

A Buckinghamshire Poet: Benjamin Disraeli

Politician, three times Chancellor of the Exchequer, and twice Prime Minister, the statesman who returned from the Berlin conference bringing "Peace with Honour, of whom Bismarck admiringly said "*Der alte Jude. DAS is der Mann*" ("The old Jew. THAT is the man"), Benjamin Disraeli is not immediately remembered as a poet. Yet in his younger days at the age of 30, he had written 3,000 lines of verse "*The Revolutionary Epic*", This work that he hoped would be recognized as one of towering genius, was revealed to an audience at a reception attended by the cream of London society. In these days of his youth, he dreamed of himself as a latter-day Byron or Shelley: man of transcendent genius and hero of the age, and so dressed like some latter day Regency dandy, in velvet coat, embroidered waistcoat and shoes with red rosettes, his dark Sephardic hair in lavish curls, he offered to his hoped for admirers what he hoped was his masterpiece.

The evening was a failure. The assembled cream of London society heard verses that failed to impress. Subsequent sales of the published work were derisory. Disraeli, a young man of undoubted talents, reluctantly recognised that his creative energies should be put to work in other areas than poetry. He turned instead both to writing novels with considerable success, and to pursuing a political career in which he proved saviour of the Conservative party, creator of one nation Toryism, a respected international statesman, and the favoured Prime Minister of a queen, Victoria the Widow of Windsor, back into public life from reclusive isolation and compulsive mourning for a lost beloved Albert.

Michael Ghirelli



**Benjamin Disraeli
the Poet**

Disraeli had a belief in the inspiring, charismatic leadership of the imaginative and far seeing hero. He was an admirer of the men of destiny whom common humanity is born to adore and to obey. The function of leadership was to 'give men something to worship'.

Wellington: a Sonnet

**Not only that thy puissant arm could bind
The tyrant of a world; and, conquering Fate,
Enfranchise Europe, do I deem thee great;
But that in all thy actions I do find
Exact propriety: no gusts of mind
Fitful and wild, but that continuous state
Of ordered impulse mariners await
In some benignant and enriching wind,--
The breath ordained of Nature. Thy calm mien
Recalls old Rome, as much as thy high deed;
Duty thine only idol, and serene
When all are troubled; in the utmost need
Prescient; thy country's servant ever seen,
Yet sovereign of thyself, whate'er may speed.**