

WORLD FAMOUS FICTIONS

THE HISTORY OF HENRY ESMOND

By
W. M. THACKERAY

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WOO KWANG KIEN

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顯理埃斯曼特

作者傳略

薩可萊是一八一—至一八六三年間人。他生於印度；他的父母都是英國人；他的父親在印度做官。他一八一七年回國，先入查爾特郝斯 (Chartuhouse) 學校，後入劍橋大學，不曾取學位。其後學法律，又學繪畫。他曾遊歷德法兩國，曾兩次赴美國。他在英國以賣文爲生，爲幾家雜誌撰諧文，初時並不知名。等到一八四七至一八四八年他的「浮華世界」出現，始享大名。他本來是中上人家，常與英國貴族往來，所以善於描寫貴族。他撰了五六部很出名的小說，以「浮華世界」及「顯理埃斯曼特」（一八五二年出版）爲最出名。有幾個批評家，以後一種爲最好。這部小說是先費了許多心血，經過很勞苦的慘淡經營，把全書都布置好，打成一片，然後下筆的。他的思想繁富，文詞美麗，

句語淺白，從容，自然，無不達的意思。況且這部書的人物的言語舉動確是當時的人物，尤其爲難能可貴。作者自己也說這是他的最好著作，其他都不及。這部小說其實是一部最偉大的歷史小說，批評家位置他在很少數的最高等的小說家之列，卻不是多數人所能領略的。這部小說所說的是一六八六至一七一四年間的英國朝局，描寫許多人物。本書的英雄就是顯理埃斯曼特，女英雄就是卡斯和特子爵夫人母女二人。埃斯曼特擁立失敗之後，往美國維吉尼亞（Virginia），住在先王所賞的土地，撰這部書，作爲他的自傳。

民國二十二年冬至日

伍光建記

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CHAPTER VI

THE 29TH DECEMBER

Young Castlewood came clambering over the stalls before the clergy were fairly gone, and running up to Esmond, eagerly embraced him. 'My dear, dearest old Harry,' he said, 'are you come back? Have you been to the wars? You'll take me with you when you go again? Why didn't you write to us? Come to mother.'

Mr. Esmond could hardly say more than a God bless you, my boy, for his heart was very full and grateful at all this tenderness on the lad's part; and he was as much moved at seeing Frank, as he was fearful about that other interview which was now to take place; for he knew not if the widow would reject him as she had done so cruelly a year ago.

'It was kind of you to come back to us, Henry,' Lady Esmond said. 'I thought you might come.'

'We read of the fleet coming to Portsmouth. Why did you not come from Portsmouth?' Frank asked, or my Lord Viscount as he now must be called.

Esmond had thought of that too. He would have given one of his eyes so that he might see his dear friends again once more; but believing that his mistress had forbidden him her house, he had obeyed her, and remained at a distance.

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'You had but to ask, and you knew I would be here,' he said.

She gave him her hand, her little fair hand: there was only her marriage ring on it. The quarrel was all over. The year of grief and estrangement was past. They never had been separated. His mistress had never been out of his mind all that time. No, not once. No, not in the prison; nor in the camp; nor on shore before the enemy; nor at sea under the stars of solemn midnight, nor as he watched the glorious rising of the dawn: not even at the table where he sate carousing with friends, or at the theatre yonder where he tried to fancy that other eyes were brighter than hers. Brighter eyes there might be, and faces more beautiful, but none so dear—no voice so sweet as that of his beloved mistress, who had been sister, mother, goddess to him during his youth—goddess now no more, for he knew of her weaknesses; and by thought, by suffering, and that experience it brings, was older now than she; but more fondly cherished as woman perhaps than ever she had been adored as divinity. What is it? Where lies it? the secret which makes one little hand the dearest of all? Whoever can unriddle that mystery? Here she was, her son by his side, his dear boy. Here she was, weeping and happy. She took his hand in both hers; he felt her tears. It was a rapture of reconciliation. . . .

'Your heart was never in the Church, Harry,' the widow said, in her sweet low tone, as they walked away together. (Now, it seemed they had never been parted, and again, as if they had been ages asunder.) 'I always thought you had no vocation that way; and that 'twas a pity to shut you out from the world. You would but have pined¹

¹pined 愁悶。

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and chafed at Castlewood: and 'tis¹ better you should make a name for yourself. I often said so to my dear lord. How he loved you! 'Twas my lord that made you stay with us.'

