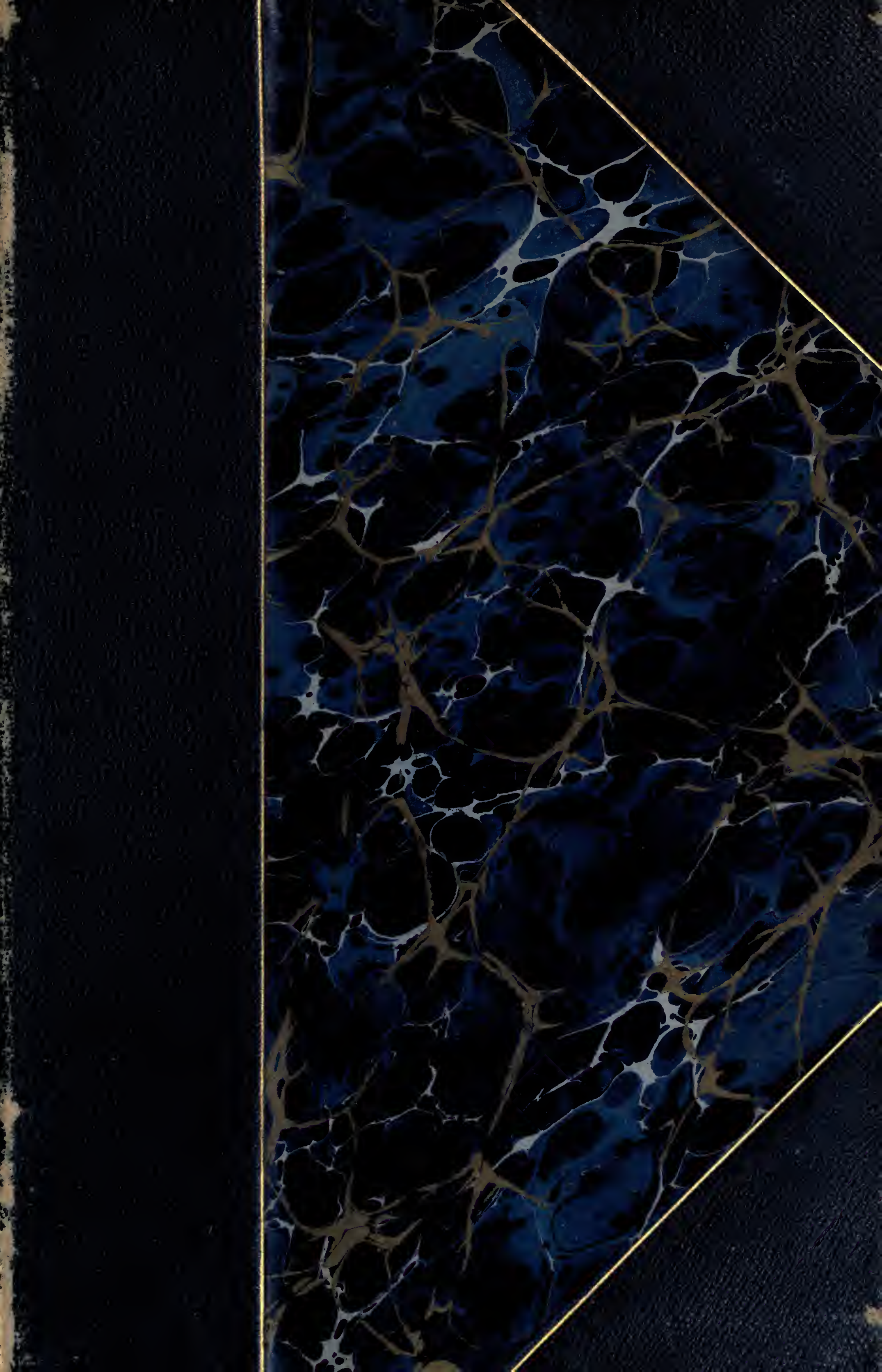

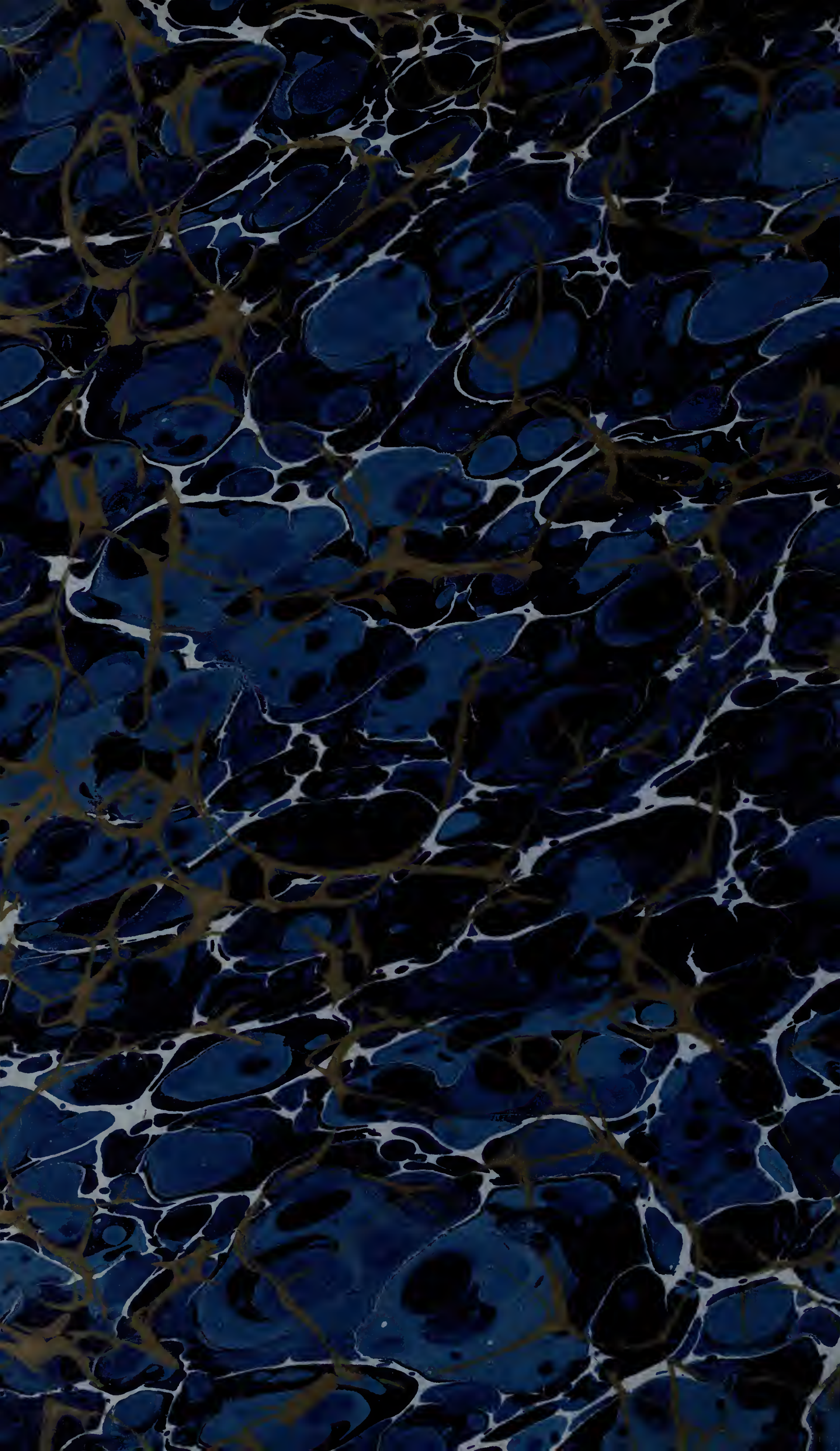

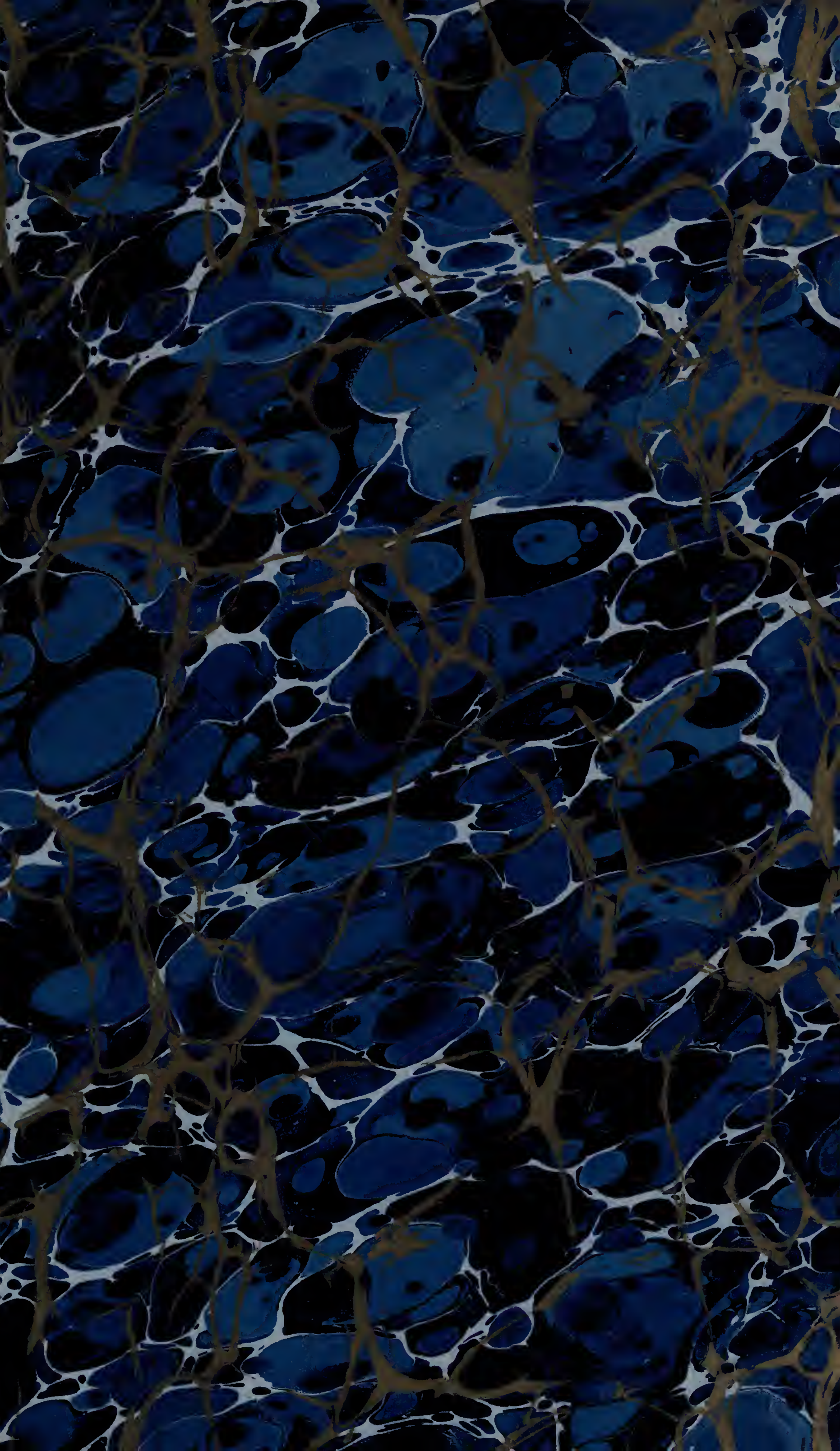

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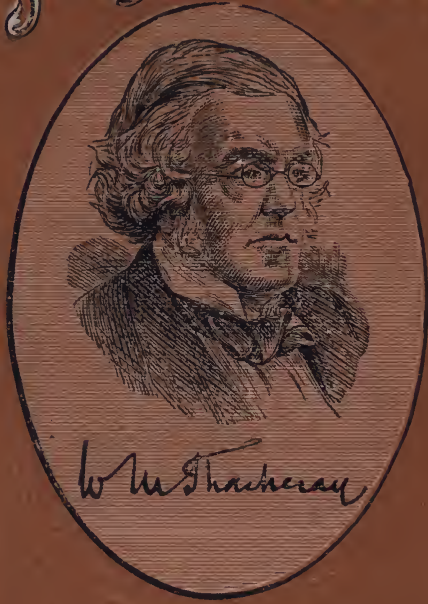
A DAY WITH



THACKERAY.

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THE BEST OF ALL GOOD COMPANY:

A SERIES OF DAILY COMPANIONS

FOR THE POCKET AND THE PORTMANTEAU, ASHORE AND AFLOAT, IN TOWN AND OUT OF TOWN, AT HOME AND ABROAD.

EDITED BY BLANCHARD JERROLD.

PRICE ONE SHILLING EACH.

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A DAY WITH CHARLES DICKENS.

Includes Fac-simile of a MS. Letter to Blanchard Jerrold.

No. II.

A DAY WITH SIR WALTER SCOTT.

No. III.

A DAY WITH LORD LYTTON.

Includes a Fac-simile Page of his MS. of "King Arthur."

No. IV.

A DAY WITH DISRAELI.

Includes two Fac-simile pages of his MS. of "Lothair," given by the Right Hon. Gentleman to the Editor.

No. V.

A DAY WITH THACKERAY.

Includes Fac-simile of Extract from MS. Letter.

IN PREPARATION:—

A DAY WITH DOUGLAS JERROLD.
A DAY WITH MACAULAY.
A DAY WITH LORD BROUGHAM.
A DAY WITH MILTON.
A DAY WITH THOMAS HOOD.
A DAY WITH PEPYS.
A DAY WITH L. E. L.
A DAY WITH THE BROWNINGS.
A DAY WITH LEIGH HUNT.
A DAY WITH MICHAEL FARADAY.
A DAY WITH ARCHBISHOP WHATELY.
A DAY WITH ANTHONY TROLLOPE.
A DAY WITH DR. JOHNSON.

AND OTHERS; ALL OF

"THE BEST OF ALL GOOD COMPANY."

LONDON:
HOULSTON & SONS, PATERNOSTER SQUARE, E.C.;
AND ALL BOOKSELLERS.

Extract from Letter of W. M. Thackeray.

Some critics have accused me of wishing to undervalue my profession, because I have spoken lightly of certain (imaginary) practitioners of it: but it is because I honour the calling, and hold it to be not better nor worse than that pursued by any other body of educated gentlemen, that I've written as I have done concerning it. To write for bread can't be wrong: but to write dishonestly or unjustly; or wilfully to impute bad motives to opponents – it is that wh lowers our profession – I am hurrying into a sermon, when I have but to answer a note – and returning you my thanks once more, remain, dear Sir Your very faithful Servt

W M Thackeray

THE

BEST OF ALL GOOD COMPANY.

BY

BLANCHARD JERROLD.

A DAY WITH W. M. THACKERAY.

[illegible]

[illegible]
HOULSTON AND SONS,
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[illegible]

[illegible] letter of [illegible] Huxley

[illegible] readers have accused me of wishing to under-
value my profession because I have spoken lightly
of certain [illegible] of it. But it is because I [illegible]
the calling and hold it to be set higher [illegible]
[illegible] that pursued by any other body of educated
gentlemen, that I [illegible] as I have done [illegible]
it. [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] profession
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] Yours very faithfully
T. H. Huxley.

THE

BEST OF ALL GOOD COMPANY.

BY

BLANCHARD JERROLD.

A DAY WITH W. M. THACKERAY.

"And there came up a lion out of Judah!"—
Charlotte Bronte's exclamation on first seeing Thackeray's Portrait.

LONDON:
HOULSTON AND SONS,
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1872.

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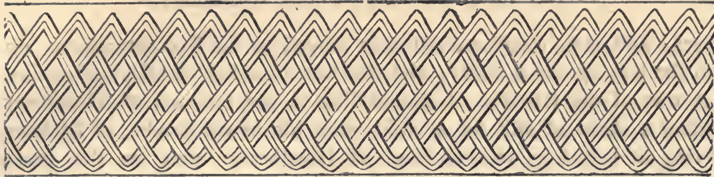

W. M. THACKERAY.

"AND SEE THE GREAT ACHILLES WHOM WE KNEW."

WHO that has seen will ever forget the commanding figure and the stately head? Sauntering—usually a solitary man—through the hall of the Reform Club, or in the quietudes of the Athenæum, making up his mind to find a corner to work for an hour or so on the small sheets of paper in his pocket, in a hand as neat as Peter Cunningham's or Leigh Hunt's;* gazing dreamily, and often with a sad and weary look, out of window; moving slowly westward home to dinner on a summer's evening; or making a strange presence, as obviously not belonging to the place, in Fleet Street on his way to Whitefriars or Cornhill; who that knew him does not remember dear Old Thackeray, as his familiars lovingly called him, in some or all of these moods and places? In Thackeray, as in Dickens, there was a strong and impressive individuality. No two men could be less alike, in person or mind, than these two writers who shared the world's favour together; and yet there was an equality and identity in their impressiveness. Dickens' strength was quick, alert, and with the glow of health in it; it seemed to proceed like that of a mighty engine from an inward fire. Thackeray's was calm, majestic by its ease and extent, as the force of a splendid stream. Hawthorne's figure and air has been described as "modestly grand"; and the observation, it occurs to me, applies exactly to Thackeray. Indeed, I have often been struck with the idea that the two men must have affected society much in the same way, and by the same mental and physical qualities. Like Hawthorne, Thackeray

"Wandered lonely as a cloud,"

—a cloud, it should be noted and remembered, with a silver lining. In their solitude, when suddenly observed, both had a sad, a grave

* Shortly before his death he spent a morning in the reading-room of the British Museum, and there by accident left upon a table a page of the MS. of the story he had in hand. The paper being found, the clearness and roundness of the writing at once suggested the owner to the attendant, and the precious missing leaf was forwarded to Kensington.

aspect; and each was "marvellously moved to fun" on occasions. In both the boy appeared easily; and this was a quality of Dickens' genius, as it was of my father's. I should like to see pictures of Thackeray holding a skein of silk for a child upon his broad hands; of Dickens playing at leap-frog or rounders; of Hawthorne lying in the grass listening to the birds, and ducking lest the passers by should interrupt him; and of Douglas Jerrold taking part in basting the bear in his Kentish orchard. Mr. Field's description of Hawthorne's fun at sea, and of his grand solitary figure under the stars at night, might stand for portraiture of Thackeray.

"That is his face, looking out upon us, next to Pope's," says Mr. Field, in his "Yesterdays with Authors." "What a contrast in bodily appearance those two English men of genius present! Thackeray's great, burly figure, broad-chested and ample as the day, seems to overshadow and quite blot out of existence the author of 'The Essay on Man.' But what friends they would have been had they lived as contemporaries under Queen Anne or Queen Victoria! One can imagine the author of 'Pendennis' gently lifting poor little Alexander out of his 'chariot' into the club, and revelling in talk with him all night long. Pope's high-bred and gentlemanly manner, combined with his extraordinary sensibility and dread of ridicule, would have modified Thackeray's usual gigantic form and sometimes boisterous sarcasm into a rich and strange adaptability to his little guest. We can imagine them talking together now, with even a nobler wisdom and ampler charity than were ever vouchsafed to them when they were busy amid the turmoils of their crowded literary lives."

What Thackeray would have been had he lived the contemporary of Pope, is a speculation much lower in interest than any description of Thackeray as he lived and breathed and had his being—one of the lights and glories of the Victorian epoch. Mr. Hannay's portrait is worth any number or kind of poetic speculations: "In private this great satirist, whose aspect in a crowd was often one of austere politeness and reserve, unbent into a familiar *naiveté*, which somehow one seldom finds in the demonstratively genial. And this was the more charming and precious that it rested on a basis of severe and profound reflection, before the glance of which all that was dark and serious in man's life and prospects lay open. The gravity of that white head, with its noble brow and thoughtful face full of feeling and meaning, enhanced the piquancy of his playfulness, and of the little personal revelations which came with such a grace from the depths of his kindly nature. When we congratulated him, many years ago, on the touch in *Vanity Fair*, in which Becky '*admires*' her husband, when he is giving Lord Steyne the chastisement which ruins *her* for life, 'Well,' he said, 'when I wrote the sentence, I slapped my fist on the table, and said '*that* is a touch of genius.' The incident is a trifle, but it will reveal, we suspect, an element of fervour, as well as a heartiness of frankness in recording the fervour, both equally at variance with the vulgar conception of him. This frankness and *bonhomie* made him delightful in a *tête-à-tête*, and

gave a pleasant human flavour to talk full of sense, and wisdom and experience, and lighted up by the gaiety of the true man of the world." If Thackeray cast upon the outer world an austere—almost contemptuous look—and walked the streets and paced the clubs self-contained, solitary,—it was because he was an observer of human nature, indeed of all nature. You stand away to examine a picture. He who goes to observe the Downs on a Derby day does not take three sticks at Aunt Sally. When Thackeray observed a child at play, he was touched by the natural flow of its movements and the natural philosophy underlying its prattle. Dickens put himself under the glossy plumes of the raven in the happy family, and dwelt unctuously on the juiciness of the youngster's exposed calves. The difference, I have thought, having often come upon both at busy points of observation, was shown in their attitude towards the world when in the thick of it. Thackeray sailed majestically along, one hand thrust in his pocket, a cultivated, fastidious, high-bred man, deep-hearted withal. Dickens had a swifter headway, a more combative and a compacter air, and bore down with his bright eye that had (to use Dore's phrase to me applied to his own retentive vision) plenty of collodion in it, upon every human countenance, every beggar's limp, or groundling's daub of dirt. Brave and loyal workers both, who have laid the world under immeasurable debts of gratitude to them; they held along opposite sides of the way, and at each passing man and woman gazed, albeit they knew them not, feeling that there were no ordinary men abroad that day.

It was with Thackeray as with Hawthorne. The grand, sad mask could pucker in a moment, and break into hearty fun and laughter. A friend went laughing into the Reform Club one afternoon; he had just met Thackeray at the door of the Athenæum Club. He had had a dispute with his cabman about the fare, which he had just proposed to settle by a toss. If Thackeray won, the cabman was to receive two shillings, and if the toss went against the author of "Vanity Fair" the cabman was to receive one shilling. Fortune was with the novelist; and he dwelt delightfully afterwards on the gentlemanly manner in which the driver took his defeat.* Yet there were times, and many, when

* Thackeray's playfulness was a marked peculiarity; a great deal of the time he seemed like a schoolboy just released from a task. In the midst of the most serious topic under discussion he was fond of asking permission to sing a comic song, or he would beg to be allowed to enliven the occasion by the instant introduction of a brief double-shuffle. Barry Cornwall told me that when he and Charles Lamb were once making up a dinner party together, Charles asked him not to invite a certain lugubrious friend of theirs, 'Because' said Lamb, 'he would cast a damper even over a funeral!' I have often contrasted the habitual qualities of that gloomy friend of theirs, with the astounding spirits of both Thackeray and Dickens. They always seemed to me to be standing in the sunshine, and to be constantly warning other people out of the cloudland. During Thackeray's first visit to America his jollity knew no bounds, and it became necessary often to repress him when he was walking in the street. I well remember his uproarious shouting and danc-

Thackeray could not break through his outward austerity, even when passing an intimate friend in the street. I and a mutual friend met him one afternoon in Fleet Street, ambling to Whitefriars on his cob, and a very extraordinary figure he made. He caught sight of us, and my companion was about to grasp his hand, but he just touched his hat with his finger, and without opening his lips or relaxing the solemn cast of his features, he passed on. My companion stamped his foot upon the pavement and cried, "Who would think that we were up till four o'clock this morning together, and that he sang his 'Reverend Dr. Luther,' and was the liveliest of us."

But Thackeray was a sick man, as well as a hard-worked one. He was threatened by several disorders of long continuance; and against which he stoutly fought, turning his noble placid face bravely upon the world —this "great Achilles whom we knew," and who was most loved by those who knew him best. Indeed by the outer world—by those with whom he came in contact for the first time—he was not loved, and not often liked. His address was as polished as a steel mirror, and as cold. In the Hoggarty Diamond, in that exquisite chapter given to Mr. Titmarsh's drive with Lady Drum, Mr. Samuel observes :—"For though I am but a poor fellow, and hear people cry out how vulgar it is to eat peas with a knife, or ask three times for cheese, and such like points of ceremony, there's something, I think, much more vulgar than all this, and that is insolence to one's inferiors. I hate the chap that uses it, as I scorn him of humble rank that affects to be of the fashion; and so I determined to let Mr. Preston know a piece of my mind." And Mr. Preston knew it accordingly. In this passage there is the keynote of the worldly side of Thackeray's character. He was beloved by his inferiors, and reserved his hottest scorn for those pretenders who, buffeted and cold-shouldered by those in whose society they aspire to mix, take their revenge upon their dependants. Thackeray was most deeply touched by any kindness or grace shown to him by one beneath him; and perhaps this honourable feeling (possible only in a cultivated being) is best shown in his whimsical dedication of the "Paris Sketch Book" to his tailor, M. Aretz.

"Sir," he said "it becomes every man in his station to acknowledge and praise virtue wherever he may find it, and to point it out for the admiration and example of his fellow-men. Some months since, when you presented to the writer of these pages a small account for coats and pantaloons manufactured by you, and when you were met by a statement from your creditor that an immediate settlement of your bill would be extremely inconvenient to him, your reply was, '*Mon Dieu*, Sir, let not that annoy you; if you want money, as a gentleman often does in a strange country,

ing when he was told that the tickets to his first course of readings were all sold, and when we rode together from his hotel to the Lecture-hall he insisted in thrusting both his long legs out of the carriage window, in deference, as he said, to his magnanimous ticket holders."—*Yesterdays with Authors.*

I have a thousand-franc note at my house which is quite at your service.' History or experience, Sir, makes us acquainted with so few actions that can be compared to yours—an offer like this from a stranger and a tailor seems to me so astonishing—that you must pardon me for thus making your virtue public, and acquainting the English nation with your merit and your name. Let me add, Sir, that you live on the first-floor; that your clothes and fit are excellent; and your charges moderate and just; and as a humble tribute of my admiration, permit me to lay these volumes at your feet."

And so, in his most gracious moods,—gentle to the weak and lowly, beloved of women and children,* but grand and stern and silent, a mighty form crowned with a massive snow-haired head,—

"See the great Achilles whom we knew."

