

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Anthony Holloper



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AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY



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THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

BY

ANTHONY TROLLOPE

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS

EDINBURGH AND LONDON

MDCCCLXXXIII

P R E F A C E.

IT may be well that I should put a short preface to this book. In the summer of 1878 my father told me that he had written a memoir of his own life. He did not speak about it at length, but said that he had written me a letter, not to be opened until after his death, containing instructions for publication.

This letter was dated 30th April 1876. I will give here as much of it as concerns the public: "I wish you to accept as a gift from me, given you now, the accompanying pages which contain a memoir of my life. My intention is that they shall be published after my death, and be edited by you. But I leave it altogether to your discretion whether to publish or to suppress the work;—

and also to your discretion whether any part or what part shall be omitted. But I would not wish that anything should be added to the memoir. If you wish to say any word as from yourself, let it be done in the shape of a preface or introductory chapter." At the end there is a postscript: "The publication, if made at all, should be effected as soon as possible after my death." My father died on the 6th of December 1882.

It will be seen, therefore, that my duty has been merely to pass the book through the press conformably to the above instructions. I have placed headings to the right-hand pages throughout the book, and I do not conceive that I was precluded from so doing. Additions of any other sort there have been none; the few footnotes are my father's own additions or corrections. And I have made no alterations. I have suppressed some few passages, but not more than would amount to two printed pages has been omitted. My father has not given any of his own letters, nor was it his wish that any should be published.

I see from my father's manuscript, and from his papers, that the first two chapters of this memoir were written in the latter part of 1875, that he began the third chapter early in January 1876, and that he finished the record before the middle of April in that year. I state this, though there are indications in the book by which it might be seen at what time the memoir was being written.

So much I would say by way of preface. And I think I may also give in a few words the main incidents in my father's life after he completed his autobiography.

He has said that he had given up hunting; but he still kept two horses for such riding as may be had in or about the immediate neighbourhood of London. He continued to ride to the end of his life: he liked the exercise, and I think it would have distressed him not to have had a horse in his stable. But he never spoke willingly on hunting matters. He had at last resolved to give up his favourite amusement, and that as far as he was concerned

there should be an end of it. In the spring of 1877 he went to South Africa, and returned early in the following year with a book on the colony already written. In the summer of 1878, he was one of a party of ladies and gentlemen who made an expedition to Iceland in the "Mastiff," one of Mr John Burns' steam-ships. The journey lasted altogether sixteen days, and during that time Mr and Mrs Burns were the hospitable entertainers. When my father returned, he wrote a short account of *How the "Mastiffs" went to Iceland*. The book was printed, but was intended only for private circulation.

Every day, until his last illness, my father continued his work. He would not otherwise have been happy. He demanded from himself less than he had done ten years previously, but his daily task was always done. I will mention now the titles of his books that were published after the last included in the list which he himself has given at the end of the second volume :—

An Eye for an Eye,	1879
Cousin Henry,	1879
Thackeray,	1879
The Duke's Children,	1880
Life of Cicero,	1880
Ayala's Angel,	1881
Doctor Wortle's School,	1881
Frau Frohmann and other Stories,	1882
Lord Palmerston,	1882
The Fixed Period,	1882
Kept in the Dark,	1882
Marion Fay,	1882
Mr Scarborough's Family,	1883

At the time of his death he had written four-fifths of an Irish story, called *The Land-leaguers*, shortly about to be published; and he left in manuscript a completed novel, called *An Old Man's Love*, which will be published by Messrs Blackwood & Sons in 1884.

In the summer of 1880 my father left London, and went to live at Harting, a village in Sussex, but on the confines of Hampshire. I think he chose that spot because he found there a house that suited him, and because of the prettiness of the neighbourhood. His last long journey was a trip to Italy in the late

winter and spring of 1881; but he went to Ireland twice in 1882. He went there in May of that year, and was then absent nearly a month. This journey did him much good, for he found that the softer atmosphere relieved his asthma, from which he had been suffering for nearly eighteen months. In August following he made another trip to Ireland, but from this journey he derived less benefit. He was much interested in, and was very much distressed by, the unhappy condition of the country. Few men knew Ireland better than he did. He had lived there for sixteen years, and his Post Office work had taken him into every part of the island. In the summer of 1882 he began his last novel, *The Landleaguers*, which, as stated above, was unfinished when he died. This book was a cause of anxiety to him. He could not rid his mind of the fact that he had a story already in the course of publication, but which he had not yet completed. In no other case, except *Framley Parsonage*, did my father publish even the first num-

ber of any novel before he had fully completed the whole tale.

On the evening of the 3d of November 1882 he was seized with paralysis on the right side, accompanied by loss of speech. His mind also had failed, though at intervals his thoughts would return to him. After the first three weeks these lucid intervals became rarer, but it was always very difficult to tell how far his mind was sound or how far astray. He died on the evening of the 6th of December following, nearly five weeks from the night of his attack.

I have been led to say these few words, not at all from a desire to supplement my father's biography of himself, but to mention the main incidents in his life after he had finished his own record. In what I have here said I do not think I have exceeded his instructions.

HENRY M. TROLLOPE.

September 1883.

CONTENTS OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

CHAP.	PAGE
I. MY EDUCATION, 1815-1834,	1
II. MY MOTHER,	26
III. THE GENERAL POST OFFICE, 1834-1841,	45
IV. IRELAND—MY FIRST TWO NOVELS, 1841-1848,	79
V. MY FIRST SUCCESS, 1849-1855,	106
VI. 'BARCHESTER TOWERS' AND THE 'THREE CLERKS,' 1855-1858,	134
VII. 'DOCTOR THORNE'—'THE BERTRAMS'—'THE WEST INDIES AND THE SPANISH MAIN,'	158
VIII. THE 'CORNHILL MAGAZINE' AND 'FRAMLEY PARSONAGE,'	176
IX. 'CASTLE RICHMOND;' 'BROWN, JONES, AND ROBINSON;' 'NORTH AMERICA;' 'ORLEY FARM,'	206
X. 'THE SMALL HOUSE AT ALLINGTON,' 'CAN YOU FORGIVE HER?' 'RACHEL RAY,' AND THE 'FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW,'	230

AUTOBIOGRAPHY
OF
ANTHONY TROLLOPE

CHAPTER I.

MY EDUCATION.

1815-1834.

IN writing these pages, which, for the want of a better name, I shall be fain to call the autobiography of so insignificant a person as myself, it will not be so much my intention to speak of the little details of my private life, as of what I, and perhaps others round me, have done in literature; of my failures and successes such as they have been, and their causes; and of the opening which a literary career offers to men and women for the earning of their bread. And yet the garrulity of old age, and the

aptitude of a man's mind to recur to the passages of his own life, will, I know, tempt me to say something of myself;—nor, without doing so, should I know how to throw my matter into any recognised and intelligible form. That I, or any man, should tell everything of himself, I hold to be impossible. Who could endure to own the doing of a mean thing? Who is there that has done none? But this I protest;—that nothing that I say shall be untrue. I will set down naught in malice; nor will I give to myself, or others, honour which I do not believe to have been fairly won.

My boyhood was, I think, as unhappy as that of a young gentleman could well be, my misfortunes arising from a mixture of poverty and gentle standing on the part of my father, and from an utter want on my own part of that juvenile manhood which enables some boys to hold up their heads even among the distresses which such a position is sure to produce.

I was born in 1815, in Keppel Street, Russell Square; and while a baby, was carried down to Harrow, where my father had built a

house on a large farm which, in an evil hour he took on a long lease from Lord Northwick. That farm was the grave of all my father's hopes, ambition, and prosperity, the cause of my mother's sufferings, and of those of her children, and perhaps the director of her destiny and of ours. My father had been a Wykamist and a fellow of New College, and Winchester was the destination of my brothers and myself; but as he had friends among the masters at Harrow, and as the school offered an education almost gratuitous to children living in the parish, he, with a certain aptitude to do things differently from others, which accompanied him throughout his life, determined to use that august seminary as a "t'other school" for Winchester, and sent three of us there, one after the other, at the age of seven. My father at this time was a Chancery barrister practising in London, occupying dingy, almost suicidal chambers, at No. 23 Old Square, Lincoln's Inn, — chambers which on one melancholy occasion did become absolutely suicidal.¹ He was, as I have been informed by those quite competent to know, an ex-

¹ A pupil of his destroyed himself in the rooms.

cellent and most conscientious lawyer, but plagued with so bad a temper, that he drove the attorneys from him. In his early days he was a man of some small fortune and of higher hopes. These stood so high at the time of my birth, that he was felt to be entitled to a country house, as well as to that in Keppel Street; and in order that he might build such a residence, he took the farm. This place he called Julians, and the land runs up to the foot of the hill on which the school and church stand,—on the side towards London. Things there went much against him; the farm was ruinous, and I remember that we all regarded the Lord Northwick of those days as a cormorant who was eating us up. My father's clients deserted him. He purchased various dark gloomy chambers in and about Chancery Lane, and his purchases always went wrong. Then, as a final crushing blow, an old uncle, whose heir he was to have been, married and had a family! The house in London was let; and also the house he built at Harrow, from which he descended to a farmhouse on the land, which I have endeavoured to make

known to some readers under the name of Orley Farm. This place, just as it was when we lived there, is to be seen in the frontispiece to the first edition of that novel, having had the good fortune to be delineated by no less a pencil than that of John Millais.

My two elder brothers had been sent as day-boarders to Harrow School from the bigger house, and may probably have been received among the aristocratic crowd,—not on equal terms, because a day-boarder at Harrow in those days was never so received,—but at any rate as other day-boarders. I do not suppose that they were well treated, but I doubt whether they were subjected to the ignominy which I endured. I was only seven, and I think that boys at seven are now spared among their more considerate seniors. I was never spared; and was not even allowed to run to and fro between our house and the school without a daily purgatory. No doubt my appearance was against me. I remember well, when I was still the junior boy in the school, Dr Butler, the head-master, stopping me in the street, and asking me, with all the clouds of Jove upon his brow and all the thunder in

his voice, whether it was possible that Harrow School was disgraced by so disreputably dirty a little boy as I! Oh, what I felt at that moment! But I could not look my feelings. I do not doubt that I was dirty;—but I think that he was cruel. He must have known me had he seen me as he was wont to see me, for he was in the habit of flogging me constantly. Perhaps he did not recognise me by my face.

At this time I was three years at Harrow; and, as far as I can remember, I was the junior boy in the school when I left it.

Then I was sent to a private school at Sunbury, kept by Arthur Drury. This, I think, must have been done in accordance with the advice of Henry Drury, who was my tutor at Harrow School, and my father's friend, and who may probably have expressed an opinion that my juvenile career was not proceeding in a satisfactory manner at Harrow. To Sunbury I went, and during the two years I was there, though I never had any pocket-money, and seldom had much in the way of clothes, I lived more nearly on terms of equality with other boys than at any other period during my very prolonged school-days. Even here,

I was always in disgrace. I remember well how, on one occasion, four boys were selected as having been the perpetrators of some nameless horror. What it was, to this day I cannot even guess; but I was one of the four, innocent as a babe, but adjudged to have been the guiltiest of the guilty. We each had to write out a sermon, and my sermon was the longest of the four. During the whole of one term-time we were helped last at every meal. We were not allowed to visit the playground till the sermon was finished. Mine was only done a day or two before the holidays. Mrs Drury, when she saw us, shook her head with pitying horror. There were ever so many other punishments accumulated on our heads. It broke my heart, knowing myself to be innocent, and suffering also under the almost equally painful feeling that the other three—no doubt wicked boys—were the curled darlings of the school, who would never have selected me to share their wickedness with them. I contrived to learn, from words that fell from Mr Drury, that he condemned me because I, having come from a public school, might be supposed to be the leader of wicked-

ness! On the first day of the next term he whispered to me half a word that perhaps he had been wrong. With all a stupid boy's slowness, I said nothing; and he had not the courage to carry reparation further. All that was fifty years ago, and it burns me now as though it were yesterday. What lily-livered curs those boys must have been not to have told the truth!—at any rate as far as I was concerned. I remember their names well, and almost wish to write them here.

When I was twelve there came the vacancy at Winchester College which I was destined to fill. My two elder brothers had gone there, and the younger had been taken away, being already supposed to have lost his chance of New College. It had been one of the great ambitions of my father's life that his three sons, who lived to go to Winchester, should all become fellows of New College. But that suffering man was never destined to have an ambition gratified. We all lost the prize which he struggled with infinite labour to put within our reach. My eldest brother all but achieved it, and afterwards went to Oxford, taking three exhibitions from the school,

though he lost the great glory of a Wykamist. He has since made himself well known to the public as a writer in connection with all Italian subjects. He is still living as I now write. But my other brother died early.

While I was at Winchester my father's affairs went from bad to worse. He gave up his practice at the bar, and, unfortunate that he was, took another farm. It is odd that a man should conceive,—and in this case a highly educated and a very clever man,—that farming should be a business in which he might make money without any special education or apprenticeship. Perhaps of all trades it is the one in which an accurate knowledge of what things should be done, and the best manner of doing them, is most necessary. And it is one also for success in which a sufficient capital is indispensable. He had no knowledge, and, when he took this second farm, no capital. This was the last step preparatory to his final ruin.

Soon after I had been sent to Winchester, my mother went to America, taking with her my brother Henry and my two sisters, who were then no more than children. This was,

I think, in 1827. I have no clear knowledge of her object, or of my father's; but I believe that he had an idea that money might be made by sending goods,—little goods, such as pin-cushions, pepper-boxes, and pocket-knives,—out to the still unfurnished States; and that she conceived that an opening might be made for my brother Henry by erecting some bazaar or extended shop in one of the Western cities. Whence the money came I do not know, but the pocket-knives and the pepper-boxes were bought, and the bazaar built. I have seen it since in the town of Cincinnati,—a sorry building! But I have been told that in those days it was an imposing edifice. My mother went first, with my sisters and second brother. Then my father followed them, taking my elder brother before he went to Oxford. But there was an interval of some year and a half during which he and I were at Winchester together.

Over a period of forty years, since I began my manhood at a desk in the Post Office, I and my brother, Thomas Adolphus, have been fast friends. There have been hot words between us, for perfect friendship bears and

allows hot words. Few brothers have had more of brotherhood. But in those school-days he was, of all my foes, the worst. In accordance with the practice of the college, which submits, or did then submit, much of the tuition of the younger boys from the elder, he was my tutor; and in his capacity of teacher and ruler, he had studied the theories of Draco. I remember well how he used to exact obedience after the manner of that lawgiver. Hang a little boy for stealing apples, he used to say, and other little boys will not steal apples. The doctrine was already exploded elsewhere, but he stuck to it with conservative energy. The result was that, as a part of his daily exercise, he thrashed me with a big stick. That such thrashings should have been possible at a school as a continual part of one's daily life, seems to me to argue a very ill condition of school discipline.

At this period I remember to have passed one set of holidays—the midsummer holidays—in my father's chambers in Lincoln's Inn. There was often a difficulty about the holidays,—as to what should be done with me.

On this occasion my amusement consisted in wandering about among those old deserted buildings, and in reading Shakespeare out of a bi-columned edition, which is still among my books. It was not that I had chosen Shakespeare, but that there was nothing else to read.

After a while my brother left Winchester and accompanied my father to America. Then another and a different horror fell to my fate. My college bills had not been paid, and the school tradesmen who administered to the wants of the boys were told not to extend their credit to me. Boots, waistcoats, and pocket-handkerchiefs, which, with some slight surveillance, were at the command of other scholars, were closed luxuries to me. My schoolfellows of course knew that it was so, and I became a Pariah. It is the nature of boys to be cruel. I have sometimes doubted whether among each other they do usually suffer much, one from the other's cruelty; but I suffered horribly! I could make no stand against it. I had no friend to whom I could pour out my sorrows. I was big, and awkward, and ugly, and, I have no doubt,

skulked about in a most unattractive manner. Of course I was ill-dressed and dirty. But, ah! how well I remember all the agonies of my young heart; how I considered whether I should always be alone; whether I could not find my way up to the top of that college tower, and from thence put an end to everything? And a worse thing came than the stoppage of the supplies from the shopkeepers. Every boy had a shilling a week pocket-money, which we called battels, and which was advanced to us out of the pocket of the second master. On one awful day the second master announced to me that my battels would be stopped. He told me the reason,—the battels for the last half-year had not been repaid; and he urged his own unwillingness to advance the money. The loss of a shilling a week would not have been much,—even though pocket-money from other sources never reached me,—but that the other boys all knew it! Every now and again, perhaps three or four times in a half-year, these weekly shillings were given to certain servants of the college, in payment, it may be presumed, for some extra services. And now, when it came to the turn of any

servant, he received sixty-nine shillings instead of seventy, and the cause of the defalcation was explained to him. I never saw one of those servants without feeling that I had picked his pocket.

When I had been at Winchester something over three years, my father returned to England and took me away. Whether this was done because of the expense, or because my chance of New College was supposed to have passed away, I do not know. As a fact, I should, I believe, have gained the prize, as there occurred in my year an exceptional number of vacancies. But it would have served me nothing, as there would have been no funds for my maintenance at the University till I should have entered in upon the fruition of the founder's endowment, and my career at Oxford must have been unfortunate.

When I left Winchester, I had three more years of school before me, having as yet endured nine. My father at this time having left my mother and sisters with my younger brother in America, took himself to live at a wretched tumble-down farmhouse on the second farm he had hired! And I was taken

there with him. It was nearly three miles from Harrow, at Harrow Weald, but in the parish; and from this house I was again sent to that school as a day-boarder. Let those who know what is the usual appearance and what the usual appurtenances of a boy at such a school, consider what must have been my condition among them, with a daily walk of twelve miles through the lanes, added to the other little troubles and labours of a school life!

Perhaps the eighteen months which I passed in this condition, walking to and fro on those miserably dirty lanes, was the worst period of my life. I was now over fifteen, and had come to an age at which I could appreciate at its full the misery of expulsion from all social intercourse. I had not only no friends, but was despised by all my companions. The farmhouse was not only no more than a farmhouse, but was one of those farmhouses which seem always to be in danger of falling into the neighbouring horse-pond. As it crept downwards from house to stables, from stables to barns, from barns to cowsheds, and from cowsheds to dung-heaps, one could hardly tell

where one began and the other ended! There was a parlour in which my father lived, shut up among big books; but I passed my most jocund hours in the kitchen, making innocent love to the bailiff's daughter. The farm kitchen might be very well through the evening, when the horrors of the school were over; but it all added to the cruelty of the days. A sizar at a Cambridge college, or a Bible-clerk at Oxford, has not pleasant days, or used not to have them half a century ago; but his position was recognised, and the misery was measured. I was a sizar at a fashionable school, a condition never premeditated. What right had a wretched farmer's boy, reeking from a dunghill, to sit next to the sons of peers,—or much worse still, next to the sons of big tradesmen who had made their ten thousand a-year? The indignities I endured are not to be described. As I look back it seems to me that all hands were turned against me,—those of masters as well as boys. I was allowed to join in no plays. Nor did I learn anything,—for I was taught nothing. The only expense, except that of books, to which a house-boarder was then subject, was

the fee to a tutor, amounting, I think, to ten guineas. My tutor took me without the fee; but when I heard him declare the fact in the pupil-room before the boys, I hardly felt grateful for the charity. I was never a coward, and cared for a thrashing as little as any boy, but one cannot make a stand against the acerbities of three hundred tyrants without a moral courage of which at that time I possessed none. I know that I skulked, and was odious to the eyes of those I admired and envied. At last I was driven to rebellion, and there came a great fight,—at the end of which my opponent had to be taken home for a while. If these words be ever printed, I trust that some schoolfellow of those days may still be left alive who will be able to say that, in claiming this solitary glory of my school-days, I am not making a false boast.

I wish I could give some adequate picture of the gloom of that farmhouse. My elder brother—Tom as I must call him in my narrative, though the world, I think, knows him best as Adolphus—was at Oxford. My father and I lived together, he having no means of living except what came from the farm. My

memory tells me that he was always in debt to his landlord and to the tradesmen he employed. Of self-indulgence no one could accuse him. Our table was poorer, I think, than that of the bailiff who still hung on to our shattered fortunes. The furniture was mean and scanty. There was a large rambling kitchen-garden, but no gardener; and many times verbal incentives were made to me,—generally, I fear, in vain,—to get me to lend a hand at digging and planting. Into the hay-field on holidays I was often compelled to go,—not, I fear, with much profit. My father's health was very bad. During the last ten years of his life, he spent nearly the half of his time in bed, suffering agony from sick headaches. But he was never idle unless when suffering. He had at this time commenced a work,—an *Encyclopædia Ecclesiastica*, as he called it,—on which he laboured to the moment of his death. It was his ambition to describe all ecclesiastical terms, including the denominations of every fraternity of monks and every convent of nuns, with all their orders and subdivisions. Under crushing disadvantages, with few or no books of

reference, with immediate access to no library, he worked at his most ungrateful task with unflagging industry. When he died, three numbers out of eight had been published by subscription; and are now, I fear, unknown, and buried in the midst of that huge pile of futile literature, the building up of which has broken so many hearts.

And my father, though he would try, as it were by a side wind, to get a useful spurt of work out of me, either in the garden or in the hay-field, had constantly an eye to my scholastic improvement. From my very babyhood, before those first days at Harrow, I had to take my place alongside of him as he shaved at six o'clock in the morning, and say my early rules from the Latin Grammar, or repeat the Greek alphabet; and was obliged at these early lessons to hold my head inclined towards him, so that in the event of guilty fault, he might be able to pull my hair without stopping his razor or dropping his shaving-brush. No father was ever more anxious for the education of his children, though I think none ever knew less how to go about the work. Of amusement, as far as I can remember, he

never recognised the need. He allowed himself no distraction, and did not seem to think it was necessary to a child. I cannot bethink me of aught that he ever did for my gratification ; but for my welfare,—for the welfare of us all,—he was willing to make any sacrifice. At this time, in the farmhouse at Harrow Weald, he could not give his time to teach me, for every hour that he was not in the fields was devoted to his monks and nuns ; but he would require me to sit at a table with *Lexicon* and *Gradus* before me. As I look back on my resolute idleness and fixed determination to make no use whatever of the books thus thrust upon me, or of the hours, and as I bear in mind the consciousness of great energy in after-life, I am in doubt whether my nature is wholly altered, or whether his plan was wholly bad. In those days he never punished me, though I think I grieved him much by my idleness ; but in passion he knew not what he did, and he has knocked me down with the great folio Bible which he always used. In the old house were the two first volumes of Cooper's novel, called *The Prairie*, a relic—probably a dishonest relic—of some sub-

scription to Hookham's library. Other books of the kind there was none. I wonder how many dozen times I read those two first volumes.

It was the horror of those dreadful walks backwards and forwards which made my life so bad. What so pleasant, what so sweet, as a walk along an English lane, when the air is sweet and the weather fine, and when there is a charm in walking? But here were the same lanes four times a-day, in wet and dry, in heat and summer, with all the accompanying mud and dust, and with disordered clothes. I might have been known among all the boys at a hundred yards' distance by my boots and trousers,—and was conscious at all times that I was so known. I remembered constantly that address from Dr Butler when I was a little boy. Dr Longley might with equal justice have said the same thing any day,—only that Dr Longley never in his life was able to say an ill-natured word. Dr Butler only became Dean of Peterborough, but his successor lived to be Archbishop of Canterbury.

I think it was in the autumn of 1831 that my mother, with the rest of the family, returned

from America. She lived at first at the farmhouse, but it was only for a short time. She came back with a book written about the United States, and the immediate pecuniary success which that work obtained enabled her to take us all back to the house at Harrow,—not to the first house, which would still have been beyond her means, but to that which has since been called Orley Farm, and which was an Eden as compared to our abode at Harrow Weald. Here my schooling went on under somewhat improved circumstances. The three miles became half a mile, and probably some salutary changes were made in my wardrobe. My mother and my sisters, too, were there. And a great element of happiness was added to us all in the affectionate and life-enduring friendship of the family of our close neighbour, Colonel Grant. But I was never able to overcome—or even to attempt to overcome—the absolute isolation of my school position. Of the cricket-ground or racket-court I was allowed to know nothing. And yet I longed for these things with an exceeding longing. I coveted popularity with a covetousness that was almost mean. It seemed to me that there

would be an Elysium in the intimacy of those very boys whom I was bound to hate because they hated me. Something of the disgrace of my school-days has clung to me all through life. Not that I have ever shunned to speak of them as openly as I am writing now, but that when I have been claimed as schoolfellow by some of those many hundreds who were with me either at Harrow or at Winchester, I have felt that I had no right to talk of things from most of which I was kept in estrangement.

Through all my father's troubles he still desired to send me either to Oxford or Cambridge. My elder brother went to Oxford, and Henry to Cambridge. It all depended on my ability to get some scholarship that would help me to live at the University. I had many chances. There were exhibitions from Harrow—which I never got. Twice I tried for a sizarship at Clare Hall,—but in vain. Once I made a futile attempt for a scholarship at Trinity, Oxford,—but failed again. Then the idea of a university career was abandoned. And very fortunate it was that I did not succeed, for my career with such assistance only as a scholarship would

have given me, would have ended in debt and ignominy.

When I left Harrow I was all but nineteen, and I had at first gone there at seven. During the whole of those twelve years no attempt had been made to teach me anything but Latin and Greek, and very little attempt to teach me those languages. I do not remember any lessons either in writing or arithmetic. French and German I certainly was not taught. The assertion will scarcely be credited, but I do assert that I have no recollection of other tuition except that in the dead languages. At the school at Sunbury there was certainly a writing master and a French master. The latter was an extra, and I never had extras. I suppose I must have been in the writing master's class, but though I can call to mind the man, I cannot call to mind his ferule. It was by their ferules that I always knew them, and they me. I feel convinced in my mind that I have been flogged oftener than any human being alive. It was just possible to obtain five scourgings in one day at Winchester, and I have often boasted that I obtained them all. Looking back over half a century,

I am not quite sure whether the boast is true ; but if I did not, nobody ever did.

And yet when I think how little I knew of Latin or Greek on leaving Harrow at nineteen, I am astonished at the possibility of such waste of time. I am now a fair Latin scholar,—that is to say, I read and enjoy the Latin classics, and could probably make myself understood in Latin prose. But the knowledge which I have, I have acquired since I left school,—no doubt aided much by that groundwork of the language which will in the process of years make its way slowly, even through the skin. There were twelve years of tuition in which I do not remember that I ever knew a lesson ! When I left Harrow I was nearly at the top of the school, being a monitor, and, I think, the seventh boy. This position I achieved by gravitation upwards. I bear in mind well with how prodigal a hand prizes used to be showered about ; but I never got a prize. From the first to the last there was nothing satisfactory in my school career,—except the way in which I licked the boy who had to be taken home to be cured.

CHAPTER II.

MY MOTHER.

