

A selection of excerpts from
the novels of **Anthony Trollope**
chosen by notable Trollopians

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Pick Up A Trollope

Perhaps more than any other writer of the Victorian era, Anthony Trollope wrote novels that transcend the time and place of their writing so that they speak to a 21st Century audience as eloquently as they addressed their first readers 150 years ago. For me, the reason why this is so is evident – Trollope wrote about characters who are real, who engage our sympathies in spite of, indeed I would argue, because of their flaws. No hero is without his feet of clay; no heroine perfectly fits that Victorian archetype “the Angel of the Hearth” and no villain is without redeeming feature, be it courage or compassion, shown at a key moment in the story.

Examples of just such flawed, and therefore more believable, characters abound in the selections included here. Whether it be Melmotte, the prescient depiction of the unscrupulous financier, in *The Way We Live Now* (was ever a book so aptly named?), or the conscience-stricken Lady Mason of *Orley Farm*, or Madeline Neroni, the apparently heartless femme fatale playing out her schemes in *Barchester Towers*, all live in the mind of the reader after the pages of the book are closed. This, I attribute to Trollope’s acute powers of observation, honed through years of feeling an outsider on the fringes of the society in which he moved, which enabled him to reveal through almost imperceptible nuances insights into even the humblest of his characters. He coupled this facility with a sympathy in his treatment of both the best and the worst facets of the characters he created that sustains our interest in them as people not merely as characters on a page.

As readers of this collection of excerpts, I can promise you a tremendous variety of experiences, from high comedy – one might almost call it farce – through introspective eroticism to moments of true power and tragedy. As I have read each episode, I have felt the almost irresistible urge to turn to my copy of the book from which it is taken to re-read it whole. I am sure many of you will feel the same and you will not be disappointed if you succumb to that temptation.

But do not forget that you are also asked to choose your own favourite from amongst the selections and vote for the novel which you would most like to feature in a grand collective read together online – a truly global book club which you can join from the comfort (and safety, in these extraordinary times) of your own home.

Most of all, though, I wish you a thoroughly enjoyable read.

Julian Fellowes - The Lord Fellowes of West Stafford

Trollope Society President

The Way We Live Now

Chapter 4 ~ Madame Melmotte's Ball

Selected by

The Right Honourable Sir John Major KG CH



'The Way We Live Now' is fascinating, thought-provoking and enjoyable: one of Trollope's finest, which should be read by all with pleasure and profit.

It is, of course, beautifully written, with fine character studies of men and women who are, in turn, principled, unprincipled, sycophantic, cynical, crude, gullible, strong-minded and weak-willed. Many characters are victims of events as well as their own shortcomings.

It has sub-plots that examine unfulfilled ambition, forlorn love, youthful folly and the underbelly and hypocrisy of Victorian life. Although the book was published 145 years ago, the perceptive will note some modern-day parallels: times may change, but human nature does not.

The book is dominated by an extremely bad man: the crooked, bullying financier Augustus Melmotte who - through villainy - rises to the heights, wrecking the lives of many in his wake and who ... well, to discover his fate, it's best to read the book.



It was at any rate an established fact that Mr Melmotte had made his wealth in France. He no doubt had had enormous dealings in other countries, as to which stories were told which must surely have been exaggerated. It was said that he had made a railway across Russia, that he provisioned the Southern army in the American civil war, that he had supplied Austria with arms, and had at one time bought up all the iron in England. He could make or mar any company by buying or selling stock, and could make money dear or cheap as he pleased. All this was said of him in his praise,—but it was also said that he was regarded in Paris as the most gigantic swindler that had ever lived; that he had made that City too hot to hold him; that he had endeavoured to establish himself in Vienna, but had been warned away by the police; and that he had at length found that British freedom would alone allow him to enjoy, without persecution, the fruits of his industry. He was now established privately in Grosvenor Square and officially in Abchurch Lane; and it was known to all the world that a Royal Prince, a Cabinet Minister, and the very cream of duchesses were going to his wife's ball. All this had been done within twelve months.

There was but one child in the family, one heiress for all this wealth. Melmotte himself was a large man, with bushy whiskers and rough thick hair, with heavy eyebrows, and a wonderful look of power about his mouth and chin. This was so strong as to redeem his face from vulgarity; but the countenance and appearance of the man were on the whole unpleasant, and, I may say, untrustworthy. He looked as though he were purse-proud and a bully.

