Chapter Nine

As "Vanity Fair" was drawing to its close in July 1848, the Advertiser attached to its last number was able to announce the first number of a new novel from its author's pen and pencil for the coming fall. The History of Pendennis: His Fortunes and Misfortunes, His Friends and His Greatest Enemy had a "hero" in its title, unlike its predecessor, but issued in the familiar yellow wrappers, in twenty-two monthly numbers concluded by a double number, and "illuminated" by its author "on wood and steel," it looked like more of the same. One of its first reviewers, in fact, complained that "it cannot be described as an advance of 'Vanity Fair.' It is rather like a pair of volumes added to that story,—containing the results of a second ramble among the booths, the wild-beast shows, and the merry-go-rounds of that chaos of folly, vice and charlatanry." "Why must Mr. Thackeray be always 'going to the fair?" asked this reviewer. "His authorship seems in some danger of becoming a performance on one string with several variations, but all in the same key, and all on the same theme of 'Humbug everywhere.'"

Thackeray's publishers, Bradbury and Evans, certainly emphasized this continuity in associating the author of Pendennis with Punch, connecting his name in the first number (November 1848) not only with Vanity Fair but with The Book of Snobs as well. The characters of the new novel indeed move about in the Punch orbit, particularly that described in a panoramic series by Richard Doyle entitled "Mr. Pips His Diary. Manners and Customs of Ye Englyshe in 1849," which includes glimpses of "Ye Fashionable Worlde
Takynge Its Exercye In Hyde Parke," "A Drawynge Room Day. Saynte James His Streete," "A Prospect Of Greenwich Fair," "Ken-
syngton Gardens With Ye Bande Playing There," "Socyetye Enjoy-

To more discerning readers, however, a certain shift of focus must have been evident in the new novel, superficially defined by some features of the *Punch Almanack for 1849*. This annual opens with "The Young Man's Almanack" dispensing tips to the real-life Arthur Pendennis and Harry Fokers on how to conduct oneself in fashionable places: "The fashion varies with every place you visit. For instance, you may keep your hat on at the casino; but it is scarcely considered good manners to do so at the Opera. . . . A cigar may be lighted with good effect in the corridor of the Adelphi, when the audience is coming out; but you would hardly attempt such a thing in the crush-room of her Majesty's Theatre." Bachelors are warned not to be too smug: "It is a sure sign of a cruel disposition if you see a person standing outside of St. George's, Hanover Square, deriving pleasure in watching the poor bridegrooms take the fatal leap from their carriages into the church. He who has no pity for others, depend upon it, will receive none himself, when his own fate is sealed!" Pearls of "wisdom" are strewn about: "Staring at a lady under her bonnet, is considered very much beneath a gentleman"; "A 'rising young man' is one who rises regularly—not later than eight o'clock; a 'promising young man' is one who pays his tailor not later than a twelvemonth after he has promised him"; "The old pay with money—the young with compliments."

In a matching "Lady's Almanack," the inevitable man trap opens its jaws wide, with marriage manoeuvering as rife as in a novel by Mrs. Gore. Young female readers are advised as to *The Best Partners*: "The oldest for whist, the youngest for dancing, and for marriage, which-ever you can"; and on *The Matrimonial Market*: "Buy in the cheapest, and sell in the dearest." As for *Courtship*: "A lover should be treated with the same gentleness as a new glove.
The young lady should pull him on with the utmost tenderness at first, only making the smallest advance at a time, till she gradually gains upon him, and twists him ultimately round her little finger.” At Christmas time the real-life Laura Pendennis, Blanche Amorys, and Fanny Boltons were greeted by the cheery face of Punch presenting a bouquet of mistletoe to a pretty maiden with this “Caution”: “Mr. Punch, desirous of combining the best counsel with the best mirth, is trembly anxious to inform the Young—especially Young Ladies—that, of those very Mistletoe Berries that seem so bead-like and so innocent, BIRDLIME IS OFTEN MANUFACTURED, wherewith unconscious Birds of Paradise are frequently caught, and what is dreadful to reflect upon—caged for the natural term of their life!”

This tone of urbane banter accompanying advice to youth, “combining the best counsel with the best mirth,” is set by the opening of *Pendennis*, where Major Pendennis finds among his morning mail at his club in Pall Mall a letter from the young hero’s mother, his sister-in-law, entreating this sophisticate to extricate “my dearest boy” from his childish infatuation with an actress. Readers were into the fifth number of *Pendennis* (March 1849)—by which time Miss Fotheringay was out of young Pen’s life—when a new series was inaugurated by Thackeray in *Punch* entitled “Mr. Brown’s Letters to His Nephew.” In these social vignettes the elder Brown stands in much the same relationship with his nephew Robert (“My dear Bobby”) as Major Pendennis continues with his nephew Arthur. “As you have now completed your academical studies and are about to commence your career in London,” writes Mr. Brown in his first letter to young Bob Brown, now reading law at the Inner Temple, “I propose, my dear Nephew, to give you a few hints for your guidance.” Uncle Brown, like Uncle Pendennis, addresses himself more to his young ward’s avocations than to his vocation. “It is not . . . with regard to your duties as a law-student that I have a desire to lecture you,” he assures young Bob, “but in respect of your pleasures, amusements, acquaintances, and general conduct and bearing as a young man of the world.”

“It is not learning, it is not virtue, about which people inquire in society. It is manners,” affirms this old man of the world (letter 2). The worldly concerns of Mr. Brown pretty well circumscribe also the social side of *Pendennis*: “On Tailoring—And Toilettes In General” (*Pendennis* opens with a description of the major’s attire); “The Influence of Lovely Women Upon Society” (“An influence so vast, for good or for evil,” affirms Mr. Brown, and so Pen, along
with other Thackerayan heroes, discovers); "On Friendship"; "A Word About Balls In Season"; "Great And Little Dinners" (on which Mr. Brown, presumably speaking for his author, observes: "I would have a great deal more hospitality practised than is common among us—more hospitality and less show"); and in three letters out of the eighteen Mr. Brown holds forth on "Love, Marriage, Men and Women," a prominent theme also in *Pendennis*, which requires a penultimate "Chapter of Match-Making" to tie up its strands.

Although to an extent a "second ramble among the booths," this successor to *Vanity Fair* views society not as a peepshow gaped at by an interloper, but from the more secure vantage point of the insider. In general, *Pendennis* conveys the impression sought by Captain Shandon, editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, on whose staff Pen serves his journalistic apprenticeship, of being "written by gentlemen for gentlemen," and moreover by "men famous at the Universities . . . known at the Clubs, and of the Society which they described" (chap. 32). In this man's world (as against the predominantly woman's world of *Vanity Fair*), seen from the windows of Bays's, the Wheel of Fortune, and other such male establishments, gossip is superseded by the overheard conversation, and the "fashionable intelligencer" of *Vanity Fair* gives way to the "accomplished man about town" that our Victorian middle-class Lord Chesterfield seeks to make of his nephew Bobby, the mold after which that superannuated Regency beau Major Pendennis tries to fashion his nephew Arthur.

"And so, my dear lad, you are at this moment enduring the delights and tortures, the jealousy and wakefulness, the longing and raptures, the frantic despair and elation, attendant upon the passion of love," writes the elder Brown sympathetically to Bob toward the end of his budget of letters. (By the time these lines appeared in *Punch*, Arthur Pendennis had turned his attentions from Miss Fotheringay to the "femme incomprise" Blanche Amory, and had been refused, after a half-hearted marriage proposal, by Laura.) "I myself went through some of these miseries and pleasures which you now, O my Nephew, are enduring. I pity and sympathise with you. I am an old cock now, with a feeble strut and a faltering crow. But I was young once: and remember the time very well," muses Mr. Brown. The sense of time remembered, and the passing on of hard-won wisdom from the old to the young, also run through the meditative memoir that is *Pendennis*. Some further words of "old cock" Brown to his fledgling protégé anticipate what
Arthur Pendennis learns from his youthful trials and tribulations: "If you lose the object of your desires, the loss won't kill you; you may set that down as a certainty. If you win, it is possible that you will be disappointed; that point also is to be considered. But hit or miss, good luck or bad—I should be sorry, my honest Bob, that thou didst not undergo the malady. Every man ought to be in love a few times in his life, and to have a smart attack of the fever. You are better for it when it is over: the better for your misfortune if you endure it with a manly heart; how much the better for success if you win it and a good wife into the bargain!"

