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The Thackeray country.



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THE THACKERAY COUNTRY

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W. M. THACKERAY.

*From an Etching in dry point by G. Barnett Smith.*



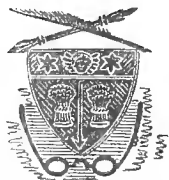


# THE THACKERAY COUNTRY

BY  
LEWIS MELVILLE

AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE OF WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY," ETC., ETC.

WITH  
FORTY-EIGHT FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS  
MOSTLY FROM ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPHS  
BY C. W. BARNES WARD



LONDON  
ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK  
SOHO SQUARE

*First Published* . *January 1905*  
*Reprinted* . *August 1911*



TO  
MY WIFE



## PREFACE

THOUGH no book treating of the Thackeray Country has been written, there have been workers in the field. First came Mr W. H. Rideing's pamphlet on *Thackeray's London*; then appeared the volumes, *Thackeray's Haunts and Homes* and *With Thackeray in America*, written and illustrated by Mr Eyre Crowe, who for a while was Thackeray's secretary, and who accompanied him on one of the visits to the United States; quite recently, Mr W. Sharp has written a most interesting paper on "The Literary Geography of Thackeray"; and Mr James MacVicar is contributing topographical introductions to the "London" edition of Thackeray's works, now in course of publication. To each of these writers I express my indebtedness for valuable suggestions contained in their writings.

I have also derived a not inconsiderable amount of information from Miss G. E. Mitton and the late Sir Walter Besant's admirable handbooks, *The Fascination of London*; and also from Mrs Ritchie's *Chapters from Some Unwritten Memoirs*, and her Biographical Introductions to an edition of her father's works.

LEWIS MELVILLE.

BARNES, *New Year's Day* 1905.

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*Map of Thackeray's London at end of volume.*



# THE THACKERAY COUNTRY

## INTRODUCTORY

“IF you want to travel, my poor Spec,” said Frank Whitestock, the curate, to ‘The Fat Contributor,’ “you should not be trusted very far beyond Islington. It is certain that you can describe a tea-kettle better than a pyramid.” So Thackeray made fun of his powers of description. Yet surely he was not quite fair to himself. It was his custom to belittle his own performances. He spoke slightingly of his lectures, and made disparaging remarks about his books. “I have just read such a stupid part of *Pendennis*, but how well written it is.” “I can’t say I think much of *Pendennis*, at least of the execution; it certainly drags about the middle; but I had an attack of illness at the time I reached that part of the book, and could not make it any better than I did.” He had the audacity to say that *Esmond* was dull. *Esmond*, the greatest historical novel in the language, the high-water mark of English fiction in the nineteenth century. But his remarks were not always damning. “I bought the *Kickleburys*, *Rebecca and Rowena*, and

the *Rhine Story*, and read them through with immense pleasure. Do you know, I think all three capital; and *R. and R.* not only made me laugh, but the other thing." "I have been reading *The Hoggarty Diamond* this morning; upon my word and honour, if it doesn't make you cry, I shall have a mean opinion." Even of *Esmond* he spoke well when Mr Fields met him in Beacon Street, New York, with the three volumes of that book tucked under his arm. "Here is the very best I can do," he said; "and I am carrying it to Prescott as a reward for having given me my first dinner in America. I stand by this book, and am willing to leave it, where I go, as my card."

Thackeray was no doubt more at home in Mayfair than in Palestine; but probably the majority of those who read the *Paris* and *Irish Sketch-books* and *From Cornhill to Grand Cairo*, will not hesitate to affirm that his pen-pictures of foreign towns and his descriptions of scenery leave little to be desired. Take, for example, the visit of Henry Esmond to the grave of his mother in the convent cemetery, close by the church of St Gudule at Brussels. "Esmond came to this spot in one sunny evening of spring, and saw, amidst a thousand black crosses, casting their shadows across the grassy mounds, that particular one that marked his mother's resting-place. Many more of those poor creatures that lay there had adopted that same name, Sœur Marie Madeleine, with which sorrow had rebaptised her, and which fondly seemed to hint their individual story of love and grief. He fancied her in tears and

darkness, kneeling at the foot of her cross, under which her cares were buried. Surely he knelt down, and said his own prayer there, not in sorrow so much as in awe (for even his memory had no recollection of her), and in pity for the pangs which the gentle soul in life had been made to suffer. To this cross she brought them; for this heavenly bridegroom she exchanged the husband who had wooed her, the traitor who had left her. A thousand such hillocks lay around, the gentle daisies springing out of the grass over them, and each bearing its cross and requiescat. A nun, veiled in black, was kneeling hard by, at a sleeping sister's bedside (so freshly made, that the spring had scarce had time to spin a coverlid for it); beyond the cemetery walls you had glimpses of life and the world, and the spires and gables of the city. A bird came down from a roof opposite, and lit first on a cross, and then on the grass below it, whence it flew away presently with a leaf in its mouth: then came a sound as of chanting, from the chapel of the sisters hard by; others had long since filled the place which poor Mary Magdaine once had there, were kneeling in the same stall, and hearing the same hymns and prayers in which her stricken heart had found consolation. Might she sleep in peace—might she sleep in peace; and we, too, when our struggles and pains are over! But the earth is the Lord's as the heaven is: we are alike his creatures here and yonder. I took a little flower off the hillock and kissed it, and went my way, like the bird that had just lighted on the cross by me, back into the world

again. Silent receptacle of death; tranquil depth of calm, out of the reach of tempest and trouble! I felt as one who had been walking below the sea, and treading amidst the bones of shipwrecks." Of description there is but a minimum, yet the scene is conjured up more minutely than probably could be done by the most exact topographer. It remains with one through the years, and, though a decade may have passed since the book was read, yet the slightest reference brings before the mind the picture of the ill-used lad standing by the side of the earthly resting-place of his erring, forsaken mother. Take another passage from an earlier work treating of the Kickleburys and Mr Titmarsh *am Rhein*. "The next morning we had passed by the rocks and towers, the old familiar landscapes, the gleaning towns by the river-side, and the green vineyards combed along the hills, and when I woke up it was at a great hotel at Cologne and it was not sunrise yet. Deutz lay opposite, and over Deutz the dusky sky was reddened. The hills were veiled in the mist and the grey. The grey river flowed underneath us; the steamers were roosting along the quays, a light keeping watch in the cabins here and there, and its reflections, quivering in the water. As I look, the sky-line towards the east grows redder and redder. A long troop of grey horsemen winds down the river road, and passes over the bridge of boats. You might take them for ghosts, those grey horsemen, so shadowy do they look; but you hear the trample of their hoofs as they pass over the planks. Every

minute the dawn tumbles up into the twilight ; and over Deutz the heaven blushes brighter. The quays begin to fill with men : the carts begin to creak and rattle, and wake the sleeping echoes. Ding, ding, ding, the steamers' bells begin to ring : the people on board to stir and wake : the lights may be extinguished and take their turn of sleep : the active boats shake themselves, and push out into the river : the great bridge opens and gives them passage : the church bells of the city begin to clink : the cavalry trumpets blow from the opposite bank : the sailor is at the wheel, the porter at his burthen, the soldier at his musket, and the priest at his prayers. . . . And lo ! in a flash of crimson splendour, with blazing scarlet clouds running before his chariot, and heralding his majestic approach, God's sun rises before the world, and all nature wakens and brightens." There is the true Thackeray, with his impressionist scene-painting : not the picture of this feature or of that ; but a sketch of the whole, omitting nothing of value ; and concluding with the tribute to nature and to the God of nature.

As a rule, Thackeray did not set himself to describe places. Man, and not scenery, was what he strove to portray. Scenes are not so important in his case as, say, with Dickens. Many of the characters of Dickens could exist only in certain localities, and as the neighbourhoods change so the characters become extinct. Most of Thackeray's creatures, however, are cosmopolitan. Becky lived in Curzon Street : she might as well have lived in Kensington or

## 6 THE THACKERAY COUNTRY

Paris or Buda-Pesth. My Lord Steyne might have been a Russian or a Spaniard instead of an English nobleman, and not a line would have had to be deleted. So might one run through a great part of the list. Often the briefest mention of a street satisfied Thackeray.

It was his aim to create "atmosphere," rather than to describe locality. Who remembers where the Sedleys went from Russell Square after the crash? Yet who does not recall, even without an effort of memory, that it was a shabby-genteel neighbourhood—whether it was in Brompton, or off the Edgware Road, or in some distant suburb, is immaterial. As a matter of fact, the chronicler tells us that the Sedleys removed to St Adelaide's Villas, Anna Maria Road, West. Thackeray enjoyed a sly hit at the grandiloquently-named streets in mean quarters, "where the houses look like baby-houses; where the people looking out of the first floor windows must infallibly, as you think, sit with their feet in the parlours; where the shrubs in the little gardens in front bloom with a perennial display of little children's pinafores, little red socks, caps, etc. (polyandria polygyria); whence you hear the sound of jingling spirits and women singing; whither of evenings you see city clerks plodding wearily. . . ." Again, not even Mr Arthur Morrison could excel the following description of a mean street. "Sedan Buildings is a little flagged square, ending abruptly with the huge walls of Bluck's Brewery. The houses, by many degrees smaller than the large decayed tenements in Great Guelph Street, are still not

uncomfortable, although shabby. There are brass-plates on the doors, two on some of them; or simple names, as 'Lunt,' 'Padgemore,' etc. (as if no other statement about Lunt and Padgemore were necessary at all), under the bells. There are pictures of mangles before two of the houses, and a gilt arm with a hammer sticking out from one. . . . It is a quiet, kind, respectable place somehow, in spite of its shabbiness. Two pewter pints and a jolly little half-pint are hanging on the railings in perfect confidence, basking in what little sun comes into the Court. A group of small children are making an ornament of oyster-shells in one corner. Who has that half-pint? Is it for one of those small ones, or for some delicate female recommended to take beer? The windows in the Court, upon some of which the sun glistens, are not cracked, and pretty clean; it is only the black and dreary look behind which gives them a poverty-stricken appearance. No curtains or blinds. A bird-cage and a very few pots of flowers here and there. This—with the exception of a milkman talking to a whity-brown woman, made up of bits of flannel and strips of faded chintz and calico seemingly, and holding a long bundle which cried—this was all I saw in Sedan Buildings."

Though Thackeray was rarely at pains to be exact in his books in the matter of localities, his daughter, Mrs Ritchie, has told us that, walking with her, he would point out the very houses in which his characters lived. Here he imagined Arthur Pendennis flirted with Miss Amory, there he pictured the residence of Colonel Newcome, a

third place was to him the hotel where Amelia stayed with her husband, and so on. Indeed, his characters were very real to him. He lived with them and shared their joys and sorrows. In many of his letters he wrote of them as if they were creatures of flesh and blood. "I wonder what will happen to Pendennis and Fanny Bolton," he said to Mr Brookfield. "Writing it and sending it to you, somehow it seems as if it were true." And later, addressing the same correspondent from the Continent, he told how he had been to the Hôtel de la Terrasse where Becky used to live, and that he had passed by Captain Osborne's lodgings. "I believe perfectly in all those people, and feel quite an interest in the inn in which they lived," he added.

There cannot be said to be a Thackeray Country in the sense that there is a Scott Country or a Burns Country. It has been truly said that all Scotland is Scott-land, and the Burns area is even more clearly defined. Thackeray was not insular in his life, and of all the novelists of his generation he was the most cosmopolitan. He spoke French like a native—he was not free from the weakness of employing the idioms of that language in his writings—and could make himself understood in German. He was born in Calcutta ; spent his boyhood in London, where he received the rudiments of his education ; went subsequently to Trinity College, Cambridge, and passed his vacations at Addiscombe or in Devonshire. He rented chambers in the Temple, and sometimes stayed there ; and passed some years in Paris. After his marriage he settled in



London, and for the rest of his life the metropolis remained his headquarters. But he was always a traveller. He visited Ireland to write of the experiences of *The Cockney in Ireland*—a work which, at the request of the publisher, appeared under the title of *The Irish Sketch-book*; and he spent some months journeying from Cornhill to Cairo. He visited many continental cities; he delivered lectures in the principal towns of England and Scotland; and twice visited America.

“How are you to limn the literary geography of Thackeray,” Mr Sharp recently exclaimed, overcome by the tremendous *vista*, “unless you at once relinquish any attempt to go beyond Bath and Exeter, or even to stray from London, unless at farthest to Brighton and Boulogne.” This is the great difficulty that at the very beginning of his task faces the literary geographer: Thackeray and his characters wandered everywhere. It is possible to trace the movements in London, and, as Thackeray was essentially a Londoner, much of the action of his novels took place in the metropolis. Thackeray’s London is mainly confined to the north side of the river, for the novelist rarely crossed the water. A few of his characters lived at Clapham, however; and Sir William Dobbin, the father of the historian of the Punjaub, with his daughters lived in a villa with beautiful graperies and peach-trees in Denmark Hill, which, the novelist assures the readers of *Vanity Fair*, was some sixty years ago a very desirable residential region. It is when one leaves London that the real stumbling-

block is met with, for were each place visited or mentioned to be described, a guide-book would be the result. No attempt, therefore, will be made to follow Thackeray on his lecture tours in England and Scotland. We shall not go with him to Tunbridge Wells where he spent a holiday—the curious may read of a journey thither from Charterhouse in the *Roundabout Paper, Tunbridge Toys*; nor shall we seek the old chemist's shop at Bath where Pen's father plied his pestle and mortar. We shall not go to Hampshire on a visit to the Bute Crawleys, nor to Queen's Crawley to call on Sir Pitt; nor shall we journey to Clevedon Court in Somersetshire, the residence of Sir Charles Elton, the father of the wife of the Rev. W. H. Brookfield, though that mansion is said to be the original of "Castlewood" in *Esmond*. Brighton deserves a place, for it is frequently mentioned in *Vanity Fair* and other writings, and was besides often visited by Thackeray. "Being entirely occupied with my two new friends, Mrs Pendennis and her son Arthur," he wrote to Mrs Brookfield in 1849 from that favourite watering-place, "I got up very early again this morning, and was with them for more than two hours before breakfast. He is a very good-natured, generous young fellow, and I begin to like him considerably. I wonder if he is interesting to me from selfish reasons, and because I fancy we resemble each other in many parts." So many places on the Continent are mentioned, that it has been thought worth while to devote a chapter to them.

Thackeray's travel-books, being themselves

records of The Thackeray Country, cannot be dealt with in detail or even city by city. At the same time, it is impossible to ignore them. Omitting *Little Travels and Roadside Sketches* and *Notes of a Week's Holiday*, minor writings to which reference will be made in a later chapter, there remain to be mentioned *The Paris Sketch-book*, *The Irish Sketch-book*, and, to give the full title, *Notes of a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo by way of Lisbon, Athens, Constantinople, and Jerusalem, performed in the steamers of the Peninsular and Oriental Company*.\*

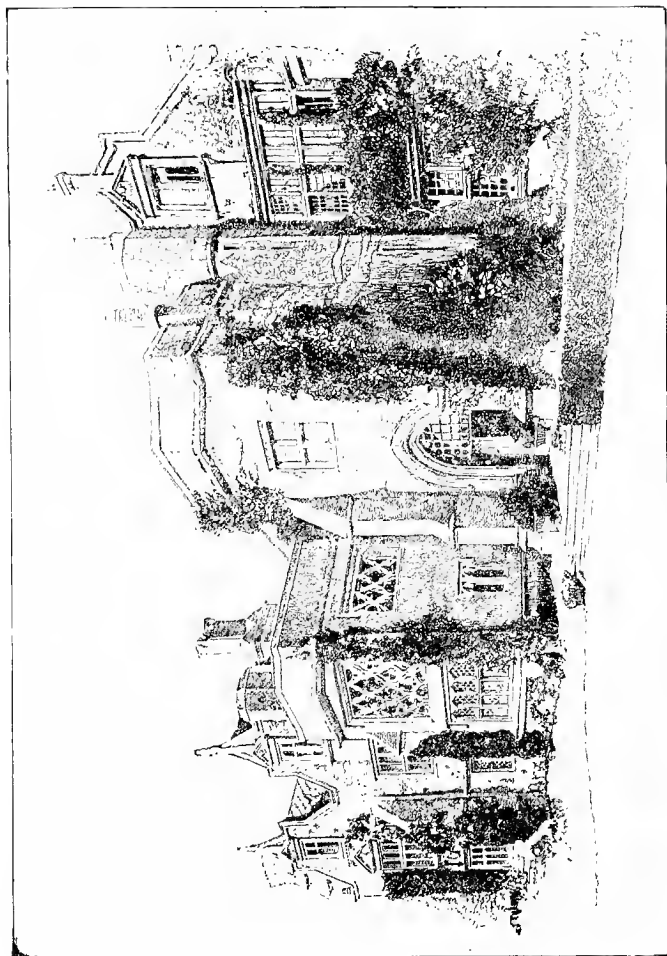
*The Paris Sketch-book*, a collection of articles, many of which had appeared in various periodicals, was the first issued. It arose, naturally enough, from Thackeray's sojourn in the French capital. He knew his Paris thoroughly; and these articles treated of matters with which he was well acquainted. He had little to say concerning the topography of the city; but he dealt with the inner life of at least one section of its inhabitants. Indeed, a picture of the Quartier Latin of his day might, without difficulty, be constructed from the stories and articles on books and their writers, on art and artists, and on plays and players contained in the volume.

If in *The Paris Sketch-book* he wrote from the fulness of his knowledge, it must be admitted that *The Irish Sketch-book* was merely written to order. Of Ireland he knew nothing. He had never been in the sister isle, nor had he associ-

\* Thackeray contributed to *Punch*, "Wanderings of Our Fat Contributor," and "Punch in the East," from "Our Fat Contributor."

ated to any particular extent with her sons and daughters. He went to Ireland to write a book about that country; and, clever as the book is, it is not in the same plane as the companion volume. It was, however, a most conscientious piece of book-making. He "did" Ireland thoroughly—Kildare, Carlow, Waterford, Cork, Bantry, Glengariff, Killarney, Tralee, Listowel, Tarbert, Limerick, Galway, Ballinahinch, Clifden, Westport, Ballinasloe, Dublin, Meath, Drogheda, Dundalk, Newry, Armagh, Belfast, Coleraine, Portrush, Templemoyle, Derry—even this long list does not exhaust the itinerary of his travels. He described town and country; officials, land-owners, peasants; town-halls and hovels;—in a word, it is an admirable guide-book, written by a clever, observant man with a practised pen, at pains to get up his subject as thoroughly as possible in a very short space of time.

The most interesting incident in the Irish tour was the meeting between Thackeray and Charles Lever at the latter's home in Templerogue, which lies four miles south-west of Dublin. Thackeray endeavoured to persuade his host to come to London, where, without doubt, he thought the latter would be able to improve his prospects, and he backed his advice with offers of pecuniary assistance. The Irishman refused, and said afterwards that Thackeray was the most good-natured man in the world, "but that help from him would be worse than no help at all. . . . He [Thackeray] was like a man struggling to keep his head above water, and who offers to teach his friend to swim." *The Irish Sketch-*



CLEVEDON COURT, SOMERSETSHIRE. Page 10.  
*Supposed to be the original of Costellood in "Esmond."*



*book* was dedicated to Lever by the author, who, "laying aside for the moment the travelling title of Mr Titmarsh," for the first time subscribed his own name. Lever was blamed by his countrymen for accepting the dedication, because, they said, the book was full of blunders and exaggeration. Fitzgerald, however, who was in Ireland at the time, would not admit the truth of the accusation. "It is all true," he wrote from Ireland. "I ordered a bath here, and when I got in the waiter said it was heated to ninety degrees, but it was scalding; he next locked me in the room, instead of my locking him out." Certainly Thackeray never meant to annoy the Irish. When someone said to him: "I hear you have written a book upon Ireland, and are always making fun of the Irish; you don't like us," his eyes filled with tears, as, thinking of his wife born in county Cork, he replied: "God help me! all that I have loved best in the world is Irish." He paid a great compliment to Erin in his lecture on Swift. "The Dean was no Irishman," he said; "no Irishman ever gave but with a kind word and a kind heart."

Ireland is not the scene of any of Thackeray's books, save, of course, the earlier chapters of inimitable *Barry Lyndon*: but many Hibernian characters are introduced. One thinks immediately of Captain "Jack" Costigan and his daughter, the beautiful Fotheringay; of The O'Mulligan, who figured rather too prominently at "Mrs Perkins's Ball"; and of Captain Shandon (of which character it is said Dr Maginn, the editor of *Fraser's Magazine*, was the prototype).

The poems that appeared over the signature of The Molony of Kilballymolony are famous. The Molony described the Great Exhibition, and a Ball given to the Nepaulese Ambassador; and discoursed of "Mitchell of Belfast," of "Meagher of the Sword," of the "Immortal Smith O'Brine," and other patriots, and of the incidents in which they were concerned. Anthony Trollope may be right when he says that Thackeray mistook the errors in pronunciation of the Irish in London trying to imitate the talk of the Londoners, for the national Irish tone; but that is a trifle. They were not serious, these *Lyra Hibernica*; they were humorous, good-natured fun poked at the eccentricities and foibles of our neighbours. Who can refuse them the tribute of a smile?

\* "The noble Chair stud at the stair,  
 And bade the dthrums to thump; and he  
 Did thus evince, to that Black Prince,  
 The welcome of his Company.  
 O fair the girls, and rich the curls  
 And bright the oys you saw there was;  
 And fixed each oye, ye there could spoi,  
 On GINERAL JUNG BAHAWTHER was!

The Ginerall great then tuck his sate  
 With all the other gineralls,  
 (Bedad his troat, his vest, his coat,  
 All bleezed with precious minerals);  
 And as he there, with princely air,  
 Reclouin on his cushion was,  
 All round about his royal chair  
 The squeezin and the pushin was.

---

\* *Mr Molony's Account of the Ball given to the Nepaulese Ambassador by the Peninsular and Oriental Company.*



O PAT, such girls, such Jukes, and Earls,  
Such fashion and nobilitee !  
Just think of TIM and fancy him  
Amidst the hoigh gentilitee !”

The journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo was undertaken almost at a moment's notice. At one of his clubs Thackeray met some friends who were going on an excursion in the Mediterranean, and at dinner they suggested he should accompany them. Thackeray liked the idea, but there were difficulties. The boat started in thirty-six hours; he had engagements at home, social and business; he had contracted to write for Messrs Chapman & Hall, a Life of Talleyrand, and to deliver the manuscript by December; and, finally, there was the question of expense. One of the party was in a position to offer, on behalf of the Directors of the Peninsular and Oriental Company, a free passage—that disposed of one trouble.\* Messrs Chapman & Hall arranged to take a book descriptive of the voyage in place of the biography—this disposed of the other vital objection. “To break his outstanding engagements—to write letters to his amazed family, stating they were not to expect him to dinner on Saturday fortnight, as he would be at Jerusalem

\* The free passage was the cause of trouble later. When the book appeared Carlyle was angry with Thackeray for having accepted the free passage, and he compared the transaction to the practice of a blind fiddler going to and fro in a halfpenny ferry-boat in Scotland, and sending round the hat for coppers. It is not generally known that this view was expressed by Carlyle or another in a magazine, and that Thackeray replied in a humorous paper contributed to *Punch*, “Titmarsh v. Tait.”

on that day—to purchase eighteen shirts and lay in a sea-stock of Russia ducks—was the work of twenty-four hours.” The dinner took place on August 20, 1844: on August 22 the “Lady Mary Wood” sailed from Southampton with Thackeray on board.

Only a bare outline of the tour need be given here. Vigo, Lisbon, Cadiz, Gibraltar, Athens, Smyrna, Constantinople, Rhodes, Telmessus, Beyrout, Jaffa, Jerusalem, Alexandria, Cairo; Malta—seventeen days’ quarantine; and home by way of Naples and Rome.

“Are you going to Cairo for fresh sensations?” Edward Fitzgerald wrote to a friend in October 1844. “Thackeray went off in a steam-boat about the time the French were before Mogadore; he was to see those coasts and to visit Jerusalem! Titmarsh at Jerusalem will certainly be an era in Christianity.” But Titmarsh was in no mocking mood when he visited the Holy City. “A great part of the city spread before us:—white domes upon domes, and terraces of the same character as our own. Here and there, from among these white-washed mounds round about, a minaret rose, or a rare date-tree; but the chief part of the vegetation near was that odious tree, the prickly pear,—one huge green wart growing out of another, armed with spikes, as inhospitable as the aloe, without shelter or beauty. To the right the Mosque of Omar rose; the rising sun behind it. Yonder steep, tortuous lane before us, flanked by ruined walls on either side, has borne, time out of mind, the title of Via Dolorosa; and tradition has fixed

the spots where the Saviour rested, bearing His cross to Calvary. But of the mountain, rising immediately in front of us, a few grey olive-trees speckling the yellow side here and there, there can be no question. That is the Mount of Olives. Bethany lies beyond it. The most sacred eyes that ever looked on this world, have gazed on those ridges: it was there He used to walk and teach. With shame and humility one looks towards the spot where that inexpressible Love and Benevolence lived and breathed; where the great yearning heart of the Saviour interceded for all our race; and whence the bigots and traitors of His day led Him away to kill Him."

Titmarsh was in quite another frame of mind when he saw the Pyramids: "Fancy my sensations; two big ones and a little one:

! ! !

There they lay, rosy and solemn in the distance—those old, majestic, mystical, familiar edifices. Several of us tried to be impressed; but breakfast supervening, a rush was made at the coffee and cold pies, and the sentiment of awe was lost in the scramble for victuals. Are we so *blasé* of the world that the greatest marvels in it do not succeed in moving us? Have society, Pall Mall clubs, and a habit of sneering, so withered up our organs of veneration that we can admire no more? My sensation with regard to the Pyramids was, that I had seen them before: then came a feeling of shame that the view of them should awaken no respect. Then I wanted (naturally) to see whether my neighbours were any more enthusi-

astic than myself. . . . The truth is, nobody was seriously moved. . . . And why should they, because of an exaggeration of bricks ever so enormous? I confess, for my part, that the Pyramids are very big!"

The writer of this volume has grappled with the difficulties to the best of his ability, and he hopes that his readers will think he has adopted the wisest course in ignoring the hundred and one places of minor importance, and in devoting his pages to those localities which in his opinion are of primary interest to those who are interested in the life and writings of Thackeray.



*(Emerg Walker.)*

W. M. THACKERAY (ABOUT 13 YEARS OF AGE)  
*From the Bust by J. Devile in the National Portrait Gallery, London.*



## CHAPTER I

### THACKERAY'S EARLY HOMES

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY was born at Calcutta on July 18, 1811. He was descended from John de Thackwra, who held at Hartwich, in 1336, a dwelling-house and thirty acres of land belonging to the Abbot of St Mary of Fountains ; and William de Thackwra, who, twenty-five years after, was tenant at will of a messuage and twenty-one acres in the same district. A hundred years later Robert Thackra lived at the Grange of Brimham. It was not until the seventeenth century that the surname assumed its now familiar form. Then Walter Thackeray settled at Hampsthwaite, near the Knaresborough forest, in the West Riding of Yorkshire. For two hundred years the family remained in this little village, until with the death of Thomas Thackeray in 1804 the yeoman's branch of the line came to an end.

In the meantime younger branches had sprung up. Elias had gone to Christ's College, Cambridge, and became M.A. in 1709, and two years

later Rector of Hawkerswell in the Archdeaconry of Richmond. Thomas left the Hampsthwaite home in 1706, and was admitted on the foundation at Eton, where he won a scholarship that took him to King's College. He was B.A. in 1715, M.A. four years later, and subsequently elected to a fellowship. He returned to Eton for a while as an assistant-master, and after an unsuccessful candidature for the provostship of King's, was appointed to be Headmaster of Harrow. He was most successful in this post, and contrived to pull this scholastic institution out of the mire into which it had been dragged by his predecessor, who has been described as a drunken, disorderly, idle man. He "performed all along with great reputation," an old chronicler has stated; and during his stay the boys increased in numbers from thirty-three to one hundred and thirty. He was appointed a chaplain to Frederick, Prince of Wales, and might have obtained high preferment had the latter lived to come into his kingdom. As it was, Thomas ultimately became Archdeacon of Surrey, an office congenial to him, since he could perform the duties at the time of his leisure in the Easter holidays. He had married, in 1729, a daughter of John Woodward, Balter's Marston, Warwickshire, who bore him sixteen children. He died in 1760.

Of Thomas's numerous sons, Elias became Provost of King's College, Cambridge; another entered the Church; a third was provided for in the Customs; and two others studied medicine, and practised, one at Windsor, the other

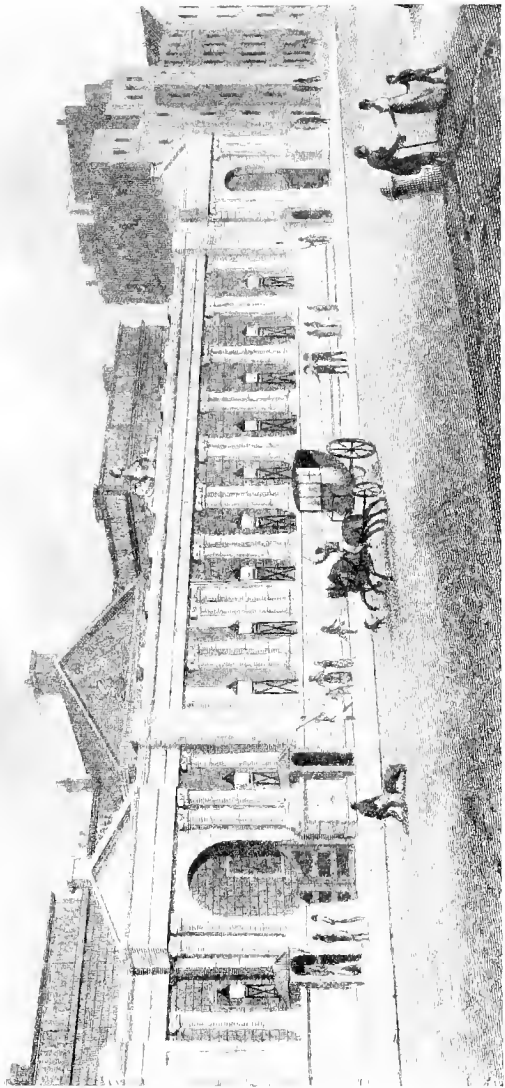


at Cambridge. The latter attended the novelist, who, when up at Cambridge, suffered from headache. He ordered diet and leeches, and refused to take a fee from his young relative. "What!" he demanded, with mock indignation, "do you take me for a cannibal?" A writership in the East India Company's service was presented to the youngest son, who bore the curious name of William Makepeace, which, it is said, was suggested as a memorial of a member of the family who in the Middle Ages had suffered for his faith at the stake. William sailed for Calcutta early in 1766. His career in India was from the outset eminently successful. He was Fourth in Council at Dacca in 1771, then Chief of the frontier Province of Sythet. In 1774 he returned to Dacca as Third in Council. Two years later he married Amelia, the daughter of Lieutenant-Colonel Richmond Webb, a descendant of the victor of Weynendal, whom Thackeray portrayed in *The History of Henry Esmond*. Soon after, William Makepeace, having amassed a considerable fortune, returned to England, where he purchased a small estate at Hadley, near Chipping Barnet, and settled down to live the life of a country gentleman. He was buried under the shadow of the Church of Monken-Hadley, a picturesque edifice, upon the tower of which still linger the battered fragments of an old beacon cage. It was he who converted the Thackerays into a great Anglo-Indian family. His sisters married Anglo-Indians; and of his eleven sons no fewer than nine went Eastward Ho! Four entered the East India Company's

service; another joined the Indian army; a sixth became a barrister and journalist at Calcutta. Two of his four daughters married Bengal civilians, and a third became the wife of the Attorney-General of Ceylon. The fourth son, Richmond, father of the novelist, was born in 1781. He was nominated to a writership, and went to Calcutta in 1798, the year in which Lord Wellesley became Governor-General. Promotion came quickly also to him. As a reward for proficiency in Arabic and Persian, he was appointed Collector of Midnapir. He was transferred to Birbhum in 1803, and then to Ranghyr. He was subsequently Secretary of the Bengal Board of Revenue, and spent most of the remaining years of his life in that city. Here he married Anne Becher, like himself the descendant of an Anglo-Indian family. Richmond was promoted to the collectorship of the Calcutta districts, and the young couple resided at the Collector's official house at Alipur until the husband's death, which occurred soon after the birth of their son.

The attempt to trace through his progenitors the evolution of Thackeray as a man and a writer, has been made by the late Sir William Hunter, the biographer of the Thackerays in India. "It was the mother's influence that remained with him through life. Divided by half the world, the child clung to her memory: the separation was followed by years of tender reunion, which ended only with his death. . . . An influence of another kind on Thackeray's character was his descent through his grandmother, Amelia Richmond





CARLTON HOUSE, PALL MALL. Page 28.

*From an Engraving by J. Fye.*

Webb, from the noble Constables of Richmond and Lords of Burton. . . . The great novelist used their crest as his signet ring : a coronet transfixed with three darts, from one of which fall three drops of blood, in combination with a monogram designed by himself . . . . But if the grandmother's ancestry touched his imagination with the wand of romance, he derived the strong fibre of his nature from the grandfather's side. During a hundred years his branch of the Thackerays had been a landless people belonging to the strictly professional class. Of sixty-nine kinsmen and collaterals, twenty-four entered the army or navy, nineteen were churchmen, nine were barristers, eight were Indian civilians, seven were medical men, two were Eton masters. In the generation immediately preceding the novelist, at least four uncles and one aunt had literary gifts. Thackeray's genius was the flowering of a century and a half of family culture. . . . Thackeray's robustness of character, his hatred of shams, his scorn of all things base, had their roots deep down in the manly life of the old Yorkshire moorland. . . . The power of producing high-class mental work to order, when work must needs be done, came to him from a century of later ancestors who made their bread by their brains. The loneliness and unsatisfied dim yearnings for love which each generation of Anglo-Indian children suffer, and the perpetual pathos of parting in our Indian life, have also left a touching record on his pages. . . . The clerical traditions of a family with nineteen parsons among them, made Thackeray, quite apart from his intellectual convictions, the friend of true

churchmen, and filled his imagination with the poetry of the rites of the Church. . . . But the greatest single interest of Thackeray's life-work was still his mother. . . . The lofty tenderness for women which he learned from that mother he lavished on his wife, until parted from her by her dark malady ; it overflowed to his daughters, and breathes in his works."

Like most children born of English parents in India, young William Makepeace was sent home at an early age for the benefit of his health. Though he could have had but the dimmest memories of the country, he frequently introduced Anglo-Indians and occasionally an Indian, into his stories.

This, however, was probably the result of the conversation he heard in his family when he was older, and of his intimacy with many civilians and military men, the greater portion of whose lives had been passed in the great Oriental peninsula. In *The History of Pendennis*, one remembers Colonel Altamont, agent to the Nawaab of Lucknow. This Ambassador Plenipotentiary of the Indian Prince was not an envoy accredited to the Courts of St James's or Leadenhall Street, being on a confidential mission quite independent of the East India Company or the Board of Control. In fact, as his friend Captain the Chevalier Edward Strong said, "Colonel Altamont's object being financial, and to effectuate a sale of some of the principal diamonds and rubies of the Lucknow Crown, his wish is *not* to report himself at the India House or in Cannon Row, but rather to negotiate with private capitalists—with whom he





WALPOLE HOUSE, CHISWICK MIDDLESEX. Page 81.  
*Supposed to be the original of Miss Fulkerton's Academy.*



has had important transactions both in this country and on the Continent." Readers of *Pendennis* will remember that this scoundrel's real name was Amory, the father of Blanche, of "*Mes larmes*" fame. In *The Newcomes* there is introduced a bogus Indian prince, Rummon Loll, at Mrs Hobson Newcome's reception. The same book of course contains the Anglo-Indian character of James Binnie, and Colonel Newcome, after that distinguished officer came home. The commander-in-chief in general orders having announced that in giving to Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Newcome, C.B., of the Bengal Cavalry, leave for the first time, after no less than thirty-four years' absence from home, "he (Sir George Hustler) cannot refrain from expressing his sense of the great and meritorious services of this most distinguished officer, who has left his regiment in a state of the highest discipline and efficiency."

There has been much discussion as to the prototype of Colonel Newcome. In all probability, like most of Thackeray's characters, it was a composite portrait. Mrs Ritchie declares there was no single original, but says it was always understood that Major Carmichael Smyth had many of his characteristics; that there was also a brother of the major's, General Charles Carmichael, of the 2nd European Bengal Light Cavalry (20th Hussars), who was very like Colonel Newcome in looks; and that a third family Colonel Newcome was Sir Richmond Shakespeare. Mrs Ritchie is credited with being the authoress of the following inscription, placed on

the wall of Holy Trinity Church, Ayr, immediately above the grave:—

Sacred to the memory of  
Major HENRY WILLIAM CARMICHAEL SMYTH  
of the Bengal Engineers,  
who departed this life at Ayr,  
9th September, 1861,  
Aged 81 years.

“ ADSUM.”

And lo, he whose heart was as that of a little  
Child, had  
answered to his name, and stood in the  
presence of the Master.

*Newcomes*, vol. iii., chap. xxvi.

On the rebuilding of the Church, his grave  
was  
brought within the walls.  
He was laid to rest immediately beneath  
this place by his step-son,  
William Makepeace Thackeray.

This memorial was put up in 1887 by some  
members of the family.

