

NOVELS AND TALES

BY THE

EARL OF BEACONSFIELD

WITH PORTRAIT AND SKETCH OF HIS LIFE

VOL. VII.—CONINGSBY

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CONINGSBY

OR

THE NEW GENERATION

BY THE

EARL OF BEACONSFIELD



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Лоджареткохна
епрота Кенна
БЕГНОТЕА ОЕР
гггг. Б. М. МЕХА
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TO
H E N R Y H O P E.

IT IS NOT because this work was conceived and partly executed amid the glades and galleries of the DEEPDENE that I have inscribed it with your name. Nor merely because I was desirous to avail myself of the most graceful privilege of an author, and dedicate my work to the friend whose talents I have always appreciated, and whose virtues I have ever admired.

But because in these pages I have endeavoured to picture something of that development of the new and, as I believe, better mind of England, that has often been the subject of our converse and speculation.

In this volume you will find many a thought illustrated and many a principle attempted to be established that we have often together partially discussed and canvassed. Doubtless you may encounter some opinions with which you may not agree, and some conclusions the accuracy of which you may find cause to question. But if I have generally succeeded in my object, to scatter some suggestions that may tend to elevate the tone of public life, ascertain the true character of political parties, and induce us for the future more carefully to distinguish between facts and phrases, realities and phantoms, I believe that I shall gain your sympathy, for I shall find a reflex to their efforts in your own generous spirit and enlightened mind.

GROSVENOR GATE: *May Day* 1844.

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BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

IT was a bright May morning some twelve years ago, when a youth of still tender age, for he had certainly not entered his teens by more than two years, was ushered into the waiting-room of a house in the vicinity of St. James's Square, which, though with the general appearance of a private residence, and that too of no very ambitious character, exhibited at this period symptoms of being occupied for some public purpose.

The house-door was constantly open, and frequent guests even at this early hour crossed the threshold. The hall-table was covered with sealed letters; and the hall-porter inscribed in a book the name of every individual who entered.

The young gentleman we have mentioned found himself in a room which offered few resources for his amusement. A large table amply covered with writing materials, and a few chairs, were its sole furniture, except the grey drugget that covered the floor, and a muddy mezzotinto of the Duke of Wellington that adorned its cold walls. There was not even a newspaper; and the only books were the Court Guide and the London Directory. For some time he remained with patient endurance planted against the