

ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

WHEN, a few months ago, Anthony Trollope laid down his pen for the last time, it was a sign of the complete extinction of that group of admirable writers who, in England, during the preceding half-century, had done so much to elevate the art of the novelist. The author of "The Warden," of "Barchester Towers," of "Framley Parsonage," does not, to our mind, stand on the very same level as Dickens, Thackeray, and George Eliot; for his talent was of a quality less fine than theirs. But he belonged to the same family—he had as much to tell us about English life; he was strong, genial, and abundant. He published too much; the writing of novels had ended by becoming, with him, a perceptibly mechanical process. Dickens was prolific; Thackeray produced with a freedom for which we are constantly grateful; but we feel that these writers had their periods of gestation. They took more time to look at their subject; relatively (for to-day there is not much leisure, at best, for those who undertake to entertain a hungry public) they were able to wait for inspiration. Trollope's fecundity was prodigious; there was no limit to the work he was ready to do. It is not unjust to say that he sacrificed quality to quantity. Abundance, certainly, is in itself a great merit; almost all the greatest writers have been abundant. But Trollope's fertility was fantastic, incredible; he himself contended, we believe, that he had given to the world a greater number of printed pages of fiction than any of his literary contemporaries. Not only did his novels follow each other without visible intermission, overlapping and treading on each other's heels, but most of these works are of extraordinary length. "Orley Farm," "Can You Forgive Her?" "He Knew He Was Right," are exceedingly voluminous tales. "The Way We Live Now" is one of the longest of modern novels. Trollope produced, moreover, in the intervals of larger labor, a great number of short stories, many of them charming, as well as various books of travel and two or three biographies. He was the great improvisatore of these latter years. Two distinguished story-tellers of the other sex—one in France and one in England—have shown an extraordinary facility of composition; but Trollope's pace was brisker even than that of the wonderful Madame Sand and the delightful Mrs. Oliphant. He had taught himself to keep this pace, and had reduced

his admirable faculty to a habit. Every day of his life he wrote a certain number of pages of his current tale, a number sacramental and invariable, independent of mood and place. It was once the fortune of the author of these lines to cross the Atlantic in his company, and he has never forgotten the magnificent example of stiff persistence which it was in the power of the eminent novelist to give on that occasion. The season was unpropitious, the vessel overcrowded, the voyage detestable; but Trollope shut himself up in his cabin every morning for a purpose which, on the part of a distinguished writer who was also an invulnerable sailor, could only be communion with the muse. He drove his pen as steadily on the tumbling ocean as in Montague Square; and as his voyages were many it was his practice before sailing to come down to the ship and confer with the carpenter, who was instructed to rig up a rough writing-table in his small sea-chamber. Trollope has been accused of being deficient in imagination, but in the face of such a fact as that the charge will scarcely seem just. The power to shut one's eyes, one's ears (to say nothing of another sense) upon the scenery of a pitching Cunarder and open them upon the loves and sorrows of Lily Dale, or the conjugal embarrassments of Lady Glencora Palliser, is certainly a faculty which has an element of the magical. The imagination that Trollope possessed he had, at least, thoroughly at his command. I speak of all this in order to explain (in part) why it was that, with his extraordinary gift, there was always in him a certain touch of the common. He abused his gift, overworked it, rode his horse too hard. As an artist he never took himself seriously; many people will say this was why he was so delightful. The people who take themselves seriously are prigs and bores; and Trollope, with his perpetual story, which was the only thing he cared about, his strong good sense, hearty good nature, generous appreciation of life in all its varieties, responds in perfection to a certain English ideal. According to that ideal it is rather dangerous to be definitely or consciously an artist—to have a system, a doctrine, a form. Trollope, from the first, went in, as they say, for having as little form as possible; it is probably safe to affirm that he had no "views" whatever on the subject of novel-writing. His whole manner is that of a man who regards the practice as one of the

more delicate industries, but has never troubled his head nor clogged his pen with theories about the nature of his business. Fortunately he was not obliged to do so, for he had an easy road to success; and his honest, familiar, deliberate way of treating his readers as if he were one of them and shared their indifference to a general view, their limitations of knowledge, their love of a comfortable ending, endeared him to many persons in England and America. It is in the name of some chosen form that, of late years, things have been made most disagreeable for the novel-reader, who has been treated by several votaries of the new experiments in fiction to unwonted and bewildering sensations. With Trollope we were always safe; there were sure to be no new experiments.

His great, his inestimable merit was a complete appreciation of reality. This gift is not rare in the annals of English fiction; it would naturally be found in a walk of literature in which the feminine mind has labored so fruitfully. Women are delicate and patient observers; they hold their noses close, as it were, to the texture of life. They feel and perceive the real (as well as the desirable), and their observations are recorded in a thousand delightful volumes. Trollope, therefore, with his eyes comfortably fixed on the familiar, the actual, was far from having invented a *genre*, as the French say; his great distinction is that, in resting there, his vision took in so much of the field. And then he *felt* all common, human things as well as saw them; felt them in a simple, direct, salubrious way, with their sadness, their gladness, their charm, their comicality, all their obvious and measurable meanings. He never wearied of the preëstablished round of English customs—never needed a respite or a change—was content to go on indefinitely watching the life that surrounded him and holding up his mirror to it. Into this mirror the public, at first especially, grew very fond of looking—for it saw itself reflected in all the most credible and supposable ways, with that curiosity that people feel to know how they look when they are represented “just as they are” by a painter who does not desire to put them into an attitude, to drape them for an effect, to arrange his light and his accessories. This exact and on the whole agreeable image, projected upon a surface without a strong intrinsic tone, constitutes mainly the entertainment that Trollope offered his readers. The striking thing to the critic was that his robust and patient mind had no particular bias, his imagination no light of its own. He saw things neither pictorially and grotesquely like Dickens; nor with that combined dispo-