TESTIMONIALS.

No better idea can be given of the generosity that lay deep in Thackeray's character, than is obtainable from his many handsome allusions to his literary contemporaries—and to Dickens, his twin star. He and Dickens were never close friends, in the sense in which Dickens and Maclise, or Mr. John Forster, or Stanfield, or Douglas Jerrold were. They quarrelled, moreover; but the author of "Vanity Fair" never for a day swerved in his chivalrous allegiance to the author of the "Christmas Carol," from that morning in 1836 when he waited on Boz to beg permission to illustrate one of his works. Become famous, a small man would have kept the fact in the background (for Michael Angelo Titmarsh was unsuccessful); but Thackeray told the story whimsically, years after when he was great man enough to be a leading guest at a Royal Academy anniversary dinner.

"I can remember when Dickens was a very young man, and had commenced delighting the world with some charming humorous works in covers, which were coloured light green and came out once a month, that this young man wanted an artist to illustrate his writings; and I recollect walking up to his chambers in Furnival's Inn with two or three drawings in my hand, which, strange to say, he did not find suitable. But for the unfortunate blight which came over my artistical existence, it

* During a small party at Horace Mayhew's, at which Thackeray had been in one of his heartiest, kindliest, and at the same time most whimsical moods, a young lady crept to the side of the host, and was unable to say less, by way of expressing her enthusiasm for the lion of the evening, than, "I should so like to kiss him." The host spoke to Thackeray: whereupon the great man advanced to the blushing damsel and treating her like a pet child, lifted her from the ground and kissed her forehead. It was one of the prettiest scenes imaginable.

would have been my pride and my pleasure to have endeavoured one day to find a place on these walls for one of my performances." This was on the death of Seymour, while "Pickwick" was appearing; and Thackeray used to refer to Dickens' rejection of his offer as "Mr. Pickwick's lucky escape." But he bore no grudge, albeit his climbing to a place by Dickens' side was slow and difficult. Only a few years after, he paid a glowing tribute of his praise to "Oliver Twist" and "Pickwick." He even went out of his way, when reviewing the Royal Academy Exhibition a few years later, to glorify the Boz personally. "Here," he told the public, "we have the real identical man Dickens; the artist must have understood the inward Boz as well as the outward before he made this admirable representation of him. What cheerful intelligence there is about the man's eye and large forehead. The mouth is too large and full, too eager and active perhaps (Thackeray would naturally think so); the smile is very sweet and generous. If Monsieur de Balzac, that voluminous physiognomist, could examine this head he would no doubt interpret every line and wrinkle in it; the nose firm and well placed, the nostrils wide and full, as are the nostrils of all men of genius (this is Monsieur Balzac's maxim). The past and the future, says Jean Paul are written in every countenance. I think we may promise ourselves a brilliant future from this one. There seems no flagging as yet in it, no sense of fatigue, or consciousness of decaying power. Long mayest thou, O Boz! reign over thy comic kingdom; long may we pay tribute, whether of threepence weekly, or of a shilling monthly, it matters not." But Thackeray's tribute on receipt of the Christmas Carol is the brightest and most brilliant of his ungrudging tributes to his illustrious friend and rival. "It is," says Thackeray, "the work of the master of all the English humourists now alive; the young man who came and took his place calmly at the head of the whole tribe, and who has kept it." Farther on: "It seems to me a national benefit, and to every man or woman who reads it a personal kindness. The last two people I heard speak of it were women; neither knew the other, or the author, and both said by way of criticism, 'God bless him!'" It was never given to Thackeray to touch the hearts of men and women and children like this: and he seemed to admit it when in one of his lectures he told the audience how one of his little girls had said to him that they liked one of the Dickens' books better than his. But did he grudge the praise on this account? No. His answer is, "'God bless him!' What a feeling is this for a writer to be able to inspire, and what a reward to reap." On another occasion he said he was grateful "for the innocent laughter and the sweet and unsullied pages which the author of 'David Copperfield' gave his children." It is related that Mr. Dickens (who was present) looked immensely hard at the ceiling; but by that time he must have been well accustomed to the generous rival's praise.

When on the 30th of December 1863, at Kensal Green, Charles Dickens stood, with Robert Browning at his side, looking into the narrow bed of his chivalrous friend; some of the generous words must have rushed through his brain, and his firm resolve must have "taken the van" to pay

back a little of the debt. I wish I could find, amid all the masses of print which Dickens controlled in his lifetime some scrap or two of hearty tribute to Thackeray; if only for the pleasure of thinking that some sunny streaks were drawn across the path of generous Thackeray by the pen of Boz.

But the sketch, "*In Memoriam*," that appeared a full month after the venerable head had been laid in Kensal Green, is all I gather. It is eloquent, fervent, straight from the heart. Its very strength and brilliancy increase the reader's regret that it should never have fallen under Thackeray's eyes; for he would have gone away direct to Gad's Hill, and have thrown himself upon Dickens' neck and cried like a child: as he did when his daughter first made a successful appearance in print, in his own magazine.

Dickens opens with an acknowledgment: "It has been desired by some of the personal friends of the great English writer who established this (the *Cornhill*) *Magazine*, that its brief record of his having been stricken from among men should be written by the old comrade and brother-in-arms who pens these lines, and of whom he often wrote himself, and always with the warmest generosity." They knew one another through eight-and-twenty years; and met last at the Athenæum club, a week before Thackeray died, when "he was very cheerful, and looked very bright." Dickens says: "The long interval between these two periods is marked in my remembrance of him by many occasions when he was supremely humorous, when he was irresistibly extravagant, when he was softened and serious, when he was charming with children. But by none do I recall him more tenderly than by two or three that start out of the crowd, when he unexpectedly presented himself in my room, announcing how that some passage in a certain book had made him cry yesterday, and how that he had come to dinner, 'because he couldn't help it,' and must talk such passage over. No one can ever have seen him more genial, natural, cordial, fresh, and honestly impulsive, than I have seen him at those times. No one can be surer than I, of the greatness and the goodness of the heart that then disclosed itself."

Out of this passage, let us hope, some English painter will some day make a picture that will travel round the world.

"We had our differences of opinion. I thought that he too much feigned a want of earnestness, and that he made a pretence of undervaluing his art, which was not good for the art that he held in trust. But, when we fell upon these topics, it was never very gravely, and I have a lively image of him in my mind, twisting both his hands in his hair, and stamping about, laughing, to make an end of the discussion.

"When we were associated in remembrance of the late Mr. Douglas Jerrold, he delivered a public lecture in London, in the course of which he read his very best contribution to "Punch," describing the grown-up cares of a poor family of young children. No one hearing him could have doubted his natural gentleness, or his thoroughly unaffected manly sympathy with the weak and lowly. He read the paper most patheti-

cally, and with a simplicity of tenderness that certainly moved one of his audience to tears. This was presently after his standing for Oxford, from which place he had dispatched his agent to me, with a droll note (to which he afterwards added a verbal postscript), urging me to 'come down and make a speech, and tell them who he was, for he doubted whether more than two of the electors had ever heard of him, and he thought there might be as many as six or eight who had heard of me.' He introduced the lecture just mentioned, with a reference to his late electioneering failure, which was full of good sense, good spirits, and good humour. [It was the lecture in which he thanked Mr. Dickens for the pure pleasure he had given his children, as I have already described.]

"He had a particular delight in boys, and an excellent way with them. I remember his once asking me with fantastic gravity, when he had been to Eton where my eldest son then was, whether I felt as he did in regard of never seeing a boy without wanting instantly to give him a sovereign? I thought of this when I looked down into his grave, after he was laid there, for I looked down into it over the shoulder of a boy to whom he had been kind.

"These are slight remembrances; but it is to little familiar things suggestive of the voice, look, manner, never, never more to be encountered on this earth, that the mind first turns in a bereavement. And greater things that are known of him, in the way of his warm affections, his quiet endurance, his unselfish thoughtfulness for others, and his munificent hand, may not be told.

"If, in the reckless vivacity of his youth his satirical pen had ever gone astray or done amiss, he had caused it to prefer its own petition for forgiveness, long before:

> "I've writ the foolish fancy of his brain;
> The aimless jest that, striking, hath caused pain;
> The idle word that he'd wish back again.

"In no pages should I take it upon myself at this time to discourse of his books, of his refined knowledge of character, of his subtle acquaintance with the weakness of human nature, of his delightful playfulness as an essayist, of his quaint and touching ballads, of his mastery over the English language. Least of all, in these pages, enriched by his brilliant qualities from the first of the series, and beforehand accepted by the public through the strength of his great name.

"But on the table before me there lies all that he had written of his latest and last story. That it would be very sad to any one—that it is inexpressibly so to a writer—in its evidences of matured designs never to be accomplished, of intentions begun to be executed and destined never to be completed, of careful preparation for long roads of thought that he was never to traverse, and for shining goals that he was never to reach, will be readily believed. The pain, however, that I have felt in perusing it, has not been deeper than the conviction that he was in the healthiest vigour of his powers when he wrought on this last labour.

In respect of earnest feeling, far-seeing purpose, character, incident, and a certain loving picturesqueness blending the whole, I believe it to be much the best of all his works. That he fully meant it to be so, that he had become strongly attached to it, and that he bestowed great pains upon it, I trace in almost every page. It contains one picture which must have cost him extreme distress, and which is a masterpiece. There are two children in it, touched with a hand as loving and tender as ever a father caressed his little child with. There is some young love, as pure and innocent and pretty as the truth. And it is very remarkable that, by reason of the singular construction of the story, more than one main incident usually belonging to the end of such a fiction is anticipated in the beginning, and thus there is an approach to completeness in the fragment, as to the satisfaction of the reader's mind concerning the most interesting persons, which could hardly have been better attained if the writer's breaking-off had been foreseen.

"The last line he wrote, and the last proof he corrected, are among these papers through which I have so sorrowfully made my way. The condition of the little pages of manuscript where Death stopped his hand, shows that he had carried them about, and often taken them out of his pocket here and there, for patient revision and interlineation. The last words he corrected in print, were, 'And my heart throbbed with an exquisite bliss.' God grant that on that Christmas Eve when he laid his head back on his pillow and threw up his arms as he had been wont to do when very weary, some consciousness of duty done and Christian hope throughout life humbly cherished, may have caused his own heart so to throb, when he passed away to his Redeemer's rest !

"He was found peacefully lying as above described, composed, undisturbed, and to all appearance asleep, on the twenty-fourth of December, 1863. He was only in his fifty-third year ; so young a man, that the mother who blessed him in his first sleep, blessed him in his last."

Dickens mentions the fact that Thackeray was laid in the grave where a third child "lost in her infancy, years ago" was at peace. At the time of her death, he called on Laman Blanchard, and wept passionately over his loss, and would not be consoled. And his friends said that in the exquisitely tender death scene of Samuel Titmarsh's first-born, he poured out the lament of his own fireside.

"The child lay there in its wicker cradle, with its sweet fixed smile in its face (I think the angels in heaven must have been glad to welcome that pretty innocent smile) ; and it was only the next day, after my wife had gone to lie down, and I sat keeping watch by it, that I remembered the condition of its parents, and thought, I can't tell with what a pang, that I had not money left to bury the little thing, and wept bitter tears of despair. Now, at last, I thought I must apply to my poor mother, for this was a sacred necessity ; and I took paper, and wrote her a letter at the baby's side, and told her of our condition. But, thank Heaven, I never sent the letter ; for as I went to the desk to get sealing-wax and

seal that dismal letter, my eyes fell upon the diamond-pin, that I had quite forgotten, and that lying in the drawer of the desk. I looked into the bed-room,—my poor wife was asleep; she had been watching for three nights and days, and had fallen to sleep from sheer fatigue; and I ran out to a pawnbroker's with the diamond, and received seven guineas for it, and coming back put the money into the landlady's hand, and told her to get what was needful."

Thackeray's references to children are delightful in their tenderness. He held the charity children at St. Paul's to be the grandest sight a man could look upon in London; and in this very same Hoggarty Diamond he made the young couple living in Lamb's Conduit Street go to see and pray with the Foundlings. "My little Mary used to make my breakfast before I went to office of mornings; and on Sundays we had a holiday, and saw the dear little children eat their boiled beef and potatoes at the Foundling, and heard the beautiful music: but, beautiful as it is, I think the children were a more beautiful sight still, and the look of their innocent happy faces was better than the best sermon."

His allusions to his own children, wherever they occur in his letters, are delightful: and his anxiety to make some dollars, "not for himself, but for the little girls at home," is recorded in many of his most charming letters. Mr. Reed relates how he held his boy in hand, and took the trouble to show him London; and how he was at Euston Square to see them off, with a present in his hand for the youngster. Hodder, in his "Memories," gives an excellent testimony in point:—

"One morning I was making my way to 36, Onslow Square, at an earlier hour than usual, when, to my great surprise, I met Mr. Thackeray pacing up and down the footway in a state of great mental uneasiness. It was so entirely contrary to his custom—at least as far as my experience told me—to leave his house at so early an hour, and I was so much concerned at seeing him in such depression, that I was naturally induced to say that I hoped nothing very serious had happened to his household. He answered, 'Poor Marochetti's child is dying.' Having said this, tears came to his relief, and he speedily returned home. He was on terms of close friendship with the Baron Marochetti (his next-door neighbour), and he sympathized with that well-known sculptor in the deep love he bore for his dying child. He was in a cheerless mood for the remainder of the day, and in the course of his work reverted many times to the calamity which he so deplored.

"Again, on the morning of his departure for America.—He was to start by an early train, and when I arrived (for it had been previously arranged that I should see him before he left) I found him in his study, and his two daughters in the dining-room—all in a very tearful condition; and I do not think I am far wrong in saying that if ever man's strength was overpowered by woman's weakness, it was upon this occasion, for Mr. Thackeray could not look at his daughters without betraying a moisture in his eyes, which he in vain strove to conceal. Nevertheless he was enabled to attend to several money transactions which it was

necessary he should arrange before leaving; and to give me certain instructions about the four volumes of his 'Miscellanies' then in course of publication, and which he begged me to watch in their passage through the press, with a view to a few foot-notes that might, he thought, be desirable. Then came the hour for parting. A cab was at the door, the luggage had all been properly disposed of, and the servants stood in the hall, to testify, by their looks, how much they regretted their master's departure. 'This is the moment I have dreaded!' said Thackeray, as he entered the dining-room to embrace his daughters; and when he hastily descended the steps of the door he *knew* that they would be at the window to—

'Cast one longing, lingering look behind.'

'Good-bye,' he murmured, in a suppressed voice, as I followed him to the cab; 'keep close behind me, and let me try to jump in unseen.' The instant the door of the vehicle was closed upon him, he threw himself back into the corner and buried his face in his hands."

When Mr. James Hannay reprinted the brief memoir of Thackeray which he wrote in the *Inverness Courier* at the time of his death, he observed in a prefatory note :—

"There was nothing more charming about Thackeray,—and this too receives illustration in what follows,—than the kindly footing on which he stood with the younger generation. He was not a man to have a little senate; he held sycophants, and all who encouraged them, in contempt; his friends and acquaintances were of all varieties of class and character, differed from him in their ways of thinking about everything. But he made it a duty to befriend and cherish anybody in whose merit and sincerity he believed, however casual the accident which had brought them under his notice. These are the traits which endear his memory to all who knew him, and which will pleasantly connect him henceforth in their minds, with the best and greatest of the humourists and moralists to whom he is now gathered."

Mr. William B. Reed,* one of Thackeray's intimate American friends, wrote a tribute to his memory in 1864, in the "Darkest Hour of the Civil War," that was published in *Blackwood* in June, 1872. He says : "My personal relations to him happened to become very intimate. He seemed to take a fancy to me and mine, and I naturally loved him dearly. He used to come to my house, not the abode of wealth or luxury, almost every day, and often more than once a day. He talked with my little children, and told them odd fairy tales; and I now see him (this was on his second visit) one day in Walnut-street walking slowly along with my little girl by the hand—the tall, gray-haired, spectacled man with an effort accommodating himself to the toddling child by his side; and then he would bring her home : and one day, when we were to have a great din-

* Mr. William B. Reed, of Philadelphia, United States Minister in China, in Lord Elgin's time.

ner at the club, given to him, and my wife was ill, and my household disarranged, and the bell rang, and I said to him, 'I must go and carve the boiled mutton for the children, and take for granted you do not care to come;' and he got up, and with a cheery voice, said 'I love boiled mutton and children too, I will dine with them,' and we did; and he was happy, and the children were happy, and our appetites for the club dinner was damaged. Such was Thackeray in my home." . . . "I liked him better at home and alone. It was on this occasion, or rather on our return journey to Philadelphia, that, on board the steamboat (here again am I localising), he spoke to me of domestic sorrows and anxieties too sacred to be recorded here. And yet it was this man whom vulgar-minded people call heartless! As he thus talked to me I thought of lines of tenderness often quoted, which no one but he could have written:—

> 'Ah me! how quick the days are flitting!
> I mind me of a time that's gone,
> When here I'd sit, as now I'm sitting,
> In this same place, but not alone;
> A fair young form was nestled near me,
> A dear, dear face looked fondly up
> And sweetly spoke and smiled to cheer me,—
> There's no one now to share my cup.'

. . . He was too sincere a man to talk for effect, or to pay compliments; and on his first visit to America, he seemed so happy and pleased with all he met, that I fancied he might be tempted to come and for a time live among us." The British Consulate at Philadelaphia became vacant, the incumbent, Mr. William Peter, dying suddenly; and it seems from the following note, written at Washington, that I urged him to take the place if he could get it." Thackeray's answer is one of his most charming letters. He acknowledged that there were half a dozen houses in Philadelphia where he could find very pleasant friends and company; and that good old library would give him plenty of acquaintances more. Then came the "BUTS":

"But home among my parents here, and some few friends I have made in the last twenty five years, and a tolerably fair prospect of an honest livelihood on the familiar London flagstones, and the library at the Athenæum, and the ride in the park, and the pleasant society afterwards; and a trip to Paris now and again, and to Switzerland and Italy in the summer—these are little temptations which make me not discontented with my lot, about which I grumble only for pastime, and because it is an Englishman's privilege. If it is death to part with these delights (and pleasures they are, and no mistake), sure the mind can conceive others afterwards; and I know one small philosopher who is quite ready to give up these pleasures; quite content (after a pang or two of separation from dear friends here) to put his hand into that of the summoning angel, and say, "Lead on, O messenger of God our Father! to the next place whither the Divine goodness calls us." We must be blindfolded before we can

pass, I know ; but I have no fear about what is to come, any more than my children need fear that the love of *their* father should fail them. I thought myself a dead man once, and protest the notion gave me no disquiet about myself."

Testimonies of love, of friendship, of admiration, in records of kindly acts, in anecdotes of tender heart, in passages from his works illustrating passages of his life, filled the papers at that mournful Christmastime when he died. The instances of his kindly and unostentatious help to many of his young literary friends, might be given by the score. I can remember many that came under my own observation. I was one morning at Horace Mayhew's chambers in Regent Street when Thackeray knocked at the door, and cried from without—" It's no use, Porry Mayhew : open the door."

" It's dear old Thackeray," said Mayhew, instinctively putting chairs and table in order to do honour to the friend of whom he never spoke without pride, and without adding,—" I know dear good Thackeray is very fond of me."

Thackeray came in, saying cheerily—" Well, young gentlemen, you'll admit an old fogy."

He always spoke of himself as an old man. Between him and Mayhew there were not many years. He took up the papers lying about, talked the gossip of the day, and then suddenly said—with his hat in his hand—" I was going away without doing part of the business of my visit. You spoke the other day at the dinner (the *Punch* weekly meeting) of poor George. Somebody—most unaccountably—has returned me a five pound note I lent him a long time ago. I didn't expect it :—so just hand it to George : and tell him, when his pocket will bear it, just to pass it on to some poor fellow of his acquaintance. By-bye." A nod and he was gone.

This was, we all agreed, very like " dear old Thackeray."

HIS LETTERS.

THACKERAY was not a voluminous nor a studied correspondent : but he was a most original one. His letters are a key to the kinder and livelier side of his character. Sending the " Irish Sketch Book " to Laman Blanchard (April 21, 1843) – the volumes lie under my eyes—he wrote in the customary whimsical way :—

" DEAR BLANCHARD,—Not knowing the number of your row—not indeed certain whether it is Union Row or Place, I've sent by the Parcels Company the book, all but the last sheet, to the Examiner, to be forwarded to you.

" It is dedicated to Mr. Lever, and the author will say in the preface that it was to have been called ' The Cockney in Ireland,' but for the pathetic remonstrances of the publishers.

" And so Heaven speed it !

" Ever yours,

" AMELIA.

" I shall be in the Linden grove at the rising of the moon, and you will know me by a cherry-coloured ribbon tied round the tail of my dog."

" Should any letters arrive," he wrote to Mr. Fields from Philadelphia, " addressed to the care of J. T. F., for the ridiculous author of this, that, and the other, F. is requested to send them to Mercantile Library, Baltimore. My ghostly enemy will be delighted (or will gnash his teeth with rage) to hear that the lectures in the capital of Pa. have been well attended. No less than 750 people paid at the door on Friday night, and though last night there was a storm of snow so furious that no reasonable mortal could face it, 500 (at least) amiable maniacs were in the lecture-room, and wept over the fate of the last king of these colonies."

Mr. Fields says :—

" Almost every day, while he was lecturing in America, he would send off little notes exquisitely written in point of penmanship, and sometimes embellished with characteristic pen-drawings. Having attended an extemporaneous supper festival at ' Porter's,' he was never tired of ' going again.' " Here is a scrap of paper, holding these few words, written in 1852 :—

" NINE O'CLOCK, P.M. TREMONT.

" Arrangements have just been concluded for a meeting *somewhere* to-

night, which we much desire you should attend. Are you equal to two nights running of good time?"

Then follows a pen portrait of a friend of his with a cloven foot and a devil's tail just visible under his cloak. Sometimes, to puzzle his correspondent, he would write in so small a hand that the note could not be read without the aid of a magnifying-glass. Caligraphy was to him one of the fine arts, and he once told Dr. John Brown of Edinburgh, that if all trades failed he would earn sixpences by writing the Lord's Prayer and the Creed (not the Athanasian) in the size of that coin. He greatly delighted in rhyming and lisping notes and billets. Here is one of them, dated from Baltimore, without signature :—

"Dear F—th! The thanguinary fateth (I don't know what their anger meanth) brought me your letter of the eighth, yethterday, only the fifteenth! What blunder cauthed by chill delay (the Doctor Johnthon'th noble verthe) thuth kept my longing thoul away, from all that motht I love on earth? Thankth for the happy contenth!—thothe dithpatched to J. G. K. and Thonth, and that thmall letter you inclothe from Parith, from my deareth oneth! I pray each month may tho increathe my thmall account with J. G. King, that all the thipth which croth the theath, good tidingth of my girl may bring!—that every blething fortune yieldeth, I altho pray may come to path on Mithter and Mith J. T. F—th, and all good friendth in Bothton, Math.!"

While he was staying at the Clarendon Hotel, in New York, every morning's mail brought a few lines, sometimes only one line, sometimes only two words, from him, reporting progress. One day he tells me: "Immense hawdience last night." Another day he says: "Our shares look very much up this morning." On the 29th of November, 1852, he writes: "I find I have a much bigger voice than I knew of, and am not afraid of anybody." At another time he writes: "I make no doubt you have seen that admirable paper, the *New York Herald*, and are aware of the excellent reception my lectures are having in this city. It was a lucky Friday when first I set foot in this country. I have nearly saved the fifty dollars you lent me in Boston." In a letter from Savannah dated the 19th of March, 1853, in answer to one I had written to him, telling him that a charming epistle, which accompanied the gift of a silver mug he had sent to me some time before, had been stolen from me, he says :—

"My dear fellow, I remember I asked you in that letter to accept a silver mug in token of our pleasant days together, and to drink a health sometimes in it to a sincere friend. . . . . . Smith and Elder write me word they have sent by a Cunard to Boston a packet of paper, stamped, &c., in London. I want it to be taken from the Custom House, dooties paid, &c., and dispatched to Miss ——, New York. Hold your tongue, and don't laugh, you rogue. Why shouldn't she have her paper, and I my pleasure, without your wicked, wicked sneers and imperence? I'm only a cipher in the young lady's estimation, and why shouldn't I sigh for her if I like? I hope I shall see you all at

Boston before very long. I always consider Boston as my native place, you know."

When Thackeray reached Philadelphia in the month of January, 1853 (his first visit), he became the household friend of Mr. William B. Reed, formerly United States minister in China. Mr. Reed's "memorial" of his Thackeray experiences are fully as delightful as those of Mr. Field's. Returned to Europe, the author of the "Virginians" remained the cordial correspondent of his American hosts, and turned often to them, in his tender, humourous way. In the summer of 1853 he was on the Continent with his daughters: and it was during their rambles, and his watching by the children's sick bed, that he wrote "The Rose and the Ring;" and that he conceived the idea of "The Newcomes"—completed two years later. "Two years ago," he explains in its conclusion, "walking with my children in some pleasant fields near Berne, in Switzerland, I strayed from them into a little wood; and coming out of it presently told them how the story had been revealed to me somehow, which for three-and-twenty months the reader has been pleased to follow." From Switzerland he wrote to his Philadelphia friend:—

"NEUFCHATEL, SWITZERLAND.
"*July* 21, 1853.

"MY DEAR REED,—Though I am rather slow in paying the tailor, I always pay him, and as with tailors so with men; I pay my debts to my friends, only at rather a long day. Thank you for writing to me so kindly, you who have so much to do. I have only begun to work ten days since, and now, in consequence, have a little leisure. Before, since my return from the West, it was flying from London to Paris and *vice versa*, dinners right and left, parties every night. If I had been in Philadelphia I could scarcely have been more feasted. Oh, you unhappy Reed! I see you (after that little supper with McMichael) on Sunday, at your own table, when we had that good Sherry-Madeira, turning aside from the wine-cup with your pale face! That cup has gone down this well so often (meaning my own private cavity), that I wonder the cup isn't broken, and the well as well as it is.

