After the "bitter bark" of "Catherine," Thackeray was determined for a time to leave a sweeter taste in readers' mouths. "The Judges stand [up] for me: Carlyle says Catherine is wonderful, and many more laud it highly, but it is] a disgusting subject & no mistake. I wish I had taken a pleasanter one," he wrote to his mother,¹ as his "romance of Mrs. Cat" was dropping its "gloomy green curtain." For the next year and a half or so he seems to have been floundering about for a congenial subject. After his attempt to make moral philosophy out of popular melodrama, he switched to the farcical treatment of politics with The Bedford-Row Conspiracy, "stolen from the French" of Charles de Bernard, and transplanted to an English borough, with the altercations of Whigs and Tories furnishing a backdrop of intrigue to an appealing tale of love and courtship.² A Shabby Genteel Story, a sophisticated and somewhat acrid modern adaptation of the Cinderella story set in a Margate rooming house, was left dangling in mid-course, owing to Thackeray's own domestic difficulties, not to be taken up again until The Adventures of Philip.³ The direction in which Thackeray was moving is indicated, perhaps, in another letter to his mother, written early in 1840; "I don't see why you should not care a fig for ordinary people wh is what ... I wanted to paint. ... I hope to get to something stabler and better, and not fritter away time as now."⁴

In September of the following year, readers of Fraser's Magazine were greeted with the first installment of The History of Samuel Titmarsh and The Great Hoggarty Diamond.⁵ Thackeray's biographer has
suggested that *The Bedford-Row Conspiracy* may have led him to attempt in this "history" a comparable story purely English in background and inspiration. Like its predecessor, *The Great Hoggarty Diamond* is tough in fiber, but tender at its core, dealing with the triumph of pure young love over the corruptions of the world. However, for its richness of humor and depth of characterization it may well qualify as the "something stabler and better" that Thackeray promised his mother. It is a tale of swindling and of unselfish devotion, of candor as well as of self-delusion. Domestic in setting, and with a quite "ordinary" clerk for its hero, it is at the same time panoramic in sweep, taking in town and country, Fulham, the West End, and Fleet Prison, and its population ranges among peers, parvenus, and poor. In tone it is at once more cheerful and more plaintive than Thackeray's readers had been accustomed to from him, resembling those songs sung by its hero, Samuel Titmarsh, and his friend Gus Hoskins in a relaxed moment—"both comic and sentimental."

On its surface *The Great Hoggarty Diamond* is an elementary fable about gold (in this instance a jewel) turning to dust and ashes in its owner's hands. It also illustrates the familiar maxim about touching pitch. The hero (a cousin of Michael Angelo Titmarsh, who has "edited" the story), struggling along on his pittance as thirteenth clerk of the West Diddlesex Fire and Life Insurance Company in Cornhill, and aspiring to marry his country sweetheart, Mary Smith, receives from his wealthy Aunt Hoggarty of Dublin a diamond pin, a family heirloom. At first disappointed in not receiving a more substantial gift of money, Sam finds to his joy that this treasure enhances him in various material ways. First it raises him in eminence among his fellow employees; then his employer Mr. Brough, hoping to add Aunt Hoggarty to his list of investors, plays up to Sam, promoting him to third clerk and introducing him to his family; eventually, as the rumor of Sam's aristocratic connection spreads, he gains entrance into higher society.

Ultimately, however, Sam's good fortune boomerangs. To keep up his position in society he buys fine clothes and fine furniture, plunging himself thereby into debt. When Aunt Hoggarty comes to live with him and his young bride, he is led into more extravagant living habits. Aunt Hoggarty is inveigled by Brough into investing in the West Diddlesex Association, which proves to be a paper empire and collapses. Mr. Brough flees to the continent, leaving Sam to bear the brunt for his boss's misdeeds. After a period in prison, Sam is exonerated, obtains another position, and feels well
rid of the diamond, which he had pawned. The patience of his long-suffering wife, Mary (whose ordeals have included the death of their infant child), elicits the moral set forth in the concluding chapter, entitled "In Which It Is Shown That A Good Wife Is The Best Diamond A Man Can Wear In His Bosom." Thackeray was out to make amends for Catherine indeed!

The basic human vanities—greed, social climbing, and bragga­docio—that motivate so many of Thackeray's characters are set down here in good spirits rather than in malice. There is a purpos­ive naïveté about the characters, who have the well-marked attributes of figures in chapbooks or from popular theater. Young Samuel Titmarsh is the essence of clerkdom—obsequious, gullible, eternally optimistic. His young bride, Mary, is the country girl of solid rural virtues—simple, staid, and sterling in her loyalty. The shrewish Aunt Hoggarty combines the raucous biddy of Irish farce with the fairy godmother of children's stories (the godmother in this tale proving to be a stepmother-witch). Mr. Brough, chairman of the directors of the Independent West Diddlesex Fire and Life Insurance Company, which "did a tremendous business in the fig and sponge way," is a model Mr. Moneybags. The Reverend Grimes Wapshot, his accomplice, who marries Aunt Hoggarty for her "protection" and eventually makes her a widow once more, is an evangelical Tartuffe. Subsidiary figures, such as the clerk Roundhand, Lord Bagwig, Lady Drum (Doldrum in the magazine version), Lady Fanny Rakes, the tailor Von Stiltz (Abednego in the magazine version), and generic place names such as Slopperton and Squishtail evoke the world of the didactic fable.

Various chapter headings sustain this fantasy motif: "Tells How The Diamond Is Brought Up To London And Produces Wonderful Effects Both In The City And At The West End"; "How The Possessor Of The Diamond Is Whisked Into A Magnificent Chariot, And Has Yet Further Good Luck"; "How Samuel Titmarsh Reached The Highest Point Of Prosperity." This sense of a charmed life is carried forward intermittently by allusion. Sam considers himself to be favored by Providence: "See, thought I, what I have gained by Aunt Hoggarty giving me a diamond-pin! What a lucky thing it is that she did not give me the money, as I hoped she would! Had I not the pin—had I even taken it to any other person but Mr. Polonius [the jeweler who mounts the pin], Lady Drum [who introduced him into society] would never have noticed me; had Lady Drum never noticed me, Mr. Brough never would, and I never should have been third clerk of the West Diddlesex" (chap.
He refers in this episode to "the magic of the pin." The sparkle and illumination of the diamond put him in mind of "the history of Coggia Hassan Alhabbal in the 'Arabian Nights'" (chap. 5), in which a diamond found by accident brings a poor man prosperity.8

As Sam comes to recognize that his hopes have been buoyed up by a bubble no more substantial than Mr. Brough's business empire, The Great Hoggarty Diamond expands into a real-life parable of the delusive fancy that cheats itself. One chapter heading, "In Which It Appears That A Man May Possess A Diamond And Yet Be Very Hard Pressed For A Dinner," is typical of the common sense interposed here and there that prepares us for Sam's rude awakening. More subtle is the superimposing throughout the story of the everyday world of getting and spending upon the timeless universe of fable. Concrete detail pins Sam's adventures precisely down to time and place. The years covered are from 1822 to 1825, a fact of significance, as will be brought out later. The diamond pin presented to Sam by his aunt originated as a locket "of Dublin manufacture in the year 1795" and was worn by Sam's uncle at the battle of Vinegar Hill. The Independent West Diddlesex Fire and Life Insurance Company, where Sam goes to work, is given not only a name but a local habitation—in Crutched Friars, in Cornhill, in the City. The assets of the firm of Brough and Hoff are opened to audit: "I was told in the strictest confidence that the house one year with another divided a good even thousand pounds: of which Brough had half, Hoff two-sixths, and the other sixth went to old Tudlow, who had been Mr. Brough's clerk before the partnership began." Sam's mother "had sunk a sum of four hundred pounds in the purchase of an annuity at this office, which paid her no less than six-and-thirty pounds a year, when no other company in London would give her more than thirty-four." Sam has a well-marked niche in the hierarchy of Brough and Hoff—thirteenth clerk in a retinue of twenty-four.

