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A Critical Study
of the Work of Frances Milton Trollope

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Abstract

Though Frances Milton Trollope was notorious among her contemporaries as a writer of crudeness and vulgarity, today we remember little more about her than her mothering Anthony Trollope and writing a travel book which treated the Americans with little tenderness. In this thesis I examine Mrs. Trollope's work in order to determine the place which belongs to her in early Victorian letters. Her travel books, with the exception of The Domestic Manners of the Americans, show her ready to profit by the vogue for such journalism, but they give no grounds for the shabbiest literary reputation, for they are pretentious and gossiping but no more. The majority of her novels she wrote in an artificial, theatrical fashion which made it possible for her to produce thirty-four novels but made it difficult for her to write in the realistic vein which proved her most congenial. Despite the limits of her theatrical convention, in The Widow Barnaby, Petticoat Government, and a few other of her novels Mrs. Trollope wrote books as good as some of the best minor fiction of her time, books with something of her own buoyancy and an attention to the revelation of character in petty domestic situations. Far less adept than her social comedies, her polemical novels

show a social concern which, with her attempts at serial publication, make her very much a writer of her time. Her reception was often hostile, largely because Mrs. Trollope described meanness and vulgarity better than anything else, but also because she maintained provocative attitudes on political and religious issues. Her contemporary reputation and the greater fame of her son have unduly diminished Mrs. Trollope's stature: it is time we restore her to a position among the better minor writers of the early Victorian period.

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In the manuscript variants for the sixth chapter of Vanity Fair, one of the alternatives Thackeray entertains is to set the chapter at a fete in Devonshire House instead of Vauxhall:

The characters should be made to speak in the real genteel fashionable polyglot Londonderry-Trollope style (no where is the language of fashion more carefully diversified than the works of the above-named authors)--and by way of giving to the work the most undoubted air of fashion, well known characters of the aristocracy should be introduced to keep company with the fictitious heroes of the romance...¹

The Trollope who escaped Thackeray's sarcasm in the rejection of the passage was Frances Milton Trollope, whose youngest son so eclipsed her literary fame that if we remember her for being more than his mother, it is usually for her first book alone, The Domestic Manners of the Americans. It is my purpose in this thesis to examine Mrs. Trollope's work in order to determine the place we should allow her in early Victorian letters.

Though biographers have seized upon Mrs. Trollope's life, justifiably, as the story of a wonderfully cheerful effort to hold a family together as its children died of consumption and its father failed at law and

¹W.M. Thackeray, Vanity Fair, ed. G. and K. Tillotson (London, 1963), 675. Lady Londonderry was, with Mrs. Trollope, a contributor to the New Monthly Magazine.

farming, few people have considered Mrs. Trollope's writing as more than a subject to be discussed incidentally in connection with either Anthony's novels or with those novels of social reform of which Mrs. Trollope contributed two of the most inept examples. For other than biographical details about her, Michael Sadleir has perhaps more to tell us than any other critic. The introduction to his edition of The Domestic Manners of the Americans, the portion of Trollope, A Commentary which treats Mrs. Trollope, and the notes on the serial parts of Michael Armstrong and Jessie Phillips in XIX Century Fiction are all useful and interesting. Frances Eleanor Ternan Trollope, Thomas Adolphus Trollope's second wife, wrote what remains the best biography of her mother-in-law; and in the introduction to his edition of The Domestic Manners of the Americans Donald Smalley gives an ample account of Mrs. Trollope's American experiences. In the present study I pay no more attention to either Mrs. Trollope's American critical fortunes or to her biography as distinct from her books than absolutely necessary for placing them in context. In view of Mrs. Trollope's own dissociation of life and work this is only fair; it was Anthony who remarked of his mother,

The doctor's vials and the ink-bottle held equal

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places in my mother's rooms. I have written many novels under many circumstances; but I doubt much whether I could write one when my whole heart was by the bedside of a dying son. Her power of dividing herself into two parts, and keeping her intellect by itself clear from the troubles of the world, and fit for the duty it had to do, I never saw equalled.²

Mrs. Trollope's travel books tell us where she went, but of inner life apart from the mere reaction to place they tell us nothing, except for The Domestic Manners of the Americans, an exception which partially explains why it is one of her best books. The novels never approach Mrs. Trollope's life closely, though it is worth noticing that those of the middle 'thirties, when her life may have been most dreary, are touched with more gloom than the majority of the later books. The closest single connection between life and work is the buoyant good spirits with which Mrs. Trollope cheered those about her which also heighten the best of the novels, particularly those involving the Widow Barnaby.

The reference to Mrs. Trollope which Thackeray omitted suggests the contemporary fame which the author had acquired long before 1847, and it suggests, too, the extent to which Mrs. Trollope participated in the literary fashions of the time. Though she did not write

²Anthony Trollope, Autobiography, ed. H.M.Trollope (London, 1883), I, 38.

novels quite in the tradition of the fashionable novel, her books had many of the elements of the genre, set in a somewhat lower rank of society. Thackeray's gibe about introducing real personages into his chapter is not unfair: Town and Country, published in 1847 and later re-titled Days of the Regency, did include the Prince Regent among its characters, and earlier novels, Charles Chesterfield and The Blue Belles of England, had included characters drawn from London's literary salons.

Mrs. Trollope came from a generation perhaps hardier and less falsely modest than many of the younger writers alongside whose books she published hers. Though out of accord with the ruling fashion of her later years of writing, her personalities would not have seemed extreme to such near contemporaries as William Maginn or Theodore Hook; her attention to petty meannesses of character and domestic detail might have pleased Jane Austen, ^{five} three years her senior, however little else that lady might have found unobjectionable in Mrs. Trollope's writing. Without imagining herself a champion of liberality, Mrs. Trollope probably represented something of that license against which later Victorians rebelled, imposing a self-censorship she never imagined employing.

Though it is not our task to more than hint Mrs.

Trollope's American reception, it is worth remembering that her first travel book sold well and offended many in America; for years after its publication she was such a byword for English disapproval of American manners that Donald Smalley reports,

She was lampooned in prose and poetry and on the stage; she was travestied in cartoons. She became a folk character. A frontiersman named his "hound with a number of whelps" after her. A circus band played "Mrs. Trollope's March" to the roar of a lion. "A Trollope! A Trollope!" became the accu- ^u / tomized cry from the pits of theatres when gentlemen failed to sit properly in the boxes. ^{l.c.}

With such a reputation in America, and in England the taint of vulgarity from having depicted vulgarity better than anything else, Mrs. Trollope now can hardly be said to have survived as a respectable writer. In my study of her books I mean to show that though carelessness and verbosity impair much of her work, she sometimes wrote seriously, and she occasionally wrote well.

³Donald Smalley, "Introduction" to The Domestic Manners of the Americans (New York, 1949), ix. One of the poetic effusions which Mrs. Trollope provoked, The Trollopiad; or, Travelling Gentlemen in America, A Satire, by Nil Admirari [Frederic W. Shelton] (New York, 1837), concerned with several English travellers in America, includes lines suggestive of Mrs. Trollope's cultural influence, pps. 91-93:

Soon may we see the happy era dawn,
When men no more shall spit, no more shall yawn;
Luxuriate at the play without a coat,
Or stock or kerchief to molest the throat;
When each barbarity shall yield apace,
To polish'd wit and Chesterfieldian grace;
All that offends the taste no more be known
And her bland manners stamp'd upon our own.

Chapter One: The Travel Book and Frances Trollope

Asked to tell all he knew of Mrs. Trollope, the average twentieth century reader, especially if exposed to occasional instruction by the BBC, would probably devote much of his exposition to her travel book, The Domestic Manners of the Americans. In a sense she could not complain if she were so remembered: The Domestic Manners of the Americans, her first book, has sold more editions than any other; the best of her travel books, it has a fair claim to being also the best of her books; and of course it made her sufficient reputation to sell some of the bad apprentice novels with which Mrs. Trollope followed it before she had learnt, as well as she was to learn, the trade of writing novels. In this first chapter we shall investigate the vogue for travel books prevalent in the eighteen-thirties and 'forties which helped Mrs. Trollope's book to receive the attention which made her famous, we shall examine The Domestic Manners of the Americans, and we shall contrast its freshness with the disappointing staleness of the travel books which Mrs. Trollope produced afterward.

Without attempting to determine the moment of greatest popularity of the travel book, I shall try to indicate the importance of the genre in the eighteen-thirties and

'forties by chronicling the reactions it provoked from contemporary authors and the criticism it enjoyed in literary periodicals. Even as I record the attention it received, though, I mean to suggest the fickleness of that attention, a fickleness more pronounced toward a semi-journalistic genre like the travel book than toward the novel.

Even before 1830 the travel book was enough in vogue to attract satirical attention: in his fantasy, The Voyage of Captain Popanilla, Benjamin Disraeli includes one jab at the sort of publishing which results in travel books made to order; the most eminent bookseller in Hubbabub(London), he writes,

assured Popanilla, that the Vraibleusian public was most nervously alive to any thing connected with discovery; that so ardent was their attachment to everything relative to science or natural philosophy, that travels and voyages were sure to be read with great eagerness, particularly if they had coloured plates. Popanilla was charmed with the proposition, but blushinglly informed the mercantile maecaenas that he did not know how to write. The publisher told him that this circumstance was not of the slightest importance; that he had never for a moment supposed that so sublime a savage could possess such a vulgar accomplishment, and that it was by no means difficult for a man to publish his travels without writing a line of them.¹

Less fictional authors than Popanilla were sometimes ac-

¹Benjamin Disraeli, The Voyage of Captain Popanilla (London, 1828), 92-93.

cused of manufacturing travel books, Mrs. Trollope among them.²

Frederic Marryat, who like Mrs. Trollope wrote a book describing his American adventures, his Diary in America, came to the travel book already a novelist and owner of the Metropolitan Magazine. For the magazine in 1833 and 1834 he wrote a series of short pieces³ ridiculing popular genres, each piece consisting of a dialogue between Ansard, a barrister out of work turned hack, and his friend Barnstaple. Barnstaple explains to Ansard formulas for producing fashionable novels and travel books; and Ansard reveals his own success at working out the formula for the historical romance. Barnstaple's recommendations for the manufacture of travel books show the excessive consciousness of predecessors, here intended to amuse, which Marryat himself later reveals in his Diary in America.

Barnstaple. One little expense must be incurred--you must subscribe a quarter to a circulating library, for I wish that what you do should be well done.

Ansard. Barnstaple, I will subscribe--to any thing.

²See, for example, the review of Paris and the Parisians in Tait's Edinburgh Review, March 1836, p.185.

³Collected in Olla Podrida (London, 1840), III: "How to Write a Fashionable Novel," 165-209; "How to Write a Book of Travels," 211-39; and "How to Write a Romance," 241-64.

Barnstaple. Well, then, since you are so reasonable, I will proceed. You must wade through all the various "Journeys on the Rhine," "Two Months on the Rhine," "Autumns on the Rhine," etc. which you can collect. This, you will find the most tiresome part of your task. Select one as your guide, one who has a reputation; follow his course, not exactly...and agree with him in every thing, generally speaking. Praise his exactitude and fidelity, and occasionally quote him; this is but fair: after you rob a man, (and I intend you shall rifle him most completely,) it is but decent to give him kind words. All others you must abuse, contradict, and depreciate.⁴

In the second installment of the paper Marryat has Barnstaple insist upon the aggressiveness the author must maintain:

Barnstaple. Have you had no affront?

Ansard. Not one.

Barnstaple. Then be seriously affronted--complain to the burgomaster, or commandant, whoever it may be--they attempt to bully--you are resolute and firm as an Englishman--insist on being righted--they will make you a thousand apologies. This will tickle the national vanity, and be read with interest.⁵

The late eighteen-twenties and the 'thirties found numerous English travellers publishing accounts of their experiences in America; it may have been partly the notoriety of Basil Hall's and Mrs. Trollope's books which prompted Dickens if not to make his own first journey to America in 1842, at least, much earlier, to threaten Mr.

⁴"How to Write a Book of Travels," Part I, in the Metropolitan Magazine, November 1833, 289.

⁵"How to Write a Book of Travels," Part II, Ibid., January 1834, 67.

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Pickwick with removal to that country. When Tony Weller decides to free Mr. Pickwick from the imprisonment he suffers because of Mrs. Bardell, the plot he characteristically imagines goes beyond arranging a mere escape. Once Pickwick has been smuggled out of the prison in an empty piano forte, he says, the next move is to,

Have a passage ready taken for 'Merriker. The 'Merrikin gov'ment will never give him up, ven vunce they finds as he's got money to spend, Sammy. Let the gov'ner stop there till Mrs. Bardell's dead, or Mr. Dodson and Fogg's hung, wich last ewent I think is the most likely to happen first, Sammy, and then let him come back and write a book about the 'Merrikins as'll pay all his expenses and more, if he blows 'em up enough.⁶

Often, as here, Dickens observes literary fashion only to make game of it; Mr. Weller's plan remarks upon the vogue of the travel book as Dickens' parody of the novel of high life in Nicholas Nickleby comments upon the longevity of that phenomenon.

The last writer we would expect to respond to literary fashion might be Robert Smith Surtees, but he too shows some awareness of the vogue of the book of travels. The chapter of Jorrocks's Jaunts and Jollities which appears in the book in 1838 as "The Road: English and

⁶Charles Dickens, Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club (London, 1837), Chapter 44, 485. The incident appears in Number 16, originally issued in August 1837.

French" first saw the light in the New Sportsman's Magazine in 1835 as "A Trip to Paris with Mr. Jorrocks," by a Yorkshireman. In the earlier form of the episode Jorrocks writes to the Yorkshireman to suggest a trip to Paris for a lark, saying, "I have just been reading in that most delightful of periodicals, the N.S.M., an account of Paris, which makes me werry much long to see it."⁷ The Yorkshireman takes up Mr. Jorrocks' suggestion, and the two go off to Paris. Three months later the magazine carries Mr. Jorrocks' objections to the account of the Yorkshireman, "A few lines from Mr. Jorrocks on the trip to Paris, the French shooting papers, and the King of Sardinia's horses"; Mr. Jorrocks writes of the Yorkshireman,

He certainly appears to me to have been werry particular in relating matters that could not be of much interest to the generaligy of your readers-- such as balls and blows out--while he has been silent on many interesting topics, which I consider it the duty of every traveller to communicate to the public, such as national habits, laws, religion, constitutions, and coins, to say nothing of bull-baiting, bear-fighting, badger-drawing on a Sunday, at the Barrier St. Martin...I am rather pinched for time just now, it being near the feeding hour, or I would write you a deuced deal better account of the trip than he's done.⁸

Obviously Mr. Jorrocks has begun to think about the obli-

⁷New Sportsman's Magazine, May 1835, p.31.

⁸Ibid., August 1835, 280-81.

gations of the author of travel books, so that we need not be surprised to find him opening the identical episode in the book by proposing a trip to amass materials for a French travel book:

"Jorrocks's France in three volumes, would sound werry well," observed our worthy citizen one afternoon to his confidential companion the Yorkshireman, as they sat in the veranda in Coram Street eating red currants and sipping cold whiskey-punch; "and I thinks I could make something of it. They tells me that at the 'West End' the booksellers will give me forty pounds for anything that will run into three volumes, and one might soon pick up as much matter as would stretch into that quantity."⁹

Though the evidence which I have so far produced to show that the travel book was fashionable in the eighteenth-thirties and 'forties has been of a literary rather than a statistical nature, statistics reinforce the idea. In 1839, the year of the fifth edition of The Domestic Manners of the Americans, various periodicals in England re-

⁹The exact worth of Jorrocks' France would be difficult to gauge; in The Trollopes (London, 1946), 54, Lucy and Richard Stebbins say that Mrs. Trollope received £1000 for The Domestic Manners of the Americans; but it was loudly approved or attacked by critics and readers. Writing to Mary Russell Mitford, 23 April 1832, Mrs. Trollope mentions receiving £250 for the first edition of 1250 copies, £200 for the second of 1000: see A.G.L'Estrange, The Friendships of Mary Russell Mitford (London, 1882), I, 233. In The Barnabys in America Mrs. Trollope has the Widow Barnaby contract with a publisher to receive 500 dollars for her travel book and half profits as well--but this amount is excessive, for Mrs. Barnaby is a shrewd business woman (not to say a cheat), and she claims to be already the pseudonymous author of sundry English novels at the time she contracts to produce her travel book. Each of Mrs. Trollope's travel books appears in two volumes.

viewed or otherwise noticed 87 books of travel published in English;¹⁰ in addition to the 87 new or re-issued travel books, the reviews listed 23 other such works without reviewing them.¹¹ Together the periodicals reviewed or listed new at least 110 books of travel in the single year. The most energetic reviewer of travels was the Athenaeum, which used reviews of travels as lead articles in fifteen of its 52 weekly issues. Of the 43 books included in Richard Bentley's "List of the Principal Publications Issued from New Burlington Street in 1839", five are travels.¹²

The numerous titles reviewed and listed in 1839, though an indication of the fashion of the travel book, suggest also the ephemeral quality of the fashion. The same Bentley list that includes five new travel books appends a list of Bentley's books reduced in price: of the 26 books on the list, eight are travels. In his study of the Bentley papers, Royal A. Gettmann notes that though Bentley's failures occur with books in all genres, in

¹⁰See Appendix A. By books of travel I mean published accounts of travel or memoirs of residence for a short time in a place described by the author.

¹¹See Appendix B.

¹²Bentley published proportionately more travel books in other years, 16 of 58 books in 1835, 12 of 67 in 1836, 9 of 52 in 1837, 20 of 73 in 1838.

both halves of the nineteenth century travel books were costly to him. The figures Gettmann cites give us an idea of the mediocre success of the genre:

During the first two years (1 September 1829-31 August 1831) of the partnership between Colburn and Bentley twenty such titles were published. The records compiled at the time of the dissolution (31 August 1832) show that the average sale of these books was 661 copies. [Writing to Lady Strangford in the winter of 1874-75, George Bentley said, "It is...in the sale after 1500 that I begin to look for my profit." See Gettmann, 131ff. Gettmann's researches support Bentley's figures.] Books on Nova Scotia, Africa, and Albania sold just over 400 copies each. An account of Timbuctoo attracted 842 purchasers, but only two of the twenty titles sold more than 1000 copies--Mrs. Elwood's Travels Overland from India (1134 copies) and Captain Beechey's Narrative of a Voyage to the Pacific and Beering's Strait (1880 copies). The success of the latter was probably due not only to the Captain's skilful narrative but to the fact that he supplied information on little-known parts of the globe and on the well-known story of Pitcairn Island... Richard Bentley and Son published 367 such books.¹³

Compared with such figures, the sales of Mrs. Trollope's travel books should have been a comfort to her various publishers.

¹³Royal A. Gettmann, A Victorian Publisher (London, 1960), 134. Recounting Bentley's efforts at a time of financial difficulty, Gettmann notes (p.150) that Bentley ultimately remaindered a large number of books at a standard price to Thomas Tegg though H.G. Bohn, then a rising and aggressive dealer, offered him selective prices for his titles which would have netted Bentley a little more money. In a range of prices from 1/6 to 6d. per volume, Bohn included Vienna and the Austrians at the highest price, though he refused a number of Bentley's travel books at any price.

A contributor to Bentley's list from 1835 through 1842, Mrs. Trollope probably attracted his attention with the success of The Domestic Manners of the Americans, published by Whittaker and Treacher in 1832. From that year onward Mrs. Trollope's family owed a substantial part of its subsistence to the book of travels; though she wasted little time in turning her hand to writing novels, Mrs. Trollope continued to produce travel books: Belgium and Western Germany in 1833(1834), Paris and the Parisians in 1835(1836), Vienna and the Austrians (1838), A Visit to Italy(1842), and a collection of sketches and stories, Travels and Travellers(1846). Probably to add lustre, her name appears to claim editorship of her son Thomas Adolphus Trollope's travel books, A Summer in Brittany(1840) and A Summer in Western France(1841). More important than these, several of her novels derive their setting from the travels which she describes: four American novels, The Refugee in America(1832), The Life and Adventures of Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw(1836), The Barnabys in America(1843), and The Old World and the New (1849); and several with European settings, especially The Abbess(1833), A Romance of Vienna(1838), Hargrave (1843), The Robertses on Their Travels(1846), The Young Countess(1848), Second Love(1851), Gertrude(1855), and

Fashionable Life (1856). Mrs. Trollope mentions American characters in three of her novels, Charles Chesterfield (1841), The Blue Belles of England (1842), and Young Love (1844); but she treats them without the vividness which she sometimes gives to Americans whom she describes in their natural habitat.

In order to recoup her family's fortunes after Thomas Anthony Trollope had shown his incapacity as a provider, Frances Trollope, her son Henry, and her two daughters accompanied an outspoken abolitionist and feminist, Frances Wright, to America late in 1827, hoping to earn a living either through Miss Wright's settlement at Nashoba, Tennessee, intended to demonstrate the educability of Negroes, or through a bazaar which Mrs. Trollope projected in Cincinnati, Ohio. Both alternatives failed Mrs. Trollope and illness endangered both her life and Henry's before the Trollopes returned safely to England. Early in her travels Mrs. Trollope began keeping the notebook which eventually provided her with her literary beginnings and, if not with wealth, at least with a comfortable living.

Though The Domestic Manners of the Americans was Frances Trollope's first book, she seems to have gone about it with more deliberation than she employed on the

novels which immediately followed it. As early in her American trip as 30 June 1828 she writes,

I amuse myself by making notes and hope some day to manufacture them into a volume. This is a remote corner of the world, and but seldom visited, and I think that if Hervieu could find time to furnish sketches of scenery and groups, a very taking little volume might be produced.¹⁴

Six months later Mrs. Trollope exclaims to Miss Mitford,

Oh! my dear friend, had I but the tenth of an inch of the nib of your pen, what pictures might I draw of the people here!--so very queer, so very unlike any other thing in heaven above or earth below!--but it may not be. I can look, and I can laugh, but the power of describing is not given to above half a dozen in a century.¹⁵

But only half a year more elapses before she owns to her friend that she has been proceeding as if she were among the fortunate half a dozen:

I, too, am writing a book, my dear Miss Mitford, which, let its success among others be what it may, has helped to amuse me at many moments that would have passed heavily without it. Captain Hall's book (and himself too, by the way) has put

¹⁴ Frances Eleanor Trollope, Frances Trollope: Her Life and Literary Work from George III to Victoria (London, 1895), I, 115. Auguste Hervieu, the first, the most constant, and possibly the feeblest of the several artists who illustrated Mrs. Trollope's books until they appeared without illustrations in the 'forties accompanied Mrs. Trollope's party with the intention of becoming a drawing master with Miss Wright's establishment. The object of Mrs. Trollope's charity in England, he became her benefactor in America, supporting her family when their funds were exhausted. The other illustrators included Buss, Onwhyn, Phiz (H.K. Browne), and John Leech.

¹⁵ A.G.L'Estrange, The Friendships of Mary Russell Mitford, I, 193; Mrs. Trollope's letter is dated 20 January 1829.

the Union in a blaze from one end to the other. I never on any occasion heard so general an expression of contempt and detestation as that which follows his name. This hubbub made me very desirous of seeing his book, but I am glad to say I did not succeed till after my first volume was finished, and most of the notes for the second collected. I thus escaped influence of any kind from the perusal. A few days ago, however, I was at Philadelphia, and there I got his very strange work. I had one or two long and interesting conversations with Lee [Lea] (the publisher), who knew him well, and from one or two anecdotes he gave me, it appears that the 'agreeable captain' was under writing orders as surely as he ever was, or hopes to be again, under sailing orders. He would have done quite enough service to the cause he intends to support if he had painted things exactly as they are, without seeking to give his own eternal orange-tawney colour to every object. His blunders are such as clearly to prove he never, or very rarely, listened to the answers he received--for we must not suppose that he knew one thing and printed another. Do not suppose, however, that I am coming home fraught with the Quixotic intention of running a tilt with Captain Hall. My little book will not be of him, but of all I have seen, and of much that he did not.¹⁶

This account of Captain Hall is markedly less complimentary than Mrs. Trollope's published comments upon him; her discretion, before she met Hall, may have kept her from offending someone holding much her own political stance. Later, of course, his kindness toward her and the vilification they shared may well have moderated her opinion. Though the charge that Captain Hall must have heard what he wanted to hear does not generally apply to Mrs. Trollope in The Domestic Manners of the Americans,

¹⁶Ibid., II, 219-220, a letter dated 28 July 1830.

it would not be an unfair indictment of her later travel books.

Reviewers of The Domestic Manners of the Americans were apt to know nothing of its author and to seize happily on the information that Mrs. Trollope had suffered financial reverses in America as explanation for the attitude she takes in the book;¹⁷ in the letter to Miss Mitford concerning Basil Hall she anticipates the charge:

Henry's miserable health, my own narrow escape from death, the failure of our hopes of placing him advantageously, and my peculiar disappointment in not benefitting him, as I had hoped to do, by this expedition, all tended (together with backwoods' disagreeabilities) to make me dislike Western America; but there is much to like and admire on this side the Alleghany Mountains, many very estimable and well-informed people, and an almost endless variety of objects and of circumstances in the highest degree interesting; yet would I not pass the remnant of my days here, even if I could have all my family around me.¹⁸

In fact The Domestic Manners of the Americans, though it records Mrs. Trollope's opinion of the Americans ac-

¹⁷Reviewing Simon Ferrall's A Ramble of Six Thousand Miles through the United States of America in September 1832, the Gentleman's Magazine notes, p.236, "The time is however come at last, when people may speak what they think, without having their property and character destroyed by the rancour of party, and when even a lady, like Mrs. Trollope, finds the sauce piquante, prepared for John Bull's palate, voted to be une peu trop forte; although every allowance should be made for her chagrin in discovering that the belles of Cincinnati would not patronize her bazaar".

¹⁸The Friendships of Mary Russell Mitford, I, 221-222.

curately enough, shows so few traces of ill-humour that the fuss it caused today seems greatly disproportionate to the offense.

When, about to return to England, Mrs. Trollope asks Miss Mitford for an introduction to her publisher, she asks with the modesty with which she will claim humble domestic experience as the particular subject of her book:

What I would ask is such a letter of introduction to your publisher as would enable me to present myself before him without feeling as if I had just dropped upon him from the moon.

My book is gossiping, and without pretension most faithfully true to the evidence of my senses, and written without a shadow of (previous) feeling for or against the things described. I have about thirty outline sketches by Hervieu, not of scenery, but of manners, which I think will help the book greatly. I am well aware that it is difficult to bring a first effort to the light, but I think your powerful name will help me much.¹⁹

Though we cannot consider prefaces written after the composition of a book as certain proof of the author's intentions during composition, we can learn from such prefaces at least what the author thought to have been his intentions. Mrs. Trollope's prefaces to The Domestic Manners of the Americans suggest that besides describing America, she takes her function as a writer of travels, to include criticism of manners and morals:

¹⁹Ibid., 227, a letter dated 29 May 1831.

Although much has already been written on the great experiment, as it has been called, now making in government, on the other side of the Atlantic, there appears to be still room for many interesting details on the influence which the political system of the country has produced on the principles, tastes, and manners, of its domestic life.²⁰

Mrs. Trollope does not pretend to comprehensiveness:

In offering the public these volumes on America, their author would rather be considered as endeavouring to excite fresh attention on a very important subject, than as pretending to furnish complete information upon it.²¹

The cleverest part of Mrs. Trollope's humility about the limits of her intentions is the indirection with which she means to find direction out; she wishes, apolitically, to make a political statement: "By describing, faithfully, the daily aspect of ordinary life, she has endeavoured to show how greatly the advantage is on the side of those who are governed by the few, instead of the many."²² Her experiences in America have made her a polemicist whose record of observation and criticism must move her readers to question the value of the American experiment.

The greatest question Mrs. Trollope would like to

²⁰The Domestic Manners of the Americans, ed. Donald Smalley (New York, 1949), Preface to the first edition, lxxvii. Unless otherwise noted all references to the book are to Smalley's edition, the only critical edition of any of Mrs. Trollope's books.

²¹Ibid., lxxvii.

²²Ibid., lxxvii.

raise about the Americans is moral; of this her preface to the first edition leaves us in no doubt:

As it is the moral and religious condition of the people which, beyond every thing else, demands the attention of the philosophical inquirer, the author would consider her work as completely successful, could she but awaken a more general interest on this subject.²³

l.c.
e/

Again in the preface to the fifth edition, and more specifically, she writes, "Had I again to travel through the Union with a view to giving an account of what I saw, I should certainly devote a much larger portion of my attention to the great national feature--negro slavery."²⁴

With a good idea now of what Mrs. Trollope afterwards considered her purposes to be in The Domestic Manners of the Americans, let us examine the book to see how well it answers these purposes. The travel book has a natural form: the traveller journeys from his home, visits, and returns. Mrs. Trollope holds her narrative to this simple pattern with very fair success. The few times she deviates from the straight path of her narrative, she writes on with so much the tone and manner of the whole that we may not notice that she has strayed: when she has been ill and must take a winter's rest, she re-

²³Ibid.,lxviii.

²⁴Ibid.,442.

views her notes to be certain of discussing the subjects "which all scribbling travellers are expected to notice."²⁵ These notes she treats in her twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth chapters; at the end of the latter in the fifth edition she introduces a short skit in which she tests her ear for American dialect. The skit seems extreme, though other travellers reported the like; but it does help to complete the picture of America which Mrs. Trollope draws.

After reverting to narration in her thirtieth chapter, Mrs. Trollope uses the thirty-first to discuss the reception of Basil Hall's Travels in North America; as she was in America when the book was published and as the reactions of the Americans have something to do with her whole vision of them, perhaps she is justified in again interrupting her narrative. The last deviation from pure narration comes at the very conclusion, when Mrs. Trollope makes summary comments; these may give point to her didactic purpose, but the book would be whole without them.

Interested, as her title indicates, particularly in American manners, Mrs. Trollope would have shown more discretion had she neglected to describe American scenery;

²⁵Ibid., 296.

read, for instance, what she writes of the Mississippi, as on it she approaches the Ohio:

Where the river is encroaching, the trees are seen growing in water many feet deep; after some time, the water undermines their roots, and they become the easy victims of the first hurricane that blows. This is one source of the immense quantities of drift wood that float into the Gulf of Mexico. /c.

- brake Where the river has receded, a young growth of cane break is soon seen starting up with the rapid vegetation of the climate; these two circumstances in some degree relieve the sameness of the ~~two~~ /c. thousand miles of vegetable wall.²⁶

Though we may perhaps explain the passivity of this description by remembering the exhaustion and discomfort incumbent upon travel by riverboat, the passage is a fair sample of Mrs. Trollope's scenic descriptions.

In contrast with such lifeless journalism is the vividness with which Mrs. Trollope records human encounters; a camp meeting brings the following description:

/c. Above a hundred persons, nearly all females, came forward, uttering howlings and groans, so terrible that I shall never cease to shudder when I recall them. They appeared to drag each other forward, and on the word being given, "Let us pray," they all fell on their knees; but this posture was soon changed for others that permitted greater scope for the convulsive movements of their limbs; and they were soon all lying on the ground in an indescribable confusion of heads and legs. They threw about their limbs with such incessant and violent motion, that I was every instant expecting some serious accident to occur. /c.

But how am I to describe the sounds that proceeded from this strange mass of human beings? I

²⁶Ibid., 32.

know no words which can convey an idea of it. Hysterical sobbings, convulsive groans, shrieks and screams the most appalling, burst forth on all sides. I felt sick with horror.²⁷

In spite of the repulsion she experiences at the camp meeting, Mrs. Trollope's language leaves no doubt that she clearly perceives the sexual aspects of the meeting; though her language may be exaggerated, at least it conveys her perception better than her descriptions of scenery. Moreover, when she removes herself from her subject a little farther, she can record what she sees with admirable clarity:

It is hardly necessary to say, that all who obeyed the call to place themselves on the "anxious benches" were women, and by far the greater number very young women. The congregation was, in general, extremely well-dressed, and the smartest and most fashionable ladies of the town were there; during the whole revival, the churches and meeting-houses were every day crowded with well-dressed people.²⁸

However fine Mrs. Trollope's description and analysis of manners may occasionally be, her triumph comes in dramatization; she recounts what happens when only she can provide an antidote for a young female slave who swallows poison intended for rats:

I immediately mixed a large cup of mustard and water (the most rapid of all emetics), and got the little girl to swallow it. The desired effect was

²⁷Ibid., 172.

²⁸Ibid., 81.

instantly produced, but the poor child, partly from nausea, and partly from the terror of hearing her death proclaimed by half a dozen voices round her, trembled so violently that I thought she would fall. I sat down in the court where we were standing, and, as a matter of course, took the little sufferer in my lap. I observed a general titter among the white members of the family, while the black stood aloof, and looked stupidified. The youngest of the family, a little girl about the age of the young slave, after gazing at me for a few moments in utter astonishment, exclaimed, "My! if Mrs. Trollope has not taken her in her lap, and wiped her nasty mouth! Why, I would not have touched her mouth for two hundred dollars."²⁹

Possibly the greatest virtue of The Domestic Manners of the Americans, nearly buried by the adverse criticism the book received, lies in Mrs. Trollope's reluctance to damn all Americans because of her treatment in the United States. Her experiences, she insists, though they may imply general conditions, were only particular events in places too diverse to be representative of the country. Nevertheless such an anecdote as the story of the poisoned slave damns the society which produces it.

Coming to authorship a mature woman with most of her opinions formed, Mrs. Trollope writes with a variety of voices. Here is the one she is famous for, the voice of the minder of manners:

The total want of all the usual courtesies of the table, the voracious rapidity with which the viands were seized and devoured; the strange

²⁹Ibid., 248.

uncouth phrases and pronunciation; the loathsome spitting, from the contamination of which it was absolutely impossible to protect our dresses; the frightful manner of feeding with their knives, till the whole blade seemed to enter into the mouth; and the still more frightful manner of cleaning the teeth afterwards with a pocket-knife....³⁰

Sometimes, though, she slips into Romanticism, as when she thinks the Hudson would be more wonderful if decorated with an occasional crumbling castle, or in her wistful comment upon an eclipse of the moon which she saw at the falls of the Potomac:

1c / The full moon arose above the black pines, with half our shadow thrown across her. The effect of her rising thus eclipsed was more strange, more striking by far, than watching the gradual obscuration; and as I turned to look at the black chasm behind me, and saw the deadly alder, and the poison-vine waving darkly on the rocks around, I thought the scene wanted nothing but the figure of a palsied crone, plucking the fatal branches to concoct some charm of mischief.³¹

We could guess Mrs. Trollope's affection for Scott and

³⁰Ibid., 18. The reader reminded of American Notes will find Dickens aware of sharing opinions with Mrs. Trollope; he answers a congratulatory letter from her upon publication of American Notes, 16 December, 1842: "As I never scrupled to say in America, so I can have no delicacy in saying to you, that, allowing for the changes you worked in many social features of American society, and for the time that has passed since you wrote of the country, I am convinced that there is no writer who has so well and accurately (I need not add so entertainingly) described it, in many of its aspects as you have done; and this renders your praise the more valuable to me." See the Nonesuch Letters (London, 1939), I, 495.

³¹The Domestic Manners of the Americans, 293-94.

Byron from this paragraph alone.

Less frequently, Mrs. Trollope turns a phrase with almost an eighteenth century snap to it; when she dissociates herself from the later career of Frances Wright, for example, she describes her as "the advocate of opinions that make millions shudder, and some half-score admire."³²

Dated, produced as evidence against the intentions of the framers of the first Reform Bill, and heavy with Mrs. Trollope's normal verbosity, The Domestic Manners of the Americans was an achievement which she would not equal for years, and which even in her best novels she could scarcely better.

Mrs. Trollope's later travel books, sharing much with The Domestic Manners of the Americans, lack the clarity and the bite of that book. As Anthony Trollope remarks in his Autobiography, Mrs. Trollope was not a woman of acute social perceptions: such acuteness as she had sufficed to make her an excellent observer of manners in a country little removed from the primitive; but though she knew far more of Europe than three years could tell her of America, viewing it she lacked the critical distance which makes her first book provocative.

³²Ibid., 14.

Other disabilities keep the European travel books from sharing the excellence of The Domestic Manners of the Americans: although Mrs. Trollope's sojourn in Austria lasted eight months, her trip to Italy nine, all four of her European travel books are tourist's books. In America she travelled wholly seriously: she went to win a livelihood for her family. Though the ultimate purpose of her European travels may well have been the same, because her readers could be expected to know something of Europe, the European travel books had to offer either information useful to future travellers (this is especially true of Belgium and Western Germany in 1833, published by John Murray) or entertaining accounts of wonders. Mrs. Trollope's Austrian hosts obligingly provided her with Prince Metternich as a wonder to whom she could recur, but Italy had only treasures of art to offer, and Paris nothing more exciting than the political unrest of the early years of Louis ^{Philippe's} ~~Phillipe's~~ reign.

As a visitor to America Mrs. Trollope brought the freshness not only of her inexperience but of political opinions which had yet to be tested by contact with brash democracy; by the time she began travelling to Europe to make books of her experience, she was both old in experience of the continent and more fixed of opinion than be-

fore her American adventure. Though her French and Italian were more than adequate, in German-speaking countries she depended upon others to translate for her: we need little wonder that she readily accepted what Metternich told her. However uncomfortable we may find Mrs. Trollope's strident conservatism, we must admire that degree of open-mindedness which let her accept and endorse a government in France not the one she would have chosen, which made her sympathize, short of advocating revolution, with Italian consternation at diminished nineteenth century Italy. If her political views contradicted one another, at least her contradictions sprang from generous motives.

It is unfortunately easier to countenance Mrs. Trollope's political vagaries in detachment than when we apply ourselves to her European travel books. All too often she forces her opinions upon us, not for our consideration, but as the received truth; sometimes we find them disguised as the talk of people Mrs. Trollope encounters:

The tone in which even our reform proceedings are canvassed, approaches sometimes very saucily towards quizzing. Nevertheless, the Germans are far from paying us in kind for the prophecies so often put forth in our journals, of their threatened insurrections; for I continually heard it repeated, with great emphasis, that "England was not a coun-

try to be overthrown by the cabals of a mob."³³

Or Prince Metternich relieves himself of a sentiment which chances to be one dear to Mrs. Trollope:

I am a Catholic,...and I trust a good one, yet did I deeply deplore your emancipation bill; for I saw that it must tend to loosen and shake the foundation upon which your well-tried and justly approved constitution was founded.³⁴

The many proper Parisians who declared (and found in Mrs. Trollope a receptive ear) that Victor Hugo and writers of his stamp were not received in society found a successor in Prince Hohenlohe, who mouths Mrs. Trollope's opinions of the writers in the travel book with which she succeeds her account of France:

The discourse turned upon a variety of subjects, and among others on the nature and effect of the light literature of modern France. The prince spoke of these productions with the contempt of a man of taste and a scholar, and of their visible influence on the minds, and even the conduct, of many, with the sorrow of a Christian.³⁵

Perhaps the most deplorable aspect of Mrs. Trollope's preoccupation with politics is the very narrow view of just such subjects as contemporary French writing to which her politics limit her.

Related to Mrs. Trollope's espousal of conservatism is something of an assumption of dignity and station

³³Belgium and Western Germany in 1833 (London, 1834), II, 221.

³⁴Vienna and the Austrians (London, 1838), II, 413.

³⁵Ibid., 240.

above that to which her middle class origins entitle her. Her aristocratic tendency gives point to many of her objections to American manners, which must in 1830 have been bad enough to warrant all her strictures; but on her European travels Mrs. Trollope too often seems to pose as the grand lady: she must postpone visiting the Boboli Gardens in Florence because on one of the two days when visiting is permitted it is bad form to go; at Mannheim a ball to which she goes disappoints her because those who attend belong to the bourgeoisie rather than to the nobility. Such prejudices most mar Vienna and the Austrians, in which Mrs. Trollope's reservations about Austrian inertia unfortunately do not keep her from spending so much description on the aristocracy that even her description shows them to be inane in the extreme.

Like Dickens, when she travels Mrs. Trollope considers it one of her responsibilities to visit public institutions--hospitals, asylums for the insane, morgues--but she devotes herself more regularly to watching religious spectacles and visiting churches. Most of the descriptions of such activities drag, though occasionally, as at the cathedral of Salzburg, Mrs. Trollope uses homely wit to excellent result:

A gentleman of the town who joined our party as we were making our tour round it was eloquent in praise of its regular form and the perfection of its proportions, which, he assured us, were according to rule, even in the most minute particulars; a style of praise which reminded me of the satisfaction I once heard expressed by a proud mother, on discovering upon measurement that a riband passed twice round her dull-looking daughter's wrist sufficed to encircle her throat, which doubled again was exactly the circumference of her waist. Yet with all this accuracy of dimension her daughter was not graceful, nor is the church of St. Peter's at Salzbouurg one-thousandth part so impressive as the dark irregular pile of the old Dom-kirch at Augsburg, or ten-thousandth part so lovely as the cathedral of Amiens.³⁶

In the later travel books as in The Domestic Manners of the Americans, we find Mrs. Trollope again divided between the sort of sensible realism suggested by her remarks on St. Peter's and the Romanticism which urges her to explore ruined castles and dungeons, to exclaim on leaving the drab-featured low countries,

About two leagues before reaching Namur, our eyes were refreshed by the first picturesque landscape we had looked upon since we entered Belgium.

A little, bright, meandering stream, a beetling rock of mountain limestone hanging over it, with a most Udolpho-like-looking castle in the woods beyond, formed a perfect treat for three picturesque-seeking travellers, who, for the last month, had seen nothing but the level plains of Flanders, Antwerp, and Brabant.³⁷

We will find the two sorts of vision persisting into Mrs. Trollope's novels, where her fine-lady Romanticism pre-

³⁶Ibid., I, 153.

³⁷Belgium and Western Germany in 1833, 93-94.

vails over her good sense except when she contains it in novels like The Vicar of Wrexhill and The Widow Barnaby.

Although Mrs. Trollope frequently discusses literature in her travel books, it figures more largely in her French and Italian books than in the others. Travels to or through France bring her opportunities to make pilgrimages to places beloved of Rousseau or Gretry, and being in Italy delights her partly because of associations with Dante, Petrarch, Tasso, or Ariosto. It is in A Visit to Italy more than in any other of her books that the reader discovers how well-educated a woman Mrs. Trollope is:

Difficult as Dante is acknowledged to be, even by his countrymen, I do truly believe, that where his enormous power has once made itself felt upon the mind, there is no degree of labour that has been considered too great as the price of understanding him fully. To any one who can read the language at all Tasso must be easy....Ariosto but little less so; and the same may be said of many other Italian writers. But not of Petrarch; it requires study for a foreigner to understand him at all, and this study (popularly speaking) has been but rarely given. Where it has, Petrarch is not considered as a love-stricken sonneteer; but as a poet equally sublime as an observer of nature and as a deep student of the feelings of the human heart....³⁸

It is in the Italian book, too, that Mrs. Trollope makes her most interesting expression of political doubt. It is true that in the preface to The Domestic Manners of

³⁸A Visit to Italy (London, 1842), II, 54-55.

the Americans she declares that she went to America a liberal and returned a conservative, and in Paris and the Parisians in 1835 she confesses to altering her opinion about Louis ^{Phillippe} Phillippe; but neither decision conflicted with Mrs. Trollope's background. In Naples she saw a soldier beat a peasant with the flat of his sword for temporarily blocking her way; and for once, however briefly, Mrs. Trollope felt uneasy at being the recipient of such protection. Her travels would all be better had she assumed the voice of authority less often, had she more often spoken humbly and plainly in her most engaging voice rather than either asserting her opinions with papal finality or gazing at spectacles great and small with a Romantic film before her eyes. The Domestic Manners of the Americans endures because in it Mrs. Trollope often speaks with humility, examines with care; but who remembers her other travel books?

Chapter 2: Mrs. Trollope's American Novels

Just as we detect great disparity in quality between the observations Mrs. Trollope records in The Domestic Manners of the Americans and those in all of her later travel books, so, curiously, she usually proves a more acute observer of at least the surface of things in her American novels than in her European ones. This is not to say that the American novels--The Refugee in America (1832), The Life and Adventures of Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw(1836), The Barnabys in America(1843), and The Old World and the New(1849)--are better than the best of the others, for they are not; but in spite of their faults as novels, in their social observation they frequently reveal Mrs. Trollope at her best.

Though her later novels as a whole are better than the earlier ones, Mrs. Trollope's writing does not improve as she proceeds from one novel to the next. Her excellences she seizes upon randomly in her passage but is apt to abandon once they have served her turn; the qualities of the American novels which are most offensive --the verbose employment of facile melodrama and rhetoric in the service of silly standards--pertain in large degree to Mrs. Trollope's worst novels(for instance A Romance of Vienna, Hargrave, or Gertrude) but in some de-

gree to all her novels. Nevertheless the American novels, which we shall examine in this chapter, show Mrs. Trollope improving her ability to relate her American material to the whole of her story and, at her dreariest, capable of occasional saving satirical touches.

The final pages of the fifth edition of The Domestic Manners of the Americans (published as the fourth volume of Richard Bentley's Standard Authors) are selections from Mrs. Trollope's first novel, The Refugee in America, which she wrote in 1832. The selections Mrs. Trollope heads with an editorial note:

In preparing for the press a new edition of "The Domestic Manners of the Americans," it has been suggested by a person eminently qualified to judge how truly some scenes in the novel entitled "The Refugee in America" deserve to take rank under the former title, that some extracts from them would make a valuable addition to the book. A few, therefore, of the scenes most peculiarly characteristic of the domestic manners of the United States are here subjoined.--F.T.¹

As Bentley was more likely to abridge books than to pad them for inclusion among his Standard Authors, we must interpret Mrs. Trollope's appending parts of The Refugee in America as acknowledgement of the piecemeal and journalistic qualities of the novel. Passages descriptive of the Americans but not intimately connected with the novel as a whole are among the most amusing in The Refu-

¹The Domestic Manners of the Americans (London, 1839), 341.

gee in America; if Mrs. Trollope had omitted them much of the pleasure of reading the novel would disappear.

As Mrs. Trollope had already begun mining the material of her American experiences, we may safely assume that she intended to use some of that material in The Refugee in America from its beginning. What we cannot determine and what the editorial addition to The Domestic Manners of the Americans draws our attention to is whether The Refugee in America exists to present the good American scenes, or the American scenes exist to pad out an otherwise uninteresting novel. Either way we choose to read it, Mrs. Trollope's method of using her American experiences changes between the beginning and the end of the novel: by the conclusion she has learnt to use the American peculiarities she observed to provide the exigencies of her plot.

The plot needs all of the realistic touches Mrs. Trollope can give it. The Gordons, Caroline and her father, carry a young nobleman, Lord Darcy, with them to America, in order to protect him from prosecution for the murder of a smuggler. The three travel to Rochester, where they suffer the vicissitudes of provincial American society and where Lord Darcy meets and passively courts an American girl. At home, Lord Darcy's mother discovers that the smuggler, who presently goes to America to kill

Darcy, is not dead; but a villain interested in marrying her and in removing Darcy discredits her discovery. Rumour and inhospitality force the Gordons and Darcy to leave Rochester; they travel to Niagara Falls and to Washington. In Washington they meet the smuggler and pursue him into Virginia, where he captures Darcy but fails to kill him. Once they have rescued Darcy, the Gordons return to England that Darcy may stand trial and be exonerated; but the evidence has been so strongly worked up against him that only the timely efforts of Emily, the American girl, who has prevailed upon the smuggler to confess, save the young lord.

The place to which the Gordons and Darcy escape does not matter at first. It is true that Rochester provides Mrs. Trollope with many of the humorous passages which she appends to The Domestic Manners of the Americans, but there is no particular reason why they should have chosen America generally or Rochester particularly as a place of refuge. Similarly, even in the third volume, there is no reason why Caroline should endure the courtship of the half dozen suitors she attracts in Washington; though the gentlemen reveal themselves as asses, none of their flirting makes the least difference to the course of the story. Describing society in Rochester and the suitors in Washington Mrs. Trollope indulges

her spleen to the impairment of the unity of the book.

More effectively she uses qualities she believes to be distinctively American to force on the action of her story. Halfway through the second volume, rumour about the foreigners makes it so difficult for them to obtain servants that they leave Rochester. Much later, at a reception given by the President in Washington, Darcy sees the smuggler who is trying to kill him; he tries to seize the man, who disappears into the crowd of guests. When the President agrees to stop everyone at the doors, that the man may be apprehended, loud voices cry, "Free-men are not to be treated in this way....This is not a country for such tricks....There is tyranny in it....Americans are not to be locked up to please an Englishman."²

Arriving at a remote inn in Virginia, the Gordons' party discovers Dally, the smuggler, who has preceded them. They wish to bind him in order to bring him before a magistrate, but the host of the inn, believing Dally to be a Kentuckian, again asserts American independence:

"Ar'n't three upon one enough, without tying the man? Fight it out, can't ye? like Christians, and not go to tie him up as if he was a wolf or a bear."

"You strangely misunderstand our object, sir," said Mr. Gordon, "we would on no account hurt this

²The Refugee in America (London, 1832), III, 114-115.

man; our only wish is to bring him to justice."
 "Now if that ar'n't English? if he's offended you, take your will of him like a man, but in the Devil's name, don't come over us with your damned English law; for that's what we won't bear, no how."³

The effectiveness of Mrs. Trollope's using the American characteristics she mocks makes her failures to absorb her American experiences--the folk story of Sam Patch's bear, for instance, merely elaborated from The Domestic Manners of the Americans⁴--the more obvious. If Mrs. Trollope did not sometimes paint properly, we could more easily forgive her daubs and blotches.

Ordinarily the particular objects of Mrs. Trollope's satire do not function in the plot; her finest observations of people are casual, almost accidental. Miss Duncomb, who lectured the ladies of Rochester on the questionable histories of the English visitors, "in that spirit of peculiar malevolence which she denominated Christian charity",⁵ biblical Mr. Mitchell, who "rubbed his hands, and thanked the Lord that he was not like other men, to let out his secrets in that fashion",⁶ and

³Ibid., 178-79.

⁴The Domestic Manners of the Americans, 376-77; repeated in The Refugee in America, I, 123-27.

⁵The Refugee in America, I, 228.

⁶Ibid., II, 148.

villainous Mr. Wilson, who "risked most fearfully that odour of sanctity in which he lived, and had his being":⁷ with the exception of Mr. Wilson, whose villainy moves the plot along, such sarcastically delineated characters appear gratuitously in the novel with no more function than to amuse us.

The major characters--Mr. Gordon, who, because Darcy reminds him of the woman he loved, helps him flee the punishment he deserves; Caroline Gordon, who flirts for amusement; Darcy, who suddenly becomes so Byronic that, for little reason, "his proud heart bled among the awful solitudes of Niagara";⁸ and Emily Williams, who wonders on meeting him, "And that other, whose glance she had never met, and on whom she had scarcely dared to look, so sacred to her seemed the melancholy that enveloped him, what ~~was~~ was he?"⁹--none convinces so well as ^{then} the least of the minor characters.

