

Anti-Jacobin Novels

Isaac D'Israeli, *Vaurien: or, Sketches of the Times*
(1797)

Edited by
Nicola Trott



ANTI-JACOBIN NOVELS

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VOLUME 8

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INTRODUCTION

Published anonymously in February 1797,¹ *Vaurien: or, Sketches of the Times* was an early work of its kind, the kind that modern criticism refers to in general as ‘the anti-Jacobin novel’.² Being a relatively fresh entrant in the field, it had a share in fixing the formal features and thematic preoccupations for others of its type. Most obviously, it confirmed that anti-Jacobin fiction was a species of faction: imaginary figures and situations were routinely combined, not just with historical, but with immediately topical and contemporary people and events. It also brought together two essential conditions for brand recognition within the new genre: a common ideological enemy, in the group of ‘philosopher’-radicals associated with William Godwin; and a common mode of representation, in the comic or satirical abstraction of intellectual, political or moral attitudes and positions. The novel’s favourite device is the allegorically named character, a device that is established at once by the eponymous villain of the piece: a French republican working to foment revolution in Britain, Vaurien is indeed a *vaurien*, the anglicized form of his native *vaut rien*, meaning a ‘worthless, good-for-nothing fellow’.³ D’Israeli’s extended use of the ‘character’ – a usage remotely descended from Theophrastus and more nearly from examples made familiar by the *Spectator* papers – was later to be taken up by Peacock; while his sceptical ‘enquiry’ into ‘a new system of morality’ (p. 23) directly anticipated the satire of the ‘New Morality’ which began appearing just nine months afterwards, with the launch of the *Anti-Jacobin; or Weekly Examiner*.⁴

Isaac D’Israeli may be better known for being the father of a novelist, the pre-prime ministerial Benjamin Disraeli, than for being a novelist himself. Yet he published, besides a collection of short ‘romances’, three works of fiction,⁵ and when the first, *Vaurien*, appeared, he was already an established literary figure, solid enough to have been the subject of one of the *Monthly Mirror*’s regular biographical sketches.⁶ This degree of celebrity was on the face of it unlikely. D’Israeli was born, in 1766, to Jewish mercantile parents. His father had emigrated less than twenty years previously to London from Italy to set up an import business and his mother

was reportedly 'so mortified by her social position that she lived until eighty without indulging in a tender expression'.⁷ The only child of his father's second marriage, and the only son of either union, D'Israeli was indulged with a country-house childhood and spells of foreign travel and tuition, but was fully expected to join the family concern. Against this prospect he rebelled in ways that seem typical of the financially secure and liberally educated second-generation immigrant: he declared himself a writer and looked for a cultural entrée into British society, starting, in 1784, with a poem condemning commerce, which he sent to Dr Johnson, who being ill returned it unread. Failure in this quarter did not prevent D'Israeli trying elsewhere: Thomas Holcroft (the dramatist), Vicesimus Knox (the essayist and anthologist) and Richard Gough (the antiquarian) were all approached, though none responded in kind. D'Israeli's search for a patron – implicitly, for a literary father who might replace or supplement the businessman who was his biological father – came good when he caused a 'minor sensation'⁸ by mounting an attack on the most personal satirist of the day, Peter Pindar (alias John Wolcot). 'On the Abuse of Satire' made D'Israeli friends among those who had been Pindar's targets (and, remarkably, did not alienate Wolcot either), among them the Poet Laureate, Henry James Pye, to whom the piece was addressed. It was to Pye that D'Israeli dedicated his first volume, a verse *Defence of Poetry* (1790). And it was Pye who reconciled D'Israeli senior 'to his son's adoption of a literary career' (DNB). In the event, he may not have had much choice: at twenty-five, Isaac became financially independent, having inherited the wealth which his orthodox maternal grandmother felt indisposed to leave to her unobservant daughters – though it freed him to pursue secular literary projects, to promote modern and enlightened Judaism, to christen his children in the Established Church and formally to withdraw from the Bevis Marks Synagogue.

His future settled, D'Israeli appears also to have decided on the company he wished chiefly to keep. His own Anglo-European identity must have complicated matters, but an early enthusiasm for and proximity to the French Revolution (he had travelled in France and elsewhere in 1788–9 and would do so again in 1792) gave way to sceptical distance (in 1794, he assisted in compiling some unflattering *Domestic Anecdotes of the French Nation*), while his contacts with English Jacobins went no further (in 1790, he had written for the *English Review*, in which the Godwinians published; in 1798, following the publication of *Vaurien*, Holcroft 'cut' D'Israeli when he met him at a book sale).⁹ Such shifts of allegiance did

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not end D'Israeli's interest in French writing, nor did it prevent his becoming the first outside Blake's immediate circle to purchase the artist's work.¹⁰ In English literary tastes, he was however identifiably *parti pris*, taking a role in the founding of the Tory *Quarterly Review* and publishing, in a *Quarterly* article of 1820, the vindication of Pope that fuelled the famous 'Controversy' in which Bowles, Campbell, Roscoe and Byron all participated. Through Murray, his publisher, with whose family the D'Israelis were intimate by 1814,¹¹ D'Israeli met the poet Thomas Moore, the critic John Wilson Croker, the (unrelated) antiquarian Thomas Crofton Croker and the Egyptologist Giovanni Belzoni. Later in life, his son Benjamin introduced him to Edward Bulwer-Lytton, an admirer who dedicated to him the fourth of the *England and the English* series ('View of the Intellectual Spirit of the Time', 1833); and, in his seventies, D'Israeli found friends in Lady Blessington's circle, including Walter Savage Landor.