Both Major Carmichael Smyth and General Carmichael, as well as most of the other reputed originals of Colonel Newcome, were members of the Oriental Club, and when Mr David Freemantle Carmichael, nephew of the above-mentioned officers, met Thackeray there when *The Newcomes* was coming out, he said to the novelist: “I see where you got your Colonel.” “To be sure you would,” was the reply, “only I had to *Angelicise* the old boys a little.” In reference to this club, Mr Baillie, who has written its history, points out as a nice point in the chronology of *Vanity*

*Fair*, that Mr Joseph Sedley, when he returned from India in the early years of the last century, "drove his horses in the Park; he dined at the fashionable taverns (for the Oriental Club was not as yet invented); he frequented the theatres, and so on"; but when he came to Europe again in 1827—it may be mentioned that Boggley Wallah, where Jos was stationed as collector while in the Honourable East India Company's service, was merely a made-up name that sounded Oriental, of the type that Thackeray frequently invented—"his very first point, of course, was to become a member of the Oriental Club, where he spent his mornings in the company of his brother Indians, where he dined, or whence he brought home men to dinner."

Thackeray never forgot the first parting from his mother. In one of the stories by the present writer, a man is described tottering up the steps of the Ghaut, having just parted with his child, whom he is despatching to England from India, he said, some forty-five years after: "I wrote this, remembering in long, long distant days, such a Ghaut or river-stair at Calcutta; and a day when, down those steps, to a boat which was in waiting, came two children, whose mothers remained on the shore." The other child was a cousin, Richmond Shakespeare, afterwards Colonel Sir Richmond Shakespeare, agent to the Governor-General for Central India, and later Chief Commissioner of Mysore. He died in 1861, and his famous relative made appreciative reference to him in a Roundabout Paper.

On the homeward journey the ship put in at

the little island of St Helena. "When I first saw England she was in mourning for the young Princess Charlotte, the hope of the Empire. I came from India as a child, and our ship touched at an island on our way home, where my black servant took me a long walk over rocks and hills until we reached a garden where we saw a man walking. 'That is he!' cried the black man. 'That is Bonoparte! he eats three sheep a day, and all the children he can lay hand on.'" A generation after, Thackeray in Paris witnessed the second funeral of Napoleon, and wrote his impressions of the scenes in a book that bears his name.

From the above passage it is possible approximately to fix the date of Thackeray's arrival. Princess Charlotte died in November 6, 1817, when the boy was six years and four months old. With the same nurse he remembered also peeping through the Colonnade at Carlton House, and seeing the abode of the Prince Regent. He recalled the incident many years later. "I can yet see the guards pacing before the gates of the Palace. The Palace! what palace? The palace exists no more than the palace of Nebuchadnezzar. It is but a name now." Carlton House was built by Lord Carlton, and subsequently occupied by George IV., when Prince Regent. It was south of Regent Street, and was divided from Pall Mall by a row of pillars that served no particular purpose, which lack of design inspired the lines :

"Care colonne, qui state sta qua?  
Non sappiamo in verità"—

which have been translated :

“ Dear little columns, all in a row,  
What do you there?—Indeed, we don't know.”

When Carlton House was pulled down in 1827 the pillars were preserved. They now form the portico of the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square. The site of Carlton House is occupied by a continuation of Waterloo Place, by the Duke of York's Memorial, and by Carlton House Terrace. Regent Street, it may be remembered, was designed by John Nash as a means of communication between Carlton House and the Regent's Park. The architectural success of the street is due to the uniting of many houses in a single façade. A notable example of this is the Quadrant, at the north end of Regent Street.

Thackeray stayed partly with his grand-uncle Moore at the Manor House, at Hadley, near Chipping Barnet, and partly with an aunt, Mrs Ritchie, who lived in Chiswick, about six miles from Charing Cross, then a little village near Twenham, now Turnham, Green. At a very early age he was sent to a school in Chiswick Mall, kept by Dr Turner, a distant relative, of whom it was said that when of a Sunday he read the Ten Commandments to his boys, his resounding tones reminded members of the congregation of Mount Sinai itself. Although the child wrote to his mother in India that he liked Chiswick because “there are so many good boys to play with”—a sentence that cannot but suggest the dictation of an elder—there is no doubt he was far from happy. Indeed, soon

after he was installed there, he made an attempt to run away ; and, in later years, when driving to Richmond, would show the corner of the lane by Hammersmith Road, where, frightened, he turned back and arrived safely in the playground without the masters being any the wiser. "What a dreadful place that private school was : cold, chilblains, bad dinners, not enough victuals, and caning awful!" was his memory of the place even in one of the last years of his life. However, while at Charterhouse, he would sometimes spend a half-holiday at the old school, until, wishing to play a part in private theatricals, he borrowed a barrister's wig from the doctor (who had been at the Bar before he went into the Church), and, losing it, the lad did not venture to call there for many a long day.

The neighbourhood of Chiswick has many interesting associations. Not far from Hammersmith Bridge, by the little passage that divides the Lower Mall from the Upper Mall, is the "Doves" public-house, then a coffee-tavern, where in a room on an upper floor Thomson wrote his famous poem, "The Seasons." The "Doves" has changed little in the intervening years, and is to-day a resort of neighbouring boatmen. The quaint old-fashioned bar on the ground floor leads the visitor to a garden that runs down to the river. At Sussex Lodge, once the property of the Duke of Sussex, lived Captain Marryat, and Sir Geoffrey Kneller resided in the Upper Mall. So, later, from 1808-1814, did that other great painter, J. W. M. Turner ; while at Kelm-scott House George Macdonald lived before

William Morris rented it. Chiswick House was occupied by Fox, and later by Canning, both of whom died there; and near by the church lived Hogarth, whose house still stands. The churchyard contains the tomb of that great humorist and painter; of Mary Cromwell, the third daughter of the Protector; of Barbara Ferrars, Duchess of Cleveland; and of the Italian poet, Ugo Foscolo.

Thackeray added another landmark. Miss Pinkerton's Academy in the opening chapter of *Vanity Fair* was undoubtedly Walpole House in Chiswick Mall. Walpole House once belonged to Barbara Ferrars, a favourite of Charles II., raised by that monarch to the peerage as Duchess of Cleveland. It subsequently came into the possession of Horace Walpole, Earl of Orford, who no doubt bestowed upon it the name it still bears. Later, in 1796, Daniel O'Connell, the Liberator, lodged there with a Mrs Rigby. It has recently been acquired by Mr Herbert Beerbohm Tree, the famous actor. At the end of chapter i. of *Vanity Fair* Thackeray has presented a picture of Becky Sharp and Amelia Sedley leaving Miss Pinkerton's Academy. The coach, with Sambo of the bandy legs hanging on behind, is driving away; little Laura Martin (who was just in round-hand) is weeping because her dear Amelia is leaving; and Miss Sharp, her pale face thrust out of the carriage window, has thrown back the copy of Johnson's Dictionary which good-hearted Miss Jemima has just given her. "So much for the Dictionary; thank God, I'm out of Chiswick," she exclaimed.

Thackeray was still at the Chiswick school when his mother, who had recently married Major Carmichael Smyth of the Bengal Engineers, returned with her husband to England in 1822. "He had a perfect memory of me," she said. "He could not speak, but kissed me, and looked at me again and again."





PENNY'S HOUSE, WILDERNESS ROW. Page 35.  
*Here Thackeray was a boarder when first at the Charterhouse.*



## CHAPTER II

### THACKERAY AND THE CHARTERHOUSE

IN 1822, Major Carmichael Smyth, with his wife, took up his residence at Addiscombe College, of which he had been appointed Governor. This was the East India Company's college for the training of officers for their service. The building was converted to other purposes after the Indian Mutiny, when the Indian army ceased to exist as a separate concern, and was amalgamated with the British army.

From Addiscombe, little William Makepeace was sent to the Charterhouse, where at least two of the greatest of English humorists were educated, Addison and Steele.

"It had been a Cistercian convent in old days when the Smithfield, which is contiguous to it, was a tournament ground," Thackeray has told us. "Obstinate heretics used to be brought thither, convenient for burning hard by. Henry the Eighth seized upon the monastery, and hanged and tortured some of the monks who would not accommodate themselves to the pace of his reforms. Finally, a great merchant bought the house and land adjoining, in which,

with the help of other wealthy endowments of land and money, he established a famous foundation hospital for old men and children. An extra school grew round the old, almost monastic foundation, which subsists still with its middle-age costume and usages; and all Christians pray that it may flourish. Of this famous house some of the greatest noblemen, prelates, and dignitaries in England are governors; and as the boys are very comfortably lodged, fed, and educated, and subsequently inducted to good scholarships at the University, and livings in the Church, many little gentlemen are devoted to the ecclesiastical profession from their tenderest years, and there is considerable emulation to produce nominations for the foundation. It was originally intended for the sons of poor and deserving clerics and laics; but many of the noble governors of the institution, with an enlarged and somewhat capricious benevolence, selected all sorts of objects for their bounty. To get an education for nothing, and a livelihood and a profession assured, was so excellent a scheme, that some of the richest people did not disdain it; and not only the great men's relations, but great men themselves, sent their sons to profit by the chance. Right reverend prelates sent their own kinsmen as the sons of their clergy, while on the other hand some great noblemen did not disdain to patronise the children of their confidential servants, so that a lad entering this establishment had every variety of youthful society wherewith to mingle."

Thackeray was at first one of some fifty

boarders in Mr Penny's house in Wilderness Row, Clerkenwell Road. The house still stands, and a tablet has been placed upon its frontage bearing the inscription,

"WILLIAM MAKEPEACE  
THACKERAY  
lived here,  
1822-1824."

Until a few years ago, there were the remains of a small tunnel running from the house into the school grounds. Among the boarders was George Stovin Venables (of the parliamentary Bar, and a life-long friend of Thackeray), who, as a lad, broke his schoolfellow's nose in a fight. "That unlucky fight!" Mr Ronpell, the monitor at Penny's in 1822, has recorded: "It was on a wet half-holiday, I think, when a boy named Glossip came and asked leave for Thackeray and Venables to fight. We wanted some amusement, so I let them fight it out in our long room, with the important result to Thackeray's nasal organ." Thackeray told a friend that after the nose had been successfully set, it was deliberately re-broken by a brutal school bully. "I got at last big enough and strong enough," he added, "to give the ruffian the soundest thrashing a boy ever had." It was probably his broken nose that suggested his pseudonymous Christian names of Michael Angelo.

Thackeray left Penny's in 1824 to become a day-boy, when he stayed with Mrs Boyes, who took in lads belonging to the Charterhouse and Merchant Taylors schools. It is believed that

Mrs Boyes's establishment was in Charterhouse Square.

"There are but 370 in the school," Thackeray wrote to his mother; "I wish there were only 369." Perhaps too much importance has been attached to this wail. It was written in 1828, when he was second monitor in Day-boys. He was a big boy then, hoping soon to go up to Cambridge, and it is probable that at worst he found the place and the work irksome. He certainly disliked Dr Russell, the headmaster, whose bark, it is said, was very much worse than his bite. But certainly Dr Russell could bark, as Thackeray has shown in *The History of Pendennis*. "A boy who construes *d e* 'and' instead of *d e* 'but,' at sixteen years of age, is guilty, not merely of folly and ignorance, and dullness inconceivable, but of crime, of deadly crime, of filial ingratitude, which I tremble to contemplate. A boy, sir, who does not learn his Greek play cheats the parent who spends money for his education. A boy who cheats his parents is not very far from robbing or forging upon his neighbour. A man who forges on his neighbour pays the penalty of his crime at the gallows. And it is not such a one that I pity (for he will be deservedly cut off), but his maddened and broken-hearted parents, who are driven to a premature grave by his crimes, or, if they live, drag on a wretched and dishonoured old age." And all this because the Doctor cannot get the boy to construe as he wishes.

Yet, from the following letter of Thackeray, written on February 14, 1826, it is obvious that

Dr Russell did bite sometimes. "Valentine's Day! But I have had no valentines. Dr Russell has been fierce to-day, yea, and full of anger. . . . I have got four hours of him before me. Is it not felicitous? Every day he begins at me: 'Thackeray, Thackeray, you are an idly profligate shuffling boy'; (because your friends are going to take you away in May). . . . Dr Russell has treated me every day with such unkindness that I really cannot bear it. If ever I get a respectable place in my Form, he is sure to bring me down again; to-day there was such a flagrant instance of it, that it was the general talk of the school." Still, even with this letter before us, one must not assume that Thackeray was persistently ill-treated. Who, with a retrospective turn of mind, cannot remember to have been treated with injustice, as often as not by inadvertence or carelessness, on a master's part? The ideal master is justice incarnate, possessing the qualities of a great judge, able to detect the right even when it is embedded in a mass of error. But ideal masters are as rare as ideal men!

Doubtless Thackeray was wretched at first at the great school. "We were flogged at school; we were fifty boys in our boarding-house, and had to wash in a leaden trough, under a cistern, with lumps of fat, yellow soap floating about in the ice and water," he said in later years. He was unhappy, no doubt, as are so many boys, sensitive, gently nurtured, who are thrown all at once into the midst of a crowd of rough lads, hardened to the usages of the school; and some-

times of nights he would kneel by his little bed and pray, "O God, let me see my mother in my dreams." Perhaps he was never quite happy while he was in Mr Penny's house; but he was certainly more contented during his stay at Mrs Boyes's, when he was growing up, and was more able to hold his own.

He took part in amateur theatricals, and in his last term played Fusbos in *Bombastes Furioso*, in a performance promoted by his schoolfellows. He went to the theatre from time to time, and witnessed at least one historic performance. "Do you remember, dear M——, oh, friend of my youth," he wrote many years after, "how one blissful night, five-and-twenty years since, *The Hypocrite* being acted, Elliston being manager, Downton and Liston performers, two boys had leave from their loyal masters to go out from Slaughterhouse School, where they were educated, and to appear on Drury Lane stage, amongst a crowd, which assembled there to greet the king. The King! there he was! Beef-eaters were before the august box. The Marquis of Steyne (Lord of the Powder Closet) and other great officers of state were behind the chair on which he sat. He sat florid of face, portly of person, covered with orders, and in a rich, curling head of hair. How we sang God save him! How they cheered and cried, and waved handkerchiefs. Ladies wept; mothers clasped their children; some fainted with emotion. People were suffocated in the pit, shrieks and groans rising up amidst the writhing and shouting mass there of his people who were, and, indeed, showed themselves almost



to be ready, to die for him. Yes, we saw him. Fate cannot deprive us of *that*. Others have seen Napoleon. Some few exist who have beheld Frederick the Great, Doctor Johnson, Marie Antoinette, etc.—be it our reasonable boast to our children that we saw George the Good, the Magnificent, the Great.”

He was fond of reading, and was able to indulge in this pleasure. There are still in existence his copies of *Don Quixote*, *The Castle of Otranto*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Joseph Andrews*, and other works of fiction. Most of these are embellished with caricatures of the masters, and ornamented with various illustrations and sketches. His feeling for art was precocious, and at a very early age he drew and painted. Indeed, he acquired some little fame for these sketches, and his comrades would come to him and say, “Old boy, draw us ‘Vivaldi tortured in the Inquisition,’” or “Draw us ‘Don Quixote and the windmill!’”

Thackeray left Charterhouse in May 1828. He revisited it from time to time. A great believer in “tips,” he always filled his pockets before going to the school. On one occasion, accompanied by another “old boy,” he tipped the first lad he met with a sovereign, proceeded to empty purse and pocket in tips for the other boys, and, his own resources temporarily exhausted, borrowed every coin his companion had about him, and distributed these too, with the result that they had to walk home, not having the cab fare left. This was quite on a par with Thackeray’s conduct at other times and in other

places. He could never see a boy without wanting to give him a tip. "Ah! my dear sir!" he wrote, "if you have any little friends at school, go and see them, and do the natural thing by them. You won't miss the sovereign. You don't know what a blessing it will be to them. Don't fancy they are too old—try 'em. And they will remember you and bless you in future days; and their gratitude shall accompany your dreary after-life, and they shall meet you kindly when thanks for kindness are scant. Oh, mercy! shall I ever forget the sovereign you gave me, Captain Bob! . . . No. If you have any little friends at school, out with your half-crown, my friend, and impart to those little ones the fleeting joys of their age. . . . It is all very well, my dear sir, to say that boys contract the habit of expecting tips, that they become avaricious and so forth. Fudge! boys contract habits of tart and toffee-eating which they do not carry into after-life. On the contrary, I wish I *did* like tarts and toffee."

Thackeray was present at Charterhouse for the last time on Founder's Day, December 12, 1863, a fortnight before his death. "He was there, in his usual back seat in the quaint old chapel," an eye-witness has recorded. "He went there to the oration in the Governor's room; and as he walked up to the orator with his contribution, was received with such hearty applause as only Carthusians can give to one who has immortalised their school. At the banquet afterwards he sat by the side of his old friend and artist-associate in *Punch*, John Leech, and in a





CHARTERHOUSE FROM THE PLAYGROUND. *Pages 33-49.*  
*In the time of Thackeray.*

[Utschigitz Collection.]

humorous speech proposed, as a toast, the noble foundation which he had adorned by his literary fame, and made popular in his works. . . . Divine service took place at four o'clock, in the quaint old chapel, and the appearance of the brethren in their black gowns, of the old stained glass and carving in the chapel, of the tomb of Sutton, could hardly fail to give a peculiar and interesting character to the service. Prayers were said by the Rev. J. J. Halcombe, the Reader of the House. There was only the usual parochial chanting of the *Nunc Dimittis*; the familiar Commemoration Day psalms, cxxii. and c., were sung after the third collect, and before the sermon; and before the General Thanksgiving the old prayer was offered up expressive of thankfulness to God for the bounty of Thomas Sutton, and of hope that all who enjoy it might make a right use of it. The sermon was preached by the Rev. Henry Earle Tweed, late fellow of Oriel College, Oxford, who prefaced it with a 'Bidding Prayer,' in which he desired the congregation to pray generally for all the public schools and colleges, and particularly for the welfare of the house founded by Thomas Sutton for the support of age and the education of youth."

Thackeray's change of retrospective feeling about the school was characteristic. He spoke of it in his earlier works as Slaughterhouse and Smithfield, but as the years passed his memories softened, and Slaughterhouse became Grey Friars.

Of course, Charterhouse was not Grey Friars. The real Grey Friars was Christ's Hospital, better known as the Bluecoat School, which fronted

Newgate Street, and was founded in the reign of Edward II. Christ Church, which adjoins the hospital, was burnt down in the great fire in 1666, and was rebuilt by Sir Christopher Wren. This school also has its literary traditions. Richardson was educated there, and Leigh Hunt, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Charles Lamb.

In many of his books Thackeray has mentioned Charterhouse; and young Rawdon Crawley, George Osborne and his son, Arthur Pendennis, Philip Ringwood, Colonel Newcome and his son Clive, Philip Firmin, and many other well-known characters, were educated there. It was in *The Newcomes*, however, that he immortalised the establishment, and well earned for himself the title of Carthusianus Carthusianorum.\*

The schools were removed in 1872 to Godalming, and the buildings were demolished. The land upon which it stood was acquired by the Merchant Taylors Company, who erected their

\* The bed upon which Thackeray died was given by his daughter to the Charterhouse, and to the head gown-boy and his successors has been accorded the privilege of lying upon it. Archdeacon Hale, then master of the Charterhouse, wrote the following inscription, which was engraved at its head:—

“HOC LECTO RECUMBENS  
OBDORMIVIT IN CHRISTO

GULIEMUS MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

IX. KAL. JANVAR : AN. MDCCCLXIV.

SCHOLÆ CARTHUSIANÆ QUONDAM DISCIPULUS  
MATURA ÆTATE HUIUSCE LOCI AMANTISSIMUS  
UTI TESTANTUR EJUS SCRIPTA  
PER ORBEM TERRARUM DIVULGATA

VIXIT ANNOS LII.”





IN HALL, CHARTERHOUSE. *Chap. II.*



own school on the site. The antique dwelling of the Poor Brethren of the Charterhouse remains, however, still available for "gentlemen by descent, and in poverty." It has changed little since the original foundation by Sir Walter de Manny, a knight of renown in the days of Cressy and Poitiers, and it is now almost as it was in Thomas Sutton's day.

The foundation of monastic Charterhouse (the name is a corruption of Chartreux) dates back to 1371; the monastery was dissolved by Henry VIII. It was not until 1611 that Sutton purchased Howard House from the Duke of Norfolk, and endowed it as The Hospital of St James, as "an house or place of bidding for the fending, sustentation and relief of poor, aged, maimed, needy or impotent people, and also one free school for the instructing, teaching, maintenance, and education of poor children or scholars." The Banqueting Hall of Howard House, with its minstrel's gallery, its beautiful carved oak, its grand old stone fireplace, and a panel bearing the date of its erection, 1571, is now the dining-room of the Poor Brethren. The portrait of the founder, with the plans of the Charterhouse in his hands, hangs in a prominent position on the wall. Leading from this hall was the boys' dining-room, now the pensioners' library. A carved oak sixteenth-century staircase of great beauty leads to the officer's library and the tapestry room (now called the governor's room), with its fine hangings brought some three hundred years ago from Italy. Outside the windows of this apartment is the terrace, which

commands a view of the old school playing-grounds.

Most interesting of all, however, is the chapel, reached through a passage, on the walls of which have been erected monuments to famous Carthusians. Perhaps the following are the most interesting :—

“GULIELMO MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

CARTHUSIANI CARTHUSIANO

H.M.P.C.

Natus MDCCCXI. Obiit MDCCCLXIII.  
Alumnus MDCCCXXII.-MDCCCXXVIII.”

And next to it that of an old schoolfellow, afterwards a colleague on the staff of *Punch*, whom Thackeray first remembered as a small boy in a little blue, buttoned-up suit, set upon a form and made to sing “Home, Sweet Home” to his comrades :

“JOHANNI LEECH

CARTHUSIANI CARTHUSIANO

H.M.P.C.

Natus MDCCCXVII. Obiit MDCCCLXIV.  
Alumnus MDCCCXXV.-MDCCCXXXIII.”

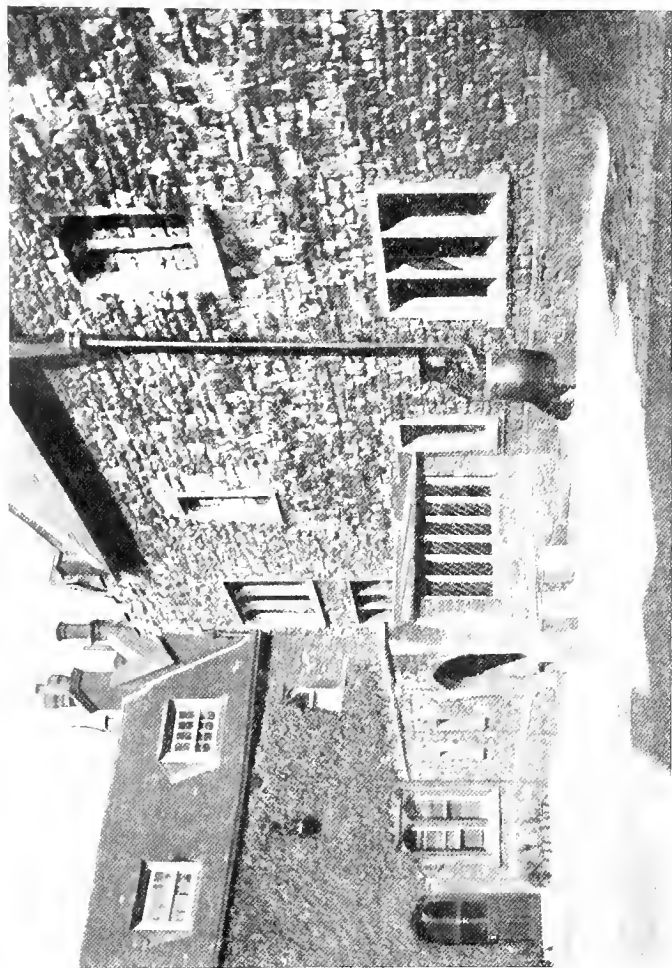
The chapel has not been touched, and the seats where the boys heard the service remain, now curtained off from the rest of the edifice.

The best description of the place is to be found in *The Newcomes*. “Mention has been made once or twice in the course of the history of the Grey Friars School—where the Colonel and Clive and I had been brought up—an ancient foundation of the time of James I., still subsisting

in the heart of London city. The death-day of the founder of the place is still kept solemnly by Cistercians. In their chapel, where assemble the boys of the school and the fourscore old men of the hospital, the founder's tomb stands, a huge edifice, emblazoned with heraldic decorations and clumsy, carved allegories. There is an old hall, a beautiful specimen of the architecture of James's time—an old hall? many old halls—old staircases, old passages, old chambers decorated with old portraits, walking in the midst of which we walk, as it were, in the early seventeenth century. To others than Cistercians, Grey Friars is a dreary place, possibly. Nevertheless, the pupils educated there love to revisit it; and the oldest of us grow young again for an hour or two as we come back into those scenes of childhood.

“The custom of the school is, that on the 12th December, the Founder's Day, the head gown-boy shall make a Latin oration in praise *Fundatoris Nostri* and upon other subjects; and a goodly company of old Cistercians is generally brought together to attend this oration, after which we go to chapel and tea and sermon; after which we adjourn to a great dinner, where old co-disciples meet, old toasts are given, and speeches are made. Before marching from the oration hall to chapel, the stewards of the day's dinner, according to old-fashioned rite, have wands put into their hands, walk to church at the head of the procession, and sit there in places of honour. The boys are already in their seats, with shining fresh faces and shining white collars; the old black-gowned pensioners are on their

benches; the chapel is lighted, and Founder's Tomb, with its grotesque carvings, monsters, heraldries, darkles and shines with the most wonderful shadows and lights. There he lies, *Fundator Noster*, in his muff and gown, awaiting the great examination day. We oldsters, be we ever so old, become boys again as we look at that familiar old tomb, and think how the seats are altered since we were here, and how the doctor—not the present doctor, the doctor of our time—used to sit yonder, and his awful eye used to frighten us shuddering boys on whom it lighted; and how the boy next us would kick our shins during service time, and how the monitor would cane us afterwards because our shins were kicked. Yonder sit forty cheery-cheeked boys, thinking about home and holidays to-morrow. Yonder sit some threescore old gentlemen, pensioners of the hospital, listening to the prayers and psalms. You hear them coughing feebly in the twilight—the old reverend black-gowns. Is Codd Ajax alive, you wonder?—the Cistercian lads called the old gentlemen 'Codds,' I know not wherefore—but is old Codd Ajax alive, I wonder? Or Codd Soldier? or kind old Codd Gentleman? or has the grave closed over them? A plenty of candles light up this chapel, and this scene of age and youth and early memories and pompous death. How solemn the well-remembered prayers are, here uttered again in the place where in childhood we used to hear them! How beautiful and decorous the rite; how noble the ancient words of the supplications which the priest utters, and to which generations of fresh children and



WASH-HOUSE COURT, CHARTERHOUSE. *Chap. II.*



troops of bygone seniors have cried 'Amen' under those arches."

It was in the Charterhouse that Colonel Thomas Newcome, *chevalier sans peur et sans reproche*, died. "At the usual evening hour, the chapel bell began to toll, and Thomas Newcome's hands outside the bed feebly beat a time. And just as the last bell struck, a peculiar, sweet smile shone over his face, and he lifted up his head a little, and quickly said, 'Adsum,' and fell back. It was the word we used at school, when names were called; and lo, he whose heart was as that of a little child, had answered to his name, and stood in the presence of the Master."

The Charterhouse is situated in the heart of Smithfield. Smithfield in earlier days lay outside the city walls. It had a large green surrounded by fine old elms, and was the scene of tournaments and fairs as well as of executions. Wallace, the Scottish chieftain, suffered the death-penalty there, and William FitzOsbert and Mortimer among the rest. The Lord Mayor of London struck down Wat Tyler at the head of the rebel mob; and at the gate of Bartholomew's Priory, a part of which may still be seen in St Bartholomew - the - Great, one of the oldest churches in the metropolis, near three hundred Protestants were burnt at the stake in Mary's reign. A memorial tablet to these sufferers of religious intolerance stands in old Smithfield to this day. Not far off, the famous Bartlemy Fair was held from its inauguration until 1855, when it was abolished.

The Charterhouse may best be described as

having lain on the north and south, between Wilderness Row and Charterhouse Square, known originally as the Pest-House Field, a name that came to it in the days of the plague of the Black Death; and between Goswell Road and Clerkenwell on the east and west. Once inside the gates, however, it is difficult to remember it is in the busiest part of the busiest city in the world. Passing under the gateway in Charterhouse Square, the visitor walks through an alley between two brick walls, and at the end, with Wash-House Court (supposed to be a part of the ancient Carthusian monastery) on the right, he is face to face with quaint, one-storeyed buildings, spacious quadrangles, and beautiful lawns that remind one of the *nouveau riche* who asked the gardener of one of the Oxford colleges how he managed to produce such grass. "Oh," said the man, in a matter-of-course tone, "we waters it, and we rolls it for a thousand years." Venerable gentlemen, in the cloak that is a survival of the old monastic garb, dot the grounds. Some are playing bowls on one of the lawns. Another lawn is patrolled by pigeons, walking as if monarchs of all they survey. The present writer visited the place recently, and was fortunate enough to be taken in hand by a mere stripling of sixty or sixty-one—he did not look a day more than fifty—who mentioned incidentally that he had come here to end his days. He stated this in all good faith. He was making no bid for sympathy. He had lost his wife. He must have lost his money, too, else he would not have been eligible for nomination as a pensioner





CHARTERHOUSE CHAPEL. *Chap. II.*



in this home for "gentlemen by descent and in poverty." Yet, though this is a pleasant, peaceful retreat in which to wait until the day comes when one enters the last Home, none the less, when the writer took leave of his newly acquired friend, there was a catching of his breath as he said "Good-bye" to his courteous host. How many tragedies, how many broken hearts, disappointed loves, shipwrecked careers, may be sheltered there! If ever a man deserved well of his kind and has earned the meed of kindly thoughts after he has gone to another place, that man, surely, is Thomas Sutton, *Fundator Noster*, who provided this retreat where the weary traveller through the maze of life may end his days in peace and comfort.

## CHAPTER III

### PENDENNIS-LAND—CAMBRIDGE—THE TEMPLE

IN 1825 Major Carmichael Smyth resigned the governorship of Addiscombe College, and, retiring from the Honourable East India Company's service, settled down as a gentleman-farmer at Larkbeare, on the confines of the parish of Ottery St Mary. This little Devonshire parish (famous as the birthplace of Samuel Taylor Coleridge) is about eleven miles from Exeter, and is situated in the valley of the Otter, by which it is bisected, and is now connected by an iron bridge, eighty feet in span, that has replaced the old stone structure washed away in 1849. The quaint little village stands on the eastern bank of the river, which flows south and empties itself into the sea some eight miles away. Polwhele states that the bounds of the manor and parish were taken by Sir George Yonge, the lord of the manor, and the parishioners by procession in 1776. The bounds are as ancient as Edward the Confessor, and were fixed by royal charter five years before Duke William of Normandy became King of England by right of conquest. The church of Saints Mary and Edward was





LARKBEARE, OTTERY ST MARY. Page 50.  
*The Home of Thackeray's Mother in Devonshire.*

[H. D. Bedford.]

founded by the Saxon monarch. It was subsequently bestowed upon the Abbey of Rouen. Bishop Branscombe rebuilt it in the thirteenth century, and it was converted into a collegiate church by Bishop Grandison in 1340. More than five hundred years later it was restored. A local topographer states that it is a large cruciform edifice in the Early English style, with an aisle of a perpendicular character. It has two towers for transepts, and the northern tower is crossed by a low sphere. There are several old monuments, notably an altar-tomb with the effigy of an armed knight under a rich monumental arch.

At Larkbeare Thackeray spent his holidays while at Charterhouse; and, later, stayed for some months in the interval between leaving school and going to Cambridge, when his step-father coached him for his university career.

Ottery St Mary made a strong impression upon the lad, and in after years he reproduced the neighbourhood in *The History of Pendennis*. In one of the vignettes illustrating that story there is an unmistakable representation of the church "cock-tower"; and the descriptions clearly identify Clavering St Mary as Ottery St Mary, Chatteris as Exeter, and Baymouth as Sidmouth. Larkbeare figures as Fair Oaks, "the lawn of which comes down to the river Brawl, and on the other side were the plantations and woods . . . of Clavering Park, Sir Francis Clavering, Bart." Perhaps those familiar with the neighbourhood may recognise the original of the Hall in Clavering Park, "a splendid freestone palace,

with great stairs, statues, porticos. . . ." Even the Reverend F. Wapshot of Clavering may have had his prototype in some master of the old King's School, which dates back to the middle of the sixteenth century. Dr Cornish, the vicar of Ottery, tells us that things have changed since Thackeray spent many a pleasant holiday there. "The old collegiate church has been swept and garnished, bedizened with finery until it scarcely knows itself; and the Wapshot boys no longer make a good cheerful noise, scuffling with their feet as they march into church and up the organ-loft stairs, but walk demurely to their open seats in the side aisles." Dr Cornish, for all we know to the contrary, may have stood for Dr Portman, and *The County Chronicle and Chatteris Champion*, to which young Arthur Pendennis sent his verses to be printed in the poet's corner, may well have been the paper published in Exeter under the splendid title of *The Western Luminary*. It was in the latter journal that Thackeray first appeared in print. No love poem this, as were Pendennis's contributions, but a parody of an *intended* speech of Lalor Shiel, which he was not allowed by the police to deliver, but of which he had taken the precaution to send advance copies to the newspapers.

#### IRISH MELODY.

AIR: *The Minstrel Boy*.

"Mister Shiel into Kent has gone,  
 On Penenden Heath you'll find him;  
 Nor think you that he came alone,  
 There's Doctor Doyle behind him.



“ ‘Men of Kent,’ said the little man,  
‘If you hate emancipation  
You’re a set of fools.’ He then began  
A cut-and-dry oration.

“ He strove to speak, but the men of Kent  
Began a grievous shouting,  
When out of the waggon the little man went,  
And put a stop to his spouting.

“ ‘What though these heretics heard me not !  
Quoth he to his friend canonical,  
‘My speech is safe in *The Times*, I wot,  
And eke in *The Morning Chronicle*.’ ”

So autobiographical is this early part of *The History of Pendennis*, that one wonders whether Miss Costigan, known professionally as Miss Emily Fotheringay, had her prototype in some member of the stock company performing in the old Exeter theatre. It may be mentioned that Mr J. Keith Angus, in *A Scotch Play-House* (Aberdeen, 1878), stated that Miss O’Neill and her father stood for Miss and Captain Costigan ; but upon what authority he based his announcement is not clear. Certainly Miss Fotheringay’s father, the immortal Costigan, existed, though probably Thackeray only met him long after the book had been written in which he figured. “In the novel of *Pendennis*, written ten years ago, there is an account of a certain Costigan, whom I had invented, as I suppose authors invent their characters, out of scraps, heel-taps, odds and ends of characters,” Thackeray confessed. “I was smoking in a tavern-parlour one night, and this Costigan came into the room alone—the very man—the most remarkable resemblance of the

printed sketches of the man, of the rude drawings in which I had depicted him. He had the same little coat, the same battered hat, cocked on one eye, the same twinkle in that eye. 'Sir,' said I, knowing him to be an old friend whom I had met in unknown regions; 'Sir,' I said, 'may I offer you a glass of brandy and water?' 'Bedad, ye may,' says he, '*and I'll sing ye a song, tu!*' Of course, he spoke with an Irish accent. Of course, he had been in the army. In ten minutes he pulled out an Army Agent's account, whereon his name was written. A few months after, we read of him in a police-court."

Thackeray went up to Trinity College, Cambridge, on February 19, 1829, at the age of eighteen. He remained there for two years, and came down without waiting to take a degree. No one could have started better. He went three times a week to Fawcett, his coach, "a most desperate, good-hearted bore," from eight to nine; to Fisher, the mathematical lecturer, from nine to ten; and to Stan, the classical lecturer, from ten to eleven. He read Greek plays with Badger, a fellow-freshman, from eleven to twelve, and spent the next hour in the study of Euclid and algebra. The evening he devoted to collateral reading connected with Thucydides or Æschylus. He sent home this programme, and in the same letter expressed an intention to write for a college prize competition an essay on "The Influence of the Homeric Poems on the Religion, the Politics, the Literature and Society of Greece!" It is almost with



CHURCH OF SAINT MARY OTTERY. Page 51.



a sense of relief that we learn he was unable to find time for this stupendous task. But though he had not leisure enough to prepare the essay, he contrived none the less to spare the time to go to supper-parties and to take part in the usual round of undergraduate amusements. He spoke at the Union—but with little success. He read Shelley, then the ideal of the younger men at Cambridge, and wrote home to say he would bring with him *The Revolt of Islam*, “a most beautiful poem—though the story is absurd, and the republican sentiments conveyed in it, if possible, more absurd.” But soon he altered his mind: he would not take the poem to Larkbeare, for “it is an odd kind of book, containing poetry that would induce me to read it through, and sentiments which might strongly incline one to throw it in the fire.”

