

THE WORKS

OF

EDWARD BULWER LYTTON

(LORD LYTTON)

NIGHT AND MORNING

Book I

PREFACE

TO THE EDITION OF 1845.

Much has been written by critics, especially by those in Germany (the native land of criticism), upon the important question, whether to please or to instruct should be the end of Fiction—whether a moral purpose is or is not in harmony with the undidactic spirit perceptible in the higher works of the imagination. And the general result of the discussion has been in favour of those who have contended that Moral Design, rigidly so called, should be excluded from the aims of the Poet; that his Art should regard only the Beautiful, and be contented with the indirect moral tendencies, which can never fail the creation of the Beautiful. Certainly, in fiction, to interest, to please, and sportively to elevate—to take man from the low passions, and the miserable troubles of life, into a higher region, to beguile weary and selfish pain, to excite a genuine sorrow at vicissitudes not his own, to raise the passions into sympathy with heroic struggles—and to admit the soul into that serener atmosphere from which it rarely returns to ordinary existence, without some memory or association which ought to enlarge the domain of thought and exalt the motives of action;—such, without other moral result or object, may satisfy the Poet,* and constitute the highest and most universal morality he can effect. But subordinate to this, which is not the duty, but the necessity, of all Fiction that outlasts the hour, the writer of imagination may well permit to himself other purposes and objects, taking care that they be not too sharply defined, and too obviously meant to contract the Poet into the Lecturer—the Fiction into the Homily. The delight in Shylock is not less vivid for the Humanity it latently but profoundly inculcates; the healthful merriment of the Tartufe is not less enjoyed for the exposure of the Hypocrisy it denounces. We need not demand from Shakespeare or from Moliere other morality than that which Genius unconsciously throws around it—the natural light which it reflects; but if some great principle which guides us practically in the daily intercourse with men becomes in the general lustre more clear and more pro-

nounced, we gain doubly, by the general tendency and the particular result.

*[I use the word Poet in its proper sense, as applicable to any writer, whether in verse or prose, who invents or creates.]

Long since, in searching for new regions in the Art to which I am a servant, it seemed to me that they might be found lying far, and rarely trodden, beyond that range of conventional morality in which Novelist after Novelist had entrenched himself—amongst those subtle recesses in the ethics of human life in which Truth and Falsehood dwell undisturbed and unseparated. The vast and dark Poetry around us—the Poetry of Modern Civilisation and Daily Existence, is shut out from us in much, by the shadowy giants of Prejudice and Fear. He who would arrive at the Fairy Land must face the Phantoms. Betimes, I set myself to the task of investigating the motley world to which our progress in humanity—has attained, caring little what misrepresentation I incurred, what hostility I provoked, in searching through a devious labyrinth for the foot-tracks of Truth.

In the pursuit of this object, I am, not vainly, conscious that I have had my influence on my time—that I have contributed, though humbly and indirectly, to the benefits which Public Opinion has extorted from Governments and Laws. While (to content myself with a single example) the ignorant or malicious were decrying the moral of Paul Clifford, I consoled myself with perceiving that its truths had stricken deep—that many, whom formal essays might not reach, were enlisted by the picture and the popular force of Fiction into the service of that large and Catholic Humanity which frankly examines into the causes of crime, which ameliorates the ills of society by seeking to amend the circumstances by which they are occasioned; and commences the great work of justice to mankind by proportioning the punishment to the offence. That work, I know, had its share in the wise and great relaxation of our Criminal Code—it has had its share in results yet more valuable, because leading to more comprehensive reforms—viz., in the courageous facing of the ills which the mock decorum of timidity would shun to contemplate, but which, till fairly fronted, in the spirit of practical

Christianity, sap daily, more and more, the walls in which blind Indolence would protect itself from restless Misery and rampant Hunger. For it is not till Art has told the unthinking that nothing (rightly treated) is too low for its breath to vivify and its wings to raise, that the Herd awaken from their chronic lethargy of contempt, and the Lawgiver is compelled to redress what the Poet has lifted into esteem. In thus enlarging the boundaries of the Novelist, from trite and conventional to untrodden ends, I have seen, not with the jealousy of an author, but with the pride of an Originator, that I have served as a guide to later and abler writers, both in England and abroad. If at times, while imitating, they have mistaken me, I am not answerable for their errors; or if, more often, they have improved where they borrowed, I am not envious of their laurels. They owe me at least this, that I prepared the way for their reception, and that they would have been less popular and more misrepresented, if the outcry which bursts upon the first researches into new directions had not exhausted its noisy vehemence upon me.