Having been summoned by his sister-in-law Helen, Major Pendennis remains *in loco parentis* for Pen, as counselor on deportment as well as on affairs of the heart. Like Mr. Punch in various guises, he incarnates the elder mentor, a familiar figure of the Victorian novel inherited from the illustrated school books and conduct books that Thackeray and his generation were nurtured on. But the major is quite a remove from the pedants of those enlightening tomes:

It can't be said that Mr. Pen's new guide, philosopher, and friend discoursed him on the most elevated subjects, or treated the subjects which he chose in the most elevated manner. But his morality, such as it was, was consistent. It might not, perhaps, tend to a man's progress in another world, but it was pretty well calculated to advance his interests in this; and then it must be remembered that the Major never for one instant doubted that his views were the only views practicable, and that his conduct was perfectly virtuous and respectable. He was a man of honour, in a word; and had his eyes, what he called, open. He took pity on this young greenhorn of a nephew, and wanted to open his eyes too. (Chap. 9)

Becky Sharp, we have noticed, did not correspond precisely with Miss Edgeworth's notion of "The Good French Governess." Neither is the major the sort of Parent's Assistant calculated to please the "celebrated philosopher" any more than he does Pen's mother Helen, who squirms in shock and dismay through the "anecdotes of the great George, the Royal Dukes, of the statesmen, beauties, and fashionable ladies of the day," that hold Arthur in thrall. As we learn upon this adolescent's entrance into Boniface College, "the world had got hold of Pen in the shape of his selfish old Mentor" (chap. 17). The major, so long as he retains this hold, represents one distinct kind of teaching that Arthur is subjected to in the academy of life. "Flames and darts and passion, and that sort of thing, do very well for a lad: and you were but a lad when that affair with the Fotheringill—Fotheringay—(what's her name?)
"But a man of the world gives up those follies. You may still do very well. You have been hit, but you may recover. You are heir to a little independence, which everyone fancies is a doosid deal more. You have a good name, good wits, good manners, and a good person—and begad! I don't see why you shouldn't marry a woman with money—get into Parliament—distinguish yourself. . . . Remember, it's as easy to marry a rich woman as a poor woman. . . . Look out: I shall be on the watch for you: and I shall die content, my boy, if I can see you with a good ladylike wife, and a good carriage, and a good pair of horses, living in society, and seeing your friends like a gentleman." It was thus this affectionate uncle spoke, and expounded to Pen his simple philosophy.\(^\text{10}\) (Chap. 28)

But there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in uncle Pendennis's simple philosophy, as the major himself is dimly aware, of which Pen has lingering intimations: "What would my mother and Laura say to this, I wonder?" thought the lad. Indeed old Pendennis's morals were not their morals, nor was his wisdom theirs." Readers had already witnessed a touching little episode where Pen as a boy was introduced to Keble's *The Christian Year*: "The son and the mother whispered it to each other with awe—faint, very faint, and seldom in after life Pendennis heard that solemn church-music; but he always loved the remembrance of it, and of the times when it struck on his heart" (chap. 3). Not surprisingly, Helen's prognostication of her son's future runs in a contrary direction to that of her brother-in-law:

Helen Pendennis by the force of sheer love divined a great number of her son's secrets. But she kept these things in her heart (if we may so speak), and did not speak of them. Besides she had made up her mind that he was to marry little Laura, who would be eighteen when Pen was six- and twenty: and had finished his college career; and had made his grand tour; and was settled either in London, astonishing all the metropolis by his learning and eloquence at the bar, or better still in a sweet country parsonage surrounded with hollyhocks and roses, close to a delightful romantic ivy-covered church, from the pulpit of which Pen would utter the most beautiful sermons ever preached. (Chap. 3)

So the sacred and the profane spirits wrestle for the soul of this Victorian Nice Wanton.

The original wrapper design on the monthly parts—representing allegorically a young man surrounded on one side by a siren and evil sprites, on the other by a sweet-faced mother and innocent-looking children (a church looming in the
background)—announces immediately matter of greater seriousness than anything contained in *Punch*’s “Young Man’s Almanack,” however they may be related. The opposed self is personified graphically throughout. The cut that concludes chapter 3 (the end of part 1 in the monthly numbers), entitled “Youth Between Pleasure And Duty,” shows the hero standing next to his friend Harry Foker, a young buck and heir to a brewer’s fortune, while being confronted in the Cathedral Yard by the voice of conscience in the form of the stern parson, Doctor Portman. Such evocative chapter headings as “Rake’s Progress,” “Prodigal’s Return,” “Babylon,” and “Temptation” mark fluctuations in Pen’s unequal bout with the fleshpots of London. Hogarth had his Victorian successors, as we are reminded in one authorial digression: “A committee of marriageable ladies, or of any Christian persons interested in the propagation of the domestic virtues, should employ a Cruikshank or a Leech, or some other kindly expositor of the follies of the day, to make a series of Designs representing the horrors of a bachelor’s life in chambers, and leading the beholder to think of better things, and a more wholesome condition” (chap. 51). These words, of course, are a jibe more at predatory young women than at spry young bachelors, but in the absence of Cruikshank and Leech, this illustrator provides enough examples of “follies of the day”: Pen confronting his creditors at Oxbridge in the plate entitled “A Few Little Bills” (chap. 19), and a later plate showing “Pen Pursuing His Law Studies” in a rather desultory fashion (chap. 28). One cut shows Pen “dandifying himself in the glass” (chap. 17); another shows him succumbing to the siren song of Blanche Amory at the spinet (chap. 22). Among the ornamented initials is one representing an imp curled around an overturned wine glass (chap. 19), while other more literal ones discover various assignations and flirtations (chaps. 27, 32, 34, 44). With its intercalation of grotesque imagery and pictures of real life, the whole novel seems to have been designed as a nineteenth-century version of an old morality play (even concluding with the stage direction “Exeunt Omnes”), with more modern angels and devils engaged in “that strange and awful struggle of good and wrong.”

The figure of the uncle as worldly mentor was not of course original with Thackeray. He appears among other places in some French novels that Thackeray knew. In *Jérôme Paturet* the hero’s uncle comes to his rescue when his fortunes are at low ebb, a turn of events that led Thackeray to comment: “... alas! it is only in
novels that these uncles are found—living literary characters have no such lucky relationships.”

A more pernicious uncle appears in one of the novels Thackeray refers to in his essay “On Some French Fashionable Novels”—Charles de Bernard’s *La femme de quarante ans*. Here young Edward de Mornac, torn (like Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier*) between his love for an aging demimondaine and the prospect of marriage to a wealthy young *paysanne*, is urged by an uncle to take the practical course. The author comments that the young man’s relative “poured into every fresh wound some drops of that seductive science, materialism, with which the good faith of the youth of the nineteenth century is poisoned at the fountain head.”

Closer to Major Pendennis is the Baron Dumesnil of Jules Janin’s *Le chemin de traverse* (1836), a didactic novel which may well have come to Thackeray’s attention even before he became an intimate friend of its author during the writing of *Pendennis*. It was highly praised by the *Times* when it first came out, and received tribute as well from that champion of the French novel G. W. M. Reynolds as “one of the finest books in the French language . . . a great moral lecture constructed on a slender ground-work of fiction . . . [teaching] the necessity of pursuing a direct path in our journey through life.”

Early in the 1840s when an English version appeared in the Romancist and Novelist Library, the anonymous translator hailed it as work in which “wit, wisdom, eloquence, the purest morality, the most profound knowledge of the human heart alike in the sunny brightness of its virtues, and the dark and terrible depths of its prejudices and vices, are to be found on every page,” and placed the author in the company of Chateaubriand and Victor Hugo.

The title of the English translation of Janin’s novel, *The Cross Roads. A Romance of Real Life*, clearly poses the dilemma of its youthful hero Prosper Chavigni, pulled, like Arthur Pendennis, in contrary directions, designated by the original divisions of the tale into “L’éducation du village” and “L’éducation de la ville,” with a concluding section entitled “La ligne droite.” We follow the progress of young Prosper from provincial *naïf* to Parisian *homme fait*. In his birthplace in Ampuy, in the Rhone Valley, he is brought up somewhat like Arthur Pendennis: “Happy was it, that he, Prosper, had his mother. A mother is a supreme intelligence; she comprehends at once, with mind, and with soul, and with heart; the most hidden mysteries of her child are to her visible as the sunbeam. What no one else had forseen or observed in the education, so suddenly, and unluckily completed . . . his mother alone had
seen and understood" (chap. 6). We are witnesses to one moment of communion between the two:

It was just at the beginning of autumn. The leaves had not yet fallen, the trees were still green, but the green had begun to be mingled with some yellowish tints. The sky was calm but dark; the Rhone ran sadly but not angrily. Prosper and his mother sat together beneath the paternal elm, and gazed upon the other's face, without venturing to break the sad and boding silence, until at length Prosper, unable to restrain his sufferings, and his desire to ease his full heart, threw himself into his mother's arms, and wept as he embraced her. (Chap. 6)

With a change of season and country, this description could almost accompany the cut entitled "Calm Summer Evenings" that appears in illustrated editions of *Pendennis* (chap. 2), showing Pen in his mother's embrace looking pensively out over a placid river at the church of Clavering. These are paradises about to be lost. With his literary education it soon becomes evident that Ampuy can no longer contain Prosper, and he goes to Paris to seek his career, with his mother's blessing. The serpent in Prosper's garden is the aforementioned uncle who, as Reynolds noted, "undertakes to educate him as a man of the world, or in other words a selfish man." This bon vivant is characterized by his creator as "the man in all France, and perhaps in the whole world, the best qualified to write and publish a book, which is far more needed than the *Dictionnaire de l'Academie* . . . this mundane gospel which would snatch from poverty and despair so many young and ardent intelligences which are abandoned to themselves . . . this book should be entitled *The Art of Rising in the World.*" Instead of writing this book, however, the uncle determines to make a living exemplum of Prosper:

It was the Baron Dumesnil who, finding Prosper still encrusted with his village simplicity, slowly and step by step despoiled him of his last vestige of virtue and innocence. It was the Baron Dumesnil who replaced the vulgar education of Brother Christophe [Prosper's devout clerical tutor] by the true Parisian education which, as doubtless you are well aware, is the best possible education, past, present, or to come. To say the truth, the worthy uncle took no small pains to elevate his pupil to his own level. And if he did not altogether succeed, you must charge his partial failure upon the perverse nature of the pupil, who without knowing or wishing it, was constantly influenced by the first impressions of the paternal home. (Chap. 14)

The baron is further described at one point as one of those social parasites who "have all their lives great joy, good cheer, fine
clothes, convenient houses—every luxury, love, of a sort, not excluded, without ever having a brick in the street, an acre under the sun, an idea in their heads, a virtue in their hearts, or a pursuit at their fingers' ends" (chap. 14). Major Pendennis, who tries to erase his nephew's "first impressions of the paternal home," is endowed with some of the superficial panache of the Baron Dumesnil, but stops short of the unscrupulousness of his prototype, who opens mail to compromise enemies, spies for the government, and even goes so far as to lead Prosper to kill a rival in a duel as a proof of gallantry. Consistently with his toning down the sensationalism and sexual intrigue of French fiction, Thackeray mellows his portrait of a roué from its French source. He even has the major succumb eventually to the "sentimental" way of life, together with Arthur, unlike the Baron Dumesnil who remains true to his corrupt code, dying an impenitent failure.17