In the same year as he came into his inheritance, 1791, D'Israeli put out a first volume of the work that was to make his name, an extraordinary compendium or 'omnium gatherum', published by Murray and culled largely from his now habitual reading in the library of the British Museum, on almost every conceivable subject, 'Literary, Critical, and Historical'. *Curiosities of Literature*, expanded and reissued throughout his writing career, met the needs – the curiosities – of a reading public without scholarly resources, but with an appetite for miscellaneous information. 'I am a great friend to Miscellaneous productions', D'Israeli told his lifelong friend and fellow researcher, Francis Douce, in 1794, having already realized that 'A single subject, though profoundly discussed is ... at the best, adapted to a confined Circle'.¹²

D'Israeli found his metier as a collector of disparate material into types of writing which were then quasi-genres of their own, the miscellany (*Miscellanies; or, Literary Recreations* came out in 1796),¹³ the ana and the anecdote (both of which had French connections). All these literary forms were what Boswell, referring to his *Life of Johnson*, called 'characteristical' – that is, revealing of individual human character. *An Essay on the Manners and Genius of the Literary Character* (1795), which earned the praise of Byron, was a work by which D'Israeli himself set considerable store, putting his name on the title-page from the first edition, and dedicating the fourth to Southey, by then (1828) Poet Laureate and a firm friend. This was but one of several attempts to turn anecdote into something more than the sum of its parts: in 1812 and 1814, D'Israeli

published the *Calamities* and then the *Quarrels of Authors*, the first directed to 'inquiries respecting their moral and literary characters' and the second to 'memoirs for our literary history'. Elsewhere, the appeal was more directly 'philosophical': in 1793, he capitalized on the success of *Curiosities of Literature* (already in its third edition, with his name on the title-page and a second volume added) by offering *A Dissertation on Anecdotes*. Such meta-anecdotage grew out of D'Israeli's sometimes uneasy sense that he might be regarded as a mere compiler or bookmaker rather than as an author or 'Man of Taste'.¹⁴ Samuel Rogers, to whom he was introduced by the anecdotalist James Pettit Andrews,¹⁵ is quoted as saying of him: 'There is a man with only half an intellect; and yet he makes books that can't help living' (a memorable tartness that was partly politically motivated, Rogers being staunchly Whig).¹⁶

The reach beyond compilation is clearest in another area than either the psychological ('characteristical') or philosophical; that is, the historical. Although it was never fully achieved, D'Israeli's ambition to write a comprehensive history of English literature saw partial realization in his *Amenities of Literature* (1841). But it was his five-volume *Commentaries on the Life and Reign of Charles the First* (1828–31) which proved his 'most valuable work' and marked 'a distinct advance in the methods of historical research' (*DNB*). On 4 July 1832, this scholarship, and the politics behind it, gained D'Israeli an honorary degree from a Royalist University of Oxford. Byron was right, however, on reading *Quarrels of Authors*, to refer to 'that most entertaining and researching writer, Israeli' (*DNB*). The research (the reliability of which was questioned at the time) would not have been read had it been less than entertaining. D'Israeli's interests led him to link 'history' to 'character', enlivened by anecdote and appealing to 'taste' as well as to 'matter of fact'. All these elements are combined in *Vaurien*.

The novel charts the adventures of a country clergyman's son and conventional Englishman, Charles Hamilton, in the wilds of late eighteenth-century London; and narrates the attempt of Vaurien, French émigré and anti-hero, to seduce both him (ideologically) and the girl with whom he is in love (sexually). This threat of a double seduction, mental and physical, comes as standard in subsequent anti-Jacobin fiction. The spectacle of the Frenchman posing as a 'town-philosopher' (p. 48) while identifying possible targets – his reconnoitring of St Paul's as the perfect site for an 'incendiary' attack, for instance (p. 86) – has uncanny resemblances to today's 'war on terror'. D'Israeli's avowed literary models, *Joseph Andrews*

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and *Gil Blas*, both of which he cites in the Advertisement, are classics of the picaresque. But his own novel shows the diversion of the picaresque into politics, a politics that had been made both imperative and imperiling by the 'great debate' of the 1790s, between the enemies and enthusiasts of the French Revolution in Britain, by the as yet unsuccessfully prosecuted war with Republican France, and most recently, in 1796, by the Franco-Irish invasion attempt at Bantry Bay (a conspiracy which enters the novel, via Vaurien's networks, in chapter 22, see pp. 155–6). *Vaurien* was a deliberate contribution, in a newly alarmed and energized phase of reaction, to the suppression of English 'Jacobin' activity.¹⁷ This literary anti-Jacobinism was doubly reactive in that it was moving in on territory already occupied by the Jacobin novelists, Godwin, Holcroft, Inchbald, Bage and Wollstonecraft. Deploying methods that were rapidly adopted and adapted by others – Walker, Bisset, Lucas and Hamilton¹⁸ – D'Israeli turned what might have been a position of weakness into one of strength. In Godwin's Jacobin novel, *Caleb Williams*, the aristocratic Falkland was only loosely identified with Edmund Burke; in D'Israeli's anti-Jacobin rejoinder, 'Mr. Subtile, the coldest-blooded metaphysician of the age' (p. 30), is none too subtly intended for William Godwin. While Godwin's presence in the novel indicates that *Vaurien* is a reactionary form in more than one sense, the effect is not of fictional dependency but rather of satirical usurpation. D'Israeli's intellectual targets, Godwin, Holcroft and many others besides, are incorporated as 'characters' within the novel itself, a novel which is of course hostile to their ideas. As a result, Jacobin thinkers become the captives, or clowns, of the anti-Jacobin text. Indeed, so do their writings. *Vaurien* turns at every opportunity to the trademark anti-Jacobin technique of mock-citation, whereby reference is made to the works of Jacobin authors in contexts which cannot fail to represent them as ludicrous, as well as dangerous or subversive. Direct quotations occur, in characters' speeches and authorial footnotes, but the interpretative regime in which they find themselves seeks to deprive these Jacobin originals of any meaning save that which is imposed on them by the host text. Where Godwin's Jacobinism – in *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*, especially – lays great store by the 'dissemination' of ideas, D'Israeli's anti-Jacobinism uses footnoted references as a means to the anti-dissemination of those same ideas. The critical apparatus serves to marginalize as well as ridicule the works cited, while the 'verbatim' quotations from radical sources – see, for instance, the notes on Holcroft,

Helvétius and Condorcet in chapter 3 (pp. 24–6) – are discredited by being attached to or voiced through the novel's sequence of 'characters'.