There are times when the most life-like characters would fail to redeem Mrs. Trollope's gaucheness. Her remarks when Emily tries to decide whether Darcy loves her or not suggest either a total absence of taste or

⁷Ibid., II, 302.

⁸Ibid., II, 294.

⁹Ibid., I, 235.

perhaps a tongue-in-cheek acceptance of the contemporary taste for melodrama; Caroline speculates about the relationship she imagines between Darcy and Emily,

But was her penetration equal to her sweetness? Had the little romance she had for some time past been weaving, and to which she now gave the finishing touch, any other foundation than her own active imagination? Was she right in thinking that the cold proud eye which had shed nothing but reason and respect on her, beamed with passion when the name of Emily was mentioned? Could the seventh Earl of Darcy be free from the besetting sin of his race? Could any thing make him forget his Norman shield? We shall see.¹⁰

It is perhaps just as well that this is the only occasion when we learn anything of either the besetting sin of Darcy's race or of his Norman shield.

The melodrama of Mrs. Trollope's tone in the passage I quote does not greatly exceed that of passages in The Refugee in America in which she is all too patently serious: "Nixon Oglender, in common with all men who have studied the human heart, knew that neither sorrow, poverty, nor even vice itself, could corrupt the integrity of a woman's affections."¹¹ Or again, "Had he learnt to worship the Maker of the universe, instead of adoring his works, young Wilson might have been a glorious being; as it was, with all his force of intellect, and endless

¹⁰Ibid., II, 205.

¹¹Ibid., II, 126.

versatility of talent, he was a noxious reptile."¹² For the elder Wilson, "There was but one subject on which his acute sagacity could not help him--he understood not the feelings of a man of honour."¹³ All too often Mrs. Trollope provides us with facile reasoning and over-simplification.

Frequently Mrs. Trollope's choice of adjectives reveals the unfortunate influence of her reading. If this were the fault only of The Refugee in America, we might forgive it as the excess of a beginner; but it is always with us, even in novels as good as The Widow Barnaby, jeopardizing Mrs. Trollope's success by revealing her insensitivity to words. Mr. Gordon, calm enough when he must act quickly to get Darcy away from England, suffers adjectival distress when his daughter may have to cross a small creek at night on a bridge made of only two widths of wood: "'My poor girl,'" exclaimed the terrified father, 'how will you ever cross this frightful pass?'"¹⁴ Three Negro girls milking in a dairy in Virginia become "three bronze maids";¹⁵ and the evergreen cave where Dally takes Darcy to kill him, though des-

¹²Ibid., II, 90.

¹³Ibid., II, 287.

¹⁴Ibid., I, 44.

¹⁵Ibid., III, 191.

cribed as containing a heap of corn-cobs and redolent of "rum, whiskey, and a negro wardrobe", is nevertheless a "sylvan dwellingplace".¹⁶

Except when Mrs. Trollope chooses to imitate American speech, her diction tends to be pompous, wordy, and silly. Let us look at a passage which reveals this typical weakness; when the Gordons establish themselves in Rochester, their domestic arrangements are at first quite primitive:

The punctilious Robert, who seemed determined to show that the power entrusted to him was well placed, himself handed the coffee-cup, while William followed with the coffee-pot, but it was not without a sigh that he poured the fragrant liquid (on the composition of which he particularly prided himself,) from a great black tin pot. That such a machine should appear before the eyes of Miss Gordon was dreadful; but what could he do? Mr. Gordon smiled at the air with which he handled the unsightly machine.¹⁷

Mrs. Trollope was not of such extravagant sensibility that having coffee poured her from a black tin pot would have been the "dreadful" exposure of an "unsightly machine"; and Mr. Gordon's smile may indicate amusement at Robert's delicacy--but here as elsewhere in Mrs. Trollope's fiction, the distance from the subject to which she intends to remove us by Mr. Gordon's smile is not enough to free her

¹⁶Ibid., III, 230.

¹⁷Ibid., I, 203-04.

from responsibility for her clumsy, silly language. Robert could be a Joseph Andrews sensitive to coffee pots instead of flesh pots, except that Mrs. Trollope never thoroughly repudiates his silliness.

If we look back to the conversation of the host in the Virginia inn,¹⁸ we see that Mrs. Trollope can write directly. Though here, as in most places where she reproduces American speech, the effect is supposed to be amusing, nevertheless it has a directness her own sloppier style lacks. Occasionally conscious of the possibility of making her American material functional, occasionally enough aware of the sound of colloquial speech to reproduce it, still Mrs. Trollope allows herself to introduce American incidents merely to provide humour or topical information and to scribble on in reams of shabby prose.

The American content of the novel has a small effect on Mrs. Trollope's images as well as on her language, though both effects nearly lose themselves in their undistinguished context. In a metaphor that suits her thought, Emily Williams tells Caroline Gordon that she does not wish to speak English as grand as Shakespeare's, for "I expect it would be like serving up corn cakes in

¹⁸See pp. 445 above.

golden dishes."¹⁹ Homely too is the defender of American letters who exclaims, "Byron can no more stand before Paulding than butter before the sun."²⁰ If the freshness and conciseness of these metaphors remains with the reader, it remains partly because of their rare occurrence in The Refugee in America, or indeed in any of Mrs. Trollope's novels.

What we must finally see in Mrs. Trollope's first novel is the work of a writer who has not yet decided between romance and realism; the romance seems largely a literary acquisition, the realism, journalistically attempted in The Domestic Manners of the Americans, a congenial mode. To think that Mrs. Trollope realizes that she mixes the two modes is to exaggerate her sophistication as an author. The influence of romance gradually weakens until in the Barnaby trilogy and in the best of the late novels, like Petticoat Government, it is present in quantities sufficient only to slightly mar the goodness of those books; but none of the novels is wholly free of it. The realism which produces the best parts of The Refugee in America gives Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw all of its interest, makes The Barnabys

¹⁹The Refugee in America, I, 180.

²⁰Ibid., III, 65.

in America a pleasantly Smollettian work, and to some extent redeems novels even as bad as Jessie Phillips; in combination with romance in The Old World and the New, it makes that book, though pale and unsatisfactory, a sort of woman's Swiss Family Robinson.

The plot of The Refugee in America recurs in all Mrs. Trollope's American novels: Europeans, driven to seek either safety or profit in America, meet American barbarity and return to civilization. At least one American marries one of the visitors, making a partial symbolic union between the two cultures. In the sub-plot involving Madame de Clairville, whose husband has died in a settlement on the Red River called Perfect Bliss, Mrs. Trollope duplicates the main plot of The Refugee in America, as she will duplicate that of Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw and that of The Old World and the New.

In The Life and Adventures of Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw Mrs. Trollope delays the appearance of the typical plot in order to give precedence to the abolitionist purpose declared in her dedication: "To those states of the American Union in which slavery has been abolished, or never permitted".²¹ In accordance with the dedication, Mrs. Trollope first attends to the title character, whom

²¹The Life and Adventures of Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw; or Scenes on the Mississippi (London, 1836), iii.

we see growing up to become a spy on the slaves of an establishment working five hundred slaves, Paradise Plantation. The second plot, like the first, concerns abolition: Edward and Lucy Bligh dedicate themselves to teaching Christianity to the slaves; Lucy, destined to marry a European, becomes more the central character than any other. The Steinmarks, a German family (the mother is English) making a fortune in the United States, work out the plot common to the American novels; and in a third plot with an abolitionistic purpose, the slave Juno's white great-grand-daughter, raised in England, returns to Louisiana where she discovers her black ancestry and kills herself because of Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw's attempt to blackmail her.

Jonathan Jefferson is a fairly well realized character. We can trace his origin to hints in The Domestic Manners of the Americans, two connected with his name. In the twelfth chapter of the book Mrs. Trollope discusses a woodcutter whose increasing affluence she watches with pleasure. Though he lives far from the Mississippi, where Jonathan's father makes his start as a woodcutter, the prosperity of the northern woodcutter prefigures that of the elder Whitlaw:

1c. / When I left Mohawk, he had fitted up his half of the building as a hotel and grocery store; and I

have no doubt that every sun that sets sees him a richer man than when it rose. He hopes to make his son a lawyer, and I have little doubt that he will live to see him sit in Congress.²²

A page further in the chapter lies the hint that becomes Jonathan Jefferson himself; Mrs. Trollope buys chickens from a lad who displays the lively avarice of her hero:

When I paid him, he always thrust his hand into his breeches pocket, which I presume, as being the keep, was fortified more strongly than the dilapidated outworks, and drew from thence rather more dollars, half-dollars, levies, and fips, than his dirty little hand could well hold....

"You are very rich, Nick," I said to him one day, on his making an ostentatious display of change, as he called it; he sneered with a most unchildish expression of countenance, and replied, "I guess 'twould be a bad job for I if that was all I'd got to shew."²³

"Jonathan" Mrs. Trollope probably gets from contemporary use of the name to stand for America as "John Bull" stands for England. The condemnation of American sobriety which she begins in The Domestic Manners of the

²²The Domestic Manners of the Americans, 121. We should note in passing that Mrs. Trollope's second travel book like her first contains the germs of important relationships and characters to be amplified in the novels. Belgium and Western Germany in 1833 foreshadows the Widow Barnaby and Major Allen, I, 214; Sophia Martin of The Ward of Thorpe Combe, I, 276-77; and either Agnes Willoughby (The Widow Barnaby) or Bertha Harrington (The Robertses on Their Travels), II, 85-86.

²³The Domestic Manners of the Americans, 122-23.

Americans, "How often did our homely adage recur to me, 'All work, and no play, would make Jack a dull boy;' Jonathan is a very dull boy",²⁴ suggests how natural a name was "Jonathan" for an American hero-villain. Similarly, "Jefferson" is appropriate for a spy on the slaves, for in The Domestic Manners of the Americans Mrs. Trollope testifies her belief that Thomas Jefferson debauched his slaves:

The great, the immortal Jefferson himself, he who when past the threescore years and ten, still taught young females to obey his nod, and so became the father of un-numbered generations of groaning slaves, what was his matin and his vesper hymn? "All men are born free and equal?"²⁵

At an early age Jonathan shows signs of his predecessor Nick; from forays on board passing riverboats he returns to his aunt, "with nearly all his scanty garments held up in a most firm and careful grasp, lest the biscuits, raisins, apples, and cents, bestowed on him by the passengers, should escape."²⁶ As for his father, like the woodsman of Mohawk, "No wood was so well cut and so well 'sawed' as Whitlaw's; no woodsman was so ready in counting, so quick in settling, and so every way convenient for men in a hurry to deal with as this our fortune-

²⁴Ibid., 305.

²⁵Ibid., 317.

²⁶Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw, I, 28.

favoured squatter."²⁷

Had Mrs. Trollope focussed her attention on the plot involving Whitlaw's growth into thorough viciousness instead of fragmenting her interest between the several plots she mixes together, she might well have written a successful polemic novel. As her book stands, its unsteady attention to the problem of slavery makes it far inferior to Mrs. Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin, which follows Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw a long sixteen years later. The slave who figures most prominently in Mrs. Trollope's book, old Juno, is so well educated that half the time she speaks in doggerel; and her antycedents are more e/ likely to be among the explained witches of gothic romances than among Negroes who actually slaved in the fields.

When Mrs. Stowe makes Uncle Tom's Cabin a vehicle for abolitionist propaganda, she has slaves figure as the sympathetic characters; she depicts not only evil but good slave owners, in order to minimize arguments against the fairness of the picture; and, though perhaps no more Christian than Mrs. Trollope (whose depiction of Edward Bligh passively wishing for martyrdom is somewhat convincing), she presents a gentle doctrine of passive resistance. If her book has a weakness, it is the re-

²⁷Ibid., I, 29.

sult of her tending to see Negroes as comic characters, a natural, defensive way of looking at them if she was to persuade people of the value of emancipation, and one suggested by that resort to self-deprecating comedy employed even today by Negroes.

The two slaves who belonged to the Blighs, it is true, are sympathetic and passively Christian; but Phebe first serves as victim for Jonathan Jefferson, and the two together make only minor appendages to the party of Lucy Bligh and the Steinmarks as they flee America. Those who own slaves are necessarily evil, and the one slave to whom most attention is given, Juno, instigates the violent (if deserved) murder of Whitlaw. Lacking both Mrs. Stowe's tact and her concentration, in Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw Mrs. Trollope writes sadly ineffective polemic but in the bargain creates fiction so grim that her critics protest.²⁸ We cannot agree with Michael Sadleir that the book "is to the modern reader one of the most satisfying of her novels."²⁹

²⁸The Athenaeum, for instance, complains, 4 July 1836, p.462, "We do doubt the expediency of making the abominations of slavery, and their consequences, the theme of a novel. If we are to read of cruel overseers, and licentious clerks, and a brutalized race of human creatures degraded into property, let it be in the grave and calm pages of the advocate or the historian; but do not let them disfigure the fairyland of fiction."

²⁹Michael Sadleir, Trollope. A Commentary (London, 1927), 85.

If in The Refugee in America we occasionally notice relics of the travel book--here explanation of the spit curl,³⁰ there translation of the term "slang wanger",³¹-- we may excuse them as natural in a novelist whose first novel follows a travel book and has the same setting. Four years later, though, we could anticipate that the traces would diminish; they do not. From early in Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw, when Mr. Whitlaw fills his cheek with tobacco and settles "himself in his ill-fitting attire with sundry of those jerks and tugs incomprehensible to all who have not looked at the natives of the New World face to face,"³² through occasional pauses for elaboration on American habits, "'Like a queen' (a simile, by the way, much oftener made use of in the republic of America than in all the kingdoms and queendoms of Europe),"³³ to the end of the book:

Neither Edward nor Lucy had ever seen the ocean; a circumstance by no means uncommon to the uncommercial portion of the inhabitants of Kentucky;-- indeed, the proportion of females in that state who have seen the sea, to those who have not, may be fairly stated as about one to a hundred.³⁴

³⁰The Refugee in America, II, 152.

³¹Ibid., II, 140.

³²Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw, I, 8.

³³Ibid., I, 63.

³⁴Ibid., III, 233.

Mrs. Trollope deposits the remains of her experience. Some of these certainly help to give the setting verisimilitude; others interrupt the story. None, however, is so blatant or so extended as the narrative about Sam Patch's bear in The Refugee in America.

If the modern reader can enjoy Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw in spite of Mrs. Trollope's fragmented attention, he may yet have difficulty enduring her diction. The Whitlaws, as rustic characters as Mrs. Trollope gives us, cannot eat their first meal on the bank of the creek Jonathan Whitlaw selects for his fueling station without Mrs. Trollope's describing their eating in the terms she would use to describe a meal enjoyed by Caroline Gordon and her father:

1c. The herring, as it hung suspended over the flame from the ingenious machine erected for it, sent forth an odour so powerful and enticing, that when it reached the nostrils of the half-famished Portia, she rose with renovated strength, and approached the manifold comforts of the blazing fire. The three weary and hungry wanderers then sat down around it, and devoured their repast with as great a degree of enjoyment as it is possible for the act of eating to bestow; and even the dog, though in general expected to provide his own meals, was not forgotten. To complete the luxury of the banquet, Jonathan dipped their one precious iron crock into the muddiest but sweetest of streams, and having boiled it, permitted the ladies, in compliance with the delicacy of their ordinary habits, to mix it, in the proportion of half and half, with the one and only liquid which he deemed wor-

thy to enter the lips of a free-born man.³⁵

Such a style as Mrs. Trollope uses here is obviously designed for the easy filling of a three-volume novel, but is it anything more? Let us acknowledge it as an attempt at humour. "Ladies" assures us of Mrs. Trollope's satirical intent, for in The Domestic Manners of the Americans she notes the Americans' overly general use of the word; Whitlaw's opinions on the proper drink for a free man, too, reveal Mrs. Trollope's scorn for his species. With this much knowledge of her intent in the passage, we can see that her calling the twig which suspends the herring an "ingenious machine", or referring to the muddy water and whiskey as the "luxury" which completes the "banquet" is a clumsy attempt at mock-heroic. She would have us aware that she is deliberately treating the low in an unsuitably elevated way.

Unfortunately, in Mrs. Trollope's hands the mock-heroic seldom takes a more satisfying form than the description of the Whitlaws' meal: always the reader remains in doubt about the satirical intention. Even when the Widow Barnaby indulges in obvious excesses, though generally conscious that Mrs. Trollope holds such excesses up to scorn, we are also aware that she relishes descri-

³⁵Ibid., I, 18-19.

bing them. If she enjoyed describing them a little less, if she could stop using great latinate words to describe simple actions, or if she could choose words so absurd that seeing them we would have to laugh, then her satire would wholly succeed. Too comfortable in its own mocking verbosity, however, it vaguely dissatisfies us with Mrs. Trollope, though we perceive her intent.

Is Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw a better novel than The Refugee in America? Yes, for several reasons: at the greater remove from her experience, Mrs. Trollope has less inclination to interpolate close approximations of her own experience into the story. The picture of the Whitlaws, for all of the verbosity with which it is drawn, convinces; if Mrs. Trollope could have limited the novel to treating them, it would be a far better book. The plot, though melodramatic in Colonel Dart's and Selina Croft's death scenes (with the exception of the discovery of dead Squire Mowbray in The Vicar of Wrexhill, Mrs. Trollope's death scenes tend to be bad) as in Whitlaw's attempts to seduce Phebe and in its violent conclusion, has more probability about it than the plot of The Refugee in America. Finally, though this is not an artistic improvement, Mrs. Trollope's generous purpose in Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw must make us respect her integrity as no seriousness in the earlier novel

makes us. Though Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw is less effective polemic than either Harriet Martineau's The Hour and the Man or Uncle Tom's Cabin, unlike her two successors Mrs. Trollope made no claim to being a professional reformer; if Mrs. Stowe had not written Uncle Tom's Cabin, we would give Mrs. Trollope far more credit than we do.

If the frame of Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw creaks when Mrs. Trollope shifts her weight from one beam to another of the plot, the creaking reveals an awareness we had little knowledge of in the earlier novel: "Some apology may be due to the reader for having so long detained him in a scene which has so little to excite either interest or sympathy, but the character of my hero would have been incomplete without it";³⁶ and again,

A story is but ill constructed when the re-
later is obliged to retrograde, yet it is sometimes
very difficult to avoid it; and I believe it will
be impossible to give the reader a necessary insight
into the character of some of the personages the
most important in my story, without referring to
events which had passed before the time it comprises
had begun.³⁷

Clumsy in themselves, the explanations suggest that, seeing so much of the sloppiness with which she constructed

³⁶Ibid., I, 78.

³⁷Ibid., I, 161.

her story, Mrs. Trollope could have mended it had she taken the time and trouble. Her never troubling is what limits her work.

Lively and rollicking, The Barnabys in America shows us a Mrs. Trollope in contrast to the author of Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw. So self-assured is she that she risks identifying herself with the vulgar Widow Barnaby by not only sending her on a journey to some of the places she herself described twelve years earlier, but by making the widow write just such a pre-arranged travel book as Mrs. Trollope was sometimes accused of writing.³⁸ Mrs. Trollope's bravado in making Mrs. Barnaby a scribbling American traveller may have contributed to the extinction of her reputation; but the result in The Barnabys in America is a high-spirited and amusing book, even if its crudely episodic structure keeps it from being more than a passable novel. In this chapter I discuss it less amply than it deserves, but only because it receives fuller treatment in later chapters than the other American novels.

Having established Mrs. Barnaby and Major Allen

³⁸In a generally harsh review of Paris and the Parisians in 1835, Fraser's critic remarks, February 1836, p.210, "Mrs. Trollope, we believe, has done other things besides travels "to order," as the tradesman's phrase runs, for the booksellers; but if these had their hour, it was very noiselessly".

as epitomes of vulgarity in both The Widow Barnaby and The Widow Married, in The Barnabys in America Mrs. Trollope plays them off against an entire people as roguish and vulgar as themselves. If the Barnabys succeed in gulling their hosts and escaping back to Europe, we understand that they owe their success only to the accident of being slightly cleverer and quicker and luckier than the Americans. And of course they are quick to learn the best ways of discomfiting the Americans--ways suggested by the foibles treated in The Domestic Manners of the Americans. Do the Americans feel prickly at their visitors' failure to be impressed? Let Mrs. Barnaby offer to glorify them in a travel book. Do slave owners growl defensively at outsiders who may disapprove? Let the widow offer to laud slavery in her book. Do northern ladies value preachers inordinately? Let Major Allen, gambler and cheat as he has only recently shown himself in The Widow Married, have no difficulty in offering himself as shepherd to the sheep of Needle Steeple congregation.

But Mrs. Trollope does more than merely play upon the foibles of her former hosts; she even makes the regionality of the foibles work in her story. The splendid dress which assures Mrs. Barnaby's southern hosts of her quality at first makes the Quakers of Philadelphia dubious of her frivolity. The enthusiasm for America

which warms southerners to the Barnabys leaves New York financiers hostile to Major Allen until he pretends to consider investing in the country.

In the earlier American novels we are aware that most Europeans are to be understood as better than most Americans; in The Barnabys in America, despite the general ebullience of the book, we see good characters, English and American, more or less surrounded by their wicked fellows--almost all southerners are slave-owners, almost all northerners are conniving financiers, almost all Englishmen are Major Allens and Mrs. Barnabys, out to get whatever they can from whoever presents himself. In such a context the young Englishman, Frederic Egerton's courtship of the young American, Annie Beauchamp, though potentially a symbolic reconciliation of England and America, really means little more than any two decent persons making a union in the midst of a hostile world.

It would be easy to exaggerate the wickedness of the world of The Barnabys in America, except that most of the widow's and the major's roguery they commit with the air of children at play rather than in any more desperate way. From the introductory chapter, in which Mrs. Trollope owns to pride of parenthood for even so disreputable a child as the Widow Barnaby, onward, the narration bears a certain complicity in the widow's

escapades that wholly compensates for the wickedness of most of the novel's characters. The pseudo-scientific air of Mrs. Trollope's analysis of Major Allen's behavior almost demands a smile:

It is, I believe, a notorious fact in natural history, that whatever instinct or faculty nature has bestowed upon an animal with predominating strength, causes in its exercise the most decided gratification; and it would be difficult to bring in evidence a stronger confirmation of this interesting phenomenon, than the state of feeling produced on the mind of Mr. O'Donagough by the act of lying. His spirits seemed to rise, his faculties seemed to expand themselves; his features assumed a look of animation and intelligence, inconceivably beyond what they ever manifested at any other time; and if the observer's eye could have gone deeper and penetrated to his heart, it would have been found gaily bounding in his bosom in a sort of triumphant jubilee at the bold feats of his undaunted tongue.³⁹

This apology for lying sets the tone of much of the book.

Mrs. Barnaby sets herself to writing her American travel book, or at least to sketching a prospectus to that work for her southern hosts, with much of the major's own swelling confidence:

"It would be just as easy for me to write all truth as all lies, about this queer place, and all these monstrous odd people. But wouldn't I be a fool if I did any such thing?--and is it one bit more trouble to write all these monstrous fine words, just like what I have read over, and over again, in novels,--is it one bit more trouble, I should like to know, writing them all in one sense instead of the other?"

Mrs. Allen Barnaby suspended her soliloquy at this point, and began leisurely and critically to

³⁹The Barnabys in America (London, 1843), I, 41.

read what she had written. She smiled--as perhaps only authors smile, as she perused the sentences which she had composed.

"I have always succeeded in every thing that I attempted to do," she said, with a feeling of triumphant confidence which made her grasp her pen firmly, and replenish it with ink as confidently as ever soldier drew his sword, or cocked his pistol; and again she wrote.⁴⁰

Mrs. Trollope merrily savours the over-weening attitude the widow assumes once she has begun to be lionized by the slave-owners:

But in all this there was something that nobody had ever seen before; a blending of condescension and indifference; an eye that seemed not fully conscious of the identity of the objects over which it glanced; an air of superiority softened by benevolence; and, finally, a look of gentle tenderness when she turned toward her husband, that seemed to indicate that she recognized in him a being who in some degree at least approached to an equality of condition with herself.⁴¹

Though the Perkinses share little in the Barnabys' triumph, even Mrs. Trollope's account of Matilda's great American expectations has, despite its sad burden, much of the merriment of the whole book:

Having a general idea that a certain letter concerning Australia, which she had heard greatly admired, was somehow or other about America, she could not but recall with interest the historical fact therein mentioned, which records that marriageable females arriving from the motherland were so eagerly sought in wedlock there, that proposals were made to them as they approached the land through speak-

⁴⁰Ibid., II, 26-27.

⁴¹Ibid., II, 92-93.

ing-trumpets. Had this circumstance been recalled to the mind of Miss Matilda as one which had influenced her wish to leave England, it is highly probable that she would have rejected the suggestion with disdain, and have declared herself not such a fool, as to take for earnest, what was perhaps written in jest.

It is, however, unquestionably certain that there had been moments in the course of the last ten years of Matilda Perkins' existence, during which this graphic image of abounding husbands had returned again and again to her fancy, throwing a sort of El Dorado halo around the name of America, which had not been without its effect.⁴²

There are enough happy passages in The Barnabys in America almost to compensate for its defective structure, in which though the Barnabys proceed on their episodic adventures, Egerton's and Annie Beauchamp's affair hangs suspended during much of the book and a slave rebellion almost irrelevantly matures. America was an ideal place to send the Barnabys; their return to Europe could probably have produced no further adventures so vivid as those in America, as the later career of the Robertses, surrogate Barnabys, in The Robertses on Their Travels, suggests.

The thirteen years between Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw and The Old World and the New contain much of Mrs. Trollope's best work, and of course they remove her yet further from her American experience. The Refugee in America took Caroline Gordon and her father to Rochester,

⁴²Ibid., I, 86-87.

a relative approximation to the more remote Cincinnati where Mrs. Trollope spent the great part of her American visit; in Rochester they suffered the same boredom and incivility which Mrs. Trollope testified to in The Domestic Manners of the Americans. Again in The Old World and the New the heroine, Katherine Smith, goes, not to Rochester, but to Cincinnati itself, where, in an inversion of Mrs. Trollope's own experience, she makes a great material success from moderate means. The American she finally marries turns out no American at all but the fiancé she believed rejected her when she needed him; and though she returns to England, her affection for the cousins with whom she travelled is so great that the future will see almost annual trips between the two countries.

But is the America of The Old World and the New the country that Caroline Gordon, Lucy Bligh, and Annie Beauchamp left so readily? We shall see that it is instead a nineteenth century forest of Arden, a pastoral place designed for making easy agricultural fortunes, for finding lost lovers in strange disguises, and for meeting the odd people who belong to such a world.

The plot of The Old World and the New is far simpler than those of The Refugee in America and Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw: because Captain Stormont has overspent

his means and because his cousin Katherine believes that her fiancé reacted harshly to her suggestion that marrying her promptly would give him opportunity to help Stormont, the Stormonts and Katherine emigrate to America. Everything they may need in their new life Katherine secretly arranges to have shipped to America, servants, furniture, silver service, the lot, so that the American comfort of the Stormont establishment is like a planned variety of the comfort enjoyed by the Swiss family Robinson.

As the American farm begins to prosper, Mrs. Trollope pads out the story with letters from Clementina Maitland, who so revels in revolution in Paris that her breathless foolish reports contrast with anything the Stormonts and Katherine are able to imagine. In time Katherine discovers that the Indian Oranego whose courtship she has tried to discourage is her old fiancé Warburton; ashamed at having misjudged his faithfulness, she happily re-accepts him. Properly chastened by watching him obey her in over-faithful attendance on Miss Maitland, whom the excess of revolution temporarily drives to America, like the heroine of a Shakespearian comedy Katherine finally marries into happiness.

Though Mrs. Trollope's transformation of America into America-Arden may mean little more than an exaggera-

tion of her normal Romantic inclination, she occasionally hints at the literary nature of the world of the novel. When Katherine feels compassion for ugly Oranego, the author writes, "It was perhaps a little like the pity that Phoebe felt for Silvius, when she answered his passionate love by saying, 'Why I am sorry for thee, gentle Silvius.'"⁴³ In the final volume of the novel, Warburton describes his desolation when Katherine left for America, "Your desertion converted me into the melancholy Jaques sort of personage, that I became after your departure."⁴⁴ Captain Stormont quite believes that he can make his American land into a suitable Arden for an enterprising man: "One steady week's work will make these well dug acres look like a bit of landscape garden-ground snatched out of Paradise."⁴⁵

The treats of The Old World and the New occur in passages which may be padding. Greatest of these is the amusing description of England's defeat upon invading

⁴³The Old World and the New (London, 1849), II, 290. Allusions to Samson Agonistes (I, 75), The Taming of the Shrew (I, 139), Hamlet (I, 230; III, 59), Othello (II, 99), Macbeth (II, 187), and I Henry IV (III, 193) contribute to the unreal, sometimes literary air of the novel; if Mrs. Trollope were less given to casual allusion, they might mean more here (numbers refer to volumes and pages of the novel).

⁴⁴The Old World and the New, III, 199.

⁴⁵Ibid., II, 185.

Ireland, reported by one of the Americans Stormont meets as he hunts for a suitable farm. For once Mrs. Trollope comically transforms that American spite against the English which she describes in The Domestic Manners of the Americans and The Refugee in America:

The forces of the Queen, sir, have, for the most part, been driven into the sea; and the Duke of Wellington, who headed the English invasion of glorious old Ireland in person, was taken prisoner, just as he was in the act of forcing his old Waterloo horse to take to the water, in the hope of making him swim back to the man-of-war that had brought him over. And just at the very moment that the old gentleman had given up his sword to one of the O'Connell family, and yielded himself prisoner, rescue or no rescue, the man-of-war was blown into the air in consequence of a match having been thrown into the powder-room, through an open window, by the admirable skill and courage of an Irish patriot, who had floated himself out for the purpose, they say, upon the house-door of the Lord Lieutenant.⁴⁶

Besides making her final comment upon American insularity in The Old World and the New, Mrs. Trollope draws her most appealing American poet. Before Aspasia Wainwright, though Mrs. Trollope scathingly recorded American poetic aspirations and had American poetry read in the salons of both Charles Chesterfield and The Blue Belles of England, she had not created so absurd and foolishly life-like a girl:

Just you think, Katherine, what I must have felt, as I sat in the forest one day all alone, with

⁴⁶ Ibid., I, 226.

nothing to do, and nothing better to comfort me than just pulling up handfuls of the long spike-grass, and letting it grow into a big heap on one side of me. And I remember that I had a sort of horrid notion, that when it was big enough, I should like to lie down and bury my face in it, and so die, because I could not breathe any longer.⁴⁷

Although Mrs. Trollope twice⁴⁸ assures us that by now the way to America is well known enough for her to spare us further information of the sort appropriate to a travelogue, the unpleasantness of American speech can still provoke rebuke:

I have seen the beauty, the sweetness, ay, and the look of intelligence too, of American ladies, which, till they spoke, had left no rival near them, vanish and melt away under the influence of a nasal twang, and a Yankee accent, as effectually as if an evil-minded fairy had transformed them into so many round-about Dutch women.⁴⁹

In the pages following the comment upon speech, too, Mrs. Trollope discusses American courting habits⁵⁰ as if she had yet to distinguish between the novel and the travel book.

Of course the novel lacks wholeness. The Parisian letters, though they contrast nicely with the Stormonts' idyllic life in America, are extraneous; and Mrs. Trol-

⁴⁷Ibid., III, 64.

⁴⁸Ibid., I, 166 and I, 275.

⁴⁹Ibid., II, 284.

⁵⁰Ibid., II, 285-86.

lope's obligation to fill a three-volume novel makes her spend the last hundred pages recounting Warburton's reactions to Katherine's departure for America, one of the very few times when lack of incident makes the reader conscious that the bulk of her book inconveniences Mrs. Trollope. The transformation of America into America-Arden, though an interesting softening of Mrs. Trollope's earlier views of the country, wants that vivacity which makes The Barnabys in America so pleasant a novel.

In all of the novels we have discussed in this chapter except The Barnabys in America, and indeed in the great majority of Mrs. Trollope's novels, we are dealing with something to which C.S.Lewis directs our attention when he tries to determine what keeps She from being a romance of the highest order:

The continuous poverty of style...a sloth or incompetence of writing whereby the author is content always with a vague approximation to the emotion, the reflection, or the image he intends, so that a certain smudging and banality is spread over all.⁵¹

In a novel like The Barnabys in America Mrs. Trollope imparts sufficient life to her story to make us forget in how great poverty of style she nearly always writes; but in other of her novels often the smudging and banality rob her moral judgments of their force and debilitate her vivacity.

⁵¹C.S.Lewis, "High and Low Brows" in Rehabilitations (London, 1939), 101.

The American material of the novels we have been considering offers both a scene sufficiently strange to make Mrs. Trollope more perceptive than in many of her European novels and a terra incognita upon which, all too often, she is prone to offer the comforting inanities of a travelogue. We shall discover that the tendency she shows in the four American novels to rewrite the same plot appears in nearly all her books, though the formula which she uses for most of the novels is necessarily more flexible than the plot common to the American novels.

Chapter 3: Mrs. Trollope and Drama

For the production of great quantities of fiction, the mediocre writer may either rewrite his plots under slightly different guises and perhaps with varying emphasis, as we have seen Mrs. Trollope rewriting her American plot, or he may resort to a somewhat more flexible convention for repeating as large a proportion of his book as possible. Mrs. Trollope adopts a convention essentially theatrical in which stock characters perform their roles with much stylized gesture and melodramatic flourish.

Though none of Mrs. Trollope's contemporaries wrote plays which have become a part of our repertoire, her theatrical way of writing fiction was anything but an anomaly in her time. In Fiction for the Working Man, 1830-1850, Louis James notes the close relationship between working men's fiction and drama, remarking that the two genres shared conventions and even authors.¹ In The Silver-Fork School, M.W. Rosa observes that the writers of novels of fashionable life nearly approached Restoration dramatists in their treatment of characters and social strata;² while the reader of Mrs. Gore's no-

¹Louis James, Fiction for the Working Man, 1830-1850 (London, 1963), 146-50.

²M.W. Rosa, The Silver-Fork School: Novels of Fashion Preceding Vanity Fair (New York, 1936), 16 and 41. The

vels is hardly surprised to discover her the author of successful plays as well as novels of high life. Charles Robert Maturin tried writing plays before finding fiction his most satisfactory medium, and Mrs. Trollope's fellow contributors to the New Monthly Magazine, Theodore Hook and John Poole, earned their reputations more with their plays than with their stories. While I cannot claim for Mrs. Trollope that she made theatrical writing in even the best of her novels the successful medium which in The Dickens Theatre Robert Garis finds Dickens making it, nevertheless in noticing Mrs. Trollope's affinities with the theatre but her failure to produce a single play we can learn something perhaps insufficiently emphasized about the fiction of her time.

Mrs. Trollope maintained a long and animated interest in the theatre. This interest we shall trace in her attendance at performances of plays, in her acquaintance with people involved in theatrical affairs, in her participation in amateur theatricals, in the theatrical knowledge revealed by her novels, and in the convention of the novels. Before investigating the extent

common ground between the writers Rosa treats, all of whom Henry Colburn published, and Mrs. Trollope, whom he published from 1840 until he went out of business, is considerable, though Mrs. Trollope does not quite fit the pattern of the novelists Rosa considers.

of Mrs. Trollope's theatrical knowledge, however, we had best refresh ourselves about the condition of the drama in the first third of the nineteenth century.

For reasons too various and problematical for us to explore them here,³ legitimate drama--formal tragedy and comedy--of the period was in a sorry state. In popularity of reception as in energy of production, traditional forms of the drama gave place to melodrama, which brought with it a variety of innovations affecting even the older sorts of plays: scenic elaboration; music, originally introduced to distinguish plays performed at theatres other than those licensed to present legitimate drama; and over-simplified characterization. At first typical of the illegitimate drama, the innovations naturally affected the production of traditional tragedies and comedies as well.

Though amusing in its assumption of national superiority, the introduction to an English translation of Scribe's Lestocq in Cumberland's British Theatre suggests the importance Mrs. Trollope's contemporaries ascribed to scenic elaboration:

The contracted size of the French theatres, and the parsimonious economy of their managers, forbid anything like a magnificent spectacle. Nothing can be more trumpery than their scenery and

³See Allardyce Nicoll, Early Nineteenth Century Drama (Cambridge, 1955).

stage appointments; while their costume displays a heterogeneous jumble of all nations and times. A marble wig, stone helmet, steel waistcoat, and a pair of tin breeches for the ghost, would hardly astonish a Parisian audience....Yet the modern French stage has many redeeming qualities in its delightful vaudevilles and pleasing operas. *Lestocq*, with its beautiful music by Auber, independent of the superadded charms of scenery and decoration so magnificently lavished upon it by the English manager, lays us under very peculiar obligations for an intellectual treat of no common kind.⁴

Though the use of stereotyped characters in drama is hardly peculiar to our period, it was so notable that even as early as 1818 Richard Brinsley Peake has a manager in his farce, Amateurs and Actors, engage his actors according to the types they normally play: the manager, Bustle, explains that, "For the serious business I have written to a Mr. Berry, an elderly man;"⁵ he refers to "Mr. Altitude, our harlequin",⁶ and greets one of his principals, "Ah, my tragedy heroine, I suppose!"⁷

But more than merely the parts were typed: the author of The Actor's Handbook and Guide to the stage for

⁴George MacFarren, Lestocq; or, the Fete at the Hermitage: An Historical Opera, pp. 5-6, in Cumberland's British Theatre, XXXIII. MacFarren's version was written in 1835; Mrs. Trollope admired Scribe's plays, many of which she saw performed in French on the continent.

⁵R. B. Peake, Amateurs and Actors, Dicks' Standard Plays, Number 962 (London, [1886]), 8.

⁶Ibid., 5.

⁷Ibid., 6.

amateurs, published by the producer of one of the large nineteenth century series of acting editions of plays, John Dicks, sets out extensive descriptions of how actors must show the various passions; here, for instance, is jealousy:

Jealousy, which is a mixture of passions, directly contrary to one another, can only justly be represented by one who is capable of delineating all those passions by turns. Jealousy shows itself by restlessness, peevishness, thoughtfulness, anxiety, absence of mind, &c; sometimes it bursts out in piteous complaint and weeping; then a gleam of hope, that all is yet well, lights the countenance into a momentary smile. Immediately the face clouded with gloom shows the mind overcast again with horrid suspicions and frightful imaginations. Then the arms are folded upon the breast, the fists violently clenched, the rolling eyes darting fury (Othello). ...He throws himself upon the ground, then he springs up, and with perturbed looks and actions, rails against all womankind (Castalia, in "The Orphan"). As poets have variously described this passion, an actor must accordingly vary his representation of it. As he must frequently fall upon the ground, he should previously raise both hands clasped together, in order to denote anguish, and which will at the same time prevent him from hurting himself; he must then fall flat, either on his face or on his side, with his face to the audience; for it would be ridiculous to see a man, who is supposed to be tormented with grief and fury, quietly lie down. This fall must be repeatedly studied, it being necessary in a variety of characters, and in the delineation of various passions and affections of the mind.⁸

Foolish as such instructions may seem, the more closely we examine Mrs. Trollope's fiction, the more clearly we shall see that though she obviously does not write with

⁸The Old Stager, The Actor's Handbook and Guide to the stage for amateurs (London, n.d.), 22.

The Old Stager's Handbook beside her as a primer, her principles for conveying character and passion depend upon exaggeration little more sophisticated than what he recommends.

How early Mrs. Trollope became interested in the theatre we cannot say, though in a letter dated 28 February 1809, months before he married Frances Milton, Thomas Anthony Trollope wrote to her describing the burning of Drury Lane Theatre, which he saw.⁹ It is certainly more significant that William Macready numbered among the Trollopes' frequent visitors,¹⁰ and that though their finances afforded seats only in the pit, dour Thomas Anthony was "prevailed upon to undertake an occasional visit to the theatre."¹¹ A visit to France, before 1824, in a far different style, gave Mrs. Trollope opportunity to see Talma and Mademoiselle Mars perform in Paris, and, at Lafayette's country home, to hear M. de Ségur read tragedies as a part of the entertainment.¹²

When Frances Trollope introduced herself to the

⁹Frances Eleanor Trollope, Frances Trollope, I, 34.

¹⁰Eileen Bigland, The Indomitable Mrs. Trollope (London, 1953), 11.

¹¹Ibid., 18. See also T.A. Trollope, What I Remember (London, 1887-89), I, 25.

¹²Frances Eleanor Trollope, Frances Trollope, I, 66 and 72.

publishers Whittaker and Treacher by the agency of a letter from Mary Russell Mitford, who had known Mrs. Trollope since 1802,¹³ the two women reversed the roles they had played in bringing Miss Mitford's play Rienzi to the attention of managers: in the spring and summer of 1826 Mrs. Trollope approached Macready and Kean about the production of the play. She spoke to Kean but could get nothing from him;¹⁴ Macready, whom she invited to spend the day at Harrow and whom she hounded even to Paris, eventually took Rienzi to America with him.¹⁵

¹³ A.G. L'Estrange, The Friendships of Mary Russell Mitford, I, 8.

¹⁴ Ibid., 158-60.

¹⁵ Ibid., I, 159-62, 164-66. Mrs. Trollope writes with familiarity of both actors, Monday 15th May 1826: "The first thing I did after my return was to see my Kean friend.... I then waited for the coming of Mr. Macready, and as soon as I heard that he was in town I wrote to him, asking him to come here to pass a day with us.... Again and again he was prevented, but yesterday he came, and our dear Marianne with him" (I, 160). Mrs. Trollope's assistance probably mattered fairly little, for though Miss Mitford began Rienzi at Macready's instigation and revised it according to his instructions under the mistaken impression that he would produce it, they quarrelled bitterly when he did not. See Vera Watson, Mary Russell Mitford (London, [1949]), 161, 165-67.

Mrs. Trollope saw Rienzi performed in New York, where despite poor acting she was delighted: see The Domestic Manners of the Americans, 339-40. Earlier, when she had accompanied Miss Mitford to a performance of her Foscari, Miss Mitford wrote to her mother, 5 November 1826, "Mrs. Trollope, between joy for my triumph and sympathy with the play, has cried herself half blind." A.G. L'Estrange, Life of Miss Mitford (London, 1870), II, 233.

To Miss Mitford Mrs. Trollope confided news of home theatricals:

Perhaps you will hear that we have been amusing ourselves during the boys' holidays by acting plays. Do not, however, fancy that I have been representing the Margravine in little. Our theatre is made in our drawing-room, and the object of it was to improve the French pronunciation of our children by getting up scenes from Moliere. We have a French friend, who plays with us, and it is really astonishing how much they have got on by his aid.¹⁶

She elaborated on the staging to Thomas Adolphus, in school at Winchester:

In the Femmes Savantes we fitted up the stage with every kind of thing you can imagine fit to fill the drawing room of a blue lady,--books, maps, MSS., etc. Upon the white curtain opposite the windows, were fixed engravings, and two little tables loaded with quartos were placed under them. All this, well shewn by the light of the lamps, had a very good effect, and we left the audience several minutes to admire it after the curtain drew up, before we made our entree. The clapping was prodigious!¹⁷

Setting aside her drawing-room for the theatricals was normal procedure for Mrs. Trollope: three later accounts of her involvement in theatrical performances

¹⁶ A.G.L'Estrange, The Friendships of Mary Russell Mitford, I, 167-68. Though undated the letter must have been written at the time of the one Mrs. Trollope sent to Thomas Adolphus in October 1826. The French friend was almost certainly Hervieu, to one of whose paintings Mrs. Trollope draws Miss Mitford's attention in the next letter L'Estrange collected. The identification is the more likely when we consider Hervieu's theatrical activities in Cincinnati: see below.

¹⁷ F.E.Trollope, Frances Trollope, I, 89-90, a letter dated October 1826.

exist, and some of her books record a knowledge of such affairs. Only in Cincinnati did her interest result in performances of a very public sort: for the waxworks museum of Joseph Dorfeuille, Mrs. Trollope first provided the services of Henry Trollope to be the multi-lingual oracle, The Invisible Woman, and the art of Hervieu to enhance the general effect of the exhibition.¹⁸ Later, more extravagantly, she furnished Dorfeuille with the idea of illustrating scenes from Dante's Inferno: she composed appropriate verses, Hervieu worked on scenic effects, and the young American Hiram Powers, not yet the sculptor Mrs. Trollope would encourage in The Domestic Manners of the Americans and A Visit to Italy, assisted with the waxworks.¹⁹

Some time after Mrs. Trollope became more occupied with her Bazaar than with the projects of Dorfeuille, when her goods had been seized and any effort she expended must have been rather to recoup her losses than to turn a profit, Mrs. Trollope used the great room at the Bazaar for a series of evening entertainments which in-

¹⁸ Donald Smalley, Introduction to The Domestic Manners of the Americans, xxvii-xxviii. ✓

¹⁹ Ibid., xxviii-xxxiv. See also T.A. Trollope, What I Remember, I, 176-78.

cluded theatrical recitation by local and imported actors.²⁰ Though Donald Smalley reasonably doubts the accuracy of Joseph Cowell, a comedian who acted in one of these performances, his recollection of Mrs. Trollope's enthusiastic scheming for future theatrical activity has so much the ring of the conversation of Mrs. Trollope's scheming women, particularly Mrs. Barnaby, that we must assume Cowell to have known The Widow Barnaby when he compiled his memoirs, or we must accept the account as fairly accurate. Cowell did not enjoy the fragmentary part he was given in the evening's affairs, which were a mixture of music and recitation rather than the performance of a whole play; afterwards he hinted his dissatisfaction to Mrs. Trollope, who rose to the occasion:

"As to a regular theatre, just step this way, and I'll show you what I intend to do."

And away the bustling little lady went, and I at her heels.

"Now you see, Mr. Cowell, I'll have the dais enlarged, and made on a declivity; and then I'll have beautiful scenes painted in oil colours, so that they can be washed every morning and kept clean. I have a wonderfully talented French painter, whom I brought with me, but the people here don't appreciate him, and this will help to bring him into notice. And then I'll have a hole cut here," describing a square on the floor with her toe; "and then a geometrical staircase for the artistes to ascend perpendicularly," twirling round and round her finger, "instead of having to walk through the audience part of the area. Or," said

²⁰Ibid., xlv-xlix.

she, after a pause, "I'll tell you what will be as well, and not so costly. I'll have some canvass nailed along the ceiling, on this side, to form a passage to lead to the stage; Mr. Hervieu can paint it like damask, with a large gold border, and it would have a fine effect!"²¹

Reading Cowell's account, we cannot help but connect Mrs. Trollope's solicitude here for Hervieu's welfare with the care she took to write to Miss Mitford about his picture; and the remarkable buoyancy of the plans for the theatre (plans elaborated only days before the more modest theatrical activities Mrs. Trollope had already arranged ended in failure), cleverly improvised for both cheapness and effect, make Mrs. Trollope seem very close indeed to Mrs. Barnaby in all but selfishness. Even the French "artistes" matches Mrs. Trollope's normal usage, while "I'll tell you what will be as well, and not so costly," could come directly from the good widow.

As we have no diaries to give us a full idea of Mrs. Trollope's theatrical activities, we must turn to her travel books for information; but though they provide an ample record of theatre-going, they mention only one instance of private theatricals--when Henry Trollope, acting in the farce Bombastes Furioso in Ostend, was so severely wounded through the thigh in a sword fight that the Trollopes' intended visit of three days was extended

²¹Joseph Cowell, Thirty Years Passed among the Players in England and America (New York, 1845), 89.

to ten.²² Once Mrs. Trollope and Thomas Adolphus had settled in Florence, the regularity of their life gave more opportunity for private acting; her son recalls Mrs. Trollope's success as an actress,

Among the other things that contributed to make these Florence days very pleasant ones, we did a good deal in the way of private theatricals.... My mother "brought the house down" nightly as Mrs. Malaprop....²³

On each of the travels she wrote about, Mrs. Trollope regularly attended the theatre (even in Austria, where she did not understand the language) and reported to her readers about what she saw; her comments suggest that she considered herself an expert. Annoyance at the over-favourable response earned by the American actor Edwin Forrest in the Hamlet which Mrs. Trollope saw in Cincinnati drew a typical comment from her:

What he may become I will not pretend to prophesy; but when I heard him play Hamlet at Cincinnati, not even Mrs. Drake's sweet Ophelia could keep me beyond the third act. It is true that I have seen Kemble, Macready, Kean, Young, C. Kemble, Cook, and Talma play Hamlet, and I might not, perhaps, be a very fair judge of this young actor's merits....²⁴

²²Belgium and Western Germany in 1833, I, 2-3.

²³T. A. Trollope, What I Remember, II, 208 and 210. In the Rivals Thomas Adolphus acted first Bob Acres, later Sir Anthony Absolute. When the family was in Cincinnati, he did Falstaff in The Merry Wives of Windsor (see I, 181), but he does not mention his mother's having had a part.

²⁴The Domestic Manners of the Americans, 132-33.

As the quotation suggests, Mrs. Trollope saw plays as many of us do: the great actors rather than the fabric of the play caught her interest.

The travel books provide us with a list of Mrs. Trollope's reactions to the fashionable actors and plays of the time. Performances in America generally displeased her, as we can tell from her comment upon Edwin Forrest's Hamlet, her reaction to Miss Mitford's Rienzi, and her disappointment in the Lear of Mr. Booth in Philadelphia:

I went to the Chesnut Street Theatre to see Mr. Booth, formerly of Drury Lane, in the character of Lear, and a Mrs. Duff in Cordelia; but I have seen too many Lears and Cordelias to be easily pleased; I thought the whole performance very bad.²⁵

Disappointment did not keep her from attending the theatre, though, in Cincinnati, New York, Philadelphia, Washington, and Baltimore. Like The Domestic Manners of the Americans, but with less indication of Mrs. Trollope's response, Belgium and Western Germany in 1833 mentions her evenings in the theatres of several cities.²⁶

Contrast between the fairly traditional drama which

²⁵Ibid., 270.

²⁶Drama: I, 69, two evenings at Brussels; I, 206-08, The Brothers, a close translation of The Woman Never Vexed, at Frankfort; I, 256, an evening at Mannheim; I, 258 a piece in the larmoyant moqueur school at Hanover. Opera: I, 212-13, Spontini's Bestalin at Frankfort; II, 8-9, Gazza Ladra in Carlsruhe; II, 61-62, Fra Diavolo at Baden; II, 92-93, Boil-dieu's La Dame Blanche in Wiesbaden.