"Three weeks of London were more than enough for me, and I feel as if I had had enough of it and pleasure. Then I remained a month with my parents; then I brought my girls on a little pleasuring tour, and it has really been a pleasuring tour. We spent ten days at Baden, when I set intrepidly to work again; and have been five days in Switzerland and now not bent on going up mountains but taking things easily. How beautiful it is! How pleasant! How great and affable, too, the landscape is! It is delightful to be in the midst of such scenes—the ideas get generous reflections from them. I don't mean to say my thoughts grow mountainous and enormous like the Alpine chain yonder; but, in fine, it is good to be in the presence of this noble nature. It is keeping good company; keeping away mean thoughts. I see in the papers now and again accounts of fine parties in London. *Bon Dieu!* is it possible any one ever wanted to go to fine London parties, and are there now people

sweating in Mayfair routs? The European continent swarms with your people. They are not all as polished as Chesterfield. I wish some of them them spoke French a little better. I saw five of them at supper at Basle the other night with their knives down their throats. It was awful! My daughter saw it, and I was obliged to say, "My dear, your great great grandmother, one of the finest ladies of the old school I ever saw, always applied cold steel to her wittles. It's no *crime* to eat with a knife, which is all very well, but I wish five of 'em at a time wouldn't.

"Will you please beg McMichael, when Mrs. Glyn, the English tragic actress, comes to read Shakespeare in your city, to call on her, do the act of kindness to her, and help her with his valuable editorial aid? I wish we were to have another night soon, and that I was going this very evening to set you up with a headache to morrow morning. By Jove! how kind you all were to me! How I like your people and want to see 'em again! You are more tender-hearted, romantic, sentimental, than we are. I keep on telling this to our fine people here, and have so belaboured your [here the paper was turned and revealed the sketch. At the top is written, "Pardon this rubbishing picture; but I didn't see, and can't afford to write page three over again,"] country with praise in private that I sometimes think I go too far. I keep back some of the truth, but the great point to try and ding into the ears of the great, stupid, virtue-proud English public is, that there are folks as good as they in America. That's where Mrs. Stowe's book has done harm, by inflaming us with an idea of our own superior virtue in freeing our blacks, whereas you keep yours. Comparisons are always odorous, Mrs. Malaprop says.

"I am about a new story, but don't know as yet if it will be any good. It seems to me I am too old for story-telling; but I want money, and shall get 20,000 dollars for this, of which (D.V.) I'll keep fifteen. I wish this rubbish (the sketch) were away, I might have put written rubbish in its stead. Not that I have anything to say, but that I always remember you and yours, and honest Mac and Wharton, and Lewis, and kind fellows who have been kind to me, and I hope will be kind to me again. Good-bye, my dear Reed, and believe me, ever sincerely yours,

"W. M. THACKERAY."

Thackeray was very fond of the world, and of London parties nevertheless; as indeed his works show. For the world—and chiefly the polite world—was his particular oyster; the food on which his wisdom, his insight, his humour, and his natural, underlying pathos, fed by day and night.

The year 1854 was one of sorrow to his friend Reed. How manly, and how full of Christian courage, is the humourist, become the consoler and the adviser.

"ONSLOW SQUARE, BROMPTON,

"*November.*

"MY DEAR REED,—I received your melancholy letter this morning. It gives me an opportunity of writing about a subject on which, of course

I felt very strongly for you and for your poor brother's family. I have kept back writing, knowing the powerlessness of consolation, and having I don't know what vague hopes that your brother and Miss Bronson might have been spared. That ghastly struggle over, who would pity any man that departs? It is the survivors one commiserates of such a good, pious, tender-hearted man as he seemed, whom God Almighty has just called back to himself. He seemed to me to have all the sweet domestic virtues which make the pang of parting only the more cruel to those who are left behind. But that loss, what a gain to him! A just man summoned by God,—for what purpose can he go but to meet the divine love and goodness? I never think about deploring such; and as you and I send for our children, meaning the manly love and kindness, how much more Pater Noster? So we say, and weep the beloved ones whom we lose all the same with the natural selfish sorrow; as you, I dare say, will have a heavy heart when your daughter marries and leaves you. *You* will lose her, though her new home is ever so happy. I remember quite well my visit to your brother—the pictures in his room, which made me see what way his thoughts lay; his sweet, gentle, melancholy, pious manner. That day I saw him here in Dover Street, I don't know whether I told them, but I felt at the time that to hear their very accents affected me somehow. They were just enough American to be national; and where shall I ever hear voices in the world that have spoken more kindly to me? It was like being in your grave, calm, kind old Philadelphia over again; and behold! now they are to be heard no more. I only saw your brother once in London. When he first called I was abroad ill, and went to see him immediately I got your letter, which he brought and kept back, I think. We talked about the tour which he had been making, and about churches in this country—which I knew interested him—and Canterbury especially, where he had been at the opening of a missionary college. He was going to Scotland, I think, and to leave London instantly, for he and Miss B—— refused hospitality, &c.; and we talked about the Memoir of Hester Reed, which I had found I didn't know how, on my study-table, and about the people whom he had met at Lord Mahon's—and I believe I said I should like to be going with him in the Arctic. And we parted with a great deal of kindness, please God, and friendly talk of a future meeting. May it happen one day! for I feel sure he was a just man. I wanted to get a copy of 'Esmond' to send by him (the first edition, which is the good one); but I did not know where to light upon one, having none myself, and a month since bought a couple of copies at a circulating library for 7s. 6d. a-piece.

"I am to-day just out of bed after another, about the dozenth, severe fit of spasms, which I have had this year. My book would have been written but for them, and the lectures begun, with which I hope to make a few thousand more dollars for those young ladies. But who knows whether I shall be well enough to deliver them, or what is in store for next year? The secretaryship of our legation at Washington was vacant the other day, and I instantly asked for it, but in the very kindest letter

Lord Clarendon showed how the petition was impossible. First, the place was given away; next, it would not be fair to appoint out of the service. But the first was an excellent reason, not a doubt of it. So if ever I come, as I hope and trust to do this time next year, it must be at my own cost, and not the Queen's.—Good-bye, my dear Reed, and believe that I have the utmost sympathy in your misfortune, and am most sincerely yours,

"W. M. THACKERAY."

Thackeray's allusion to the treatment he received when he applied for a post that in any other civilized country would have been pressed upon the acceptance of so illustrious a citizen, is full of his customary modesty. It will remain a notable fact—not to the credit of the Government of which Lord Clarendon was a member—long after most of the members of that Government shall have passed out of the memories of men. Thackeray returned to America in the winter of 1855, with "The Georges." Mr. Reed is in doubt whether it was to a passage on the death of George IV., or to one about the Princess Amelia and the old king praying for returning reason, that Thackeray refers in the following :—

"BALTIMORE,
"*January* 16, 1856.

"MY DEAR REED,—Your letter of the 9th, with one from Boston of the 8th, was given to me last night when I came home. In what possible snow-drift have they been lying torpid? One hundred thanks for your goodness in the lecture and all other matters; and if I can find the face to read those printed lectures over again, I'll remember your good advice. That splendid crowd on the last lecture night I knew would make our critical friend angry. I have not seen the last article, of course, and don't intend to look for it. And as I was reading the George III. lecture here on Monday night, I could not help asking myself, 'What can the man mean by saying that I am uncharitable, unkindly—that I sneer at virtue,' and so forth? My own conscience being pretty clear, I can receive the *Bulletin's* displeasure with calmness—remembering how I used to lay about me in my own youthful days, and how I generally took a good tall mark to hit at.

"Wicked weather, and an opera company which performed on the two first lecture nights here, made the audiences rather thin; but they fetched up at the third lecture, and to-night is the last; after which I go to Richmond, then to go further south, from Charleston to Havannah and New Orleans; perhaps to turn back and try westward, where I know there is a great crop of dollars to be reaped. But to be snow-bound in my infirm condition! I might never get out of the snow alive.

"I go to Washington to-morrow for a night. I was there, and dined with Crampton on Saturday. He was in good force and spirits, and I saw no signs of packing-up or portmanteaus in the hall.

"I send my best regards to Mrs. Reed and your sister-in-law, and Lewis and his kind folks, and to Mac's whiskey-punch, which gave *me*

no headache. I'm very sorry it treated you so unkindly. Always yours, dear Reed,

"W. M. THACKERAY."

Mr. Reed explains the following letter in a passage of which it may be observed that in all particulars the incident is "so like Thackeray." "The allusion in this letter to the printed lectures, recalls a little incident which was very illustrative of his generous temper, and is not unlike "the pill-box with the guineas," which I have seen lately in some literary notices. It was this: On his return to Philadelphia, in the spring of 1856, from the south and west, a number of his friends—I as much as any one—urged him, unwisely as it turned out, to repeat his lectures on "The Humourists." He was very loth to do it, but finally yielded, being, I doubt not, somewhat influenced by the pecuniary inducements accidentally held out to him. A young bookseller of this city offered him a round sum—not very large, but, under the circumstances, quite liberal—for the course, which he accepted. The experiment was a failure. It was late in the season, with long days and shortening nights, and the course *was* a stale one, and the lectures had been printed, and the audiences were thin, and the bargain was disastrous, not to him, but to the young gentleman who had ventured it. We were all disappointed and mortified; but Thackeray took it good-humouredly: the only thing that seemed to disturb him being his sympathy with the man of business. "I don't mind the empty benches, but I cannot bear to see that sad-faced young man as I come out, who is losing money on my account." This he used to say at my house when he came home to a frugal and not very cheerful supper after the lectures. Still the bargain had been fairly made, and was honourably complied with; and the money was paid and remitted, through my agency, to him at York. I received no acknowledgment of the remittance, and recollect well that I felt not a little annoyed at this; the more so, when, on picking up a newspaper, I learned that Thackeray had sailed for home. The day after he had gone, when there could be no refusal, I received a certificate of deposit on his New York bankers for an amount quite sufficient to meet any loss incurred, as he thought, on his behalf. I give the accompanying note, merely suppressing the name of the gentleman in question. There are some little things in his note—its blanks and dates—to which a fac-simile alone would do justice:—

"*April* 24.

"MY DEAR REED,—When you get this, . . . remummum-ember me to kick—kick—kind ffu-fffu-ffriends . . . a sudden resolution—to—mummum-morrow . . . in the Bu-bu-baltic.

"Good-bye, my dear kind friend, and all kind friends in Philadelphia. I didn't think of going away when I left home; but it's the best way.

"I think it best to send back 25 per cent. to poor ——. Will you kindly give him the enclosed; and depend on it I shall go and see Mrs. Best when I go to London, and tell her all about you. My heart is uncommonly heavy; and I am yours, gratefully and affectionately,

"W. M. T."

And so he left America—never to return. But his friends from the West were always welcome; and when they announced their coming they found him ready to prepare for, and receive, them. Mr. Reed tells us, that on his appointment to China, Thackeray was among the first to congratulate him, and to beg him to be his guest in London—*en route*.

"MAURIGY'S HOTEL, 1, REGENT STREET, WATERLOO PLACE,
"*April* 2, 1859.

"MY DEAR REED,—This is the best place for you, I think. Two bishops already in the house. Country gentlefolks and American envoys especially affect it. Mr. Maurigy says you may come for a day at the rate of some ten guineas a week, with rooms very clean and nice, which I have just gone over, and go away at the day's end if you disapprove.

"This letter (*referring to one enclosed*) is about the *Athenæum*, where you may like to look in. I wrote to Lord Stanhope, who is on the committee, to put you up.

"I won't bore you by asking you to dinner till we see how matters are; as of course you will consort with bigger wigs than yours always,

"W. M. THACKERAY."

Mr. Reed relates that no "bigger wigs" came between them; and that Thackeray was very kind and attentive to him during his stay. "He came regularly to our quarters, went with me to the Athenæum—that spot of brilliant association—where he pointed out the eminent men of whom I had heard and read; and then he would go to his working-table in the club library and write for the *Cornhill*."

Thackeray's appearances in print as a letter-writer were few and far between; but they were all memorable, and to his honour I give two admirable examples. First, of the dignity of literature. This letter is an amplification of that to the editor of the *Sun*, the fac-simile of which opens this "Day":—

"REFORM CLUB,
"*Jan.* 8*th*, 1850.

"*To the Editor of the Morning Chronicle.*

"SIR,—In a leading article of your journal of Thursday, the 3rd instant, you commented upon literary pensions and the *status* of literary men in this country, and illustrated your argument by extracts from the story of 'Pendennis,' at present in course of publication. You have received my writings with so much kindness that, if you have occasion to disapprove of them or the author, I can't question your right to blame me, or doubt for a moment the friendliness and honesty of my critic; and however I might dispute the justice of your verdict in my case, I had proposed to submit to it in silence, being indeed very quiet in my conscience with regard to the charge made against me. But another newspaper of high character and repute takes occasion to question the

principles advocated in your article of Thursday ; arguing in favour of pensions for literary persons as you argued against them ; and the only point upon which the *Examiner* and the *Chronicle* appear to agree unluckily regards myself, who am offered up to general reprehension in two leading articles by the two writers ; by the latter, for 'fostering a baneful prejudice' against literary men ; by the former, for 'stooping to flatter' this prejudice in the public mind, and condescending to caricature (as is too often my habit), my literary fellow-labourers, in order to pay court to 'the non-literary class.' The charges of the *Examiner* against a man who has never, to his knowledge, been ashamed of his profession, or (except for its dulness) of any single line from his pen—grave as they are, I hope, not proven. 'To stoop to flatter' any class is a novel accusation brought against my writings ; and as for my scheme 'to pay court to the non-literary class by disparaging my literary fellow-labourers, it is a design which would exhibit a degree not only of business, but of folly upon my part, of which I trust I am not capable. The editor of the *Examiner* may, perhaps, occasionally write, like other authors, in a hurry, and not be aware of the conclusions to which some of his sentences may lead. If I stoop to flatter everybody's prejudice for some interested motives of my own, I am no more nor less than a rogue and a cheat, which deductions from the *Examiner's* premises I will not stoop to contradict, because the premises themselves are simply absurd. I deny that the considerable body of our countrymen described by the *Examiner* as 'the non-literary class' has the least gratification in witnessing the degradation or disparagement of literary men. Why accuse 'the non-literary class' of being so ungrateful? If the writings of an author give a reader pleasure or profit, surely the latter will have a favourable opinion of the person who so benefits him. What intelligent man, of what political views, but would receive with respect and welcome that writer of the *Examiner* of whom your paper once said, that 'he made all England laugh and think?' Who would deny to that brilliant wit, that polished satirist, his just tribute of respect and admiration? Does any man who has written a book worth reading—any poet, historian, novelist, man of science – lose reputation by his character for genius or for learning? Does he not, on the contrary, get friends, sympathy, applause—money, perhaps?—all good and pleasant things in themselves, and not ungenerously awarded as they are honestly won. That generous faith in men of letters, that kindly regard in which the whole reading nation holds them, appear to me to be so clearly shown in our country every day, that to question them would be as absurd as, permit me to say for my part, it would be ungrateful. What is it that fills mechanics institutes in the great provincial towns when literary men are invited to attend their festivals? Has not every literary man of mark his friends and his circle, his hundreds or his tens of thousands of readers? And has not every one had from these constant and affecting testimonials of the esteem in which they hold him? It is of course one writer's lot, from the nature of his subject, or of his genius, to command

the sympathies or awaken the curiosity of many more readers than shall choose to listen to another author ; but surely all get their hearing. The literary profession is not held in disrepute ; nobody wants to disparage it ; no man loses his social rank, whatever it may be, by practising it. On the contrary, the pen gives a place in the world to men who had none before—a fair place fairly achieved by their genius ; as any other degree of eminence is by any other kind of merit. Literary men need not, as it seems to me, be in the least querulous about their position any more, or want the pity of anybody. The money-prizes which the chief among them get are not so high as those which fall to men of other callings—to bishops, or to judges, or to opera-singers and actors ; nor have they received stars and garters as yet, or peerages and governorships of islands, such as fall to the lot of military officers. The rewards of the profession are not to be measured by the money standard ; for one man spends a life of learning and labour on a book which does not pay the printer's bill, and another gets a little fortune by a few light volumes. But, putting the money out of the question, I believe that the social estimation of the man of letters is as good as it deserves to be, and as good as that of any other professional man. With respect to the question in debate between you and the *Examiner* as to the propriety of public rewards and honours for literary men, I don't see why men of letters should not very cheerfully coincide with Mr. *Examiner* in accepting all the honours, places, and prizes which they can get. The amount of such as will be awarded to them will not, we may be pretty sure, impoverish the country much ; and if it is the custom of the State to reward by money, or titles of honour, or stars and garters of any sort, individuals who do the country service,—and if individuals are gratified at having 'Sir,' or 'My Lord' appended to their names, or stars and ribands hooked on their coats and waistcoats, as men most undoubtedly are, and as their wives, families, and relations are, there can be no reason why men of letters should not have the chance, as well as men of the robe or the sword ; or why, if honour and money are good for one profession, why they should not be good for another. No man in other callings thinks himself degraded by receiving a reward from his government ; nor, surely need the literary man be more squeamish about pensions, and ribands, and titles, than the ambassador, or general, or judge. Every European state but ours rewards its men of letters ; the American government gives them their full share of its small patronage, and if Americans, why not Englishmen ? If Pitt Crawby is disappointed at not getting a riband on retiring from his diplomatic post at Pumpernickel, if General O'Dowd is pleased to be called Sir Hector O'Dowd, K.C.B., and his wife at being denominated my Lady O'Dowd, are literary men to be the only persons exempt from vanity, and is it to be a sin in them to covet honour ? And now, with regard to the charge against myself of fostering baneful prejudices against our calling—to which I no more plead guilty than I should think Fielding would have done, if he had been accused of a design to bring the Church into contempt by describing Parson Trulliber,—permit me

to say that before you deliver sentence it would be as well if you had waited to hear the whole of the argument. Who knows what is coming in the future numbers of the work which has incurred your displeasure and the *Examiner's*, and whether you, in accusing me of prejudice, and the *Examiner* (alas !) of swindling and flattering the public, have not been premature? Time and the hour may solve this mystery, for which the candid reader is referred 'to our next.' That I have a prejudice against running into debt, and drunkenness, and disorderly life, and against quackery and falsehood in my profession, I own, and that I like to have a laugh at those pretenders who write confidential news about fashion and politics for provincial *gobemouches;* but I am not aware of feeling any malice in describing this weakness, or of doing anything wrong in exposing the former vices. Have they never existed amongst literary men? Have their talents never been urged as a plea for improvidence, and their very faults adduced as a consequence of their genius? The only moral that I, as a writer, wished to hint in the descriptions against which you protest, was, that it was the duty of a literary man, as well as any other, to practise regularity and sobriety, to love his family, and to pay his tradesmen. Nor is this picture I have drawn 'a caricature which I condescend to,' any more than it is a wilful and insidious design on my part to flatter 'the non-literary class.' If it be a caricature, it is the result of a natural perversity of vision, not of an artful desire to mislead; but my attempt was to tell the truth, and I meant to tell it not unkindly. I have seen the bookseller whom Bludyer robbed of his books; I have carried money, and from a noble brother man-of-letters, to some one not unlike Shandon in prison, and have watched the beautiful devotion of his wife in that dreary place. Why are these things not to be described, if they illustrate, as they appear to me to do, that strange and awful struggle of good and wrong which takes place in our hearts and in the world? It may be that I worked out my moral ill, or it may be possible that the critic of the *Examiner* fails in apprehension. My efforts as an artist come perfectly within his province as a censor; but when Mr. *Examiner* says of a gentleman that he is 'stooping to flatter a public prejudice,' which public prejudice does not exist, I submit that he makes a charge which is as absurd as it is unjust, and am thankful that it repels itself. And instead of accusing the public of persecuting and disparaging us as a class, it seems to me that men of letters had best silently assume that they are as good as any other gentlemen, nor raise piteous controversies upon a question which all people of sense must take to be settled. If I sit at your table, I suppose that I am my neighbour's equal as that he is mine. If I begin straightway with a protest of 'Sir, I am a literary man, but I would have you to know I am as good as you,' which of us is it that questions the dignity of the literary profession—my neighbour who would like to eat his soup in quiet, or the man of letters who commences the argument? And I hope that a comic writer, because he describes one author as improvident, and another as a parasite, may not only be guiltless of a desire to vilify

the profession, but may really have its honour at heart. If there are no spendthrifts, or parasites amongst us, the satire becomes unjust; but if such exist, or have existed, they are as good subjects for comedy as men of other callings. I never heard that the Bar felt itself aggrieved because *Punch* chose to describe Mr. Dunup's notorious state of insolvency, or that the picture of Stiggins in 'Pickwick' was intended as an insult to all Dissenters, or that all the attorneys in the empire were indignant at the famous history of the firm of 'Quirk, Gammon, and Snap.' Are we to be passed over because we are faultless, or because we cannot afford to be laughed at? And if every character in a story is to represent a class, not an individual—if every bad figure is to have its obliged contrast of a good one, and a balance of vice and virtue is to be struck—novels, I think, would become impossible, as they would be intolerably stupid and unnatural, and there would be a lamentable end of writers and readers of such compositions.

"Believe me, Sir, to be your very faithful servant,

"W. M. THACKERAY."

In the April of the same year Thackeray again addressed the editor of the *Morning Chronicle*—perhaps the most delightfully whimsical of all his letters. It is quite as good in its way as his reply to the *Times* criticism ("An Essay on Thunder and Small Beer") on "The Kickleburys on the Rhine," published in the same year. It is entitled—

"CAPERS AND ANCHOVIES.

"*To the Editor of the Morning Chronicle.*

"SIR,—I hope no Irish gentleman will be insulted at my recalling a story, venerable for its antiquity, of the Irish officer who, having stated that he had seen anchovies growing in profusion upon the rocks of Malta, called out and shot an Englishman who doubted his statement. As the unhappy Saxon fell writhing with his wound, the Irishman's second remarked, 'Look, Sir Lucius! you have made him cut capers!' 'Bedad, its capers I mane!' the gallant and impetuous O'Trigger remarked, and instantly apologized in the handsomest terms to his English antagonist for his error. It was capers he had seen, and not anchovies, growing on the rocks; the blunder was his, but the bullet was in the Englishman's leg, who went away grumbling because the other had not thought of the truth before.

"Sir, three Irish newspapers, and an Irish Member of Parliament in his place in the Rotunda, have delivered their fire into me through a similar error. Every post brings me letters containing extracts from Irish papers, sent to me by friends, and one of them, who is most active in my behalf, informs me that there is a body of Irish gentlemen who are bent upon cudgelling me, and who are very likely waiting at my door whilst I write from the club, where, of course, I have denied myself. It is these, while it is yet time, whom I wish to prevent; and as many of them will

probably read your journal to-morrow morning, you may possibly be the means of saving my bones, valuable to me and my family, and which I prefer before any apology for breaking them. The blunder of which I am the victim is at once absurd and painful, and I am sorry to be obliged to have recourse to the press for explanation.

"Ten years ago I wrote a satirical story in *Fraser's Magazine*, called 'Catherine,' and founded upon the history of the murderess, Catherine Hayes. The tale was intended to ridicule a taste then prevalent for making novel-heroes of Newgate malefactors. Every single personage in my story was a rascal, and hanged, or put to a violent death; and the history became so atrocious that it created a general dissatisfaction, and was pronounced to be horribly immoral. While the public went on reading the works which I had intended to ridicule, 'Catherine' was, in a word, a failure, and is dead, with all its heroes.

"In the last number of the story of 'Pendennis' (which was written when I was absent from this country, and not in the least thinking about the opera here), I wrote a sentence to the purport that the greatest criminals and murderers—Bluebeard, George Barnwell, Catherine Hayes —had some spark of human feeling, and found some friends,—meaning thereby to encourage minor criminals not to despair. And my only thought in producing the last of these instances was about Mrs. Hayes, who died at Tyburn, and subsequently perished in my novel, and not in the least about an amiable and beautiful young lady now acting at Her Majesty's theatre. I quite forgot her existence. I was pointing my moral such as it was, with quite a different person, and never for a single instant, I declare on my word of honour, remembering the young lady, nor knowing anything regarding her engagement at the Haymarket.

"From this unlucky sentence in 'Pendennis' my tribulations begin, and my capers are held up as the most wicked anchovies to indignant Ireland. *Vindex* writes to the *Freeman's Journal*, saying that I have an intention to insult the Irish nation in the person of an accomplished and innocent young lady, whom I class with murderers and cut-throats, whereby I damn myself to everlasting infamy. The *Freeman's Journal*, in language intelligible always, if not remarkable for grammatical or other propriety, says I am 'the Big Blubberman, the hugest humbug ever thrust on the public,' that I am guilty of unmanly grossness and cowardly assault, and that I wrote to ruin Miss Hayes, but did not succeed. The *Freeman* adds, in a concluding paragraph, that there may have been some person happening to bear a name coincident with that of the *Freeman's* accomplished countrywoman; and that if I have this very simple and complete defence to make, I shall hasten to offer it. I don't take in the *Freeman's Journal*—I am not likely to be very anxious about reading it,—but the *Freeman* never gives me any notice of the attack which I am to hasten to defend, and, calling me coward and ruffian, leaves me. It is the anchovy-caper question settled in the approved manner.

"The *Mail*, assuming that I intended insult and injury, remarks on

the incriminated sentence thus : 'Its brutality is so far neutralized by its absurdity as to render it utterly harmless.' No. 2.

"No. 3. The *Packet*, speaking on the judgment of both of its contemporaries, says, admirably :—

"'*This prompt and chivalrous espousal of a lady's cause is just what we would have expected from our brethren of the Irish press, and will be no doubt a source of much gratification to Miss Hayes.* But . . . . we only think it fair to state that he has not been guilty of the 'incredibly gross act' of associating our pure and amiable Catherine with the murderers and tyrants about whom he has written so nonsensically.'

"And then follows the revelation of the mystery about the real Catherine, the writer remarking that I am neither a fool nor a madman, and that I would not outrage Miss Hayes, lest some Saxon should kick me.

"Sir, if some pictures of the Irish, drawn by foreign hands, are caricatures, what are they compared to the pictures of the Irish drawn by themselves? Would any man—could any man out of Ireland—invent such an argument as the last? It stands thus—

"1. I have not intended to injure, nor have I in the least injured Miss Hayes

"2. The people who have abused me for injuring her have acted with chivalrous promptitude, and, no doubt, have greatly gratified Miss Hayes. Poor young lady! she is to be gratified by seeing a man belaboured who never thought of her or meant her a wrong.