It may be said that Thackeray's career as an author dates from the Cambridge days. While at Charterhouse, he had penned some verses, but his first serious effort was a paper on Shelley's poems written during the Long Vacation at Paris in 1829 for a magazine to be called *The Chimæra*. But neither the magazine nor the essay has been traced by the bibliographers. Thackeray only discovered his powers as a humourist when he began to contribute to a little weekly paper managed by undergraduates, entitled *The Snob*. The best known of his pieces is the parody of Tennyson's prize poem *Timbuctoo*, which, after a lament of the misery caused by the intro-

duction of slavery into Africa, concludes with a prophecy :

“The day shall come when Albion’s self shall feel  
Stern Afric’s wrath, and writhe ’neath Afric’s steel.  
I see her tribes the hill of glory mount,  
And sell her sugars on her own account,  
While round her throne the prostrate nations come,  
Sue for her rice, and barter for her rum.”

“*Timbuctoo* received much laud,” the proud author wrote, in a vein characteristic of later days. “I could not help finding out that I was very fond of this same praise. The men knew not the author, but praised the poem; how eagerly I sucked it in. All is vanity!” Among other contributions by Thackeray to *The Snob* and its successor, *The Gownsmen*, were the parodies of Theodore Hook’s “Ramsbottom” papers. The point of these, of course, is the somewhat mechanical humour of malapropisms and occasional phonetic spelling. There is nothing very striking in the parodies, and they are interesting chiefly, indeed almost entirely, because they were the precursors of the writings of the erudite footman, James Yellowplush.

While at Cambridge, Thackeray made many lasting friendships. First and foremost came Edward FitzGerald, the translator of *Omar*. When, a little before the end, Thackeray was asked which of his friends he loved the best, he replied: “Why, dear old Fitz, of course; and Brookfield.” For many years Thackeray and FitzGerald corresponded more or less regularly, and met as frequently as possible. The poet was in later days inclined to think himself





TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE. Page 54.

*Where Thackeray studied.*



neglected. "Thackeray is in such a great world that I am afraid of him; he gets tired of me, and we are content to regard each other at a distance." This was not quite fair, for there was never any coldness in their hearts. "So dear old Thackeray is really going to America. I must fire him a letter of farewell." And Fitzgerald wrote and told him of a provision he had made in his will. "You see," he said, "you can owe me no thanks for giving what I can no longer use when I go down the pit. . . ." And the letter in which Thackeray asked him to act as his executor is touching. "The greatest comfort I have in thinking about, my dear old boy, is that recollection of our youth when we loved each other as I do now, when I write Farewell!" As the years passed, the men met seldom. "I am surprised almost to find how much I am thinking of him, so little as I had seen him for the last ten years—not once for the last five. I have been told—by you, for one—that he was spoilt," he wrote to Samuel Laurence. "I am glad, therefore, that I have scarcely seen him since he was 'old Thackeray.' I keep reading his *Newcomes* of nights, and, as it were, hear him saying so much in it; and it seems to me as if he might be coming up my stairs, and about to come (singing) into my room, as in old Charlotte Street, etc., thirty years ago." When the news of his friend's death was brought to him: "A great figure has gone under earth," he said.

With the Rev. William Brookfield and his wife, Thackeray was intimate until the end.

How intimate, may be realised from a perusal of Thackeray's letters to them, a selection of which was published some years ago. He wrote to them from town, from the Continent, from New York, long chatty letters, often about trifles, sometimes about grave matters. "I tell you and William most things," he said to Mrs Brookfield. "With all this racket and gaiety . . . do you understand a gentleman feels very lonely?" he wrote from Paris. "I swear I had sooner have a paper and gin-and-water *soirée* with somebody than the best President's orgeat." He introduced some traits of Mrs Brookfield into the composite character of Amelia Osborne (*née* Sedley). "You know you are only a piece of Amelia. My mother is another half; my poor little wife—*y est pour beaucoup*," he told her. And he portrayed his old schoolfellow—the father of Charles, the famous raconteur and brilliant dramatist—in *The Curate's Walk (Travels in London)* as the good-hearted curate, Frank Whitestock.

A few more of Thackeray's college friends deserve mention. There were John Stirling and R. C. Trench; and John Spedding and W. H. Thompson, afterwards Master of the college; and John (later Archdeacon) Allen, popularly supposed to be the prototype of Dobbin in *Vanity Fair*. The Tennysons, Charles and Alfred, were his seniors by a year at the university; and the acquaintance with the latter ripened as the years passed, and was only severed by death. "You don't know how pleased the girls were at Kensington the other day,"





MIDDLE TEMPLE GATE. *Page 60.*

Thackeray wrote to him in 1859, "to hear you quote their father's little verses; and he, too, I daresay, was not displeased." And Tennyson, a warm admirer of the novelist's productions, expressed his disapproval that "you have engaged, for any quantity of money, to let your brains be sucked" in an editorial capacity, and that "so great an artist should go to work in this fashion." Richard Monckton Milnes, afterwards first Lord Houghton, was another intimate whose friendship was founded at Cambridge. He was able to render Thackeray many a service, and never failed to do his best to improve his friend's position. "I was thinking of our acquaintance the other day, and how it had been marked on your part, by constant kindness, along which I can trace it," Thackeray wrote, when, full of forebodings, he left for the first journey to America. "Thank you for them; and let me shake your hand, and say *Vale* and *Salve*."

Thackeray's residence at Cambridge, though it procured him no academic laurels, was undoubtedly of great value to him. After all, as Walter Bagehot rightly asserted, the value of an English university training consists more in the youthful friendships there formed with fellow-students and contemporaries than in the actual studies and examinations. The university gave Thackeray his social status, and though he went into Bohemia and mixed with many strange folk, he was always a visitor in the debatable land; an intimate visitor perhaps, but not an inhabitant. Indeed, it has been well said that though many literary men in Thackeray's day may have sat in

their shirt-sleeves, Thackeray always kept on his coat.

From Cambridge, after a lengthy continental ramble (to which reference is made in a later chapter), Thackeray came to London. In the autumn of 1831, he entered himself as a student at the Middle Temple. He did not like the idea of practising at the Bar, and did not take at all kindly to the law, as readers of *The History of Pendennis* will have concluded; yet, as he wrote to his mother, he regarded his profession as "a noble and tangible object, an honourable calling, and, I trust in God, a certain fame." He read with the special pleader and conveyancer, Taprell, whose chambers were on the ground floor at No. 1 Hare Court; and he had chambers on an upper floor of the same building. His name does not occur in the list of tenants, but, it has been suggested, this was because he shared the room of another man—it is said that his fellow-tenant was Tom Taylor—as Pendennis shared those of Warrington. Probably he lived very much the life of those fictitious folk, who, "after reading pretty hard of a morning, and, I fear, not law merely, but politics and general history and literature, which were as necessary for the advancement and instruction of a young man as mere dry law, after applying with tolerable assiduity to letters, to reviews, to elemental books of law, and, above all, to the newspapers, until the hour of dinner was drawing nigh . . . would sally out upon the town with great spirits and appetite, and bent upon enjoy-

ing a merry night as they had passed a pleasant forenoon."

Thackeray came of age on July 18, 1832, and he abandoned at once even the pretence of studying for the Bar. It was a cold-blooded profession at best, he said, and a good lawyer must think of nothing all his life long but law. Another great author expressed a very similar opinion of this profession. "The Bar—pooh! Law and bad jokes till we are forty, and then with the most brilliant success the prospect of gout and a coronet," said Benjamin Disraeli. "Besides, to succeed as an advocate I must be a great lawyer, and to be a great lawyer I must give up my chances of being a great man." So Thackeray abandoned the law and went to study art at Paris.

He had chambers subsequently at 2 Brick Court, where Goldsmith had lived. "I have been many a time in the chambers in the Temple which were his (Goldsmith's), and passed up the staircase, which Johnson and Burke and Reynolds trod to see their friend, their poet, their kind Goldsmith—the stair in which the poor women sat weeping bitterly when they heard that the greatest and most generous of men was dead within the black oak door." It was to these chambers that Johnson came on a memorable occasion. "I received one morning a message from poor Goldsmith, that he was in great distress, and, as it was not in his power to come to me, begging that I would come to him as soon as possible. I sent him a guinea, and promised to come directly. I accordingly went

as soon as I was dressed, and found that his landlady has arrested him for his rent, at which he was in a violent passion. I perceived that he had also changed my guinea, and had got a bottle of Madeira and a glass before him. I put the cork into the bottle, desired that he would be calm, and began to talk to him of the means of which he might be extricated. He then told me that he had a novel ready for press, which he produced to me. I looked into it and saw its merits, told the landlady I should soon return, and, having gone to a bookseller, sold it for sixty pounds. I brought Goldsmith the money, and he discharged his rent, not without rating his landlady in a high tone for having used him so ill."

Subsequently, Thackeray rented chambers at 10 Crown Office Row, in which block of buildings Charles Lamb was born. He was called to the Bar by the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple, on May 26, 1848, not with the intention of practising, but so as to be able to accept, if only the chance would occur, of the many appointments for which only a barrister is eligible. He was anxious to obtain a vacant magistracy, but he was not a barrister of seven years' standing, as required by law. "Time will qualify me, however, and I hope to be able to last six years in the literary world; for though I shall write, I daresay, very badly, yet the public won't find it out for some time, and I shall live on my past reputation," he wrote to Monckton Milnes. "It is a pity, to be sure. If I could get a place and rest, I think I could do something better than I





DOORWAY IN THE CLOISTERS, TEMPLE. *Page 60.*



have done, and leave a good and lasting book behind me ; but Fate is over-ruling." Soon after, the assistant-secretaryship of the Post-office became vacant, and Lord Clanricarde endeavoured to obtain the post for Thackeray ; but it was found necessary to appoint a man already on the staff. The novelist made another attempt in 1854 to obtain employment under Government. "The secretaryship of our Legation at Washington was vacant the other day, and I instantly asked for it," he told his American friend, Mr Reed ; "but in the very kindest letter Lord Clarendon showed how the petition was impossible. First, the place was given away. Next, it would be unfair to appoint out of the service. But the first was an excellent reason—not a doubt of it. So if ever I come—as I hope and trust to do this time next year—it must be in my own coat, and not the Queen's." The reason for these applications was that Thackeray was sick and weary, and thought probably that change of occupation, less exacting work, and an assured income, would do him good and set his mind at rest.

The Temple has many literary associations and historic memories, and it was these which endeared it to Thackeray. The old Fleet Ditch, which ran into the Thames at Blackfriars, had long been covered over, but the street of the same name during the century and a half of its existence had many an interesting landmark. Fleet Street is intimately associated with Miss Pinkerton's great lexicographer. Indeed, the "Dixonary," which that lady presented to her departing pupils, was compiled in Gough Square ;

and the Doctor lived in many an alley thereabouts: in Fetter Lane, in Boswell Court, in Bolt Court for a long time, also in Inner Temple Lane, and in the court which since has borne his name. Not far from The Old Mitre, the favourite supper-house of Boswell's hero, once had stood the old Devil Tavern, where rare Ben Jonson and the wits of his day did congregate. The "Devil" was close by Temple Bar, which, destroyed by the great fire, was replaced by Wren's structure in 1670. A little more than two hundred years after this, it was removed and placed in the grounds of Theobald's Park, near Cheshunt, Herts, and the present memorial was erected in 1880. The old formalities have not been abandoned, however, and when the sovereign visits the city, admission is still demanded of the civic authorities, the city sword surrendered by the Lord Mayor as an act of homage, and duly returned to him. The Temple derives its name from the Knight Templars who came there from Thavie's Inn in the twelfth century. Later the Inner and Middle Temple were acquired by the lawyers, and the first James granted the Temple to the Benchers of the two Inns and their successors for ever. Since then many a famous person has resided in the precincts, and Thackeray was never weary of calling up the ghosts of the illustrious dead. "The man of letters cannot but love the place which has been inhabited by so many of his brethren, and peopled by their creations, as real to us at this day as the authors whose children they were. Sir Roger de Coverley walking in



HARE COURT, TEMPLE. Page 60.

*Where Thackeray studied Law.*



the Temple Garden, and discoursing with the Spectator about the beauties in hoops and patches who are sauntering over the grass, is just as lively a figure to me as old Samuel Johnson, rolling through the fog with the Scotch gentleman at his heels, on their way to Mr Goldsmith's chambers in Brick Court ; or Harry Fielding, with inked ruffles and a wet towel round his head, dashing off articles at midnight for *The Covent Garden Journal*, while the printer's boy is asleep in the passage."

Many of Thackeray's writings contain references to the Temple ; and many of his characters lived in these Inns of Court. "Young Smith and Brown from the Temple did not go from their chambers to dine at the Polyanthus or the Megatherium . . . but ordered their beef-steaks and pint of port from the 'plump head-waiter at the Cock,'" a tavern standing on the north side of Fleet Street, opposite Middle Temple Lane, familiar to readers of Tennyson's "Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue."

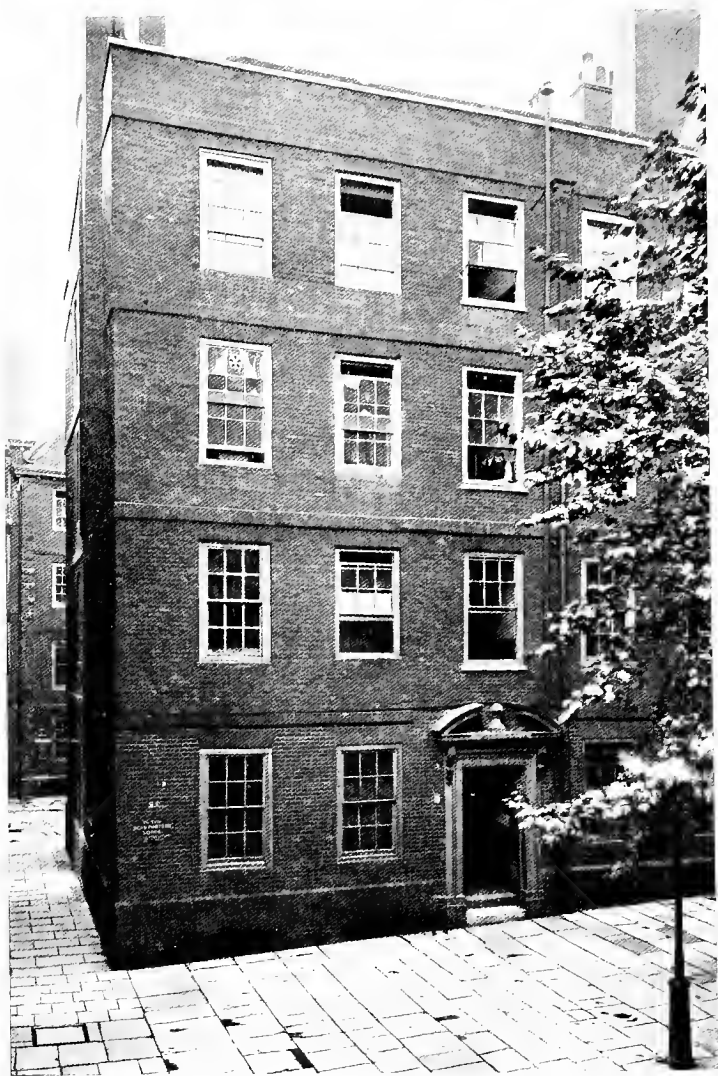
"O plump head-waiter at The Cock,  
To which I most resort,  
How goes the time ? 'Tis five o'clock.  
Go fetch a pint of port :  
But let it not be such as that  
You set before chance-comers,  
But such whose father-grape grew fat  
On Lusitanian summers."

Mr Timmins, the story of whose Little Dinner has been recorded "in another place," had chambers in Fig-tree Court ; and Pendennis and George Warrington lived in Lamb Court. Pen's

uncle, who rarely left the St James's Street district, came to see him. "When Major Pendennis reached that dingy portal (of the Upper Temple) it was about twelve o'clock in the day; and he was directed by a civil personage with a badge and a white apron, through some dark alleys, and under various melancholy archways each more dismal than the other, until finally he reached Lamb Court. If it was dark in Pall Mall, what was it in Lamb Court? Candles were burning in many of the rooms there—in the pupil-room of Mr Hodgeman, the special pleader, where six pupils were scribbling declarations under the tallow; in Sir Hokey Walker's clerk's room, where the clerk, a person far more gentlemanlike and cheerful in appearance than the celebrated counsel, his master, was conversing in a patronising manner with the managing clerk of an attorney at the door; and in Curling the wig-maker's melancholy shop, where, from behind the feeble glimmer of a couple of lights, large sergeants' and judges' wigs were looming drearily, with the blank blocks looking at the lamp-post in the court. Two little clerks were playing at toss-halfpenny under that lamp. A laundress in pattens passed in at one door, a newspaper boy issued from another. A porter, whose white apron was faintly visible, paced up and down. It would be impossible to conceive a place more dismal, and the Major shuddered to think that any one should select such a residence. "Good God!" he said, "the poor boy mustn't live on here." The exquisite climbed up the







2 BRICK COURT, TEMPLE. Page 61.  
*Where Thackeray had Chambers.*

black stairs until he came to the third storey, where, at the sound of his footsteps a great voice inquired: "Is that the beer?" The fine gentleman was not satisfied until he learnt that his nephew's companion was a younger son of Sir Miles Warrington of Suffolk, with whom he had served in India and New South Wales years ago.

There were other visitors to the dingy chambers. Colonel Newcome brought little Clive, who had come as a little boy to Charterhouse just before Pendennis left for the university; and when the latter was ill, came Helen Pendennis, the simple, saintly woman, and Laura Bell, to whom "Bluebeard" lost his heart, and with whom, but for that gentleman's kindly warning, she might well have fallen in love. It is a well-known story how Thackeray at Brighton went to see the Misses Smith, daughters of Horace, part-author of *Rejected Addresses*, and told them he had at once to write the first chapters of a new book and that he had no plot. Whereupon they told him a simple, little story of Brighton life, which formed the groundwork of *Pendennis*. In gratitude he christened the heroine Laura after one of the sisters, who, when the books was brought to a close was very angry. "I'll never speak to you again, Mr Thackeray," she declared; "you know I meant to marry Warrington."

In Pump Court resided the Honourable Algernon Percy Deuceace, fifth and youngest son of the Earl of Crabs, who with his neighbour, Mr Richard Blewitt, contrived to

pluck the wings of that most gullible pigeon, Mr Dawkins. The curious may read of the incident in *The Yellowplush Papers*. It is interesting to learn that this card-sharpping episode had its origin in a painful experience of the author. Once, when Thackeray was at Spa, he pointed out to Sir Theodore Martin, a tall, shabbily-dressed man. "That," said the novelist, "was the original of my Deuceace; I have not seen him since the day he drove me down in his cabriolet to my broker's in the City, where I sold out my patrimony and handed it over to him." "Poor devil," he added, "my money doesn't seem to have thriven with him!" These hawks, knowing that the lad would inherit money when he came of age, seduced him into card-playing and relieved him, not indeed of his entire fortune, but of some fifteen hundred pounds.

In the chapter of *Pendennis* called "Alsatia" —so named, no doubt, after the real Alsatia that had adjoined the Temple, and in earlier days had been a place of refuge until the end of the seventeenth century, when the privileges of sanctuary were withdrawn — another inn is introduced. "Bred up, like a bailiff or a shabby attorney, about the purlieus of the Inns of Court, Shepherd's Inn is always to be found in the close neighbourhood of Lincoln's Inn Fields and the Temple. Somewhere behind the black gables and smutty chimney-stacks of Wych Street, Holywell Street, Chancery Lane, the quadrangle lies, hidden from the outer world; and it is approached by curious passages and ambiguous smoky alleys, on which the sun has

forgotten to shine. Slop-sellers, brandy-balls and hard-bake vendors, purveyors of theatrical prints for youths, dealers in dingy furniture and bedding suggestive of anything but sleep, line the narrow walls and dark casements with their wares. The doors are many-belled, and crowds of dirty children form endless groups about the steps, or around the shell-fish dealers' trays in these courts; whereof the damp pavements resound with pattens, and are drabbled with a never-failing mud. Ballad-singers come and chant here, in deadly guttural tones, satirical songs against the Whig administration, against the Bishops and dignified clergy, against the German relatives of an august royal family: Punch sets up his theatre, sure of an audience, and occasionally of a halfpenny from the swarming occupants of the houses: women scream after their children for loitering in the gutter, or, worse still, against the husband who comes reeling from the gin-shop;—there is a ceaseless din and life in these courts, out of which you pass into the tranquil, old-fashioned quadrangle of Shepherd's Inn. In a mangy little grass-plot in the centre rises up the statue of Shepherd, defended by iron railings from the assaults of boys. The hall of the Inn, on which the founder's arms are painted, occupies one side of the square, the tall and ancient chambers are carried round the other two sides, and over the central archway, which leads into Oldcastle Street, and so into the great London thoroughfare." The gate of Shepherd's Inn was kept by Mrs Bolton, assisted by her daughter Fanny, who

figures somewhat prominently in some chapters of *The History of Pendennis*. Captain Costigan and Mr Bows lived in the third floor at No. 4, in the rooms that once were occupied by Charley Podmore ("the pleasing tenor singer, T.R.D.L., and at the Back Kitchen Concert Rooms"). Lady Mirabel (*née* Costigan, *alias* Fotheringay) called there sometimes to see her father, and her grand carriage caused much excitement in the neighbourhood. Next door resided Colonel Altamont, agent to the Nawaab of Lucknow, and Captain the Chevalier Edward Strong. It was in these chambers that occurred the famous scene of recognition, in which Mrs Bonner, the house-keeper of the Claverings, recognised the ex-convict Amory, and Blanche Amory met her papa.

There has been some speculation as to the identity of "Shepherd's Inn," but, at the request of the present writer, Miss G. E. Mitton, the high court of appeal on all matters connected with the topography of London, has set the question at rest. "I do not think Thackeray meant to depict any special inn, but rather made a model from the salient characteristics of the small inns in the neighbourhood," she has written. "He cannot mean Clifford's Inn, as that was not close to Wych Street and Holywell Street, but lies on the other side of Chancery Lane. Lyon's Inn was, so far as I remember, always associated with the law, until its demolition, and was sold by the lawyers, so that must be ruled out of court. There remains New, but, apart from the fact that this was not a one-man inn, founded by



TEMPLE GARDENS. Pages 65-71.





a man whose statue stood in the quad., there are other points of dissimilarity. Clement's Inn in some ways answers more nearly to Thackeray's account than any. However, some of the same objections lie against it. The idea of the statue being in the quad. may have been suggested to him by the well-known statue called the Blackamoor which was in the centre of Clement's quad. Also there were coats of armoury over the gateway and in the hall. The gateway itself is another feature he specially mentions. So altogether Clement's Inn approximates best, though by no means accurately copied."

## CHAPTER IV

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF THACKERAY'S HOMES—  
(i) TYBURNIA; (ii) BLOOMSBURY

WHEN Thackeray came over from Paris in 1834, he stayed with Major and Mrs Carmichael Smyth at their house, 18 Albion Street, Hyde Park. When he returned with his wife some three years later, the young couple stayed with his mother and stepfather.

Albion Street is close to the Marble Arch, which, erected by Nash at a cost of seventy-five thousand pounds, and placed by George IV. at the entrance to Buckingham Palace, was removed in 1851 to its present position at the north-eastern gate of Hyde Park. Almost opposite Marble Arch is Connaught Place, on the site of which stood Tyburn Gallows, where malefactors were executed. It was not until 1783 that the executions were transferred to Newgate. The criminal was brought from Newgate in a cart, and the procession stopped first at the steps of St Sepulchre's Church, opposite the prison, where by an old benefaction the evil-doer was presented with a nosegay, and again in Broad Street, one of the most ancient streets in the parish of Holborn (Old Bourne), at the gates





LAMB COURT, MIDDLE TEMPLE. *Pages 65-71.*  
*The Chambers of Warrington and Pendennis.*

of the Leprosy Hospital, where the condemned man took his last draught of ale. The last stage of the route was through Tyburn Lane, now Park Lane. The executions were public, and the tiers of seats round the gallows were sold to spectators. After the Restoration, the bodies of Cromwell, Ireton, and Bradshaw were exhumed and hung on these gallows. Perkin Warbeck, a pretender to the throne, here suffered the extreme penalty, and Catherine Hayes, who murdered her husband, was burnt alive by the mob. Here suffered also Jack Sheppard, the highwayman; Lord Ferrars, for the murder of his servant; Dr Dodd, for forgery; and Mrs Brownrigg, who

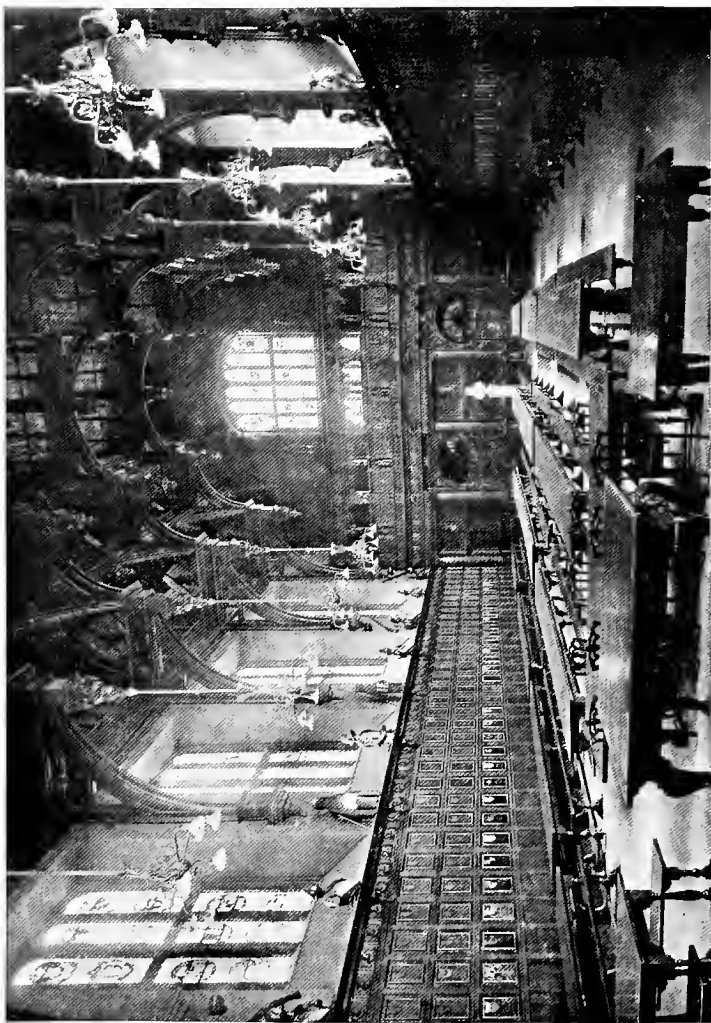
“ . . . whipped two female prentices to death,  
and hid them in the coal-hole.”

Mrs Brownrigg was made the principal character of a satire on the “Newgate” novels, which appeared in *Fraser's Magazine* in the early thirties, and by many is ascribed to Thackeray. Another criminal who suffered at Tyburn, Catherine Hayes, has had her memory kept alive by Thackeray's tale, *Catherine*, the object of which the author stated was “to counteract the injurious influence of some popular fictions of that day, which made heroes of highwaymen and burglars, and created a false sympathy for the vicious and criminal.” It is interesting to note that the irony of the story was overlooked, and that it was objected to by the critics as one of the most disgusting of romances woven around an evil-doer.

Henry Fielding, in the delightful *Life of Mr Jonathan Wild*, takes this hero to Tyburn. He gives an admirable pen-portrait of the scene.

“He was at the usual hour attended by the proper gentlemen appointed for the purpose, and acquainted that the cart was ready. On this occasion he exerted that greatness of courage which hath been so much celebrated in other heroes; and knowing that it was impossible to resist, he gravely declared he would attend them. He then descended to that room where the fetters of great men are knocked off, in a most solemn and ceremonious manner. Then shaking hands with his friends (to wit, those who were conducting him to the tree), and drinking their healths in a bumper of brandy, he ascended the cart, where he was no sooner seated than he received the acclamations of the multitude, who were highly ravished with his GREATNESS. The cart now moved slowly on, being preceded by a troop of horse guards bearing javelins in their hands, through streets lined with crowds all admiring the great behaviour of our hero, who rode on, sometimes fighting, sometimes swearing, sometimes singing or whistling, as his humour varied. When he came to the tree of glory, he was welcomed with an universal shout of the people, who were there assembled in prodigious numbers, to behold a sight much more rare in populous cities than one would reasonably imagine it should be, viz., the proper catastrophe of a great man. But though envy was, through fear, obliged to join the general voice in applause on this occasion, there were not wanting some





MIDDLE TEMPLE HALL. Pages 66-71.



who maligned this completion of glory which was now about to be fulfilled to our hero, and endeavoured to prevent it by knocking him on the head as he stood under the tree, while the Ordinary was performing his last office. They therefore began to batter the cart with stones, brick-bats, dirt, and all manner of mischievous weapons, some of which, erroneously playing on the robes of the ecclesiastic, made him so expeditious in his repetition that with wonderful alacrity he had ended almost in an instant, and conveyed himself into a place of safety in a hackney coach, where he waited the conclusion with the temper of mind described in these lines :

*' Suave mari magna, turbantibus æquora ventis,  
E terra alterius magnum spectare laborem.'*

We must not however omit one circumstance, as it serves to shew the most admirable conservation of character in our hero to his last moment, which was, that whilst the Ordinary was busied in his ejaculations, Wild, in the midst of the shower of stones, etc., which played upon him, applied his hands to the parson's pocket, and emptied it of his bottle-screw, which he carried out of the world in his hand. The Ordinary being now descended from the cart, Wild had just opportunity to cast his eyes round the crowd, and to give them a hearty curse, when immediately the horses moved on, and with universal applause our hero swung out of this world."

From Albion Street Thackeray moved to

13 Great Coram Street (Jorum Street, Edward FitzGerald says the novelist used to call it), which runs from Woburn Place to Brunswick Square, parallel to the better-known Guildford Street, which connects Russell Square with Gray's Inn Road. Here their first child, Anne Isabella, was born. That child is now Mrs Richmond Ritchie, but she is still affectionately remembered as Miss Thackeray, the authoress of many charming stories and essays. She has published some delightful *Memoirs*, and not long since wrote the interesting Biographical Introductions prefixed to a new edition of her father's works. At the time, John Leech and Charles Keene, both later to be his colleagues on the staff of *Punch*, were living in Great Coram Street.

The district of Bloomsbury figures largely in Thackeray's novels and in his letters. In Great Coram Street itself lived Mr Todd, the junior partner in the firm of Osborne & Todd. "The very next day Mr and Mrs John Brough, in their splendid carriage - and - four, called upon Mr Hoggarty and my wife at our lodgings in Lamb's Conduit Street," Mr Samuel Titmarsh mentions in his story of *The Great Hoggarty Diamond*. Lamb's Conduit Street was so called after one William Lamb, a merchant, who towards the end of the sixteenth century erected a conduit by which water was conveyed from Holborn to Snow Hill. In the middle of the eighteenth century the conduit was removed, when the Foundling Hospital was built at the north end of the street.

The Foundling Hospital was erected by Captain Thomas Coram, whose portrait, by Hogarth, still adorns the board-room. Coram was a sailor, who was moved to his philanthropic deed by the many deserted babies that were found in the metropolis. When the building was opened in 1739, it was available for the reception of all infants who should be left by their mothers in a basket placed at the entrance. But this led to flagrant abuse; no fewer than 3296 babies were brought in the first year, and more stringent conditions had to be imposed. Connected with the hospital is the Foundling Church, where, twice on Sundays, "the boys and girls sit in graduated sizes on each side of the big organ given by Handel; the girls in white mob-caps, tuckers, and aprons, and the boys in red sashes." It is a sight that may be viewed by all, and a picturesque sight it is, though depressing enough to the thoughtful. It was at this church that the Osborne family worshipped, and where old Osborne erected a monument on the wall: "Sacred to the memory of George Osborne Junior, Esq., late a Captain in His Majesty's —th regiment of foot, who fell on the 18th of June, 1815, aged 28 years, while fighting for his king and country in the glorious victory of Waterloo. *Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori.*" There, too, the dead man's son went with his aunt; and once, at least, Amelia attended Divine service, and sat in a place where she could see the head of the boy under his father's tombstone. "Many hundred fresh children's voices rose up there and sang hymns to the Father

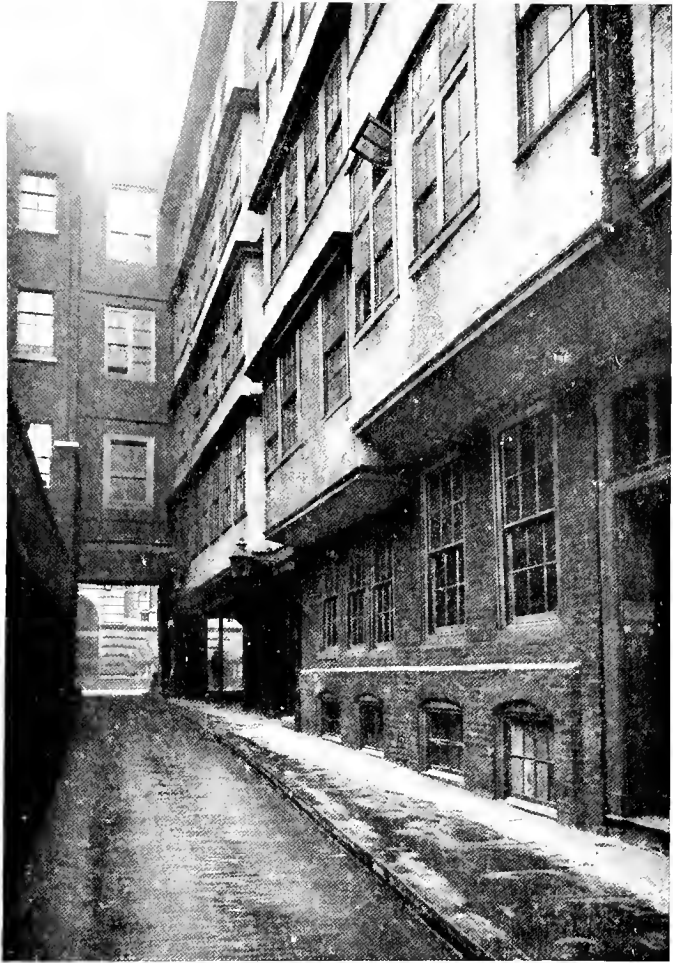
Beneficent ; and little George's soul thrilled with delight at the burst of the glorious psalmody. His mother could not see him for a while, through the mist that dimmed her eyes."

Thackeray was always susceptible to the sufferings and pleasures of children—

"There's something, even in his bitterest mood,  
That melts him at the sight of infancy ;  
Thank God that he can love the pure and good."

When J. T. Fields, the American publisher and man of letters, was in London, he was one day mentioning the various sights he had seen, when Thackeray interrupted. "But you haven't seen the greatest one yet," he said. "Go with me to-day to St Paul's, and hear the charity children sing." So they went, and Mr Fields noticed that Thackeray had his head bowed, and that his whole frame shook with emotion as the children of poverty rose to pour out their anthem of praise.

"There is one day in the year," Thackeray said, in one of the lectures on the Georges, "when I think St Paul's presents the noblest sight in the whole world: when five thousand charity children, like nogs, and with sweet fresh voices, sing the hymn which makes every heart thrill with praise and happiness. I have seen a hundred grand sights in the world—coronations, Parisian splendours, Crystal Palace openings, Pope's chapels with their processions of long-tailed cardinals and quavering choirs of fat *soprani*, but think in all Christendom there is no such sight as Charity Children's Day. *Non Angli, sed Angeli.* As one looks at that



MIDDLE TEMPLE LANE. *Pages 65-71.*



beautiful multitude of innocents, as the first note strikes;—indeed, one may almost fancy that cherubs are singing.” And elsewhere he has written: “To see a hundred boys marshalled in a chapel or old hall; to hear their sweet, fresh voices when they chant, and look in their brave, calm faces; I say, does not the sight and sound of them smite you, somehow, with a pang of exquisite kindness?”

Not far from the Foundling is Russell Square, where lived several members of the family of Major Carmichael Smyth. In the last three or four years alterations have been made, but chiefly in the frontages of the houses, and without materially changing the character of the neighbourhood. “None of its modern innovations can altogether destroy the spirit and feeling of Thackeray that it breathed,” the late Mrs E. T. Cook wrote in the charming *Highways and Byways in London*. “Here lived old Osborne, the purse-proud banker; there is going on old Sedley’s sale; I can see the packing-cases, loafers, and the vans, at this moment; and here, by these very prosaic green railings is Amelia, sad and black-garbed, looking with tear-filled eyes for her boy George. Now that she comes into the light, I can see she is only a nurse from one of the Great Ormond Street or Queen’s Square hospitals, or, perhaps, a Salvation Army ‘lassie,’ but for the moment she was Amelia, poke-bonnet and all, to the life. Even the historic railings are just the same as when Thackeray drew them and Amelia beside them, in chapter 1.”

Close by is Queen's Square, built in the reign of Anne, and named in compliment to her; but the statue that stands in the garden is that of Queen Charlotte. It is strange to read in the little volume on Bloomsbury by Miss G. E. Mitton, who has written so admirably on *The Fascination of London*, that when the square was first built much eulogy was bestowed upon it because of the beautiful view to the Hampstead and Highgate hills, for which reason the north side was left open. This is still open, but the view is now confined to Guildford Street. On the south side is the church, fashionable in the reign of Queen Anne, when Sir Richard Steele kept house, and did not pay rent, hard by in Bloomsbury Square. Thackeray mentioned it in *The Adventures of Philip*, and to offer up their praises and thanksgiving for late mercies vouchsafed to them, went Philip and the Little Sister and the two little children. It was in Hart Street that young George Osborne attended the school of the Reverend Lawrence Veal, domestic chaplain to the Earl of Bareacres, who prepared young gentlemen and noblemen for the universities, the senate, and the learned professions; whose system did not embrace the degrading corporal severities still practised at the ancient places of education, and in whose family the pupils found the elegances of refined society and the confidence and affection of a home. Separated only by Southampton Row is Bloomsbury Square, once Southampton Square. It is a dismal, respectable place, and its most conspicuous building is the College of Preceptors.