That these characters allude to live historical subjects poses something of a problem. Noting that friends of his in reading passages from the novel had shown 'malicious promptness [in] applying the characters and reflections to individuals', D'Israeli is moved to a double and rather disingenuous declaration, that 'at the same time, that there is not one character, and scarcely one incident, which is not founded on facts', nevertheless 'these volumes contain not a single individuality' (p. 11). Modern critics have not scrupled to name names: according to Marilyn Butler, 'The satire here is personal, for Subtile is meant to be recognisable as Godwin, Bounce as Richard Price, and so on';¹⁹ while for Ford K. Brown, 'Godwin is Mr. Subtile, Holcroft probably Mr. Reverberator, Thelwall certainly Mr. Rant and Parr probably Dr. Bounce', or conceivably Fawcett.²⁰ The critics agree, then, as to three of the intended targets,²¹ and disagree about a fourth. The implication of these positive identifications could probably be pushed a little further. Contemporary reviewers (see this volume, pp. 291–305) were surprisingly coy about playing the detective game, until the Francophile William Taylor broke ranks, in the *Monthly Review*, in order to condemn what he saw as D'Israeli's willingness to attribute to Vaurien, and hence to associate with the character's 'fictitious crimes', a work by a real, named individual (French writer de la Blancherie – the irony being that D'Israeli's information is derived from a review of Blancherie by Taylor himself: see this volume, p. 285, n. 501). Such guilt by association put at risk a Frenchman living in London within reach of the recently passed Alien Act – under which Vaurien is indeed deported at the end of the novel. The *Analytical Review* followed suit, taking issue with the representation of John Thelwall in the figure of Rant and pointing out the dangers posed to him by his fictional counterpart. Read in the light of Thelwall's identification, *Vaurien* becomes a startling piece of quasi-historical re-enactment, centring on the arrests and trials for treason in 1794–5; and Rant's role as a popular agitator who incites his hearers to 'behead the king' becomes an attempt to wrest for the Crown, in imputation at least, the guilty verdict of which the jury deprived it at the time.²² Moreover, the *Analytical's* reviewer may have been none other than William Godwin, as commissioned by Mary Wollstonecraft (see headnote to review, this volume, p. 298). If so, the review's alertness to analogies with the Treason Trials would be consistent with Godwin's public defence of those set before the courts in 1795;²³ though it is noticeable that it does not once draw attention to his own appearance in the

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character of *Subtile*. At any rate, the implied contexts for the liberal journal's disquiet – the fiction's coincidence with a history which it also rewrites, its deliberate obliviousness to the fact of Thelwall's acquittal from the charge of high treason – are the very things which the *Anti-Jacobin Review* is on the contrary keen to justify and enlarge upon, in its article on the novel, not least because it provides an occasion for attacking the *Analytical* reviewers as well as Citizen Thelwall.

If the circle of fictional identification or incrimination is widened, it is possible to find in the aristocratic bankroller of the revolutionaries, Lord Belfield, a portrait of the historical type whom Burke had singled out in *A Letter to a Noble Lord* (1796). That D'Israeli's character combines a voguish patronage of the 'new' philosophy with a traditional aristocratic interest in horseflesh may be intended to reflect ironically on the reputation of Francis Russell, fifth Duke of Bedford, the Whig peer who was a notable stockbreeder and had earned Burke's anger by objecting to the granting of his pension. Bedford, the victim of Burke's vitriol, is one likely historical candidate. Another may be Lord Shelburne, who supported Bedford's parliamentary motion for putting an end to the war with France, was patron of the 'Bowood Circle' – which included such Dissenters and reformers as Price and Priestley – and, at both his Bowood estate and his London home (Lansdowne House in Berkeley Square), was 'a munificent patron of literature and the fine arts', who played host to 'the most cultivated and liberal society of the day' (*DNB*).²⁴ D'Israeli has considerable fun with the semiotic double-think of such a position: in Lord Belfield's interpretation, the Jacobin principle of equality translates into an invitation to have even his humblest carts emblazoned with his coronet (p. 23) – a misplaced entrenchment of the inherited social order in which the philosophers are happy to collude because 'Citizen Lord Belfield' (p. 37) is after all paying for them to have their own equally self-serving fantasy of abolishing private property. D'Israeli leads the way in novelizing Burke's equation of metaphysics and theft, 'a den of bravoës and banditti' who assume 'the garb and tone of an academy of philosophers' and in their 'double character' regard their patron as both 'a noble booty' and 'a glorious subject for their experimental philosophy'.²⁵ Since those who enjoyed Shelburne's hospitality included Dr Johnson, and since *Vaurien* includes, in a character called Mr Johnson, a moral man who in ways not explained has got mixed up with Lord Belfield's set of revolutionaries, we may deduce that the great Doctor, whom D'Israeli admired, and defended in print,²⁶ is obliquely intended. The normality of his surname at any rate separates Johnson from the invented allegorical titles of *Subtile*,

Reverberator et al.²⁷ By name-association and by tacit disagreement (he ‘hems’ his way through Subtile’s monologue), Mr Johnson is placed among, but not of, the revolutionary party; and his position indicates that of the implied reader, while his novelistic role is to act as guide and mentor to the ingenuous hero Charles Hamilton.

And yet D’Israeli’s assertion that his volumes ‘contain not a single individuality’ may be more than authorial sleight of hand. The various models proposed for Dr Bounce (Parr, Price, Fawcett) rather confirm his experience ‘that the same character was frequently given to different persons’ by different readers of the work (p. 11), while the probable doubles for Lord Belfield suggest that the novel is not, in its range of reference at least, dealing in one-to-one correspondences. On closer inspection, the ‘characters’ are creatures of multiple identity: Subtile, for instance, has Helvétius, Mirabeau, Condorcet and Montaigne as well as Godwin (and Holcroft), at his fingertips, and incorporates as his own the latest scientific discoveries and experiments by Erasmus Darwin and Joseph Priestley (pp. 42–3). This procedure is useful for a number of reasons: it enables D’Israeli to combine in a single character-sketch the several personalities cited in the footnotes; it lends a greater depth and variety to the portrait; and it shows up the intellectual dependencies of the English Jacobin – ‘Subtile’ Godwin, it is implied, is merely a refiner upon the French *philosophes*, and his ‘Reverberator’ Holcroft therefore merely a repeater of a repeater. The usefulness of multiple identities extends to politics as well as to persons. When the Belfield radicals secretly turn themselves into ‘A Committee of Public Safety’ (see p. 204), the merger of English Jacobinism with a French Revolutionary state apparatus is clear enough; while their subsequent ‘Dissention’ (which covers both their disposition to disagree and their Dissenting origins) about what to do with the King in the aftermath of a British revolution – proposed solutions range from pensioning off to assassination²⁸ – is a parody of the debates held in the French National Assembly prior to the trial and execution of Louis XVI.²⁹ The analogies between Britain and France are seemingly meant to appear both alarming and absurd: the self-appointed ‘committee’ proposes, in addition to massacre and king-killing, liberating Newgate (London’s Bastille), taking the Tower and blowing up the Houses of Parliament. Although it aims to destroy the state, the threatened violence ends in farce, as D’Israeli shows the Godwinian party using the ‘Jacobin’ calculating method against itself: the demagogue ‘Dragon’ is asked how great a mob he can assemble, and when it turns out that only 300 are spoken for, Subtile’s cry of ‘Calculate, calculate!’ goes up, and the numbers game shows the plot is hopeless

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(p. 208). The clear message is the lack of any real popular support in Britain for a revolution *à la française*. The literary effect is a rather English fiction, perhaps, in which violent history is absorbed in comic effect.