Mrs. Trollope admires and the products of contemporary French dramatists like Hugo, whom she abhors, gives Paris and the Parisians in 1835 much of its fierceness. For a whole chapter she attacks a performance of Hugo's Le Roi s'amuse for its coarseness and romantic extravagance,²⁷ though Mademoiselle Mars' performances in Tartuffe and Les Femmes savantes meet her enthusiastic approval.²⁸ Mrs. Trollope's criticism of the contemporary French plays implies a knowledge of melodrama; of one of the actors in Duveyrier's Le Monomane she writes, "His repentant agony is soon walked-off by a few well-trod melodramatic turns up and down the stage".²⁹ Another description reinforces the reader's impression of her knowledge: "Big with the darling thought of murdering his wife , his eyes rolling, his cheek pale, his bristling hair on end, and the awful genius of Melodrama swelling in every vein...."³⁰ We can easily infer that, despite Mrs. Trollope's enjoyment of the description, her opinion of melodrama is not a happy one:

²⁷ Paris and the Parisians in 1835 (London, 1836), I, (Letter 19.

²⁸ Ibid., I, 16 and 325.

²⁹ Ibid., I, 93.

³⁰ Ibid., I, 97.

If the "fusion", as it has been called, of tragedy and comedy into one were very skilfully performed, the sublime and prodigious monster [melodrama] might be hoped for as the happiest product that could be expected.³¹

And Mrs. Trollope laments, "How much it is to be regretted that the art of writing comedy has passed away."³²

If Mrs. Trollope found her trip to Paris memorable because of the acting of Mademoiselle Mars, Vienna gave her as great a treat in Madame Rettich, whom Mrs. Trollope saw in a tragedy of the day and in Romeo and Juliet.³³ It was as Desdemona, though, that the actress most impressed her:

The manner in which her fond eye watches the gradual and almost incredible change in the temper of Othello is indescribably affecting; and when he at last breaks out into open violence, the expression of astonishment and pity, rather than of resentment, which takes possession of her speaking features, and seems manifest even in the movement of her arms, brings Shakespeare's beau ideal of a gentle wife before us with such beautiful truth and nature, that one must feel, in looking at her, how well, how very well, "the mighty master" knew of what soft stuff a loving woman's heart is made.³⁴

We might more readily accept Mrs. Trollope's judgement of Madame Rettich's acting if the bardolatry of the passage were not so patent, but Hervieu's accompanying il-

³¹Ibid., II, 68.

³²Ibid., I, 326.

³³Vienna and the Austrians, I, 318 and II, 165-66.

³⁴Ibid., I, 375-76. Hervieu's plate faces 376.

lustration is not reassuring: Othello stands with his fist raised, threatening Desdemona at a distance of a couple of feet, while she in turn woodenly stares at his chest, as if offended by something spilled on his fancy ruff. No more reassuring as indication of Mrs. Trollope's penetration of Shakespeare's meaning is her remark on Othello's colour: "Shakespeare never meant to persuade us that the delicate Desdemona became enamoured of a black-a-moor. The very word 'swarthy' proves this, for who would think of applying this epithet to a negro."³⁵

In Italy as in Austria Mrs. Trollope found more to praise than to blame in the theatre, though the actors she saw most often belonged to a French touring company. Upon seeing them perform in the palace of Prince Torlonia in Rome, she writes,

This theatrical company was the same as we had before seen in two or three places....Florence, Lucca, and Naples....and, for the most part, they played exceedingly well. The piece which of all those performed during these three evenings, was the most admired, was Scribe's "Verre d'Eau."³⁶

Scribe, whose La Collerica Mrs. Trollope saw performed in private theatricals in Rome along with Goldoni's La Villana Contessa,³⁷ was with Pixérécourt one of the most

³⁵Ibid., I, 374.

³⁶A Visit to Italy, II, 331.

³⁷
Ibid., II, 374.

translated French dramatists of Mrs. Trollope's day;³⁸ she may have enjoyed him because he was not a great innovator.

As the travel books evince Mrs. Trollope's acquaintance with the theatre in their lists of her theatrical evenings, so, with the novels, they occasionally suggest that she was a good observer during those evenings. In New York not even the mauvais ton of the Bowery could prevent her from admiring the appointments of its theatre:

There are three theatres at New York, all of which we visited. The Park Theatre is the only one licensed by fashion, but the Bowery is infinitely superior in beauty; it is indeed as pretty a theatre as I ever entered, perfect as to size and proportion, elegantly decorated, and the scenery and machinery equal to any in London, but it is not the fashion.³⁹

It is by a theatrical comparison that Mrs. Trollope tries to indicate the pleasures of floating down the Hudson to lovers of the picturesque at home: "Not even a moving panoramic view, gliding before their eyes for an hour together, in all the scenic splendour of Drury Lane, or Covent Garden, could give them an idea of it."⁴⁰ To indicate the unsettled state of affairs in France, early in the reign of Louis Philippe, she employs an extended theatrical metaphor:

³⁸See Allardyce Nicoll, Early Nineteenth Century Drama, 83-85.

³⁹The Domestic Manners of the Americans, 339.

⁴⁰Ibid., 402.

I have sometimes felt as if I had got behind the scenes of a theatre, and that all sorts of materials, for all sorts of performances, were jumbled together around me, that they might be ready at a moment's notice if called for....As to the scene-shifters who were to prepare the different tableaux, I in truth knew nothing about them. Their trap-doors, wires, and other machinery were very wisely kept out of sight of such eyes as mine.

French politics Mrs. Trollope tries to illuminate by comparison with the machinery behind the scenic effects of which her age was so fond; Italian landscape she compares with the dominant dramatic form of the period:

The sights which meet the eye after passing the Hospice, and fairly beginning the descent into Piedmont, might really justify the school of melodramatists in declaring that it is from nature they draw the inspiration which teaches them to produce those fortepiano effects of contrast by which they love to startle the world. The transition from a torture chamber to some silvery temple filled with roses, is not more violent than that from the frozen plain of St. Nicolo, to the sunny slope down which you glide to Susa.⁴²

The novels, like the travel books, contain many indications of Mrs. Trollope's theatrical knowledge, none more amusing than the rehearsal of Mrs. Sherbourne's play to which Charles Chesterfield accompanies her:

It did not take above two minutes to make this transit from the stage to the stage-box; but by the time they were seated, they found Mrs. Winterblossom and Mr. Periwinkle going at full gallop through the first scene.

⁴¹Paris and the Parisians, II, 381.

⁴²A Visit to Italy, I, 17.

"'Remorseless fangs,'
muttered Mrs. Winterblossom.

"'In vain you plead--

"Joys fit for Heaven,'"

mumbled Mr. Periwinkle.

"What are they about?" demanded the irritated Mrs. Sherbourne, addressing herself to Mr. Marchmont. "Do they call this rehearsing?"

"Marvel is in a great hurry, you see," returned the friendly critic, "and it will be more for your interest I think not to interrupt them. They seem admirably perfect, you may perceive, by the rapidity with which the cue is always taken...."

"'Passion unconquered, and a will untamed,'" said Mr. Periwinkle, yawning.⁴³

Mrs. Trollope gives us no other picture of the theatre as realistic in its shabby detail as the one she offers in Mrs. Sherbourne's unfortunate experience. A perfect contrast is the following more literary illustration of Mrs. Trollope's theatrical expertise in The Lottery of Marriage:

Lord Wigton took his post and kept it with an aspect so gay and frolicsome, as to give him the appearance of one of Congreve's heroes, uttering an aside behind a coulisse, for the benefit of a thousand listeners. But Julian was very decidedly the sentimental personage of the comedy, for though he stood precisely where his companion bade him, he actually trembled as if his life hung upon his concealment, and his eyes were fixed with such grave steadiness upon the equipage they were watching as very clearly to prove that the business they were upon was no joke to him.⁴⁴

Several of Mrs. Trollope's novels involve charades, but she treats them most extensively in the long story,

⁴³Charles Chesterfield; or, the Adventures of a Youth of Genius (London, 1841), II, 239-41. Phiz's illustration faces 236.

⁴⁴The Lottery of Marriage (London, 1849), II, 222-23.

"The Butt", which appeared in the New Monthly Magazine⁴⁵ before being collected in Travels and Travellers. The heroine of the story, Mary Bell, literally goes mad because of the embarrassment she sustains when forced to appear in the guise of an incubus; in a story with results nearly as grim, the title character of The Young Countess arranges private theatricals in her country home which lead to a crisis in her feelings and those of her young protege for one of her guests. Lady Bertha Wilbury tries to beguile the three oldest Lurrington girls and William, who give the title to The Lurringtons; or, Superior People, into enacting a charade which will make them appear the pompous spectacle she finds them, but Baron de Shoenberg foils her scheme.

On no other of the private theatrical performances indulged in by her characters does Mrs. Trollope lavish detail as she does on the performance given by the Dowling family in Michael Armstrong. The room given over to the performance has become "just such a carpeted, draped, mirrored, and flower-adorned arena, as well-dressed amateur ladies and gentlemen delighted to appear in."⁴⁶ Though originally intended to celebrate Michael's

⁴⁵See Appendix D.

⁴⁶The Life and Adventures of Michael Armstrong, the Factory Boy (London, 1840), 102.

rescue of Lady Clarissa Shrimpton from a cow, Osmond Norval's play, to win the approval of Sir Matthew Dowling's wife, has become in addition a vehicle for the semi-public exposure of Sir Matthew's many offspring. Once Norval, in the character of Apollo, has introduced the play, it is the turn of the children:

No less than sixteen male and female Dowlings rushed forth from the silken hangings, and formed themselves, after some little confusion, into a tableau, declared, on all sides, to be of unrivalled beauty. Again bravoes and clapping of hands announced the delight of the spectators; and, when this was calmed, some very pompous verses gave notice that this display of youthful grace and beauty, was on occasion of a rustic fete, in which the dramatis personae were to amuse themselves al fresco.⁴⁷

At length Lady Clarissa appears, and for the moment all goes as it should:

In dumb show the lady indicated the direction from whence the dreaded monster would approach; and the most energetic and unsparing action of the limbs and person secured the audience, as well as her deliverer, from any possible mistake on the subject. Michael, too, performed his part with great spirit, exaggerating, as he had been commanded, by every possible means, the manoeuvres necessary for turning the front of a cow.⁴⁸

It is an interesting revelation of Mrs. Trollope's strength and weakness as a novelist that we can believe in the Dowlings' theatricals, surely wrought up out of the sort of theatricals Mrs. Trollope shared with her own children, rather more easily than we can believe anything she tells

⁴⁷Ibid., 103.

⁴⁸Ibid., 104.

about Michael Armstrong's factories, though she travelled about collecting information for the purpose of reducing the abuses of the factory system.

Theodore Vidal (Luke Squabs), who gleans a living by being the title character of The Attractive Man, a versatile guest at country houses, proves an expert at charades:

Lady Randal arranged a troop of charade players, in which amusement the Springfields were known to excel, and for which Mr. Chatterton Springfield, in particular, proposed that his new friend, Vidal, should be invited to give his assistance; and from the moment he appeared, almost before he had uttered a single syllable of the rich and racy playfulness by which, apparently without the slightest effort, he elicited the talents of the ladies, while, unconsciously, as it seemed, displaying his own, no other gentleman of the set appeared to be either seen or heard.⁴⁹

But Vidal is a professional at amateur charades and theatricals; periodically he goes abroad to add to his knowledge of them in order to obtain invitations the more easily:

It cost very little to take a regular course of Parisian vaudevilles, melodramas, and little comedies; and still less to make grotesque portraits-- which he did admirably well--of all the most striking figures, gentle or simple, that he saw. And how much did he make grow out of this! Charades, private theatricals, tableaux vivants, deputé gossip on the state of Europe, and feuilleton criticism on all the literature of the world, arts and sciences included.⁵⁰

⁴⁹The Attractive Man (London, 1846), I, 176-77.

⁵⁰Ibid., 188-89.

Though any number of Mrs. Trollope's major characters consciously play roles, only two have a more direct connection with the stage than Charles Chesterfield and Mrs. Sherbourne: Mrs. Barnaby's daughter Patty and her husband Don Tomorino. Before meeting Patty, Don Tomorino scraped his living however he could: "Among other things he played in the orchestra at Drury Lane, and danced in the ballets at Covent Garden--he gave lessons in most living languages to all who would be so kind as to learn, and offered to teach the guitar for a shilling a lesson."⁵¹ Though none of these occupations kept him very well, he reacted strongly when exposed to opera in Philadelphia in the very theatre where Mrs. Trollope saw Lear:

The piece was Beaumarchais and Mozart's "Barbiere di Sevigllia," adapted to the American stage, and despite the doubtful improvement of sundry alterations, the Spaniard was in ecstasies. He was himself by no means a bad performer on the flute, and such a longing seized him as he watched the performer on that instrument, who sat almost immediately under him, once more to listen to his own notes upon it, that for some minutes after the opera ended, he was lost in revery.⁵²

The result of this enthusiasm is natural enough: Don Tomorino suggests to Patty that they offer their ser-

⁵¹The Barnabys in America, I, 81. Don Tomorino's linguistic skills are hardly supported in quoted dialogue, where his foreign words are almost invariably French, peculiar in a Spaniard.

⁵²Ibid., II, 311.

vices to the manager of the theatre, she displays her vapidness and her figure in the part of Nerissa in The Merchant of Venice, the Don disrupts the orchestra, and John Leech has occasion for a plate showing Major Allen and Mrs. Barnaby shocked at Patty's appearance on stage.⁵³

After the debacle, which endangers the Barnabys' takings in Philadelphia, the Major threatens to leave the Don and Patty unless they cooperate. Patty likes nothing more than the idea of beginning a life on the stage, but the manager has already told the Don what her acting is worth:

"Your wife, monseer, has no more notion of acting than a possum," said the manager; "but I expect too, that she is a considerable fine young woman, and therefore I shall have no objection to engage with her for a reasonable salary if she has no objection to stick to the boys' parts."⁵⁴

However reasonable the pay offered, the Don knows well enough that it would not cover Patty's extravagances, so he forces her to abandon her theatrical ambitions.

This much we can say about Mrs. Trollope's knowledge of the drama: over a period of years she went regularly to plays, she knew people connected with the theatre, she participated in home theatricals, and she occasionally left traces of her knowledge in such passages as we

⁵³ facing III, 58.

⁵⁴ Ibid., III, 72.

have been examining. The references Mrs. Trollope makes to actors or to melodrama not only strengthen our impression of her knowledge of the theatre but in addition hint at the essentially theatrical nature of her own books. In an early novel like Tremordyn Cliff she depends upon bringing her characters together for great scenes, a typical one being the party introducing the Maxwells to the society of Broton. Never particularly subtle, Mrs. Trollope ends the chapter which describes the party,

Like a melo-dramatist, it may be as well to drop the curtain upon the scene, just when it arrives at the point of most agreeable interest--leaving it to the spectators to go home, and reconcile the incongruous mixture of mysteries as they can.⁵⁵

Final relief from Lady Augusta's calumny causes Katherine to make a tableau with her child:

They followed her upstairs into a room, where, on a low couch, lay the little cherub whose fate had just undergone so great a change. Beside him knelt his lovely mother, her hands clasped, her eyes raised to heaven, and her lips offering the pious thankfulness of a mother's heart.⁵⁶

But the stage is always with us, not merely in the earliest novels. Marchmont, the greatest imposter in Charles Chesterfield, reacts to anyone he imagines gulling as he reacts to Clara Meddows when introduced to her:

⁵⁵Tremordyn Cliff (London, 1835), III, 32.

⁵⁶Ibid., III, 328-29.

"'I have had the honour of seeing Miss Meddows before,' he said, in a deep low tone, worthy of Kean in the days of his best whisper."⁵⁷ The villainous characters of Young Love, Amelia Thorwald and Lord William Hammond match one another in their theatricality: "There was something of Siddonian dignity (quite of the tragic kind too) in her aspect";⁵⁸ while across his face went "a sort of melodramatic vehemence of gloomy expression, which, if it had lasted, might perhaps rather have alarmed his bride."⁵⁹ One of the houseguests in The Young Countess, Mrs. Griffith, "on one occasion, remarked, in a tone as distinct and clear as that of the immortal Siddons herself, that her pen had traversed many pages, and that her pages would traverse many lands."⁶⁰

The discernment Mrs. Trollope shows about those of her characters given to imitating Kean and Mrs. Siddons is sadly lacking in much of her work; an illustrator of Father Eustace might have had the ill taste to have drawn Edward Stormont theatrically prostrating himself before Juliana: "'Juliana!' he replied piteously, stretching

⁵⁷Charles Chesterfield, II, 172.

⁵⁸Young Love (Paris, 1845), 153.

⁵⁹Ibid., 206.

⁶⁰The Young Countess, or Love and Jealousy (London, 1848), II, 15.

out his emaciated arms toward her, 'fear me no more! I am come to die at your feet! Will you refuse your pardon to a dying man?'"⁶¹

Sometimes Edward Lexington in Three Cousins is conscious of his acting:

Mr. Lexington, feeling that the part of Papa must be performed, and that the quicker it was got through, the better it would be for all parties, took courage, as the disagreeable moment drew near, and made the last step towards the trembling girl with an air of affectionate eagerness which would have produced very excellent effect in a comédie larmoyante.⁶²

At other times he is, unfortunately, unconscious of his acting, as perhaps Mrs. Trollope is herself. For instance, he warns his uncle that he will punish Laura if she marries Frederic Lexington: "If under any circumstances she consents to become the wife of your natural son, my curse shall be her portion--and that curse shall cleave to her and hers from generation to generation, till the contaminated race be extinct."⁶³

Mrs. Trollope certainly hopes for a theatrically experienced reader for Town and Country, in which Harriet Cuthbert wears to a ball a costume of Anne Boleyn des-

⁶¹Father Eustace; a Tale of the Jesuits (London, 1846), III, 317-18.

⁶²Three Cousins (London, 1847), III, 47.

⁶³Ibid., III, 294. According to Margaret Dalziel in Popular Fiction 100 Years Ago (London, 1957), 133-34, the curse was a convention of the time, but the convention itself seems theatrical to me.

cribed as "familiar to the eye and greatly popular as the very perfection of elegance, from having been worn by a very lovely actress during Mrs. Siddons' last representations of the part of Queen Katherine."⁶⁴ For the same ball Charles Marshdale "had chosen a dress very closely imitating that worn by Mr. John Kemble, in Hamlet."⁶⁵ When Mrs. Trollope describes the two meeting at an opera, her description certainly seems the exaggeration of a stage production:

Any one who had seen and understood the look that young Marshdale fixed upon her would have said that he winced--nay, that he almost shuddered, as he contemplated Harriet Hartwell, metamorphosed into this dazzling epitome of elegance and fashion; while on her side she started violently, after the gaze of a moment, and exclaimed "Good Heaven!"⁶⁶

Charles' repulsion is natural enough, for he believes Harriet to have been corrupted by her husband into pandering for the Prince Regent; but for Harriet's behavior Mrs. Trollope gives no explanation. Neither, however, would wince, shudder, or start, if Mrs. Trollope were not steeped in the wincing, shuddering, and starting she saw on the stage.

Like Edward Lexington, the portrait painter William Richards in The Life and Adventures of a Clever Woman

⁶⁴Town and Country (London, 1848), II, 85.

⁶⁵Ibid., II, 115.

⁶⁶Ibid., II, 173.

finds it expedient to pretend an unfelt love for his daughter; and Mrs. Trollope notifies us of his theatrical antecedents:

We may all have been amused in our day by watching the sudden changes of Harlequin on the stage; but no metamorphosis was ever exhibited more striking than that now produced on Mr. Richards by the words of his visitor.⁶⁷

His new role Mr. Richards assumes as if he had never left his daughter to look after herself:

Give her to you? Give you my Zelah? I swear that I love you well and have always admired the gentlemanlike sobriety of your bearing in the midst of wine and wassail. But how am I to bear the parting with her, Herbert? Tell me that!⁶⁸

I have been indicating some of the more striking instances of theatricality in Mrs. Trollope's novels, instances where she herself was usually partly conscious of the acting of her characters; it was a quality that did not escape her observers, even hostile ones. The reviewer of The Abbess in the Atlas thought Mrs. Trollope had borrowed from either J.B. Buckstone's The Pet of the Petticoats, performed earlier in 1833, or from its

⁶⁷The Life and Adventures of a Clever Woman (London, 1854), III, 204. Harlequin, the lover in English pantomime, makes frequent miraculous changes of costume in the course of a performance. Allardyce Nicoll lists more than 200 pantomimes of the first half of the nineteenth century with titles like Harlequin and Mother Goose, or Harlequin Don Quixote de la Mancha.

⁶⁸Ibid., III, 206.

French antecedents;⁶⁹ the correspondences between Buckstone's play and Mrs. Trollope's novel--a mischievous boy attached to a convent aids in removing a married woman (or women) from its confines--matter less than the fact that the reviewer thought the book had a theatrical source. Similarly the critic of The Vicar of Wrexhill in the Spectator believed that Mrs. Trollope had taken the plot of the novel from a play:

The general scheme of this fiction is borrowed from the play of the Hypocrite; as its leading character is taken from Dr. Cantwell....Nor do we believe that without the Hypocrite before her, Mrs. Trollope would have written the Vicar of Wrexhill. ...Mrs. Trollope's pictures have for the most part an unusual and exaggerated appearance about them; which proves pretty clearly that the writer sat down to invent, instead of reviving the results of observation.

...The characters have little individuality, and the most prominent ones are melodramatic exaggerations, or gross caricatures. They rarely speak or act in a natural manner: Mrs. Trollope racking her brains for effect is visible in almost every dialogue and "situation."⁷⁰

What is most remarkable about this attack on The Vicar of Wrexhill is not the reviewer's suggestion that Mrs. Trollope derived her plot from Isaac Bickerstaffe's Hy-

⁶⁹See the Atlas, 16 June 1833, p.388. The reviewer also detected similarities to a novel, Agnes Lancaster's The Abbess of Valtiera (London, 1816); these are slight.

⁷⁰Spectator, 16 September 1837, p.881.

pocrite, which she patently did not,⁷¹ but his assumption that the play was the source of the novel and the terms in which he criticizes Mrs. Trollope's writing show that he was considering the novel as a theatrical piece of writing. He correctly describes the characters as either "melodramatic exaggerations" or lacking in individuality; they do speak unnaturally; and the final clause I quote suggests that the critic was conscious of the novel's having been constructed around deliberate scenes.

⁷¹ While it is possible that Mrs. Trollope knew the play (I have read an acting edition printed in 1818), the plots are quite dissimilar, as even the reviewer seems aware, for he spends some space minimizing the difference. Instead of basing The Vicar of Wrexhill on The Hypocrite, Mrs. Trollope probably derived the title character from the vicar of Harrow, J.W. Cunningham, as both Michael Sadleir in Trollope, A Commentary, p.48, and the Stebbinses in The Trollopes, p.81, observe. Ingredients of the novel appear in an undated letter by Mrs. Trollope concerning Cunningham, quoted by F.E. Trollope in Frances Trollope, I, 92: "We dined at Mr. B's last Tuesday, and alas! I was the only lady of the party not 'pious.' I was quite thrown out, when they began to talk of selling £200 worth of pin-cushions for various Christian purposes. Mr. Cunningham was there, and told me that he had heard that I had been amusing myself at his expense, by repeating what he had said about the virtuous manner in which certain young ladies played the piano-forte. I told him that I had; upon which he turned the other cheek and asked me 'why?' Whereupon I answered with my usual sincerity, 'because you deserved it, sir.' However, this sharp encounter of our wits by no means disturbed the harmony of the evening, for it was carried on at the corner of a sofa, and we parted the tenderest of friends." But Frances Eleanor Trollope also remarks of the making of the novel, I, 256, "Her very intimate friend, Henrietta Skerrøtt, had years before furnished her with many facts which Mrs. Trollope at once perceived could be effectively worked into fiction".

The great failing of most of Mrs. Trollope's novels is that though she can often introduce characters cleverly, in performance they become either so bland or so exaggerated as to be unbelievable: they want people to act them in order to be credible. Mona Wilson points to exactly this flaw when she remarks, "Her creations were tossed at birth into the inkpot to sink or swim; sometimes a well-begotten infant was neglected and forgotten, others were not allowed to pursue their natural development."⁷² She goes on to cite Mrs. Morrison of The Three Cousins as an abandoned infant:

The mind of Mrs. Morrison was by no means of an ordinary character. Had her education been good, she might have been a very superior creature, for in that case her powers of reasoning and judging would have been cultivated and strengthened, and her imagination, which was indeed in her "la folle de la maison," might have been regulated and restrained. As it was, however, the case happened to be quite the reverse; and the consequence was that her mind, which was active to excess, and ever eager for fresh materials to work upon, became, to all intents and purposes, a spiritual knight-errant, roaming through the intellectual world in search of adventures.⁷³

Early on, Mrs. Trollope discusses the bishop's lady's affection for her partially adopted cousin with as much insight as she ever shows:

⁷²Mona Wilson, "A Best Seller of Last Century," in These Were Muses (London, 1924), 157.

⁷³The Three Cousins, I, 46-47.

However the intercourse between Mrs. Morrison and her young cousin began, it certainly ended in a strong but odd sort of attachment on both sides. Odd on the part of Mrs. Morrison, because she soon became conscious that it was stronger than she intended it to be...odd on the part of Laura, because she did not comprehend what she felt for the Bishop's lady, nor why she felt it. Hitherto the whole of her loving heart had been given to her little grandmother; and as time wore on, and she began to be conscious how much of it was, by degrees, bestowed on a person so every way different, she felt puzzled when she thought about it.⁷⁴

Yet, as Mona Wilson suggests, the bishop's wife disappears into the action of the novel, becoming no more than an agreeable extra in a drama without believable principals; Laura becomes one of the interchangeable and uninteresting heroines who recur in all of Mrs. Trollope's novels. Not even these girls, however, are entirely free of melodramatic exaggeration: Gertrude, in A Romance of Vienna, has sufficient faith in her fiancé to react patiently when he would have her know his mother, whom rumour calls the mistress of his father; but when Gertrude's friend the Countess de Ferris visits the Jews with whom the boy lives to determine the truth of a story that he is himself a Jew, the otherwise reasonable Gertrude becomes theatrical: "'You have been amidst those Jews?' said Gertrude, colouring deeply....'Gracious mother of God!' ...she added, covering her face with her hands; 'that

⁷⁴Ibid., I, 44-45.

you should have been brought to this by me!"⁷⁵

Gertrude is not the only one of Mrs. Trollope's heroines to suffer from an irregular or an excessive sensibility; in The Attractive Man, because she has promised Vidal not to reveal their broken engagement and so must keep the secret from Arthur Lexington, Clara Maynard refuses him:

A hateful, a fatal recollection, makes me feel that I am not worthy of you. To explain this to you is impossible. I am solemnly bound to secrecy on the subject. To become your wife without telling you all that has happened to me since we parted is equally impossible. To break my promise were a sin deep enough to forfeit your love. Think of me no more. Doubtless there is some good reason, though we see it not, why our past wishes and our new-born hopes should not be gratified. God bless you Mr. Lexington! I have no longer any great business in society, and am not therefore likely to cross your path often; but it will be kind and merciful if you try to avoid me.⁷⁶

Obviously this sort of moral confusion is useful for spinning out a plot; but it is also melodrama, for indeed the lady protests too much.

A lady with whom we sympathize far less than with Clara Maynard, the title character of The Young Countess, comes close to following the Old Stager's instructions for acting jealousy:

⁷⁵A Romance of Vienna (London, 1838), III, 161.

⁷⁶The Attractive Man, III, 196-97.

The face of Madame de Rosenau was more than pale-- it was livid; and not a feature but had undergone a change, which made the waiting woman almost fancy that she was in the presence of some terrific stranger; the eyes were frightfully opened, and the eyebrows knotted into a frown that would have become an angry Juppiter better than a woman. The nostrils were distended, and there was a movement in them which seemed to indicate that the heated breath which passed them came too rapidly. The lips, so richly red before, were now colourless; and, worse still, their very form was altered; thin and compressed, the mouth seemed stretched into unnatural width, while the whole face looked sunk and hollow.⁷⁷

Here as so often Mrs. Trollope's character displays emotion out of all proportion to the circumstances which arouse her.

The distortion of many of Mrs. Trollope's exaggerations--Marmaduke Wentworth's pride in One Fault, Gertrude's aversion toward Jews, Clara's good faith to Vidal, or Madame de Rosenau's jealousy--makes each of the characters difficult to believe in without the help of someone acting the part on the stage. A few of Mrs. Trollope's characters, however, take strength from their falseness, live in their exaggeration, and justify, if anything can, theatrical writing in the novel. The great example, of course, is the Widow Barnaby, whose weaknesses for finery and food, whose desire for gaudy greatness, are so extreme as to make her easily the triumph of Mrs. Trollope's

⁷⁷The Young Countess, III, 120.

writing. The way in which Mrs. Barnaby arranges that Agnes will wear the mourning for Mr. Barnaby, instead of her wearing it herself, is masterly:

"I don't know how it is, my dear Agnes, [...]
but though I don't dislike to see you in deep
mourning, the sight of it on myself makes me per- /c.
fectly wretched....It is for your sake, my dear,
that I am determined, as far as in me lies, to stop
the sorrow that is eating into my very vitals....
Whenever you see me shaking off the gloom of my
widowed condition, remember it is solely owing to
my love for you." 78

Love of this pure and intense sort characterizes the widow perfectly, so that even writing Agnes from the Fleet, where her failure to pay Cheltenham debts temporarily places her, she strikes the same note:

Agnes, I want you to set off the very minute you receive this, and come to me for a visit....Mind not to lose your way; but it's uncommonly easy if you will only go by what I say. Set out the same way that we went to the church, you know, and keep on till you get to the Haymarket, which you will know by its being written up....Just ask your way /c.
to the Strand; and when you have got there....And do, Agnes, buy as you come along half a dozen cheese-cakes and half a dozen queencakes, and a small jar, for about four or five shillings, of brandy cherries. ...And what's a great comfort, I may keep you till it's dark, which is what they call shutting-up time, and then you can easily enough find your way back again by the gaslight, which is ten times more beautiful than day, /d.
There is one very elegant-looking man here that I meet in the passage every time I go to my bedroom. He always bows, but we have not spoken yet. Bring five sovereigns with you, and be sure [to] set off the moment you get this. 79

78 The Widow Barnaby (London, 1839), I, 237-38.

79 Ibid., III, 109-110.

How, after receiving such a letter, Agnes can refuse to go to her aunt's aid, it is difficult to imagine; but the failing of The Widow Barnaby is that with two important exceptions, the characters are not of the widow's calibre of theatricality. The exceptions are Lord Mucklebury, who is as selfish and clever as the widow herself, and Major Allen, doomed to become the widow's third husband and to accompany her through two later novels.⁸⁰ Already his propensity for falsehood more than equals that of Mrs. Barnaby:

The battle of Waterloo would have been lost,--was lost, positively lost,--till I, disdainng in such a moment to receive orders from one whom I perceived to be incompetent, rushed forward, almost knocking the Duke off his horse as I did so....sent back the French army like a flock of sheep before an advancing lion....seized with my own hand on the cocked hat of Napoleon....drew it from his head, and actually flogged his horse with it till horse and rider together seemed well enough inclined to make the best of their way out of my reach.⁸¹

If more characters in The Widow Barnaby matched the rightful Duke of Wellington in his melodramatic and Lever-like ferocity, the book could be Mrs. Trollope's most sprightly as well as her best novel; in fact, though structurally a weak novel, The Barnabys in America is livelier

⁸⁰ This cannot have been Mrs. Trollope's first intention, for she dismisses the major with finality, II, 235: "Without any farther attempt to carry off the palm of victory, he made his way down stairs; and it is now many years since he has been heard of in the vicinity of Clifton."

⁸¹ Ibid., II, 104.

than either of its two predecessors: for once most of the characters seem wholly involved in the acting parts they play toward the rest of the world. The widow herself sets the tone in her afternoon dream of literary success, a dream we learn of exactly as if she were on stage, sleeping, and letting us know no more than any observer could know:

"Pray, move out of the way, Louisa! Do you not see how all those good people are straining and striving to get a glimpse of me. Matilda! It is quite ill-natured to keep standing so exactly before me.... Oh, yes, certainly," she continued, varying her tone as if speaking courteously to some stranger, "yes, certainly, my lord. If you will just push that golden inkstand a little nearer to me, I will give you an autograph immediately."

For a moment or two she was silent, and then turning as it were impatiently on her bed, she resumed, in accents less bland,

"It is nonsense, Donny, to think of it. It is not you who have written all these books; and if, as you all justly enough say, a title must and will be given, as in the case of Sir Walter and Sir Edward, it cannot be given to you.... But if my country wishes to reward me by a title, to which I should have no objection whatever, if such be the will of my sovereign.... Why should I not be called Lady Martha?" and then she murmured on till her voice sank into silence, and herself into sounder sleep, "Lady Martha Allen Barnaby, Lady Martha Allen Barnaby, Lady Allen Martha Bar--"⁸²

Everyone in this novel, except the lovers, plays a role, even Matilda Perkins, who seizes upon the threat of suicide as a means of binding Louisa to her will:

If you persist in keeping me chained to this sterile land, where the best and tenderest feelings of the

⁸²The Barnabys in America, II, 83-84.

human heart are checked and blighted by the constant fear of not having money enough to marry upon--if, I say, you do this, instead of permitting me to try my chance in a new world, I solemnly declare to you, that I will put an end to my life; and when the awful deed is done, you may learn, too late, the danger of torturing the human soul beyond its powers of endurance. Now then, Louisa, speak! Decide! I abide your decision, and you must abide its consequences!⁸³

As Matilda acts and believes her role as a marriageable female, so the slave-holding ladies, Mrs. Colonel Beauchamp and Mrs. General Gregory, act to the full their roles as defenders of slavery, not so much because they believe in slavery as because they require parts in which to compete with one another; in New York Jefferson Crop and Washington Fad play disinterested speculators to gull Major Allen.

The great actors are the major and his good wife, who alter their callings and their seeming as they progress through America: at first he is the tourist and she the successful author willing to defend slavery; presently, as she persuades John Williams to give her Quaker money for writing against slavery, the Major has become a writer interested in defending it. The possibilities of an easy fortune in New York make him a financier; and though he escapes with the ten thousand dollars swindled from Crop and Fad in the guise of a preacher

⁸³Ibid., I, 70.

which he used in The Widow Married to return to England, he must finally impersonate his wife and she a working woman in order to avoid exposure. Twice Mrs. Barnaby removes her rouge to feign illness; and the major excels himself in the stories of romantic attachments and duelling by which he explains to Patty the necessity for travelling.

Beyond the facetiousness of the defense of Major Allen's lying which we examined in the last chapter lies the fact that for the characters of The Barnabys in America, deceiving others and sometimes themselves pleases them so greatly that they live their parts, making themselves the most believable of all Mrs. Trollope's characters.

By now we have examined sufficient evidence to see that Mrs. Trollope's knowledge of and interest in the theatre was sufficient to pervade her fiction; but against everything I have said, we have still to weigh the fact that Mrs. Trollope wrote no plays, though T.H.Reynoldson made one of The Widow Barnaby. I think we may explain Mrs. Trollope's failure to write for the theatre proper in two ways without particularly damaging my thesis of the theatrical nature of her fiction: it may have been all very well for Dickens and Bulwer to write an occasional

play, but they were not women. For Mrs. Trollope to sit with her family in the pit, though exhausting, might have been respectable when to write the piece performed was not. We see something of vague disapprobation in the way Mrs. Trollope's contemporaries thought of Mrs. Gore, who did write plays; and, as we shall see when we deal with Mrs. Trollope's reception, a good portion of such adverse criticism as she received derived largely from the accident of her being a woman. Her attitude toward her own play (write), Mrs. Sherbourne, certainly lacks respect. -wright

The second reason for Mrs. Trollope's failure to write plays also depends upon her class and upbringing: the fact that many of the dramatic references in her novels are to home theatricals is no accident. In theatrical matters Mrs. Trollope's experience was largely amateur: her extravagantly stylized characters insist, more than professionals might, that they derive from just such a theatrical amateur as The Actor's Handbook was designed to assist. Nevertheless Mrs. Trollope's theatrical writing determines the nature of her fiction as any other convention she might have chosen would; in the next chapter we shall see how she manipulates her particular theatrical convention.

Chapter 4: Stock Characters and Repetitious Patterns

In the last chapter I summed up the evidence that Mrs. Trollope knew the theatre well enough for her theatrical knowledge to have a distinct effect on her writing. Partially by analogy, and without wishing to make more of Mrs. Trollope's theatrical activities than they warrant, in this chapter I mean to describe the stock characters composing the imaginary company on which Mrs. Trollope draws to people her novels. After sketching the composition of the company, I shall suggest how the use of this particular cast limits Mrs. Trollope as a novelist, but also how she succeeds in using it to make her own peculiar contribution to the novel.

Writing of the fashionable novelists, M.W. Rosa observes that "their plots were not essential enough to demand much care or originality, and like the Restoration dramatists, the novelists availed themselves of a succession of stock characters."¹ Not merely the fashionable novelist, but any writer of large quantities of fiction, may create characters for one book after another who bear a strong family likeness; stereotyped and theatrical characters, though certainly not those of the fashionable novels, Louis James finds shared by simple melo-

¹M.W. Rosa, The Silver-Fork School, 16.

dramas and novels for working men:

Characters become reduced to easily recognizable stock figures, very good or very bad, and the plot only serves to lead up to the "strong" scenes where, in stylized ritual, the hero confronts the villain, or the villain confronts the heroine.²

Nor are the best novelists free of this theatrical repetitiousness: melodramatically benevolent old men and ingenuous youths recur in Dickens' novels, while a series of young men only slightly less ingenuous appears in Henry James' novels from Roderick Hudson to The Wings of the Dove.

Although not limited to the black and white melodramatic characters Louis James discusses, Mrs. Trollope writes in a convention quite as fixed as that of the novelists he treats. Far more dependent than Dickens on her stock figures, she puts them through their paces far more often: if it annoys a reader of Dickens to find old Martin Chuzzlewit's deceptive benevolence hardly altered in the behavior of Boffin, it may enrage Mrs. Trollope's reader to find the Baron Von Schwanberg in Mrs. Trollope's thirty-third novel, Gertrude, a near copy of the Count d'Albano in her second, The Abbess. Let me illustrate the point: the count complains of his daughter's inactivity,

²Louis James, Fiction for the Working Man, 148.

Can you find nothing, Lady Juliet,...can you find nothing within the compass of your youthful powers, and not inconsistent with the dignity of my daughter, by which you could testify your sense of the honour that awaits you?³

The baron expresses approval of his daughter in virtually the same terms:

"Gertrude!" he said, very solemnly; "Gertrude, my dear, you certainly are a very superior young lady. I ought not, however, either to express, or to feel any astonishment at this. You ought, from the name you bear, to be a very superior person. I do not suppose there has ever been a descendant of the Von Schwanberg race, who has not been superior; but yet, nevertheless, my dear daughter, I will not deny that I never remark in you any of the superior qualities for which our name is celebrated, without feeling a very strong sense of pride and pleasure."⁴

The count and the baron are obvious caricatures, repressive fathers like Captain Peppercoal in Edward Fitzball's Flying Dutchman or his alter ego in any of a hundred melodramas; it would be pleasant to call them Mrs. Trollope's only lapse of their sort, except that either heavy parents or other humourless villains appear in at least twenty-four of her novels.⁵ These are the most theatrical of Mrs. Trollope's characters and the most apt to behave unnaturally. Some, like d'Albano or Von Schwanberg or Lord Tremordyn, spend much of their time bellowing

³The Abbess (London, 1833), I, 28-29.

⁴Gertrude (London, 1855), I, 163-64.

⁵See Appendix C.

about family pride, play the role of the patriarch to the full, but fail to look after their daughters properly; others like the vicar of Wrexhill, Mr. Cartwright, or George Rixley or Sir Christopher Harrington neglect their daughters for asocial behavior in which they are engaged, Cartwright in seducing women or amassing wealth, Rixley in maintaining a mistress and probably a smuggling trade, and Harrington in keeping his mistress as governess to his daughter until the woman poisons his wife. If such men should be interested in their children, their interest derives from the likeness or fancied likeness between the children and themselves--Count Alderberg's interest--or because they hope to use such children as they may gain by marriage--the hope of Hargrave. Most, however, are capable of truly vicious crimes: Mrs. Wentworth all but pays to have her daughter-in-law disposed of; Count Alderberg kidnaps and repudiates his wife, swearing her to secrecy; and Mr. Cuthbert encourages his wife to pander to the Prince Regent.

Far more interesting than the villains are their natural counterpart, the benefactors. A few of these quite resemble Dickens' benefactors in their forbidding exteriors and soft interiors, especially Agnes Willoughby's Aunt Betsy Compton; and some, like Mrs. Watts and Cornelius Thorpe, exploit the greed of their would-be beneficiaries in a genuinely amusing way. In the relation-

ships which these people form with others who will not readily accept charity no matter how badly they need it, Mrs. Trollope makes good use of her convention. For example, needing a companion but averse from accepting over-eager Mrs. Gabberly, Mary Brotherton wisely takes her good nurse Mrs. Tremlett as a companion: the interaction between Mary and Mrs. Tremlett reveals something about each and about their classes.

Other of Mrs. Trollope's benefactors show something of themselves and of Mrs. Trollope in the charities which they perform because they need something in return: Katherine Smith needs the occupation of settling in America with her cousins and revels in the surprises she can arrange for the family's comfort; in Mrs. Trollope's last novel Clara Holmwood, restraining her generous impulses because of a delicate sense of her friends' pride, works out a relationship of some honesty and directness with Lady Amelia Wharton and her daughter, giving security in return for the advantages of their station.

One stock character occurs in the novels largely to test the reactions of possible benefactors: the pathetic spinster. In her treatment of spinsters Mrs. Trollope becomes more generous as she grows older: early representatives of the class like evangelical Miss Duncomb or Mar-

garet Tidwell or Miss Morrison are portrayed as butts for our amusement; soon, however, the treatment becomes more complex and more interesting. The Perkinses begin their acquaintance with the Barnabys in The Widow Married as younger Misses Morrison, but they soon diverge into conflicting personalities: when Louisa turns down Foxcroft's proposal, made as a result of his discovery that she and not Matilda has their little fortune, we can detect a new compassion in Mrs. Trollope's writing. However pathetic, Louisa is wholly admirable, and Matilda is a wretch. How much a wretch she is she shows in The Barnabys in America when she blackmails Louisa into undertaking the American trip under the threat of committing suicide. In contrast to all the Barnabys, the American heroine of the novel champions Louisa, revealing her own worth to her English suitor in the act: this marks the beginning of Mrs. Trollope's kinder attitude toward spinsters. No less butts than Margaret Tidwell, the plain Laurrington girls, Mary and Araminta, are comically sad; and Celestina Marsh, described very like the young Martha Compton and her Patty in her excessive good health, nevertheless is a pathetic and moving person.

The three spinsters of Petticoat Government serve as tests for several of the characters: Miss Elfreda,

who ultimately causes the Dorkings to reveal themselves as too proud to treat her kindly, herself behaves ungenerously toward Miss Tollbridge:

"This is Miss Tollbridge, my sweet Judith," said she. "A lady that you will often see here, for she is good enough to be useful to me in a hundred ways; but you need not trouble yourself sweetest, to stand upon any ceremony with her."⁶

In contrast, Judith

comprehended that Miss Tollbridge was a person whom her aunt Elfreda gave her leave to treat with all possible impertinence, setting her the example herself.

Whereupon Judith...quietly determined in her very heart of hearts that she would never, under any circumstances, omit any possible kindness, respect, or attention, which it should be in her power to show her.⁷

The spinster serves largely to test other characters; the eccentric performs that function and others besides. Indeed, this stock character, perhaps more than any other, expands and alters its role in Mrs. Trollope's novels as she grows older. A certain set of eccentrics, like the spinsters, exists to provoke other characters to react; such eccentrics include Clio Whitlaw, Lucy and Christina Clark, and possibly Madame Marathone. Each has her foible: Clio remains mannish, decent, and in-

⁶Petticoat Government (London, 1850), II, 256.

⁷Ibid., II, 257. Margaret Dalziel under-estimates Mrs. Trollope's compassion for the spinster in her reading of the novels in the Railroad Library; see Popular Fiction 100 Years Ago, 113.

dustrious, as her family grows more prosperous and more corrupt; Lucy does needlework to distraction and Christina politics and economics;⁸ and Madame Marathone, most amusing of them all, parrots and garbles the evolutionary theories with which her husband deliberately tries to confuse her:

Somehow or other by means of electricity and all that sort of thing, there began to be lots of little fishes. Marathone says, they were very shabby scrubby little fishes at first, but that every fish had a child that was a good deal better looking and cleverer than itself. At some particular time, I don't exactly remember when, the electricity did not go on any more in that particular way, because the creatures began to have fathers and mothers, but the most extraordinary thing (excepting one) is, that when the fishes married, they had rats for children, and when the rats married, they had birds, or else the birds came first, and they were confined with rats, and then the rats had cats, I believe, and the cats had dogs, and the dogs monkeys, and the monkeys men and women. No, not men and women, Marathone says, that no men and women are ever made men and women, out and out, at first, but a great many other things before they are born. I do assure you, Arthur, it made my blood run cold when he told me that only a few months before I was born I was a fish first and afterwards a reptile!⁹

⁸The reviewer of One Fault in the Spectator, 30 November 1839, pp. 1138-39, sees Miss Christina as a caricature of Harriet Martineau, to whom Mrs. Trollope did refer flippantly in the introduction to The Mother's Manual (1833). Miss Christina and Miss Martineau do share interest in politics and economics, as well as harbouring a sympathy for feminism, but if malicious caricature were intended, Mrs. Trollope would not have troubled to make Miss Christina the very worthy, if crotchety, old lady she appears in the context of the novel. Hannah Wigginsville in Uncle Walter more amateurishly shares Miss Martineau's interests.

⁹The Attractive Man, III, 51-52.

Though Madame Marathone's naive muddle compresses all evolution into a single generation of each species, it is fairly accurate down to the final suggestion that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny. Arthur Lexington, however, finds the whole business absurd and wonders if his aunt has indeed gone mad; but he responds to her need, so that her eccentric function in the novel is satisfied. In Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw Clio provokes warm response from the Steinmark family and contrasting abuse from Whitlaw; her reappearance in The Barnabys in America gives Annie Beauchamp opportunity to show her worth. The Clark sisters cause Marmaduke Wentworth and his mother to show the lack of charity which we are to suppose Miss Christina's revelation of their scanty pedigree accounts for.

A less amusing but more significant sort of eccentric begins to appear in Mrs. Trollope's novels in Tremordyn Cliff: the person alienated from his society. Jemima Wortley is only the first of several such persons; the child of an obnoxious radical and busybody, she has preserved an innocence and openmindedness which endear her to the heroine's coterie. Others of her sort include Martha Dowling, Marianne Gibson, and William Ormond: each behaves soberly and decently when all about him, even his closest relatives, incline to frivolity and unfeeling acts.

If Ormond is a bit stuffy, what he has to say about a fête planned by Lady Wilbury shows a sensitivity to class feelings uncommon in Mrs. Trollope:

"Were you in earnest when you talked of requesting your guests to come in the garb of peasants?" said he. [Lady Wilbury elaborates.]

"But do you not think that all the poor folks in the county will suppose you are quizzing them?" said Mr. Ormond.

"Good heavens, no!" replied her ladyship. "How could such an idea enter their heads? If they should ever hear of it at all, I should imagine that they would be flattered beyond measure."

"Do you?" said he. "I greatly doubt it."¹⁰

The most sensitive of Mrs. Trollope's eccentrics perform more actively the role of such critics of society as Marianne Gibson or William Ormond. The active eccentrics are apt to view the ideas of their elders with skepticism, disobeying in order to put their own ideas into action. Emily Williams abandons her American relatives because she observes as they do not the superiority of their English visitors; Annie Beauchamp performs a more exacting task, winnowing the Americans and the English she knows to reject both her family and the Barnabys in favour of the virtues of Clio Whitlaw and Frederic Egerton. Bertha Harrington escapes from the idiotic whirl of life with the Robertses to pursue her own private course, while Lucy Selcroft, though not heroine e-

¹⁰The Laurringtons (London, 1844), I, 80-81.

nough for Mrs. Trollope to arrange a husband for her, nevertheless has strength to quietly oppose her father's attempts to aggrandize himself.

In Mrs. Trollope's late novels, her protagonists frequently reject the social world which makes the setting for many of the earlier novels, a world which few characters earlier found so distasteful that like Charles Chesterfield they escaped from it. The most passionate of the active eccentrics, Judith Maitland, compares the fashionable world of her fiancé Frederic Dorking with that of her painter cousin, and, aided by the hostility of Dorking's mother, dissolves her engagement. Two of the late novels, Mrs. Mathews and Uncle Walter, feature title characters who have passed the prime of their lives. Before this time, the only central characters in the novels who have passed their twenties have been the abbess in Mrs. Trollope's only historical novel, and people like Mrs. Barnaby, interested in achieving success on society's basest terms, or like Mrs. Watts, interested in bringing their protégés to positions of respectable social prominence.¹¹ Mrs. Mathews, however, has for years devoted

¹¹That Mrs. Trollope fitted out most of her novels with very youthful heroes and heroines is an ironic concession to what she supposed to be the predilections of her readers, for we can guess from one of her letters to Mary Russell Mitford that she has little respect for the

herself to scholarly pursuits, has a den which she permits only privileged guests to enter, and, when her father urges her to exchange the spinsterhood she has enjoyed during fifty years for marriage to Mr. Mathews, she insists that she be permitted five hundred pounds a year to spend on books if she pleases, though in the event she prefers to spend it establishing Judith Anderson and Herbert Otterborne. Mrs. Trollope goes to some length to give credibility to Mrs. Mathews' scholarship; and the house that Mrs. Mathews shares in the future prophesied by the conclusion of the novel has just such a den as she enjoyed in her own house when a spinster.

Uncle Walter Harrington, too, has deviated far from the normal experience of Mrs. Trollope's characters. After going out to Australia he became a naturalist whose remote researches so unfit him for normal society that on return to London he asks for roast turkey when his sister-in-law offers him a snack, actually enjoys climbing stairs, and discomfits his host by unpacking a fine boa constrictor which he has brought to present to the zoo. If Uncle Walter's scientific experience makes less

opinions of youth; on 16 September 1831 she writes news of Fanny Kemble, "Miss Milman tells me that this Miss Fanny has actually written and published a very fine tragedy. To me this appears like a joke--a girl of 19 write a fine tragedy. Do you believe this possible? I do not." A.G.L'Estrange, The Friendships of Mary Russell Mitford, I, 228.

impression on us than Madame Marathone's knowledge of evolution, it may be because he is less interested in expounding than in hearing his nephew Henry's unflattering explanations of London society. Altogether then, in Petticoat Government, Mrs. Mathews, and Uncle Walter, we find Mrs. Trollope presenting us with important eccentric characters who suggest real alternatives to living a mere social whirl--art, scholarship, and science; perhaps only coincidentally the prospective husband of the heroine in Uncle Walter works as an architect, a most unusual burden for a young man in Mrs. Trollope's fiction.

