney left several children; his heir was five years older than the next son Charles who at the period of his father's death was at Christchurch and had just entered the last year of his minority. Attaining that age, he received the sum of fifteen thousand pounds, his portion, a third of which amount his expenditure had then already anticipated. Egremont had been brought up in the enjoyment of every comfort and every luxury that refinement could devise and wealth furnish. He was a favourite child. His parents emulated each other in pampering and indulging him. Every freak was pardoned, every whim was gratified. He might ride what horses he liked, and if he broke their knees, what in another would have been deemed a flagrant sin, was in him held only a proof of reckless spirit. If he were not a thoroughly selfish and altogether wilful person, but very much the reverse, it was not the fault of his parents, but rather the operation of a benignant nature that had bestowed on him a generous spirit and a tender heart, though accompanied with a dangerous susceptibility that made him the child and creature of impulse, and seemed to set at defiance even the course of time to engraft on his nature any quality of prudence. The tone of Eton during the days of Charles Egremont was not of the high character which at present distinguishes that community. It was the unforeseen eve of the great change, that, whatever was its purpose or have been its immediate results, at least gave the first shock to the pseudo-aristocracy of this country. Then all was blooming; sunshine and odour; not a breeze disturbing the meridian splendour. Then the world was not only made for a few, but a very few. One could almost tell upon one's fingers the happy families who could do anything, and might have everything. A school-boy's ideas of the Church then were fat-livings, and of the State, rotten-boroughs. To do nothing and get something, formed a boy's ideal of a manly career. There was nothing in the lot, little in the temperament, of Charles Egremont, to make him an exception to the multitude. Gaily and securely he floated on the brilliant stream. Popular at school, idolized at home, the present had no cares, and the future secured him a family seat in Parliament the moment he entered life, and the inheritance of a glittering post at court in due time, as its legitimate consequence. Enjoyment, not ambition, seemed the principle of his existence. The contingency of a mitre, the certainty of rich preferment, would not reconcile him to the self-sacrifice which, to a certain degree, was required from a priest, even in those days of rampant Erastianism. He left the colonies as the spoil of his younger brothers; his own ideas of a profession being limited to a barrack in a London park, varied by visits to Windsor. But there was time enough to think of these things. He had to enjoy Oxford as he had enjoyed Eton. Here his allowance from his

father was extravagant, though greatly increased by tithes from his mother's pin-money. While he was pursuing his studies, hunting and boating, driving tandems, riding matches, tempering his energies in the crapulence of boyish banquets, and anticipating life, at the risk of expulsion, in a miserable mimicry of metropolitan dissipation, Dukism, that was supposed to be eternal, suddenly crashed.

The Reform Act has not placed the administration of our affairs in abler hands than conducted them previously to the passing of the measure, for the most efficient members of the present cabinet with some very few exceptions, and those attended by peculiar circumstances, were ministers before the Reform Act was contemplated. Nor has that memorable statute created a Parliament of a higher reputation for public qualities, such as politic ability, and popular eloquence, and national consideration, than was furnished by the old scheme. On the contrary; one house of Parliament has been irremediably degraded into the decaying position of a mere court of registry, possessing great privileges, on condition that it never exercises them; while the other chamber that, at the first blush, and to the superficial, exhibits symptoms of almost unnatural vitality, engrossing in its orbit all the business of the country, assumes on a more studious inspection somewhat of the character of a select vestry, fulfilling municipal rather than imperial offices, and beleaguered by critical and clamorous millions, who cannot comprehend why a privileged and exclusive senate is required to perform functions which immediately concern all, which most personally comprehend, and which many in their civic spheres believe they could accomplish in a manner not less satisfactory, though certainly less ostentatious.

But if it have not furnished us with abler administrators or a more illustrious senate, the Reform Act may have exercised on the country at large a beneficial influence. Has it? Has it elevated the tone of the public mind? Has it cultured the popular sensibilities to noble and ennobling ends? Has it proposed to the people of England a higher test of national respect and confidence than the debasing qualification universally prevalent in this country since the fatal introduction of the system of Dutch finance? Who will pretend it? If a spirit of rapacious coveteousness, desecrating all the humanities of life, has been the besetting sin of England for the last century and a half, since the passing of the Reform Act the altar of Mammon has blazed with triple worship. To acquire, to accumulate, to plunder each other by virtue of philosophic phrases, to propose an Utopia to consist only of WEALTH and TOIL, this has been the breathless business of enfranchised England for the last twelve years, until we are startled from our voracious strife by the wail of intolerable serfage.

Are we then to conclude, that the only effect of the Reform Act has been to create in this country another of those class interests, which we now

so loudly accuse as the obstacles to general amelioration? Not exactly that. The indirect influence of the Reform Act has been not inconsiderable, and may eventually lead to vast consequences. It set men a-thinking; it enlarged the horizon of political experience; it led the public mind to ponder somewhat on the circumstances of our national history; to pry into the beginnings of some social anomalies which they found were not so ancient as they had been led to believe, and which had their origin in causes very different to what they had been educated to credit; and insensibly it created and prepared a popular intelligence to which one can appeal, no longer hopelessly, in an attempt to dispel the mysteries with which for nearly three centuries it has been the labour of party writers to involve a national history, and without the dispersion of which no political position can be understood and no social evil remedied.

The events of 1830 did not produce any change in the modes of thought and life of Charles Egremont. He took his political cue from his mother, who was his constant correspondent. Lady Marney was a distinguished "stateswoman," as they called Lady Carlisle in Charles the First's time, a great friend of Lady St Julians, and one of the most eminent and impassioned votaries of Dukism. Her first impression on the overthrow of her hero was, astonishment at the impertinence of his adversaries, mingled with some lofty pity for their silly ambition and short-lived career. She existed for a week in the delightful expectation of his grace being sent for again, and informed every one in confidence, that "these people could not form a cabinet." When the tocsin of peace, reform, and retrenchment sounded, she smiled bitterly; was sorry for poor Lord Grey of whom she had thought better, and gave them a year, adding with consoling malice, "that it would be another Canning affair." At length came the Reform Bill itself, and no one laughed more heartily than Lady Marney; not even the House of Commons to whom it was presented. The bill was thrown out, and Lady Marney gave a grand ball to celebrate the event, and to compensate the London shopkeepers for the loss of their projected franchise. Lady Marney was preparing to resume her duties at court when to her great surprise the firing of cannon announced the dissolution of Parliament. She turned pale; she was too much in the secrets of Tadpole and Taper to be deceived as to the consequences; she sank into her chair, and denounced Lord Grey as a traitor to his order.

Lady Marney who for six months had been writing to her son at Oxford the most charming letters, full of fun, quizzing the whole Cabinet, now announced to Egremont that a revolution was inevitable, that all property would be instantly confiscated, the poor deluded king led to the block or sent over to Hanover at the best, and the whole of the nobility and principal gentry, and indeed every one who possessed anything, guillotined without remorse.