Inevitably the Baron Dumesnil had his literary kinfolk in English society. One of the "charming enchanters of the silver-fork school," Lady Blessington (the Lady Violet Le Bas of Pendennis) kept her name before the reading public during the 1840s with an undistinguished series of "confession" memoirs. Among these were Meredith (1843) and Marmaduke Herbert; or, The Fatal Error (1847), in both of which a young man is torn, like the hero of Le chemin de traverse, by the conflicting influences of a religious mother and a polished, but morally sleazy, uncle. Not included in the company at Bacon's or Bungay's entertainments was Mrs. Catherine Gore, a steady contributor nevertheless to the lists of their real-life counterparts Colburn and Bentley. Thackeray's friendship with and respect (despite "Lords and Liveries") for this queen of the chroniclers of the "thrice filtered filtration of the fashionable world" is already well known, and attention has been called to analogies between the character and amours of the hero of her best known novel, Cecil; or, The Adventures of a Coxcomb (1841), and those of young Pen.18 Additionally worth noting is her Preferment; or, My Uncle the Earl, issued by Colburn a year before Cecil. In this novel the title character, a forty-five-year-old roué named Adolphus Egerton, exerts an insidious influence over a nephew, who, as a result of expert tutelage, "attained that sort of ignis fatuis brilliance, the result of a species of malaria, generated by the fashionable quarters of London—the mere phosphorescence of corruption" (bk. 1, chap. 14). As these words indicate, Uncle Adolphus succeeds all too well in dandifying his nephew Dick, though he turns his disciple into something less than a gentleman in the pro-
cess. After being extricated from an adulterous affair through the interceding of a cousin, this protégé is obliged to flee England, leaving his debts and promising parliamentary career behind. The young man we are supposed to admire in this novel is Dick's unassuming high-minded country cousin Julius, who manages to withstand the temptations of the world and rises by his own merit rather than by aristocratic patronage. Against a background of Regency decadence, contrasting town and country morality, the mode and the simple domestic life, Mrs. Gore raises anew and more in earnest Falstaff's question—also posed in Pendennis—"What Is Honor?"

In this quest, young Arthur Pendennis, true to the character of the neophyte of the didactic fables, comes under the surveillance of a variety of mentors. Counteracting the influence of the major are, as has already been observed, the pious mother and the exemplary young "sister" (as Laura is called from time to time by Helen because of her devotion to the young lady destined to become Pen's bride). There are also the traditional "Parents' Assistants"—the schoolmaster Dr. Portman, and the curate Mr. Smirke. But in the midst of the various moral pressures this youth is subjected to, his creator intrudes a plea for self-development. As he reminds the parents among his readers: "[Pen] had a world of his own. What generous, ardent, imaginative soul has not a secret pleasure-place in which it disports. Let no clumsy prying or dull meddling of ours try to disturb it in our children." And so, he cautions them, "Leave him occasionally alone, my good madam, if you have a poet for a child. Even your admirable advice may be a bore sometimes. Yonder little child may have thoughts too deep even for your great mind, and fancies so coy and timid that they will not bare themselves when your ladyship sits by" (chap. 3). Helen Pendennis, cut off, like the mother of Prosper Chavigni, from her son's mental development, tries by intuition to read his "inmost heart." But, as his creator says, Pen has "a world of his own" permanently shut out from his mother's vision. He is indeed an unusual child—an incipient man of letters, as his name indicates. From his boyhood lessons in construing Greek plays (however reluctantly) at Greyfriars to his poring over headier volumes of religion and philosophy on the steps of Dr. Portman's library and his subsequent study of ancient poets and "the charming wicked Aristophanes" under the rather lax supervision of Mr. Smirke, young Pen is clearly in training for the literary life.
Since *Pendennis* is to a large extent the story of the author as a young man, other writers for a time supersede "Home Influence" on his growth. Among the fans who watch Miss Fotheringay perform Mrs. Haller at the Chatteris theater, and subsequently a caller on Helen Pendennis, is one Mr. Wagg, a popular novelist of the day (now generally identified with Theodore Hook). We first catch him engaged in a typical activity: "Mr. Wagg noted everything that he saw; the barometer and the letter-bag, the umbrellas and the ladies' clogs, Pen's hats and tartan wrapper, and old John opening the drawing-room door to introduce the new-comers." Wagg is ever the practicing novelist, even away from his desk: "Such minutiae attracted Wagg instinctively; he seized them in spite of himself" (chap. 25). Helen, ever the polite hostess, professes admiration for Wagg's books, though privately she cannot abide them. Nor is she taken with the man himself, as "he poured out a flood of fashionable talk, introducing the names of a score of peers, and rattling on with breathless spirits," a continuation presumably of the major's name-dropping chatter that had left this refined rural widow "so sadly bored and perplexed." "What a man! she thought; are all the men of fashion like this? I am sure Pen will never be like him" (chap. 25). Pen, according to Laura's report, "laughs at Mr. Wagg's celebrity . . . and says he is a dunce, and that everybody could write his books." Pen, no less than his creator at his age, has indeed been following this eminent writer's sayings and doings, and recognizes that it is possible to gain celebrity from writing about contemporary society with observation and wit. In fact his decision to invade Paternoster Row is prompted largely by his confidence that he can surpass Mr. Wagg—a bit of self-esteem bolstered by Laura ("If Pen can write better than this gentleman . . . He ought to go away, indeed he ought").

Captain Shandon, the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, who launches Pen on his career of literary journalism, "spoke of the characters of the day, and great personages of the fashion with easy familiarity and jocular allusions, as if it is his own habit to live amongst them." In the midst of his own embarrassed circumstances, Shandon "told anecdotes of their private life, and of the conversations he had had, and entertainments, and at which such and such a thing occurred." The incongruity of the situation is not lost on Shandon's visitor: "Pen was amused to hear the shabby prisoner in a tattered dressing-gown talking glibly about the great of the land" (chap. 32). He derives similar amusement from watching Jack Finucane, the subeditor "with a plate of meat from the
cookshop, and a glass of porter from the public-house, for his meal, recounting the feasts of the great, as if he had been present at them; and in tattered trousers and dingy shirt-sleeves, cheerfully describing and arranging the most brilliant fêtes of the world of fashion" (chap. 35).

In the Upper Temple, meanwhile, Pen falls in with another struggling young law student with literary aspirations, George Warrington. He comes to admire George's contributions to law reviews, as well as his newspaper articles, for their “strong thoughts and curt periods, the sense, the satire, and the scholarship” (chap. 31). This sounds like a challenge indeed to the potential novelist who has ambitions beyond mere entertainment, who would describe the world he lives in, yet rise above the mere “minutiae” and gossip of Mr. Wagg, and, unlike Jack Finucane, prefers to know the people he writes about. Hence George Warrington exerts a firmer guiding hand on Pen, at least subliminally, than any of this young dandy’s other friends, as he sets about revising and expanding his first effort at a novel, “Leaves from the Life-book of Walter Lorraine,” transforming it from an effusion of adolescent weltschmerz into a “picture of real life,” to borrow a familiar kind of subtitle of the time. In plotting his hero’s career, Thackeray steers an adroit course between depicting an average youth “no better nor worse than most educated men” promised in his preface and in some of the archetypal chapter headings (“Shows First Love may Interrupt Breakfast”: “In which Pendennis Appears as a Very Young Man Indeed”) and yet a unique specimen of the genus author. Consequently we become witnesses not only to a rake’s progress, but to a work in progress.

“You have been bred up as a mollycoddle, Pen, and spoilt by the women,” remarks George candidly during one of their conversations (chap. 31), but at the same time he renews Pen’s confidence in himself, which has begun to flag in the course of his removal from the shelter and loving care of Fairoaks to the harsh competition of Fleet Street. Simultaneously he applies the bit and spur to Arthur’s Pegasus, catering to his authorial vanity and yet openly criticising his early efforts (“The Prize Poem is so pompous, that I’m positively surprised, sir, that it didn’t get the medal. You don’t suppose you are a serious poet, do you, and are going to cut out Milton and Aeschylus?” [chap. 31]). At this point Warrington does not know the extent of Arthur’s abilities, or the direction they will take, but he turns Pen’s literary sights toward the workaday world and makes him aware that this world owes the writer a living no more than it
does any other profession (“If a lawyer, or a soldier, or a parson, outruns his income, and does not pay his bills, he must go to gaol, and an author must go, too”). More importantly, Warrington inspires him with a sense of disinterested dedication: “If fortune favours me, I laud her; if she frowns, I resign her,” he meditates to himself following his conversation with his friend. “I pray Heaven I may be honest if I fail, or if I succeed. I pray Heaven I may tell the truth as far as I know it: that I mayn’t swerve from it through flattery, or interest, or personal enmity, or party prejudice” (chap. 32).²¹

Warrington serves a double function in *Pendennis*, alternating between confidant and sounding board to the hero, and Thackeray’s own second self. “I am a prose labourer. . . . you, my boy, are a poet in a small way, and so, I suppose, consider you are authorised to be flighty,” says Warrington to Pen on one occasion, this time over brandy and water in one of their favorite haunts, the Back Kitchen (chap. 32). So the hack engages with the creative artist. Pen and Warrington join various disparate elements of Thackeray’s temperament as writer—the man of reflection and the bon vivant, the idealist and the skeptic, the topical journalist and the writer for the ages, the seasoned sophisticate and the eternal youth to whom the world is ever new.²² These come together with Arthur’s discovery, during his perambulations about Saint Paul’s Churchyard as he awaits the outcome of his “agent” Warrington’s offer of his first fruits to Mr. Bacon, that the Corporation of the Goosequill offers a career open to all talents:

Pen looked at all the windows of all the shops, and the strange variety of literature which they exhibit. In this were displayed black-letter volumes and books in the clear pale types of Aldus and Elzevier: in the next, you might see the “Penny Horrific Register;” the “Halfpenny Annals of Crime;” and “History of the most celebrated Murderers of all Countries;” “The Raff’s Magazine;” “The Larky Swell,” and other publications of the penny press; whilst at the next window, portraits of ill-favoured individuals, with facsimiles of the venerated signatures of the Reverend Grimes Wapshot,²³ the Reverend Elias Howle,²⁴ and the works written and the sermons preached by them showed the British Dissenter where he could find mental pabulum. Hard by would be . . . books of controversial theology, by which the faithful of the Roman opinion might learn a short way to deal with Protestants . . . whilst in the very next window you might see “Come out of Rome,” a sermon preached at the opening of the Shepherd’s Bush College, by John Thomas Lord Bishop of Ealing. Scarce an opinion but has its expositor and its place of exhibition in this peaceful old Paternoster Row, under the toll of the bells of Saint Paul. (Chap. 31)
In his ramble among the booths of the book fair, Arthur in effect reviews the history of modern print, from the introduction of the small book aimed at the purse of the common reader (Aldines and Elzeviers), to the emergence of the penny press that brought "mental pabulum" to the millions. His own career seems cut out for him. Moreover, the topics represented here among the shops of Paternoster Row—crime, the affairs of the "raffs" and "swells" of society, and religion—somehow become amalgamated in his book.

The form that his own book takes, as apart from its matter, is conditioned to an extent by fiction that Arthur sees is capturing the market. Fishing up his adolescent trifle from its storage box, he concludes that it did not add up to much, "but it was as good as most books of the kind that had the run of the circulating libraries and the career of the season." He has had opportunity, that is, to observe that others besides that modern Asmodeus Mr. Wagg have been converting silver forks into lucre. "He had critically examined more than one fashionable novel by the authors of the day then popular, and he thought that his intellect was as good as theirs, and that he could write the English language as well as those ladies and gentlemen" (chap. 41). Pen does not name names, but we have already noticed his creator's sly habit of introducing "authors of the day then popular" into the novel, slightly disguised. Others are alluded to: "It was the period when the novel called the 'fashionable' was in vogue among us," we are informed at one point, "and Warrington did not fail to point out [to Mr. Bungay] . . . how Pen was a man of the first fashion himself, and received at the houses of some of the greatest personages of the land" (chap. 41). At this time there was, of course, more than one novel called "The fashionable," or some variant thereof. Fashionables and Unfashionables, by Rosalia St. Clair (an offering of A. K. Newman of Minerva Press fame), and English Fashionables Abroad (a product of Colburn's factory) preceded Pelham by a year. These were followed by such scandal chronicles as Russell; or, The Reign of Fashion (1830), Mrs. Gore's Sketch Book of Fashion (1833), and the Misses Beauclerks' Tales of Fashion and Reality (1836). In the very year when Pendennis began to appear, though the vogue was beginning to spend itself, readers could have renewed their acquaintance with "fashion and its votaries" through the Honorable Catherine Charlotte Maberly's novel of that title.

We do not learn much specifically about the published version of Arthur's novel that (unlike any of Thackeray's own early efforts)
catches on with the public sufficiently to require a second edition within two months. "The rubbish is saleable enough," was Warrington's opinion as he looked over the first version, but he advised Pen to "give [it] a more modern air, prune away... some of the green passages, and add a little comedy, and cheerfulness, and satire, and that sort of thing, and then we'll take him to the market and sell him" (chap. 41). Pen succeeds, at least in the eyes of another of his literary companions, the aspiring hack Percy Popjoy, who puffs Pen's book to Mrs. Bungay, the publisher's wife, as "full of wit, genius, satire, pathos, and every conceivable good quality" (chap. 41). He could be speaking for Pendennis itself, in which something of Warrington's "strong thoughts," "sense," and "scholarship" is engrafted upon the romantic sensibility of Pen's salad days and the social reportage that makes up the stock-in-trade of the silver-fork novelist. With Pendennis, that is to say, Thackeray carries the fashionable novel beyond gossip chronicle into living social history.

Mrs. Gore had led the way, to an extent, in the aforementioned Preferment, in which the managing uncle, Adolphus Egerton, is represented as a relic of a passing age: "Adolphus had, in fact, cherished occasional misgivings that the legitimate school, of which he was so distinguished a professor, was on the decline, and the temple of fine gentlemanism, reared under the auspices of Carlton House, tottering to its fall. Of the great men illustrating the dandy epoch of his youth... Some were in exile—some in the grave... George Robins had disposed of the paraphernalia of a dozen or so, whose place remembered them no longer... whose names were forgotten amid their daily haunts and ancient neighbourhood, except in the defaulter-lists of the clubs" (bk. 1, chap. 5). Major Pendennis can be numbered among the legion of those "whose names were forgotten amid their daily haunts and ancient neighbourhood":

As became a man of fashion, Major Pendennis spent the autumn passing from house to house of such country friends as were at home to receive him... To say the truth, the old gentleman's reputation was somewhat on the wane: many of the men of his time had died out, and the occupants of their halls and the present wearers of their titles knew not Major Pendennis: and little cared for his traditions of the wild Prince and Poins and of the heroes of fashion passed away. It must have struck the good man with melancholy as he walked by many a London door, to think how seldom it was now open for him, and how often he used to knock at it—to what banquets and welcome he used to pass through it—a score of years back. (Chap. 67)
The major shares the regret felt by his prototype Adolphus Egerton for the dear dead teens of the century gone beyond recall: "The men, thinks he, are not such as they used to be in his time; the old grand manner and courtly grace of life are gone." In a rare moment of reckoning he muses: "'I'm getting old: they're getting past me: they laugh at us old boys'" (chap. 67).

Earlier we have had a glimpse at the major through the eyes of two of "the men of the new time" (as this "old boy" refers to the rising generation):

In the course of that very day, it chanced that the Major had stationed himself in the great window of Bays's Club in Saint James's Street at the hour in the afternoon when you see a half-score of respectable old bucks similarly recreating themselves (Bays's is rather an old-fashioned place of resort now; and many of its members more than middle-aged; but in the time of the Prince Regent, these old fellows occupied the same window, and were some of the very greatest dandies in this empire)—Major Pendennis was looking from the great window, and spied his nephew Arthur walking down the street in company with his friend Mr. Popjoy.

"Look!" said Popjoy to Pen, as they passed, "did you ever pass Bays's at four o'clock without seeing that collection of old fogies? It's a regular museum. They ought to be cast in wax, and set up at Madame Tussaud's—"

"—In a chamber of horrors by themselves," said Pen laughing.

(Chap. 36)

Popjoy's analogy suggests one aspect of this novel itself—a kind of animated museum of ways of life passed and passing, set up for the delight and instruction of that hypothetical reader the author looks forward to, "the antiquary of future generations." The impression of a portrait gallery is further conveyed by the window frame in which the major and fellow "old fogies" are momentarily caught, transformed in the illustration that originally accompanied this dialogue into a picture frame. This is the frame that Pen is determined to burst free of as he strives to become a "man of the world" in a wider sense than that envisaged in the major's "simple philosophy."

The "history" of Arthur Pendennis is essentially his evolution from man-about-town to man of letters. As Thackeray widened the span of the silver-fork novel to take in social life, manners, and morals in general, not merely those of "society," so his hero's wanderings take him beyond the clubs of Pall Mall and Saint James. Shortly after his arrival in the metropolis, "elated with the idea of
seeing life, Pen went into a hundred queer London haunts. He liked to think he was consorting with all sorts of men—so he beheld coalheavers in their tap rooms; boxers in their inn-parlours; honest citizens disporting in the suburbs or on the river; and he would have liked to hob and nob with celebrated pickpockets, or drink a pot of ale with a company of burglars and cracksmen, had chance afforded him an opportunity of making the acquaintance of this class of society" (chap. 30). Here too Pen follows the lead of Warrington, who enjoys the company of the proprietors of public houses and their customers "to that of his own class, whose manners annoyed him, and whose conversation bored him." In society, Warrington affirms, "everybody is the same, wears the same dress, eats and drinks, and says the same things; one young dandy at the club talks and looks just like another, one Miss at a ball exactly resembles another, whereas there's character here. . . . I like gin-and-water better than claret. I like a sanded floor in Carnaby Market better than a chalked floor in Mayfair" (chap. 30).

A "social republican" Thackeray calls Warrington, and one to whom "it never entered his head while conversing with Jack and Tom that he was in any respect their better," adding the sly qualification that "perhaps the deference which they paid him might secretly please him." Pen at this point, more in conformity with one of Thackeray's "Respectable Snobs," conducts himself like "a young prince in disguise, visiting the poor of his father's kingdom." There is distance on both sides: "They [the frequenters of the public houses] respected him as a high chap, a fine fellow, a regular young swell. He had somehow about him an air of imperious good-humour, and a royal frankness and majesty, although he was only heir apparent to twopence halfpenny, and but one in descent from a gallipot." Pen has been an apt pupil in the school of deportment conducted by Major Pendennis. As he is weaned away from the major's influence under the supervision of George Warrington, he approaches the ideal of the writer as "social republican."