IS ALBION STREET, HYDE PARK. Page 72.  
*Where Thackeray stayed with his Mother in 1837.*



The gardens contain a statue of Fox. It has, however, many interesting associations. Bedford House occupied the entire north side, and its residents included Steele, Akenside, Sir Hans Sloane, whose collection of books forms the nucleus of the British Museum collections. Lord Mansfield, whose famous library was burnt by the Gordon rioters in 1780, lived there, and also in 1818 Isaac Disraeli, when his more famous son, Benjamin, was fourteen years of age. It was in St Andrew's, Holborn, that the latter was baptised when his father withdrew from the Jewish community. Isaac Disraeli's reasons are duly set forth in his book, *The Genius of Judaism*: his principal complaint was that the law was enforced in all its severity when circumstances had changed, and the original object was not thereby effected. St George's Church has its entrance in Hart Street. It was built in 1731 by Hawkesmoor, a pupil of Sir Christopher Wren, and has a quaint tower, on the top of which is a statue of George I. in Roman costume. This inspired the following lines:

“When Harry the Eighth left the Pope in the lurch,  
He ruled over England a head of the Church;  
But George's good subjects, the Bloomsbury people,  
Instead of the Church, made him Head of the Steeple.”

Next to Bedford House was Montague House in Great Russell Street, which in 1759 was opened as the British Museum. Soon the collections outgrew their habitation, and a new building was erected in 1823 by Sir Robert Smirke. This

Ionic structure is regarded as the most successful imitation of the Greek architecture in the country. The great reading-room, with its accommodation for more than three hundred readers, was not built until 1857, and since then a new wing has been added. Even now considerations of space are becoming a question of importance, and already old newspapers are stored at Hendon; while, years ago, the natural history collections were removed to South Kensington. "Most Londoners—not all—have seen the British Museum Library," Thackeray paid tribute, in a *Roundabout Paper*. "I speak *à cœur ouvert*, and pray the kindly reader to bear with me. I have seen all sorts of domes of Peters and Pauls, Sophia, Pantheon—what not?—and have been struck by none of them as much as by that catholic dome in Bloomsbury, under which our million volumes are housed. What peace, what love, what truth, what beauty, what happiness for all, what generous kindness for you and me, are here spread out! It seems to me one cannot sit down in that place without a heart full of grateful reverence. I own to have said my grace at the table, and to have thanked Heaven for this, my English birthright, freely to partake of these bountiful books, and to speak the truth I found there." Thackeray wrote part of *The Virginians* there, and, in the summer of 1858, John Lothrop Motley, the American historian of the Dutch Republic, saw him in the reading-room. "I believe you have never seen Thackeray," the latter wrote to his wife; "he has the appearance of a colossal infant—smooth,





13 GREAT CORAM STREET, BRUNSWICK SQUARE. *Pages 76-90.*  
*Where Thackeray lived, 1837-1840.*

white, shiny, ringlety hair—flaxen, alas! with advancing years—a roundish face, with a little dab of a nose, upon which it is a perpetual wonder how he keeps his spectacles, a sweet but rather piping voice, with something of the childish treble about it, and a very tall, slightly stooping figure—such are the characteristics of the great snob of England. His manner is like that of every one else in England; nothing original, all planned down into perfect uniformity with that of his fellow-creatures. There was not much more distinction in his talk than in his white choker, or black coat and waistcoat. . . . After breakfast, I went down to the British Museum. I had been immersed half an hour in my manuscript, when, happening to turn my head round, I found seated next to me Thackeray, with a file of old newspapers before him, writing the ninth number of *The Virginians*. He took off his spectacles to see who I was, then immediately invited me to dinner the next day (as he seems always to do, every one he meets), which invitation I could not accept; and he then showed me the page he had been writing, a small, delicate, legible manuscript. After that, we continued our studies.”

Thackeray was quite at home under the dome, and when Sir Anthony Panizzi asked him to give evidence before a Parliamentary committee, he replied in a letter that has never been published: “I’ll gladly come and say on behalf of the B. M. what little I know—that I’ve always found the very greatest attention and aid there—that I once came from Paris to London

to write an article in a review about French affairs—and that when I went to the Bibliothèque du Roi, I could only get a book at a time, and no sign of a catalogue. But then, I didn't go often, being disgusted with the place, and entering it as a total stranger, without any recommendation."

Walking through Great Russell Street, and going northwards down Tottenham Court Road, through a turning on the western side, Fitzroy Square is reached. This is a depressing, faded place nowadays, but once it was the centre of the artists' quarters, and in earlier times had been a fashionable area. Colonel Newcome and James Binnie, soon after their return from India, rented a vast but melancholy house there, with great black passages, a large black stone staircase, a cracked conservatory, and a dilapidated bathroom. "Not long since it was a ladies' school in an unprosperous condition. The scar left by Madame Latour's brass-plate may still be seen on the tall black door, cheerfully ornamented in the style of the last century with a funeral urn in the centre of the entry, with garlands and the skulls of rams at each corner." There Clive entertained his friends in his own suite of rooms, and there also came correct East India gentlemen from the Oriental Club in Hanover Square. But for James Binnie *The Newcomes* might have been a happier story, for it was through him that the Colonel and Clive came to know the terrible Campaigner, the evil genius of the book.

Only a few streets away is Howland Street, where Clive took his wife, and perforce, the



Campaigner, his mother-in-law, when the Bundelkund Bank failed and left them penniless.

Harking back to Great Coram Street and going south into Holborn, one arrives at Chancery Lane, out of which runs Cursitor Street. There was Sloman's sponging-house, the prototype of Moss's, which stood opposite Lord Eldon's house at 2 Cursitor Street. Colonel Rawdon Crawley was taken to Moss's when he left Gaunt House after the great ball, where his wife, Becky, won so much admiration in the charades. Becky did not come to rescue "*mon pauvre cher petit*"; but Lady Jane Crawley acted as the Good Samaritan, and released Crawdon in time for him to interrupt the supper of his wife and Lord Steyne. Then came the greatest and most dramatic scene in *Vanity Fair*. The Marquis thought a trap had been laid for him, and was furious. "Make way, sir, and let me pass," he screamed. But Rawdon Crawley, springing out, seized him by the neckcloth, until Steyne, almost strangled, writhed and bent under his arm. "You lie, you dog," said Rawdon. "You lie, you coward and villain!" and he struck the peer twice on the face with his open hand, and flung him bleeding to the ground. It was all done before Rebecca could interpose. She stood there trembling before him. She admired her husband, strong, brave and victorious. In later years, thinking of this passage where Becky admires her husband for giving Lord Steyne the chastisement that *ruins* her for life, "When I wrote that sentence," Thackeray remarked, "I slapped my fist on the table and said, 'That is a stroke of genius.'"

Further east is Furnival's Inn, where Thackeray and Dickens met for the first time. It was at this time Dickens was writing *Pickwick*. Robert Seymour, the inventor of the original crude design of *Pickwick*, was the illustrator; but when he had only completed the drawings for the first two or three numbers, on the morning of Thursday, April 20, 1836, in a fit of temporary insanity he committed suicide. His place was filled by Mr R. W. Buss, with whose work, however, Dickens was not satisfied. A new artist was wanted, and Thackeray, applying for the post, met Dickens for the first time. Years after, at a Royal Academy dinner, Thackeray, responding to the toast of "Literature," with which his name and Dickens were associated, spoke of his now famous offer, the refusal of which he would persist in calling "Mr Pickwick's lucky escape." "Had it not been for the direct act of my friend who has just sat down," he said, "I should most likely never have been included in the toast which you have been pleased to drink; and I should have tried to be not a writer, but a painter, or designer of pictures. That was the object of my early ambition; and I can remember when Mr Dickens was a very young man; and had commenced delighting the world with some charming humorous works, of which I cannot mention the name, but which were coloured light green, and came out once a month, that this young man wanted an artist to illustrate his writings; and I recollect walking up to his chambers in Furnival's Inn with two or three drawings in my hand, which, strange



RUSSELL SQUARE, EAST SIDE. Page 79.



to say, he did not find suitable. But for the unfortunate blight which came over my artistical existence, it would have been my pride and pleasure to have endeavoured one day to find a place on these walls for one of my performances. This disappointment caused me to direct my attention to a different work of art, and now I can only hope to be 'translated' on these walls, as I have been, thanks to my talented friend Mr Egg."

Not far from Furnival's Inn was Newgate, on the east side of Old Bailey, where Thackeray went with Richard Monckton Milnes, afterwards Lord Houghton, to witness the hanging of Courvoisier, in July 1840. Milnes breakfasted with him at half-past three, at Great Coram Street, and they drove past Gray's Inn into Holborn, and so to Snow Hill. The scene upset Thackeray, and he said what he thought of it in his article in *Fraser's Magazine*, "Going to see a Man Hanged." "There is some talk of the terror which the sight of this spectacle inspires. . . . I fully confess that I came away . . . that morning with a disgust for murder, but it was *for the murder I saw done*. . . . This is the twentieth of July, and I may be permitted for my part to declare that, for the last fourteen days, so salutary has the impression of the butchery been upon me, I have had the man's face continually before my eyes; that I can see Mr Ketch at this moment, with an easy air, taking the rope from his pocket, that I feel myself ashamed and degraded at the brutal curiosity which took me to that brutal sight, and that

I pray to Almighty God to cause this disgraceful sin to pass from among us, and to cleanse our land of blood." Years after he was asked to attend a similar function, but he did not accept the invitation. "Seeing one man hanged is quite enough in the course of a life," he remarked. "*J'y ai été*, as the Frenchman said of hunting."

In later years Newgate was used for prisoners awaiting trial at the Central Criminal Court next door. After 1868 the executions took place in the presence only of the officials, but crowds assembled to witness the hoisting of the black flag that announced the death of the condemned man. The prison was demolished in 1903.

Thackeray rarely went farther east. Colonel Newcome, however, made more than one excursion thither. "He dismissed his cab at Ludgate Hill and walked thence by the dismal precincts of Newgate and across the muddy pavements of Smithfield, on his way back to the old school where his son was, a way which he had trodden many a time in his own early days. This was Cistercian Street, and the Red Cow of his youth; there was the quaint old Grey Friars Square, with its blackened trees and gardens surrounded by ancient houses of the build of the last century, now slumbering like pensioners in the sunshine."

Thackeray seldom went into the city save on business, notably to Cornhill, where, over against St Peter's Church, were situated the offices of Messrs Smith, Elder, & Company, the proprietors of *The Cornhill Magazine*, before they moved to Waterloo Place; and to the *Punch* offices in Bouverie Street.





RUSSELL SQUARE, WEST SIDE. Page 79.



At the Great Coram Street house another child was born, who died in infancy ; and in May 1840 a third, Harriet Marion, afterwards the late Sir Leslie Stephen's first wife. Mrs Thackeray was very ill after the latter event, and the illness affected her mind. Thackeray, who regarded this as a temporary derangement, took her from watering-place to watering-place, as the doctors recommended. Some ten years later, in a pathetic letter to his life-long friends the Brookfields, he recalled this sad time of his life. "I find an old review, containing a great part of an article I wrote about Fielding in 1840 in *The Times*," he wrote. "My wife was just sickening at that moment: I wrote it at Margate where I had taken her, and used to walk out three miles to a little bowling-green, and write there in an arbour—coming home and wondering what was the melancholy oppressing the poor little woman." It is not long since the present writer, walking from Margate to Broadstairs, came to Kingsgate, about three miles from either town, and there he found, perched upon an extremity of the cliff, close by the coast-guard station and opposite the lighthouse, a time-honoured inn, old bowling-green, and what might well have been "the little sunshiny arbour," all complete ; and the sad picture was conjured up instanter.

At last Thackeray was compelled to realise that the cloud on his wife's intellect would never dissolve. It was necessary that she should be properly cared for, and with this object in view she was placed in the charge

of Mr and Mrs Thompson, at Leigh, in Essex. She outlived her husband by so many years, that it was with something like a shock that in 1894 the announcement of her death was read.





COLONEL NEWCOME'S HOUSE IN FITZROY SQUARE. *Page 84.*

## CHAPTER V

### THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF THACKERAY'S HOMES— (iii) ST JAMES'S AND MAYFAIR

SOON after his wife's illness, Thackeray sent his children to stay with their grandparents in Paris, and about the same time he gave up the house in Great Coram Street. His movements thereafter for a while are not easy to trace. It may be surmised that he stayed with friends, put up at the Bedford Hotel, revisited Paris; but this cannot be stated with any definite assurance. In 1842, however, one learns his whereabouts from the autobiography of the late Mr Henry Vizetelly, the founder of *The Pictorial Times* and other journalistic ventures. "On calling at the address given me—a shop in Jermyn Street, eight or ten doors from Regent Street, and within a few doors of the present Museum of Geology—and knocking at the private entrance, a young lodging-house slavey, in answer to my inquiries, bade me follow her upstairs," Mr Vizetelly has related. "I did so, to the very top of the house, and after my card had been handed in, I was asked to enter

the front apartment, where a tall, slim individual between thirty and thirty-five years of age, with a pleasant, smiling countenance, and a bridgeless nose, and clad in a dressing-gown of decided Parisian cut, rose from a small table standing close to the near window to receive me. When he stood up the low pitch of the room caused him to look even taller than he really was, and his actual height was well over six feet. The apartment was an exceedingly plainly furnished bedroom, with common rush-seated chairs, and painted French bedstead, and with neither looking-glass nor prints on the bare, cold, cheerless-looking walls. On the table from which Mr Thackeray had risen a white cloth was spread, on which was a frugal breakfast tray—a cup of chocolate and some dry toast; and huddled together at the other end were writing materials, two or three numbers of *Fraser's Magazine*, and a few slips of manuscript. I presented Mr Nickisson's letter—[Nickisson was then the editor of *Fraser's Magazine*, having succeeded Dr Maginn]—and explained the object of my visit, when Mr Thackeray at once undertook to write [for the forthcoming *Pictorial Times*] upon art, to review such books as he might fancy, and to contribute an occasional article on the opera, more with reference to its frequenters, than from a critical point of view. So satisfied was he with the three guineas offered him for a couple of columns weekly, that he jocularly expressed himself willing to sign an agreement for life upon these terms. I can only suppose, from the eager way

in which he closed with my proposal, that the prospects of an additional hundred and sixty pounds to his income was, at that moment, anything but a matter of indifference. The humble quarters in which he was installed seemed, at any rate, to indicate that, for some reason or other, strict economy was just then the order of the day with him."

Close by in Bury Street, which runs into Piccadilly, Major Pendennis, half-pay, lived in lodgings. Here it was that he was bidden by his servant Morgan to stand and deliver; and here, like the old soldier he was, he turned the tables completely on his aggressor. Thackeray placed an interesting scene in Jermyn Street itself, or Germain Street as it was called in the reign of Queen Anne. Harry Esmond, after dining with Dick Steele at the guard-table at St James's Palace, was surprised when, walking down this street, his companion suddenly left his arm and ran after a gentleman, who was poring over a folio volume at the book-shop near to St James's Church. The tall fair man, in a snuff-coloured suit, with a plain sword, very sober, and almost shabby in appearance—at least when compared to Captain Steele, who loved to adorn his jolly round person with the finest of clothes, and shone in scarlet and gold lace—was no less a person than Mr Joseph Addison. Mr Addison took them both to his lodgings in the Haymarket, gave them a bottle of wine, invited Harry to give him some particulars of Marlborough's actions for use in *The Campaign*, upon the writing of which he was then engaged, and

subsequently read them the portion already composed. *The Campaign* is as dead as the works of the late Mr Martin Tupper; of whom some American once asked Thackeray what they thought of him in England. "We don't think of him in England," came the truthful reply. *The Campaign* is as little read as any other of Addison's poems, plays, and other writings. He lives solely by his contributions to *The Spectator*, in which his playful fancy had full vent. Yet he is as great a figure in the literary history of the beginning of the eighteenth century as Johnson was towards the end. And the curious part of it is, that of the Doctor's writings also, save *Rasselas*, no one reads anything at all!

Mr Vizetelly is probably correct in giving the date of his interview with Thackeray in Jermyn Street as 1842, for early in the following year Thackeray's contributions began to appear in *The Pictorial Times*. It is, however, a little puzzling to find a letter to Nickisson from Thackeray, dated "13 Great Coram Street, April 8, 1843"; and the only conjectures that seem feasible are that he had let his house and returned to it when his tenant's agreement terminated; or that he dated from it as an address more permanent than that of the apartments he occupied.

Later, Thackeray was to be found at 88 St James's Street, where he wrote *The Luck of Barry Lyndon, Esq.* Mr W. H. Rideing, in his very interesting brochure on *Thackeray's London*, published in 1885, stated that this house had





LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS, SOUTH SIDE.

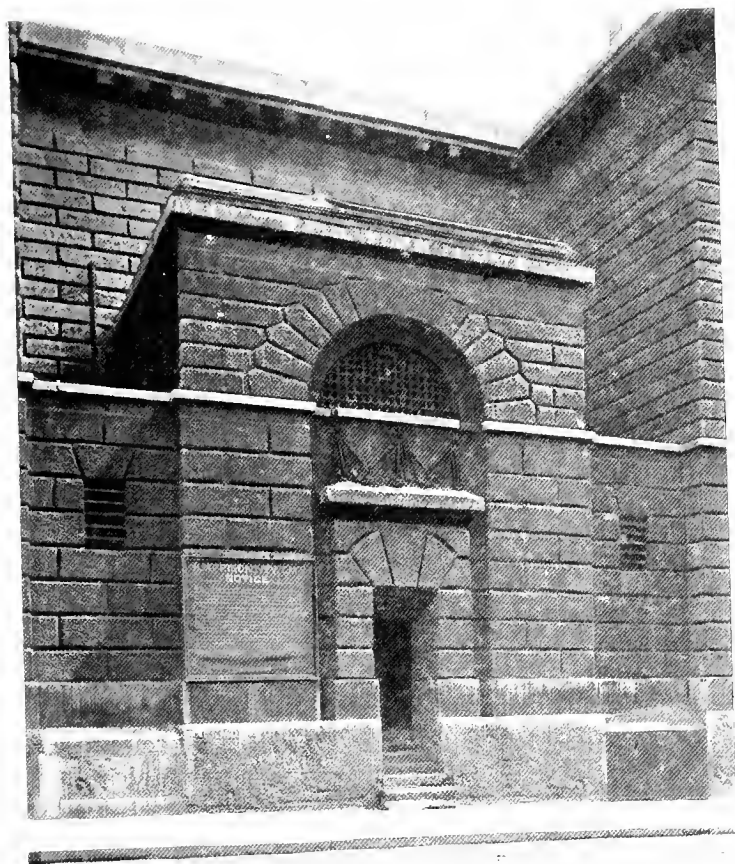


been pulled down some years ago. This, however, is inaccurate. It was altered, and for a while a post-office occupied the ground floor. Not until the present year (1904) was it demolished. No. 88 was situated at the south-west corner of St James's Street, with a frontage in Cleveland Row. It was close by Marlborough House, where King Edward lived when Prince of Wales, now occupied by his heir-apparent. It faced that portion of St James's Palace which stands between the Colour Court and the Ambassador's Court, and was next door to what used to be the St James's Coffee-House, where fashionable wits foregathered, and Swift—not too far distant from Esther Vanhomrigh ("Vanessa") in Suffolk Street—wrote so many of his letters to sweet, womanly Stella. "He never sends away a letter to her but he begins a new one the same day. He can't bear to let go her little hand as it were."

In the last hundred and fifty years London has altered almost out of recognition, yet, somehow, no part of it has suffered so little change of atmosphere as St James's Street and its immediate neighbourhood. Bloomsbury has decayed; Soho has become the quarter of poor foreigners; Baker Street of the genteel rather than of the *monde*; but St James's Street is still one of the main arteries of fashion. No area in London has memories more interesting than this, and this volume could easily be filled with an account of these few acres. It is needless here to refer to the many associations of the Palace, and unnecessary to dwell upon the traditions of

the Park, where Charles II. sauntered, and which Queen Caroline, the consort of the second George, wished to have enclosed as an addition to the Palace gardens. She inquired of Sir Robert Walpole, "What would it cost to effect this?" "Only three crowns, madam," the great, unscrupulous minister told her. In St James's Street Gibbon resided for a while, and Napoleon died in exile. This street was the centre of the chocolate-houses district, many of which—The Cocoa Tree, Arthur's, Brooks's, Boodle's, White's, The Thatched House—converted into clubs, still survive. Rogers, the banker-poet, lived at 42 St James's Place, and gave his famous breakfast parties, to which went Byron, Moore, Sir Walter Scott, Sydney Smith—nimblest of wits—Disraeli the younger, Macaulay, and a host of other celebrities. There, too, sometime resided Addison; in Park Place, Hume; in Bennet Street, Byron.

In King Street, close by, was Nerot's Hotel, where Colonel Newcome, C.B., and his civilian colleague in the Honourable East India Company's service, James Binnie, stayed on their return to England. This old hostelry probably dated back to the middle of the seventeenth century, and at this time was falling into decay. In the early thirties it was bought by John Braham, the author of "The Death of Nelson," a well-known tenor of the day, "a beast of an actor, though an angel of a singer," as Sir Walter Scott said. Thackeray knew him, and mocked him in his paper, grandiloquently named *The National Standard and Journal of Litera-*



OLD NEWGATE PRISON. *Pages 87-88.*



*ture, Science, Music, Theatricals, and the Fine Arts:*

“ Say not that Judah's harp has lost its tone,  
 Or that no bard hath found it where it hung,  
 Broken and lonely, voiceless and unstrung,  
 Beside the sluggish streams of Babylon ;  
 Sloman repeats the strains his fathers sung,  
 And Judah's burning lyre is Braham's own.  
 Behold him here. Here view the wondrous man,  
 Majestical and lovely, as when first  
 In music on a wondering world he burst,  
 And charmed the ravished ears of sov'reign Anne.\*  
 Mark well the form, O reader ! nor deride  
 The sacred symbol—Jew's-harp glorified—  
 Which circled with a blooming wreath is seen  
 Of verdant bays ; and thus are typified  
 The pleasant music and the baize of green  
 Whence issues out at eve, Braham with front serene ! ”

Braham had spent forty thousand pounds on the Colosseum in Regent's Street, and now he expended another thirty thousand on the erection on the site of the building designed by the architect Beazley, known as the St James's Theatre. The somewhat curious preliminary announcement ran : “ Mr Braham has the honour to inform the nobility, gentry, and the public that his new theatre, King Street, St James's Square, will open on Monday, December 14, 1835, when, and during the week, an Opening Address will be spoken by Mrs Silby ; after which will be presented, for the first time, a new and original burletta, which has been some time in preparation, *Agnes Sorel*, written by Gilbert à Becket. The

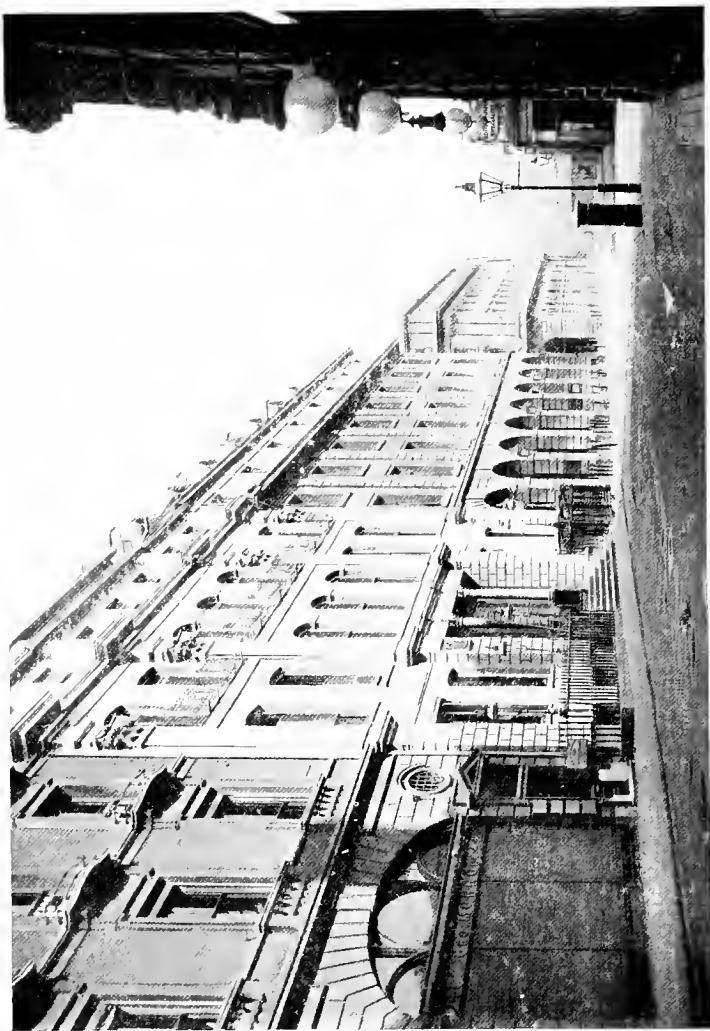
\* Thackeray added a note : “ Mr Braham made his first appearance in England in the reign of Queen Anne.”

overture and the whole of the music composed by Mrs G. à Becket." Braham was unfortunate in his choice of pieces, and died a ruined man, but not before his property had acquired the nickname of "Braham's Folly." He was succeeded by Chatterton, Alfred Wigan, Frank Matthews, Benjamin Webster, Miss Herbert, Mrs John Wood, the Kendals, Mrs Langtry, and others. It was not until 1891 that the popular actor-manager, Mr George Alexander, took possession of the house.

Next door to the theatre is Willis's Rooms and Restaurant. This was formerly the exclusive Almack's, "the seventh heaven of the fashionable world," ruled by the famous Lady Jersey. It was started by a Scotchman, MacAll, who, inverting the order of the syllables of his patronymic, gave his name to the assembly-rooms. It was at Willis's Rooms that Thackeray delivered his first course of Lectures on "The English Humourists of the Eighteenth Century." "You must be thinking of coming back to Pimlico soon," Thackeray wrote on April 29, 1857, to Mrs Brookfield, "for the lectures are to begin on the 15th [of May]. I tried the great room at Willis's yesterday, and recited part of the multiplication table to a waiter at the opposite end, so as to try the voice. He said he could hear perfectly, and I daresay he could, but the thoughts somehow swell and amplify with that high-pitched voice and elaborate distinctness. As I perceive how poets become selfish, I see how orators become humbugs, and selfish in their way, too, absorbed in that selfish pursuit, and turning of







BEDFORD HOTEL, COVENT GARDEN.  
*Where Thackeray stayed*

periods. It is curious to take these dips in a life new to me as yet, and try it and see how I like it, isn't it?" Thackeray trying his voice in the lecture-hall reminds one of a similar and amusing incident in the life of his fellow-humorist, Sir Richard Steele. Steele built himself a little private theatre, and when it was nearly finished he wished to test its acoustic properties. He went into a remote corner of the gallery, and told the builder to speak to him from the stage. The man complained that he was unaccustomed to public speaking, but Steele told him to say whatever he happened to think of. Then he spoke, and to the point: "Sir Richard Steele, for three months past me and my men have been working in this theatre, and we've never seen the colour of your honour's money: we will be very much obliged if you will pay it directly, for until you do we won't drive in another nail." Sir Richard said that his friend's elocution was perfect, but that he didn't like the subject much.

The first lecture was delivered, not on May 15, but on May 22, and the others followed on May 29, June 12, 19, 26, July 3, 1851. The price for a reserved seat for the course was two guineas; for an unreserved seat for a single lecture, seven-and-sixpence. The audiences included "all the talents." Hallam heard the whole series, and so did Macaulay. "Margaret came to take me to Thackeray's [third] lecture," he noted in his diary. "He is full of humour and imagination, and I only wish that these lectures may answer, both in the way of fame

and money. He told me, as I was going out, that the scheme had done wonders for him; and I told him, and from my heart, that I wished he had made ten times as much. "Carlyle and his wife went to hear him, besides Harriet Martineau, Monckton Milnes, Dickens, Lord Carlisle, and Charlotte Brontë. Mrs Ritchie was there with her grandmother and her younger sister, and she has recorded her impressions: how the room was crowded, and how she did not recognise her father's voice when he began, "In treating of the English Humourists of the eighteenth century, it is of the men rather than of their works," etc., though soon it softened and deepened until it sounded again like the familiar tones. She remembers, when it was all over, the applause of the audience crowding up to shake hands with the lecturer, the proud and happy look of her grandmother; and the drive home, when her father, in high spirits, made jokes, and they all laughed and were very jolly.

From the southern extremity, Pall Mall runs eastwards.

"In town let me live, in town let me die,  
For in truth I can't relish the country, not I;  
If one must have a villa in summer to dwell,  
Oh! give me the sweet shady side of Pall Mall."

"I am lodged in the street called Pall Mall, the ordinary residence of all strangers, because of its vicinity to the Queen's Palace, the Park, the Parliament House, the theatres, and the chocolate and coffee houses, where the best company frequent," Defoe wrote. "If you

would know our manner of living, 'tis thus : We rise by nine, and those that frequent great men's *levées* find entertainment at them till eleven, or, as at Holland, go to tea-tables. About twelve, the *beau monde* assembles in several coffee or chocolate houses ; the best of which are the Cocoa Tree or White's chocolate houses ; St James's, the Smyrna, Mr Rochford's, and the British coffee houses ; and all these so near one another that in less than one hour you can see the company of them all." Pall Mall to-day rivals St James's Street as a home of clubs, from the Marlborough, almost opposite the palace, to the United Service at the corner of Waterloo Place, and the Union overlooking Trafalgar Square. Indeed, great palaces have arisen from one end to the other, but at the cost of the destruction of many interesting landmarks. The War Office has absorbed Buckingham House since the Commander-in-chief removed from the Horse Guards, and the civil and military administration of the army were housed under one roof ; while, as it has been mentioned in an earlier chapter, Carlton House, the residence of the Prince Regent, has been demolished. "Where be the sentries who used to salute as the royal chariots drove in and out?" Thackeray inquired. "The chariots, with the kings inside, have driven to the realms of Pluto ; the tall Guards have marched into Hades. Where the palace once stood, a hundred little children are paddling up and down the steps to St James's Park. A score of grave gentlemen are taking their tea at the Athenæum Club ;

as many grisly warriors are garrisoning the United Service Club opposite." Then he proceeded to conjure up a picture of the historic street in bygone days. "Pall Mall is the great social Exchange of London now—the mart of news, of politics, of scandal, of rumour—the English forum, so to speak, where men discuss the last despatch from the Crimea, the last speech of Lord Derby, the next move of Lord John. And now and then, to a few antiquarians, whose thoughts are with the past rather than with the present, it is a memorial of old times and old people; and Pall Mall is our Palmyra. Look! About this spot Tom of Ten Thousand was killed by Königsmarch's gang. In that great red house Gainsborough lived, and Culloden Cumberland, George III.'s uncle. Yonder is Sarah Marlborough's palace, just as it stood when the termagant occupied it. At 25, Walter Scott used to live; at the house now 79, and occupied by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, resided Mrs Eleanor Glynn, comedian. How often has Queen Caroline's chair issued from under yonder arch! All the men of the Georges have passed up and down the street. It has seen Walpole's chariot and Chatham's sedan; and Fox, Gibbon, Sheridan, on their way to Brooks's; and stately William Pitt stalking on the arm of Dundas; and Hanger and Tom Sheridan reeling out of Raggett's; and Byron limping into Wattier's; and Swift striding out of Bury Street; and Mr Addison and Dick Steele, both perhaps a little the better for liquor; and the Prince of Wales



JERMYN STREET, Page 94.  
*Where Thackeray lived in Apartments*





and the Duke of York clattering over the pavement ; and Johnson counting the posts along the streets, after dawdling before Dodsley's window ; and Harry Walpole hobbling into his carriage, with a gimcrack bought at Christie's ; and George Selwyn sauntering into White's."

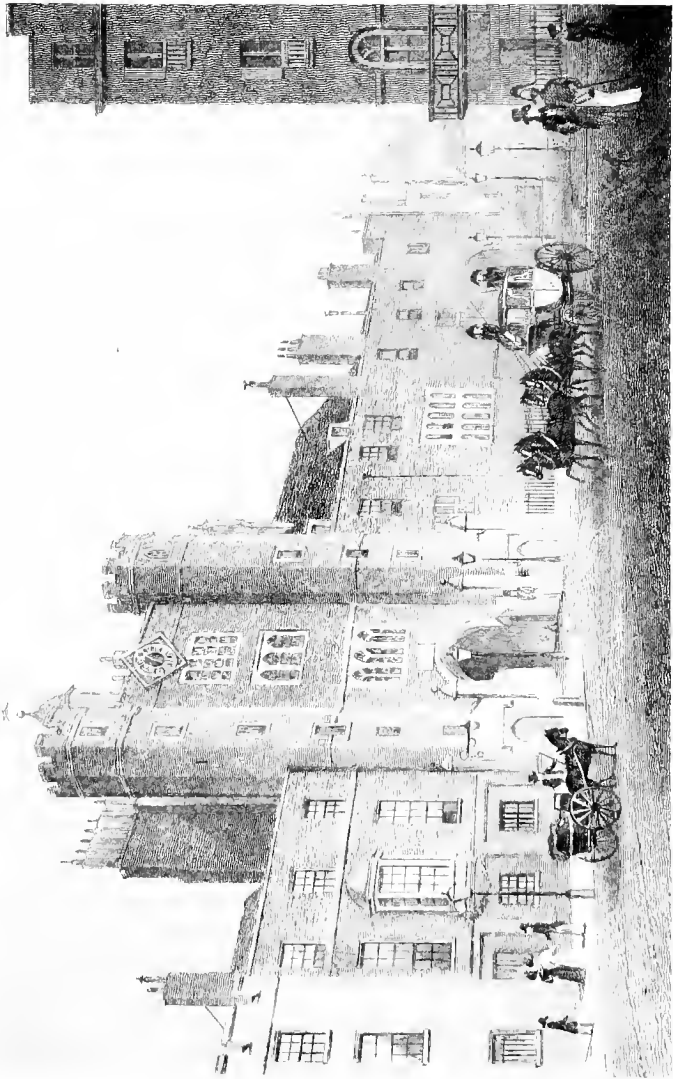
From Pall Mall, going through Waterloo Place, where now are the headquarters of Messrs Smith, Elder, & Company, the proprietors of *The Cornhill Magazine*, of which periodical Thackeray was the first editor, Regent Street is gained, where was the famous establishment of Howell & James, who provided Captain Rawdon Crawley with the famous dressing-case which, that gentleman stated, "cost me two hundred pounds—that is, I owe two for it," for which, as Thackeray put it, let the firm "be now praised and some day paid." Messrs Howell & James have gone, and part of their premises is occupied by a cheap tea-shop. *Sic transit gloria mundi.* In Regent Street was also the office of Fraser the publisher, with whose magazine Thackeray was for many years intimately connected.

Out of this famous thoroughfare runs Piccadilly. Here, too, clubs and mammoth buildings spring up like mushrooms, and old landmarks disappear with startling rapidity. The Bath Hotel is being demolished while these lines are being written, and the Albany is threatened, indeed, is doomed—the Albany, that quiet retreat for gentlemen, situated between 46 and 47 Piccadilly, but lying back a considerable distance from the roadway, with its many memories as the home of Byron, Canning, Lytton, and Macaulay.

Cambridge House, the residence of Lord Palmerston from 1855 to 1862, is now the Naval and Military Club, more familiarly referred to usually as the "In and Out" Club, a nickname derived from the legends inscribed on the gates leading into the courtyard. There still remains, however, the White Horse Cellar, nearly opposite Arlington Street—the Glos'ter Coffee-House of *The History of Pendennis*, where Arthur, the head of the family, as his immortal uncle always reminded him, alighted on his arrival in London from Fair Oaks. The hostelry was once the starting-place of nearly all coaches; but the coaching of to-day is done for pleasure and not by necessity, and the headquarters of the amusement is in that street of giant hotels, Northumberland Avenue.

