grandfather died when he was in his eighteenth year, without leaving any provision for the children of his youngest son, and in his nineteenth year Smollett left Glasgow and launched himself on London in quest of for­tune with the tragedy of the *Regicide* in his pocket. He failed to get the tragedy accepted, and, reduced almost to starvation, was fain to take the situation of surgeon’s mate on board a ship of the line. He was present in 1741 at the siege of Cartagena. He soon quitted the navy in disgust, but during his service of a few years he acquired, as Scott says, “ such intimate knowledge of our nautical world as enabled him to describe sailors with such truth and spirit of delineation that, from that time, whoever has undertaken the same task has seemed to copy more from Smollett than from nature.”

Returning to England in 1746, Smollett made a de­sperate attempt to live by his pen, publishing the satires *Advice* and *Reproof*—satire being then in fashion—and pushing the *Regicide* and other dramatic works on thea­trical managers and patrons. He revenged himself in his satires for the rebuffs given to his plays. Whether he was ever reduced to such straits as Mr Melopoyn, whom Roderick Random met with in the Fleet, is not known for certain, but it is certain that he was sharply pinched ; and he did not mend his circumstances by marrying a portion­less lady whom he had met in the West Indies. His buoyant spirit was not in the least broken by adverse fortune, but it was considerably inflamed and embittered. His fierce and distempered mood when he wrote *Roderick Random* is reflected in the characters of the novel, which are drawn with a much more defiant and contemptuous hand than he used in any of his subsequent works. The author was not a cold-blooded cynic, but a proud warm­hearted man enraged by what he considered unjust usage. He was not in a mood to dwell upon lovable traits in human nature, or to find pleasure in pretty sentiments. The public, however, when *Roderick Random* was published —in 1748, a few months before *Tom Jones—*did not con­cern themselves with the character of the author. The wealth of humorous incident, the rapidly moving crowd of amusing figures, concealed all those harsher features in the picture of life which quiet reflexion can now trace to the circumstances of the author, smarting as he was under petty insults and real or fancied indignities. This novel at once raised Smollett into reputation. It was followed after an interval of three years by *Peregrine Pickle* (1751), the immediate popularity of which was helped by the in­sertion into the body of the novel of two stories from real life, the memoirs of a lady of quality (Lady Vane) and the memoirs of the philanthropist M'Kercher. This second masterpiece was written with a much lighter heart than the first, although it must be confessed that the hero is not much of an improvement on Roderick Random. Scott describes him as “ the savage and ferocious Pickle, who, besides his gross and base brutality towards Emilia, besides his ingratitude to his uncle, and the savage propensity which he shows in the pleasure he takes to torment others by practical jokes, resembling those of a fiend in glee, exhibits a low and ungentlemanlike tone of thinking, only one degree higher than that of Roderick Random.” There is, however, this difference, that the author seems much more conscious of the bad qualities of Pickle than of Random. He expends no sympathy or fine sentiment on either, but Random’s defects are represented as the results of the harsh treatment he had himself received, while Pickle’s appear rather as the outcome of a naturally harsh and insolent character. Both are far from being model gentlemen, but Pickle is several degrees lower rather than one degree higher than Random. In the second novel there is a still richer crowd of characters,

quaint, amusing, disgusting, and contemptible ; but there is more of a tendency to secure variety by extravagant caricature. For some of the indecencies in the first edition Smollett apologized, and withdrew them in a second edition, but he still left enough to satisfy the greediest taste in that particular. He also withdrew a very offensive allu­sion to Fielding, and in his next novel, *The Adventures of Ferdinand, Count Fathom,* paid that great rival the com­pliment of imitation. Though Smollett was far from being a servile imitator, there can be no doubt that he profited greatly by Fielding’s example in all the higher essentials of his craft. This, his third effort, although it has not the same exuberant humour and fresh variety of character, is vastly better in point of constructive skill and sustained power of description. It looks as if he had deliberately set himself to show that he too as well as the author of *Tom Jones* could make a plot. The vileness of Fathom’s character is so repulsive that the novel is much less often read than others of Smollett’s ; but it is his greatest feat of invention, being not a mere string of lively adventures, but a connected series in the progressive movement of the villain’s career. It contains some of Smollett’s most cynical comments on human motives, as well as passages that illustrate strikingly his real goodness of heart. He was not at home, however, in the direct expression of tender sentiment ; when any of his persons gush, they do so with such wordiness and extravagance as to give them an air of insincerity.

With the composition of *Count Fathom* in 1753 Smollett’s invention seemed to be exhausted for the time.' For the next ten years he occupied himself with miscellaneous literary work, translating *Don Quixote* (published 1755), compiling a *Compendium of Voyages and Travels* (1757), and producing a *History of England from the Landing of Cæsar to the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle* (1757), followed by a continuation down to the date of publication (1761-65). Smollett, in short, from the time of his first success made his living as a professional man of letters. He obtained a medical degree from a German university about 1752, and set up as a physician, but seems never to have acquired much practice. He turned this experience to account, how­ever, by caricaturing in *Count Fathom* the arts of rising in the profession. He had very little more success in his attempts to write for the stage. The *Regicide* was never acted, and, when it was published in 1749 to expose the folly of managers in not accepting it, the verdict of the public was rather with the managers than with the author. Smollett’s single success on the stage was a farce with a political object, *The Reprisals, or the Tars of Old England,* produced in 1757 to excite feeling against the French. As a journalist also Smollett was not particularly successful, partly perhaps because he attached himself to the losing side,—the Tory and High Church party. He edited their organ *The Cri­tical Review* for some years, and in 1759 suffered imprison­ment for an attack on Admiral Knowles. At the beginning of the reign of George III. he supported Lord Bute’s ministry in *The Briton,* but *The Briton* was driven out of the field by Wilkes’s *North Briton.* Altogether Smollett’s revenue from play-writing and journalism seems to have been small, unless his party services were requited inde­pendently of the sale of his papers. But his name stood high with booksellers. He introduces himself in *Humphrey Clinker* as a dispenser of literary patronage, surrounded by a number of humble dependants. These were probably the hacks to whom he gave employment in his journals and in such booksellers’ jobs as his translation of Voltaire and the compilation entitled *The Present State of all Nations, containing a Geographical, Natural, Commercial, and Political History of all the Countries of the Known World* (1763).