Pen's education by society thereby becomes a means of defining the social role of the writer. In one respect Thackeray was carrying on a crusade already underway. The year before Pendennis began to appear, George Henry Lewes, who was to be one of its most favorable reviewers, spoke out in his own novel Ranthorpe (like Pendennis a Bildungsroman concerned with vocation and the literary life) on the importance and responsibilities of authorship. In one chapter, significantly entitled "The Aristocracy of Intellect," Lewes
complained that this class, no less than the aristocracy of birth, has its pretenders, "presumptuous parvenus, despicable and despised... men who aspire to qualities they have no claim to: eunuchs of ambition!" "Authors, consent to be authors," Lewes exhorts his fellows of the writing fraternity, "and before attempting to 'move in the first circles,' unless your position calls you there, rigidly scrutinize what it is you want: what is your aim, and whether this society and its demands be compatible with the mission of your lives.... Either there is dignity in intellectual rank, or there is not; if there is, no other rank is needed; if there is not, no other rank can give it; for dignity is not an accident, but a quality" (bk. 3, chap. 1). While *Pendennis* was in mid-course, Thackeray himself felt called upon to affirm the dignity of literature, having come under critical attack for his apparent ridicule of writers: "The literary profession is not held in disrepute [he wrote]; nobody wants to disparage it, no man loses his social rank, whatever it may be, by practising it. On the contrary: the pen gives a place in the world to men who had none before, a fair place, fairly achieved by their genius, as any other degree of eminence is by any other kind of merit. Literary men need not, as it seems to me, be in the least querulous about their position any more, or want the pity of anybody." This observation seems to be confirmed by that arch snob Major Pendennis. "You have got yourself a little reputation by your literary talents, which I am very far from undervaluing," he deigns to concede to his nephew, "though in my time, begad, poetry and genius and that sort of thing were devilish disreputable. There was poor Byron, for instance, who ruined himself and contracted the worst habits by living with poets and newspaper-writers, and people of that kind. But the times are changed now—there's a run upon literature—clever fellows get into the best houses in town, begad!" (chap. 36). "We are grown doosid republican," as this old boy is forced to admit (chap. 44).

By now the newly respectable Arthur is not contented merely to "get into the best houses in town." Returning with Warrington to the Back Kitchen, he "had the pleasure of seeing as many different persons of his race as the most eager observer need desire to inspect." Here come together "healthy country tradesmen and farmers... squads of young apprentices and assistants... rakish young medical students, gallant, dashing, what is called 'loudly' dressed, and (must it be owned?) somewhat dirty... young university bucks... with that indescribably genteel simper which is only learned at the knees of Alma Mater;—and handsome young guardsmen, and
florid bucks from the St. James's Street Clubs;—nay, senators English and Irish; and even members of the House of Peers.” In short, “men of all sorts and conditions entered and quitted the house of entertainment” (chap. 30).

The Back Kitchen can be taken as a microcosm of society from top to bottom—and of Arthur’s potential readership. His wanderings take him also to Shepherd’s Inn, in the vicinity of the Inns of Court, where Fanny Bolton and her family dwell: “Ballad-singers come and chant here, in deadly guttural tones, satirical songs against the Whig administration, against the bishops and dignified clergy, against the German relatives of an august royal family: Punch sets up his theatre, sure of an audience, and occasionally of a half-penny from the swarming occupants of the houses” (chap. 42). These audiences Arthur too hopes to capture for his more refined criticism of society, once he “sets up his theatre.” Among Fanny’s neighbors are Blanche Amory’s vagabond father (as yet unknownst to her), Colonel Altamont, Altamont’s trusty Ned Strong, and their boisterous company: “A strange and motley set they were, these friends of the Chevalier [Strong]; and though Major Pendennis would not much have relished their company, Arthur and Warrington liked it not a little, and Pen thought it as amusing as the society of the finest gentlemen in the finest houses which he had the honour to frequent” (chap. 42).

Presumably Thackeray here means as much to cast reflection on the “finest houses” as to compliment Shepherd’s Inn. He also seems to be recalling for us whence he has come as a writer and indicating whither he is going. The “set” surrounding Altamont and Strong look familiar. Jack Holt, the mercenary from Don Carlos’s army, engaged now in smuggling tobacco, is reminiscent of Captain Brock of Catherine. Keightley, manager of the Polwheele and Tredyddlum Copper Mines, “which were as yet under water,” as well as of a sponge company and “a little quicksilver operation . . . which would set him straight wth the world yet,” would have fit well with B rough and Hoff, proprietors of the West Diddlesex Company in The Great Hoggarty Diamond; and Filby, an Irish ex-soldier and peripatetic ne’er-do-well whose father “left him that famous property from which he got no rents now, and of which nobody exactly knew the situation,” could be a kinsman of Barry Lyndon. Seedy as the company assembled here may be, it is significant that Blanche Amory’s stepfather, Lord Clavering, one of the “finest gentleman in the finest houses” that Arthur has gained entrée to, finds it quite congenial. Clavering “liked their society, although he did not add
much to their amusements by his convivial powers,” we are told, and in turn “he was made much of by the company now, on account of his wealth and position” (chap. 42). Moreover, as we learn shortly afterward, this noble was “as destitute of honesty as the people who cheated him, and a dupe chiefly because he was too mean to be a successful knave. . . . Had he been a Crown Prince—he could not have been more weak, useless, dissolute, or ungrateful” (chap. 43).

So high touches low in the course of Arthur Pendennis’s forays through society, and at times they seem to be mirror images. It must have been with tongue in cheek that Thackeray apologized to his readers in the preface, in explanation for his laying aside a more “exciting” plan for the book in favor of the one he adopted: “. . . never having been intimate with any convict in my life, and the manners of ruffians and gaol-birds being quite unfamiliar to me, the idea of entering into competition with M. Sue was abandoned.” To the contrary we encounter plenty of gaol-birds in the story that follows. Sir Francis Clavering, for one glittering example, “had had his own history . . . before his accession to good fortune, and had seen the inside of more prisons than one, and written his name on many a stamped paper” (chap. 42). Pen’s first meeting with his editor, Shandon, is in a cell in the Fleet where that down-at-the-heels journalist has been confined for debt. The ex-convict Colonel Altamont, when last heard from (and as seen in the drawing that originally accompanied this episode), has jumped out of a window in Shepherd’s Inn to escape arrest from a constable.30

The implication behind Thackeray’s preface, however, is that not all of society’s transgressors are behind prison bars. And so we are led to gather from some further conversation between Pen and his friend Percy Popjoy before the great window of Bays’s Club:

“... They are old rogues, most of ’em; and no mistake [says Popjoy]. There’s old Blondel; there’s my Uncle Colchicum, the most confounded old sinner in Europe; there’s—hullo! there’s somebody rapping the window and nodding at us.”

“It’s my uncle, the Major,” said Pen. “Is he an old sinner too?”

“Notorious old rogue,” Pop said, wagging his head. . . . “He's beckoning you in; he wants to speak to you.”

“Come in, too,” Pen said.

“—Can’t,” replied the other. “Cut uncle Col. two years ago, about Mademoiselle Frangipane—Ta, ta,” and the young sinner took leave of Pen, and the club of the elder criminals, and sauntered into Blaquière’s, an adjacent establishment, frequented by reprobates of his own age.
This club in Saint James's, already likened to a museum and chamber of horrors, here takes on the semblance of a classy prison house, emblematic of the thin line Thackeray enjoys drawing between respectability and rascality.

"To describe a real rascal, you must make him so horrible that he would be too hideous to show; and unless the painter paints him fairly, I hold he has no right to show him at all," further declares Thackeray in the preface to Pendennis, echoing the manifesto of Ikey Solomons in Catherine. He keeps his promise to his readers, sparing them "the most active horrors," preferring, in the civilized world defined by Pall Mall, Kensington, and the Royal Gardens of Vauxhall, to speak in "dark suggestions and generalities," as he says in one place. Dire enough predictions are made for Arthur's future by his earliest "parents' assistants" (as with his prototype Tom Jones). "Miserable trifler!" exclaims Dr. Portman, angry at little Pen's resistance to the niceties of classical grammar: "A boy, sir, who does not learn his Greek play cheats the parent who spends money for his education. A boy who cheats his parent is not very far from robbing or forging upon his neighbor, A man who forges upon his neighbor pays the penalty of his crime at the gallows" (chap. 2). Pen's infatuation with Miss Fotheringay leads the local parson to prepare a sermon "in which he spoke of Jezebel, theatrical entertainments . . . and of youth going to perdition, in a manner which made it clear to every capacity that Pen was the individual meant, and on the road alluded to." Hard upon his punishment of a village yokel who has made fun of his discomfiture, "Pen was pronounced to be a murderer as well as a profligate, and his name became a name of terror and a byword in Clavering." At Oxbridge Pen does not seem to learn much, but he gets a forcible lesson on how evil companions can corrupt good manners. "A man may have a very good coat-of-arms, and be a tiger my boy," Major Pendennis, with all his toadying, is shrewd enough to observe during a visit with Pen at Boniface College (chap. 19). He is speaking of the flashy Bloundell-Bloundell of the Suffolk Bloundells (offspring of the roguish "old Blondel" whom Percy Popjoy gossips about. "One such diseased creature as this is enough to infect a whole colony," it is observed in passing, "and the tutors of Boniface began to find the moral tone of their college lowered and their young men growing unruly and almost ungentlemanlike, soon after Mr. Bloundell's arrival at Oxbridge." Bloundell is a good example of the man of the world that Pen might have become, but as it hap-
pens he is drawn only temporarily into that scapegrace's net, just long enough to gain, in the author's double entendre, "a knowledge of the odds at hazard." Nevertheless Pen's conduct continues to be open to question. His carryings on in "Babylon" provoke a rival to characterize him as "an abandoned criminal, a regular Don Juan, a fellow who when he did come into the country, ought to be kept out of honest people's houses" (chap. 50). And subsequently "Pen formed the subject for a second sermon at the Clavering chapel of ease: where the dangers of London, and the crime of reading and writing novels, were pointed out on a Sunday evening, to a large and warm congregation. They did not wait to hear whether he was guilty or not. They took his wickedness for granted" (chap. 50).