"3. But if I *had* injured Miss Hayes, many Saxon boot-toes would have taught me decency; that is, capers not being anchovies, gentlemen would have acted with much chivalry in shooting me; and if capers *had* been anchovies, I should richly have merited a kicking. Comfortable dilemma!

"I should not have noticed this charge except in Ireland, believing that it must be painful to the young lady whose name has been most innocently and unfortunately brought forward; but I see the case has already passed the Channel, and that there is no help for all parties but publicity. I declare upon my honour, then, to Miss Hayes, that I am grieved to have been the means of annoying her, if I have done so; and I need not tell any gentleman—what gentleman would question me?—that I never for a moment could mean an insult to innocence, and genius, and beauty.

"I am, sir, your very faithful servant,

"W. M. THACKERAY."

"GARRICK CLUB, *April* 11, 1850.

When Thackeray was writing "The Newcomes," a passage of irony about Washington was misunderstood as an insult deliberately offered to the hero of American idolatry, and commented upon by the New York correspondent of the *Times*. Having quoted the offensive passage, Thackeray set himself to answer it in the leading journal, in his own peculiar way :—

"Having published the American critic's comment," he wrote, "permti the author of a faulty sentence to say what he did mean, and to add the obvious moral of the apologue which has been so oddly construed. I am speaking of a young apprentice coming to London between the years 1770 and '80, and want to depict a few figures of the last century. (The illustrated head letter of the chapter was intended to represent Hogarth's 'Industrious Apprentice.') I fancy the old society, with its hoops and powder—Barré or Fox thundering at Lord North asleep on the Treasury bench—the newsreaders at the coffee-room talking over the paper, and owning that this Mr. Washington, who was leading the rebels, was a very courageous soldier, and worthy of a better cause than fighting against King George. The images are at least natural and pretty consecutive. 1776—the people of London in '76—the Lords and House of Commons in '76—Lord North—Washington—what the people thought about Washington—I am thinking about '76. Where, in the name of common sense, is the insult to 1853? The satire, if satire there be, applies to us at home, who called Washington 'Mr. Washington;' as we called Frederick the Great 'the Protestant Hero,' or Napoleon 'the Corsican Tyrant,' or 'General Bonaparte.' Need I say that our officers were instructed (until they were taught better manners) to call Washington 'Mr. Washington?' and that the Americans were called rebels during the whole of the contest? Rebels?—of course they were rebels; and I should like to know what native American would have not been a rebel in that cause?

"As irony is dangerous, and has hurt the feelings of kind friends whom I would not wish to offend, let me say, in perfect faith and gravity, that I think the cause for which Washington fought entirely just and right, and the champion the very noblest, purest, bravest, best of God's men."

And then how charming was his final leave-taking with his American friends in that dainty little poem:

"To all good friends in Boston, Mass.!"

HIS SPEECHES AND SPEECH-MAKING.

THACKERAY was, even to his latest day, and after considerable experience, an uncertain speaker. The idea that he had to make a speech on any occasion disturbed his mind, and worked upon his nerves. I remember on one occasion sitting near him at a club dinner (we were not more than twenty), when the chairman proposed his health as the guest of the evening. Thackeray, while the compliments were being showered upon him, whispered to me that had he known it he would have been at least twenty miles away from that table at that moment. His reply was nervous and spasmodic; and he charged the chairman with having been guilty of great cruelty towards him, and with having spoiled his evening. Sometimes he would suddenly break down: at others, his words would flow placidly from him to the end; but he never managed a peroration, nor rose to eloquence. He gossiped in his own delightful way with his audience—when he was in the mood; and when he could not do this easily, he collapsed. The set phrases, the rhetorical flights, the clap-traps of a chairmanship, were impossible to him. It has been said by a writer of a popular memoir of Thackeray * that his speeches were always unstudied—"as the occasions when they were uttered allowed that freedom of fancy, and play of sudden thought, of which the pen is not always willing to make use." But this was not so. When Thackeray had a grave occasion before him, he not only thought over what he had to say—like Dickens, who took a long walk and arranged his happy thoughts in the manner we remember; but he often dictated his speech to his secretary. Take the following witness—George Hodder—whose testimony on this subject is unimpeachable. The occasion was the memorable dinner given to him on the eve of his departure for America.

"On the morning of the banquet he was in a state of great nervous anxiety, saying that it was very kind of his friends to give him a dinner, but that he wished it was over, for such things always set him trembling. "Besides," he exclaimed, "I have to make a speech, and what am I to say? Here, take a pen in your hand and sit down; and I'll see if I can hammer out something. It's hammering now; I'm afraid it will be *stammering* by-and-bye." I did as he requested, and he dictated with much ease and fluency a speech—or rather the heads of a speech—which he proposed delivering in response to the inevitable toast of his own health.

* "Thackeray—the Humourist and Man of Letters. The Story of his Life," by T. Taylor. John Camden Hotten.

"This was on a morning in the first week of October, 1855, and the dinner took place at the London Tavern in the evening of the same day, the duties of chairman being delegated to Mr. Charles Dickens, who from the very beginning of his public career had always manifested a remarkable aptitude for that responsible office."

"The following account of the affair was afterwards published by a gentleman who was present on the occasion :—

"'The Thackeray dinner was a triumph. Covers, we are assured, were laid for sixty; and sixty and no more sat down precisely at the minute named to do honour to the great novelist. Sixty very hearty shakes of the hand did Thackeray receive from sixty friends on that occasion ; and hearty cheers from sixty vociferous and friendly tongues followed the chairman's—Mr. Charles Dickens—proposal of his health, and of wishes for his speedy and successful return among us. Dickens—the best after dinner speaker now alive—was never happier. He spoke as if he was fully conscious that it was a great occasion, and that the absence of even one reporter was a matter of congratulation, affording ample room to unbend. The table was in the shape of a horse-shoe, having two vice-chairmen, and this circumstance was wrought up and played with by Dickens in the true Sam Weller and Charles Dickens manner. Thackeray, who is far from what is called a good speaker, outdid himself. There was his usual hesitation ; but this hesitation becomes his manner of speaking and his matter, and is never unpleasant to his hearers, though it is, we are assured, most irksome to himself. This speech was full of pathos and humour, and oddity, with bits of prepared parts imperfectly recollected, but most happily made good by the felicities of the passing moment. Like the 'Last Minstrel,'

> "'Each blank in faithless memory's void
> The poet's glowing thought supplied.'

"It was a speech to remember for its earnestness of purpose and its undoubted originality. Then the chairman quitted, and many near and at a distance quitted with him. Thackeray was on the move with the chairman, when, inspired by the moment, Jerrold took the chair, and Thackeray remained. Who is to chronicle what now passed?—what passages of wit—what neat and pleasant sarcastic speeches in proposing healths—what varied and pleasant, ay, and at times sarcastic acknowledgments? Up to the time when Dickens left, a good reporter might have given all, and with care, to future ages ; but there could be no reporting what followed. There were words too nimble and too full of flame for a dozen Gurneys, all ears, to catch and preserve. Few will forget that night. There was an 'air of wit' about the room for three days after. Enough to make the two companies, though downright fools, right witty.'

"I am now fortunately enabled to give the original draft of the speech thus pictured, and which, as I have just stated, was written by me, to Mr. Thackeray's dictation on the morning of the dinner. It will be seen from the occasional vacant spaces, that the writer of the above was correct in

assuming that the speaker had intentionally left blanks with the view of supplying them at the moment. Some few sentences will be found to be quite incomplete, but it is not very difficult to conjecture how Mr. Thackeray would fill them up; though I believe I am right in saying that the speech as delivered fell far short of the speech as written. The latter has never been out of my possession since it came from Mr. Thackeray's lips, for having once tested his power and brought to light the thoughts which animated him, he did not care for the MS., and did not even read it. I subjoin it, *ipsissima verba*:—

"'I know great numbers of us here present have been invited to a neighbouring palace, where turtle, champagne, and all good things are as plentiful almost as here, and where there reigns a civic monarch with a splendid court of officers, &c. The sort of greeting that I had myself to-day—this splendour, &c.—the bevy in the ante-room—have filled my bosom with an elation with which no doubt Sir Francis Graham Moon's throbs. I am surrounded by respectful friends, &c.,—and I feel myself like a Lord Mayor. To his Lordship's delight and magnificence there is a drawback. In the fountain of *his* pleasure there surges a bitter. He is thinking about the ninth of November, and I about the thirteenth of October.

"Some years since, when I was younger and used to frequent jolly assemblies, I wrote a Bacchanalian song, to be chanted after dinner, &c. I wish some one would sing that song now to the tune of the "Dead March in Saul,' &c., not for me—I am miserable enough,—but for you, who seem in a great deal too good spirits. I tell you I am not—all the drink in Mr. Bathe's cellar won't make me. There may be sherry there 500 years old: Columbus may have taken it out from Cadiz with him when he went to discover America: and it won't make me jolly, &c.; and yet, entirely unsatisfactory as this feast is to me, I should like some more. Why can't you give me some more? I don't care about them costing two guineas a-head. It is not the turtle I value. Let us go to Simpson's fish ordinary, or to Bertolini's, or John o' Groats', &c.—I don't want to go away—I cling round the mahogany tree.

"In the course of my profound and extensive reading, I have found it is the habit of the English nation to give dinners to the unfortunate. I have been living lately with some worthy singular fellows 150 or 160 years old. I find that upon certain occasions the greatest attention was always paid them. They might call for anything they liked for dinner. My friend Simon Fraser, Lord Lovat, about 109 years since, I think, partook very cheerfully of minced veal and sack before he was going on his journey.— Lord Ferrers (Rice). I could tell you a dozen jolly stories about feasts of this sort. I remember a particularly jolly one at which I was present, and which took place at least 900 years ago. My friend, Mr. Macready, gave it at Forres Castle, North Britain, Covent Garden. That was a magnificent affair indeed. The tables were piled with most splendid fruits; gorgeous dish-covers glittered in endless perspective;— Macbeth—Macready, I mean,—taking up a huge gold beaker, shining

with enormous gems that must have been worth many hundred millions of money, filled it out of a gold six-gallon jug, and drank courteously to the general health of the whole table. Why did he put it down? What made him, in the midst of that jolly party, appear so haggard and melancholy? It was because he saw before him the ghost of John Cooper, with chalked face, and an immense streak of vermilion painted across his throat! No wonder he was disturbed. In like manner I have before me at this minute the horrid figure of a steward, with a basin perhaps, or a glass of brandy and water, which he will press me to drink and which I shall try and swallow, and which won't make me any better —I know it won't.

"Then there's the dinner, which we all of us must remember in our schoolboy days, and which took place twice or thrice a year at home, on the day before Dr. Birch expected his young friends to reassemble at his academy, Rodwell Regis. Don't you remember how the morning was spent?—how you went about taking leave of the garden, and the old mare and foal, and the paddock, and the pointers in the kennel?—and how your little sister wistfully kept at your side all day? and how you went and looked at that confounded trunk which old Martha was packing with the new shirts, and at that heavy cake packed up in the play-box? and how kind 'the governor' was all day; and how at dinner he said 'Jack, or Tom, pass the bottle,' in a very cheery voice? and how your mother had got the dishes she knew you liked best? and how you had the wing instead of the leg, which used to be your ordinary share? and how that dear, delightful, hot raspberry roley-poley pudding, good as it was, and fondly beloved by you, yet somehow had the effect of the notorious school stickjaw, and choked you and stuck in your throat? and how the gig came? and then how you heard the whirl of mail-coach wheels and the tooting of the guard's horn, as, with an odious punctuality, the mail and the four horses came galloping over the hill. Shake hands! good-bye! God bless everybody! Don't cry, sister! and to-morrow we begin with Dr. Birch and six months at Rodwell Regis.

"But after six months came the holidays again, &c., &c., &c."

In a speech delivered in 1849—which is an excellent sample of his point of view in regard to his own vocation—he confessed that he had forgotten his written words. But he was in a fair humour, and so gossipped on :—

"I suppose, Mr. Chairman, years ago when you had a duty to perform, you did not think much about, or look to, what men of genius and men of eloquence in England might say of you; but you went and you did your best with all your power, and what was the result? You determined to do your best on the next occasion. I believe that is the philosophy of what I have been doing in the course of my life; I don't know whether it has tended to fame, or to laughter, or to seriousness; but I have tried to say the truth, and as far as I know, I have tried to describe what I saw before me, as best I might, and to like my neighbour as well as my neighbour would let me like him. All the rest of the speech which I had

prepared, has fled into thin air ; the only part of it which I remember, was an apology for, or rather an encomium of, the profession of us novelists, which, I am bound to say, for the honour of our calling, ought to rank with the very greatest literary occupations. Why should historians take precedence of us? Our personages are as real as theirs. For instance, I maintain that our friends Parson Adams and Dr. Primrose are characters as authentic as Dr. Sacheverell, or Dr. Warburton, or any reverend personage of their times. Gil Blas is quite as real and as good a man as the Duke of Lerma, and, I believe, a great deal more so. I was thinking, too, that Don Quixote was to my mind as real a man as Don John or the Duke of Alva ; and then I was turning to the history of a gentleman of whom I am particularly fond—a school-fellow of mine before Dr. Russell's time. I was turning to the life and history of one with whom we are all acquainted, and that is one Mr. Joseph Addison, who, I remember, was made Under-Secretary of State at one period of his life, under another celebrated man, Sir Charles Hedges, I think it was, but it is now so long ago I am not sure; but I have no doubt Mr. Addison was much more proud of his connection with Sir Charles Hedges, and his place in Downing Street, and his red box, and his quarter's salary, punctually and regularly paid ; I dare say he was much more proud of these than of any literary honour which he received, such as being the author of the 'Tour to Italy,' and the 'Campaign.' But after all, though he was indubitably connected with Sir Charles Hedges, there was another knight with whom he was much more connected, and that was a certain Sir Roger de Coverley, whom we have always loved, and believed in a thousand times better than a thousand Sir Charles Hedges. And as I look round at this, my table, gentlemen, I cannot but perceive that the materials for my favourite romances are never likely to be wanted to future authors."

Thackeray was fond of dwelling on the merits and position of his own profession—always to claim independence and honour for it. He said, at the 1851 Literary Fund Dinner,—

"I don't believe in the literary man being obliged to resort to ignoble artifices and mean flatteries to get places at the tables of the great, and to enter into society upon sufferance. I don't believe in the patrons of this present day, except such patrons as I am happy to have in you, and as any honest man might be proud to have, and shake by the hand, and be shaken by the hand by. Therefore I propose from this day forward that the oppressed literary man should disappear from among us. The times are altered; the people don't exist; 'the patron and the jail,' praise God, are vanished from out our institutions. It may be possible that the eminent Mr. Edmund Curl stood in the pillory in the time of Queen Anne, who, thank God, is dead; it may be that in the reign of another celebrated monarch of these realms, Queen Elizabeth, authors who abused the persons of honour, would have had their arms cut off on the first offence, and be hanged on the second. Gentlemen, what would be the position of my august friend and patron, Mr. Punch, if that were

now the case? Where would be his hands, and his neck, and his ears, and his bowels? He would be disembowelled, and his members cast about the land. We don't want patrons, we want friends; and, I thank God we have them. And as for any idea that our calling is despised by the world, I do, for my part, protest against and deny the whole statement. I have been in all sorts of society in this world and I never have been despised that I know of. I don't believe there has been a literary man of the slightest merit, or of the slightest mark, who did not greatly advance himself by his literary labours. I see along this august table gentlemen whom I have had the honour of shaking by the hand, and gentlemen whom I should never have called my friends, but for the humble literary labours I have been engaged in. And, therefore, I say don't let us be pitied any more. As for pity being employed upon authors, especially in my branch of the profession, if you will but look at the novelists of the present day, I think you will see it is altogether out of the question to pity them. We will take, in the first place, if you please, a great novelist who is the great head of a great party in a great assembly in this country. When this celebrated man went into his county to be proposed to represent it, and he was asked on what interest he stood? he nobly said, 'he stood on his *head*.' And who can question the gallantry and brilliancy of that eminent crest of his, and what man will deny the great merit of Mr. Disraeli? Take next another novelist, who writes from his ancestral hall, and addresses John Bull in letters on matters of politics, and John Bull buys eight editions of those letters. Is not this a prospect for a novelist? There is a third, who is employed upon this very evening, heart and hand—heart and voice, I may say,—on a work of charity. And what is the consequence? The Queen of the realm, the greatest nobles of the empire, all the great of the world, will assemble to see him and to do him honour. I say, therefore, don't let us have pity. I don't want it till I really *do* want it. Of course it is impossible for us to settle the mere prices by which the works of those who amuse the public are to be paid. I am perfectly aware that Signor Twankeydillo, of the Italian Opera, and Mademoiselle Petitpas of the Haymarket, will get a great deal more money in a week, for the skilful exercise of their chest and toes, than I, or you, or any gentleman, shall be able to get by our brains, and by weeks of hard labour. We cannot help these differences in payment: we know there must be high and low payments in our trade as in all trades; that there must be gluts of the market, and over-production; that there must be successful machinery, and rivals, and brilliant importations from foreign countries; that there must be hands out of employ, and tribulation of workmen. But these ill winds which afflict us blow fortunes to our successors. These are natural evils. It is the progress of the world rather than any evil which we can remedy, and that is why I say this society acts most wisely and justly in endeavouring to remedy, not the chronic distress, but the temporary evil; that it finds a man at the moment of the pinch of necessity, helps him a little, and gives him a 'God speed!' and sends him on his way."

HIS LIFE AND WORKS.

WITHOUT pausing to discuss whether or no William Makepeace Thackeray belonged, as Mr. James Hannay has asserted in his memoir, to "the upper middle class," or to the middle class proper (people are very proud of being on the right side of even the thinnest partitions, in this country), we may note that he was descended from an ancient Saxon race, long rooted in Yorkshire. Mr. Hannay, who delights in the details, records :—" His great-grandfather was Dr. Thackeray, of Harrow, who went to Cambridge in 1710, an excellent scholar and clever man, who partly educated Sir William Jones, and whose epitaph was written by his pupil, Dr. Parr. The son of the Doctor married a Miss Webb, of the old English family to which the Brigadier Webb, of Marlborough's wars, belonged,—whose portrait is drawn with something of the geniality of kinsmanship in *Esmond*. This Thackeray, we believe, was the first of the race to settle in India ; where his son also sought his fortunes ; and where his grandson, the novelist, was born—at Calcutta, in 1811. There are numerous descendants of the scholarly old head-master of Harrow scattered over the English Church and in the Indian Service, and traces of the influence of family connections are found all through the books of the man who has made his name famous. The feudal feeling of Scott—which in any case is Scotch rather than English—Thackeray did not share. Heraldry to him had only the quaint interest and prettiness of old china. But it is impossible to appreciate either his philosophy, his style, or his literary position, without remembering that he was a well-born, well-bred, and well-educated gentleman." Thackeray, Hannay relates, used to say that it took three generations to make a gentleman ; but he certainly never said it in the spirit in which the author of *Satire and Satirists* repeats it. Thackeray throughout his life was a sincere and thorough Liberal ; fastidious in the forms of his rare political activity, but as downright and uncompromising as the noisiest of his party.

Thackeray was sent home from Calcutta at an early age. One of his earliest recollections is a peep at the mighty Napoleon, caged, under the ferocious guardianship of Lowe, in St. Helena ; and this stirred within him, when long years later he wrote the " Chronicle of the Drum," after seeing the ashes of the hero carried under the dome of the Invalides. He was educated, like his friend John Leech, at the Charter-

house—the Greyfriars of his imaginary work; and for those quiet, studious days he was ever grateful. Mr. Hannay says that in after life he let his Greek slip away from him; but that his acquaintance with the Latin language, and especially the Latin poets, was eminently respectable, and exercised a profound influence over his genius and his diction.

From the Charterhouse Thackeray went to Cambridge—leaving without having taken a degree. Mr. Charles Kent, in his "Footprints on the Road," gives a fuller and more authentic account of Thackeray's advance from childhood to fame and self-won fortune than any I have read. Guarding himself against all unwarrantable intrusions upon the sanctities of private life, Mr. Kent says:—

"We may loiter and chat among the pillars of the peristyle without any infraction of the laws of courtesy—if we but pause upon the inner threshold, if we abstain from lifting the curtain veiling the porch of the triclinium, if we but bear in remembrance the symbolic rose carved upon the old classic ceilings over the centre of the banquet-table—the rose ever since those days, or rather nights, of the ancient symposium imparting a proverbial sanctity to social converse. Guided by this rational sense of what is alone allowable to the biographer of those very recently deceased, we would here trace in a few rapid touches the leading points in the path traversed by W. M. Thackeray in his advance from childhood to maturity; from the period when, as a rough-pated urchin, he first donned the gown doubly famous now as that worn also, once upon a time, by old Flos (Sir Henry Havelock), and by old Codd Colonel (dear Thomas Newcombe), upon entering as a boy-scholar the old monastic Charterhouse. There, among the Cistercians, as he loved to call them, Thackeray received his early education. Removed thence in due course to the University of Cambridge, there, among his contemporaries, were numbered several who were destined, like himself, to achieve some reputation in literature. Foremost amongst these aspiring striplings, the now laureate, Alfred Tennyson. Noticeable among them —in a lesser and varied degree—Mitchell Kemble, the late gifted Saxon antiquary; Monckton Milnes, now Lord Houghton; Alexander Kingslake, author of the brilliant, cynical 'Eothen;' with that other famous Oriental traveller, upon whom we have already commented, meaning the ill-fated and lamented Eliot Warburton."

"Originally intended for a career at the bar, Mr. Thackeray kept seven or eight terms while at Cambridge, but eventually quitted the university without a degree, bent upon obeying implicitly, and with all reasonable despatch, the earliest promptings of his youthful ambition, then inciting him at the outset of his career to become, in preference to anything else, an artist. In this design he appears to have been encouraged, at the period, by a variety of circumstances. Immediately, for example, upon coming of age, in 1832, he found himself in possession by inheritance, if not of an ample fortune, at any rate of an independence sufficient to justify him in carrying out to the full his own instinctive inclinations. He at once started upon an educational tour, as an art student, through

the principal galleries of the European continent. Pausing for a while in those travels for the more careful prosecution of his studies at Rome, Thackeray loitered on at his leisure among the academies of Italy and Germany. Thither, indeed, while yet a minor, he had found his way, pencil in hand, into the midst of the refined society of Weimar—then, in 1831, still recognised as the intellectual capital of the whole Teutonic confederation.

"At nineteen his artistic powers, like those of Olive Newcome, were chiefly remarkable for the extravagant and rapid drollery of his quaintly scribbled caricatures—comical sketches of situation and character, dashed off in pen and ink, *currente calamo*, for the delighted amusement of his acquaintances. "Among the English who lived in Weimar during those days," writes Mr. Lewes, in his masterly "Life of Goethe" (book vii., chap. 8, p. 553), "was a youth whose name is now carried in triumph wherever English literature is cherished—I allude to William Makepeace Thackeray:" the biographer adding, "and Weimar albums still display with pride the caricatures which the young satirist sketched at that period." Several of these bizarre scraps of pictorial fun were shown at the time to Goethe, to the great author's unspeakable amusement. And at last there came the day, marked thenceforth with a white stone in the calendar of the young Englishman, when the venerable German poet gave audience to the caricaturist. The interview has happily been described by Mr. Thackeray himself, in that charming letter, penned nearly one quarter of a century after the occurrence it describes, dated "London, 18th April, 1855," in which he recounts to Mr. Lewes the circumstances of his converse with the author of "Faust." Through that epistle, as vividly as through the lorgnette of a stereoscope, we recognise the stately, comely figure, robed in the long grey redingote, the blooming features beaming radiantly above the white neckcloth, the little red ribbon glowing in the button-hole. *Vidi tantum!* exclaims Thackeray, exultingly, at the close of these delightful recollections.

"Several years passed thus pleasantly over the head of the young art student, preparing himself with eager but desultory application for those toils in the *atêlier* which were never, as it happened, to begin for him in earnest. How it eventually came to pass that, in the twenty-fifth year of his age, art was permanently abandoned by him for letters, he himself humorously related a few years since, upon the occasion of the annual dinner given by the Royal Academy. There, within the walls of the National Gallery, upon Saturday, the 1st of May, 1858, Mr. Thackeray afforded that anecdotal glimpse of his earlier life which was so especially welcome to all who heard it as a fragmentary portion of his autobiography. It was then that, Mr. Charles Dickens having responded to the toast of literature, Mr. Thackeray, whose name had likewise been coupled with that toast complimentarily, supplemented the thanks of Boz with this apt reminiscence :—"Had it not been," he said, "for the direct act of my friend who has just sat down, I should most likely have never been included in the toast which you have been pleased to drink;

and I should have tried to be, not a writer, but a painter or designer of pictures. That was the object of my early ambition; and I can remember when Mr. Dickens was a very young man, and had commenced delighting the world with some charming humorous works, of which I cannot mention the name, but which were coloured light green, and came out once a month, that this young man wanted an artist to illustrate his writings; and I recollect walking up to his chambers with two or three drawings in my hand, which, strange to say, he did not find suitable. But for that unfortunate blight which came over my artistical existence, it would have been my pride and my pleasure to have endeavoured one day to find a place on these walls for one of my performances." Happily for us all, that wholesome blight did really descend thus upon the pictorial leaves carried hopefully by William Thackeray to the door of those chambers in Furnival's Inn, up that staircase thus rendered doubly and delightfully classic ground, being at once the access to the abode of the historian of Mr. Pickwick, and the true starting-point in the literary career subsequently traversed by the author of "Vanity Fair," "Esmond," and "The Newcomes." Shortly before this incident, while he had been sojourning in the French capital, Mr. Thackeray had been industriously, day after day, copying pictures in the gallery of the Louvre. Thenceforth, however, by reason of the above-mentioned timely corrective, the crayon was thrown aside for the goosequill. The art student, forsaking the palette for the standish, settled down resolutely to work out his destinies afresh, and with redoubled zest, in his new capacity as a professional man of letters.