THOUGH I do not wish in these pages to go back to the origin of all the Trollopes, I must say a few words of my mother,—partly because filial duty will not allow me to be silent as to a parent who made for herself a considerable name in the literature of her day, and partly because there were circumstances in her career well worthy of notice. She was the daughter of the Rev. William Milton, vicar of Heckfield, who, as well as my father, had been a fellow of New College. She was nearly thirty when, in 1809, she married my father. Six or seven years ago a bundle of love-letters from her to him fell into my hand in a very singular way, having been found in the house of a stranger, who, with much courtesy, sent them to me. They were then about sixty years old, and had

been written some before and some after her marriage, over the space of perhaps a year. In no novel of Richardson's or Miss Burney's have I seen a correspondence at the same time so sweet, so graceful, and so well expressed. But the marvel of these letters was in the strange difference they bore to the love-letters of the present day. They are, all of them, on square paper, folded and sealed, and addressed to my father on circuit ; but the language in each, though it almost borders on the romantic, is beautifully chosen, and fit, without change of a syllable, for the most critical eye. What girl now studies the words with which she shall address her lover, or seeks to charm him with grace of diction ? She dearly likes a little slang, and revels in the luxury of entire familiarity with a new and strange being. There is something in that, too, pleasant to our thoughts, but I fear that this phase of life does not conduce to a taste for poetry among our girls. Though my mother was a writer of prose, and revelled in satire, the poetic feeling clung to her to the last.

In the first ten years of her married life she became the mother of six children, four of

whom died of consumption at different ages. My elder sister married, and had children, of whom one still lives ; but she was one of the four who followed each other at intervals during my mother's lifetime. Then my brother Tom and I were left to her,—with the destiny before us three of writing more books than were probably ever before produced by a single family.¹ My married sister added to the number by one little anonymous high church story, called *Chollerton*.

From the date of their marriage up to 1827, when my mother went to America, my father's affairs had always been going down in the world. She had loved society, affecting a somewhat liberal *rôle*, and professing an emotional dislike to tyrants, which sprung from the wrongs of would-be regicides and the poverty of patriot exiles. An Italian marquis who had escaped with only a second shirt from the clutches of some archduke whom he had wished to exterminate, or a French *prolé-*

¹The family of Estienne, the great French printers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, of whom there were at least nine or ten, did more perhaps for the production of literature than any other family. But they, though they edited, and not unfrequently translated the works which they published, were not authors in the ordinary sense.

taire with distant ideas of sacrificing himself to the cause of liberty, were always welcome to the modest hospitality of her house. In after years, when marquises of another caste had been gracious to her, she became a strong Tory, and thought that archduchesses were sweet. But with her politics were always an affair of the heart,—as, indeed, were all her convictions. Of reasoning from causes, I think that she knew nothing. Her heart was in every way so perfect, her desire to do good to all around her so thorough, and her power of self-sacrifice so complete, that she generally got herself right in spite of her want of logic; but it must be acknowledged that she was emotional. I can remember now her books, and can see her at her pursuits. The poets she loved best were Dante and Spenser. But she raved also of him of whom all such ladies were raving then, and rejoiced in the popularity and wept over the persecution of Lord Byron. She was among those who seized with avidity on the novels, as they came out, of the then unknown Scott, and who could still talk of the triumphs of Miss Edgeworth. With the literature of the day she was familiar, and with the

poets of the past. Of other reading I do not think she had mastered much. Her life, I take it, though latterly clouded by many troubles, was easy, luxurious, and idle, till my father's affairs and her own aspirations sent her to America. She had dear friends among literary people, of whom I remember Mathias, Henry Milman, and Miss Landon; but till long after middle life she never herself wrote a line for publication.

In 1827 she went to America, having been partly instigated by the social and communistic ideas of a lady whom I well remember,—a certain Miss Wright,—who was, I think, the first of the American female lecturers. Her chief desire, however, was to establish my brother Henry; and perhaps joined with that was the additional object of breaking up her English home without pleading broken fortunes to all the world. At Cincinnati, in the State of Ohio, she built a bazaar, and I fancy lost all the money which may have been embarked in that speculation. It could not have been much, and I think that others also must have suffered. But she looked about her, at her American cousins, and resolved to write

a book about them. This book she brought back with her in 1831, and published it early in 1832. When she did this she was already fifty. When doing this she was aware that unless she could so succeed in making money, there was no money for any of the family. She had never before earned a shilling. She almost immediately received a considerable sum from the publishers,—if I remember rightly, amounting to two sums of £400 each within a few months; and from that moment till nearly the time of her death, at any rate for more than twenty years, she was in the receipt of a considerable income from her writings. It was a late age at which to begin such a career.

The Domestic Manners of the Americans was the first of a series of books of travels, of which it was probably the best, and was certainly the best known. It will not be too much to say of it that it had a material effect upon the manners of the Americans of the day, and that that effect has been fully appreciated by them. No observer was certainly ever less qualified to judge of the prospects or even of the happiness of a young people. No

one could have been worse adapted by nature for the task of learning whether a nation was in a way to thrive. Whatever she saw she judged, as most women do, from her own standing-point. If a thing were ugly to her eyes, it ought to be ugly to all eyes,—and if ugly, it must be bad. What though people had plenty to eat and clothes to wear, if they put their feet upon the tables and did not reverence their betters? The Americans were to her rough, uncouth, and vulgar,—and she told them so. Those communistic and social ideas, which had been so pretty in a drawing-room, were scattered to the winds. Her volumes were very bitter; but they were very clever, and they saved the family from ruin.

Book followed book immediately,—first two novels, and then a book on Belgium and Western Germany. She refurnished the house which I have called Orley Farm, and surrounded us again with moderate comforts. Of the mixture of joviality and industry which formed her character, it is almost impossible to speak with exaggeration. The industry was a thing apart, kept to herself. It was not

necessary that any one who lived with her should see it. She was at her table at four in the morning, and had finished her work before the world had begun to be aroused. But the joviality was all for others. She could dance with other people's legs, eat and drink with other people's palates, be proud with the lustre of other people's finery. Every mother can do that for her own daughters; but she could do it for any girl whose look, and voice, and manners pleased her. Even when she was at work, the laughter of those she loved was a pleasure to her. She had much, very much, to suffer. Work sometimes came hard to her, so much being required,—for she was extravagant, and liked to have money to spend; but of all people I have known she was the most joyous, or, at any rate, the most capable of joy.

We continued this renewed life at Harrow for nearly two years, during which I was still at the school, and at the end of which I was nearly nineteen. Then there came a great catastrophe. My father, who, when he was well, lived a sad life among his monks and nuns, still kept a horse and gig. One day in

March 1834, just as it had been decided that I should leave the school then, instead of remaining, as had been intended, till mid-summer, I was summoned very early in the morning, to drive him up to London. He had been ill, and must still have been very ill indeed when he submitted to be driven by any one. It was not till we had started that he told me that I was to put him on board the Ostend boat. This I did, driving him through the city down to the docks. It was not within his nature to be communicative, and to the last he never told me why he was going to Ostend. Something of a general flitting abroad I had heard before, but why he should have flown the first, and flown so suddenly, I did not in the least know till I returned. When I got back with the gig, the house and furniture were all in the charge of the sheriff's officers.

The gardener who had been with us in former days stopped me as I drove up the road, and with gestures, signs, and whispered words, gave me to understand that the whole affair—horse, gig, and harness—would be made prize of if I went but a few yards

farther. Why they should not have been made prize of I do not know. The little piece of dishonest business which I at once took in hand and carried through successfully was of no special service to any of us. I drove the gig into the village, and sold the entire equipage to the ironmonger for £17, the exact sum which he claimed as being due to himself. I was much complimented by the gardener, who seemed to think that so much had been rescued out of the fire. I fancy that the ironmonger was the only gainer by my smartness.

When I got back to the house a scene of devastation was in progress, which still was not without its amusement. My mother, through her various troubles, had contrived to keep a certain number of pretty-pretties which were dear to her heart. They were not much, for in those days the ornamentation of houses was not lavish as it is now; but there was some china, and a little glass, a few books, and a very moderate supply of household silver. These things, and things like them, were being carried down surreptitiously, through a gap between the two gardens, on to

the premises of our friend Colonel Grant. My two sisters, then sixteen and seventeen, and the Grant girls, who were just younger, were the chief marauders. To such forces I was happy to add myself for any enterprise, and between us we cheated the creditors to the extent of our powers, amidst the anathemas, but good-humoured abstinence from personal violence, of the men in charge of the property. I still own a few books that were thus purloined.

For a few days the whole family bivouacked under the Colonel's hospitable roof, cared for and comforted by that dearest of all women, his wife. Then we followed my father to Belgium, and established ourselves in a large house just outside the walls of Bruges. At this time, and till my father's death, everything was done with money earned by my mother. She now again furnished the house,—this being the third that she had put in order since she came back from America two years and a half ago.

There were six of us went into this new banishment. My brother Henry had left Cambridge and was ill. My younger sister

was ill. And though as yet we hardly told each other that it was so, we began to feel that that desolating fiend, consumption, was among us. My father was broken-hearted as well as ill, but whenever he could sit at his table he still worked at his ecclesiastical records. My elder sister and I were in good health, but I was an idle, desolate hanger-on, that most hopeless of human beings, a hobbledehoy of nineteen, without any idea of a career, or a profession, or a trade. As well as I can remember I was fairly happy, for there were pretty girls at Bruges with whom I could fancy that I was in love; and I had been removed from the real misery of school. But as to my future life I had not even an aspiration. Now and again there would arise a feeling that it was hard upon my mother that she should have to do so much for us, that we should be idle while she was forced to work so constantly; but we should probably have thought more of that had she not taken to work as though it were the recognised condition of life for an old lady of fifty-five.

Then, by degrees, an established sorrow was at home among us. My brother was an

invalid, and the horrid word, which of all words were for some years after the most dreadful to us, had been pronounced. It was no longer a delicate chest, and some temporary necessity for peculiar care, — but consumption! The Bruges doctor had said so, and we knew that he was right. From that time forth my mother's most visible occupation was that of nursing. There were two sick men in the house, and hers were the hands that tended them. The novels went on, of course. We had already learned to know that they would be forthcoming at stated intervals,—and they always were forthcoming. The doctor's vials and the ink-bottle held equal places in my mother's rooms. I have written many novels under many circumstances; but I doubt much whether I could write one when my whole heart was by the bedside of a dying son. Her power of dividing herself into two parts, and keeping her intellect by itself clear from the troubles of the world, and fit for the duty it had to do, I never saw equalled. I do not think that the writing of a novel is the most difficult task which a man may be called upon to do; but it is a task that may be supposed

to demand a spirit fairly at ease. The work of doing it with a troubled spirit killed Sir Walter Scott. My mother went through it unscathed in strength, though she performed all the work of day-nurse and night-nurse to a sick household ;—for there were soon three of them dying.

At this time there came from some quarter an offer to me of a commission in an Austrian cavalry regiment ; and so it was apparently my destiny to be a soldier. But I must first learn German and French, of which languages I knew almost nothing. For this a year was allowed me, and in order that it might be accomplished without expense, I undertook the duties of a classical usher to a school then kept by William Drury at Brussels. Mr Drury had been one of the masters at Harrow when I went there at seven years old, and is now, after an interval of fifty-three years, even yet officiating as clergyman at that place.¹ To Brussels I went, and my heart still sinks within me as I reflect that any one should have intrusted to me the tuition of thirty boys. I can only hope that those boys

¹ He died two years after these words were written.

went there to learn French, and that their parents were not particular as to their classical acquirements. I remember that on two occasions I was sent to take the school out for a walk ; but that after the second attempt Mrs Drury declared that the boys' clothes would not stand any further experiments of that kind. I cannot call to mind any learning by me of other languages ; but as I only remained in that position for six weeks, perhaps the return lessons had not been as yet commenced. At the end of the six weeks a letter reached me, offering me a clerkship in the General Post Office, and I accepted it. Among my mother's dearest friends she reckoned Mrs Freeling, the wife of Clayton Freeling, whose father, Sir Francis Freeling, then ruled the Post Office. She had heard of my desolate position, and had begged from her father-in-law the offer of a berth in his own office.

I hurried back from Brussels to Bruges on my way to London, and found that the number of invalids had been increased. My younger sister, Emily, who, when I had left the house, was trembling on the balance,—who had been pronounced to be delicate, but with that false-

tongued hope which knows the truth, but will lie lest the heart should faint, had been called delicate, but only delicate,—was now ill. Of course she was doomed. I knew it of both of them, though I had never heard the word spoken, or had spoken it to any one. And my father was very ill,—ill to dying, though I did not know it. And my mother had decreed to send my elder sister away to England, thinking that the vicinity of so much sickness might be injurious to her. All this happened late in the autumn of 1834, in the spring of which year we had come to Bruges; and then my mother was left alone in a big house outside the town, with two Belgian women-servants, to nurse these dying patients—the patients being her husband and children—and to write novels for the sustenance of the family! It was about this period of her career that her best novels were written.

To my own initiation at the Post Office I will return in the next chapter. Just before Christmas my brother died, and was buried at Bruges. In the following February my father died, and was buried alongside of him,—and with him died that tedious task of his,

which I can only hope may have solaced many of his latter hours. I sometimes look back, meditating for hours together, on his adverse fate. He was a man, finely educated, of great parts, with immense capacity for work, physically strong very much beyond the average of men, addicted to no vices, carried off by no pleasures, affectionate by nature, most anxious for the welfare of his children, born to fair fortunes,—who, when he started in the world, may be said to have had everything at his feet. But everything went wrong with him. The touch of his hand seemed to create failure. He embarked in one hopeless enterprise after another, spending on each all the money he could at the time command. But the worse curse to him of all was a temper so irritable that even those whom he loved the best could not endure it. We were all estranged from him, and yet I believe that he would have given his heart's blood for any of us. His life as I knew it was one long tragedy.

After his death my mother moved to England, and took and furnished a small house at Hadley, near Barnet. I was then a clerk

in the London Post Office, and I remember well how gay she made the place with little dinners, little dances, and little picnics, while she herself was at work every morning long before others had left their beds. But she did not stay at Hadley much above a year. She went up to London, where she again took and furnished a house, from which my remaining sister was married and carried away into Cumberland. My mother soon followed her, and on this occasion did more than take a house. She bought a bit of land,—a field of three acres near the town,—and built a residence for herself. This, I think, was in 1841, and she had thus established and re-established herself six times in ten years. But in Cumberland she found the climate too severe, and in 1844 she moved herself to Florence, where she remained till her death in 1863. She continued writing up to 1856, when she was seventy-six years old,—and had at that time produced 114 volumes, of which the first was not written till she was fifty. Her career offers great encouragement to those who have not begun early in life, but are still ambitious to do something before they depart hence.

She was an unselfish, affectionate, and most industrious woman, with great capacity for enjoyment and high physical gifts. She was endowed too, with much creative power, with considerable humour, and a genuine feeling for romance. But she was neither clear-sighted nor accurate; and in her attempts to describe morals, manners, and even facts, was unable to avoid the pitfalls of exaggeration.

CHAPTER III.

THE GENERAL POST OFFICE.

1834-1841.

WHILE I was still learning my duty as an usher at Mr Drury's school at Brussels, I was summoned to my clerkship in the London Post Office, and on my way passed through Bruges. I then saw my father and my brother Henry for the last time. A sadder household never was held together. They were all dying; except my mother, who would sit up night after night nursing the dying ones and writing novels the while,—so that there might be a decent roof for them to die under. Had she failed to write the novels, I do not know where the roof would have been found. It is now more than forty years ago, and looking back over so long a lapse of time I can tell the story,

though it be the story of my own father and mother, of my own brother and sister, almost as coldly as I have often done some scene of intended pathos in fiction ; but that scene was indeed full of pathos. I was then becoming alive to the blighted ambition of my father's life, and becoming alive also to the violence of the strain which my mother was enduring. But I could do nothing but go and leave them. There was something that comforted me in the idea that I need no longer be a burden,—a fallacious idea, as it soon proved. My salary was to be £90 a year, and on that I was to live in London, keep up my character as a gentleman, and be happy. That I should have thought this possible at the age of nineteen, and should have been delighted at being able to make the attempt, does not surprise me now ; but that others should have thought it possible, friends who knew something of the world, does astonish me. A lad might have done so, no doubt, or might do so even in these days, who was properly looked after and kept under control,—on whose behalf some law of life had been laid down. Let him pay so much a week for his board and lodging, so

much for his clothes, so much for his washing, and then let him understand that he has—shall we say?—sixpence a day left for pocket-money and omnibuses. Any one making the calculation will find the sixpence far too much. No such calculation was made for me or by me. It was supposed that a sufficient income had been secured to me, and that I should live upon it as other clerks lived.

But as yet the £90 a year was not secured to me. On reaching London I went to my friend Clayton Freeling, who was then secretary at the Stamp Office, and was taken by him to the scene of my future labours in St Martin's le Grand. Sir Francis Freeling was the secretary, but he was greatly too high an official to be seen at first by a new junior clerk. I was taken, therefore, to his eldest son Henry Freeling, who was the assistant secretary, and by him I was examined as to my fitness. The story of that examination is given accurately in one of the opening chapters of a novel written by me, called *The Three Clerks*. If any reader of this memoir would refer to that chapter and see how Charley Tudor was supposed to have been admitted into the Internal

Navigation Office, that reader will learn how Anthony Trollope was actually admitted into the Secretary's office of the General Post Office in 1834. I was asked to copy some lines from the *Times* newspaper with an old quill pen, and at once made a series of blots and false spellings. "That won't do, you know," said Henry Freeling to his brother Clayton. Clayton, who was my friend, urged that I was nervous, and asked that I might be allowed to do a bit of writing at home and bring it as a sample on the next day. I was then asked whether I was a proficient in arithmetic. What could I say? I had never learned the multiplication table, and had no more idea of the rule of three than of conic sections. "I know a little of it," I said humbly, whereupon I was sternly assured that on the morrow, should I succeed in showing that my handwriting was all that it ought to be, I should be examined as to that little of arithmetic. If that little should not be found to comprise a thorough knowledge of all the ordinary rules, together with practised and quick skill, my career in life could not be made at the Post Office. Going down the main stairs of the building,—

stairs which have I believe been now pulled down to make room for sorters and stampers,—Clayton Freeling told me not to be too down-hearted. I was myself inclined to think that I had better go back to the school in Brussels. But nevertheless I went to work, and under the surveillance of my elder brother made a beautiful transcript of four or five pages of Gibbon. With a faltering heart I took these on the next day to the office. With my caligraphy I was contented, but was certain that I should come to the ground among the figures. But when I got to “The Grand,” as we used to call our office in those days, from its site in St Martin’s le Grand, I was seated at a desk without any further reference to my competency. No one condescended even to look at my beautiful penmanship.

That was the way in which candidates for the Civil Service were examined in my young days. It was at any rate the way in which I was examined. Since that time there has been a very great change indeed;—and in some respects a great improvement. But in regard to the absolute fitness of the young men selected for the public service, I doubt

whether more harm has not been done than good. And I think that good might have been done without the harm. The rule of the present day is, that every place shall be open to public competition, and that it shall be given to the best among the comers. I object to this, that at present there exists no known mode of learning who is best, and that the method employed has no tendency to elicit the best. That method pretends only to decide who among a certain number of lads will best answer a string of questions, for the answering of which they are prepared by tutors, who have sprung up for the purpose since this fashion of election has been adopted. When it is decided in a family that a boy shall "try the Civil Service," he is made to undergo a certain amount of cramming. But such treatment has, I maintain, no connection whatever with education. The lad is no better fitted after it than he was before for the future work of his life. But his very success fills him with false ideas of his own educational standing, and so far unfits him. And, by the plan now in vogue, it has come to pass that no one is in truth responsible

either for the conduct, the manners, or even for the character of the youth. The responsibility was perhaps slight before; but existed, and was on the increase.

There might have been,—in some future time of still increased wisdom, there yet may be,—a department established to test the fitness of acolytes without recourse to the dangerous optimism of competitive choice. I will not say but that there should have been some one to reject me,—though I will have the hardihood to say that, had I been so rejected, the Civil Service would have lost a valuable public servant. This is a statement that will not, I think, be denied by those who, after I am gone, may remember anything of my work. Lads, no doubt, should not be admitted who have none of the small acquirements that are wanted. Our offices should not be schools in which writing and early lessons in geography, arithmetic, or French should be learned. But all that could be ascertained without the perils of competitive examination.

The desire to insure the efficiency of the young men selected, has not been the only

object—perhaps not the chief object—of those who have yielded in this matter to the arguments of the reformers. There had arisen in England a system of patronage, under which it had become gradually necessary for politicians to use their influence for the purchase of political support. A member of the House of Commons, holding office, who might chance to have five clerkships to give away in a year, found himself compelled to distribute them among those who sent him to the House. In this there was nothing pleasant to the distributor of patronage. Do away with the system altogether, and he would have as much chance of support as another. He bartered his patronage only because another did so also. The beggings, the refusings, the jealousies, the correspondence, were simply troublesome. Gentlemen in office were not therefore indisposed to rid themselves of the care of patronage. I have no doubt their hands are the cleaner and their hearts are the lighter; but I do doubt whether the offices are on the whole better manned.

As what I now write will certainly never be read till I am dead, I may dare to say what

no one now does dare to say in print,—though some of us whisper it occasionally into our friends' ears. There are places in life which can hardly be well filled except by "Gentlemen." The word is one the use of which almost subjects one to ignominy. If I say that a judge should be a gentleman, or a bishop, I am met with a scornful allusion to "Nature's Gentlemen." Were I to make such an assertion with reference to the House of Commons, nothing that I ever said again would receive the slightest attention. A man in public life could not do himself a greater injury than by saying in public that the commissions in the army or navy, or berths in the Civil Service, should be given exclusively to gentlemen. He would be defied to define the term,—and would fail should he attempt to do so. But he would know what he meant, and so very probably would they who defied him. It may be that the son of the butcher of the village shall become as well fitted for employments requiring gentle culture as the son of the parson. Such is often the case. When such is the case, no one has been more prone to give the butcher's son all the welcome he

has merited than I myself; but the chances are greatly in favour of the parson's son. The gates of the one class should be open to the other; but neither to the one class nor to the other can good be done by declaring that there are no gates, no barrier, no difference. The system of competitive examination is, I think, based on a supposition that there is no difference.

I got into my place without any examining. Looking back now, I think I can see with accuracy what was then the condition of my own mind and intelligence. Of things to be learned by lessons I knew almost less than could be supposed possible after the amount of schooling I had received. I could read neither French, Latin, nor Greek. I could speak no foreign language,—and I may as well say here as elsewhere that I never acquired the power of really talking French. I have been able to order my dinner and take a railway ticket, but never got much beyond that. Of the merest rudiments of the sciences I was completely ignorant. My handwriting was in truth wretched. My spelling was imperfect. There was no subject as to which examination

would have been possible on which I could have gone through an examination otherwise than disgracefully. And yet I think I knew more than the average of young men of the same rank who began life at nineteen. I could have given a fuller list of the names of the poets of all countries, with their subjects and periods,—and probably of historians,—than many others ; and had, perhaps, a more accurate idea of the manner in which my own country was governed. I knew the names of all the Bishops, all the Judges, all the Heads of Colleges, and all the Cabinet Ministers,—not a very useful knowledge indeed, but one that had not been acquired without other matter which was more useful. I had read Shakespeare and Byron and Scott, and could talk about them. The music of the Miltonic line was familiar to me. I had already made up my mind that *Pride and Prejudice* was the best novel in the English language,—a palm which I only partially withdrew after a second reading of *Ivanhoe*, and did not completely bestow elsewhere till *Esmond* was written. And though I would occasionally break down in my spelling, I could write a letter. If I

had a thing to say, I could so say it in written words that the readers should know what I meant,—a power which is by no means at the command of all those who come out from these competitive examinations with triumph. Early in life, at the age of fifteen, I had commenced the dangerous habit of keeping a journal, and this I maintained for ten years. The volumes remained in my possession unregarded—never looked at—till 1870, when I examined them, and, with many blushes, destroyed them. They convicted me of folly, ignorance, indiscretion, idleness, extravagance, and conceit. But they had habituated me to the rapid use of pen and ink, and taught me how to express myself with facility.

I will mention here another habit which had grown upon me from still earlier years,—which I myself often regarded with dismay when I thought of the hours devoted to it, but which, I suppose, must have tended to make me what I have been. As a boy, even as a child, I was thrown much upon myself. I have explained, when speaking of my school-days, how it came to pass that other boys would not play with me. I was therefore alone,

and had to form my plays within myself. Play of some kind was necessary to me then, as it has always been. Study was not my bent, and I could not please myself by being all idle. Thus it came to pass that I was always going about with some castle in the air firmly built within my mind. Nor were these efforts in architecture spasmodic, or subject to constant change from day to day. For weeks, for months, if I remember rightly, from year to year, I would carry on the same tale, binding myself down to certain laws, to certain proportions, and proprieties, and unities. Nothing impossible was ever introduced,—nor even anything which, from outward circumstances, would seem to be violently improbable. I myself was of course my own hero. Such is a necessity of castle-building. But I never became a king, or a duke,—much less when my height and personal appearance were fixed could I be an Antinous, or six feet high. I never was a learned man, nor even a philosopher. But I was a very clever person, and beautiful young women used to be fond of me. And I strove to be kind of heart, and open of hand, and noble in thought, despising mean

things ; and altogether I was a very much better fellow than I have ever succeeded in being since. This had been the occupation of my life for six or seven years before I went to the Post Office, and was by no means abandoned when I commenced my work. There can, I imagine, hardly be a more dangerous mental practice ; but I have often doubted whether, had it not been my practice, I should ever have written a novel. I learned in this way to maintain an interest in a fictitious story, to dwell on a work created by my own imagination, and to live in a world altogether outside the world of my own material life. In after years I have done the same,—with this difference, that I have discarded the hero of my early dreams, and have been able to lay my own identity aside.

I must certainly acknowledge that the first seven years of my official life were neither creditable to myself nor useful to the public service. These seven years were passed in London, and during this period of my life it was my duty to be present every morning at the office punctually at 10 A.M. I think I commenced my quarrels with the authorities there

by having in my possession a watch which was always ten minutes late. I know that I very soon achieved a character for irregularity, and came to be regarded as a black sheep by men around me who were not themselves, I think, very good public servants. From time to time rumours reached me that if I did not take care I should be dismissed; especially one rumour in my early days, through my dearly beloved friend Mrs Clayton Freeling,—who, as I write this, is still living, and who, with tears in her eyes, besought me to think of my mother. That was during the life of Sir Francis Freeling, who died,—still in harness,—a little more than twelve months after I joined the office. And yet the old man showed me signs of almost affectionate kindness, writing to me with his own hand more than once from his death-bed.

Sir Francis Freeling was followed at the Post Office by Colonel Maberly, who certainly was not my friend. I do not know that I deserved to find a friend in my new master, but I think that a man with better judgment would not have formed so low an opinion of me as he did. Years have gone by, and I can write

now, and almost feel, without anger ; but I can remember well the keenness of my anguish when I was treated as though I were unfit for any useful work. I did struggle—not to do the work, for there was nothing which was not easy without any struggling—but to show that I was willing to do it. My bad character nevertheless stuck to me, and was not to be got rid of by any efforts within my power. I do admit that I was irregular. It was not considered to be much in my favour that I could write letters—which was mainly the work of our office—rapidly, correctly, and to the purpose. The man who came at ten, and who was always still at his desk at half-past four, was preferred before me, though when at his desk he might be less efficient. Such preference was no doubt proper ; but, with a little encouragement, I also would have been punctual. I got credit for nothing, and was reckless.