However, this account of the book's identity politics still leaves out many of its characters and much of its interest. For *Vaurien* is not just, or simply, an anti-Jacobin novel. In the round, it is often distinctive in ways that set it apart from later, more tightly organized or politically motivated, examples of anti-Jacobin fiction. Where it is not busy flying the anti-Jacobin flag, its conservatism is moderate, even anodyne: the representative position is that of Charles Hamilton, that the 'constitution ... must be slowly reformed, not rapidly destroyed; united closer, not disorganised' (p. 154). It is indicative, for instance, that the *Analytical Review* approved, and the *Anti-Jacobin Review* disapproved, of the novel's sympathetic representation of two social groups in particular: Jews and prostitutes. In an extensive subplot, which lodges the innocent heroine, Emily, and her father, Lieutenant Balfour, a destitute sailor cast off by an ungrateful naval service, with Mrs Wilson, a mother of four forced into the sex trade (see pp. 20, 88–92), *Vaurien* makes room for types of exploited virtue and excusable vice. It discourages 'prejudice' in these directions even as it encourages it, after the Burkean example, in others (see pp. 21, 23). There is some contradiction, then, between the tolerance that is extended towards the downtrodden or disadvantaged and the intolerance that is shown to those who are regarded as ideologically unsound.³⁰ At the same time, the novel's method of 'ridicule' (p. 5) cuts against 'things as they are' as well as in favour of them; and its satire is aimed at a wide variety of social evils, ranging from the marriage-market – 'sanctioned prostitution' (p. 49) – to the workings of the law, medicine and religion (pp. 64–70).

This wider purpose spreads well beyond the anti-Jacobin plot of philosophizing, spying and agitating. Though his name is on the title-page, *Vaurien* himself appears only in chapter 11 (having been introduced, by report, at the end of chapter 10), two-thirds of the way through the first volume. And though his function as a possible spy emerges in chapter 12, his covert operations are hidden even to the reader until some way into the second volume. The novel's more continuous subject-matter lies in the direction of its subtitle, *Sketches of the Times: Exhibiting Views of the Philosophies, Religions, Politics, Literature, and Manners of the Age*,³¹ which enables it to conduct, in thirty-two chapter-length stages, a comprehensive survey of contemporary London (and by association British) society, analogous individually to contemporary cartoons by Gillray or Rowlandson, and

collectively to the city panorama that was invented and exhibited during this period.³²

Noticing that ‘every chapter ... forms, for the most part, a distinct sketch or essay’, the *Critical Review* judged ‘There is no regular story that serves to bind the whole together’.³³ This is certainly the effect on first reading, and chapter 11 consists explicitly of ‘A Dissertation on the Marvellous in Novel Writing’ (directed of course at the vogue for gothic); but on reflection the novel may be a little more connected up or ‘clubbable’ than this review suggests. For one thing it names many London meeting-places – from Brooks to the Bank, the Dissenting Library and St Paul’s to the Mansion House and stock exchange. For another, it deals in ‘sects’ and ‘systems’,³⁴ religious and philosophical, cultural and political, with a Londoner’s appreciation of who’s who within each sphere of influence. In addition to Lord Belfield’s circle, the philosopher-revolutionaries, there are two other groups worth mentioning. One is the *beau monde* gathered around Lady Belfield, with her aristo-sex games (placing bets on adultery) and aristo-pastimes (making dilettantish pursuits of painting and poetry). While *Vaurien* differs markedly from later anti-Jacobin novels in predating Godwin’s notorious *Memoirs of Mary Wollstonecraft*, it still manages to impeach Wollstonecraftian morals, in respect of Sunday observances (p. 55, n., refers to her own work, the *Letters Written ... in Sweden*) and in relation to Lady Belfield’s promiscuous advocacy of such ‘models of voluptuous freedom’ as Cleopatra and Mary, wife of Francis and lover of Darnley (p. 75). There is an obvious dramatic irony, in that both these models came to sticky ends, but the citing of ‘Mary’ is especially pointed (and, oddly, anticipates Wollstonecraft herself, who in the *Maria; or, The Wrongs of Woman* has own her Maria fall adulterously in love with Darnford, whose name, as Gary Kelly remarks, ‘is a variation on Darnley, the lover of Mary Queen of Scots and the cause of her downfall’).³⁵ Meanwhile, Lady Belfield’s ‘fashionable rout’ (p. 47), at which cards are played and gambles taken, presents opportunities for a wide range of society types to be examined, through the eyes of the critic-observer Mr Johnson and for the benefit of the ingénu Charles, rather as though cards from a deck were being turned over and their value explained to the novice player. Collectively, these gambling addicts target the Whig Devonshire House set (with which Bedford was associated). Financial transactions, and the circulation of money in society and government, is centred on a second significant sect or circle, that of the loan contractor, Mr Million, and his heiress daughter, who, as their family name insists, represent vulgarly obtrusive new money – abundant enough to purchase the Queen of

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France's diamond necklace (p. 102), to build a vast and ugly villa into the private ponds of which London's public water supply is diverted (p. 111), and to raise a war-chest for the ministry in its conquest of India. Money markets, and the technical aspects of calculating rates of increase or return on investment, are here, possibly for the first time, presented in fiction (p. 110). Though the novel never identifies the Millions as Jews, it is possible that D'Israeli had this racial stereotype in mind, and clear that he was drawing on the business expertise of his own father (who had been a stockbroker for twenty years and in 1801 would become a founder member of the London Stock Exchange, though he appears to have retired too early to take full advantage of the system of national loans introduced to finance the Napoleonic wars).³⁶

