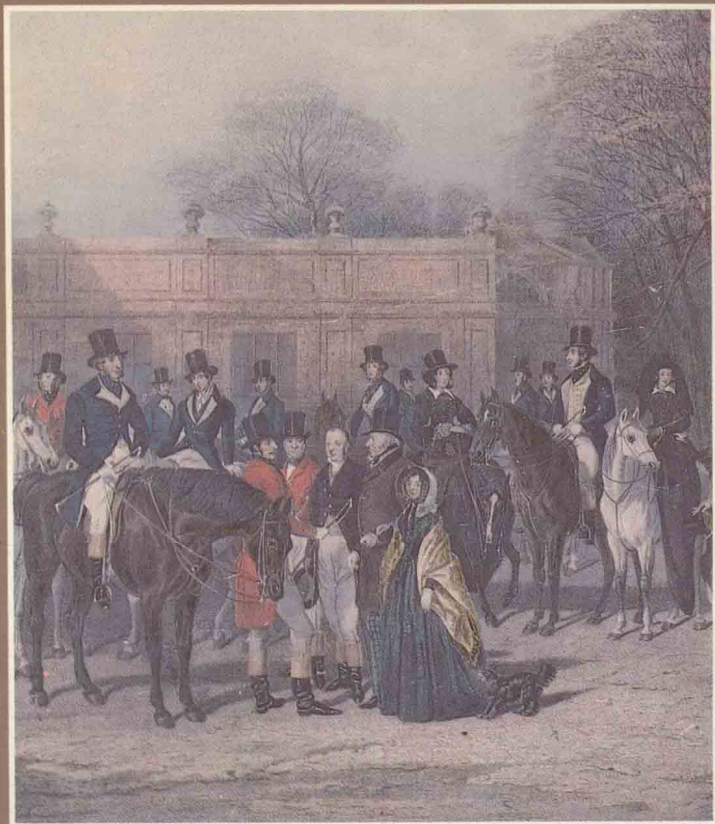


THE WORLD'S CLASSICS



ANTHONY TROLLOPE

FRAMLEY PARSONAGE



ANTHONY TROLLOPE
Framley Parsonage

With an Introduction and Notes by
P. D. EDWARDS

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FRAMLEY PARSONAGE

ANTHONY TROLLOPE (1815-82), the son of a failing London barrister, was brought up an awkward and unhappy youth amidst debt and privation. His mother maintained the family by writing, but Anthony's own first novel did not appear until 1847, when he had at length established a successful Civil Service career in the Post Office, from which he retired in 1867. After a slow start, he achieved fame, with 47 novels and some 16 other books, and sales sometimes topping 100,000. He was acclaimed an unsurpassed portraitist of the lives of the professional and landed classes, especially in his perennially popular *Chronicles of Barsetshire* (1855-67), of which *Framley Parsonage* is the fourth, and his six brilliant Palliser novels (1864-80). His fascinating *Autobiography* (1883) recounts his successes with an enthusiasm which stems from memories of a miserable youth. Throughout the 1870s he developed new styles of fiction, but was losing critical favour by the time of his death.

P. D. EDWARDS, Professor of English at the University of Queensland, Australia, is the author of *Anthony Trollope: His Art and Scope* and editor of Trollope's *Autobiography* in the World's Classics edition.

The Chronicles of Barsetshire

THE WARDEN (1855)

BARCHESTER TOWERS (1857)

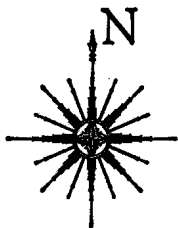
DOCTOR THORNE (1858)

FRAMLEY PARSONAGE (1861)

THE SMALL HOUSE AT ALLINGTON (1864)

THE LAST CHRONICLE OF BARSET (1867)