sition to satire and to literary form which gives such “body,” as they say of wine, to the manner of Thackeray; nor with anything of the philosophic, the transcendental cast—the desire to follow them to their remote relations—which we associate with the name of George Eliot. Trollope had his element of fancy, of satire, of irony; but these qualities were not very highly developed, and he walked mainly by the light of his good sense, his clear, direct vision of the things that lay nearest, and his great natural kindness. There is something remarkably tender and friendly in his feeling about all human perplexities; he takes the good-natured, moderate, conciliatory view—the humorous view, perhaps, for the most part, yet without a touch of mockery or cynicism. As he grew older, and had sometimes to go further afield for his subjects, he acquired a savor of bitterness and reconciled himself sturdily to treating of the disagreeable. A more copious record of disagreeable things could scarcely be imagined, for instance, than “The Way We Live Now.” But, in general, he has a wholesome mistrust of morbid analysis, an aversion to inflicting pain. He has an infinite love of detail, but his details are, for the most part, the innumerable items of the familiar. When the French are disposed to pay a compliment to the English mind, they are so good as to say that there is in it something remarkably *honnête*. If I might borrow this epithet without seeming to be patronizing, I should apply it to the genius of Anthony Trollope. He represents in an eminent degree this natural decorum of the English spirit, and represents it all the better that there is not in him a grain of the mawkish or the prudish. He writes, he feels, he judges like a man, talking plainly and frankly about many things, and is by no means destitute of a certain saving grace of coarseness. But he has kept the purity of his imagination, and held fast to old-fashioned reverences and preferences. He thinks it a sufficient objection to several topics to say simply that they are unclean. There was nothing in his theory of the storyteller’s art that tended to convert the reader’s or the writer’s mind into a vessel for polluting things. He recognized the right of the vessel to protest, and would have regarded such a protest as conclusive. With a considerable turn for satire, though this, perhaps, is more evident in his early novels than in his later ones, he had as little as possible of the quality of irony. He never played with a subject, never juggled with the sympathies or the credulity of his reader, was never in the least paradoxical or mystifying. He sat down to his theme in a serious, business-like way, with

his elbows on the table and his eye occasionally wandering to the clock.

To touch successively upon these points is to attempt a portrait, which I shall perhaps not altogether have failed to produce. The source of his success in describing the things that lay nearest to him, and describing them without any of those artistic perversions that come, as we have said, from a powerful imagination, from a cynical humor, or from a desire to look, as George Eliot expresses it, for the suppressed transitions that unite all contrasts, the essence of this love of reality was his extreme interest in character. This is the fine and admirable quality in Trollope, this is what will preserve his best things in spite of those deficiencies which keep him from standing on quite the same level as the masters. Indeed, this quality is so much one of the finest (to my mind at least) that it makes me wonder the more that the writer who had it so abundantly and so naturally should not have just that distinction which Trollope lacks and which we find in his three brilliant contemporaries. If he was in any degree a man of genius (and I hold that he was), it was in virtue of this happy, instinctive perception of character. His knowledge of human nature, his observation of the common behavior of men and women, was not reasoned, nor acquired, not even particularly studied. All human doings deeply interested him. Human life, to his mind, was a perpetual story; but he never attempted to take the so-called scientific view, the view which has lately found ingenious advocates among the countrymen and successors of Balzac. He had no airs of being able to tell you *why* people in a given situation would conduct themselves in a particular way; it was enough for him that he felt their feelings and struck the right note, because he had, as it were, a good ear. If he was a knowing psychologist, he was so by grace; he was just and true without apparatus and without effort. He must have had a great taste for morals; he evidently believed that such things are the basis of the interest of fiction. We must be careful, of course, in attributing convictions and opinions to Trollope, who, as I have said, had as little as possible of the pedantry of his art, and whose occasional chance utterances in regard to the object of the novelist and his means of achieving it are of an almost startling simplicity. But we certainly do not go too far in saying that he gave his practical testimony in favor of the idea that the interest of a work of fiction is great in proportion as the people stand on their feet. His great effort was evidently to make them stand so; if he achieved this result by the quietest and most

unpretending touches, it was nevertheless the measure of his success. If he had taken sides on the rather superficial opposition between novels of character and novels of plot, I can imagine him to have said (except that he never expressed himself in epigrams) that he preferred the former class, inasmuch as character in itself is plot, while plot is by no means character. It is more safe indeed to believe that his great good sense would have prevented him from taking an idle controversy seriously. Character, in any sense in which we can get at it, is action, and action is plot, and any plot which hangs together, even if it pretend to interest us only in the fashion of a Chinese puzzle, plays upon our emotion, our suspense, by means of personal tones. We care what happens to people only in proportion as we know what people are. Trollope's great apprehension of the real, which was what made him so interesting, came to him through his desire to satisfy us on this point—to tell us what certain people were and what they did in consequence of being so. That is the purpose of each of his tales; and if these things produce an illusion, it comes from the gradual abundance of his testimony as to the temper, the tone, the passions, the habits, the moral nature, of a certain number of contemporary Britons.