Thackeray as the novelist of the upper classes of society, housed many of his characters in the exclusive area bounded by Bond Street, Oxford Street, Park Lane, and Piccadilly, known as Mayfair. Mayfair is a conservative district, and has changed but little since the days when Thackeray wrote. A severely aristocratic locality, the mansions remain in the same families generation after generation. Outwardly there is little to indicate the wealth and fashion of its inhabitants, and it lacks the magnificence of Belgravia. Yet it houses more famous names to the acre than, perhaps, any other spot in the world. Thackeray lived north of Mayfair in Albion Street, and south of it in St James's Street, but he never resided in the favoured area. A list of his characters that lived there, however, would read like a directory. The mention of a few must suffice. In Park Lane





ST. JAMES'S PALACE, PALL MALL. Page 95.  
*Showing Thackeray's House at the foot of St James's Street.*

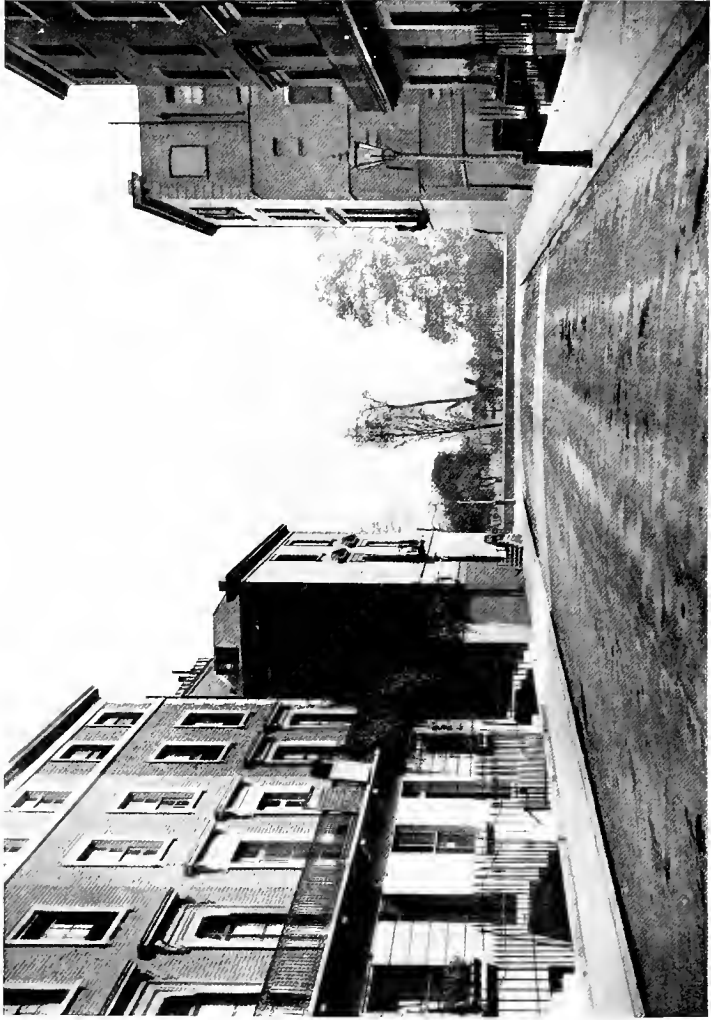
lived Sir Brian Newcome, banker, and Miss Crawley, the patroness of "Becky"; and in Walpole Street, Fred Bayham, J. J. Ridley, Miss Cann, and the Reverend Charles Honeyman occupied the same house, which was owned by Mrs Ridley, who had been the housekeeper to Squire Bayham, before that family fell upon evil days. Honeyman was the incumbent of Lady Whittlesea's Chapel, near by, and it is said that this clergyman, with his affectations and mannerisms, was drawn from a well-known and popular preacher, whose enemies said he had missed his vocation, for he should have been an actor. In Queen Street the Countess of Kew resided; in Bond Street, "at the court end of the town," lodged Harry Warrington; and in Clarges Street, Beatrix Bernstein, *née* Castlewood, "held her card-parties, her Wednesday and Sunday evenings, save during the short season when Ranelagh was open on a Sunday, when the desolate old woman sat alone waiting hopelessly for the scapegrace nephew that her battered old heart had learned to love." Great Gaunt Street contained the abodes of Lady Gaunt's mother and Sir Pitt Crawley. Who does not remember Becky's arrival at the latter? "Having passed through Shiverly Square into Great Gaunt Street, the carriage at length stopped at a tall, gloomy house between two other tall gloomy houses,\* each with the hatchment over the middle drawing-room window, as is the custom of houses in Great

\* Thackeray's own illustration contradicts the text. In the drawing the house is at the corner, with a side view of the Square.

Gaunt Street, in which gloomy locality death seems to reign perpetual." And who does not remember Becky inquiring majestically of the man who carries in her box, where is Sir Pitt Crawley? "He, he! *I* be Sir Pitt Crawley. Relect you owe me a pint for bringing down your luggage. He, he! Ask Tinker if I baynt. Mrs Tinker, Miss Sharp; Miss Governess, Mrs Charwoman. Ho, ho! . . . Where's the farden? . . . I gave you three-halfpence. Where's the change, old Tinker?" "There!" replied Mrs Tinker, flinging down the coin, "its only baronets as cares about farthings." The late Canon Kingsley told a good story of his brother-novelist. "I like your novel exceedingly," said a lady to Thackeray, "the characters are so natural, all but the baronet, Sir Pitt Crawley, and he is surely overdrawn; it is impossible to find such coarseness in his rank of life!" "That character," the author replied, with a laugh, "is almost the only exact portrait in the whole book." It has been suggested that the character was sketched from that of a former Lord Role, and the gentleman who advances this theory states that Sir Pitt's letters to Becky were very badly spelt and written, and that he has in his possession a letter written by Sir Robert Brownrigg to His Royal Highness the Duke of York, when Commander-in-chief of the British Army, complaining that a report received from Lord Role, as Lord-Lieutenant of his county, was so badly written and so badly spelt that he could not decipher it.

Great Gaunt Street is supposed to be Hill





28 WALPOLE STREET. Page 105.  
*Mrs. Estley's Lodging-House.*



Street, which runs into Berkeley Square—the Shiverly Square and Gaunt Square of *Vanity Fair*, where lived the Most Honourable George Gustavus, Marquis of Steyne, Earl of Gaunt and of Gaunt Castle, in the Peerage of Ireland, Viscount Hellborough, Baron Petchley and Grillsby, a Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, of the Golden Fleece of Spain, of the Russian Order of Saint Nicholas of the First Class, of the Turkish Order of the Crescent, First Lord of the Powder Closet and Groom of the Back Stairs, Colonel of the Gaunt or Regent's Own Regiment of Militia, a Trustee of the British Museum, an Elder Brother of the Trinity House, a Governor of the White Friars, and D.C.L.

“All the world knows that Lord Steyne's town palace stands in Gaunt Square, out of which Great Gaunt Street leads. . . . Gaunt House occupies nearly a side of the Square. The remaining three sides are composed of mansions that have passed away into dowagerism;—tall, dark houses, with window-frames of stone, or picked out of a lighter red. Little light seems to be behind those lean, comfortless casements now; and hospitality to have passed away from those doors as much as the laced lacqueys and link-boys of old times, who used to put out their torches in the blank iron extinguishers that still flank the lamps over the steps. . . . The Square . . . has a dreary look—nor is my Lord Steyne's palace less dreary. All I have ever seen of it is the vast wall in front, with the rustic columns at the great gate, through which an old

porter peers with a fat and gloomy red face—and over the wall the garret and bedroom windows, and the chimneys, out of which there seldom comes any smoke now.”

Gaunt House still stands in Berkeley Square, occupying nearly a side of it, and the description given by Thackeray tallies with that of the actual building. The mansion is not called Gaunt House, but the curious may easily ascertain its name. Mrs E. T. Cook, that charming writer on the *Highways and Byways of London*, however, asserts that Hertford House in Manchester Square, which belonged to the Hertford family, and is now the home of the Wallace Collection, is the prototype of Gaunt House. Undoubtedly it was a Lord Hertford, who was caricatured or portrayed as the Marquis of Steyne. Indeed there is no difficulty in recognising Francis, third Marquis of Hertford, the intimate friend of George IV. The same peer, it will be remembered stood for Lord Monmouth in Disraeli's *Coningsby*. It has been stated frequently that the Marquis's managing man in *Vanity Fair*, Wenham, as well as the Marquis's managing man in *Coningsby*, Rigby, was drawn from the Right Honourable John Wilson Croker. This, on the face of it, is absurd. Rigby is Croker to the life as seen through green spectacles, and he has but little in common with Wenham.

Near Gaunt House—if it is accepted as the Berkeley Square mansion—is Curzon Street, where at No. 201 resided, in a snug and complete bachelor's house, the Honourable Frederick Deuceace. When that gentleman went abroad, Mr Raggles, once

butler to Miss Crawley, purchased the lease and the rich and appropriate furniture. This house he let to the most desirable tenants. When Colonel Rawdon Crawley and his wife returned to London after the Waterloo campaign, the house was to let, and these worthy folk who wished to demonstrate to the world the useful and interesting art of living on nothing a year, rented it from the owner. Here Lord Steyne came and paid court to Becky, and here it was that that great nobleman was chastised by the irate husband. "I am innocent," protested Becky when Rawdon found her pocket-book filled with bank-notes. But Rawdon left her without a word. There is due to that shady person some commiseration. He had worked for his brilliant wife with his billiard cue, and had spent dull hours at the card-table, more for her sake than his own; he had ruined his prospects in life by marrying her; and he had never regretted the step, because he loved her. He had given up all for her and she had basely betrayed him. "You might have spared me a hundred pounds, Becky, out of all this—I have always shared with you." That was his only reproach. And when he had left, Becky went below to the drawing-room and gathered up the trinkets, which had been lying on the floor since she had dropped them there at her husband's orders before Lord Steyne went away.

## CHAPTER VI

### THACKERAY'S CLUBS AND HAUNTS

THACKERAY'S favourite club was the Garrick. "We, the happy initiated, never speak of it as the Garrick," he said at one of the club dinners; "to us it is 'the G,' 'the little G,' 'the dearest place in all the world.'" The premises then were in King Street, Covent Garden, and the new house in Garrick Street was not ready for the reception of members until after his death. It was to this club he brought Mr Herman Merivale as a boy to dinner—the curious may read of the occasion in *Travels in London*. Years after, Mr Merivale asked his host if he remembered the occasion. "Why, yes, of course," said the great man without a moment's hesitation; "and what is more, I remember I gave you beefsteak and apricot omelette." The young man was delighted that even the details of the entertainment should have impressed themselves upon his companion, and he expressed his pleasure. "Yes," said Thackeray, with twinkling eyes; "I always gave boys beefsteaks and apricot omelettes." Whereupon the lad's joy departed from him.

Thackeray became a power at the Garrick



HERTFORD HOUSE, MANCHESTER SQUARE. Page 108.  
*Supposed by some to be the original of Grant House.*



Club, and the extent of his influence was proved in the famous quarrel with Edmund Yates, afterwards the founder and proprietor of *The World*, now so admirably conducted by the son named after him. The quarrel originated in an article written by Yates in a paper called *Town Talk*, of which he was editor. It was a pen-sketch of Thackeray, who resented the personalities contained therein. Thackeray wrote an angry letter to the author, and Yates drafted a reply, in which, stating he had not meant all that Thackeray had read into the article, he reminded his correspondent of similar misdemeanours committed against fellow-clubmen in his earlier days—against Dr Lardner and Lord Lytton, as Dr Athanasius Lardner and Mistaw Edwad Lytton Bulwig in *The Yellow-plush Papers*; against Mr Stephen Price, Mr Wyndham Smith, and Captain Granby Calcroft, in *The Snobs of England*; and, above all, in later days, against Mr Andrew Arcedeckne as Foker in *The History of Pendennis*. Had this letter been sent, the matter would probably have died a natural death, for Thackeray would have been hard put to it to refute the charges. Unfortunately Yates showed his reply to Charles Dickens, who thought it flippant, and suggested one that was neither dignified nor politic for a man who was, so far, in the wrong. Upon the receipt of the Yates-Dickens letter, Thackeray placed the correspondence in the hands of the committee of the Garrick Club, on the grounds that the Club was the only place where he had been accustomed to meet the

aggressor. "I think I may fairly appeal to the committee of the Garrick Club," he wrote, "to decide whether the complaints I have against Mr Yates are not well founded, and whether the practice of publishing such articles as that which I enclose will not be fatal to the comfort of the Club, and is not intolerable in a society of gentlemen." The committee upheld Thackeray, and decided that Yates must apologise or retire from the Club. An appeal to a General Meeting was made by Yates, supported by Dickens, John Forster, Wills, Albert Smith, Wilkie Collins, Palgrave Simpson, and others; but the resolution to support the committee was carried by seventy votes against forty-six, and, in due course, Yates's name was erased from the list of members.

At the time it was believed (and the belief has not yet been refuted) that Dickens, acting for Yates, conducted the matter in a spirit hostile to Thackeray. Indeed, Yates declared that there was no real intimacy or anything like friendship between the two men, and he asserted that after the first, Thackeray was more angry with Dickens than with the original offender who, much to his detriment, was made the subject of a trial of strength between them. "You must not think, young 'un, I am quarrelling with Mr Yates," it is recorded that Thackeray said to an intimate: *I am hitting the man behind him.*" How far these statements are accurate, it is not easy to determine. As a result of the affair, the two great novelists did not speak for some years.

Even at the Garrick Club, however, there





BECKY SHARP'S HOUSE IN CURZON STREET. *Page 109.*



was a rift in Thackeray's lute : a member whose presence and speech irritated Thackeray, and who, discovering his power, was prone to exercise it. For instance, Thackeray was telling a story in the smoking-room when his persecutor entered. To the surprise of those assembled, Thackeray hesitated, stammered, then stopped. Whereon the new arrival, in patronising manner, exasperated him with the encouraging words : " Proceed, sweet warbler ! "

Thackeray's last visit here was paid in the last week of his life, and Shirley Brooks, his colleague on the staff of *Punch*, commemorated it lovingly in an obituary notice. " On the Tuesday he came to his favourite club, ' The Garrick, ' and asked for a seat at the table of two friends, who, of course, welcomed him, as all welcomed Thackeray. It will not be deemed too minute a record by any of the hundreds who personally loved him, to note where he sat for the last time at that club. There is in the dining-room in the first floor a nook near the reading-room. The principal picture hanging in that nook, and fronting you as you approach it, is the celebrated one from *The Clandestine Marriage*. Opposite to this Thackeray took his seat, and dined with his friends. He was afterwards in the smoke-room, a place in which he delighted. . . . Before the dawn of Thursday he was where there was no night. "

The Garrick Club has several portraits of Thackeray upon its walls, notably that by Maclise depicting him as a fashionably dressed young man, seated in a *négligé* attitude, displaying a

massive eyeglass; and the posthumous portrait by Sir John Gilbert.

Thackeray was elected a member of the Reform Club in April 1840, having been proposed by Mr Martin Thackeray, and seconded by Mr Henry Webbe. Thackeray described the Club in many of his writings, notably in *The Book of Snobs* and *Mr Brown's Letters to a Young Man about Town*. Though the Reform is pre-eminently a political club, and though Thackeray took no active part in politics—save for his one abortive attempt to represent Oxford—he is a proud memory of the club; and his portrait by Lawrence hangs in the place of honour in the Strangers' Room, between those of his friends Sir William Molesworth and Charles Buller. It was to the latter he referred in the following lines of "The End of the Play":—

"Who knows the inscrutable design?  
 Blessed be He who took and gave!  
 Why should your mother, Charles, not mine,  
 Be weeping at her darling's grave?"

"One of the most amusing legends concerning the great writer is connected with the place," Sir Wemyss Reid has told us. "Going into the coffee-room of the Reform Club one afternoon, he chanced to see on the *menu* of the day 'beans and bacon.' He was to dine with some eminent personage that night, but 'beans and bacon' were more than he could resist. Straightway he betook himself to the morning-room and penned a note to his host, telling him that he could not have the pleasure of dining with

him, as he had just met a very old friend whom he had not seen for years, and from whom he could not tear himself. Then he went back to the coffee-room and dined satisfactorily off his beloved dish in a corner. So runs the tale. Let us hope it is true. . . . But we have no Thackeray now. To some of us, at least, the Club is endeared by the thought that he was once one of ourselves; that he sat in these chairs, dined at these tables, chatted in these rooms, and with his wise, far-seeing eyes, surveyed the world from these same windows."

Between the Reform and the Athenæum is sandwiched the Travellers, a club for which Thackeray was proposed for membership in 1856, and was rejected. The ballot at the Travellers is by the members and not by the committee, and the majority gave the reason for their action that they were afraid of seeing themselves in some future novel from the pen of the great man.

The Athenæum Club is at the corner of Pall Mall and Waterloo Place, and, across the broad roadway in which stands the Duke of York's column on the site of Carlton House, faces the United Service Club. This has resulted in some wit calling the edifices Bishopsgate and Cripplegate. John Wilson Croker, the well-hated and the much-abused, was one of the founders of the Athenæum, and in all club matters he was so despotic that a humorist penned the following lines :

"I'm John Wilson Croker !  
I do what I please !  
They ask for an ice-house :  
I'll give them a frieze."

There has been a good deal of misunderstanding about Thackeray's election to the Athenæum, and the present writer must plead guilty to have perpetuated the error in the earlier editions of *The Life of William Makepeace Thackeray*. In extenuation, he can only plead the misleading use of the word "blackball" in one of Thackeray's letters about the matter. As a matter of fact, Thackeray never came up for membership in the ordinary way. He was proposed in 1846 by the Rev. W. Harness, and seconded by Charles Buller; but before his time came, under rule ii., which provides for the annual introduction of a certain number of persons of distinguished eminence, in science, literature, or for public services, without recourse to ballot, his name was brought forward in 1850 by Dean Milman and others, but without success. "I cannot say how much I am annoyed by the failure of my attempt to bring in Thackeray at the Athenæum. But there is no counting on the stubborn stupidity of man," Milman wrote to Abraham Hayward. "One voice, you know, excludes, and among eighteen committee-men that there should not be one self-conceited—I must not fill up this sentence. We are bound not to reveal the secrets of our Conciliabulum, but I may say it was curious to see Macaulay and Croker row together in my boat with Martin, etc., etc. If I had not thought myself sure of my success, I should not have subjected Thackeray to the chance of rejection. Pray assure him of my regret and disappointment. Every man whose opinion Mr Thackeray would value was with him." Thackeray's serenity

was but little disturbed. "I was quite prepared for the issue of the kind effort made at the Athenæum on my behalf," he replied to Hayward; "indeed, as a satirical writer, I rather wonder that I have not made more enemies than I have. I don't mean enemies in a bad sense, but men conscientiously opposed to my style, art, opinions, impertinences, and so forth. There must be thousands of men to whom the practice of ridicule must be very offensive; doesn't one see such in society or in one's own family? persons whom nature has not gifted with a sense of humour. Such a man would be wrong not to give me a blackball, or whatever it is called; a negatory nod of his honest, respectable, stupid old head. And I submit to this without the slightest feeling of animosity against my judge. Why, Doctor Johnson would certainly have blackballed Fielding, whom he pronounced 'a dull fellow, sir, a dull fellow!' . . . Didn't I tell you once before, I feel frightened almost at the kindness of people regarding me? May we all be honest fellows, and keep our heads from too much vanity." Thackeray's friends, however, were not dismayed, and his name was brought forward again in the following year, when their effort was successful. Thackeray liked the club, and made much use of the library, where he would take a table and cover a few of those little slips of paper upon which he wrote his stories.

If Thackeray and Dickens quarrelled at the Garrick Club, they became reconciled at the Athenæum Club. They met on the steps of

the latter institution a few days before the Christmas of 1863. They passed each other; then Thackeray turned back, and with outstretched hand went up to Dickens and said he could no longer bear to be on any but the old terms of friendship. "I saw him shortly before Christmas at the Athenæum Club," Dickens wrote afterwards, "when he told me he had been in bed three days—that after these attacks he was troubled with cold shiverings, which quite took the work out of him, and that he had it in his mind to try a new remedy, which he described. He was very cheerful, and looked very bright." A few days later Dickens was looking down into the grave of his great rival.

Thackeray belonged also to some minor clubs. One of these was the Whittington Club in Arundel Street, Strand. Dickens, Mark Lemon, and Dion Boucicault *père* were members, and there was an amateur theatrical section that was famous in its day. The following letter was written to Thomas Burbey Rae, the honorary secretary of the club, and father of Josephine, the well-known actress, and Henrietta, the distinguished painter. The letter, now published for the first time, is printed, so that he who can may interpret. At the lapse of many years its meaning is not clear. Was Thackeray the treasurer, by any chance?—

"13 YOUNG STREET, KENSINGTON,  
July 18, 1848.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Times have been bad with me, and I have not been able until now to spare



the sum necessary for the Gas Company and Major Symth. I have now £30 at your orders, for which I send a cheque.

“Will you kindly acknowledge it, and send me the receipt of the Gas Company.—Very faithfully yours, Dear Sir,

“W. M. THACKERAY.”

Thackeray was an original member of the Fielding Club, the title of which, indeed, was chosen by him. It succeeded in 1852 the Cyder Cellars Club, and was established owing to the impossibility of getting supper at a very late hour at the Garrick Club. Many years later he joined “Our Club,” which had been founded by Douglas Jerrold, who had known Thackeray for many years. He was the man whom Thackeray regarded as his most important rival on the staff of *Punch*. It has been placed on record how, when the author of *The Snobs of England* received his advance copy of the journal, he would hastily turn over the pages until he found “what young Douglas has to say this week,” and before glancing at the other contents, read the chapter of “The Caudle Lectures,” or “Mr Robinson Crusoe,” or whatever the contribution might be. Though they said many sharp things of one another, a good understanding existed between them. It was Jerrold who laconically criticised the reading of the first paper of “The English Humourists” series: “Very good, Thack.; but wants a piano!”; and when it was rumoured that Thackeray had a leaning towards the Church of Rome, and some one remarked,

"Why, they are Romanising old Thack.," he said, remembering the great man's broken nose, "Then I hope they will begin at the nose." It was an act of friendship when Thackeray ran up to town from Leamington, where he was lecturing, to use his influence to secure his election at the Reform Club of Jerrold, whose wit had made him many enemies. At Jerrold's death, too, Thackeray co-operated with Dickens to raise a fund for the widow and children, and for his share contributed the lecture on "Week-day Preachers," in which he made special and admirable reference to Jerrold and his writings. The lecture was delivered on July 22, 1857, the day after the declaration of the poll of the Oxford election in which Thackeray was defeated. The audience were on the alert for some allusion to that event, and they were not disappointed, for the opening words of the discourse, delivered with comical solemnity, were: "Walking yesterday in the High Street of a certain ancient city. . . ." A storm of laughter deferred for some moments the completion of the sentence.

"Our Club" was social and literary, and included among its members many well-known men. The club was next door to Evans's. Mr Jefferson, the historian of "Our Club," has presented a pleasant picture of Thackeray. "I cannot conceive him to have ever been seen to greater advantage than when he was sitting with a party of his congenial comrades at 'Our Club,' gossiping tenderly about dead authors, artists, and actors, and in the kindest spirit about living notabilities. It was very pleasant to watch the





STRANGERS' ROOM, REFORM CLUB. Pages 114, 115.  
*Showing the Portrait by Samuel Laurence of W. M. Thackeray.*

white-haired veteran, and also to hear him (though at best he sang indifferently) whilst he trotted forth his favourite ballads touching 'Little Billee' and 'Father Martin Luther.' Better still it was to regard the radiant gratification of his face whilst Horace Mayhew sang 'The Mahogany Tree,' perhaps the finest and most soul-stirring of Thackeray's social songs, or was throwing his soul into the passionate 'Marseillaise.'"

"A pleasant land, not fenced with drab stucco like Tyburnia or Belgravia; not guarded by a huge standing army of footmen; not echoing with noble chariots; not replete with polite chintz drawing-rooms and neat tea-tables; a land over which hangs an endless fog, occasioned by much tobacco; a land of chambers, billiard-rooms, supper-rooms, oysters; a land of song; a land where soda-water flows freely in the morning; a land of tin dish-covers from taverns, and frothing porter; a land of lotus-eating (with lots of cayenne pepper), of pulls on the river, of delicious reading of novels, magazines, and saunterings in many studios; a land where men call each other by their Christian names; where most are old, where almost all are young, and where, if a few oldsters enter, it is because they have preserved more tenderly and carefully than others their youthful spirits, and the delightful capacity to be idle. I have lost my way to Bohemia now, but it is certain that Prague is the most picturesque city in the world."

So wrote Thackeray in *The Adventures of Philip*, and he wrote those lines from his heart,

thinking of the years he had passed in the land where, so far as possible, one leads a light-hearted, devil-take-the-hindmost life; where the present is regarded as all-sufficient, and the future, which requires such careful nursing, is left to take care of itself; where cares cease from troubling for the moment, and worries are temporarily at rest:

“Sorrow, begone!  
 Life and its ills,  
 Duns and their bills,  
 Bid we to flee.  
 Come with the dawn,  
 Blue-devil sprite  
 Leave us to-night,  
 Round the old tree.”

If in his later years Thackeray had lost his way to Bohemia, it is difficult for us now to find the way. The Bohemia of to-day is a land of clubs and dress-coats. The Bohemia of Thackeray's day has disappeared entirely. Where is the little club on the first floor of a small, old-fashioned tavern in Dean Street, Soho, kept by one Dicky Moreland, supposed to have been the last landlord in London who wore a pigtail and topboots? Where is this club where, to the great delight of the grandiloquent George Augustus Sala, Thackeray one night sang “The Mahogany Tree”? Where is the tavern? Where is the tiny establishment in the Strand kept by two elderly maiden ladies, respectable to primness, for fish suppers and other light refreshments, frequented by the great novelist? Ranelagh Gardens has been improved

off the face of the earth, and Chelsea Hospital stands on the site. Gone, too, is the historic Vauxhall Gardens, classic grounds lying to the south end of the Bridge, with its twenty thousand *additional* lamps burnt every night as usual; with "windings and turnings in little wildernesses so intricate that the most experienced mothers often lost themselves in looking for their daughters"; where Pendennis went with an order that admitted the "Editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and friend," and, rescuing Captain Costigan from an uncomfortable predicament, was rewarded by making the acquaintance of pretty Fanny Bolton, whose mother kept the lodge at Shepherd's Inn. The Gardens were closed in 1859, and a church, St Peter's, and a labyrinth of streets cover the area once sacred to votaries of pleasure; and Lord Colchicum, Major Pendennis's naughty, noble friend, had to find a fresh resort in which to spend his evenings with Mademoiselle Caracoline, the great rider at Astley's, and his other charmers; and Henry Foker had to go elsewhere to brood about the affected little Blanche Amory, the authoress of *Mes Larmes*, or perhaps to rejoice in his ultimate escape from that lady. The riverside taverns have also disappeared, or at least are not much frequented by Londoners of the upper classes. But the Ship at Greenwich still stands, and maintains the reputation for its fish dinners. It was here in 1859 that Thackeray invited a large party of friends to dine. They were to meet at the hotel, where the host would join them. The guests arrived,

but at six o'clock their host had not come. Half an hour passed without his putting in an appearance. At seven o'clock the company began to think of returning to town, when, with a merry shout, Thackeray bounded into the room. Mr Fields has told us how the great man had not changed his morning dress; that the ink was still visible on his fingers; that, without apology, he shook hands with every one, introduced nobody, and ordered dinner to be served forthwith. Then the secret came out. "Thank Heaven," he cried, "the last sheet of *The Virginians* has gone to the printer." His delight was so obvious that all feeling of annoyance was swept away. "The dinner was overdone throughout," the chronicler adds feelingly.

Even clubland has changed. In Thackeray's day clubs existed only for the well-born and the well-to-do. Now, with the spread of education, we have clubs for all and sundry. Most of the old institutions remain, but there have arisen a whole host of new ones, with regard to which the only qualification for membership is the ability to pay the entrance fee and subscription, and where the warehouseman in a city firm's employ is as welcome as the author and the actor. Times have changed, indeed; the British lion is aroused, and Progress—the progress with the capital initial letter—is rampant. The poor man must imitate the rich—that is the trend of modern liberalism! The true Bohemian clubs no longer exist. The Garrick Club, it is true, is still with us, but it is more dignified than of yore. Perhaps the only true Bohemian resort is the



Savage Club, to be eligible for which a man must be connected professionally with literature, art, science, the drama, or music. Social position alone, or mere wealth, counts for nothing there; and "once aboard the lugger," once admitted a member, the only qualification for popularity is good-fellowship.

After the illness of his wife, Thackeray was compelled to live the life of a bachelor, and he threw himself heart and soul into the life of Bohemia. He visited the places already mentioned in this chapter, and not only these but the famous taverns of the west-central district. As the coffee and chocolate houses of an earlier age have given place to clubs, so these establishments where food and drink and song were obtainable have made way for, were indeed the precursors, of the music halls of to-day. The most famous of the taverns were the "Coal Hole," the "Cyder Cellars," and "Evans's (late Joy's)," as the punning inscription ran on the lamp; and of all these Thackeray was an *habitué*.

The Coal Hole, owned by John Rhodes, was situated in a court off the Strand. It stood on the site on which many years later Terry's Theatre was built. Thackeray often used to drop in here about midnight for a Welsh-rarebit, and would stay to listen to the glee-singing. In *The Life of William Makepeace Thackeray* by the present writer, it is stated that this place was introduced into one of the novelist's great works, and that it was the prototype of the "Cave of Harmony" in *The Newcomes*. The late Mr Edmund Yates, however, believed that

the "Cave of Harmony" stood for Evans's; and recently Sir Francis Burnand has remarked that he, too, fancies it was intended for Evans's, as it was in its very earliest days when songs were volunteered by *habitues*. The two places were not vastly dissimilar, and it matters little which Thackeray portrayed.

"We became naturally hungry at twelve o'clock at night," Mr Arthur Pendennis has recorded in *The Newcomes*, "and a desire for Welsh rabbits and good old glee-singing led us to the 'Cave of Harmony.' One night Colonel Newcome, with his son Clive, came here 'to see the wits.' A timely warning to the landlord from Jones of Trinity that a boy was in the room, and a gentleman who was quite a greenhorn, and the songs were so carefully selected that a ladies' school might have come in and, but for the stink of the cigars and brandy-and-water, have taken no harm by what occurred. The Colonel was delighted, especially when Nadab the improvisatore, devoted a verse to him and to his son, and he sang a ditty himself, 'Wapping Old Stairs.' Unfortunately for the peace of the evening, however, Captain Costigan entered, very drunk, and insisted upon singing one of his most ribald songs. 'Silence!' Colonel Newcome roared at the end of drunken Captain Costigan's song at the 'Cave of Harmony.' 'Go on!' cried the Colonel, in his high voice, trembling with anger. 'Does any gentleman say, "Go on?" Does any man who has a wife and sisters, or children at home, say "Go on" to such disgusting ribaldry as this? Do you care, sir, to call yourself a

gentleman, or to say you hold the King's commission, and to sit down amongst Christians and men of honour, and defile the ears of young boys with this wicked balderdash?' 'Why bring young boys here, old man?' cried a voice of the malcontents. 'Why? Because I thought I was coming to a society of gentlemen,' cried out the indignant Colonel. 'Because I never could have believed that Englishmen could meet together and allow a man, and an old man, so to disgrace himself. For shame, you old wretch! Go home to your bed, you hoary old sinner! And for my part, I'm not sorry that my son should see, for once in his life, to what shame and degradation and dishonour, drunkenness and whisky may bring a man. Never mind the change, sir!—curse the change!' says the Colonel, facing the amazed waiter. 'Keep it till you see me in this place again, which will be never—by George, never!' And shouldering his stick, and scowling round at the company of scared bacchanalians, the indignant gentleman stalked away, his boy after him. Clive seemed rather shamefaced, but I fear the rest of the company looked still more foolish. *Aussi que diable venait-il faire dans cette galère?* says King of Corpus to Jones of Trinity; and Jones gave a shrug of his shoulders, which were smarting perhaps; for that uplifted cane of the Colonel's had somehow fallen on the back of every man in the room."

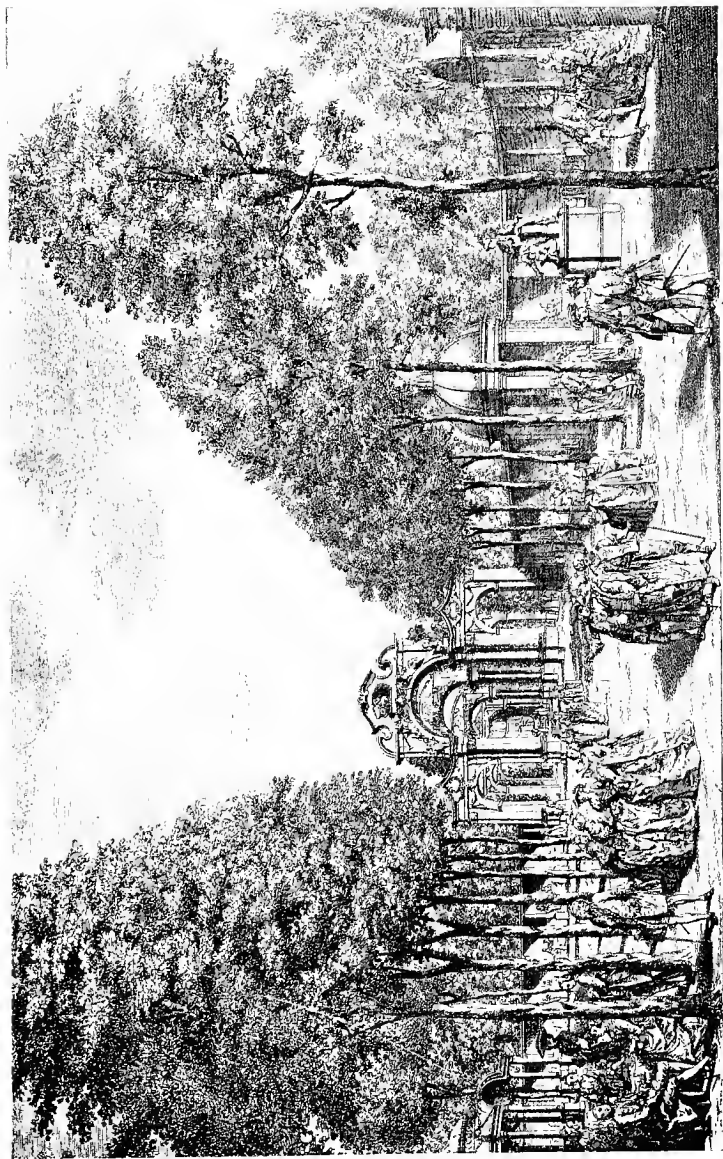
The Cyder Cellars, with its Virgilian motto, *Honor erit huic pomo* ("Honour shall be given to the apple"), was owned by John Rhodes's brother William, and after his death it was managed by

his widow, assisted by a Mr Baker. This establishment was situated in Maiden Lane, between the little Jewish synagogue and the stage-door of the Adelphi Theatre. On the whole it attracted a more distinguished company than the Coal Hole. Porson, the Greek Professor, used to come here and babble Greek in his cups. A thirsty soul was Porson. A three-bottle man on sober days : at other times there was no limit to the quantity. All sorts and conditions of liquors he drank. Once at least he drank spirits of wine ; on another occasion he took a draught of an embrocation ; not even ink, it is said, entirely escaped him. His portrait used to hang upon the wall. Maginn was an *habitué* ; Maginn, who was the "Oliver Yorke" and editor of *Fraser's Magazine*, and the original of Captain Shandon in *The Adventures of Pendennis*. Most of the "Fraser" set were visitors, and also Charles Dickens, Disraeli the Younger, afterwards Disraeli the More Famous ; Dr Maguire ; and Napoleon III. before he became President of the Republic.

As a lad, Thackeray heard Sloman—the Nadad of the passage just quoted from *The Newcomes*—sing his improvisations, and he introduced him in a satirical verse about Braham,

"Sloman repeats the strains his fathers sung" ;

and he appended a note : "It is needless to speak of this eminent vocalist and improvisatore. He nightly delights a numerous and respectable audience at the Cyder Cellars." It was at this establishment that the well-known comedian, Ross, sang his celebrated song "Sam Hall." Mr John



VAUXHALL GARDENS. Page 123.

*From a Contemporary Print.*



Hollingshead, perhaps the greatest living authority upon the haunts of the fifties, had recorded that this chaunt was the swan-song of a defiant, blasphemous chimney-sweep, who was to be hanged for murder the next morning. He narrated his robberies of rich and poor, of great and small; and at the end of each verse he damned his eyes, until that phrase became the catchword and popular oath of the assembly, and later of the town. This popular song was usually given about two in the morning, and as the clock went round the songs became so equivocal in character as to justify Thackeray's attack in *The Newcomes*. The Cyder Cellars was described by Albert Smith in *The Medical Student* and in *The Adventures of Mr Ledbury*. It was also the prototype of the "Back Kitchen in *The History of Pendennis*," and the description of this place where George Warrington took Arthur Pendennis, and where Tom Sergeant, Clive Newcome, and Fred Bayham foregathered, gives an idea of the mixed company usually to be found there. "Healthy country tradesmen and farmers in London for their business came and recreated themselves with the jolly singing and suppers at the Back Kitchen; squads of young apprentices and assistants—the shutters being closed over the scene of their labours—came hither for fresh air, doubtless; dashing young medical students—gallant, dashing, what is called loudly dressed, and, must it be owned? somewhat dirty—came here, smoking and drinking, and vigorously applauding the songs; young university bucks were to be found here, too, with that indescribable

simper which is only to be learned at the knees of Alma Mater; and handsome young guardsmen and florid bucks from the St James's Street clubs; nay! senators—English and Irish—and even members of the House of Peers."

The most famous of all these taverns that were links between the old coffee-houses of Addison's time—the Will's and Button's—and the modern music-halls, was Evans's. It was a great resort of men about town in Paddy Green's day, and among the frequenters, besides Thackeray, were Douglas Jerrold, Albert and Arthur Smith, George Augustus Sala, James Hannay, the Mayhews, Sergeant Ballantine, and a host of other celebrities. Rlbald songs were at one time the mainstay of the evening's entertainment, but these eventually fell into disfavour; later, Sam Cowell, actor and singer, and Sharpe of Vauxhall and Cremorne fame, ceased to "draw"; and these were succeeded by choruses sung by trained choir boys, whose fresh young voices sang the old glees and madrigals of Purcell, Niedermayer, and Pearsall.

