

manipulator of the truth about self" who sustained his ironic perspective in works "delightfully ambivalent." Williams detects a rise in Borrow's popularity and predicts that his reputation will continue to grow: "it is becoming clear at last that Borrow is a genuinely original, strongly creative writer and that limbo has not been and never will be a place capable of holding him."

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ANTHONY TROLLOPE, *The Letters of Anthony Trollope*, Vols. 1 and 2, ed. N. John Hall with the assistance of Nina Burgis. Vol. 1: 1835–1870, Pp. xxxvii + 535. Vol 2: 1871–1882, Pp. xv + 537–1082. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1983. \$87.50 for two-volume set.

This is as fine a scholarly edition of letters as I have seen. N. John Hall has not only done a stunning job of tracking down letters from all over the globe but has presented them to us with elegance: full and invariably helpful, often witty annotations; a crisp and sensitive introduction; apt full-page illustrations; a detailed chronology of Trollope's life at the beginning of each volume; and appendices including Trollope's commonplace book, his notes for a proposed History of World Literature, a record of his selections for reading aloud to his family, and some letters from Thomas Adolphus Trollope concerning Anthony's last illness and death. In all, there are 1,826 letters, more than twice as many as were included in Bradford Allen Booth's *The Letters of Anthony Trollope* (1951). In addition, Hall gives, in full, letters only summarized by Booth, correcting errors in transcription and dating; he also includes samples of postal reports, 85 letters to Trollope, and 16 letters about him. There are two extremely valuable indices: one of correspondents and the other a general index of subjects, persons, and events discussed in the letters. Such headings as "Trollope—on writing—his own—others" (not to mention "on smoking" or "on hunting") will prove indispensable to interested scholars. The volumes themselves are very handsomely produced by Stanford University Press: the pages are clear and unfussy, with generous margins and spacing.

I do not mean to become tedious about the virtues of this edition, but they do seem to me so remarkable that a little illustration is warranted. First of all, there is the matter of transcription, by no means an easy job in this case. Trollope himself joked about his handwriting—

“What a comfort it must be to you to find some one who writes so much worse than yourself” (p. 926)—and the plates Hall gives us showing Trollope’s script at four different stages in his life show quite clearly that the problem of deciphering was no joke, particularly as Trollope grew older. For all that, there are few words indeed that Hall was unable to make out. Most of us would have retreated quickly to less demanding work. More important are Hall’s many and careful corrections of material previously published; these corrections, even when they are small, are often significant. For instance, the alteration of just one letter adds, in my view, even more oil to the unctuous Dr. Norman Macleod, editor of *Good Words*. Writing to induce Trollope to provide him with a novel to publish, Macleod projects for him the opportunity for unrestricted piety: “I think you could let out the *best* side of your soul in *Good Words*—better far than even in *Cornhill*” (p. 178). The only earlier published version of this letter, in Sadleir’s *Trollope: A Commentary* (p. 243), had rendered the last part as “better far than ever in *Cornhill*.” The sly and sanctimonious “even” seems to me fully characteristic of Macleod, and I am happy to have it right. I should add to this list of merits some praise both for the quality of the illustrations and for the judiciousness of their selection and placement. For example, when Trollope writes to complain of a Millais illustration for *Framley Parsonage*, calling it “a burlesque,” “simply ludicrous” (p. 104), we are able to see on the facing page exactly what he is talking about.

Even more admirable are the richly detailed and fascinating annotations. They not only identify people and places, fill in the background, summarize reviews that are mentioned, give us supplementary information, and refer us to the novels, the *Autobiography*, and scholarly commentary, but correct misleading suggestions. When Trollope writes to his mother, railing against Carlyle’s *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, calling them, for the most part, “sheerest trash,” and suggesting that Carlyle has now gone mad, Hall reminds us of Trollope’s own concern with Carlylean themes and of *The New Zealander* (p. 29). Similarly and more spicily, Trollope’s letter to Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton praising Bulwer’s work is accompanied by a note from Hall suggesting that Trollope is, uncharacteristically, being “less than frank” and pointing us toward the unflattering comments in the *Autobiography* and the even more unflattering comments in the commonplace book: “How wrong [Bulwer] is in his ideas on life & human nature—how false his philosophy is, & to what little purpose he has worked his brains” (p. 319). Hall has combed such repositories as the Kent County Archives to find wonderful tidbits like Lady Fane’s report on Trollope as a house guest