As for sense of place, residences are located with the exactness of a London guide, not only that of the Titmarshes (No. 3, Bell Lane, Salisbury Square, near St. Bride's Church, Fleet Street), but also the Roundhands' domicile in Myddleton Square, Pentonville, the Broughs' rus in urbe at Fulham, and Lady Jane Preston's great house in Whitehall Street. We learn not only where these storied people live and work, but where they shop as well. The jewelry establishment of Mr. Polonius is in Coventry Street, off St. Martin's Lane. Mr. Von Stiltz, the tailor, is in Clifford Street; the ices and supper that furnish forth the Broughs' soirée, even the footmen
borrowed for the occasion, are supplied by the quite palpable Mr. Gunter of Berkeley Square; Sam purchases his black satin stock at Ludlam's in Piccadilly. We even know where some of our friends carouse, for example at the Yellow Lion and at the Poppleton Arms in Grumpley.

Witnessing Sam's precipitate rise in life allows us also a brief glimpse at the sartorial fashions of the early 1820s. Sam remembers precisely what he was wearing when he met Lady Jane and the Countess of Drum: "I had on that day my blue coat and brass buttons, nankeen trousers, a white sprig waistcoat, and one of Dando's silk hats, that had just come in in the year '22, and looked a great deal more glossy than the best beaver" (chap. 3); later, bolstered up by Mr. Brough and his own apparent prosperity, he orders from Von Stiltz "two of the finest coats ever seen, a dress-coat and a frock, a velvet waistcoat, a silk ditto, and three pairs of pantaloons, of the most beautiful make." There is also much mouth-watering gustatory detail: the gift of red peaches, luscious grapes, and venison from Lady Jane's garden and park; the "turbitt and sammon with immense boles of lobster sauce" enjoyed by Aunt Hoggarty at the Brough mansion. The "illustrations" promised, but not delivered, by Michael Angelo Titmarsh are supplied by the graphic narrative.

We learn something also of the family background of the genealogy-conscious figures in this "History." Aunt Hoggarty qualifies for Thackeray's gallery of the "small great" Irish Snobs, with her stickpin heirloom and the legendary Castle Hoggarty. Lady Jane claims to know "all the Hoskinses in England," presumed ancestors of Sam's friend Gus, third son of a leatherseller in Skinner Street. At Brough's establishment in Fulham, Sam confronts "a grave gentleman out of livery . . . in a chocolate coat and gold lace, with Brough's crest on his button" (chap 7). Captain Fitzigig, suitor to Mr. Brough's daughter Belinda, claims kinship with such peers of the realm as the Duke of Doncaster, the Earl of Crabs, and the Earl of Cinqbars (the second and third of whom some readers might have remembered conducting themselves rather ignobly in, respectively, "The Amours of Mr. Deuceace" and "A Shabby Genteel Story"). We are thus early plunged into the Thackerayan social swim of toadies and tuft-hunters.

Just as young Samuel Titmarsh has his head in the clouds, but his feet firmly planted in the City and in the West End, so his "history," with its plethora of factual information on finance, clothing, and home economy, fixes its readers' eyes on the London of the
Scheherazades of the press—the writers for *John Bull*, the *Morning Post*—and *Fraser’s Magazine for Town and Country*. The line between fact and fiction could be a thin one indeed in the last-named journal, to judge by the titles of some of the articles that surrounded *The Great Hoggarty Diamond* on its original publication. Among pieces that appeared earlier in the year that are pertinent to matter of the tale were: “On Manners, Fashion, and Things in General . . . The Philosophy of Fashion,” by Captain Orlando Sabertash; and “Memorials of Gormandizing. In a Letter to Oliver Yorke, Esq.,” By M. A. Titmarsh. Political and religious issues debated in such editorials as “Our Foreign Policy and Home Prospects”; “The Literary Labours of Daniel O’Connell, Esq., M.P.”; and “Dissent, 1841” find their echoes in the fulminations of Aunt Hoggarty and in the preaching of the Reverend Grimes Wapshot. The collapse of the West Diddlesex Empire of Mr. Brough is anticipated in “The Condemned Cells. From the Notebooks of the Ordinary . . . The Confessions of a Swindler.”

The background events to *The Great Hoggarty Diamond* are very much in the foreground in the lead article, “The End of the Beginning,” that opened the issue of *Fraser’s* in which the first chapters of the story also ran. This article sounds a general hurrah over the latest elections, which brought the Conservative party back into power after a ten-year rule by the Whigs, a decade marked, according to this commentator, by a continuous course of political and financial bungling. Among other things, this leader writer shares Aunt Hoggarty’s disdain for her countrymen. “As for those odious Irish people . . . don’t speak of them: I hate them, and everyone of their mothers,” she exclaims, according to Sam’s report, in a moment of pique over a lawsuit connected with her family property (chap. 1). The writer of “The End of the Beginning” was also finding the Irish “odious,” though for political rather than personal reasons. Among his sources of irritation with the outgoing Melbourne administration was its “truckling,” as he regarded it, to O’Connell and his repeal movement. Reference to O’Connell’s agitation for repeal of the Union of 1798 evokes memories here of the late civil war, as does the Dublin brooch that Sam receives from his aunt at the beginning of his “history.” In the middle of this jewel, we soon learn, is represented Uncle Hoggarty dressed in “the scarlet uniform of the corps of Fencibles to which he belonged.” This very brooch, according to family tradition, was worn by Sam’s uncle at the battle of Vinegar Hill and miraculously preserved his life in
the bloody fray that saw the defeat of the Irish by General Lake. The resultant Union, we infer from the editorial pages of Fraser's, has proved as unstable as Aunt Hoggarty's temper.

Closer to the nerve center of Sam Titmarsh's predicament is the denunciation in this article of the late un lamented Whig government for their mismanagement of finances. Lord John Russell is labeled unequivocally as "facile princeps charlatonorum." The occasion for the abuse is the administration of the New Poor Law, rather than investment or speculation, but this writer conveys the vivid impression that a whole new generation has been victimized, as Sam Titmarsh turns out to be, into a delusive hope for a quick rise of fortune. "When the Whigs entered upon office," the leader writer recalls, "we all expected such economy from their management, and their luminous political theories, that ere long the national debt would only afford matter of speculation to the historian, whilst everything would become so cheap that our paupers could afford to take houses in St. James's Square, and live on French wines and pâtés de foie gras de Strasbourg." But, we are informed, the event proved otherwise, as a good number of humble folk suffered a fate that sounds very much like that wrought on Sam Titmarsh, his aunt, and his mother by Mr. Brough: "Let us render them [the Whigs] full justice. How they did squeeze poor old dowagers... Many a poor clerk who thought his hard earnings and scanty living had taught him what economy was, learned that Whig economy was to make those who were poor already poorer still, and teach them who lived on cheese to be content in the future with cheese-parings."15

Titmarsh's comeuppance, however, occurs, he reminds us, "some score of years ago, when, as the reader may remember, there was a great mania in the City of London for establishing companies of all sorts; by which many people made pretty fortunes" (chap. 2)—while many others were wiped out, he might have added. For the benefit of those who might have forgotten this "great mania," the writer of "The End of the Beginning" joggles their memories of "the panic of 1825," mainly to credit the Conservative party for pulling the country out of the resultant depression, which he lays at the door of the Whig administration. This panic came along in the wake of the wild wave of speculation recalled by Sam Titmarsh, investor in Mr. Brough's enterprises, capitalized at five million sovereigns, and paying off (in its brief heyday) 6½ percent a year. Sam hints at other sources of Brough's income: "He was a great
man on 'Change, too. . . . the young stockbrokers used to tell us of immense bargains in Spanish, Greek, and Columbians, that Brough made” (chap. 2).

Sam Titmarsh was not, of course, the only young man temporarily ruined by ill-advised speculation during this era of stock watering and unregulated currency. Among his better-known contemporaries who shared his fate was Benjamin Disraeli, whose first publication was not a novel or a political tract, but a pamphlet entitled An Enquiry Concerning the Plans, Progress and Policy of the American Mining Companies (1825), one of a series promoting what proved to be worthless companies. The Mr. Brough in young Disraeli’s life was J. D. Powles, principal partner of a leading firm of South American merchants, who prevailed on the future statesman to speculate in shares of new mining companies, particularly in emergent Latin American republics, such as the Anglo-Mexican Mining Association and the Columbian Mining Association. One recognizes here at least two of Mr. Brough’s “Spanish, Greek, and Colombians.” This line of investment had been abetted by the policy of George Canning, the Foreign Minister, to encourage the new republics of the Western Hemisphere, but dissentient voices were raised, mainly those of Lord Liverpool, the prime minister, and Lord Eldon, the lord chancellor, who issued warnings against the spreading gambling fever. Disraeli’s pamphlets were intended to counteract Lord Eldon’s alarms, but Eldon proved to be all too accurate a prophet of doom. The unhealthy financial situation was further aggravated by the incompetence of Lord Vansittart, who succeeded Eldon as chancellor of the exchequer, and during the spring of 1825, almost simultaneously with the collapse of the West Diddlesex Association, the bottom fell out of the mining-share market.

