

THE
EARL OF BEACONSFIELD'S
WIT AND WISDOM

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WIT AND WISDOM
OF
BENJAMIN DISRAELI
EARL OF BEACONSFIELD

COLLECTED from HIS WRITINGS and SPEECHES

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P R E F A C E.

As 'good wine needs no bush,' so words of wit and wisdom, whether falling from the lips, or flowing from the pen, of a great man, do not call for a preface—and no one will gainsay the fact that Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield, was one of the greatest men of the century—probably the greatest, when the difficulties which he had to overcome are taken into consideration.

It is not given to many to excel either in action or in thought; to very few indeed to be *facile princeps* in both, as was Lord Beaconsfield—a Janus of literature and politics, in the study a Thackeray, a Bolingbroke in the Senate.

But this is neither the time nor the place for panegyric. The air is still ringing with the voice of unanimous England, proclaiming the patience and the patriotism of the great statesman, extolling the eloquence of the brilliant debater, the sparkling phrases of the witty writer, who has just passed away.

This selection does not purport to be exhaustive—very far from it. It would be easy to compile other volumes equally wise and witty. The gold nearest the surface has been extracted from the rich lode, but an ample store of nuggets remains to reward the seeker ; and the object of the present work will be more than accomplished if it induces others to look for further treasure in the writings and speeches of the Earl of Beaconsfield.

It only remains to add that the present work was begun before Lord Beaconsfield's last illness, and that, though the manuscript was never in his hands, he expressed his approval and looked forward to its publication with interest.

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