STUDIES IN VICTORIAN LIFE AND LITERATURE
Anne Thackeray Ritchie
Journals and Letters

Biographical Commentary and Notes by Lillian F. Shankman
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For my husband, Leonard I. Shankman
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Anne Isabella Thackeray was born in 1837, the year of Victoria's ascendancy to the throne. The young Anny remembered and later recorded in her journals a nightmare journey in a coach to Paris that she made in 1840; as an old woman she stoically vacated her London home after it was bombed by a German plane during the First World War. Like the world around her, her life was full of extraordinary events and her writing reflects this changing world. Although Anny never ceased to be William Makepeace Thackeray's daughter, she merits study in her own right. She not only inherited many of her father's attributes, but she was also a unique person and writer.

The particular circumstances of the Thackeray family, brought about by the insanity of Isabella Thackeray, Anny's mother, contributed to the close relationship between father and daughter. Being motherless left its mark on Anny, but Thackeray helped to enlarge her world in a way that would not have been possible had Isabella been present. From the age of fourteen she was his amanuensis, writing from his dictation large sections of Henry Esmond and his later works. The man and his precepts loom large over her own writing. He taught her honesty, independence, and disdain of humbug; his was the greatest influence in her life. Anny was a complex woman who enjoyed a full and active life. Overcoming tragedy, she lived with enthusiasm and joy, while inwardly bedeviled by traumatic events which haunted her. She became Lady Ritchie, but she was always that intriguing phenomenon: a Victorian lady. Raised by Thackeray, and with his imprint always upon her, she nonetheless developed a flair for living that was uniquely her own.

Like her father, Anny was much admired by her friends; and although her prose does not generally suggest the range of her father's vision nor his classic polish of language, she was also a thoroughly distinguished person of letters. William Makepeace Thackeray asserted in 1846 that his nine-year-old daughter Anne Isabella was "going to
Because of her originality Anny has always been difficult to categorize. The appellation "genius" followed her throughout her life, expressing the esteem with which she was regarded by so many persons and suggesting her extraordinary qualities. Matthew Arnold, George Smith, Leslie Stephen, Algernon Swinburne, Henry James, and later Virginia Woolf all recognized that she was a unique "personage." Edward FitzGerald named Anne "a chip of the old Block." Among other Victorians who admired her work were Robert Browning, who dedicated a book to her, Robert Louis Stevenson, who wrote a poem to her, and George Eliot, who claimed that Anne Thackeray was the only contemporary novelist (apart from a little of Anthony Trollope) she read. Trollope too admired Anny's writing, although with some qualifications. After her father's death, Anny retained the esteem she had earned among her father's friends and literary contemporaries. She also acquired new friends who admired her both for her inherited genius and for her individuality.

Anne Thackeray's connection with Virginia Woolf is of major importance. When Leslie Stephen remarried after the death of his first wife (Anny's sister, Minny Thackeray), Anne Thackeray became Aunt Anny to Virginia and the other Duckworth-Stephen children. Aunt Anny was the model of a female writer for the young Virginia Stephen; later Virginia used her aunt as the basis for her characterization of Mrs. Hilbery in Night and Day.

Although not an activist, Anny espoused the feminist point of view before it had a name. Contemporary critics are starting to find Anny a genial subject, and yet much more work needs to be done. The recent biography by Winifred Gérin, and many recent articles as well, give Anny the prominence she deserves. Through the work of Gérin and others it is no longer true, as it was for a long period in this century, that Anny is mentioned only rarely and then in passing. This addition to the published body of Anny's writing was prepared in the hope that it will encourage further interest in her and her works.