This embarrassing episode in Disraeli’s life is alluded to in that semiautobiographical fantasia on the follies of youth Vivian Grey, where Powles is disguised as Mr. Millions, and Isaac D’Israeli (who had been unhappy about his son’s paper schemes) as Mr. Grey. Vivian is duly warned by his father: “Here dashed by the gorgeous equipage of Mrs. Ormolu, the wife of a man who was working all the gold and silver mines in Christendom. ‘Ah! my dear Vivian,’ said Mr. Grey, ‘it is this which has turned all your brains. . . . This thirst for sudden wealth it is, which engenders the extravagant conceptions, and fosters that wild spirit of speculation which is now stalking abroad. . . . Oh, my son, the wisest has said, “He that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent.”” So Vivian Grey
learns too late along with Sam Titmarsh, but the financial embarrassment of Thackeray's hero (like his own, which always hovers behind any of his situations involving money) proves temporary, unlike that of the creator of Vivian Grey, who was saddled with debt for years after the misadventures of his early years.

The "thirst for sudden wealth," the quest after paper El Dorados, spins the plots of much of the fiction of the 1830s that elevated financial speculation into matter for moral speculation. Sitting in the British Museum early in 1840 "casting about for some other subject" now that Catherine was off his hands, Thackeray had one of the most popular of these tales very much in mind. While waiting for some books to be delivered to him, he wrote to his mother: "There is a story called Ten thousand a year in Blackwood that all the world attributes to me, but it is not mine—only better: it is capital fun: of a good scornful kind." Samuel Warren's "tallow-faced counter jumper" of a hero, Tittlebat Titmouse, clerk in Mr. Tag-rag's drapery shop, living wretchedly on his thirty-five pounds a year while he dreams of pennies from heaven, sprang from the pages of Maga in the fall of 1839 to become the quintessential cockney upstart to many an early and mid-Victorian reader. The author makes clear very early that he meant his book for more than "capital fun," as he breaks into his naïve young hero's daydreams with a sermon:

"Hope springs eternal in the human breast." And probably, in common with most who are miserable from straitened circumstances, he often conceived, and secretly relied upon, the possibility of some unexpected and accidental change for the better. He had heard and read of extraordinary cases of LUCK. Why might he not be one of the LUCKY? A rich girl might fall in love with him—that was, poor fellow! in his consideration, one of the least unlikely ways of luck's advent; or some one might leave him money; or he might win a prize in the lottery;—all these, and other accidental modes of getting rich, frequently occurred to the well-regulated mind of Mr. Tittlebat Titmouse; but he never once thought of one thing, viz., of determined, unwearying industry, perseverance, and integrity in the way of his business, conducting to such a result!

Is his case a solitary one?—Dear reader, you may be unlike poor Tittlebat Titmouse in every respect except one! (Chap. 1)

As one might expect, the histories of Titmouse and the similarly named Titmarsh bear a resemblance, in outline if not in detail. Both young clerks enjoy a sudden windfall which proves an ill wind. Titmouse, like Titmarsh, tastes an illusory prosperity,
brought about in his case through the manipulations of an un­
scrupulous lawyer who leads the ignorant draper's assistant to be­
lieve himself true heir to an estate and income of ten thousand a
year illegally held by a distant kinsman. His aristocratic connec­
tions, as with Titmarsh, open doors previously closed to him, but he
goes young Sam one better by entering the ranks of the squirearchy
and marrying an earl's daughter. Titmouse outdistances Tit­
marsh also in his pseudodandyism: "figged out in his very utter­
most best, with satin stock and double breastpins; his glossy hat
cocked on one side of his head, his tight blue surtout, with the
snowy handkerchief elegantly drooping out of the breast pocket;
straw-coloured kid gloves, tight trousers, and shining boots, his
ebony silver-headed cane held carelessly under his arm!" (bk. 1,
chap. 10). Sam Titmarsh, arriving at Mr. Brough's country house
in Fulham in his dress, coat, silk stockings, and pumps, is riding for
a fall no less than Tittlebat Titmouse, arriving at the house of Mr.
Tag-rag, and subsequently at the more stately mansion of the Earl
of Dreddlingcourt, bedecked in his foppery, but Titmouse suffers a
heavier one. The ground gives out under young Tittlebat's feet
when his claim to his ancestral estate is voided through discovery of
his illegitimacy, and he ends his days in a madhouse.

Ten Thousand a Year and The Great Hoggarty Diamond both illus­
trate the folly of what Carlyle called Mammonism, but Thackeray's
fable has a buoyancy lacking in Warren's more grisly exemplum.
Thackeray had reason at this time, as has already been observed, to
avoid Warren's "scornful kind" of humor. Also, he had a basic
sympathy with his erring young clerk (whose experience, after all,
to an extent paralleled his own), whereas Warren never conceals his
utter contempt for his shop man. Sam is naïve, but basically good;
Tittlebat Titmouse, on the other hand, is both ignorant and mean,
a "pint pot," according to his creator, and perpetrator of "gentle­
manly frauds." Oily Gammon, the shyster lawyer who victimizes
Titmouse, is likened to a snake wrapped around a monkey. Warren
condemns materialism and social climbing out of strong moral con­
victions, but also from a viewpoint that strikes one as somewhat
patronizing and patrician. His antihero is conceived as "no more
than an average sample of his kind," that is, of the working-class
man who overreaches, and as such he is contrasted with "true nobil­
ity" as represented by the ideal squire Mr. Aubrey, the rightful
owner of the estate at Yatton from which he is temporarily dis­
placed by the presumptuous cockney, Titmouse. It is noteworthy
that the Aubrey family along with their only begetter were later
inscribed in Thackeray's Book of Snobs.
The sharpies and charlatans who frisk through *The Great Hogarty Diamond* place this story among Thackeray's "rook and pigeon" tales (Mr. Brough's country house, in fact, is called "The Rookery"). At the beginning of one of them, "Captain Rook and Mr. Pigeon," Thackeray refers to "the romances of Adam Smith, Malthus and Ricardo, and the philosophical works of Miss Martineau," in recognition presumably of the reputation the last-named lady then enjoyed as priestess of the mysteries of political economy. Harriet Martineau also had witnessed the financial crisis of 1825, her father's bombazine manufacturing business in Norwich being one of the numerous enterprises that went under at that time. She thus acquired a rough education in economics early in life, refined through a study of James Mill's writings (which helped her to understand what happened to her father), and was determined to pass her hard-earned wisdom to the reading public in a more easily accessible form. So were conceived her *Illustrations of Political Economy*, a series of tales launched in 1832, extending eventually, with the addition of two more groups, to some thirty-four volumes, in which she set out literally to "illustrate" the recondite laws of the free marketplace through "pictures of what these principles are actually doing in communities."

What Hannah More had sought to do for the common man's spiritual salvation in the *Repository Tales*, Harriet Martineau attempted to do for his material weal through the gospels of the Manchester school of economics. As she has a curate remark in one of the tales: "All fair means of improving the temporal condition are, or ought to be, means for improving the moral state of the people." She had for precedent Mrs. Marcet's *Conversations on Political Economy* (1829), in which a young girl is instructed by her tutor on such topics as savings banks and land allotments through a series of questions and answers (on the order of Mangnall's *Questions*). This format of the secular catechism was extended by Miss Martineau into lengthy dialogues on wealth and poverty, accompanied by incidents dramatizing the working out of Malthusian and Ricardian doctrine, particularly as expounded in James Mill's *Elements of Political Economy*. Her *Illustrations* span the range of economic phenomena as they were then understood, subsumed under the production, distribution, and consumption of wealth. There are tales to represent a Hobbesian "state of nature" (the Crusoe-like "Life in the Wilds"); the benefits of the enclosure movement ("Brooke of Brooke Farm"); the immorality of slavery ("Demerara"); the need for Malthusian celibacy and "preventive" checks on population growth ("Ella of Garveloch"); the evils of low wages and
factory working conditions ("A Manchester Strike"); and the advantages of free trade ("For Each and For All").