WEST
EAST
BARSET
SHIR



HOGGLE END

HOGGLESTOCK

SILVERBRIDGE

FRAMLEY

GRESHAMSBURY

COURCY

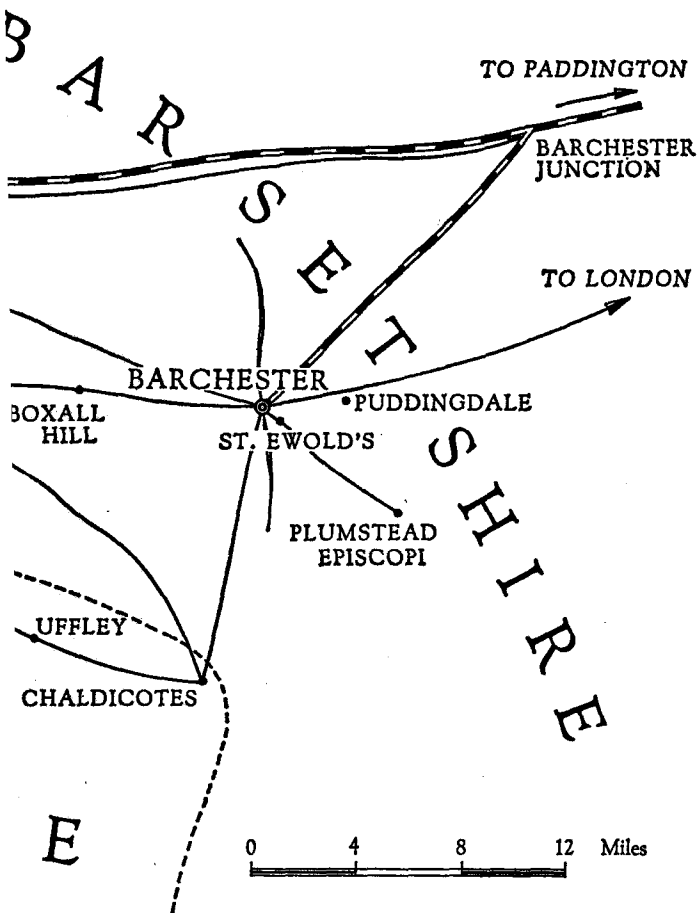
TO GUESTWICK
& ALLINGTON

TO OMNIUM

- RAILWAYS
- BOUNDARY OF
EAST AND WEST
BARSET
- ROADS

BARSETSHIRE

after the reconstruction by
MGR. RONALD KNOX



INTRODUCTION

THE importance of *Framley Parsonage* in Trollope's life and his career as a novelist is reflected in the precision with which he recorded how and when it came to be written. On 23 October 1859 he wrote to Thackeray offering to contribute a series of short stories to the *Cornhill Magazine*, which was to commence publication, under Thackeray's editorship, in January 1860. Three days later he received a reply from Smith and Elder, publishers of the *Cornhill*, offering him £1000 for a novel to be issued first as a serial in the magazine and subsequently in three-volume form. On 28 October, Thackeray himself wrote, welcoming Trollope as a 'co-operator' in the *Cornhill*; his letter is quoted in full in Trollope's *Autobiography*, written sixteen years later. The first instalment of the novel was to be in Smith and Elder's hands by 12 December. It would be the first serial novel Trollope had written, and the price was almost twice as high as he had received for any of his previous novels. At the time, Trollope and his family, after eighteen years' residence in Ireland, were about to move to Waltham Cross in Hertfordshire, just outside London, but Trollope's letter to Thackeray had been written from Dublin. The reply struck him as momentous enough to require a quick trip to London, where he arrived 'on the morning of Thursday, 3d of November'. His first idea was that an Irish novel on which he was already at work – *Castle Richmond* – might suit the *Cornhill*. George Smith, however, 'wanted an English tale, on English life, with a clerical flavour', and *Framley Parsonage* was begun, to these specifications, aboard the train that took Trollope back to Ireland on the evening of Friday, 4 November. The first instalment was due in less than six weeks' time.