'I asked no better than to stay near you always,' said Mr. Esmond.

'But to go was best, Harry. When the world cannot give peace, you will know where to find it; but one of your strong imagination and eager desires must try the world first before he tires of it. 'Twas not to be thought of, or if it once was, it was only by my selfishness, that you should remain as chaplain to a country gentleman and tutor to a little boy. You are of the blood of the Esmonds, kinsman; and that was always wild in youth. . . .

'And now we are drawing near to home,' she continued. 'I knew you would come, Harry, if—if it was but to forgive me for having spoken unjustly to you after that horrid—horrid misfortune. I was half frantick with grief then, when I saw you. And I know now—they have told me. That wretch, whose name I can never mention, even has said it: how you tried to avert the quarrel, and would have taken it on yourself, my poor child: but it was God's will that I should be punished, and that my dear lord should fall.'

'He gave me his blessing on his death-bed,' Esmond said. 'Thank God for that legacy!'

'Amen, amen! dear Henry,' says the lady, pressing his arm. 'I knew it. Mr. Atterbury, of St. Bride's, who was called to him, told me so. And I thanked God, too, and in my prayers ever since, remembered it.'

¹ 'tis ~~up~~ it is.

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'You had spared me many a bitter night, had you told me sooner,' Mr. Esmond said.

'I know it, I know it,' she answered, in a tone of such sweet humility, as made Esmond repent that he should ever have dared to reproach her. 'I know how wicked my heart has been; and I have suffered too, my dear. I confessed to Mr. Atterbury—I must not tell any more. He—I said I would not write to you or go to you—and it was better, even, that having parted, we should part. But I knew you would come back—I own that. That is no one's fault. And to-day, Henry, in the anthem, when they sang it, "When the Lord turned the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream," I thought, yes, like them that dream—them that dream. And then it went, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy; and he that goeth forth and weepeth, shall doubtless come home again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him;" I looked up from the book, and saw you. I was not surprised when I saw you. I knew you would come, my dear, and saw the gold sunshine round your head.'

She smiled an almost wild smile, as she looked up at him. The moon was up by this time, glittering keen in the frosty sky. He could see, for the first time now clearly, her sweet careworn face.

'Do you know what day it is?' she continued. 'It is the 29th of December—it is your birthday! But last year we did not drink it—no, no. My lord was cold, and my Harry was likely to die: and my brain was in a fever; and we had no wine. But now—now you are come again, bringing your sheaves with you, my dear.' She burst into a wild flood of weeping as she spoke; she laughed and sobbed on the young man's heart, crying out wildly, 'bringing your sheaves with you—your sheaves with you!' . . .

CHAPTER XIII

I MEET AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE IN FLANDERS, AND
FIND MY MOTHER'S GRAVE AND MY OWN
CRADLE THERE

Holt's friendship encouraged Captain Esmond to ask, what he long wished to know, and none could tell him, some history of the poor mother whom he had often imagined in his dreams, and whom he never knew. He described to Holt those circumstances which are already put down in the first part of this story—the promise he had made to his dear lord, and that dying friend's confession; and he besought Mr. Holt to tell him what he knew regarding the poor woman from whom he had been taken.

'She was of this very town,' Holt said, and took Esmond to see the street where her father lived, and where, as he believed, she was born. 'In 1676, when your father came hither in the retinue¹ of the late king, then Duke of York, and banished hither in disgrace, Captain Thomas Esmond became acquainted with your mother, pursued her, and made a victim of her: he hath told me in many subsequent conversations, which I felt bound to keep private then, that she was a woman of great virtue and tenderness, and in all respects a most fond, faithful creature. He called himself Captain Thomas, having good reason to be ashamed of his conduct towards her, and hath spoken to me many times with sincere remorse for that, as with fond love for her many amiable qualities. He owned to having treated her very ill; and that at this time his life

¹ retinue 隨從人等.

was one of profligacy, gambling, and poverty. She became with child of you; was cursed by her own parents at that discovery; though she never upbraided, except by her involuntary tears, and the misery depicted on her countenance, the author of her wretchedness and ruin.