As it was, the conduct of some of us was very bad. There was a comfortable sitting-room up-stairs, devoted to the use of some one of our number who in turn was required to remain in the place all night. Hither one or two of us would adjourn after lunch, and play

écarté for an hour or two. I do not know whether such ways are possible now in our public offices. And here we used to have suppers and card-parties at night—great symposiums, with much smoking of tobacco; for in our part of the building there lived a whole bevy of clerks. These were gentlemen whose duty it then was to make up and receive the foreign mails. I do not remember that they worked later or earlier than the other sorting-clerks; but there was supposed to be something special in foreign letters, which required that the men who handled them should have minds undistracted by the outer world. Their salaries, too, were higher than those of their more homely brethren; and they paid nothing for their lodgings. Consequently there was a somewhat fast set in those apartments, given to cards and to tobacco, who drank spirits and water in preference to tea. I was not one of them, but was a good deal with them.

I do not know that I should interest my readers by saying much of my Post Office experiences in those days. I was always on the eve of being dismissed, and yet was always striving to show how good a public servant I

could become, if only a chance were given me. But the chance went the wrong way. On one occasion, in the performance of my duty, I had to put a private letter containing bank-notes on the secretary's table,—which letter I had duly opened, as it was not marked private. The letter was seen by the Colonel, but had not been moved by him when he left the room. On his return it was gone. In the meantime I had returned to the room, again in the performance of some duty. When the letter was missed I was sent for, and there I found the Colonel much moved about his letter, and a certain chief clerk, who, with a long face, was making suggestions as to the probable fate of the money. "The letter has been taken," said the Colonel, turning to me angrily, "and, by G——! there has been nobody in the room but you and I." As he spoke, he thundered his fist down upon the table. "Then," said I, "by G——! you have taken it." And I also thundered my fist down;—but, accidentally, not upon the table. There was there a standing movable desk, at which, I presume, it was the Colonel's habit to write, and on this movable desk was a large bottle

full of ink. My fist unfortunately came on the desk, and the ink at once flew up, covering the Colonel's face and shirt-front. Then it was a sight to see that senior clerk, as he seized a quire of blotting-paper, and rushed to the aid of his superior officer, striving to mop up the ink ; and a sight also to see the Colonel, in his agony, hit right out through the blotting-paper at that senior clerk's unoffending stomach. At that moment there came in the Colonel's private secretary, with the letter and the money, and I was desired to go back to my own room. This was an incident not much in my favour, though I do not know that it did me special harm.

I was always in trouble. A young woman down in the country had taken it into her head that she would like to marry me,—and a very foolish young woman she must have been to entertain such a wish. I need not tell that part of the story more at length, otherwise than by protesting that no young man in such a position was ever much less to blame than I had been in this. The invitation had come from her, and I had lacked the pluck to give it a decided negative ; but I had left the house

within half an hour, going away without my dinner, and had never returned to it. Then there was a correspondence,—if that can be called a correspondence in which all the letters came from one side. At last the mother appeared at the Post Office. My hair almost stands on my head now as I remember the figure of the woman walking into the big room in which I sat with six or seven other clerks, having a large basket on her arm and an immense bonnet on her head. The messenger had vainly endeavoured to persuade her to remain in the ante-room. She followed the man in, and walking up the centre of the room, addressed me in a loud voice: “Anthony Trollope, when are you going to marry my daughter?” We have all had our worst moments, and that was one of my worst. I lived through it, however, and did not marry the young lady. These little incidents were all against me in the office.

And then a certain other phase of my private life crept into official view, and did me a damage. As I shall explain just now, I rarely at this time had any money wherewith to pay my bills. In this state of things a certain tailor

had taken from me an acceptance for, I think £12, which found its way into the hands of a money-lender. With that man, who lived in a little street near Mecklenburgh Square, I formed a most heart-rending but a most intimate acquaintance. In cash I once received from him £4. For that and for the original amount of the tailor's bill, which grew monstrously under repeated renewals, I paid ultimately something over £200. That is so common a story as to be hardly worth the telling; but the peculiarity of this man was that he became so attached to me as to visit me every day at my office. For a long period he found it to be worth his while to walk up those stone steps daily, and come and stand behind my chair, whispering to me always the same words: “Now I wish you would be punctual. If you only would be punctual, I should like you to have anything you want.” He was a little, clean, old man, who always wore a high starched white cravat, inside which he had a habit of twisting his chin as he uttered his caution. When I remember the constant persistency of his visits, I cannot but feel that he was paid very badly for his

time and trouble. Those visits were very terrible, and can have hardly been of service to me in the office.

Of one other misfortune which happened to me in those days I must tell the tale. A junior clerk in the secretary's office was always told off to sleep upon the premises, and he was supposed to be the presiding genius of the establishment when the other members of the Secretary's department had left the building. On an occasion when I was still little more than a lad,—perhaps one-and-twenty years old,—I was filling this responsible position. At about seven in the evening word was brought to me that the Queen of,—I think Saxony, but I am sure it was a Queen,—wanted to see the night mails sent out. At this time, when there were many mail-coaches, this was a show, and august visitors would sometimes come to see it. But preparation was generally made beforehand, and some pundit of the office would be at hand to do the honours. On this occasion we were taken by surprise, and there was no pundit. I therefore gave the orders, and accompanied her Majesty around the build-

ing, walking backwards, as I conceived to be proper, and often in great peril as I did so, up and down the stairs. I was, however, quite satisfied with my own manner of performing an unaccustomed and most important duty. There were two old gentlemen with her Majesty, who, no doubt, were German barons, and an ancient baroness also. They had come and, when they had seen the sights, took their departure in two glass coaches. As they were preparing to go, I saw the two barons consulting together in deep whispers, and then as the result of that conversation one of them handed me half-a-crown! That also was a bad moment.

I came up to town, as I said before, purporting to live a jolly life upon £90 per annum. I remained seven years in the General Post Office, and when I left it my income was £140. During the whole of this time I was hopelessly in debt. There were two intervals, amounting together to nearly two years, in which I lived with my mother, and therefore lived in comfort,—but even then I was overwhelmed with debt. She paid much for me, —paid all that I asked her to pay, and all that

she could find out that I owed. But who in such a condition ever tells all and makes a clean breast of it? The debts, of course, were not large, but I cannot think now how I could have lived, and sometimes have enjoyed life, with such a burden of duns as I endured. Sheriff's officers with uncanny documents, of which I never understood anything, were common attendants on me. And yet I do not remember that I was ever locked up, though I think I was twice a prisoner. In such emergencies some one paid for me. And now, looking back at it, I have to ask myself whether my youth was very wicked. I did no good in it; but was there fair ground for expecting good from me? When I reached London no mode of life was prepared for me,—no advice even given to me. I went into lodgings, and then had to dispose of my time. I belonged to no club, and knew very few friends who would receive me into their houses. In such a condition of life a young man should no doubt go home after his work, and spend the long hours of the evening in reading good books and drinking tea. A lad brought up by strict parents, and without hav-

ing had even a view of gayer things, might perhaps do so. I had passed all my life at public schools, where I had seen gay things, but had never enjoyed them. Towards the good books and tea no training had been given me. There was no house in which I could habitually see a lady's face and hear a lady's voice. No allurements to decent respectability came in my way. It seems to me that in such circumstances the temptations of loose life will almost certainly prevail with a young man. Of course if the mind be strong enough, and the general stuff knitted together of sufficiently stern material, the temptations will not prevail. But such minds and such material are, I think, uncommon. The temptation at any rate prevailed with me.

I wonder how many young men fall utterly to pieces from being turned loose into London after the same fashion. Mine was, I think, of all phases of such life the most dangerous. The lad who is sent to mechanical work has longer hours, during which he is kept from danger, and has not generally been taught in his boyhood to anticipate pleasure. He looks for hard work and grinding circumstances.

I certainly had enjoyed but little pleasure, but I had been among those who did enjoy it and were taught to expect it. And I had filled my mind with the ideas of such joys. And now, except during official hours, I was entirely without control,—without the influences of any decent household around me. I have said something of the comedy of such life, but it certainly had its tragic aspect. Turning it all over in my own mind, as I have constantly done in after years, the tragedy has always been uppermost. And so it was as the time was passing. Could there be any escape from such dirt? I would ask myself; and I always answered that there was no escape. The mode of life was itself wretched. I hated the office. I hated my work. More than all I hated my idleness. I had often told myself since I left school that the only career in life within my reach was that of an author, and the only mode of authorship open to me that of a writer of novels. In the journal which I read and destroyed a few years since, I found the matter argued out before I had been in the Post Office two years. Parliament was out of the question. I had not means to go

to the Bar. In official life, such as that to which I had been introduced, there did not seem to be any opening for real success. Pens and paper I could command. Poetry I did not believe to be within my grasp. The drama, too, which I would fain have chosen, I believed to be above me. For history, biography, or essay writing I had not sufficient erudition. But I thought it possible that I might write a novel. I had resolved very early that in that shape must the attempt be made. But the months and years ran on, and no attempt was made. And yet no day was passed without thoughts of attempting, and a mental acknowledgment of the disgrace of postponing it. What reader will not understand the agony of remorse produced by such a condition of mind? The gentleman from Mecklenburgh Square was always with me in the morning, — always angering me by his hateful presence, — but when the evening came I could make no struggle towards getting rid of him.

In those days I read a little, and did learn to read French and Latin. I made myself familiar with Horace, and became acquainted

with the works of our own greatest poets. I had my strong enthusiasms, and remember throwing out of the window in Northumberland Street, where I lived, a volume of Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, because he spoke sneeringly of *Lycidas*. That was Northumberland Street by the Marylebone Workhouse, on to the back-door of which establishment my room looked out—a most dreary abode, at which I fancy I must have almost ruined the good-natured lodging-house keeper by my constant inability to pay her what I owed.

How I got my daily bread I can hardly remember. But I do remember that I was often unable to get myself a dinner. Young men generally now have their meals provided for them. I kept house, as it were. Every day I had to find myself with the day's food. For my breakfast I could get some credit at the lodgings, though that credit would frequently come to an end. But for all that I had often breakfast to pay day by day; and at your eating-house credit is not given. I had no friends on whom I could sponge regularly. Out on the Fulham Road I had an uncle, but his house was four miles from the Post Office,

and almost as far from my own lodgings. Then came borrowings of money, sometimes absolute want, and almost constant misery.

Before I tell how it came about that I left this wretched life, I must say a word or two of the friendships which lessened its misfortunes. My earliest friend in life was John Merivale, with whom I had been at school at Sunbury and Harrow, and who was a nephew of my tutor, Harry Drury. Herman Merivale, who afterwards became my friend, was his brother, as is also Charles Merivale, the historian and Dean of Ely. I knew John when I was ten years old, and am happy to be able to say that he is going to dine with me one day this week. I hope I may not injure his character by stating that in those days I lived very much with him. He, too, was impecunious, but he had a home in London, and knew but little of the sort of penury which I endured. For more than fifty years he and I have been close friends. And then there was one W—— A ——, whose misfortunes in life will not permit me to give his full name, but whom I dearly loved. He had been at Winchester and at Oxford, and at both

places had fallen into trouble. He then became a schoolmaster,—or perhaps I had better say usher,—and finally he took orders. But he was unfortunate in all things, and died some years ago in poverty. He was most perverse; bashful to very fear of a lady's dress; unable to restrain himself in anything, but yet with a conscience that was always stinging him; a loving friend, though very quarrelsome; and, perhaps, of all men I have known, the most humorous. And he was entirely unconscious of his own humour. He did not know that he could so handle all matters as to create infinite amusement out of them. Poor W—— A——! To him there came no happy turning-point at which life loomed seriously on him, and then became prosperous.

W—— A——, Merivale, and I formed a little club, which we called the Tramp Society, and subjected to certain rules, in obedience to which we wandered on foot about the counties adjacent to London. Southampton was the furthest point we ever reached; but Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire were more dear to us. These were the happiest hours of my then life—and perhaps not the least innocent,

although we were frequently in peril from the village authorities whom we outraged. Not to pay for any conveyance, never to spend above five shillings a day, to obey all orders from the elected ruler of the hour (this enforced under heavy fines), were among our statutes. I would fain tell here some of our adventures:—how A—— enacted an escaped madman and we his pursuing keepers, and so got ourselves a lift in a cart, from which we ran away as we approached the lunatic asylum; how we were turned out of a little town at night, the townsfolk frightened by the loudness of our mirth; and how we once crept into a hayloft and were wakened in the dark morning by a pitchfork,—and how the juvenile owner of that pitchfork fled through the window when he heard the complaints of the wounded man! But the fun was the fun of W—— A——, and would cease to be fun as told by me.

It was during these years that John Tilley, who has now been for many years the permanent senior officer of the Post Office, married my sister, whom he took with him into Cumberland, where he was stationed as one of our

surveyors. He has been my friend for more than forty years ; as has also Peregrine Birch, a clerk in the House of Lords, who married one of those daughters of Colonel Grant who assisted us in the raid we made on the goods which had been seized by the Sheriff's officer at Harrow. These have been the oldest and dearest friends of my life ; and I can thank God that three of them are still alive.

When I had been nearly seven years in the Secretary's office of the Post Office, always hating my position there, and yet always fearing that I should be dismissed from it, there came a way of escape. There had latterly been created in the service a new body of officers called surveyors' clerks. There were at that time seven surveyors in England, two in Scotland, and three in Ireland. To each of these officers a clerk had been lately attached, whose duty it was to travel about the country under the surveyor's orders. There had been much doubt among the young men in the office whether they should or should not apply for these places. The emoluments were good and the work alluring ; but there was at first supposed to be something derogatory in the posi-

tion. There was a rumour that the first surveyor who got a clerk sent the clerk out to fetch his beer; and that another had called upon his clerk to send the linen to the wash. There was, however, a conviction that nothing could be worse than the berth of a surveyor's clerk in Ireland. The clerks were all appointed, however. To me it had not occurred to ask for anything, nor would anything have been given me. But after a while there came a report from the far west of Ireland that the man sent there was absurdly incapable. It was probably thought then that none but a man absurdly incapable would go on such a mission to the west of Ireland. When the report reached the London office I was the first to read it. I was at that time in dire trouble, having debts on my head and quarrels with our Secretary-Colonel, and a full conviction that my life was taking me downwards to the lowest pits. So I went to the Colonel boldly, and volunteered for Ireland if he would send me. He was glad to be so rid of me, and I went. This happened in August 1841, when I was twenty-six years old. My salary in Ireland was to be but £100 a year; but I

was to receive fifteen shillings a day for every day that I was away from home, and sixpence for every mile that I travelled. The same allowances were made in England; but at that time travelling in Ireland was done at half the English prices. My income in Ireland, after paying my expenses, became at once £400. This was the first good fortune of my life.

CHAPTER IV.

IRELAND—MY FIRST TWO NOVELS.

1841-1848.

IN the preceding pages I have given a short record of the first twenty-six years of my life, —years of suffering, disgrace, and inward remorse. I fear that my mode of telling will have left an idea simply of their absurdities; but in truth I was wretched, —sometimes almost unto death, and have often cursed the hour in which I was born. There had clung to me a feeling that I had been looked upon always as an evil, an encumbrance, a useless thing,—as a creature of whom those connected with him had to be ashamed. And I feel certain now that in my young days I was so regarded. Even my few friends who had found with me a certain capacity for enjoyment were half afraid of me. I acknowledge the weak-

ness of a great desire to be loved,—of a strong wish to be popular with my associates. No child, no boy, no lad, no young man, had ever been less so. And I had been so poor; and so little able to bear poverty. But from the day on which I set my foot in Ireland all these evils went away from me. Since that time who has had a happier life than mine? Looking round upon all those I know, I cannot put my hand upon one. But all is not over yet. And, mindful of that, remembering how great is the agony of adversity, how crushing the despondency of degradation, how susceptible I am myself to the misery coming from contempt,—remembering also how quickly good things may go and evil things come,—I am often again tempted to hope, almost to pray, that the end may be near. Things may be going well now—

“*Sin aliquem infandum casum, Fortuna, minaris ;
Nunc, o nunc liceat crudelem abrumperé vitam.*”

There is unhappiness so great that the very fear of it is an alloy to happiness. I had then lost my father, and sister, and brother,—have since lost another sister and my mother ;—but I have never as yet lost a wife or a child.

When I told my friends that I was going on this mission to Ireland they shook their heads, but said nothing to dissuade me. I think it must have been evident to all who were my friends that my life in London was not a success. My mother and elder brother were at this time abroad, and were not consulted ;—did not even know my intention in time to protest against it. Indeed, I consulted no one, except a dear old cousin, our family lawyer, from whom I borrowed £200 to help me out of England. He lent me the money, and looked upon me with pitying eyes,—shaking his head. “After all you were right to go,” he said to me when I paid him the money a few years afterwards.

But nobody then thought I was right to go. To become clerk to an Irish surveyor, in Connaught, with a salary of £100 a year, at twenty-six years of age ! I did not think it right even myself,—except that anything was right which would take me away from the General Post Office and from London.

My ideas of the duties I was to perform were very vague, as were also my ideas of Ireland generally. Hitherto I had passed my

time, seated at a desk, either writing letters myself, or copying into books those which others had written. I had never been called upon to do anything I was unable or unfitted to do. I now understood that in Ireland I was to be a deputy-inspector of country post offices, and that among other things to be inspected would be the postmasters' accounts! But as no other person asked a question as to my fitness for this work, it seemed unnecessary for me to do so.

On the 15th of September 1841, I landed in Dublin, without an acquaintance in the country, and with only two or three letters of introduction from a brother clerk in the Post Office. I had learned to think that Ireland was a land flowing with fun and whisky, in which irregularity was the rule of life, and where broken heads were looked upon as honourable badges. I was to live at a place called Banagher, on the Shannon, which I had heard of because of its having once been conquered, though it had heretofore conquered everything, including the devil. And from Banagher my inspecting tours were to be made, chiefly into Connaught, but also over a strip of country eastwards, which would enable me occasionally

to run up to Dublin. I went to a hotel which was very dirty, and after dinner I ordered some whisky punch. There was an excitement in this, but when the punch was gone I was very dull. It seemed so strange to be in a country in which there was not a single individual whom I had ever spoken to or ever seen. And it was to be my destiny to go down into Connaught and adjust accounts,—the destiny of me who had never learned the multiplication table, or done a sum in long division!

On the next morning I called on the Secretary of the Irish Post Office, and learned from him that Colonel Maberly had sent a very bad character with me. He could not have sent a very good one; but I felt a little hurt when I was informed by this new master that he had been informed that I was worthless, and must in all probability be dismissed. "But," said the new master, "I shall judge you by your own merits." From that time to the day on which I left the service, I never heard a word of censure, nor had many months passed before I found that my services were valued. Before a year was over, I had ac-

quired the character of a thoroughly good public servant.

The time went very pleasantly. Some adventures I had ;—two of which I told in the *Tales of All Countries*, under the names of *The O'Conors of Castle Conor*, and *Father Giles of Ballymoy*. I will not swear to every detail in these stories, but the main purport of each is true. I could tell many others of the same nature, were this the place for them. I found that the surveyor to whom I had been sent kept a pack of hounds, and therefore I bought a hunter. I do not think he liked it, but he could not well complain. He never rode to hounds himself, but I did ; and then and thus began one of the great joys of my life. I have ever since been constant to the sport, having learned to love it with an affection which I cannot myself fathom or understand. Surely no man has laboured at it as I have done, or hunted under such drawbacks as to distances, money, and natural disadvantages. I am very heavy, very blind, have been—in reference to hunting—a poor man, and am now an old man. I have often had to travel all night outside a mail-coach, in order that I might

hunt the next day. Nor have I ever been in truth a good horseman. And I have passed the greater part of my hunting life under the discipline of the Civil Service. But it has been for more than thirty years a duty to me to ride to hounds; and I have performed that duty with a persistent energy. Nothing has ever been allowed to stand in the way of hunting,—neither the writing of books, nor the work of the Post Office, nor other pleasures. As regarded the Post Office, it soon seemed to be understood that I was to hunt; and when my services were re-transferred to England, no word of difficulty ever reached me about it. I have written on very many subjects, and on most of them with pleasure; but on no subject with such delight as that on hunting. I have dragged it into many novels,—into too many no doubt,—but I have always felt myself deprived of a legitimate joy when the nature of the tale has not allowed me a hunting chapter. Perhaps that which gave me the greatest delight was the description of a run on a horse accidentally taken from another sportsman,—a circumstance which occurred to my dear friend

Charles Buxton, who will be remembered as one of the members for Surrey.

It was altogether a very jolly life that I led in Ireland. I was always moving about, and soon found myself to be in pecuniary circumstances which were opulent in comparison with those of my past life. The Irish people did not murder me, nor did they even break my head. I soon found them to be good-humoured, clever—the working classes very much more intelligent than those of England—economical, and hospitable. We hear much of their spendthrift nature; but extravagance is not the nature of an Irishman. He will count the shillings in a pound much more accurately than an Englishman, and will with much more certainty get twelve pennyworth from each. But they are perverse, irrational, and but little bound by the love of truth. I lived for many years among them—not finally leaving the country until 1859, and I had the means of studying their character.

I had not been a fortnight in Ireland before I was sent down to a little town in the far west of county Galway, to balance a defaulting postmaster's accounts, find out how much he

owed, and report upon his capacity to pay. In these days such accounts are very simple. They adjust themselves from day to day, and a Post Office surveyor has nothing to do with them. At that time, though the sums dealt with were small, the forms of dealing with them were very intricate. I went to work, however, and made that defaulting postmaster teach me the use of those forms. I then succeeded in balancing the account, and had no difficulty whatever in reporting that he was altogether unable to pay his debt. Of course he was dismissed;—but he had been a very useful man to me. I never had any further difficulty in the matter.

But my chief work was the investigating of complaints made by the public as to postal matters. The practice of the office was and is to send one of its servants to the spot to see the complainant and to inquire into the facts, when the complainant is sufficiently energetic or sufficiently big to make himself well heard. A great expense is often incurred for a very small object; but the system works well on the whole as confidence is engendered, and a feeling is produced in the country that the

department has eyes of its own and does keep them open. This employment was very pleasant, and to me always easy, as it required at its close no more than the writing of a report. There were no accounts in this business, no keeping of books, no necessary manipulation of multitudinous forms. I must tell of one such complaint and inquiry, because in its result I think it was emblematic of many.

A gentleman in county Cavan had complained most bitterly of the injury done to him by some arrangement of the Post Office. The nature of his grievance has no present significance; but it was so unendurable that he had written many letters, couched in the strongest language. He was most irate, and indulged himself in that scorn which is so easy to an angry mind. The place was not in my district, but I was borrowed, being young and strong, that I might remember the edge of his personal wrath. It was mid-winter, and I drove up to his house, a squire's country seat, in the middle of a snow-storm, just as it was becoming dark. I was on an open jaunting-car, and was on my way from one little town to another, the cause of his complaint having

reference to some mail conveyance between the two. I was certainly very cold, and very wet, and very uncomfortable when I entered his house. I was admitted by a butler, but the gentleman himself hurried into the hall. I at once began to explain my business. "God bless me!" he said, "you are wet through. John, get Mr Trollope some brandy and water,—very hot." I was beginning my story about the post again when he himself took off my greatcoat, and suggested that I should go up to my bedroom before I troubled myself with business. "Bedroom!" I exclaimed. Then he assured me that he would not turn a dog out on such a night as that, and into a bedroom I was shown, having first drunk the brandy and water standing at the drawing-room fire. When I came down I was introduced to his daughter, and the three of us went into dinner. I shall never forget his righteous indignation when I again brought up the postal question on the departure of the young lady. Was I such a Goth as to contaminate wine with business? So I drank my wine, and then heard the young lady sing while her father slept in his arm-

chair. I spent a very pleasant evening, but my host was too sleepy to hear anything about the Post Office that night. It was absolutely necessary that I should go away the next morning after breakfast, and I explained that the matter must be discussed then. He shook his head and wrung his hands in unmistakable disgust,—almost in despair. “But what am I to say in my report?” I asked. “Anything you please,” he said. “Don’t spare me, if you want an excuse for yourself. Here I sit all the day,—with nothing to do; and I like writing letters.” I did report that Mr —— was now quite satisfied with the postal arrangement of his district; and I felt a soft regret that I should have robbed my friend of his occupation. Perhaps he was able to take up the Poor Law Board, or to attack the Excise. At the Post Office nothing more was heard from him.

I went on with the hunting surveyor at Banagher for three years, during which, at Kingstown, the watering-place near Dublin, I met Rose Heseltine, the lady who has since become my wife. The engagement took place when I had been just one year in

Ireland; but there was still a delay of two years before we could be married. She had no fortune, nor had I any income beyond that which came from the Post Office; and there were still a few debts, which would have been paid off no doubt sooner, but for that purchase of the horse. When I had been nearly three years in Ireland we were married on the 11th of June 1844;—and perhaps I ought to name that happy day as the commencement of my better life, rather than the day on which I first landed in Ireland.

For though during these three years I had been jolly enough, I had not been altogether happy. The hunting, the whisky punch, the rattling Irish life,—of which I could write a volume of stories were this the place to tell them,—were continually driving from my mind the still cherished determination to become a writer of novels. When I reached Ireland I had never put pen to paper; nor had I done so when I became engaged. And when I was married, being then twenty-nine, I had only written the first volume of my first work. This constant putting off of the day of work was a great sorrow to me. I certainly had

not been idle in my new berth. I had learned my work, so that every one concerned knew that it was safe in my hands; and I held a position altogether the reverse of that in which I was always trembling while I remained in London. But that did not suffice,—did not nearly suffice. I still felt that there might be a career before me, if I could only bring myself to begin the work. I do not think I much doubted my own intellectual sufficiency for the writing of a readable novel. What I did doubt was my own industry, and the chances of the market.

The vigour necessary to prosecute two professions at the same time is not given to every one, and it was only lately that I had found the vigour necessary for one. There must be early hours, and I had not as yet learned to love early hours. I was still, indeed, a young man; but hardly young enough to trust myself to find the power to alter the habits of my life. And I had heard of the difficulties of publishing,—a subject of which I shall have to say much should I ever bring this memoir to a close. I had dealt already with publishers on my mother's behalf, and

knew that many a tyro who could fill a manuscript lacked the power to put his matter before the public;—and I knew, too, that when the matter was printed, how little had then been done towards the winning of the battle! I had already learned that many a book—many a good book—

“is born to blush unseen
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.”

But still the purpose was strong within me, and the first effort was made after the following fashion. I was located at a little town called Drumsna, or rather village, in the county Leitrim, where the postmaster had come to some sorrow about his money; and my friend John Merivale was staying with me for a day or two. As we were taking a walk in that most uninteresting country, we turned up through a deserted gateway, along a weedy, grass-grown avenue, till we came to the modern ruins of a country house. It was one of the most melancholy spots I ever visited. I will not describe it here, because I have done so in the first chapter of my first novel. We wandered about the place, suggesting to

each other causes for the misery we saw there, and while I was still among the ruined walls and decayed beams I fabricated the plot of *The Macdermots of Ballycloran*. As to the plot itself, I do not know that I ever made one so good,—or, at any rate, one so susceptible of pathos. I am aware that I broke down in the telling, not having yet studied the art. Nevertheless, *The Macdermots* is a good novel, and worth reading by any one who wishes to understand what Irish life was before the potato disease, the famine, and the Encumbered Estates Bill.