More than any of his earlier novels, *Framley Parsonage*

made Trollope's name a household word;¹ it also played a crucial part in the spectacular success of the *Cornhill*, which within a few months reached a sale of 100,000 copies. In marked contrast to *Castle Richmond*, it is one of the gentlest and happiest of Trollope's novels, presenting a view of English life that has been described, with only slight exaggeration, as 'idyllic' and 'pastoral'.² To some extent, one imagines, it must represent Trollope's heartfelt tribute to the country he was returning to after eighteen years' absence; and the new serenity that it reveals – even in comparison with the three earlier Barsetshire chronicles, *The Warden*, *Barchester Towers*, and *Doctor Thorne* – must in some measure express his pride and delight at having finally achieved recognition, with the prospect of social success and rich financial rewards.

Trollope's comments on *Framley Parsonage* in his *Autobiography* also suggest, however, that its mellowness was to some extent the result of a shrewd calculation on his part as to what the occasion demanded. The inauguration of a new journal by a publisher of great prestige – the publisher of Charlotte Brontë and Thackeray – presented him with a supreme opportunity not only to establish himself in the popular mind as a novelist of distinctive style and talents, but also to prove his power of gauging public taste. When George Smith ordered 'an English tale' Trollope knew very well that he didn't mean such a tale as *The Woman in White*, which was currently lifting the sale of Dickens's periodical, *All the Year Round*, to unprecedented heights. What Smith presumably wanted was something as different as possible from *The Woman in White*, something in

1. Cf. *The Saturday Review*, xi (4 May 1861), 451: 'At the beginning of every month the new number of [*Framley Parsonage*] has ranked almost as one of the delicacies of the season; and no London belle dared to consider herself literary, who did not know the very latest intelligence about the state of Lucy Roberts' heart and of Grisela Grantley's [*sic*] flounces.'

2. See James R. Kincaid, *The Novels of Anthony Trollope* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), pp. 113–25.

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the pleasant 'domestic' vein of *Cranford*, *Barchester Towers*, or *John Halifax, Gentleman* rather than in the frenetic 'sensational' vein of Dickens and Wilkie Collins; something that would evoke decent, comfortable, middle-class England rather than the England of slums and factories, passion and violence; something, in short, approximating to the artless 'hodge-podge' of which, according to Trollope, *Framley Parsonage* essentially consists:

Nothing could be less efficient or artistic. But the characters were so well handled, that the work from the first to the last was popular, – and was received as it went on with still increasing favour by both Editor and proprietors of the magazine. The story was thoroughly English. There was a little fox-hunting and a little tuft-hunting,¹ some Christian virtue and some Christian cant. There was no heroism and no villainy. There was much Church, but more love-making. And it was downright honest love, – in which there was no pretence on the part of the lady that she was too ethereal to be fond of a man, no half-and-half inclination on the part of the man to pay a certain price and no more for a pretty toy. Each of them longed for the other, and they were not ashamed to say so. Consequently they in England who were living, or had lived, the same sort of life, liked *Framley Parsonage*.

Trollope is given to self-depreciation, particularly when appraising his most popular novels, and the somewhat sardonic tone in which he refers to *Framley Parsonage* here disappears altogether when he comes, a little later, to speak of his didactic aims in his novels (his desire to 'impregnate' the mind of the reader with the 'feeling that honesty is the best policy'). But the description he gives of *Framley Parsonage* is certainly more accurate and incisive, not least in its vaguely pejorative aspects ('tuft-hunting', 'Christian cant'), than his remarks on most of his novels. *Framley Parsonage* does in fact betray some anxiety lest the reader should confuse respect for rank and money with tuft-hunting, and the distinction between the two hardly appears as sharp as some of the characters and perhaps Trollope himself – now that he was on the way to becoming

1. Social climbing.

a literary lion – would have wished. Likewise the dividing-line between ‘Christian virtue’ and ‘Christian cant’ sometimes blurs, though in such a fashion as to suggest, not that Trollope himself was uncertain which was which, but that he preferred not to upset readers who were. *Framley Parsonage* is by no means as untroubled and unambiguous as its confident tone and the disarmingly easy resolution of its plot would have us believe.