In this Novel of *Night and Morning* I have had various ends in view — subordinate, I grant, to the higher and more durable morality which belongs to the Ideal, and instructs us playfully while it interests, in the passions, and through the heart. First — to deal fearlessly with that universal unsoundness in social justice which makes distinctions so marked and iniquitous between Vice and Crime — viz., between the corrupting habits and the violent act — which scarce touches the former with the lightest twig in the fascis — which lifts against the latter the edge of the Lictor's axe. Let a child steal an apple in sport, let a starveling steal a roll in despair, and Law conducts them to the Prison, for evil commune to mellow them for the gibbet. But let a man spend one apprenticeship from youth to old age in vice — let him devote a fortune, perhaps colossal, to the wholesale demoralisation of his kind — and he may be surrounded with the adulation of the so-called virtuous, and be served upon its knee, by that Lackey — the Modern World! I say not that Law can, or that Law should, reach the Vice as it does the Crime; but I say, that Opinion may be more than the servile shadow of Law. I impress not here, as in *Paul Clifford*, a material moral to work its effect on the Journals, at the Hastings, through Constituents, and on Legisla-

tion;—I direct myself to a channel less active, more tardy, but as sure—to the Conscience—that reigns elder and superior to all Law, in men's hearts and souls;—I utter boldly and loudly a truth, if not all untold, murmured feebly and falteringly before, sooner or later it will find its way into the judgment and the conduct, and shape out a tribunal which requires not robe or ermine.

Secondly—In this work I have sought to lift the mask from the timid selfishness which too often with us bears the name of Respectability. Purposely avoiding all attraction that may savour of extravagance, patiently subduing every tone and every hue to the aspect of those whom we meet daily in our thoroughfares, I have shown in Robert Beaufort the man of decorous phrase and bloodless action—the systematic self-server— in whom the world forgive the lack of all that is generous, warm, and noble, in order to respect the passive acquiescence in methodical conventions and hollow forms. And how common such men are with us in this century, and how inviting and how necessary their delineation, may be seen in this,— that the popular and pre-eminent Observer of the age in which we live has since placed their prototype in vigorous colours upon imperishable canvas.—[Need I say that I allude to the Pecksniff of Mr. Dickens?]

There is yet another object with which I have identified my tale. I trust that I am not insensible to such advantages as arise from the diffusion of education really sound, and knowledge really available;—for these, as the right of my countrymen, I have contended always. But of late years there has been danger that what ought to be an important truth may be perverted into a pestilent fallacy. Whether for rich or for poor, disappointment must ever await the endeavour to give knowledge without labour, and experience without trial. Cheap literature and popular treatises do not in themselves suffice to fit the nerves of man for the strife below, and lift his aspirations, in healthful confidence above. He who seeks to divorce toil from knowledge deprives knowledge of its most valuable property.—the strengthening of the mind by exercise. We learn what really braces and elevates us only in proportion to the effort it costs us. Nor is it in Books alone, nor in Books chiefly, that we are made conscious of our strength as Men; Life is the great Schoolmaster, Experience the mighty Volume. He who has made one stern sacri-

fice of self has acquired more than he will ever glean from the odds and ends of popular philosophy. And the man the least scholastic may be more robust in the power that is knowledge, and approach nearer to the Arch-Seraphim, than Bacon himself, if he cling fast to two simple maxims—"Be honest in temptation, and in Adversity believe in God." Such moral, attempted before in Eugene Aram, I have enforced more directly here; and out of such convictions I have created hero and heroine, placing them in their primitive and natural characters, with aid more from life than books,— from courage the one, from affection the other—amidst the feeble Hermaphrodites of our sickly civilisation;—examples of resolute Manhood and tender Womanhood.