One of the social explanations Walter Harrington requires of his nephew concerns a Miss Puddingthwaite, who, though a thoroughly objectionable person, appears at all fashionable affairs in London. Henry explains that for people who like his mother intend to get ahead socially, it is necessary to cultivate Miss Puddingthwaite, for though a nobody, she controls the access to at least one somebody; she is one of the many parasites who frequent Mrs. Trollope's novels. Two varieties of parasites occur more commonly than the variety Miss Puddingthwaite represents--a variety more fully developed in Mrs. Barnaby's Lady Susan Deerwell--entertainers like the poets Charles Rice and Osmond Norval, the painters Bradley

and Richards, or more versatile party-attenders like William Withers; and impoverished ladies of quality like Lady Clarissa Shrimpton and Lady Mary Weyland. The first category of these gentry tend not to be too nice about the sources of their income, some being reduced like Richards to gambling for a living; while the impoverished ladies have no scruples about imposing upon their friends. Lady Clarissa rarely leaves Sir Mathew Dowling's house without carrying away an edible gift she has requisitioned, while Lady Mary adds pointed requests to invitations to dine:

The formula of invitation was the same to all; but to the Dalton note was added, "If the grape-house should chance to have more fruit than is necessary for Mr. Dalton's immediate use, Lady Mary will be greatly obliged by a bunch or too [sic] --her own garden being unfortunately at this moment without fruit of any kind."

The Lewis envoi had a still more flattering conclusion, "Should Mr. Lewis chance to have a bottle or two to spare of the same champagne that Lady Mary has repeatedly tasted at his house, her ladyship would be exceedingly obliged by his sending them, as unfortunately she has discovered that several bricks have fallen upon the champagne bin in her cellar, leaving, as she greatly fears, not a single bottle unbroken."¹²

Similar requests of course accompany the invitations to her other guests.

Inevitably the alliance between the parasites and

¹²Jessie Phillips: A Tale of the Present Day (London, 1844), 102. In XIX Century Fiction (London, 1951), 347, Michael Sadleir gives the subtitle as "a Tale of the New Poor Law," but I have seen his version nowhere else. IX

and those who need their services is uneasy, however graciously the former oblige and the latter defer, so that the thoughts of the Barnabys and Lady Susan, as they approach the presentation in court bought from Lady Susan by clothes which Mrs. Barnaby's treachery will leave to be paid for by the lady herself, set the tone for all such relationships:

"What a quaker-like object!" thought Mrs. O'Donagough. "It is well Patty and I have some style about us, or the whole party would be passed over as horrid hum-drums."

"Oh! the hideous old stick!" thought Miss Patty; "but she is no bad contrast though, to such a girl as me."

"Mercy on me! how shall I ever stand this!" thought the noble spinster. "I have the greatest mind in the world not to go now."¹³

None of the parasites is very attractive; indeed it is a telling comment on the nature of Mrs. Trollope's fiction that the most consistently attractive stock character is the faithful servant. Though not often of great importance, the good servants sometimes colour whole novels with their care and industry, so that in the attack by the reviewer of The Ward of Thorpe-Combe in the Athenaeum we find a hint that Mrs. Barnes, not named in the review, nevertheless is an important character in the novel:

Mrs. Trollope never objects to peep into the pantry, to gossip with a comfortable old housekeeper,

¹³The Widow Married (London, 1840), III, 221.

or to intrigue with an astute lady's maid, and hence she is particularly strong in the below stairs....We have all manner of edifying particulars as to housemaids, plate, blankets not moth-eaten, and well-served desserts. We beg pardon of our poetical readers, but these paraphernalia are Mrs. Trollope's, not ours. Thrifty Mrs. Clarissa Packard, herself, whose experiences make up one of the most American of American fictions, does not write with greater unction of rubbing and scrubbing, saving and spending, than our popular novelist; though the latter ever and anon throws off as triumphant a flourish about "pictures, taste, Shakespeare, and the musical glasses," as if the world of Johns and Dollys were not, in reality, her Empyrean,--the sphere in which she is most at home! ...If he [the reader] do not quarrel with a smack of the still-room and the second table, even when ladies and gentlemen are discussed, he will find the misdeeds of Sophy Martin excite a strong interest.¹⁴

If we forgive the reviewer's condemnation of The Ward of Thorpe-Combe because he at least draws attention to what he condemns, we can see that in this and other of Mrs. Trollope's novels domestic matters are important and revealing, though perhaps no other servant is more important than Mrs. Barnes. If she were merely a housekeeper who did as she was told and no more, we could hardly be as interested in her as we are; instead she actively opposes her young employer's attempt to treat the Heathcotes stingily, contriving to give them better rooms than Sophia intends they should have, and even giving the children sweets in her own apartment to sup-

¹⁴Athenaeum, 9 April 1842, p.312.

plement the coarse fare Sophia provides them. Mrs. Barnes risks her job at least partly out of compassion:

Independent, and above the world, as I now am, I'd throw the keys in her face and be off, rather than demean myself by serving such a grudging, selfish curmudgeon of a girl, if it wasn't a fancy I've taken to them poor Heathcotes. I think that, spite of young madam and all her cleverness, I may make them more comfortable than they would be without me; and I should be able to do it fearlesslike, because, if she found me out, I just snap my fingers at her and wish her good morning.¹⁵

Even Mrs. Barnes is not the most compassionate of the servants: this is probably Wagner, the woman who, employed by Count Alderberg to assist in the kidnapping of his wife, realizes the wife's virtue and defends her so stoutly that Alderberg imprisons her for years. Coincidences enable other good servants like Susan Jenkins and Martha Squabs to do their employers (or in Martha's case, the nephew of her employer) enormous favours. Not asked to display Wagner's constancy, several maidservants support their mistresses with faithfulness, especially Mary Wilson, Jane Smith, and Mrs. Morris. Mrs. Trollope says a word for them all when she remarks at the end of Town and Country, "Mrs. Morris continues with Lady Corwyn, half housekeeper and half friend."¹⁶

¹⁵The Ward of Thorpe-Combe (London, 1842), II, 187.

¹⁶Town and Country, III, 301.

So far the stock characters we have discussed, except some of the eccentrics and the benefactors, have played supporting roles; those who most frequently take commanding roles are the adventurers. For convenience we shall call those "adventurers" who employ largely sexual means to advance themselves, leaving "manipulators" to refer to characters who try to influence others by asexual means. Often the two characters are hardly to be differentiated, for a young character with a bent for manipulation will as readily use his sex as anything else: the Widow Barnaby is the perfect union of the two types, though she shows herself more an adventuress in The Widow Barnaby and a manipulator in the book's sequels. Remembering Mrs. Trollope's comment on Fanny Kemble, we may understand why the machinations of the characters in her novels invariably interest the reader more than the affairs of her heroes and heroines.

Whether they are male or female, Mrs. Trollope's adventurers behave in a consistent fashion. They use their sexual and social attractions to win whatever they can from likely victims; even as a girl the future Mrs. Barnaby evinces a certain skill at this. Wanting finery but knowing her credit at Mr. Smith the draper's to be exhausted, she goes to his shop on the arm of Captain Tate, putting on a show for Mr. Smith's benefit:

"Good heaven!....we are at the shop already!" said the Captain, interrupting her...."How such dear moments fly!"

Miss Martha answered not with her lips, but had no scruple to let her fine large eyes reply with very intelligible meaning, even though at that very moment she had reached the front of the counter, and that Mr. Smith himself stood before her, begging to know her commands. Her arm, too, still confidently hung upon that of the stylish-looking officer; and there certainly was both in her attitude and manner something that spoke of an interest and intimacy between them of no common kind.¹⁷

Presently Martha dismisses Captain Tate and finishes the process of bending Mr. Smith to her will:

"I suppose, Mr. Smith, you have heard the news about me?....There never was such a place for gossip as Silverton."

Mr. Smith smilingly protested he had heard nothing whatever about her, but added, with very satisfactory significance, that he rather thought he could guess what the news was, and begged very respectfully to wish her joy of it.

"You are very kind....And now, Mr. Smith, I want to speak to you about the things that must be bought. I am sure you are too neighbourly and too kind to put difficulties in my way. It is a very different thing now, you know, as to what I buy; and I am sure you will let me have quite on my own account, and nothing at all to do with papa, a few things that I want very much at the present moment."¹⁸

Many of Mrs. Trollope's adventuresses proceed about their business less delicately than does Martha Compton with her sophisticated indirection, indeed Mrs. Barnaby's own performance usually lacks such finesse; but all get

¹⁷The Widow Barnaby, I, 44-45.

¹⁸Ibid., I, 46-47.

their way by conscious acting. Mrs. Sherbourne woos Charles Chesterfield largely by the disarrangement of her drapery; and it is amusing to find Mrs. Fitzjames working on Lord Goldstable in the identical way after a lapse of eleven years:

The white muslin lace-bedecked peignoir, from beneath which her exquisitely shaped feet chaussés to perfection, and crossed over each other at the ankles, peeped forth, could not, it is true, display as fully as the dress of the preceding evening the ivory shoulders, or the beautifully formed bust; but it admitted of being so arranged as to afford a partial view.¹⁹

Adventurers behave exactly as the females of their species, most theatrically in the instance of Theodore Vidal, as we observed in the last chapter. His method of serving up his charm in portions to each of the ladies he courts is common to many other adventurers, especially the vicar of Wrexhill, Henry Mortimer, Frederic Dalton, and Augustus Oglevie. Just as Mrs. Trollope notes that Major Allen experiences great pleasure when acting and lying with greatest fluency, so she notes of Frederic Dalton,

Never, perhaps, had he been equally successful in making the eyes and the voice, the looks and the words, the alternate vivacity and plaintiveness of one man, do the work of many, as upon this occasion. His obvious success, indeed, acted as a stimulant, and thus every labour of love which he

¹⁹Uncle Walter (London, 1852), I, 313.

performed only gave him fresh courage to proceed.²⁰ Dalton and other adventurers of his sort bear a certain relationship to the seducers of melodrama with the difference that though a man like Squire Chase in J.B. Buckstone's Luke the Labourer may fail of having Clara Wakefield, Mrs. Trollope's adventurers do sometimes ruin the ladies they pursue. The vicar of Wrexhill may fail to seduce Fanny Mowbray, but he makes at least one other lady pregnant; Frederic Dalton accomplishes the ruin of Jessie Phillips; and Theodore Vidal either seduces or succumbs to seduction by Lucy Dalton. Less dangerous and far funnier than such melodramatic seducers, Matilda Perkins' Foxcroft nevertheless demonstrates some theatrical flair when he suddenly proposes to Miss Louisa, as Buss' illustration would show even if Mrs. Trollope did not make it perfectly clear:

"And who think you was this erring man?" replied Foxcroft; "who think you was the angelic woman who had this power over him? Oh! Louisa!" he added, throwing himself on his knees before her, determined, as it seemed, to stake all on this bold throw, "oh! Louisa! it is yourself! Speak to me, adored Louisa! Tell me my fate in one soul-stirring word--Will you be my wife?"²¹

Though Foxcroft wins no wife, several of Mrs. Trollope's

²⁰Jessie Phillips, 62.

²¹The Widow Married, III, 94.

adventurers miscalculate so badly as to marry their equals: Mrs. Hartley and Joe Marsh deceive one another, Amelia Thorwald finds her match in Lord William Hammond, and Cassandra de Laurie and Augustus Oglevie perfectly deserve one another.

Mrs. Trollope's unscrupulous manipulators have much of the adaptability of the adventurers, a social agility that the ingenuous find almost too smooth, too glib. When Major Dalrymple talks with Mr. Cartwright, the soldier carries away a curious impression:

The two gentlemen conversed together for a few minutes on the ordinary topics of Russia, the harvest, the slave-trade, and reform. On every subject, except the harvest, which Mr. Cartwright despatched by declaring that it would be peculiarly abundant, the reverend gentleman expressed himself with an unusual flow of words, in sentences particularly well constructed; yet nevertheless his opinions seemed enveloped in a mist; and when Mrs. Richards asked the major his opinion of the new vicar, he replied that he thought his manners very gentleman-like and agreeable, but that he did not perfectly remember what opinions he had expressed on any subject.²²

Among Sophia Martin's observers only Algernon Heathcote has the acuteness to detect her acting for the benefit of Mr. Thorpe; after teasing about her behavior he finally assures his mother, "I have done, mother, ... that is, upon condition that you will listen to me tomorrow, and let me have the fun of being showman, and pointing out

²²The Vicar of Wrexhill (London, 1837), I, 126.

to you and Florence all that is being acted in this beautiful puppet-show."²³ The puppet-show goes off without a hitch, the puppet hesitating in all the appropriate places and overwhelming Mr. Thorpe:

Sophia herself, the gentle, timid Sophia, trembled very perceptibly, and, for a moment, her eyes were fixed upon the ground; but in the next she looked up, and with a sudden movement that appeared perfectly irresistible, she grasped the hands which had held her own a moment before, and raising them to her lips kissed them passionately. Then, terrified of what she had done, she drooped her head and murmured--

"Forgive me! Forgive me! I am fatherless and motherless! and I cannot bear such kindness!" This burst of emotion was not distinctly audible to any ears but those of Mr. Thorpe, but he heard every word she said quite clearly, and was very much touched by the forlorn and desolate feeling they expressed.²⁴

It is perhaps because Sophia's act for Cornelius Thorpe is rather a revival than a performance specially got up for him that she fails to make the same favourable impression on Mr. Thorpe's son, though the words sound like enough:

Oh Mr. Jenkins! you know not what a life of suffering mine has been! Left an orphan at nineteen years of age, I but too well remembered all the happiness of having a mother, not to feel in the most agonizing manner the want of one!²⁵

Mr. Hargrave regularly performs for his daughters and

²³The Ward of Thorpe-Combe, I, 99.

²⁴Ibid., I, 105.

²⁵Ibid., III, 144-45.

all the great world of Paris, but unlike Sophia, who at first seems sweet enough, he never convinces the reader; here, for instance, is a most melodramatic soliloquy:

Mr. Hargrave quitted the room, leaving his daughter, as he intended to do, in a state of the most violent agitation.

"So!" he exclaimed, as he once again enclosed himself in his library, "the plot thickens upon me. Now or never! Glory, honour, and magnificence for life, or ruin, exposure and death."²⁶

A few of Mrs. Trollope's schemers belong also to the class of benefactors, though these are no less conscious of their acting than their less scrupulous fellows. Cornelius Thorpe, in the person of Mr. Timothy Jenkins, would-be benefactor, deliberately cultivates an appearance unlikely to remind anyone of what he once looked like:

He carried in his hand a cap of scarlet cloth, embroidered with gold, the glittering splendour of which contrasted strangely with the rest of his attire. His trousers of yellowish white (texture unknown) were of almost Asiatic fulness of dimension; and a smoke-tinctured waistcoat, imperfectly buttoned, gave to view an extremely dirty flannel ditto, which, fastening close round his neck, was but partially concealed by a fine and clean linen shirt that intervened between them. A wonderfully ill-fitted coat, which had every appearance of having been purchased of a Jew clothes merchant, completed his attire.²⁷

In her description of Cornelius as he works toward the

²⁶Hargrave; or, the Adventures of a Man of Fashion (London, 1843), II, 86-87.

²⁷The Ward of Thorpe-Combe, III, 3.

conclusion of his plot, Mrs. Trollope makes casual dramatic references which reinforce the reader's impression of Cornelius' theatrical performance: learning how Sophia deliberately dressed to look like the family portrait of him, "He did not...forget the story; and being determined to make this portrait a part of the machinery of his discovery scene...."²⁸ When Cornelius asks Major Heathcote if he finds him like the portrait, Mrs. Trollope notes that he speaks "in a tone as solemn as that of old Hamlet's ghost";²⁹ and of the Major's reaction, she writes, "Anybody who had studied his countenance might have perceived that the longer he gazed/ the more satisfied he became that the ghost spoke truth."³⁰

Whether the manipulator works for his own good, like the Widow Barnaby and Mr. Cartwright, or for the good of others, like Mrs. Watts or Cornelius Thorpe, he acts with a life Mrs. Trollope gives to no other character. Plotting is so easily the most exciting activity possible in Mrs. Trollope's novels that it is tempting to describe it as the distinctive ingredient. If Second Love lacked Mr. Selcroft, it would be far more difficult

²⁸Ibid., III, 253.

²⁹Ibid., III, 258.

³⁰Ibid., III, 259-60.

to identify as Mrs. Trollope's; and who would want to read it without his machinations:

You must let me write a letter to Henry, telling him that we are greatly alarmed for your health, and therefore that your marriage must be postponed till we have a stronger assurance than we can feel at present of your ultimate recovery. This will at once set all right with the bishop; and as every day brings us worse and worse accounts of poor Broughton, we may be very sure that in the course of a week or ten days the melancholy scene will be closed at Elmland; and then there cannot be the slightest doubt but that the bishop, eager to show his approval of my obedience, will lose no time in fulfilling the promise he has made me; and once rector of Elmland, my darling, it will not be long, trust me, ere you and your Henry are made man and wife at its altar.³¹

This rather dry statement of policy gives way to actual manoeuvring, first for Elmland, next for Henry, finally for Henry's child and Selcroft's right to visit Henry's estate as if he owned it. When Henry proposes taking the child abroad, Selcroft puts on a masterful^(u) performance: -14

For a few seconds there was a pause of total silence, and then Mr. Selcroft, having suffered his knife and fork to drop upon his plate, raised his eyes and his clasped hands heavenwards, and exclaimed in an accent that old Kemble might have envied, "Take your infant child abroad with you! Henry Harley, you are not in earnest! I know you are not in earnest--the thing is too monstrous to be possible!"³²

The various types of character recur so frequently

³¹Second Love: or, Beauty and Intellect (London, 1851), I, 230-31.

³²Ibid., II, 264.

in Mrs. Trollope's novels that they bring with them whole patterns of action or description, some slight or foolish, others interesting and entertaining. Mrs. Trollope's readers must have noticed how the heroines of one of her books after another display extraordinary sensitivity to music: some few find perfect suitors who possess good singing voices and the inclination to use them in duets with their ladies; but most can count on lovers who will be overcome by the beauty of their singing. Similarly many of Mrs. Trollope's heroines possess deep blue eyes and a predilection for simple white muslin dresses. It is in the repetition of such trivial detail that Mrs. Trollope makes the reader unpleasantly conscious of just how nearly she adheres to a formula for the production of so many books.

Fortunately at least one amusing pattern recurs in the novels: an association of the tendency for unscrupulous manipulation with a selfish urge for privy gormandizing. For the moment let Sophia Martin speak for the many who share the two inclinations, Count Alderberg, the good widow, Mr. Selcroft, Henry Harrington, and Sophia herself:

I eat very little, that is, I want very few dishes on the table; but I am very particular about having nothing but the nicest things, dressed in the ni-

cest manner, and with little nice things, such as mushrooms, you know, Mrs. Barnes, and the like, for stews and sauces.³³

If Sophia's language often smacks of The Widow Barnaby, we must note that though The Ward of Thorpe-Combe was not published until 1842, Mrs. Trollope sold it to Richard Bentley by a contract dated 9 September 1840,³⁴ making it possible that she described Sophia's activities soon after the conclusion of The Widow Married in June 1840 in the New Monthly Magazine. Sophia's orders to Mrs. Barnes to have in fancy foods from old Mr. Thorpe's Piccadilly grocer sound especially like the widow:

Barnes, you had better make out your list for this Fordham at once. It would be exceedingly absurd, with my fortune, to deny myself what I know so particularly agrees with my health; but in making the list, you must remember that it is only when I dine entirely alone, or else with quite a show-off party, (which I shall have very seldom at present,) that I shall use these very costly things;³⁵ so you will not write at first for a great deal.

Though Sophia does not share Mrs. Barnaby's love of cutting a fancy figure, an earlier self-indulgent plotter does: the vicar of Wrexhill. No sooner does he gain control of the Mowbray property than

Everything seemed to prosper with him. The wines he ordered could hardly be accounted dear even at the unheard-of prices he gave for them.

³³The Ward of Thorpe-Combe, II, 178-79.

³⁴Add. MSS. 46, 613, p. 309.

³⁵The Ward of Thorpe-Combe, II, 181-82.

The beautiful creature he bought for his own riding, with just action enough to show off his handsome figure, and not sufficient to occasion him the least fatigue, appeared to be so born and bred on purpose for his own use, that every eye was fixed in admiration as he paced along, and no tongue wagged.³⁶

The largest repeated pattern in the novels is the nearly inevitable courtship and marriage of the heroine; even if, as in Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw, The Vicar of Wrexhill, and Father Eustace, the title character undergoes exposure and defeat, at the end of the novel at least one young lady marries, so that the fiercest satire loses something of its edge by accompanying so ordinary and happy a process as marriage. The pattern suffers modification in Mrs. Trollope's late novels, so that to the simply arranged marriages of girls like Emily Williams, Annie Beauchamp and Florence Heathcote succeed marriages involving girls who accept their suitors only after subjecting them to severe trials (Katherine Smith and Clara Holmwood), girls whose suitors break engagements in order to court them (Cecilia Larrington, Julia Drummond and Judith Anderson), girls who throw over one suitor to have another they prefer (Constance Ridley, Clara Maynard and Mary Clementson, and Judith Maitland), and a few girls who marry badly but wait for their hus-

³⁶The Vicar of Wrexhill, III, 58-59.

bands to die so that they can remarry men whom they prefer (Isabella Worthington, Harriet Hartwell, and Frederica Rittesberg).

Some of Mrs. Trollope's variations in the pattern we can attribute simply to the inclination not to bore her readers by presenting identical stories about characters of different names; but in some of her more competent novels she shows such an understanding of psychology that what may begin as variation becomes the exploration of character. Thus Constance Ridley, the heroine of The Blue Belles of England, goes through the normal process of courtship by Henry Mortimer as far as engagement before suddenly examining the object of her affections and reflecting on the speed of her engagement. Once she has broken the engagement, she is naturally reluctant to accept Fitzosborne's suit in spite of her attraction to him, because she fears being and seeming the creature of her infatuations.

If Mrs. Trollope were interested in tragedy, the marital complexities of Second Love would give her opportunity to attempt it: Henry Harley feels obliged to marry Louisa Selcroft because, having permitted him to engage her affections on a purely superficial level, she falls ill on the threat of his leaving her. Her

father's scheme for advancement in the church gives Henry a reprieve from Louisa just long enough for him to fall in love with Frederica Rittesberg; but he dutifully marries Louisa, and Frederica resigns herself to marrying a good man who is a friend of her father. When Louisa dies, as Mrs. Trollope's ill-matched husbands and wives have a tendency to do, not knowing that Frederica has married, Henry returns to her and soon declares his passion. Though she does not love Lord Otway as she loves Henry, Frederica rejects Henry; if Lord Otway did not conveniently die, the two would be doomed to frustration. Twice in the novel Mrs. Trollope takes the easy course of killing people who are in the way of Henry's and Frederica's union instead of exploring their reaction to their frustrating marriages; but even so her analysis of both their feelings is acute and sensitive.

Already the advantages and disadvantages of Mrs. Trollope's dependence on stock characters who reappear in novel after novel according to patterns capable of only limited variation become obvious. That she found it necessary to reproduce such unnatural and uninteresting characters as heavy fathers, seventeen-year-old ingénues ready for prompt marriage, and parasites whose connections cannot have been worth the annoyance of their

company so limits the scope of Mrs. Trollope's novels that not even the burgeoning vitality of her active plot-
ters wholly compensates for the narrowness of her world. The charge of vulgarity, hardly applicable to the sensitive treatment Mrs. Trollope gives to servants and domestic affairs, does fit her crude presentation of heavy characters of noble birth, of artless parasites, and of mindless maidens ready for marriage.

If the stock characters and patterns limit Mrs. Trollope, nevertheless she can work with them to achieve some delicate effects. Most important, once she has worked with her patterns long enough to adapt them for purposes like social comment, they give her good opportunities for irony: early in Uncle Walter Henry Harrington, a gorman-dizing manipulator, takes a private meal between two sermons, while he works up old notes for the second:

The Doctor helped himself to some pulled turkey from a covered silver dish that stood before him, added a few delicate green peas to it from another silver dish, and proceeded while eating to look over the pile of sermons he had referred to, in order to select one for his afternoon's discourse.³⁷

Juxtaposed to Mr. Harrington's delicate meal is his sermon, an attack on applewomen who profane the sabbath:

There is no one symptom which so irresistibly proves that the insidious poison of revolutionary doctrines

³⁷Uncle Walter, I, 24.

have spread among the masses of the population, as the shameless, the revolting practice of openly desecrating the Sabbath and defying the police, by carrying on a traffic demoralizing alike to the purchaser and vendor in the public streets. For what guilt can be worse than his who seeks to make a profit of the wickedness of that portion of the community whose tender years lay them most open to insidious temptation? And is it not an additional aggravation, which deepens indignation into horror, and nurtures disgust into loathing, when the sex of the tempter is that in which every pure feeling, and every holy instinct should lead to the shedding of tears over the loss of the young soul thus lured to destruction?³⁸

Not only do the stock figures enable Mrs. Trollope to remark on the relation between preaching and doing, but, in their interaction between one another, they permit her to explore character. For instance, when Gertrude's father receives a petition from a young woman of means, an adventuress who wishes to marry his librarian, the two act their roles for their own satisfaction alone:

Arabella thanked him by bestowing another gentle kiss upon his noble hand, not aware that what she intended as a mark of tender and familiar affection, he would interpret as a symptom of profound respect, arising from the imposing difference between her pedigree and his own.³⁹

Other of the stock characters show themselves more capable of self-examination than Arabella and the baron: when Mrs. Watts realizes that her more frivolous plots have nearly

³⁸Ibid., I, 26-27.

³⁹Gertrude, II, 70-71.

miscarried with serious results, she has brief qualms that perhaps she ought not to have meddled with other people's lives; and Mrs. Chilbert almost casually remarks to Judith Maitland,

I don't wish you to find any more Mrs. Chilberts, Judith: we are only a variety of the genus tyrant. But now I have begun with you, it is quite as well that I should go on; and in exactly two months from this time, I have the Dean's word for it that I shall be in London myself; and then I shall take you again into my own hands, and renew my favourite practice of making you do exactly what I bid you.⁴⁰

When we survey the whole range of Mrs. Trollope's stock company, we see that the Athenaeum's notice of The Ward of Thorpe-Combe, a part of the journal's consistent attack on Mrs. Trollope's vulgarity, is almost as ill-conceived as it could be: it is in their relationships with servants and in their meannesses or generosities about the commonest articles of domestic life that Mrs. Trollope's characters are most apt to reveal themselves as more than bad stereotypes of characters in bad plays. To expect a reviewer, and at that a hostile one, to realize this, is perhaps asking too much; we must remember Harriet Martineau's complaint about John Murray's refusal to publish Deerbrook:

The execution was not the ground of refusal. It was, as I had afterwards reason to know, the scene

⁴⁰Petticoat Government, II, 223.

being laid in middle life....People liked high life in novels, and low life, and ancient life; and life of any rank presented by Dickens, in his peculiar artistic light, which is very unlike the broad daylight of actual existence, English or other: but it was not supposed that they would bear a presentment of the familiar life of every day.⁴¹

Miss Martineau might not enjoy being compared to Frances Trollope, but in the most telling of her descriptions of domestic affairs, Mrs. Trollope shares the burden of a new and healthy realism in the novel with her more serious junior. Mrs. Trollope's novels would suffer from the want of such vulgarities as showing Charlotte Mastermann treating with Mary Laurrington for her sitting-room in the Laurringtons' house, as having Judith Maitland form an alliance with her Aunt Barbara's maid in order to get a fire in her room, a bath, and a writing desk, and as describing Mrs. Barnaby rejoicing in New Orleans in the thrift with which she stuffed her husband's wine hampers with her many clothes for the trip to the new world.

To look back at The Domestic Manners of the Americans after the novels is a revealing process, for in Mrs. Trollope's earliest novels there are few domestic manners to be seen, and the novels are accordingly weaker than the travel book. Similarly domestic matters form

⁴¹Harriet Martineau, Autobiography (London, 1877), II, 115.

a minor issue in Mrs. Trollope's European travel books, which compare so poorly with her American one that the reader wishes she had attended to the humble concerns of her first book. In the best of Mrs. Trollope's novels, however, domestic manners reappear, serving as a comment on the nature of her characters. Even in her pallid last novel, Fashionable Life, we know a great deal about Clara Holmwood from her clever defeat of Anastasia Brixbourg's attempt to give Clara's Aunt Sarah a nasty room above many stairs, while Clara's contrivances to fit Annie Wharton and her husband comfortably into her Paris household have an interest unequalled in the remainder of the story. In their most effective performances Mrs. Trollope's stock company appear in informal dress.

Chapter 5: Comedies of Character and Situation

Comedy in Mrs. Trollope's novels consists of several elements: close observation of human behavior, comparison between that behavior and the principles claimed for it, and, especially in the later novels, folly and its cure. When Mrs. Trollope chooses to view hypocrisy, self-seeking, and folly humourlessly and as the product of deliberate malice, she writes social criticism of a singularly unlovely and unsuccessful sort, including those of her books most often examined by social historians today, the predominantly grim novels like The Vicar of Wrexhill or Michael Armstrong; we shall consider the reasons for her failure as a novelist in such books in the next chapter. In the present chapter it is our pleasanter task to treat Mrs. Trollope's superficially more trivial novels, the comedies which make her greatest successes.

The Widow Barnaby expresses Mrs. Trollope's harsh comic view of life with more vitality and sounder organization than any other of her novels. Later novels depict characters who reach some degree of self-realization; it is the widow's wry triumph never to admit her self-seeking, her folly, and ultimately her ill-preparation for the world into which she thrusts herself.

The reviewer of The Widow Barnaby for the Times was only one of many who recognized its superiority over the novels which preceded it:

Compelled on one or two occasions to cry out against the errors and literary crimes of Mrs. Trollope, we had determined to pass over altogether her future productions (fearing that our distaste might have possibly amounted to a prejudice), when the Widow Barnaby luckily fell into our hands.... Had the Widow preceded the Vicar of Wrexhill, or the Romance of Vienna, it is possible that we should have liked both of the latter, as children of the same mother who had given to the world the fascinating Barnaby....

To speak plainly, there is so much originality, so much honest jolly humour in the manner in which Mrs. Trollope has depicted the widow, that the book wipes away a multitude of the authoress's former sins, and shows her merits in the most favourable light. The Barnaby is such a heroine as never before has figured in a romance. Her vulgarity is sublime. Imaginary personage though she be, everybody who has read her memoirs must have a real interest in her. We still feel that charming horror which carried us through these volumes, contemplate in fancy the majestic developments of her person, and listen to the awful accents of her voice.¹

In most of her novels Mrs. Trollope presents numerous related characters; but in The Widow Barnaby as in no other she deliberately contrives relationships which force the reader constantly to contrast one character with another, one scene with another, so as to heighten our sense of the vain, tiresome, energetic, and often delightful, character of the widow. By parallel relationships Mrs. Trollope measures Mrs. Barnaby against

¹The Times, 24 January 1839, p.5.

other important characters in the novel--against Agnes as Miss Betsy's niece, against Miss Betsy as Agnes' aunt, against Mr. Barnaby as the comforter of her father's old age--invariably to find the widow both wanting common decency but in her buoyant selfishness somehow more alive than all her relatives. We feel the more inclined to sympathize with her because as a manipulator she shows herself the least adept of the sharpers in the book, the clever parasites like Major Allen, Lord Mucklebury, and O'Donagough, all bent on extracting at least amusement and often their living from the people about them.

Mrs. Barnaby herself gives us the clue to the organization of the book; each new situation she experiences she compares to what has come before, drawing absurdly optimistic conclusions in the expectation of at last enjoying the social success which has unaccountably evaded her grasp until the present moment. Her first suitor, Captain Tate, provides a standard against which she can judge later ones, so that upon seeing Colonel Hubert for the first time she remarks, "I never saw a finer fellow in my life. He's taller than Tate by half a head, I am sure."² When she notices that a young man sharing a coach with her and Agnes has courage to chat with her

²The Widow Barnaby, I, 319.

but is abashed by Agnes' more obvious gentility,

"That's very odd,"....thought Mrs. Barnaby. "She certainly is a most beautiful creature.... quite as handsome as I was even in poor dear Tate's days, and yet the moment he got a sight of her, his pleasant, gay manner, changed all at once; and now he looks as glum as a boy at school....Though she's my niece, she is not like me; that's certain,and who knows but that many men may still prefer my style to hers?....As to this one, at least, it is impossible to doubt it, and it will be great folly in me to set out with a fancy that my face and figure, especially when I get back to dress again, [She has been in mourning for Mr. Barnaby.] will not stand comparison with hers. For some years at any rate, in justice to myself, I will keep this in mind; and not take it for granted that every glance directed towards us is for the child, and not for the woman."³

The faulty judgment which prompts Mrs. Barnaby to misinterpret the young man's behavior colours her personal affairs so rosily that though we know that Captain Tate will marry the lady to whom he has been engaged throughout his flirtation with Martha Compton, we nevertheless find her saying seriously, "I shouldn't wonder yet if he was to come out with a proposal";⁴ we find her as Martha Barnaby equally convinced that Lord Muckle-

³Ibid., I, 218. Parents and foster parents in Mrs. Trollope's novels often share Mrs. Barnaby's wish to minimize the ages of daughters entrusted to their care; examples include John Clementson in The Attractive Man, Mrs. Codrington in The Lottery of Marriage, Barbara Jenkyns in Petticoat Government, and Charlotte Morris in The Life and Adventures of a Clever Woman: Mrs. Trollope usually attributes the inclination to sexual rivalry.

⁴Ibid., I, 20.

bury, who enjoys her as a joke, will have her as a wife. In her final doubts of Mucklebury she questions not her judgment but her knowledge of the manners appropriate to his station:

The widow was at a loss what to do or say next. Had he been rude or angry, or even silent and sullen, or in any other mood in the world but one of such very easy good humour, she could have managed better. But a painful sort of conviction began to creep over her that Lord Mucklebury's present conduct, as well as all that had passed before, was merely the result of high-breeding and fashionable manners, and that lords and ladies always did so to one another. If this were so, rather than betray such rustic ignorance as to appear surprised at it, she would have consented to live without a lover for weeks and weeks to come;...and the terrible idea followed, that by having ignorantly hoped for too much she might have lost a most delightful opportunity of forming an intimate friendship with a peer of the realm, that might have been credit-⁵able and useful to her, either abroad or at home.⁵

The particular revery I quote is a fine example of Mrs. Trollope's skill in presenting the widow as at once coarse and grasping but curiously ebullient and touching. By the end of the passage we see that she has begun to consider what she can make of Mucklebury as a prestigious connection, if she cannot marry him; she has also begun thinking of being abroad. The disappointment of knowing her original hopes for him to be thoroughly dashed disappears in her contemplation of yet another gloriously projected future. But the sadness of the widow comes

⁵Ibid., III, 51-52.



from our knowledge that though Mucklebury uses her all along as a butt, in her hopes for him she actually makes herself love him a little, far more than he loves anyone, so that even her hope of using him for the prestige of the connection is a little touched with her having cared. Vulgar and materialistic as she is, nevertheless Mrs. Barnaby draws our compassion through the ease with which she is gulled, the verve with which she recovers. Always her courage matches her lack of self-criticism:

Soh!....Here I am then, after six months' trial of the travelling system, and a multitude of experiments in fashionable society, just seven hundred pounds poorer than when I set out, and without having advanced a single inch towards a second marriage....This will never do!....My youth, my beauty, and my fortune will all melt away together before the object is obtained, unless I change my plans, and find out some better mode of proceeding.⁶

If it is the comparison with the other sharpers in the novel which reveals Mrs. Barnaby's poor adaptation to the role in which she has cast herself, it is the roles she shares with Mr. Barnaby, with Agnes, and with Aunt Betsy which afford the most damaging contrasts. At the death of Mrs. Compton when Martha Barnaby and her husband learn that they must look after Martha's father, their dialogue reveals their characters in a confrontation typical of Mrs. Trollope's best novels:

⁶Ibid., III, 183-84.

* There is no p. 159.

"The poor old man need not be in our way much, my dear Barnaby;....I have been thinking that the little room behind the laundry may be made very comfortable for him without any expense at all; I shall only just have to..."

"No, no, Martha," interrupted the worthy Galen, "there is no need of packing the poor gentleman into that dismal little place....Let him have the room over the dining-room; the south is always the best aspect for the old; and, besides, there is a closet that will serve to keep his pipes and tobacco, and his phials and his pill-boxes, out of sight."⁷

For the insistence with which she reminds the reader of the widow's gross appearance Mrs. Trollope may justly be accused of vulgarity. The widow scarcely appears without our being informed that "Mrs. Barnaby, feathered, rouged, ringleted, and desperately determined to share the honours of the hour, made her way, proud in the consciousness of attracting a hundred eyes, up to the conspicuous place where Agnes stood."⁸ Despite the frequent repetition of this sort of observation, Mrs. Trollope succeeds in using the physical and mental contrasts between Agnes and the widow and between Aunt Betsy and the widow to reveal different sides of Mrs. Barnaby's character.

As we might easily imagine from Mrs. Barnaby's observations on her fellow coach passenger,⁹ she competes

⁷Ibid., I, 103.

⁸Ibid., II, 203.

⁹See above, p. 156.

with Agnes, both sexually and as Aunt Betsy's heir. The sexual competition has amusing complications: before Major Allen decides to cultivate the widow, he tries and fails to gain Agnes' attention; before Colonel Hubert fixes his affection on Agnes, he is attracted by Mrs. Barnaby's marvellous vulgarity. So interchangeable are all handsome men to Mrs. Barnaby that once the major has given her up, she foolishly thinks to herself, "I was to blame in so totally neglecting the evident admiration of Colonel Hubert, in order to gratify the jealous feelings of Major Allen."¹⁰ Though Mrs. Barnaby may have difficulty distinguishing friendliness from forwardness, Agnes has none and easily rejects Major Allen's advances.

The more we see of the two ladies together, "like a Bella Donna beside a Holyhock,"¹¹ the more we know of each. Their attitudes towards one another tell us something: Agnes alternates between submissiveness and cringing from her aunt's embarrassing behavior; the widow exclaims how healthful for herself and how beneficial for Agnes her latest extravagance and her newest device for Agnes to use her cast-off clothing will be. Agnes

¹⁰The Widow Barnaby, II, 259.

¹¹Ibid., II, 16.

left to herself reads or plays the piano; the widow either sews herself fine things, indulges in speculation as to what she must do next to make the world aware of her, or has a bite of something she takes "to be very light and wholesome".¹²

Mrs. Trollope so constructs the book that we can not forget the competition between Agnes and the widow as nieces, or that between Aunt Betsy and the widow as aunts. Martha Compton's early expeditions to Aunt Betsy in the hope of coaxing her into subsidizing her finery contrast with Agnes' refusal to beg anything until she grows quite desperate; and Aunt Betsy emphasizes the contrast by suggesting, late in the book, that she has not yet determined which niece is to be her heir.

The tight structure of the book works most effectively in the contrast between the two aunts. It is no coincidence that upon setting out for London to rescue Agnes from Mrs. Barnaby, Aunt Betsy goes through the very process of selecting retainers that Mrs. Barnaby went through far earlier in the book; and the different procedures of the two ladies are instructive. Mrs. Barnaby chooses Betty Jacks for her elegant length of limb against the recommendation of the girl's teacher,

¹²Ibid., I, 130.

Mrs. Sims; Aunt Betsy carefully engages the services of two people she knows, William Appleby and the daughter of her own farmer. The two ladies' financial arrangements make a contrast yet more telling: Mrs. Trollope informs us that the widow goes off to achieve her second marriage on something over four hundred pounds a year,¹³ and even the vagueness of the figure tells us something about the widow; Aunt Betsy's accounts she renders in a business-like tabular form, appropriate for describing that lady's affairs. We learn that from various rents, three per cent consols, and mortgages, Aunt Betsy can count on £1415 per year,¹⁴ though she can expect that her bee-keeping will gradually augment both principal and income. Beside this exact and impressive account, even the widow's success in selling her husband's property and practice for half again what it is worth seems pretty paltry.

But the financial comparison between the two aunts, cleverly and effectively as it is presented, by no means exhausts the use Mrs. Trollope makes of their similar roles. The ladies conceive of themselves in quite opposite fashions: Aunt Betsy is quite willing to let the

¹³Ibid., I, 156.

¹⁴Ibid., I, 198.

Comptons and all the world believe her a stingy and relatively poor woman; the widow would be known for her generosity and affluence. Huge and gross, the widow delights in pleasures of the flesh; tiny, hunchbacked,¹⁵ and retiring, the old lady, Mrs. Trollope occasionally hints, is something of a fairy godmother.¹⁶ Though Mrs. Barnaby prides herself on her worldly knowledge, she blunders in almost every attempt she makes to be a fashionable success; conversely, Aunt Betsy, so out of the world that she says of herself,

1c. / Though surrounded by human beings with whom I have lived on the most friendly terms, I have passed my existence, as to anything like companionship, entirely alone. I have never been dull, for I have read incessantly, and altogether I think it likely that I have been happier than most people.¹⁷

she none the less manages Agnes' worldly career masterfully, partly because of vicarious knowledge accumulated from much reading of novels.

As our understanding of the major characters of the novel benefits from its careful structure, so too we find quite minor characters reacting with them in an illuminating way. Elizabeth Peters, the only member of her family to be taken in by the widow's pretensions,

¹⁵Mrs. Barnaby calls her a "hunch-backed Jesabel of an aunt", I, 244.

¹⁶Ibid., III, 180.

¹⁷Ibid., I, 178.

Mrs. Trollope describes as one who "in her heart believed Mrs. Barnaby was the kindest person in the world, because she said so."¹⁸ Though less economically described, Elizabeth Norris' stuffy reaction to Agnes' first appearance in the charge of her Aunt Betsy has a similarly edged humour:

lc. / The expressive countenance of the old lady underwent more than one change before she spoke. At first it very unequivocally indicated astonishment.... then came a smile that as plainly told of admiration (at which moment, by the way, her ladyship became impressed with the firmest conviction that the nose of the honourable Miss Nivett, [whom she believes to be Agnes' relative] and that of Miss Willoughby, were formed on the same model), and at last, whatever intention of reserve might have possessed her, it all melted away, and she held out both her hands....¹⁹

Most amusing of all perhaps is Mrs. Barnaby's adoption of a character appropriate for the wife of Patrick O'Donagough:

Agnes Willoughby, my dear, I can't say you behaved very well to me when the cheerful sort of life I indulged in, solely on your account, was changed for sorrow and imprisonment; but, nevertheless, my religious principles, which are stronger, my dear, than even when you knew me, lead me to forgive you, and, better still, they lead me to introduce you to your excellent and exemplary uncle, the Reverend Mr. O'Donagough.²⁰

The Widow Barnaby fills too many pages, the repe-

¹⁸Ibid., I, 281-82.

¹⁹Ibid., III, 249.

²⁰Ibid., III, 355.

titive patterns which give it form tend also to make it monotonous, and the animosity with which Mrs. Trollope belabours poor Mrs. Barnaby merely on account of her size and her furbelows detracts from the interest of the book; but in its sprightliness and organization it certainly is the best of Mrs. Trollope's novels. Its social comment, always indirect, has the conservatism of most of Mrs. Trollope's books: the way of the fashionable world is a good way; only selfishness like Mrs. Barnaby's mars it.

Like The Widow Barnaby, The Ward of Thorpe-Combe shows careful construction; and it is the only novel by Mrs. Trollope which fits the physical pattern imposed by publication in three volumes. The houseparty given in the first volume by old Mr. Thorpe so that he can choose an heir from among his young relatives balances Cornelius Thorpe's houseparty given for the same purpose in the third volume, the two separated by Sophia Martin's exercises in meanness. As in The Widow Barnaby Mrs. Trollope exploits the relationships between characters, but The Ward of Thorpe-Combe differs significantly from the earlier book: except for her suitor Richard Brandenberry, Sophia is the only rogue in the book; so that competing with her good cousins to be Mr. Thorpe's and Cornelius' heir, she lacks the widow's ad-

vantage of having more effective rogues to force sympathy toward her. We are conscious that the widow greatly exaggerates her own cleverness; but after Sophia's early success in manipulating Mr. Thorpe we find her clumsiness handling Cornelius disquietingly inconsistent, though Cornelius' own plotting has Sophia off her guard.

The antitheses posed by The Widow Barnaby effectively catch the reader's interest in spite of Agnes' making at best a pallid and insipidly obedient foil for Mrs. Barnaby; the widow's warmth and life redeem the book. Sophia, though probably cleverer than Mrs. Barnaby, has none of her vitality, so that the feebleness of her foils, Algernon and Florence Heathcote, matters as Agnes' does not. Florence never becomes more than an undemonstratively lady-like alternative to Sophia; and Algernon's role as observing and caustic critic too often gives way for his performances as the youthful invalid or the child of intellectual promise.

As in both The Ward of Thorpe-Combe and The Widow Barnaby Mrs. Trollope exploits her stock character the manipulator, so in The Larringtons she focusses on the benefactor. Again family connections are important, but it is Mrs. Watts who occupies the centre of the stage, her reasons for manipulating the other characters and her reactions to their behavior which hold the reader's

attention. More than any other of Mrs. Trollope's manipulators, Mrs. Watts has reasons for acting as she does: as she writes to Barøn de Shoenberg,²¹ when her brother-in-law was engaged to her sister she came to love him and he her, so that the happiness of the marriage which for duty's sake he nevertheless made was spoilt. Consequently Mrs. Watts determines to do what she can to extricate de Shoenberg from the engagement to her niece Cornelia which she sees he repents, in order to replace it by engagement to her favourite niece Cecelia. This much plotting her own experience justifies, but when in the course of detaching Cornelia from de Shoenberg in the dazzle of a season in London Mrs. Watts asks two friends to help her by occupying Cornelia's older sisters, the results, serious and comic, are out of all proportion to her intentions.

In a single night William Lurrington's wife leaves him for Augustus Hendson; and Cornelia not only repudiates the baron but elopes with her suitor Ringley, belatedly arousing Mrs. Watts' feelings of propriety:

What motive could have induced him to throw such a slur upon the reputation of the woman he intended to make his wife, when that woman, already of age, gave him so very clearly to understand her willingness to give herself to him in that capacity? In

²¹The Lurringtons, II, 201-206.

truth the old lady was frightened, very seriously frightened; and the secret consciousness of her own share in the business did not greatly tend to sooth her agitation.²²

Hard upon the exposure of the elopements Mrs. Watts receives a letter from the music master she passed off as an Italian prince in order to occupy Araminta Laurrington, a letter revealing that Araminta decided to overcome the awe inspired by the Laurringtons by herself offering the gentleman her hand; and similarly Mr. Pope, whom Mrs. Watts prevailed upon to take Mary Laurrington to a feminist lecture, reports that she took the lecture personally and proposed to him, so that he has decided to leave England immediately for a visit to Egypt of indefinite duration. As if these letters did not make a sufficiently comic crescendo to end Mrs. Watts' most active plotting, she receives yet another from Frank Mastermann, a generation her junior, proposing that she marry him.

Except for her moment of compunction at Cornelia's hasty elopement, Mrs. Watts' enjoyment of the comic results of her manipulations keeps her from feeling fully her responsibility for meddling. That she turns out so shallow a fairy godmother after so generously explaining her reasons for acting to the baron is most

²²Ibid., III, 244-45.

disappointing; the compassion which enriches the comedy of The Widow Barnaby gives way before mere amusement in The Laurringtons.

Though Mrs. Trollope portrays middle-aged characters with acuteness from The Widow Barnaby onward, she comes only gradually to the presentation of convincing young people. In spite of his foolishness Charles Chesterfield attracts the reader's sympathy as no other of Mrs. Trollope's male characters does; but as M.W.Rosa suggests,²³ his repudiation of worldly city life in favour of rusticity was a commonplace, at least in the fashionable novel, though Mrs. Trollope uses it well. The girl who makes an initial mistake in choosing her lover and then must somehow disembarass herself of him in order to take on someone more promising appears repeatedly and finally leads to Mrs. Trollope's greatest success after The Widow Barnaby, Petticoat Government.

Constance Ridley in The Blue Belles of England holds our interest with something of Mrs. Barnaby's power, in spite of being the romantic lead. As with the widow Mrs. Trollope allows us not only to see characters involved in situations which make an indirect comment upon Constance's situation by analogy, but she also permits

²³M.W.Rosa, The Silver-Fork School, 32-33.

us to know far more than Constance knows of the behavior of her two suitors. The multiple marriages of the book comment on Constance's projected and her final marriage: her brother falls victim to the wiles of a woman just as selfish as Mortimer, and Mrs. Hartley succumbs to the advances of a mere adventurer. By contrast, aided by Constance and Fitzosborne, Penelope Hartley makes a perfectly sound marriage with her childhood sweetheart; in fact Penelope's happiness prompts her to question Constance pointedly about the ease with which she seems to sustain the loss of Mortimer:

"Constance, how comes it that you seem as happy from having lost your lover as I am from being united for ever and for ever to mine?"

"Because, as I presume," replied Constance, colouring, "we were not attached precisely in the same manner."

"Yes, yes, I presume so too," returned her friend, laughing; "but how came you so greatly to mistake your own heart?"

"The blunder and the blame...were all your own, Penelope".²⁴

The contrast between Penelope's marriage and the one she herself avoided prompts Constance to analyze further the nature of her mistake, a matter not so much of infatuation with Mortimer as with what he represented to her. She continues for Penelope's benefit,

The intense mortification I felt from hearing you say that I must never hope to find any real genuine mental companionship among the gifted great ones whom I so languished to know, could only be equalled

²⁴The Blue Belles of England (London, 1842), III, 165.

by the delight of thinking that, in the case of Henry Mortimer, at least, you were mistaken.²⁵

Henry Mortimer's tendency to treat Constance as only one of the many admirers deserving of his attention, and the public display he wished her to make to his greater glory, quite erased her early infatuation for him. Well before the dissolution of her engagement Constance came to doubt the worth of persisting with it, but because she feared her own fickleness, and in her shame at having misjudged Mortimer, she resolved to go through with the wedding:

The fortune of Mr. Mortimer was so small as to make the loss of hers a disappointment of the most serious nature, and one which the generosity of her temper shrank from inflicting, more sensitively than from telling him that he was no longer beloved. The second reason...she was conscious of...but think of it she dared not. In her deep, deep grief, almost to her horror, she was conscious that, though incapable, as she hoped and trusted, of ever again loving mortal man, she had discovered in Mr. Fitzosborne so many of the higher qualities which were wanting in her affianced husband, that were she now to break the tie she had formed, her own heart might be the first to reproach her with lightly yielding it up to another love.²⁶

Happily Constance has the wit to consider her folly without necessarily assuming the gravity of the passage we have just considered. Even as she thinks that she may have found the qualities she admires in Fitzosborne, she

²⁵Ibid., III, 166-67.