These intersecting social circles also introduce us to various sub-groups. Among them are booksellers and their authors: *Vaurien's* alertness to print culture – to writing itself as a 'trade' or 'Exchange' and to language as the medium of sectarian interests (pp. 32, 59) – coincides at certain points with a wish-fulfilling fantasy based on D'Israeli's own experience of searching for a patron and a literary life in London after a childhood spent at his father's house in the country. Thus, Mr Johnson, who himself emerges as an author of sorts, earning a living partly by ghost writing for those he has reviewed and found incompetent (p. 174), takes his protégé Charles on a tour of one of the town's bookshops (p. 58). Prominent among the bestsellers are the preachers, who contribute to the novel's directly sectarian preoccupations, and are treated also in the conversation of the comically fierce Mrs Bully, housekeeper to the Millions and fanatical Jacobite,³⁷ whose hostility to Dissent and especially Socinianism is almost worse than the heresy itself and whose reading in seventeenth-century religious controversy is an object lesson in bigotry. A further argumentative sub-group consists of two critics, whose absurd and amusing fictional quarrel alludes in passing to actual scandals involving both types, which record the antiquarian as having been duped into taking a fake for a genuine antiquity, and the arbiter of 'taste' as having been tricked into writing a declaration of love to a Della Cruscan poetess who was in fact being personated by a male writer (pp. 128, 132–3). (Still, something of D'Israeli's own divided interests and ambitions emerges in this clash between Acrid, representative of 'writers of taste', and Antique, of writers 'on *curious* subjects'.³⁸)

Even the stand-alone full-length portraits (to which whole chapters are dedicated) are linked together as a series, in that they consist of four

exemplary modern thinkers, the Great Philosopher (Subtile), the Philosophical Voluptuary (Sedley), the Jewish Philosopher and the Platonist. D'Israeli's biographer has suggested historical models for the last two, linking the Platonist to 'Godwin's associate Thomas Taylor'³⁹ – the largely self-taught and misunderstood devotee and translator of Greek philosophy and religion about whom D'Israeli wrote again in *Curiosities of Literature* – and the Jewish Philosopher to Moses Mendelssohn,⁴⁰ the German Platonist and 'Jewish Socrates', about whom D'Israeli would publish an article in 1798,⁴¹ and in whom it is possible to find both an idealized self-portrait⁴² and an idealized racial identity. To Mendelssohn's ideas of the modern enlightened and educated Jew, subject neither to conversion nor to ghettoization, D'Israeli had a lifelong attachment, resulting ultimately in his 1833 work, *The Genius of Judaism*.

All four major 'characters' are, if only occasionally, interesting and sympathetic in excess of their satirical function – the Jewish Philosopher uniquely so, since he attracts neither irony nor criticism and is permitted a densely referenced historical summary of anti-semitic culture – Britain's not excepted. Subtile himself, being possessed of 'An emphatic monotony' from the 'gigantic ideas' which 'formed his genius' (p. 34), exacts a kind of grudging awe. Vaurien, too, is morally and culturally complex in ways that exceed his functional brief: he dispenses charity to hard-luck cases, and his last stand, a proclamation in favour of a secular cult of the English genius Newton (based, the footnote records, on the work of the French writer de la Blancherie, see pp. 212–13), is accompanied, somewhat improbably, by his reported respect for the British constitution, government, press and legal processes (p. 214). Nevertheless, it is only when the larger political game is up that he confesses his crimes of deception towards the hero and heroine, dismissing them on the grounds that 'Domestic treasons are beneath me; it is only national treasons which I feel as my genius, and consider as my glory' (p. 227). Quite apart from detecting the perverse logic which finds 'glory' in state treason, contemporary readers would presumably be expected to notice in Vaurien's separation of the domestic from the national a violation of the conservative premise which, in Burke's phrase, makes the family the 'little platoon of society'. As in other anti-Jacobin novels, the sex-plot is not a distraction from but integral to the case against Jacobin ideology.⁴³ D'Israeli's can be surprisingly explicit, from the insinuation of sexual favours (p. 82), to Emily Balfour having her breast fondled by a careerist churchman (off-stage but spoken of, p. 150), to Lady Belfield and Vaurien's 'mutual

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passion' passing into a joint pact for 'procuring themselves new lovers' (p. 155), and the really quite sinister implication of the sort of assistance that will be provided: "I have told you, Vaurien," replied her Ladyship, "that I have already secured that dear girl [Emily] to reside with us some time ... smile at least on the victim of my friendship and your love. When she bleeds, let me not hear her cries" (p. 155).

The Burkean location of social virtue in domestic life seems also to lie behind the odd accusations about the 'peculiar and complex barbarity' of the 'private murders' of the French (as compared to those of the British, presumably), in chapter 30 (p. 216). The one place where a full-blown xenophobia becomes evident, this chapter is organized around the contention that 'National characters are opposite' (p. 12); yet it also reveals D'Israeli as one of those who 'rejoiced at the French revolution' as the 'liberation' of a 'great nation' by 'English principles' (those of 1688), even though its 'fatal progress has only shewn, what some suspected, that *slaves* are not immediately prepared to become *freemen*' (p. 217, n.). It is possible to regard *Vaurien* as latently Francophilic in form even while it is blatantly Francophobic in content. By D'Israeli's own admission, in the Preface, 'I have chosen the *form* rather than the *matter* of a novel' (p. 8).⁴⁴ As in his other works, the principal formal relationship is with the French-derived traditions of the 'ana' and the 'anecdote', although it must be said that the combination of anti-Jacobin plot with gossip-episodic characterization has a clear English precedent also in *The Democrat: Interspersed with Anecdotes of Well-Known Characters*. This novel, first printed in 1795, was 'one of the first anti-Jacobin novels',⁴⁵ and was the work of none other than D'Israeli's first supporter, the Laureate, Pye. Pye's Jean Le Noir may have less allegorical gallic flair than Vaurien, but he too is a French agent or agitator who settles on Britain as the latest setting for international revolutionary conspiracy and there meets a disloyal peer with more money than political sense.⁴⁶ At the same time, the *Anti-Jacobin Review* did not appreciate what it saw as the good press *Vaurien* gives to Voltaire, in whose *Micromegas* may be found a philosophical satire congenial to D'Israeli's own; and it is the novel's quotation from Voltaire's famous observation of England as a nation of sects – attributed scoffingly, and possibly by deliberate error, to a German professor (p. 55) – which provides the best insight into its own analysis of a sectarian society. This is just one of a number of ways in which the work manages to keep up genuine anti-Jacobin appearances while importing more freethinking, critical, or extra-Anglo-Saxon attitudes. For all the nationalist flag waving of its closing

chapters, *Vaurien* is an exception as well as an innovation in the newly emergent anti-Jacobin novel.