A little-known story of Thackeray at Evans's has been told by Mr F. H. Underwood. When *The Newcomes* was being written, Thackeray met Lowell, who was in London on a visit. The novelist looked haggard and worn, and when the poet made sympathetic inquiry, he explained: "Come into Evans's and I'll tell you all about it. *I have killed the Colonel.*" "So they walked in," the story runs, "and took a table in a remote corner, and then Thackeray drawing the fresh sheets of manuscript from his breast pocket, read



through that exquisitely touching chapter which records the death of Colonel Newcome. When he came to the final *adsum*, the tears which had been swelling his lids for some time, trickled down his face, and the last word was almost an inarticulate sob."

Evans's stood at the western corner of the Covent Garden Piazza, or Italian Colonnade, of which little now remains, but which at one time was one of the sights of the city. In *Vanity Fair* it is referred to as the Piazza Coffee-House. The house, with a sixteenth-century staircase said to be unequalled in England, was occupied after the Restoration by Sir Kenelm Digby, and later by Admiral the Earl of Oxford. It was not opened as an hotel until nearly the end of the eighteenth century, when the largest room was used as a concert hall. The frontage, unaltered through many generations, may be seen in Hogarth's picture "Morning."

The glories of Covent Garden have faded, but they have not entirely disappeared. The antiquarian memories of the places and its association with many famous taverns and celebrated personages endeared it to Thackeray, who described it charmingly in a passage that shows a thorough acquaintance with the neighbourhood. This, indeed, was natural, since at one time when he was studying art in Paris, and again when he was Paris correspondent of *The Constitutional and Public Ledger*, he always put up at the Bedford when he came over to London. "The young chevalier is arrived, and is to be heard of at the Bedford Hotel in Covent Garden,

or at the Garrick Club, King Street," he wrote to his life-long friend Richard Monckton Milnes, afterwards first Lord Houghton. "He accepts breakfasts—and dinners still more readily."

"The two great national theatres on one side, a churchyard full of mouldy but undying celebrities on the other; a fringe of houses studded in every part with anecdotes or history; an arcade, often more gloomy and deserted than a cathedral aisle; a rich cluster of brown old taverns, one of them filled with the counterfeit presentments of many actors long since silent, who scowl and smile once more from the canvas upon the grandsons of their dead admirers; a something in the air which breathes of old books, old painters, and old authors; a place beyond all others one would choose in which to hear the chimes at midnight, a crystal palace—the representative of the present—which presses in timidly from a corner upon many things of the past; a withered bank that has been sucked dry by a felonious clerk, a squat building with a hundred columns, and chapel-looking fronts, which always stand knee-deep in baskets, flowers, and scattered vegetables; a common centre into which nature showers her choicest gifts, and where the kindly fruits of the earth often nearly choke the narrow thoroughfares; a population that never seems to sleep, and that does all in its power to prevent others sleeping; a place where the very latest suppers and the earliest breakfasts jostle each other over the footways."

As the years passed and fame came to him, he went less into Bohemia, and when his girls

grew up and he could go about with them, his visits to "the pleasant land" became still more infrequent. He went into Society — Holland House, Sir Robert Peel, Devonshire House, Lady Waldegrave's, Rothschilds—to receptions, dinners, and other functions. But in later years he took his girls with him. At one or two places the great man only was wanted, and his daughters were not invited. When asked to those places, he went elsewhere—with his children.

No chapter on Thackeray's haunts is complete without reference to the theatre. Not that the novelist was ever a frequenter of the *coulisses*, save perhaps in his youth at the Exeter Theatre; but he was a regular playgoer from the time when, as a lad at the Charterhouse, he went to Drury Lane and saw Liston in *The Hypocrite*, until the end of his days. When he was reading with Mr Taprell, he wrote to his mother: "As for the theatre, I scarcely go there more than once a week, which is moderate for me. In a few days come the pantomimes, huzza!" And when, years after, he asked a friend if he loved "the play," and was answered: "Ye-es, I like a good play," he retorted; "Oh, get out! I said *the play*. You don't even understand what I mean." He usually went to the pit, always was happy, and invariably stayed to the end. Edward FitzGerald went with him either to the Haymarket or the Olympic, and, towards the end of a wretched burlesque, beginning to feel bored, he was about to propose they should go, when at that moment Thackeray stretched out his huge arms, and said: "My God, how I

am enjoying myself." (According to FitzGerald, Thackeray's exclamations generally began with "My God.")

His letters are full of allusions to the theatre. He was a frequent visitor to the Hoftheater in Weimar, where he saw Devrient's wonderful performance of Franz Moor. "I never saw anything so horrible in my life," he wrote home. He wrote much about the play and players in Paris in articles that were brought together in *The Paris Sketch-book*; and his novels contain many allusions to real and fictitious performances, from Mr Yellowplush's disquisition upon Lytton's *Sea Captain* to *The Virginians*, which contains graphic descriptions of the productions of *Carpezan* and *Pocohontas*, both from the pen of the real Fortunate Youth, Mr George Warrington.

An admirable picture of the Duke's playhouse, on the occasion of a performance of Mr Wycherley's *Love in a Wood*, is given in *Esmond*. Mrs Bracegirdle, the actress who performed the girl's part in the comedy, "was disguised as a page, and came and stood before the gentlemen as they sate on the stage, and looked over her shoulder with a pair of arch black eyes, and laughed at my lord, and asked what ailed the gentleman from the country, and had he had bad news from Bullock Fair? Between the acts of the play the gentlemen crossed over and conversed freely. There were two of Lord Mohun's party, Captain Macartney in a military habit, and a gentleman in a suit of blue velvet and silver in a fair periwig, with a rich fall of point of Venice lace—my lord the Earl of Warwick and Holland.

My lord had a paper of oranges, which he ate and offered to the actresses, joking with them. And Mrs Bracegirdle, when my Lord Mohun said something rude, turned on him, and asked what he did there, and whether he and his friends had come to stab anybody else as they did poor Will Mountford."

## CHAPTER VII

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF THACKERAY'S HOMES—  
(iv) KENSINGTON ; (v) BROMPTON

WHEN Thackeray left St James's Street, he went further westward. The boundary of Mayfair on that side is Hyde Park. This popular resort in days gone by shared with Leicester Fields and the open space behind Montague House, the distinction of being the favourite spots in London for duels. In 1685 the Duke of Grafton went out with the Honourable John Talbot, and killed his man. A much more famous encounter was that in 1712, between the Duke of Hamilton and Lord Mohun, which took place near Price's Lodge. This meeting is especially interesting to readers of *Esmond*, for in that book Thackeray has given a more or less graphic description of it. The novelist makes the duel occur while the Duke was preparing to go to Paris as ambassador from the Court of St James's, just before his marriage with the beautiful, wayward Beatrix Castlewood. The *Historical and Genealogical Memoirs of the House of Hamilton* state that "such was the animosity with which they fought that, neglecting the rules of art, they seemed to run on one another, as if they tried which should





THE COLONNADE, COVENT GARDEN. *Page 131.*



kill first." "It was pursued with such fierceness," Thackeray says, "and sprang from so trifling a cause, that all men agreed at the time there was a party, of which these three notorious brawlers were but agents, who desired to take away Lord Hamilton's life." The Duke killed Mohun—whose christian name was Charles, not Henry, as the novelist has it. The Duke also was killed, but there is some doubt as to the manner in which he met his death. Colonel Hamilton, his second, gave evidence that he was stabbed in the back by Colonel Macartney; and, as Macartney fled the country, this gave further credence to the statement. But, in spite of what Thackeray says, he returned four years later, stood his trial in the King's Bench, and was acquitted. Charles, Lord Mohun, was an infamous person, even in a day when morality was at a low ebb. He was concerned with Lord Warwick (husband of the lady whom Addison married, and father of the lad whom Addison summoned to his deathbed to see how a Christian should die); in the murder of Will Mountford, the comedian, and in many other scandalous affairs. Thackeray makes Mohun kill Viscount Castlewood, Harry Esmond's protector, in a duel in Leicester Fields; but this incident is a fiction of the novelist, though, doubtless, it was based upon some chapter in the man's career. Also in Hyde Park, the ugliest man of his day, John Wilkes, of *The North Britain* fame, was pinked by Samuel Martin, M.P. (1763); Lord Thurloe called out Andrew Stewart (1770); Charles James Fox fought with

William Adam (1777); Colonel Fullerton wounded the Earl of Shelbourne (1780); and, besides, there were many other encounters more or less important. There is another tragedy connected with the Park, and one far more touching than the result of any duel. Mrs Carlyle, wife of the historian of *The French Revolution*, was driving in 1866 in a brougham, a luxury only recently permitted by the improvement of the sage's financial position. An accident to her small dog gave Mrs Carlyle a shock that affected her weak heart, and she died from syncope, the while the coachman, all unwitting, continued to drive round the Ring Road.

Hyde Park was the scene of the great Exhibition of 1851, which Thackeray duly celebrated in verse:

“ With ganial foire  
 Thransfuse me loyre,  
 Ye sacred nymphs of Pindus,  
 The whoile I sing  
 That wondthrous thing  
 The Palace made o' windows !

“ Say, PAXTON, truth,  
 Thou wondthrous youth,  
 What sthroke of art celistial,  
 What power was lint  
 You to invint  
 This combineection cristial !

“ O would before  
 That THOMAS MOORE,  
 Likewyise the late LORD BOYRON,  
 Thim aigles sthrong  
 Of godlike song,  
 Cast oi, on that cast oiron !

“ And saw thim walls,  
And glittering halls,  
Thim rising slendther columns,  
Which I, poor pote,  
Could not denote,  
No, not in twinty vollums.”

From Hyde Park Corner, proceeding along Knightsbridge, where once Henry Esmond stayed so as to be near his dear Lady Castlewood in Kensington Square, one comes to the Albert Hall, opposite the Albert Memorial. There, in Thackeray's day, had stood Gore House. Wilberforce had lived there when the author of *Vanity Fair* was a child. “We are just one mile from the turnpike at Hyde Park Corner, having about three acres of pleasure ground around our dome, or rather behind it, and several old trees, walnut and mulberry, of thick foliage,” he wrote. “I can sit and read under their shade with as much appreciation of the beauties of nature as if I were two hundred miles from the great city.” Lady Blessington occupied the mansion for the first thirteen years of the late queen's reign. All literary and artistic London attended her salon and crowded to pay homage where she held her court, supported by the husband of her stepdaughter, the dandiacal, attractive Count D'Orsay, whom even Carlyle did not dislike. Disraeli went often to Gore House, and Bulwer Lytton, and Louis Napoleon during his exile, and Thackeray. The latter was not unfriendly to the Count and was fond of the hostess. For her he wrote “Piscator and Piscatrix,” when she sent him an album print of a boy and girl

fishing, with a request that he would make some verses to accompany it ; and, with several of the old Gore House set, for old friendship's sake, he supported Miss Marguerite Power, Lady Blessington's niece, when she carried on "The Keepsake," established by her aunt. He attended the great sale at Gore House after the Countess had gone to Paris. "M. Thackeray est venu aussi," the butler wrote to her. "Il avait les larmes aux yeux en partant. C'est peut-être la seule personne que j'aie vu réellement affectée à votre départ."

Subsequently, Alexis Soyer took over Gore House and established a restaurant during the great Exhibition. The following amusing and characteristic passage, poking good-humoured fun at the famous *chef*, occurs in a recently identified contribution of Thackeray to *Punch*, entitled "The French Conspiracy," signed "Gobemouche," who is supposed to be a fellow-countryman of Soyer's spying out the nakedness of this land. "In the neighbourhood of London—by the gigantesque Palace of Crystal, the fresh meadows of the Hyde Park, and the sombre avenues of Kinsington's Gardens—little removed from the Octroi (turnspikes)—there stands, amidst parks and prairies of its own, a château called the Château of Gor. The Château of Gor has been purchased with the money of the municipality by this grateful nation, by these grave magistrates, and has been conferred, with the patent of baronnet, upon ALEXIS SOYER, Frenchman. SIR SOYER, in a warm allocution, responded to the LORD MAYOR when this title, this domain, was conferred upon him

—and asked all the magistrates to dine in the palace of which he has become master. A palace of fairies is he making of it—truly a symposium of all nations, as SIR SOYER (faithful to his Bacchanalian tradition, and proud of his religion of the apron) has styled it. Halls are here filled in the manners of all nations, accommodated by the presiding taste of SIR ALEXIS. The Saloon of Italy, the Saloon of Turkey, the Saloon of Spain; the Hall of France, the Hall of Old England. You may consume here the cockaliquet of the mountains of Scotland, the garbanzos of Castille, the shamrocks of Ireland, the maccaroni of Vesuvius, the kari of the Ganges, and the cabob of the Bosphorus; you may call here for the golden juice of the Rhine and the purple draught of the Garonne, as for the whiski of the Liffi and the Afandaf (liquor which I adore) of the Thames. SIR SOYER will soon be prepared to furnish you with all these. Already his pavilions glow with the rich colours of the lavish pencil: already banquet halls and feudal towers rise among his parterres: already quiet alcoves and particular cabinets twinkle from among the bosquets, where they will be covered by the discreet and beautiful foliage of Spring and Summer:—yet a few weeks and the palace of SOYER will be opened. This, Milord, is the Conspiracy by which France hopes to conquer you—this is the representative whom the Republic sends to Albion.”

Continuing along the High Road, on the right is the historic Palace of Kensington; and a hundred yards farther on is St Mary Abbot's

Church, with its high spire, its stone porch over the entrance to the churchyard, and its cloistered passage running round one side. Close by is Kensington Town Hall, and next door is the Public Free Library. As the former building dates from 1878, it must have been in the other municipal edifice that Thackeray made one of his last appearances in public. Archdeacon Sinclair held a meeting to raise contributions in aid of the Lancaster Fund at the height of the cotton famine, and he had induced Thackeray to attend. Thackeray had declined to move a resolution. "You forget that my vocation is not to be a speaker, but a writer." The Archdeacon assured him there were abundant orators, but the great difficulty was to collect an audience in Kensington. "If you will only let me print your name in my handbills, I shall be sure of a large attendance, and I can depend on my orators to call forth contributions." Thackeray laughingly consented, and promised to attend. Whereupon the Archdeacon issued handbills announcing that among other speakers, W. M. Thackeray would address the meeting. The novelist was better than his word. He addressed the crowded audience. "Great applause followed as he rose," the Archdeacon has narrated. "As soon as silence was restored, he began with perfect self-possession and delivered, with much emphasis, a few weighty and well-considered sentences. They were received with enthusiasm, and I was afterwards congratulated repeatedly on my success in calling forth for the first, and, as unhappily it proved,

the last time, the rhetorical powers of the great novelist."

A little further on is that supreme glory of western Kensington, Holland House. This mansion was erected at the beginning of the seventeenth century, on the site of the old Manor House of Abbot's, Kensington. The edifice, erected for Sir Walter Cope, is in the style of the Tudor period; and the wings and the arcades were added when it came into the possession of his son-in-law, the first Earl of Holland and Warwick, and the original name of Cope Castle was changed to that which it still bears. The Fox family purchased the domain in 1762, and it has remained in their possession ever since. Holland House has a place alike in the history of politics and the history of letters. It was in the gardens overlooking the High Road that Lady Lennox, great-granddaughter of Charles II. and daughter of the second Duke of Richmond, played at shepherdess, and attracted, and, but for the interference of his mother and his ministers, might have married, George the Third. Addison lived there after his wretched marriage with Charlotte, widow of the third Earl of Holland and Warwick. In later days it was the centre of the Whig society of the day. Macaulay, who lived near, at the walled-in Holly Lodge, where he spent his last years, and died, literally pen in hand, at his writing-table, was an honoured guest at Holland House; and after the publication of *Vanity Fair* had drawn all men's eyes to the author, Thackeray was an occasional visitor.

Tired of his bachelor life and anxious to have his girls with him, Thackeray gave up the St James's Street chambers he had occupied for two years, and set up his establishment as pater-familias at 13 (now 16) Young Street. He was delighted with the house, and thought its two semi-tower-like embrasures gave it the air of a feudal castle. "I'll have a flagstaff put over the coping of the wall," he said, laughingly, to Mr Eyre Crowe, who for a while acted as his secretary, "and I'll hoist a standard when I'm at home." The house is now marked by a tablet, placed over the window of the author's study, and composed of the initials W. M. T. grouped in a monogram between the dates of his residence, 1846-1853, while in the border are inscribed the names of the three great works written there, *Vanity Fair*, *Pendennis*, and *Esmond*.

It was when passing by this residence in after years with Mr J. T. Fields, the American publisher, that Thackeray exclaimed, with mock gravity: "Down on your knees, you rogue, for here *Vanity Fair* was penned; and I will go down with you, for I have a high opinion of that little production myself."

"I am beginning to count the days now till you come," he wrote to his eldest daughter in August, while he was preparing the house for their reception. He told them how he was very busy, working hard every day, and how, though every one gave him credit for making a fortune, he was really very poor. In the late autumn his children were brought from Paris by Mrs Carmichael Smyth, who, however, soon returned to





THE RING DRIVE, HYDE PARK. Page 188.  
*The Scene of the Duel in "Esmond."*



her husband, when her place was taken by her mother, who died there in 1848. Thackeray never parted again from his "little girls," except when he went to lecture in America.

*The History of Pendennis: His Fortunes and Misfortunes, His Friends and His Greatest Enemy*, was begun at Spa, whither the author had repaired immediately after the last number of *Vanity Fair* had appeared in July 1848; but the greater part of the story was written in Young Street. Mrs Ritchie well remembers the morning Helen Pendennis died. She entered her father's study, but he motioned her away. An hour afterwards he went to the schoolroom, and half-laughing, half-ashamed, said: "I do not know what James can have thought of me when he came in with the tax-gatherer, just after you left, and found me blubbering over Helen Pendennis's death."

The book was issued in monthly parts, and pursued the even tenour of its way from November 1848 until September of the following year, when the publication ceased. Thackeray was ill. Indeed, he was sick nigh unto death. For a while his family and friends despaired of his life, but slowly he rallied, though it was not until December that his recovery was assured. Edward FitzGerald saw him on December 7, and wrote to Frederick Tennyson: "I saw poor Thackeray in London getting slowly better of a bilious fever that had nearly killed him. . . . People in general thought *Pendennis* got dull as it progressed; and I confess I thought so too: he would do well to take the opportunity of his illness to discontinue it altogether. He told me

last June he was tired of it, and must not his readers naturally tire too!" Having put his hand to the plough, however, Thackeray was not inclined to turn away without completing his task, and so *The History of Pendennis* was continued. It was not thought dull by most, and FitzGerald, re-reading the book years after, found, to his surprise presumably, that he liked *Pendennis* much; and he reported that Alfred Tennyson also thought it delicious. "It seems to me so mature," the Poet-laureate said, spreading out his great hands.

The book that many regard as the author's masterpiece and the greatest historical novel in the language, *The History of Colonel Esmond, a Colonel in the Service of Her Majesty Queen Anne*, was also written here; and, while still at Young Street, Thackeray composed those discourses which probably arose out of the reading necessitated to ensure the accuracy of the "atmosphere" of *Esmond*, the lectures on "The English Humourists of the Eighteenth Century." The period, however, was a favourite one with Thackeray long before *Esmond* was thought of, and the writers of the reigns of Anne and the early Georges were those whom he had always delighted to study. "My English would have been much better if I had read Fielding before I was ten," he advised a young cousin. Great tribute, indeed, coming from the master-stylist of the nineteenth century.

To Young Street once came a little lady out of Yorkshire, of whom all England was talking at the time. Most interesting were Thackeray's





13 (NOW 16) YOUNG STREET, KENSINGTON. *Page 146.*  
*Where Thackeray lived, 1846-1853.*

relations with Charlotte Brontë, and by no means devoid of humour. When the authoress of *Jane Eyre* was known only as "Currer Bell," she dedicated the second edition of her book to Thackeray. "There is a man in our own day," she wrote, "whose words are not framed to tickle delicate ears: who, to my thinking, comes before the great ones of society—much as the son of Imlah comes before the throned Kings of Judah and Israel; and who speaks truth as deep, with a power as prophet-like and as vital—a man as dauntless and as daring. Is the satirist of *Vanity Fair* admired in high places? I cannot tell; but I think if some of those amongst whom he hurls the Greek fire of his sarcasm, and over whom he flashes the leven-brand of his denunciation, were to take his warnings in time, they and their seed might yet escape a fatal Ramoth and Gilead." She went on to state that she saw in him an intellect profounder and more unique than his contemporaries had then recognised, and regarded him as the first social regenerator of the day. "They say he is like Fielding: they talk of his wit, humour, and comic powers. He resembles Fielding as an eagle does a vulture: Fielding could stoop on carrion, but Thackeray never does," she concluded. "His wit is bright, his humour attractive, but both bear the same relation to his serious genius that lambent-shell lightning playing under the edge of the summer cloud does to the electric death-spark hid in its womb." This innocent dedication was the cause of much annoyance to both parties, for scandal-mongers were at work, and insisted that

Thackeray was the Rochester of *Jane Eyre*, and the authoress of that book the prototype of Becky Sharpe in *Vanity Fair*. There is no doubt that this disgraceful libel was one of the causes that prompted Miss Brontë to raise the veil and declare herself.

Having set out with this picture of Thackeray, she was angry if her conduct or conversation fell below her ideal. An amusing and probably apocryphal anecdote is told, which so absolutely hits off Charlotte Brontë's attitude in this case that it is well worth repeating. It is of Thackeray's first meeting with her. The tiny, intense creature, full of her ideal, quoted under her breath as Thackeray entered the room: "Behold, a lion cometh out of Judah!" Some one repeated this to Thackeray. "Oh, Lord!" he said; "and I'm nothing but a poor devil of an Englishman ravenous for his dinner." Miss Brontë was by her own request placed opposite him at dinner. "And I had," he said, "the miserable humiliation of seeing her ideal of me disappearing down my own throat, as everything went into my mouth and nothing came out of it; until at last, as I took my fifth potato, she leaned across, with clasped hands and tears in her eyes, and breathed imploringly, 'Oh, Mr Thackeray! Don't!'" Still, in spite of the mortification of being compelled to realise that her hero was also a man with some of man's weaknesses, she never retreated far from her original conception of him, though she was greatly worried because he led so harassing a life, and his mocking tongue so perversely denied the better



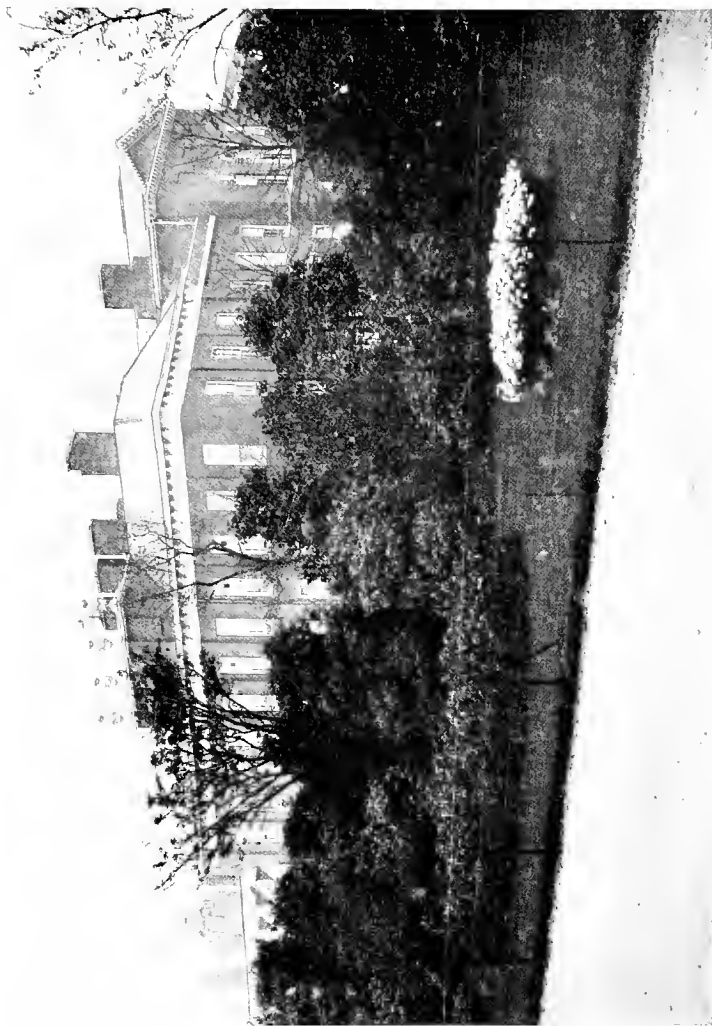
feelings of his better moods. "All is true in Thackeray," she said later. "If Truth were again a goddess, Thackeray should be her high priest."

Thackeray gave a dinner party to meet Miss Brontë in June 1850, and among the guests invited were the Carlyles, the Proctors, the Brookfields, Mr Crowe, Miss Eliot, and Miss Perry. "It was a gloomy and a silent evening," Mrs Ritchie has recorded; "every one waited for the brilliant conversation which never began at all. Miss Brontë returned to the sofa in the study, and murmured a low word now and then to our kind governess, Miss Truelock. The room looked very dark, the lamp began to smoke a little, the conversation grew dimmer and more dim, the ladies sat around still expectant, my father was too much perturbed by the gloom and the silence to be able to cope with it at all. Mrs Brookfield, who was in the corner in which Miss Brontë was sitting, bent forward with a little commonplace, since brilliance was not to be the order of the evening. 'Do you like London, Miss Brontë?' she said; another silence, a pause, then Miss Brontë answered, 'Yes—No,' very gravely. . . . After Miss Brontë had left, I was surprised to see my father opening the front door with his hat on. He put his fingers to his lips, walked out into the darkness, and shut the door quietly behind him. Overcome by the gloom and constraint, he was running away to his club!"

Young Street, the "dear old street" as Mrs Ritchie calls it, "Our Street" as Thackeray desig-

nated it, runs into Kensington Square. The Square was built in the latter part of the seventeenth century, and the back windows of houses on the north side overlooked the red brick Palace of Kensington, where were the social headquarters of the Court, though state ceremonials were held at St James's. Kensington Palace was built by William and Mary, and there Queen Anne lived. Later the unhappy Caroline of Brunswick, wife of George IV., took up her residence there, and some time after the Princess Victoria was born and spent the years of her girlhood. Kensington Square was commenced in the reign of James II., and finished towards the close of William. In the time of Queen Anne it was very fashionable, and in the reign of George II. lodgings were very much in demand, owing, of course, to the proximity of the Court. Indeed, it is said that an ambassador, a bishop, and a physician occupied apartments in the same house. Many notabilities lived there, including Talleyrand, and Addison when he was paying court to the Countess of Warwick. Mrs Scurlock, Steele's "dear Prue" resided there, and was frequently visited by her future husband, who no doubt often finished the evening at Mr Addison's, where many a bottle of wine was opened and emptied by the two valiant toppers. Numbers 10 and 11 were reserved for the residence of maids of honour, who could not be housed at the Palace.

In those days Kensington was in the country, and even Knightsbridge was described as a hamlet in the parishes of Chelsea, Kensington,



KENSINGTON PALACE, FROM THE GARDENS Page 150.



and St Margaret's, Westminster, "between London and Kensington, and overlooking the Gardens." Knightsbridge was then a lonely, isolated village, and so late as 1740 the Bristol mail was robbed there. "The hawthorn spread across the fields, and market gardens lay between Kensington and the river. Lanes ran to Chelsea, to Fulham, to North End, where Richardson once lived and wrote in his garden-house. The mist of the great city hid the horizon and dulled the sound of the advancing multitude; but close at hand . . . were country corners untouched—flowers instead of bricks in spring-time, summer-shade in summer."

The parish of Kensington is interwoven with memories of *Esmond*. When Rachel, Lady Castlewood, came into her little inheritance, she took a house in Kensington Square, convenient for her daughter Beatrix, when her term came as maid of honour. The house she chose had been in the early years of the eighteenth century the residence of the Marquis of Powis, who accompanied the second James into exile, and was rewarded by a dukedom by that not always grateful monarch. The mansion had stabling, and there was a cottage attached to it. It was upon the site of the cottage that the house was built in Young Street in which the historian of *Esmond* lived. It will be remembered that to Lady Castlewood's the Pretender came incognito, and from there went to surprise his sister, Queen Anne, when she and her favourite lady-in-waiting were taking the air in the Cedar Walk behind the new banqueting-hall of the adjacent Palace.

It was at Lady Castlewood's, also, that Colonel Esmond warned the Prince that if he believed His Royal Highness—or His Majesty, as the Jacobite household styled him—had a thought of dishonour in respect of Beatrix Castlewood, he should call in the watch, who would be only too glad to secure the five hundred pounds reward offered for his person. The Prince was furious, then indignant. He gave his word and broke it, and, as readers of the novel may recall, by his breach of faith lost a crown. Many interesting scenes took place in this house, but there was none more touching or more dignified than that in which Lady Castlewood, when the Duke of Hamilton refused to allow Beatrix to accept jewels from the Colonel, told the story of Henry Esmond's noble renunciation. "My daughter may receive presents from the Head of our House; my daughter may thankfully take kindness from her father's, her mother's, her brother's dearest friend; and be grateful for one more benefit besides the thousand we owe him," she said. "What is a string of diamonds compared to that affection he hath given us—our dearest preserver and benefactor? We owe him not only Frank's life, but our all—yes, our all. The title we bear is his, if he would claim it. 'Tis we who have no right to our name: not he that's too great for it. He sacrificed his name at my dying lord's bedside—sacrificed it to my orphan children; gave up rank and honour because he loved us so nobly. His father was Viscount of Castlewood and Marquis of Esmond before him; and he is his father's lawful son and





KENSINGTON SQUARE. Page 151.  
*Where Lady Custlewood lived.*



true heir, and we are the recipients of his bounty, and he the chief of a house that's as old as your own. And if he is content to forego his name that my child may bear it, we love him, and honour him, and bless him under whatever name he bears."

After his return from the first American lecture tour, Thackeray transferred his household gods from Young Street to 36 Onslow Square, next door to his friend, Baron Marochetti, the sculptor, who subsequently made the bust of him which is in Westminster Abbey. Onslow Square is within easy distance of Knightsbridge, and is reached through the Brompton Road and Thurloe Place, and either Sydney Place or Summer Place. It is near South Kensington Station. Close by is the Oratory of St Philip Neri, with its great dome, on the summit of which is a golden cross. Cardinal Manning opened the present church in 1884: in Thackeray's day there was only a temporary Oratory erected in 1854. What is now Queen's Gate and Exhibition was once Brompton Park; then nursery gardens, where the Horticultural Society held its shows; later the site of the Exhibition of 1862; and now the Natural History Museum, a branch of the parent institution, the British Museum. The "Brompton Boilers," the joke of a generation, gave place to a more stately erection, duly announced in *Punch*—

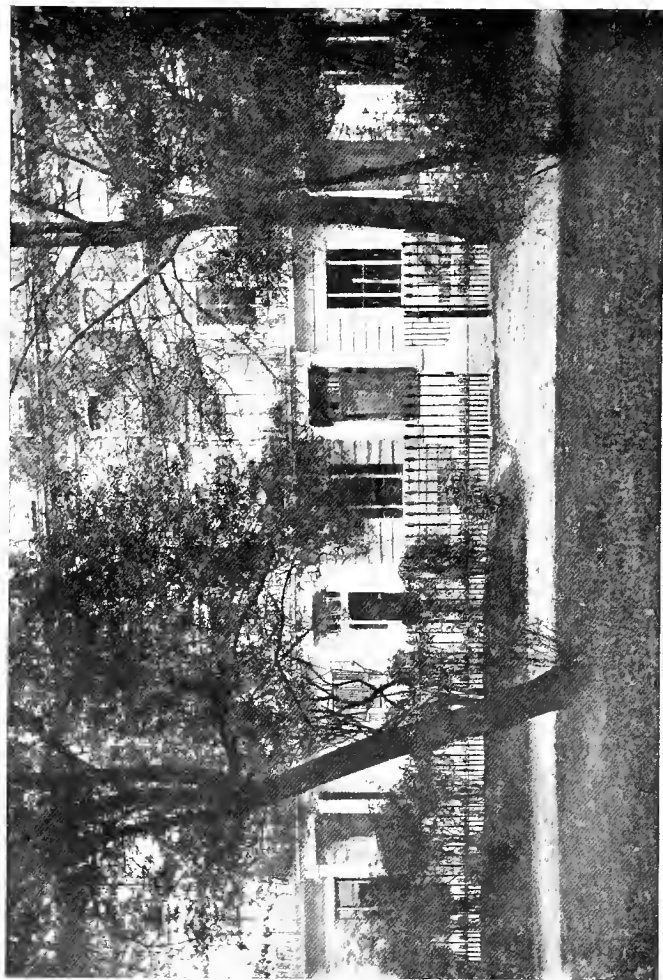
"I built my Cole a lordly treasure-house,"

a reference to Sir Henry Cole of South Kensington fame.

"The result of my father's furnishing was a pleasant, bowery sort of home, with green curtains and carpets, looking out upon the elm trees of Onslow Square," Mrs Ritchie has said. "We lived for seven years at No. 36, and it was there he wrote the lectures on the Georges and the end of *The Newcomes*, and *The Virginians*, part of *Philip*, and many of the *Roundabout Papers*. His study was over the drawing-room, and looked out upon the elm trees."

The lectures on the Georges unexpectedly enough brought in their train much annoyance. When they were delivered in America, people brought charges of disloyalty against the author, and said he would never venture to read them in his own country. "My lecture is rather extra loyal whenever the Queen is mentioned," Thackeray wrote to Miss Perry from America, after reading an attack in *The Saturday Review*; "and the most applauded passages in them I shall have the honour of delivering to-night in the lecture on George II., where the speaker says: 'In laughing at those old-world follies and ceremonies, shall we not acknowledge the change of to-day? As the mistress of St James's passes me now, I salute the sovereign, wise, moderate, exemplary of life, the good mother, the good wife, the accomplished friend of Art, the tender sympathiser in her people's glories and sorrows: I can't say more, can I? And as for George III., I leave off just with the people on the crying point.'" When the course was announced in England, feeling ran





86 ONSLOW SQUARE, BROMPTON. Page 156.  
*Where Thackeray lived, 1858-1862.*

high in certain circles. Thackeray resented the howl of indignation raised by the hysterical, and he made a public defence when a dinner was given in his honour at Edinburgh in 1857. "I had thought that in these lectures I had spoken in terms, not of disrespect or unkindness, but in feelings and in language not un-English, of Her Majesty the Queen," he said; "and whenever I have had to mention her name, whether it was upon the banks of the Clyde or upon those of the Mississippi, whether it was in New England or in Old England, whether it was in some great hall in London to the artisans of the suburbs of the metropolis, or to the politer audiences at the western end—whenever I had to mention her name, it was received with shouts of applause, and with the most hearty cheers. And why was this? It was not on account of the speaker; it was on account of the truth; it was because the English and the Americans—the people of New Orleans a year ago, the people of Aberdeen a week ago—all received and acknowledged with due allegiance the great claims to honour which that lady has, who worthily holds that great and awful situation which our Queen occupies. It is my loyalty that is called into question, and it is my loyalty I am trying to plead to you. Suppose, for example, in America—in Philadelphia or in New York—I had spoken of George IV. in terms of praise or affected reverence, do you suppose they would have hailed his name with cheers, or have heard it with anything like respect? They would have

laughed in my face if I had so spoken of him. They know what I know and you know, and what numbers of squeamish loyalists who affect to cry out against my lectures know, that that man's life was not a good life—that that King was not such a king as we ought to love, or regard, or honour. And I believe, for my part, that in speaking the truth as we hold it, of a bad sovereign, we are paying no disrespect at all to a good one. Far from it. On the contrary, we degrade our own honour and the Sovereign's by unduly and unjustly praising him: and the mere slaverer and flatterer is one who comes forward, as it were, with flash notes, and pays with false coin his tribute to Cæsar. I don't disguise from you that I feel somehow or other on my trial here for loyalty, for honest English feeling."

It was while residing in Brompton that Thackeray made his first and last attempt to enter Parliament. For some time past he had been eager to stand for a constituency, and when Professor Neale, member for the city of Oxford, was unseated in June 1857 for what Thackeray called "a twopennyworth of bribery" which he never committed, he stood in the Liberal interest. His Peelite opponent was Edward, afterwards Lord, Cardwell, who subsequently made a great name at the War Office. It is unnecessary to dwell upon the incidents of the election, which are recorded in *The Life of William Makepeace Thackeray*. The novelist canvassed vigorously. He even sent a droll note to Dickens, urging him to "Come down and make a speech, and tell

them who I am, for I doubt whether more than two of the electors have ever heard of me, and I think there may be as many as six or eight who have heard of you." Thackeray took his defeat easily, and returned to his desk.

"I shall write a novel with the scene laid here . . ." he had stated, when travelling with the Titmarsh-Van through Virginia. "I shall not write it for two years. It will take me at least two years to collect my material and become acquainted with the subject. I cannot write upon a subject I know nothing of. . . . I shall give it the title of *The Two Virginians*. . . . I shall lay the scene in Virginia. There will be two brothers who will be prominent characters; one will take the English side in the war, and the other the American; and they will both be in love with the same girl." The first number of *The Virginians* appeared in November 1857, the twenty-fourth and last was finished at the end of August 1859. "I am surprised I have finished *The Virginians* so well," he wrote to his publisher. "Oh, what a load off my mind."