²⁶Ibid., III, 104-105.

wonders if she isn't merely proceeding from one infatuation to another:

Should he say to me, "Constance I love you;--will you be my wife?"--shall I answer him, "Fair Sir, I was engaged on Wednesday last to Mr. Mortimer, having fallen desperately in love with him on Monday; but as he would not have me, and you will, I am your debtor; and for this courtesy am ready to forget all that has gone before, and swear to love you to the end of time, even as I swore to him before?" No!--this will I never do!²⁷

More than with any character before Constance, Mrs. Trollope successfully takes us inside the girl and allows us to share her feelings; but at the same time she gives us the benefit of the narrator's wider experience:

She stood convicted in her own eyes of that precise species of female fickleness which she most cordially detested. It was not fickleness of purpose...temper...taste, but it was a thousand times worse than either, for it was fickleness of heart; at least such it seemed to herself, for in the conscientious sternness of her self-examination, it never occurred to her that the blunder she had made between affection and vanity had nothing to do with her heart, and that Henry Mortimer and his verses had never touched that.²⁸

What weakens The Blue Belles of England is that though Constance learns to repudiate the world of literary salons and celebrated poets, the alternative Mrs. Trollope offers her with Fitzosborne, except that he is more decent than Mortimer, has little to distinguish it from what she repudiates. Penelope Hartley's mar-

²⁷Ibid., III, 210-11.

²⁸Ibid., III, 268-69.

riage suggests quite a different alternative; but though we see it favourably, Constance does not try to find a similar match for herself.

Younger and more sensitive than Constance, Mary Clementson of The Attractive Man allows herself to be manipulated into engagement with a man she does not love. Lucy Dalton's claims that Theodore Vidal loves Mary and that she herself loves and is loved by the cousin for whom Mary really cares, along with Mr. Clementson's urging that Mary accept Vidal (Lucy has persuaded him that Mary loves Vidal) prevail on the girl to accept him, but she finds herself incapable of affection for him. Mrs. Trollope's revelation of Mary's self-criticism displays her character with uncommon delicacy:

[Mary] firmly believed him to be very strongly attached to her; and whenever she felt a sensation of distaste creep over her, as he displayed all the innumerable graces of his person and mind, she almost shuddered at the baseness of her own ingratitude. She had for some time made it decidedly the first object of her existence to persuade herself that she did not, nor ever had, liked any body so well, and having also, and with much less effect, persuaded herself that nobody else had ever liked her so well, she was growing into a very firm belief that (excepting towards her father), nature had not been pleased to bestow upon her the great blessing of an affectionate heart, and she had no doubt that it was owing to this lamentable deficiency that she could not control a strong feeling of anger and indignation towards her matchless

lover²⁹ every time he made her father wait for dinner.

In The Attractive Man as in The Blue Belles of England parallel affairs comment on the major engagement of the novel: Lucy Dalton's relationship with Vidal, Clara Maynard's with Vidal and Lexington, and Lexington's aunt's with M. Marathone all offer analogies to Mary's affair; but as in the earlier novel the organization of the book is not careful enough to make Mrs. Trollope's writing effective, though some of its characterization is as delicate as any she ever attempted.

According to Frances Eleanor Trollope, Mrs. Trollope had the title and plot of Petticoat Government from Thomas Adolphus,³⁰ even as Anthony was to have the plot of Dr. Thorne from him a few years later. Whether Thomas Adolphus' collaboration extended into the construction of the novel it is impossible to say, but in its sound structure, its acidly etched characterization, and its repudiation of fashionable society it stands with The Widow Barnaby as one of Mrs. Trollope's two best novels. Here for once we have the combination of an effectively presented young person like Constance Ridley or Mary Clementson in a situation contrived to contrast the characters

²⁹The Attractive Man, III, 221.

³⁰F.E. Trollope, Frances Trollope, II, 187.

whom she meets.

As an outsider, Judith Maitland finds the society which her spinster aunts represent selfish, unintellectual and boring. When she tries to find her widowed Aunt Penelope, she discovers that no one wishes to re-establish contact with someone so debased as to have married an impecunious artist; and once she has herself found her aunt, she learns that the fiancé she has chosen from the elite of her Aunt Elfreda's London lacks concern for her relatives and sensitivity to painting, even as she had already realized that he was unmoved by music. On an excursion by boat to Richmond the revulsion she feels for the entire fashionable world, for the potential mother-in-law who wishes to display her as a conversation piece, and for the neglect by both her fiancé and his mother of all the people for whom she cares, causes her to vomit over the side of the boat: Mrs. Trollope may not intend the action to be symbolic, but as it stands it signifies Judith's unconscious denial of all the Dorings' values. When at length they provide her with opportunity to renounce her engagement, she does, later to marry her artist cousin.

So bare an account hardly suggests either the virtues or the vices of the book. The world which Judith

rejects Mrs. Trollope presents in amusing detail; Judith's squabbling aunts, for example, drily abuse one another:

"The fact is," observed Miss Barbara, "that both Penelope and Judith are what is called regular beauties; and you may take my word for it, Elfreda, there is not a greater bore in the world than [^] ~~the~~ having a regular beauty belonging to you. I do not believe that I am particularly ugly, because Mamma always says I have such a good nose. You, Elfreda, have not any good feature in your face, and therefore, of course, I suppose you are particularly ugly. However, there is nobody will deny, I think, that we are both of us ten thousand times cleverer than they are."³¹

Miss Elfreda has quite enough vanity of her own to resent Barbara's denigration of her features, and she replies with spirit:

"If I am uglier than you, sister Barbara," she said, "so much the better for me; for the uglier I am, the better my chance of being let alone and permitted to remain as I am, and [^] of going half-and-half shares in the house with you. But you seem to forget my pretty feet, my dear. Mamma says I have the best legs and feet of the whole family. However, I don't want any body to fall in love with my legs and feet, not I, for I should not like to shape my intellect so as to please any man."³²

The selfishness of the two spinsters displays itself variously. Miss Barbara reluctantly provides Judith with bath water, a fire in her room, and even a party, lest the girl take away her income and her car-

³¹Petticoat Government, I, 11-12.

³²Ibid., I, 12-13.

riage; but when Judith tries to cultivate the parrot given the old lady by Dr. Wroughtley, Miss Barbara snaps at her:

"Don't you like that people should love your parrot, aunt Barbara?" said Judith....

Miss Barbara made a great effort to control her feelings, and so far succeeded as to reply, comparatively, with composure--

"Love him, niece Judith? oh dear no! of course I have no objection that people should love him, and, indeed, I don't see how any body can help it, such a very beautiful creature as he is. But I don't choose that any body's love should interfere with my management of him, my dear. He was given to me by a very particularly dear friend, and I feel it to be a sort of duty that I owe to him, to take the very greatest care that nobody should feed him but myself. It is not everybody that understands the nature of parrots."³³

Just as Miss Barbara's selfishness centers on her persuading Dr. Wroughtley to accept her instead of remaining a bachelor, so Miss Elfreda's great aim is to be a success in her own particular sphere in London. When Judith comes to tell her that she has at last found Penelope Worthington, Aunt Elfreda first thinks the good news the girl wants to give her concerns her own social success:

"My dear, dear aunt, if the news I bring you should create in your heart one half of the joy it has created in mine, we shall be the happiest pair of ladies in London!"

"...Nothing has been mentioned, my sweet Judith, about the possibility of my obtaining one

³³Ibid., I, 159-60.

ticket for Almack's? I did just breathe the longing wish I had for it into the ear of your devoted Frederic, and he is such a very charming creature, that if it be possible to do it, I think it will be done by him."³⁴

Elfreda Jenkyns' hope is so very selfish yet modest that it serves to suggest the nature of her world and to indicate something of the greater pettiness of the Dorkings, who certainly have not troubled to get her a ticket to Almack's. Measuring her aunts Barbara and Elfreda against her Aunt Penelope, Judith finds the spinners wanting; but Aunt Elfreda herself receives so little recognition from the Dorkings that the girl grows defensive about her as well as about her Aunt Penelope.

Unlike most of Mrs. Trollope's novels, Petticoat Government concerns itself considerably with the place of art in fashionable society; Colonel Hubert, Agnes Willoughby's husband, happily combined being appreciative of music with being a fashionable lion, but in Petticoat Government Mrs. Trollope suggests not only that art must be separate from fashion, but that the hand of patronage has a blighting influence. Judith begins to concern herself with the subject just before she meets her painter cousin Charles Worthington:

"I cannot help thinking how dreadful it must be to labour so for an uncertainty! And even then, suppose

³⁴Ibid., III, 85-86.

the work was ordered, a portrait, for instance, like that fat gentleman before us, in his fine satin waistcoat, how do we know but that the poor artist may be conscious of really possessing some talent? Perhaps he may feel that he could paint a group of naked children at play, that might look like so many living creatures suddenly suspended in their movements and thrown upon the canvass as it were by magic; Rubens does that, you know, continually. But only fancy the misery of an artist who could do something a little like it, fancy his misery at being obliged to do such a thing as that, in order to avoid starvation!³⁵

Once she has met Charles, the question of the relationship of the artist to fashionable society changes for Judith from a general to a most specific question; and indeed it is the insistence of this very question which causes her to examine the society which the Dorkings represent:

It occurred to her to ask herself what she should wish to make of Charles, did she possess the power of deciding what his situation should be. "Would I make an idle, fine gentleman of him?" thought she.

A crimson glow accompanied the answer that her heart suggested. No! Not for her own right hand would she have robbed his of its cunning! Again and again she meditated both upon the question and the answer; and not all her meditations, no, nor all her suffering either, and her eyes were overflowing with tears, could lead to any other answer.³⁶

But Charles' artistic concerns penetrate into even the trivial matters of the fashionable existence Judith persists in with the Dorkings. When she must wear a dress

³⁵Ibid., III, 5.

³⁶Ibid., III, 163-64.

provided by Mrs. Dorking, all she can do is to compare its rococo frivolity with the simplicity of Greek and Roman dress as she has seen them in the pages of Charles' sketch book:

She turned her eyes upon her exquisite dress, the choice of which she had left to Frederic's mother, at his particular request^{judithly}—and there was no part of it that she did not contemplate with extreme dislike. And yet it had really nothing objectionable in it, being composed of primrose-coloured silk, covered with a mixture of fine muslin[>] and finer lace.[>]

"Fancy Charles composing a picture, and putting a young girl into such a dress as this!" thought she. And yet this thought, though it appeared to her exceedingly comical and ridiculous, brought tears into her eyes.³⁷

Because art and Charles are so thoroughly identified in Judith's thoughts, the question of the place of art becomes central to the book and gives it a subject of more seriousness than any other of Mrs. Trollope's novels has. Seriousness seldom keeps her from humour, however, so that even in noting Judith's admiration of a recitation of Dante which Charles gives at the Careys, Mrs. Trollope cleverly marks the girl's mixture of disinterestedness and interest:

"And this is the man," thought Judith, as she looked proudly at her cousin, "this is the man they are ashamed of! But no. Perhaps if they saw him thus,—perhaps if they hit upon the notable discovery that he had that in him which might rouse

³⁷Ibid., III, 167.

even the apathy of fashion into something like intellectual excitement,--perhaps then they might condescend to notice him. But rather than this should be--rather than he should be made use of, as a tool for their amusement, I would doom him to the oblivion of a hermit's cell. And his mother and I would share it with him."³⁸

Judith's reaction to Charles may be the most important in the novel, but Dorking's reaction is just as interesting, especially as Mrs. Trollope is at pains to suggest that of all fashionable people, he is indeed the most kind and pleasant. Nevertheless his response to Judith's request that he patronize Charles is a mixed one: he will do nothing to obtain Charles' company, though eventually he sends some business to him. Yet his actions, Mrs. Trollope insists, are no less than we must expect of the best of fashionable men:

But all these obliging thoughts concerning Charles, and the services he still hoped to render him, were wholly distinct from any notion of cultivating his acquaintance / as a gentleman, as a companion, or even as an acquaintance, who might occasionally visit at his father's house. The visiting at his father's house, indeed, was so totally out of the question, that the idea never even occurred to him in the shape of an annoyance, from his feeling that it was either probable or possible. But he often thought, and with all his characteristic good nature, that when he and Judith were married, they might perhaps often receive him, and his poor sickly-looking mother, too, in a quiet way, and be really a comfort to them.³⁹

³⁸Ibid., III, 247.

³⁹Ibid., III, 201-02.

This is indeed a realistic examination of Dorking and of the limits of such a person in society; and its genial recognition of limited goodness, even in people not admirable, colours the whole of Petticoat Government as it colours no other of Mrs. Trollope's novels. Characters far less important than Dorking become more than mere excuses to fill pages of the interminable three volumes when Mrs. Trollope gives them this care; of Dr. Wroughtley, for example, she writes,

There was a vast deal of genuine good-nature in Dr. Wroughtley, and though he had perhaps, the rather common fault of loving himself best, he joined it to the redeeming quality of loving others too. For instance, he loved Miss Barbara Jenkyns very sincerely; not exactly, perhaps, in the way and manner that she would have best liked, poor lady, but as a good-natured person is pretty sure to love those who have been kind to them.⁴⁰

Mrs. Chilbert Mrs. Trollope sees with similar clarity and charity:

Never could Mrs. Chilbert have supplied any deficiencies in the rudiments of ordinary instruction. It might be doubted if her own children, fondly as she loved them, would ever have learned to read, had the teaching them been left to her; but for the cultivation of taste, for the excitement of every intellectual faculty, and for teaching the charm that is to be found in the exercise of all and every of them, she was admirable.⁴¹

In Petticoat Government Mrs. Trollope achieves a maturity shared with no other of her novels, though The Widow Barnaby surpasses it in vitality.

⁴⁰ Ibid., I, 275.

⁴¹ Ibid., II, 30-31.

Only one of Mrs. Trollope's novels after Petticoat Government, Uncle Walter, merits attention here. Like Judith Maitland, Walter Harrington comes to the society of the novel from outside; but unlike her, he does not so much form his own opinions of that society as he has them provided for him by his irreverent nephew Henry and his niece Kate. Their opinions, on subjects as various as fashionable marriage and Puseyism, along with Mrs. Trollope's close observation of the Reverend Henry Harrington's inconsistent behavior in the pulpit and out, give a certain interest to the novel; but many of young Henry's observations on society, critical as they are, must have sounded commonplace to readers of fashionable novels. In contrast to Uncle Walter's traditional idea of marriage his nephew offers this description:

"I have always been taught, uncle," replied the young man demurely, and exactly with the air of a child saying its catechism, "I have always been taught that marriage is a holy state instituted for the better securing of a handsome establishment and equipage, and that it is the bounden duty of a well-principled young lady to obey her parents, and keep these objects steadily in view in forming a matrimonial connection."⁴²

When Uncle Walter questions Henry about his mother's disagreeable guest, Miss Puddingthwaite, his nephew has no reluctance to explain in his most world-weary way why his mother must entertain such a woman:

⁴²Uncle Walter, I, 306.

All Miss Puddingthwaite's acquaintance dislike her as much as my mother does; and all invite her for the same reason, namely, because all the rest do. ...She has no good quality either of heart or head to recommend her; but she goes everywhere, and there is no one of whom this is said, who could by possibility find the very slightest difficulty in going anywhere....Miss Puddingthwaite...has, and is perfectly well known to have, a particularly tight hold of the skirts of the Duchess of Benlmond, and my good mother, therefore, clings with an equally tenacious grasp to her skirts.⁴³

Henry's complaints, unfortunately, are overly well rehearsed and could come as easily from Mrs. Gore as from Mrs. Trollope. His sister, though, in defining Puseyism from the behavior of her brother James, has a freshness and spontaneity that help to raise the book above the mediocre:

A Puseyite thinks that the world was in its prime of life somewhere about the year 1500, or thereabouts; and that it has been going down hill ever since. I know that a proper Puseyite, thinks it far better to be a Roman Catholic than a dissenter; and that he wears a particular sort of waistcoat, generally made of black silk, pinned, without buttons, close under his chin. This, I know, is a very essential point. He does not talk much about religion, in the way that Aunt Juliana does, [She is very evangelistic] but discourses much about "the Church." He is greatly inclined to love and reverence all kinds of ecclesiastical ornaments; and if anything of, or belonging to the church, has an old name and a new one, he seems to think it a point of duty to call it by the old one. He always fasts, as he calls it, on Fridays; that is to say, he eats no meat, but James, fortunately, seems to be exceedingly fond of fish, and makes a great point of having the very finest that can be procuredAnd this is really and truly all I know about Puseyism, Uncle Walter, except a trifling peculi-

⁴³ Ibid., I, 205-07.

arity which I remarked in James' pronunciation of the word Catholic. He calls it Cartholic, with a strong emphasis on the first syllable. What this means I cannot guess, but I suppose it is intended to mean something.⁴⁴

Mrs. Trollope's critics sometimes remark that no matter how bad her books, they find themselves compelled to read to the end; though few of us would feel the compulsion in more than her best novels, we could find such pleasant passages as Kate Harrington's dissertation on Puseyism in many of the slighter novels.

Mrs. Trollope is not the sort of writer who exhibits deliberate and regular improvement. At all times in her career--witness The Refugee in America in 1832, Hargrave in 1842 and Gertrude in 1855--she is capable of writing very badly indeed. Nevertheless, as a whole the books after The Widow Barnaby usually have something of that novel's directness, and from One Fault (1840) through Petticoat Government, the best of the novels show an increase in sensitivity. We may well wish that Mrs. Trollope had begun writing before reaching her fifties, that the maturity shown in Petticoat Government had revealed itself in other novels; but at least we have the consolation that beginning writing in middle age she could develop so far as to be capable of a Widow Barnaby and a Petticoat Government.

⁴⁴Ibid., II, 242-44.

Chapter 6: Polemic

Mrs. Trollope's concern with public issues begins with her first book and persists in her work at least as late as Uncle Walter (1852), but it most strongly marks four novels from the middle of her career: Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw, The Vicar of Wrexhill, Michael Armstrong, and Jessie Phillips. Though we must account all four unsuccessful novels, we shall spend this chapter examining Mrs. Trollope's failure in them because it represents her most direct and ambitious attempt to deal with the problems of her contemporaries.

In our second chapter we noted that Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw proves an unsatisfactory tract about slavery because Mrs. Trollope divides her attention between several plots, most not centrally concerned with slaves, and because the slave she singles out for the greatest attention, Juno, more closely represents a hag out of a gothic romance than a slave whom Mrs. Trollope could have observed during her American visit. We did not, however, discuss an equally important weakness in the book: Mrs. Trollope does not know enough about slavery in America to deal with it in a manner which would imply that she controlled it. The very subordination of her material concerning slavery suggests that she doubted her compe-

tence to deal with it. Though in The Hour and the Man (1841) Harriet Martineau makes the reader aware that she has so digested Haitian history as to have made it a part of her, never in Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw except in the introductory scenes does the reader feel Mrs. Trollope so firmly in command of her material. Because Miss Martineau makes the blacks of Haiti her principal characters, the reader detects none of the condescension occasionally obvious in Mrs. Trollope's treatment of American Negroes, who at best become servants in the train of her white characters. Both her ignorance and her inability to subordinate the plot typical of her novels to her polemical intentions prevent Mrs. Trollope from creating effective polemic in Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw.

Though polemical in that it would alter our opinion about a social issue, because The Hour and the Man treats historical material, thus limiting our reaction to mere speculation about what is past, it is not a perfect polemic against which to measure Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw or Mrs. Trollope's other polemical novels. Harriet Beecher Stowe's Dred; a Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp (1856) makes a more apt object for comparison with Mrs. Trollope's novels both because it treats the very issue she treats in Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw and because it is not only a good novel but a good polemic as well. Just

as there can be no formula for satire, so there is none for polemic; but an examination of Dred will suggest what a good polemic must do.

The characters of Dred include Negro slaves inclined to rebel against their mal-treatment and others more passively determined to endure their lot; white southerners of varying complexions of opinion and of varying station interact with the slaves. The book persuades the reader of the necessity for emancipation by showing how the abuses of slavery pervade the lives of all the characters in the novel. By presenting a trial in which the slave-owner's right to beat his property to death is ultimately upheld, by showing even well-intentioned people inclining to countenance the brutality and misery about them because it is too difficult or dangerous or costly to protest, Mrs. Stowe forces her readers to her opinion. The triumph of the book is that, presenting opinions on both sides of the issue in the normal course of her story, Mrs. Stowe none the less makes us adopt her convictions. If some of the characters seem monsters, they seem to have become monsters because of their traffic in slaves. Perhaps the most curious point of comparison between Dred and Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw is that Mrs. Stowe's title character shares some of the attributes of Mrs. Trollope's Juno: he commonly speaks in language extraordinary for

an ill-educated Negro, and he shows some second sight; but whereas we turn in distaste from Juno, in spite of her trials as mistress to several owners, Dred convinces us. This is partly because his poetic character derives from an acquaintance with the prophetic books of the Bible (in which Mrs. Stowe too is steeped), but partly because the author presents his milieu in impressive breadth.

No one of Mrs. Trollope's polemical novels persuades as Dred does; and it is the first duty of polemic to persuade. We cannot believe in her slaves, her working men are too easily translated into realms of unimaginable affluence, and her wronged seamstresses are too poetically avenged; more important, we find it difficult to see her characters as representing every-day problems requiring practical solutions. Never does Mrs. Trollope describe opposition to her own views as less than monstrous: evangelistic vicars are seducers; mill-owners are despots; and workhouse keepers know no human feelings.

If we could believe that the specific situation Mrs. Trollope describes in The Vicar of Wrexhill were indeed typical of communities afflicted with evangelical vicars, then we would have to admit that much of the plot serves her purpose in revealing evangelism as pernicious. The vicar's machinations interfere with the process,

normal in Mrs. Trollope's novels, by which the younger characters in the book feel their way toward matrimonial security; and Mrs. Trollope's skill in playing off the evangelical plotting against the matrimonial makes The Vicar of Wrexhill by far her most successful novel before The Widow Barnaby. The book contains some of Mrs. Trollope's most acute observations and most successful satire, but its unevenness of tone and of characterization seriously mars it.

In her general description of the vicar's almost sexual wooing of the populace of Wrexhill Mrs. Trollope reminds the reader forcibly of her observations of camp meetings and revivals in The Domestic Manners of the Americans. Nowhere does she display more acuteness than in presenting Fanny Mowbray's gradual attraction to and subsequent falling away from the vicar. Fanny never shows herself consciously aware that Cartwright has been employing his sexual attractions to add her to his followers, but Mrs. Trollope makes it clear that this is the case: what finally disenchant's Fanny with the man is his marriage to her mother; and other characters, especially Rosalind Torrington and Sir Gilbert Harrington, detect the nature of Cartwright's attraction, an attraction which eventually leads to Mrs. Simpson's pregnancy.¹

¹ As the seduction of Mrs. Simpson suggests, Mrs. Trollope treats the vicar's sexual prowess seriously

Psychologically the vicar understands how to bend people to his will: having once won Fanny Mowbray's allegiance, he persuades her to sport the outward and visible trappings of inward and evangelical grace, warning her of the persecution which will ensue. He increases her faith in him both by proving an accurate prophet about the persecution, and by being her refuge from that persecution. Mrs. Trollope shows herself similarly acute about Mrs. Mowbray's reaction to Cartwright's underbred cousin, Stephen Corbold:

The more Mrs. Mowbray felt disposed to shrink from an intimate association with the serious attorney, the more strenuously did she force her nature to endure him; and feeling, almost unconsciously perhaps, that it was impossible Helen should not detest him, she put all her power and authority in action, not only to prevent her showing it, but to prevent also so very sinful and worldly-minded a sentiment from taking hold upon her young mind.²

throughout the novel; she was capable of viewing it with more humour, as an anecdote included in Thomas Adolphus Trollope's What I Remember, I, 93, demonstrates. A girl of 18, neighbour to the Trollopes in Harrow and under the influence of the model of the Vicar of Wrexhill, J.W. Cunningham, "was describing at much length the delight of the assurances of grace which he had given her, when my mother suddenly looking her straight in the eyes, said, 'Did he kiss you, Carrie?'

'Yes, Mrs. Trollope. He did give me the kiss of peace. I am sure there was no harm in that!'

'None at all, Carrie! For I am sure you meant none!' returned my mother. 'Honi soit qui mal y pense! But remember, Carrie, that the kiss of peace is apt to change its quality if repeated!'"

²The Vicar of Wrexhill, II, 91.

How very natural it is to want others to share the mortifications we take on ourselves, and how observant of Mrs. Trollope to notice.

The climax of The Vicar of Wrexhill, at least in its satire, falls near the close of the book in Cartwright's serious fancy fair. Here as seldom in the novel Mrs. Trollope shows an acquaintance with her subject which informs her writing with good humour, especially in her description of squabbles between ladies intending to man the stalls of fancy goods. Though Cartwright requests that only attractive young women take charge of the stalls, Mrs. Trollope observes that,

At a very early hour, not only all the young and handsome part of the company expected, but all who considered themselves as belonging to that class, were seen arriving in their very becoming sad-coloured suits, with their smooth braided tresses, and Quakerish bonnets and caps.³

At first the ladies' decorum matches their demure appearance as they try to apportion the few stalls among their large number:

Any one who had witnessed and watched the sweet universal smile with which each one regarded the other, and the charming accents with which all exclaimed as with one voice, "Oh! it is exactly the same to me where I stand," would have been ready to declare that even their youth and beauty were less attractive than the sweet temper which seemed to be so universal among them.⁴

³Ibid., III, 196-97.

⁴Ibid., III, 198.

But when the first few places have been taken, decorum gives way to greed, and the ladies' sweet temper alters somewhat:

To the fourth place, promising equal affluence of passers-by to the three already taken, no less than four ladies rushed at once. And then began the civil war which in a greater or a less degree, as circumstances may excite or assuage it, rages at all fancy fairs, bazaars, and charity sales of every class and denomination whatever.⁵

The stall-tending ladies, who act only partially selfishly, Mrs. Trollope treats gently; the clerical gentlemen banquetting to celebrate the fancy fair she describes with fiercer satire:

One gentleman confessed very frankly his inability to resist taking more of such wine as that now set before them than was altogether consistent with his own strict ideas of ministerial propriety. "But," added he, "though in so yielding, I am conscious of being in some sort wrong, I feel intimately persuaded at the same time, that by thus freely demonstrating the strength and power of original sin within me, I am doing a service to the cause of religion, by establishing one of its most important truths."

This apology was received with universal applause; it manifested, as one of the company remarked, equal soundness of faith, and delicacy of conscience.⁶

As if this tongue-in-cheek observation were not enough for Mrs. Trollope to amuse herself with, she continues, describing a man who in his cups fancies that he has had a divine visitation:

⁵Ibid., III, 199-200.

⁶Ibid., III, 214-15.

One of the most celebrated of the regular London speakers, known at all meetings throughout the whole evangelical season, having silently emptied a bottle of claret, which he kept close to him, began, just as he had finished the last glass, to recover the use of his tongue. His first words were, "My king has been paying me a visit."⁷

The anticlimax of learning that by his king he means God does not detract from Mrs. Trollope's amusing recognition that there was an evangelical season, even as there was a fashionable one, nor from the equally unstressed implication that while in communion with his bottle the man lost the use of his tongue. If Mrs. Trollope more frequently employed her wit as cleverly as in the description of the banquet, we could forgive her much of her malice.

But above all else The Vicar of Wrexhill is a malicious book, and the wit that saves the banquetting scene does not suffice to shorten tedious pages taken up by Cartwright's extempore prayers nor to make his performance credible. The susceptible characters in the novel fall easily under the spell of his praying; the reader is not so fortunate. Inevitably Cartwright's piety sounds insincere, whether he uses it to win the faith of Fanny Mowbray and Mary Richards,

"God bless you both!" said he, joining their hands between both of his. "To lead you together in the path in which we must all wish to go, would be a task that might give a foretaste of the heaven we sought!—~~you~~ you are not little children," he added, again pressing each of their hands; "but I may safely

cap.

⁷Ibid., III, 215.

say, 'of such are the kingdom of heaven.'"⁸

or to cow his new wife into a proper notion of her duties to him:

Bless O Lord! my virtuous wife; teach her to be meekly obedient to my word, and to thine through me; and make her so to value the inestimable mercy of being placed in the guiding hands of thy elected servant, that the miserable earthly dross which she maketh over to me in exchange for the same may seem but as dirt and filthiness in her sight!⁹

Such a passage serves to indicate the egocentric nature of Cartwright's ministry; but we need only compare it with the language of the Shepherd, Mr. Stiggins, in The Pickwick Papers, to see its inadequacy both as satire and as a record of the speech of such a man as Cartwright. As indication of the words which he could actually use praying with people, this passage, like the more conversational one which I quote before it, completely fails to convince the reader; serious readers might well find it an offensive travesty.¹⁰ Mrs. Trollope understands the success of people like Cartwright in the abstract, and she warms, always, to the machinations by which they

⁸Ibid., I, 121.

⁹Ibid., II, 299.

¹⁰The reviewer of the book in the Monthly Review, November 1837, p. 316, for example, declares, "Though there are...clever hits and some happily constructed scenes, these are neither so numerous nor so brilliant as to redeem the novel from the charge of being of a heavy and dull character, evidently the work of one who knows nothing of Christianity, either as respects its benign and gracious spirit, or with any class of its true professors."

control others; but in The Vicar of Wrexhill she seems to have lost her ear for the colloquial patterns of speech which heighten her American books.

If Mrs. Trollope's inability to make Cartwright speak in a realistic way comes from inadequately dramatizing her idea, her other lapse in The Vicar of Wrexhill, nearly as grievous as the similar lapse in Tremordyn Cliff, derives from over-dramatization: in each book we understand the villain to be so very accomplished at getting what he wants that his ultimate defeat by the good characters is difficult to believe. It is strange that so forceful a character as Lady Augusta should display such weakness as to keep her brother's certificate of marriage; and Cartwright's allowing his wife opportunity to re-cast her will is similarly anomalous behavior. True, Cartwright exercises less control over the characters on whom his success depends than Lady Augusta exercises over herself, so that Stephen Corbold is free to ruin his possible marriage to Helen, but even so Cartwright's defeat seems improbable.

Another improbability confronts us in The Vicar of Wrexhill: though Mrs. Trollope cleverly makes Henrietta Cartwright's loss of faith the natural result of the girl's exposure to her father's hypocrisy, her regeneration through Rosalind's good efforts has none of the

convincing quality of her falling away. Mrs. Trollope succeeds in making Henrietta's loss of faith so thoroughly understandable that her regaining it with the help of so slender a crutch as Rosalind seems unlikely, especially as, good though we know Rosalind to be, her major role in the story has been rather to detect hypocrisy in others than to reveal herself an exemplary Christian. In a novel so very caustic about hypocrisy as The Vicar of Wrexhill Mrs. Trollope shows considerable nerve to include as a contrast a situation which superficially resembles the hypocrisy of her evangelists so closely as Rosalind's proselytizing Henrietta does; the contrast is not a success.

A fierce and militant book, The Vicar of Wrexhill cannot have won anyone from evangelism; and if it had, to what would it have won him? To Rosalind's indistinguishable brand of Christianity? To the sort of morality which countenances Colonel Harrington's horsewhipping Corbold, an unarmed man? To standards which condemn Cartwright, among other reasons, for refusing to let Charles take up killing people professionally? Thackeray attacked the book properly in Fraser's Magazine, though he acknowledged its author's cleverness; and we cannot better end our discussion of it than by quoting his review:

Mrs. Trollope may make a licentious book, of which the heroes and heroines are all of the evan-

gical party; and it may be true, that there are scoundrels belonging to that party as to every other: but her shameful error has been in fixing upon the evangelical class as an object of satire, making them necessarily licentious and hypocritical, and charging upon every one of them the vices which belong to only a very few of all sects.¹¹

Though we may interpret such a comment as evidence of Thackeray's general dislike of reforming novels, a dislike Mrs. Trollope's efforts in the genre encourage, he is sensitive too to Mrs. Trollope's ignorance and her venom: "Having very little, except prejudice, on which to found an opinion, she makes up for want of argument by a wonderful fluency of abuse."¹² Mrs. Trollope's tendency to abuse whole classes in the persons of representatives of her creation, despite her limited knowledge of their classes, limits all of Mrs. Trollope's polemical novels, though it most damages The Vicar of Wrexhill.

Mrs. Trollope was early among her contemporaries to exploit anti-evangelistic feeling; it is difficult to think of any earlier attacks on the evangelists than the Stiggins episodes of The Pickwick Papers, and Dickens had the good taste to make these only a small portion of a large work. It is Dickens too who not only precedes

¹¹William Makepeace Thackeray, "Our Batch of Novels for Christmas, 1837," in Fraser's Magazine, January 1838, p.80.

¹²Ibid., 79.

Mrs. Trollope in writing novels published in monthly parts calling for social reform, but indeed who invents the serial polemical novel. We may be certain that Mrs. Trollope would not have ventured to attempt either The Life and Adventures of Michael Armstrong, the Factory Boy or Jessie Phillips: A Tale of the Present Day if she had not had the sales of Oliver Twist (serialized in Bentley's Miscellany from February 1837 to April 1839) and Nicholas Nickleby (in parts from April 1838 to October 1839) by which to gauge her own market.¹³

We know from Mrs. Trollope's son that for Michael Armstrong at least she tried to learn about her subject before writing about it; Thomas Adolphus writes in What I Remember,

In the year 1839...my mother, who had been led... to take a great interest in the then hoped-for factory legislation, and in Lord Shaftesbury's efforts in that direction, determined to write a novel on the subject with the hope of doing something towards attracting the public mind to the question, and to visit Lancashire for the purpose of obtaining accurate information and local details.¹⁴

¹³Louis F. Cazamian suggests Mrs. Trollope's dependence on Dickens in Le Roman Social en Angleterre, 1830-1850 (Paris, 1935), II, 152: "En 1839, elle annonce l'intention d'écrire un roman industriel. On peut retrouver dans ce projet l'influence de son illustre ami. Olivier Twist était alors dans toute sa vogue, le sentimentalisme social s'attachait à la figure de l'enfant martyr, type d'une classe ouvrière."

¹⁴T. A. Trollope, What I Remember, II, 7.

As for the research itself,

My mother neglected no means of making the facts stated in her book authentic and accurate, and the mise en scene of her story graphic and truthful. Of course I was the companion of her journey, and was more or less useful to her in searching for and collecting facts in some places where it would have been difficult for her to look for them. We carried with us a number of introductions from Lord Shaftesbury to a rather strange assortment of persons whom his lordship had found useful both as collectors of trustworthy information, and as energetic agitators in favour of legislation.¹⁵

From Thomas Adolphus' memory of his mother's preparations for writing Michael Armstrong we can see that Mrs. Trollope intended to ground her book firmly on observation and fact; but as we have it the book is a sad travesty of her intentions. As in Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw, not only does she so subordinate the polemical material to the exigencies of her normal plot that it loses all of its effectiveness and most of its meaning, but the very method of writing a novel which she cultivated until it could produce a lively Widow Barnaby worked against the possibility of her creating an effective tract in Michael Armstrong.

The story in Michael Armstrong is fragmented into as many plots as that in Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw: one concerns Michael's misadventures, another describes Mary Brotherton's attempts to compensate for having inherited

¹⁵Ibid., II, 8.

factory-created wealth, and the third treats Matthew Dowling's downfall, softened by the faithfulness of his daughter Martha. Though the fragmentation of plot could give Mrs. Trollope the advantage of having both a middle-class outsider, Mary Brotherton, and a working class insider, Michael, experience the effects of the factory system, in fact, as we might expect from Mrs. Trollope's treatment of slaves in Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw, Michael does little more than provide an occasion for Mary Brotherton to display her benevolence.

Just as Mrs. Trollope gives us little sense of the wretchedness of slavery, so not all her footnotes to the effect that Deep Valley really exists or that there was little ventilation in the factories she visited convince the reader of the reality of the two factories in which Michael works nor of the others Mary Brotherton visits in search for him. The insubstantial quality of these institutions derives partly from the small space which Mrs. Trollope actually devotes to them. One chapter of thirty-three concerns Michael's original factory, and no more than four the mill in Deep Valley: we escape all too easily from the wretchedness of these places. Several more chapters involve Michael's home or the home of the dying woman whom Mary visits; but the story visits

these places, and the important characters, even Michael, no more than visit them.

If Mrs. Trollope nettled Thackeray by attacking the class of evangelists through a representative of her devising in The Vicar of Wrexhill, by her assault on the class of manufacturers in the person of Matthew Dowling in Michael Armstrong she must have galled him quite as much. She chooses to treat Dowling as she would a butt in any of her books, in his relationships with the people with whom he lives, rather than in any contact with his operatives (other than Michael); every scene in which he appears reveals him a gauche man, capable of attracting only such sycophants as will endure his coarseness in exchange for a share of the wealth he has amassed. Though the domestic side of Dowling's life which Mrs. Trollope presents may be a possibility in just such a newly successful manufacturer, it is finally a side irrelevant to the consideration of the man as manufacturer: Mrs. Trollope commits the fallacy of the argumentum ad hominem.

That she resorts to such an argument suggests two things: it is convenient for her normal method of presenting character and does after all tell us something about Dowling; and it shows that Mrs. Trollope is uneasy

about her industrial material. Naturally more at home discussing social visiting than describing the conditions suffered by operatives either in factories or at home, Mrs. Trollope takes her normal course in describing Dowling's would-be genteel domestic existence, and in doing so scants the serious treatment of workers' conditions.

Indeed, since we generally see Dowling at home and trying to appear genteel, the only evidence we have for his being a manufacturer appears in his attempt to use Michael to win the approval of his workers and in his discussions of labour and the corn laws with Dr. Crockley. The scheme for making Michael the conspicuous object of Dowling's beneficence has so little of serious planning about it, is abandoned so casually, that for all its possible value as propaganda for Dowling's workers, the reader would scarcely credit a successful manufacturer with its adoption; and the business conversation with Crockley consists so wholly of rant that no man would say it, no matter what he thought: "Crockley, they don't understand spinning in Flanders: they don't know yet how many baby sinews must be dragged, and drawn out to mix as it were with the thread, before the work can be made to answer."¹⁶

¹⁶ Michael Armstrong, 119.

On the few occasions when Mrs. Trollope attempts description of conditions in the factories, the excesses of her abuse destroy our belief in her description. Of Michael's original factory; for example, we learn that,

The ceaseless whirring of a million hissing wheels, seizes on the tortured ear; and while threatening to destroy the delicate sense, seems bent on proving first, with a sort of mocking mercy, of how much suffering it can be the cause. The scents that reek around, from oil, tainted water, and human filth, with that last worst nausea, arising from the hot refuse of atmospheric air, left by some hundred pairs of labouring lungs, render the act of breathing a process of difficulty, disgust, and pain.¹⁷

Though this is rather a general description than a concrete instance of the discomforts suffered by an individual, nevertheless it is repellent enough to be effective out of context. In context it comes only a page before Sir Matthew Dowling forces Michael to kiss scavenger No. 3, an illustration of the monstrous which no one would take to be typical of even the most brutal of mill-owners. Mrs. Trollope loses the effect of her reporting in her exaggeration.¹⁸

¹⁷Ibid., 80.

¹⁸Speaking far more generally of Michael Armstrong than I am trying to here, Louis Cazamian comes to approximately the same opinion: "Non seulement sa visite à Manchester ne lui a rien appris que des faits extérieurs, mais elle en atténue la force probante par la façon dont elle les présente." Le Roman Social en Angleterre, 1830-1850, II, 153.

In the month of the commencement of Michael Armstrong, the Chartist newspaper the Leeds Northern Star announced that Mrs. Trollope had undertaken researches for the writing of her novel:

She has been spending some time in the neighbourhood of Manchester, making her own observations upon the real state in which "The Factory Boy" exists. She was hearing the Rev. J.R. Stephens preach at his chapel, at Staley-Bridge, last Saturday evening, and on Monday she had a short interview with Mr. Oastler. From Manchester she proceeded to Derbyshire, and thence she intends to visit Bradford and other factory towns. She has introductions to the rich and to the poor; and she seems determined to avail herself of these opportunities of making herself mistress of the whole question pro and con.¹⁹

The degree of caricature in the book hardly bears out the Northern Star's assumption of Mrs. Trollope's disinterested examination of both sides of the issue; and indeed the few names Thomas Adolphus Trollope gives us of Mrs. Trollope's informants--Stephens, Oastler, the Reverend Bull at Bradford, and the conscientious mill-owners Wood and Walker--hardly suggest any balance of opinion. The reforming zeal of Mrs. Trollope's sources may help to explain the enthusiasm of her own attack on mill-owners.

Soon, however, Mrs. Trollope repents that enthusiasm. The violence of the Chartists alarms her, and she aborts the original plan of the book, which she describes thus in her preface:

¹⁹Northern Star, 2 March 1839, p.4.

When the author of "Michael Armstrong" first determined on attempting to draw the attention of her countrymen to the fearful evils inherent in the Factory System, as carried out in our manufacturing towns, she intended to divide her work into two portions, ...in the first of these to drag into the light of day, and place before the eyes of Englishmen, the hideous mass of injustice and suffering to which thousands of infant labourers are subjected, who toil in our monster spinning-mills. In the second, she proposed that the hero of her tale, having lived through his toil-worn boyhood, should have been seen embarked in those perfectly constitutional struggles for the amelioration of the sufferings of his class, in which many of the more enlightened operatives have been for some years engaged.²⁰

Though we may doubt that in any case Mrs. Trollope would have been able to discipline her gossiping inclinations as a novelist to the rigours of the projected second half of her task, her alarm at the actions of the Char-
tists decides her to bring the book to a hasty conclusion:

When those in whose behalf she hoped to move the sympathy of their country are found busy in scenes of outrage and lawless violence, and uniting themselves with individuals whose doctrines are subversive of every species of social order, the author feels that it would be acting alike in violation of her own principles, and doing injury to the cause she wishes to serve, were she to persist in an attempt to hold up as objects of public sympathy, men who have stained their righteous cause with deeds of violence and blood....

Under these circumstances she has determined that the existence of her hero as an operative shall close with his childhood.²¹

The natural result of Mrs. Trollope's having to confine her book to barely more than half its projected

²⁰ Michael Armstrong, iii.

²¹ Ibid., iv.

length is that, as in The Vicar of Wrexhill, she offers little in the way of constructive alternatives to the system which she attacks. Mr. Bell, who gives Mary Brotherton her information about the factories, tells her that nothing can be done at once to improve matters, but that,

All that we ask for, all that the poor creatures ask for themselves, is that by Act of Parliament it should be rendered illegal for men women and children to be kept to the wearying unhealthy labour of the mills for more than ten hours out of every day, leaving their daily wages at the same rate as now.²²

The manufacturers Wood and Walker, who limit their workers to the ten hour day already and whom Mrs. Trollope holds up as a shining light, "are losing thousands every year by their efforts to purify this traffic of its enormities,"²³ but presumably if Mrs. Trollope's parliamentary act were passed, the loss relative to what other factories earn would be erased. As she cannot have thought it likely that she could win much more, Mrs. Trollope is realistic to ask for such a reform; but Mr. Bell suggests it so near the middle of the book and Mrs. Trollope reminds us of it so seldom that the events of both Mary's and Michael's careers so bury the suggestion in the bulk of the book that the inattentive reader might easily

²²Ibid., 206.

²³Ibid., 211.

forget that it was offered. As in most of Mrs. Trollope's novels the conclusion finds the principal characters so comfortable that the misery Michael and the other children suffer early on disappears in the general rosi-ness of the ending. Potentially the conclusion has a symbolic value not very different from the union of the two nations in Sybil: Mary Brotherton, the daughter of a manufacturer, marries Edward Armstrong, an operative and victim of the factory system. It is as well that Mrs. Trollope does not emphasize this union, for even if we could believe it (the match may be the most unlikely in all her novels) it loses polemical significance in its envelope of material rewards.

Just as she allows her normal formula for constructing a novel to dilute her polemic in Michael Armstrong, so Mrs. Trollope permits the polemic to rob the book of the leaven of effective social criticism characteristic of her best novels. The relationship in the novel which most invites exploration, Martha Dowling's love for and potential disrespect of her father, Mrs. Trollope scarcely touches; and to delineate most of the characters she contents herself with the clumsy daubs she uses for Dowling, Crockley, Mrs. Gabberly, Lady Clarissa, and Dowling's minions. Concerned with the reforms she hopes to bring about, Mrs. Trollope so over-

simplifies as to write neither good polemic nor good fiction.

In The Vicar of Wrexhill and in Michael Armstrong Mrs. Trollope devotes her energies to treating single issues; in the last of her polemical novels, Jessie Phillips, she divides her attention between two questions: the possibilities of abuse in the new poor law, which interferes with the personal patronage practised by the best characters in other of her novels (Aunt Betsy in The Widow Barnaby, Harriet Cuthbert in Town and Country); and the dangers of relieving the fathers of illegitimate children of responsibility for their support. Mrs. Trollope muddles together a surprisingly tolerant examination of the results of the new poor law with the very sort of fierce personal attack on fathers of illegitimate children which she has earlier launched at evangelists and at the factory system. As in Michael Armstrong, Mrs. Trollope's campaigning deprives Jessie Phillips of attention to the details of characterization or the relationships between people, leaving the later book like the earlier peopled with caricatures whose connections with one another range from the improbable to the impossible.

The caution with which Mrs. Trollope pronounces upon

the question of the new poor law does credit to her maturity. It is a reasonable and a singularly honest procedure to confess one's doubts as she confesses hers in the penultimate paragraph of the book:

The story of Jessie Phillips would have wandered less widely from what was intended, when the first numbers were written, had not the author received, during the time it was in progress, such a multitude of communications urging various and contradictory modes of treating the subject, that she became fearful of dealing too closely with a theme which might be presented to the judgment under so great a variety of aspects.²⁴

Though in Michael Armstrong Mrs. Trollope's actual remedies to the situation are quite as temperate as the remedies which she leads us to expect in Jessie Phillips by so careful a statement as this, in both books the characters and situations which she creates detract from the sanity of her argument.

Though Mrs. Trollope abuses the governor of the workhouse and his associates no less than she attacks the staff of Deep Valley Mill, at least she has learnt enough about writing polemic to leave us her argument at the end of the novel:

The constantly increasing evils arising from the attempt to generalize regulations upon points so essentially requiring variety of modification, as well as the radical mischief, and obviously demoralising effect, of substituting central, in the place of local authority, are already so strongly

²⁴Jessie Phillips, 352.

felt that it were a sin to doubt their ultimate reform; and on a subject both of such enormous difficulty, and such stupendous importance, it is quite evident that patience is equally required in those who make the laws and in those for whom they are made.²⁵

If we could detach this statement from the less sensible novel it comes from, we could consider Mrs. Trollope a responsible social critic; that we cannot is an indictment of her method of writing polemic.

As usual in Mrs. Trollope's direct attacks on social issues, the plot of Jessie Phillips is badly fragmented; though Mrs. Trollope needed a pretext for introducing a decent and respectable person into the poorhouse, it is unfortunate that she chooses to force Jessie there because of her sexual indiscretion. The novelist reveals herself as uncommonly generous in portraying Jessie always as decent and self-respecting even though she permits Frederic Dalton to make her pregnant; but not all of Mrs. Trollope's generosity suffices to keep Jessie's behavior from blurring the issue of the new poor law.

One improbability after another attaches itself to the girl's relationships with others: Martha Maxwell extorts a promise of marriage to herself from Frederic Dalton in the expectation of somehow using it to help

²⁵Ibid., 352.

Jessie (and yet we are to approve Martha's forward behavior);²⁶ a feeble-minded girl, Silly Sally, wanders away with Jessie's infant while she lies unconscious after giving birth, so that coming to herself Jessie does not know if in her own weakness she herself killed the child; Frederic Dalton finds the child and stamps it to death, later drowning as he tries to flee from Sally;²⁷ and Dalton's sister Ellen suffers nearly fatal illness only because she believes him to have killed the child. Sub-plots linking Ellen Dalton with Lord Pemberton and duplicating Silly Sally by Wandering Winny, a beggar-woman who like Sally carries about a child, complicate a novel already muddled by Mrs. Trollope's advocacy of two separate social reforms.

Just as Michael Armstrong seems more to pay visits to than to live in both his home and the two factories where he works, for similar reasons Jessie's imprisonment in the workhouse, from which she escapes easily enough when she decides to see Frederic, has a temporary air about it. The succession of clergy who fail to believe her story and the inevitability with which her

²⁶ See the Athenaeum, 28 October 1843, pp. 956-57: the reviewer gibes at Martha's behavior.

²⁷ The critic of The Weekly Dispatch, 24 December 1843, p. 622 finds Jessie reminiscent of Jennie Deans, but Mrs. Trollope probably owed more to Scott, whom she admired, for the characters of Silly Sally and her double. a

trial comes upon her help to remedy this.

Neither Mary Brotherton nor Martha Maxwell has the immediacy of the Widow Barnaby or Judith Maitland; and the characters who share the great parts in the novels with Mary and Martha, Michael and Jessie, are not so much characters as exempla. In Jessie Phillips as in Michael Armstrong the potentially interesting character serves the family of the villain as its humblest member: as Martha Dowling experiences ambivalent feelings towards her father, so Ellen Dalton both loves and feels uneasy about her brother. But in Jessie Phillips Mrs. Trollope chooses to indulge one of her typical fantasies, the marriage of a humble girl to a land-owning aristocrat; in no novel does this union detract more from Mrs. Trollope's intended effect than here, where she has all too much difficulty attending to her two governing ideas. The fact is that her method of writing a novel, which follows directly on from the anecdotal method of The Domestic Manners of the Americans, is a gossiping way of proceeding, a fairly random process of turning from character to character, without extensively examining any one.

Such a method demands a novel with a large cast, and so Mrs. Trollope's novels swarm with characters to be given their moment's chatter and swept off into the

wings to await possible reappearance. The board of the workhouse in Jessie Phillips includes several representatives of village society whom Mrs. Trollope can feature from time to time; Frederic Dalton pays advances to half a dozen girls; and of course the Dalton children number ten girls in addition to Frederic. Such proliferation of character means diffusion of interest for a novelist already so unconcerned with depth of character as Mrs. Trollope; and the more widely and thinly she spreads our interest, the less chance she has to persuade us to adopt her opinions.