at Lord Houghton's: "I think he is detestable—vulgar, noisy & domineering—a mixture of Dickens vulgarity & Mr. Burton's self-sufficiency—as unlike his books as possible" (p. 321). We are given some information we would like Trollope to have had, just to observe his fury: his post office nemesis, Rowland Hill, for instance, recorded in his diary that he believed Trollope to be insincere, even "dishonest" (p. 194). Remembering that Trollope located a kind of instinctive honesty at the center of his definition of a gentleman and even of a Christian, one would love to have seen him pitching into Sir Rowland. On occasion, the annotations are even more interesting than the text. Hall, for example, finds the following description of Trollope as a hunter in an obscure 1896 book, *The Essex Foxhounds*: "Trollope was perfectly fearless; but his defective sight led him often to choose some good man to show him the way. He was indifferent either to jumping on anyone, or being jumped upon. When he and his son Harry were out, it was good betting which would first blunder on the top of the other" (p. 578).

As for the letters themselves, even Trollope enthusiasts will likely admit that they are a bit disappointing. Those who are not Trollope enthusiasts will probably have a harsher verdict if they read these letters—which they won't. The style, for one thing, is, as Hall says, unlikely to do anything for Trollope's literary reputation (p. xxi); it is quick, intelligible, effortless; it is a style, as he says in one of his letters, that comes of long training and high intelligence, one unspoiled by revision or "the grating of the file" (p. 792). This is, of course, the style that can work such subtle effects in the novels, "dribbling" all those countless details and impressions into our minds. But in the short space of a letter—or, for that matter, his short stories—there simply is not space and time for these effects to develop. As a consequence, the letters often seem flat and voiceless.

Still, there are absorbing and valuable letters published here for the first time, both from and to Trollope. Some are amusing in unexpected ways: "Our cook has got drunk,—perpetually drunk. If there be nothing to eat we can do the same" (p. 215); or, "As for acquirements [for admission to the Garrick], I know no position for which so few are needed. I suppose the members can, most of them, read; but there are many who shew no signs of so much erudition" (p. 643). Others, like the many letters to G. W. Rusden, retrieved by Hall from the University of Melbourne, are thoughtful and revealing in their discussion of writing. And it is fun to stumble across Trollope's rarely expressed but forthright harshness: "It is disgusting to see the self-conscious and irritated craving for applause which such men as Mac-

ready and Dickens have exhibited;—& which dear old Thackeray did exhibit also” (p. 671). The letters to Trollope are often equally fresh and illuminating, particularly a remarkable series from his mother, never before published, which suggest a wonderful warmth and understanding on the part of Frances Trollope, especially when she praises her son’s industry, calling her own heroic efforts “positive *idleness* when compared to what you manifest.” “Tom and I agree in thinking,” she continues, “that you exceed in this respect any individual that we have ever known or heard of—and I am proud of being your mother—as well for this reason as for sundry others” (p. 44). Nothing, I am sure, could have so warmed the heart of this proud, sensitive man whose early on, to have felt that he had little to be proud of.

For me, the best part of this new correspondence is the raging battle recorded between Trollope and John Tilley, a Post Office Secretary, and Tilley’s irritatingly aloof superior, the Postmaster General Lord Stanley, over a petition from Trollope and other surveyors to have their salaries reviewed. Hall lays out the whole hilarity before us deftly. Tilley reports, first, that “His Lordship refrains from offering any opinion” on the salary issue (p. 260). Trollope, not without warrant, launches a reply that mixes reasoned argument with anger and pique: the response is the least satisfactory he has ever received; it is couched in “studiously offensive” language; the “newly appointed Secretary”—a slap at Tilley—has shown no consideration for the feelings of his old colleagues (pp. 272–77). Tilley, obviously stung, forwards the letter to Lord Stanley, calling it “most intemperate” (p. 277). Tilley then has a go at Trollope, chiding him for “the language which you have permitted yourself to use” and then concluding loftily: “Lord Stanley, passing by the numerous inaccuracies in your letter, desires me to express his regret at its tone and at the temper which you have displayed and to say that you have adduced no reason which appears to him to call for a reconsideration of his decision” (p. 278). NO REASON!!! Trollope wastes no more time with Tilley but goes straight for the jugular—or straight to Lord Stanley. Trollope’s letter begins calmly enough, but gradually heats up as he thinks of the manifold indignities heaped upon him—and thinks also of supercilious Tilley: “It was exactly the way in which Oliver was treated when he came forward on behalf of the Charity boys to ask for more;—and I own that I thought Mr. Tilley was very like Bumble in the style of the answer he gave us” (p. 281). Trollope has the last word, but the inscrutable Lord Stanley has the last silence, replying only, at Tilley’s dictation, that he had “nothing to add” to his earlier noncommunications. All this must have driven Trollope to kicking his children, his dog, or at least his hatstand.