In his *Autobiography*, Trollope alternates between rueful acknowledgments of his inability to concoct adequate plots and impenitent professions of contempt for this aspect of the creative process. The plot of *Framley Parsonage*, however, obviously strikes him as notably flimsy and meagre even by his own standards. He began the novel, he says, with no more than the ‘idea’ of a clergyman ‘led into temptation by his own youth and by the unclerical accidents of the life of those around him’. The love of the clergyman’s sister for a young lord was added because ‘there must be love in a novel’. So that ‘old friends’ from earlier Barset novels could be brought in, the main action of the novel was set near Barchester. Since the novel was to be serialized care was taken to invent interesting business for each instalment and to avoid long stretches of ‘tediousness’, ‘bathos or dulness’. The whole process, Trollope would have us believe, was haphazard; and even allowing for the air of bumbling artlessness that he likes to affect in speaking of his methods of composition, the reader can hardly fail to assent to his view that in this novel (though hardly, as he claimed, in novels generally) the plot is ‘the most insignificant part of the tale’, a mere ‘vehicle’ for the characters. This is not to dispute that, along the way, it produces the situations that bring the characters to life for us, lend them depth and complexity; in such situations as the one in which Mark Robarts rationalizes his decision to go to Gatherum with casuistry worthy of a Browning protagonist (Chapter 4), or the one in which Lucy debates whether it is Lord Lufton’s ‘legs’ or his ‘title’ that cast a

spell over her (Chapter 26), Trollope's 'eye for the moral question'¹ is revealed at its most penetrating. But viewed as a whole the plot is conspicuously lacking in the tension that derives from real and sustained moral conflict – rather than from the mere clash of personalities. In this respect the shortcomings of Lucy's story are the more obvious, but even Mark's story, though it purports to turn on a conflict between sharply differentiated values and lifestyles, fails in the outcome to demonstrate that anything of more than personal consequence was really at stake. Trollope's own dim view of the plot perhaps reflects his feeling that the nostrum 'no heroism and no villainy' – which served him so well on many other occasions – had this time led him perilously close to no novel.

From a structural point of view, then, *Framley Parsonage* depends for most of its interest on side-issues, rather than on the issues that its plot ostensibly turns upon and resolves. And while the same is no doubt true, in varying degrees, of quite a number of Trollope's other novels, *Framley Parsonage* is surely unusual both in the richness of its side-issues and the relative poverty of its central ones. In particular, the lack of real conflict in its main plot offers a striking, and pertinent contrast with the earlier chronicles of Barset, in each of which the main action unmistakably embodies moral and social conflicts that are crucial not only to the novel as a whole but to the Barsetshire series as a whole. Thus in *The Warden* the battle over Mr Harding's right to the wardenship of Hiram's Hospital is presented explicitly as one involving not merely the moral and physical comfort of Mr Harding, and the power and privileges of his wing of the church, but also the continuous clash between old ways and new, between conservatism and 'progress', between the picturesque and the utilitarian, between country and town. In *Barchester Towers*, the war

1. The phrase is used by Henry James in his long essay 'Anthony Trollope' (1883), reprinted in *The House of Fiction* (London: Hart Davis, 1957).

between the low church party – foisted upon Barset by the Whig government in London – and the entrenched clergy of the high, or ‘high-and-dry’, persuasion represents a continuation of this clash. In *Doctor Thorne*, the enclave that the enemy – Whigs, low churchmen, fashionable, frivolous Londoners – had established in *Barchester Towers* is acknowledged to be a great deal larger, and of less recent origin, than it had previously appeared: it is now disclosed that there are in fact two Barsetshires, one of which, East Barset, adheres to the Tories and the old, picturesque, inefficient, unfashionable ways of rural England, while the other, the West, has long ago thrown in its lot with London and the Whigs. In the novel an old East Barset family who have unhappily intermarried with a West Barset one are tempted to compound the error by marrying their son and heir to another outsider. All three novels depict old Barsetshire in a beleaguered situation, fighting for survival against enemies without and within, and all of the characters find themselves either drafted or voluntarily enlisted in one or other of the contending armies. For the volunteers and their generals – Mrs Proudie, Archdeacon Grantly, Tom Towers of the *Jupiter* (the *Times*), Lady De Courcy, Doctor Thorne, and so on – the joy of battle is life itself, and it is their zest for combat that above all enlivens the novels. For the conscripts – striving to avoid the fighting without getting trapped in the crossfire – the battlefield supplies the suspense and excitement that make their lives worth recording. Even Mr Harding, who is by far the most memorable and important of them, lives on for the reader only by virtue of the moral prestige he acquired, the individuality and integrity he asserted, in those rare warlike moments when he defied Tom Towers and the Archdeacon. But Eleanor Bold and Dr Arabin, Frank Gresham and Mary Thorne cease to live at all once they have withdrawn from the battles in which their over-zealous partisans embroiled them.