Whether Thackeray exerted the patience to plow through Miss Martineau's entire five-foot shelf of ready economics education is doubtful, but he seems to have read at least one of the more delightful of the tales, "Berkeley the Banker," intended to bring out the havoc of unrestricted currency issue. A leading figure in the story, set in the period preceding Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo, is a shady investment banker named Mr. Cavendish who brings ruin down on his head, and on a number of people who have put their trust in him, when he is detected in the forgery of notes. However, before his disgrace he has enriched himself by underselling grain merchants and extending his paper trading to a point where his cash reserve is dangerously low (in the manner of Hoff, partner to Brough, who brings the West Diddlesex Corporation to bankruptcy by endorsing bills for the Jamaica Ginger Beer Company and the Patent Pump Company, both of which prove insolvent). The immediate cause of the demise of Mr. Cavendish is the introduction of foreign corn on the English market at the conclusion of the Napoleonic wars, not the failure of mines, banks, and ginger beer firms, as with Mr. Brough, but the outcomes of their manipulations are similar. Both escape from England, leaving a young assistant to face the music. Mr. Cavendish transfers his operations across the sea: "The family are now flourishing at New York," we are told in the epilogue, "where, by their own account, are concentrated all the talents and virtues requisite of the genius of Mr. Cavendish, the accomplishments of Mrs. Cavendish, and the respective brilliant qualities of all the Masters and Misses Cavendish." As for the destiny of Mr. Brough, we learn through the edited account of Sam Titmarsh: "Since he vanished from the London world, he has become celebrated on the Continent, where he has acted a thousand parts, and met all sorts of changes of high and low fortune" (chap. 13). Here, to judge by the success of Robert Macaire and other mountebanks as already recounted by Sam Titmarsh's cousin Michael in The Paris Sketch Book, Mr. Brough must have found as ready a market for his wares as did Mr. Cavendish.

The Great Hoggarty Diamond and Berkeley the Banker both expose human gullibility and cupidity, but Miss Martineau traces Cavendish's success to infraction of economic order more than of moral order: "Such were his means and such the principles of his profit, means which could be plausibly acted upon, only in the times of banking run mad, when the currency having been desperately tampered with, the door was opened to abuses of every sort; and
the imprudence of some parties encouraged the knavery of others, to the permanent injury of every class of society in turn" (chap. 4). Along with such dicta interspersed through the tales, her general practice, lest her "pictures" were not in themselves sufficiently instructive, was to end each volume with a "Summary of Principles." And so the fate of Mr. Cavendish's victims leaves its indelible sermon on paper: "Great evils, in the midst of many advantages, have arisen out of the use of paper money, from the neglect of measures of security, or from the adoption of such of those as have. Issues of controvertible money have been allowed to a large extent, unguarded by any restriction as to the quantity issued."  

Nevertheless Miss Martineau was convinced that "Example is better than precept," as stated in the motto attached collectively to the Illustrations of Political Economy. Thackeray later put this motto in the mouth of one of his fictitious elderly mentors, Mr. Brown, who had been commenting to his nephew on a "silly and sentimental book which I looked over at the Club, called the 'Foggarty Diamond' (or some such vulgar name)." So in The Great Hoggarty Diamond, together with other "magazinery" such as "Cox's Diary," a tale of the rise and fall of a barber temporarily enriched by an inheritance he is not legally entitled to; "The Amours of Mr. Deuceace" and "Mr. Deuceace in Paris," Charles Yellowplush's sagas of gambling dandies; and "The Fatal Boots," a fable of a debt incurred at school that plagues a man through life, Thackeray drew his own "illustrations of political economy," or at least of the fortuitous ways of money. Furthermore, in The Great Hoggarty Diamond the "editor" appends the "principles" illustrated by the tale, in the manner prescribed by Miss Martineau, as he takes his farewell, "bidding all gents who peruse this, to be cautious of their money, if they have it; to be still more cautious of their friends' money; to remember that great profits imply great risks; and that the great shrewd capitalists of this country would not be content with four per cent for their money, if they could securely get more: above all, I entreat them never to embark in any speculation, of which the conduct is not perfectly clear to them, and of which the agents are not perfectly open and loyal." It might be argued that one need not have journeyed to Manchester or sat at the feet of Ricardo to come to these conclusions, but such is Thackeray's perfunctory nod to "fable-books, where you are obliged to accept the story with the inevitable moral corollary that will stick close to it."  

In his offhand way with the moral fable, Thackeray betrays some kinship with Theodore Hook, a fellow contributor both to Fraser's Magazine and the New Monthly Magazine. Among Hook's more
popular writing was his series of tales with the collective title *Sayings and Doings* (1824–28), whose purpose was set forth in the Shakespearean motto that originally adorned the title pages of its nine volumes: “Full of Wise Saws and Modern Instances.” His avowed purpose in these “Sketches from Life” was “to judge, by the events of real life, the truth or fallacy of those axioms which have been transmitted to us with a character for ‘usefulness and dignity: as conducive to the understanding of philosophy, of which they are the very remains, and of which they are adapted to persuade.”38 A devotee of the Parisian stage before Thackeray made its acquaintance, Hook claimed to have derived the scheme for *Sayings and Doings* from the popular French plays known as *proverbes*, in which maxims were acted out by illustrative incidents.39 Feeling that the point of these *proverbes* was all too frequently blunted in English translation, Hook decided (as he indicates in a preface) to produce their equivalent in fiction, while drawing his examples from English life. Far from suggesting that life be regulated by proverbs, Hook stated that his intention was to select from his experience events in which people unconsciously exemplify proverbs in their conduct. In brief—as the covering title for the series signifies—the “doings” of modern men and women are compared with the “sayings” of the ancient sages.

Its plots concocted out of intrigues, counterintrigues, mischances, and the fortuities of fate, *Sayings and Doings* can be candidly described as a series of devious tales with dubious morals. To illustrate the motto “There’s many a slip twixt the cup and the lip” Hook fabricated an ironical and somewhat chilling story of a young man who rescues his sweetheart from an unwanted marriage, is prevented himself from marrying her by the young lady’s scheming mother, and finally, when, after numerous obstacles, they are free to wed, his beloved dies. Another story, bearing the twin mottoes “Look before you leap” and “Marry in haste, repent in leisure,” concerns two brothers, a sentimental one who marries an Irish beauty purely for love, and a more circumspect one, who makes a “prudent” match with the wealthy, but unattractive and phlegmatic, daughter of a nabob. Both brothers, it turns out, are “done,” for the two wives turn out to be equally disagreeable.40

The world of these moral fables, as these samples may indicate, is a rather harsh one. The narrator is generally a tough-minded worldling, cynical about men and their motives. One of the author’s spokesmen is the significantly, if not subtly, named Mr. Humbug, head of a family whose various members are given to some foolish
excess or other (the mother is addicted to romantic literature; Humbug himself tries futilely to preserve his youth; the eldest daughter is snobbish, the middle one prudish, the younger one pedantic), altogether exemplifying the maxim, “All is not gold that glitters.” Declares Humbug at the end of this story: "'Tis the way of the World . . . where there is most pretension, there is the least merit," and so most of the stories confirm. All manner of humbugs flit through the sleazy society conjured up by Hook, made up in equal part of gulls who fly too high and the cormorants who prey on them. Here are swindlers, parasites, parvenus, maneuvering mothers, snobs, hypocrites, opportunists, and innocents—often young lovers and newlyweds.

Hook’s coarse-grained social world is not far removed from that of Thackeray’s "rook and pigeon" stories, and one of the tales in Sayings and Doings, called “Danvers,” is, in fact, quite close to The Great Hoggarty Diamond. Thomas Burton, the hero of this story (intended to illustrate the saying “Too much of a good thing is good for nothing”), is an up-and-coming young lawyer newly married to the daughter of a Somerset baronet. The smooth course of their marriage is ruffled by the young wife’s wealthy and crotchety uncle Frumpington Danvers, who indulges the young couple in extravagant gifts that turn out to be white elephants. Upon the death of the uncle, the Burtons inherit most of his fortune, a curse, as things develop, rather than a blessing. In order to receive the uncle’s money, Burton has to adopt the name of Danvers, which he is pleased to do, but adopting the style expected of them with their new affluence forces the newlyweds to live beyond their means. The estate they purchase becomes a constant drain on their finances; they accumulate expensive pictures, furniture, gold plate, and ornaments (including diamonds). Worse still, their attempts to move in the “best” society involve them in all manner of gaucheries.