His stories, in spite of their great length, deal very little in the unusual, the unexpected, the complicated; as a general thing, he has no great story to tell. The thing is not so much a story as a picture; we hesitate to call it a picture only, because the author gives us an impression of not possessing in any appreciable degree that temperament which is known as the artistic. There is not even, as a general thing, much description, in the sense which the present votaries of realism in France attach to that word. The author lays his scene in a few deliberate, not especially pictorial strokes, and never dreams of finishing the piece for the sake of enabling the reader to hang it up. The finish, such as it is, comes later, from the slow, gradual, sometimes rather heavy accumulation of small incidents. These incidents are sometimes of the smallest; Trollope turns them out inexhaustibly, repeats them freely, unfolds them without haste and without rest. But they are all of the most homogeneous sort, and they are none the worse for that. The point to be made is that they have no great spectacular interest (we beg pardon of innumerable love-affairs that Trollope has described) like many of the incidents, say, of Walter Scott and of Alexandre Dumas: if we care to know about them (as repetitions of a familiar case), it is because the author has managed, in his solid, definite,

somewhat lumbering way, to tell us that about the men and women concerned which has already excited on their behalf the impression of life. It is a marvel by what homely arts, by what plain persistence, Trollope contrives to excite this impression. Take, for example, such a work as "The Vicar of Bullhampton." It would be difficult to give the *donnée* of this slow but excellent story, which is a capital example of interest produced by the quietest conceivable means. The principal persons in it are a lively, jovial, high-tempered country clergyman, a young woman who is in love with her cousin, and a small, rather dull squire, who is in love with the young woman. There is no connection between the affairs of the clergyman and those of the two other persons, save that these two are the Vicar's friends. The Vicar gives countenance, for Christian charity's sake, to a young countryman, who is suspected (falsely, as it appears) of murder, and also to the lad's sister, who is more than suspected of leading an immoral life. Various people are shocked at his indiscretion, but in the end he is shown to have been no worse a clergyman because he is a good fellow. A cantankerous nobleman, who has a spite against him, causes a Methodist conventicle to be erected at the gates of the vicarage; but afterward, finding that he has no title to the land used for this obnoxious purpose, causes the conventicle to be pulled down, and is reconciled with the parson, who accepts an invitation to stay at the castle. Mary Lowther, the heroine of "The Vicar of Bullhampton," is sought in marriage by Mr. Harry Gilmore, to whose passion she is unable to respond; she accepts him, however, making him understand that she does not love him and that her affections are fixed upon her kinsman, Captain Marrable, whom she would marry (and who would marry her) if he were not too poor to support a wife. If Mr. Gilmore will take her on these terms, she will become his spouse; but she gives him all sorts of warnings. They are not superfluous; for, as Captain Marrable presently inherits a fortune, she throws over Mr. Gilmore, who retires to foreign lands, heart-broken, inconsolable. This is the substance of "The Vicar of Bullhampton"; the reader will see that it is not a very tangled skein. But if the interest is quiet, it is extreme and constant, and it comes altogether from excellent portraiture. It is essentially a moral interest. There is something masterly in the steadiness and certainty with which, in work of this kind, Trollope handles his brush. The Vicar's nature is thoroughly understood and expressed, and his monotonous friend the

Squire, a man with limitations, as the phrase is, but possessed and consumed by a genuine passion, is equally near to truth.

Trollope has described again and again the ravages of love, and it is wonderful to see how well, in these delicate matters, his plain good sense and good taste serve him. His story is always primarily a love-story, and a love-story constructed on an inveterate system. There is a young lady who has two lovers, or a young man who has two sweet-hearts; we are treated to the innumerable forms in which this dilemma may present itself and the consequences, sometimes pathetic, sometimes grotesque, which spring from such false situations. Trollope is not what is called a colorist; still less is he a poet. He is seated on the back of heavy-footed prose. But his account of those sentiments which the poets are supposed to have made their own is apt to be as touching as demonstrations more lyrical. There is something wonderfully vivid in the state of mind of the unfortunate Harry Gilmore, of whom I have just spoken; and his history, which has no more pretensions to style than if it were cut out of yesterday's newspaper, lodges itself in the imagination in all sorts of classic company. He is not handsome, nor clever, nor rich, nor romantic, nor distinguished in any way; he is simply a rather dull, narrow-minded, stiff, obstinate, common-place, conscientious modern Englishman, exceedingly in love and, from his own point of view, exceedingly ill-used. He is interesting because he suffers, and because we are curious to see the form that suffering will take in that particular nature. Our good fortune, with Trollope, is that the person put before us will have a certain particular nature. The author has cared enough about the character of such a person to find out exactly what it is. Another particular nature in "The Vicar of Bullhampton" is the surly, sturdy, skeptical old farmer Jacob Brattle, who doesn't want to be patronized by the parson, and in his dumb, dusky, half-brutal, half-spiritual melancholy, surrounded by domestic troubles, financial embarrassments, and a puzzling world, declines altogether to be won over to clerical optimism. Such a figure as Jacob Brattle, purely episodic though it be, is an excellent English portrait. As thoroughly English, and the most striking thing in the book, is the combination, in the nature of Frank Fenwick — the delightful Vicar — of the patronizing, conventional, clerical element, with all sorts of manliness and spontaneity; the union or, to a certain extent, the contradiction of official and personal geniality. Trollope touches these points in a way that shows that he knows his man. Delicacy is not his great sign; but

when it is necessary he can be as delicate as anyone else.