Vote for *The Way We Live Now* at TrollopeSociety.org



The Prime Minister

Chapter I ~ Ferdinand Lopez

Selected by

The Right Honourable

The Lord Archer of Weston-Super-Mare



*I love the start of chapter one of 'The Prime Minister'.
Being neither a washerwoman nor an archbishop,
it remains one of my favourite openings of all time.*



It is certainly of service to a man to know who were his grandfathers and who were his grandmothers if he entertain an ambition to move in the upper circles of society, and also of service to be able to speak of them as of persons who were themselves somebodies in their time. No doubt we all entertain great respect for those who by their own energies have raised themselves in the world; and when we hear that the son of a washerwoman has become Lord Chancellor or Archbishop of Canterbury we do, theoretically and abstractedly, feel a higher reverence for such self-made magnate than for one who has been as it were born into forensic or ecclesiastical purple. But not the less must the offspring of the washerwoman have had very much trouble on the subject of his birth, unless he has been, when young as well as when old, a very great man indeed. After the goal has been absolutely reached, and the honour and the titles and the wealth actually won, a man may talk with some humour, even with some affection, of the maternal tub;—but while the struggle is going on, with the conviction strong upon the struggler that he cannot be altogether successful unless he be esteemed a gentleman, not to be ashamed, not to conceal the old family circumstances, not at any rate to be silent, is difficult. And the difficulty is certainly not less if fortunate circumstances rather than hard work and intrinsic merit have raised above his natural place an aspirant to high social position. Can it be expected that such a one when dining with a duchess shall speak of his father's small shop, or bring into the light of day his grandfather's cobbler's awl? And yet it is so difficult to be altogether silent! It may not be necessary for any of us to be always talking of our own parentage. We may be generally reticent as to our uncles and aunts, and may drop even our brothers and sisters in our ordinary conversation. But if a man never mentions his belongings among those with whom he lives, he becomes mysterious, and almost open to suspicion. It begins to be known that nobody knows anything of such a man, and even friends become afraid. It is certainly convenient to be able to allude, if it be but once in a year, to some blood relation.

Vote for *The Prime Minister* at TrollopeSociety.org



The Duke's Children

Chapter 73 ~ I Have Never Loved You

Selected by

The Right Honourable

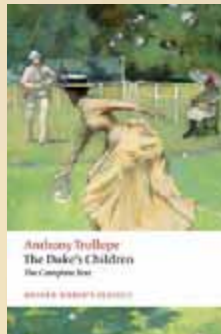
The Lord Fellowes of West Stafford

Photograph by Nick Briggs



I like this extract because, in the hands of a lesser writer, Mabel would come across as a calculating, hard and unsympathetic woman who has nearly tricked Silverbridge into marriage. But there is always a kind of mercy in Trollope's work that makes him reluctant to judge anyone too harshly, and here he criticises the age they live in quite as much as he criticises her. In fact, the woman who is not-good-but-not-all-bad is a feature of his writing, among them Lady Onslow in 'The Claverings', Lady Mason in 'Orley Farm', of course, and here, Lady Mabel Grex, all of whom he treats with understanding, even while he reprimands them.

I would heartily recommend the longer, restored version of this novel, which makes far more sense of Trollope's values, in much greater depth and detail, than the almost bowdlerised edition published at the time by the son of Charles Dickens. Once again, the author looks at the inequities of the class system, and the harshness of the judgments of his contemporaries, but always in a sympathetic manner. Lord Silverbridge is a nice young man, his father, the Duke, is moral and disciplined and upright, but Trollope teases his own characters about their positions and derives a lot of fun from them. The Duke's views on the possibility of his gaining an American daughter-in-law, with its attendant horrors, are very gently depicted as absurd, and he takes much the same stance with the political figures who are part of the supporting cast. I suppose, in the end, I admire the way Trollope can demonstrate his piercingly accurate understanding of human motive, without ever quite abandoning kindness.



“Time will do it.”

“Yes; time,—that brings wrinkles and rouge pots and rheumatism. Though I have so hated those men as to be unable to endure them, still I want some man's house, and his money, and his carriages,—some man's bread and beef and wine,—some man's jewels and titles and woods and parks and gardens;—if I can get them. Time can help a man in his sorrow. If he begins at forty to make speeches, or to win races, or to breed oxen, he can yet live a prosperous life. Time is but a poor consoler for a young woman who has to be married. You will see perhaps now, my friend, that I was not altogether indifferent to your position as an eldest son. But you have escaped.”

“Oh, Mabel.”