The opinions I have here put forth are not in fashion at this day. But I have never consulted the popular any more than the sectarian, Prejudice. Alone and unaided I have hewn out my way, from first to last, by the force of my own convictions. The corn springs up in the field centuries after the first sower is forgotten. Works may perish with the workman; but, if truthful, their results are in the works of others, imitating, borrowing, enlarging, and improving, in the everlasting Cycle of Industry and Thought.

Knebworth, 1845.

NOTE TO THE PRESENT EDITION, 1851.

I have nothing to add to the preceding pages, written six years ago, as to the objects and aims of this work; except to say, and by no means as a boast, that the work lays claims to one kind of interest which I certainly never desired to effect for it—viz., in exemplifying the glorious uncertainty of the Law. For, humbly aware of the blunders which Novelists not belonging to the legal profession are apt to commit, when they summon to the *denouement* of a plot the aid of a deity so mysterious as Themis, I submitted to an eminent lawyer the whole case of "Beaufort versus Beaufort," as it stands in this Novel. And the pages which refer to that suit were not only written from the opinion annexed to the brief I sent in, but submitted to the eye of my counsel, and revised by his pen.—(N.B. He was feed.) Judge then my dismay when I heard long afterwards that the late Mr. O'Connell disputed the soundness of the law I had thus bought and paid for! "Who shall decide when doctors disagree?" All I can say is, that I took the best opinion that love or money could get me; and I should add, that my lawyer, unawed by the alleged *ipse dixit* of the great Agitator (to be sure, he is dead), still stoutly maintains his own views of the question.

[I have, however, thought it prudent so far to meet the objection suggested by Mr. O'Connell, as to make a slight alteration in this edition, which will probably prevent the objection, if correct, being of any material practical effect on the disposition of that visionary El Dorado—the Beaufort Property.]

Let me hope that the right heir will live long enough to come under the Statute of Limitations. Possession is nine points of the law, and Time may give the tenth.

Knebworth.

NIGHT AND MORNING.

BOOK I.

"Noch in meines Lebens Lenze
War ich and ich wandert' aus,
Und der Jugend frohe Tanze
Liess ich in des Vaters Haus."

SCHILLER, *Der Pilgrim*.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

"Now rests our vicar. They who knew him best,
Proclaim his life to have been entirely rest;
Not one so old has left this world of sin,
More like the being that he entered in." — CRABBE.

In one of the Welsh counties is a small village called A — —. It is somewhat removed from the high road, and is, therefore, but little known to those luxurious amateurs of the picturesque, who view nature through the windows of a carriage and four. Nor, indeed, is there anything, whether of scenery or association, in the place itself, sufficient to allure the more sturdy enthusiast from the beaten tracks which tourists and guide-books prescribe to those who search the Sublime and Beautiful amidst the mountain homes of the ancient Britons. Still, on the whole, the village is not without its attractions. It is placed in a small valley, through which winds and leaps down many a rocky fall, a clear, babbling, noisy rivulet, that affords excellent sport to the brethren of the angle. Thither, accordingly, in the summer season occasionally resort the Waltons of the neighbourhood — young farmers, retired traders, with now and then a stray artist, or a roving student from one of the universities. Hence the solitary hostelry of A — —, being somewhat more frequented, is

also more clean and comfortable than could reasonably be anticipated from the insignificance and remoteness of the village.