Thackeray's witty condemnation of Jessie Phillips, tossed off in the course of reviewing a book by Charles Lever in the Morning Chronicle, provides us with a way at once acute and imperceptive of seeing Mrs. Trollope's attempts at polemic; a remonstrant to comic novelists like Mrs. Trollope is saying,

I would much rather hear you on your own ground--amusing by means of amiable fiction, and instructing by kindly satire, being careful to avoid the discussion of abstract principles, beyond those of the common ethical science which forms a branch of all poets and novelists' business--but, above all, eschewing questions of politics and political economy, as too deep, I will not say for your comprehension, but for your readers'; and never, from their nature, properly to be discussed in any, the most gilded, story-book. Let us remember, too, how loosely some of our sentimental writers have held to political creeds:--thus, we all know that the great philosopher, Mrs. Trollope, who, by means of a novel in shilling numbers, determined to write

down the poor-laws, somewhere towards the end of her story came to a hitch in her argument, and fairly broke down with a confession that facts had come to light, subsequent to the commencement of her story, which had greatly altered her opinions regarding the law; and so the law was saved for that time.²⁷

Thackeray's cleverness need not bind us to accepting his theory that indirect comment on society which does not pretend to reform may be worth more than the most caustic direct attack on social abuse; indeed Mrs. Stowe's success in Dred or Dickens' in Bleak House forcibly persuades us that a direct attack, skilfully performed, may make at least as effective a social comment and as good a novel as a less direct work. Instead of agreeing with Thackeray, let us, with Mrs. Trollope's difficulties in mind, suggest instead that the novelist of moderate abilities may well have a more difficult time producing an effective polemical novel than a book less involved in achieving reforms.

If we end up seeing Mrs. Trollope as a poor polemical novelist, it is nevertheless wonderfully honest in her to admit her confusion in Jessie Phillips and good that this sort of honesty keeps her from closely adhering to any party's pronouncements on the issues which concern her. When slavery in America wants attacking, she

²⁷W.M.Thackeray, Contributions to the Morning Chronicle, ed. Gordon N. Ray(Urbana, Ill.,1955),71-72.

attacks it, regardless of English apathy towards American slavery. Seeing the brutality of the factory system she writes a book to bring about its reform, a worthy cause even if her enthusiasm yields to alarm when the operatives threaten violence. Similarly genuine concern provokes both Mrs. Trollope's examination of the new poor law and her attack on men's freedom to create children without taking on the responsibility of caring for them. In each case Mrs. Trollope acts generously, though her method of writing lends itself ill to propagandising. Curiously, her most successful polemic is her least generous, The Vicar of Wrexhill, a book of far more venom than compassion.

Generosity does not make a good novel, though it is pleasant to come on even in a bad one: if our attempts to see Mrs. Trollope's novels as repetitions according to a flexible pattern make her seem something of a hack, her novels of reform show her trying to do more than merely make a modest living from her writing. None of the novels we have been discussing in this chapter except possibly The Vicar of Wrexhill numbers among Mrs. Trollope's best books; but taken together they help to give her a dimension as a serious writer which may be lacking in authors like Mrs. Gore or Charles Lever, contented to adhere to the patterns they found profitable.

Chapter 7: Mrs. Trollope's Reaction to Serial Publication

Although we are apt to think of early Victorian serial publication largely in terms of the vogue for novels in monthly parts initiated by The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club, Mrs. Trollope's efforts at both novels in parts and novels serialized in magazines serve as a useful reminder not only of the persistence of the latter alongside monthly parts but of the many novelists of lesser rank than Dickens or Thackeray who published their books in one serial form or another. Like Charles Lever, R.S. Surtees, Dickens, or Thackeray, Mrs. Trollope published some novels in each of the serial forms. Though we shall be interested to add the chronology of her serializations to the general context of serial publication in the eighteen thirties and 'forties, in this chapter we shall make it our main concern to determine her response to the conditions of serial publication.

As R.M. Wiles suggests early in Serial Publication in England before 1750, serials can greatly enhance the selling power of a periodical. This is no less true of the first half of the nineteenth century than of the eighteenth: we find Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine carrying John Galt's The Ayreshire Legatees as early as

June 1820--February 1821, and for years after, the magazine regularly included serial fiction. D.M.Moir's extracts from the Autobiography of Mansie Waunch took two years (October 1824--January 1827) to appear, and G.R.Gleig followed his The Subaltern by an American sequel. Other periodicals provided just as much serial entertainment for their readers: in his own magazine, the Metropolitan, Frederick Marryat ran a long sequence of his books, beginning with The Pacha of Many Tales in 1831, continuing with Peter Simple, Jacob Faithful, Japhet in Search of a Father, a portion of Mr. Midshipman Easy, and Snarleyvow or the Dog-Fiend. Jorrocks's Jaunts and Jollities appeared irregularly in the New Sporting Magazine; and Dickens' Oliver Twist appeared in Bentley's Miscellany beginning with its second number in February 1837.

Oliver Twist appeared with illustrations by George Cruickshank, a combination reminiscent of Dickens' beginning as a novelist as the mere supplier of copy to accompany Robert Seymour's sporting illustrations. In the nineteenth century, as a reader of the New York Public Library's catalogue of the Arents Collection of books in parts can tell,¹ whether its subject was art, sport,

¹See New York Public Library, The Arents Collection of Books in Parts and Associated Literature. A complete checklist, with an introductory survey. By Sarah Augusta Dickson (New York, 1957).

travel or more general information, publication in parts frequently depended upon collaboration between an illustrator and an author. We know how Dickens' collaboration with Seymour began with the illustrator's supremacy and ended with his death and replacement; it must concern us generally in looking at novels in parts in the eighteenth thirties and 'forties that though the artist may have lost his supremacy,² he continues contributing. Dickens' importance for fiction in parts is that he establishes the pre-eminence of the text.

If publication in parts demanded illustrated text, Mrs. Trollope began her career as a writer in easy anticipation of at least this demand. She believed that Auguste Hervieu's drawings would materially help her first book,³ and indeed at least one reviewer of her verses in The Mothers' Manual remarked more on the appearance of the amply illustrated text than on the quality of the hackneyed verse.⁴ When Mrs. Trollope did come to serial publication with Michael Armstrong, Hervieu remained with her, though it was John Leech who illustrated her second novel in parts, Jessie Phillips. Like Oliver

²George Cruickshank's published protests about the novelists whose guide and inspiration he believed himself are perhaps an amusing attempt to re-establish that supremacy.

³See above, p.21.

⁴See the Atlas, 9 June 1833, p.389.

Twist, some of her magazine serials too had illustrations: The Widow Married, Charles Chesterfield, and The Barnabys in America are all accompanied by appropriate illustrations, though The Blue Belles of England and The Robertses on Their Travels have none.

We may estimate the degree to which Mrs. Trollope imitated Dickens in issuing Michael Armstrong and Jessie Phillips in monthly parts at least partially by the fact that of all her serially published novels, only the two in parts call for social reforms. Those appearing in magazines far more nearly approached Mrs. Trollope's normal performance in novels. All of the magazine serials except The Blue Belles of England, which appeared in the Metropolitan, ran in Henry Colburn's New Monthly Magazine, with which Mrs. Trollope's readers must have identified her. Even as early in her association with the magazine as September 1839, in The Life and Times of Peter Priggins, College Scout and Bedmaker, J.T.J. Hewlett, with Mrs. Trollope a regular contributor to the New Monthly in the early 'forties, casually quotes a review of the magazine which treats Mrs. Trollope's association with it as a matter of course: "Paper by the Editor--good as usual. By Mrs. Trollope--satirical as ever, with two engravings. Several others, all intended to please, which will be much approved of by some

people, but perhaps not by others. Peter Priggins again...."⁵

Mrs. Trollope thought of writing for periodicals long before The Widow Married appeared in the New Monthly; on 23 April 1832 she wrote asking Miss Mitford, experienced in such matters, "What does one do to get business with the mags and annuals? Does one say, as at playing écarté, 'I propose,' or must one wait to be asked? Remember, dear, that I have five children."⁶ Miss Mitford's reply, only part of which has been published,⁷ notes that the New Monthly pays well but probably would be too radical to accept contributions by Mrs. Trollope. In fact Miss Mitford probably mistook the New Monthly for the periodical which provided its title, the Monthly Magazine, which never condescended to review Mrs. Trollope.^{before 1836}

⁵Peter Priggins, fifth installment in the New Monthly Magazine, September 1839, p.102, reprinted in Peter Priggins, the College Scout, ed. Theodore Hook (London, 1841) I, 181. Michael Sadleir draws attention to this quotation in Trollope, A Commentary, 90: "The appearance of Frances Trollope in this context gives a definite indication of the place she occupied--not in literature--but in contemporary letters. It is from topical annotators of the type of Hook that one can detect the vernacular of any period, and popular authors, popular taverns or popular jokes are as much a part of the vernacular as is any word of slang." For the exact chronology of Mrs. Trollope's serial publications see Appendix D.

⁶The Friendships of Mary Russell Mitford, I, 234.

⁷in T.A. Trollope, What I Remember, II, 340-42. I allude to the unpublished portion of the letter, which I have read through the kindness of the owner.

Colburn's more conservative magazine must have found Mrs. Trollope an uncomfortable contributor because of the paradoxes in her thinking like those in Carlyle's which make him the author of tracts both radical and authoritarian. It is probable that Colburn chose to issue Michael Armstrong and Jessie Phillips in monthly parts at least partly because their tone was at variance with the prevailing tone of the New Monthly. Even if the Tory principles of the magazine might have admitted that side of Mrs. Trollope which would deny Jessie Phillips a right to show pride above her station--to Ellen Dalton's "companions there was [in Jessie's manner] evidently an assumption of something that might have been called dignity, if the word could, without absurdity, have been applied to the little sempstress"⁸--it might not so easily have accommodated the bitterness to which Jessie's defenselessness moves the author:

The terror that formerly kept so many libertines of all classes in check was no longer before [Frederic], the legislature having, in its collective wisdom, deemed it "discreetest, best," that the male population should be guarded, protected, sheltered, and insured from all the pains and penalties arising from the crime he meditated.⁹

Though nominally Tory, the New Monthly reveals its political attitude largely in ignoring questions of social reform like those Mrs. Trollope comments upon in her

⁸Jessie Phillips, 95.

⁹Ibid., 67.

novels in parts.

But though the New Monthly carried neither Michael Armstrong nor Jessie Phillips, it adopted the proprietary air of Henry Colburn's other periodicals in reviewing them; the notice of the opening numbers of Michael Armstrong in April 1839 is a good example of how the magazine treated Mrs. Trollope once Colburn began publishing her:

It is a great mistake, and a still greater injustice, to suppose that Mrs. Trollope offers "The Factory Boy" as any thing like a pendant to the admirable works of Mr. Dickens, which have appeared under a similar form. The great and leading characteristics of those works, is humour--broad even to caricature--humour expanding itself over all classes of society, and drawing laughter and merriment from all. But the Factory Boy has a deeper design and aims at the accomplishment of that design by other, and even still more rare and estimable means. It is evidently intended to be a deep, moral satire, having a serious, and even a solemn purpose to accomplish--with truth alone as the means and medium of its accomplishment, and good alone as the ultimate end; every step of the way being made irresistibly attractive by the inexhaustible amusement that is scattered over it.¹⁰

This review has much the air and the general lack of modesty of an advertisement; we may best see it as part of a campaign to puff Mrs. Trollope's books. The first indication we have of the campaign in the New Monthly is Mrs. Trollope's inclusion in the magazine's por-

¹⁰New Monthly Magazine, April 1839, p.565. For discussion of similar reviews, see below, pgs. 258 - 263

trait gallery¹¹ in March 1839, two months before her first contribution appears; in the intervening month appears the review of Michael Armstrong quoted above, and in May begins The Widow Married. From this time onward the New Monthly treats Mrs. Trollope with such honour that criticism in its notices is purely accidental.

The great author who publishes serially may turn contemporary issues into the material for works of more than merely contemporary meaning: the trial of Bardell vs. Pickwick, though it may have been suggested by a trial Dickens had reported, none the less means much to the reader who knows nothing of the trial which he sat through. The lesser author who treats contemporary issues serially risks having the meaning of his work fade as the issues he treats give way for newer issues.

While she wrote for periodicals Mrs. Trollope concerned

¹¹This gallery, if not in competition with that of Fraser's, seems to be somewhat in imitation of it, with the notable difference that many of the figures in the New Monthly's gallery are in some way connected with Colburn's publications, and all of the descriptions of the subjects are adulatory (this though most of the portraits are headed in the fashion of the Trollope portrait, "A Memoir of Mrs. Trollope, by a Correspondent"). In order of appearance, between October 1836 and April 1839, the portraits include Frederic Marryat, Horace Smith, T.H. Lister, Lady Charlotte Bury, G.R. Gleig, Mrs. Gore, Benjamin Disraeli, Letitia Landon, James Smith, William IV, Victoria, Sergeant Talfourd, Lady Stepney, Captain Chamier, Mrs. S.C. Hall, Edward Howard, and Mrs. Trollope.

herself with contemporary figures and matters of the moment as seldom before or after: both Charles Chesterfield (in the New Monthly) and The Blue Belles of England (in the Metropolitan) are peopled by lesser lions of belles lettres, most of whom mean little for us even when we are fortunate enough to know whom Mrs. Trollope meant her characters to stand for.¹²

Writing for the New Monthly probably encouraged Mrs. Trollope to attend to matters of the moment: the editors when she contributed were Theodore Hook and Thomas Hood, both interested in "topical annotations", as Sadleir put it; and other contributors, like Hewlett, John Poole and Mrs. Gore added to their effect. But it would be a mistake to over-emphasize the New Monthly's peculiar role, a role, after all, not so peculiar as particularly to distinguish it. Major contributors it shared with other magazines--Mrs. Trollope, Marryat, and Mrs. Gore, for instance, all wrote for the Metropolitan (so distinctly Marryat's that it contained a

¹²I can identify none of the characters in Charles Chesterfield, though Mrs. Trollope notes that Mrs. Sherbourne's suicide contract derives from an actual case in Paris; Frances Eleanor Trollope, Mrs. Browning, and Mona Wilson (in "A Best Seller of Last Century" in These Were Muses) provide the following identifications for characters in The Blue Belles of England: Clericus = Sydney Smith, Contrarius = Samuel Rogers, Jane Beauchamp = Joanna Baillie, Bradley = Edwin Landseer, Rolphe = Mathias. Probably Lodhart, = John Lockhart, a friend of Mrs. Trollope.

large quantity of military and naval fiction and reminiscence)--and its minor pieces were interchangeable with the lesser pieces of most magazines of the day.

If she adds to the liveliness of the New Monthly and the Metropolitan, Mrs. Trollope brings to them little attention to the possibilities of serial publication: it is difficult to say whether Mrs. Trollope planned the installments of the magazine serials, for in their various sizes and disregard for form they almost suggest that the editors of the magazines merely chopped them into convenient pieces. If Mrs. Trollope did plan the installments she paid no particular attention to their effectiveness as units, but merely wrote along in her usual episodic way, taking no great advantage of the suspense possible from month to month and twice in both The Widow Married and Charles Chesterfield wholly losing ^{of} that suspense because illustrations precede the number they illustrate.¹³

¹³In The Widow Married an illustration appropriate to Installment 8, Don Tornorino picking up Patty's parasol, appears early with Installment 7; with Installment 8 appears an illustration of Patty's and Jack's interrupted tête-à-tête, which should accompany Installment 9. In Charles Chesterfield a plate accompanying Installment 10 showing Charles' farewell visit to the Gibsons belongs with Installment 12; and, more to the detriment of suspense, the plate with Installment 11 showing Mrs. Sherbourne's revelation that she has cozened Marchmont should

Without writing deliberately to create effective serial novels, Mrs. Trollope wrote several which, because of the accident of her normal method of creating hosts of characters and the happy opportunity of continuing many characters from The Widow Barnaby into two serialized novels, could give the unwary reader the impression that calculation has a larger part in her serialized fiction than I suspect it has. Many characters from The Widow Barnaby appear at intervals in its sequel, enlivening The Widow Married: Lord Mucklebury appears, for instance, with a flourish in Installment 11; and Elizabeth Peters, who has no role earlier in the sequel, opportunely exposes Major Allen in Installment 14.

The minor litterati and hacks who make up the worlds of both Charles Chesterfield and The Blue Belles of England represent Mrs. Trollope's most obvious attempt to portray figures of the day; and though the two worlds are more or less complementary--Charles' world that of

also accompany Installment 12. While it is possible either that the illustrators had been briefed ahead as to future incidents of the novels (as Dickens' sometimes were), or that in each instance Mrs. Trollope had proceeded in advance of publication only so far as the illustrations give evidence, it is also possible that she had finished the books ahead of schedule. Illustrations accompanying The Barnabys in America never precede their appropriate installments. As I have seen no unbound copies of The New Monthly this information remains purely conjectural.

backstage art best shown in Marchmont or the theatre manager Marvel, the world of The Blue Belles of England more especially that of the hangers-on of the world of art--nevertheless they share an air of up-to-the-minute gossip and characters who might easily be interchanged.¹⁴ Were Charles Chesterfield more successful, we can imagine him graduating from the salon of Mrs. Gibson to those of Lady Dort, Lady Stephens, and Mrs. Gardener Stewart; and if the American poet read but not introduced in The Blue Belles of England, Mr. Hookham, were actually to appear, he mightn't be much different from Marchmont's protégé Fendergrass. The numerous casts of both novels help to keep the installments full of incident.

Whether or not she intends it, in both of the serials about salons Mrs. Trollope derives some advantage from the lapse of time between installments. In the ninth installment of Charles Chesterfield Mrs. Sherbourne begins to urge Charles to marry her; when she continues to press in the following installment, the reader of the New Monthly may well feel the implication that be-

¹⁴The reviewer of The Blue Belles of England in the Athenaeum, 18 December 1841, p.972, remarks, "It would seem as if the caustic and clever authoress had wrought up what materials she had to spare from the confection of 'Charles Chesterfield,' into the tale before us--so justly might it be called the female of that novel."

tween the installments the same importunities have continued. More effectively yet, in The Blue Belles of England Constance Ridley tells Penelope Hartley of her engagement to Mortimer in the eighth installment; in the same installment Constance begins to ^{detect} Mortimer's self-love, so that the lapse of time between the eighth installment and the tenth makes Constance's doubts, full-blown by now, seem to have grown more gradually than in mere pages they have grown. In the novels of belles lettres the accident of serial publication favours Mrs. Trollope.

Mrs. Trollope may have written The Barnabys in America as the book was being issued; Frances Eleanor Trollope notes that,

The terms she received for it Mrs. Trollope did not consider good ones; but she candidly told her publisher that she wanted money to pay for the building of her house, and accepted his price because it was to be paid by monthly instalments, so much on the delivery of each portion of manuscript.¹⁵

Though the novel contains some of Mrs. Trollope's cleverest and most amusing satire, in its uncomfortable juxtaposition of major and minor plots and its final hurried conclusion (brought on by an editor's urgency that it be completed?) it makes a serial so much less satisfactory than Mrs. Trollope's previous magazine serials that we

¹⁵F.E.Trollope, Frances Trollope, II, 14.

may suspect her of confronting in it, for the first time, the problem of writing as she published serially. If this is so, she responds to the problem inadequately.

In its multiplicity of aims The Barnabys in America is one of Mrs. Trollope's most ambitious books, so that the accomplishment of some of her intentions in the book is worthy of credit, even if it fails as a serial novel. Not only does she carry on with the social comedy of the Barnabys and their hangers-on, the Perkinses, but she balances English against American pride and humbles both, mocks her favourite American foibles, and still devotes some space to recognizing compassion where she finds it.

Slavery as an object for Mrs. Trollope's attack proves both a triumph and a disaster for her in The Barnabys in America: when she treats it satirically, Mrs. Trollope manages to expose the issue as skilfully as any problem she ever sought to remedy. The southerners who curry favour with Mrs. Barnaby deserve every extortion and vulgarity that lady can inflict on them, as Colonel Beauchamp's excursion about his plantation makes plain enough:

When [Colonel Beauchamp and Mrs. Barnaby] reached the negro village in which the largest portion of his slaves dwelt, and found them all dressed out in their best attire, and dancing away to the squeak-

ing of one of their own fiddles, while all the teeth of all the tribe were displayed by one broad universal grin, he did not think it necessary to mention that this exhibition of gaiety was got up for her especial benefit,--but permitted her to write, "none but those who have witnessed the blissful scene with their own eyes can form an idea of that unequalled moral felicity which is enjoyed by the negro slaves of the United States of America."¹⁶

The effectiveness of this indirect attack on slavery need not blind us to Mrs. Trollope's failure in attacking it directly; in fact she raises the threat of a slaves' rebellion so clumsily that we wonder afresh at her curious balance between compassion and callousness. Certainly she would have us admire compassion: Annie Beauchamp and Frederic Egerton attract one another because they are the only caring people among many callous ones. The worthiest American in the book is the Quaker John Williams, who sees the problem of writing a book on America with all of Mrs. Trollope's hindsight:

There is not an English goose-quill that can be wagged about us, right or wrong, witty or dull, powerful in wisdom, or mawkish in folly, but every man Jonathan in the States is rampant as a hungry wolf that seeks his food till he gets hold of it, and straightway it is devoured as if his life depended upon his swallowing the whole mess, let him find it as nauseous as he may....If the best written treatise that ever was penned were to come forth to-morrow in favour of universal emancipation by John Williams of Philadelphia, thee dost know right well, Rachel, that it would only go to line trunks and wrap candles.¹⁷

¹⁶The Barnabys in America in the New Monthly Magazine, October 1842, p.169.

¹⁷Ibid., December 1842, pps.494-95.

But it is not his clarity of vision so much as his compassion which strikes us; having pursued the Barnabys (and his five hundred dollars) in vain, he returns to find a stray dog outside his rooming house:

"Poor beast! Thee art homeless!" said the kind-hearted man, stepping back into the hall, and calling to Ariadne, who was passing it, for "a plate of broken victuals for a poor dog"....
 "And what matters it?" soliloquized the quaker, as he again retreated into the house. "I do believe that the whole set are not much better than they should be, but I would rather feed a hungry dog¹⁸ any day, than catch and scourge a vicious one."

The last number of The Barnabys in America includes brief mention of the slave uprising on Beauchamp's plantation hinted at earlier by Annie's slave Nina and by the general skittishness of the slaves of Big-Gang Bank. In no time and with no regrets Beauchamp has been murdered by the slaves and the remainder of the family is in flight to Europe with Egerton. The uprising seems more of a convenience for Egerton to take Annie from her home than an event intended to provide more comment upon slavery, but in effect it nearly cancels Mrs. Trollope's sharp observations earlier in the book. The very little affection Annie shows for her father is curious in the context of the many dutiful children in Mrs. Trollope's novels.

¹⁸Ibid., January 1843, p.47.

The novel suffers also the difficulty that a full complement of characters who appear early on--Beauchamps, Perkinses, and Egerton--are not wanted while the Barnabys traipse off into the hinterlands of America, gulling the American sharps: from the beginning of Installment 8 until the middle of Installment 14 they remain in limbo. Their reappearance at the conclusion adds to the confusion of the final installment, especially as Mrs. Trollope finds it necessary to have Egerton not only take care of the surviving Beauchamps but expose(or be prepared to expose) Major Allen as well.

Of all Mrs. Trollope's novels, The Barnabys in America gives us the clearest evidence that Mrs. Trollope shared anything of Dickens' close dependence on his audience, though their dependence is of different varieties. In the introductory chapter of the novel Mrs. Trollope treats her special relationship to both her characters and to her audience with much good humour, with the assumption of prior knowledge of her work on the part of the audience, and perhaps with something of the intimacy of a person sharing a good joke with a friend:

I scruple not to confess that with all Mrs. Barnaby's faults, and she has some, I love her dearly: I owe her many mirthful moments, and the deeper pleasure still of believing that she has brought mirthful moments to others also. Honestly avowing

this to be the case, can any one wonder, can any one blame me, for feeling an affectionate longing at my heart to follow her upon the expedition upon which I sent her when last we parted? An expedition, too, that was to lead her to a land which all the world knows I cherish in my memory with peculiar delight? I will not believe it, but trusting to the long-established, and goodhumoured toleration of those who condescend to listen to my gossipings, I will forthwith proceed to tell them all that has happened to this dear excellent lady since General Hubert and Mr. Stephenson left her in her grand drawing-room in Curzon-street, surrounded by her family and friends.¹⁹

This is a merry beginning and a pleasant indication of the good terms which Mrs. Trollope felt existed between her and her readers.

The last of Mrs. Trollope's full-length contributions to the New Monthly begins with a sober and essay-like lecture to the reader on the disreputable behavior of British tourists abroad that seems the beginning of a series of sketches of such behavior;²⁰ but whether or not she intended any such sketches, Mrs. Trollope soon found herself writing a novel.

If Mrs. Trollope was unexpectedly persuaded to convert the initial sketch of The Robertses on Their Travels into a novel, it is interesting that in this last magazine serial, because she sets her aim low, concentrating

¹⁹Ibid., April 1842, p.504.

²⁰Though ended "To be continued", the first sketch of The Robertses on Their Travels has no chapter divisions; the second installment begins with Chapter 5.

on a single plot, she works out a satisfying, if tediously long, serial. As in the novels concerning the world of belles lettres, Mrs. Trollope gleans some advantage from the lapse of time between the installments of the novel: just as the repetition of Charles Chesterfield's financial worries from ^{in installment} number to ^{in installment} number might lead the reader to give those worries the duration of time between the ^{installments} numbers, so, much more forcibly in The Robertses on Their Travels, the family's chronic extravagance becomes interminably repetitive; the final dissolution takes on an inevitability perhaps less imperative for the reader in volumes. For the periodical reader, Edward's involvement with Madame de Marquemont, continued from Installment 10 to his being dunned for her debts in Installment 14 seems the more entangling if it persists during five months.

Mrs. Trollope's last two novels in the New Monthly suggest that the writer of moderate abilities, particularly of moderate organizational abilities, can manage a simple story in periodical parts, though complexity will lead to disorganization and ineffectiveness; the first three magazine serials,²¹ I believe, were pre-prepared, though I have insufficient evidence to prove this.

²¹From the terms in which Frances Eleanor Trollope

It is tempting to see Mrs. Trollope's failure to deal successfully with complexity in a serialized story (a failure borne out in the novels in parts, as we shall see) as a parallel to Dickens' having had to work until Dombey and Son before achieving a serialized novel of great concentration; but most of Mrs. Trollope's serial work she did past the age of sixty when she had no longer time nor patience to discipline herself into planning a serial novel.

Because Mrs. Trollope could not express herself succinctly, the short pieces published in the New Monthly and collected in Travels and Travellers, either accounts of travels like "A Midnight Passage of the Mont du Chat", or stories like "The Value of a Shawl", are little worth remembering. Mrs. Trollope's best

discusses Mrs. Trollope's sale of The Blue Belles of England to a competitor of Colburn, it is difficult to tell whether the book was sold in bulk. It has a tightness which makes it more like The Widow Married and Charles Chesterfield than The Barnabys in America. Colburn was provoked by Mrs. Trollope's action, perhaps grudging the sales the novel might gain from his puffing her: "Another novel in three volumes, entitled "Hargrave" had been agreed for between them. The manuscript of this latter was sent up to Mr. Colburn in January, 1841, by the hand of Mrs. Trollope's brother Henry Milton; but Mr. Colburn declined to receive it, and declared that he intended to be off his bargain altogether on the ground that Mrs. Trollope had vitiated all her contracts with him by publishing another novel ("The Blue Belles of England") with a rival publisher, in serial form, simultaneously with the publication of "Charles Chesterfield." F.E.Trollope, Frances Trollope, I, 321.

short story belongs not to the New Monthly but to Bentley's Miscellany: "The Patron King" is a worldly, clever version of "The Emperor's New Clothes", set in Spain. In both A Romance of Vienna and Vienna and the Austrians the reader never loses the feeling that both he and Mrs. Trollope are awed interlopers worshipping at the shrine of deified aristocracy; but in "The Patron King" she permits herself to be as irreverent towards aristocracy as towards democracy: the king combines a veneration for purity of descent(chaste parents) with an equal respect for scientific invention, so that three shipwrecked French seamen easily play on his gullibility. Given precious jewels they promise to manufacture a wonderful fabric: "Should a mother's frailty have in any way tarnished the purity of descent, the spurious issue shall look upon this mystic cloth, and shall behold a void."²² Though the sailors recommend that the king wear the garments they produce over an undergarment of velvet, the chancellor(it will turn out a costly joke) scorns the king's wearing such a shabby material beneath the wonderful one. Mrs. Trollope's lack of false modesty in elaborating the story typifies the best of her writing; but to my knowledge this is the only story in which she re-works traditional material. Her success suggests that

²²Bentley's Miscellany, November 1839, p.488.

she would have done well to have tried the experiment more often.

If our understanding of Mrs. Trollope's method of writing her magazine serials suffers from a lack of specific knowledge, the information we have about the novels in parts is still insufficient to make clear the relationship she maintained either with her publisher or her public. We learn from the Advertisement²³ to Michael Armstrong that Mrs. Trollope has chosen monthly parts because she means to find an audience which will respond to her message:

The cheapest form of publication has been adopted, that the work may find its way into the cottage as well as into the drawing-room, and that the resistless, though not quickly moving, weight of public opinion, may be fully brought to bear upon the subject.

It only remains to be added, that although the form of fiction has been chosen as being the most attractive, the facts stated and the circumstances disclosed are no fiction--but most true--most sad realities.²⁴

Besides showing Mrs. Trollope's anxiety to find an audience for whom gossip about a Widow Barnaby is less important than saving the lives and health of children who work in factories, the Advertisement promises that Michael Armstrong will be issued in twenty monthly

²³Phrases in the Advertisement so closely echo sentences in the text that we can safely assume it to be Mrs. Trollope's work.

²⁴Michael Armstrong, Number 2, 1 March 1839, v.

parts; but as we noted in our last chapter,²⁵ Mrs. Trollope curtailed the book at the twelfth number, abandoning the idea of treating Michael as a grown operative because of the Chartists' violence. It is difficult to say exactly what alarmed Mrs. Trollope, for some Chartists advocated violence from their first organizing; but the wholesale arrests in the summer of 1839, in the wake of Parliament's failure to pass the measures of the Charter, followed by occasional violence, must have had a cumulative effect on Mrs. Trollope.

We may hazard a guess that even before the violent November of 1839, which saw an abortive rising in Newport, Mrs. Trollope had decided to halve Michael Armstrong. The ninth number, appearing in November, contains the great compression of time which makes Michael a man in remarkably few pages. The divisions of the novel in no way indicate that Mrs. Trollope wrote it as she went: no number ends cleanly between chapters, and some end even in mid-sentence. If it were not for the evidence of the Advertisement of the planned twenty numbers and Mrs. Trollope's admission of changed plans in the Preface added when the novel was complete, we would hardly be aware that Michael Armstrong was published

²⁵See above, p.207.

serially. Never does Mrs. Trollope treat the monthly number as a unit of sense, a segment intelligible in itself.

Jessie Phillips marks Mrs. Trollope's closest relationship to her readers, though the book begins with the same neglect of even the formal possibilities of writing serially that she displays in Michael Armstrong: the first six numbers of the later book, like all but one number in the earlier, end in mid-chapter. Just as Mrs. Trollope begins writing as if she were composing only a novel in volumes, so the only objection to the early part of the text which we know Mrs. Trollope to have received, comes on an inset leaf bound with Number 3 and is answered on the same page(not in the text proper) by Mrs. Trollope.²⁶ We need not even suppose that she altered the course of the novel because a man named Baxter thought a character with his surname in the novel was meant as a caricature: though the character is abandoned, Mrs. Trollope abandons many other of her characters part way through her novels.

More interesting than the early numbers are the numbers after Number 6 which all end tidily between chapters, suggesting that Mrs. Trollope at least tailored

²⁶Reported by Michael Sadleir in XIX Century Fiction (London, 1951), 347.

them to fit publication in monthly parts and perhaps wrote as they were published. Though the monthly numbers throughout the book tend to be chaotically organized, we can detect a slight gain in coherence after the sixth number. A summary of the contents of the fifth (all in thirty-two pages) will suggest a possible extreme of disorganization: Mrs. Trollope reveals Jessie's pregnancy and shows Frederic and Ellen Dalton worrying, Frederic proposing to Martha Maxwell, repudiating Jessie before Ellen, and threatening Jessie, Martha Maxwell checking the truth of Frederic's claim that his father wants him to marry someone else, the Rochdales learning of Ellen's philanthropy from Mrs. Greenhill, the Duchess of Rochdale talking with Ellen's friend Mrs. Buckhurst, Martha extracting a written promise of marriage from Frederic, and Jessie working as a sempstress. Surely all this incident could not but make the reader of the number beg for system, if only to keep sanity.

Though the later numbers offer only a degree less confusion than the early ones, I offer Number 8 to suggest the improvement in logical sequence of events: Lord Pemberton proposes to Ellen; Henry Mortimer has Martha return the promise of marriage; Susan White persuades Jessie to get support for the child from Frederic;

Martha returns the promise to Frederic, who writes a scornful reply; Jessie escapes from the workhouse and awaits Frederic, who scorns her; Jessie promises to see the lawyer, but Frederic anticipates her with Lewis, who turns her away in the bodily anguish preceding her giving birth. There may be improvement in this later number, but its logic is still nothing marvellous.

But what are to make of Mrs. Trollope's claim in Jessie Phillips that she received so large a correspondence on the issues of the book while it was in progress that she doubted her ability to treat them?²⁷ This is the most positive evidence we have that Mrs. Trollope was affected by her readers, but how much difference does it make for the novel? Its issues remain much as Mrs. Trollope must have determined them at the beginning: she defends Jessie from Dalton's abandonment; the workhouse remains an unsatisfactory solution to the misfortunes of the poor and the administration of the new Poor Law no less culpable than she would have pictured it had she received not a single letter. True, she provides no particular solutions for the problems she raises, but, as usual, she defends private virtue as opposed to cor-

²⁷See above, p.211.

porate virtue: the best example of this in the novel is that once the publicly paid doctor has abandoned care of Mrs. Phillips, the local doctor, too scrupulous to take on public work, too ill-paid to keep his patients supplied with drugs, reveals the other's incorrect diagnosis. Similarly the publicly paid parson at the workhouse is too hurried to help Jessie. Mrs. Trollope may have felt that she was influenced by the letters she received, but lacking evidence of her original plans, we may doubt the effect of the letters.

However, that she received letters at all suggests that Jessie Phillips was reaching the audience intended; that Mrs. Trollope felt herself influenced by the letters is evidence that for her as for Dickens, serial publication was permitting an exchange between author and reader. The conclusion to Jessie Phillips and the introduction to The Barnabys in America, taken together, indicate that Mrs. Trollope was able to reach two segments of Dickens' public. That she had nothing of his conception of the serial as a work of art composed of deliberately constructed smaller parts helps to make her only a dim background figure in the realm where he demands attention; but there would be a gap in that background were she not there.

Chapter 8: Notoriety

The twentieth century reader who takes the trouble to examine the opinions of Mrs. Trollope's contemporaries about her writing will be surprised by the animosity with which many of them regarded her. For many she not only epitomized vulgarity but represented narrow-minded Toryism at its worst, nominal christianity at its most superficial, and hack writing at its most irresponsible. In this context Anthony's apology for her in his autobiography seems warmer and more dutiful than it might to one unacquainted with the criticism:

She was an unselfish, affectionate, and most industrious woman, with great capacity for enjoyment and high physical gifts. She was endowed too, with much creative power, with considerable humour, and a genuine feeling for romance. But she was neither clear-sighted nor accurate; and in her attempts to describe morals, manners, and even facts, was unable to avoid the pitfalls of exaggeration.¹

In this chapter we shall examine the reactions of Mrs. Trollope's public, partly for the illumination of the time such an examination provides, and partly for the light it throws upon Mrs. Trollope's writing itself-- for even at their most vehement, many of her reviewers could make observations worthy of more dispassionate treatment. Before going to the reviewers and to such of Mrs. Trollope's readers ^{as} ~~who~~ comment upon her, we shall

¹Anthony Trollope, Autobiography, ed. H.M.Trollope (London, 1883), I, 44.

try to determine the extent of her public from the partial records left by her major publishers, Bentley and Colburn.

Richard Bentley became Mrs. Trollope's publisher only with her sixth book and third novel, Tremordyn Cliff (1835). According to such contracts as remain among the Bentley papers in the British Museum, he paid her £250 for the first edition of the novel, £100 more if it sold 950 copies, and for further editions, £100 at the sale of 450 copies, £100 more if the sale reached 700;² for Paris and the Parisians she was to receive £500 for an edition of 2000 copies, and £100 for every 500 copies in further editions;³ Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw brought £250 for the first edition, £100 more if the sale reached 1200 copies;⁴ for the entire copyright of The Vicar of Wrexhill Bentley offered £400, for Vienna and the Austrians £500, for A Visit to Italy £550;⁵ for A Romance of Vienna she was to have £500 with an additional £100

²British Museum Add. MSS.46,612, pps.150-51, contract of 10 March 1835; I have found no editions besides the first.

³Ibid.,156-57, 28 March 1835; at least three editions appeared.

⁴Ibid.,201-02, 26 December 1835; altered to £350 for the entire copyright in the contract of 27 April 1836; four English editions appeared.

⁵Ibid.,240-41, 27 April 1836.

at the sale of 1450 copies;⁶ and for the entire copyright of The Ward of Thorpe-Combe Bentley gave £650.⁷

If we are to judge by a letter of 20 May 1838 in which Bentley makes Mrs. Trollope an offer for the book which becomes One Fault, he seems to have been willing to risk loss with her books:

Although I have two works of fiction from your pen in my hands, the success of which to me has yet to be determined, and although your work on Vienna does not hold out much expectation of profit to me, I should be reluctant that a small difference should separate us. I am willing therefore to purchase the copyright of Temper for £700 £100 of which payable on reprinting the work. The first Edition to consist of 1500 copies.⁸

From the figures which I have quoted we can see that Mrs. Trollope only gradually worked her way to receiving a middling price for her novels, while for her travel books, items which commonly brought Bentley very little profit,⁹ she commanded a respectable price from the beginning. A brief list of other ~~of other~~ of Bentley's contracts of the time reinforces this impression:

30 July 1836	Edward Howard	<u>The Old Commodore</u>	£500
13 Oct. 1836	James Morier	<u>Uncle Abel</u>	£750
17 Oct. 1836	Douglas Jerrold	<u>Nell Gwyn</u>	£300
		(£100 more at sale of 900 copies)	

⁶Add. MSS.46,613, pps.46-47, 14 December 1837.

⁷Ibid.,309, 9 September 1840; this novel went into not only three English but five editions of a French translation.

⁸Add. MSS.46,640, p.199b, 26 May 1838.

⁹See above, pps.17-18.

24 Nov. 1836	Captain Chamier	<u>The Spitfire</u>	£500
10 Dec. 1838	W.H.Ainsworth	<u>Jack Sheppard</u>	£500
		(including publication in the <u>Miscellany</u>)	
24 Apr. 1839	Mrs. Gore	<u>The Dowager</u>	£250
		(£50 more at sale of whole ed. of 1000).	¹⁰

We can trace Dickens' quarrel with Bentley, which derived partly from the unpredictable growth of the novelist's popularity, through the successive contracts which raise the price for Barnaby Rudge from £500 (22 August 1836) to £700 (28 September 1837) and finally to £2000 with increments (27 February 1839);¹¹ there is no evidence that Mrs. Trollope ever commanded £2000 for a book. Bentley's terms with her for travel books deserve attention, however, for had she cut anything but an impressive figure as a writer of travels, he might well have offered no more than the half profits he gave R.G.Latham for Norway and the Norwegians or Major Forbes for his Residence in Ceylon. One of the few extant scraps of letters which Anthony wrote as a young man suggests that The Domestic Manners of the Americans was not the only one of Mrs. Trollope's travel books to sell well: to Thomas Adolphus he writes, January 1836, "Mamma will, I feel confident, have a second thousand of the Paris. No work of hers

¹⁰ Add. MSS.46,612, pps.284-85, 312-13, 314-15, 326-27; Add. MSS.46,613, pps.159-60, 189.

¹¹ Charles Dickens, Letters, Pilgrim Edition, I, 648-49, 654, 674-75.

was ever abused so much--or sold so fast--or praised in the periodicals so little--especially by her own party."¹²

Of Mrs. Trollope's relations with her other major publisher, Henry Colburn, unfortunately we know far less than we know of her commerce with Bentley; at the very least it was far less cordial, as Colburn's quarrel over the serialization of The Blue Belles of England¹³ suggests. Mrs. Trollope can hardly have asked Colburn much less than Bentley paid her; and knowing Bentley to have been so accommodating as the letter about One Fault indicates, we may suppose that Colburn offered more in order to induce her to leave his rival. Most of the prices which a searcher of memoirs can determine that Colburn paid,¹⁴ though from an earlier period than his connection with Mrs. Trollope, do suggest that he gave quite as much as Bentley; and the one price which we know he offered Mrs. Trollope--£625 for Hargrave¹⁵ is for a book which initially

¹²F.E.Trollope, Frances Trollope, I, 248.

¹³See above, p. 236.

¹⁴To Theodore Hook for Sayings and Doings, First Series (1824) £600; Second Series (1825) 1000 guineas, later £350 more; Maxwell (1830) £1000; to Lady Morgan for France (1817) £1000 with increments; Florence McCarthy (1818) £2000; to Robert Gillies for Sir Basil Barrington £200; to Benjamin Disraeli for Vivian Grey, Pt. 1 (1826) £200; Pt. 2 (1826) £600; to R.P. Ward for Tremaine (1825) £500. The best guide to Colburn's activities is M.W. Rosa, who devotes a chapter, pp. 178-206, of The Silver-Fork School to the publisher.

¹⁵F.E.Trollope, Frances Trollope, I, 326.

he was reluctant to take because of his quarrel over the serialization of The Blue Belles of England in the Metropolitan rather than his own New Monthly Magazine.

But even if we had all of Mrs. Trollope's contracts rather than merely those she made with Bentley, we would want to know as well how many editions her books went into, and what were the conditions of their being reissued. Without pretending to have exhaustively traced the editions of the books, especially difficult with translations and pirated editions, I can summarize the information obtainable from the British, French, and American national libraries, supplemented by accounts of particular publishing houses: The Domestic Manners of the Americans leads the rest of Mrs. Trollope's books, having appeared in at least six English editions, three French(translated), and three American. If we recognize as separate English editions the books published in English for travellers in Paris by Baudry or Galignani,¹⁶ at least thirty-one of

¹⁶These editions, some of them pirated, may well have circulated Mrs. Trollope's books more than the legitimate editions, as a comment in the Athenaeum, 28 January 1837, p.65, on the lack of international copyright, indicates: "To what extent the English author is injured by the system, is not so directly capable of proof; but a reasonable guess may be made from the facts stated in regard to America,--from a further and important fact, that our colonies are supplied by the Americans; that even the East Indies are stocked full to overflowing with American reprints; and that a Paris edition of a

Mrs. Trollope's books appeared in more English editions than one; at least fifteen appeared in as many as three English editions; eleven in four English editions; five in five or more English editions. At least eight of the books were issued in America; and no fewer than seven were translated into French.

Contemporary comment bears out the wide circulation suggested by these many editions; Timothy Flint, who had met Mrs. Trollope in Cincinnati, writes in the Knickerbocker,

Mrs. Trollope's book, "Domestic Manners of the Americans," has strangely fixed public attention both in England and America. It has been immensely circulated in the former country, to the extent of a great number of editions [four when Flint wrote] and has been translated into French and Italian, and has been read, we imagine by greater numbers of people in the United States, than any book of travels upon our country that has ever been published.¹⁷

The reviewer of The Refugee in America in the Athenaeum coyly avoids giving an opinion of the novel by first providing a preview of it with the comment,

The extraordinary avidity with which Mrs. Trollope's work on America [The Domestic Manners of the Americans] was devoured by all parties, na-

popular English novel is never under 1,500 copies, frequently, as of Mr. Bulwer's novels, the first impression is from four to five thousand, and that of Mrs. Trollope's 'America' not less than from twelve to fifteen thousand were sold!"

¹⁷Knickerbocker, October 1833, p.286.

turally enough makes the public eager for a sight of this forthcoming novel, the scene of which is laid in that country--we have, therefore, great pleasure in offering¹⁸ our readers, thus early, a glimpse into its pages.

Two months later, after noting American reactions to the earlier book, the reviewer observes, "When we gave the extracts from this lady's novel, we deferred all comment until the work was published. It now appears so certain that it will be read, whatever may be our critical opinion, that it would be superogatory to offer it."¹⁹

Months after the publication of The Vicar of Wrexhill, the Court Magazine provides a notice of the book with a summary of the plot "for such of our readers who wish to know what the Vicar of Wrexhill is about, without encountering much that is disgusting in its pages"; the notice, the reviewer implies, is demanded of the magazine by the circulation of the novel:

Mrs. Trollope's lately published volumes have attracted more attention from the public than they are entitled to from their literary merits. They are eagerly snatched up, nay almost devoured, yet at the same time exclaimed against and detested. All classes read it, excepting those against whom their envenomed shafts are aimed.²⁰

¹⁸Athenaeum, 8 September 1832, p.577.

¹⁹Ibid., 10 November 1832, p.733.

²⁰Court Magazine and Monthly Critic, and Lady's Magazine and Museum, February 1838, p.219.

Reviewers of the novels protest, even into the 'fifties, that in spite of the books' faults, which they are happy to point out, the libraries will have them; the Critic remarks, 15 November 1844, "Mrs. Trollope's name will compel the libraries to have a copy of her new novel; but let it be one only. We would advise the reader whose leisure compels a choice of books, not to send for Young Love."²¹ Disgusted with Father Eustace, the reviewer for the same periodical complains, 9 January 1847, "Critics will condemn, but libraries will buy, and their customers will borrow."²² The reviewer of Mrs. Mathews for the Literary Gazette, after informing his readers that the book is most notable for its dullness, concludes, "Mrs. Trollope's novel will doubtless be extensively read. A perusal of our remarks on its weaknesses will lead to its being read with less disappointment."²³

But the reader of reviews of Mrs. Trollope's books must beware of the possibility that directly or indirectly her publishers may have influenced the critics. For example, under the impression that Whittaker, Mrs. Trollope's first publisher, was trying to control the treatment of his books by the Atlas, the reviewer for the

²¹Critic, 15 November 1844, p.183.

²²Ibid., 9 January 1847, p.27.

²³Literary Gazette, 4 October 1851, p.674.

paper used space originally intended for review of The Abbess in the issue of 9 June 1833 to air his quarrel with the publisher, while Mrs. Trollope had to wait a week for the reviewer to tell her and his readers how poor a performance he found the novel--without his opinion's seeming the natural consequence of his quarrel.

If we are to believe the critic of Belgium and Western Germany in the Literary Gazette, John Murray advertised the book misleadingly:

The respected publisher of this work has not, we think, done very wisely in allowing it to be announced in the manner in which it has been paragraphed in the newspapers, and teaching us to expect much of new and unaccustomed ground travelled over and described by the observant author; for the expectation of great novelty must assuredly be disappointed; and the public, consequently, feel less inclined to be pleased with the clever sketches...²⁴

Neither Whittaker nor Murray, however, had the notoriety of either Bentley or Colburn for puffing their books--Colburn the acknowledged master of this activity, Bentley his apt student during the years the two continued their partnership. Bentley's concern for public relations shows in a letter he wrote to Mrs. Trollope on 30 January 1836 concerning a review in the Times to which he suggests she should reply,

a long, ill-natured and would be humorous account of "Paris and the Parisians." Had this proceeded from an obscure journal, it might be wise to pass it by in silent contempt, but as everyone reads

²⁴Ibid., 19 July 1834, p.491.

this paper, some answer is imperatively necessary, otherwise the operation of the criticism might be very injurious to the sale of the book especially as regards that portion of it which affects to charge you with misstatement in the account of the readings at Madame Récamiers. Should you agree in my view of the matter, permit me to suggest that the reply should be framed without delay.²⁵

Bentley and the Times had one other amusing rencontre over Mrs. Trollope more specifically involving puffing than the dispute about Madame Récamier's readings; in its only hearty review of any of Mrs. Trollope's books, the notice of The Widow Barnaby, the newspaper contains the following aside about Bentley:

We have the pleasure to state to her publisher, who, on a late occasion managed to extract a single line from a sentence in a critique in this paper, by which we were made to give Mrs. Trollope the most unqualified approbation, that the present book is full of real harmless drollery and humour.²⁶

Like Murray, Bentley made what currency he could from Mrs. Trollope's American fame; the Atlas takes him to task for advertising Tremordyn Cliff as a picture of English society as revealing as her description of the

²⁵British Museum Add. MSS.46,639, p.15b. The review appears the day of Bentley's letter, Mrs. Trollope's reply on 2 February. The Times accompanies her letter with a note claiming not to have doubted her veracity, merely to have wished to point out her vagueness. When "Our Weekly Gossip" in the Athenaeum, 6 October 1838, calls on Mrs. Trollope to explain the lack of a scientific association in Vienna, she replies the following week; if not again a rejoinder prompted by Bentley, her reply at least shows continuing concern for reception.

²⁶The Times, 24 January 1839, p.5.

Americans:

The announcements of this work which recently appeared in the newspapers prepared us to expect a novel exhibiting a sort of narrative commentary upon the habits and manners of the upper orders in this country. We were led to believe that Mrs. Trollope had done for our aristocracy, in her own etching way, what she had before done for the American people; and we looked, with some curiosity, for a similar caricature of the follies and vices of English fashionable life.²⁷

Needless to say they were disappointed.

Colburn's puffing was a matter of normal procedure. At various times he either owned or held a share in the Literary Gazette, the New Monthly, the Athenaeum, the Court Journal, the United Service Journal, and the Sunday Times;²⁸ Cyrus Redding, long the acting editor of

²⁷ Atlas, 6 September 1835, p.567.

²⁸ An amusing comment on Colburn's puffing appears in William Maginn's anonymously published Whitehall; or the Days of George IV (London, 1827), in which the hero stumbles into a great factory advertised by a sign reading, "Henri Le Grand, his Manufactory." Once inside he listens while Colburn's assistant, Reuben Apsley, reads from a great cookery book on the preparation of historical, fashionable, and Irish fiction, noting near the end, p.316, "Serve up, hot and hot, with puffs; them you manufacture yourself, or you hire a regular baker." And Apsley concludes, p.317, "And finally, Sir, get yourself connected with a magazine, which you supply with light goods--and in return it will set off your work in its front window." Much later Colburn and Bentley also serve as models for the feuding publishers in Pendennis, Bacon and Bungay, of whom Thackeray writes, "Since they have separated, it is a furious war between the two publishers; and no sooner does one bring out a book of travels, or poems, a magazine or periodical, quarterly, or monthly, or weekly, or annual, but the rival is in the field with something similar." The History of Pendennis, His Fortunes and Misfortunes, His Friends and His Greatest Enemy (London, 1849-50), I, 318.

of the New Monthly under the nominal editorship of Thomas Campbell, notes that in the magazine, "The literary report and works in the press were sent through Colburn [rather than written by the staff of the magazine] for obvious trade reasons",²⁹ while the compiler of Lady Morgan's memoirs, W. Hepworth Dixon, informs us that on one occasion,

Colburn wrote with great satisfaction to Lady Morgan to tell her that the Examiner, the New Times, and the John Bull, had abstained from saying anything against the work [her book on Italy], adding naively, "I am intimately acquainted with the editors; and advertising with them a great deal, keeps them in check."³⁰

Colburn seems to have puffed Mrs. Trollope's books as systematically as those of any of his writers; as she began writing for him before wholly ending her connection with Bentley, reviews of her variously published books differ significantly in periodicals in which Colburn had influence: the Court Journal, for instance, hails the first number of Michael Armstrong (Colburn),

Well done Mrs. Trollope! After having thrown half the New World into a fever of rage and shame--and delighted all the world in the respective works 'The Domestic Manners of the Americans,' 'The Vicar of Wrexhill,' and the Glorious Widow!--she is now carrying the war into Lancashire amongst the cotton people. It was the fear of Mrs. Trollope that made the corn-law delegates decamp in such haste

²⁹Cyrus Redding, Fifty Years' Recollections (London, 1858), II, 169-70.