“And now let there be not a word more about it. I know—that I can trust you.”

“Indeed you may.”

“Though you will tell her everything else, you will not tell her this.”

“No;—not this.”

“There will be something between us which will not be common to her. And surely you will not tell your sister!”

“I shall tell no one.”

“It is because you are so true that I have dared to trust you. I had to justify myself,—and then to confess. Had I at that one moment taken you at your word, you would never have known anything of all this. ‘There is a tide in the affairs of men—!’ But I let the flood go by! I shall not see you again now before you are married, but come to me afterwards. Sometime, I dare say she and I may become friends.” Then he took his leave, almost without a word, and walked home, pondering what he had heard.

Vote for *The Duke's Children* at TrollopeSociety.org



Orley Farm

Chapter 44 ~ Showing How Lady Mason Could Be Very Noble

Selected by

Ken Follett CBE FRSL

Photograph by Olivier Favre



Be sure your sins will find you out, my mother used to say, quoting the Old Testament book of Numbers; and I think Trollope probably liked the saying too. My favourite among his novels, 'Orley Farm', is about a respectable and rather admirable woman who commits one sin.

Trollope is so good at human weakness. Time and again in his books we see determined upright morality yield to the slow erosion caused by time and temptation and human weakness, and yet we rarely come across a character who is thoroughly bad. Trollope gives us good people sinning.

Mary Mason commits a sin for love, but it is a sin all the same, and a crime as well, and many years later it finds her out—slowly, agonisingly, with terrific suspense and emotion. 'Orley Farm' is a courtroom drama at heart, but the tension builds for more than five hundred pages before we actually get to court. And every twist and turn in the relentless uncovering of her shame wreaks havoc in the circle of family, friends, and professional advisors that she inhabits.

We hold our breath while we wait for the verdict. We know by now that she is guilty, but we don't know what the jury will think, and I won't spoil it here.

However, the most dramatic moment in the book comes when Lady Mason has confess to her fiancé, and this is the scene I have chosen for my extract.



He got up and opened the door for his guest, and then hurrying across the hall, opened the library door for her also, holding it till she had passed in. Then he took her left hand in his, and passing his right arm round her waist, asked her if anything disturbed her.

"Oh yes," she said, "yes; there is much that disturbs me. I have done very wrong."

"How done wrong, Mary?" She could not recollect that he had called her Mary before, and the sound she thought was very sweet;—was very sweet, although she was over forty, and he over seventy years of age.

"I have done very wrong, and I have now come here that I may undo it. Dear Sir Peregrine, you must not be angry with me."

"I do not think that I shall be angry with you; but what is it, dearest?"

But she did not know how to find words to declare her purpose. It was comparatively an easy task to tell Mrs. Orme that she had made up her mind not to marry Sir Peregrine, but it was by no means easy to tell the baronet himself. And now she stood there leaning over the fireplace, with his arm round her waist,—as it behoved her to stand no longer, seeing the resolution to which she had come. But still she did not speak.

"Well, Mary, what is it? I know there is something on your mind or you would not have summoned me in here. Is it about the trial? Have you seen Mr. Furnival again?"

"No; it is not about the trial," she said, avoiding the other question.

"What is it then?"

"Sir Peregrine, it is impossible that we should be married." And thus she brought forth her tidings, as it were at a gasp, speaking at the moment with a voice that was almost indicative of anger.

"And why not?" said he, releasing her from his arm and looking at her.

"It cannot be," she said.

"And why not, Lady Mason?"

"It cannot be," she said again, speaking with more emphasis, and with a stronger tone.

"And is that all that you intend to tell me? Have I done anything that has offended you?"

"Offended me! No. I do not think that would be possible. The offence is on the other side—"

"Then, my dear,--"

"But listen to me now. It cannot be. I know that it is wrong. Everything tells me that such a marriage on your part would be a sacrifice,--a terrible sacrifice. You would be throwing away your great rank--"

"No," shouted Sir Peregrine; "not though I married a kitchen-maid,--instead of a lady who in social life is my equal."

"Ah, no; I should not have said rank. You cannot lose that;--but your station in the world, the respect of all around you, the--the--the--"

"Who has been telling you all this?"

"I have wanted no one to tell me. Thinking of it has told it me all. My own heart which is full of gratitude and love for you has told me."

"You have not seen Lord Alston?"

"Lord Alston! oh, no."

"Has Peregrine been speaking to you?"

"Peregrine!"

"Yes; Peregrine; my grandson?"

"He has spoken to me."