"According to a writer in the *Edinburgh Review*, Mr. Thackeray illustrated his literary career shortly after its commencement, somewhat notably, by setting on foot and editing, with distinguished ability, a weekly journal, arranged upon the plan of the *Literary Gazette* and *Athenæum*. It is generally understood that his pen contributed to the columns of the *Times* newspaper, during the editing of that greatest of all London journals (it might be said, of all journals in the wide world) by Thomas Barnes, the first of all London journalists. His earliest settled engagement, however, upon the staff of any periodical dates, we believe, from the September of 1836, the very year during which the first great humorous novel by Boz was brought to its triumphant termination. The rejection of certain proffered embellishments, for which work, we have seen, had suddenly, during the course of its periodical issue, driven Thackeray from art to literature. Towards the close of that year there was commenced, in London, a daily newspaper called the *Constitutional*. Mr. Thackeray's step-father occupied from the outset a prominent position in the direction of the establishment. Vanishing though this journal did from the world of letters within a few months after the date of its inauguration, it is interesting to remember the names inscribed upon the catologue of the contributors. Douglas Jerrold, then fresh from the glories of "Black-eyed Susan," was the theatrical critic. Laman Blanchard filled the Rhadamanthine chair as the literary reviewer. Dudley

Costello wrote the foreign articles. W. M. Thackeray, taking up his position anew in the gay French capital, efficiently discharged, during the existence of the newspaper, the congenial duties devolving upon him in his official capacity as its Paris correspondent."

Henceforth Thackeray for many years worked in the ranks of periodical literature—but chiefly in *Fraser's Magazine*. In Maclise's celebrated cartoon of the Fraser writers at the frequent banquets that were held at 212, Regent Street, he appears a young man not in the foremost rank, and he is between Churchill and Percival Bankes, and appears to be eyeing Jordan and Lockhart, who are taking wine together, in sublime unmindfulness of editor Maguinn, who is "on his legs." Indeed, it is remarkable that not one among all this "Best of all Good Company" is paying the least attention to the chairman. Irving is talking to Mahony (whose portrait strikingly resembles one I have of him taken a few months before his death); D'Orsay, that politest of men, is chatting with Allan Cunningham; Fraser is having a serious conversation with Crofton Croker; and Coleridge has fairly turned his back upon the frolic. In this company Thackeray first gained distinction as a writer. His early progress has been nowhere so fully and authoritatively sketched as in Mr. Kent's pages, to which I return:—

"His earliest distinction was gained in this manner through *Fraser's Magazine*, for which he wrote month after month, year after year, papers of the most miscellaneous character, some of them of essential evanescence, others peculiarly worthy of preservation—essays upon art, reviews, tales and social sketches, fantastic squibs and the quaintest satirical disquisitions. Foremost among these grotesquely humorous contributions to *Regina* were the nine facetious communications entitled 'The Yellow-plush Correspondence.' These, if never printed in a separate form in their own tongue, were at any rate eventually translated into Dutch by Mark Philip Lindo; and in that foreign guise were published at Haarlem, in 1848—during the first outburst of the popularity won for the author by the completion of 'Vanity Fair,'—under the novel title of 'Gedenkschriften van den Herr Yellowplush.' The November of 1837 witnessed the appearance of the earliest of those nine eccentric and certainly very original instalments, the latest of them, 'Mr. Yellowplush's Ajew,' appearing in '*Regina*' in the August following. It is in that first prefatory chapter of his memorials that the redoubtable Charles James Harrington Fitzroy Plantagenet Yellowplush observes of Captain Flupp—among other specimens of his quality, specimens provocative only of what in Homeric phrase is defined as inextinguishable laughter—that 'he is a huzza, but looks much more like a bravo.' Pointing us the way majestically with his gold-headed cane, Chawles Jeames introduces us—we are ashamed to confess it—always upon the broad grin, to Miss Shum's husband. He conducts us into 'Foring Parts.' He refreshes us with a few 'skimmings from the Diary of George IV.'—skimmings, of course, at once yielding us access to the 'cream of cream.' He reveals to our scrutiny the various shuffles of

'Mr. Duceace at Paris;' obliges us with a trenchant exemplar of 'Diamond cut Diamond;' and ultimately brings us up short with a pathetic 'Ajew,' as already intimated, from the lips of this preposterous high priest of Flunkeydom.

"Between the commencement and the completion of the 'Yellowplush Correspondence' occurred one month's omission—a hiatus auspiciously filled up (under date June, 1838) by those 'strictures on pictures' in *Fraser's Magazine* which formed, we believe, the earliest acknowledged effusion from the pen of Mr. Michael Angelo Titmarsh. The sequel to this lecture upon the fine arts did not make its appearance in *Regina* until another twelvemonth had elapsed, when, in June, 1839, Mr. A. Titmarsh again put on the critical spectacles. Afterwards (it was in the ensuing December) there was brought to light, through the same channel, that ingenious 'Letter to Macgilp on the French School of Painting' which, a few months later, formed part and parcel of our author's first substantive publication. This, in truth, was no other than the 'Paris Sketch-book, by Mr. Titmarsh'—a couple of volumes composed of miscellaneous papers, several entirely new, though the majority of them were simply reprinted from the periodicals. Scattered through the letterpress appeared here, for the first time, some of those fantastic little 'designs by the author,' for which—etched on copper-plate, pencilled on wood blocks —Mr. Thackeray's writing so often afterwards became whimsically remarkable,—productions of art, some of them almost as funny, most of them nearly as inartistic as even Tom Hood's pictorial comicalities. As a draughtsman Mr. Thackeray employed the crayon and the needle habitually with too careless a rapidity ever to effect more, by their twittering movement over level box or varnished metal, than to tickle his reader now and then into a cordial burst of laughter. With much of the grotesque genius of the caricaturist, he had but little of his manipulative dexterity—scarcely any indeed beyond that evidenced by the extraordinary speed with which, literally in a twinkling, he produced those fantastic embellishments, occasionally, it must be confessed, dashing off thus rapidly on an initial letter chacterized by an effect the most exquisitely ludicrous. Instance this one of the latter, that is an initial letter prefixed to a chapter about midway in 'Vanity Fair,' in the which a small boy and girl balance upon their tiptoes to a degree beyond the endurance of any one's gravity—attaining an acme of absurdity upon their pumps beyond the possibility of an eclipse by any similar imagining of Leech or of Cruikshank.

"Reverting, however, from the embellishments—which are but the aits interspersing the current of the letterpress—to the volumes of which they are but the incidental, and for the most part indifferent illustrations, we may observe that the work just now mentioned, as a whole, does not, in one sense at least, affect the merit of originality, several of the tales in it being avowedly borrowed from the French and reproduced in translations, chiefly remarkable for the ease, the freedom, and the sprightliness of the paraphrase. The narrative, if so it can be termed, opens with a

pleasant 'Invasion of France,' *viâ* Boulogne. It is agreeably inscribed by Mr. Titmarsh to his tailor, M. Aretz, of the Rue Richelieu—a gentleman who had offered him the loan of a 1,000-franc note, proving himself thereby the very paragon of snips, and one eminently worthy of the meed of this genial dedication. As an attestation of his quality as a humorist, almost we had said before starting, there is that delightful record by Mr. Thackeray of the English bull heard by him while they were crossing the channel. Says the man at the wheel, 'That's Ramsgit,' says he, 'that there's Deal, that there's Dover, round that there pint, only you can't see it.' As for the written bad pronunciation of French, soon after we have landed upon the shores of Gaul, it is here altogether as excruciatingly good in its way as Albert Smith's imitative spoken pronunciation under the like circumstances." It is literally, as the Egyptian Hall Polyglot Monologuist used to call it quaintly, "French with the unmistakable English accent." Turning the pages of this "Paris Sketch book," who can ever forget "The Painter's Bargain,"—that story of Simon Gambouge, where the invisible devil who has answered his soliloquy of impieties, on being asked by Simon, "Where are you?" says in reply, and in the very smallest of voices, "S-q-u-e-e-z-e!" And immediately, on the nail being picked from a bladder of crimson lake in the hand of the artist, a little imp spirts out on the palette,—a little blood-coloured imp of expanding dimensions; as big at first, we are told, as a tadpole, as a mouse, as a cat, when it jumps off the palette and turns a somersault. Who, again, can easily lose of that other kindred historiette of "The Devil's Wager," the irreverent legend about the soul of Sir Roger de Rollo, such as ought, by rights, to have been chanted by Thomas Ingoldsby, or that quaintest of episodes, "The Story of the Little Poinsinet," another little Pickle as ugly as Thersites, and as deformed as Asmodeus? Here, too, in this curious *mêlange* do we not still bear in vivid recollection the mock-heroic biography of Cartouche, the pick-pocket; the terrible history of Mary Ancel; a leaf, stained with blood, torn from the annals of the Revolution; and the sorrowful memoirs of Beatrice Merger, a poor French servant of all work—memoirs there penned nearly twenty years ago by Thackeray, as simply and as touchingly—as Lamartine subsequently related those of Genevieve. Here likewise do we not haste awe-stricken to that frightful record of "A Gambler's Death," a story with a horrible pathos in it, depicting in lurid colours the career and decease of John Athwood, the gamester? The circumstantial account of a trial for murder related to us in this strange miscellany, the extraordinary particulars of the case of "Sebastian Peytal," might have awakened the enthusiasm, as it must certainly have riveted the interest of Edgar Poe, that greatest of all masters of the horrible and the mysterious in literature. It is in this chapter that, while speaking of executions, Thackeray writes, "It is a fine grim pleasure that we have in seeing a man killed." Effective phrases are by no means sparsely scattered through this maiden work of the satirist and humorist, in which he already gives evidence of his rare capacity in the double cha-

racter. Passing under the shadow of the Egyptian obelisk in that superb centralpoint of the French capital, and remembering as he looks about him the scenes that have been witnessed in that really "finest site in Europe," he wonders to himself drolly, why upon earth they call it the Place de la Concorde? Looking then (in 1840) with an eye of keen sagacity under the specious quietude that lasted for years afterwards, until the arrival of one famous February, he declares of Louis Philippe, with all the confidence of one far in advance of his time, that "no one cares sixpence for him or his dynasty." Scanning with an impartial glance the social and political problems of that time and country, he asks gravely—while discoursing upon the treatment there and then of female prisoners,—"Was it not a great stroke of the Legislature to superintend the morals and the linen at once, and thus keep these poor creatures continually mending?" Descanting upon some of the glorious memories of the Empire, he observes most happily of Murat, that he was a kind of mixture of Dugueslin and Decrow—a felicitous comment, reminding one of that celebrated witticism of Mirabeau in which the great Tribune spoke of Lafayette by a double epithet as Cromwell-Grandison.

"One of the most delightful portions of this "Paris Sketch-book" is one glorious critical chapter upon French caricature. It celebrates befittingly the genius of Philippon and Daumier, the rival artists of the *Charivari*. It relates, among other things, how they in their time have immortalized through their ineffably ridiculous lithographs the knaveries of Robert Macaire, and of poor dear stupid Bertrand, the perpetual accomplice of that most clever and ragged of rapscallions. Philippon it was, by the way, especially, who assisted so very materially with the point of his wicked lead pencil in bringing about eventually the third (and let us hope final) French revolution. He assisted thus in preparing for it, by discovering in regard to the citizen king that, as the Arab exclaims with disgust in the ballad of Bon Gualther, "his head is like a pear." And there—thanks to Philippon—week after week that pear dangled and mellowed among the leaves of the *Charivari;* until at length, in Napoleonic phrase, the pear, *being ripe*, fell from its high estate at the first breeze of the February revolution.

"Throughout these initial volumes of his, however, Thackeray is especially bounteous in regart to art. He himself was just fresh from it; he was yet great upon it; it was still in a manner his hobby in retrospect. Writing upon this theme to a certain extent as an ex-artist, *ex cathedra*, he by no means as an art critic lectures us even into the merest momentary notion of his infallibility. We differ from him in his opinions, we dissent from his conclusions, we recoil when he blasphemes Raphael, the divinest of all painters; actually (at page 156, vol. I.) designating as "donkeys" those who do not accord to him, in the flagrant heresy, an implicit agreement. Yet, for the most part, when gossiping upon art topics, Mr. Titmarsh is peculiarly delightful; he is then, beyond a doubt, especially amusing. Protesting against the long nightmare of French classicism, he designates it "a classicism inspired by rouge, gas lamps, and a few lines in Lemprière." But exulting later

on over the downfall of the popularity of Davidism and classicism, he cries out exultingly, " Classicism is dead! Sir John Froissart has taken Dr. Lemprière by the nose and reigns sovereign." While enunciating earnestly enough his preference for landscapes, he observes, after the irresistible manner of Leigh Hunt, " Fancy living in a room with David's sans culotte Leonidas staring perpetually in your face!" His sense of the true sublime in art, however, is profound and thorough. If he reviles Raphael, he pronounces the apotheosis of Buonarotti. Speaking of the sculpturesque masterpiece of that colossal intellect as "frightfully majestic," he adds, " I would not like to be left in a room alone with the Moses;" wondering afterwards, in so many words, that Michael Angelo was not "scorched up" by the fire of his genius like Semele by Jupiter. By a pleasant conceit he likens Watteau to Champagne, Claude Lorraine to Chateau Margaux, and Poussin to a draught of hot blood; remarking, in regard to the last-mentioned, "I don't like indulging in such tremendous drink." Then, taking his reader by the button-hole, " Confess, now," says he, "how many times you have read Béranger and how many Milton? If you go to the 'Star and Garter,' don't you grow sick of that vast luscious landscape, and long for the sight of a couple of cows, or a donkey, and a few yards of common?" Yet, loving Béranger thus entirely, he is, nevertheless, in these very volumes but indifferently successful in his attempted imitations of the master song-writer. Instance this, his versions of Le Roi d'Yvetôt, Le Grimer, and Roger Bontemps, in which, as he himself observes so happily of translations, "the flavour and sparkle have evaporated in the decanting." If feeble, however, in his insular echo of those glorious *chansons*, he is admirably bold, vigorous, and discriminative in his criticisms upon another and a very different branch of French literature,—his masterly survey, we mean, of one or two species of prose fiction, then, and some of them still popular among our Gallic neighbours. Herewith he puts forward an earnest plea for romances in general, all unconscious of some he himself was to write in the hereafter, exclaiming derisively to those sedate bigwigs who avowedly despise novels, " Go and bob for triangles from the Pons Asinorum!"

"Incomparably the happiest evidences ever given of his capacity as a reviewer of novels and novelists are those afforded through his searching and scornful satire upon George Sand (otherwise Madame Dudevant) and the New Apocalypse. One after another he subjects to the inexorable scrutiny of common sense the various masterpieces of that intellectual hermaphrodite, selecting each in turn as though it were some glittering reptile pinned down upon the page, and placed under the lens of the critical microscope. " Indiana,"—directly attacking marriage as a religious and social institution! "Valentine,"—advocating an amiable licence in all things for young men and young maidens! " Lelia!"—what does he call it?—a regular topsyturvyfication of morality, or thieves' and prostitutes' apotheosis! Finally, " Spiration,"—the religious, or rather, ethical, manifesto of George Sand, in which that epicene prophet boldly

declares for Pantheism! Here it is that, in words worthy of the then unrecognised genius within him—words as noble in their eloquence as any to which his pen ever afterwards gave expression—Thackeray breaks forth at last in this cry of reverent and burning indignation :—" O awful, awful name of God! Light unbearable! Mystery unfathomable! Vastness immeasurable! Who are these who come forward to explain the mystery, and gaze unblinking into the depths of the light, and measure the immeasurable vastness to a hair? O name that God's people of old did fear to utter! O light that God's prophet would have perished had he seen! Who are these that are now so familiar with it?" It is no mere professional jester, observe, who talks to us thus from the "Paris Sketch book," but, on the contrary, an earnest thinker—one who was already scanning the philosophy of life with a clear and comprehensive intelligence.

"Our examination of these earliest volumes from the hand of Mr. Thackeray has been thus minute and lengthened intentionally. The production is, doubtless, little more in itself than a careless prelude to all his more highly elaborated after performances. Yet it is a prelude, we cannot but think, in which the gamut of the hitherto untouched organ was sounded—however carelessly—from the treble to the diapason. As such, it appears to us not uninteresting to recall some of those prefatory trills and roulades, some of those forgotten chords and harmonies, thus distinctly to remembrance.

"The following year, 1841, witnessed Mr. Titmarsh's reappearance before the reviewers, bearing in his hand this time, however, only a miniature volume, in which he recounted in three letters, addressed to Miss Smith, of London, the incidents accompanying the obsequies famous thenceforth in history as "The Second Funeral of Napoleon." It was a timely effusion enough—not by any means one in the ordinary acceptation of the phrase *à propos de boths*, being, in point of fact, literally *à propos* to the celebrated jack-boots of the Little Corporal! boots, by the way, far beyond the seven-leagued boots of the old nursery tale,—having traversed kingdoms and empires during the wearer's lifetime in strides preternaturally gigantesque, and now, after death, carrying him at one stride from Slane's Valley, under the shadow of the willows of St. Helena, to his place of final and imperial sepulture under the dome of the Invalides.

"Although Mr. Titmarsh is a true Briton, and therefore appears to have felt somehow constrained to look with an eye askance upon the pageant he has recently been witnessing, he cannot help blurting out, once in a way, an indication of hero-worship worthy of a true Bonapartist. Relating the historic fact, how the old soldiers and the villagers walked miles upon miles across country to the borders of the Seine, in order that they might see the boat pass by with its twinkling *chapelle ardente;* and how those veterans and peasants there knelt down on the banks of the river and prayed with streaming eyes for the repose of the soul of the emperor and king Napoleon, Thackeray cannot help exclaiming, "Some-

thing great and good *must* have been in this man; something loving and kindly, that has kept his name so cherished in the popular memory, and gained him such lasting reverence and affection." Yet, for all that, the letters are written in a sardonic spirit throughout; even from the commencement of the first epistle, in which there is sarcastic talk about that veritable banyan tree, spreading and dropping tendrils down and taking fresh root, and expanding into a wider and yet wider forest perpetually—the Humbug Plant! Nay, so little is the enthusiasm of the writer kindled by the spectacle at which he is assisting, so feebly is his record of it coloured with anything like infatuation, so keen a regard still does he preserve for the ludicrous in the midst of the ceremonial of the reinterment, that he there makes that most ridiculous mention of the signal-cry uttered by the Commandant of the National Guard—the signal that, reverberating in the silence of the sacred edifice, sounded in Mr. Titmarsh's profane ears like nothing less supremely absurd than "Harrum—Hump!" Yet, in expiation, so to speak, of what might seem but flippant in the eyes of another even than an imperialist, there is appended to the prose narrative of the Second Funeral, the poetic "Chronicle of the Drum," a ballad history recounting the warlike glories of France from the days of the great Condé to those of the greater Napoleon,—

> The story of two hundred years
> Writ on the parchment of a drum."

"It is appropriately chanted—this stirring war-song—by the lips of the veteran Pierre, one of the Emperor's old guardsmen. As the grizzled warrior sings to us,—

> "This cross, 'twas the Emperor gave it,
> (God bless him!) it covers a blow;
> I had it at Austerlitz fight,
> As I beat my drum in the snow."

"We needs must listen to the close; we are under the glamour of an eye as glittering as that of the Ancient Mariner. Altogether, this ditty is, perhaps, the best sustained among the lyrical efforts of Mr. Thackeray. And although it might with truth be described as also one of the most successful, it is far from being our own peculiar favourite. Better than this that charming reminiscence of the Temple, "The Cane-bottomed Chair;" trotting off with,—

> "In tattered old slippers that toast at the bars,
> And a ragged old jacket, perfumed with cigars;
> Away from the world, with its toils and its cares,
> I've a snug little kingdom up four pair of stairs."

Most beautiful that homely realm of day-dreams, because there, in the embrace of that old cane-bottomed chair, Fanny one morning sat enthroned so bewitchingly,—

> "It was but a moment she sat in this place,
> She'd a scarf on her neck, and a smile on her face;
> A smile on her face, and a rose in her hair,
> And she sate there and bloomed in my cane-bottomed chair."

Better to us than that roaring blood-bespattered "Chronicle of the Drum," the delectable souvenier of Paris life preserved to us in "The ballad of Bonillabaisse."—

> "When first I saw ye, *cari heoghi*,
> I'd scarce a beard upon my face;
> And now a grizzled, grim old fogy,
> I sit and wait for Bonillabaisse."

Better, ah, how immeasurably better the cordial hand-grasp of each line of "The Mahogany Tree":—

> "Here let us sport,
> Boys as we sit,
> Laughter and wit
> Flashing so free.
> Life is but short—
> When we are gone,
> Let them sing on
> Round the old tree."

Still sing on with us, warm heart, large heart, and gentle—

> "Evenings we knew
> Happy as this;
> Faces we miss
> Pleasant to see,
> Kind hearts and true,
> Gentle and just,
> Peace to your dust,
> We sing round the tree."

Surely this is the dear old song of home for us all. As such we prize it, as such we love it. This, if we must perforce make choice from among them, we may perhaps select as among all the lyrics of Thackeray own own especial favourite."

I, who have heard Thackeray sing his songs in his happy moments—his "Reverend Doctor Luther" among them—can hardly say that it was not his best. "The Mahogany Tree," as Horace Mayhew sang it in his early time, was the most delightful rendering of it I can call to mind. Let us now turn to Mr. Kent's rapid and finely critical description of Thackeray's best and more important work:—

"Although our writer during the first lustre of his career as a man of letters had given frequent evidence of his abilities, he had done so for the most part merely with the average brilliancy of a magazine contributor

and a newspaper correspondent. His wit had sparkled hitherto only in fitful and momentary scintillations. His *métier* seemed to be simply the facetious ; his mission, to crack jokes anonymously. We question very much whether he himself had any confidence whatever, even until a long while afterwards, in his own capacity to realize, however remotely in the hereafter, what must, in spite of his own diffidence and self-depreciation, have coloured at intervals the day-dream of his ambition ; namely, the hope of taking first rank among the great masters of English literature. Employing a grotesque image, that may yet not inaptly express his own unconsciousness of his power at the outset of his career, and of the marvellous capabilities of the magical little instrument in his hand, he might be described as merely whistling and blowing catcalls, where he was ultimately to breathe the music of a pure and original genius—through the trivial orifice of a quill, which, at the touch of the lip of genius, becomes, more resonantly than the golden horn of Clio, the trumpet of immortality. Added to which, he was talking so long under masks, in feigned accents, that we were without the opportunity even of detecting the depth or the sweetness of his own natural intonations. Hushed at last the guttural croakings of the Fat Contributor, the shrill but variable treble of Spec, and Snob, and divers other whimsical minor individualities —abandoned at length (with a sigh) what he himself rapturously designates "that peculiar, unspellable, inimitable, flunkified pronunciation," with which Whatdy'ecallum, in Mr. T's. own tragic record of Gray's dinner (chops and roly-poly pudding) to Goldmore, asks the latter "Whawt toim will you please have the *cage*, sir"—then, at length, but not sooner, we could hear the tears in the voice of Thackeray.

Beyond any doubt whatever, the earliest indication of the real strength and scope of his rare gifts as a writer, both of humour and of sensibility, was afforded through that fantastic narrative, "The History of Samuel Titmarsh and the Great Hoggarty Diamond," a story begun in *Fraser's Magazine* towards the end of 1841, the first instalment of the thirteen chapters appearing in the number for September. It was not until eight years afterwards—when the writer had sprung at last by a single bound into a recognized popularity—that the tale of "The Hoggarty Diamond" was placed substantially before us as a separate publication. Yet the charms of the little fiction, the exquisite merits scattered up and down it, were recognized by the more observing almost immediately upon its periodical issue, even within the first quarter from the date of its commencement. A letter of John Stirling's—affording proof positive of this early appreciation—a letter addressed by Stirling to his mother, under date December 11th, 1841, may be found in evidence of what we are here saying, in Mr. Carlyle's Life of that thunderer among London journalists. "I have seen no new book," writes Stirling in this epistle; but he adds immediately, "I have got hold of the two first numbers of 'The Hoggarty Diamond,' and read them with extreme delight. What is there better?' he asks, defiantly : 'What is there better in Fielding or Goldsmith? The man is a true genius ; and, with quiet and comfort, might produce master-

pieces that would last as long as any we have, and delight millions of unborn readers. There is more truth and nature in one of these papers than in —— 's novels together." Who —— may possibly be, we are left of course to conjecture. It is but a spiteful and jealous stab in the dark, aimed with a pointless printer's dash at somebody whose identity we care not to distinguish. But the appreciative panegyric of the friend then, and for that matter during several years afterwards, altogether "unknown to fame" beyond the radius of a genial literary coterie—that assuredly is as explicit and as emphatic as any heartfelt and unstudied eulogium well could be. Insomuch that Thomas Carlyle, after quoting those earnest words of praise in his biography of "The Thunderer," is fain to add, by way of comment (p. 287): "Thackeray, always a close friend of the Stirling House, will observe that this is dated 1841, and not 1851, and have his own reflections on the matter." It is not, after all, very surprising, however, to note the cordiality of those encomiastic and even prophetic words of Stirling, if we come to turn over once more those leaves of ready fun and frolic, of sportive sarcasm and unaffected tenderness, through which we hear so many strange but soon familiar voices; a few among them, at rare intervals, thrilling us with simple accents into tears; the majority provoking us to secret merriment, or, better still, coming down upon us plump with sleeveless errands of laughter! Don't we yet listen delighted to the quavering tones of old Aunt Susy descanting upon the great Mulcahy's *shy deuver*, "the p — the por — the portrait of her sainted Hoggarty," let into that dreadful machine, the locket ("about the size of the lid of a shaving box"), upon the margin of which blazes the great diamond, the heirloom of the Hoggarties? Don't we still watch with malicious satisfaction the convulsive features of Samuel, the nephew, as he gulps down repeated doses of that abhorred black currant wine, idealized under the mellifluous title of Rosolio? Have we not a glance of the evil eye yet, flashed back from our indignation of old, in regard to that sanctimonious Brough, the swindling manager of the West Diddlesex Association? Cannot we find one little morsel of fricasseed toad left still to eat at the hospitable board of the Dowager Countess of Drum; or a single hair of the tuft upon the chin of that West-end Riquet, the radiant Earl of Tiptoff, to hunt a brief while longer down the broad sweep of Rotten Row, or round the curl of the Ring, or through the mazy involutions of Belgravia? As for the minor characters, or more vulgar entities introduced among the throng of those more elevated personages, they may, it is true, be meaner studies for the artist, but they acquire more distinctly under his hand the sharp outline and the warm tints of verisimilitude. Instance, let us say, that priggish young clerk, Bob Swinney, with his "Sir, to you," when summoned to appear before his principal—a sort of shadowy silhouette of the immortal Swiveller! or good-natured Gus Hoskins, the dim precursor of that delightful gent in Pendennis! It is, however, around the fresh, wholesome little womanly figure of dear Miss Mary Smith that was, young Mrs. Samuel Titmarsh that is, and as such, through her husband, possessoress for the time being of the Great

Hoggarty Diamond, that the one real charm of the book revolves. She is the central point of the magic circle, drawn here by his pen's tip in this initial fiction of Mr. Thackeray. Listen to that crowning incident in her home-life, as related by worthy Mrs. Stokes, the landlady, the incident occurring shortly after the death of the heroine's first-born, when she hopes to extricate her husband from his pecuniary troubles, by obtaining the post of wet-nurse in the Countess of Tiptoff's establishment. "'Poor thing!' said my lady (who has just heard from the narrator the twofold sorrows, driving the bereaved young mother in quest of this peculiar and lowly situation); "Poor thing!" said my lady. Mrs. Titmarsh did not speak, but kept looking at the baby; and the great, big grenadier of a Mrs. Honner (another applicant) looked angrily at her. 'Poor thing!' says my lady, taking Mrs. T's. hand very kind, 'she seems very young. 'How old are you, my dear?'' 'Five weeks and two days!' says your wife, sobbing. Mrs. Honner burst into a laugh; but there was a tear in my lady's eyes, for she knew what the poor thing was a-thinking of." Thus, in that thirteenth chapter of "The Hoggarty Diamond," as surely as the Master Bet writ in the third scene of his third act of *Troilus and Cressida*,—

"One touch of nature makes the whole world kin:"

the countess takes the ex-clerk's wife as a sister in her embrace, while the reader's mind leaps at the same instant to the recognition of the unmistakeable sign-manual of genius—the expression of that sweet, and true, and exquisite pathos, which is the inseparable and inevitable characteristic of the world's great original humourists.