And now Thackeray embarked upon a new and important venture. It had long been his desire to establish a magazine, as Ainsworth had done, and Douglas Jerrold, and Tom Hood, and Dickens. He had suggested to Mr George Smith, of Messrs Smith, Elder, & Co., a small daily print after the style of *The Tatler*, to be called "Fair Play," but nothing seems to have been done in the matter. Macmillan's announced a shilling magazine, the first number of which, under the editorship of Professor Masson, was to

appear in November 1859; and Mr Smith decided to produce a periodical at the same price and about the same time. A novel by Thackeray was desired, but the editorship was not offered to Thackeray until it had been declined by Mr Tom Hughes. There was some discussion as to what the monthly should be called. It was suggested that the name should be "Thackeray's Magazine," but finally, as Thackeray wrote to George Henry Lewes, "Our storehouse being in Cornhill [Messrs Smith, Elder, & Co.'s offices were then in Cornhill 'over against St Peter's Church'], we name and date our magazine from its place of publication." "We might have assumed a title much more startling," he continued characteristically; "for example, 'The Thames on Fire,' was a name suggested; and, placarded in red letters about the city and country, it would no doubt have excited some curiosity. But on going to London Bridge, the expectant rustic would have found the stream rolling on its accustomed course, and would have turned away angry at being hoaxed." The first number of *The Cornhill Magazine* was issued in January 1860, and the periodical at once found favour with readers. The editor contributed *Lovel the Widower*, a story based upon his unacted play, *The Wolves and the Lamb*; *The Adventures of Philip*, which is to a certain extent a continuation of *A Shabby Genteel Story*, and the inimitable, mature, delightful *Roundabout Papers*. *Denis Duval* had not been completed when the author died, but enough had been written to silence those who said that Thackeray's





2 PALACE GREEN, KENSINGTON. Page 161.  
*Where Thackeray died.*



powers as a novelist had decayed. There is little in his works that is more perfect than the description in *Denis Duval* of Madame de Saverne's sorrows and madness and death.

Though Thackeray contributed to *The Cornhill Magazine* until his death, he had resigned the editorship, as, indeed, he stated in a now almost unknown valedictory address to contributors and correspondents prefixed to the issue for April 1862. "Ladies and gentlemen (who will continue in spite of the standing notice below, to send papers to the editor's private residence), perhaps you will direct the postman to some other house when you learn that the editor of the *Cornhill* no longer lives in mine. . . . The editor no more, I hope long to remain a contributor to my friend's magazine. I believe my own special readers will agree that my books will not suffer when their author is released from the daily task of reading, accepting, refusing, losing, and finding the work of other people. To say No has often cost me a morning's peace and a day's work. I tremble *recenti metu*. Oh! those hours of madness, spent in searching for Louisa's last lines to her dead piping bullfinch, or Nhoj Senoj's mislaid essay. I tell them for the last time that the (late) editor will not be responsible for rejected communications, and herewith send off the chair, and the great *Cornhill Magazine* tin box, with its load of care." The editorship was put into commission for a while, during which period there is reason to believe that Mr Frederick Greenwood was the presiding deity; and then Mr (afterwards Sir Leslie) Stephen,

who married Thackeray's younger daughter, occupied the chair. It has been stated times without number that Thackeray resigned because he found the work too painful. "How can I go into society with comfort?" he asked a friend. "I dined the other day at ——'s, and at the table were four gentlemen whose masterpieces of literature I had been compelled to decline with thanks." He emphasised this discomfort in his little paper on *Thorns in the Cushion*. He told of the "thorn-letters he received." He even quoted one and commented on it. "Here is the case put with true feminine logic: 'I am poor; I am good; I am ill; I work hard; I have a sick mother and hungry brothers and sisters dependent on me. You can help us if you will.' And then I look at the paper with the thousandth part of a faint hope that it may be suitable, and I find it won't do; and I knew it wouldn't do; and why is this poor lady to appeal to my pity, and bring her little ones kneeling to my bedside, and calling for bread which I can give them if I choose?" Still it was not editorial worries alone that induced Thackeray to resign the editorial chair and to sacrifice a very large salary, not even the desire to devote more time to his writings. Failing health, probably, was the predominant reason. In fact, in one of his letters he relates how a physician told him he was suffering from a fatal disease, and though he subsequently discovered the information was wrong, yet before he learnt of the mistake he had determined upon his course of action.

Thackeray took, in 1859, a long lease of a



PALACE GREEN. *Page 162.*  
*From the back of the King's Arms, Kensington.*



rather dilapidated house on the west side of Kensington Gardens. It was his intention only to repair and improve the existing structure; but after careful consideration he decided to pull it down. In its place, from his own drawings, Messrs Jackson & Graham erected a handsome mansion of red brick with stone facings, in the style of Queen Anne. This house, 2 Palace Green, has the Society of Arts oval commemorative tablet inserted in the wall. "Are you waiting [to come to London] till next year, when my fine new house will be built—at Palace Green, Kensington—opposite the old palace?" he asked some American friends, in a letter dated December 1860. "My dear relations are furious at my arrogance, extravagance, and presumption in building a handsome new house; and one of them, who never made a joke in his life, said yesterday to me: 'You ought to call it Vanity Fair.'" Eighteen months later he wrote to the same correspondents: "This is what you will see—the reddest house in all the town. I have already had £1000 offered me for my bargain. . . . But the house is very dear. It costs £6000, and £100 a year ground rent. Where we are now only costs £3000. But it is a famous situation, and will be a little competency to the girl who inherits it." Indeed, Thackeray believed always that the house represented a judicious investment, and when a friend playfully reminded him of what Horace said of those who, forgetful of death, built houses, he replied cheerfully: "No, I am *memor sepulchri*, for this house will always let for so many hundreds a year."

He was thoroughly satisfied with his "lordly dwelling-house." "Well, upon my word, it is one of the nicest houses I have ever seen," he declared, and he was enthusiastic about the old green and the old palace, and the magnificent trees before the windows at which he wrote. It was his intention here, facing this residence of Queen Anne, to continue Macaulay's *History of England*. "Here I am going to write my greatest work—A History of the Reign of Queen Anne," he said to Bayard Taylor the last time they were together in his new house; and he pointed out the "material" he had stocked on the shelves in his library. "Probably [I shall begin it] as soon as I am done with *Philip*; but I am not sure I shall not have to write another novel first. But the history will mature all the better for the delay. I want to absorb the authorities gradually, so that when I come to write, I shall be filled with the subject, and can sit down to a continuous narrative without jumping up every moment to consult somebody. The history has been a pet project of mine for some years past. I'm slowly working up to the level of it, and know that when I once begin I shall do it well." And from the picture of the age in *Esmond*, there is no doubt had he lived long enough he would have done it well.

The house was finished in 1861, and early in the following February Thackeray removed into it. A few weeks later he gave a house-warming. The cards of invitation were for "W. Empty House," denoting at once its unfurnished condition and the initials of its owner. There was an



entertainment, which included the host's play of "The Wolves and the Lamb." Thackeray was announced in the programme as Mr Bonnington, but as a matter of fact he only came upon the stage at the fall of the curtain to say, "Bless you, my children."

"On December 24, 1863," Dr Merriman has recorded, "I was summoned about 8 A.M. to Palace Green, to find him lying dead in his bed! Life had been extinct for some hours; effusion had taken place into his great, powerful brain, and he had passed away into the night to the better country where there is no night." It is pleasant to recall that the last words that Thackeray revised of *Denis Duval* were "And my heart throbbed with an exquisite bliss." Many men, hearing the news on that sad Christmas Eve, must have recalled the lines that bring to a close his poem, "The End of the Play" :—

"I lay the weary pen aside ;  
And wish you health, and love, and mirth,  
As fits the solemn Christmas-tide.  
As fits the holy Christmas birth,  
Be this, good friends, our carol still—  
Be peace on earth, be peace on earth,  
To men of gentle will."

The Middle Temple, of which he was a member, asked to be allowed to bury him in the Temple, where Goldsmith lies, but the offer was declined. Many thought the authorities should have applied for permission to bury him among the illustrious in Westminster

Abbey. As his friend, Richard Monckton Milnes, wrote :

“But, may be, he—who so could draw  
The hidden great—the humble wise,  
Yielding with them to God's good law  
Makes the Pantheon where he lies.”

His mortal remains were laid at rest in the Kensal Green cemetery, under a plain stone, bearing the simple but sufficient record :

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

Born, July 18, 1811.

Died, December 24, 1863.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THACKERAY IN PARIS

THACKERAY'S first visit to Paris was paid surreptitiously. "I remember as a boy," he wrote in *Desseins*, "at the 'Ship' at Dover (*imperante Carolo Decimo*) when, my place to London being paid, I had but twelve shillings left after a certain little Paris expedition (about which my benighted parents never knew anything), ordering for dinner a whiting, a beef-steak, and a glass of negus, and the bill was: dinner seven shillings, a glass of negus two shillings, waiter sixpence, and only half-a-crown left, as I was a sinner, for the guard and coachman on the way to London! And I *was* a sinner. I had gone without leave. What a long, dreary, guilty four hours' journey it was from Paris to Calais, I remember. . . . I met my college tutor only yesterday. We were travelling, and stopped at the same hotel. He had the very next room to mine. After he had gone into his apartment, having shaken me quite kindly by the hand, I felt inclined to knock at his door and say, 'Dr Bentley, I beg your pardon, but do you remember when I was going down at the

Easter vacation in 1830, you asked me where I was going to spend my vacation? And I said, With my friend Slingsby, in Huntingdonshire. Well, sir, I grieve to have to confess that I told you a fib. I had got twenty pounds, and was going for a lark to Paris, where my friend Edwards was staying.' . . . The doctor will read it, for I did not wake him up."

He was a frequent visitor to Paris throughout his life. It was his favourite continental haunt from the surreptitious visit in 1830 to which reference has just been made. His first visit extended to some months, during which time he studied the language, went into society, read a good deal, and in his letters criticised what he read, made many sketches, and, as a matter of course, frequented the theatres. After his return to London he became associated with *The National Standard and Journal of Literature, Science, Music, Theatricals and the Fine Arts*, first as contributor, then as editor, and eventually as proprietor. He wrote articles on literature and art; he contributed verse and fiction and drawings; and for some months acted as its Paris correspondent. It was while staying in the French capital for his paper, that he wrote to his mother: "I have been thinking very seriously of turning artist. I can draw better than I can do anything else, and certainly I should like it better than any other occupation, so why shouldn't I?" When *The National Standard*, etc., came to an untimely end, he remained in Paris to devote himself in all seriousness to the study of art. He stayed

with his grandmother, Mrs Butler, and afterwards with other relations or friends until he took rooms for himself in the Rue des Beaux Arts. The life of Thackeray in Paris has been made known to all the world in the novelist's writings and in his letters. As art-student he spent his days in the studio of Brinè, a well-known impressionist artist, and later in the *atelier* Gros, a favourite pupil of David. He copied pictures in the galleries—a Watteau or a Lucas van Leyden ("a better man, I think, than Albert Dürer, and mayhap as great a composer as Raphael himself"). He made some progress, and hoped in a year, if he worked hard, he might paint something worth looking at; but, he naïvely told his mother, it would require at least that time to gain any readiness with his brush.

"The life of the young artist is the easiest, merriest, dirtiest existence possible," he wrote. "He comes to Paris, probably at sixteen, from his province; his parents settle forty pounds a year on him, and pay his master; he establishes himself in the Pays Latin, or in the new quarter of Notre Dame de Lorette (which is quite peopled with painters); he arrives at his *atelier* at a tolerably early hour, and labours among a score of companions as merry and as poor as himself. Each gentleman has his favourite tobacco pipe; and the pictures are painted in the midst of a cloud of smoke, and a din of puns and choice French slang, and a roar of choruses, of which no one can form an idea who has not been present at such an

assembly. How he passes his evenings, at what theatres, at what guinguettes, in company with what seducing little milliner, there is no need to say. . . . These young men (together with the students of sciences) comport themselves towards the sober citizen pretty much as the German bursch towards the *philister*, or as the military man, during the Empire, did to the pekin—from the height of their poverty they look down upon him with the greatest imaginable scorn—a scorn, I think, by which the citizen is dazzled, for his respect for the Arts is intense.”

Thackeray waxed enthusiastic on the opportunities afforded to the Parisian art-student. He pointed out that the painter was better appreciated, better understood, and better paid than in England; that, whereas in our country there was no school except the Academy, in Paris for ten pounds a lad might enter any one of a dozen *ateliers* and be properly trained, and provided with models and all the necessary accessories; and that, whereas in those days the painter in perfidious Albion was laughed at or disregarded, in France he had a rank above rather than below his merits.

Abraham Hayward, contributor to the *Edinburgh Review*, in his article on *Vanity Fair*, stated that he well remembered finding Thackeray engaged in copying pictures in the Louvre in order to qualify himself for his intended profession. Indeed, Thackeray was never weary of visiting this palace of art. “What a paradise this gallery is for French students, or foreigners, who sojourn





THACKERAY'S GRAVE. Page 164.  
*Kensal Green Cemetery.*



in the capital! It is hardly necessary to say that the brethren of the brush are not usually supplied by fortune with any extraordinary wealth, or means of enjoying the luxuries with which Paris more than any other city abounds. But here they have a luxury which surpasses all others, and spend their days in a palace which all the money of the Rothschilds could not buy. They sleep, perhaps, in a garret, and dine in a cellar; but no grandee in Europe has such a drawing-room. King's houses have at best but damask hangings and gilt cornices. What are these to a wall covered with canvas by Paul Veronese, or a hundred yards of Rubens? Artists in England, who have a national gallery that resembles a moderate sized gin-shop, who may not copy pictures, except under particular restrictions, and on rare and particular days, may revel here to their heart's content. Here is a room half a mile long, with as many windows as Aladdin's palace, open from sunrise till evening, and free to all manners and all varieties of study. The only puzzle to the student is to select the one he shall begin upon, and keep his eyes away from the rest."

About this time Thackeray met with an accident that might have had very serious consequences. During a picnic in the woods of Montmorenci, the younger people including Thackeray, thought the day would not be passed properly without a ride on the famous donkeys. Half a dozen of the party started, and urged their animals into places and paces to which they were quite unused. Struggles between men and

beasts were the natural sequence, and Thackeray's donkey tossed his rider over his head, depositing him on a heap of newly-broken stones. The fall was so severe that it was thought the picnic would have a tragic ending. Fortunately, however, no very serious injury was inflicted—but Thackeray bore the mark of the accident to his dying day.

Thackeray went to London to settle the preliminaries of a scheme for establishing a newspaper in which Major Carmichael Smyth was interested, and which was to appear when the old newspaper tax was to be reduced. A small joint-stock company was formed to take over a respectable paper with a small and ever-decreasing circulation, entitled *The Public Ledger*, and to issue it as *The Constitutional and Public Ledger*. Its politics were radical, and it advocated the ballot, triennial parliaments, complete freedom of the press, and religious liberty and equality. Joseph Hume, George Grote, George Evans, Charles Buller, William Ewart, Sir William Molesworth, and John Arthur Roebuck, were among the supporters of the scheme. Laman Blanchard was appointed editor, and Thackeray returned to France as Paris correspondent. Thackeray's letters began to appear on September 27, and continued until February 18, 1837, when he came to town and took over the editorship of *The Constitutional*, the last number of which appeared on July 1, with a black border for the death of the king.

Soon after *The Constitutional* was launched, Thackeray married Miss Isabella Gethin Creagh

Shawe, daughter of Colonel Matthew Shawe, at the English Embassy in Paris. The following is extracted from the Register Book of Marriages in the house of the British Ambassador in Paris : "William Makepeace Thackeray of the Parish of St John, Paddington in the County of Middlesex, Bachelor and Isabella Gethin Creagh Shawe, of the Parish of Donerial in the County of Cork Spinster and a Minor was married in this house with the consent of her mother Isabella G. Shawe, this twentieth day of August, in the year One thousand eight hundred and thirty-six. By me, H. M. Luscombe, Bishop and Chaplain. This marriage was solemnised between us W. M. Thackeray, I. G. C. Shawe. In the presence of V. Spencer, I. G. Shawe, senior, J. W. Lemaire."

It will be remembered that it was Bishop Luscombe who married Mrs Carrickfergus to Mr Andrea Fitch—for particulars of the ceremony *A Shabby Genteel Story* should be consulted.

Thackeray had lost his patrimony, partly in newspaper ventures, partly at the card table, where he was swindled, and partly in an Indian bank smash; and at the time of his marriage he was entirely dependent upon his salary as Paris correspondent on *The Constitutional*. He would never admit that the step was imprudent, and he expressed his admiration of a friend who gave up his fellowship and tutorship at Cambridge to marry on nothing a year. "I married at your age with £400 paid by a newspaper which failed six months afterwards, and always

love to hear of a young fellow testing his fortune bravely in that way," he wrote later to Mr Synge on the eve of that gentleman's marriage. "Though my marriage was a wreck, as you know, I would do it again, for behold Love is the crown and completion of all earthly good."

The newly-married folk settled in the Rue St Augustin. Near by was the Rue Neuve des Petits Champs, reached through the Passage Choiseul, where was situated the establishment, as an old guide-book has it, of "Terré Jeune, Restaurateur; house noted for Spanish dishes, and for good wines, and more especially for the Marseilles dish, Bouillabaisse." Here the young couple came frequently to dine, meeting many friends who also appreciated the *cuisine*. Many years later Thackeray revisited the restaurant, when he wrote the touching "Ballad of Bouillabaisse" that appeared in *Punch*.

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

"I drink it as the Fates ordain it  
 Come, fill it, and have done with rhymes:  
 Fill up the lonely glass, and drain it  
 In memory of dear old times.  
 Welcome the wine, whate'er the seal is;  
 And sit you down and say your grace  
 With thankful heart, whate'er the meal is.  
 —Here comes the smoking Bouillabaisse!"

On the Boulevard St Germain there is a little unpretending wine shop, close to the Rue du Tour, which has for a sign a portrait of Thackeray at table, and underneath an inscription in English to the effect that the great novelist took his meals there when an art student. The sign has only recently been put up.

Thackeray and his wife went to London in 1837. The subsequent history of their marriage has been outlined in an earlier chapter.

Thackeray was in Paris in December 1840, the month in which took place the second funeral of Napoleon; *i.e.* the ceremony of conveying the remains of the great warrior from St Helena to their last resting-place at the Hôtel des Invalides. He witnessed the procession from a room opening on a garden in the Champs Elysées, and published his impressions in a little volume in the form of three letters addressed to an imaginary Miss Smith of London, and some verses entitled *The Chronicle of the Drum*, in which an old French soldier traces the history of the Revolution to the fall of Napoleon. The book was characteristic of the author. Thackeray, of course, realised that Napoleon was a great man, but he thought the affair humbug, and, though he realised he was running counter to the feelings of two nations, he did not hesitate to say so. It was to him a grand serio-comic, melodramatic spectacle. Yet surely there was something grand about it. The decorations along the route may have been tawdry, itinerant merchants may have striven to make profit out of the crowds

assembled in the street. But, when all was said, it was the body of a great Frenchman returning to France, and there must have been something thrilling at the supreme moment when the Prince of Joinville addressed Louis Philippe: "Sire, I bring you the body of the Emperor Napoleon." There is something of the anticlimax in the King's reply: "I receive it in the name of France."

Napoleon's renown would not have been less had his remains never been disinterred at St Helena and transferred to France. This was obvious to Thackeray, and of course to many others; but those who saw this did not make allowance for the popular feeling and the sentiment that animated the people. Thackeray saw the triviality of it. He did not admire a great general with the ardour of most; he had not that reverence for the man of action over the man of the study that is possessed by the vast majority; and it is certain that he thought Goethe greater far than Napoleon, and would rather have been Addison than Wellington. He gave his opinion of Napoleon in *The Chronicle of the Drum*.

"He captured many thousand guns,  
He wrote 'The Great' before his name;  
And dying, only left his sons  
The recollection of his shame.

"Though more than half the world was his,  
He died without a rood his own;  
And borrowed from his enemies  
Six foot of ground to lie upon.

“He fought a thousand glorious wars,  
And more than half the world was his,  
And somewhere, now, in yonder stars,  
Can tell, mayhap, what greatness is.”

There you have Thackeray's philosophy, expressed again and again in his works. Vanity of vanities! he cried; and he said he saw that text wherever he looked, though it was three thousand years since “the sad and splendid, the weary King Ecclesiast” had penned it. The world seemed to him a sad place, more melancholy than mirthful. “Oh! Vanitas vanitatum! which of us is happy in the world? which of us has his desire? or, having it, is satisfied?” So he concluded his great prose epic. He realised it was an accident whether you were born prince or peasant, rich or poor, clever or dull. But he was a simple honest man, and thought that every man and every woman could be good. Yet he made allowances—even for his *bête noir*, George IV. “Which of us, taking temptation into account, can say he would have been more worthy”—which is only the modern rendering of “Let him who is without sin cast the first stone.” Yet he could not always refrain from stonethrowing. He saw there were people flourishing with no reverence save for prosperity, and with no eye for anything beyond success—faithless, hopeless, without charity; and he had at them with might and main. It was against pride of purse and birth and place, against haughtiness, against those who meanly admired mean things that he fought. He bewailed the faults and follies of mankind, and gently, tenderly, chided

them; roused only to anger when he met a man bullying a woman; a woman by virtue of her weakness imposing on a man; or a stronger taking advantage of a weaker fellow-creature. But to Thackeray all was not vanity. As some one has said, "He could not have painted *Vanity Fair* as he has, unless Eden had been in his inner eye." And, indeed, he was ever ready to respect and to bow before such qualities as virtue, simplicity, honour, bravery, and unselfishness. He knew

" . . . how fate may change and shift ;  
The prize be sometimes with the fool,  
The race not always to the swift.  
The strong may yield, the good may fall,  
The great man be a vulgar clown,  
The knave be lifted over all,  
The kind cast piteously down."

But he preached,

"Come wealth or want, come good or ill,  
Let young and old accept their part,  
And bow before the Awful Will,  
And bear it with an honest heart.  
Who misses, or who wins the prize ?  
Go, lose or conquer, as you can :  
But if you fail, or if you rise,  
Be each, pray God, a gentleman."

"Do your duty," he wrote again and again. Do your duty with an honest heart; be reverent, be humble, be charitable! That was the teaching of his life and the epitome of all his lectures and lay sermons.

*Revenons à nos moutons.*





W. M. THACKERAY.

*From an Ink Drawing by Samuel Laurence in the British Museum.*



“What brought me to this place? Well, I am glad I came; it will give me a subject for at least six weeks in *Punch*, of which I was getting so weary that I thought I must have done with it. . . .” Thackeray wrote in 1849. “I went to see my old haunts when I came to Paris thirteen years ago, and made believe to be a painter, just after I was ruined, and before I fell in love, and took to marriage and writing. It was a jolly time. I was as poor as Job, and sketched away most abominably, but pretty contented; and we used to meet in each other’s rooms and talk about art, and smoke pipes, and drink bad brandy-and-water. That awful habit still remains, but where is art, that dear mistress whom I loved, though in a very indolent, capricious manner, but with a real sincerity? I see her far, very far off. I jilted her. I know it very well; but you see it was fate ordained that marriage should never take place.” The *Punch* papers that resulted from this visit, when Richard Doyle, his colleague on the staff, accompanied him were *Paris Revisited*, *Two or Three Theatres at Paris*, and *On Some Dinners at Paris*. He saw the famous play *La Propriété c’est le Vol*, in which Adam and Eve danced a polka, and sang a song quite appropriate to the costume in which they figured; also a wonderful play entitled *Les Mystères de Londres*, an unreal, impossible melodrama; and if he did not dine at the Frères, at Véry’s, and at the Café de Paris, it was because, like his friend Folkestone Canterbury, his intimates insisted upon his coming to their houses, where one regaled him with boiled leg of mutton and

turnips, and another with mock-turtle soup and beefsteak!

Four years later, after the first course of his lectures on "The English Humourists of the Eighteenth Century" had been delivered, he went again to Paris, this time accompanied by his daughters, and stayed at 19 Rue d'Angouleme St Honoré. "Travelling as paterfamilias, with a daughter in each hand, I don't like to speak to our country-folks; but give myself airs, rather, and keep off from them," he wrote to Mrs Brookfield. "If I were alone I should make up to everybody. You don't see things so well *à trois* as you do alone; you are an English gentleman; you are shy of queer-looking or queer-speaking people; you are in the *coupé*; you are an earl; confound your impudence, if you had £5000 a year and were Tompan, Esq., you could not behave yourself more high and mightily. Ah! I recollect ten years back a poor devil looking wistfully at the few napoleons in his *gousset*, and giving himself no airs at all. He was a better fellow than the one you know, perhaps; not that our characters alter, only they develop, and our minds grow grey and bald, etc. I was a boy ten years ago, breathing out my simple cries in *The Great Hoggarty Diamond*." This time he dined at the Trois Frères, saw the pictures, and went to the play by himself. "The advance of this place in material splendour is wonderful," he commented. "They are pulling down and building up as eagerly as in New York, and the Rue de Rivoli is going to be the grandest street in the world—all the houses as

tall as the St Nicholas—and the palaces and the gardens looking so ancient and noble.”

Thackeray's last visit was paid after the appearance of the first number of *The Cornhill Magazine*. He fled ignominiously from London. He had been overwhelmed with manuscripts, not only at the office—which was all very well—but actually at “the editor's private residence, to which, in spite of prayers, entreaties, commands, and threats, authors, and ladies especially,” would send their communications. Even against this he held up manfully; but when the intending contributors began to *call* on him in Onslow Square, he packed up a portmanteau and ran away. “The darlings demanded that I should rewrite, if I could not understand, their —— nonsense, and put their halting lines into proper form. I was so appalled when they set upon me with their ‘ipics’ and their ‘ipeccacs,’ that you might have knocked me down with a feather, sir. It was insupportable, and I fled away into France,” he told Fields, the American publisher, who has further confided to the public ear how, when he called on Thackeray at his hotel in the Rue de la Paix he found him almost delirious with joy at the news from London of the immense sale of the Magazine, and full of enthusiasm for George Smith. “London is not big enough to contain me now, and I am obliged to add Paris to my residence! Great heavens!” said he, throwing up his long arms, “where will this tremendous circulation stop? Who knows but that I shall have to add Vienna and Rome to my whereabouts? If the worst comes to the worst,

New York also may fall into my clutches, and only the Rocky Mountains may be able to stop my progress."

"Those days in Paris were simply tremendous," says Fields. "We dined at all possible and impossible places together. We walked round and round the glittering courts of the Palais Royal, . . . and all my efforts were necessary to restrain him from rushing in and ordering a pocketful of diamonds and 'other trifles' as he called them; 'for,' said he, 'how can I spend the princely income which Smith allows me for editing *The Cornhill* unless I begin instantly somewhere?' If he saw a group of three or four persons talking together in an excited way . . . he would whisper to me with immense gesticulation: 'There, there, you see the news has reached Paris, and perhaps the number has gone up since my last accounts from London.' His spirits during these few days were colossal, and he told me he found it impossible to sleep for counting subscribers."

## CHAPTER IX

### THACKERAY ON THE CONTINENT

THACKERAY was a frequent visitor to the Continent all the days of his life, from his first surreptitious visit to Paris, when he was up at Cambridge, until almost the end. He went alone, he went with friends, he went with his children. He roamed all over Europe, and was familiar with many cities. His experiences, though not exciting, were many; and his books benefited by the journeys he made. Had he never visited Germany, perhaps the Kickleburys would not have gone *am Rhein*, and the chapter about Becky and the Pumpnickel students could never have been written. Charles Kingsley could write about tropical forests with a familiarity that impresses the reader with its reality, although the author had never been so far south: Thackeray rarely ventured to write of a place he had never visited. It must not be thought, however, that Thackeray had been to every place he mentioned. Mr Sharp, in his admirable paper on "The Literary Geography of Thackeray," refers to an article about Thackeray's wide range, in which its author stated that Florence was perhaps the only

English-frequented town, and Rome the only capital, with which Thackeray had no literary dealings in his fiction; and reminds us of Becky, who in Florence kept house awhile with the notorious Madame de la Cruchecassée, and as Madame de Rawdon met, for the last time, at the Polonia ball in Rome, the great Lord Steyne, upon whose white, bald, shining forehead remained the scar made by the diamond thrown at him by Colonel Crawley, the non-complaisant husband.

After coming down from the university, Thackeray travelled for a couple of years on the Continent. He began at Godesberg, where, for some reason unknown, most people did begin a tour in those days. He remained a month in that town, which occupies so important a place in *A Legend of the Rhine*, and during his stay endeavoured to supplement his very rudimentary knowledge of "the awful German language," so that, as Mark Twain would put it, he should not make twins out of a dative dog.

His next destination, Weimar, is the place in his itinerary around which centres most of the interest of these early travels. He arrived there about September 1830, and remained for several months. He liked the capital of the Grand Duchy of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach so well, that he wrote home he would like to be appointed to an *attaché*-ship there. To judge from his letters, he enjoyed himself thoroughly. He flirted with a young lady, who discarded him when a life-guardsmen with magnificent waistcoats and ten thousand a year came her way. The lad was not heart-broken at the abrupt termination of his



love-affair, and translated right merrily some sad lines of his favourite Schiller :

“The world is empty,  
This heart is dead,  
Its bones and its ashes  
For ever are fled.”

It was at Weimar that Fitzboodle met Dorothea, the daughter of Herr Oberhof-und-Bau-Inspektor von Spech. For her sweet sake he learnt to dance. He learnt in secret, practised in secret, and made his first appearance as a dancer at a court-ball. There did he dance with Dorothea—oh, bliss!—danced with her on a waxed floor, danced—aye, and fell too. “O, Dorothea! you can’t forgive me, you oughtn’t to forgive me; but I love you madly still. My next flame was Ottilia.” Was Fitzboodle’s experience founded upon the author’s? At this interval of time, perhaps, there is no one who can say. At least there was a Dorothea of flesh and blood, for when Thackeray revisited the town twenty-five years later he pointed out to his daughters the house where his heroine had lived. He saw her again soon after. “At Venice, a year or two after our visit to Weimar,” Mrs Ritchie has recorded in the charming *Chapters from Some Unwritten Memoirs*, “we were breakfasting at a long table, where a fat lady also sat a little way off, with a pale, fat little boy beside her. She was stout; she was dressed in light green; she was silent; she was eating an egg. The *sala* of the great marble hall was shaded from the blaze of sunshine, but streaky gleams shot across the dim

hall, falling in on the palms and orange-trees beyond the lady, who gravely shifted her place as the sunlight dazzled her. Our own meal was also spread, and my sister and I were only waiting for my father to begin. He came in presently, saying he had been looking at a guest-book in the outer hall, and he had seen a name which interested him very much. 'Frau von Z., geboren von X. It must be Amalia! She must be *here*—in the hotel,' he said, and as he spoke he asked a waiter whether Madame von Z. was still in the hotel. 'I believe that is Madame von Z.,' said the waiter, pointing to the fat lady. The lady looked up, and then went on with her egg, and my poor father turned away, saying in a low overwhelmed voice, '*That* Amalia! That cannot be Amalia!' I could not understand his silence, his discomposure. 'Aren't you going to speak to her? Oh, please do go and speak to her,' we both cried. 'Do make sure if it is Amalia.' But he shook his head. 'I can't,' he said, 'I had rather not.' Amalia, meanwhile, having finished her egg, rose deliberately, laid down her napkin, and walked away, followed by her little boy."

Weimar was an hospitable place when Thackeray went there. The Court, though splendid, was most pleasant and homely; and it was easy for strangers with the necessary credentials to obtain the *entré*. Thackeray was invited to dinners, balls, and assemblies there; and he was so much troubled by the makeshift dress of black coat, waistcoat, and trousers cut down into breeches (in which he declared he looked half-footman, half-methodist parson), that

he wrote home begging for a cornetcy in Sir John Kennaway's yeomanry, so that he might have the right to appear in uniform. In those days Weimar was the Court of Letters. Goethe, Schiller, Wieland, and Herder, had been welcomed there, and have given the little town a fame far greater than otherwise it would have enjoyed. When Thackeray was there the great centre of interest was Wolfgang von Goethe, who, though he had retired from the direction of the theatre, still resided in the town. "I saw for the first time old Goethe to-day," Thackeray wrote on October 20, 1830; "he was very kind, and received me in rather a more *distingué* manner than he has used the other Englishmen here; the old man gives occasionally a tea-party, to which the English and some special favourites in the town are invited; he sent me a summons at twelve. I sat with him for half an hour." "I remember very well the perturbation of spirit with which, as a lad of nineteen, I received the long-expected intimation that the Herr Geheimrath would see me on such a morning," he told George Henry Lewes many years after. "This notable audience took place in a little antechamber of his private apartments, covered all round with antique casts and bas-reliefs. He was habited in a long grey or drab ridingot, with a white neckcloth, and a red ribbon in his buttonhole. He kept his hands behind his back, just as in Rauch's statuette. His complexion was very bright, clear, and rosy. His eyes extraordinarily dark, piercing, and brilliant. I felt quite afraid before them, and recollect comparing them to the eyes of the hero

of a certain romance called *Melmoth the Wanderer*, which used to alarm us boys thirty years ago; eyes of an individual who had made a bargain with a Certain Person, and at an extreme old age retained his eyes in all their awful splendour. I fancied Goethe must have been still more handsome as an old man than even in the days of his youth. His voice was very rich and sweet. He asked me questions about myself, which I answered as best I could. I recollect I was at first astonished, and then somewhat relieved, when I found he spoke French with not a good accent." He only saw Goethe twice more. Once walking in the garden of his house in the Frauenplatz; once going to step into his chariot on a sunshiny day, wearing a cap and a cloak with a red collar. "My only recommendation is that I have seen Napoleon and Goethe, and am the owner of Schiller's sword," Thackeray used to say. Certainly they were among his most cherished memories. When nearly a quarter of a century later he revisited Weimar, he found Madame de Goethe there, who received him and his daughters with the kindness of old days; and he was touched to find that some of the caricatures he had delighted to make for children had been kept.

Weimar is mentioned more than once in Thackeray's books. It figures most prominently as Pumpernickel in *Vanity Fair*, when "Der Herr Graf von Sedley nebst Begleitig, aus London" visited the town. The party included, besides Der Herr Graf, better known as Jos, his sister Amelia and her son George, and Amelia's

devoted swain, Colonel Dobbin. They had travelled first to Rotterdam, and then down the Rhine to Cologne. Frankfort-on-Main, thinly disguised as the Free City of Judenstadt, was their next resting-place, and it was only with the greatest difficulty that Dobbin prevailed upon Jos not to put on his cocked-hat and tights when invited to dine with "Our Minister." From Frankfort the travellers proceeded to Weimar, and in the chapters devoted to their stay, the author drew largely upon his own memories of "the cheery social little German place." They went on a *gast-rolle* night to the Royal Grand Ducal Pumpnickelisch Hof-Theater, and, as Thackeray himself had done, saw Madame Schroeder-Devrient in the part of the heroine in *Fidelio*. They went to other operas with which the author was familiar, and were present at a performance of Beethoven's *Die Schlacht bei Vittoria*, in which "God Save the King" is performed. "There may have been a score of Englishmen in the house, but at the burst of that beloved and well-known music, every one of them stood bolt upright in their places, and proclaimed themselves to be members of the dear old British nation." The pretty custom still prevails, at least it did some fifteen years ago when the present writer heard the opera in Frankfort, for when the familiar strains were heard, the dozen Englishmen present rose in their seats. Their German neighbours looked alarmed for a moment; but soon they smiled tolerantly and murmured: "Die dummen Engländer," the remark with which they excuse most of the eccentricities of

our fellow-countrymen. Indeed, that phrase is the salvation of many British travellers who else, disregarding "foreign" authority abroad, as is too often their wont, might not infrequently see the inside of a German police-station.

Pumpnickel, where Sir Pitt Crawley had spent some years as *attaché*, the author of *Vanity Fair* informs his readers, "stands in the midst of a happy valley, through which sparkles—to mingle with the Rhine somewhere, but I have not the map at hand to say exactly at what point—the fertilising stream of the Pump. In some places the river is big enough to support a ferry-boat, in others to turn a mill. In Pumpnickel itself, the last Transparency but three, the great and renowned Victor Aurelius XIV., built a magnificent bridge, on which his own statue rises, surrounded by water-nymphs and emblems of victory, peace, and plenty; he has his foot on the neck of a prostrate Turk—history says he engaged and ran a janissary through the body at the relief of Vienna by Sobieski—but, quite undisturbed by the agonies of the prostrate Mahomedan, who writhes at his feet in the most ghastly manner—the Prince smiles blandly, and points with his truncheon in the direction of the Aurelius Platz, where he began to erect a new palace that would have been the wonder of the age, had the great-souled Prince but funds to complete it. But the completion of Monplaisir (Monblaisir, the honest German folks call it) was stopped for lack of ready money, and it and its park and garden are now in rather a faded condition,

and not more than ten times big enough to accommodate the Court of the reigning sovereign."

