

Beckford, William (b. 1760, d. 1844), an English millionaire and distinguished author. When only twenty he published a clever satire, *Biographical Memoirs of Extraordinary Painters*. After some foreign travel he entered Parliament, and published his great work, *The Romance of Vathek*, in the French language, a book which excited the widest admiration. The chief episodes of the remainder of his life were the erection, at enormous cost, of two vast mansions in England and a "fairy palace" in Portugal.