I alighted, just now, at a venture, upon the history of Frank Fenwick; it is far from being a conspicuous work in the immense list of Trollope's novels. But, to choose an example, one must choose arbitrarily; for examples of almost anything that one may wish to say are numerous to embarrassment. In speaking of a writer who produced so much and produced always in the same way, there is perhaps a certain unfairness in choosing at all. As no work has higher pretensions than any other, there may be a certain unkindness in holding an individual production up to the light. "Judge me in the lump," we can imagine the author saying; "I have only undertaken to entertain the British public. I don't pretend that each of my novels is an organic whole." Trollope had no time to give his tales a classic roundness; yet there is (in spite of an extraordinary defect) something of that quality in the thing that first revealed him. "The Warden" was published in 1855. It made a great impression; and when, in 1857, "Barchester Towers" followed it, every one saw that English literature had a novelist the more. These were not the works of a young man, for Anthony Trollope had been born in 1815. It is remarkable to reflect, by the way, that his prodigious fecundity (he had published before "The Warden" three or four novels which attracted little attention) was inclosed between his fortieth and his sixty-seventh year. Trollope had lived long enough in the world to learn a good deal about it; and his maturity of feeling and evidently large knowledge of English life were for much in the impression produced by the two clerical tales. It was easy to see that he would be a novelist of weight. What he knew, to begin with, was the clergy of the Church of England, and the manners and feelings that prevail in cathedral towns. This, for a while, was his specialty, and, as always happens in such cases, the public was disposed to prescribe to him that path. He knew about bishops, archdeacons, prebendaries, precentors, and about their wives and daughters; he knew what these dignitaries say to each other when they are collected together, aloof from secular ears. He even knew what sort of talk goes on between a bishop and a bishop's lady when the august couple are enshrouded in the privacy of the episcopal bedroom. This knowledge, somehow, was rare and precious. No one, as yet, had been bold enough to snatch the illuminating torch from the very summit of the altar. Trollope enlarged his field very speedily. There is, as I remember that work, as little as possible of

the ecclesiastical in the tale of "The Three Clerks," which came after "Barchester Towers." But he always retained traces of his early observation of the clergy; he introduced them frequently, and he always did them easily and well. There is no ecclesiastical figure, however, so good as the first—no creation of this sort so happy as the admirable Mr. Harding. "The Warden" is an excellent little story, and a signal instance of Trollope's habit of offering us the spectacle of a character. A motive more delicate, more slender, as well as more charming, could scarcely be conceived. It is simply the history of an old man's conscience.

The good and gentle Mr. Harding, precentor of Barchester Cathedral, also holds the post of warden of Hiram's Hospital, an ancient charity, where twelve old paupers are maintained in comfort. The office is in the gift of the bishop, and its emoluments are as handsome as the labor of the place is small. Mr. Harding has for years drawn his salary in quiet gratitude; but his moral repose is broken by hearing it at last begun to be said that the wardenship is a sinecure, that the salary is a scandal, and that a large part, at least, of his easy income ought to go to the pensioners of the hospital. He is sadly troubled and perplexed, and when the great London newspapers take up the affair he is overwhelmed with confusion and shame. He thinks the newspapers are right—he perceives that the warden is an overpaid and a rather useless functionary. The only thing he can do is to resign the place. He has no means of his own—he is only a quiet, modest, innocent old man, with a taste, a passion, for old church music and the violoncello. But he determines to resign, and he does resign in spite of the sharp opposition of his friends. He does what he thinks right, and goes to live in lodgings over a shop in the Barchester high-street. That is all the story, and it has exceeding beauty. The question of Mr. Harding's resignation becomes a drama, and we anxiously wait for the catastrophe. Trollope never did anything happier than the picture of this sweet and serious little old gentleman, who on most of the occasions of life has shown a lamblike softness and compliance, but in this particular matter opposes a silent, impenetrable obstinacy to the urgency of the friends who insist on his keeping his sinecure—fixing his mild, detached gaze on the distance and making imaginary passes with his fiddle-bow while they demonstrate his pusillanimity. The subject of "The Warden," exactly viewed, is the opposition of the two natures of Archdeacon Grantley and Mr. Harding, and there is nothing finer in all

Trollope than the vividness with which this opposition is presented. The archdeacon is as happy a portrait as the precentor—an image of the full-fed, worldly churchman, taking his stand squarely upon his rich temporalities, and regarding the church frankly as a fat social pasturage. It required the greatest tact and temperance to make the picture of Archdeacon Grantley stop just where it does. The type, impartially considered, is detestable, but the individual may be full of amenity. Trollope allows his archdeacon all the virtues he was likely to possess, but he makes his spiritual grossness wonderfully natural. No charge of exaggeration is possible, for we are made to feel that he is conscientious as well as arrogant, and comfortable as well as hard. He is one of those figures that spring into being all at once, and solidify in the author's grasp. These two capital portraits are what we carry away from "The Warden," which some persons profess to regard as the author's masterpiece. We remember, while it was still something of a novelty, to have heard a judicious critic say that it had much of the charm of "The Vicar of Wakefield." Anthony Trollope would not have accepted this compliment, and would not have wished this little tale to pass before several of its successors. He would have said, very justly, that it gives too small a measure of his knowledge of life. It has, however, a certain classic roundness, though, as we said a moment since, there is a blemish on its fair face. The chapter on Dr. Pessimist Anticant and Mr. Sentiment would be a mistake almost inconceivable, if Trollope had not in other places taken pains to show us that for certain forms of satire (the more violent, doubtless), he had absolutely no gift. Dr. Anticant is a parody of Carlyle, and Mr. Sentiment is an exposure of Dickens; and both these little *jeux d'esprit* are as infelicitous as they are misplaced. It was no less luckless an inspiration to convert Archdeacon Grantley's three sons, denominated respectively Charles James, Henry, and Samuel, into little effigies of three distinguished English bishops of that period, whose well-known peculiarities are reproduced in the description of these unnatural urchins. The whole passage, as we meet it, is a sudden disillusionment; we are transported from the mellow atmosphere of an assimilated Barchester to the air of unsuccessful allegory.