³⁰Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan's Memoirs: Autobiography, Diaries and Correspondence, ed. W. Hepworth Dixon (London, 1862), II, 145.

from Brown's Hotel! Mr. Dickens, look to your laurels! our widow will beat you and give you a distance--she has what you entirely want, the perception of the absurd and ridiculous, and immense graphic power of description....³¹

Little wonder that her contemporaries thought Mrs. Trollope vulgar, if only from the taint of such advertisement as this.

In sharp contrast to the Court Journal's opinion of Michael Armstrong is its criticism of One Fault (Bentley): "To our judgment, some of the characters in this novel are wildly out of drawing, whilst others are not only repulsive but unnatural."³² The two reviews which follow of novels published by Colburn, The Widow Married and Charles Chesterfield, again glow with praise; but The Blue Belles of England, the source of Colburn's and Mrs. Trollope's quarrel, rouses a singularly abusive review:

Does Mrs. Trollope really imagine that such trash as this will ever attain a current value? If so, she is doomed to be bitterly undeceived. A set of more exclusively wood-and-wire puppets were never before congregated in three volumes of a soi-disant novel. A more absolute ignorance of the sphere in which these puppets are supposed to move was never perpetrated by the bluest twaddler of the Rosa-Matilda school. A style more fâde; an affectation more glaring; a purpose more riïe of emptiness, no printer's devil was ever yet tortured to bring forth. To our thinking, the whole of Mrs. Trollope's works, with the exception of her Widow Barnaby, come, with certain allowances, under the same cate-

³¹Court Journal, 2 March 1839, p.148.

³²Ibid., 7 December 1839, p.795.

gory as these Blue-belles. Her truthless and distorted pictures of American society; her diluted, water-colour, toadying daubs of Vienna and the Viennese, have long arrived at their just level, (low enough, with a vengeance!) and may their oblivion never be disturbed.³³

Without drawing quite so fierce a review as The Blue Belles of England, Mrs. Trollope's last novel published with Bentley, The Ward of Thorpe Combe, receives treatment which marks it plainly as unsheltered by Colburn's aegis: "We rise neither wiser nor better, but very much amused, from the perusal of that which we cannot but regard as the most superficial of Mrs. Trollope's many superficial volumes."³⁴ From the time when Colburn becomes Mrs. Trollope's sole publisher, though occasionally qualifying its admiration, the Court Journal nevertheless admires in terms like those used for Young Love: "Broad comedy floats like sunshine through the pages of this very clever novel."³⁵

Colburn took better care of Michael Armstrong than of any other of Mrs. Trollope's books which he published. Whether he thought he had more to lose than usual because Mrs. Trollope risked the comfortable audience of most of her books by expressing sympathy for a factory operative

³³Ibid., 25 December 1841, p.1733.

³⁴Ibid., 30 April 1842, p.324.

³⁵Ibid., 9 November 1844, p.736.

we can only guess; but in any case the monthly numbers lent themselves to running comment³⁶ in periodicals with which Colburn had influence. The Era, for instance, takes the attitude more of one of Mrs. Trollope's intimates than of a mere supporter; at the publication of the first number, it deliberately plays her off against Dickens:

This work is to be published monthly, after the manner of Nicholas Nickleby and the Pickwick papers, and to be completed in twenty parts. We doubt not Mrs. Trollope will treat her subject very cleverly, for talent in contradistinction to genius is, in our opinion, the characteristic of this lady's style.³⁷

Four times more in the course of the book's appearance the Era deems it worthy of comment; for our purposes we shall examine only the two notices which most strongly suggest the publisher's hand. At the sixth number the Era observes,

To those who are acquainted with the former portion of this work, the present number will prove

³⁶Not only do magazines comment upon both Michael Armstrong and Jessie Phillips as the two appear in monthly parts; but some periodicals notice the monthly numbers of other periodicals, so that the Age, for example, 8 December 1839, p.386, noticing the December issue of the New Monthly, comments on The Widow Married, then in its eighth installment in the magazine, "Mrs. Trollope's 'Widow Married' is more animated than heretofore, and is very full of promise of future fun."

³⁷Era, 3 March 1839, p.272. That Dickens did not care to be identified with Michael Armstrong in this fashion is plain from his correspondence with Laman Blanchard about Colburn's advertising the book as published uniform with Dickens'. See Pilgrim Letters, I, 506-7, also 640 for a reference in Dickens' Diary.

interesting. The characters of Sir Matthew Dowling and Mary Brotherton are still more forcibly developed, and we suspect the struggle between active, straight forward, unsuspecting benevolence, and the crooked cunning, unfeeling policy of the knight, will occupy many chapters of this highly-wrought story. We hope for the honour of human nature, the sufferings of the poor factory children are exaggerated, but we fear there is too much reason to believe that the picture is painted from life.³⁸

The notice of the following month has even more of Mrs. Trollope's own tone in the announcement of Michael Armstrong:

We cannot but believe that this clever work will prove of essential aid in the cause of humanity. The system of factory slavery and the moral degradation attendant on it, when thoroughly exposed, must rouse the energies of every heart not perfectly dead to the feelings of common charity. We think that even from the following extract [Mr. Bell lecturing Mary Brotherton] our readers will judge that Mrs. Trollope is perfectly mistress of her subject.³⁹

Fortunately at least for their identification, the puffs of Mrs. Trollope's books often take as blatant a form as those we have been examining; but the nature of her reputation was such that, though I may be assuming a subtlety in advertising greater than that of which Colburn is likely to have been capable, sometimes even unfavourable notice must have been valuable: once it became clear that Mrs. Trollope would not live down the charges of vulgarity her books regularly provoked, then even a notice attacking her normal excesses but over-

³⁸Ibid., 4 August 1839, p.536.

³⁹Ibid., 1 September 1839, p.584.

praising her virtues may well have served Colburn's purposes. To justify this claim for his subtlety at advertising, let me provide examples from the Weekly Dispatch, which tends to treat Mrs. Trollope in the mixed fashion I describe. In its first notice of Michael Armstrong, the Dispatch mingles fulsome praise with rather flippant criticism; the result of the mixture attracts attention but acknowledges the novelist's unavoidable exaggerations:

It is with great pleasure that we avail ourselves of every opportunity of bearing our humble testimony to the talents of Mrs. Trollope, who has now established herself as one of the very first female writers of the age, in this or in any other country; but, at the same time, we feel it an imperative duty to warn the public against her spleen, ill-humours, and abominable prejudices. When the lady is well-pleased by flattery, attentions, or prosperity, her writings are full of nature, truth, and ingenuity, all exhibited in bright sunshine and in healthy hues; but put her out of temper, and every thing is lurid or jaundiced....The design of Mrs. Trollope is to display the factory system in all its gradations, from the life of the richest mill-owner down to that of the humblest victim of low wages and hard labour. Her plan is excellent, and it is in good hands; but we trust she will avoid those abominable faults which we have pointed out in her former writings.⁴⁰

As in the Era's puffs of Michael Armstrong the reviewer undertakes the exposition of Mrs. Trollope's intentions; but if the extravagant praise of the notice were not tempered with criticism of one sort or another, it is

⁴⁰Weekly Dispatch, 17 March 1839, p.130.

hard to imagine anyone's giving it a second glance. Distorted as it is by its over-thorough endorsement of Mrs. Trollope's virtues, it must attack her a little to bear a semblance to genuine criticism.

In the Dispatch's final notice of Jessie Phillips we find a mixture of praise and blame like that devoted to Michael Armstrong:

Nobody can question Mrs. Trollope's good talents, although there are strong differences of opinion as to her application of them. Her taste to us is unquestionably bad, and her views are always more or less jaundiced with prejudice; still, however, she is a very clever writer, and if we sometimes dislike one of her works, we always lay it down with an acknowledgment that there is talent in it. The novel now before us shows the author's genius more than any of her recent productions. In substance there is very little in the tale, but the genius with which that little is wrought into importance is really surprising.⁴¹

Even when Mrs. Trollope passes, along with some of Colburn's other writers, into the care of Hurst and Blackett, the Dispatch maintains its mixed receptivity to her work; the reviewer of The Life and Adventures of a Clever Woman describes the book as,

one of the most tremendous satires upon the falsehood, hollowness, and innate dishonesty of gentility and "fashionable" life taken generally it is possible to imagine. It is almost frightful to see the deliberate rascality of the male and female worthies who appear in these pages so paraded.... Valuable, we think, as this exposition is, the base, black features of such a series of events exhibit the "fashionable circles" with their balls and routs,

⁴¹Ibid., 24 December 1843, p.622a

their driving, shopping, squandering and general trickery, in the most repulsive manner. We must suppose Mrs. Trollope to have some actual knowledge, besides experience, of the several phases of existence she here so mercilessly delineates, and this experience is of the most sad and dreary character imaginable.⁴²

Anyone led by this notice to read the book would have found it well removed from the pattern picture of the fashionable novel which the reviewer paints, complete with the suggestion that Mrs. Trollope has inside knowledge of such wicked goings-on.

As if it were not enough for us to have to disentangle genuine reviews of Mrs. Trollope's books from those affected by her publishers' concern for her sales, we have also to deal with the fact that unlike Dickens, her news value declined greatly. In the 'thirties, even reviews quite hostile to her might well consider her worth attacking--Fraser's, for example; by the 'forties, many merely stopped reviewing her, while others began taking her for granted and scarcely criticised what earlier they would have fiercely attacked. Several periodicals illustrate the pattern of neglect: the Spectator reviews five novels in the 'thirties, two in the 'forties; the Times notices four in the 'thirties, one in the 'forties; the Athenaeum, which follows Mrs. Trollope fairly carefully through Young Love (1844) then abandons

⁴²Ibid., 23 July 1854, p.470.

her until the appearance of Uncle Walter (1852).

The Examiner best exemplifies the paper which gradually comes to regard Mrs. Trollope with something akin to affection in spite of her faults, merely because it accustoms itself to her; but even at its most disrespectful, as in its notice of Paris and the Parisians, it finds both virtues and faults in her writing:

Mrs. Trollope will forfeit none of the reputation she acquired for her brilliant discoveries in America, by the publication of her remarks on Paris and the Parisians. The book is distinguished by the same ridiculous spirit of self-complacent conceit; is full of the same ignorant and foolish flippancy; has even more than Mrs. Trollope's usual share of vulgar mistakes and deliberate misrepresentations; and, we will add, is written with more than her usual cleverness.⁴³

The irony of this review recurs in later ones, but gradually the approval accompanying it becomes more important. The reviewer of Jessie Phillips, for instance, notes not only the muddle Mrs. Trollope makes of presenting any coherent view of the poor laws, but her humanity which is partly responsible for that muddle:

On some of these points, [of local administration] Mrs. Trollope's zeal may do good; but the gradual change and modification of her own opinions in relation to them, has had the reverse of a beneficial influence on the management of her story.... What a clever thinker might, at any rate, have made a thoughtful and striking picture in its relations to general society, she reduces to the mere vehicle of a common tale, tedious and long drawn out, of

⁴³Examiner, 10 January 1836, p.20.

weakness, wickedness, and seduction....Strong improbabilities are looked for by Mrs. Trollope's readers, and her wicked folks are remarkable for an amount of purposeless and motiveless wickedness unknown to even the most depraved experiences of this wicked planet. Thus, where a subject is forced and painful in itself, its failings are not likely to be the less apparent in Mrs. Trollope's hands.... There are some little points of domestic painting, here and there, which the reader will find excellent. He will not be at a loss to discover them. It is seldom incident to even the worst of Mrs. Trollope's stories, that the book is laid down unfinished.⁴⁴

In the review of Jessie Phillips, the reviewer's balance of criticism and compassion informs his comments with a finer critical judgment than most of Mrs. Trollope's contemporaries managed. Later in the 'forties, however, an access of warmth for her nearly spoils the Examiner's objectivity; if The Lottery of Marriage is as bad as the critic tells us, he ought to be able to dismiss it more curtly than by writing,

A piece of gingerbread in a fair has as much affinity to the thing it represents as these do-me-good sentimentalisms have to actual people; and it is really a curious proof of the tact and cleverness of Mrs. Trollope that out of so large an infusion of such materials she can concoct three readable volumes. For readable the book certainly is, absurd as it is. There is continual movement, the bores come and go quickly, and the objection to the entertainment is not fully felt till it is over....

The writing of the book is not better, or worse, than usual. The English is of that slipshod sort which may be tolerated in a private letter and is not intolerable in a novel; it has even racy turns and expressions here and there which make it lively

⁴⁴Ibid., 28 October 1843, pps.675-76.

and agreeable....On the whole we part from Mrs. Trollope, as usual, in very good humour; and if she should take it into her head to write a sequel to the adventures of the principal scamp in the Lottery of Marriage, explaining how it was that he rose to be "a very noted billiard-player and first-rate man of fashion in New Orleans,"--we promise her that we will read it.⁴⁵

This is being too easy on Mrs. Trollope, as indeed is the notice of The Old World and the New:

Mrs. Trollope will be amusing. If you cannot laugh at her characters, she is content that you should laugh at herself. She was always extravagant, as Garrick used to say of Kitty Clive (to Horace Walpole's infinite disgust) "she outdoes her former outdoings" in that respect. But abuse her books as we will, and knowing perfectly to what lengths they carry us in the way of ridiculous absurdity, we find it less difficult to read them than to lay them down. They have easiness of manner as well as breadth of humour, contain often fresh and spirited intimations of character, and mix up very just views with very foolish ones in regard to matters of social life.⁴⁶

Even the treatment of The Old World and the New is a disinterested examination, worthy of Anthony himself, in comparison to the Examiner's effusion (not a formal notice, merely a gossip) on the appearance of Mrs. Trollope's last novel:

Mrs. Trollope, too, selects the seaside season to gather her old troops of readers around her. The story of Clara Holmwood and her city fortune, of the unfortunate Victor and the fortunate Henry, and of M. Roche's great mining concern, will be found neatly woven with bright threads into a web

⁴⁵Ibid., 2 June 1849, p.341.

⁴⁶Ibid., 20 October 1849, pps.661-62.

of mystery by Mrs. Trollope, in her new novel called Fashionable Life, or Paris and London. The book has its writer's usual faults as well as merits, and among the latter the invaluable one (for a story teller) of being thoroughly readable.⁴⁷

The pattern which we have been noticing--that critical attention paid to Mrs. Trollope either flags or takes on an appearance rather of recognition than of reaction increasingly in the 'forties after Jessie Phillips--has ~~has~~ much to do with Mrs. Trollope's abandonment of serious social themes; so long as she concerns herself with issues of more than merely personal importance, at least she can provoke some of the weightier journals into noticing her books. I insist on the some because, in contrast to Dickens, or even to lesser writers like Bulwer or Disraeli, Mrs. Trollope fails to arouse several of the important reviews: the Quarterly notices only The Domestic Manners of the Americans, The Refugee in America, Belgium and Western Germany, and Vienna and the Austrians, though the reviewer of Vienna does show acquaintance with The Vicar of Wrexhill. The Edinburgh treats only The Domestic Manners of the Americans; and the British and Foreign Review deigns to treat Vienna and the Austrians and Michael Armstrong, but spends the

⁴⁷Ibid., 16 August 1856, p.518. Though I choose to use this notice as an example of growing acceptance of Mrs. Trollope, it is worth remembering Colburn's inclusion of the Examiner among the papers he could influence (see p. 256 above); Hurst and Blackett may have inherited the influence.

review devoted to the latter and Jack Sheppard inveighing against the condition of a book trade which provides such books.

Before turning to the content of the many reviews devoted to Mrs. Trollope we must note one amusing inconsistency in the way in which critics in the periodicals treated her. As she progressed from book to book, hostile reviewers displayed a curiously inconstant attitude toward her earlier productions. Several periodicals which on the whole found her first book a clever enough travel book upon its original publication, in retrospect found it increasingly vulgar; such a periodical is the Monthly Review, which though deploring the tendency of The Domestic Manners of the Americans to exacerbate relations between England and America nevertheless at first found kind words to say for Mrs. Trollope:

It must be everywhere admitted, that her observations uniformly indicate a strong, active, well informed mind, endowed with good sense, and no ordinary firmness. Her style is lively, elegant, and sometimes even poetically beautiful. This is the first production we have seen from her hands, but we have no hesitation in expressing our opinion, that it must place her name among those of the most eminent female writers in our language.⁴⁸

A notice of Isaac Fidler's Observations on Professions, Literature, Manners and Emigration in the United States the following year suggests a certain disenchantment with

⁴⁸Monthly Review, April 1832, p.565.

the eminent female writer:

Mrs. Trollope has no great reason to be proud of such disciples as the Rev. Isaac Fidler; and, indeed, it is a subject of great congratulation, that an example so unworthy of her country as that which Mrs. Trollope has afforded, in her observations on America, finds admirers only in the dull herd of narrow and prejudiced minds.⁴⁹

A flattering review of C.D. Arfwedson's The United States and Canada contrasts his book with Mrs. Trollope's, "It steers clear of the aristocracy of Captain Hall, the flippancies and sneers of Mrs. Trollope, and the narrow-mindedness of a host of other travellers";⁵⁰ but the full alteration in the opinion of the Monthly Review becomes clear only in its review of Vienna and the Austrians:

The writer of [Vienna and the Austrians], the readers of the Monthly Review are aware, is clever; but still more distinguished by her shallowness, vulgarity, and measureless distortions. Very generally, the talent we have given her credit for, amounts merely to pertness and petulance. But the shape in which this native and cherished turn becomes most offensive, is when she--who is totally destitute of all severe training and study; who is ignorant of the philosophy of mind and the great general principles which regulate the phases of society, either in its larger or more circumscribed forms; who is incapable, not only from habit and the obliquity of her modes of thinking, but from what would seem a malformation of intellect, of seeing beyond the surface of things, or of judging

⁴⁹Ibid., June 1833, p.317. Such an admirer was Sydney Smith, who wrote to Lord Holland about The Refugee in America, 3 December 1832, "I have read with great amusement Mrs. Trollope's Réchauffée on American Manners. The painting is admirable--the Story of the Novel I did not attend to--I really cannot see why Jonathan is not to be quizzed if he is ridiculous." Letters, ed. Nowell C. Smith (Oxford, 1953), II, 569.

⁵⁰Monthly Review, January 1835, p.13.

of a community according to any accepted rules of generalization,--when she, with all the rashness of a fatuous person, takes upon herself to talk of nations with which she can have but the limited acquaintance which a blue stocking who inhabits a third floor can only have obtained in the course of a few months in the society of her fellow-lodgers, or from the questionable authorities that frequent a third-rate hotel....Were it worth while to attempt to measure this lady's bigotry, credulity, and fanaticism, perhaps the best way would be to commence with her in America, and say she was then a gross calumniator, but that ever since her progress in misrepresentation has been at a rate equal to what one would expect from an incurable that could not be stationary, till at last we have her here in Austria, in Vienna, talking more at random and more outrageously than ever.⁵¹

I quote the diatribe at such length partly because it typifies one sort of hardening reaction toward Mrs. Trollope: had she later abandoned the political attitude of The Domestic Manners of the Americans as a whim of the moment, then the Monthly Review might have continued to stress her poetic style; but as in fact she maintains, rather exaggerates, that political stance as she keeps on writing, then the reviewer for this periodical, like those of others,⁵² must find her pernicious. It is this

⁵¹Ibid., March 1838, pps.439-440. The extent to which this notice is gratuitous abuse, rather than sound criticism, may easily be discerned by comparing it with those in the Literary Gazette and the British and Foreign Review, cited below, pps. 277-78.

⁵²The Athenaeum, for example, after much adverse criticism nevertheless warily honours Mrs. Trollope in its review of The Domestic Manners of the Americans, 31 March 1832, p.206: "It has pained us much to speak as we have done, of the work of one so clever and sagacious, and who can handle the pen in a way so graceful and easy. We have seldom met with so much talent united to such

very political reaction to Mrs. Trollope's books to which we shall turn our attention once we have examined a change in a periodical's reactions quite the converse of the change we have seen in the Monthly Review.

Some periodicals tend to find whichever of Mrs. Trollope's books they have presently under examination greatly inferior to past work which at the moment of publication they found reprehensible; the Spectator, for example, alters its opinion of The Vicar of Wrexhill in order to criticize One Fault the more strongly; in its review of the earlier novel, the Spectator notes,

sad prejudice." By the time the reviewer handles Vienna and the Austrians, he has become more anxious to scotch Mrs. Trollope, 17 February 1838, p.113: "The Americans can afford to laugh with, or at, their calumniator, in the full consciousness that no living soul thinks the worse of them for her pert and extravagant caricatures." Though doubtful that Mrs. Trollope saw a representative sample of American society (a common criticism), Fraser's sums up its notice of her first book temperately, April 1832, p.337: "Her work, we repeat, is singularly acute and amusing. We think she might have left out all the fine writing about Niagara, and the wonderful feelings she experienced when getting drenched with the spray there; and in general have blotted every passage where any thing but a shrewd and satirical observation of character was concerned." This fine judgment gives way to far more abuse in the notice of Paris and the Parisians, February 1836, p.210: "She was first brought into notice by a book about America, at which the British public, in despite of their better feelings, were something amused, because it pandered to some unworthy prejudices which we cannot as yet quite help entertaining towards our transatlantic brethren. It was overmuch belauded by some people, but surely nothing could be more manifestly unjust than her strictures upon the Americans generally, nothing more audacious than her pretending to draw general conclusions from the experience she enjoyed and the opportunities that were afforded to her."

Mrs. Trollope cannot write a book without libelling and caricaturing some class or other. The present subjects of her trading spite are that section of the Church of England called the Evangelicals: but the Vicar of Wrexhill,⁵³ if not the worst, is the dullest of her efforts.

But in the notice of One Fault, the reviewer takes a far more complimentary view of the earlier book:

In this novel we do not in the least recognize the author of the Vicar of Wrexhill and The Widow Barnaby. In those clever works Mrs. Trollope has exhibited a vigorous and somewhat masculine mind, shrewd observation of life, a strong sense of the ridiculous in character and manners, and a turn for keen and humorous though rather coarse satire.⁵⁴

In such an alteration of opinion we detect two factors working upon the reviewer (always assuming him to be the same reviewer and serious enough about his work to intend maintaining a consistent outlook): in reaction to Mrs. Trollope he is willing to employ anything that lies to hand, even an opinion which he did not hold of one of her earlier books; and--the instance of The Vicar of Wrexhill is a happy one for this conjecture, as it ran to at least four English editions--public acceptance of the novel may have suggested that he reconsider his earlier opinion. Like the affectionate notices of Mrs. Trollope's books in the Examiner of the late 'forties and the 'fifties, the critic's changed opinion toward Mrs. Trollope's older books marks her acceptance.

⁵³Spectator, 16 September 1837, p.881.

⁵⁴Ibid., 30 November 1839, p.1138.

Such acceptance was hard won, and as I suggest above, by the time it came, Mrs. Trollope had abandoned direct attack on conditions in her society. Before she permitted her readers to subside into occasionally amused apathy, however, she stirred them into frequent indignation, over her politics, her religious attitudes, her hack writing, her unfemininity, her vulgarity. This reaction we shall now examine.

When, writing to his brother of the success of Paris and the Parisians,⁵⁵ Anthony includes the comment that the book has scarcely been noticed by Mrs. Trollope's own party, he identifies her with the Tories as indeed most of her contemporaries do.⁵⁶ Her criticisms of the Americans, for them, are quite as much attacks upon democratic reformers in England as reflections of Mrs. Trollope's own American experience; similarly her praise of the Prussian government in Belgium and Western Germany, her disdain for Parisian mobs in Paris and the Parisians, and her adulation of Metternich and Austrian paternalism in Vienna and the Austrians are all defiantly conservative attitudes: all provoke political response from her reviewers.

⁵⁵See ~~pp.~~²⁴⁷⁻⁸ above.

⁵⁶Compare Mrs. Browning's note to Miss Mitford describing Robert's reluctance to meet "the author of certain books directed against liberal institutions and Victor Hugo's poetry." E.B. Browning, Letters, ed. F.C. Kenyon (London, 1897), I, 476.

The Edinburgh Review takes Mrs. Trollope's first book as a direct attack on the reforms before parliament at the moment of the book's publication:

Returned to Harrow, her preface of March 1832 is an express advertisement against the Reform Bill. Four-and-thirty chapters of American scandal are dished up with the immediate purpose of contrasting the graceful virtues of a boroughmonger with the profligate vulgarity of a ten pound franchise....If she uncovers the nakedness of our Transatlantic children, it is out of pure alarm for the English Constitution....The misery of squatters and the servant-talk of Cincinnati, are the appropriate materials for establishing the advantages of a government by the few over a government by the many. The history of quackery has nothing more preposterous than the scheme of passing off a saucy discontented journal as 'interesting details,' exhibiting the 'influence which the political system of the country has produced on the principles, tastes, and manners of its domestic life.'⁵⁷

Free the Edinburgh of its opprobrium and Mrs. Trollope would have little to complain of in its analysis of her intentions. More commonly periodicals choose to attack her principles less directly than the reviewer in the Edinburgh; after picturing America as a cradle of freedom, the critic in the Monthly Repository places Mrs. Trollope in a whole class of detractors from that freedom:

It has unfortunately chanced that, with a few exceptions, the descriptions of the United States have been those of persons either of small intellect, and incapable, with their best efforts, of judging

⁵⁷Edinburgh Review, July 1832, p.496.

between that which is essential and that which is accidental, as instance Basil Hall; or worse, those whose prejudices make their principles, and whose long-formed habits of subserviency make them fancy servility refinement, and its absence coarseness:⁵⁸ and of this latter class is the author before us.

With the directness of the Edinburgh reviewer quoted above, Tait's Edinburgh Magazine denounces Mrs. Trollope's stance as an inconsequential female observer as mere cover for her political purposes in Paris and the Parisians:

With a file of Galignani, a few other French papers, and the contemporary and scandalous and fashionable chronicles, she could have executed her task much more comfortably, and, consequently, far better for the public, at her own fireside. French novels and dramas could have been obtained from every library, and twaddle Carlism is not ill to find; while Ultra-Toryism is a native and spontaneous growth. With what pretty prudery Mrs. Trollope disclaims politics, while her entire work is a series of second-hand representations and commonplace remarks about Paris, garnished with nicknames to O'Connell, and claptraps for the dowager division of the High Churchmen and Tories of England.⁵⁹

The Weekly Dispatch deploras Mrs. Trollope's handling of the issue of slavery in Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw; but some of the reviewer's remarks suggest that it is as much her politics as her story which he finds offensive:

In this work...Mrs. Trollope has again displayed her rancorous prejudices against republican America. True it is, that the book is chiefly directed against

⁵⁸Monthly Repository, June 1832, p.402.

⁵⁹Tait's Edinburgh Magazine, March 1836, p.174.

that system of black slavery which continues to disgrace some of the States of the Union, and that it is dedicated to those States in which slavery does not exist; but it contains too many bitter satires against Americans in general, to leave a doubt as to the design of this inveterate female Tory.⁶⁰

While many of the reviewers who find Mrs. Trollope's politics intolerable merely abuse her, the critic of the Examiner not only criticizes her bias in The Vicar of Wrexhill but explains why he deploras it in a reasoned review of the book:

The most difficult task that a satirist can take in hand is the ridicule and exposure of religious pretenders or fanatics. The instrument must be very dextrously applied that lays bare their errors or hypocrisy without exposing the operator to the imputation of wanting that very charity the absence of which he so strenuously condemns in others. Above all the writer should be fair-dealing and unprejudiced.

That Mrs. Trollope is an unprejudiced person no one, we apprehend, imagines within the bounds of probability. In every page of every book she has written is stamped strong evidence of the coarsest party feelings, thrust obtrusively upon the reader when the introduction of such matter can in no way serve the purposes of what she has in hand, and repeated again and again with a doggedness and virulence which Mrs. Trollope, in denouncing prejudices not her own, would be the first to designate as the blindest and most besotted bigotry.⁶¹

This sort of sensitivity not merely to polemic but to its abuse sets the Examiner's reviews of Mrs. Trollope's earlier books well above the average; and such sensi-

⁶⁰Weekly Dispatch, 10 July 1836, p.258.

⁶¹Examiner, 1 October 1837, p.628.

tivity, especially as it concerns the religious issue of The Vicar of Wrexhill in addition to the politics of most of Mrs. Trollope's books published in the thirties, is extraordinary. Far more common is the amused perception with which the Literary Gazette treats the politics of Vienna and the Austrians:

Whether called an attachment to conservatism, legitimacy, or aristocracy, her bias seems to have been strengthened by an introduction through our ambassador, Sir Frederic Lamb, to Prince Metternich, and thence to the highest circles of Vienna. Her account of this is, accordingly, sufficiently rose-coloured; but it is not often that we have tourists with opportunities for making any observations whatever on this class of persons. Living for a season among them, we find much to interest us in Mrs. Trollope's descriptions; and they are not the less amusing for a certain assumption of dignity in our countrywoman, from having kept such fine and illustrious company.⁶²

We can see both the admirable qualities and the weaknesses of the Literary Gazette's detachment when we compare its review with the damning one given Vienna and the Austrians by the British and Foreign Review; whereas the Literary Gazette can view the book disinterestedly, the British and Foreign Review considers its political effect reprehensible:

Disqualified by her ignorance of the language of the country from bringing home a correct account of the customs and conditions of its people--disqualified by the glare of the contrast between her wonted obscurity and the splendour of the Austrian

⁶²Literary Gazette, 3 March 1838, p.131.

court from judging fairly of the persons and society about her--disqualified above all by her extreme credulity, and by her evident ignorance of the first rudiments of the present state of the Austrian empire, whose court she saw, and whose interested ruler she believed--Mrs. Trollope has been led by her vanity and her pretensions to speak of subjects which no one could discuss successfully without the greatest candour and the best information. Her sources for statistical and historical facts were the drawing-room hints and ex parte statements of the official circle, least inclined to communicate them to strangers. Her means of judging of parties and elements in society which must have been wholly new to her, appear to have been confined to a large provision of narrow party spirit obviously intended for home consumption; and her end seems to have been accomplished when she had fawned upon her Vienna patrons through the space of a winter, and received the sum which publishers are ready to bestow on ladies who keep a diary of court-scandal, and report the conversations which they have been (perhaps not unintentionally) allowed to listen to.⁶³

If the Literary Gazette treats Vienna and the Austrians with too exclusive an attention to its presentation of Mrs. Trollope's reactions to the Austrian great, the British and Foreign Review in its turn may over-stress the book's importance as a part of contemporary politics; but though the first review strikes the twentieth century reader as the more pertinent in its concern with what Mrs. Trollope does present in the book, the second helps us to understand just how much she does not. The comment in the Literary Gazette we could have made for ourselves; the equally telling one of the British and Foreign Review, even if it reveals something of the special-

⁶³British and Foreign Review, April 1838, p.661.

ist's interest in defending his preserve, perhaps we needed to obtain from Mrs. Trollope's contemporaries. The very bias obvious in the British and Foreign Review's notice alerts the reviewer to Mrs. Trollope's disabilities for writing any travel book to be valued as reporting of fact.

Adverse comment need not be so useful as that of the British and Foreign Review; in its notice of The Laurringtons, the Critic explains Mrs. Trollope's politics without attending to her actual accomplishments and so falls into both under- and over-estimating her. Its reviewer declares that,

She is one of those unscrupulous personages but too abundant in our literature, who are not ashamed to prostitute their pens to the vilest purposes of the petty passing party politics of the time, and to carry into books that should aim at something more than a momentary life, the despicable squabble, and disgusting misrepresentations which, if ever endurable, should be at least limited to the ephemeral columns of a newspaper.⁶⁴

Anyone who had followed Mrs. Trollope at all carefully (the Examiner's reviewer, for instance) would have realized that though she may often have written from a most confused idea of lessening the cruelties of her world, she neither adhered rigidly to her party's dictates nor wrote that to which she did not subscribe; but the Cri-

⁶⁴Critic, January 1844, p.63.

tic's reviewer, having accused her of prostituting herself, goes on to credit her with creation of characters of a permanence generally beyond her powers:

Her pictures are coarsely painted, but they are graphic; her characters are no unsubstantial creatures of the fancy but veritable flesh and blood, with distinct outlines, that print themselves upon the reader's mind and live and move and have their being, and often come back upon the memory like personages whom in some past time we have seen and known.⁶⁵

If this was so, the reviewer was gifted with a mind not only susceptible to facile impression but populated with singularly lifeless characters.

Indeed we may feel that reviewers who treat Mrs. Trollope's politics hostilely may judge her books more soundly than those who find her a sympathetic spirit. The reviewer of The Three Cousins in Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine, a radical periodical, under the impression that Mrs. Trollope points her barbs toward her own party in the book (her malice is seldom so single-edged as critics imagine) welcomes quite a mediocre novel in terms of excessive warmth; the book is, he writes, a work abounding in the portrayal of character with that subtlety of satire for which the authoress is so celebrated. The story is conducted in a very artistic manner, and the characters developed by a series of situations bespeaking the excellent

⁶⁵Ibid., January 1844, p.63.

tact and experience of the celebrated writer. It is, too, more just and liberal in its tone: acknowledging in those circles and amongst those politicians the lady has been wont to uphold as patterns of excellence, a gentle-mannered but worldly bishop, a malignant baronet, a ruffianly heir expectant, a heartless lady of fashion, and sundry other ornaments of the better classes.⁶⁶

This is clumsy sycophancy, nearly as odious as the Era's trumpetings, all because the reviewer believes Mrs. Trollope to have inclined toward his beliefs; we are better off with the harshness of the Edinburgh or the British and Foreign Review, which, if touched by political bias, none the less convey some idea of Mrs. Trollope's actual ability; and we are best served by the Examiner's more disinterested criticism. Politics offer Mrs. Trollope's critics an interesting field for comment and almost as much opportunity to display their own limits as religion, in handling which she exposes herself to even more severe accusations than her political attitude provokes.

Because Mrs. Trollope's reviewers for the most part write for an immediate audience, with little concern for the improbable attention of posterity, they tend to group her literary sins under a few closely related headings satisfactory as aids to administering abuse, less helpful for critical illumination of her work. We have

⁶⁶ Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine, June 1847, p.565.

examined her political sins; her religious offenses, as many of her reviewers unconsciously notice in lumping the two together, are closely related. In spite of, or perhaps because of, her exposure to her father's Church of England priesthood, for Mrs. Trollope religion, like much of politics, is a matter of automatic acceptance of the done thing, the way of behaving normal to her ancestors; indeed we ought to expect such an attitude from a lady who kept a liveried footman long after her husband's dwindling income made such an expenditure a luxury. With this acceptance of conservative, undemonstrative Church of England worship goes an intolerance of religion which protests too much, of religion which founds itself on any base other than traditional English practice, of any religion other than her own; but perversely, in addition to intolerance, Mrs. Trollope wears an attitude, most clearly expressed perhaps in Belgium and Western Germany, that she is sophisticated enough to enjoy the show of other people's religion. We need little wonder that she provokes criticism.

Though critics of Mrs. Trollope's religious attitudes tend to react especially to the novels in which she treats of religious matters at greatest length--The Abbess, The Vicar of Wrexhill, and Father Eustace--several other of her books arouse response as well. The Gentle-

man's Magazine, for instance, finds irreverence the greatest fault of The Refugee in America:

The most prominent and obtrusive fault, is the derision continually and wantonly flung upon anything approaching to religion. Events are framed, characters introduced, dialogues constructed, evidently to fulfil this sole and unworthy purpose. Mrs. Trollope, with all her shrewdness, either did not or would not see, that among those sects and individuals against whom she is so acrimonious, there is much that is good, much that is high-minded, much that is noble, and that there are many "whose doctrine and whose life coincident" would put to shame more than a few eminent divines of the old world.⁶⁷

The coincidence that Mrs. Trollope uses an American minister as one of the villains in her novel as well as mocking sober dissent in the person of Miss Duncomb apparently convinces her critic that the book serves as an anti-dissenting tract.

The Abbess, a novel feebly deriving from the gothic tradition which indeed contained anti-Catholic elements, struck the reviewer in the Atlas as a partisan attack on Catholicism worthy of repudiation:

The chief object is to cast odium on the Catholic religion; but in effecting this design, the authoress has committed the unconscious error of making her chief Protestant character one of the most ardent hypocrites that ever existed....How the Protestant faith can be honoured in the person of a base and false woman remains to be explained; and

⁶⁷Gentleman's Magazine, November 1832, p.443.

how any faith can be hurt by a sorry romance is more than we can divine.⁶⁸

The lack of concern Mrs. Trollope shows for the abbess' hypocrisy suggests not so much partisan feeling for the Church of England or against Catholicism as the mere manipulation of counters in a literary game; but she lives in an age when easy unconcern is offensive to more deeply involved believers. It is exactly her unconcern which arouses the Monthly Review in its notice of Belgium and Western Germany:

We do not say to what communion she belongs, although our authoress lets us know, her's [sic] is not that of the Roman Catholic. But this we venture to assert, that no member of that communion, whose opinion is worth consulting, would ever, when speaking of the all important subject of religion, much less when referring to its most solemn ordinances, dwell entirely and merely, in swelling and high-sounding phrases, labouriously [sic] culled from a vocabulary, about architecture, dresses, and faces. [The reviewer quotes a description of a mass in Cologne] ...But she should know, that laxity is not liberality, and neither Catholic nor Protestant are complimented by approbation founded upon superficial grounds, nor by one who loses sight so far of the creed, she professes to believe in, as does Mrs. Trollope.⁶⁹

If Mrs. Trollope's unconcern offends some readers, the violent partisanship of a novel like The Vicar of Wrexhill provokes even more. The Dublin Review treats

⁶⁸Atlas, 16 June 1833, p.388.

⁶⁹Monthly Review, August 1834, p.469.

The Abbess and The Vicar of Wrexhill as variations upon a theme of intolerance:

There is perhaps no writer of the day so universally obnoxious as Mrs. Trollope; nor can this be wondered at;--she has loaded with the most virulent abuse all those whose creed or politics have incurred her displeasure; while the conservative and high church party are, we suspect, a little ashamed of her warm advocacy....

...The novel in which she directed her whole fire against the Catholics, was in the highest degree absurd; it was not only malignant, but it had a more fatal fault, from which we are bound to acknowledge Mrs. Trollope's novels to be generally free--it was dull, and has fallen, in consequence, into speedy oblivion. The Vicar of Wrexhill has longer occupied the attention of the public: a satire against so large a party in the church of England, was newer than a twenty-times told tale about monks and convents; and, to do Mrs. Trollope credit, nothing that malice could give was wanting to its poignancy.⁷⁰

There is a greater difference between the literarily derivative quality of Mrs. Trollope's second novel and the direct attack upon evangelicism of The Vicar of Wrexhill than the Dublin Review chooses to notice; but the reviewer finds malice a "newer" charge to prefer against both books than the less spectacular observation that ordinarily Mrs. Trollope reacts to the superficial elements of religion. The same periodical later considers A Visit to Italy somewhat more sensibly; we need not agree that treating religion superficially is necessarily

⁷⁰Dublin Review, August 1839, pps.244,245. U.C.B.
 Dublin Review, 1839, 244-245.

blameworthy in order to understand something of the feeling behind such a comment as,

When we find her carrying her light and supercilious observations into more sacred ground, and talking of the religion which forms our happiness, at once with ignorance and with flippancy, we must not allow ourselves the pleasure of being lenient, but must speak out plain.⁷¹

In spite of the cliché which the reviewer ends by mouthing, we can see that Mrs. Trollope's religious insensitivity makes her books painful to more readers than those whose interests are immediately concerned in her attacks on Catholicism or evangelicism; the lack of charity which the Examiner criticizes in its notice of The Vicar of Wrexhill troubles the Times' reviewer of the same book:

It is hard to say what moral end has been proposed or can be answered by the publication of this book. That Mrs. Trollope in her zeal for the tenets of high church Protestantism, should be anxious to show that her form of religion is superior to that of any other sect, is only a laudable enthusiasm upon the lady's part, who has both a good cause to advocate and no ordinary talent to back her cause. But it is bad to exaggerate so absurdly, and to be so outrageously cruel in her treatment of her adversary; thank God, the church has no need to be benefitted tali auxilio, and we fear that it would be seriously injured were there any idea in the country that the ingenious Mrs. Trollope was an authorized high church champion, and that the church's opinion of the Evangelical party was such as is expressed in these three clever volumes of the Vicar of Wrexhill.

⁷¹Ibid., February 1843, p.262; N.P.S. Wiseman wrote this review, which also treated American Notes.

...A Methodist, however gloomy, might read Graves's book [The Spiritual Quixote] and profit by it; he will only grow angry at Mrs. Trollope's, where his bigotry is met by greater bigotry on her side, and his party is so coarsely and cruelly belied. Mrs. Trollope has a good deal of Queen Elizabeth's Protestantism, who showed her faith by roasting Anabaptists and Socinians; our authoress worships God in her way, by cutting a Methodist into small pieces, or impaling a writhing Evangelist.⁷²

The tendency to exaggeration, not so much in characterization as in force of opinion, which Anthony admits as his mother's great weakness, seems in notices like this of the Times to cost Mrs. Trollope some support that a less vehement partisan might have attracted.

Among the reviewers of many of her books Mrs. Trollope finds critics who sympathize with her point of view without endorsing the strength with which she expresses it. Such a critic is the Literary Gazette's reviewer of The Vicar of Wrexhill, who writes,

This is certainly the best novel that Mrs. Trollope has produced, as regards dramatic execution or development of character....We firmly believe

⁷²Times, 25 October 1837, p.2. In its notice of the novel the Monthly Review begins with something of the Times' disdain for Mrs. Trollope's intolerance, but it soon passes on to more damning criticism, November 1837, p.316: "We have still a graver charge to advance against this pure creation of a distempered imagination, which is, that sentiments both in spirit and expression abound in it which are grossly irreverent, even blasphemous....We hold Mrs. Trollope as doubly guilty, being not only the gratuitous rehearser of language altogether unwarrantable, but the creator of the occasion on which it was used. The recklessness with which she makes use of the most sacred name, and of the most solemn phrases of Scripture, is in itself a fearful experiment to make in a novel which is meant to entertain the young."

that the exaggerating and self-righteous saint does more harm to the cause of religion than even the infidel. The falsehood and coldness of disbelief must, sooner or later, find their own insufficiency; but the small vanities, shrouded under the sweeping condemnation of others; the horror wasted on trifles, which should be kept for graver offence; and the severity so contrary to the Gospel,--all these are so calculated to excite disgust and ridicule, that religion is confounded with, and injured by, those who indeed take its name in vain. Mrs. Trollope has drawn a picture of such a state, with much force and point--our only objection is, that there are some portions too coarsely coloured.⁷³

Like the Literary Gazette, the Athenaeum grudgingly admits sympathy with some of Mrs. Trollope's religious pronouncements;⁷⁴ but in its notice of Vienna and the Austrians it seizes upon an anti-semitic statement and decries Mrs. Trollope's prejudices:

Whatever Mrs. Trollope may think, we can assure her that the temper of the present times will reject with contempt these appeals to intolerance. To the better spirits even of her own faith and party she will be thought in her social details to have exhibited the aristocratic airs of the lady's maid; and in her political dogmatism to have outstripped the extravagance of provincial journalism. For the rest, 'Vienna and the Austrians' differs but little in merit or defect from the previous productions of the author, and to such readers as are satisfied with these, we may safely recommend their successor.⁷⁵

⁷³Literary Gazette, 16 September 1837, p.596.

⁷⁴Athenaeum, 23 September 1837, p.708: "But, as such a book as 'The Vicar of Wrexhill' has come before us for judgment, we are as much bound to declare our belief that it is true in its broad outline, as to protest against the class to which it belongs, and the taste with which it is executed."

⁷⁵Ibid., 24 February 1838, p.140. The snide attack on Mrs. Trollope's gentility in this notice forms part

In fact the Athenaeum rates its time too highly: Mrs. Trollope fairly reflects unthinking middle class prejudice, above all else in her religious beliefs; the publication of Vienna and the Austrians, 26 February 1838, in the same month as the eleventh number of Oliver Twist, may serve to remind us that in anti-semitism as in reaction to American democracy and to continental forms of religion, Mrs. Trollope shares with Dickens some of the common attitudes of the social climate the two inhabit. It is unfortunate that Mrs. Trollope did not continue writing into the 'sixties, if only because it would be interesting to see if like Dickens in Our Mutual Friend she would one day take pains to repair her offence against the Jews.

No sooner does the reviewer of A Romance of Vienna for the Athenaeum notice that Mrs. Trollope permits herself the luxury of Jewish villainy in the book than he launches an even more virulent attack on her than Vienna and the Austrians provoked:

Though its pages may not contain any scenes so objectionable as some in the 'Vicar,' they are throughout pervaded by the characteristic offences of that work--the same malicious and busy appeal to every narrow and bad prejudice. Having demolished, as she

of the Athenaeum's general attitude toward Mrs. Trollope discussed below, pps. 297-99 .

imagines, Dissent in her 'Domestic Manners of the Americans,' and Catholicism, in her 'Paris and the Parisians,' and Calvinistic Protestantism in her 'Vicar' aforesaid--Mrs. Trollope here sets herself to show up Judaism in Austria. An honest, a befitting vocation this, for an English gentlewoman!-- a trade for which materials can never be wanting. We are the less inclined to mitigate the strength and earnestness of our former protest against such works, from a fear that there is, just now, some danger of their style being largely and successfully introduced into our fictions. With others, it may have been fallen into unconsciously, and is persisted in, out of habit, rather than malice prepense; whereas with Mrs. Trollope, it is a deliberate and settled purpose.⁷⁶

Without intending wholly to exonerate Mrs. Trollope from the penalties to which her prejudices do expose her, I would say that the Athenaeum's reviewer judges her too harshly: the magazine's own acquiescence in the burden of The Vicar of Wrexhill shows just how easy it was, in the eighteen-thirties and 'forties to get caught up in religious questions on one side or another. The most extraordinary examples of the same contagion of religious bias occur in connection with Mrs. Trollope's Father Eustace.

The Literary Gazette, attributing to the book "a strong air of versimilitude," and placing it neither among Mrs. Trollope's best nor among her worst productions, concludes its notice very oddly:

⁷⁶Ibid., 1 September 1838, p.618.

It is, however, curious enough that, since the publication of this work, the Worcester Herald and two foreign journals have contained extraordinary revelations of a kind to justify the attack on Jesuitry. The book could not have a more genuine and unpremeditated puff.⁷⁷

Even stranger is the review of the Atlas, which though dubious of the vehicle in which Mrs. Trollope conveys her message, nevertheless receives that message so seriously as to remark,

The work will awaken eager curiosity in certain circles. It will strike people with dismay--it will confirm the creed of some--and disturb the opinions of others. It will help make Jesuitism more unpopular than ever; and in that way, perhaps, justify the excesses to which we have taken objection. There is no denial to be given to the broad impeachment, and it is this which will sink into the general mind, and leave a deep and permanent impression behind.⁷⁸

Only the defections of Newman and others to the Roman Catholic church in the year before Father Eustace ap-

⁷⁷Literary Gazette, 19 December 1846, p.1071.

⁷⁸Atlas, 12 December 1846, p.802. The paper is no less receptive to The Vicar of Wrexhill, disappointed only that Mrs. Trollope thrashes the evangelists insufficiently, 17 September 1837, p.601: "Mrs. Trollope has taken the evangelists in hand and given them what punishment she could with her peculiar rod. We wish so ill...to this class of persons, and are so firmly persuaded of the beneficial effects of ridicule in cooling a distemper which other applications have served rather to inflame, that we must rejoice to see them in the keeping of anyone who has a mind to try this remedy and the power to lay it on. It will readily be understood from what we have said above, that we are not of opinion that the authoress of this novel is the sort of writer best able to work the cure...."

peared could give such credence to either Mrs. Trollope's book or contemporary accounts of Jesuitry; and indeed we must suspect Mrs. Trollope to have written in the confidence that the issue was still alive enough to sell her book. It is unlikely that any thinking person in the twentieth century would allow such a disturbing effect upon a reader to be a possible result of acquaintance with Father Eustace.

The best antidote for the credulity of the reviewers for the Literary Gazette and for the Atlas is the skepticism of the Critic's reviewer, who remarks,

Behold the Female Quixotte of the nineteenth century once again in her vocation, tilting at the giants and dragons that go up and down upon the earth, seeking whom they may devour; and, it must be confessed, like the famous Don, not unfrequently falling foul of a windmill or a flock of sheep. This present enterprise is directed against that imaginary monster, the Jesuit--that incarnation of Belial, as a class of fiction-mongers in France and England love to paint him; a beau ideal of the union of the profoundest wisdom with the most accomplished manners and unbounded wickedness. To write up to this ideal is Mrs. Trollope's endeavour in Father Eustace; of course with the benevolent intention thereby to write down the professors of the faith he so zealously promulgates. They who remember with what unction this authoress assailed the Evangelical party in a similar novel--how she revelled in her spites--how heartily she wielded her unsparing satire--with what vigour she spat about her venom at those who differed from her particular notions of orthodoxy--will readily understand the gout with which she advances to the other Doxy that differs also from her own, and how she throws herself body and soul into the work of

exaggeration and misrepresentation, and all the poisoned weapons which she so unscrupulously employs when her purpose is to destroy a reputation.⁷⁹

Father Eustace deserves the lightness with which the Critic dismisses it; but such is the complexion of the time that in the act of writing off the novel as a fantasy, so far as any serious purpose goes, the reviewer becomes quite fierce. Even a book as late as Uncle Walter (1852) arouses some antagonism because of its satire on church dignitaries; the Literary Gazette unfairly remarks of it,

This novel is written with Mrs. Trollope's usual ability but with more than her usual coarseness and bad taste....The Rev. Henry Harrington...affords scope for the abuse which Mrs. Trollope takes every opportunity of throwing on the Church of England, and on evangelical religion.⁸⁰

Such a claim is obviously incorrect: though Mrs. Trollope chooses to portray numerous clergy among her characters, and though they receive perhaps more than their share of her satire, the treatment of Harrington and his high church son, the most amusing ingredients in the novel, in its affectionate humour is plainly designed as a protest against abuses of church practice.

But even unjust criticism like that which we have just examined shows little of the nastiness which iden-

⁷⁹Critic, 9 January 1847, pps.26-27.