Any discussion of Anne Thackeray Ritchie must consider both the woman and her work. She was a woman of great warmth, imagination, and sensitivity. Above all, she was a writer. She wrote letters, journals, introductions, essays, reminiscences, short stories, and novels. She began at a very early age, and she wrote until she died: on scraps of paper, in notebooks, on anything that would hold her words. She published twenty-one books, but her books represent only a portion of her creativity.
In the late 1800s and the early 1900s most of Anny's books went into several printings and were published in Europe and in the United States as well as in London. Her introductions to Thackeray's works provided much needed biographical material about him, and set a pattern for personal introductions. Among her five novels, Old Kensington, the best known, describes her life with Thackeray during the years when he wrote Vanity Fair, Pendennis, and Henry Esmond. Because she was Thackeray's daughter and social companion, she knew intimately the men and women of literary and artistic London. Years later, when she wrote about them, her reminiscences were evocative but uncluttered. She had known them as her father's friends and they had responded to her without the distancing of a public persona.

Of her writings, those that most illuminate the woman and her great gift for life and also demonstrate her ability as a writer are her letters and journals. This book offers the reader an ample selection of Anny's most interesting letters, her complete journals written in 1864–65 and 1878, and a number of significant letters written to her. As we learn about Anny through her writings, we also learn about Thackeray, the mainspring around which she built her life, and about the Victorian literary world in which she played a major role.

What I originally perceived as an addendum to Thackeray scholarship—an intimate look at him through his daughter's eyes—soon took on a life of its own. With the discovery of more and more letters, my knowledge of Anny grew, and so did my sense of her inheritance of genius. Because she was both a writer and a Victorian, her correspondence was prodigious. Through the letters selected here I have tried to account for Anny's character as well as her career. From the beginning Anny's correspondence was incisive and revelatory. Her ease with words, her joy in writing, and her humor manifest themselves in her earliest letters and provide corroborating evidence of her growth as a writer. Anny's early writing was nurtured and encouraged by Thackeray. Overshadowed by her father, Anny was content to be Thackeray's daughter. It was not until after he died that her talent expanded in the freedom that his death afforded.

Anny's writing, as illustrated by her letters and journals, is a worthy legacy to the modern reader. The 1864–65 journal and the 1878 journal bear detailed discussion. Started shortly after Thackeray's death, the 1864–65 journal is an eloquent and evocative statement of a daughter's love for her father written within an elegant hard-bound journal with a brass clasp lock. Disclosing intimate details of their life together, the
picture of Thackeray which emerges substantiates Gordon Ray’s positive conception of him in *Thackeray: The Age of Wisdom*. With some additions the 1878 journal goes over much the same ground as the earlier one, but demonstrates Anny’s changed outlook on life. Fourteen years older and married, she recounts for her niece the episodes that bear retelling for a child. Although the journal is polished and charming, and reflects her own happiness, it nevertheless reveals her fears and insecurities. The journals, particularly the 1864–65 journal, are documents that stand on their own literary merit. Because they deal so fully with both Anny and her father, they are doubly important.

The largest portion of the manuscripts and letters presented here come from the major Anne Thackeray Ritchie collection of the late Gordon N. Ray, now in The Pierpont Morgan Library in New York. These letters and journals have been supplemented by additional letters written by Anny, located in collections both in England and in the United States, as well as letters from Anny’s intimates and friends located in the Ray collection and in other repositories. This book neither exhausts the Ray collection nor the wealth of Anny’s correspondence in other repositories; rather, it presents enough of Anny’s nonfictional prose to suggest her interest as a person and importance as a writer and literary figure. The greater part of Anny’s two journals, as well as the letters from the Ray collection, have not been previously published: in the case of the journals, less than a third. Anny herself used the journals as source material for the introductions to her father’s works. Because she was the author of the phrases borrowed, she had the privilege of editing, but not of changing content. This she never did. However, Anny’s daughter, Hester Ritchie Fuller, not only corrupted the text but used it without footnotes or attribution in her books *Thackeray and His Daughter* and *Thackeray’s Daughter*. She borrowed phrases and entire sentences, attributing them to “Family History,” transposing them, and silently editing not only the style but the content. More recently, Ray accurately transcribed and attributed small portions of the journals and five of the letters in his works: *Thackeray: The Uses of Adversity, The Age of Wisdom*, and *The Buried Life*. Gérin also used extracts from the journals in her recent biography. By publishing the journals in their entirety and within a context created by the letters it is hoped that a much fuller and coherent picture of Anne Thackeray Ritchie will be formed than has previously been available.
Of all the dilemmas encountered, the one I have most wrestled with concerns her name. From childhood she was “Anny.” As was then the custom, her first writings in periodicals were unsigned, but her first book was attributed to “Miss Thackeray.” After her marriage she signed her letters “Anne Ritchie”; her books still bore the name “Miss Thackeray” and in parentheses “Mrs. Richmond Ritchie.” When her husband was knighted, she signed herself “Lady Ritchie” in her published work. To call her “Anny” as a child seemed natural. When I discussed her adult work, it became a problem. To call her “Thackeray” before she was married led to confusion. To switch to “Ritchie” once she was married, led to further havoc, particularly in the chapter in which her husband Richmond Ritchie becomes crucial. And so, with few exceptions, she remained “Anny,” as she did to her friends.
Editors' Note