‘Thomas Esmond—Captain Thomas, as he was called—became engaged in a gaming-house brawl, of which the consequence was a duel, and a wound, so severe that he never—his surgeon said—could outlive it. Thinking his death certain, and touched with remorse, he sent for a priest, of the very Church of St. Gudule, where I met you; and on the same day, after his making submission to our Church, was married to your mother a few weeks before you were born. My Lord Viscount Castlewood, Marquis of Esmond by King James’s patent, which I myself took to your father, your lordship was christened at St. Gudule by the same curé who married your parents, and by the name of Henry Thomas, son of E. Thomas, officer Anglois, and Gertrude Maes. You see you belong to us from your birth, and why I did not christen you when you became my dear little pupil at Castlewood.

‘Your father’s wound took a favourable turn—perhaps his conscience was eased by the right he had done—and to the surprise of the doctors he recovered. But as his health came back, his wicked nature, too, returned. He was tired of the poor girl, whom he had ruined; and receiving some remittance from his uncle, my lord the old Viscount, then in England, he pretended business, promised return, and never saw your poor mother more.

‘He owned to me, in confession first, but afterwards in talk before your aunt, his wife, else I never could have disclosed what I now tell you, that on coming to London

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he writ a pretended confession to poor Gertrude Maes—Gertrude Esmond—of his having been married in England previously, before uniting himself with her; said that his name was not Thomas; that he was about to quit Europe for the Virginia plantations, where, indeed, your family had a grant of land from King Charles the First; sent her a supply of money, the half of the last hundred guineas he had, entreated her pardon, and bade her farewell.

‘Poor Gertrude never thought that the news in this letter might be untrue as the rest of your father’s conduct to her. But though a young man of her own degree, who knew her history, and whom she liked before she saw the English gentleman who was the cause of all her misery, offered to marry her, and to adopt you as his own child, and give you his name, she refused him. This refusal only angered her father, who had taken her home; she never held up her head there, being the subject of constant unkindness after her fall; and some devout¹ ladies of her acquaintance offering to pay a little pension for her, she went into a convent, and you were put out to nurse.

‘A sister of the young fellow, who would have adopted you as his son, was the person who took charge of you. Your mother and this person were cousins. She had just lost a child of her own, which you replaced, your own mother being too sick and feeble to feed you; and presently your nurse grew so fond of you, that she even grudged letting you visit the convent where your mother was, and where the nuns petted the little infant, as they pitied and loved its unhappy parent. Her vocation became stronger every day, and at the end of two years she was received as a sister of the house.

¹devout 奉教虔篤.

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'Your nurse's family were silk-weavers out of France, whither they returned to Arras in French Flanders, shortly before your mother took her vows, carrying you with them, then a child of three years old. 'Twas a town, before the late vigorous measures of the French king, full of Protestants, and here your nurse's father, old Pastoureau, he with whom you afterwards lived at Ealing, adopted the Reformed doctrines, perverting¹ all his house with him. They were expelled thence by the edict² of his Most Christian Majesty,³ and came to London, and set up their looms in Spittlefields. The old man brought a little money with him, and carried on his trade, but in a poor way. He was a widower; by this time his daughter, a widow too, kept house for him, and his son and he laboured together at their vocation. Meanwhile your father had publicly owned his conversion just before King Charles's death, was reconciled to my Lord Viscount Castlewood, and married, as you know, to his daughter.

It chanced that the younger Pastoureau, going with a piece of brocade to the mercer who employed him, on Ludgate Hill, met his old rival coming out of an ordinary there. Pastoureau knew your father at once, seized him by the collar, and upbraided him as a villain, who had seduced his mistress, and afterwards deserted her and her son. Mr. Thomas Esmond also recognised Pastoureau at once, besought him to calm his indignation, and not to bring a crowd round about them; and bade him to enter into the tavern, out of which he had just stepped, when

¹pervert 引入改奉他教。 ²edict 命令,指路易第十四下令收回顯理第四所頒行保護耶穌教徒的命令。 ³his Most Christian Majesty 指法蘭西王路易第十四。

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he would give him any explanation. Pastoureau entered, and heard the landlord order the drawer to show Captain Thomas to a room; it was by his Christian name that your father was familiarly called at his tavern haunts, which, to say the truth, were none of the most reputable.