⁸⁰Literary Gazette, 11 December 1852, p.906.

tifies Mrs. Trollope with the subjects of her satire, either those whose religion or whose manners she remarks upon. The Westminster Review hints at such an identification of author and subject in a retrospective review provoked by The Vicar of Wrexhill:

The coarse distortions of a mind which cannot see or sympathize with any of the pure, or good, or kind, or lofty, or spiritual feelings of human nature,--the observations of a woman, who, in the religious movement in France, dwells on the rosy cheeks and broad shoulders of the young priests, and marks chiefly, during the vehement addresses of the American methodist, the vigour of his form and the lustre of his eyes, may be quoted as authorities by unscrupulous writers, to aid the end of the hour, with momentary success; but, when the libeller comes to English ground,--when, running counter to the whole experience of society, she holds up, as the type of the evangelical clergy of England, the sweet-tongued and black-hearted Vicar of Wrexhill, she unfolds the source in herself of her pictures of foreign manners.⁸¹

A portion of the Westminster's attack Mrs. Trollope's warmest defender would have to acknowledge as justifiable: it is true that she is apt to consider many subjects superficially--and, perhaps more damning for her contemporaries, she often acknowledges wickedness and sexuality⁸² where many would prefer to ignore it. But the

⁸¹Westminster Review, October 1837, pgs. 130-31.

⁸²Sydney Smith is one of the few to warn to this sort of perception in Mrs. Trollope's books; to Lady Holland he writes, 1 January 1836, "I am very desirous to read Mrs. Trollope's Paris and the Parisians; her Tremordyn Cliff I read with considerable pleasure. She

identification the Westminster makes between the vicar's wickedness and necessary wickedness in his creator, an identification the Athenaeum and other periodicals reiterate to the point of boredom between the vulgarity Mrs. Trollope shows in some of her characters and necessary vulgarity in her own character, is the sort of pernicious criticism which blackens the author for her contemporaries.⁸³ If she notices wickedness and vulgar-

must be an amorous old Dame; all these matters she describes with the most juvenile warmth and impetuosity." Letters, ed. Nowell C. Smith (Oxford, 1953), II, 635-36.

⁸³The most remarkable instance of a person wholly convinced of Mrs. Trollope's disreputability is Harriet Martineau, who in her Autobiography, I, 317-19 gives an account of a dinner at the Hallams' at which Henry Milman, who knew Mrs. Trollope from childhood, defended her to the company: "It was a pleasant party of eight or ten people,--every one, as it happened, of considerable celebrity, and therefore not to be despised in the matter of literary criticism, or verdict on character. I was placed near the top of the table, between Milman and Mr. Rogers; and the subject of animated conversation at the bottom presently took its turn among us. Mrs. Trollope's novel, 'Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw,' had just come out, and was pronounced on by every body present but myself,--I not having read it. As I had lately returned from the United States, I was asked what Mrs. Trollope's position was there. My reply was that I had no scruple in saying that Mrs. Trollope had no opportunity of knowing what good society was in America, generally speaking. I added that I intended to say this, as often as I was inquired of; for the simple reason that Mrs. Trollope had thought proper to libel and slander a whole nation. If she had been an ordinary discontented tourist, her adventures in America would not be worth the trouble of discussing; but her slanderous book made such exposures necessary. Every body, except Milman,

ity, according to critics like her reviewer in the Athenaeum, she must own her share of both.

asked questions, and I answered them. She certainly had no admirers among the party when she was first mentioned; and the account I gave of her unscrupulous method of reporting surprised nobody."

The next day, Milman visited Miss Martineau in anxiety for Mrs. Trollope: "He frankly told me now, in the proper place and time, why he thought Mrs. Trollope ill-qualified to write travels and describe a nation: 'but,' he continued, 'the thing is done, and can't be helped now: so that, unless you feel bound in conscience to expose her,--which might be to ruin her,--I would intercede for her.' Laying his finger on a proof-sheet of my American book which lay at his elbow, he went on, 'Can't you, now, say what you think of the same people, and let that be her answer?' 'Why,' exclaimed I, 'you don't suppose I am going to occupy any of my book with Mrs. Trollope! I would not dirty my pages with her stories, even to refute them. What have I to do with Mrs. Trollope but to say what I know when inquired of?' 'Oh, well, that is all right,' said he. 'I took it for granted you meant to do it in your book: and I don't say that you could be blamed if you did. But if you mean in conversation, you are certainly quite right, and Mrs. Trollope herself could have no title to complain.'" What Miss Martineau says is interesting not only because it suggests how fashionable it was to read Mrs. Trollope in 1836, but because Miss Martineau quite fails to see how Milman's faithfulness in defense of Mrs. Trollope contrasts with her harshness. She does not explain how she knows that Mrs. Trollope lacked opportunity to view good society in America; it is possible that she means that Mrs. Trollope had no acquaintance among the respectable Americans whom she herself met. But the accusation appears early in reviews like the Atlas' notice of Belgium and Western Germany, 27 July 1834, p.474: "We have heard it asserted, upon trustworthy authority, that Mrs. Trollope never was in society in America, and that her opportunities for observation were, in fact, so scanty and brief, that without proceeding to an analysis of its contents, her work might at once be pronounced to partake more of the nature of fiction than truth."

Mrs. Trollope's eye for domestic detail and for mean or lewd behavior, as reflected in her novels, probably does tell us something about her character; but her critics' reaction to just such perceptions tells us even more about the age in which she lived. To properly evaluate her work itself, however, we need concern ourselves only with how her special perceptions help or hinder the effectiveness of her writing; her critics seldom so limit themselves in treating her books.

How great a variety of sins Mrs. Trollope's critics include within the accusation of vulgarity we can get an idea by examining various notices in the Athenaeum, which frequently attacks her under this head. The reviewer of Paris and the Parisians declares the book,

just such a work as a thorough-going John Bull, something below the middle classes, and steeped to the lips in English prejudice unredeemed by the humanizing influence of a good general education, might have produced by a run through the sights of Paris, and an appeal to the guide-book. It is not, however, that the remarks on matters of everyday life are not frequently pregnant with good plain sense; Mrs. Trollope is quite a good connoisseur in bad smells, and would make a very tolerable commissioner of pavements. But, even in judging the more ordinary phases of society, she is contented with the surface of things, and those, too, the most obvious, and vulgar. She exhibits no fancy --no philosophy.⁸⁴

Already in a single notice we learn that Mrs. Trollope

⁸⁴Athenaeum, 16 January 1836, p.45.

is of low class, poor education, attends to the noisome details of life, but penetrates no deeper than the surface of the world she observes. But the Athenaeum can abuse far more heartily than this, as we learn if we read its notice of The Widow Married:

Few will deny the double-dyed vulgarity of this continuation of 'The Widow Barnaby,' now collected from the pages of the New Monthly Magazine. Someone remarked upon the first number of 'Michael Armstrong,' "that it might have been written with dripping instead of ink,"--a character tenfold applicable to 'The Widow Married.' Apart from the coarseness of the whole clan O'Donagough, which is touched with a thorough mastery, little short of sympathy, the great ladies and gentlemen of the tale--the Huberts and Stephensons--are also incurably underbred: as will be admitted readily, when we have stated, that the devices of the third husband of the Widow Barnaby are unmasked by Lady Stephenson calling in her clever maid, "and her saucy French page, who could have worked his way through a deal board as readily as a gimlet, had he expected to find either mischief or profit behind it"--for auxiliaries in her defeat of vice and imposture.⁸⁵ Despite, however, of this all-pervading taint...

Far more vicious than the review of Paris and the Parisians, this notice not only identifies Mrs. Trollope with the vulgarity of her characters--"coarseness...touched with a thorough mastery, little short of sympathy"--but blames her as well for reporting the very sort of collaboration between master and servant which novelists up and down the scale from Mrs. Gore to Dickens report as well. Oblivious to the fact that Mrs. Trollope herself

⁸⁵Ibid., 4 April 1840, pps. 274-75.

holds the O'Donagoughs up to scorn, the reviewer naturally fails to notice that her view even of Lady Stephenson has a touch of irony about it. But having once established the identity of the O'Donagoughs and Mrs. Trollope, the Athenaeum's reviewer abuses Mrs. Trollope with it when occasion offers.

We shall look at one other instance of the Athenaeum's labelling Mrs. Trollope as vulgar, partly because it suggests how far the term will stretch, and partly--as with most of this sort of criticism--because there is a germ of truth buried in the abuse. Reviewing the first six numbers of Michael Armstrong, the Athenaeum remarks that Mrs. Trollope is giving voice to the theory offered by physical force orators,

that the disorganization and misery of the manufacturing population are the consequences of an unequal division of the profits of trade....Taking this proposition for her theme, Mrs. Trollope proceeds to work it out by a method, as inherently vulgar as the idea itself.⁸⁶

Here vulgar has both its original meaning of popular or intended for the masses, as well as suggesting lack of sophistication either of ideas or of literary method. It is cruel of the Athenaeum's reviewer to damn by employing the pejorative term instead of expressing his criticism more precisely.

⁸⁶Ibid., 10 August 1839, p.588.

That Mrs. Trollope is certainly guilty of some of the multiform vulgarity which the Athenaeum attributes to her we can most easily see when a critic takes pains to make even an abusive accusation articulate; this the Atlas' reviewer of Belgium and Western Germany does:

Mrs. Trollope possess^{es} a very agreeable, or, at all events, a very striking talent for turning the ridiculous side of things out. When she can seize upon any weakness or imperfection in national character, or any traits of individual eccentricity, or any absurd oppositions to accustomed modes, she never lets such points pass until she has sifted them thoroughly, heightened the folly, and created out of very common-place and mean materials a complete caricature for genteel people to laugh at. In her satires upon vulgarity she is singularly vulgar. The spirit that is capable of detecting and enlarging upon trifling vulgarities, special sins against conventional notions that are not worth recording, must be inherently vulgar. The tendency of Mrs. Trollope's critical powers is naturally towards the awkwardness and petty foibles of life: the great sustaining principles of character are either above her reach, or out of the line of her taste.⁸⁷

There is plenty in Belgium and Western Germany, as in Mrs. Trollope's books more generally, to warrant the Atlas' denunciation, but the reviewer's criticism would be more valuable if he realized that the inclination to petty gossip which prevents Mrs. Trollope from becoming more than a minor novelist nevertheless enables

⁸⁷Atlas, 27 July 1834, p.474.

her to see society in a critically revealing way, provoking her to attempt to reform abuses of individual liberty, permitting some few of her characters a humanity well beyond the ordinary powers of gossip.

In the spectrum consulted by Mrs. Trollope's critics, vulgarity shades into un-femininity, which in turn shares an indefinite border with immorality. Because of the pose with which she begins writing--that The Domestic Manners of the Americans is a mere woman's attempt to realize the domestic effects of democracy--Mrs. Trollope renders herself particularly susceptible to criticism of her femininity; her reviewers take full advantage of that susceptibility. In its notice of The Laurringtons, for example, the Critic observes, in a way reminiscent of at least one reviewer⁸⁸ of The Widow Married who calls vulgarity both Mrs. Trollope's triumph and her great disability,

The mind of Mrs. Trollope is essentially coarse and vulgar--steeped in prejudice, because unreflective--and painfully wanting in the gentle and refined qualities which constitute the charm of her sex. Her popularity as an authoress, strange to say, is the result of those very characteristics that make her odious as a woman--satire proceeding from ill nature, a keen perception of the faults and follies of her race, combined with utter ina-

⁸⁸Ibid., 21 March 1840, p.187: "The very feature in these works which we have invariably considered their great and fundamental vice, constitutes, in fact, their principal attraction...their intense vulgarity."

bility to appreciate their virtues, and a hearty good will brought to her censorious task.⁸⁹

The same periodical, reviewing Young Love later in 1844, after enumerating the qualities distinctive of Mrs. Trollope's writing (including a sense of the ridiculous, apt expression, and vehemence in support of her opinion) nevertheless considers all her excellences somehow altered by their pertaining to a female writer:

Such characteristics in one of our own sex might recommend him to our critical judgment, but not to our affection; we should admire the author, and dislike the man; but, seen in a woman, they are doubly disagreeable; in her they are unnatural as well as unpleasing, so foreign to the gentleness and the benevolent spirit and the modesty that make the charm of her sex, that we look upon a lady caricaturist as a sort of monster for whom it would be impossible to feel either respect or regard. Yet such is Mrs. Trollope, a novelist we must admire, a woman we must dislike; her excellence as the one constituting her defect as the other.⁹⁰

We need little wonder that the Brontë sisters chose to write behind names which could have belonged to men.

The Athenaeum, which declares of Mr. Cartwright in The Vicar of Wrexhill that though true

in its distinguishing outline, to life, ... his is a fearful character; and some of his later doings are too dark and terrible to have been written down by a woman, -- aye, or a man either: but Mrs. Trollope loves debateable ground.⁹¹

after fifteen years continues to chide the authoress

⁸⁹Critic, January 1844, p.63.

⁹⁰Ibid., 15 November 1844, p.183.

⁹¹Athenaeum, 23 September 1837, p.708.

in a similar vein about Uncle Walter:

Now, we put it to Mrs. Trollope whether such are the fitting materials and the fitting dramatis personae to be offered as the elements of light fiction, under the guarantee of a lady's penmanship, for the entertainment of her own sex.⁹²

The British Critic, noticing The Vicar of Wrexhill, shows more concern for juvenile than for female readers:

With her, all is written, not for truth but for effect. Every page bears its evidence of a shrewd and inquisitive, but, at the same time, of a coarse, unfastidious, and, must we say it?--vulgar mind. Many passages are gross in the conception, and of at least very equivocal delicacy in the phraseology. But we will not say more; for there are expressions which we would be most unwilling to use in reviewing a lady's publication. We need only refer to the scene of private devotions with the Vicar on his knees; to the scene with Miss Fanny in the lime-trees; to the scenes with the same young lady in the carriage, and afterwards in the house; as also to a variety of others, which cannot, we think, be very edifying to the rising generation,--not even to any little Master Trollope or little Miss Trollope, if such happen to be in existence.⁹⁴

under

when the lawyer is

⁹²Ibid., 30 October 1852, p.1169.

⁹³The lawyer courts not Fanny Mowbray but her sister Helen in both the carriage and the house.

⁹⁴British Critic and Quarterly Theological Review, January 1838, p.100. For a similar criticism in the Monthly Review see p.287 above. Bentley's reader of both The Vicar of Wrexhill and The Widow Barnaby remarked on their indelicacy of phraseology; in A Victorian Publisher, 214, Royal A. Gettmann notes, "Even in the relative freedom of the 'thirties Barham must have been warned to keep an eye on the novels of Mrs. Trollope, for he assured Bentley, 'I have looked over the two chapters of the "Widow Barnaby" and like the opening very much there is nothing objectionable as yet save one

Mrs. Trollope's difficulty with critics of her vulgarity, unfemininity, or, as we shall see, immorality, is that behavior of which she does not approve frequently interests her without her feeling a lady-like compulsion to reticence. While her lack of restraint has the virtue of giving us a Mrs. Barnaby in all her over-blown glory, it repeatedly provides also such questionable (in Mrs. Trollope's presentation, improbable) characters as the Count Alderberg of A Romance of Vienna who attempts to make a mistress of his wife, Sir Joseph Lexington in Three Cousins who only posthumously lets his son know that he is legitimate, or Mrs. Mathews' husband whose having fathered an illegitimate son exposes him to blackmail by a supposed grandson. These and other characters whose actions Mrs. Trollope plainly does not hold up for emulation arouse much criticism.

Although sympathetic toward the abolition of slavery, the Monthly Repository nevertheless believes Jon-

word which is not English & which I have corrected.' [Letter of 26 November 1838, in the Berg Collection of the New York Public Library.] But Mrs. Trollope's next novel, The Vicar of Wrexhall (sic) was excessively robust in its language, and in sending the corrections for the second volume Barham explained, 'You will find that all the revolting expressions are changed and taken out.' With ingenuous candour he added, 'at the same time the cant is as strong as ever.'" Gettmann dates this letter, also in the Berg Collection, 27 November 1839, which is improbable both as to month and year, as the book was issued not after The Widow Barnaby but before, the first edition 6 September 1837, the second 3 March 1838.

athan Jefferson Whitlaw an immoral book:

She seems influenced by a malicious pleasure rather than a feeling of moral antipathy in exposing the absurd anomaly presented by a people who are at once extensive slave-holders and professed lovers of liberty; who are in this instance utter tyrants and the greatest declaimers in the world against all tyranny. Taking this strange compound of inconsistencies as a basis, she has worked up a tale which is clever in many respects, but which is painful and disgusting more than affecting or tragic, because the display of low and degrading vice is more frequently attempted and more efficiently executed, than that of suffering virtue or strong and guilty passions.⁹⁵

In its notice of The Vicar of Wrexhill the Athenaeum typically suggests that in her book on slavery Mrs.

Trollope fouls herself with her subject matter:

She scents out moral deformities with a sort of professional eagerness, and applies herself to their exposure, regardless of the uncleanness into which her task may lead her, and the soil and foul odours she herself may contract in prosecuting the beloved work. In her last novel she plunged over head into the abominable sink of slavery; here, again, she is up to the neck in another kennel of corruption.⁹⁶

While we may suspect the critic of allowing himself to be overwhelmed by powerful language, it is a weakness to which Mrs. Trollope's critics have an unhappy inclination.

Like the Athenaeum, the Times regards The Vicar of Wrexhill as a morally offensive book:

⁹⁵Monthly Repository, October 1836, p.635.

⁹⁶Athenaeum, 23 September 1837, p.708.

The detail of all the indecencies practised in Mowbray-house by the Rev. Mr. Cartwright and the ladies is a double fault--not merely an error in morals, for Mrs. Trollope has no business to make such descriptions, whatever her end may be,--but a fault of art. It is monstrous to suppose that a well-bred and well-meaning woman could break through the ties and affections and habits of 20 years, and give up her heart to the vulgar rant of the vicar, or to fancy that her innocent daughter could have any doubt as to the meaning of his attentions to her....

We shall give no extracts from Mrs. Trollope's book, nor should we have noticed it at all, for it is dangerous, vulgar, and unjust, but that it is withall singularly clever....So much the greater pity that a lady with a good wit and a good intention should degrade the two so shamefully. All these peccadilloes and indecencies of the vicar, all these horrible blasphemies and sickening prayers addressed to the Supreme Being, go far beyond the genuine limits of satire, as they exceed the bounds of truth. No moralist (and above all, no woman moralist) can use such weapons as these without injuring herself far more than her adversary.⁹⁷

Most critics who complain of immorality in Mrs. Trollope's writing take approximately the ground held so forcefully by the Athenaeum and the Times: no one, least of all a woman, should treat such subjects. Another typical example of this sort of criticism is the Monthly Chronicle's understandable protest against A Romance of Vienna:

The plot of this romance is not only improbable, but immoral. The characters are displayed in the broadest lights; the coarse texture of the style, and the broad indelicacy of the design are unfeminine and offensive. The want of refinement in Mrs.

⁹⁷Times, 25 October 1837, p.2.

Trollope's views of society--her ribald and mocking humours--and the virulent prejudices which glare through her pages, utterly spoil any passing enjoyment that might possibly be derived from the progress of the narrative, which even were it purified of all its objectionable passages, is not recommended by skill in the invention, or power in detail.⁹⁸

The reviewer might simply have said that Mrs. Trollope strains her reader's imagination without once rewarding him by writing perceptively or even clearly.

Amusing but less just than the average among such criticisms is the Literary Gazette's protest at the blasphemous infant in Three Cousins:

There is here, for example, a child altogether unnecessary to the story, who, at the age of between three and four years is allowed to associate with the gents of the stable, till he has acquired a habit of swearing as troopers were said to swear in less decent times than ours. Now to hear oaths from such an infant-mouth would be extremely shocking, and to have them flourishing in print is not less disagreeable. Yet the father of the precocious nuisance enjoys this peculiar attainment of his offspring! and the mother exclaims, "What an angel!" when her son raps out a bit of blasphemy. This is, to say the least of it, in very bad taste.⁹⁹

True, Mrs. Trollope introduces the incident involving the child rather casually and for the entertainment of her readers; but not only does it have more the air of realism than most of the book, but Mrs. Trollope makes it plain that she exhibits the deplorable behavior of the child's parents as a failure: it is a cautionary

⁹⁸Monthly Chronicle, September 1838, p.273.

⁹⁹Literary Gazette, 8 May 1847, p.351.

tale.

The strangest complaint offered by the Literary Gazette concerns quite another matter than the immoral behavior of Mrs. Trollope's characters. In its notice of The Attractive Man the journal attacks Mrs. Trollope for caricaturing a real person in the character of her protagonist:

With the exception of the superadded villainy of Vidal, it is impossible not to recognize in that impersonation the traits and features of a man who ought not, even in fiction, to have had his distinct lineaments so compounded with odious and contemptible guilt. Those who know better may discriminate and separate the invented from the real; but as far as the rest of the world is concerned, a cruel and monstrous injury has been done to the memory of the dead in this publication; an injury which the lapse of time would augment, because disproof would be gradually growing fainter, whilst the distressing and foul perversion continued to cast its darkening and yet-blacker shadow over the long-closed grave.¹⁰⁰

It is curious that in a preface to the book Mrs. Trollope should have felt it necessary to state that she only once copied a character from the life--a patent falsehood when, as I have suggested above, many people recognized characters in The Blue Belles of England as minor literati;¹⁰¹ though I suspect that Vidal may have

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 25 October 1845, p.700.

¹⁰¹A letter from R.P.Ward to P.G.Patmore inquiring the identity of Marchmont in Charles Chesterfield assumes the character to be another copy; see P.G.Patmore, My Friends and Acquaintance (London, 1855), II, pps.190-91.

been cast in the pattern discerned by the Literary Gazette's reviewer, time has not augmented the injury, for the identification is lost.

Another criticism of morality in the same review deserves our attention. The reviewer finds all of the female characters in the book repellent because when they marry they do not bring their first affections to their husbands; and this, he says, is only the least of the book's faults:

If we could believe the characters to be truly drawn, and to exhibit classes, not individuals, we should think far less of womankind than we have ever been accustomed to do; and as the drawings are from the hand of a clever and observant woman, we are the more dissatisfied with the degradation of the sex....The bloom is off the fairest and freshest of them; and the others are more seriously blemished, from slighter defects to corruption at the core....What shall we say...of Lady Sarah Monckton, a wife of a certain age, a determined sentimental flirt with every man who approaches her; of the Miss Jenkinsees, the elder a scheming, and the other a puling old maid, bent in their different ways on netting the wealthy squire within the links of matrimony; of Lucy Dalton, an unprincipled fiend at seventeen or eighteen years of age; or of her drunken mother, lunatic from gin or brandy? We repeat, it is positively disagreeable, and almost disgusting, to read three volumes in which the development of emotions and passions in the breasts of women affords nothing more refreshing to human nature than such weaknesses, follies, vices, and crimes.¹⁰²

Here as in several of her books we find Mrs. Trollope

¹⁰²Literary Gazette, 25 October 1845, p.700.

markedly less sensitive than her critics; in a similar instance the Athenaeum accuses her of Barnabyism when she makes the widowed heroine of One Fault offer herself as a wife to the man whom she wants to marry.

I suspect that like a twentieth century reader of her books Mrs. Trollope would reply to such criticism that she was reporting the world as she saw it in The Attractive Man and that Mrs. Wentworth was only behaving sensibly.

The resistance which Mrs. Trollope's insensitivity caused in readers of her own day necessarily made her fame notoriety and that notoriety short-lived. Circumstances conspired to keep later generations from knowing much about the vulgar Mrs. Trollope: she died seven years after the publication of her last novel, and in Italy; there were few obituaries, for already she was a figure of the past.

In its obituary notice the Athenaeum so far removed itself from the atmosphere of revulsion in which it usually dealt with Mrs. Trollope's books that its attitude toward her was kindly; its remark on her age points us another suggestion for understanding Mrs. Trollope's disappearance as a literary figure: "The public will hardly expect to hear that this lady was in her eighty-

fifth year."¹⁰³The public hardly expected to hear anything about it; younger writers grew up as Mrs. Trollope wrote and could do what she did best quite as well or better. The Spectator, too, announced the death and maintained that Mrs. Trollope's books still sold:

We regret to notice the death, at Florence, of Mrs. Frances Trollope, the novelist, at the age of 84. Though she began writing nearly forty years since, her books still sell, and, with some exceptions, deserve their popularity. There is a vigour about them which, though it often degenerates into coarseness and caricature, still keeps the attention alive, and her sketches of Mrs. Barnaby, of the ward of Thorpe Combe, and the four "Robertses," are valuable contributions to the anatomy of vulgarity. Her more refined personages are usually characterless.¹⁰⁴

It is true that fourteen of Mrs. Trollope's books were reprinted in the 'fifties though two of these were in French, one extracts only; the decade of Mrs. Trollope's death saw nine reprinted, more than half of them novels of the previous ten years and largely as a result of demand for books in railway library editions. The 'seventies saw five more, by the end of the century there had been an additional four, and nearly seventy years of our century have brought five editions, three of The Domestic Manners of the Americans. The durabi-

¹⁰³Athenaeum, 10 October 1863, p.469.

¹⁰⁴Spectator, 10 October 1863, p.2590.

bility of Mrs. Trollope's first book we might have anticipated, for it received more critical attention than any other of her books; it is unfortunate though that The Widow Barnaby has been lost, last reprinted in 1881, for not only do I consider it her best novel, but it received the most enthusiastic reviews of all the novels, even from critics normally hostile to Mrs. Trollope.

We can broaden our picture of Mrs. Trollope's posthumous fortunes among her readers by examining the catalogues of Mudie's Library:¹⁰⁵ though Mrs. Trollope's books on the list numbered only six in 1875, by the end of the century Mudie's included 17. This suggests greater popularity than the books probably enjoyed, for after 1900 they virtually disappear from the list; their persistence even to that date reflects Anthony's success rather than his mother's.

In critical compendiums like R.H.Horne's A New Spirit of the Age (1844) or Chambers's Cyclopedia of English Literature (1844) Mrs. Trollope fares badly, though some of the criticism is just enough. Horne allows that America suited Mrs. Trollope as a subject, but he describes her as both literarily amoral and tasteless:

¹⁰⁵See Appendix E.

She owes everything to that audacious contempt of public opinion, which is the distinguishing mark of persons who are said to stick at nothing. Nothing but this sticking at nothing could have produced some of the books she has written, in which her wonderful impunity of face is remarkable. ...Her books of travel are crowded with plebeian criticisms on works of art and the usages of courts, and are doubtless held in great esteem by her admirers, who love to see such things overhauled and dragged down to their own level.¹⁰⁶

Chambers's Cyclopedia of the same year concludes its treatment of Mrs. Trollope in a similarly uncomplimentary fashion:

Reviewing the aggregate labours of this industrious authoress, we cannot say that she has done good proportioned to her talents. Her satire is directed against the mere superficialities of life, and is not calculated to check vice or encourage virtue. In depicting high life she wants the genial spirit and humanity of Theodore Hook. She has scattered some amusement among novel-readers by some of her delineations; but in all her mirth there is a mocking and bitter spirit, which is often as misplaced as it is unfeminine.¹⁰⁷

But thirty-two years later, in its third edition, the

¹⁰⁶R.H.Horne, ed., A New Spirit of the Age (London, 1844), I, 239-40. Horne's contributor, Elizabeth Barrett, found his treatment of Mrs. Trollope unduly harsh; she writes to Horne, 5 January 1844, "And, my dear Mr. Horne, it really does strike me strongly that you and your critic do no manner of justice to Mrs. Trollope, who is a very clever writer--very acute--absolute over laughter in matters of caricature on the coarse scale, and moreover--which scarcely accords with her general character as either you or I consider it--a vivid and graphic painter of scenic nature. Because I said this illegibly somewhere in the proof I say it over again here. I am determined that you shall read me." E.B.Barrett, Letters Addressed to R.H.Horne, 2 vols. (London, 1877), I, 212-13.

¹⁰⁷Chambers, Robert, Cyclopedia of English Literature (London, 1844) II, 612.

Cyclopedia contains merely its earlier account extended by an extract from the Athenaeum's obituary notice.

Our contemporaries are apt to rank Mrs. Trollope as a very minor author; the two pages devoted to her in Ernest A. Baker's History of the English Novel (is) fairly typical. Perhaps she deserves no more than two pages in an account of the novel: she was not an innovator, no more than three or four of her books deserve reprinting, and those three make a minimal portion of her output. But that Michael Armstrong should be reprinted and The Widow Barnaby neglected indicates that Mrs. Trollope is no longer known enough for her good work to receive the attention due it. are/

Examination of reactions to Mrs. Trollope suggests that if her contemporaries often attacked her fiercely, at the same time they tended to value her good qualities more than we do today. Though both criticism and praise go beyond what Mrs. Trollope's books deserve, her best achievements--in The Domestic Manners of the Americans, The Widow Barnaby, Petticoat Government, and two or three of her other novels--demand recognition.

Insensitivity to matters which her contemporaries consider too delicate or unpleasant to be aired¹⁰⁸ may

¹⁰⁸Michael Sadleir comes to much my opinion of the explanation of Mrs. Trollope's reputation in Trollope, A Commentary, 105: "Why, then, poor Mrs. Trollope? Partly from snobbery, one feels. Her high society was not quite

be worthy callousness in such an age as Mrs. Trollope's. Her attention to vulgarity and her crudeness of expression certainly deprive her of the rank of an artist of the sensitivity of Jane Austen, but as a minor writer Mrs. Trollope deserves as much or more of our concern than Marryat, Surtees, or Lever.

That we do not pay her this attention is perhaps partly the result of her contemporary reputation, but I think we neglect her as well for the reverse of the reason which kept her books on Mudie's shelves for so long: she is Anthony Trollope's mother; her maternity is more wonderful than her authorship. Of course this is true, but some of the same good qualities go into both productions: it is time we re-establish Frances Trollope as an author as well as a mother. The Spectator's obituary describes her best work as an "anatomy of vulgarity"; it is this work which is worth attending to even now, both for itself and for the dimension it adds to the early Victorian period.

high enough; her salons were to the expert eye of critic-toadies a little tarnished, ever so little sordid. But her greater offence was that she was too truthful for the liking of the day."

Appendix A:

Books of travel published in English, reviewed or published serially in 1839.

This list includes books reviewed by six of the more important periodicals of the day; it is unlikely that many travel books escaped the attention of one or another of them for reasons either of negligence or of party feeling. Titles of magazines I abbreviate as follows: Athenaeum = A; Edinburgh Review = E; Literary Gazette = LG; Metropolitan = M; New Monthly = NM; Quarterly = Q.

<u>Author</u>	<u>Short Title</u>	<u>Magazine</u>	<u>Date Noticed</u> serial May serial
1. C.G. Addison	A Journey Southward from Damascus	M	
2. anonymous	Austria and the Austrians	Q	
3. anonymous	Baronial Residences in the North of Scotland	M	
4. anonymous	Journal of a Trip to the Far West	A	April
5. anonymous	Letters from Germany and Belgium by an Autumn Tourist	A	Sept.
6. anonymous	Spain, Its Present State & Prospects, by an English Traveller	LG	July
7. anonymous	Travels of Minna & Godfrey, vol. II	LG	June
8. G.P. Badger	Description of Malta and Gozo	A	May
9. G.J. Bennett	A Pedestrian Tour through North Wales	M	March
10. J.R. Best	Odious Comparisons; or the Cosmopolite in England	A	March
11. Rev. W. Bingley	Excursions in North Wales	NM	July
12. Lady Bléssington	The Idler in Italy	A	April
13. Robert Bremner	Excursions in Denmark	M	May
14. Robert Bremner	Excursions in the Interior of Russia	NM	July
15. Mrs. Broughton	Six Years' Residence in Algiers	A, LG, NM	March
		A, NM	Dec.
		LG	Feb.
		NM	Feb.
		A, M	June

Appendix A, continued.

16. James Burnes	Visit to the Court of Sinde (3rd ed)	A	Dec.
17. H. Capper	South Australia (3rd ed)	LG	Sept.
18. Lady Chatterton	Rambles in the South of Ireland	A	June
		LG	April & August
19. Lt. A. Conolly	Travels to the North of India	M, NM	May
20. W. F. Cumming	Notes of a Wanderer in Search of Health	A	Jan.
21. Charles Darwin	Voyage of the Beagle	A, M	May
		LG	March
22. John Davidson	Notes Taken during Travels in Africa	A	June
23. George Dennis	A Summer in Andalusia	Q	Dec.
24. George Downes	Three Months in the North	A	Nov.
25. M. Elphinstone	Account of the Kingdom of Caubul	A	July
26. Adolphe Ermann	Travels round the Earth, vol. II	A	Sept.
27. Charles Fellows	Journal Written during an Excursion in Asia Minor	LG	July
28. Cpts. Fitzroy & King	Narrative of the Voyages of the Adventure and the Beagle	A, LG	Jan.
29. Alexander Forbes	California	A	Jan.
30. J. B. Fraser	Narrative of the Persian Princes in London in 1835 & 1836	A	June
31. Rev. G. R. Gleig	Germany, Bohemia & Hungary Visited in 1837	E	July
32. Rev. G. R. Gleig	Sketches of Illyria, Italy & the Tyrol	Q	Dec.
33. James Grant	Travels in Town	A	Feb.
34. H. B. Hall	Scenes at Home and Abroad	A	Sept.
35. James Hall	Notes on the Western States	A	Jan.
36. Capt. W. C. Harris	Narrative of an Expedition into Southern Africa	A	March & April
		Q	June

Appendix A, continued.

37.	C.F.Hoffman	Wild Scenes in the Forest & Prairie	A	Jan.
38.	William Howitt	Visits to Remarkable Places	LG	Dec.
39.	T.H.James	Six Months in South Australia	A	June
40.	Edward Jesse	A Summer Day at Hampton Court	LG	Sept.
41.	H.G.Knight	An Architectural Tour in Normandy	E	April
42.	H.G.Knight	The Normans in Sicily; Being a Sequel to An Architectural Tour in Normandy	E	April
43.	W.Knight	Oriental Outlines	A	Nov.
44.	D.H.Kolff	Voyages of the Dutch Brig of War Dourga	A Nov. LG Dec	Nov. Dec
45.	Samuel Laing	Tour in Sweden in 1838	A	March
46.	Lancelot Lamprey	Mems in the Mediterranean	E	July
47.	Lord Lindsay	Letters on Egypt, Edom & the Holy Land	M	serial
48.	R.M.McBrair	Sketches of a Missionary's Travels in Egypt	Q	Jan.
49.	Rev.H.Malcolm	Travels in South-Eastern Asia	NM	Oct.
50.	W.Mann	Six Years' Residence in the Australian Provinces	A	June
51.	Capt.F.Marryat	Diary in America(2 series)	LG Dec. A, LG E, Q	July Oct. August
52.	W.H.Maxwell	Wild Sports of the West	M	August
53.	Capt.Mignan	Winter Journey through Russia	LG	Feb.
54.	R.M.Milnes	Memorials of a Residence on the Continent	A	April
55.	G.W.Montgomery	Narrative of a Journey to Guatemala	LG	Feb.
56.	C.A.Murray	Travels in North America	Q	June
57.	Nathaniel Ogle	The Colony of Western Australia	A	Oct.
			A	August
			LG	Oct.
			Q	July
			LG	Nov.

Appendix A, continued.

58. Caesar Otway	Sketches in Ireland (new ed)	A, M	Oct.
59. Caesar Otway	A Tour in Connaught	LG	August
60. Jahn Paget	Hungary and Transylvania	M	July
61. Sir W. Parish	Buenos Ayres	LG	Dec.
62. J.D. Paxton	Letters on Palestine & Egypt	Q	Oct.
63. Charlotte Elizabeth Phelan	Letters from Ireland	A	June
64. Edmund Phipps	A Summer in Bavaria	A	Oct.
65. H. Pigot	Pilgrimage from Fontainebleau to Scotland	IG	August
66. Mrs. Postans	Western India in 1838	NM	serial
67. Emma Reeve	Character & Costume in Turkey & Italy	M	serial
68. C.J. Rich	Narrative of a Journey to the Site of Babylon	A, LG	Nov.
69. J.P. & P.W. Robertson	Letters on Paraguay	IG	Sept.
70. Capt. C.R. Scott	Excursions in the Mountains of Ronda & Granada	IG	March
71. T. Scott	Description of South Australia	Q	March
72. Archibald Smith	Peru as It Is	A	June
73. Edmund Spencer	Travels in Circassia	IG	March
74. John Stephens	South Australia (new ed.)	A, NM	June
75. J.L. Stephens	Incidents of Travel in Egypt (cheap ed)	A	March
76. J.L. Stephens	Incidents of Travel in the Russian and Turkish Empires	A	Nov.
77. Lt. Col. James Tod	Travels in Western India	A	Jan.
		A, LG	July & August

¹ Abbreviation of Stephens' titles in the Athenaeum makes identification uncertain.

- Appendix A, concluded.
- | | | | |
|----------------------|--|----|-------|
| 78. J.K.Townshend | Journey across the Rocky Mountains | A | June |
| 79. J.K.Townshend | Sporting Excursions in the Rocky Mountains | NM | Dec. |
| 80. Frances Trollope | Vienna and the Austrians | Q | Dec. |
| 81. P.E.Turnbull | Austria | Q | Dec. |
| 82. R.L.Venables | Domestic Scenes in Russia | A | Feb. |
| 83. Capt.R.Wilbraham | Travels in the Trans-Caucasian Provinces of Russia | A | May |
| | | M | Sept. |
| 84. Henry Wilkinson | Sketches of Scenery in the Basque Provinces of Spain | NM | Dec. |
| | | LG | Jan. |
| 85. Rev.C.Wordsworth | Athens & Attica: Journal of a Residence | Q | June |
| 86. Rev.C.Wordsworth | Greece, Pictorial | A | June |
| 87. G.N.Wright | Shores & Islands of the Mediterranean | LG | Oct. |

Appendix B: Travel books listed but not reviewed by the
Athenaeum and the Edinburgh Review in 1839.
 Abbreviations are as in Appendix A.

<u>Author</u>	<u>Short title</u>	<u>Magazine</u>
1. W. Allen	Six Years in the Austrian Provinces	A
2. anonymous	Egypt; a Familiar Description	E
3. anonymous	Reminiscences of a Tour in Germany	A
4. anonymous	Scenery of Edinburgh & Midlothian	A
5. anonymous	Scenes of Modern Travel & Adventure	A,E
6. anonymous	Sketches in Egypt & Sinai	A ^g
7. anonymous	Tour to Killarney	A
8. Anson	Voyage Round the World	A
9. Burr	Private Journal in Europe (2nd series)	A
10. Dr. E. Clarke	Travels in Russia (People's ed.)	A
11. Capt. Harris	Wild Sports of Southern Africa	E
12. Jarman	Voyage to the South Seas	A
13. J. W. Massie	Continental India	A
14. Palack	Residence in New Zealand	E
15. Charlotte Elizabeth Phelan	Derry	A
16. Pilkington	Travels through the United Kingdom	A
17. Prout	Sketches in France, Switzerland & Italy	A
18. Stewart	Bogota in 1836	A
19. Twamley	Rambles by the Wye	A
20. Waterton	Wanderings (4th ed.)	A
21. E. Wilkey	Wanderings in Germany	E
22. Williams	Missionary Voyage (new ed.)	A
23. Windell	Hints & Descriptive Notices of Cork	A

Appendix C: Stock Characters. So as not to clutter the text with the titles of novels when I refer to their characters, I have labelled the stock characters to whom I refer in Chapter 4.

date	short title	heavy characters	benefactors
1832	Refugee	N. Ogländer, R. Dally, Wilson	Geraldine d'Albano
1833	Abbess	Count d'Albano, Isidore	
1835	Tremordyn	Lord Tremordyn, Lady Augusta	
1836	Whitlaw	young Whitlaw, Hogstown	
1837	Vicar	Cartwright	
1838	Romance	Count Alderberg	Aunt Betsy
1839	Widow Barnaby		
1839-40	Widow Married		
1839-40	Armstrong	Sir Mathew Dowling	Mary Brotherton
1840	One Fault	Wentworth & his mother	
1840-41	Chesterfield	Sir George Meddows	
1842	Ward		Cornelius Thorpe & father
1841-42	Blue Belles		
1843	Hargrave	Hargrave	
1842-43	Barnabys	Frederic Dalton	
1842-43	Jessie Phillips	William Laurrington	Mrs. Watts
1844	Laurringtons		
1844	Young Love	Sir Christopher Harrington	
1844-46	Robertses	M. Marathone	
1846	Attractive Man	Scaviatoli, William Mills	Sir Joseph Amelia Rosenau
1846	Father Eustace	Sir Joseph & Edward Lexington	
1847	Three Cousins	Amelia Rosenau	
1848	Young Countess	Cuthbert	
1848	Town & Country		
1849	Lottery		
1849	Old World		
1850	Petticoat		
1851	Second Love	Mrs. Dorking	Katherine Smith
1851	Mrs. Mathews	William White, Cornington	
1852	Uncle Walter	Henry Harrington	Uncle Walter
1853	Young Heiress	George Rixley, Hackwood	
1854	Clever Woman	Cornelius Folkstone	
1855	Gertrude	Baron Von Schwanberg	
1856	Fashionable Life		Clara Holmwood

Appendix C, continued.

<u>date</u>	<u>short title</u>	<u>spinsters</u>	<u>eccentrics</u>
1832	Refugee	Miss Duncomb	Emily Williams
1833	Abbess		
1835	Tremordyn	Margaret Tidwell	Jemima Wortley
1836	Whitlaw		
1837	Vicar		
1838	Romance		
1839	Widow Barnaby	Miss Morrison	Aunt Betsy
1839-40	Widow Married	Louisa & Matilda	
1839-40	Michael Armstrong	Lucy and Christina Clark	Lucy & Christina Clark
1840	One Fault		Marianne Gibson
1840-41	Chesterfield		Cornelius Thorpe
1842	Ward		
1841-42	Blue Belles		
1843	Hargrave	Louisa & Matilda	Clio Whitlaw, Annie Beauchamp
1842-43	Barnabys		
1842-43	Jessie Phillips	Mary & Araminta	William Ormond
1844	Laurringtons	Celestina Marsh	
1844	Young Love		Bertha Harrington
1844-46	Robertses	Misses Jenkins	
1846	Attractive Man		
1846	Father Eustace		
1847	Three Cousins		
1848	Young Countess		
1848	Town and Country		
1849	Lottery	the Ladies Procter	
1849	Old World		
1850	Petticoat	Miss Tollbridge, Aunts Jenkyns	Judith Maitland
1851	Second Love		Lucy Selcroft
1851	Mrs. Mathews		Mrs. Mathews
1852	Uncle Walter	Misses Wigginsville	Uncle Walter
1853	Young Heiress		
1854	Clever Woman		
1855	Gertrude		
1856	Fashionable Life		

Appendix C, continued.

<u>date</u>	<u>short title</u>	<u>faithful servants</u>	<u>parasites</u>
1832	Refugee	Robert	
1833	Abbess	Morgante	Father Laurence Charles Rice
1835	Tremordyn		
1836	Whitlaw	Clio Whitlaw	
1837	Vicar	Mrs. Williams	Stephen Corbold
1838	Romance	Mrs. Wagner	Imla Balthazar
1839	Widow Barnaby	Farmer Wright	
1839-40	Widow Married		Lady Susan Deerwell
1839-40	Armstrong	Mrs. Tremlett	Norval, Gabberly, Crockley & Oldfield
1840	One Fault	Mary Wilson	Lady Clarissa
1840-41	Chesterfield		
1842	Ward	Mrs. Barnes	Bradley
1841-42	Blue Belles		
1843	Hargrave		
1842-43	Barnabys		
1842-43	Jessie Phillips		
1844	Laurringtons		
1844	Young Love	Susan Jenkins	Lady Mary Weyland
1844-46	Robertses		
1846	Attractive Man		
1846	Father Eustace	Martha Squabbs	
1847	Three Cousins	Jane Smith	
1848	Young Countess	Ludwig	
1848	Town & Country	Mrs. Morris	
1849	Lottery		William Withers
1849	Old World	all Stormont domestics	
1850	Petticoat		
1851	Second Love		
1851	Mrs. Mathews		
1852	Uncle Walter		
1853	Young Heiress		
1854	Clever Woman		
1855	Gertrude		
1856	Fashionable Life	Sarah Lambert	Miss Puddingthwaite William Richards

Appendix C, concluded.

<u>date</u>	<u>short title</u>	<u>adventurers</u>	<u>manipulators</u>
1832	Refugee		Geraldine d'Albano, Isidore
1833	Abbess		Whitlaw
1835	Tremordyn		Count Alderberg
1836	Whitlaw		Mrs. Barnaby
1837	Vicar		Sir Mathew Dowling
1838	Romance		Mrs. Wentworth
1839	Widow Barnaby		Sir George Meddows
1839-40	Widow Married		
1839-40	Armstrong		
1840	One Fault		
1840-41	Chesterfield		
1842	Ward		
1841-42	Blue Belles		
1843	Hargrave		
1842-43	Barnabys		
1842-43	Jessie Phillips		
1844	Laurringtons		
1844	Young Love		
1844-46	Robertses		
1846	Attractive Man		
1846	Father Eustace		
1847	Three Cousins		
1848	Young Countess		
1848	Town & Country		
1849	Lottery		
1849	Old World		
1850	Petticoat		
1851	Second Love		
1851	Mrs. Mathews		
1852	Uncle Walter		
1853	Young Heiress		
1854	Clever Woman		
1855	Gertrude		
1856	Fashionable Life		
		Cartwright, Corbold	
		Mrs. Barnaby	
		Lionel Nutcomb	
		Mrs. Sherbourne	
		Brandenberry, Sophia Martin	
		Joe Marsh, Caroline & Mrs. Hartley	
		Hargrave	
		Mrs. Barnaby	
		Frederic Dalton	
		Frank & Charlotte Mastermann	
		Amelia Thorwald, Sir William Hammond	
		Edward Roberts, his sisters	
		Mrs. Roberts	
		Luke Squabs (Vidal), Lucy Dalton	
		William Mills	
		Mrs. Cobhurst, Edward Lexington	
		Prince Altenthon, Princess Loffendoff	
		Cuthbert	
		Augustus Oglevie, Cassandra de Laurie	
		Katherine Smith	
		Mrs. Dorking, Mrs. Chilbert	
		Selcroft	
		William White	
		Stephen Cornington	
		Mrs. Fitzjames	
		Arabella Morrison	
		Charlotte Morris	
		Clara Holmwood	

Appendix D: Chronology of Mrs. Trollope's Serial Publications.

<u>Date</u>	<u>New Monthly</u>	<u>Metropolitan</u>	<u>Bentley's Miscellany</u>	<u>in parts</u> <u>Michael Armstrong</u>
1839				
March				ch. 1-3
April				3-6
	The Widow Married			
May	ch. 1-3			6-10
June	4-7			11-12
July	8-10			12-15
Aug.	11-12			15-18
Sept.	13-15			18-21
Oct.	16-17			21-23
Nov.	18-19		"The Patron King"	23-25
Dec.	20-21			26-27
1840				
Jan.	22-23			27-30
Feb.	24-25			30-33
March	26-27			
April	28-30			
May	31-33			
June	34-35			
	Charles Chesterfield			
July	ch. 1-3			
Aug.	4-5			
Sept.	6-7			
Oct.	8-10			
Nov.	11-12			
Dec.	13-14			
1841		Blue Belles of England		
Jan.	15-16	ch. 1-4		
Feb.	17-19	5-6		
March	20-22	7-9		
April	23-24	10-12		
May	25-26	13-14		
June	27-28	15-17		
July	29-30	18-20		
Aug.	31-32	21-23		
Sept.		24-25		
Oct.	33-34	26-28		
Nov.	35-37	29-33		
Dec.				
1842				
Jan.		34-37		
Feb.				
Mar.				
	Barnabys in America			
April	ch. 1-5			
May	6-9			
June	10-12			
July	13-16			

Appendix D, concluded.

<u>Date</u>	<u>New Monthly</u>	<u>in parts</u>
1842	Barnabys in America	
August	ch. 17-20	
Sept.	21-24	
Oct.	25-27	
Nov.	28-30	
		Jessie Phillips
Dec.	31-32	ch. 1-5
1843, Jan.	33	5-8
Feb.	34-36	8-12
March	37-39	12-16
April	40-41	16-23
May		23-28
June	41-42	29-34
July		35-41
August		42-47
Sept.	43	48-52
Oct.	"The Organist and His Daughter"	53-56
Nov.	"Midnight Passage of the Mont du Chat"	
Dec.	"Value of a Shawl"	
1844, Jan.	"Visit to Les Charmettes"	
Feb.	"The Butt", I	
March	"The Butt", II	
April	"Aix les Bains"	
May	The Robertses on Their Travels	ch.1-4
June	"One More Savoy Ramble"	
July	The Robertses on Their Travels	ch.5-7
August	8-9	
September	10-12	
October	13-15	
November	16-18	
December	19-21	
1845, January	22-24	
February	25-27	
March	28-30	
April	31-33	
May	34-36	
June	37-39	
July	40-43	
August	44-47	
September	48	
October	49-50	
November	51-52	
December	53-55	
1846, January	56-59	

Appendix E: Numbers of titles by A.Trollope, T.A.Trollope, and F.Trollope included in the selective catalogues of fiction of Mudie's Library, 1848-1935. As the catalogues are selective, they show not Mudie's total holdings but probably the books the library felt to be most interesting to readers, for our purpose information quite as useful as figures of total holdings. I include figures for Anthony and Thomas Adolphus Trollope partly because Anthony's popularity must have helped to give his mother's books currency, partly because Mrs. Trollope's figures alone mean less than in comparison with those of both a popular and a relatively unpopular novelist.

	Anthony Trollope	T.A.Trollope	Frances Trollope
1848	1		16
1857	2		11
1865	14	5	10
1875	30	13	6
1888	49	13	10
1900	52	15	17
1910	45		
1920	45		4
1935	20		

Select Bibliography

Unless I indicate otherwise, the place of publication is London and the edition consulted the first, with the major exception that for early nineteenth century drama I have taken any edition I could find. Dates of Mrs. Trollope's editions are deceptive, as comparison of dates of reviews and those on title pages indicates: The Widow Barnaby, for instance, was issued late in 1838 but dated 1839. I have been unable to obtain a first edition of Young Love and prefer Smalley's critical edition of The Domestic Manners of the Americans to the first. Since Sadleir gives pagination of installments of Michael Armstrong and Jessie Phillips, I use the single volume editions to which his pagination corresponds rather than the three volume ones which preceded them by a month or more.

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The Attractive Man, 3 volumes, 1846.
The Barnabys in America, 3 volumes, 1843.
The Blue Belles of England, 3 volumes, 1842.
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Gertrude; or Family Pride, 3 volumes, 1855.
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- Uncle Walter, 3 volumes, 1852.
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