"Telling you to say this to me. Then he is an ungrateful boy;--a very ungrateful boy. I would have done anything to guard him from wrong in this matter."

"Ah; now I see the evil that I have done. Why did I ever come into the house to make quarrels between you?"

"There shall be no quarrel. I will forgive him even that if you will be guided by me. And, dearest Mary, you must be guided by me now. This matter has gone too far for you to go back--unless, indeed, you will say that personally you have an aversion to the marriage."

"Oh, no; no; it is not that," she said eagerly. She could not help saying it with eagerness. She could not inflict the wound on his feelings which her silence would then have given.

"Under those circumstances, I have a right to say that the marriage must go on."

"No; no."

"But I say it must. Sit down, Mary." And she did sit down, while he stood leaning over her and thus spoke. "You speak of sacrificing me. I am an old man with not many more years before me. If I did sacrifice

what little is left to me of life with the object of befriending one whom I really love, there would be no more in it than what a man might do, and still feel that the balance was on the right side. But here there will be no sacrifice. My life will be happier, and so will Edith's. And so indeed will that boy's, if he did but know it. For the world's talk, which will last some month or two, I care nothing. This I will confess, that if I were prompted to this only by my own inclination, only by love for you--" and as he spoke he held out his hand to her, and she could not refuse him hers--"in such a case I should doubt and hesitate and probably keep aloof from such a step. But it is not so. In doing this I shall gratify my own heart, and also serve you in your great troubles. Believe me, I have thought of that."

"I know you have, Sir Peregrine,--and therefore it cannot be."

"But therefore it shall be. The world knows it now; and were we to be separated after what has past, the world would say that I--I had thought you guilty of this crime."

"I must bear all that." And now she stood before him, not looking him in the face, but with her face turned down towards the ground, and speaking hardly above her breath.

"By heavens, no; not whilst I can stand by your side. Not whilst I have strength left to support you and thrust the lie down the throat of such a wretch as Joseph Mason. No, Mary, go back to Edith and tell her that you have tried it, but that there is no escape for you." And then he smiled at her. His smile at times could be very pleasant!

But she did not smile as she answered him. "Sir Peregrine," she said; and she endeavoured to raise her face to his but failed.

"Well, my love."

"Sir Peregrine, I am guilty."

"Guilty! Guilty of what?" he said, startled rather than instructed by her words.

"Guilty of all this with which they charge me." And then she threw herself at his feet, and wound her arms round his knees.



Barchester Towers

Chapter 11 ~

Mrs Proudie's Reception - Concluded

Selected by

Susan Hampshire CBE



In my career, I have been lucky to have been asked to play two of Anthony Trollope's fascinating women in the BBC productions of 'The Pallisers' and 'The Barchester Chronicles'. Although the two roles were very different, I have always thought that both the characters I played, Glencora Palliser and Signora Madeline Neroni, shared an ability to see through the

facades of those around them and, when the right moment arose, knew precisely how to puncture the vanity of those who thought they were owed deference by all around them.

I have chosen this excerpt from 'Barchester Towers', which to my mind includes some of Trollope's finest comedy scenes. It features Madeline getting the better of Mrs Proudie who normally intimidates everyone around her to get her way. Here, though, Madeline shows that she doesn't care a jot for Mrs Proudie's position and inflated opinion of her own importance and, when the chance comes, she seizes the opportunity to bring her down to size.

In fact, here, as in all her appearances throughout the novel, Madeline's behaviour is an act, put on for the audience of admirers she gathers around herself. So it is that she recognises, with absolutely perfect comic timing, when to laugh at Mrs Proudie in her predicament. This then sets off everybody else, including, of course, us as readers, in laughing at the overbearing figure now brought low by the accident to her dress. It is a moment of true comic farce. Rarely, in all literature, can haughty pride have suffered such a humiliating fall.



The sofa had certainly been so placed that those who were behind it found great difficulty in getting out;—there was but a narrow gangway, which one person could stop. This was a bad arrangement, and one which Bertie thought it might be well to improve.

‘Take care, Madeline,’ said he; and turning to the fat rector, added, ‘Just help me with a slight push.’