When my friend left me, I set to work and wrote the first chapter or two. Up to this time I had continued that practice of castle-building of which I have spoken; but now the castle I built was among the ruins of that old house. The book, however, hung with me. It was only now and then that I found either time or energy for a few pages. I commenced the book in September 1843, and had only written a volume when I was married in June 1844.

My marriage was like the marriage of other people, and of no special interest to any one

except my wife and me. It took place at Rotherham in Yorkshire, where her father was the manager of a bank. We were not very rich, having about £400 a year on which to live. Many people would say that we were two fools to encounter such poverty together. I can only reply that since that day I have never been without money in my pocket, and that I soon acquired the means of paying what I owed. Nevertheless, more than twelve years had to pass over our heads before I received any payment for any literary work which afforded an appreciable increase to our income.

Immediately after our marriage, I left the west of Ireland and the hunting surveyor, and joined another in the south. It was a better district, and I was enabled to live at Clomnel, a town of some importance, instead of at Banagher, which is little more than a village. I had not felt myself to be comfortable in my old residence as a married man. On my arrival there as a bachelor I had been received most kindly, but when I brought my English wife I fancied that there was a feeling that I had behaved badly to Ireland generally.

When a young man has been received hospitably in an Irish circle, I will not say that it is expected of him that he should marry some young lady in that society ;—but it certainly is expected of him that he shall not marry any young lady out of it. I had given offence, and I was made to feel it.

There has taken place a great change in Ireland since the days in which I lived at Banagher, and a change so much for the better, that I have sometimes wondered at the obduracy with which people have spoken of the permanent ill condition of the country. Wages are now nearly double what they were then. The Post Office at any rate is paying almost double for its rural labour,—9s. a week when it used to pay 5s., and 12s. a week when it used to pay 7s. Banks have sprung up in almost every village. Rents are paid with more than English punctuality. And the religious enmity between the classes, though it is not yet dead, is dying out. Soon after I reached Banagher in 1841, I dined one evening with a Roman Catholic. I was informed next day by a Protestant gentleman who had been very hospitable to me that I must

choose my party. I could not sit both at Protestant and Catholic tables. Such a caution would now be impossible in any part of Ireland. Home-rule no doubt is a nuisance,—and especially a nuisance because the professors of the doctrine do not at all believe it themselves. There are probably no other twenty men in England or Ireland who would be so utterly dumfounded and prostrated were Home-rule to have its way as the twenty Irish members who profess to support it in the House of Commons. But it is not to be expected that nuisances such as these should be abolished at a blow. Home-rule is at any rate better and more easily managed than the rebellion at the close of the last century; it is better than the treachery of the Union; less troublesome than O'Connell's monster meetings; less dangerous than Smith O'Brien and the battle of the cabbage-garden at Ballinagary; and very much less bloody than Fenianism. The descent from O'Connell to Mr Butt has been the natural declension of a political disease, which we had no right to hope would be cured by any one remedy.

When I had been married a year my first

novel was finished. In July 1845 I took it with me to the north of England, and intrusted the MS. to my mother to do with it the best she could among the publishers in London. No one had read it but my wife; nor, as far as I am aware, has any other friend of mine ever read a word of my writing before it was printed. She, I think, has so read almost everything, to my very great advantage in matters of taste. I am sure I have never asked a friend to read a line; nor have I ever read a word of my own writing aloud,—even to her. With one exception,—which shall be mentioned as I come to it,—I have never consulted a friend as to a plot, or spoken to any one of the work I have been doing. My first manuscript I gave up to my mother, agreeing with her that it would be as well that she should not look at it before she gave it to a publisher. I knew that she did not give me credit for the sort of cleverness necessary for such work. I could see in the faces and hear in the voices of those of my friends who were around me at the house in Cumberland — my mother, my sister, my brother-in-law, and, I think, my brother—that

they had not expected me to come out as one of the family authors. There were three or four in the field before me, and it seemed to be almost absurd that another should wish to add himself to the number. My father had written much—those long ecclesiastical descriptions—quite unsuccessfully. My mother had become one of the popular authors of the day. My brother had commenced, and had been fairly well paid for his work. My sister, Mrs Tilley, had also written a novel, which was at the time in manuscript—which was published afterwards without her name, and was called *Chollerton*. I could perceive that this attempt of mine was felt to be an unfortunate aggravation of the disease.

My mother however did the best she could for me, and soon reported that Mr Newby of Mortimer Street was to publish the book. It was to be printed at his expense, and he was to give me half the profits. Half the profits! Many a young author expects much from such an undertaking. I can with truth declare that I expected nothing. And I got nothing. Nor did I expect fame, or even acknowledgment. I was sure that the book

would fail, and it did fail most absolutely. I never heard of a person reading it in those days. If there was any notice taken of it by any critic of the day, I did not see it. I never asked any questions about it, or wrote a single letter on the subject to the publisher. I have Mr Newby's agreement with me, in duplicate, and one or two preliminary notes; but beyond that I did not have a word from Mr Newby. I am sure that he did not wrong me in that he paid me nothing. It is probable that he did not sell fifty copies of the work;—but of what he did sell he gave me no account.

I do not remember that I felt in any way disappointed or hurt. I am quite sure that no word of complaint passed my lips. I think I may say that after the publication I never said a word about the book, even to my wife. The fact that I had written and published it, and that I was writing another, did not in the least interfere with my life or with my determination to make the best I could of the Post Office. In Ireland, I think that no one knew that I had written a novel. But I went on writing. *The Macdermots* was published in 1847, and *The Kellys and the O'Kellys* fol-

lowed in 1848. I changed my publisher, but did not change my fortune. This second Irish story was sent into the world by Mr Colburn, who had long been my mother's publisher, who reigned in Great Marlborough Street, and I believe created the business which is now carried on by Messrs Hurst & Blackett. He had previously been in partnership with Mr Bentley in New Burlington Street. I made the same agreement as before as to half profits, and with precisely the same results. The book was not only not read, but was never heard of,—at any rate in Ireland. And yet it is a good Irish story, much inferior to *The Macdermots* as to plot, but superior in the mode of telling. Again I held my tongue, and not only said nothing but felt nothing. Any success would, I think, have carried me off my legs, but I was altogether prepared for failure. Though I thoroughly enjoyed the writing of these books, I did not imagine, when the time came for publishing them, that any one would condescend to read them.

But in reference to *The O'Kellys* there arose a circumstance which set my mind to work on a subject which has exercised it much

ever since. I made my first acquaintance with criticism. A dear friend of mine to whom the book had been sent—as have all my books—wrote me word to Ireland that he had been dining at some club with a man high in authority among the gods of the *Times* newspaper, and that this special god had almost promised that *The O'Kellys* should be noticed in that most influential of “organs.” The information moved me very much ; but it set me thinking whether the notice, should it ever appear, would not have been more valuable, at any rate more honest, if it had been produced by other means ;—if for instance the writer of the notice had been instigated by the merits or demerits of the book instead of by the friendship of a friend. And I made up my mind then that, should I continue this trade of authorship, I would have no dealings with any critic on my own behalf. I would neither ask for nor deplore criticism, nor would I ever thank a critic for praise, or quarrel with him, even in my own heart, for censure. To this rule I have adhered with absolute strictness, and this rule I would recommend to all young authors. What can be

got by touting among the critics is never worth the ignominy. The same may of course be said of all things acquired by ignominious means. But in this matter it is so easy to fall into the dirt. *Facilis descensus Averni.* There seems to be but little fault in suggesting to a friend that a few words in this or that journal would be of service. But any praise so obtained must be an injustice to the public, for whose instruction, and not for the sustentation of the author, such notices are intended. And from such mild suggestion the descent to crawling at the critic's feet, to the sending of presents, and at last to a mutual understanding between critics and criticised, is only too easy. Other evils follow, for the denouncing of which this is hardly the place ;—though I trust I may find such place before my work is finished. I took no notice of my friend's letter, but I was not the less careful in watching *The Times*. At last the review came,—a real review in *The Times*. I learned it by heart, and can now give, if not the words, the exact purport. “ Of *The Kellys and the O'Kellys* we may say what the master said to his footman, when the man complained of the constant supply of legs of

mutton on the kitchen table. ‘Well, John, legs of mutton are good substantial food;’ and we may say also what John replied: ‘Substantial, sir;—yes, they are substantial, but a little coarse.’” That was the review, and even that did not sell the book!

From Mr Colburn I did receive an account, showing that 375 copies of the book had been printed, that 140 had been sold,—to those, I presume, who liked substantial food though it was coarse,—and that he had incurred a loss of £63, 10s. 1½d. The truth of the account I never for a moment doubted; nor did I doubt the wisdom of the advice given to me in the following letter, though I never thought of obeying it—

“GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET,
November 11, 1848.

“MY DEAR SIR,—I am sorry to say that absence from town and other circumstances have prevented me from earlier inquiring into the results of the sale of *The Kellys and the O’Kellys*, with which the greatest efforts have been used, but in vain. The sale has been, I regret to say, so small that the loss upon the publication is very considerable; and it appears

clear to me that, although in consequence of the great number of novels that are published, the sale of each, with some few exceptions, must be small, yet it is evident that readers do not like novels on Irish subjects as well as on others. Thus you will perceive it is impossible for me to give any encouragement to you to proceed in novel-writing.

“As, however, I understand you have nearly finished the novel *La Vendée*, perhaps you will favour me with a sight of it when convenient.—I remain, &c. &c. H. COLBURN.”

This, though not strictly logical, was a rational letter, telling a plain truth plainly. I did not like the assurance that “the greatest efforts had been used,” thinking that any efforts which might be made for the popularity of a book ought to have come from the author;—but I took in good part Mr Colburn’s assurance that he could not encourage me in the career I had commenced. I would have bet twenty to one against my own success. But by continuing I could lose only pen and paper; and if the one chance in twenty did turn up in my favour, then how much might I win!

CHAPTER V.

MY FIRST SUCCESS.

1849-1855.

I HAD at once gone to work on a third novel, and had nearly completed it, when I was informed of the absolute failure of the former. I find however that the agreement for its publication was not made till 1850, by which time I imagine that Mr Colburn must have forgotten the disastrous result of *The O'Kellys*, as he thereby agrees to give me £20 down for my "new historical novel, to be called *La Vendée*." He agreed also to pay me £30 more when he had sold 350 copies, and £50 more should he sell 450 within six months. I got my £20, and then heard no more of *La Vendée*, not even receiving any account. Perhaps the historical title had appeared more

alluring to him than an Irish subject ; though it was not long afterwards that I received a warning from the very same house of business against historical novels,—as I will tell at length when the proper time comes.

I have no doubt that the result of the sale of this story was no better than that of the two that had gone before. I asked no questions, however, and to this day have received no information. The story is certainly inferior to those which had gone before ;—chiefly because I knew accurately the life of the people in Ireland, and knew, in truth, nothing of life in the La Vendée country, and also because the facts of the present time came more within the limits of my powers of story-telling than those of past years. But I read the book the other day, and am not ashamed of it. The conception as to the feeling of the people is, I think, true ; the characters are distinct ; and the tale is not dull. As far as I can remember, this morsel of criticism is the only one that was ever written on the book.

I had, however, received £20. Alas ! alas ! years were to roll by before I should earn by my pen another shilling. And, indeed, I was

well aware that I had not earned that; but that the money had been "talked out of" the worthy publisher by the earnestness of my brother, who made the bargain for me. I have known very much of publishers and have been surprised by much in their mode of business,—by the apparent lavishness and by the apparent hardness to authors in the same men;—but by nothing so much as by the ease with which they can occasionally be persuaded to throw away small sums of money. If you will only make the payment future instead of present, you may generally twist a few pounds in your own or your client's favour. "You might as well promise her £20. This day six months will do very well." The publisher, though he knows that the money will never come back to him, thinks it worth his while to rid himself of your importunity at so cheap a price.

But while I was writing *La Vendée* I made a literary attempt in another direction. In 1847 and 1848 there had come upon Ireland the desolation and destruction, first of the famine, and then of the pestilence which succeeded the famine. It was my duty at that

time to be travelling constantly in those parts of Ireland in which the misery and troubles thence arising were, perhaps, at their worst. The western parts of Cork, Kerry, and Clare were pre-eminently unfortunate. The efforts—I may say the successful efforts—made by the Government to stay the hands of death will still be in the remembrance of many:—how Sir Robert Peel was instigated to repeal the Corn Laws; and how, subsequently, Lord John Russell took measures for employing the people, and supplying the country with Indian corn. The expediency of these latter measures was questioned by many. The people themselves wished of course to be fed without working; and the gentry, who were mainly responsible for the rates, were disposed to think that the management of affairs was taken too much out of their own hands. My mind at the time was busy with the matter, and, thinking that the Government was right, I was inclined to defend them as far as my small powers went. S. G. O. (Lord Sydney Godolphin Osborne) was at that time denouncing the Irish scheme of the Administration in the *Times*, using very strong language,—as those

who remember his style will know. I fancied then—as I still think—that I understood the country much better than he did; and I was anxious to show that the steps taken for mitigating the terrible evil of the times were the best which the Minister of the day could have adopted. In 1848 I was in London, and, full of my purpose, I presented myself to Mr John Forster—who has since been an intimate and valued friend—but who was at that time the editor of the *Examiner*. I think that that portion of the literary world which understands the fabrication of newspapers will admit that neither before his time, nor since, has there been a more capable editor of a weekly newspaper. As a literary man, he was not without his faults. That which the cabman is reported to have said of him before the magistrate is quite true. He was always “an arbitrary cove.” As a critic, he belonged to the school of Bentley and Gifford,—who would always bray in a literary mortar all critics who disagreed from them, as though such disagreement were a personal offence requiring personal castigation. But that very eagerness made him a good editor. Into whatever he

did he put his very heart and soul. During his time the *Examiner* was almost all that a Liberal weekly paper should be. So to John Forster I went, and was shown into that room in Lincoln's Inn Fields in which, some three or four years earlier, Dickens had given that reading of which there is an illustration with portraits in the second volume of his life.

At this time I knew no literary men. A few I had met when living with my mother, but that had been now so long ago that all such acquaintance had died out. I knew who they were as far as a man could get such knowledge from the papers of the day, and felt myself as in part belonging to the guild, through my mother, and in some degree by my own unsuccessful efforts. But it was not probable that any one would admit my claim;—nor on this occasion did I make any claim. I stated my name and official position, and the fact that opportunities had been given me of seeing the poor-houses in Ireland, and of making myself acquainted with the circumstances of the time. Would a series of letters on the subject be accepted by the *Examiner*? The great man, who loomed very large to me,

was pleased to say that if the letters should recommend themselves by their style and matter, if they were not too long, and if—every reader will know how on such occasions an editor will guard himself—if this and if that, they should be favourably entertained. They were favourably entertained,—if printing and publication be favourable entertainment. But I heard no more of them. The world in Ireland did not declare that the Government had at last been adequately defended, nor did the treasurer of the *Examiner* send me a cheque in return.

Whether there ought to have been a cheque I do not even yet know. A man who writes a single letter to a newspaper of course is not paid for it,—nor for any number of letters on some point personal to himself. I have since written sets of letters to newspapers, and have been paid for them; but then I have bargained for a price. On this occasion I had hopes; but they never ran high, and I was not much disappointed. I have no copy now of those letters, and could not refer to them without much trouble; nor do I remember what I said. But I know that I did my best in writing them.

When my historical novel failed, as completely as had its predecessors, the two Irish novels, I began to ask myself whether, after all, that was my proper line. I had never thought of questioning the justice of the verdict expressed against me. The idea that I was the unfortunate owner of unappreciated genius never troubled me. I did not look at the books after they were published, feeling sure that they had been, as it were, damned with good reason. But still I was clear in my mind that I would not lay down my pen. Then and therefore I determined to change my hand, and to attempt a play. I did attempt the play, and in 1850 I wrote a comedy, partly in blank verse, and partly in prose, called *The Noble Gilt*. The plot I afterwards used in a novel called *Can You Forgive Her?* I believe that I did give the best of my intellect to the play, and I must own that when it was completed it pleased me much. I copied it, and re-copied it, touching it here and touching it there, and then sent it to my very old friend, George Bartley the actor, who had when I was in London been stage-manager of one of the great theatres,

and who would I thought, for my own sake and for my mother's, give me the full benefit of his professional experience.

I have now before me the letter which he wrote to me,—a letter which I have read a score of times. It was altogether condemnatory. “When I commenced,” he said, “I had great hopes of your production. I did not think it opened dramatically, but that might have been remedied.” I knew then that it was all over. But, as my old friend warmed to the subject, the criticism became stronger and stronger, till my ears tingled. At last came the fatal blow. “As to the character of your heroine, I felt at a loss how to describe it, but you have done it for me in the last speech of Madame Brudo.” Madame Brudo was the heroine's aunt. “‘Margaret, my child, never play the jilt again; 'tis a most unbecoming character. Play it with what skill you will, it meets but little sympathy.’ And this, be assured would be its effect upon an audience. So that I must reluctantly add that, had I been still a manager, *The Noble Jilt* is not a play I could have recommended for production.” This was a blow that I did feel. The

neglect of a book is a disagreeable fact which grows upon an author by degrees. There is no special moment of agony,—no stunning violence of condemnation. But a piece of criticism such as this, from a friend, and from a man undoubtedly capable of forming an opinion, was a blow in the face! But I accepted the judgment loyally, and said not a word on the subject to any one. I merely showed the letter to my wife, declaring my conviction, that it must be taken as gospel. And as critical gospel it has since been accepted. In later days I have more than once read the play, and I know that he was right. The dialogue, however, I think to be good, and I doubt whether some of the scenes be not the brightest and best work I ever did.

Just at this time another literary project loomed before my eyes, and for six or eight months had considerable size. I was introduced to Mr John Murray, and proposed to him to write a handbook for Ireland. I explained to him that I knew the country better than most other people, perhaps better than any other person, and could do it well. He asked me to make a trial of my skill, and to send

him a certain number of pages, undertaking to give me an answer within a fortnight after he should have received my work. I came back to Ireland, and for some weeks I laboured very hard. I "did" the city of Dublin, and the county of Kerry, in which lies the lake scenery of Killarney; and I "did" the route from Dublin to Killarney, altogether completing nearly a quarter of the proposed volume. The roll of MS. was sent to Albemarle Street,—but was never opened. At the expiration of nine months from the date on which it reached that time-honoured spot it was returned without a word, in answer to a very angry letter from myself. I insisted on having back my property,—and got it. I need hardly say that my property has never been of the slightest use to me. In all honesty I think that had he been less dilatory, John Murray would have got a very good Irish Guide at a cheap rate.

Early in 1851 I was sent upon a job of special official work, which for two years so completely absorbed my time that I was able to write nothing. A plan was formed for extending the rural delivery of letters, and for

adjusting the work, which up to that time had been done in a very irregular manner. A country letter-carrier would be sent in one direction in which there were but few letters to be delivered, the arrangement having originated probably at the request of some influential person, while in another direction there was no letter-carrier because no influential person had exerted himself. It was intended to set this right throughout England, Ireland, and Scotland; and I quickly did the work in the Irish district to which I was attached. I was then invited to do the same in a portion of England, and I spent two of the happiest years of my life at the task. I began in Devonshire; and visited, I think I may say, every nook in that county, in Cornwall, Somersetshire, the greater part of Dorsetshire, the Channel Islands, part of Oxfordshire, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Monmouthshire, and the six southern Welsh counties. In this way I had an opportunity of seeing a considerable portion of Great Britain, with a minuteness which few have enjoyed. And I did my business after a fashion in which no other official man has

worked, at least for many years. I went almost everywhere on horseback. I had two hunters of my own, and here and there, where I could, I hired a third horse. I had an Irish groom with me,—an old man, who has now been in my service for thirty-five years; and in this manner I saw almost every house—I think I may say every house of importance—in this large district. The object was to create a postal network which should catch all recipients of letters. In France it was, and I suppose still is, the practice to deliver every letter. Wherever the man may live to whom a letter is addressed, it is the duty of some letter-carrier to take that letter to his house, sooner or later. But this, of course, must be done slowly. With us a delivery much delayed was thought to be worse than none at all. In some places we did establish posts three times a week, and perhaps occasionally twice a week; but such halting arrangements were considered to be objectionable, and we were bound down by a salutary law as to expense, which came from our masters at the Treasury. We were not allowed to establish any messenger's walk on which a sufficient number of letters

would not be delivered to pay the man's wages, counted at a halfpenny a letter. But then the counting was in our own hands, and an enterprising official might be sanguine in his figures. I think I was sanguine. I did not prepare false accounts; but I fear that the postmasters and clerks who absolutely had the country to do became aware that I was anxious for good results. It is amusing to watch how a passion will grow upon a man. During those two years it was the ambition of my life to cover the country with rural letter-carriers. I do not remember that in any case a rural post proposed by me was negatived by the authorities; but I fear that some of them broke down afterwards as being too poor, or because, in my anxiety to include this house and that, I had sent the men too far afield. Our law was that a man should not be required to walk more than sixteen miles a day. Had the work to be done been all on a measured road, there would have been no need for doubt as to the distances. But my letter-carriers went here and there across the fields. It was my special delight to take them by all short cuts; and as I measured on horseback the short cuts

which they would have to make on foot, perhaps I was sometimes a little unjust to them.

All this I did on horseback, riding on an average forty miles a day. I was paid sixpence a mile for the distance travelled, and it was necessary that I should at any rate travel enough to pay for my equipage. This I did, and got my hunting out of it also. I have often surprised some small country postmaster, who had never seen or heard of me before, by coming down upon him at nine in the morning, with a red coat and boots and breeches, and interrogating him as to the disposal of every letter which came into his office. And in the same guise I would ride up to farmhouses, or parsonages, or other lone residences about the country, and ask the people how they got their letters, at what hour, and especially whether they were delivered free or at a certain charge. For a habit had crept into use, which came to be, in my eyes, at that time, the one sin for which there was no pardon, in accordance with which these rural letter-carriers used to charge a penny a letter, alleging that the house was out of their beat, and that they must be paid for their extra

work. I think that I did stamp out that evil. In all these visits I was, in truth, a beneficent angel to the public, bringing everywhere with me an earlier, cheaper, and much more regular delivery of letters. But not unfrequently the angelic nature of my mission was imperfectly understood. I was perhaps a little in a hurry to get on, and did not allow as much time as was necessary to explain to the wondering mistress of the house, or to an open-mouthed farmer, why it was that a man arrayed for hunting asked so many questions which might be considered impertinent, as applying to his or her private affairs. "Good morning, sir. I have just called to ask a few questions. I am a surveyor of the Post Office. How do you get your letters? As I am a little in a hurry, perhaps you can explain at once." Then I would take out my pencil and notebook, and wait for information. And in fact there was no other way in which the truth could be ascertained. Unless I came down suddenly as a summer's storm upon them, the very people who were robbed by our messengers would not confess the robbery, fearing the ill-will of the men. It was necessary to

startle them into the revelations which I required them to make for their own good. And I did startle them. I became thoroughly used to it, and soon lost my native bashfulness;—but sometimes my visits astonished the retiring inhabitants of country houses. I did, however, do my work, and can look back upon what I did with thorough satisfaction. I was altogether in earnest; and I believe that many a farmer now has his letters brought daily to his house free of charge, who but for me would still have had to send to the post-town for them twice a week, or to have paid a man for bringing them irregularly to his door.

This work took up my time so completely, and entailed upon me so great an amount of writing, that I was in fact unable to do any literary work. From day to day I thought of it, still purporting to make another effort, and often turning over in my head some fragment of a plot which had occurred to me. But the day did not come in which I could sit down with pen and paper and begin another novel. For, after all, what could it be but a novel? The play had failed more absolutely than the novels, for the novels had attained the honour

of print. The cause of this pressure of official work lay, not in the demands of the General Post Office, which more than once expressed itself as astonished by my celerity, but in the necessity which was incumbent on me to travel miles enough to pay for my horses, and upon the amount of correspondence, returns, figures, and reports which such an amount of daily travelling brought with it. I may boast that the work was done very quickly and very thoroughly,—with no fault but an over-eagerness to extend postal arrangements far and wide.

In the course of the job I visited Salisbury, and whilst wandering there one mid-summer evening round the purlieus of the cathedral I conceived the story of *The Warden*,—from whence came that series of novels of which Barchester, with its bishops, deans, and arch-deacon, was the central site. I may as well declare at once that no one at their commencement could have had less reason than myself to presume himself to be able to write about clergymen. I have been often asked in what period of my early life I had lived so long in a cathedral city as to have become intimate

with the ways of a Close. I never lived in any cathedral city,—except London, never knew anything of any Close, and at that time had enjoyed no peculiar intimacy with any clergyman. My archdeacon, who has been said to be life-like, and for whom I confess that I have all a parent's fond affection, was, I think, the simple result of an effort of my moral consciousness. It was such as that, in my opinion, that an archdeacon should be,—or, at any rate, would be with such advantages as an archdeacon might have ; and lo ! an archdeacon was produced, who has been declared by competent authorities to be a real archdeacon down to the very ground. And yet, as far as I can remember, I had not then even spoken to an archdeacon. I have felt the compliment to be very great. The archdeacon came whole from my brain after this fashion ;—but in writing about clergymen generally, I had to pick up as I went whatever I might know or pretend to know about them. But my first idea had no reference to clergymen in general. I had been struck by two opposite evils,—or what seemed to me to be evils,—and with an absence of all art-judgment in

such matters, I thought that I might be able to expose them, or rather to describe them, both in one and the same tale. The first evil was the possession by the Church of certain funds and endowments which had been intended for charitable purposes, but which had been allowed to become incomes for idle Church dignitaries. There had been more than one such case brought to public notice at the time, in which there seemed to have been an egregious malversation of charitable purposes. The second evil was its very opposite. Though I had been much struck by the injustice above described, I had also often been angered by the undeserved severity of the newspapers towards the recipients of such incomes, who could hardly be considered to be the chief sinners in the matter. When a man is appointed to a place, it is natural that he should accept the income allotted to that place without much inquiry. It is seldom that he will be the first to find out that his services are overpaid. Though he be called upon only to look beautiful and to be dignified upon State occasions, he will think £2000 a year little enough for such beauty and

dignity as he brings to the task. I felt that there had been some tearing to pieces which might have been spared. But I was altogether wrong in supposing that the two things could be combined. Any writer in advocating a cause must do so after the fashion of an advocate,—or his writing will be ineffective. He should take up one side and cling to that, and then he may be powerful. There should be no scruples of conscience. Such scruples make a man impotent for such work. It was open to me to have described a bloated parson, with a red nose and all other iniquities, openly neglecting every duty required from him, and living riotously on funds purloined from the poor,—defying as he did do so the moderate remonstrances of a virtuous press. Or I might have painted a man as good, as sweet, and as mild as my warden, who should also have been a hard-working, ill-paid minister of God's word, and might have subjected him to the rancorous venom of some daily Jupiter, who, without a leg to stand on, without any true case, might have been induced, by personal spite, to tear to rags the poor clergyman with poisonous, anonymous, and ferocious

leading articles. But neither of these programmes recommended itself to my honesty. Satire, though it may exaggerate the vice it lashes, is not justified in creating it in order that it may be lashed. Caricature may too easily become a slander, and satire a libel. I believed in the existence neither of the red-nosed clerical cormorant, nor in that of the venomous assassin of the journals. I did believe that through want of care and the natural tendency of every class to take care of itself, money had slipped into the pockets of certain clergymen which should have gone elsewhere; and I believed also that through the equally natural propensity of men to be as strong as they know how to be, certain writers of the press had allowed themselves to use language which was cruel, though it was in a good cause. But the two objects should not have been combined—and I now know myself well enough to be aware that I was not the man to have carried out either of them.

