



## THE TROLLOPE SOCIETY TRIP TO BRUSSELS AND BRUGES

Friday 29<sup>th</sup> August – Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September

### Letter to Trollope from George Bartley

11 Woburn Square, London, 18<sup>h</sup> June. 1851.

My dear Mr. A. Trollope,

I am sorry I did not see you on Monday, but as I was obliged to remain in town until this afternoon, I occupied myself yesterday in carefully perusing your MS., and feel myself bound, as you ask for my opinion, to give it candidly. And it is this.

When I commenced, I had great hopes of your production. I did not think it opened dramatically, but that might have been remedied, and the dialogue, both serious and comic, promised admirably. But as the plot proceeded I found the serious parts deficient in interest, and the comic ones overlaid with repetitions. There is not one character, serious or comic, to challenge the sympathy of the audience; and without that all the good writing in the world will not ensure success upon the stage.

We are told the Count Upsel is a most amiable and quiet man, but you have given him no scope to assert or prove his good qualities. He has really nothing to do.

Mark Steinburg (sic) is merely a republican, and why he makes his base proposal to Margaret, except to carry on the plot of the play, I cannot understand. As far as it is explained in his own person, it is wholly gratuitous; nor, if you mean him for a villain (with this fatal exception), has he anything of villainy in him; nor is his character prominently brought out. Indeed, such little lead does he or the Count take in the business of the drama, that you have a five-act play without a hero!

The comic scenes are good, but too long and all so much alike, that one is merely a repetition of the other.

Helen's character is well and boldly written and (to me) the least objectionable in the play, though I am not in love with her or her ready intermeddling.

As to the character of Margaret, I felt at a loss how to describe it and my objections to it, but you have done it for me in the last speech of Madame Brudo:

" Margaret, my child; never play the jilt again. 'Tis a most unbecoming character. Play it with what skill you will, it meets but little sympathy."

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—This, be assured, would be its effect upon an audience. So that I must reluctantly add that, had I been still a manager, " The Noble Jilt " is not a play I could have recommended for production.

I qualify all this by honestly stating I have often been mistaken in my opinion and may be wrong in this. But you ask me for my honest impressions, and I have too much regard and respect for your excellent and highly gifted mother and all her family, not to give them candidly as they are, and am most truly sorry they are not more favourable.

I am, my dear Mr. A. Trollope, respectfully and sincerely, yours,  
Geo. Bartley.

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Trollope, Anthony. Delphi Complete Works of Anthony Trollope (Illustrated) (Delphi Series Two Book 9) (Function). Kindle Edition.