The rector's weight was resting on the sofa, and unwittingly lent all its impetus to accelerate and increase the motion which Bertie intentionally originated. The sofa rushed from its moorings, and ran half-way into the middle of the room. Mrs Proudie was standing with Mr Slope in front of the Signora, and had been trying to be condescending and sociable; but she was not in the very best of tempers; for she found that whenever she spoke to the lady, the lady replied by speaking to Mr Slope. Mr Slope was a favourite, no doubt; but Mrs Proudie had no idea of being less thought of than the chaplain. She was beginning to be stately, stiff, and offended, when unfortunately the castor of the sofa caught itself in her lace train, and carried away there is no saying how much of her garniture. Gathers were heard to go, stitches to crack, plaits to fly open, flounces were seen to fall, and breadths to expose themselves;—a long ruin of rent lace disfigured the carpet, and still clung to the vile wheel on which the sofa moved.

So, when a granite battery is raised, excellent to the eyes of warfaring men, is its strength and symmetry admired. It is the work of years. Its neat embrasures, its finished parapets, its casemated stories, show all the skill of modern science. But, anon, a small spark is applied to the treacherous fusee,—a cloud of dust arises to the heavens,—and then nothing is to be seen but dirt and dust and ugly fragments.

We know what was the wrath of Juno when her beauty was despised. We know to what storms of passion even celestial minds can yield. As Juno may have looked at Paris on Mount Ida, so did Mrs Proudie look on Ethelbert Stanhope when he pushed the leg of the sofa into her train.

‘Oh, you idiot, Bertie!’ said the Signora, seeing what had been done, and what were the consequences.

‘Idiot,’ re-echoed Mrs Proudie, as though the word were not half strong enough to express the required meaning; ‘I’ll let him know -;’ and then looking round to learn, at a glance, the worst, she saw that at present it behoved her to collect the scattered debris of her dress.

Bertie, when he saw what he had done, rushed over the sofa, and threw himself on one knee before the offended lady. His object, doubtless, was to liberate the torn lace from the castor; but he looked as though he were imploring pardon from a goddess.

‘Unhand it, sir!’ said Mrs Proudie. From what scrap of dramatic poetry she had extracted the word cannot be said; but it must have rested on her memory, and now seemed opportunely dignified for the occasion.

‘I’ll fly to the looms of the fairies to repair the damage, if you’ll only forgive me,’ said Ethelbert, still on his knees.

‘Unhand it, sir!’ said Mrs Proudie, with redoubled emphasis, and all but furious wrath. This allusion to the fairies was a direct mockery, and intended to turn her into ridicule. So at least it seemed to her. ‘Unhand it, sir!’ she almost screamed.

‘It’s not me; it’s the cursed sofa,’ said Bertie, looking imploringly in her face, and holding up both his hands to show that he was not touching her belongings, but still remaining on his knees.

Hereupon the Signora laughed; not loud, indeed, but yet audibly. And as the tigress bereft of her young will turn with equal anger on any within reach, so did Mrs Proudie turn upon her female guest.

‘Madam!’ she said,—and it is beyond the power of prose to tell of the fire that flashed from her eyes.

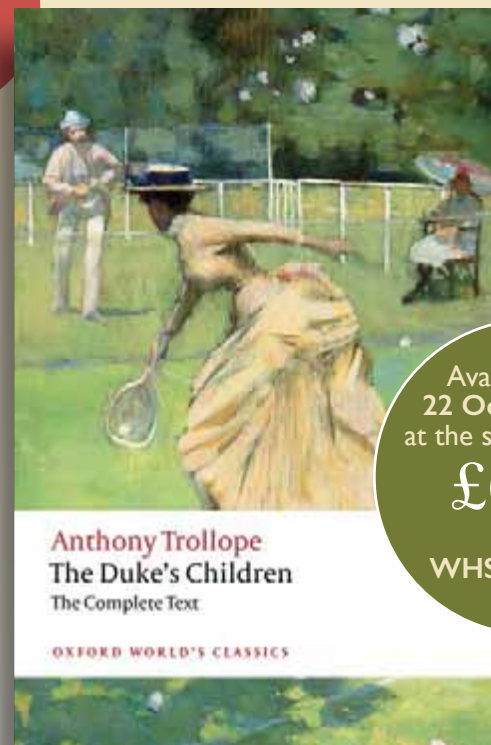
The Signora stared her full in the face for a moment, and then turning to her brother said, playfully, ‘Bertie, you idiot, get up.’

By this time the bishop, and Mr Slope, and her three daughters were around her, and had collected together the wide ruins of her magnificence. The girls fell into circular rank behind their mother, and thus following her and carrying out the fragments, they left the reception-rooms in a manner not altogether devoid of dignity. Mrs Proudie had to retire and re-array herself.