Already, within the year which witnessed towards its close the commencement of this earliest of the serial stories of Mr. Thackeray, there had been collected together from magazines or from manuscript two volumes of his miscellaneous effusions, designated simply and explicitly on the title page, "Comic, Tales and Sketches." Anonymously and gradually the future novelist was stealing his way to public notice, under all kinds of whimsical soubriquets, and through a great variety of popular periodicals. Sometimes, for example, in that preposterous story of "Little Spity," which many a reader of *Cruikshank's Omnibus* must about this time have cried with laughing over, through the medium of an independent specimen of broad humour, that tasked to its utmost even the illustrative drollery of the pencil of that prince and paragon of caricaturists. Beyond the original monthly outlet for Thackeray's satirical and humourous fancies, namely, the double-columned pages of *Fraser's Magazine*, there was started precisely at the right moment for his own powers, as for those also of so many of his literary intimates and collaborateurs, that wonderful weekly repertory of fun; in other words, that delightful little hunchback, *Punch*, whose jesting has had in its day sufficient originality, and, for that matter, also sufficient nationality about it to make us often regret exceedingly its never yet having dropped its second title of the *London Charivari*.

By hebdomadal instalments, by monthly instalments ; through *Punch*, through *Fraser*, Thackeray by degrees numbered up so many good things, that these of themselves when acknowledged—apart from his other more elaborate writings—would have sufficed to secure for him in the end a reputation.

For the most part these piecemeal effusions have never yet been issued from the press of England in an independent form, save in their collective form as portions of the four volumes of the author's "Miscellanies." Several among them, however, upon the opposite shores of the Atlantic had long previously achieved the honours of separate publication. It was thus with the sarcastic "Confessions of Fitzboodle," coupled with the record of "Major Gahagan's Tremendous Adventures," that exaggeration even upon the extravagance of the mendacious and redoubtable Baron Munchausen. It was thus, too, with the quaint portraiture of "Men's Wives," meaning the model wives of Frank Berry and Dennis Hoggarty. Thus, likewise, had it been in America with regard to "A Shabby Genteel Story"—eked out as a volume by several minor tales in the form of a supplement—that cynical story which relates with pitiless particularity, among other kindred incidents, the painful ceremonial of a shabby-genteel dinner. Another of those *unique* American reprints, again, was an agreeable little *omnium gatherum* volume, embracing within the compass of 306 pages, 16mo, "Punch's Prize Novelists," "The Fat Contributor," and "Travels in London,"—all these thus reprinted together being announced upon that New York title-page as "By W. M. Thackeray," the earliest revelation of which name in authorship, if we remember rightly, occurred, however, in our own country in connection with a work now requiring to be particularized. It was a revelation, however, of that now famous name, not upon a title page, but at the close of an epistolary dedication. The production itself savoured somewhat, it must be confessed, of book-making. This was no other than "The Irish Sketch Book," by Mr. Titmarsh, a sketch book, the letter-press of which was disfigured here and there by a few of the author's prejudices, and here and there also by a few more of his illustrations. The description therein attempted to be given of Ireland and the Irish is, of course, by this time very much after date. It could hardly be expected, therefore, to bear much resemblance to what Ireland and the Irish actually are to our own present knowledge. But viewing the sister island retrospectively, as it undoubtedly was when the pencillings of Mr. Titmarsh were but first freshly jotted down upon the leaves of his Sketch Book, the limning is not by any means so much the reflective limning of a faithful portraiture, as it is one characterized by the bizarre distortions of the veritable caricature. It is a hastily-finished picture—painted in distemper. The general tone of it might be most aptly described as sad-coloured. Viewing it in its own ostensible character as a sketch-book, the effect produced was rather dispiriting and monotonous. The outlines were in Indian ink, and the shading neutral-tinted. So undisguisedly is it in parts an exemplar of the merest book making, that the commence-

ment of it is really little more than a contrasting reprint from the liberal Catholic *Morning Register*, and from the independent Conservative *Saunders' News Letter*. The dedicatory epistle, at the close of which Mr. Thackeray here for the first time plucked off for a moment the comic mask of Titmarsh, revealing under that facetious pseudonym his own earnest individuality, was addressed in the genial spirit of a frank and cordial friendship to Charles Lever, then editor of the *Dublin University Magazine*. "Harry Lorrequer," quoth the first sentence of the letter, "needs no complimenting in a dedication; and" continues the writer, with an exemplary affectation of bashfulness, "I would not venture to inscribe this volume to the editor of the *Dublin University Magazine*, who, I fear, must disapprove of a great deal which it contains. But," he adds—and the sarcasm lurking in the words that follow seems to drop more befittingly from the searing steel pen of W. M. Thackeray than from the playfully twittering goose-quill of M. A. Titmarsh—"allow me," he writes, "to dedicate my book to a good Irishman, the hearty charity of whose visionary red-coats some substantial personages in black might imitate to advantage." The ingredients in the ink thus trailed across the paper as far back as the twenty-seventh of April, 1843, from the point of that iron stylus, for long afterwards lost none of their poignant efficacy, either in sparkle or in bitterness. The caustic for years still bit; the phosphorus still glimmered out in luminous scintillations.

That our English traveller carries with him everywhere through Ireland a microscopic eye for spots and blemishes, he indicates whimsically enough at the very outset. He has scarcely landed at Kingstown, when wandering through the streets he recognises nothing more vividly than its "shabby milliners and tailors, with fly-blown prints of old fashions,"—peculiarities, of course, altogether invisible in the suburban districts of London and Westminster. Following no settled plans in his peregrinations, Mr. Thackeray allow his narrative to meander in the track of his footprints hither and thither discursively as the whim prompts; or, what is yet more potent with your pleasure tourist—the weather. "A Summer's Day in Dublin," agreeably depicted, is followed by a true Cockney's description of "A Country House in Kildare." And so onward by the clattering car from Carlow to Waterford! Occasionally, the future dreaded cynic of all such scribes as affect to clamber into the pulpit, and to talk there didactically *ex cathedra*, cannot himself resist a momentary impulse to write as it were *prepense*, in the midst of his waggeries, up to some high moral purpose, to the championship of some great social or political innovation. Here again, for example, as already in "The Paris Sketch Book," we find him advocating upon principle, and from the depth of his own humane convictions, the absolute remission of the supreme penalty of capital punishment. Sometimes, too, the keen-witted ex-artist turned bookman gives evidence of his capacity, let us say, to take the measurement of an agricultural district by a better standard than the breadth of his ruler or the length of his mahlstick. Thus, so many long years ago, he estimates with shrewd discernment at its right

value, the then new and almost untried manure of guano, as compared with bone dust or with Murray's composition—acknowledging (Vol. I. p. 57) that "the bone-dust run guano very hard," but that the "composition was clearly distanced." At intervals, Mr. Titmarsh still contrives by a single felicitous epithet to hit off in a twinkling a whole vivid description: as where, upon crossing the Suir, he says they "went over the thundering old wooden bridge to Waterford." Is there not a glimpse, too, of the mannerism of that quiet humour with which we afterwards became so perfectly well acquainted, but that then was so new to us all, where he describes that house in Cork with "a fine tester bed in the best room, where my lady might catch cold in state in the midst of yawning chimneys?" Better still, is there not a premonitory flavour—something like that which Count Xavier de Maistre alludes to in his delightful "Journey Round my Room" (Ch. 42), where he writes, "It is thus that one experiences a pleasant foretaste of acid when one cuts a lemon,"—is there not a foretaste here of the "Lectures upon the English Humourists" of ten years afterwards, where in this "Irish Sketch Book" (Vol. I. p. 24), he muses over that mask of Swift's dead face preserved in Trinity College, wondering over those painful, almost awful, lineaments of Dean Jonathan—"the tall forehead fallen away in a ruin, the mouth settled in a hideous, vacant smile?" Best of all, however, in these two earlier volumes from the hand of Thackeray, as an unmistakeable foreshadowing of his veritable presence as later on revealed in its actual proportions—best of all, as such, is that little incidental mention here (Ch. VI.) in the description given of the Ursuline Convent, at Blackrock, of the nun guiding him proudly among the "little collection of gimcracks," dignified with the title of museum among the sisterhood. As he recalls to recollection how the young nun went prattling on before him, leading him hither and thither, "like a child showing her toys," Mr. Thackeray asks his reader, in words of infinite tenderness—asks his reader in a voice afterwards thrilling familiarly to the hearts of many hundreds of thousands—"What strange mixture of pity and pleasure is it which comes over you sometimes, when a child takes you by the hand and leads you up solemnly to some little treasure of its own—a feather, or a string of glass beads? I declare I have looked at such," he adds, "with more delight than at diamonds, and felt the same sort of soft wonder examining the nun's little treasure-chamber." It is but a casual fragment, this, from Mr. Titmarsh's "Irish Sketch Book," but it is a thought expressed in words not unworthy of the author later on of "Esmond" and "The Newcomes."

The following year, 1844, witnessed the production by Mr. Thackeray of another serial tale, issued still anonymously, however, though this time under another *nom de plume*, through the pages of *Fraser's Magazine.* The narrative itself was entitled "The Luck of Barry Lyndon," the writer of it assuming to be one George Fitzboodle. It afterwards achieved the honour of a separate reprint both at Paris and at New York, though at home it has merely been republished, we believe, as an integral portion of

the four volumes of Mr. Thackeray's collected "Miscellanies." Meanwhile the weekly quarto pages of *Punch* had been affording the author of "Barry Lyndon" more frequent and effective opportunities for the display of his rare and original genius as a satirist—as the one destined to take rank very speedily, by universal assent, as the master satirist of our generation. Yet acrid to the last degree of acridity, although he was already demonstrating himself to be *as* a satirist, as a critic, Mr. Thackeray was about this time frequently proving, as he had often proved before and as he so often proved afterwards, genial to the utmost limits of geniality, overflowing with a grateful, cordial, generous, enthusiastic appreciation. This romance of the last century, "Barry Lyndon" to wit, had scarcely been commenced—the first instalment of it appearing in January, 1844—when in the number of *Fraser* for the ensuing month of February there came forth a kind of collective review, entitled "A Box of Novels." This delectable paper, signed with the well-known initials, M. A. T., is still noticeable, though never since reprinted, as a critical argument containing within it one of the most exquisite tributes ever offered to the genius of Charles Dickens *à propos* of that glorious "Christmas Carol" which notwithstanding its brevity, we are are almost tempted to select from among all the now voluminous writings of Boz as pre-eminently his master-piece.

Perhaps Charles Dickens has had no more ardent admirer, he certainly never had any more unstinted panegyrist, than the very author whose writings, during so many subsequent years, have been absurdly held up by certain bungling enthusiasts in contrast to the works of Boz, with a view to the depreciation of that delightful genius. Mr. Thackeray must often, we doubt not, have been of all men about the first to laugh to very scorn the conclusions thus arrived at by some of his more infatuated encomiasts. According to those eccentric logicians, when "Vanity Fair" appeared "Pickwick" ceased to be! The publication of "Pendennis" rendered "David Copperfield" non-existent! Nay, the caustic worldly wit and wisdom of the anatomist of the snobs of England, according to this newly discovered mode of reasoning, suddenly invested with a heinous but nameless guilt those extraordinary powers, both pathetic and humorous, which had previously won for Charles Dickens a popularity that has never been surpassed, if it has ever been equalled, during his own lifetime, by any one purely and simply a writer of imagination. Mr. Thackeray in his time effectively illustrated his own vivid appreciation of the distinct difference (a difference discernible, one might have thought, at a glance) between his own powers, style, tendencies, idiosyncrasy, and those of his great contemporary, where the former has related in one of his charming colloquial discourses how his own children once upon a time posed him with the query, Why he did not write a novel like "Nicholas Nickleby?" It is, to our thinking, in the peculiar combination in Thackeray's genius—in the very pith and marrow of his genius—of the distinctive and vividly contrasting attributes of the satirist and humourist that his chief excellence lies. It is as if his pen alternately, at his own variable whim and pleasure, dropped honey and vitriol. It is as

if there were blent together in the nature of this one writer the sweetness of Goldsmith and the withering and pitiless scorn of Swift—the bitterness of satire, in its very intensity, mingled with humour the most genial, humour with all its most graceful, overflowing and bewitching tenderness. Admiration for *the* humourist, and admiration for the satirist-humourist of our time, we would simply insist upon being in no way incompatible. The appreciation of Thackeray does not necessarily imply the depreciation of Dickens, or *vice versâ.* There is room enough for all in the vacant niches and upon the unoccupied pedestals of the great Walhalla of Literature. To induct another worthy to his appropriate place of elevation, there is no need to clear the way for him either with the spiteful pencil of a Pasquin or with the blundering hammer of an iconoclast. How utterly distasteful these ridiculous gibes directed against Dickens, with a view to the glorification of Thackeray, must have been to Thackeray himself, any one acquainted with Thackeray's miscellaneous writings may readily enough conjecture, knowing thereby, as the reader of Thackeray does full well, the latter's intense and ever tender admiration for the genius of his great contemporary. Contenting ourselves with one solitary indication of this profound and affectionate appreciation, let us here recall to recollection for a moment the musings of our satirist-humourist in his delightful "Sketches and Travels in London," where he is startled by "the melody of Horner's nose, as he lies asleep upon one of the sofas" of the club-house library at the Polyanthus. "What is he reading?" asks Mr. Brown the traveller, otherwise Mr. Thackeray, the great rival novelist. "Hah! *Pendennis*, No. VII.; hum, let us pass on. Have you read 'David Copperfield,' by the way?" says he, turning round upon his reader in a glow of unaffected delight. "How beautiful it is, how charmingly fresh and simple! In those admirable touches of tender humour—and I should call humour, Bob, a mixture of love and wit—who can equal this great genius? There are little words and phrases in his books which are like personal benefits to the reader. What a place it is to hold in the affections of men! What an awful responsibility hanging over a writer: What man holding such a place, and knowing that his words go forth to vast congregations of mankind,—to grown folks—to their children, and perhaps to their children's children,—but must think of his calling with a solemn and humble heart! May love and truth guide such a man always! It is an awful prayer: may Heaven further its fulfilment!" Noble and beautiful words surely, words before which should ever afterwards remain dumb and confounded such as might yet meditate testifying their admiration for Thackeray by depreciating Dickens—"that great genius" whose writings Thackeray loved and honoured not less than any other man out of the huge multitude of his contemporaries. An eulogium, by the way, the impressive close of which Mr. Thackeray failed even then to recognise, comprised within it an orison for his own guidance by the handmaids of Providence.

By this cursory mention, however, of Mr. Brown's "London Travels and Sketches," we are inadvertently anticipating. Mr. Brown had been

preceded some five years by Mr. Snob, while Mr. Snob in his turn had trod hard upon the heels, if he had not even jostled the elbows, of Mr. de la Pluche. Each of them tripping jauntily, in turn as together, across the conspicuous proscenium of Mr. Punch the manager—that pleasant little gentleman (as Mr. Thackeray himself expressed it, long afterwards, through a delightful paper in the *Quarterly*) with the florid nose and the falsetto voice, the "slight dorsal irregularity" and the just faintly perceptible ventral protuberance. "Jeames's Diary" was of course *à propos* of that memorable railway mania which the *Times* by a single "leader"—by a single phrase in a "leader"—brought one fine morning to an abrupt conclusion; "Chawles Jeames de la Pluche, Esq.," himself shortly afterwards serving, by the potent agency of ridicule, to complete the catastrophe. Nothing could well be more laughter-moving than the mere orthography of those wondrous autobiographical memoranda of the great archetype and representative-man of Flunkeydom. An anticipative relish of this is given in the very earliest of the entries, *i.e.*—"3rd January—Our Beer in the Suvnt's Hall so precious small at this Christmas time, that I reely *muss* give warning." It was the "Book of Snobs," nevertheless, that capped the climax of Mr. Thackeray's successes as an anonymous contributor to the periodicals. It is not only the happiest among all his many felicitous serial papers in "Punch," but, beyond that, the most remarkable among all his Miscellanies. Upon this wonderful instrument at once of torture and of execution, "The Snobs of England"—here of the Million, there of the Upper Ten Thousand,—were carefully hung, and drawn, and quartered by one who duffed himself, after the fashion of Tom Moore's Fadladeen at the very outset of his labours (as torturer and executioner), "One of themselves." How he trots them out here, one after another, in ridiculous procession! Mr. Punch's baton has slipped into his hands, and he deals about him with it unmercifully. Down they go, turn by turn, one at a time, or half a dozen of them together. Anybody comes in for it—everybody; his own knuckles even tingling from the recoil occasionally. Talking of the imitation of the great as a weakness universally apparent, "Peacock's feathers are stuck in the tails of most families," quoth he (p. 75), "Scarce one of us domestic birds but imitates the lanky, pavonine strut, and shrill, genteel scream." Sometimes the careless strokes dealt around him by the comic censor, blight as visibly and instantaneously as a flare of lightning. When pausing, for example, before one of the great houses in Belgravia—one of those state mansions of "Vanity Fair," in reference to which he observes afterwards to his throng of readers in the midst of his noble masterpiece descriptive of it (chap. li., p. 449), "Dear brethren, let us tremble before these august portals!" so now previously in his "Book of Snobs" (chap. vi. p. 24), halting for an instant in front of one of these patrician dwellings,—saith he within himself, "Oh house, you are inhabited!—oh knocker, you are knocked at!—oh undressed flunkey, sunning your lazy calves as you lean against the iron railings, you are paid!—by snobs!" And thereupon awfully selecting this same "tremendous

thought," as he terms it, for immediate illustration, "Look," he exclaims "at this grand house in the middle of the square. The Earl of Loughcorrib lives there; he has fifty thousand a-year. A *déjeûner dansant* given at his house last week cost, who knows how much? The mere flowers for the room and bouquets for the ladies cost four hundred pounds. That man in drab trowsers coming crying down the steps, is a dun; Lord Loughcorrib has ruined him, and won't see him: that is his Lordship, peeping through the blind of his study at him now. Go thy way, Loughcorrib, thou art a Snob, a heartless pretender, a hypocrite of hospitality, a rogue who passes forged notes upon society." Yet, directly afterwards, the darkened face of the cynic dimples over with fun, as he depicts with harmless railing the peculiarities of that wonderful portrait of General Scraper—the picture representing the General (who, we are informed, distinguished himself at Walcheren) "at a parlour window with red curtains, in the distance a whirlwind in which cannon are firing off," with other irresistibly ludicrous particulars. A translation of this witty little book, more exquisitely provocative of merriment, in parts, even than the original (by reason of its being a translation), has presented "*Les Snobs d'Angleterre*" to the wondering contemplation, no doubt, of Monsieur and Madame, our dear French neighbours. It is worth looking at, for a moment, this "traduction," by those who have the opportunity, if only for the absurdity of the thing, in beholding "*Les Snobs d'Angleterre*" aforesaid, tricked out for the nonce, as it were, in French habiliments, straddling over the trottoirs, so to speak, in those marvellous Hessian trousers plaited round the waist, the little dandified *képi* perched on the extreme top of the sturdy British cranium, Mr. Snob pausing, we may suppose, when athirst, to moisten his lips at the leaden counter of some small Parisian wine-shop, with one of those amazing little sips of bitter nothing, the *petits verres d'absinthe!*

Prior to the apparition in *Punch* of either the "Book" or the "Diary," Mr. Thackeray had packed his portmanteau and gone struggling off by the Overland Route, as that voyage across the Mediterranean is, oddly enough, designated, had gone struggling off to the East in a semi-official serio-comic sort of a character, as Mr. P's Fat Contributor and Correspondent Extraordinary.

The journey extended not only, as the title of its ultimate record intimates, "From Cornhill to Cairo," but branched off in divers directions—to Lisbon, to Athens, to Jerusalem, to Constantinople.

It was commenced in the August of 1844, this pleasant journey eastwards, on board the P. and O. Company's steamer, the "Lady Mary Wood." But it was not until more than a twelvemonth afterwards that the notes of travel jotted down by Mr. Thackeray *in transitu* were published in a volume brimmed full from rim to rim of its cover with sparkling facetiousness.

The traveller seems throughout never to have forgotten for an instant the aim or drift of the whole enterprise. As the Fat Contributor, he appears to imagine that he must be perpetually on the chuckle. Sometimes in the most incongruous and unseemly localities for a jest, he can

hardly see for laughing—he can hardly see, at least, that the ground he treads on is holy ground, and that the awful sanctity of what he himself once designates, even here in his jest-book, "the great murder of all," is around him. The mixture of cynicism and scepticism with which he passes by such hallowed regions as the place of the Holy Sepulchre, is almost as offensive as that manifested by his brother Cantab, Mr. Kinglake, in his radiant but refrigerating "Eothen." He is nevertheless, in spite of all this, awed for one brief interval into solemnity, by the iron soil and the whole spectacle of branded sterility presented to view on all sides both within and around the awful city of Jerusalem—describing as "the most ghostly sight in the world" the blasted desolation of the wild and rocky valley of Jehoshaphat.

It is as a professional *farceur*, or joke-master, however, that he travels throughout the whole of this Oriental expedition; although he humourously depicts himself as landing in Egypt prepared to view everything "with pyramidal wonder and hieroglyphic awe," he is, on the contrary, perpetually looking at all around him with an especial eye for the detection of the ridiculous. He carries his London likings, moreover, with him beyond the ends of Christendom. At Alexandria he acknowledges to his having a Cockney preference for "Punch" over the Sphinx, as for "Galignani" over the tombs of the Pharaohs. Scanned superciliously through his English spectacles the Sultan's seraglio looks for all the world "like Vauxhall in the day-time." And precisely as Mr. Dickens startles us in his "Pictures from Italy," by declaring (with parenthetical hesitation, and three notes of exclamation) that as he came in sight of the Eternal City, "it looked like—I am half afraid to write the word—like London!!!" so here, too, Mr. Thackeray surprises us by confessing the disappointment with which he found Alexandria to be just like—Southampton! Yet he has the appreciative glance of a painter for the ripe and varied colouring of vast stretches of the southern and oriental scenery. Looking up, entranced, into the sky over the market-place at Cadiz he describes it as bluer and brighter than the best cobalt in the paintboxes. And floating once more, in imagination, over the blue waters of the Nile, his luminous page reflects thus gorgeously the sunrise he then witnessed—"In the sky in the east," he writes, "was a streak of greenish light, which widened and rose until it grew to be of an opal colour, then orange, then, behold, the round red disk of the sun rose flaming up above the horizon, till the waters blushed as he got up; the deck was all red; the steersman gave his helm to another and prostrated himself on the deck, and bowed his head eastward, and praised the maker of the sun; it shone on his white turban as he was kneeling, and gilt up his bronze face, and sent his blue shadow over the glowing deck." Yet directly afterwards, upon the very next page, all Mr. Thackeray has to say about the pyramids is this:—"I confess, for my part, that the pyramids are very big." While all that he can tell us about the desert is, that it appeared to him "uncomfortable." Journeying onward in this mood—in search, not like Dr. Syntax, of the picturesque, but of the

droll—it must have been quite congenial to his humour to make his first entrance into Grand Cairo in a race upon donkeys! No wonder, with this unwinking gaze everywhere in quest of the absurd, that when stopping for a while at Ramleh, in the course of his advance in cavalcade towards Jerusalem, he makes particular mention of the circumstance of his being waited upon, by an Arab, ornamented about the nose with diachylon.