At a time in which my narrative opens, the village boasted a sociable, agreeable, careless, half-starved parson, who never failed to introduce himself to any of the anglers who, during the summer months, passed a day or two in the little valley. The Rev. Mr. Caleb Price had been educated at the University of Cambridge, where he had contrived, in three years, to run through a little fortune of L3500. It is true, that he acquired in return the art of making milkpunch, the science of pugilism, and the reputation of one of the best-natured, rattling, open-hearted companions whom you could desire by your side in a tandem to Newmarket, or in a row with the bargemen. By the help of these gifts and accomplishments, he had not failed to find favour, while his money lasted, with the young aristocracy of the "Gentle Mother." And, though the very reverse of an ambitious or calculating man, he had certainly nourished the belief that some one of the "hats" or "tinsel gowns"—i.e., young lords or fellow-commoners, with whom he was on such excellent terms, and who supped with him so often, would do something for him in the way of a living. But it so happened that when Mr. Caleb Price had, with a little difficulty, scrambled through his degree, and found himself a Bachelor of Arts and at the end of his finances, his grand acquaintances parted from him to their various posts in the State Militant of Life. And, with the exception of one, joyous and reckless as himself, Mr. Caleb Price found that when Money makes itself wings it flies away with our friends. As poor Price had earned no academical distinction, so he could expect no advancement from his college; no fellowship; no tutorship leading hereafter to livings, stalls, and deaneries. Poverty began already to stare him in the face, when the only friend who, having shared his prosperity, remained true to his adverse fate,—a friend, fortunately for him, of high connections and brilliant prospects—succeeded in obtaining for him the humble living of A—. To this primitive spot the once jovial roisterer cheerfully retired—contrived to live contented upon an income somewhat less than he had formerly given to his groom—preached very short sermons to a very scanty and ignorant congregation, some of whom only understood Welsh—did good to the poor and sick in his own careless, slovenly way—and, uncheered or unvexed

by wife and children, he rose in summer with the lark and in winter went to bed at nine precisely, to save coals and candles. For the rest, he was the most skilful angler in the whole county; and so willing to communicate the results of his experience as to the most taking colour of the flies, and the most favoured haunts of the trout—that he had given especial orders at the inn, that whenever any strange gentleman came to fish, Mr. Caleb Price should be immediately sent for. In this, to be sure, our worthy pastor had his usual recompense. First, if the stranger were tolerably liberal, Mr. Price was asked to dinner at the inn; and, secondly, if this failed, from the poverty or the churlishness of the obliged party, Mr. Price still had an opportunity to hear the last news—to talk about the Great World—in a word, to exchange ideas, and perhaps to get an old newspaper, or an odd number of a magazine.

Now, it so happened that one afternoon in October, when the periodical excursions of the anglers, becoming gradually rarer and more rare, had altogether ceased, Mr. Caleb Price was summoned from his parlour in which he had been employed in the fabrication of a net for his cabbages, by a little white-headed boy, who came to say there was a gentleman at the inn who wished immediately to see him—a strange gentleman, who had never been there before.

Mr. Price threw down his net, seized his hat, and, in less than five minutes, he was in the best room of the little inn.

The person there awaiting him was a man who, though plainly clad in a velveteen shooting-jacket, had an air and mien greatly above those common to the pedestrian visitors of A—. He was tall, and of one of those athletic forms in which vigour in youth is too often followed by corpulence in age. At this period, however, in the full prime of manhood—the ample chest and sinewy limbs, seen to full advantage in their simple and manly dress—could not fail to excite that popular admiration which is always given to strength in the one sex as to delicacy in the other. The stranger was walking impatiently to and fro the small apartment when Mr. Price entered; and then, turning to the clergyman a countenance handsome and striking, but yet more prepossessing from its expression of frankness than from the regularity of its features,—he stopped short, held out his hand, and said, with a gay laugh, as he glanced over the

parson's threadbare and slovenly costume, "My poor Caleb!—what a metamorphosis!—I should not have known you again!"

"What! you! Is it possible, my dear fellow?—how glad I am to see you! What on earth can bring you to such a place? No! not a soul would believe me if I said I had seen you in this miserable hole."

"That is precisely the reason why I am here. Sit down, Caleb, and we'll talk over matters as soon as our landlord has brought up the materials for—"

"The milk-punch," interrupted Mr. Price, rubbing his hands.

"Ah, that will bring us back to old times, indeed!"

In a few minutes the punch was prepared, and after two or three preparatory glasses, the stranger thus commenced: "My dear Caleb, I am in want of your assistance, and above all of your secrecy."

"I promise you both beforehand. It will make me happy the rest of my life to think I have served my patron—my benefactor—the only friend I possess."