‘I must tell you that Captain Thomas, or my Lord Viscount afterwards, was never at a loss for a story, and could cajole¹ a woman or a dun¹ with a volubility, and an air of simplicity at the same time, of which many a creditor of his has been the dupe. His tales used to gather verisimilitude² as he went on with them. He strung together fact after fact with a wonderful rapidity and coherence. It required, saving your presence,³ a very long habit of acquaintance with your father to know when his lordship was l——,—telling the truth or no.

‘He told me with rueful remorse when he was ill—for the fear of death set him instantly repenting, and with shrieks of laughter when he was well, his lordship having a very great sense of humour⁴—how in half an hour’s time, and before a bottle was drunk, he had completely succeeded in biting⁵ poor Pastoureau. The seduction he owned to; that he could not help: he was quite ready with tears at a moment’s warning, and shed them profusely to melt his credulous listener. He wept for your mother even more than Pastoureau did, who cried very heartily, poor fellow, as my lord informed me; he swore upon his honour that he had twice sent money to Brussels, and mentioned the name of the merchant with whom it was lying for poor Gertrude’s use. He did not even know whether she had a child or no, or whether she was alive or dead;

¹ dun 殆即 dunce 傻子。 ² verisimilitude 好像是眞的。 ³ saving your presence 請你勿怪。 ⁴ humour 諧趣, 亦作幽默。 ⁵ biting 騙。

but got these facts easily out of honest Pastoureau's answers to him. When he heard that she was in a convent, he said he hoped to end his days in one himself, should he survive his wife, whom he hated, and had been forced by a cruel father to marry; and when he was told that Gertrude's son was alive, and actually in London, "I started," says he; "for then, damme, my wife was expecting to lie-in, and I thought, should this old Put,¹ my father-in-law, run rusty, here would be a good chance to frighten him."

'He expressed the deepest gratitude to the Pastoureau family for their care of the infant: you were now near six years old; and on Pastoureau bluntly telling him, when he proposed to go that instant and see the darling child, that they never wished to see his ill-omened face again within their doors; that he might have the boy, though they should all be very sorry to lose him; and that they would take his money, they being poor, if he gave it; or bring him up, by God's help, as they had hitherto done, without; he acquiesced in this at once, with a sigh, and said, "Well, 'twas better that the dear child should remain with friends who had been so admirably kind to him;" and in his talk to me afterwards, honestly praised and admired the weaver's conduct and spirit; owned that the Frenchman was a right fellow, and he, the Lord have mercy upon him, a sad villain.

'Your father,' Mr. Holt went on to say, 'was good-natured with his money when he had it; and having that day received a supply from his uncle, gave the weaver ten pieces with perfect freedom, and promised him fur-

¹ Put 古老樣子的人。

ther remittances. He took down eagerly Pastoureau's name and place of abode in his table-book, and when the other asked him for his own, gave, with the utmost readiness, his name as Captain Thomas, New Lodge, Penzance, Cornwall; he said he was in London for a few days only on business connected with his wife's property; described her as a shrew, though a woman of kind disposition; and depicted his father as a Cornish squire, in an infirm state of health, at whose death he hoped for something handsome, when he promised richly to reward the admirable protector of his child, and to provide for the boy. "And by Gad, sir," he said to me in his strange laughing way, "I ordered a piece of brocade of the very same pattern as that which the fellow was carrying, and presented it to my wife for a morning wrapper, to receive company in after she lay-in of our little boy."

'Your little pension was paid regularly enough; and when your father became Viscount Castlewood on his uncle's demise, I was employed to keep a watch over you, and 'twas at my instance¹ that you were brought home. Your foster-mother was dead; her father made acquaintance with a woman whom he married, who quarrelled with his son. The faithful creature came back to Brussels to be near the woman he loved, and died, too, a few months before her. Will you see her cross in the convent cemetery? The Superior is an old penitent of mine, and remembers Sœur Marie Madeleine fondly still.'