In time the prosperity of the Burtons brings about a series of disasters. Young Danvers tries to go into politics, engaging in a campaign that amounts to a costly failure. The combination of a drop in the market and crop failure in the West Indies, together with his overextended speculations, ruins him financially. After a year in prison, he is happy to return to his own class of society and resume his former simpler way of life. With a few divergences, the basic pattern of Sam Titmarsh’s history is anticipated here, down to the sentimental conclusion. “How fervently do I thank my God that by His Providence I have been taught what to value in this transitory world and what reject,” declares the chastened Thomas Dan-
vers (né Burton), "that I have seen the worthlessness of wealth, and find the real value of virtue and religion." To this amen is added a benediction, as the hero passes his hard-earned wisdom on to his seven daughters:

"It is here, my children," said Danvers, pointing to his wife, "it is here that I possess my Treasure; to your mother I owe not only the means by which I have purchased the experience so beneficial to myself and these my dearest and best beloved, but to her I am indebted for the correction of all my indiscretions, for the excitement and encouragement of every right feeling which I possess.

"It is," continued he, "in the possession of a fond, faithful and amiable wife, and such dear pledges as these which now surround me with the power of doing good, and the blessings of that peace of mind which the Disposer of all events vouchsafes to those who devoutly seek it, that man possesses real happiness upon earth."

Young Danvers's tribute to his Mary is directly echoed in the title of the last chapter of *The Great Hoggarty Diamond*, where Mary Titmarsh is praised as "the best diamond a man can wear in his bosom." Hook and Thackeray both revert to homiletics to assert the triumph of spiritual goods over those things that moths and rust corrupt. However, one detects a hollow ring in the preachments of the sly Hook. Mary Danvers is indeed the "means" by which he learns his lesson, her uncle having started them on their unfortunate course. We infer besides that young Burton is henpecked and that his wife uses her humility as a guise to dominate him. His concluding sermonette, then, could be taken as a sign of her success. One does not doubt the sincerity of Titmarsh (Mary Smith, after all, was based in part on Thackeray's Isabella), but, as will appear later, the conclusion of his history is not without its tinge of irony either.

Thackeray is at one with Hook in the ridicule of those who seek quick and easy ways to wealth, eminence, and social position, and both authors mock false aspiration in general. The narrator of "Danvers" remarks of the efforts of the newly rich young couple to break into society: "In short there is always some drawback, some terrible qualifier in the affair, which it would be difficult distinctly to define, but which invariably gives the *air bourgeois* to all the attempts of upstart wealth to imitate the tone and manner of the aristocracy of our country." A certain amount of the comedy of *The Great Hoggarty Diamond*, too, is derived from mudlarks adopting the plumage of peacocks. Titmarsh, to his credit, knows his limitations:

And now I should be glad to enlarge upon that experience in genteel life which I obtained through the perseverance of Mrs. Hoggarty;
but it must be owned that my opportunities were but few, lasting only for the brief period of six months: and also, genteel society has been fully described already by various authors of novels, whose names need not be here set down, but who, besides being themselves connected with the aristocracy, viz., as members of noble families, or as footmen or hangers-on thereof, naturally understand their subject a great deal better than a poor young fellow from a fire-office can. (Chap. 10)

Through his alter ego Thackeray pelts away at what was to be a favorite target—the society novelists then in vogue. In a sarcastic article that had appeared earlier that year in Fraser's, "On Manners, Fashions, and Things in General" by one Captain Orlando Sabertash, the writers of "Mr. Colburn's menage" are lumped together with parvenus as social gate crashers:

To place myself at once on the elevated pedestal which belongs to me, let me here explain the great difference existing between these, my compositions, and the works of all others who, from Dandy Bulwer to Dowdy [Frances] Trollope, have written on modern manners: it is easily shewn out, and settles at once the value of our relative pretensions. The fashionable novel-writers cannot distinguish just tact and real elegance of manners from what I am forced to term vulgar gentility: from the half breeding that an ordinary intercourse with society will bestow, even on the ignorant, illiterate and vulgar minded. Like all others, these writers can distinguish between the polished gold and the unpolished brass; but they cannot, like the skilful metallist, distinguish between the pure metal, and the base but superficially polished ore.44

Thackeray had already introduced readers of Fraser's to such "members of noble families" as Count von Galgenstein, the Earl of Crabs, and Lord Cinqbars. They also had seen society through the eyes of one of the "footmen or hangers-on of noble families," Charles Yellowplush, who has moved in "exquizzit suckles" and has been inside "Holmax and Crockfuds." Samuel Titmarsh gives us still more pictures of "vulgar gentility," if necessarily fleeting ones. He runs into none other than Charles Yellowplush, who by now has left the employ of "the Honrable Halgernon Percy Deuceace, youngest and fifth son of the Earl of Crabs" to become servant in livery to Lord and Lady Preston. As guardian of this domicile, Yellowplush refuses admittance to Aunt Hoggarty, unimpressed by her descent from "the Hoggartys of Castle Hoggarty." Sam's aunt is a particularly blatant specimen of the Irish snobs who, as Thackeray was to write later, "are on their knees still before English fashion—these simple wild people; and indeed it is hard not to grin at some of their naive exhibitions."45 Sam reports with a straight
face her attempts at playing the *grande dame* with her "*shy dewvers, bongtong*" and "*ally mode de Parry.*" He also bears witness to her wearing of "*yellow satn*" at "*two ellygant (though quiet) evening-parties by my hospattable host*" Mr. Brough, where "*Lord Scaramouche handed me to table*" and "*everything was in the most sumptious style*"—on the basis of her unique epistolary accounts (chap. 9). One taste of fashion is sufficient to set Aunt Hoggarty off on a binge of "*trumpery imitations*" of the mode—hiring a fly, donning a wig, and applying the rouge, which, according to Sam resulted in "*such a pair of red cheeks as Nature never gave her.*" Other indulgences by her strain the Titmarsh economy, such as her forcing her nephew and his young wife to set up a servant in livery wearing buttons representing "*the united crests of the Titmarshes and Hoggartys, viz., a tomtit rampant and a hog in armour*" (chap. 10). Her madcap course is finally brought to a halt by her futile efforts to gain entrée into the Preston establishment and her snub by Lady Drum at the Opera House. These setbacks turn her from "*the vanities of this wicked world*" to the ministering attentions of her rescuer from "*the bottomless pit,*" the Reverend Grimes Wapshot.

Aunt Hoggarty is only one of many examples in this story of brass passing itself off for gold. Through Sam Titmarsh's ingenuous eyes we also meet the coronet-worshipping clerk Gus Hoskins, with his imitation gold neck chain; Mrs. Roundhand of Pentonville, wife of another of Sam's fellow clerks, who regularly consults the Peerage and lives in memory of waltzing with Count de Schloppenzollern at the City ball; Mrs. Brough, with her French cook and gold-epauleted butler in chocolate livery; her affected daughter Belinda who likes to drop French phrases; the pseudodandy Tidd, with his Byron ribands and turned-down collars; his rival, the foppish Captain Fitzigig, ever busy with his quizzing glass. Needless to say, most of the gold that glitters in this story proves to be fool's gold, from the silly, garrulous Lady Drum, to her grandson-in-law, the pompous, vicious-tempered Lord Preston, to the down-at-heels son of Lord Deuceace (another holdover from Yellowplush's memoirs), whom Sam finds in debtors' prison being kowtowed to by fellow inmates as though they themselves were Bond Street bucks. "*I have seen sauntering dandies in watering-places ogling the women, watching eagerly for steamboats and stage-coaches as if their lives depended upon them, and strutting all day in jackets up and down the public walks,*" Sam recalls. "*Well there are such fellows in prison: quite as dandified and foolish, only a little more*
shabby—dandies with dirty beards and holes at their elbows" (chap. 12). The paths of glory and fashion lead to the Fives Court, where the shabby dandy rubs tattered elbows with the shabby genteel.