In *Framley Parsonage*, by contrast, only one of the cen-

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tral characters – Mark Roberts – becomes fully involved in the central struggle between East Barset and its enemies; and although it is clear that in his eyes the struggle is still in some senses a moral one – with values as well as power at stake – all the indications are that for the other main characters the real battles have long since ended in truce. Mark Roberts does flirt with the enemy and is punished for his offence, financially, socially, and in his own conscience. But given his economic dependence on Lady Lufton, and his essential loyalty to her and to East Barsetshire, any outright defection on his part is always out of the question. His inevitable return to the fold is accompanied by exemplary and apparently unaffected remorse: he sees himself as Pilgrim wallowing in a slough of despond among the ‘lowest dregs of mankind’, and the narrator presents his plight as an illustration of the Biblical saw that a man cannot ‘touch pitch’ without being ‘defiled’. The reader, however, is bound to sense a note of exaggeration (of ‘Christian cant’) in the implication that Sowerby and the Duke of Omnium were agents of the Evil One – particularly after Sowerby has himself shed tears of remorse over his fleecing of Mark. For the novel as a whole leaves us no reason to believe that the enormities of Gatherum and the frivolities of London are anywhere near as black as Lady Lufton’s imagination paints them, and such moral damage as Mark has suffered from his contact with them appears to be easily cured. Old Barset in fact reclaims him effortlessly, and in doing so it succeeds, for the first time in the series, in consolidating its strength without conceding anything to the enemy.

Consolidation is achieved, however, by withdrawal rather than by confrontation. *Framley Parsonage* shows high-and-dry Barset contracting, retreating into a fastness in which it can, when it chooses, ignore the enemy altogether. Even the main love-story, unlike those in the previous chronicles, is entirely an internal matter, not in any way affecting old Barset’s relations with the outside world. As

contemporary reviewers protested,¹ Lucy Robarts's pride and Lady Lufton's prejudice erect only the most temporary and flimsy obstacles to a marriage that is clearly suitable and must take place. The reader is fully convinced that Lucy deserves Lord Lufton long before she proves her heroism in Florence Nightingale-fashion, by turning sick-nurse to Mrs Crawley. There is never any doubt that the mercurial wit and sturdy spirit that endear her to Lord Lufton will soon win over his mother as well. Her social eligibility – as distinct from her 'style' – is never really questioned, even by Lady Lufton, and her moral credentials, which Lady Lufton, if she knew as much as the reader, might consider not quite immaculate, are at any rate devoid of any London or West Barset taint. In gaining her and losing Griselda Grantly, old Barset obviously scores a double-victory. And by accepting Lucy, Lady Lufton also extirpates the one weakness in her own character – the residual tinge of 'worldliness' – that might have exposed her world to corruption.