If *Vaurien* is 'French', perhaps it is so in its confessedly un-novelistic 'matter' or content after all. Research-led, it models itself partly on the rapid encyclopaedic style D'Israeli admired in Bayle, whose dictionary, cited in the notes, 'says as much in one page, as duller and more learned men do in a volume'.⁴⁷ Such a connection links the novel, however loosely, to the grand project of the French Enlightenment, the encyclopaedia that was begun by the rationalist Diderot in 1751, contributed to by Voltaire and Rousseau among others, and by 1780 had expanded to thirty-five volumes. D'Israeli's efforts, in two, can hardly bear comparison; and yet within the limits of London, its ambition of total cultural coverage makes it too a sort of mini-encyclopaedia. Prodigious of reference and reading (neither, it has to be said, invariably reliable or accurate), the book could have been written by index-cards. At times, the fiction appears to be an excuse for the annotations rather than the occasion for them. But a novel that is partly a thinly fictionalized extension of the working methods used in the *Curiosities of Literature* – 'consisting', as the subtitle has it, 'of Anecdotes, Characters, Sketches, and Observations, Literary, Critical, and Historical' – is in itself something of a curiosity. And however researched the research, it is always applied, that is, made immediately topical, by reference to the people, events and issues of the decade, and almost the hour, of writing.

NOTES

1. D'Israeli's authorship was quickly identified (*Monthly Mirror*, 3 (March 1797), pp. 163–6; p. 163), see this volume, p. 292.
2. See the list of 'Anti-Jacobin Novels and Tales' in Matthew Grenby, *The Anti-Jacobin Novel: British Conservatism and the French Revolution* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 243–6. The beginnings of the anti-Jacobin novel date to 1791 (Edward Sayer's *Lindnor and Adelaïde*) and 1795 (Henry James Pye's *The Democrat*); see Grenby, *The Anti-Jacobin Novel*, pp. 90, 116.
3. OED – though its earliest entry for the word is 1825–9.
4. Contributed to by Canning, Frere, Ellis and Gifford, the periodical ran from 20 November 1797 to 9 July 1798. Its verse spoof of Erasmus Darwin's poetry,

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- 'The Loves of the Triangles', may reflect *Vaurien's* joint mockery of Darwin's scientific speculations (p. 42) and the 'new ... morality' as a 'system' devised along along 'mathematical' lines (p. 23).
5. *Flim-Flams! or, The Life and Errors of My Uncle, and the Amours of my Aunt*, 3 vols (London, John Murray, 1805; 2nd corrected edn 1806), a Shandyan novel, and *Despotism: or The Fall of the Jesuits*, 2 vols (London, Murray, 1811), a title which sufficiently indicates its author's position on Catholicism, and was being read by Mary Shelley in 1815 (*Mary Shelley's Journal*, ed. Frederick L. Jones (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1947), p. 39: 'Monday, MAR 6 [1815.] – Find my baby dead. Send for Hogg. Talk. A miserable day. In the evening read "Fall of the Jesuits."').
 6. 'Biographical Sketch of I. D'Israeli Esq.', *Monthly Mirror*, 2 (December 1796), pp. 451–9.
 7. James Ogden, *Isaac D'Israeli* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 8, quoting Benjamin Disraeli's 1849 memoir of his father.
 8. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
 9. For evidence of D'Israeli's later friendly relations with Godwin, see C. Kegan Paul, *William Godwin: His Friends and Contemporaries*, 2 vols (London, 1876), Vol. 1, p. 294; William St Clair, *The Godwins and the Shelleys: A Biography of a Family* (London, Faber, 1989), p. 356.
 10. Ogden, *Isaac D'Israeli*, pp. 43–4.
 11. *Ibid.*, p. 132.
 12. Letter, 28 October 1794, Bodleian MS Douce d 33, f. 8; quoted in Ogden, *Isaac D'Israeli*, p. 36.
 13. Published by Cadell and Davies and dedicated to Hugh Downman, D'Israeli's doctor during his convalescence in Exeter for what seems to have been a breakdown.
 14. There were 'two kinds of Readers', D'Israeli wrote to Douce in planning his *Miscellanies*, 'the matter of fact' and 'the Man of Taste' – the latter the category of a rather more discriminating beast than was the 'Man of Feeling' (letter of 28 October 1794, Bodleian MS Douce d 33, f. 7; quoted in Ogden, *Isaac D'Israeli*, p. 36).
 15. So says DNB; though Ogden states that it was through Pye that D'Israeli met Pettit Andrews, of *Anecdotes Ancient and Modern*, and hence William Seward, of *Anecdotes of Distinguished Persons* – and that it was in their company that he 'declared that "the most interesting of miscellanies might be drawn up by a well read man from the library in which he lived"' (*Isaac D'Israeli*, p. 22).
 16. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
 17. It finds a place alongside such official measures as the suspension of Habeas Corpus, 1794, the 'Gagging Acts' of 1795, and the arrests and Treason Trials of 1794–5.

18. Elizabeth Hamilton's *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers*, 3 vols (London, G. G. and J. Robinson, 1800) rather than her earlier *Translation of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah*, 2 vols (London, G. G. and J. Robinson, 1796).
19. *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 107.
20. *The Life of William Godwin* (London, J. M. Dent and Sons, 1926), p. 161 and n.
21. Cf. Peter H. Marshall, *William Godwin* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1984), p. 214 (echoing Brown): 'Godwin is clearly Mr. Subtile, Holcroft probably the Reverberator, and Thelwall Mr. Rant'; and Ogden, *Isaac D'Israeli*, p. 61: 'Mr. Subtile (Godwin), Mr. Reverberator (Holcroft) and Mr. Rant (Thelwall)'.
22. Thelwall, together with Horne Tooke and Thomas Hardy, secretary of the London Corresponding Society, were arrested in May 1794. Their trials for high treason, at the Sessions House in the Old Bailey, starting with Hardy's in November 1794, were taken in shorthand by Joseph Gurney and published on their acquittal. See this volume, pp. 304–5; and John Barrell, *Imagining the King's Death: Figurative Treason, Fantasies of Regicide 1793–1796* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000).
23. William Godwin, *Cursory Strictures on the Charge Delivered by Lord Chief Justice Eyre to the Grand Jury, October 2, 1794* (London, 1794).
24. William Petty (1737–1805), first Marquis of Lansdowne, better known as Lord Shelburne, a complex and often hated politician: 'In March 1797 he indignantly denied the charge of Jacobinism which had frequently been imputed to him, and declared that he only "desired the present system should be changed for a constitutional system"' (DNB, quoting *Parliamentary History*).
25. *A Letter from the Right Honourable Edmund Burke to A Noble Lord*, 4th edn (London, 1796), pp. 57, 60.
26. Ogden, *Isaac D'Israeli*, pp. 12–13.
27. A third category of naming in the novel, of withheld titles, obscures with asteriks or dashes those 'real people' whose identity is to be guessed at but not revealed (e.g. p. 54).
28. Plans for attacking the King in his route to Parliament (p. 205) allude directly to the historical event which justified the Gagging Acts.
29. D'Israeli was himself in Paris at the time, according to Ogden, *Isaac D'Israeli*, p. 17.
30. A contradiction noticed by William Taylor, *Monthly Review*, 24 (September 1797), pp. 33–6; p. 36 (see this volume, p. 296).
31. One model was John Brown's *Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times* (1757), referenced by D'Israeli (p. 7).
32. The concept was patented by Robert Barker in 1787, and his was the first panorama to be exhibited in London, in 1789 (OED).
33. *Critical Review*, 2nd series, 21 (November 1797), pp. 293–300; p. 293; see this volume, p. 297.