"Tush, man! don't talk of that: we shall do better for you one of these days. But now to the point: I have come here to be married—married, old boy! married!"

And the stranger threw himself back in his chair, and chuckled with the glee of a schoolboy.

"Humph!" said the parson, gravely. "It is a serious thing to do, and a very odd place to come to."

"I admit both propositions: this punch is superb. To proceed. You know that my uncle's immense fortune is at his own disposal; if I disoblige him, he would be capable of leaving all to my brother; I should disoblige him irrevocably if he knew that I had married a tradesman's daughter; I am going to marry a tradesman's daughter—a girl in a million! the ceremony must be as secret as possible. And in this church, with you for the priest, I do not see a chance of discovery."

"Do you marry by license?"

"No, my intended is not of age; and we keep the secret even from her father. In this village you will mumble over the bans without

one of your congregation ever taking heed of the name. I shall stay here a month for the purpose. She is in London, on a visit to a relation in the city. The bans on her side will be published with equal privacy in a little church near the Tower, where my name will be no less unknown than hers. Oh, I've contrived it famously!"

"But, my dear fellow, consider what you risk."

"I have considered all, and I find every chance in my favour. The bride will arrive here on the day of our wedding: my servant will be one witness; some stupid old Welshman, as antediluvian as possible—I leave it to you to select him—shall be the other. My servant I shall dispose of, and the rest I can depend on."

"But—"

"I detest buts; if I had to make a language, I would not admit such a word in it. And now, before I run on about Catherine, a subject quite inexhaustible, tell me, my dear friend, something about yourself."

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Somewhat more than a month had elapsed since the arrival of the stranger at the village inn. He had changed his quarters for the Parsonage—went out but little, and then chiefly on foot excursions among the sequestered hills in the neighbourhood. He was therefore but partially known by sight, even in the village; and the visit of some old college friend to the minister, though indeed it had never chanced before, was not, in itself, so remarkable an event as to excite any particular observation. The bans had been duly, and half audibly, hurried over, after the service was concluded, and while the scanty congregation were dispersing down the little aisle of the church,—when one morning a chaise and pair arrived at the Parsonage. A servant out of livery leaped from the box. The stranger opened the door of the chaise, and, uttering a joyous exclamation, gave his arm to a lady, who, trembling and agitated, could scarcely, even with that stalwart support, descend the steps. "Ah!" she said, in a voice choked with tears, when they found themselves alone in the little parlour,— "ah! if you knew how I have suffered!"

How is it that certain words, and those the homeliest, which the hand writes and the eye reads as trite and commonplace expres-

sions—when spoken convey so much,—so many meanings complicated and refined? "Ah! if you knew how I have suffered!"

When the lover heard these words, his gay countenance fell; he drew back —his conscience smote him: in that complaint was the whole history of a clandestine love, not for both the parties, but for the woman—the painful secrecy—the remorseful deceit—the shame—the fear—the sacrifice. She who uttered those words was scarcely sixteen. It is an early age to leave Childhood behind for ever!

"My own love! you have suffered, indeed; but it is over now.

"Over! And what will they say of me—what will they think of me at home?

Over! Ah!"

"It is but for a short time; in the course of nature my uncle cannot live long: all then will be explained. Our marriage once made public, all connected with you will be proud to own you. You will have wealth, station—a name among the first in the gentry of England. But, above all, you will have the happiness to think that your forbearance for a time has saved me, and, it may be, our children, sweet one!—from poverty and—"

"It is enough," interrupted the girl; and the expression of her countenance became serene and elevated. "It is for you—for your sake. I know what you hazard: how much I must owe you! Forgive me, this is the last murmur you shall ever hear from these lips."

An hour after these words were spoken, the marriage ceremony was concluded.

"Caleb," said the bridegroom, drawing the clergyman aside as they were about to re-enter the house, "you will keep your promise, I know; and you think I may depend implicitly upon the good faith of the witness you have selected?"

"Upon his good faith?—no," said Caleb, smiling, "but upon his deafness, his ignorance, and his age. My poor old clerk! He will have forgotten all about it before this day three months. Now I have seen your lady, I no longer wonder that you incur so great a risk. I