I may take occasion to remark here upon a very curious fact—the fact that there are certain precautions in the way of producing that illusion dear to the intending novelist which Trollope not only habitually scorned to take, but really, as we may say, asking pardon for the heat of the thing, delighted wantonly to

violate. He took a suicidal satisfaction in reminding the reader that the story he was telling was only, after all, a make-believe. He habitually referred to the work in hand (in the course of that work) as a novel and to himself as a novelist, and was fond of letting the reader know that this novelist could direct the course of events according to his pleasure. Already, in "Barchester Towers," he falls into this pernicious trick. In describing the wooing of Eleanor Bold by Mr. Arabin, he has occasion to say that the lady might have acted in a much more direct and natural way than the way he attributes to her. But if she had, he adds, "where would have been my novel?" The last chapter of the same story begins with the remark, "The end of a novel, like the end of a children's dinner party, must be made up of sweetmeats and sugar-plums." These little slaps at credulity (we might give many more specimens) are very discouraging, but they are even more inexplicable; for they are deliberately inartistic, even judged from the point of view of that rather vague consideration of form which is the only canon we have a right to impose upon Trollope. It is impossible to imagine what a novelist takes himself to be, unless he regard himself as an historian and his narrative as a history. It is only as an historian that he has the smallest *locus standi*. As a narrator of fictitious events, he is nowhere; to insert into his attempt a back-bone of logic, he must relate events that are assumed to be real. This assumption permeates, animates all the work of the most solid story-tellers; we need only mention (to select a single instance) the magnificent historical tone of Balzac, who would as soon have thought of admitting to the reader that he was deceiving him as Garrick or John Kemble would have thought of pulling off his disguise in front of the foot-lights. Therefore, when Trollope suddenly winks at us and reminds us that he is telling us an arbitrary thing, we are startled and shocked in quite the same way as if Macaulay or Motley were to drop the historic mask and intimate that William of Orange was a myth or the Duke of Alva an invention.

It is a part of this same ambiguity of mind as to what constitutes evidence that Trollope should sometimes endow his people with such fantastic names. Dr. Pessimist Anticant and Mr. Sentiment make, as we have seen, an awkward appearance in a modern novel; and Mr. Neversay Die, Mr. Stickatit, Mr. Rerechild and Mr. Fillgrave (the two last the family physicians) are scarcely more felicitous. It would be better to go back to Bunyan at once. There is a person mentioned in "The Warden" under the name of Mr. Quiverful—a

poor clergyman, with a dozen children, who holds the living of Puddingdale. This name is a humorous allusion to his overflowing nursery, and it matters little so long as he is not brought to the front. But in "Barchester Towers," which carries on the history of Hiram's Hospital, Mr. Quiverful becomes, as a candidate for Mr. Harding's vacant place, an important element, and the reader is made proportionately unhappy by the primitive character of this satiric note. A Mr. Quiverful, with fourteen children (which is the number attained in "Barchester Towers") is too difficult to believe in. We can believe in the name, and we can believe in the children; but we cannot manage the combination. It is probably not unfair to say that if Trollope derived half his inspiration from life he derived the other half from Thackeray; his earlier novels, in especial, suggest an honorable emulation of the author of "The Newcomes." Thackeray's names were perfect; they always had a meaning, and (except in his absolutely jocose productions, where they were still admirable) we can imagine, even when they are most expressive, that they should have been borne by real people. But in this, as in other respects, Trollope's hand was heavier than his master's; though, when he is content not to be too comical, his appellations are sometimes fortunate enough. Mrs. Proudie is excellent for Mrs. Proudie, and even the Duke of Omnium and Gatherum Castle rather minister to illusion than destroy it. Indeed, the names of houses and places, throughout Trollope, are full of color.

I would speak in some detail of "Barchester Towers" if this did not seem to commit me to the prodigious task of appreciating each of Trollope's works in succession. Such an attempt as that is so far from being possible, that I must frankly confess to not having read everything that proceeded from his pen. There came a moment in his vigorous career (it was even a good many years ago) when I renounced the effort to "keep up" with him. It ceased to seem obligatory to have read his last story; it ceased soon to be very possible to know which was his last. Before that, I had been punctual, devoted; and the memories of the earlier period are delightful. It reached, if I remember correctly, to about the publication of "He Knew He Was Right"; after which, to my recollection (oddly enough, too, for that novel was good enough to encourage a continuance of past favors, as the shop-keepers say), the picture becomes dim and blurred. The author of "Orley Farm" and "The Small House at Allington" ceased to produce individual works; his activity became one huge "serial." Here and there, in

the vast fluidity, a more compact mass detached itself. "The Last Chronicle of Barset," for instance, is one of his most powerful things; it contains the sequel of the terrible history of Mr. Crawley, the starving curate—an episode full of that absolutely truthful pathos of which Trollope was so often a master, and which occasionally raised him quite to the level of his two immediate predecessors in the vivid treatment of English life—great artists whose pathetic effects were sometimes too visibly prepared. For the most part, however, he should be judged by the productions of the first half of his career; later, the strong wine was rather too copiously watered. His practice, his acquired facility, were such, that his hand went of itself, as it were, and the thing looked superficially like a fresh inspiration. But it was not fresh, it was rather stale; and though there was no appearance of effort, there was a fatal dryness of texture. It was too little of a new story and too much of an old one. Some of these ultimate compositions—"Phineas Redux" ("Phineas Finn" is much better) "The Prime Minister," "John Caldigate," "The American Senator," "The Duke's Children"—have the strangest mechanical movement. What stands Trollope always in good stead (in addition to the ripe habit of writing) is his various knowledge of the English world—to say nothing of his occasionally laying under contribution the American. His American portraits, by the way (they are several in number), are always friendly; they hit it off more happily than the attempt to depict American character from the European point of view is accustomed to do: though indeed, as we ourselves have not yet learned to represent our types very finely,—are not apparently even very sure what our types are,—it is perhaps not to be wondered at that transatlantic talent should miss the mark. The weakness of transatlantic talent, in this particular, is apt to be want of knowledge; but Trollope's knowledge has all the air of being excellent, though not intimate. Had he indeed striven to learn the way to the American heart? No less than twice and, possibly, even oftener has he rewarded the merit of a scion of the British aristocracy with the hand of an American girl. The American girl was destined sooner or later to make her entrance into British fiction, and Trollope's treatment of this complicated being is full of good humor and of that fatherly indulgence, that almost motherly sympathy, which characterizes his attitude throughout toward the youthful-feminine. He has not mastered all the springs of her delicate organism, nor sounded all the mysteries of her conversation. Indeed, as regards