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He Knew He Was Right

Chapter 37 ~ Mont Cenis

Selected by

Prue Leith CBE



I like this little piece because when I was a Director of British Rail in the eighties I was credited with reforming the BR sandwich. As in Trollope's time, the BR sandwich was a national joke, universally referred to as the curly sandwich. After plastic packaging it became the soggy sandwich.

The railway caterers saw no reason for change. To my requests for interesting fillings and decent bread, I'd be told BR was the biggest sandwich seller in the country and that the BR cheese sarnie was Britain's most popular sandwich. This was true, but only because, before the days of supermarket sarnies and sandwich shops on every corner, British Rail had more outlets than anyone else and the cheese sandwich (Mother's Pride, Flora marge and a Kraft cheese slice) was pretty well their only offering.

I wonder what Trollope would say about today's BLT, Coronation chicken, or mozzarella and prosciutto sarnies?

We are often told in our newspapers that England is disgraced by this and that; by the unreadiness of our army, by the unfitness of our navy, by the irrationality of our laws, by the immobility of our prejudices, and what not; but the real disgrace of England is the railway sandwich,—that whited sepulchre, fair enough outside, but so meagre, poor, and spiritless within, such a thing of shreds and parings, such a dab of food, telling us that the poor bone whence it was scraped had been made utterly bare before it was sent into the kitchen for the soup pot.



Vote for He Knew He Was Right at TrollopeSociety.org



Miss Mackenzie

Chapter 9 ~ Miss Mackenzie's Philosophy

Selected by

Joanna Trollope CBE



'Miss Mackenzie' was published in 1865, by which time Trollope was well established as a very successful novelist. He says disarmingly in his autobiography, that it was a novel produced without any love, but, like a lot of the things he said about himself as a novelist, he didn't really mean it. At all. He plainly adores Miss Mackenzie, who is about the only woman in the book that he doesn't send up - and the sending up is remorseless.

When the book opens Miss Mackenzie is a classic Victorian spinster of 36, frugal, ignored, and at the mercy of a demanding family. She is described as being rather plain - too thin, Trollope says, and too tall, and regrettably big boned - but there is "a certain brightness in her grey eyes" and there is, also, her personality, which nobody in the Mackenzie family has ever given a thought to. For them, she was a nobody whose main purpose was to nurse first an old father and then a much older brother. She was, as so many Victorian women were, an unmarried female burden on the family, so she might as well make herself useful by way of earning (that is, in some way deserving) her bread.

So she nurses her unmarried brother Walter, whom she obeys as well as cares for. Her other brother, Tom, has married a woman who regards Margaret with the same dismissiveness that her brothers do. When Walter dies - he was unmarried and hard working - Margaret is astonished (so is Tom, and even more, so is Mrs Tom) to be the almost sole beneficiary of his Will, and finds herself suddenly an heiress, with £800 a year- over a million nowadays - to spend.

She not only has money, but she also, and in direct consequence, has suitors. Several of them in fact, all of whom are attracted by her wealth, which has had the immediate result of making her person strangely attractive. How have they not noticed how alluring she was before? Mrs Tom crossly says, "Of course, she will marry the first fool who asks her". But she doesn't. She goes instead to Bath (Trollope calls it Littlebath) taking with her Tom and Mrs Tom's gawky fifteen year old daughter, Susanna, who plainly reminds her very much of herself at that age. She even goes so far as to turn down her widowed cousin, Sir John Ball, who says quite frankly to her that he can't make her much of an offer as

he is really just looking for a stepmother to his poor children. And anyway, his mother, Lady Ball, makes no secret of the fact that she has a very low opinion of Margaret Mackenzie. She says of her to her widowed son, "She's not a beauty, eh, John? and she won't set the Thames on fire".

Littlebath is as interested in Miss Mackenzie's wealth as London was, even if it is wrapped up in the loud Evangelism of the Stumfolds, who preside there. There are a few trustworthy new friends - Miss Baker is one - but Mr Maguire is not among them. He is a clergyman, very much a pet of Mrs Stumfold, and he seems at first glance, to fit Margaret's increasingly romantic bill, being tall and possessed of good looks, a good figure and magnificent black hair. But - it is an insurmountable but in the end - he has a wall eye. A violently wall eye, never mind a deeply egregious manner. He is, in short, a creep, and he won't do for Margaret.