Nevertheless I thought much about it, and on the 29th of July 1853,—having been then two years without having made any literary effort,—I began *The Warden*, at Tenbury in

Worcestershire. It was then more than twelve months since I had stood for an hour on the little bridge in Salisbury, and had made out to my own satisfaction the spot on which Hiram's hospital should stand. Certainly no work that I ever did took up so much of my thoughts. On this occasion I did no more than write the first chapter, even if so much. I had determined that my official work should be moderated, so as to allow me some time for writing; but then, just at this time, I was sent to take the postal charge of the northern counties in Ireland, — of Ulster, and the counties Meath and Louth. Hitherto in official language I had been a surveyor's clerk, — now I was to be a surveyor. The difference consisted mainly in an increase of income from about £450 to about £800; — for at that time the sum netted still depended on the number of miles travelled. Of course that English work to which I had become so warmly wedded had to be abandoned. Other parts of England were being done by other men, and I had nearly finished the area which had been entrusted to me. I should have liked to ride over the whole country, and to have

sent a rural post letter-carrier to every parish, every village, every hamlet, and every grange in England.

We were at this time very much unsettled as regards any residence. While we were living at Clonmel two sons had been born, who certainly were important enough to have been mentioned sooner. At Clonmel we had lived in lodgings, and from there had moved to Mallow, a town in the county Cork, where we had taken a house. Mallow was in the centre of a hunting country, and had been very pleasant to me. But our house there had been given up when it was known that I should be detained in England; and then we had wandered about in the western counties, moving our headquarters from one town to another. During this time we had lived at Exeter, at Bristol, at Caermarthen, at Cheltenham, and at Worcester. Now we again moved, and settled ourselves for eighteen months at Belfast. After that we took a house at Donnybrook, the well-known suburb of Dublin.

The work of taking up a new district, which requires not only that the man doing it should

know the nature of the postal arrangements, but also the characters and the peculiarities of the postmasters and their clerks, was too heavy to allow of my going on with my book at once. It was not till the end of 1852 that I recommenced it, and it was in the autumn of 1853 that I finished the work. It was only one small volume, and in later days would have been completed in six weeks,—or in two months at the longest, if other work had pressed. On looking at the title-page, I find it was not published till 1855. I had made acquaintance, through my friend John Merivale, with William Longman the publisher, and had received from him an assurance that the manuscript should be “looked at.” It was “looked at,” and Messrs Longman made me an offer to publish it at half profits. I had no reason to love “half profits,” but I was very anxious to have my book published, and I acceded. It was now more than ten years since I had commenced writing *The Macdermots*, and I thought that if any success was to be achieved, the time surely had come. I had not been impatient; but, if there was to be a time, surely it had come.

The novel-reading world did not go mad about *The Warden*; but I soon felt that it had not failed as the others had failed. There were notices of it in the press, and I could discover that people around me knew that I had written a book. Mr Longman was complimentary, and after a while informed me that there would be profits to divide. At the end of 1855 I received a cheque for £9, 8s. 8d., which was the first money I had ever earned by literary work;—that £20 which poor Mr Colburn had been made to pay certainly never having been earned at all. At the end of 1856 I received another sum of £10, 15s. 1d. The pecuniary success was not great. Indeed, as regarded remuneration for the time, stone-breaking would have done better. A thousand copies were printed, of which, after a lapse of five or six years, about 300 had to be converted into another form, and sold as belonging to a cheap edition. In its original form *The Warden* never reached the essential honour of a second edition.

I have already said of the work that it failed altogether in the purport for which it was intended. But it has a merit of its own,—a merit by my own perception of which I was

enabled to see wherein lay whatever strength I did possess. The characters of the bishop, of the archdeacon, of the archdeacon's wife, and especially of the warden, are all well and clearly drawn. I had realised to myself a series of portraits, and had been able so to put them on the canvas that my readers should see that which I meant them to see. There is no gift which an author can have more useful to him than this. And the style of the English was good, though from most unpardonable carelessness the grammar was not unfrequently faulty. With such results I had no doubt but that I would at once begin another novel.

I will here say one word as a long-deferred answer to an item of criticism which appeared in the *Times* newspaper as to *The Warden*. In an article—if I remember rightly, on *The Warden* and *Barchester Towers* combined—which I would call good-natured, but that I take it for granted that the critics of the *Times* are actuated by higher motives than good-nature, that little book and its sequel are spoken of in terms which were very pleasant to the author. But there was added to this a

gentle word of rebuke at the morbid condition of the author's mind which had prompted him to indulge in personalities,—the personalities in question having reference to some editor or manager of the *Times* newspaper. For I had introduced one Tom Towers as being potent among the contributors to the *Jupiter*, under which name I certainly did allude to the *Times*. But at that time, living away in Ireland, I had not even heard the name of any gentleman connected with the *Times* newspaper, and could not have intended to represent any individual by Tom Towers. As I had created an archdeacon, so had I created a journalist, and the one creation was no more personal or indicative of morbid tendencies than the other. If Tom Towers was at all like any gentleman then connected with the *Times*, my moral consciousness must again have been very powerful.

CHAPTER VI.

‘BARCHESTER TOWERS’ AND THE ‘THREE CLERKS.’

1855-1858.

IT was, I think, before I started on my English tours among the rural posts that I made my first attempt at writing for a magazine. I had read, soon after they came out, the two first volumes of Charles Merivale’s *History of the Romans under the Empire*, and had got into some correspondence with the author’s brother as to the author’s views about Cæsar. Hence arose in my mind a tendency to investigate the character of probably the greatest man who ever lived, which tendency in after years produced a little book of which I shall have to speak when its time comes,—and also a taste generally for Latin literature, which has been one of the chief delights of my later life.

And I may say that I became at this time as anxious about Cæsar, and as desirous of reaching the truth as to his character, as we have all been in regard to Bismarck in these latter days. I lived in Cæsar, and debated with myself constantly whether he crossed the Rubicon as a tyrant or as a patriot. In order that I might review Mr Merivale's book without feeling that I was dealing unwarrantably with a subject beyond me, I studied the Commentaries thoroughly, and went through a mass of other reading which the object of a magazine article hardly justified,—but which has thoroughly justified itself in the subsequent pursuits of my life. I did write two articles, the first mainly on Julius Cæsar, and the second on Augustus, which appeared in the *Dublin University Magazine*. They were the result of very much labour, but there came from them no pecuniary product. I had been very modest when I sent them to the editor, as I had been when I called on John Forster, not venturing to suggest the subject of money. After a while I did call upon the proprietor of the magazine in Dublin, and was told by him that such articles were generally written to oblige friends,

and that articles written to oblige friends were not usually paid for. The Dean of Ely, as the author of the work in question now is, was my friend; but I think I was wronged, as I certainly had no intention of obliging him by my criticism. Afterwards, when I returned to Ireland, I wrote other articles for the same magazine, one of which, intended to be very savage in its denunciation, was on an official blue-book just then brought out, preparatory to the introduction of competitive examinations for the Civil Service. For that and some other article, I now forget what, I was paid. Up to the end of 1857 I had received £55 for the hard work of ten years.

It was while I was engaged on *Barchester Towers* that I adopted a system of writing which, for some years afterwards, I found to be very serviceable to me. My time was greatly occupied in travelling, and the nature of my travelling was now changed. I could not any longer do it on horseback. Railroads afforded me my means of conveyance, and I found that I passed in railway-carriages very many hours of my existence. Like others, I

used to read,—though Carlyle has since told me that a man when travelling should not read, but “sit still and label his thoughts.” But if I intended to make a profitable business out of my writing, and, at the same time, to do my best for the Post Office, I must turn these hours to more account than I could do even by reading. I made for myself therefore a little tablet, and found after a few days’ exercise that I could write as quickly in a railway-carriage as I could at my desk. I worked with a pencil, and what I wrote my wife copied afterwards. In this way was composed the greater part of *Barchester Towers* and of the novel which succeeded it, and much also of others subsequent to them. My only objection to the practice came from the appearance of literary ostentation, to which I felt myself to be subject when going to work before four or five fellow-passengers. But I got used to it, as I had done to the amazement of the west country farmers’ wives when asking them after their letters.

In the writing of *Barchester Towers* I took great delight. The bishop and Mrs Proudie were very real to me, as were also the troubles

of the archdeacon and the loves of Mr Slope. When it was done, Mr W. Longman required that it should be subjected to his reader; and he returned the MS. to me, with a most laborious and voluminous criticism,—coming from whom I never knew. This was accompanied by an offer to print the novel on the half-profit system, with a payment of £100 in advance out of my half-profits,—on condition that I would comply with the suggestions made by his critic. One of these suggestions required that I should cut the novel down to two volumes. In my reply, I went through the criticisms, rejecting one and accepting another, almost alternately, but declaring at last that no consideration should induce me to put out a third of my work. I am at a loss to know how such a task could be performed. I could burn the MS., no doubt, and write another book on the same story; but how two words out of six are to be withdrawn from a written novel, I cannot conceive. I believe such tasks have been attempted—perhaps performed; but I refused to make even the attempt. Mr Longman was too gracious to insist on his critic's terms; and the book was published, certainly

none the worse, and I do not think much the better, for the care that had been taken with it.

The work succeeded just as *The Warden* had succeeded. It achieved no great reputation, but it was one of the novels which novel readers were called upon to read. Perhaps I may be assuming upon myself more than I have a right to do in saying now that *Barchester Towers* has become one of those novels which do not die quite at once, which live and are read for perhaps a quarter of a century; but if that be so, its life has been so far prolonged by the vitality of some of its younger brothers. *Barchester Towers* would hardly be so well known as it is had there been no *Framley Parsonage* and no *Last Chronicle of Barsest*.

I received my £100, in advance, with profound delight. It was a positive and most welcome increase to my income, and might probably be regarded as a first real step on the road to substantial success. I am well aware that there are many who think that an author in his authorship should not regard money,—nor a painter, or sculptor, or composer in his art. I do not know that this

unnatural self-sacrifice is supposed to extend itself further. A barrister, a clergyman, a doctor, an engineer, and even actors and architects, may without disgrace follow the bent of human nature, and endeavour to fill their bellies and clothe their backs, and also those of their wives and children, as comfortably as they can by the exercise of their abilities and their crafts. They may be as rationally realistic, as may the butchers and the bakers; but the artist and the author forget the high glories of their calling if they condescend to make a money return a first object. They who preach this doctrine will be much offended by my theory, and by this book of mine, if my theory and my book come beneath their notice. They require the practice of a so-called virtue which is contrary to nature, and which, in my eyes, would be no virtue if it were practised. They are like clergymen who preach sermons against the love of money, but who know that the love of money is so distinctive a characteristic of humanity that such sermons are mere platitudes called for by customary but unintelligent piety. All material progress has come from man's desire to do the

best he can for himself and those about him, and civilisation and Christianity itself have been made possible by such progress. Though we do not all of us argue this matter out within our breasts, we do all feel it; and we know that the more a man earns the more useful he is to his fellow-men. The most useful lawyers, as a rule, have been those who have made the greatest incomes,—and it is the same with the doctors. It would be the same in the Church if they who have the choosing of bishops always chose the best man. And it has in truth been so too in art and authorship. Did Titian or Rubens disregard their pecuniary rewards? As far as we know, Shakespeare worked always for money, giving the best of his intellect to support his trade as an actor. In our own century what literary names stand higher than those of Byron, Tennyson, Scott, Dickens, Macaulay, and Carlyle? And I think I may say that none of those great men neglected the pecuniary result of their labours. Now and then a man may arise among us who in any calling, whether it be in law, in physic, in religious teaching, in art, or literature, may in his professional enthusiasm utterly disre-

gard money. All will honour his enthusiasm, and if he be wifeless and childless, his disregard of the great object of men's work will be blameless. But it is a mistake to suppose that a man is a better man because he despises money. Few do so, and those few in doing so suffer a defeat. Who does not desire to be hospitable to his friends, generous to the poor, liberal to all, munificent to his children, and to be himself free from the carking fear which poverty creates? The subject will not stand an argument;—and yet authors are told that they should disregard payment for their work, and be content to devote their unbought brains to the welfare of the public. Brains that are unbought will never serve the public much. Take away from English authors their copyrights, and you would very soon take away from England her authors.

I say this here, because it is my purpose as I go on to state what to me has been the result of my profession in the ordinary way in which professions are regarded, so that by my example may be seen what prospect there is that a man devoting himself to literature with industry, perseverance, certain necessary ap-

titudes, and fair average talents, may succeed in gaining a livelihood, as another man does in another profession. The result with me has been comfortable but not splendid, as I think was to have been expected from the combination of such gifts.

I have certainly always had also before my eyes the charms of reputation. Over and above the money view of the question, I wished from the beginning to be something more than a clerk in the Post Office. To be known as somebody,—to be Anthony Trollope if it be no more,—is to me much. The feeling is a very general one, and I think beneficent. It is that which has been called the “last infirmity of noble mind.” The infirmity is so human that the man who lacks it is either above or below humanity. I own to the infirmity. But I confess that my first object in taking to literature as a profession was that which is common to the barrister when he goes to the Bar, and to the baker when he sets up his oven. I wished to make an income on which I and those belonging to me might live in comfort.

If indeed a man writes his books badly, or

paints his pictures badly, because he can make his money faster in that fashion than by doing them well, and at the same time proclaims them to be the best he can do,—if in fact he sells shoddy for broadcloth,—he is dishonest, as is any other fraudulent dealer. So may be the barrister who takes money that he does not earn, or the clergyman who is content to live on a sinecure. No doubt the artist or the author may have a difficulty which will not occur to the seller of cloth, in settling within himself what is good work and what is bad,—when labour enough has been given, and when the task has been scamped. It is a danger as to which he is bound to be severe with himself—in which he should feel that his conscience should be set fairly in the balance against the natural bias of his interest. If he do not do so, sooner or later his dishonesty will be discovered, and will be estimated accordingly. But in this he is to be governed only by the plain rules of honesty which should govern us all. Having said so much, I shall not scruple as I go on to attribute to the pecuniary result of my labours all the importance which I felt them to have at the time.

Barchester Towers, for which I had received £100 in advance, sold well enough to bring me further payments—moderate payments—from the publishers. From that day up to this very time in which I am writing, that book and *The Warden* together have given me almost every year some small income. I get the accounts very regularly, and I find that I have received £727, 11s. 3d. for the two. It is more than I got for the three or four works that came afterwards, but the payments have been spread over twenty years.

When I went to Mr Longman with my next novel, *The Three Clerks*, in my hand, I could not induce him to understand that a lump sum down was more pleasant than a deferred annuity. I wished him to buy it from me at a price which he might think to be a fair value, and I argued with him that as soon as an author has put himself into a position which insures a sufficient sale of his works to give a profit, the publisher is not entitled to expect the half of such proceeds. While there is a pecuniary risk, the whole of which must be borne by the publisher, such division is fair enough; but such a demand on the part of the

publisher is monstrous as soon as the article produced is known to be a marketable commodity. I thought that I had now reached that point, but Mr Longman did not agree with me. And he endeavoured to convince me that I might lose more than I gained, even though I should get more money by going elsewhere. "It is for you," said he, "to think whether our names on your title-page are not worth more to you than the increased payment." This seemed to me to savour of that high-flown doctrine of the contempt of money which I have never admired. I did think much of Messrs Longman's name, but I liked it best at the bottom of a cheque.

I was also scared from the august columns of Paternoster Row by a remark made to myself by one of the firm, which seemed to imply that they did not much care for works of fiction. Speaking of a fertile writer of tales who was not then dead, he declared that —— (naming the author in question) had spawned upon them (the publishers) three novels a year! Such language is perhaps justifiable in regard to a man who shows so much of the fecundity of the herring; but I did not know

how fruitful might be my own muse, and I thought that I had better go elsewhere.

I had then written *The Three Clerks*, which, when I could not sell it to Messrs Longman, I took in the first instance to Messrs Hurst & Blackett, who had become successors to Mr Colburn. I had made an appointment with one of the firm, which, however, that gentleman was unable to keep. I was on my way from Ireland to Italy, and had but one day in London in which to dispose of my manuscript. I sat for an hour in Great Marlborough Street, expecting the return of the peccant publisher who had broken his tryst, and I was about to depart with my bundle under my arm when the foreman of the house came to me. He seemed to think it a pity that I should go, and wished me to leave my work with him. This, however, I would not do, unless he would undertake to buy it then and there. Perhaps he lacked authority. Perhaps his judgment was against such purchase. But while we debated the matter, he gave me some advice. "I hope it's not historical, Mr Trollope?" he said. "Whatever you do, don't be historical; your historical

novel is not worth a damn." Thence I took *The Three Clerks* to Mr Bentley; and on the same afternoon succeeded in selling it to him for £250. His son still possesses it, and the firm has, I believe, done very well with the purchase. It was certainly the best novel I had as yet written. The plot is not so good as that of the *Maddermots*; nor are there any characters in the book equal to those of Mrs Proudie and the Warden; but the work has a more continued interest, and contains the first well-described love-scene that I ever wrote. The passage in which Kate Woodward, thinking that she will die, tries to take leave of the lad she loves, still brings tears to my eyes when I read it. I had not the heart to kill her. I never could do that. And I do not doubt but that they are living happily together to this day.

The lawyer Chaffanbrass made his first appearance in this novel, and I do not think that I have cause to be ashamed of him. But this novel now is chiefly noticeable to me from the fact that in it I introduced a character under the name of Sir Gregory Hardlines, by which I intended to lean very heavily on that much

loathed scheme of competitive examination, of which at that time Sir Charles Trevelyan was the great apostle. Sir Gregory Hardlines was intended for Sir Charles Trevelyan,—as any one at the time would know who had taken an interest in the Civil Service. “We always call him Sir Gregory,” Lady Trevelyan said to me afterwards, when I came to know her and her husband. I never learned to love competitive examination; but I became, and am, very fond of Sir Charles Trevelyan. Sir Stafford Northcote, who is now Chancellor of the Exchequer, was then leagued with his friend Sir Charles, and he too appears in *The Three Clerks* under the feebly facetious name of Sir Warwick West End.

But for all that *The Three Clerks* was a good novel.

When that sale was made I was on my way to Italy with my wife, paying a third visit there to my mother and brother. This was in 1857, and she had then given up her pen. It was the first year in which she had not written, and she expressed to me her delight that her labours should be at an end, and that mine should be beginning in the same field. In

truth they had already been continued for a dozen years, but a man's career will generally be held to date itself from the commencement of his success. On those foreign tours I always encountered adventures, which, as I look back upon them now, tempt me almost to write a little book of my long past Continental travels. On this occasion, as we made our way slowly through Switzerland and over the Alps, we encountered again and again a poor forlorn Englishman, who had no friend and no aptitude for travelling. He was always losing his way, and finding himself with no seat in the coaches and no bed at the inns. On one occasion I found him at Coire seated at 5 A.M. in the *coupe* of a diligence which was intended to start at noon for the Engadine, while it was his purpose to go over the Alps in another which was to leave at 5.30, and which was already crowded with passengers. "Ah!" he said, "I am in time now, and nobody shall turn me out of this seat," alluding to former little misfortunes of which I had been a witness. When I explained to him his position, he was as one to whom life was too bitter to be borne. But he made his way into Italy,

and encountered me again at the Pitti Palace in Florence. "Can you tell me something?" he said to me in a whisper, having touched my shoulder. "The people are so ill-natured I don't like to ask them. Where is it they keep the Medical Venus?" I sent him to the Uffizzi, but I fear he was disappointed.

We ourselves, however, on entering Milan had been in quite as much distress as any that he suffered. We had not written for beds, and on driving up to a hotel at ten in the evening found it full. Thence we went from one hotel to another, finding them all full. The misery is one well known to travellers, but I never heard of another case in which a man and his wife were told at midnight to get out of the conveyance into the middle of the street because the horse could not be made to go any further. Such was our condition. I induced the driver, however, to go again to the hotel which was nearest to him, and which was kept by a German. Then I bribed the porter to get the master to come down to me; and, though my French is ordinarily very defective, I spoke with such eloquence to that German innkeeper that he, throwing his arms round

my neck in a transport of compassion, swore that he would never leave me nor my wife till he had put us to bed. And he did so; but, ah! there were so many in those beds! It is such an experience as this which teaches a travelling foreigner how different on the Continent is the accommodation provided for him, from that which is supplied for the inhabitants of the country.

It was on a previous visit to Milan, when the telegraph-wires were only just opened to the public by the Austrian authorities, that we had decided one day at dinner that we would go to Verona that night. There was a train at six, reaching Verona at midnight, and we asked some servant of the hotel to telegraph for us, ordering supper and beds. The demand seemed to create some surprise; but we persisted, and were only mildly grieved when we found ourselves charged twenty zwanzigers for the message. Telegraphy was new at Milan, and the prices were intended to be almost prohibitory. We paid our twenty zwanzigers and went on, consoling ourselves with the thought of our ready supper and our assured beds. When we reached Verona, there arose a great cry

along the platform for Signor Trollopè. I put out my head and declared my identity, when I was waited upon by a glorious personage dressed like a beau for a ball, with half-a-dozen others almost as glorious behind him, who informed me, with his hat in his hand, that he was the landlord of the "Due Torre." It was a heating moment, but it became more hot when he asked me after my people,—“mes gens.” I could only turn round, and point to my wife and brother-in-law. I had no other “people.” There were three carriages provided for us, each with a pair of grey horses. When we reached the house it was all lit up. We were not allowed to move without an attendant with a lighted candle. It was only gradually that the mistake came to be understood. On us there was still the horror of the bill, the extent of which could not be known till the hour of departure had come. The landlord, however, had acknowledged to himself that his inductions had been ill-founded, and he treated us with clemency. He had never before received a telegram.

I apologise for these tales, which are certainly outside my purpose, and will endeavour

to tell no more that shall not have a closer relation to my story. I had finished *The Three Clerks* just before I left England, and when in Florence was cudgelling my brain for a new plot. Being then with my brother, I asked him to sketch me a plot, and he drew out that of my next novel, called *Doctor Thorne*. I mention this particularly, because it was the only occasion in which I have had recourse to some other source than my own brains for the thread of a story. How far I may unconsciously have adopted incidents from what I have read,—either from history or from works of imagination,—I do not know. It is beyond question that a man employed as I have been must do so. But when doing it I have not been aware that I have done it. I have never taken another man's work, and deliberately framed my work upon it. I am far from censuring this practice in others. Our greatest masters in works of imagination have obtained such aid for themselves. Shakespeare dug out of such quarries wherever he could find them. Ben Jonson, with heavier hand, built up his structures on his studies of the classics, not thinking it beneath him to give, without direct acknow-

ledgment, whole pieces translated both from poets and historians. But in those days no such acknowledgment was usual. Plagiarism existed, and was very common, but was not known as a sin. It is different now; and I think that an author, when he uses either the words or the plot of another, should own as much, demanding to be credited with no more of the work than he has himself produced. I may say also that I have never printed as my own a word that has been written by others.¹ It might probably have been better for my readers had I done so, as I am informed that *Doctor Thorne*, the novel of which I am now speaking, has a larger sale than any other book of mine.

Early in 1858, while I was writing *Doctor Thorne*, I was asked by the great men at the General Post Office to go to Egypt to make a treaty with the Pasha for the conveyance of our mails through that country by railway. There was a treaty in existence, but that had reference to the carriage of bags and boxes by

¹ I must make one exception to this declaration. The legal opinion as to heirlooms in *The Eustace Diamonds* was written for me by Charles Merewether, the present Member for Northampton. I am told that it has become the ruling authority on the subject.

camels from Alexandria to Suez. Since its date the railway had grown, and was now nearly completed, and a new treaty was wanted. So I came over from Dublin to London, on my road, and again went to work among the publishers. The other novel was not finished; but I thought I had now progressed far enough to arrange a sale while the work was still on the stocks. I went to Mr Bentley and demanded £400,—for the copyright. He acceded, but came to me the next morning at the General Post Office to say that it could not be. He had gone to work at his figures after I had left him, and had found that £300 would be the outside value of the novel. I was intent upon the larger sum; and in furious haste,—for I had but an hour at my disposal,—I rushed to Chapman & Hall in Piccadilly, and said what I had to say to Mr Edward Chapman in a quick torrent of words. They were the first of a great many words which have since been spoken by me in that backshop. Looking at me as he might have done at a highway robber who had stopped him on Hounslow Heath, he said that he supposed he might as well do as I desired. I considered

this to be a sale, and it was a sale. I remember that he held the poker in his hand all the time that I was with him;—but in truth, even though he had declined to buy the book, there would have been no danger.

CHAPTER VII.

‘DOCTOR THORNE’ — ‘THE BERTRAMS’ — ‘THE WEST INDIES AND THE SPANISH MAIN.’

As I journeyed across France to Marseilles, and made thence a terribly rough voyage to Alexandria, I wrote my allotted number of pages every day. On this occasion more than once I left my paper on the cabin table, rushing away to be sick in the privacy of my state room. It was February, and the weather was miserable; but still I did my work. *Labor omnia vincit improbus*. I do not say that to all men has been given physical strength sufficient for such exertion as this, but I do believe that real exertion will enable most men to work at almost any season. I had previously to this arranged a system of task-work for myself, which I would strongly recommend to those who feel as I have felt,

that labour, when not made absolutely obligatory by the circumstances of the hour, should never be allowed to become spasmodic. There was no day on which it was my positive duty to write for the publishers, as it was my duty to write reports for the Post Office. I was free to be idle if I pleased. But as I had made up my mind to undertake this second profession, I found it to be expedient to bind myself by certain self-imposed laws. When I have commenced a new book, I have always prepared a diary, divided into weeks, and carried it on for the period which I have allowed myself for the completion of the work. In this I have entered, day by day, the number of pages I have written, so that if at any time I have slipped into idleness for a day or two, the record of that idleness has been there, staring me in the face, and demanding of me increased labour, so that the deficiency might be supplied. According to the circumstances of the time,—whether my other business might be then heavy or light, or whether the book which I was writing was or was not wanted with speed,—I have allotted myself so many pages a week. The average number has been

64
11
2
2
about 40. It has been placed as low as 20, and has risen to 112. And as a page is an ambiguous term, my page has been made to contain 250 words; and as words, if not watched, will have a tendency to straggle, I have had every word counted as I went. In the bargains I have made with publishers I have,—not, of course, with their knowledge, but in my own mind,—undertaken always to supply them with so many words, and I have never put a book out of hand short of the number by a single word. I may also say that the excess has been very small. I have prided myself on completing my work exactly within the proposed dimensions. But I have prided myself especially in completing it within the proposed time,—and I have always done so. There has ever been the record before me, and a week passed with an insufficient number of pages has been a blister to my eye, and a month so disgraced would have been a sorrow to my heart.

I have been told that such appliances are beneath the notice of a man of genius. I have never fancied myself to be a man of genius, but had I been so I think I might well have

subjected myself to these trammels. Nothing surely is so potent as a law that may not be disobeyed. It has the force of the water-drop that hollows the stone. A small daily task, if it be really daily, will beat the labours of a spasmodic Hercules. It is the tortoise which always catches the hare. The hare has no chance. He loses more time in glorifying himself for a quick spurt than suffices for the tortoise to make half his journey.