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34. For example, p. 63, 'every new [philosophical] system seems to terminate in something like a conventicle'; and, p. 182: 'religion breaks into sectarism, and philosophy divides into systems'.
35. Gary Kelly, *The English Jacobin Novel, 1780–1805* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1976), p. 209.
36. See Ogden, *Isaac D'Israeli*, p. 193.
37. D'Israeli himself, his vindication of Charles I revealed, tended not only to the anti-Jacobin but the Jacobite: see 'Gallery of Literary Characters. No. XXIII. Israel D'Israeli, Esq.', *Fraser's Magazine*, 5 (April 1832), p. 321.
38. D'Israeli was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, 1822; see 'Gallery of Literary Characters. No. XXIV. The Antiquaries', *Fraser's Magazine*, 5 (May 1832), p. 475.
39. Ogden, *Isaac D'Israeli*, p. 61; also pp. 42–3.
40. *Ibid.*, pp. 195–7.
41. 'A Biographical Sketch of the Jewish Socrates', *Monthly Magazine*, 6 (July 1798), pp. 38–44.
42. As intuited by the *Anti-Jacobin Review*, 1 (December 1798), pp. 685–90; pp. 687–8 (see this volume, p. 303). In the Jewish Philosopher's chapter, D'Israeli permits himself to notice the post-revolutionary tendency in parts of Europe to 'imagine that the *children of Jacob* are really *Jacobins*, which, if they were, would not be surprising' (p. 200, n.).
43. See my 'Sexing the Critic: Mary Wollstonecraft at the Turn of the Century' in Richard Cronin (ed.), *1789: The Year of the 'Lyrical Ballads'* (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1998), pp. 32–67.
44. The *Monthly Mirror* describes the novel as a 'literary coalition' between story and philosophy (see this volume, p. 292).
45. Grenby, *The Anti-Jacobin Novel*, p. 116. *The Democrat* is reprinted in Vol. 1 of this edition.
46. See Vol. 1 of this edition; and see Grenby, *The Anti-Jacobin Novel*, pp. 116–17, 112.
47. Letter to Douce, 28 October 1794, Bodleian MS Douce d 33, f. 8; quoted Ogden, *Isaac D'Israeli*, p. 36. See also Preface to *Curiosities of Literature. Volume the Second* (London, Murray, 1793). Bayle and his dictionary are the subject of three pieces in *Curiosities of Literature*, 14th edn, 3 vols (London, Moxon, 1849), Vol. 1, pp. 435–8; Vol. 2, pp. 423–38.



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NOTE ON THE TEXT

The copy text for this Pickering & Chatto edition is *Vaurien: or, Sketches of the Times: Exhibiting Views of the Philosophies, Religions, Politics, Literature, and Manners of the Age. In two volumes* (London, printed for T. Cadell, junior, and W. Davies, in the Strand; and J. Murray and S. Highley, no. 32 Fleet Street, 1797). This was the first and only edition. The copy used here is held in Glasgow University Library (Library Research Annexe, Store HA06068). While uses of the long S have been modernized and obvious typographical errors corrected (see the list of Silent Corrections at the end of the volume, pp. 289–90), this Pickering & Chatto edition follows as closely as possible the original spelling, punctuation, accentuation or capitalization of the copy text, even where these are inconsistent or idiosyncratic. The use of inverted commas to identify direct speech in this text is especially erratic: frequently speech marks are omitted altogether, or alternatively are opened but not closed, or resumed at the beginning of a new paragraph. I have not added or otherwise emended speech marks, except to employ single marks where the original uses double, and to reserve the use of double inverted commas for internal quotation. Similarly, I have not corrected the consistent use of ‘it’s’ for ‘its’ throughout the text. Original authorial footnotes are indicated by symbols. Editorial footnotes for this edition are designated by numbers.



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ISAAC D'ISRAELI: BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- 1793 *Curiosities of Literature. Volume the Second* (London, Murray). [2nd edn (1794); *Curiosities of Literature*, 4th edn, 2 vols (London, Murray, 1797–8), 5th edn, 2 vols (London, Murray, 1807)]
- 1793 *A Dissertation on Anecdotes* (London, Kearsley and Murray).
- 1794 *Domestic Anecdotes of the French Nation* (London, Kearsley).
- 1795 *An Essay on the Manners and Genius of the Literary Character* (London, Cadell and Davies).
- 1796 *Miscellanies: or, Literary Recreations* (London, Cadell and Davies).
- 1797 *Vaurien: or, Sketches of the Times: Exhibiting Views of the Philosophies, Religions, Politics, Literature, and Manners of the Age*, 2 vols (London, Cadell and Davies, Murray and Highley).
- 1799 *Romances* (London, Cadell and Davies, Murray and Highley).
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- 1801 *Romances. To Which is now added, A Modern Romance*, 2nd edn (London, Murray and Highley). [3rd edn, revised (London, Murray; Edinburgh, Constable, 1807)]
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- 1811 *Despotism: or The Fall of the Jesuits. A Political Romance, illustrated by historical anecdotes*, 2 vols (London, Murray; Edinburgh, Blackwood).