Worldliness is Lady Lufton's, and the novel's, label for the way the world outside East Barset behaves. In the earlier chronicles of the county, it had been more or less synonymous with Archdeacon Grantly, the champion of the high-and-dry party, and had not been altogether a term of disparagement; but in Lady Lufton's domain it is a dangerous aberration, though fortunately one that can be rectified more or less painlessly (as it is in both Lady Lufton and Mark Robarts). For the novelist, however, it raises problems not so easily disposed of. At the time when Mark Robarts is undergoing his crisis of conscience over whether or not to accept an invitation to Gatherum Castle, the narrator assures us that, though ambitious to 'rise higher', Mark is not to be regarded in the degrading light of a 'tuft-hunter'. Similarly, at the crucial moment when Lady Lufton first learns, with 'surprise', of her son's attachment to Lucy Robarts, the narrator prefaces his

1. E.g. *Westminster Review*, xxx (July 1861), 283.

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account of her hostile response to the news with an assurance that she was 'not herself a worldly woman', was 'almost as far from being so as a woman could be in her position'. In each instance, the character's moral status is explained negatively – in terms of what he is not, rather than what he is – and in each instance, significantly, a double-adversative ('but nevertheless') is required to persuade the reader that a real opposition, a measurable distinction between what he is and is not, is involved. So in admitting that Mark Robarts, if not quite a tuft-hunter, does wish to mix with people of rank and wealth at Gatherum, the narrator disarmingly observes: 'It is no doubt very wrong to long after a naughty thing. But nevertheless we all do so. One may say that hankering after naughty things is the very essence of the evil into which we have been precipitated by Adam's fall.' And the observation that Lady Lufton is 'almost' as unworldly as a woman in her position can be is immediately qualified by: 'But, nevertheless, there were certain worldly attributes which she regarded as essential to the character of any young lady who might be considered fit to take the place which she herself had so long filled.'

Doubtless these judgments leave us free to regard Mark Robarts as at any rate less of a tuft-hunter and Lady Lufton as less worldly than most other people. And we are presumably meant to make the same qualification when we are told that Lucy, like any of 'Eve's daughters', would dearly like to be the wife of a lord, and that Fanny, though she is not a 'tuft-hunter or a toad-eater', entertains a proper regard for Lady Lufton. Even Framley cannot exclude all the consequences of the Fall, though somehow its worldliness is more innocent and less ingrained than that of the world outside. Certainly Lady Lufton's domain would be duller – almost unimaginably so – without its mild propensity to tuft-hunting and worldliness, and from this point of view the report at the end of the novel that, despite her formal cession of authority to her son's wife, Lady Lufton

'still reigns paramount' in Framley strikes a somewhat chilling note. It suggests that in place of her former sprightliness – in which Lady Lufton had found 'no quiet, no repose' – Lucy may have begun learning that '*vis inertiae*' belonging to beautiful and dignified reticence' which Lady Lufton most admires in young women.

Indeed it is the *vis inertiae* – the strength of passive withdrawal rather than the virile and bellicose vitality of Archdeacon Grantly and Doctor Thorne that from now on largely sustains old Barset. The mute snub that Lady Lufton administers to the Duke of Omnium in the novel's best known scene of confrontation between old Barset and its enemies (Chapter 24) epitomizes the county's new reliance on fugitive and cloistered virtue, its new certainty of moral superiority which – as Lily Dale also finds in the next Barsetshire chronicle, *The Small House at Allington* – contact with the outside world can serve only, and predictably, to confirm. As Lady Lufton draws her skirts away from the Duke – who has accidentally been pressed against them – her unspoken boast is that of Clarissa Harlowe to Lovelace: 'My soul is above thee, man.' But although, by her low curtsy and 'haughty arrangement of her drapery', she is held to have 'conquered' the Duke, everyone sees his 'slight smile of derision'. Neither he nor, one feels, Trollope believes for a moment that life's real battles are fought and won so effortlessly – with such dignity and without blows.

Significantly, it is Trollope's 'old friends' from earlier Barset novels – the Grantlys, the Proudies, and Miss Dunstable – who carry on what remains of the war in *Framley Parsonage*; and all of these, whether their allegiance is to East Barset or West, to high church or low, Toryism or Whiggery, share a common commitment to worldliness. In the Proudies the commitment smacks of hypocrisy. In Miss Dunstable it is equivocal and a little shamefaced (though the reader surely finds her 'London wit and aptitude for fun' altogether livelier and more appealing than the 'gen-