I have known authors whose lives have always been troublesome and painful because their tasks have never been done in time. They have ever been as boys struggling to learn their lesson as they entered the school gates. Publishers have distrusted them, and they have failed to write their best because they have seldom written at ease. I have done double their work,—though burdened with another profession,—and have done it almost without an effort. I have not once, through all my literary career, felt myself even in danger of being late with my task. I have known no anxiety as to “copy.” The needed pages far ahead—very far ahead—have almost always been in the drawer beside me. And

that little diary, with its dates and ruled spaces, its record that must be seen, its daily, weekly demand upon my industry, has done all that for me.

There are those who would be ashamed to subject themselves to such a taskmaster, and who think that the man who works with his imagination should allow himself to wait till—inspiration moves him. When I have heard such doctrine preached, I have hardly been able to repress my scorn. To me it would not be more absurd if the shoemaker were to wait for inspiration, or the tallow-chandler for the divine moment of melting. If the man whose business it is to write has eaten too many good things, or has drunk too much, or smoked too many cigars,—as men who write sometimes will do,—then his condition may be unfavourable for work; but so will be the condition of a shoemaker who has been similarly imprudent. I have sometimes thought that the inspiration wanted has been the remedy which time will give to the evil results of such imprudence.—*Mens sana in corpore sano.* The author wants that as does every other workman,—that and a habit of industry. I was once told that the surest

aid to the writing of a book was a piece of cobbler's wax on my chair. I certainly believe in the cobbler's wax much more than the inspiration.

It will be said, perhaps, that a man whose work has risen to no higher pitch than mine has attained, has no right to speak of the strains and impulses to which real genius is exposed. I am ready to admit the great variations in brain power which are exhibited by the products of different men, and am not disposed to rank my own very high; but my own experience tells me that a man can always do the work for which his brain is fitted if he will give himself the habit of regarding his work as a normal condition of his life. I therefore venture to advise young men who look forward to authorship as the business of their lives, even when they propose that that authorship be of the highest class known, to avoid enthusiastic rushes with their pens, and to seat themselves at their desks day by day as though they were lawyers' clerks;—and so let them sit until the allotted task shall be accomplished.

While I was in Egypt, I finished *Doctor Thorne*, and on the following day began *The*

Bertrams. I was moved now by a determination to excel, if not in quality, at any rate in quantity. An ignoble ambition for an author, my readers will no doubt say. But not, I think, altogether ignoble, if an author can bring himself to look at his work as does any other workman. This had become my task, this was the furrow in which my plough was set, this was the thing the doing of which had fallen into my hands, and I was minded to work at it with a will. It is not on my conscience that I have ever scamped my work. My novels, whether good or bad, have been as good as I could make them. Had I taken three months of idleness between each they would have been no better. Feeling convinced of that, I finished *Doctor Thorne* on one day, and began *The Bertrams* on the next.

I had then been nearly two months in Egypt, and had at last succeeded in settling the terms of a postal treaty. Nearly twenty years have passed since that time, and other years may yet run on before these pages are printed. I trust I may commit no official sin by describing here the nature of the difficulty which met me. I found, on my arrival, that I was to

communicate with an officer of the Pasha, who was then called Nubar Bey. I presume him to have been the gentleman who has lately dealt with our Government as to the Suez Canal shares, and who is now well known to the political world as Nubar Pasha. I found him a most courteous gentleman, an Armenian. I never went to his office, nor do I know that he had an office. Every other day he would come to me at my hotel, and bring with him servants, and pipes, and coffee. I enjoyed his coming greatly; but there was one point on which we could not agree. As to money and other details, it seemed as though he could hardly accede fast enough to the wishes of the Postmaster-General; but on one point he was firmly opposed to me. I was desirous that the mails should be carried through Egypt in twenty-four hours, and he thought that forty-eight hours should be allowed. I was obstinate, and he was obstinate; and for a long time we could come to no agreement. At last his oriental tranquillity seemed to desert him, and he took upon himself to assure me, with almost more than British energy, that, if I insisted on the quick transit,

a terrible responsibility would rest on my head. I made this mistake, he said,—that I supposed that a rate of travelling which would be easy and secure in England could be attained with safety in Egypt. “The Pasha, his master, would,” he said, “no doubt accede to any terms demanded by the British Post Office, so great was his reverence for everything British. In that case he, Nubar, would at once resign his position, and retire into obscurity. He would be ruined; but the loss of life and bloodshed which would certainly follow so rash an attempt should not be on his head.” I smoked my pipe, or rather his, and drank his coffee, with oriental quiescence but British firmness. Every now and again, through three or four visits, I renewed the expression of my opinion that the transit could easily be made in twenty-four hours. At last he gave way,—and astonished me by the cordiality of his greeting. There was no longer any question of bloodshed or of resignation of office, and he assured me, with energetic complaisance, that it should be his care to see that the time was punctually kept. It was punctually kept, and, I believe, is so still. I must confess, however,

that my persistency was not the result of any courage specially personal to myself. While the matter was being debated, it had been whispered to me that the Peninsular and Oriental Steamship Company had conceived that forty-eight hours would suit the purposes of their traffic better than twenty-four, and that, as they were the great paymasters on the railway, the Minister of the Egyptian State, who managed the railway, might probably wish to accommodate them. I often wondered who originated that frightful picture of blood and desolation. That it came from an English heart and an English hand I was always sure.

From Egypt I visited the Holy Land, and on my way inspected the Post Offices at Malta and Gibraltar. I could fill a volume with true tales of my adventures. The *Tales of All Countries* have, most of them, some foundation in such occurrences. There is one called *John Bull on the Guadalquivir*, the chief incident in which occurred to me and a friend of mine on our way up that river to Seville. We both of us handled the gold ornaments of a man whom we believed to be a bull-fighter, but who turned out to be a duke,—and

a duke, too, who could speak English! How gracious he was to us, and yet how thoroughly he covered us with ridicule!

On my return home I received £400 from Messrs Chapman & Hall for *Doctor Thorne*, and agreed to sell them *The Bertrams* for the same sum. This latter novel was written under very vagrant circumstances,—at Alexandria, Malta, Gibraltar, Glasgow, then at sea, and at last finished in Jamaica. Of my journey to the West Indies I will say a few words presently, but I may as well speak of these two novels here. *Doctor Thorne* has, I believe, been the most popular book that I have written,—if I may take the sale as a proof of comparative popularity. *The Bertrams* has had quite an opposite fortune. I do not know that I have ever heard it well spoken of even by my friends, and I cannot remember that there is any character in it that has dwelt in the minds of novel-readers. I myself think that they are of about equal merit, but that neither of them is good. They fall away very much from *The Three Clerks*, both in pathos and humour. There is no personage in either of them comparable to

Chaffanbrass the lawyer. The plot of *Doctor Thorne* is good, and I am led therefore to suppose that a good plot,—which, to my own feeling, is the most insignificant part of a tale,—is that which will most raise it or most condemn it in the public judgment. The plots of *Tom Jones* and of *Ivanhoe* are almost perfect, and they are probably the most popular novels of the schools of the last and of this century; but to me the delicacy of *Amelia*, and the rugged strength of *Burley* and *Meg Merrilies*, say more for the power of those great novelists than the gift of construction shown in the two works I have named. A novel should give a picture of common life enlivened by humour and sweetened by pathos. To make that picture worthy of attention, the canvas should be crowded with real portraits, not of individuals known to the world or to the author, but of created personages impregnated with traits of character which are known. To my thinking, the plot is but the vehicle for all this; and when you have the vehicle without the passengers, a story of mystery in which the agents never spring to life, you have but a wooden show. There must, however, be a

story. You must provide a vehicle of some sort. That of *The Bertrams* was more than ordinarily bad; and as the book was relieved by no special character, it failed. Its failure never surprised me; but I have been surprised by the success of *Doctor Thorne*.

At this time there was nothing in the success of the one or the failure of the other to affect me very greatly. The immediate sale, and the notices elicited from the critics, and the feeling which had now come to me of a confident standing with the publishers, all made me know that I had achieved my object. If I wrote a novel, I could certainly sell it. And if I could publish three in two years, —confining myself to half the fecundity of that terrible author of whom the publisher in Paternoster Row had complained to me,—I might add £600 a-year to my official income. I was still living in Ireland, and could keep a good house over my head, insure my life, educate my two boys, and hunt perhaps twice a-week, on £1400 a-year. If more should come, it would be well;—but £600 a-year I was prepared to reckon as success. It had been slow in coming, but was very pleasant when it came.

On my return from Egypt I was sent down to Scotland to revise the Glasgow Post Office. I almost forget now what it was that I had to do there, but I know that I walked all over the city with the letter-carriers, going up to the top flats of the houses, as the men would have declared me incompetent to judge the extent of their labours had I not trudged every step with them. It was midsummer, and wearier work I never performed. The men would grumble, and then I would think how it would be with them if they had to go home afterwards and write a love-scene. But the love-scenes written in Glasgow, all belonging to *The Bertrams*, are not good.

Then in the autumn of that year, 1858, I was asked to go to the West Indies, and cleanse the Augean stables of our Post Office system there. Up to that time, and at that time, our Colonial Post Offices generally were managed from home, and were subject to the British Postmaster-General. Gentlemen were sent out from England to be postmasters, surveyors, and what not; and as our West Indian islands have never been regarded as being of themselves happily situated for residence, the

gentlemen so sent were sometimes more conspicuous for want of income than for official zeal and ability. Hence the stables had become Augean. I was also instructed to carry out in some of the islands a plan for giving up this postal authority to the island Governor, and in others to propose some such plan. I was then to go on to Cuba, to make a postal treaty with the Spanish authorities, and to Panama for the same purpose with the Government of New Grenada. All this work I performed to my satisfaction, and I hope to that of my masters in St Martin's le Grand.

But the trip is at the present moment of importance to my subject, as having enabled me to write that which, on the whole, I regard as the best book that has come from my pen. It is short, and, I think I may venture to say, amusing, useful, and true. As soon as I had learned from the secretary at the General Post Office that this journey would be required, I proposed the book to Messrs Chapman & Hall, demanding £250 for a single volume. The contract was made without any difficulty, and when I returned home the work was complete in my desk. I

began it on board the ship in which I left Kingston, Jamaica, for Cuba,—and from week to week I carried it on as I went. From Cuba I made my way to St Thomas, and through the island down to Demerara, then back to St Thomas,—which is the starting-point for all places in that part of the globe,—to Santa Martha, Carthagená, Aspinwall, over the Isthmus to Panama, up the Pacific to a little harbour on the coast of Costa Rica, thence across Central America, through Costa Rica, and down the Nicaragua river to the Mosquito coast, and after that home by Bermuda and New York. Should any one want further details of the voyage, are they not written in my book? The fact memorable to me now is, that I never made a single note while writing or preparing it. Preparation, indeed, there was none. The descriptions and opinions came hot on to the paper from their causes. I will not say that this is the best way of writing a book intended to give accurate information. But it is the best way of producing to the eye of the reader, and to his ear, that which the eye of the writer has seen and his ear heard. There are two kinds of confidence

which a reader may have in his author,—which two kinds the reader who wishes to use his reading well should carefully discriminate. There is a confidence in facts and a confidence in vision. The one man tells you accurately what has been. The other suggests to you what may, or perhaps what must have been, or what ought to have been. The former requires simple faith. The latter calls upon you to judge for yourself, and form your own conclusions. The former does not intend to be prescient, nor the latter accurate. Research is the weapon used by the former; observation by the latter. Either may be false,—wilfully false; as also may either be steadfastly true. As to that, the reader must judge for himself. But the man who writes *currente calamo*, who works with a rapidity which will not admit of accuracy, may be as true, and in one sense as trustworthy, as he who bases every word upon a rock of facts. I have written very much as I have travelled about; and though I have been very inaccurate, I have always written the exact truth as I saw it;—and I have, I think, drawn my pictures correctly.

The view I took of the relative position in the West Indies of black men and white men was the view of the *Times* newspaper at that period; and there appeared three articles in that journal, one closely after another, which made the fortune of the book. Had it been very bad, I suppose its fortune could not have been made for it even by the *Times* newspaper. I afterwards became acquainted with the writer of those articles, the contributor himself informing me that he had written them. I told him that he had done me a greater service than can often be done by one man to another, but that I was under no obligation to him. I do not think that he saw the matter quite in the same light.

I am aware that by that criticism I was much raised in my position as an author. Whether such lifting up by such means is good or bad for literature is a question which I hope to discuss in a future chapter. But the result was immediate to me, for I at once went to Chapman & Hall and successfully demanded £600 for my next novel.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE 'CORNHILL MAGAZINE' AND 'FRAMLEY
PARSONAGE.'

SOON after my return from the West Indies I was enabled to change my district in Ireland for one in England. For some time past my official work had been of a special nature, taking me out of my own district ; but through all that, Dublin had been my home, and there my wife and children had lived. I had often sighed to return to England,—with a silly longing. My life in England for twenty-six years from the time of my birth to the day on which I left it, had been wretched. I had been poor, friendless, and joyless. In Ireland it had constantly been happy. I had achieved the respect of all with whom I was concerned, I had made for myself a comfortable home, and I had enjoyed many pleasures. Hunting

itself was a great delight to me ; and now, as I contemplated a move to England, and a house in the neighbourhood of London, I felt that hunting must be abandoned.¹ Nevertheless I thought that a man who could write books ought not to live in Ireland,—ought to live within the reach of the publishers, the clubs, and the dinner-parties of the metropolis. So I made my request at headquarters, and with some little difficulty got myself appointed to the Eastern District of England,—which comprised Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, and the greater part of Hertfordshire.

At this time I did not stand very well with the dominant interest at the General Post Office. My old friend Colonel Maberly had been, some time since, squeezed into, and his place was filled by Mr Rowland Hill, the originator of the penny post. With him I never had any sympathy, nor he with me. In figures and facts he was most accurate, but I never came across any one who so little understood the ways of men,—unless it was his brother Frederic. To the two brothers the

¹ It was not abandoned till sixteen more years had passed away.

servants of the Post Office,—men numerous enough to have formed a large army in old days,—were so many machines who could be counted on for their exact work without deviation, as wheels may be counted on, which are kept going always at the same pace and always by the same power. Rowland Hill was an industrious public servant, anxious for the good of his country; but he was a hard taskmaster, and one who would, I think, have put the great department with which he was concerned altogether out of gear by his hardness, had he not been at last controlled. He was the Chief Secretary, my brother-in-law—who afterwards succeeded him—came next to him, and Mr Hill's brother was the Junior Secretary. In the natural course of things, I had not, from my position, anything to do with the management of affairs;—but from time to time I found myself more or less mixed up in it. I was known to be a thoroughly efficient public servant; I am sure I may say so much of myself without fear of contradiction from any one who has known the Post Office;—I was very fond of the department, and when matters came to be considered, I generally had an opinion of my

own. I have no doubt that I often made myself very disagreeable. I know that I sometimes tried to do so. But I could hold my own because I knew my business and was useful. I had given official offence by the publication of *The Three Clerks*. I afterwards gave greater offence by a lecture on The Civil Service which I delivered in one of the large rooms at the General Post Office to the clerks there. On this occasion, the Postmaster-General, with whom personally I enjoyed friendly terms, sent for me and told me that Mr Hill had told him that I ought to be dismissed. When I asked his lordship whether he was prepared to dismiss me, he only laughed. The threat was no threat to me, as I knew myself to be too good to be treated in that fashion. The lecture had been permitted, and I had disobeyed no order. In the lecture which I delivered, there was nothing to bring me to shame,—but it advocated the doctrine that a civil servant is only a servant as far as his contract goes, and that he is beyond that entitled to be as free a man in politics, as free in his general pursuits, and as free in opinion, as those who are in open professions and open

trades. All this is very nearly admitted now, but it certainly was not admitted then. At that time no one in the Post Office could even vote for a Member of Parliament.

Through my whole official life I did my best to improve the style of official writing. I have written, I should think, some thousands of reports,—many of them necessarily very long; some of them dealing with subjects so absurd as to allow a touch of burlesque; some few in which a spark of indignation or a slight glow of pathos might find an entrance. I have taken infinite pains with these reports, habituating myself always to write them in the form in which they should be sent,—without a copy. It is by writing thus that a man can throw on to his paper the exact feeling with which his mind is impressed at the moment. A rough copy, or that which is called a draft, is written in order that it may be touched and altered and put upon stilts. The waste of time, moreover, in such an operation, is terrible. If a man knows his craft with his pen, he will have learned to write without the necessity of changing his words or the form of his sentences. I had learned so

to write my reports that they who read them should know what it was that I meant them to understand. But I do not think that they were regarded with favour. I have heard horror expressed because the old forms were disregarded and language used which had no savour of red-tape. During the whole of this work in the Post Office it was my principle always to obey authority in everything instantly, but never to allow my mouth to be closed as to the expression of my opinion. They who had the ordering of me very often did not know the work as I knew it,—could not tell as I could what would be the effect of this or that change. When carrying out instructions which I knew should not have been given, I never scrupled to point out the fatuity of the improper order in the strongest language that I could decently employ. I have revelled in these official correspondences, and look back to some of them as the greatest delights of my life. But I am not sure that they were so delightful to others.

I succeeded, however, in getting the English district,—which could hardly have been refused to me,—and prepared to change our

residence towards the end of 1859. At the time I was writing *Castle Richmond*, the novel which I had sold to Messrs Chapman & Hall for £600. But there arose at this time a certain literary project which probably had a great effect upon my career. Whilst travelling on postal service abroad, or riding over the rural districts in England, or arranging the mails in Ireland,—and such for the last eighteen years had now been my life,—I had no opportunity of becoming acquainted with literary life in London. It was probably some feeling of this which had made me anxious to move my penates back to England. But even in Ireland, where I was still living in October 1859, I had heard of the *Cornhill Magazine*, which was to come out on the 1st of January 1860, under the editorship of Thackeray.

I had at this time written from time to time certain short stories, which had been published in different periodicals, and which in due time were republished under the name of *Tales of All Countries*. On the 23d of October 1859 I wrote to Thackeray, whom I had, I think, never then seen, offering to send him for the magazine certain of these stories. In reply to

this I received two letters,—one from Messrs Smith & Elder, the proprietors of the *Cornhill*, dated 26th of October, and the other from the editor, written two days later. That from Mr Thackeray was as follows :—

“ 36 ONSLOW SQUARE, S.W.,
October 28th.

“ MY DEAR MR TROLLOPE, — Smith & Elder have sent you their proposals ; and the business part done, let me come to the pleasure, and say how very glad indeed I shall be to have you as a co-operator in our new magazine. And looking over the annexed programme, you will see whether you can't help us in many other ways besides tale-telling. Whatever a man knows about life and its doings, that let us hear about. You must have tossed a good deal about the world, and have countless sketches in your memory and your portfolio. Please to think if you can furbish up any of these besides a novel. When events occur, and you have a good lively tale, bear us in mind. One of our chief objects in this magazine is the getting out of novel spinning, and back into the world.

Don't understand me to disparage our craft, especially *your* wares. I often say I am like the pastrycook, and don't care for tarts, but prefer bread and cheese; but the public love the tarts (luckily for us), and we must bake and sell them. There was quite an excitement in my family one evening when Paterfamilias (who goes to sleep on a novel almost always when he tries it after dinner) came up-stairs into the drawing-room wide awake and calling for the second volume of *The Three Clerks*. I hope the *Cornhill Magazine* will have as pleasant a story. And the Chapmans, if they are the honest men I take them to be, I've no doubt have told you with what sincere liking your works have been read by yours very faithfully,

W. M. THACKERAY."

This was very pleasant, and so was the letter from Smith & Elder offering me £1000 for the copyright of a three-volume novel, to come out in the new magazine,—on condition that the first portion of it should be in their hands by December 12th. There was much in all this that astonished me;—in the first place the price, which was more than double

what I had yet received, and nearly double that which I was about to receive from Messrs Chapman & Hall. Then there was the suddenness of the call. It was already the end of October, and a portion of the work was required to be in the printer's hands within six weeks. *Castle Richmond* was indeed half written, but that was sold to Chapman. And it had already been a principle with me in my art, that no part of a novel should be published till the entire story was completed. I knew, from what I read from month to month, that this hurried publication of incompleted work was frequently, I might perhaps say always, adopted by the leading novelists of the day. That such has been the case, is proved by the fact that Dickens, Thackeray, and Mrs Gaskell died with unfinished novels, of which portions had been already published. I had not yet entered upon the system of publishing novels in parts, and therefore had never been tempted. But I was aware that an artist should keep in his hand the power of fitting the beginning of his work to the end. No doubt it is his first duty to fit the end to the beginning, and he

will endeavour to do so. But he should still keep in his hands the power of remedying any defect in this respect.

" Servetur ad imum
Qualis ab incepto processerit,"

should be kept in view as to every character and every string of action. Your Achilles should all through, from beginning to end, be "impatient, fiery, ruthless, keen." Your Achilles, such as he is, will probably keep up his character. But your Davus also should be always Davus, and that is more difficult. The rustic driving his pigs to market cannot always make them travel by the exact path which he has intended for them. When some young lady at the end of a story cannot be made quite perfect in her conduct, that vivid description of angelic purity with which you laid the first lines of her portrait should be slightly toned down. I had felt that the rushing mode of publication to which the system of serial stories had given rise, and by which small parts as they were written were sent hot to the press, was injurious to the work done. If I now complied with the proposition made to me, I must act against my own principle.

But such a principle becomes a tyrant if it cannot be superseded on a just occasion. If the reason be 'tanti,' the principle should for the occasion be put in abeyance. I sat as judge, and decreed that the present reason was 'tanti.' On this my first attempt at a serial story, I thought it fit to break my own rule. I can say, however, that I have never broken it since.

But what astonished me most was the fact that at so late a day this new *Cornhill Magazine* should be in want of a novel! Perhaps some of my future readers will be able to remember the great expectations which were raised as to this periodical. Thackeray's was a good name with which to conjure. The proprietors, Messrs Smith & Elder, were most liberal in their manner of initiating the work, and were able to make an expectant world of readers believe that something was to be given them for a shilling very much in excess of anything they had ever received for that or double the money. Whether these hopes were or were not fulfilled it is not for me to say, as, for the first few years of the magazine's existence, I wrote for it more than any other one person.

But such was certainly the prospect;—and how had it come to pass that, with such promises made, the editor and the proprietors were, at the end of October, without anything fixed as to what must be regarded as the chief dish in the banquet to be provided?

I fear that the answer to this question must be found in the habits of procrastination which had at that time grown upon the editor. He had, I imagine, undertaken the work himself, and had postponed its commencement till there was left to him no time for commencing. There was still, it may be said, as much time for him as for me. I think there was,—for though he had his magazine to look after, I had the Post Office. But he thought, when unable to trust his own energy, that he might rely upon that of a new recruit. He was but four years my senior in life, but he was at the top of the tree, while I was still at the bottom.

Having made up my mind to break my principle, I started at once from Dublin to London. I arrived there on the morning of Thursday, 3d of November, and left it on the evening of Friday. In the meantime I had

made my agreement with Messrs Smith & Elder, and had arranged my plot. But when in London, I first went to Edward Chapman, at 193 Piccadilly. If the novel I was then writing for him would suit the *Cornhill*, might I consider my arrangement with him to be at an end? Yes; I might. But if that story would not suit the *Cornhill*, was I to consider my arrangement with him as still standing,—that agreement requiring that my MS. should be in his hands in the following March? As to that, I might do as I pleased. In our dealings together Mr Edward Chapman always acceded to every suggestion made to him. He never refused a book, and never haggled at a price. Then I hurried into the City, and had my first interview with Mr George Smith. When he heard that *Castle Richmond* was an Irish story, he begged that I would endeavour to frame some other for his magazine. He was sure that an Irish story would not do for a commencement;—and he suggested the Church, as though it were my peculiar subject. I told him that *Castle Richmond* would have to “come out” while any other novel that I might write for him would be running through

the magazine;—but to that he expressed himself altogether indifferent. He wanted an English tale, on English life, with a clerical flavour. On these orders I went to work, and framed what I suppose I must call the plot of *Framley Parsonage*.

On my journey back to Ireland, in the railway carriage, I wrote the first few pages of that story. I had got into my head an idea of what I meant to write,—a morsel of the biography of an English clergyman who should not be a bad man, but one led into temptation by his own youth and by the unclerical accidents of the life of those around him. The love of his sister for the young lord was an adjunct necessary, because there must be love in a novel. And then by placing Framley Parsonage near Barchester, I was able to fall back upon my old friends Mrs Proudie and the archdeacon. Out of these slight elements I fabricated a hodge-podge in which the real plot consisted at last simply of a girl refusing to marry the man she loved till the man's friends agreed to accept her lovingly. Nothing could be less efficient or artistic. But the characters were so well handled, that the work

from the first to the last was popular,—and was received as it went on with still increasing favour by both editor and proprietor of the magazine. The story was thoroughly English. There was a little fox-hunting and a little tuft-hunting, some Christian virtue and some Christian cant. There was no heroism and no villainy. There was much Church, but more love-making. And it was downright honest love,—in which there was no pretence on the part of the lady that she was too ethereal to be fond of a man, no half-and-half inclination on the part of the man to pay a certain price and no more for a pretty toy. Each of them longed for the other, and they were not ashamed to say so. Consequently they in England who were living, or had lived, the same sort of life, liked *Framley Parsonage*. I think myself that Lucy Robarts is perhaps the most natural English girl that I ever drew,—the most natural, at any rate, of those who have been good girls. She was not as dear to me as Kate Woodward in *The Three Clerks*, but I think she is more like real human life. Indeed I doubt whether such a character could be made more lifelike than Lucy Robarts.

And I will say also that in this novel there is no very weak part,—no long succession of dull pages. The production of novels in serial form forces upon the author the conviction that he should not allow himself to be tedious in any single part. I hope no reader will misunderstand me. In spite of that conviction, the writer of stories in parts will often be tedious. That I have been so myself is a fault that will lie heavy on my tombstone. But the writer when he embarks in such a business should feel that he cannot afford to have many pages skipped out of the few which are to meet the reader's eye at the same time. Who can imagine the first half of the first volume of *Waverley* coming out in shilling numbers? I had realised this when I was writing *Framley Parsonage*; and working on the conviction which had thus come home to me, I fell into no bathos of dulness.

I subsequently came across a piece of criticism which was written on me as a novelist by a brother novelist very much greater than myself, and whose brilliant intellect and warm imagination led him to a kind of work the very opposite of mine. This was Nathaniel

Hawthorne, the American, whom I did not then know, but whose works I knew. Though it praises myself highly, I will insert it here, because it certainly is true in its nature: "It is odd enough," he says, "that my own individual taste is for quite another class of works than those which I myself am able to write. If I were to meet with such books as mine by another writer, I don't believe I should be able to get through them. Have you ever read the novels of Anthony Trollope? They precisely suit my taste,—solid and substantial, written on the strength of beef and through the inspiration of ale, and just as real as if some giant had hewn a great lump out of the earth and put it under a glass case, with all its inhabitants going about their daily business, and not suspecting that they were being made a show of. And these books are just as English as a beef-steak. Have they ever been tried in America? It needs an English residence to make them thoroughly comprehensible; but still I should think that human nature would give them success anywhere."