Several of his facetious phrases in the midst of this habitual jocularity are, of course, it must be admitted, even by the veriest curmudgeon of a reader, irresistibly ridiculous. What can be better than his mode of defining the lethargic influence of the lovely climate at Rhodes—where he depicts everybody there as being "idle with all their might?" He seems to walk, as it were, nervously upon tiptoe along the streets of Lisbon, with secret qualms in regard to one particular historic recollection, describing the Portuguese capital as not smoked like London, but dusted over, having "a dry, uncomfortable, earthquaky look." Surveying the sham architecture of the Sultan's palace at Constantinople, he observes comically that "most of the marble is wood;" a remark about as oddly ridiculous as that exclamation of one of those two absurd men in the farce of "Box and Cox," the one who calls out indignantly over the gridiron, "Hallo! my bacon 's a chop!" Almost immediately upon his setting forth on this journey, as we have called it, in search of the droll, Mr. Thackeray must certainly be regarded as in luck; for, scarcely has he landed at Vigo, when we find himself and his companions suddenly accosted thus by the Spanish mendicants: "I say, sir! penny, sir! I say English! tam your ays! penny!" Then is it worth going all the way to Byzantium to arrive at last at such a result as the Turkish bath, provocative of that deliciously fantastic description, assuredly better than the most vivacious fragment to be culled from all Lady Mary Wortley Montague's "Correspondence," that description of the true Turkish bath, in which Mr. Thackeray declares that he was at last "drowned in lather"—protesting in the mere spluttering recollection of it—"you can't see, the suds are frothing over your eye-ball; you can't hear, the soap is whizzing into your ears; you can't gasp for breath, Miss Mac Whirter's wig is down your throat, with half a pailful of suds, in an instant—you are all soap." In a similar strain of grotesque exaggeration, he submits to his reader his profound sense of the hopeless decay of the Turkish Empire, by remarking that there, so to speak, "the ready roasted meat trees may cry, 'come and eat me,' every now and then in a faint voice without any gravy in it, but the faithful begin to doubt about the quality of the victuals." With what a preposterous gravity he descants, with an air of tender interest, upon the merits of every one on board the Lady Mary Wood—down even to "the cook with tattooed arms, sweating among the saucepans of the galley, who used (with touching affection) to send us locks of his hair in the soup." About as good in its way that, as the mention made in another place, of the lazaretto for quarantine, where the authorities are so attentive as to scent your letters with aromatic vinegar.

Conspicuous among the oddities in these descriptions of his, there is that ludicrous record of the landing of the Bishop of Faro, with his lord-

ship's servant in yellow and blue livery, "like the Edinburgh Review!" Or again, there is the particularly dry humour with which he undertakes to delineate, in a few words, the prevailing characteristics of the Maltese landscape, where, speaking of what may be called the country near Valetta, he says that "there the fields are rocks, and the hedges stones." Occasionally his similies are hardly less poetical than they are fantastical as when he quaintly talks of that pinnacle of the arched entrance to a mosque at Cairo, as shooting up "like the most beautiful pirouette by Taglioni." That he was at length beginning to feel something like hope in himself and his goosequill, take this queer little running commentary upon the twain at the close of these Oriental lucubrations. "This quill," quoth he, "it comes of the wing of an humble domestic bird, who walks a common, who talks a great deal (and hisses sometimes), who can't fly far or high, and drops always very quickly, and whose unromantic end is to be laid on a Michaelmas or Christmas table, and there to be discussed for half-an-hour—let us hope with some relish." With so much relish apparently (with all its abundant accompaniments of "sage" and "sauce") was it discussed in this instance, that. Mr. Thackeray upon six different occasions afterwards catered directly for the English table at Christmas.

Taking down his old dusty paint-box from the shelf upon which it had been so long lying, almost forgotten, certainly quite neglected—selecting his brightest gamboge, his richest carmine, and his divinest ultramarine, our dear modern Michael Angelo, him of the dumpling cheeks and circular spectacles—Mr. Titmarsh for the nonce—came forth, to the delight of all the boys and girls in the three kingdoms, during the winter of 1846—47, with a little pink glazed quarto volume of funny letterpress and yet funnier coloured illustrations, descriptive of "Mrs. Perkins's Ball." Setting aside, as the one solitary exception, that *homme farouche* who may be regarded as the exaggerated type of the model Irishman of your ultra-caricaturist, the Mulligan of Ballimulligan—setting aside that one outrageous extravagance, an Englishman's notion of an Irishman, about as like the original as a Frenchman's notion of an Englishman, with his *biftake* "bleeding," and his *bouledogue* "bandy-legged," and his *steppare* flying the garter over park gates as an everyday pastime, and his *Cott-tam* interlarding of everyday conversation—with that one exception of the Mulligan (proving the rule), the characters introduced into this entertaining historiette were exact and literal limnings of people who had sat, or walked, or sang, or danced to the author-artist for their portraiture. They were literary and pictorial Daguerreotypes, in the imprinting of which upon the pages of his Christmas book Mr. Thackeray had taken wit for his iodine. He had turned the feather end of his goose-quill into a paint-brush and had taken his pigments directly from the palette of nature. In testimony of which it is only necessary to recall the merest sprinkling from the motley groups crowding the drawing-rooms, staircases, and hall-passage of Mrs. Perkins in our amused remembrance! From Herr Spoff, breathing melody through his cornet-à-piston, to honest Grunsell, the attendant greengrocer, draining bottles behind the screen! From

Master Perkins, busy among the macaroons on the landing, to Mr. Flam, tantalising the seven lovely Misses Bacon with "Gad! how I wish I was a dancing man" upon the very brink of an expected invitation! An exact companion, externally, to this earliest of Mr. Titmarsh's half-dozen Christmas books dropped from the press in the midst of the ensuing year's festivities. It was only a companion to it, however, in the manner of its appearance—"Our Street" being really and truly for the most part valueless, utterly valueless indeed, saving for a few among the illustrations, "The Man in Possession" being obviously one of these happier hits with the leaded pencil. But the best of them all, "The Lady whom Nobody knew," flaunting in gay apparel down "Our Street," yet scorned by the nurserymaids. A blither, merrier book than any yet, tickling us into laughter, thus with crayon or quill-point twiddled between the finger and thumb of M. A. Titmarsh, R.A., was the goodly volumette in which, during the winter following, he introduced us to "Dr. Birch and his Young Friends." Who can forget those model boys of the model schoolmaster, or the subtle touches of nature with which we get often at an instant to the depths of their idiosyncrasies? George Champion, the cock of the school, for example, after the summing up of the distinguishing peculiarities of whose beautiful, brave, and noble character our author propounds the following delectable sentiment—"I think that to be strong and able to whop everybody would be the greatest of all gifts." There is Duval the pirate, too, in the record of whose predatory career it may be remembered that we come, among other larcenous feats, upon one most impressive incident where Jones Minimus, passing laden with tarts, after a slight colloquy has the goods (that have been merely entrusted to him) confiscated. Can anything, again, have a more comical truthfulness about it than that touching example of "Briggs in Luck?" "Enter the Knife Boy—'Hamper for Briggses?' Master Brown—'Hurray, Tom Briggs! *I'll lend you my knife!*'" But they are all of them capital, these photographs from the haunts of Hieroclesian Skolastikos! From Mother Ruggles, the tart, apple, and brandy-ball seller, up to (or down to—which is it?) the Honourable Plantagenet Gamut-Gamut, the idiot aristocrat; with all the intermediate throng—including among them Master Hewlett (in bed) and Master Nightingale (in his shirt), upon the occasion of that farcical scene in the dormitories! Not forgetting the *vera effigies* of the pugnacious Boxalls and dull Master Hulker, of Bullock the sharper and Backhouse the pill-garlick—destined, this last mentioned, so very frequently to lament, like Master Ingoldsby in the famous legend by the Rev. Thomas Barham—

> "Then he took me by the collar,
> Cruel only to be kind,
> And to my exceeding dolour
> Gave me several slaps behind."

Wonderfully life-like specimens, all of them are, of the academic inhabitants of Rodwell Regis, those small inhabitants trembling under the rule —rather, we should say, the fe-rule of energetic Dr. Birch, the swinge of

whose cane must have afforded so many of his pupils a lively notion of the vigorously rounded development of the biceps muscle veiled under the clerical broadcloth.

Singularly to the foregoing Christmas book were the two immediately ensuing in annual succession. The first of these, "Rebecca and Rowena," being in effect, as the second title designated it, "a romance upon romance," partook of the obnoxious and irritating character of a deliberate travesty, the wilful degradation of the beautiful to the ridiculous. Insomuch was the travesty here, to our thinking, something quite intolerable, that even the piquant drollery of Richard Doyle, as the illustrator, failed to propitiate us so far as to lure us even into momentary approbation. Delectably humorous, certainly, was the little woodcut in the centre of the ornamental cover of the volume, representing Master Motley, with palette and brush, "painting the lily!" But what possibly could in any way redeem from the Malaprop penalty of "forfeiting our malevolence for ever" that disgracefully laughable vignette upon the title page, portraying Wamba as Clown, Isaac as Pantaloon, Wilfred as Harlequin, and Rebecca as Columbine,—disposing the chief personages of Ivanhoe, in fact, in the approved *tableau* preliminary to the Charivari, the hammer and tongs, sausage-stealing, and red-hot poker brandishing, the comic business, in short, as it is technically called, of your regular Christmas pantomime? Somewhat better than this "romance upon romance" was the next "winter night's tale" from the hand of Mr. Titmarsh, "The Kickleburys up the Rhine," descriptive for the most part of a season passed by an English family, once upon a time, in that very *beau ideal* of a German watering-place yclept Rougetnoirburg. It is chiefly memorable, however, this little narrative, designed apparently for nothing more than the pleasant wiling-away of a December evening, by reason of its having elicited from the *Times* a savage review, intended, no doubt, to be crushingly overwhelming. Hurled blindly at Mr. Thackeray, nevertheless it somehow recoiled upon the critic like a boomerang. It goaded Mr. Thackeray to a "retort polite," a rejoinder which is yet worthy of preservation as among the happiest effusions of gall from the pen-point of the master satirist. "An Essay on Thunder and Small Beer," it was called; a mere little octavo pamphlet extending to the length, or rather the shortness, of some half-dozen leaves or so, yet, by turns, within this narrow compass, dignified, ironical, contemptuous, sarcastic, bitter, derisive, eloquent—flaying the reviewer from the lips downwards, and then steeping him in the aquafortis of a scholarly and gentlemanly ridicule. Scarcely a quarter of a year had well elapsed after this edifying literary one-two between the *Times* and Thackeray, when—it was upon a certain May-day, thenceforth to be held in popular remembrance—"The Thunderer," in token of its magnanimous reconciliation with its eminent discomfiter, was doing far better than merely chronicling small beer (or souring it) by giving to publicity in its columns that harmonious "May-Day Ode" with which Mr. Thackeray celebrated in graceful stanzas the inauguration, in Hyde Park, of the World's Exhibition of Art and Industry.

Finally, completing the fairy circle of these Christmas phantasies by Mr. A. Titmarsh, there appeared, not, however, until four seasons later, the last of the little series, perhaps among them all the most delightful, certainly the most fanciful, that pretty fire-side pantomime for great and small children, "The Rose and the Ring," giving us the veracious histories of Prince Giglio and Prince Bulbo. If for nothing else, it would live daintily in our recollection to the music of the little girl's song, as she sings, dancing to herself in the wondrous garden—the sweetest little lisping baby-song, surely, that great author ever penned,—

"O what fun!
Nice plum bun,
How I wis it never was done!"

As it never will be let us all rest assured! For that little girl, with her song and her bun, like little Red Shoes in the fairy legend of the dear Danish poet for all children, Hans Christian Andersen, will go on dancing - "dance she will and dance she must," down to the very end of the chapter.

Already by this time the satirist-humourist had been in the enjoyment during several years of a conspicuous popularity. It was immediately after the appearance of the earliest of the little Christmas books here particularized, that Michael Angelo Titmarsh suddenly, as it were, by a single stride advanced from amidst the crowd of brilliant writers for the periodicals, to a recognised place among the foremost of the great living chiefs of our imaginative literature. He had served for ten years in the ranks; but all the while, like one of the true soldiers of the great Napoleon, he had been carrying his marshal's baton in his knapsack. "Vanity Fair" became at once a new starting point in his literary career, and the most lasting trophy of his genius as a satirist-humourist. It is understood to have been declined by one publisher, though happily the Sibylline leaves, in this instance, were not diminished in number by that obtuse rejection. The serial issue of the narrative began almost unnoticed. It was scarcely midway, however, in its course of month-by-month publication, when throughout all the various literary circles of the metropolis it had become the theme of wondering and delighted conversation. By the period of its completion in 1848, Mr. Thackeray's fame was already securely established; his name was enrolled forthwith, by right of that one work, upon the list of our great English novelists; he had assumed his place at once, and permanently, in the inner throng of that illustrious and beloved fraternity."

The reader is now in possession of the facts of Thackeray's literary career, set forth in the tender and scholarly framing of Mr. Charles Kent. Let him now turn to James Hanway's fine literary estimate (already referred to) of our illustrious friend, which he published in the *Edinburgh Courant* at the time of Thackeray's death :—

"Thackeray," Hannay says, "was still young and opulent when he began to make the acquaintance of London men of letters. Certain it is, that he lent—or in plainer English, gave—five hundred pounds to poor old Maginn, when he was beaten in the battle of life, and like other beaten soldiers made a prisoner—in the Fleet. With the generation going out,—that of Lamb and Coleridge,—he had, we believe, no personal acquaintance. Sydney Smith he met at a later time; and he remembered with satisfaction that something which he wrote about Hood gave pleasure to that delicate humourist and poet in his last days. But his first friends were the Fraserians, of whom Father Prout,—always his intimate,—and Carlyle,—always one of his most appreciating friends,—survive. From reminiscences of the wilder lights in the *Fraser* constellations were drawn the pictures of the queer fellows connected with literature in 'Pendennis,'—Captain Shandon,—the ferocious Bludyer,—stout old Tom Serjeant,—and so forth. Magazines in those days were more brilliant than they are now, when they are haunted by the fear of shocking the Fogy element in their circulation; and the effect of their greater freedom is seen in the buoyant, riant, and unrestrained comedy of Thackeray's own earlier *Fraser* articles. 'I suppose we all begin by being too savage,' is the phrase of a letter which he wrote in 1849; '*I know one who did.*' He was alluding here to the 'Yellowplush Papers' in particular, where living men were freely handled. This old, wild satiric spirit it was which made him interrupt even the early chapters of 'Vanity Fair,' by introducing a parody, which he could not resist, of some contemporary novelists. In the last fifteen years of his life he wrote under greater restraint, and with a sense of his graver responsibilities as one of the leading men of letters of the country. But his satire was never at any time malignant; and the fine freedom of his early writing developed his genius as the scenes of the arena developed the athlete. He was writing for twelve or thirteen years, as a professional author, before 'Vanity Fair' made him really known to the world at large. The best works of that epoch will be found in the *Miscellanies*, published by Bradbury and Evans in 1857. But there is much of his writing buried in periodicals, some of which have been long dead. He was connected with at least one failure, the *Parthenon*,—an ill-omened name borne after a long interval by another journal quite recently defunct. He certainly contributed some things to the *Times*, during Barnes' editorship,—an article on Fielding amongst them,—a kind of work for which he had no relish, and for which he believed himself to have no turn. *Fraser* was the organ with which he was most successfully connected till the days of his *Punch* engagement. It was indeed as a magazinist that he educated himself for a novelist. With a playful reference to his early and never-forgotten ambition to be an artist, he called himself Michael Angelo Titmarsh, and published under that name, not only articles but books. The 'Paris Sketchbook,' the 'Second Funeral of Napoleon' (comprising the 'Chronicle of a Drum), the 'Fatal Boots,' the 'Hoggarty Diamond,' the 'Irish Sketchbook,' the 'Journey from

Cornhill to Grand Cairo,' sufficiently attest his activity during the years which preceded the great epoch of 'Vanity Fair.' These books are full of sense, and wit, and humour, and it seems extraordinary that their author should have been within a year or two of forty before he was really famous. Their very truthfulness, however,—the easy quiet of their best philosophy,—the slyness of their choicest irony,—the gentlemanly taste of their heartiest *abandon*,—all this was *caviare* to the vulgar, including the vulgar of the critical press. The offer of 'Vanity Fair' was declined by one publisher; and good judges said that a necessary impulse was given to its appreciation, by an article during its progress in the *Edinburgh Review*. It was still the fashion, as far as it was fashionable to speak of Thackeray at all, to treat him as a satirist. An admirable satirist he had, indeed, just proved himself in the 'Snob Papers'—a series that stands high above anything ever given to the world in *Punch*, excepting Hood's 'Song of the Shirt.' Nor was Thackeray ever ashamed of the title of satirist, knowing by what great men it had been borne before him, and how much honest work there was in the world for satire to do. But that he was a satirist only, he had proved long before the 'Snob Papers' to be absurd. Anybody who can read, for instance, the story of Sam Titmarsh's sufferings and the loss of his child, after the Diddlesex catastrophe, in the 'Hoggarty Diamond,' without seeing that the writer's tenderness and power of representing tenderness were exquisitely deep and exquisitely real, may conclude himself disqualified by nature for having an opinion on literary matters. There are a few whose judgment on such things is much worth,—but his is certainly worth nothing.

"When Thackeray wrote 'Vanity Fair,' in 1846, '7, '8, he was living in Young Street, Kensington,—a street on your left hand, before you come to the church; and here, in 1848, the author of this sketch had first the pleasure of seeing him, of being received at his table, and of knowing how essentially a kind, humane, and perfectly honest man he was. 'Vanity Fair' was then unfinished, but its success was made, and he spoke frankly and genially of his work and his career. 'Vanity Fair' always, we think, ranked in his own mind as best in *story* of his greater books; and he once pointed out to us the very house in Russell Square where his imaginary Sedleys lived—a curious proof of the reality his creations had for his mind. The man and the books were equally real and true; and it was natural that he should speak without hesitation of his books, if you wished it; though as a man of the world and a polished gentleman who knew the world thoroughly, literature to him only took its turn among other topics. From this point of view his relation to it was a good deal like that of Scott. According to Lockhart, people were wrong in saying that Sir Walter declined at all markedly to talk about literature, and yet his main interest was in active life. Just so, Thackeray was not bookish, and yet turned readily to the subject of books, if invited. His reading was undoubtedly large in Memoirs, Modern History, Biography, Poetry, Essays, and Fiction,—and, taken in conjunction with his scholarship,

probably placed him as a man of letters above any other novelist except Sir Bulwer Lytton. Here is a characteristic fragment from one of his letters, written in August 1854, and now before us :—'I hate Juvenal,' he says ; 'I mean I think him a truculent brute, and I love Horace better than you do, and rate Churchill much lower ; and as for Swift, you haven't made me alter my opinion. I admire, or rather admit, his power as much as you do ; but I don't admire that kind of power so much as I did fifteen years ago, or twenty shall we say. Love is a higher intellectual exercise than hatred ; and when you get one or two more of those young ones you write so pleasantly about, you'll come over to the side of the kind wags, I think, rather than the cruel ones.' Passages like this, which men who knew him will not need to have quoted to them, have a double value for the world at large. They not only show a familiar command of writers whom it is by no means easy to know well,—but they show what the real philosophy was of a man whom the envious represented to the ignorant as a cynic and a scoffer. Why, his favourite authors were just those whose influence he thought had been beneficial to the cause of virtue and charity. 'I take off my hat to Joseph Addison,' he would say, after an energetic testimony to his good effect on English life. He was in fact even greater as a moralist than as a mere *describer* of manners ; and his very hatred of quackery and meanness was proved to be real by his simplicity, humanity and kindliness of character. In private this great satirist, whose aspect in a crowd was one of austere politeness and reserve, unbent into a familiar *naïveté* which somehow one seldom finds in the demonstratively genial. And this was the more charming and precious that it rested on a basis of severe and profound reflection, before the glance of which all that was dark and serious in man's life and prospects lay open. The gravity of that white head, with its noble brow and thoughtful face full of feeling and meaning, enhanced the piquancy of his playfulness, and of the little personal revelations which came with such a grace from the depths of his kindly nature. When we congratulated him, many years ago, on the touch in 'Vanity Fair' in which Becky '*admires*' her husband when he is giving Lord Steyne the chastisement which ruins *her* for life, 'Well, he said, 'when I wrote the sentence I slapped my fist on the table and said, "*that* is a touch of genius!"' The incident is a trifle, but it will reveal, we suspect, an element of fervour, as well as a heartiness of frankness in recording the fervour, both equally at variance with the vulgar conception of him. This frankness and *bonhomie* made him delightful in a *tête-à-tête*, and gave a pleasant human flavour to talk full of sense, and wisdom, and experience, and lighted up by the gaiety of the true London man of the world. Though he said witty things now and then, he was not a wit in the sense in which Jerrold was, and he complained sometimes that his best things occurred to him after the occasion had gone by ! He shone most,—as in his books,—in little subtle remarks on life, and little descriptive sketches suggested by the talk. We remember in particular one evening, after a dinner party at his house, a fancy picture he drew of Shakspeare during

his last years at Stratford, sitting out in the summer afternoon watching the people, which all who heard it, brief as it was, thought equal to the best things in his lectures. But it was not for this sort of talent,—rarely exerted by him,—that people admired his conversation. They admired above all, the broad sagacity, sharp insight, large and tolerant liberality, which marked him as one who was a sage as well as a story-teller, and whose stories were valuable because he was a sage. Another point of likeness to him in Scott was that he never overvalued story-telling, or forgot that there were nobler things in literature than the purest creations of which the object was amusement. 'I would give half my fame,' wrote Scott, 'if by so doing I could place the other half on a solid basis of science and learning.' 'Now is the time,' wrote Thackeray to a young friend in 1849, 'to lay in stock. I wish I had had five years' reading before I took to our trade.' How heartily we have heard him praise Sir Bulwer Lytton for the good example he set by being 'thoroughly *literate!*' We are not going to trench here on any such ground as Thackeray's judgments about his contemporaries. But we may notice an excellent point bearing on these. If he heard a young fellow expressing great admiration for one of them, he encouraged him in it. When somebody was mentioned as worshipping an eminent man just dead,—'I am glad, said Thackeray, 'that he worships any body.'

"After 'Vanity Fair' Thackeray's fame steadily increased. 'Pendennis' appeared during 1849 and 1850, and though it was generally considered inferior in mere plot to its predecessor, no inferiority was perceived in the essential qualities of character, thought, humour, and style. The announcement in the summer of 1851 that he was about to lecture on the English Humourists gave a thrill of pleasure to intellectual London ; and when he rose in Willis' Rooms* to commence the course with Swift, all that was most brilliant in the Capital was assembled to hear him. Amidst a throng of nobles, and beauties, and men of fashion, were Carlyle, and Macaulay,—Hallam with his venerable head,—and Charlotte Bronte, whose own fame was just at its height, and who saw in the lecturer her ideal of an elevated and high-minded master of literary art. The lectures were thoroughly appreciated. Everybody was delighted to see the great masters of English of a past age brought to life again in their habits as they lived, and endowed with the warm human reality of the lecturer's Dobbins, and Warringtons, and Pendennises. It was this power, and not the literary criticism, which constituted the value of Thackeray's lectures, and will secure their place in the biographical literature of the country.

"Towards the close of 1852, 'Esmond' appeared, and Thackeray sailed for America. 'Esmond' constituted a new epoch in his career. By this time

* "He recalled the present writer from a tour in Scotland, in October, and placed the MS. of the 'Humourists' in his hands to edit and annotate during his absence. The recent statement of an Edinburgh writer that it was 'here' he lectured, is of course a blunder."

his celebrity, and the impression made by his distinct and peculiar genius,—so different from that of the common sentimental schools,—had provoked a certain amount of reaction. Cads who disliked him as a gentleman,—Mechanics' Institute men who disliked him as a scholar,—Radicals who knew that he associated with the aristocracy,—and the numerous weaklings to whom his severe truth and perfect honesty of art seemed horrible after the riotous animal spirits, jolly caricature, and lachrymose softness of the style which he was putting out of fashion,—this crew, we say, was by no means satisfied with the undoubted fact that Thackeray was becoming the favourite writer of the cultivated classes. They accordingly began to call his honesty cynicism, and his accuracy reporting. They forgot that tears are pure in proportion to the depth from which they come, and not to the quantity in which they flow, and that the tenderness of a writer is to be estimated by the *quality* of his pathos. They also forgot that as what they called hardness was mere fidelity to truth, so what they called stenographic detail was mere finish of art. The richer imaginativeness of 'Esmond,' and the freer play of feeling in which the author allowed himself to indulge when dealing with a past age, came in good time to rebuke cavillers, and prove that Thackeray's mind was rich as well as wide. 'Esmond,' we take it, is the favourite novel of his choicest admirers. He takes certain liberties with history in it. For instance, the Duke of Hamilton, whom he represents, as about to marry Beatrix when he is cut off in a duel, is, left a widower spoken of by Swift in the 'Journal to Stella.' But as Scott makes Leicester quote the 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' in 'Kenilworth', when Shakspeare was about twelve or thirteen years of age, this may be excused.

"It is a pity that Thackeray did not write expressly on America, for we think that he would have written the most impartial English book to which that country has yet given rise, When he returned from this first visit, he was a good deal away from town. 'Since my return from America,' he writes in August, 1854, 'I have hardly been in London at all, and when here, in such a skurry of business and pleasure as never to call a day my own scarcely.' The passage is significant. Few lives were more engrossed than his, discharging, as he did, at once the duties of a man of letters and a man of fashion. He dined out a great deal during the season. He went to the theatres. He belonged to three clubs—the Athenæum, Reform, and Garrick—to say nothing of minor associations, for the promotion of good fellowship, With less of this wear and tear we should have had more work from him—should have had, perhaps, the History which long dwelt in his imagination as one of the creations of the future. As it is, he achieved a great deal during the last eight or ten years of his life. Two such elaborate novels as the 'Newcomes' and 'Virginians,' a second trip to America, and a ramble over Great Britain, with a new set of lectures on the 'Four Georges'—not to mention a contested election, and what he did for the 'Cornhill,' established on the strength of his name, and for a time directly conducted by him—these were great

doings for a man who, though naturally robust, was plagued and menaced by more than one vexatious disorder of long continuance. And he did them greatly—going into the world gaily and busily to the last, and always finding time for such holy little offices of personal kindness and charity as gave him, we believe and know, more real pleasure than all his large share of the world's applause. He was much gratified by the success of the 'Four Georges' (a series which superseded an earlier scheme for as many discourses on 'Men of the World in Scotland.' 'I have had three per cent. of the whole population here,' he wrote from Edinburgh, in November, 1856. 'If I could but get three per cent. of London.' He thoroughly appreciated the attention and hospitality which he met with during these lecturing tours. And if, as would sometimes happen, a local notability's adoration became obtrusive, or such a person thrust his obsequious veneration upon him beyond the limits of the becoming, his forbearance was all the more respectable on account of his sensitiveness.