these latter phenomena, he has observed a few of which he has been the sole observer. "I got to be thinking if any one of them should ask me to marry him," words attributed to Miss Boncassen, in "The Duke's Children," have much more the note of English-American than of American-English. But, on the whole, in these matters Trollope does very well. His fund of acquaintance with his own country—and, indeed, with the world at large—was apparently inexhaustible, and it gives his novels an airy, spacious quality which we should not know where to look for elsewhere in the same degree, and which is the sign of an extraordinary difference between such an horizon as his and the limited world-outlook, as the Germans would say, of the brilliant writers who practice the art of realistic fiction on the other side of the Channel. Trollope was familiar with all sorts and orders of men, with the business of life, with affairs, with the great world of sport, with every component part of the ancient fabric of English society. He had traveled all over the globe (more than once, we believe), and for him, therefore, the background of the human drama was a very extensive scene. He had none of the pedantry of the cosmopolite; he remained a sturdy and sensible middle-class Englishman. But his work is full of implied reference to the whole arena of modern energy. He was for many years concerned in the management of the Post-office; and we can imagine no experience more fitted to impress a man with the diversity of human relations. It is possibly from this source that he derived his fondness for transcribing the letters of his love-lorn maidens and other embarrassed persons. No contemporary story-teller deals so much in letters; the modern English epistle (very happily imitated, for the most part) is his unfailing resource.

There is perhaps little reason in it, but I find myself comparing this tone of allusion to many lands and many things, and whatever it brings us of easier respiration, with that narrow vision of humanity which accompanies the strenuous, serious work lately offered us in such abundance by the votaries of art for art who sit so long at their desks on Parisian *quatrième*s. The contrast is complete, and it would be interesting, had we space to do so here, to see how far it goes. On one side a wide, good-humored, superficial glance at a good many things; on the other a gimlet-like consideration of a few. Trollope's plan, as well as Zola's, was to describe the life that lay near him; but the two writers differ immensely as to what constitutes life and what constitutes nearness. For Trollope the emotions of a nursery-governess in Australia

would take precedence of the adventures of a depraved countess in Paris or London. They both undertake to do the same thing—to depict French and English manners; but the English writer (with his unsurpassed industry) is so occasional, so accidental, so full of the echoes of voices that are not the voice of the muse. Gustave Flaubert, Émile Zola, Alphonse Daudet, on the other hand, are nothing if not concentrated and sedentary. Trollope's realism is as instinctive, as inveterate as theirs; but nothing could mark more the difference between the French and English mind than the difference in the application, on one side and the other, of this system. We say system, though on Trollope's part it is none. He has no visible, certainly no explicit care for the literary part of the business; he writes easily, comfortably, and profusely, but his style has nothing in common either with the vivid brush-work of Daudet or the calculated harmonies of Flaubert. He accepted all the common restrictions, and found that even within the barriers there was plenty of material. He attaches a preface to one of his novels—"The Vicar of Bullhampton," before mentioned—for the express purpose of explaining why he has introduced a young woman who may, in truth, as he says, be called a "castaway"; and in relation to this episode he remarks that it is the object of the novelist's art to entertain the young people of both sexes. Writers of the French school would, of course, protest indignantly against such a formula as this, which is the only one of the kind that I remember to have encountered in Trollope's pages. It is narrow, assuredly; but Trollope's practice was really much larger than such a theory. And indeed any theory was good which enabled him to produce the works which he put forth between 1856 and 1869, or later. In spite of his want of doctrinal richness, I think he tells us, on the whole, more about life than the "naturalists" in our sister republic. I say this with the full consciousness of the opportunities an artist loses in leaving so many corners unvisited, so many topics untouched, simply because I think his perception of character was more naturally just and temperate than that of the naturalists. This has been from the beginning the good fortune of our English providers of fiction, as compared with the French. They are inferior in audacity, in neatness, in acuteness, in intellectual vivacity, in the arrangement of material, in the art of characterizing visible things. But they have been more at home in the moral world; they have put their finger on the right chord of the conscience. This is the value of much of the work done by the feminine wing of the

school—work which presents itself to French taste as terribly gray and insipid. Much of it is exquisitely human, and that, after all, is a merit. As regards Trollope, one may perhaps characterize him best, in opposition to what I have ventured to call the sedentary school, by saying that he was a novelist who hunted the fox. Hunting was for years his most valued recreation, and I remember that, when I made in his company the voyage of which I have spoken, he had timed his return from the antipodes exactly to be able to avail himself of the first day on which it should be possible to ride to hounds. He “worked” the hunting-field largely. It constantly re-appears in his novels. It was excellent material.