This last bit of sarcasm snipes implicitly at the didactic moral fable that Thackeray has been imitating in Pendennis. Earlier he had addressed, by implication, the "large and warm congregation" so ready to condemn the hero:

Who among us has not given a plenty of the very best advice to his friends? Who has not preached, and who has practised? To be sure, you, madam, are perhaps a perfect being, and never had a wrong thought in the whole course of your frigid and irreproachable existence; or you, sir, are a great deal too strong-minded to allow any foolish passion to interfere with your equanimity in chambers or your attendance on "Change": you are so strong that you don't want any sympathy. We don't give you any, then; we keep ours for the humble and the weak, that struggle and stumble and get up again, and so march with the rest of mortals. What need have you of a hand that never fall? Your serene virtue is never shaded by passion, or ruffled by temptation, or darkened by remorse. . . . Good bye, then; our way lies with the humble folks, and not with serene highnesses like you; and we give notice that there are no perfect characters in this history.

Nor presumably are there any perfect characters among the readers of "this history." In describing his hero as "a gentleman of our age . . . no better nor worse than most educated men," Thackeray means to expose the moral taint from which no human being is free. At one point Pen is characterized as "very weak as well as very impetuous, very vain as well as very frank, and if of a generous disposition, not a little selfish in the midst of his profuseness, and also rather fickle," to which is added, "as all eager pursuers of self-gratification are" (chap. 17). Those prone to cast a stone have it flung back in their faces, as when the author defends Arthur's plan to marry Blanche Amory's fortune: "And, if like many a worse and
better man, Arthur Pendennis, the widow's son, was meditating an apostasy, and going to sell himself . . . at least the renegade did not pretend to be a believer in the creed to which he was ready to swear. And if every woman and man in this kingdom, who has sold her or himself for money, or position, as Mr. Pendennis was about to do, would but purchase a copy of his memoirs, what tons of volumes Messrs. Smith and Elder would sell!” (chap. 64).35 Moral evil is traced to its fount and source—in the school and in the home. “Before he was twelve years old and while his mother fanned him an angel of candour, little Pen had heard talk enough to make him quite awfully wise upon some points,” the author informs the mothers of England with reference to his hero's education at Greyfriars, adding for their benefit: “—and so, Madam, has your pretty rosy-cheeked son, who is coming home for the ensuing Christmas holidays” (chap. 2).36 “I don't say that the boy is lost, or that the innocence has left him which he had from ‘Heaven, which is our home,’” the narrator continues, “but that the shades of the prison-house are closing very fast over him,37 and that we are helping as much as possible to corrupt him.”

The main effect then of Thackeray's adroit turnabout of the Parent's Assistants and conduct books of his era was to make mentors and their pupils equally blameworthy. On the positive side, they become joint witnesses of this Victorian Rake's Progress. “Yes, it was the same Pendennis, and time had brought to him, as to the rest of us, its ordinary consequences, consolations, developments,” the author reminds his readers, as Pen is contemplating his “sensible” marriage to Blanche, under the prodding of the major: “We alter very little. When we talk of this man or that woman being no longer the same person whom we remember in youth, and remark . . . changes in our friends, we don’t, perhaps, calculate that circumstance only brings out the latest defect or quality, and does not create it” (chap. 59). There is something of interest for everybody in the vicissitudes that govern young Pen's life—for parents who might easily be presumed to share the central interest of this book in the maturing of a pampered youth, and for their sons and daughters as well, involved in love problems of their own: “What don't you sacrifice to it, indeed, young gentlemen and young ladies of ill-regulated minds. . . . Life, business, family ties, all things useful and dear once, become intolerable, and you are never easy except when you are in pursuit of your flame” (chap. 45): “Yes, you must go through the hot fits and the cold fits of that pretty
fever. . . . As the gambler said of his dice, to love and win is the best thing, to love and lose the next best” (chap. 39). The “constant communication with the reader” promised in the preface is intended primarily to urge sweet reasonableness in human relations as against the irrationality (“fever,” “passion,” “ill-regulated minds”) amply illustrated in Pendennis’s history.

The audience for this history extends beyond the family circle. The author addresses also those “who have a real and heartfelt relish for London society, and the privilege of an entrée into its most select circles” (chap. 9). In one of his digressions he speaks to the “philosophic reader” (chap. 16); in another it is the “friendly reader . . . taking up the page for a moment’s light reading” who engages his attention (chap. 59); in connection with the Epsom Downs episode he is reminded of “our sporting readers” (chap. 59); and in another reflective mood he turns his words to “each man who lives by his pen” (chap. 71). All readers—old and young, married and unmarried, “philosophical” and “sporting”—are supposed to see something of themselves in this glass of fashion that is Arthur Pendennis. By the end of his history, once they are assured that Arthur has not “sold himself,” but is joined in holy matrimony with his angel in the house, Laura, all of these readers are supposed to take to heart the author’s parting words: “knowing how mean the best of us is, let us give a hand of charity to Arthur Pendennis, with all his faults and shortcomings, who does not claim to be a hero, but only a man and a brother.” The author makes every endeavor to transfer his own disposition to “pardon humanity” to his readers.

The creator of Arthur Pendennis is no upholder, certainly, of a cloistered virtue. Once his hero is launched on his literary career, he asks his readers: “Was Pendennis becoming worldly, or only seeing the world, or both? and is a man very wrong for being after all only a man? Which is the most reasonable and does his duty best: he who stands aloof from the struggle of life, calmly contemplating it, or he who descends to the ground, and takes his part in the contest” (chap. 44). In raising this question and answering it, Thackeray at once comes to the defence of his hero’s moral character and of the vocation of the novelist, both of which are condemned by the “large and warm congregation” at the Clavering chapel. In the course of his adventures, during which he is beset by the temptations to which youthful flesh is heir, Pen proves that a man of the world can be also a man of honor. At the same time, we watch this progress as man of letters out of a self-centered romanti-
cism and indulgence in social lionizing to devote his pen to humanity. Despite his apparent world weariness following upon his introduction to the haute monde, we are assured that he retains “a constant desire for society, which showed to be anything but misanthropical” (chap. 46). His snobbishness toward the cook Mirobolant and a certain condescension toward the habitués of the Back Kitchen and the Shepherd’s Inn notwithstanding, his tolerance surfaces in moods of relaxation: “If he could not get a good dinner he sate down to a bad one with entire contentment; if he could not procure the company of great or beautiful persons, he put up with any society that came to hand.” Significantly it is in a public park where we watch his convivial faculty expand:

[In the Royal Gardens of Vauxhall] he was on terms of friendship with the great Simpson, and . . . shook the principal comic singer or the lovely equestrian of the arena by the hand. And while he could watch the grimaces or the graces of these with a satiric humour that was not deprived of sympathy, he could look on with an eye of kindness at the lookers-on too; at the roystering youth bent upon enjoyment, and here taking it; at the honest parents with their delighted children laughing and clapping their hands at the show: at the poor outcasts, whose laughter was less innocent though perhaps louder, and who brought their shame and their youth here, to dance and be merry till the dawn at least; and to get bread and drown care. Of this sympathy with all conditions of men Arthur often boasted: he was pleased to possess it: and said that he hoped thus to the last he should retain it. (Chap. 46).

In entitling this chapter “Monseigneur s’ amuse,” Thackeray obviously intends a witty analogy between the philandering of Victor Hugo’s Francis I and Arthur’s impending “affair” with the porter’s daughter Fanny Bolton, whom he meets for the first time here. More fundamental is the juncture of the grave and the gay, of amusement with edification exemplified in this episode—essential to the literary credo that Thackeray imparts to his hero. What starts out as a light-hearted flirtation proves to have serious enough implications, almost leading to a rift between Pen and his mother and Laura, and testing his moral strength. Vauxhall itself, though a random gathering of pleasure seekers, represents various elements of the population that crisscross in the novel itself—entertainers (Miss Fotheringay; her father, Captain Costigan; and Bows, the musician, who loves her in vain); parents and children (the Pendennisises obviously, as well as the Claverings, the Fokers, and the Huxters); as well as “poor outcasts” (Colonel Altamont, Ned Strong, and their cohorts); all treated with “a satiric humour that was not deprived of sympathy.”
This evolution of the hero as author proceeds against a background of society itself in development. Arthur's mingling among all the degrees of men and women is one among many evidences of the general social motility in operation throughout his "history." It is announced immediately in the ostentation of that arch-climber Major Pendennis, who in turn devotes himself to making a successful parvenu of his nephew. The major has his low comedy counterpart in Johnny Armstrong—Mr. Amory—Colonel Altamont, who manages easy leaps from one rung of the social ladder to another through a glib tongue and slick manners aided by human gullibility. Marriages as well as characters in this novel are "mixed," another manifestation of a dynamic society. Pen's own father, we learn early, was an apothecary who tried to seal his pretensions to gentility by his second marriage to Helen Thistlewood (eventually Pen's mother). Helen comes out of a faintly genteel background as "a very distant relative of the noble house of Bareacres" (whose acquaintance we made in *Vanity Fair*). Occupying central stage is the marriage of the high-born wastrel Lord Clavering to Blanche Amory's ignorant and commonplace but kind-hearted mother. With his "predominating tendency to antithesis" Thackeray gives us the converse situation also, with the marriage of Harry Foker's father, a wealthy brewer, to a lady. Blanche Amory, who loses out both on Arthur and Harry Foker, marries a Parisian of dubious title (ironically appropriate to her dubious legitimacy), allowing her to proclaim herself to Mr. Bungay's readers as Madame la Comtesse de Montmorenci de Valentinois. Occasionally extremes meet, as with the scholarly George Warrington, saddled to his grief with his "female boor," and the matching of Pen's adolescent passion, the illiterate actress Miss Fotheringay, to that peer of the realm Charles Mirabel. Outside the circle of marriage and giving in marriage, there is Major Pendennis's blackmailing valet, Morgan, who manages somehow to become "one of the most respectable men in the parish of St. James's, and in the present political movement has pronounced himself like a man and a Briton" (chap. 75). Another arriviste is the erstwhile maître d'hôtel of the Clavering household, Frederick Lightfoot, who when last heard from "has begged leave to inform the nobility and gentry of——shire that he has taken that well-known and comfortable hotel, the 'Clavering Arms' in Clavering, where he hopes for the continued patronage of the gentlemen and families of the county" (chap. 75).

