

NOVELS AND TALES

BY THE

EARL OF BEACONSFIELD

WITH PORTRAIT AND SKETCH OF HIS LIFE

VOL. I.—VIVIAN GREY



Alfred Greys's Art

Boisau

AUTHOR OF "VIVIAN GREY."

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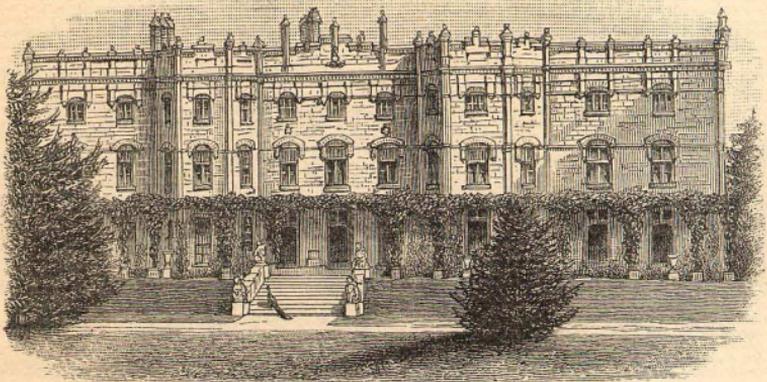
Hughenden Edition

VIVIAN GREY

BY THE

EARL OF BEACONSFIELD

‘Why then the world’s mine oyster
Which I with sword will open.’



HUGHENDEN MANOR
WEST FRONT

LONDON
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

1882

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Books written by boys (1825-6), which pretend to give a picture of manners, and to deal in knowledge of human nature, must necessarily be founded on affectation. They can be, at the best, but the results of imagination, acting upon knowledge not acquired by experience. Of such circumstances, exaggeration is a necessary consequence, and false taste accompanies exaggeration. Nor is it necessary to remark that a total want of art must be observed in their pages, for that is a failing incident to all first efforts. When the writers of such books are not again heard of, the works, even if ever noticed, are soon forgotten, and so there is no great harm done. But, when their authors subsequently become eminent, such works often obtain a peculiar interest, and are sought for from causes irrespective of their merits. Such productions should be exempt from criticism, and should be looked upon as a kind of literary lusus.

These observations apply to 'VIVIAN GREY.' For more than a quarter of a century its author has refused to reprint it; but the action of the foreign presses in the present day, especially in the United States and Germany, renders an author no longer the master of his own will. It has, therefore, been thought best to include it in this general edition of his works, and so it is hoped that it will be read with an indulgent recollection of the conditions under which it was produced.

November 1853.