ALTHOUGH contemporary practice, with which we generally agree, is to use last names of female as well as male writers, we have left Dr. Shankman's more familiar use of "Anny" throughout for her voice as editor. Her many years of working with these intimate records created quite naturally a friend, with whom she, if not we, had a right to be on a first-name basis.

Dr. Lillian Shankman wrote in her introduction to this work, "My intention is to present the letters as close to their original state as possible." The editors decided, following Dr. Shankman, to preserve the casual and spontaneous quality of the original letters and journals. No silent emendations have been made, except as indicated in the following principles, which have been developed to assure the consistency and readability of the letters and journals presented here.

1. It has often been difficult to distinguish between the author's formation of capital and lower case letters. Unless the author's intention is clear, we have let logic dictate.
2. Anne Thackeray Ritchie frequently used her own symbol "\(\wedge\)" for the word "and"; this has been printed as the more common symbol "&."
3. Ritchie's dashes, sometimes longer and shorter in her hand, have been regularized.
4. Words not satisfactorily ascertained have been followed by a question mark placed within brackets. An attempt had been made to indicate, within brackets, the number of illegible words.
5. "[Sic]" has been used to indicate misspellings and other errors in the manuscript where the reader might otherwise be confused; we have not marked normal variations in informal spelling or other punctuation, which occur frequently, especially in children's writing. We have not attempted to point out Ritchie's errors in foreign languages, but have provided a translation where helpful.
Editors' Note

6. Ritchie did not consistently indent paragraphs. If a line stops short and a new sentence begins on the left margin, this intentional lacuna is indicated in the text by an indented paragraph.

7. Inserts that seem to have been made at the time of writing by Ritchie have been included in their intended place without comment. Words that have been crossed out have been given in a footnote if they are of interest. All words added at a later time by her or by a different hand are indicated as such in a footnote.

8. Dates have been consistently placed on the right, where they are almost always found. Postmarks are clearly marked as such, and placed within brackets. Dates established through direct references in the text are given in brackets; dates established through other references or our guesswork are given in brackets followed by a footnote. Letters without a firm date are placed at their earliest possible date. Addresses are provided only when they occur in the letters.

9. Dr. Shankman attempted to present the complete text of each letter and each journal. When any portion of a letter is missing, this has been noted. This most frequently occurs when the signature has been cut off, most likely for autograph seekers.

10. Through the generosity of Ohio State University Press, we have provided reproductions of Ritchie's sketches on letters whenever we have been able to obtain suitable copies, which was possible in the vast majority of cases. They show another inherited genius, for inspired doodles. They are placed where they occur in the flow of text unless otherwise noted.

We wish to thank Richard D. Altick, for most helpful suggestions; John W. Bicknell; Betty Coley; Leon Edel; Carol Hanbery MacKay; Helen Young of the University of London Library. Alex Holzman and the staff of the Ohio State University Press have been most accommodating in every stage of our work.

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ing journals, available in the attractive and useful form developed by Dr. Shankman.

Letters, journals, and other materials from Ritchie and the Thackeray family are here published by kind permission of Mrs. Belinda Norman-Butler. Letters by Robert Browning, Henry James, and Leslie Stephen are published by courtesy of John Murray, Alexander James, and Quentin Bell, the respective copyright owners.

A.B.B.
J.M.