Whatever Thackeray's opinion of fable books with moral tags, he pays lip service to the practice, if with tongue in cheek. Along with aphoristic chapter headings and Sam's little economics lessons, the proper moral atmosphere is set by "exemplary" characters. Besides the Reverend Grimes Wapshot, there is that model financier John Brough, "a great man among the Dissenting connection," charitable with his purse, who will accept no clerk "without a certificate from the school master and clergyman of his native place, strongly vouching for his morals and doctrine," and whose firm, moreover, was looked upon by city and country "for order, honesty, and good example" (chap. 2). He is the paragon of prudence, at least according to his own lights: "Those who know John Brough, know that ten years ago he was a poor clerk like my friend Titmarsh here, and is now worth half a million. Is there a man in the House better listened to than John Brough? Is there any Duke in the land that can give a better dinner than John Brough; or a larger fortune to his daughter than John Brough?"; "I'm a man,—a plain, downright citizen of London, without particle of pride... This is the way that we live, Titmarsh, my boy: ours is a happy, humble, Christian home, and that's all" (chap. 7). Sam himself is given to finger wagging, as when he cautions his friend Gus against idling on Sunday, and reads to him from Blair's sermons (chap. 4). Now and then he addresses a wise saw to the reader ("When rogues fall out, honest men come by their own" [chap. 10]).

Yet such morals as are to be gleaned from the story itself are far from comforting ones. The most important lesson that Sam learns from Mr. Brough is the vast distance between precept and practice, or, as Hook might have put it, between men's sayings and their doings. Sam himself offers ample evidence that the armor of commonplace wisdom does not shield one from folly. Moreover, it is certainly no conventional moral tale whose villain not only goes unpunished, but for whom his victim acquires a certain amount of respect. Learning of Mr. Brough's resettlement and temporary rehabilitation on the continent, Sam remarks: "One thing we may at least admire in the man, and that is, his undaunted courage; and I can't help thinking, as I have said before, that there must be some good in him, seeing the way in which his family are faithful to him."
As for "the best diamond" Sam is left with, it is made clear that his good wife has been as much a material as a spiritual benefit to him. Sam is quick to throw his wife into the struggle for existence, as nurse in the home of Lord and Lady Tiptoff, when his own fortunes are on the wane: "And though some gents who read this, may call me a poor-spirited fellow for allowing my wife to go out to service, who was bred a lady and ought to have servants herself," Sam rationalizes, "yet, for my part, I confess I did not feel one minute's scruple or mortification on the subject. If you love a person, is it not a pleasure to feel obliged to him? And this, in consequence, I felt. I was proud and happy at being able to think that my dear wife should be able to labour and earn bread for me, now misfortune had put it out of my power to support me and her" (chap. 13). Mary's endearing herself to the Tiptoff family has the collateral result of helping Sam find new employment. Eventually, despite all his blunders and gaucheries, Sam becomes a rich man again, but through a whim of Aunt Hoggarty rather than by his own efforts. After cutting him out of her will, Sam's aunt decides to leave him her estates when she learns of his connection with Lord Tiptoff. Hence he benefits in the long run from Aunt Hoggarty's social climbing ambitions, an outcome that may seem to undercut traditional bromides about Mammon worship. As Sam Titmarsh basks in unearned prosperity, at the happy conclusion of his history readers of the time may well have been left wondering just what sort of a moral his misadventures are supposed to convey. The best answer seems to be "that dubious one ... which every man may select according to his own mind."46

Samuel Titmarsh is certainly no model of that "determined, unwearying industry, perseverance, and integrity in the way of business," the Hogarthian ideal promoted by Samuel Warren in *Ten Thousand A Year*, any more than is Warren's own "hero" Tittlebat Titmouse, but the consequences are not so dire for Sam. Both young men, however, are the sport of "the blind jade Fortune in her mad vagaries," whom Warren invokes as he foretells the doom of poor Titmouse. This deity, as Warren reminds us, has a way of bestowing "her shifty boons benign" haphazardly and unpredictably (bk. 1, chap. 2), and we also watch her alternately smile and frown on Titmarsh. Sam himself tends to attribute his weal and his woe alike, not so much to prudence and the deficiency thereof, as to that intangible influence he refers to from time to time as "luck." It brings him the diamond in the first place, with temporary prosperity and social success, and at the end Sam concludes
that “the disappearance of that ornament had somehow brought a
different and better sort of luck into my family,” and appreciates
“the great good fortune my dear wife’s conduct procured for me”
(chap. 13). Luck then appears in this history to be as capricious as
the fluctuations of the paper market and of Aunt Hoggarty’s
moods. In his poem “Vanitas Vanitatum,” Thackeray was to
categorize the Goddess Fortune as both irrational and amoral:

How strange a record here is written!
Of honours dealt as if in joke;
Of brave desert unkindly smitten.

O Vanity of vanities!
How wayward the decrees of Fate are;
How very weak the very wise,
How very small the very great are!

Are we to conclude from The Great Hoggarty Diamond that man-
kind is entirely at the mercy of blind chance? Sam himself, who,
with all the foolishness he has been capable of, is at heart sensible,
seems to feel that we are at least as much the victims of our own
natures. The “mania” for speculation that he recalls is only one of
the excesses illustrated in his story. Lady Drum, for one, “had, it
appeared, the mania for fancying all the world related to her”
(chap. 3). “Mania” too is the word for Aunt Hoggarty’s obsession
with imitating fashion, her subsequent (and short-lived) religious
fanaticism, and her various mental storms and rages. High society
is an inflated bubble no less than high finance in this fable that
fuses the Arabian Nights with the Silver Fork novel and Illustrations
of Political Economy. Against the delusions of fancy so delightfully
represented here are posed the virtues of common sense, the “reg-
ularity” and “honesty” exemplified by Sam Titmarsh and his wife
Mary. To this tale of a diamond lost and won Thackeray might
have appended the subtitle of Dr. Watts’s treatise on logic that he
seems to have taken to heart—The Right Use of Reason.

Just how much or how far reason prevails among men either in
life or in fiction remains a moot question. It is the Commissioner of
the Bankruptcy Court who suggests to the victimized Sam, as he
passes sentence on him, that “your story is not likely to get into the
newspapers; for, as you say, it is a private affair. . . . But if it could
be made public, it might do some good and warn people, if they will
be warned, against the folly of such enterprises, as that in which
you have been engaged” (chap 12). Sam’s story eventually is made public, though in a half-hearted way and not at his own behest. “Though I am no literary man myself,” he writes in conclusion, “my cousin Michael (who generally, when he is short of coin, comes down and passes a few months with us) says that my Memoirs may be of some use to the public (meaning, I suspect, to himself); and if so, I am glad to serve him and them, and hereby take farewell.”

Titmarsh’s memoirs, however, seem to have been generally ignored by “the public” on their first appearance. As Thackeray’s own luck had it, at least two rejections preceded their publication in Fraser’s, and there was no immediate call for a reprint. To be sure, the story had its early admirers, notably John Sterling: “What is there better in Fielding and Goldsmith? The man is a true genius; and, with quiet and comfort, might produce masterpieces that would last as long as any we have, and delight millions of unborn readers,” he predicted in a letter to his friend Thomas Carlyle. But his praise did not at this time secure a wide audience for The Great Hoggarty Diamond any more than Carlyle’s had for Catherine. Thackeray himself retained a soft place in his heart for this little gem, referring to it on one occasion as “the best story I ever wrote.” To a French friend he recommended it for translation as “un joli petit livre a mon idée d’une bonhomie et simplicité affectées peut être.” To Mrs. Brookfield he confided: “I have been rereading the Hoggarty Diamond—upon my word and honour if it does not make you cry I shall have a mean opinion of you. It was written at a time of great affliction when my heart was soft and humble.” He was referring to the death of one of his and Isabella’s children that had occurred in 1839, paralleled by an episode in the story (chap. 12), which to one of its late reviewers “surpasses in beauty and pathos . . . anything by Dickens.”