This scrambling of the social classes, of the respectable with the less so, these pictures of people struggling upwards, of men and
women from various walks of life juxtaposed, are all tangible evidence of those “chances and changes” that Thackeray sees as part of the modern human condition. Arthur Pendennis bears witness to and tries to capture for his growing audience—life in flux, as a constant state of becoming. *Pendennis*, like all of Thackeray’s novels, is a “chronicle of Fate’s surprises” whose emblem is the Wheel of Fortune, the name of one of the clubs that Pen frequents. The quirks of fortune are signalized in turns of plot that may strike the casual reader as mere contrivance, notably the yoking and un-yoking of Colonel Altamont and Lady Clavering and the delayed revelation that Blanche Amory is illegitimate rather than the product of a bigamous union. It is also consistent with Thackeray’s Hericlitean concept of life that couples shift so readily throughout the novel (e.g., Fanny Bolton from Bows, to Pen, to Sam Huxter; Blanche from Pen, to Foker, to her French count), with the result that we are kept guessing to the end as to who marries whom. Significantly, readers are deprived of the conventional “and they lived happily ever after” ending, even when they know that Pen has abandoned any idea of a “sensible” marriage once and for all and has settled down with the girl of his mother’s choice. “And what sort of husband would this Pendennis be?” the author anticipates his readers’ asking, involving them with his hero’s development even beyond the confines of this story. “The querists, if they meet her, are referred to that lady herself, who, seeing his faults and wayward moods—seeing and owning that there are better men than he—loves him always with the most constant affection” (chap. 75). So our hero and heroine are left not exactly in a bower of bliss, but in a habitable house. Character, moreover, like plot is open-ended as Thackeray conceives it, being pretty much a function, as he says at one point, of “circumstance” (chap. 59). That Pen’s character is by no means “fixed” could have been apparent to a sharp-eyed reader of *Pendennis* in its first publication in book form where the revised version of the wrapper drawing shows him looking in the direction of the serpent woman, having shifted his gaze from the good wife, as represented in the monthly parts. To those hot for certainties in a world where all is uncertain there remains the “constant affection” of Laura, a sustained sweet note to lighten the burden of “Humbug everywhere” that Thackeray’s critics had complained of.

Neither Helen Pendennis nor the major quite predicts how Pen will turn out, but both prove partially right. He manages to distinguish himself socially, as Major Pendennis hopes, but not with “a
good carriage, and a good pair of horses.” He opts for the “sweet country parsonage surrounded with hollyhocks and roses” and marries Laura, as Helen wishes, though he does not carry her fond dream so far as to take a pulpit. He ends up somewhat like his French prototype Prosper Chavigni of Jules Janin’s Le chemin de traverse, another chastened cynic who, we learn, returns to Ampuy after disillusionment with Paris, marries his childhood sweetheart Laetitia (the Laura of his life), and thereafter “happiness, repose, and the esteem of all around them, were their possessions.” Janin concludes his novel with these words, which could also have been tacked on to the end of Pendennis, had Thackeray been given to such sampler wisdom: “And of all the lessons [Prosper and Laetitia] inculcated upon their children, they inculcated none more carefully than this—that Cross Roads in life are to be avoided, and that in this world there is only one road by which we can arrive at fortune without incurring regret and self-upbraiding; the high

*Pendennis*, allegorical design that appeared on wrapper of the monthly parts. (From volume 3 of *The Works of William Makepeace Thackeray* [Centenary Biographical Edition]; reproduced by permission of John Murray, Ltd.)
road of honesty, labour, patience, and virtue.” For those following Pen’s fortunes beyond the concluding monthly part, as has been noted, Thackeray had a coup-de-grace in store to remind them that the flesh is still weak even where the spirit is willing.

“A man and a brother” no more and no less is all that Thackeray claims for his hero, but one equipped to speak for and on behalf of humanity. His wisdom, however, is to find its outlet in the Pall Mall Gazette, and to be contained in wrappers and boards rather than spoken out from bar, bench, or pulpit. It is through the novel that he will capture “all conditions” of audiences, the Fanny Boltons addicted to the “darling greasy volumes” from Miss Minifer’s circulating library, the Blanche Amorys immersed in “Mes larmes” and the Journal des modes, the Madame Fribsbys who sigh over sentimental romances, the Helen Pendennis, who “melt right away” at the reading of Bishop Heber and Felicia Hemans. He would win Sir Francis Clavering away from Bell’s Life in London if he could, as well as Major Pendennis from Paul de Kock, and Foker from his
sporting prints, and would like at the same time to provide nutri-
ment substantial enough to impress even Paley buried in his law
books and Dr. Portman surrounded by the folios of his private
library. Young Pen, we learn early in his history, “never read to
improve himself out of school-hours, but, on the contrary, de-
voured all the novels, plays, and poetry, on which he could lay his
hands” (chap. 2). But, as his creator affirms in the preface to Pen-
dennis, truth should be welcomed “from whatever chair—from
those whence graver writers or thinkers argue, as from that at
which the story-teller sits.”

“To myself and to many of my own generation it has always
seemed as if there was a special music in ‘Pendennis,’ and the best
wisdom of a strong heart beating under its yellow waistcoat,” re-
called Anne Thackeray in the introduction she prepared for the
Biographical Edition. The esteem in which it was held at the time
is indicated by her placing it second to Vanity Fair in this collection.
If its “special music” has not proved particularly attuned to the ears
of this generation, that is probably because, of all of Thackeray’s
major novels, Pendennis is best savored in connection with its origi-
nal circumstances and milieu. It is highly significant in Thackeray’s
career in a number of ways. His latest biographer has pointed out
that the success of Vanity Fair relieved Thackeray from economic
struggle, leaving him free to appraise his own youth and early
manhood, and meditate over its significance. In an earlier chap-
ter of this study it was suggested that Thackeray’s self-confidence
as a novelist made it possible for him to speak out to his readers
more straightforwardly and seriously, in propria persona rather than
in the guise of a popular entertainer—though theater hovers in the
background and theatrical metaphor persists. But success brought
its perils too, as Thackeray was aware in a letter he wrote to his
mother when he was about to begin the writing of Pendennis: “May
God Almighty keep me honest and keep pride and vanity down. In
spite of himself a man gets worldly and ambitious in this great
place: with every bodycourting and flattering. I am frightened at it
and my own infernal pride and arrogance. . . . What I mean is
that all of a sudden I am a great man. I am ashamed of it: but yet I
can’t help seeing it—being elated by it trying to keep it down, etc.”
So this most personal of Thackeray’s novels becomes a stocktaking
of himself both as man and as author, achieving identity of writer
and readers, because he is able to look into their hearts with a
knowledge of his own.
Amalgamating guide to youth, fashionable novel, and literary Bildungsroman, *Pendennis*, moreover, is the culminating novel of "the Punch connexion," just as *Barry Lyndon* had marked the zenith of his career with "F a magazine of wit." Its growth out of humorous "fashionable intelligence" and popular moral advice parallels Thackeray's own evolution from journalist to novelist-educator-philosopher. Now that his eminence in fiction was assured, Thackeray was, moreover, not so dependent upon magazines for themes, and he tended after *Pendennis* to seek his subject matter elsewhere. For his next venture, in view of the complaint of one of the reviewers of *Pendennis* that he was tending to "play on one string with several variations, but all in the same key," it is not surprising that he changed his tune and also removed himself far from "the booths, the wild-beast shows, and the merry-go-rounds," he had become associated with. "I've got a better subject for a novel than any I've yet had," he wrote to his mother late in 1850, on the day that he finished *Pendennis*.44 We can almost see the new novel shaping itself in the chapter of *Pendennis* entitled "The Knights of the Temple," where the author muses: "I don't know whether the student of law permits himself the refreshment of enthusiasm, or indulges in poetical reminiscences as he passes by historical chambers . . . but the man of letters can't but love the place which has been inhabited by so many of his brethren, or peopled by their creations as real to us at this day as the authors whose children they were—and Sir Roger de Coverley walking in the Temple Garden, and discoursing with Mr. Spectator about the beauties in hoops and patches who are sauntering over the grass, is just as lively a figure to me as old Samuel Johnson" (chap. 29). In his heart he shared with that "Pall Mall philosopher" Major Pendennis a wistful nostalgia for the more genteel, less hurried era before the railroads, whose coming, among other economic developments, is documented in *Pendennis*: "The men, thinks [the major], are not such as they used to be in his time: the old grand manner and courtly grace of life are gone: what is Castlewood House and the present Castlewood compared to the magnificence of the old mansion and owner? The late lord came to London with four post-chaises and sixteen horses: all the North Road hurried out to look at his cavalcade: the people in London streets even stopped as his procession passed them" (chap. 67).