But it would be hard to say (within the circle in which he revolved) what material he neglected. I have allowed myself to be detained so long by general considerations, that I have almost forfeited the opportunity to give examples. I have spoken of “The Warden,” not only because it made his reputation, but because, taken in conjunction with “Barchester Towers,” it is thought by many people to be his most vigorous story. “Barchester Towers” is admirable; it has an almost Thackerayan richness. Archdeacon Grantley is still more powerfully developed, and Mr. Harding is as charming as ever. Mrs. Proudie is ushered into a world in which she was to make so great an impression. Mrs. Proudie has become classical; of all Trollope’s characters, she is the most often referred to. She is exceedingly good; but I do not think she is quite so good as her fame and as several figures from the same hand that have not won as much honor. She is rather too violent, too vixenish, too sour. The truly awful female bully—the completely fatal episcopal spouse—would have, I think, a more insidious form, a greater amount of superficial padding. The Stanhope family, in “Barchester Towers,” are a real *trouvaille*, and the idea of transporting the Signora Vesey-Neroni into a cathedral-town was an inspiration. There could not be a better example of Trollope’s manner of attaching himself to character than the whole picture of Bertie Stanhope. Bertie is a delightful creation; and the scene in which, at the party given by Mrs. Proudie, he puts this majestic woman to rout is one of the most amusing in all the chronicles of Barset. It is perhaps permitted to wish, by the way, that this triumph had been effected by intellectual means rather than by physical; though, indeed, if Bertie had not despoiled her of her drapery we should have lost the lady’s admirable “Unhand it, sir!” Mr. Arabin is charming, and the henpecked bishop has painful truth; but Mr. Slope, I think, is a little

too arrant a scamp. He is rather too much what the French call *ancien jeu*; he goes too coarsely to work, and his clamminess and cant are somewhat overdone. He is an interesting illustration, however, of the author’s dislike (at that period, at least) of the bareness of evangelical piety. In one respect “Barchester Towers” is (to the best of our recollection) unique, being the only one of Trollope’s novels in which the interest does not center more or less upon a simple maiden in her flower. The novel does not contain the least young girl; though we know that this attractive object was to lose nothing by waiting. Eleanor Bold is a charming and natural person; but Eleanor Bold is not in her flower. After this, however, Trollope settled down steadily to the English girl; he took possession of her; he turned her inside out. He never made her a subject of heartless satire, as cynical fabulists of other lands have been known to make the sparkling daughters of those climes; he bestowed upon her the most serious, the most patient, the most tender, the most copious consideration. He is evidently always more or less in love with her, and it is a wonder how under these circumstances he should make her so objective, plant her so well on her feet. But, as I have said, if he was a lover, he was a paternal lover; as competent as a father who has had fifty daughters. He has presented the British maiden under innumerable names, in every station and in every emergency in life, and with every combination of moral and physical qualities. She is always definite and natural. She plays her part most properly. She has always health in her cheek and gratitude in her eye. She has not a touch of the morbid, and is delightfully tender, modest and fresh. Trollope’s heroines have a strong family likeness, but it is a wonder how finely he discriminates between them. One feels, as one reads him, like a man with “sets” of female cousins. Such a person is inclined at first to lump each group together; but presently he finds that even in the groups there are subtle differences. Trollope’s girls, for that matter, would make delightful cousins. He has scarcely drawn, that we can remember, a disagreeable damsel. Lady Alexandrina de Courcy is disagreeable, and so is Amelia Roper, and so are various provincial (and, indeed, metropolitan) spinsters, who set their caps at young clergymen and Government-clerks. Griselda Grantley was a stick; and considering that she was intended to be attractive, Alice Vavasor does not commend herself particularly to our affections. But the young women I have mentioned had ceased to belong to the tender category; they had

entered the period of toughness or flatness. Not that Trollope's more mature spinsters invariably fall into these extremes. Miss Thorne of Ullathorne, Miss Dunstable, Miss Mackenzie, Rachel Ray (if she may be called mature), Miss Baker and Miss Todd, in "The Bertrams," Lady Julia Guest, who comforts poor John Eames: these and many other amiable figures rise up to contradict the idea. A gentleman who had sojourned in many lands was once asked by a lady (neither of these persons was English) in what country he had found the women most to his taste. "Well, in England," he replied. "In England?" the lady repeated. "Oh, yes," said her interlocutor; "they are so affectionate!" The remark was fatuous; but it has the merit of describing Trollope's heroines. They are so affectionate. Mary Thorne, Lucy Robarts, Adela Gauntlet, Lily Dale, Nora Rowley, Grace Crawley, have a kind of clinging tenderness, a passive sweetness, which is quite in the old English tradition. Trollope's genius is not the genius of Shakspeare, but his heroines have something of the fragrance of Imogen and Desdemona. There are two little stories, to which, I believe, his name has never been affixed, but which he is known to have written, that contain an extraordinarily touching representation of the passion of love in its most modest form. In "Linda Tressel" and "Nina Balatka" the vehicle is plodding prose, but the effect is none the less poignant. And in regard to this I may say that in a hundred places in Trollope the extremity of pathos is reached by the homeliest means. He often achieved a very eminent degree of the tragical. The long, slow process of the conjugal wreck of Louis Trevelyan and his wife (in "He Knew He Was Right"), with that rather ponderous movement which is often characteristic of Trollope, arrives at last at an impressive completeness of misery. It is the history of an accidental rupture between two stiff-necked and ungracious people,—“the little rift within the lute,”—which widens at last into a gulf of anguish. Touch is added to touch; one small, stupid, fatal aggravation to another; and as we gaze into the widening breach we wonder at the materials of which tragedy sometimes composes itself. I have always remembered the chapter called "Casalunga," toward the close of "He Knew He Was Right," as a very powerful picture of the insanity of stiff-neckedness. Louis Trevelyan, separated from his wife, alone, haggard, suspicious, unshaven, undressed, living in a desolate villa on a hill-top near Siena, and returning doggedly to his fancied wrong, which he has nursed until it becomes an hallucination, is a

picture worthy of Balzac. Here and in several other places Trollope has dared to be thoroughly logical; he has not sacrificed to conventional optimism; he has not been afraid of a misery which should be too much like life. He has had the same courage in the history of the wretched Mr. Crawley, and in that of the much to be pitied Lady Mason. In this latter episode, he found an admirable subject. A quiet, charming, tender-souled English gentlewoman, who (as I remember the story of "Orley Farm") forges a codicil to a will in order to benefit her son, a young prig who doesn't appreciate immoral heroism, and who is suspected, accused, tried, and saved from conviction only by some turn of fortune that I forget; who is, furthermore, an object of high-bred, respectful, old-fashioned gallantry on the part of a neighboring baronet, so that she sees herself dishonored in his eyes as well as condemned in those of her boy: such a personage and such a situation would be sure to yield, under Trollope's handling, the last drop of their reality.