If it did, we would not find out about it from the letters, which are, with a few exceptions, overwhelmingly concerned with the outer man, with business and business affairs. They are, as Hall says, "more than anything else a record of author-publisher relations" (p. xiv). Indeed, the first extant letter from Trollope asks Richard Bentley for help "in procuring the insertion of lucubrations of my own in any of the numerous periodical magazines &c which come out in such monthly swarms" (p. 1). Happily, Trollope dropped the silliness of this sort of embarrassed prose, but he did not stop the incessant letters to publishers; and they make, for me, mighty dull reading, whatever their value to economic and social historians. They are interesting, however, when they reveal Trollope's cantankerous, testy side—and that is not seldom: he threatens to break with the *Cornhill* if anyone, even Thackeray, dares to revise a word of what he has written (p. 138*n*); and he is capable of astonishingly direct insults: "I wonder whether you as a publisher think that an author should be bound to work up to your requirements whilst you owe nothing to him. The author must do his work himself, while that of the publisher is in a great degree mechanical" (p. 968).

But we do see a great deal more of Trollope than this attractively blustering, touchy, commercial side. I think Hall is right to insist that, however obliquely, these letters do "reveal in their sum the man himself" (p. xiii). At least, they allow us to construct, if we wish, a remarkably consistent character: a combination of Mr. Crawley, the Duke of Omnium, Mr. Scarborough, and Madame Max. He is, indeed, often touchy; and he is obsessed with detail. As an editor himself, he is alert to every word, as his extensive correspondence with Austin Dobson shows: "I know I am sticking pins into you by my remarks," he says at one point, "but what is an Editor to do?" (p. 450). Poor Dobson must have wondered who had picked him out as the object for such painful voodoo, and he must have been particularly galled by Trollope's somewhat literalistic insistence that any poetry he published must be immediately intelligible to the dull. Trollope even went so far as to claim that lines in Shakespeare he found obscure must, indeed, be a fake, written by some inferior. His attention to the mundane doubtless helps account for his considerable success both as a writer and as a civil servant: when negotiating a treaty with the Nubar Bey, Trollope found out everything for himself, including the speed at which camels laden with sacks might probably travel—he thinks three miles per hour but is willing to settle for two and one-half.

Akin to his preoccupation with detail is his obsession with hard work as an end in itself or as a stay against various fears and woes; he

writes in an early letter to his wife, "Do not be dismal if you can help it—I feel a little that way inclined, but hard work will I know keep it off" (p. 64). There is, of course, something melancholy in this willed absorption—"After a man has done making love there is no other thing on earth to make him happy but hard work" (p. 671)—a melancholy that, now and then, shows through directly: Greville's memoirs are "of a nature to make one feel that all gentlemanlike faith is dying out in the land" (p. 660). And he writes several times that he fears the time may come when he would wish to be dead, when he would be unable, that is, to continue working actively.

But such lapses are quite rare. More common by far are the scenes of Trollope happily roaring about wrongs to himself—from Sir Rowland Hill or from such agencies as the railway authorities: there is a riotous set of letters Trollope wrote to the *Times* complaining of manifold injuries and discomforts suffered on a trip from London to Basle—"the traveller could barely get a cup of coffee!"—reprinted here. No one understood better than Trollope the joys that can come from the self-satisfied, blanketing warmth of a well-nursed grievance. But Trollope's life, inner or outer, did not depend on pleasures like these, pleasures which might border on the neurotic. The image we have is of a happy man, a man who had created by his own efforts the pattern of his life, a life he felt clearly deserved him a place in his country's esteem and in heaven. He was right—at least on the first score.

And, one is tempted to say, perhaps the second. This magnificent edition presents to us also Trollope as Bagwax, the warmhearted, generous, blusteringly kind and decent man, the true pro, the true gentleman. Speaking of the death of his friend Charles Taylor, Trollope does what he so seldom allowed himself to do—reveal himself: "He is dead, poor Fellow! . . . And so I loved this man. It was not for his dinner certainly. He was not very clever, nor specially well read,—was self-willed, cantankerous, and unpopular. But he was thoroughly manly, and among the friends of my latter life there was no one whom I more thoroughly loved" (p. 696). Leaving out the part about not being popular or clever, Trollope might have been describing himself. As the world's leading Trollope scholar, Hall has made available to us, as no one else could, not only a myriad of facts but also of possibilities. This edition will make happy hunting for the ever increasing and increasingly subtle band of Trollope scholars.

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