Thackeray could not bring back the old Castlewood House, but he could do the next best thing. At the time he wrote to his mother about the new novel he had in mind, he was returning to the period
of Barry Lyndon in his reading, presumably in preparation for the series of lectures on eighteenth-century humorists that he launched the following spring. Henceforth the aura of the public lecturer and popular historian, the literary situation he found most congenial, was to dominate his fiction. In other ways too he was shifting his ground. “I must tell you that a story is biling up in my interior, in which there shall appear some very good lofty and generous people,” he wrote to Mrs. Brookfield early in 1851. “Perhaps a story without any villain in it would be good, wouldn’t it?” He had swung full round from “A Novel without a Hero.” As for the nature of the new hero, Thackeray may have taken to heart the suggestion of another reviewer of Pendennis that “we should like to see him in the future diminish the Pen a little and develop the Warrington.” What we do know now is that Henry Esmond was destined to become the ancestor of George Warrington through his daughter Rachel. With change of tone and color came also a transformation of mode. “Pathos I hold should be very occasional indeed in humorous works and indicated rather than expressed or expressed very rarely,” Thackeray wrote a friend in the fall of 1848, before Pendennis had begun to appear. “We shouldn’t do much more than that I think in comic books,” the letter continues; “In a story written in the pathetic key it would be different & then the comedy should be occasional. Some day—but a truce to egotistical twaddle.” In Pendennis we can see pathos overtaking comedy, but in the next novel we find ourselves with Henry, returned to Castlewood after his student days at Cambridge, “in the midst of this actual tragedy of life.”

1. Athenaeum, 7 December 1850, p. 1273.
2. Punch 16 (January-June 1849), 17 (July-December 1849), practically concurrent with the first twelve numbers of Pendennis, the first of which appeared in November 1848. In her introduction to Pendennis, Anne Thackeray refers to this series and quotes a letter written by her father to a friend in imitation of its style, signed “Samuel S. Pips” (Works, 2:xxxviii–ix). This letter of October 1850 (to Lady Eddisbury) is reprinted in Letters, 2:699–70. Doyle’s cartoon “A Cydere Callere During a Comyck Songe,” which illustrated the episode of this series in Punch, 17 March 1849, is reproduced in Letters, 2:442 (facing). “Mr. Pips” was Percival Leigh, who wrote the text illustrated by the cartoons.
3. Conclusion of preface to vol. 17 (July–December 1849).
4. It began on 24 March 1849 and ran through 18 August of that year. Pendennis was not concluded until December 1850.
5. Despite surface similarities, the two uncles differ fundamentally in character. The elder Brown is a widower, not a bachelor like Major Pendennis, has read law, tends toward restraint in matters of dress, unlike the foppish major; and though worldly and opportunistic, he deplores tuft-hunting and chasing after “swells.” In some ways he serves as a corrective to the major.
A direct connection is established with the novel in one of the numbers (12 May 1849; letter 7 in reprints), in which Mr. Brown visits a club with his nephew where a member is discovered dozing over part 7 of *Pendennis*. Book and reader are clearly shown in the headpiece that originally preceded this episode.


8. Thackeray specifically mentions *The Parent’s Assistant, Amis des enfans, Evenings at Home*, and Dr. Dilworth’s illustrated books as part of the reading of his own childhood in his essay “John Leech’s Pictures of Life and Character,” *Quarterly Review* 96 (December 1854); *Works*, 13:481.

9. My chapter references generally follow the revised numbering as incorporated in the Penguin English Library reprint, but there will be occasional quotations from the first edition. Beginning with the unillustrated one-volume edition of 1855 (dated 1856), considerable cuts were made (whether by Thackeray or not is unknown). Chapter numbers and titles do not diverge between the two versions of the text until after chap. 15; with the 1855 edition the telescoping of the original chaps. 16 and 17 resulted in the dropping of one heading (“More Storms in the Puddle,” chap. 16 in the early editions) and the reduction of the number of chapters from seventy-six to seventy-five. Minor revisions were made in the text (largely changes in punctuation and corrections of typographical errors) in the first book issue. See Peter L. Shillingsburg, “The First Edition of Thackeray’s Pendennis,” *Publications of the Bibliographical Society of America* 66 (First Quarter 1972): 35–49.

10. The less materialistic Mr. Brown, on the other hand, advises nephew Bob to marry “a lady not very much above or below your station” (letter 15). This letter appeared almost concurrently with the ninth number of *Pendennis* (July 1849), in the last chapter of which the major expresses the wisdom quoted in the text.


12. Chap. 5 (as quoted from an anonymous translation, London, n.d.)

13. His meeting with Janin in London is mentioned in letters to W. Raymond Sams, 4 February 1849, and to Mrs. Brookfield, 4 February 1849 (Letters, 2:499, 500). In October 1853 he wrote to Lord Holland from Paris in anticipation of seeing Janin in a café the next day: “Have you met JJ? He is the most wonderful company more amusing than 20 vaudevilles” (Letters, 3:309). The friendship kept up practically to the end of Thackeray’s life, his diary recording a visit on 8 March 1863 (Letters, 4:409). In “Small-Beer Chronicle” he recalls wandering about the streets of London with this “famous and witty French critic” (*Roundabout Papers, Works*, 13:305).


15. “Translator’s Preface,” Prosper Chavigni & Letitia Laferti (thus on the title page, but the running title is *The Cross Roads*) (London: J. Clements, n.d. [though one of the stories bound up with it is dated 1842]).


17. “‘Ho, ho!’ they will exclaim, ‘so you are going to begin at the beginning, with the education of this young provincial!’” writes Janin at the beginning of his narrative, addressing his readers, with whom he seems to have enjoyed bantering as much as did Thackeray. Janin too tries to fob off charges of deliberately setting out to shock readers: “You are going, then, to show him systematically how to become a liar, a coward, a cheat, a duellist, a scamp—in a word you are going to teach him to become something. It is thus that I hear many voices exclaiming around me, in spite of all the precautions with which I encircled the second part of my recital. Morality has made such immense progress in our days!” (chap. 2). Cf. Thackeray’s testimony in the preface to *Pendennis*: “Many ladies have remonstrated and subscribers have left me, because, in the course of this story, I described a young man resisting and affected by temptation.”
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19. In his introduction to the Penguin English Library reprint, J. I. M. Stewart compares Pendennis in this respect to Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, pointing out the difference that in A Portrait "the mature Joyce is Joyce the adolescent as he writes, so that his work is a masterpiece . . . of self-empathy," whereas in Pendennis, Thackeray "is looking back, so that the boy comes to us, as it were, refracted through the gaze of the man" (p. 8). Also, as I point out in this chapter, Thackeray is not concerned so much with the artist sui generis, as with what the artist has in common with the humanity at large.

In "Michael Angelo Titmarsh and the Knebworth Apollo" (Costerus, n.s. 2 [1974]: 77), Anthea Trodd asserts that Pendennis is in part a rebuttal to Bulwer's conception of the writer as a superior being in Ernest Maltravers.

20. See above, pp. 185–88, and Colby, Fiction with a Purpose, pp. 159–62.


22. In his W. M. Thackeray, l'homme—le penseur—le romancier (Paris: Librairie Champion, 1932), Raymond Las Vergnas analyzes Thackeray's resolution of such dualities in his temperament as bohemianism and gentility, cynicism and tenderheartedness, melancholy and gaiety, insularity and cosmopolitan, realism and romanticism (see the chapter entitled "Contradictions," pp. 52–70).

23. The evangelical clergyman in The Great Hoggarty Diamond (see above, p. 175 and 195 n. 7).

24. The name Lever gave to his caricature of Thackeray in Roland Cashel (1850).


27. With much quotation from Faust on the strivings of the imagination, appropriate to the future biographer of Goethe.

28. Works, 13:630–31. This essay originally was published in the Morning Chronicle, 12 January 1850, in reply to a leading article that had appeared in the previous number, as well as a comment in the Examiner that had taken issue with the views on the literary profession expressed by Thackeray in Pendennis.

29. Thus in the first edition; subsequently changed to "Queen Christina's army."

30. Altamont is best appreciated as a parodic character, a spoof at once of the "high-souled convict" who figures in the French romances read by his daughter Blanche (chap. 23) and of the swashbuckling characters of Sue and Dumas.

31. Chap. 16 in first edition, cut out in 1855 when chaps. 15 and 16 were telescoped.

32. Among matter relating to Bloundell that was cut out in 1855.

33. The rival is the gruff but generally good-natured young medical student Sam Huxter, prompted at this point by his own interest in Fanny Bolton.

34. Chap. 46 in first edition, excised in 1855.

35. "Bradbury and Evans" in monthly parts and first book issue, as well as in revision of 1855.

36. This passage appeared in the first number that came out in November 1848.

37. Wordsworth was poet laureate at the time.

38. Further parallels are pointed out with Ranthorpe in Colby, Fiction with a Purpose, pp. 143, 168.


40. "Beware how you marry out of your degree," Warrington warns Arthur (chap. 57), apparently more in agreement with Mr. Brown than with Major Pendennis (see above, n. 10). Mixed marriages on the whole do not fare well in this novel; v. Warrington, who is married to the ignorant daughter of a yeoman, and Mr. Pynsent and Sam Huxter, who marry respectively above and below their stations, to not altogether happy result.

41. See above, p. 294.
42. *Works*, 2:xxxvi. According to Peter Shillingsburg, who has studied the records, *Pendennis* "established its popularity . . . at a faster rate than did *Vanity Fair.*" He indicates that initial printings of the first twelve parts ranged from eight thousand to ten thousand, and that reader demand necessitated printing of additional copies. He conjectures further that parts may still have been run off by Bradbury and Evans even after the book issue ("The First Edition of Thackeray's *Pendennis,*" pp. 38–39).


45. Ibid., p. 736.