There are many more things to say about him than I am able to add to these very general observations, the limit of which I have already passed. It would be natural, for instance, for a critic who affirms that his principal merit is the portrayal of individual character, to enumerate several of the figures that he has produced. I have not done this, and I must ask the reader who is not acquainted with Trollope to take my assertion on trust; the reader who knows him will easily make a list for himself. No account of him is complete in which allusion is not made to his practice of carrying certain persons from one story to another—a practice which he may be said to have inherited from Thackeray, as Thackeray may be said to have borrowed it from Balzac. It is a great mistake, however, to speak of it as an artifice which would not naturally occur to a writer proposing to himself to make a general portrait of a society. He has to construct that society, and it adds to the illusion in any given case that certain other cases correspond with it. Trollope constructed a great many things—a clergy, an aristocracy, a *bourgeoisie*, an administrative class, a specimen of the political world. His political novels are distinctly dull, and I confess I have not been able to read them. He evidently took a good deal of pains with his aristocracy; it makes its first appearance, if I remember right, in "Doctor Thorne," in the person of the Lady Arabella de Courcy. It is difficult for us in America to measure the success of that picture, which is probably, however, not absolutely to the life. There is in "Doctor Thorne," and some other works,

too constant a reference to the distinction of classes—as if people's consciousness of this matter were not (as one may say) chronic, but permanently acute. It is true that, if Trollope's consciousness had not been acute, he would, perhaps, not have given us Lady Lufton and Lady Glencora Palliser. Both of these noble persons are as living as possible, though I see Lady Lufton, with her terror of Lucy Robarts, the best. There is a touch of poetry in the figure of Lady Glencora; but I think there is a weak spot in her history. The actual woman would have made a fool of herself to the end with Burgo Fitzgerald; she would not have discovered the merits of Plantagenet Palliser—or if she had, she would not have cared about them. It is an illustration of the business-like way in which Trollope laid out his work, that he always provided a sort of underplot to alternate with his main story—a strain of narrative of which the scene is usually laid in a humbler walk of life. It is to his underplot that he generally relegates his vulgar people, his disagreeable young women; and I have often admired the pertinacity with which he unfolds this more depressing branch of the tale. Now and then, it may be said, as in "Ralph the Heir," the story appears to be all underplot and all vulgar people. These, however, are details. As I have already intimated, it is difficult to specify in Trollope's work, on account of the immense quantity of it; and there is sadness in the thought that this enormous mass does

not present itself in a very portable form to posterity.

Trollope did not write for posterity; he wrote for the day, the moment; but these are just the writers of whom posterity is apt to take hold. So much of the life of his time is reflected in his novels, that we must believe a part of the record will be saved; and they are full of so much that is sound and true and genial, that readers with an eye to that sort of entertainment will always be sure, in a certain proportion, to turn to them. Trollope will remain one of the most trustworthy, though not one of the most eloquent, of the writers who have helped the heart of man to know itself. The heart of man does not always desire this knowledge; it prefers sometimes to look at history in another way—to look at the manifestations, without troubling about the motives. There are two kinds of taste in the appreciation of imaginative literature: the taste for emotions of surprise, and the taste for emotions of familiarity. It is the latter that Trollope gratifies, and he gratifies it the more that the medium of his own mind, through which we see what he shows us, gives confidence to our sympathy. His natural rightness and purity are so real that the good things he projects must be real. A race is fortunate when it has a good deal of the sort of imagination—of imaginative feeling—that had fallen to the share of Anthony Trollope. Our English race, happily, has much of it.

Henry James.

THE PHILADELPHIA COMMITTEE OF ONE HUNDRED.

A FEW years ago, Philadelphia was the worst governed city in the United States. This statement will call to the reader's mind the condition of New York under the Tweed Ring; but maladministration was at no time so completely and intelligently systematized by Tweed and his associates as it was in Philadelphia by the little group of men who, for ten years, managed the affairs of the Quaker City; nor was it difficult to overthrow. New York, as a rule, is a Republican State, and the Tweed Ring was Democratic; consequently, when a Republican legislature was sitting, the suffering citizens were able to get some relief from the State capital, in the way of amendments to the city charter which took some of the city departments out of the hands of the plunderers. The Philadelphia Ring shrewdly attached itself to the party in power in the State, and, by furnishing

fraudulent majorities in the city to sustain that party in close contests, made itself necessary to the politicians managing the party machine in the State, and by the aid of the large delegation sent to Harrisburg from the city districts obtained a shield and ally in the legislative power. Besides, the members of the Philadelphia Ring were shrewder, more cautious, more dexterous, less openly indecorous, and, to put it bluntly, less hoggish than the rascals who robbed New York. They subsidized the press whenever they could, instead of defying it; they put able and outwardly respectable men in the higher offices instead of coarse ruffians; they behaved quietly in their private lives instead of flaunting their wealth and vices in the face of the public; they held closely together and never let the people know of their quarrels over the spoils. The Philadelphia Ring, like the old New York



ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

[DRAWN BY R. BIRCH, AFTER A PHOTOGRAPH BY SARONY.]