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- 1812 *Calamities of Authors; including some Inquiries respecting their Moral and Literary Characters*, 2 vols (London, Murray; Edinburgh, Blackwood; Dublin, Cumming).
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ISAAC D'ISRAELI: CHRONOLOGY

- 1748 Benjamin, Isaac D'Israeli's father, emigrates to London from Italy, setting up as an importer of Italian goods (1757) and then as a stockbroker (from 1776).
- 1765 28 May: Benjamin's second marriage, to Sarah Syprut de Gabay Villa Real, daughter of a London merchant.
- 1766 11 May: Isaac D'Israeli born, at his father's residence, 5 Great St Helen's, London, only child of Benjamin's second marriage. Isaac attends school of Scottish master, Morison, near Enfield, where his father has taken a country residence.
- 1780–1 Isaac goes to Amsterdam, learning modern European languages from a freethinking tutor.
- 1782–4 Responds to parental pressure to enter business with a satire on commerce; sends poem on the subject to Dr Johnson, who being ill returns it unread.
- 1784 April and May: first publications, essays in Thomas Holcroft's *Wit's Magazine*.
- 1786 Unsuccessfully seeks patronage of Vicesimus Knox, anthologist of *Elegant Extracts*.
December: publishes vindication of Dr Johnson's character, in *Gentleman's Magazine*.
- 1787 20 November: first published poem, a panegyric on antiquarian and Enfield neighbour, Richard Gough, in *St James's Chronicle*; Gough unimpressed.
- 1788–9 To Paris, and also Germany and Italy, returning to London at the outbreak of the Revolution with a taste for French literature and politics.
- 1789 July: 'An Abuse of Satire', attack on Peter Pindar (John Wolcot), published anonymously in *Gentleman's Magazine*; earns

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gratitude of Pindar's victims and support for the pursuit of a literary career from the Poet Laureate, Henry James Pye.

- 1790 Publishes first volume, in verse, *A Defence of Poetry [and] Specimens of a New Version of Telemachus*, dedicated to Pye; contributes to *English Review*, in which the Godwin circle also publishes.
- 1791 Made financially independent by terms of maternal grandmother's will; takes rooms in literary quarter of James Street, Adelphi; makes a confirmed habit of reading in the library of the British Museum; meets fellow-researcher and lifelong friend Francis Douce; publishes, in one volume, *Curiosities of Literature*, 'consisting of Anecdotes, Characters, Sketches, and Observations, Literary, Critical, and Historical'.
- 1792 To France and Belgium.
December: in Paris while Louis XVI is being put on trial by the National Convention.
- 1793 2nd vol. of *Curiosities of Literature* published, as is 3rd edn of vol. 1, with D'Israeli's name on title-page; *A Dissertation on Anecdotes, by the author of Curiosities of Literature*.
- 1794 Compiler of Franco-sceptic *Domestic Anecdotes of the French Nation, during the last thirty years, indicative of the French Revolution*.
- 1794–6 Probable nervous breakdown, (mis)diagnosed as consumption; convalescence in Devonshire, living mainly at Mount Radford, at the house of John Baring, MP for Exeter, attended by Dr Hugh Downman, and participating in Exeter learned society.
- 1795 Publishes *An Essay on the Manners and Genius of the Literary Character* (later titled *The Literary Character*): praised by Byron; 4th edn, 2 vols (1828), dedicated to Southey.
- 1796 Publishes *Miscellanies; or, Literary Recreations*, dedicated to Downman.
- 1797 Publishes *Romances*: 'Mejnoun and Leila: a Persian Romance', 'Love and Humility: a Roman Romance', 'The Lovers, or, The Birth of the Pleasing Arts: an Arcadian Romance'; publishes first novel, *Vaurien: or, Sketches of the Times*.

Chronology

- 1798 July: article on Moses Mendelssohn in *Monthly Magazine*.
- 1801 24 August: D'Israeli's father acquires English citizenship by act of denization and becomes founder member of London stock exchange.
- 1802 10 February: marries Maria Basevi, also of an Italian-Jewish London family; new home at 6 King's Road, Bedford Row; birth of Sarah ('Sa'), d. 1859.
- 1803 Publishes *Narrative Poems*.
- 1804 Birth of Benjamin ('Dizzy'), future novelist and prime minister, d. 1881.
- 1805 Publishes second novel, *Flim-Flams! or, The Life and Errors of My Uncle and the Amours of my Aunt*.
- 1807 Birth of Naphtali, dies in infancy; 5th edn of *Curiosities of Literature*, rev. and enlarged.
- 1809 Birth of Raphael ('Ralph'), d. 1898.
- 1811 Publishes third and last novel, *Despotism: or The Fall of the Jesuits*.
- 1812 Publishes *Calamities of Authors; including some Inquiries respecting their Moral and Literary Characters*.
- 1813 Birth of Jacobus ('James'), d. 1868; elected warden of the Bevis Marks Synagogue by elders; refuses either to serve or to pay the fine imposed for declining the office.
- 1814 Publishes *Quarrels of Authors, or Some Memoirs for our Literary History*.
- 1816 Death of D'Israeli's father.
Publishes *An Inquiry into the Literary and Political Character of James the First*.
- 1817 On advice of Sharon Turner, friend and historian, D'Israeli children baptized at St Andrew's, Holborn, in name of Disraeli; family move to Bloomsbury Square, within walking distance of British Museum; 3rd vol. of *Curiosities of Literature* published.
- 1820 Defence of poetry of Pope, *Quarterly Review*: recognized by Byron as D'Israeli's work.

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- 1821 Withdraws from Bevis Marks Synagogue.
- 1822 Elected Fellow of Society of Antiquaries.
- 1823 Publishes *A Second Series of Curiosities of Literature*; publishes *Curiosities of Literature*, 7th edn, corrected.
- 1825 Death of D'Israeli's mother.
- 1826 Split with Murray, following losses incurred by editorial advice of D'Israeli's son Benjamin and the subsequent caricature of publisher in *Vivian Grey*.
- 1829 Move to Bradenham House, near High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire.
- 1828–31 Publishes *Commentaries on the Life and Reign of Charles the First*.
- 1832 Publishes *Eliot, Hampden and Pym*: reply to criticism by Lord Nugent of implicit Toryism of *Commentaries*.
4 July: created honorary Doctor of Civil Law by University of Oxford.
- 1833 Publishes *The Genius of Judaism*.
- 1834 Publishes *Curiosities of Literature*, 9th edn, revised.
- 1837 Bolton Corney, *Curiosities of Literature Illustrated*: an exposé of D'Israeli's *errata*.
- 1838 Publishes *The Illustrator Illustrated*: D'Israeli's reply to Corney.
- 1839 Publishes *Curiosities of Literature*, 11th edn.
- 1839–40 Loses eyesight.
- 1841 Publishes *Amenities of Literature; sketches and characters of English literature* (work aided by daughter Sarah).
- 1847 21 April: death of wife.
- 1848 19 January: dies, of influenza, at home, Bradenham House.
- 1849 *Curiosities of Literature, with a view of The Life and Writings of the Author. By his Son*, 14th edn.
- 1851 *Commentaries on ... Charles the First*, ed. Benjamin Disraeli.
- 1858–9 *The Works of Isaac Disraeli*, ed. Benjamin Disraeli.