As it happened, this story that provokes such mixed emotions, written for money and for love, uniting much that was personal to Thackeray with so much that was at the time topical, did not reach book publication until 1849, when his publishers, Bradbury and Evans, were, as he says in the preface, “bold enough to venture upon producing the ‘Hoggarty Diamond’ in its present connected shape.” By this time they were hardly taking a risk, as Thackeray insinuates, for he was now the celebrated author of Vanity Fair, and Pendennis was beginning to appear. The Great Hoggarty Diamond was, in fact, advertised in the last number of Vanity Fair, and one disadvantage of its reaching the larger public so belatedly is that critics
tended to measure it against this epic, next to which it naturally fell short. One critic, however, noted a "family likeness" to the later cynical-sentimental history, and another regretted that it had not attracted more attention when it first came out, for to him it loomed as "a Mountain of Life" above its class of periodical writing.54

"My kind friends, the publishers of this little book, appear to have a very high opinion of the virtue of prefaces, and demand one for the present occasion in terms so urgent, that it is impossible to refuse a compliance with their petition," Thackeray explained to his enlarged public of 1849. So from the well-rewarded author we get more tacked-on "principles" à la Miss Martineau:

Those enterprising men are anxious that the moral of the tale, viz., that speculations are hazardous, and that honesty is the best policy, should be specially pointed out to the British public. But that moral is spoken a thousand times every year. Are not the newspapers full of advertisements about California? Have we not the Railway Share List as a constant monitor? It was after paying a call, with a very bad grace, that I thought to myself ruefully,—why did I not remember the last page of The Great Hoggarty Diamond?55

Because prudence sometimes comes a little too late, and parsons do not practice what they preach, shall there be no more advice, and no more sermons? Profit by it or not; at least the present discourse is not very long.

A different "moral corollary" is offered about this time by the worldly Mr. Brown to the nephew whose social education he is supervising through the pages of Punch in time for him to take notice of "this little book":

Magnificence is the decency of the rich—but it cannot be purchased with half-a guinea a day, which, when the rent of your chambers is paid, I take to be pretty nearly the amount of your worship's income. This point, I thought, was rather well illustrated the other day, in an otherwise silly and sentimental book which I looked at over at the Club, called the 'Foggarty Diamond.' . . . Somebody gives the hero, who is a poor fellow, a diamond pin: he is obliged to buy a new stock to set off the diamond, then a new waistcoat, to correspond with the stock, then a new coat, because the old one is too shabby for the rest of his attire;—finally the poor devil is ruined by the diamond ornament, which he is forced to sell, as I would recommend you to sell your waistcoat studs, were they worth anything.56

There are other repercussions. Becky Sharp claims to have rented the diamonds she wears to her presentation at court from none other than Mr. Polonius of Coventry Street. As for Lady Claver-
ing, the nabob’s daughter in *Pendennis*: “Her account at her London banker’s was positively known, and the sum embraced so many cyphers as to create many O’s of admiration in the wondering hearer. It was a known fact that an envoy from an Indian Prince, a Colonel Altamont, the Nawaub of Lucknow’s prime favourite, an extraordinary man, who had, it was said, embraced Mahometanism, and undergone a thousand wild and perilous adventures, was at present in this country, trying to negotiate with the Begum Clay- ering, the sale of the Nawaub’s celebrated nose-ring diamond, ‘the light of the Dewan’” (chap. 7). Such rumors are sufficient to win the Begum entrée into circles normally barrred to those with her infra dig manners and grammar. Nor does the trail of the diamond end there. Sam Titmarsh’s story seems to be starting all over again on a loftier plane and more than a century earlier with Henry Esmond, whose aunt, the Viscountess Esmond, intercedes for him at Court: “My lady made feasts for him, introduced him to more company, and pushed his fortunes with such enthusiasm and success, that she got a promise of a company for him through the Lady Marlborough’s interest, who was graciously pleased to accept of a diamond worth a couple of hundred guineas, which Mr. Esmond was enabled to present to her ladyship through his aunt’s bounty, and was promised that she would take charge of Esmond’s fortune” (bk. 2, chap. 5).

Thackeray obviously did not forget *The History of Samuel Titmarsh and the Great Hoggarty Diamond*, and he did not let his readers forget it either, however much they may have taken its “sermon” to their bosoms. But the last word seems to have been pronounced by the Commissioner of the Bankruptcy Court, who originally urged Sam to make his story public: “But what’s the use of talking . . . here is one rogue detected, and a thousand dupes made; and if another swindler starts tomorrow, there will be a thousand more of his victims round this table a year hence; and so, I suppose, to the end. And now let’s go to business, gentlemen, and excuse this sermon” (chap. 12). Or, in the immortal words of Robert Macaire, who, like Mr. Brough, has managed to combine the careers of financial swindler and moralist, “Le jour va passer, mais les badauds ne passeront pas.” Do as I say, not as I do, saith the preacher. “*O mea culpa, mea maxima culpa!*” Thackeray was to write twenty years later. “But though the preacher trips, shall not the doctrine be good?” For now he had in mind for the readers of *Fraser’s Magazine* another story of Irish luck, and this a quite unsentimental one.
THE GREAT HOGGARTY DIAMOND

1. 11–15 February 1840, Letters, 1:421.

2. *The Bedford-Road Conspiracy* first appeared in the *New Monthly Magazine* 58 (January, March, April 1840) and was reprinted the following year in *Comic Tales and Sketches*, vol. 2.

3. *A Shabby Genteel Story* appeared in *Fraser's Magazine* 21 (June 1840); 22 (July, August, October 1840). The setting is probably owing to Thackeray’s having taken his wife, Isabella, to Margate for a rest early that year when she displayed alarming mental symptoms. He cut the story short abruptly with the October number, unable to sustain the mood when it became necessary for him to take Isabella to the continent for medical aid. This story will be considered in a later chapter in connection with *The Adventures of Philip*.


5. 21 (September–December 1841). Its subsequent publishing history will be taken up later in the chapter.


7. He is based in part on the Reverend Cartwright, the title villain of Frances Trollope’s *The Vicar of Wrexhill* (1837), which quotes from Molière’s play on its title page. Thackeray reviewed this novel, among several others, in “Our Batch of Novels for Christmas,” *Fraser’s Magazine* 17 (January 1838): 79–92.

8. In this tale a ropemaker, having lost two gifts of money from one benefactor, receives a piece of lead from another. He gives the lead to a neighbor, a fisherman, to weight a net. In return the neighbor gives him a fish that turns out to have a diamond inside its belly, and through the diamond the ropemaker becomes wealthy. In time the diamond finds its place in the treasury of the Caliph Haroun Alraschid, to whom the ropemaker narrates the story. It is intended to illustrate the truism that “money is not always a certain means to get money and become rich.” Thackeray twists the tale about by having the diamond bring his hero to poverty.

9. In his “Plan for a Prize Novel,” Thackeray later satirized this device in an “advertisement novel,” in which he demonstrates how novels can join in collusion with merchants. Here is a sample paragraph: “Lady Emily was reclining on one of Down and Eider’s voluptuous ottomans, the only couch on which Belgravian beauty now repose, when Lord Bathershins entered, stepping noiselessly over one of Tomkin’s elastic Axminster carpets. ‘Good heavens, my Lord!’ she said—and the lovely creature fainted. The Earl rushed to the mantelpiece, where he saw a flacon of Otto’s eau-de-cologne, and, &c.” (*Punch* 20 [1851]; *Works*, 6:556).

10. When the story first appeared in *Fraser’s Magazine*, it was announced as “Edited and Illustrated by Sam’s Cousin Michael Angelo,” but no cuts or plates accompany this version. The uniformity of the original heading with “*Comic Tales and Sketches*. Edited and Illustrated by Michael Angelo Titmarsh,” published earlier that year by Hugh Cunningham, suggests that Thackeray was hoping to reprint *The Great Hoggarty Diamond* as a third volume in that series. In a letter of 1 June 1841 to Richard Bentley, Thackeray writes: “Have the goodness to give my MS. of the Diamond to my friend Mr. Cunningham. I can’t get any answer from you good bad or indifferent.” (Fales Library, New York University; Ray, *The Uses of Adversity*, p. 478, n. 3). One infers from this letter that Thackeray tried to place the story in *Bentley’s Miscellany* before *Fraser’s* accepted it, but why Cunningham might have turned it down for book publication is unknown—possibly because *Comic Tales and Sketches* was not a success.

11. Edited at the time when the story takes place by Theodore Hook, one of the writers imitated by Thackeray.

12. January, June, February, May, and June 1841, respectively. “Orlando Sabethash” is identified by Miriam Thrall, the historian of *Fraser’s*, as John Mitchell. “Titmarsh,” of course, is Thackeray writing to Maginn as “Oliver Yorke.”