It is one of Trollope's many skills that his women are so real, so lively and fascinating, and his portrayal of them is so sympathetic. He was also very good at writing about sex, particularly female sensuality, and Margaret Mackenzie is a prime example. Freed by her money from the drudgery of her place in a Victorian household, Miss Mackenzie is at last able to please herself. And what she realises she wants is a man - a husband if you like - that she actually fancies. In the privacy of her own chamber she can at last gratify herself and her physical yearnings. Here she is, reflecting on her rejection of John Ball's first offer, in front of her mirror:

Thinking of this during the long afternoon ... she got up and looked at herself in the mirror. She moved up her hair from off her ears, knowing where she would find a few that were grey, and shaking her head, as though owning to herself that she was old; but as her fingers ran almost involuntarily across her locks, her touch told her that they were soft and silken; and she looked into her own eyes, and saw that they were bright; and her hand touched the outline of her cheek, and she knew that something of the fresh bloom of youth was still there; and her lips parted, and there were her white teeth; and there came a smile, and a dimple, and a slight purpose of laughter in her eye and then a tear. She pulled her scarf tighter across her bosom, feeling her own form, and then she leaned forward and kissed herself in the glass.



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*It is, if you consider it, an astonishing portrait of candid female desire, and especially astonishing for 1865. It is frank and open, but says so much by saying, in fact, so little. Margaret Mackenzie grows with the novel, and ends up as a considerable personality. The novel might not end quite the way it would end if it were written now, but for all that, she emerges as someone of real significance, an ornament to the man she eventually agrees to marry. And there are such wonderful treats on the way along, such as the shabby dreariness of Lady Ball's sitting room in *The Cedars*, which Trollope describes as being "a pretty room had any care been taken to make anything pretty at *The Cedars*". Then there is the joy of Mrs Tom's dinner party, which is socially a disaster, with insufficient wine and iced puddings from the local pastry shop which taste of onions. And the bazaar It is a wonderfully described bazaar, from the cause it benefits - *The Orphans of Negro Soldiers* - to the society ladies who participate. The Countess of Ware, a stout, square little woman, wore a tiara, "which gave her appearance a ferocity almost greater than was natural to her".*

'Miss Mackenzie' is witty and teasing and serious all at once. It is a remarkable novel, and very undervalued in the great Trollope canon. I urge you to read it - and set the record straight.

Miss Mackenzie is currently out of print.

The Small House at Allington

Chapter 31 ~ The Wounded Fawn

Selected by

Gyles Brandreth

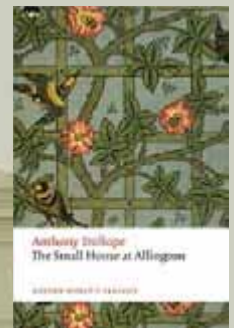


It is so hard to choose one particular favourite passage from the many novels of Anthony Trollope. Thanks to the Trollope Society, I have all his fiction and I have read every word – including some of those hunting episodes which, for me at least, can be pretty heavy going. To play the game, I have made my choice. 'The Small House at Allington' is a perfect example of Trollope's style and plotting. And Lily Dale, the heroine, is a perfect example of the many noble, spirited women who inhabit Trollope's novels. Their goodness, integrity and readiness for self-sacrifice, sometimes by marrying, sometimes by not marrying, are in sharp contrast to Trollope's feisty but flawed anti-heroines such as Lizzie Eustace.

In this extract from 'The Small House at Allington' we find Lily Dale thrown over by Adolphus Crosbie in anticipation of a better financial outcome if he marries an Earl's daughter.

Of course, as a Trollopian heroine Lily does not wait to be jilted but manages to seize the moral high ground by granting her false suitor his freedom before he screws up the courage to break off their understanding. Game, set (but sadly no match) to Lily Dale.

Naturally, Lily is broken-hearted, yet she carries on bravely despite the fact that she is in no mood to throw herself into the coming Christmas festivities. Her uncle and mother tentatively suggest she join the family up at her uncle's house - 'The Great House' at Allington.



“Of course we’ll go,” said Lily; “why not? We always do. And we’ll have blind-man’s-buff with all the Boyces, as we had last year, if uncle will ask them up.” But the Boyces were not asked up for that occasion.