This was dated early in 1860, and could have had no reference to *Framley Parsonage*;

but it was as true of that work as of any that I have written. And the criticism, whether just or unjust, describes with wonderful accuracy the purport that I have ever had in view in my writing. I have always desired to "hew out some lump of the earth," and to make men and women walk upon it just as they do walk here among us,—with not more of excellence, nor with exaggerated baseness,—so that my readers might recognise human beings like to themselves, and not feel themselves to be carried away among gods or demons. If I could do this, then I thought I might succeed in impregnating the mind of the novel-reader with a feeling that honesty is the best policy; that truth prevails while falsehood fails; that a girl will be loved as she is pure, and sweet, and unselfish; that a man will be honoured as he is true, and honest, and brave of heart; that things meanly done are ugly and odious, and things nobly done beautiful and gracious. I do not say that lessons such as these may not be more grandly taught by higher flights than mine. Such lessons come to us from our greatest poets. But there are so many who will read novels

and understand them, who either do not read the works of our great poets, or reading them miss the lesson! And even in prose fiction the character whom the fervid imagination of the writer has lifted somewhat into the clouds, will hardly give so plain an example to the hasty normal reader as the humbler personage whom that reader unconsciously feels to resemble himself or herself. I do think that a girl would more probably dress her own mind after Lucy Robarts than after Flora Macdonald.

There are many who would laugh at the idea of a novelist teaching either virtue or nobility,—those, for instance, who regard the reading of novels as a sin, and those also who think it to be simply an idle pastime. They look upon the tellers of stories as among the tribe of those who pander to the wicked pleasures of a wicked world. I have regarded my art from so different a point of view that I have ever thought of myself as a preacher of sermons, and my pulpit as one which I could make both salutary and agreeable to my audience. I do believe that no girl has risen from the reading of my pages less modest than she was before,

and that some may have learned from them that modesty is a charm well worth preserving. I think that no youth has been taught that in falseness and flashness is to be found the road to manliness; but some may perhaps have learned from me that it is to be found in truth and a high but gentle spirit. Such are the lessons I have striven to teach; and I have thought it might best be done by representing to my readers characters like themselves,—or to which they might liken themselves.

Framley Parsonage—or, rather, my connection with the *Cornhill*—was the means of introducing me very quickly to that literary world from which I had hitherto been severed by the fact of my residence in Ireland. In December 1859, while I was still very hard at work on my novel, I came over to take charge of the Eastern District, and settled myself at a residence about twelve miles from London, in Hertfordshire, but on the borders both of Essex and Middlesex,—which was somewhat too grandly called Waltham House. This I took on lease, and subsequently bought after I had spent about £1000 on improvements. From hence I was able to make myself fre-

quent both in Cornhill and Piccadilly, and to live, when the opportunity came, among men of my own pursuit.

It was in January 1860 that Mr George Smith—to whose enterprise we owe not only the *Cornhill Magazine* but the *Pall Mall Gazette*—gave a sumptuous dinner to his contributors. It was a memorable banquet in many ways, but chiefly so to me because on that occasion I first met many men who afterwards became my most intimate associates. It can rarely happen that one such occasion can be the first starting-point of so many friendships. It was at that table, and on that day, that I first saw Thackeray, Charles Taylor (Sir)—than whom in latter life I have loved no man better,—Robert Bell, G. H. Lewes, and John Everett Millais. With all these men I afterwards lived on affectionate terms;—but I will here speak specially of the last, because from that time he was joined with me in so much of the work that I did.

Mr Millais was engaged to illustrate *Framley Parsonage*, but this was not the first work he did for the magazine. In the second number there is a picture of his accompanying

Monckton Milne's *Unspoken Dialogue*. The first drawing he did for *Framley Parsonage* did not appear till after the dinner of which I have spoken, and I do not think that I knew at the time that he was engaged on my novel. When I did know it, it made me very proud. He afterwards illustrated *Orley Farm*, *The Small House of Allington*, *Rachel Ray*, and *Phineas Finn*. Altogether he drew from my tales eighty-seven drawings, and I do not think that more conscientious work was ever done by man. Writers of novels know well—and so ought readers of novels to have learned—that there are two modes of illustrating, either of which may be adopted equally by a bad and by a good artist. To which class Mr Millais belongs I need not say; but, as a good artist, it was open to him simply to make a pretty picture, or to study the work of the author from whose writing he was bound to take his subject. I have too often found that the former alternative has been thought to be the better, as it certainly is the easier method. An artist will frequently dislike to subordinate his ideas to those of an author, and will some-

times be too idle to find out what those ideas are. But this artist was neither proud nor idle. In every figure that he drew it was his object to promote the views of the writer whose work he had undertaken to illustrate, and he never spared himself any pains in studying that work, so as to enable him to do so. I have carried on some of those characters from book to book, and have had my own early ideas impressed indelibly on my memory by the excellence of his delineations. Those illustrations were commenced fifteen years ago, and from that time up to this day my affection for the man of whom I am speaking has increased. To see him has always been a pleasure. His voice has been a sweet sound in my ears. Behind his back I have never heard him praised without joining the eulogist; I have never heard a word spoken against him without opposing the censurer. These words, should he ever see them, will come to him from the grave, and will tell him of my regard,—as one living man never tells another.

Sir Charles Taylor, who carried me home

in his brougham that evening, and thus commenced an intimacy which has since been very close, was born to wealth, and was therefore not compelled by the necessities of a profession to enter the lists as an author. But he lived much with those who did so,—and could have done it himself had want or ambition stirred him. He was our king at the Garrick Club, to which, however, I did not yet belong. He gave the best dinners of my time, and was,—happily I may say is,¹—the best giver of dinners. A man rough of tongue, brusque in his manners, odious to those who dislike him, somewhat inclined to tyranny, he is the prince of friends, honest as the sun, and as open-handed as Charity itself.

Robert Bell has now been dead nearly ten years. As I look back over the interval and remember how intimate we were, it seems odd to me that we should have known each other for no more than six years. He was a man who had lived by his pen from his very youth; and was so far successful that I do not think that want ever came near him. But he never

¹ Alas! within a year of the writing of this he went from us.

made that mark which his industry and talents would have seemed to ensure. He was a man well known to literary men, but not known to readers. As a journalist he was useful and conscientious, but his plays and novels never made themselves popular. He wrote a life of Canning, and he brought out an annotated edition of the British poets; but he achieved no great success. I have known no man better read in English literature. Hence his conversation had a peculiar charm, but he was not equally happy with his pen. He will long be remembered at the Literary Fund Committees, of which he was a staunch and most trusted supporter. I think it was he who first introduced me to that board. It has often been said that literary men are peculiarly apt to think that they are slighted and unappreciated. Robert Bell certainly never achieved the position in literature which he once aspired to fill, and which he was justified in thinking that he could earn for himself. I have frequently discussed these subjects with him, but I never heard from his mouth a word of complaint as to his own literary fate.

He liked to hear the chimes go at midnight, and he loved to have ginger hot in his mouth. On such occasions no sound ever came out of a man's lips sweeter than his wit and gentle revelry.

George Lewes,—with his wife, whom all the world knows as George Eliot,—has also been and still is one of my dearest friends. He is, I think, the acutest critic I know,—and the severest. His severity, however, is a fault. His intention to be honest, even when honesty may give pain, has caused him to give pain when honesty has not required it. He is essentially a doubter, and has encouraged himself to doubt till the faculty of trusting has almost left him. I am not speaking of the personal trust which one man feels in another, but of that confidence in literary excellence, which is, I think, necessary for the full enjoyment of literature. In one modern writer he did believe thoroughly. Nothing can be more charming than the unstinted admiration which he has accorded to everything that comes from the pen of the wonderful woman to whom his lot has been united. To her name I shall

recur again when speaking of the novelists of the present day.

Of "Billy Russell," as we always used to call him, I may say that I never knew but one man equal to him in the quickness and continuance of witty speech. That one man was Charles Lever—also an Irishman—whom I had known from an earlier date, and also with close intimacy. Of the two, I think that Lever was perhaps the more astounding producer of good things. His manner was perhaps a little the happier, and his turns more sharp and unexpected. But "Billy" also was marvellous. Whether abroad as special correspondent, or at home amidst the flurry of his newspaper work, he was a charming companion; his ready wit always gave him the last word.

Of Thackeray I will speak again when I record his death.

There were many others whom I met for the first time at George Smith's table. Albert Smith, for the first, and indeed for the last time, as he died soon after; Higgins, whom all the world knew as Jacob Omnium, a man

I greatly regarded; Dallas, who for a time was literary critic to the *Times*, and who certainly in that capacity did better work than has appeared since in the same department; George Augustus Sala, who, had he given himself fair play, would have risen to higher eminence than that of being the best writer in his day of sensational leading articles; and Fitz-James Stephen, a man of very different calibre, who has not yet culminated, but who, no doubt, will culminate among our judges. There were many others;—but I cannot now recall their various names as identified with those banquets.

Of *Framley Parsonage* I need only further say, that as I wrote it I became more closely than ever acquainted with the new shire which I had added to the English counties. I had it all in my mind,—its roads and railroads, its towns and parishes, its members of Parliament, and the different hunts which rode over it. I knew all the great lords and their castles, the squires and their parks, the rectors and their churches. This was the fourth novel of which I had placed the scene in Barsetshire,

and as I wrote it I made a map of the dear county. Throughout these stories there has been no name given to a fictitious site which does not represent to me a spot of which I know all the accessories, as though I had lived and wandered there.

CHAPTER IX.

'CASTLE RICHMOND;' 'BROWN, JONES, AND ROBINSON;' 'NORTH AMERICA;' 'ORLEY FARM.'

WHEN I had half-finished *Framley Parsonage*, I went back to my other story, *Castle Richmond*, which I was writing for Messrs Chapman & Hall, and completed that. I think that this was the only occasion on which I have had two different novels in my mind at the same time. This, however, did not create either difficulty or confusion. Many of us live in different circles; and when we go from our friends in the town to our friends in the country, we do not usually fail to remember the little details of the one life or the other. The parson at Rusticum, with his wife and his wife's mother, and all his belongings; and our old friend, the Squire, with his family his-

tory ; and Farmer Mudge, who has been cross with us, because we rode so unnecessarily over his barley ; and that rascally poacher, once a gamekeeper, who now traps all the foxes ; and pretty Mary Cann, whose marriage with the wheelwright we did something to expedite ;— though we are alive to them all, do not drive out of our brain the club gossip, or the memories of last season's dinners, or any incident of our London intimacies. In our lives we are always weaving novels, and we manage to keep the different tales distinct. A man does, in truth, remember that which it interests him to remember ; and when we hear that memory has gone as age has come on, we should understand that the capacity for interest in the matter concerned has perished. A man will be generally very old and feeble before he forgets how much money he has in the funds. There is a good deal to be learned by any one who wishes to write a novel well ; but when the art has been acquired, I do not see why two or three should not be well written at the same time. I have never found myself thinking much about the work that I had to do till I was doing it. I have indeed for many years

almost abandoned the effort to think, trusting myself, with the narrowest thread of a plot, to work the matter out when the pen is in my hand. But my mind is constantly employing itself on the work I have done. Had I left either *Framley Parsonage* or *Castle Richmond* half-finished fifteen years ago, I think I could complete the tales now with very little trouble. I have not looked at *Castle Richmond* since it was published; and poor as the work is, I remember all the incidents.

Castle Richmond certainly was not a success,—though the plot is a fairly good plot, and is much more of a plot than I have generally been able to find. The scene is laid in Ireland, during the famine; and I am well aware now that English readers no longer like Irish stories. I cannot understand why it should be so, as the Irish character is peculiarly well fitted for romance. But Irish subjects generally have become distasteful. This novel, however, is of itself a weak production. The characters do not excite sympathy. The heroine has two lovers, one of whom is a scamp and the other a prig. As regards the scamp, the girl's mother is her own rival. Rivalry of the same nature

has been admirably depicted by Thackeray in his *Esmond*; but there the mother's love seems to be justified by the girl's indifference. In *Castle Richmond* the mother strives to rob her daughter of the man's love. The girl herself has no character; and the mother, who is strong enough, is almost revolting. The dialogue is often lively, and some of the incidents are well told; but the story as a whole was a failure. I cannot remember, however, that it was roughly handled by the critics when it came out; and I much doubt whether anything so hard was said of it then as that which I have said here.*

I was now settled at Waltham Cross, in a house in which I could entertain a few friends modestly, where we grew our cabbages and strawberries, made our own butter, and killed our own pigs. I occupied it for twelve years, and they were years to me of great prosperity. In 1861 I became a member of the Garrick Club, with which institution I have since been much identified. I had belonged to it about two years, when, on Thackeray's death, I was invited to fill his place on the Committee, and I have been one of that august body ever since. Having up to that time lived very

little among men, having known hitherto nothing of clubs, having even as a boy been banished from social gatherings, I enjoyed infinitely at first the gaiety of the Garrick. It was a festival to me to dine there—which I did indeed but seldom ; and a great delight to play a rubber in the little room up-stairs of an afternoon. I am speaking now of the old club in King Street. This playing of whist before dinner has since that become a habit with me, so that unless there be something else special to do—unless there be hunting, or I am wanted to ride in the park by the young tyrant of my household—it is “my custom always in the afternoon.” I have sometimes felt sore with myself for this persistency, feeling that I was making myself a slave to an amusement which has not after all very much to recommend it. I have often thought that I would break myself away from it, and “swear off,” as Rip Van Winkle says. But my swearing off has been like that of Rip Van Winkle. And now, as I think of it coolly, I do not know but that I have been right to cling to it. As a man grows old he wants amusement, more even than when he is

young; and then it becomes so difficult to find amusement. Reading should, no doubt, be the delight of men's leisure hours. Had I to choose between books and cards, I should no doubt take the books. But I find that I can seldom read with pleasure for above an hour and a half at a time, or more than three hours a day. As I write this I am aware that hunting must soon be abandoned. After sixty it is given but to few men to ride straight across country, and I cannot bring myself to adopt any other mode of riding. I think that without cards I should now be much at a loss. When I began to play at the Garrick, I did so simply because I liked the society of the men who played.

I think that I became popular among those with whom I associated. I have long been aware of a certain weakness in my own character, which I may call a craving for love. I have ever had a wish to be liked by those around me,—a wish that during the first half of my life was never gratified. In my school-days no small part of my misery came from the envy with which I regarded the popularity of popular boys. They seemed to me to live in a social paradise, while the

desolation of my pandemonium was complete. And afterwards, when I was in London as a young man, I had but few friends. Among the clerks in the Post Office I held my own fairly for the first two or three years; but even then I regarded myself as something of a pariah. My Irish life had been much better. I had had my wife and children, and had been sustained by a feeling of general respect. But even in Ireland I had in truth lived but little in society. Our means had been sufficient for our wants, but insufficient for entertaining others. It was not till we had settled ourselves at Waltham that I really began to live much with others. The Garrick Club was the first assemblage of men at which I felt myself to be popular.

I soon became a member of other clubs. There was the Arts Club in Hanover Square, of which I saw the opening, but from which, after three or four years, I withdrew my name, having found that during these three or four years I had not once entered the building. Then I was one of the originators of the Civil Service Club—not from judgment, but instigated to do so by others. That also I

left for the same reason. In 1864 I received the honour of being elected by the Committee at the Athenæum. For this I was indebted to the kindness of Lord Stanhope; and I never was more surprised than when I was informed of the fact. About the same time I became a member of the Cosmopolitan, a little club that meets twice a week in Charles Street, Berkeley Square, and supplies to all its members, and its members' friends, tea and brandy and water without charge! The gatherings there I used to think very delightful. One met Jacob Omnium, Monckton Milnes, Tom Hughes, William Stirling, Henry Reeve, Arthur Russell, Tom Taylor, and such like; and generally a strong political element, thoroughly well mixed, gave a certain spirit to the place. Lord Ripon, Lord Stanley, William Forster, Lord Enfield, Lord Kimberley, George Bentinck, Vernon Harcourt, Bromley Davenport, Knatchbull Huguessen, with many others, used to whisper the secrets of Parliament with free tongues. Afterwards I became a member of the Turf, which I found to be serviceable—or the reverse—only for the playing of whist at high points.

In August 1861 I wrote another novel for the *Cornhill Magazine*. It was a short story, about one volume in length, and was called *The Struggles of Brown, Jones, and Robinson*. In this I attempted a style for which I certainly was not qualified, and to which I never had again recourse. It was meant to be funny, was full of slang, and was intended as a satire on the ways of trade. Still I think that there is some good fun in it, but I have heard no one else express such an opinion. I do not know that I ever heard any opinion expressed on it, except by the publisher, who kindly remarked that he did not think it was equal to my usual work. Though he had purchased the copyright, he did not republish the story in a book form till 1870, and then it passed into the world of letters *sub silentio*. I do not know that it was ever criticised or ever read. I received £600 for it. From that time to this I have been paid at about that rate for my work—£600 for the quantity contained in an ordinary novel volume, or £3000 for a long tale published in twenty parts, which is equal in length to five such volumes. I have occasionally, I think, received something more than

this, never I think less for any tale, except when I have published my work anonymously.¹ Having said so much, I need not further specify the prices as I mention the books as they were written. I will, however, when I am completing this memoir, give a list of all the sums I have received for my literary labours. I think that *Brown, Jones, and Robinson* was the hardest bargain I ever sold to a publisher.

In 1861 the War of Secession had broken out in America, and from the first I interested myself much in the question. My mother had thirty years previously written a very popular, but, as I had thought, a somewhat unjust book about our cousins over the water. She had seen what was distasteful in the manners of a young people, but had hardly recognised their energy. I had entertained for many years an ambition to follow her footsteps there, and to write another book. I had already paid a short visit to New York City and State on my way home from the West Indies, but had not seen enough then to justify me in the expression of any opinion. The breaking out of the

¹ Since the date at which this was written I have encountered a diminution in price.

war did not make me think that the time was peculiarly fit for such inquiry as I wished to make, but it did represent itself as an occasion on which a book might be popular. I consequently consulted the two great powers with whom I was concerned. Messrs Chapman & Hall, the publishers, were one power, and I had no difficulty in arranging my affairs with them. They agreed to publish the book on my terms, and bade me God-speed on my journey. The other power was the Postmaster-General and Mr Rowland Hill, the Secretary of the Post Office. I wanted leave of absence for the unusual period of nine months, and fearing that I should not get it by the ordinary process of asking the Secretary, I went direct to his lordship. "Is it on the plea of ill-health?" he asked, looking into my face, which was then that of a very robust man. His lordship knew the Civil Service as well as any one living, and must have seen much of falseness and fraudulent pretence, or he could not have asked that question. I told him that I was very well, but that I wanted to write a book. "Had I any special ground to go upon in asking for such indulgence?" I

had, I said, done my duty well by the service. There was a good deal of demurring, but I got my leave for nine months,—and I knew that I had earned it. Mr Hill attached to the minute granting me the leave an intimation that it was to be considered as a full equivalent for the special services rendered by me to the department. I declined, however, to accept the grace with such a stipulation, and it was withdrawn by the directions of the Postmaster-General.¹

I started for the States in August and returned in the following May. The war was raging during the time that I was there, and the country was full of soldiers. A part of the time I spent in Virginia, Kentucky, and Missouri, among the troops, along the line of attack. I visited all the States (excepting California) which had not then seceded,—failing to make my way into the seceding States unless I was prepared to visit them with an amount of dis-

¹ During the period of my service in the Post Office I did very much special work for which I never asked any remuneration,—and never received any, though payments for special services were common in the department at that time. But if there was to be a question of such remuneration, I did not choose that my work should be valued at the price put upon it by Mr Hill.

comfort I did not choose to endure. I worked very hard at the task I had assigned to myself, and did, I think, see much of the manners and institutions of the people. Nothing struck me more than their persistence in the ordinary pursuits of life in spite of the war which was around them. Neither industry nor amusement seemed to meet with any check. Schools, hospitals, and institutes were by no means neglected because new regiments were daily required. The truth, I take it, is that we, all of us, soon adapt ourselves to the circumstances around us. Though three parts of London were in flames I should no doubt expect to have my dinner served to me if I lived in the quarter which was free from fire.

The book I wrote was very much longer than that on the West Indies, but was also written almost without a note. It contained much information, and, with many inaccuracies, was a true book. But it was not well done. It is tedious and confused, and will hardly, I think, be of future value to those who wish to make themselves acquainted with the United States. It was published about the middle of the war,—just at the time in which

the hopes of those who loved the South were most buoyant, and the fears of those who stood by the North were the strongest. But it expressed an assured confidence—which never quavered in a page or in a line—that the North would win. This assurance was based on the merits of the Northern cause, on the superior strength of the Northern party, and on a conviction that England would never recognise the South, and that France would be guided in her policy by England. I was right in my prophecies, and right, I think, on the grounds on which they were made. The Southern cause was bad. The South had provoked the quarrel because its political supremacy was checked by the election of Mr Lincoln to the Presidency. It had to fight as a little man against a big man, and fought gallantly. That gallantry,—and a feeling based on a misconception as to American character that the Southerners are better gentlemen than their Northern brethren,—did create great sympathy here; but I believe that the country was too just to be led into political action by a spirit of romance, and I was warranted in that belief. There was a moment in which the

Northern cause was in danger, and the danger lay certainly in the prospect of British interference. Messrs Slidell and Mason,—two men insignificant in themselves,—had been sent to Europe by the Southern party, and had managed to get on board the British mail steamer called "The Trent," at the Havannah. A most undue importance was attached to this mission by Mr Lincoln's government, and efforts were made to stop them. A certain Commodore Wilkes, doing duty as policeman on the seas, did stop the Trent, and took the men out. They were carried, one to Boston and one to New York, and were incarcerated, amidst the triumph of the nation. Commodore Wilkes, who had done nothing in which a brave man could take glory, was made a hero and received a prize sword. England of course demanded her passengers back, and the States for a while refused to surrender them. But Mr Seward was at that time the Secretary of State, and Mr Seward, with many political faults, was a wise man. I was at Washington at the time, and it was known there that the contest among the leading Northerners was very sharp on the matter. Mr Sumner and Mr Seward were,

under Mr Lincoln, the two chiefs of the party. It was understood that Mr Sumner was opposed to the rendition of the men, and Mr Seward in favour of it. Mr Seward's counsels at last prevailed with the President, and England's declaration of war was prevented. I dined with Mr Seward on the day of the decision, meeting Mr Sumner at his house, and was told as I left the dining-room what the decision had been. During the afternoon I and others had received intimation through the embassy that we might probably have to leave Washington at an hour's notice. This, I think, was the severest danger that the Northern cause encountered during the war.

But my book, though it was right in its views on this subject,—and wrong in none other as far as I know,—was not a good book. I can recommend no one to read it now in order that he may be either instructed or amused,—as I can do that on the West Indies. It served its purpose at the time, and was well received by the public and by the critics.

Before starting to America I had completed *Orley Farm*, a novel which appeared in shilling numbers, —after the manner in which

Pickwick, *Nicholas Nickleby*, and many others had been published. Most of those among my friends who talk to me now about my novels, and are competent to form an opinion on the subject, say that this is the best I have written. In this opinion I do not coincide. I think that the highest merit which a novel can have consists in perfect delineation of character, rather than in plot, or humour, or pathos, and I shall before long mention a subsequent work in which I think the main character of the story is so well developed as to justify me in asserting its claim above the others. The plot of *Orley Farm* is probably the best I have ever made; but it has the fault of declaring itself, and thus coming to an end too early in the book. When Lady Mason tells her ancient lover that she did forge the will, the plot of *Orley Farm* has unravelled itself;—and this she does in the middle of the tale. Independently, however, of this the novel is good. Sir Peregrine Orme, his grandson, Madeline Stavely, Mr Furnival, Mr Chaffanbrass, and the commercial gentlemen, are all good. The hunting is good. The lawyer's talk is good. Mr Moulder carves his turkey admirably, and

Mr Kantwise sells his tables and chairs with spirit. I do not know that there is a dull page in the book. I am fond of *Orley Farm*;—and am especially fond of its illustrations by Millais, which are the best I have seen in any novel in any language.

I now felt that I had gained my object. In 1862 I had achieved that which I contemplated when I went to London in 1834, and towards which I made my first attempt when I began the *Macdermots* in 1843. I had created for myself a position among literary men, and had secured to myself an income on which I might live in ease and comfort,—which ease and comfort have been made to include many luxuries. From this time for a period of twelve years my income averaged £4500 a year. Of this I spent about two-thirds, and put by one. I ought perhaps to have done better,—to have spent one-third, and put by two; but I have ever been too well inclined to spend freely that which has come easily.

This, however, has been so exactly the life which my thoughts and aspirations had marked out,—thoughts and aspirations which

used to cause me to blush with shame because I was so slow in forcing myself to the work which they demanded,—that I have felt some pride in having attained it. I have before said how entirely I fail to reach the altitude of those who think that a man devoted to letters should be indifferent to the pecuniary results for which work is generally done. An easy income has always been regarded by me as a great blessing. Not to have to think of sixpences, or very much of shillings; not to be unhappy because the coals have been burned too quickly, and the house linen wants renewing; not to be debarred by the rigour of necessity from opening one's hands, perhaps foolishly, to one's friends;—all this to me has been essential to the comfort of life. I have enjoyed the comfort for I may almost say the last twenty years, though no man in his youth had less prospect of doing so, or would have been less likely at twenty-five to have had such luxuries foretold to him by his friends.

But though the money has been sweet, the respect, the friendships, and the mode of life which has been achieved, have been much

sweeter. In my boyhood, when I would be crawling up to school with dirty boots and trousers through the muddy lanes, I was always telling myself that the misery of the hour was not the worst of it, but that the mud and solitude and poverty of the time would insure me mud and solitude and poverty through my life. Those lads about me would go into Parliament, or become rectors and deans, or squires of parishes, or advocates thundering at the Bar. They would not live with me now,—but neither should I be able to live with them in after years. Nevertheless I have lived with them. When, at the age in which others go to the universities, I became a clerk in the Post Office, I felt that my old visions were being realised. I did not think it a high calling. I did not know then how very much good work may be done by a member of the Civil Service who will show himself capable of doing it. The Post Office at last grew upon me and forced itself into my affections. I became intensely anxious that people should have their letters delivered to them punctually. But my hope to rise had always been built on the writing of

novels, and at last by the writing of novels I had risen.

I do not think that I ever toadied any one, or that I have acquired the character of a tuft-hunter. But here I do not scruple to say that I prefer the society of distinguished people, and that even the distinction of wealth confers many advantages. The best education is to be had at a price as well as the best broadcloth. The son of a peer is more likely to rub his shoulders against well-informed men than the son of a tradesman. The graces come easier to the wife of him who has had great-grandfathers than they do to her whose husband has been less,—or more fortunate, as he may think it. The discerning man will recognise the information and the graces when they are achieved without such assistance, and will honour the owners of them the more because of the difficulties they have overcome;—but the fact remains that the society of the well-born and of the wealthy will as a rule be worth seeking. I say this now, because these are the rules by which I have lived, and these are the causes which have instigated me to work.