Sedley and his companions were presented at Court, and invited to some of the functions given by royalty; they attended the public balls; and even visited the *trente-et-quarante* and *roulette* tables established for the *fête* week in a room at the Town Hall. There it was that Jos met his old friend Becky Crawley (*née* Sharp), who, after her husband had accepted the Governorship of Coventry Island, had led a vagabond and, it is to be feared, a not too reputable, existence. She had been all over Europe—Boulogne, where she was cut by the British matron, and patronised by women of the Mrs Washington White type; Dieppe, Caen, Tours, at one of which places that worthy woman, Mrs Hook Eagles took her up, and quarrelled with the ambassador's wife because she would not receive her *protégée*; Paris, where she tried keeping house with Madame de Saint Amour in the Rue Royale, and where she found a relative in the person of a hideous old box-opener at a Boulevard theatre; Brussels, where she was a queen at the boarding-house presided over by Madame la Comtesse de Borodino, widow of Napoleon's General, Count de Borodino, who was left with no resource by the deceased hero but that of a *table-d'hôte* and an *écarté* table. "The lucky Mrs Rawdon was known at every play-table in Germany. She and Madame de la Cruchecassée kept house at Florence together. It is said she was ordered out of Munich; and my friend Mr Frederick

Pigeon avers that it was at her house at Lausanne that he was hocused at supper, and lost eight hundred pounds to Major Loder and the Honorable Mr Deuceace." As Madame de Rawdon, she gave a *matinée musicale* at Wildbad; and at Strasbourg in the year 1830, as Madame Rebecque, appeared in the opera of the *Dame Blanche*. The police ejected her from St Petersburg, which seems to contradict the rumour that she was a Russian spy at Töplitz and afterward at Vienna. At Leipzig she advertised a concert, and sold many tickets, but went off without singing. She visited Naples and Rome in company with Major Loder, "the same man who shot Prince Ravioli, and was caned by Sir John Buckskin for carrying four kings in his hat besides those which he used, in playing at *écarté*." By this time she was a confirmed Bohemian. She was in very low water when her old friends found her at Pumpnickel-Weimar, but not unhappy with her student admirers. Emmy the soft-hearted took her away from her cheap lodgings to stay with her, and by so doing, quarrelled with her faithful Dobbin. "You are not worthy of the love which I have devoted to you. I knew all along that the prize I had set my life on was not worth the winning; that I was a fool, with fond fancies, too, bartering away my all of truth and ardour against your little feeble remnant of love," he spoke out at last to the astonished Emmy, who for so long had trampled upon him. "I will bargain no more: I withdraw. I find no fault with you. You are very good-natured, and you



have done your best; but you couldn't—you couldn't reach up to the height of the attachment I bore you, and which a loftier soul than yours might have been proud to share. Good-bye, Amelia! I have watched your struggle. Let it end. We are both weary of it." He went away; and of course Amelia sent for him; and of course he came; but who can doubt that he loved his little daughter, and even his *History of the Punjaub*, better than the weak little woman who had kept him dangling so long at her heels.

Thackeray visited many German towns. Frankfort, from which town the son of Alderman Swilby recorded the "Latest from the Continent," which the proud father sent to *Punch*, in the columns of which it duly appeared; Weisbaden; Bonn, where Fitzboodle met and fell in love with the pretty Mina, daughter of Moses Löwe, banker; Heidelberg—"I daresay we went to see Heidelberg Castle, and admired the vast shattered walls and quaint gables, and the Neckar running its bright course through that charming scene of peace and beauty"; Baden-Baden, where he may have met Madame de Schlangenbad and Madame de la Cruchecassée and Count Punter and honest Captain Blackball. More than once, with his children, he roamed over Southern Europe—Vevey, where the idea struck him to let Arthur Pendennis write the memoirs of his friend, Clive Newcome; Geneva, Lausanne, Berne, Friburg; and on one occasion followed by the Two Little Children in Black, familiar to readers of the *Roundabout Papers*, over the Saint Gothard to Milan, Venice, Naples, Florence, and Rome.

The latter city he visited more than once. He was there in the autumn of 1844, returning from Cairo. He stayed at Franz's on the Condotti, and spent much of his time peering into the studios of his fellow-countrymen. It was during this visit that he sent Mr Bevan a copy of his humorous verses, "The Three Sailors," better known nowadays as "Little Billee," with permission to print them in his book, *Sand and Canvas*. "I don't like the looks of the ballad at all in print," he wrote to the recipient; "but, if you please, prefer to have it in this way exactly [*i.e.* in facsimile of the MS.]. 'Be blowed,' it would never do in a printed ballad of Yours very truly, W. M. Thackeray." On another visit, after an inspection of some studios, he wrote to Millais that he had met a versatile young man who would one day run him hard for the Presidentship of the Royal Academy. The versatile young man justified the prophecy—he not only ran Millais hard for the Presidentship, but won the race. His name was Frederick Leighton! There was a little English colony there, so insular in its habits that it spurred Thackeray to comment. "We have a little England at Paris, a little England at Munich, Dresden, elsewhere. Our friend is an Englishman, and did at Rome as the English do. There was the polite English society—the society that flocks to see the Colosseum lighted up with blue fire, that flocks to the Vatican to behold the statues by torchlight, that bustles into the churches on public festivals in black veils and deputy-lieutenant's uniforms, and stares and talks, and uses opera-glasses while the pontiffs of the

Roman Church are performing its ancient rites, and the crowd of faithful are kneeling round the altars; the society which gives its balls and dinners, has its scandals and bickerings, its aristocrats, *parvenus*, toadies imported from Belgravia; has its club, its hunt, and its Hyde Park on the Pincio: and there is the other little English world, the broad-hatted, long-bearded, velvet-jacketed, jovial colony of the artists, who have their own feasts, haunts, and amusements by the side of their aristocratic compatriots, with whom but few have the honour to mingle." Clive Newcome was for a while in the artist colony at Rome, and breakfasted with his comrades at Café Greco at dawn, devoted some hours to study at the Life Academy, and divided his evenings between Bohemia and Society.

Thackeray was at Rome in the winter of 1853, and met many friends. Mrs Kemble, Mrs Sartoris, and the Brownings, among others. "If anyone wants small talk by handfuls, or glittering dust swept out of salons, here's Mr Thackeray," Mrs Browning, when writing to Miss Mitford, announced on his arrival. He and his little girls stayed in an old palace over a famous confectionery shop. The children gave little tea-parties, to which Pen Browning and neighbouring little boys and girls were invited. They got up a Twelfth-Night party, but, to their father's distress, there was not a magic lantern to be had, or even Twelfth-Night characters—those quaint pictures of the King and Queen, the Lover and the Lady, and so on, in which the juveniles of an earlier generation found amusement. So Thackeray took the

task upon himself, and began to draw the pictures. "One little maiden was very ill in those days," Mrs Ritchie has recalled. "My father, who used often to go and see her, went with the pictures to amuse her as she lay on her sick-bed. I can remember the child starting up eagerly, and tossing back her thick hair, and some hand stretching out with the pages. Then he fell ill, and we left Rome." When Thackeray recovered he continued the series of pictures, which are now familiar as the illustrations to the *Fire-side Pantomime: The Rose and the Ring*.

Thackeray was as much at home in the north-west of Europe as in the south. Spa he knew; and Calais, where he had sometimes stayed at the charming old "Hôtel Dessen," with its court, its garden, its lordly kitchen, its princely waiter—a gentleman of the old school, who has welcomed the finest company in Europe. The hotel was made the scene of the *Roundabout Paper* that bears its name—that quaint paper in which Thackeray converses with the ghosts of the author of *A Sentimental Journey*, of Beau Brummel, and of Eustace of St Peter's. The character of Colonel Newcome was evolved while Thackeray was staying at the Château de Brequereque, on the outskirts of the town of Boulogne, to which he not infrequently repaired. In *Notes of a Week's Holiday*, he has given a picture of Calais; and *Little Travels and Road-side Sketches* are devoted to the tour he made to Antwerp, Ghent, and Bruges in the year 1844. "The tall pale houses have many of them crumpled gables, that look like Queen Elizabeth's

ruffs," he described Antwerp. "There are as many people in the streets as in London at three o'clock in the morning; the market women wear bonnets of a flower-pot shape, and have shining brazen milk-pots, which are delightful to the eyes of a painter. Along the quays of the lazy Scheldt are innumerable good-natured groups of beer-drinkers (small beer is the most good-natured drink in the world); along the barriers outside the town are more beershops and more beer-drinkers. The city is defended by the queerest fat military. The chief traffic is between the hotels and the railroad. The hotels give wonderful good dinners, and especially at the 'Grand Laboureur' may be mentioned a peculiar tart, which is the best of all tarts that ever a man ate since he was ten years old. A moonlight walk is delightful. At ten o'clock the whole city is quiet; and so little changed does it seem to be, that you may walk back three hundred years into time, and fancy yourself a majestical Spaniard, or, an oppressed and patriotic Dutchman at your leisure. You enter the inn, and the old Quentin Durward courtyard, on which the old towers look down. There is a sound of singing—singing at midnight. Is it Don Sombrero, who is singing an Andalusian seguidilla under the windows of the Flemish burgomaster's daughter? Ah, no! it is a fat Englishman in a zephyr coat: he is drinking cold gin-and-water in the moonlight, and warbling softly—

'Nix my dolly, pals, fake away,  
Nix my dolly, pals, fake a—a—way.'

The same paper contains admirable pen-pictures of Ghent and Bruges, though space merely permits this brief mention; and for descriptions of Amsterdam and Rotterdam, readers can only be referred to the already-mentioned *Notes of a Week's Holiday*.

Brussels is the scene of many incidents in Thackeray's writings. In *Esmond* it figures largely. It was in that city that the hero's father married; that his mother was buried in a convent cemetery; and that his cousin was married by Father Holt, in the church of St Gudule (where Harry had been christened), to Clothilde, daughter of Count de Wertheim, Chamberlain to the Emperor, and having a post in the household of the Governor of the Netherlands; and it was to Brussels that the *dramatis personæ* of *Vanity Fair* repaired when the Great Duke took the field against Napoleon for the last time. Then Thackeray, not claiming to rank with the military novelists, and taking his place with the non-combatants, wrote those wonderful chapters that show his genius at its high-water mark. Who does not remember how Becky engaged George Osborne's worthless affections while Rawdon attacked his pocket at the card-table? and the Duchess of Richmond's ball, where Dobbin heard the news: "The enemy has passed the Sambre, and our left is already engaged. . . . We are to march in three hours"? and George's self-communion as he walked back to his quarters? and his last visit to his young wife's chamber? "George came in and looked at her again, entering still more softly. By the pale night-light he could see

her sweet pale face—the purple eyelids were fringed and closed, and one round arm, smooth and white, lay outside of the coverlet. Good God! how pure she was; how gentle, how tender, and how friendless! and he, how selfish, brutal, and black with crime! Heart stained and shame-stricken, he stood at the bed's foot, and looked at the sleeping girl. How dared he—who was he, to pray for one so spotless! God bless her! God bless her! He came to the bedside, and looked at the hand, the little soft hand, lying asleep; and he bent over the pillow noiselessly towards the gentle pale face. Two fair arms closed tenderly round his neck as he stooped down. 'I am awake, George,' the poor child said, with a sob fit to break the little heart that nestled so closely by his own." She was awake only in time to hear the bugle that called her husband from her.

Not far from Brussels is Waterloo, where at the great battle Major O'Dowd obtained his step; and George Osborne, with many a comrade and many a foe, went to that land where earthly promotion does not rank. "No more firing was heard at Brussels—the pursuit rolled miles away. The darkness came down on the field and city: and Amelia was praying for George, who was lying on his face, with a bullet through his heart."

## CHAPTER X

### THACKERAY IN AMERICA

THACKERAY prepared for his first visit to America in no hilarious frame of mind. "Why, if so much money is to be made in this Empire, not go through with the business and get what is to be had?" he wrote to the Brookfields from Edinburgh where he was lecturing to full houses. But the American offers were too tempting to be refused. He wished to replace the patrimony he had spent, so that he could make provision for his wife and leave his daughters a competency.

The greatest drawback was the parting with his little girls. He took them abroad to his mother and Major Carmichael Smyth, in whose care they were to be during his absence; and they said good-bye at the railway station at Olten, in Belgium, when they left *en route* for Switzerland, and he for England. He never forgot the agony of this parting. "Worse still, man, you have just parted from the dear ones with bursting heart; . . . and, lonely, man, just torn from your children . . . their little tokens of affection, yet in your pocket . . . pacing the deck at evening in the midst of the roaring



ocean, you can remember how you were told supper was ready, and how you went down into the cabin, and had brandy-and-water and biscuit. You remember the taste of them. Yes; for ever. You took them while you and your Grief were sitting together, and your Grief clutched you round the soul."

Whatever the reasons, and a certain ill-health must be included among them, Thackeray was very despondent before his departure. "My dearest old friend," he wrote to Edward Fitzgerald just before he sailed, "I mustn't go away without shaking your hand and saying farewell and God bless you. If anything happens to me, you by these presents must get ready the Book of Ballads which you like, and which I had not time to prepare before embarking on this voyage. And I should like my daughters to remember that you are the best and oldest friend their father ever had, and that you would act as such; as my literary executor, and so forth. My books would yield a something as copyrights; and should anything occur, I have commissioned friends, in good places, to get a pension for my poor little wife. . . . Does not this sound gloomily? Well, who knows what fate is in store; and I feel not at all downcast, but very grave and solemn, just at the brink of the great voyage. The greatest comfort I have in thinking about, my dear old boy, is that recollection of our youth when we loved each other as I do now, when I write Farewell."

Thackeray with Mr Eyre Crowe, the artist, as his secretary, sailed in the R.M.S. *Canada*

(Captain Lang), on October 30, 1852. He arrived in Boston early in November, and at once repaired to Tremont House. William H. Prescott was the first to welcome him, and the novelist dined with the historian on the following evening. "Mr Prescott, the historian, is delightful," he reported to English friends. "It's like the society of a rich cathedral-town in England—grave and decorous, and very pleasant and well-read." He had been advised to open his lecture tour in New York, and to that city he repaired on November 16. In the train he was amused by "a rosy-cheeked little peripatetic book-merchant" crying "Thackeray's Works!" for sale, and he bought *A Shabby Genteel Story* to read on the journey. George Bancroft was among the earliest visitors to Thackeray at the Clarendon Hotel; and it was at the former's house that he witnessed a spiritualistic *séance* conducted by the notorious Home. Later, he was present when Bancroft read an address before the New York Historical Society.

The lecturing tour was carried out under the auspices of the Mercantile Library Association, of which institution Mr Millard Felt was president. The first lecture was delivered on November 19, in the Church of the Unity, on the east side of Broadway, near Princes Street, a Unitarian chapel of which Dr Chapin (who had recently succeeded the Rev. Henry Bellows) was the pastor. Thackeray had to read from a rostrum fronting the pulpit, and he pretended not to be at his ease until he was assured that the organ would not accompany his utterances.

The building was crowded with a fashionable audience, and literature was represented by Bancroft, Bryant, Irving, Horace Greeley, N. P. Willis (an old acquaintance), and a whole host of minor celebrities. The audience—who were surprised to see so big a man, and one who looked so old as his grey hairs made him appear—was enthusiastic; and the newspapers were generous in their praise. The receipts were heavy enough to encourage the organisers to arrange a second course, to begin on December 6. So successful was this, too, and the course delivered at Brooklyn, that before leaving New York, Thackeray placed to his credit at his bankers five thousand dollars. The minimum estimate of the profits of the whole tour is £2500. There is reason to believe, however, that they largely exceeded this sum.

Wherever he went Thackeray found himself the lion, and he was the hero of so many entertainments—balls, receptions, dinners, suppers—that he referred laughingly to his visit as “one unbroken round of indigestion.” The literary men welcomed him as a brother, and he made many friends. He renewed his acquaintance with J. T. Fields, who subsequently issued many of his works; and with W. H. Appleton, whom he had known in earlier days at Paris. For the latter’s edition of his (Thackeray’s) *Minor Works*, he furnished an interesting Preface. Bayard Taylor became one of his intimates, and to him he gave one of his most valued possessions, Schiller’s sword. He came to know Lester Wallack, the actor; and was soon a friend of

the Baxter family, and a frequent visitor at their house at the corner of Second Avenue and Eighteenth Street.

The hearty reception accorded on all sides pleased him the more, because he had not been confident that he would meet with a warm welcome. At least one New York paper had attacked him before his arrival—indeed, a copy of the journal had reached him while he was yet in Liverpool. Dickens had not made it easy for the next Englishman who went to lecture in the States. He had enraged the nation with his *American Notes*. It had received him with open arms, had given a "Dickens" Ball at the Park Theatre in his honour, and had organised "Boz" Tableaux as a compliment; and, in return, he had shown up the weaknesses, or what he regarded as the weaknesses, of his hosts. It is, therefore, not surprising that they were not in agreeable mood when the announcement was made of Thackeray's visit. "He will come and humbug us, eat our dinners, pocket our money, and go home and abuse us, like Dickens." The majority, however, decided to give him fair play. This was enough: within a few days he had won their hearts. "The popular Thackeray-theory before his arrival was of a severe satirist, who concealed scalpels in his sleeves and carried probes in his waistcoat pocket; a wearer of masks; a scoffer and sneerer and general infidel of all high aim and noble character," said a writer in *Putnam's Monthly Magazine* shortly after the novelist had returned to his native land. "His presence among us quite corrected this idea. We welcomed a friendly,

genial man; not at all convinced that speech is Heaven's first law, but willing to be silent when there was nothing to say—who decidedly refused to be lionised, not by sulking, but by stepping off his pedestal and challenging the common sympathies of all he met. He convinced us of his intellectual integrity; he showed us how impossible it is for him to see the world and describe it other than he does. He does not profess cynicism, nor satirise society with malice. There is no man more humble, none more simple, and his interests are human and concrete, not abstract."

As a matter of fact, once the initial misapprehension was removed, the popularity evoked by Thackeray is not surprising. It was no sudden growth. Thackeray's writings were better known, and, on the whole, more widely appreciated in America than in England. In part, no doubt, this was directly attributable to the fact that on the newer Continent there was no protection for English authors, and as consequently there were no author's fees to pay, their works could be produced more cheaply and, therefore, were more accessible to the general public.\* It is noteworthy, for instance, that while *The Yellowplush Correspondence*, which appeared in *Fraser's Magazine* during 1837 and 1838 was not collected and issued in book form in England until 1841, it was pirated in America three years earlier. While Thackeray was still a struggling writer the astute Mr Nathaniel Parker Willis, editor of the New

\* Some publishers, however, took the honourable course of paying Thackeray a fee; and among these may be mentioned Messrs Harper and Messrs Appleton.

York *Corsair*, secured his services for his paper, and announced this acquisition with a blare of the editorial trumpet. Even when Thackeray had "arrived" and was one of the literary lions of London, it was reserved for America to reprint much of his works before his English publishers thought it worth while to collect it. Messrs Appleton in their popular Library of the Best Authors, issued during 1852-53 some dozen volumes, which included, reprinted from the periodicals in which they lay neglected, works no less important than *Barry Lyndon*, *A Shabby Genteel Story*, *The Fitzboodle Papers*, *Men's Wives*, *A Legend of the Rhine*, *Rebecca and Rowena*, the worldly-wise *Letters of Mr Brown to a Young Man about Town*, and *The Discourses of Doctor Solomon Pacifico*, as well as *The Prize Novelists*, *Travels in London*, and many miscellaneous pieces. Even to-day Thackerayana is more treasured by our trans-Atlantic cousins than by the bulk of his fellow-countrymen.

Between the inhabitants of the United States and Thackeray the regard was mutual, and, perhaps, the surprise. "I didn't expect to like the people as I do, but am agreeably disappointed, and find many pleasant companions, natural and good; natural and well-read; and well-bred too"; he wrote home to the Brookfields. "Now what impressed me here is that I find homes as pure as ours, firesides like ours, domestic virtues as gentle; the English language, though the accent be a little different, with its homelike melody; and the Common Prayer-Book in your families. I am more struck by pleasant resemblances

than by anything else," he told an American friend.

He found much to admire, little to dislike. He was not horrified with the slavery in the Southern States, and, indeed, thought the negroes in the good families "the comfortablest race of menials." The luxury of New York astonished him, and he found the costumes of the ladies a matter for unceasing wonder. "Solomon in all his glory, or the Queen of Sheba, when she came to visit him in state, was not arrayed so magnificently as these New York damsels." He was disappointed with American scenery. He found the country dreary and unpicturesque for the most part, and declared he had not seen a dozen picturesque views in all his wanderings, nor even cared to use his pencil except to sketch a negro or two. "I have been up the Alabama River three and a half days—say 600 miles—and now up the Mississippi near 1000, and in my life have seen nothing more dreary and funereal than these streams," he wrote to the late Rev. Whitwell Elwin on Easter Sunday, 1856, from on board the *Thomas Small*, a Mississippi steamer. "The nature and the people oppress me, and are repugnant to me. I had the keenest pleasure in the lonely beauty of the Nile, and the generous Rhône charmed me, and my native Gunga, I remember quite well, and the *sense* of it as being quite friendly and beautiful; but I go out forward and the view gives me pain, and I come back. I don't like that great, fierce, strong, impetuous ugliness."

He disliked the "personal" journalism that

prevailed in the States, and he could not refrain from having his "tit for tat" with it. He sent to *Fraser's Magazine* a humorous article, *Mr Thackeray in the United States*, where it appeared over the signature of "John Small." He quoted extracts from a character-sketch that he pretended has appeared in a New York paper. "One of his most singular habits is that of making rough sketches for caricatures on his finger-nails. The phosphoretic ink he originally used has destroyed the entire nails, so his fingers are now tipped with horn, on which he draws his portraits. . . . He has an insatiable passion for snuff, which he carries loose in his pockets. . . . Mr T. has a passion for daguerrotypes, of which he has a collection of many thousands. Most of these he took unobserved from the outer gallery of St Paul's. He generally carries his apparatus in one of Sangster's alpaca umbrellas, surmounted with a head of Dr Syntax. He has been known to collar a beggar boy in the streets, drag him off to the nearest pastry-cook's, and exercise his photographic art without ceremony. . . . In London he had a tame laughing hyæna presented to him, on the breaking up of the Tower menagerie, which followed him like a dog, and was much attached to his master, though totally blind from confinement; deaf, and going on three legs and a wooden one. He was always surrounded by pets and domestic animals in his house; two owls live in the ivy tod of the summer-house in his garden. His back sitting-room has an aviary. Monkeys, dogs, parrots, cats, and guinea-pigs swarm in the chambers. . . ." The skit was



written while Thackeray was in America, and, although it was not published over his name, it was immediately recognised as his work. It was received with good-humoured laughter of most Americans, but a few regarded it as an unpleasant scarification of the minor penny-a-line fraternity. The story of the article was softened by the tribute to the United States with which it concluded. "In England it was my custom after the delivery of these lectures [on *The English Humourists of the Eighteenth Century*], to point such a moral as seemed to befit the country I lived in, and to protest against an outcry, which some brother authors of mine most imprudently and unjustly raise, when they say that our profession is neglected, and its professors held in light esteem. Speaking in this country, I would say that such a complaint could not only not be advanced, but could not even be understood here, where your men of letters take their manly share in public life; whence Everett goes as minister to Washington, and Irving and Bancroft to represent the republic in the old country. And if to English authors the English public is, as I believe, kind and just in the main, can any of us say, will any who visit your country not proudly and gratefully own, with what a cordial and generous greeting you receive us? . . . I think . . . of the kind hands stretched out to welcome me by men famous in letters, and honoured in our country as in their own, and I thank you and them for a most kindly greeting and a most generous hospitality."

Thackeray returned to Boston before Christ-

mas, and delivered his discourses in the great Melodeon Music Hall. "At Boston there is very good literary society indeed," he remarked; and indeed it is not surprising that he noticed that fact, for his first audience included Longfellow, Whittier, Emerson, Holmes, Prescott, and Ticknor, with all of whom he became more or less friendly. He supped with Longfellow; and went to Cambridge to see Lowell, who promised, "You shall either be carried back to Boston, or spend the night with us." He became intimate with Ticknor, especially on the second visit. He invited himself to eat a Christmas dinner with the historian and his family; and on New Year's Eve watched the New Year in by their fireside, rising on the stroke of twelve, with tears in his eyes, to exclaim: "God bless my girls, and all who are kind to them." Oliver Wendell Holmes, one of the princes among humorists, naturally appealed to him. "A dear little fellow, a true poet," he said. "I told him how much I liked his verses, and what do you think he did? *His* eyes began to water. Well, it's a comfort to have given pleasure to that kind soul." During his stay at Boston, Thackeray's high spirits were remarkable. Mr J. T. Fields, publisher and man-of-letters, has recorded how the great man shouted uproariously, and danced when he was told all the tickets for his first course were sold; and how, riding from the hotel to the lecture hall, he insisted on thrusting both his long legs out of the window, in deference, so he said, to his magnanimous ticketholders. "By Jove,

how kind you all were to me," he exclaimed afterwards.

From Boston, Thackeray went to Philadelphia, where he lectured in the Musical Fund Hall—on his second visit, he stayed at La Pierre House and lectured at the concert hall. He carried a letter of introduction to Mr William B. Reed, with whom he cemented an intimacy that endured to the end of his life. Baltimore was the next stand, and there the lecturer made the acquaintance of Mr John P. Kennedy. When Thackeray returned to Baltimore in 1856, he was the guest of this gentleman, who gave the novelist much information concerning Virginia and the Virginians, and even took him to Virginia so that he might see things for himself. The knowledge he acquired was used in his tale, *The Virginians*. Concerning this a remarkable controversy had arisen. Several friends of Mr Kennedy state he wrote all or part of the fourth chapter of the second volume of *The Virginians!* On the other hand, Mrs Ritchie says the original manuscript of that novel is in her father's handwriting. "No doubt Mr Kennedy gave him some facts about the scenery," she has said; "but I am sure my father wrote his own books, for nobody else could have written them for him."

From Baltimore, Thackeray went to Washington, where he was the guest of the British Minister, Sir John Crampton, Bart., "the most hospitable of envoys." It was a very gay, tiring time for him, and there was "an interminable succession of balls, parties, banquets, at

the British Embassy and elsewhere." To one of the lectures came together Mr Felmore and General Pierce, the President and the President-elect. "Two kings of Brentford smelling at one rose," remarked Washington Irving.

From Washington, Thackeray ran back to New York to give a lecture on January 31, in the Church of the Messiah, for the benefit of a Sewing Society of a Unitarian church in which some of his friends were interested. He composed a special discourse on "Charity and Humour" for this occasion, in which he compared the humorists of the eighteenth with their successors of the nineteenth century. He made an appreciative reference to the works of Dickens, and repeated Hood's poem, *The Bridge of Sighs*. He delivered the lecture in England when benefit performances were given for the families of Angus B. Reach and Douglas Jerrold.

Thackeray lectured in Richmond at the beginning of March. "To-morrow I shall pass down the Potomac, on which Mrs Esmond-Warrington used to sail with her two sons when they went to visit their friend, Mr Washington," he wrote from there. "I wonder will anything come out of that preface, and will that story ever be born?" Charleston was reached on March 8, and three lectures were delivered. Thackeray met Professor Agassiz, who was also there to lecture: "a delightful *bonhomious* person, as frank and unpretending as he is learned and illustrious in his own branch." Savannah followed, where Thackeray was the guest of Andrew Low,

the British Consul. The lectures were not a financial success, and the attendance smaller than anywhere else on the tour. In April, Thackeray was back at the Clarendon Hotel, New York. He went for a couple of days to Albany, and intended to go to Canada—indeed, his appearance at Montreal was announced—but he never crossed the border.

The lectures were immensely popular, and he read often nearly at the rate of a pound a minute; but he was heartily sick of it. "I can't go on much longer," he had declared early in the tour. And from Richmond he wrote: "I am getting so sick and ashamed of the confounded old lectures, that I wonder I have the courage to go on delivering them. I shan't read a single review of them when they are published; anything savage said about them will serve them right. . . . I should like to give myself a week's holiday without my dem'd lecture-box." His personal popularity pleased him, but at last he found that it had its drawbacks, and was becoming irksome. "Oh! I am tired of shaking hands with people, and acting the lion business night after night. Everyone is introduced and shakes hands. I know thousands of colonels, professors, editors, and what not, and walk the streets guiltily, knowing that I don't know 'em, and trembling lest the man opposite is one of my friends of the day before."

He made up his mind suddenly to return. On the morning of April 20, he threw aside a newspaper, and told his astonished friend Crowe: "I see there's a Cunarder going this morning.

I'll go down to Wall Street to see whether I can secure berths in her." There was no time to say good-bye to anyone, and they reached the *Europe* to be greeted with the cry, "Hurry up, she's starting." He landed at Liverpool on May 1.

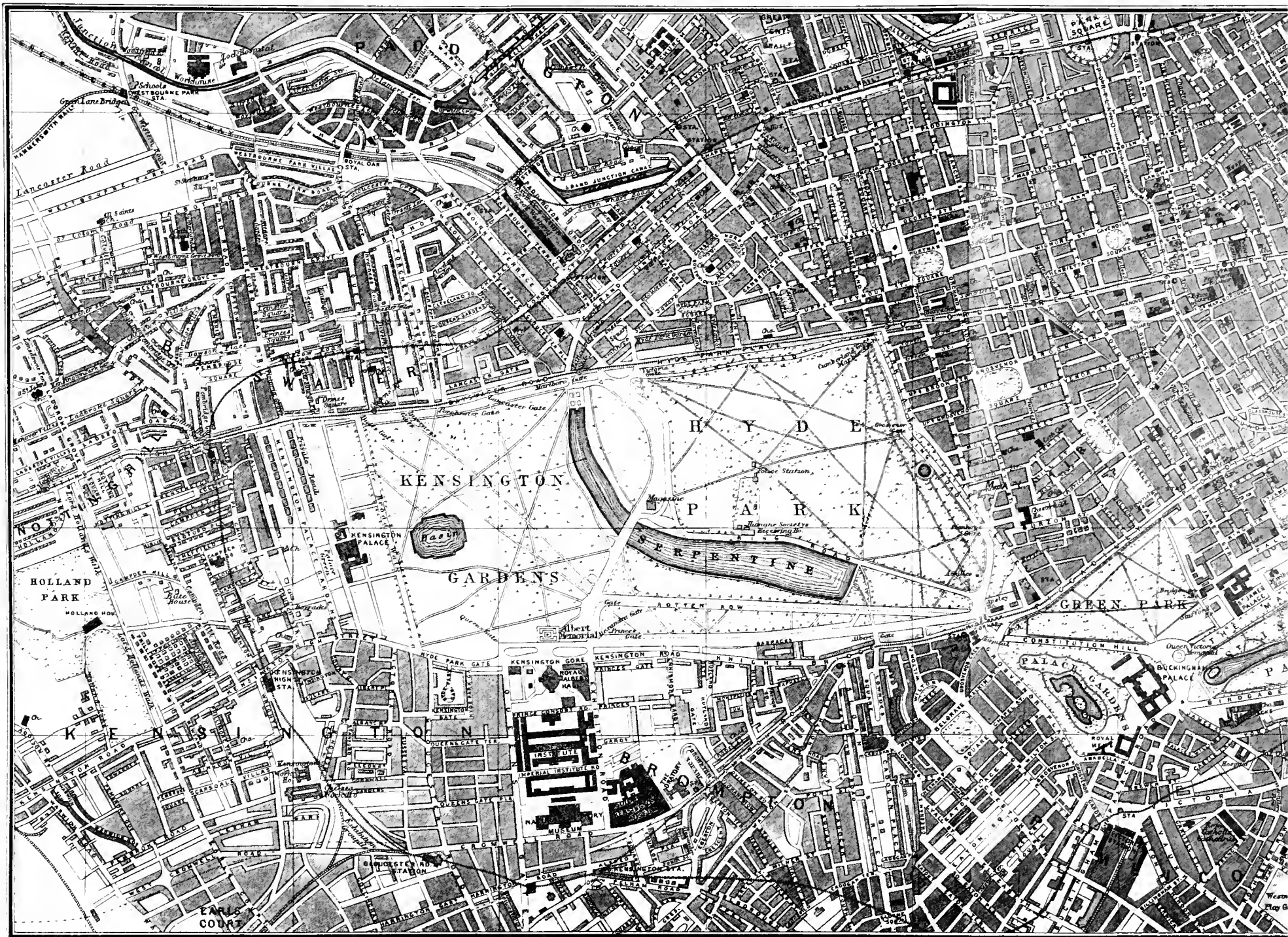
There is little to relate of the second visit, which began in October 1855, and was brought to a close in the following April. There were the same round of entertainments, and the threads of old intimacies to be picked up. The tour was more extensive—New York, Trenton, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore — "where the Opera Company had chosen my nights"—Richmond, Charleston, Augusta—"I have brought a snug little purse from snug little Augusta, though I had a rival—a Wild Man, lecturing in the very same hall. I tell you it is not a dignified *métier*, that which I pursue"—Savannah, Montgomery, Macon, Mobile, New Orleans, St Louis, Buffalo, Cincinnati, and then back to New York, where he stayed at the "Bower of Virtue," as he styled the house 604 Houston Street, near Broadway, where three bachelor friends of his lived. "The Georges are so astonishingly popular here that I go on month after month hauling in fresh bags of sovereigns, wondering that the people are not tired, and that the lecturer is not found out," he wrote home. "To-morrow I am away for two months to the North—have found a Barnum who pays me an awful sum for April and May, and, let us hope, June—shall make ten thousand pounds by my beloved monarchs one way or the other—and then, and then,

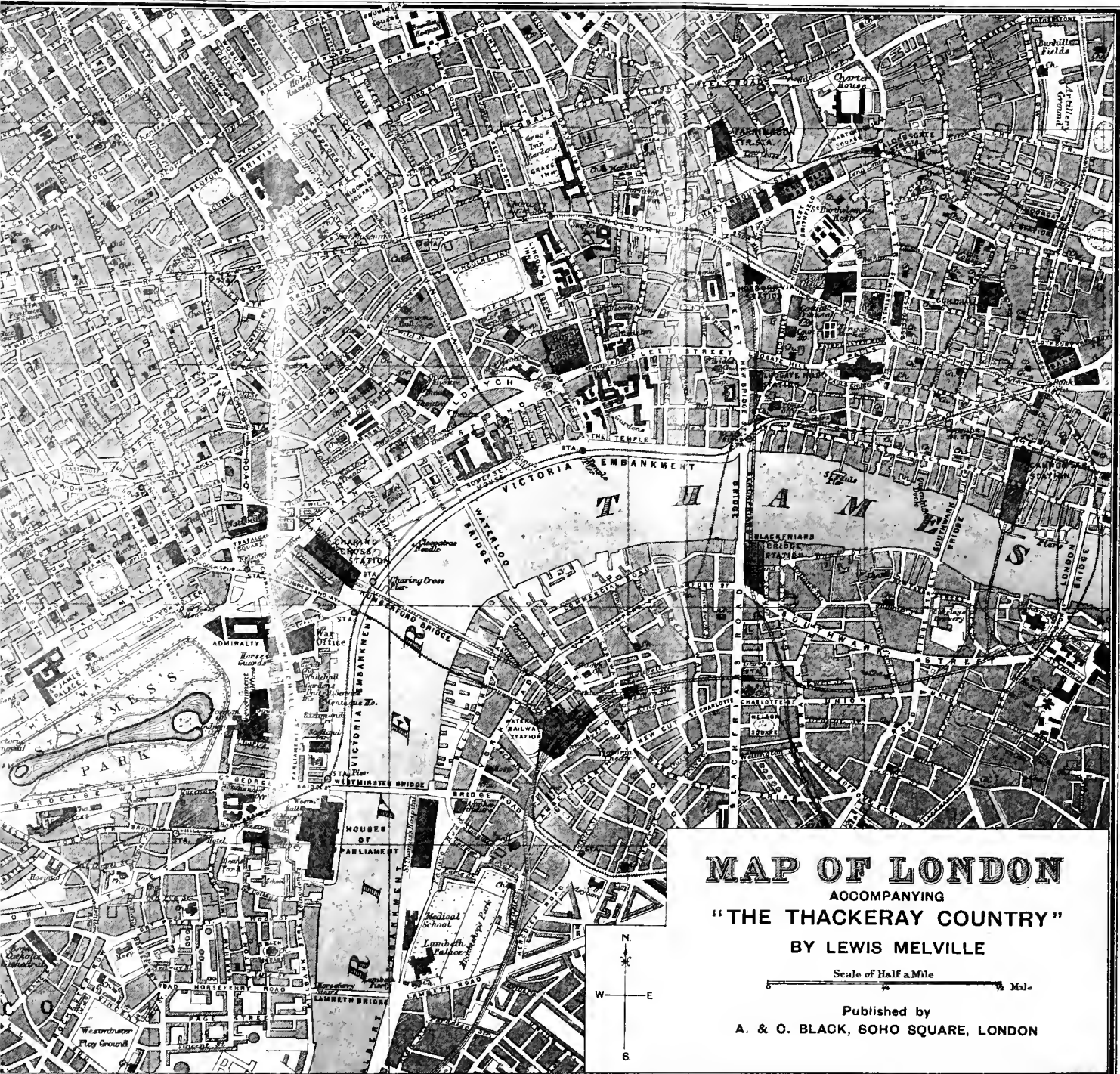
then — well, I don't know what is going to happen."

What actually did happen was what had occurred at the end of the first visit. He made up his mind suddenly to return, and departed without a word of good-bye to anyone. His exile had become unendurable: he could no longer bear the absence from his girls.









# MAP OF LONDON

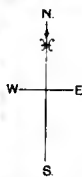
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BY LEWIS MELVILLE

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A. & C. BLACK, 60HO SQUARE, LONDON



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