But Lily, though she put on it all so brave a face, had much to suffer, and did, in truth, suffer greatly. If you, my reader, ever chanced to slip into the gutter on a wet day, did you not find that the sympathy of the bystanders was by far the severest part of your misfortune? Did you not declare to yourself that all might yet be well, if the people would only walk on and not look at you? And yet you cannot blame those who stood and pitied you; or, perhaps, essayed to rub you down, and assist you in the recovery of your bedaubed hat. You, yourself, if you see a man fall, cannot walk by as though nothing uncommon has happened to him. It was so with Lily. The people of Allington could not regard her with their ordinary eyes. They would look at her tenderly, knowing that she was a wounded fawn, and thus they aggravated the soreness of her wound. Old Mrs Hearn consoled with her, telling her that very likely she would be better off as she was. Lily would not lie about it in any way. “Mrs Hearn,” she said, “the subject is painful to me.” Mrs Hearn said no more about it, but on every meeting between them she looked the things she did not say. “Miss Lily!” said Hopkins one day, “Miss Lily!” - and as he looked up into her face a tear had almost formed in his old eye - “I knew what he was from the first. Oh, dear! Oh, dear! If I could have had him killed!” “Hopkins, how dare you?” said Lily. “If you speak to me again in such a way, I will tell my uncle.” She turned away from him; but immediately turned back again, and put out her little hand to him. “I beg your pardon,” she said. “I know how kind you are, and I love you for it.” And then she went away. “I’ll go after him yet and break the dirty neck of him,” said Hopkins to himself, as she walked down the path.

The novel concludes with a wedding where we see Lily at her best:

Chapter 60 ~ Conclusion

But no one at the wedding was so gay as Lily,—so gay, so bright, and so wedding-like. She flirted with the old earl till he declared that he would marry her himself. No one seeing her that evening, and knowing nothing of her immediate history, would have imagined that she herself had been cruelly jilted some six or eight months ago. And those who did know her could not imagine that what she then suffered had hit her so hard, that no recovery seemed possible for her. But though no recovery, as she herself believed, was possible for her—though she was as a man whose right arm had been taken from him in the battle, still all the world had not gone with that right arm. The bullet which had maimed her sorely had not touched her life, and she scorned to go about the world complaining either by word or look of the injury she had received. “Wives when they have lost their husbands still eat and laugh,” she said to herself, “and he is not dead like that.” So she resolved that she would be happy, and I here declare that she not only seemed to carry out her resolution, but that she did carry it out in very truth.



Vote for *The Small House at Allington* at TrollopeSociety.org

The Last Chronicle of Barset

Chapter 84 ~ Conclusion

Selected by

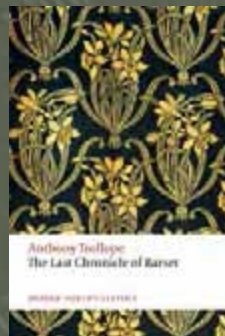
Francesca Simon



I had spent six months reading all the Palliser and Barsetshire novels, one after the other, and was feeling quite emotional as I reached the last and final page. When I read the line, 'And now, if the reader will allow me to seize him affectionately by the arm, we will together take our last farewell of Barset and of the towers of Barchester' I promptly burst into tears. It was as if

Anthony had read my mind, and was speaking to me from the grave. I have always felt a strong connection with Trollope, and that sentence summed up everything I felt about our companionship, and my love for his novels.

And now, if the reader will allow me to seize him affectionately by the arm, we will together take our last farewell of Barset and of the towers of Barchester. I may not venture to say to him that, in this county, he and I together have wandered often through the country lanes, and have ridden together over the too-well wooded fields, or have stood together in the cathedral nave listening to the peals of the organ, or have together sat at good men's tables, or have confronted together the angry pride of men who were not good. I may not boast that any beside myself have so realized the place, and the people, and the facts, as to make such reminiscences possible as those which I should attempt to evoke by an appeal to perfect fellowship. But to me Barset has been a real county, and its city a real city, and the spires and towers have been before my eyes, and the voices of the people are known to my ears, and the pavement of the city ways are familiar to my footsteps. To them all I now say farewell. That I have been induced to wander among them too long by my love for old friendships, and by the sweetness of old faces, is a fault for which I may perhaps be more readily forgiven, when I repeat, with some solemnity of assurance, the promise made in my title, that this shall be the last chronicle of Barset.



Vote for *The Last Chronicle of Barset* at TrollopeSociety.org

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Anthony Trollope, *An Autobiography*.



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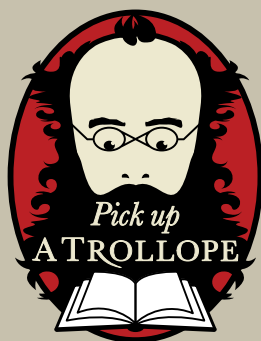
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