"Latterly he had built himself a handsome house in Kensington, to which he removed from Onslow Square, Brompton—his residence after leaving Young Street in which he wrote *Vanity Fair*. It was a dwelling worthy of one who really represented literature in the great world, and who, planting himself on his books, yet sustained the character of his profession with all the dignity of a gentleman. A friend who called on him there from Edinburgh, in the summer of 1862, knowing of old his love of the *Venusian*, playfully reminded him what Horace says of those who, regardless of their sepulchre, employ themselves in building houses :—

"Sepulcri
Immemor, struis domos."

'Nay,' said he, 'I am *memor sepulcri*, for this house will always let for so many hundreds (mentioning the sum) a-year.' How distant, then seemed the event which has just happened, and with which the mind obstinately refuses to familiarize itself, though it stares at one from a thousand broadsheets! Well, indeed, might his passing-bell make itself heard through all the myriad joy-bells of the English Christmas! It is long since England has lost such a son—it will be long before she has such another to lose. He was indeed emphatically English,—English as distinct from Scotch,—no less than English as distinct from Continental, —a different type of great man from Scott, and a different type of great man from Balzac. The highest purely English novelist since Fielding, he combined Addison's love of virtue with Johnson's hatred of cant,—Horace Walpole's lynx-like eye for the mean and the ridiculous, with the gentleness and wide charity for mankind as a whole, of Goldsmith. *Non omnis mortuus est.* He will be remembered in his due succession with these men for ages to come, as long as the hymn of praise rises in the old Abbey of Westminster,* and wherever the English tongue is native to

* "Dum Capitolium
Scandet cum tacita virgine Pontifex.'"

men, from the banks of the Ganges to those of the Mississippi.* This humble tribute to his illustrious and beloved memory comes from one whom he loaded with benefits, and to whom it will always throw something of sadness over the great city where he first knew him, that it contains his too early grave."

Let us now turn to Anthony Trollope, who has accorded to Thackeray "The design of a white marble statue in words."

Trollope dwells not so much on the great man's fame, as on his loveable nature :—

"The fine grey head, the dear face with its gentle smile, the sweet manly voice which we knew so well, with its few words of kindest greeting ; the gait, and manner, and personal presence of him whom it so delighted us to encounter in our casual comings and goings about the town—it is of these things, and of these things lost for ever, that we are now thinking ! We think of them as of treasures which are not only lost, but which can never be replaced. He who knew Thackeray will have a vacancy in his heart's inmost casket, which must remain vacant till he dies. One loved him almost as one loves a woman, tenderly and with thoughtfulness,—thinking of him when away from him as a source of joy which cannot be analysed, but is full of comfort. One who loved him, loved him thus, because his heart was tender, as is the heart of a woman. * * * *

"It is not for any of us who were connected with him in the enterprise to say whether this was done successfully or not ; but it is for us—for us of all men—to declare that he was the kindest of guides, the gentlest of rulers, and, as a fellow-workman, liberal, unselfish, considerate, beyond compare. It has been said of him that he was jealous as a writer. We of the *Cornhill* knew nothing of such jealousy. At the end of two years Mr. Thackeray gave up the management of the Magazine, finding that there was much in the very nature of the task which embarrassed and annoyed him. He could not bear to tell an ambitious aspirant that his aspirations were in vain ; and, worse again, he could not endure to do so when a lady was his suppliant. Their letters to him were thorns that festered in his side, as he has told us himself. In truth it was so. There are many who delight in wielding the editorial ferule, good men and true no doubt, who open their hearts genially to genius when they find it ; but they can repress and crush the incapable tyro, or the would-be poetess who has nothing to support her but her own ambition, if not with delight, at least with satisfaction. Of such men are good editors made. Whether it be a point against a man, or for him, to be without such power, they who think of the subject may judge for themselves. Thackeray had it not. He lacked hardness for the place, and therefore, at the end of two years, he relinquished it.

"But he did not on that account in any way sever himself from the Magazine. His 'Roundabout Papers,' the first of which appeared in our first number, were carried on through 1862, and were completed in the

* "Dicar qua violens óbstrepit Aufidus," &c.

early part of 1863. 'Lovel the Widower,' and his 'Lectures on the Four Georges,' appeared under his own editorship. 'Philip' was so commenced, but was completed after he had ceased to reign. It was only in November last, as our readers may remember, that a paper appeared from his hand, entitled, 'Strange to say, on Club Paper.' In this he ridiculed a silly report as to Lord Clyde, which had spread itself about the town,—doing so with that mingled tenderness and sarcasm for which he was noted,—the tenderness being ever for those named, and the sarcasm for those unknown. As far as we know, they were the last words he lived to publish. Speaking of the old hero who was just gone, he bids us remember that 'censure and praise are alike to him;—"The music warbling to the deafened ear, The incense wasted on the funeral bier!"' How strange and how sad that these, his last words, should now come home to us as so fitted for himself! Not that we believe that such praise is wasted,—even on the spirit of him who has gone,—

> 'Comes the blind Fury with abhorred shears,
> And slits the thin spun life! "But not the praise,"
> Phœbus replied, and touched my trembling ears.'

Why should the dead be inaccessible to the glory given to them by those who follow them on the earth? He, of whom we speak, loved such incense when living. If that be an infirmity he was so far infirm. But we hold it to be no infirmity. Who is the man who loves it not? Where is the public character to whom it is not as the breath of his nostrils? But there are men to whom it is given to conceal their feelings. Of such Thackeray was not one. He carried his heart-strings in a crystal case, and when they were wrung or when they were soothed all their workings were seen by friend and foe.

"When he died he was still at work for this Magazine. He was writing yet another novel for the delight of its readers. 'Shall we continue this story-telling business and be voluble to the end of our age? Will it not be presently time, O prattler, to hold your tongue and let younger people speak?' These words, of course, were his own. You will find them in that Roundabout Paper of his, 'De Finibus,' which was printed in August, 1862. He was voluble to the end;—alas! that it should have been the end! The leisure time of which he was thinking never came to him. That presently was denied to him, nor had he lived would it have been his for many a year to come. He was young in power, young in heart as a child, young even in constitution in spite of that malady which carried him off. But, though it was so, Thackeray ever spoke of himself, and thought of himself, as of one that was old. He in truth believed that the time for letting others speak was speedily coming to him. But they who knew him did not believe it, and his forthcoming new novel was anxiously looked for by many who expected another 'Esmond.'

"I may not say how great the loss will be to the *Cornhill*, but I think that those concerned in the matter will be adjudged to be right in giving to the public so much of this work as he has left behind him. A portion

of a novel has not usually much attraction for general readers; but we venture to think that this portion will attract. They who have studied Mr. Thackeray's characters in fiction,—and it cannot be doubted that they have become matter of study to many,—will wish to follow him to the last, and will trace with a sad but living interest the first rough lines of the closing portraits from his hand.

"I shall not attempt here any memoir of Mr. Thackeray's life. Such notices as the passing day requires have been given in many of the daily and weekly papers, and have been given, I believe, correctly. I may, perhaps, specially notice that from the pen of Mr. Hannay, which appeared in the *Edinburgh Courant*. The writing of his life will be a task, and we trust a work of love, for which there will probably be more than one candidate. We trust that it may fall into fitting hands,—into the hands of one who shall have loved wisely, and not too well,—but, above all things, into the hands of a true critic. That which the world will most want to know of Thackeray, is the effect which his writings have produced; we believe that effect to have been very wide, and beneficial withal. Let us hope, also, that the task of his biography may escape that untoward hurry which has ruined the interest of so many of the memoirs of our latter-day worthies.

"Of our late Editor's works, the best known and most widely appreciated are, no doubt, 'Vanity Fair,' 'Pendennis,' 'The Newcomes,' and 'Esmond.' The first on the list has been the most widely popular with the world at large. 'Pendennis' has been the best loved by those who have felt and tasted the delicacy of Thackeray's tenderness. 'The Newcomes' stands conspicuous for the character of the Colonel, who as an English gentleman has no equal in English fiction. 'Esmond,' of all his works, has most completely satisfied the critical tastes of those who profess themselves to read critically. For myself, I own that I regard 'Esmond' as the first and finest novel in the English language. Taken as a whole, I think that it is without a peer. There is in it a completeness of historical plot, and an absence of that taint of unnatural life which blemishes, perhaps, all our other historical novels, which places it above its brethren. And, beyond, this, it is replete with a tenderness which is almost divine—a tenderness which no poetry has surpassed. Let those who doubt this go back and study again the life of Lady Castlewood. In 'Esmond,' above all his works, Thackeray achieves the great triumph of touching the innermost core of his subject, without ever wounding the taste. We catch all the aroma, but the palpable body of the thing never stays with us till it palls on us. Who ever wrote of love with more delicacy than Thackeray has written in 'Esmond?' May I quote one passage of three or four lines? Who is there who does not remember the meeting between Lady Castlewood and Harry Esmond after Esmond's return. 'Do you know what day it is?' she continued. 'It is the 29th December; it is your birthday! But last year we did not drink it;—no, no! My lord was cold, and my Harry was like to die; and my brain was in a fever; and we had no wine. But now—now you are come again, bringing

your sheaves with you, my dear.' She burst into a wild flood of weeping as she spoke ; she laughed and sobbed on the young man's heart, crying out wildly,—'bringing your sheaves with you,—your sheaves with you!'

"But if 'Esmond' be, as a whole, our best English novel, Colonel Newcome is the finest single character in English fiction. That it has been surpassed by Cervantes, in 'Don Quixote,' we may, perhaps, allow, though 'Don Quixote' has the advantage of that hundred years which is necessary to the perfect mellowing of any great work. When Colonel Newcome shall have lived his hundred years, and the lesser works of Thackeray and his compeers shall have died away, then, and not till then, will the proper rank of this creation in literature be appreciated.

"We saw him laid low in his simple grave at the close of last year, and we saw the brethren of his art, one after another, stand up on the stone at the grave foot to take a last look upon the coffin which held him. I was very sad. There were there the faces of rough men red with tears who are not used to the melting mood. The grave was very simple, as became the sadness of the moment. At such times it is better that the very act of interment should be without pomp or sign of glory. But, as weeks pass by us, they who love English literature will desire to see some preparation for placing a memento of him in that shrine in which we keep the monuments of our great men. It is to be regarded as a thing of course, that there should be a bust of Thackeray in Westminster Abbey."

The bust is in the Abbey, the work of his dear friend and neighbour Marochetti ; and thousands from far and near have stepped from Dickens' grave to look upon it, linking together thus the memory of the two great and generous rivals in English fiction of our time.

But I have always felt that, while ample justice has been done to the heart as well as to the head of the author of "Picwick," the parent of Colonel Newcome and of "Esmond" has suffered injustice at the hands of his countrymen. This is owing to the subtlety and quaintness of his humour, and to a certain shame-facedness there is in most of his tender passages : this is very noticeable in many passages of his "Irish Sketch-Book." In the Ursuline Convent, he observes : "I should have liked to kneel down too, but was ashamed ; our northern usages not encouraging—among men at least—that sort of abandonment of dignity. Do any of us dare to sing psalms at church? and don't we look with rather a sneer at a man who does?" Herein is expressed a feeling which seems to hold Thackeray back—in his later and greater works at any rate—when he is upon a sentimental passage. He turns out of the sick chamber with a joke. He laughs that he may be saved from the indignity of crying.

In his earlier time—in the record of his Irish Jaunt, for instance, published in the spring of 1843—he would be even violent in his expression of anger at a wrong, or vehement in his advocacy. At the close of a description of the trial of Timothy Woods for the murder of Michael Laffan, he bursts out on the subject of capital punishment :—

"I confess, for my part to that common cant and sickly sentimentality which, thank God ! is felt by a great number of people now-a-days, and which leads them to revolt against murder, whether performed by a ruffian's knife or a hangman's rope ; whether accompanied by a curse from the thief, as he blows his victim's brains out, or a prayer from my lord on the bench in his wig and black cap. Nay, is all the cant and sickly sentimentality on our side, and might not some such charge be applied to the admirers of the good old fashion ? Long ere this is printed, for instance, Byrne and Woods have been hanged ; sent 'to face their God,' as the Chief Justice says, 'with the weight of their victim's blood upon them,'—a just observation ; and remember, that it is *we who send them.* It is true that the judge hopes Heaven will have mercy upon their souls, but are such recommendations of particular weight because they come from the bench ? Psha ! If we go on killing people without giving them time to repent, let us at least give up the cant of praying for their souls' salvation. We find a man drowning in a well, shut the lid upon him, and then heartily pray that he may get out. Sin has hold of him, as the two ruffians of Laffan yonder, and we stand aloof, and hope that he may escape. Let us give up the ceremony of condolence, and be honest like the witness, and say, 'Let him save himself or not, it's no business of ours.'"

Finding himself in the midst of a crowd of ragged fellows round the County Court House at Cork, who had cheered men convicted of having thrown vitriol in the faces of some mill-owners ; he breaks out on his own subject—endeavouring still with all his might to hold the balance fairly between the judges and the judged :—

"There stand the men ; they are only separated from us by a few paces ; they are as fond of their mothers and children as we are ; their gratitude for small kindnesses shown to them is extraordinary ; they are Christians as we are ; but, interfere with their interests, and they will murder you without pity. It is not revenge so much which these poor fellows take, as a brutal justice of their own. Now, will it seem a paradox to say in regard to them and their murderous system, that the way to put an end to the latter is to *kill them no more?* Let the priest be able to go amongst them and say, the law holds a man's life so sacred, that it will on *no account* take it away. No man, nor no body of men, has a right to meddle with human life ; not the Commons of England any more than the Commons of Tipperary. This may cost two or three lives, probably, until the system may come to be known and understood ; but which will be the greatest economy of blood in the end ?"

In the two Irish volumes there are a score of passages through which the warmth of Thackeray's generous heart glows with a heat not found in any of his later works. The heart had not grown colder ; but the artist had ripened and become fastidious. I conclude with the ending of his visit to the Ursuline Convent. It is a noble burst of righteous indignation :—

"In the *grille* is a little wicket and a ledge before it. It is to this

wicket that the women are brought to kneel, and a bishop is in the chapel on the other side, and takes their hands in his, and receives their vows. I had never seen the like before, and own that I felt a sort of shudder in looking at the place. There rest the girl's knees as she offers herself up, and forswears the sacred affections which God gave her; there she kneels and denies for ever the beautiful duties of her being—no tender maternal yearnings, no gentle attachments are to be had for her, or from her—there she kneels and commits suicide upon her heart. O honest Martin Luther! thank God you came to pull that infernal, wicked, unnatural altar down—that cursed Paganism! Let people, solitary, worn out by sorrow, or oppressed with extreme remorse, retire to such places; fly and beat your breasts in caverns and wildernesses, O women, if you will, but be Magdalens first. It is shameful that any young girl, with any vocation, however seemingly strong, should be allowed to bury herself in this small tomb of a few acres. Look at yonder nun—pretty, smiling, graceful and young—what has God's world done to *her* that she should run from it, or she done to the world that she should avoid it? What call has she to give up all her duties and affections; and would she not be best serving God with a husband at her side and a child on her knee?

"The sights in the house having been seen, the nun led us through the grounds and gardens. There was the hay in front, and a fine yellow corn-field at the back of the house, and a large melancholy-looking kitchen garden; in all of which places the nuns, for certain hours in the day, are allowed to take recreation. 'The nuns here are allowed to amuse themselves more than ours at New Hall,' said a little girl who is educated at the English convent; 'do you know that here the nuns may make hay?' What a privilege is this? We saw none of the black sisterhood availing themselves of it however; the hay was neatly piled into cocks and ready for housing; so the poor souls must wait until next year before they can enjoy this blessed sport once more.

"Turning into a narrow gate, with the nun at our head, we found ourselves in a little green, quiet enclosure—it was the burial-place of the convent. The poor things know the places where they are to lie; she who was with us talked smilingly of being stretched there one day, and pointed out the resting-place of a favourite old sister who had died three months back, and had been buried in the very midst of the little ground. And here they come to live and die.

"The gates are open, but they never go out. All their world lies in a dozen acres of ground; and they sacrifice their lives in early youth, many of them passing from the grave upstairs in the house to the one scarcely narrower in the churchyard here; and are seemingly not unhappy.

"I came out of the place quite sick; and looking before me—there, thank God! was the blue spire of Monkstown church soaring up into the free sky—a river in front rolling away to the sea—liberty, sunshine, and all sorts of glad life and motion, round about; and I couldn't but

thank Heaven for it, and the Being whose service is freedom, and who has given us affections that we may use them—not smother and kill them; and a noble world to live in, that we may admire it, and Him who made it—not shrink from it, as though we dared not live there, but must turn our backs upon it and its bountiful Provider. And, in conclusion, if that most cold-blooded and precise of all personages, the repectable and respected English reader, may feel disposed to sneer at this sentimental homily, or to fancy that it has been written for effect, let him go and see a convent for himself. I declare I think, for my part, that we have as much right to permit Sutteeism in India, as to allow women in the United Kingdom to take these wicked vows, or Catholic bishops to receive them; and that government has as good a right to interpose in such cases as the police has to prevent a man from hanging himself, or the doctor to refuse a glass of prussic acid to anyone who may have a wish to go out of the world." The heartiness of this indignation is a quality that was wanting in Thackeray's later writings. It is everywhere in the account of his travels through the woe-begone districts of Ireland; and so is the thorough Liberalism of his sympathies.

"The National Education scheme," he observed—"a noble and liberal one, at least as far as a stranger can see, which might have united the Irish people, and brought peace into this most distracted of all countries, failed, unhappily, of one of its greatest ends. The Protestant clergy have always treated the plan with bitter hostility; and I do believe, in withdrawing from it, have struck the greatest blow to themselves as a body, and to their own influence in the country, which has been dealt to them for many a year. Rich, charitable, pious, well-educated, to be found in every parish in Ireland, had they chosen to fraternize with the people and the plan, they might have directed the educational movement; they might have attained the influence which is now given over entirely to the priest; and when the present generation, educated in the national schools, were grown up to manhood, they might have had an interest in almost every man in Ireland. Are they not as pious, and more polished, and better educated, than their neighbours, the priests? There is no doubt of it; and by constant communion with the people they would have gained all the benefits of the comparison, and advanced the interests of their religion far more than now they can hope to do. Look at the national school: throughout the country it is commonly by the chapel side—it is a Catholic school, directed and fostered by the priest; and as no people are more eager for learning, more apt to receive it, or more grateful for kindness, than the Irish, he gets all the gratitude of the scholars who flock to the school, and all the future influence over them, which naturally and justly comes to him. The Protestant wants to better the condition of these people; he says that the woes of the country are owing to its prevalent religion; and in order to carry his plans of amelioration into effect, he obstinately refuses to hold communion with those whom he is desirous to convert to what he believes are sounder principles and purer doctrines. The clergyman will reply, that points of

principle prevented him. With this fatal doctrinal objection it is not, of course, the province of a layman to meddle; but this is clear, that the parson might have had an influence over the country and he would not; that he might have rendered the Catholic population friendly to him and he would not; but instead, has added one cause of estrangement and hostility more to the many which already existed against him. This is one of the attempts at union in Ireland, and one cannot but think with the deepest regret and sorrow of its failure."

Read by the light of the last few years, these words, written some thirty years ago are very impressive.

Thackeray's liberal spirit shines most vividly among the productions of his riper years—in his "Roundabout Papers." Of these, his paper "On Ribbons" is fullest of this quality. He observes, "In England, until very late days, we have been accustomed rather to pooh-pooh national Orders, to vote ribbons and crosses, tinsel gewgaws, foolish foreign ornaments, and so forth. It is known how the Great Duke (the breast of his own coat was plastered with some half-hundred decorations) was averse to the wearing of ribbons, medals, clasps, and the like, by his army. We have all of us read how uncommonly distinguished Lord Castlereagh looked at Vienna, where he was the only gentleman present without any decoration whatever. And the Great Duke's theory was, that clasps and ribbons, stars and garters, were good and proper ornaments for himself, for the chief officers of his distinguished army, and for gentlemen of high birth, who might naturally claim to wear a band of garter blue across their waiscoats; but that for common people your plain coat, without stars and ribbons, was the most sensible wear."

Then how admirably the subject is wound up!

"In the winter of '53, I went from Marseilles to Civita Vecchia, in one of the magnificent P. and O. ships, the *Valetta*, the master of which subsequently did distinguished service in the Crimea. This was his first Mediterranean voyage, and he sailed his ship by the charts alone, going into each port as surely as any pilot. I remember walking the deck at night with this most skilful, gallant, well-bred, and well-educated gentleman, and the glow of eager enthusiasm with which he assented, when I asked him whether he did not think a RIBBON or ORDER would be welcome or useful in his service.

"Why is there not an ORDER OF BRITANNIA for British seaman? In the Merchant and Royal Navy alike, occur almost daily instances and occasions for the display of science, skill, bravery, fortitude in trying circumstances, resource in danger. In the first number of our *Magazine*, a friend contributed a most touching story of the M'Clintock expedition, in the dangers and dreadful glories of which he shared; and the writer was a merchant captain. How many are there (and, for the honour of England, may there be many like him!)—gallant, accomplished, high-spirited, enterprising masters of their noble profession? Can our Fountain of Honour not be brought to such men? It plays upon captains and colonels in seemly profusion. It pours forth not illiberal rewards

upon doctors and judges. It sprinkles mayors and aldermen. It bedews a painter now and again. It has spirted a baronetcy upon two, and bestowed a coronet upon one noble man of letters. Diplomatists take their Bath in it as of right ; and it flings out a profusion of glittering stars upon the nobility of the three kingdoms. Cannot Britannia find a ribbon for her sailors? The Navy, royal or mercantile, is *a Service*. The command of a ship, or the conduct of her, implies danger, honour, science, skill, subordination, good faith. It may be a victory, such as that of the *Sarah Sands;* it may be discovery, such as that of the *Fox;* it may be heroic disaster, such as that of the *Birkenhead;* and in such events merchant seamen, as well as royal seamen, take their share.

"Why is there not, then, an Order of Britannia ? One day a young officer of the *Euryalus* may win it ; and having just read the memoirs of LORD DUNDONALD, I know who ought to have the first Grand Cross."

A writer in *Once a Week* lately remarked on Thackeray's power of imitating the styles of his contemporaries :—

"It is curious that the best specimen of Disraeli's style that can be given in a few lines is not Disraeli's at all, but Thackeray's. In his 'Novels by Eminent Hands,' he has 'Codlingsby : by the Right Hon. B. Shrewsberry'—a wonderfully good imitation in caricature of Disraeli's style.

"They entered a moderate-sized apartment—indeed, Holywell street is not above a hundred yards long, and this chamber was not more than half that length—and fitted up with the *simple taste* of its owner.

"The carpet was of white velvet—(laid over several webs of Aubusson, Ispahan, and Axminster, so that your foot gave no more sound as it trod upon the yielding plain than the shadow which followed you)—of white velvet painted with flowers, arabesques, and classic figures by Sir William Ross, J. M. W. Turner, R.A., Mrs. Mee, and Paul Delaroche. The edges were wrought with seed pearl, Valenciennes lace and bullion. The walls were hung with cloth of silver, embroidered with gold figures, over which were worked pomegranates, polyanthuses, and passion-flowers, in ruby, amethyst, and smaragd. The drops of dew which the artificers had sprinkled on the flowers, were of diamonds. The hangings were over-hung with pictures yet more costly. Giorgione the gorgeous, Titian the golden, Rubens the ruddy and pulpy (the Pan of Painting), some of Murillo's beatified shepherdesses, who smile on you out of darkness like a star ; a few score of first-class Leonardos, and fifty of the master-pieces of the patron of Julius and Leo, the imperial genius of Urbino, covered the walls of the *little* chamber. *Divans of carved amber*, covered with ermine, went round the room, and in the midst was a fountain pattering and bubbling into jets of double-distilled otto of roses.

"'Pipes, Goliath!' Rafael said gaily, to a little negro with a silver collar (he spoke to him in his native tongue of Dongola); 'and welcome to our snuggery, my Codlingsby.'"

* * * * * * *

"Her hair had that deep glowing tinge in it which has been the delight

of all painters, and which, therefore, the vulgar sneer at, It was of burning auburn, meandering over her fairest shoulders in twenty thousand minute ringlets ; it hung to her waist, and below it. A light-blue velvet fillet, clasped with a diamond aigrette (valued at two hundred thousand tomauns, and bought from Lieutenant Vicovich, who had received it from Dost Mahomed), with a simple bird of Paradise forming her head-gear. A sea green cymar, with short sleeves, displayed her exquisitely-moulded arms to perfection, and was fastened by a girdle of emeralds over a yellow satin frock. Pink gauze trousers, spangled with silver, and slippers of the same colour as the band which clasped her ringlets (but so covered with pearls, that the original hue of the charming papoosh disappeared entirely), completed her costume. She had three necklaces on, each of which would have dowered a princess ; her fingers glittered with rings to their rosy tips ; and priceless bracelets, bangles, and armlets wound round an arm that was whiter than the ivory grand piano on which it leaned."

Punch's forty-sixth volume, January, 1864, opens with—

"WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY.

"While generous tributes are everywhere paid to the genius of him who has been suddenly called away in the fulness of his power and the maturity of his fame, some who have for many years enjoyed the advantage of his assistance and the delight of his society would simply record that they have lost a dear friend. At an early period in the history of this Periodical he became a contributor to its pages, and he long continued to enrich them, and though of late he had ceased to give other aid than suggestions and advice, he was a constant member of our council, and sat with us on the eighth day from that which has saddened England's Christmas. Let the brilliancy of his trained intellect, the terrible strength of his satire, the subtlety of his wit, the richness of his humour, and the catholic range of his calm wisdom, be themes for others, the mourning friends who inscribe these lines to his memory think of the affectionate nature, the cheerful companionship, the large heart and open hand, the simple courteousness, and the endearing frankness of a brave, true, honest gentleman, whom no pen but his own could depict as those who knew him most desire."

With these just words on a just gentleman, my Day with him shall close.

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