Esmond came to this spot in one sunny evening of spring, and saw, amidst a thousand black crosses, casting

¹at my instance 由我請求.

their shadows across the grassy mounds, that particular one which marked his mother's resting-place. Many more of those poor creatures that lay there had adopted that same name, with which sorrow had rebaptised her, and which fondly seemed to hint their individual story of love and grief. He fancied her, in tears and darkness, kneeling at the foot of her cross, under which her cares were buried. Surely he knelt down, and said his own prayer there, not in sorrow so much as in awe (for even his memory had no recollection of her), and in pity for the pangs which the gentle soul in life had been made to suffer. To this cross she brought them; for this heavenly bridegroom she exchanged the husband who had wooed her, the traitor¹ who had left her. A thousand such hillocks lay round about, the gentle daisies springing out of the grass over them, and each bearing its cross and requiescat.² A nun, veiled in black, was kneeling hard by, at a sleeping sister's bed-side (so fresh made, that the spring had scarce had time to spin a coverlid for it); beyond the cemetery walls you had glimpses of life and the world, and the spires and gables of the city. A bird came down from a roof opposite, and lit first on a cross, and then on the grass below it, whence it flew away presently with a leaf in its mouth: then came a sound as of chanting, from the chapel of the sisters hard by: others had long since filled the place which poor Mary Magdaine once had there, were kneeling at the same stall, and hearing the same hymns and prayers in which her stricken heart had found consolation. Might she sleep in peace—might

¹traitor 反叛, 這裏解作薄倖郎. ²requiescat 即天主教人墳上的 R. I. P. 三字, 譯作平安休息.

she sleep in peace; and we, too, when our struggles and pains are over! But the earth is the Lord's, as the Heaven is; we are alike His creatures, here and yonder. I took a little flower off the hillock, and kissed it, and went my way, like the bird that had just lighted on the cross by me, back into the world again. Silent receptacle of death! tranquil depth of calm, out of reach of tempest and trouble! I felt as one who had been walking below the sea, and treading amidst the bones of shipwrecks.

CHAPTER X

WE ENTERTAIN A VERY DISTINGUISHED GUEST AT KENSINGTON

Beatrix's tale told, and the young lady herself calmed somewhat of her agitation, we asked with regard to the Prince, who was absent with Bishop Atterbury, and were informed that 'twas likely he might remain abroad the whole day. Beatrix's three kinsfolk looked at one another at this intelligence; 'twas clear the same thought was passing through the minds of all.

But who should begin to break the news? Monsieur Baptiste, that is Frank Castlewood, turned very red, and looked towards Esmond; the Colonel bit his lips, and fairly beat a retreat¹ into the window: it was Lady Castlewood that opened upon Beatrix with the news which we knew would do anything but please her.

'We are glad,' says she, taking her daughter's hand, and speaking in a gentle voice, 'that the guest is away.'

Beatrix drew back in an instant, looking round her at us three, and as if divining a danger. 'Why glad?' says

¹ beat a retreat 退兵.

she, her breast beginning to heave; 'are you so soon tired of him?'

'We think one of us is devilishly¹ too fond of him,' cries out Frank Castlewood.

'And which is it—you, "my lord, or is it mamma, who is jealous because he drinks my health? or is it the head of the family' (here she turned with an imperious look towards Colonel Esmond) 'who has taken of late to preach the King sermons?'²

'We do not say you are too free with his Majesty.'

'I thank you, madam,' says Beatrix, with a toss of the head and a curtsy.

But her mother continued, with very great calmness and dignity—'At least we have not said so, though we might, were it possible for a mother to say such words to her own daughter, your father's daughter.'

'*Eh! mon père,*' breaks out Beatrix, 'was no better than other persons' fathers;' and again she looked towards the Colonel.

We all felt a shock as she uttered those two or three French words; her manner was exactly imitated from that of our foreign guest.

'You had not learned to speak French a month ago, Beatrix,' says her mother, sadly, 'nor to speak ill of your father.'

Beatrix, no doubt, saw that slip she had made in her flurry, for she blushed crimson: 'I have learnt to honour the King,' says she, drawing up, 'and 'twere³ as well that others suspected neither his Majesty nor me.'

¹ devilishly 太過. ² preach sermons 講經, 這裏解作教訓.
³ 'twere 卽 it were.