13. February, March, and April 1841.


15. Ibid., pp. 256–57.

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Bane biography is the source of much of the detail that follows. Of these early pamphlets Blake remarks: "For one destined to be a master of the art of fiction, this literary debut was perhaps not inappropriate, but it is an odd beginning for a future Chancellor of the Exchequer."


19. *Ten Thousand a Year* was published in book form immediately after its conclusion in *Maga* in August 1841. Mrs. Oliphant, the historian of the Blackwood firm, recalled late in the century that it "attracted a great deal of attention, and combined caricature with sentiment, the ridiculous with the exalted, in a manner which delighted the public" (*Annals of a Publishing House*, 2 vols. [Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1897], 2:32). It was revised by its author several times, and reprinted intermittently through the century, both in England and in America. In his introduction to the final version of 1854, Warren characterizes the book as "exhibiting in the course of natural events the aspect socially, professionally, politically, and religiously of English society," and considers it "an enormous engine for developing and testing the character of man, individually and collectively." He quotes a letter from an admirer in Kentucky who attributed his rise from mechanic to an important position in society to the example of Warren's model gentleman Charles Aubrey, and who had named his daughter after Mr. Aubrey's daughter Kate.

Although Warren clearly thought of himself as a contributor to the literature of "self-help," Thackeray's references to *Ten Thousand a Year* call attention mainly to its humor. See in particular his essay "The Dignity of Literature," where he alludes to "the famous history of the firm of Quirk, Gammon and Snap," and "De Finibus," where he recalls the episode of Titmouse's green hair produced by a dye palmed off on him by an unscrupulous perruquier.

20. Thackeray had introduced the name Titmarsh as an alter ego before Warren's story began its run in *Maga* (October 1839), but he may have given it to Sam with Warren's hero in mind. In one episode of *Ten Thousand a Year*, a character mistakenly refers to Titmouse at a dinner as "Titmash" (bk. 1, chap. 10). A letter indicates that Thackeray tried to place *The Great Hoggarty Diamond* in *Maga*, but was rejected (2 January 1847 to William Edmounstone Aytoun, *Letters*, 2:262).

21. There are also analogous characters, e.g., the merchant Mr. Tag-rag, a forerunner of Sam's employer Mr. Brough, who also has an affected wife and daughter; and the dissenting minister, the Reverend Dismal Horror, who anticipates the Reverend Grimes Wapshot, Aunt Hoggarty's spiritual counselor.


Michael Steig suggests that Warren modeled his hero in part on his rival Dickens, who was conspicuous at the time for his showy dress. See his "Subversive Grotesque in Samuel Warren's *Ten Thousand a Year*," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 24 (September 1969): 163. If so, the reincarnation of Titmouse in Pip of *Great Expectations* is an outstanding case of literary cross-fertilization.

23. For his "pictures of genteel life," Warren is placed, along with Bulwer, Disraeli, Mrs. Gore, and Mrs. Trollope, among the "Literary Snobs" (chap. 16). Because of their longings for their dinners with great families in the midst of their temporary indigence, the Aubreys are included among déclassé snobs in "Snobs and Marriage" (chap. 34). See *Works*, 6:358, 420–21.


25. R. K. Webb has pointed out that Miss Martineau also followed the discussions of economic problems in her local newspaper the *Globe*, and suggests that she may have heard reports of Cobbett's lectures in Norwich (Harriet Martineau [New York: Columbia University Press, 1960] pp. 59–60).


27. "Berkeley the Banker," chap. 1 (Mr. Craig speaking).

29. Prior to the launching of the Illustrations, she had written two tales on economics subjects for the publisher Houlston—"The Rioters," suggested by an account of machine breaking in the Globe, and "The Turn-Out," on the subject of wages (Webb, Harriet Martineau, p. 99), but the method of the Illustrations was suggested by her reading of Mrs. Marceet.

30. Although set early in the century, the story is based in part on her memory of her father's tribulations with a Norwich bank (Martineau, Autobiography, 1:181).

31. Edgar Morrison, of "Berkeley the Banker," however, is a weak-willed accomplice, not an innocent dupe like Sam Titmarsh.

32. See "Caricatures and Lithography in Paris." On Robert Macaire and his success, Michael Angelo Titmarsh remarks: "Will this satire apply anywhere in England? Have we any Consolidated European Blacking Associations amongst us? Have we penniless directors issuing El Dorado prospectuses, and jockeying their shares through the market? For information on this head, we must refer the reader to the newspapers; or if he be connected with the City, and acquainted with commercial men, he will be able to say whether all the persons whose names figure at the head of the announcements of projected companies are as rich as Rothschild, or quite as honest as heart could desire" (Works, 5:159). Another analogue is the hero of Jérôme Paturot, a favorite novel of Thackeray's (see above, pp. 126-28), whose hero is inveigled into becoming the treasurer of the Imperial Bitumen Company, the manager of which subsequently disappears with the treasury of the firm (see "Jérôme Paturot," Works, 13:390).

33. R. K. Webb has pointed out that these summaries are taken almost verbatim from James Mill's Elements of Political Economy.

34. Conclusion to vol. 5.


36. His two cartoons contributed to the Anti-Corn Law Circular (1839), ed. Richard Cobden, entitled "Illustrations of the Rent Laws," suggest parodic echoes of Miss Martineau's later series Poor Laws and Paupers Illustrated (1833) and Illustrations of Taxation (1834).

The first of these, with the caption "Poles Offering Corn," shows foreign grain merchants prevented from bringing their sheaves ashore by a minister and military officers, with dead and starving figures behind them. The second, bearing the legend "The Choice of a Loaf," shows a poor man being forced at gun point to purchase a loaf of bread at Is, while at the next booth Polish bread is offered at 4d a loaf (partially rpt. in Stray Papers, frontispiece; pp. 167-68). So much for "free trade!"

37. Irish Sketch Book, chap. 15; Works, 5:405 (relating to The Adventures of Captain Freeny, which Thackeray admired for its straightforward amorality). See below, chap. 7.


39. In chap. 3 of "The Ravenswing" (one of the "Men's Wives" series originally published in Fraser's, June 1843), Thackeray appended this note: "A French proverbe furnished the author with the notion of the rivalry between the barber and the tailor [Mr. Eglantine and Mr. Woolsey]." A French scholar has traced this allusion to a proverbe acted out by characters in Charles de Bernard's novel La chasse aux amants (1841). See R. Maître, "Nouvelles sources françaises de Thackeray," Études anglaises 17 (January-March 1964): 56-61.


42. Hook died while The Great Hoggarty Diamond was running in Fraser's. An obituary article on him appeared in the October issue.

43. Sam's wife comes from Somerset, the locale of chap. 1 of The Great Hoggarty Diamond.

44. January 1841, p. 53. The author of this article is identified as John Mitchell in Wellesley Index, 2:370.
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46. Irish Sketch Book, chap. 15.
47. See above, nn. 10, 20.
49. Letter to Aytoun, Letters, 2:262.
52. Godey's Lady's Book 38 (February 1849).
53. The book was attractively designed, with simulated vellum boards, green flowered borders, and, for its centerpiece, a medallion containing the Hoggarty locket. The title page represents four children (one resembling Thackeray) holding up the diamond stick pin. The text includes the illustrations promised in the title of the magazine version. These alternate between the comic (Sam drinking the rosolio with his aunt; Gus Hoskins looking enviously at Sam riding in an open carriage with Lady Drum and Lady Jane; Mrs. Roundhand rattling away to an obviously bored Sam; and Sam literally walking on air at Mr. Brough's ball) and the sentimental (Sam courting Mary Smith by a hay rick; Mary holding the baby of Lord and Lady Tiptoff in her arms; and an especially stark one called "The Common Lot" showing Sam and Mary weeping over the cradle of their dead child).
   The first book publication occurred in America (New York: Harper, 1848), about two months before that of Bradbury and Evans, but was not so elaborate.
55. Ill-fated railway speculations bring ruin to the hero of Thackeray's "The Diary of C. Jeames De La Pluche, Esq" (Punch, 2 August 1845), published in America in Appleton's Popular Library with the subtitle A Tale of the Panic of 1845.
56. 24 March 1849, p. 115; Works, 6:607.
57. Works, 5:165.