I have heard the question argued—On what terms should a man of inferior rank live with those who are manifestly superior to him? If a marquis or an earl honour me, who have no rank, with his intimacy, am I in my intercourse with him to remember our close acquaintance or his high rank? I have always said that where the difference in position is quite marked, the overtures to intimacy should always come from the higher rank; but if the intimacy be ever fixed, then that rank should be held of no account. It seems to me that intimate friendship admits of no standing but that of equality. I cannot be the Sovereign's friend, nor probably the friend of many very much beneath the Sovereign, because such equality is impossible.

When I first came to Waltham Cross in the winter of 1859-1860, I had almost made up my mind that my hunting was over. I could not then count upon an income which would enable me to carry on an amusement which I should doubtless find much more expensive in England than in Ireland. I brought with me out of Ireland one mare, but she was too light for me to ride in the hunting-field. As, how-

ever, the money came in, I very quickly fell back into my old habits. First one horse was bought, then another, and then a third, till it became established as a fixed rule that I should not have less than four hunters in the stable. Sometimes when my boys have been at home I have had as many as six. Essex was the chief scene of my sport, and gradually I became known there almost as well as though I had been an Essex squire, to the manner born. Few have investigated more closely than I have done the depth, and breadth, and water-holding capacities of an Essex ditch. It will, I think, be accorded to me by Essex men generally that I have ridden hard. The cause of my delight in the amusement I have never been able to analyse to my own satisfaction. In the first place, even now, I know very little about hunting, —though I know very much of the accessories of the field. I am too blind to see hounds turning, and cannot therefore tell whether the fox has gone this way or that. Indeed all the notice I take of hounds is not to ride over them. My eyes are so constituted that I can never see the nature of a fence. I

either follow some one, or ride at it with the full conviction that I may be going into a horse-pond or a gravel-pit. I have jumped into both one and the other. I am very heavy, and have never ridden expensive horses. I am also now old for such work, being so stiff that I cannot get on to my horse without the aid of a block or a bank. But I ride still after the same fashion, with a boy's energy, determined to get ahead if it may possibly be done, hating the roads, despising young men who ride them, and with a feeling that life can not, with all her riches, have given me anything better than when I have gone through a long run to the finish, keeping a place, not of glory, but of credit, among my juniors.

CHAPTER X.

‘THE SMALL HOUSE AT ALLINGTON,’ ‘CAN YOU FORGIVE HER?’ ‘RACHEL RAY,’ AND THE ‘FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW.’

DURING the early months of 1862 *Orley Farm* was still being brought out in numbers, and at the same time *Brown, Jones, and Robinson* was appearing in the *Cornhill Magazine*. In September 1862 the *Small House at Allington* began its career in the same periodical. The work on North America had also come out in 1862. In August 1863 the first number of *Can You Forgive Her?* was published as a separate serial, and was continued through 1864. In 1863 a short novel was produced in the ordinary volume form, called *Rachel Ray*. In addition to these I published during the time two volumes of stories called *The Tales of all Countries*. In the early spring of

1865 *Miss Mackenzie* was issued in the same form as *Rachel Ray*; and in May of the same year *The Belton Estate* was commenced with the commencement of the *Fortnightly Review*, of which periodical I will say a few words in this chapter.

I quite admit that I crowded my wares into the market too quickly,—because the reading world could not want such a quantity of matter from the hands of one author in so short a space of time. I had not been quite so fertile as the unfortunate gentleman who disgusted the publisher in Paternoster Row,—in the story of whose productiveness I have always thought there was a touch of romance,—but I had probably done enough to make both publishers and readers think that I was coming too often beneath their notice. Of publishers, however, I must speak collectively, as my sins were, I think, chiefly due to the encouragement which I received from them individually. What I wrote for the *Cornhill Magazine*, I always wrote at the instigation of Mr Smith. My other works were published by Messrs Chapman & Hall, in compliance with contracts made by me with them,

and always made with their good-will. Could I have been two separate persons at one and the same time, of whom one might have been devoted to Cornhill and the other to the interests of the firm in Piccadilly, it might have been very well;—but as I preserved my identity in both places, I myself became aware that my name was too frequent on title-pages.

Critics, if they ever trouble themselves with these pages, will, of course, say that in what I have now said I have ignored altogether the one great evil of rapid production,—namely, that of inferior work. And of course if the work was inferior because of the too great rapidity of production, the critics would be right. Giving to the subject the best of my critical abilities, and judging of my own work as nearly as possible as I would that of another, I believe that the work which has been done quickest has been done the best. I have composed better stories—that is, have created better plots—than those of *The Small House at Allington* and *Can You Forgive Her?* and I have portrayed two or three better characters than are to be found in the pages of either of them; but taking these books all

through, I do not think that I have ever done better work. Nor would these have been improved by any effort in the art of story telling, had each of these been the isolated labour of a couple of years. How short is the time devoted to the manipulation of a plot can be known only to those who have written plays and novels;—I may say also, how very little time the brain is able to devote to such wearing work. There are usually some hours of agonising doubt, almost of despair,—so at least it has been with me,—or perhaps some days. And then, with nothing settled in my brain as to the final development of events, with no capability of settling anything, but with a most distinct conception of some character or characters, I have rushed at the work as a rider rushes at a fence which he does not see. Sometimes I have encountered what, in hunting language, we call a cropper. I had such a fall in two novels of mine, of which I have already spoken—*The Bertrams* and *Castle Richmond*. I shall have to speak of other such troubles. But these failures have not arisen from over-hurried work. When my work has been quicker done,—and it has

sometimes been done very quickly—the rapidity has been achieved by hot pressure, not in the conception, but in the telling of the story. Instead of writing eight pages a day, I have written sixteen; instead of working five days a week, I have worked seven. I have trebled my usual average, and have done so in circumstances which have enabled me to give up all my thoughts for the time to the book I have been writing. This has generally been done at some quiet spot among the mountains,—where there has been no society, no hunting, no whist, no ordinary household duties. And I am sure that the work so done has had in it the best truth and the highest spirit that I have been able to produce. At such times I have been able to imbue myself thoroughly with the characters I have had in hand. I have wandered alone among the rocks and woods, crying at their grief, laughing at their absurdities, and thoroughly enjoying their joy. I have been impregnated with my own creations till it has been my only excitement to sit with the pen in my hand, and drive my team before me at as quick a pace as I could make them travel.

The critics will again say that all this may be very well as to the rough work of the author's own brain, but it will be very far from well in reference to the style in which that work has been given to the public. After all, the vehicle which a writer uses for conveying his thoughts to the public should not be less important to him than the thoughts themselves. An author can hardly hope to be popular unless he can use popular language. That is quite true; but then comes the question of achieving a popular—in other words, I may say, a good and lucid style. How may an author best acquire a mode of writing which shall be agreeable and easily intelligible to the reader? He must be correct, because without correctness he can be neither agreeable nor intelligible. Readers will expect him to obey those rules which they, consciously or unconsciously, have been taught to regard as binding on language; and unless he does obey them, he will disgust. Without much labour, no writer will achieve such a style. He has very much to learn; and, when he has learned that much, he has to acquire the habit of using what he has learned with ease. But all this

must be learned and acquired,—not while he is writing that which shall please, but long before. His language must come from him as music comes from the rapid touch of the great performer's fingers; as words come from the mouth of the indignant orator; as letters fly from the fingers of the trained compositor; as the syllables tinkled out by little bells form themselves to the ear of the telegraphist. A man who thinks much of his words as he writes them will generally leave behind him work that smells of oil. I speak here, of course, of prose; for in poetry we know what care is necessary, and we form our taste accordingly.

Rapid writing will no doubt give rise to inaccuracy,—chiefly because the ear, quick and true as may be its operation, will occasionally break down under pressure, and, before a sentence be closed, will forget the nature of the composition with which it was commenced. A singular nominative will be disgraced by a plural verb, because other pluralities have intervened and have tempted the ear into plural tendencies. Tautologies will occur, because the ear, in demanding fresh emphasis, has forgotten that the desired force has been al-

ready expressed. I need not multiply these causes of error, which must have been stumbling-blocks indeed when men wrote in the long sentences of Gibbon, but which Macaulay, with his multiplicity of divisions, has done so much to enable us to avoid. A rapid writer will hardly avoid these errors altogether. Speaking of myself, I am ready to declare that, with much training, I have been unable to avoid them. But the writer for the press is rarely called upon—a writer of books should never be called upon—to send his manuscript hot from his hand to the printer. It has been my practice to read everything four times at least—thrice in manuscript and once in print. Very much of my work I have read twice in print. In spite of this I know that inaccuracies have crept through,—not single spies, but in battalions. From this I gather that the supervision has been insufficient, not that the work itself has been done too fast. I am quite sure that those passages which have been written with the greatest stress of labour, and consequently with the greatest haste, have been the most effective and by no means the most inaccurate.

The Small House at Allington redeemed my reputation with the spirited proprietor of the *Cornhill*, which must, I should think, have been damaged by *Brown, Jones, and Robinson*. In it appeared Lily Dale, one of the characters which readers of my novels have liked the best. In the love with which she has been greeted I have hardly joined with much enthusiasm, feeling that she is somewhat of a French prig. She became first engaged to a snob, who jilted her; and then, though in truth she loved another man who was hardly good enough, she could not extricate herself sufficiently from the collapse of her first great misfortune to be able to make up her mind to be the wife of one whom, though she loved him, she did not altogether reverence. Prig as she was, she made her way into the hearts of many readers, both young and old; so that, from that time to this, I have been continually honoured with letters, the purport of which has always been to beg me to marry Lily Dale to Johnny Eames. Had I done so, however, Lily would never have so endeared herself to these people as to induce them to write letters to the author concerning her fate. It was because she could

not get over her troubles that they loved her. Outside Lily Dale and the chief interest of the novel, *The Small House at Allington* is, I think, good. The De Courcy family are alive, as is also Sir Raffle Buffle, who is a hero of the Civil Service. Sir Raffle was intended to represent a type, not a man; but the man for the picture was soon chosen, and I was often assured that the portrait was very like. I have never seen the gentleman with whom I am supposed to have taken the liberty. There is also an old squire down at Allington, whose life as a country gentleman with rather straitened means is, I think, well described.

Of *Can you Forgive Her?* I cannot speak with too great affection, though I do not know that of itself it did very much to increase my reputation. As regards the story, it was formed chiefly on that of the play which my friend Mr Bartley had rejected long since, the circumstances of which the reader may perhaps remember. The play had been called *The Noble Filt*; but I was afraid of the name for a novel, lest the critics might throw a doubt on the nobility. There was more of tentative humility in that which I at last adopted.

The character of the girl is carried through with considerable strength, but is not attractive. The humorous characters, which are also taken from the play,—a buxom widow who with her eyes open chooses the most scampish of two selfish suitors because he is the better looking,—are well done. Mrs Greenow, between Captain Bellfield and Mr Cheeseacre, is very good fun—as far as the fun of novels is. But that which endears the book to me is the first presentation which I made in it of Plantagenet Palliser, with his wife, Lady Glencora.

By no amount of description or asseveration could I succeed in making any reader understand how much these characters with their belongings have been to me in my latter life; or how frequently I have used them for the expression of my political or social convictions. They have been as real to me as free trade was to Mr Cobden, or the dominion of a party to Mr Disraeli; and as I have not been able to speak from the benches of the House of Commons, or to thunder from platforms, or to be efficacious as a lecturer, they have served me as safety-valves by which to deliver my

soul. Mr Plantagenet Palliser had appeared in *The Small House at Allington*, but his birth had not been accompanied by many hopes. In the last pages of that novel he is made to seek a remedy for a foolish false step in life by marrying the grand heiress of the day;—but the personage of the great heiress does not appear till she comes on the scene as a married woman in *Can You Forgive Her?* He is the nephew and heir to a duke—the Duke of Omnium—who was first introduced in *Doctor Thorne*, and afterwards in *Framley Parsonage*, and who is one of the belongings of whom I have spoken. In these personages and their friends, political and social, I have endeavoured to depict the faults and frailties and vices,—as also the virtues, the graces, and the strength of our highest classes; and if I have not made the strength and virtues predominant over the faults and vices, I have not painted the picture as I intended. Plantagenet Palliser I think to be a very noble gentleman,—such a one as justifies to the nation the seeming anomaly of an hereditary peerage and of primogeniture. His wife is in all respects very inferior to him; but she, too, has, or has been intended to have,

beneath the thin stratum of her follies a basis of good principle, which enabled her to live down the conviction of the original wrong which was done to her, and taught her to endeavour to do her duty in the position to which she was called. She had received a great wrong,—having been made, when little more than a child, to marry a man for whom she cared nothing;—when, however, though she was little more than a child, her love had been given elsewhere. She had very heavy troubles, but they did not overcome her.

As to the heaviest of these troubles, I will say a word in vindication of myself and of the way I handled it in my work. In the pages of *Can You Forgive Her?* the girl's first love is introduced,—beautiful, well-born, and utterly worthless. To save a girl from wasting herself, and an heiress from wasting her property on such a scamp, was certainly the duty of the girl's friends. But it must ever be wrong to force a girl into a marriage with a man she does not love,—and certainly the more so when there is another whom she does love. In my endeavour to teach this lesson I subjected the young wife to the

terrible danger of overtures from the man to whom her heart had been given. I was walking no doubt on ticklish ground, leaving for a while a doubt on the question whether the lover might or might not succeed. Then there came to me a letter from a distinguished dignitary of our Church, a man whom all men honoured, treating me with severity for what I was doing. It had been one of the innocent joys of his life, said the clergyman, to have my novels read to him by his daughters. But now I was writing a book which caused him to bid them close it! Must I also turn away to vicious sensation such as this? Did I think that a wife contemplating adultery was a character fit for my pages? I asked him in return, whether from his pulpit, or at any rate from his communion-table, he did not denounce adultery to his audience; and if so, why should it not be open to me to preach the same doctrine to mine. I made known nothing which the purest girl could not but have learned, and ought not to have learned, elsewhere, and I certainly lent no attraction to the sin which I indicated. His rejoinder was full of grace, and enabled him to avoid the annoyance of

argumentation without abandoning his cause. He said that the subject was so much too long for letters; that he hoped I would go and stay a week with him in the country,—so that we might have it out. That opportunity, however, has never yet arrived.

Lady Glencora overcomes that trouble, and is brought, partly by her own sense of right and wrong, and partly by the genuine nobility of her husband's conduct, to attach herself to him after a certain fashion. The romance of her life is gone, but there remains a rich reality of which she is fully able to taste the flavour. She loves her rank and becomes ambitious, first of social, and then of political ascendancy. He is thoroughly true to her, after his thorough nature, and she, after her less perfect nature, is imperfectly true to him.

In conducting these characters from one story to another I realised the necessity, not only of consistency,—which, had it been maintained by a hard exactitude, would have been untrue to nature,—but also of those changes which time always produces. There are, perhaps, but few of us who, after the lapse of ten years, will be found to have changed our chief

characteristics. The selfish man will still be selfish, and the false man false. But our manner of showing or of hiding these characteristics will be changed,—as also our power of adding to or diminishing their intensity. It was my study that these people, as they grew in years, should encounter the changes which come upon us all; and I think that I have succeeded. The Duchess of Omnium, when she is playing the part of Prime Minister's wife, is the same woman as that Lady Glencora who almost longs to go off with Burgo Fitzgerald, but yet knows that she will never do so; and the Prime Minister Duke, with his wounded pride and sore spirit, is he who, for his wife's sake, left power and place when they were first offered to him;—but they have undergone the changes which a life so stirring as theirs would naturally produce. To do all this thoroughly was in my heart from first to last; but I do not know that the game has been worth the candle. To carry out my scheme I have had to spread my picture over so wide a canvas that I cannot expect that any lover of such art should trouble himself to look at it as a whole. Who will read *Can*

You Forgive Her? *Phineas Finn*, *Phineas Redux*, and *The Prime Minister* consecutively, in order that they may understand the characters of the Duke of Omnium, of Plantagenet Palliser, and of Lady Glencora? Who will ever know that they should be so read? But in the performance of the work I had much gratification, and was enabled from time to time to have in this way that fling at the political doings of the day which every man likes to take, if not in one fashion then in another. I look upon this string of characters,—carried sometimes into other novels than those just named,—as the best work of my life. Taking him altogether, I think that Plantagenet Palliser stands more firmly on the ground than any other personage I have created.

On Christmas day 1863 we were startled by the news of Thackeray's death. He had then for many months given up the editorship of the *Cornhill Magazine*,—a position for which he was hardly fitted either by his habits or temperament,—but was still employed in writing for its pages. I had known him only for four years, but had grown into much intimacy with him and his family. I regard him as

one of the most tender-hearted human beings I ever knew, who, with an exaggerated contempt for the foibles of the world at large, would entertain an almost equally exaggerated sympathy with the joys and troubles of individuals around him. He had been unfortunate in early life—unfortunate in regard to money—unfortunate with an afflicted wife—unfortunate in having his home broken up before his children were fit to be his companions. This threw him too much upon clubs, and taught him to dislike general society. But it never affected his heart, or clouded his imagination. He could still revel in the pangs and joys of fictitious life, and could still feel—as he did to the very last—the duty of showing to his readers the evil consequences of evil conduct. It was perhaps his chief fault as a writer that he could never abstain from that dash of satire which he felt to be demanded by the weaknesses which he saw around him. The satirist who writes nothing but satire should write but little,—or it will seem that his satire springs rather from his own caustic nature than from the sins of the world in which he lives. I myself regard

Esmond as the greatest novel in the English language, basing that judgment upon the excellence of its language, on the clear individuality of the characters, on the truth of its delineations in regard to the time selected, and on its great pathos. There are also in it a few scenes so told that even Scott has never equalled the telling. Let any one who doubts this read the passage in which Lady Castlewood induces the Duke of Hamilton to think that his nuptials with Beatrice will be honoured if Colonel Esmond will give away the bride. When he went from us he left behind living novelists with great names ; but I think that they who best understood the matter felt that the greatest master of fiction of this age had gone.

Rachel Ray underwent a fate which no other novel of mine has encountered. Some years before this a periodical called *Good Words* had been established under the editorship of my friend Dr Norman Macleod, a well-known Presbyterian pastor in Glasgow. In 1863 he asked me to write a novel for his magazine, explaining to me that his principles did not teach him to confine his matter to religious subjects, and paying me the compliment of

saying that he would feel himself quite safe in my hands. In reply I told him I thought he was wrong in his choice; that though he might wish to give a novel to the readers of *Good Words*, a novel from me would hardly be what he wanted, and that I could not undertake to write either with any specially religious tendency, or in any fashion different from that which was usual to me. As worldly and—if any one thought me wicked—as wicked as I had heretofore been, I must still be, should I write for *Good Words*. He persisted in his request, and I came to terms as to a story for the periodical. I wrote it and sent it to him, and shortly afterwards received it back—a considerable portion having been printed—with an intimation that it would not do. A letter more full of wailing and repentance no man ever wrote. It was, he said, all his own fault. He should have taken my advice. He should have known better. But the story, such as it was, he could not give to his readers in the pages of *Good Words*. Would I forgive him? Any pecuniary loss to which his decision might subject me the owner of the publication would willingly make

good. There was some loss—or rather would have been—and that money I exacted, feeling that the fault had in truth been with the editor. There is the tale now to speak for itself. It is not brilliant, nor in any way very excellent; but it certainly is not very wicked. There is some dancing in one of the early chapters, described, no doubt, with that approval of the amusement which I have always entertained; and it was this to which my friend demurred. It is more true of novels than perhaps of anything else, that one man's food is another man's poison.

Miss Mackenzie was written with a desire to prove that a novel may be produced without any love; but even in this attempt it breaks down before the conclusion. In order that I might be strong in my purpose, I took for my heroine a very unattractive old maid, who was overwhelmed with money troubles; but even she was in love before the end of the book, and made a romantic marriage with an old man. There is in this story an attack upon charitable bazaars, made with a violence which will, I think, convince any reader that such attempts at raising money were at the time

very odious to me. I beg to say that since that I have had no occasion to alter my opinion. *Miss Mackenzie* was published in the early spring of 1865.

At the same time I was engaged with others in establishing a periodical Review, in which some of us trusted much, and from which we expected great things. There was, however, in truth so little combination of idea among us, that we were not justified in our trust or in our expectations. And yet we were honest in our purpose, and have, I think, done some good by our honesty. The matter on which we were all agreed was freedom of speech, combined with personal responsibility. We would be neither conservative nor liberal, neither religious nor free-thinking, neither popular nor exclusive ;—but we would let any man who had a thing to say, and knew how to say it, speak freely. But he should always speak with the responsibility of his name attached. In the very beginning I militated against this impossible negation of principles,—and did so most irrationally, seeing that I had agreed to the negation of principles,—by declaring that nothing should appear denying or questioning

the divinity of Christ. It was a most preposterous claim to make for such a publication as we proposed, and it at once drove from us one or two who had proposed to join us. But we went on, and our company—limited—was formed. We subscribed, I think, £1250 each. I at least subscribed that amount, and—having agreed to bring out our publication every fortnight, after the manner of the well-known French publication,—we called it *The Fortnightly*. We secured the services of G. H. Lewes as our editor. We agreed to manage our finances by a Board, which was to meet once a fortnight, and of which I was the Chairman. And we determined that the payments for our literature should be made on a liberal and strictly ready-money system. We carried out our principles till our money was all gone, and then we sold the copyright to Messrs Chapman & Hall for a trifle. But before we parted with our property we found that a fortnightly issue was not popular with the trade through whose hands the work must reach the public; and, as our periodical had not become sufficiently popular itself to bear down such opposition, we succumbed, and brought it out

once a month. Still it was *The Fortnightly*, and still it is *The Fortnightly*. Of all the serial publications of the day, it probably is the most serious, the most earnest, the least devoted to amusement, the least flippant, the least jocose,—and yet it has the face to show itself month after month to the world, with so absurd a misnomer! It is, as all who know the laws of modern literature are aware, a very serious thing to change the name of a periodical. By doing so you begin an altogether new enterprise. Therefore should the name be well chosen;—whereas this was very ill chosen, a fault for which I alone was responsible.

That theory of eclecticism was altogether impracticable. It was as though a gentleman should go into the House of Commons determined to support no party, but to serve his country by individual utterances. Such gentlemen have gone into the House of Commons, but they have not served their country much. Of course the project broke down. Liberalism, free-thinking, and open inquiry will never object to appear in company with their opposites, because they have the conceit to think that they can quell those opposites;

but the opposites will not appear in conjunction with liberalism, free-thinking, and open inquiry. As a natural consequence, our new publication became an organ of liberalism, free-thinking, and open inquiry. The result has been good; and though there is much in the now established principles of *The Fortnightly* with which I do not myself agree, I may safely say that the publication has assured an individuality, and asserted for itself a position in our periodical literature, which is well understood and highly respected.

As to myself and my own hopes in the matter,—I was craving after some increase in literary honesty, which I think is still desirable, but which is hardly to be attained by the means which then recommended themselves to me. In one of the early numbers I wrote a paper advocating the signature of the authors to periodical writing, admitting that the system should not be extended to journalistic articles on political subjects. I think that I made the best of my case; but further consideration has caused me to doubt whether the reasons which induced me to make an exception in favour of political writing do not extend themselves also

to writing on other subjects. Much of the literary criticism which we now have is very bad indeed;—so bad as to be open to the charge both of dishonesty and incapacity. Books are criticised without being read,—are criticised by favour,—and are trusted by editors to the criticism of the incompetent. If the names of the critics were demanded, editors would be more careful. But I fear the effect would be that we should get but little criticism, and that the public would put but little trust in that little. An ordinary reader would not care to have his books recommended to him by Jones; but the recommendation of the great unknown comes to him with all the weight of the *Times*, the *Spectator*, or the *Saturday*.

Though I admit so much, I am not a recreant from the doctrine I then preached. I think that the name of the author does tend to honesty, and that the knowledge that it will be inserted adds much to the author's industry and care. It debars him also from illegitimate license and dishonest assertions. A man should never be ashamed to acknowledge that which he is not ashamed to publish. In *The Fortnightly* everything has been signed, and

in this way good has, I think, been done. Signatures to articles in other periodicals have become much more common since *The Fortnightly* was commenced.

After a time Mr Lewes retired from the editorship, feeling that the work pressed too severely on his moderate strength. Our loss in him was very great, and there was considerable difficulty in finding a successor. I must say that the present proprietor has been fortunate in the choice he did make. Mr John Morley has done the work with admirable patience, zeal, and capacity. Of course he has got around him a set of contributors whose modes of thought are what we may call much advanced; he being "much advanced" himself, would not work with other aids. The periodical has a peculiar tone of its own; but it holds its own with ability, and though there are many who perhaps hate it, there are none who despise it. When the company sold it, having spent about £9000 on it, it was worth little or nothing. Now I believe it to be a good property.

My own last personal concern with it was on a matter of fox-hunting.¹ There came out

¹ I have written various articles for it since, especially two on Cicero, to which I devoted great labour.

in it an article from the pen of Mr Freeman the historian, condemning the amusement, which I love, on the grounds of cruelty and general brutality. Was it possible, asked Mr Freeman, quoting from Cicero, that any educated man should find delight in so coarse a pursuit? Always bearing in mind my own connection with *The Fortnightly*, I regarded this almost as a rising of a child against the father. I felt at any rate bound to answer Mr Freeman in the same columns, and I obtained Mr Morley's permission to do so. I wrote my defence of fox-hunting, and there it is. In regard to the charge of cruelty, Mr Freeman seems to assert that nothing unpleasant should be done to any of God's creatures except for a useful purpose. The protection of a lady's shoulders from the cold is a useful purpose; and therefore a dozen fur-bearing animals may be snared in the snow and left to starve to death in the wires, in order that the lady may have the tippet,—though a tippet of wool would serve the purpose as well as a tippet of fur. But the congregation and healthful amusement of one or two hundred persons, on whose behalf a single fox may or may not be killed, is not a useful purpose. I think that Mr

Freeman has failed to perceive that amusement is as needful and almost as necessary as food and raiment. The absurdity of the further charge as to the general brutality of the pursuit, and its consequent unfitness for an educated man, is to be attributed to Mr Freeman's ignorance of what is really done and said in the hunting-field,—perhaps to his misunderstanding of Cicero's words. There was a rejoinder to my answer, and I asked for space for further remarks. I could have it, the editor said, if I much wished it; but he preferred that the subject should be closed. Of course I was silent. His sympathies were all with Mr Freeman,—and against the foxes, who, but for foxhunting, would cease to exist in England. And I felt that *The Fortnightly* was hardly the place for the defence of the sport. Afterwards Mr Freeman kindly suggested to me that he would be glad to publish my article in a little book to be put out by him condemnatory of fox-hunting generally. He was to have the last word and the first word, and that power of picking to pieces which he is known to use in so masterly a manner, without any reply from me! This I was obliged to

decline. If he would give me the last word, as he would have the first, then, I told him, I should be proud to join him in the book. This offer did not however meet his views.

It had been decided by the Board of Management, somewhat in opposition to my own ideas on the subject, that the *Fortnightly Review* should always contain a novel. It was of course natural that I should write the first novel, and I wrote *The Belton Estate*. It is similar in its attributes to *Rachel Ray* and to *Miss Mackenzie*. It is readable, and contains scenes which are true to life; but it has no peculiar merits, and will add nothing to my reputation as a novelist. I have not looked at it since it was published; and now turning back to it in my memory, I seem to remember almost less of it than of any book that I have written.

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