in which was published the excellent poem of *The White Squall.* In 1844 there began in *Fraser* the *Memoirs of Barry Lyndon*, called in the magazine *The Luck of Barry Lyndon, a Romance of the Last Century. Barry Lyndon* has, with a very great difference in treatment, some resemblance to Smollett’s *Count Fathom* ;—the hero, that is to say, is or becomes a most intolerable scoundrel, who is magnificently unconscious of his own iniquity. The age and pressure of the time depicted are caught with amazing verisimilitude, and in the boyish career of Barry Lyndon there are fine touches of a wild chivalry, simplicity, and generosity, which mingle naturally with the worse qualities that, under the influence of abominable training, afterwards corrupt his whole mind and career. The man is so in­fatuated with and so blind to his own roguery, he has so much dash and daring, and is on occasions so infamously treated, that it is not easy to look upon him as an entirely detestable villain until, towards the end of his course, he becomes wholly lost in brutish debauchery and cruelty. His latter career is founded on that of Andrew Robinson Stoney Bowes, who married the widow of John, ninth earl of Strathmore. There is also no doubt a touch of Casanova in Barry Lyndon’s character. Besides the con­tributions to *Punch* specially referred to, there should be noticed *Punch's Prize Novelists,* containing some brilliant parodies of Edward Lytton Bulwer, Lever, Mr D’Israeli (in *Codlingsby,* perhaps the most perfect of the series), and others. Among minor but admirable works of the same period are found *A Legend of the Rhine* (a burlesque of the great Dumas’s *Othon l'Archer),* brought out in a periodical of George Cruikshank’s, *Cox's Diary* (on which has been founded a well-known Dutch comedy, *Janus Tulp),* and the *Fatal Boots.* This is the most fitting moment for mentioning also *Rebecca and Rowena,* which towers, not only over Thackeray’s other burlesques, excellent as they are, but over every other burlesque of the kind ever written. Its taste, its wit, its pathos, its humour, are unmatchable; and it contains some of the best songs of a particular kind ever written—songs worthy indeed to rank with Peacock’s best. In 1846 was published, by Messrs Bradbury and Evans, the first of twenty-four numbers of *Vanity Fair,* the work which first placed Thackeray in his proper position before the public as a novelist and writer of the first rank. It was completed in 1848, when Thackeray was thirty-seven years old ; and in the same year Abraham Hayward paid a tribute to the author’s powers in the *Edinburgh Review.* It is probable that on *Vanity Fair* has been largely based the foolish cry, now heard less and less frequently, about Thackeray’s cynicism, a cry which he himself, with his keen knowledge of men, foresaw and provided against, amply enough as one might have thought, at the end of the eighth chapter, in a passage which is perhaps the best commentary ever written on the author’s method. He has explained how he wishes to describe men and women as they actually are, good, bad, and indifferent, and to claim a privilege—

“Occasionally to step down from the platform, and talk about them : if they are good and kindly, to love and shake them by the hand; if they are silly, to laugh at them confidentially in the reader’s sleeve ; if they are wicked and heartless, to abuse them in the strongest terms politeness admits of. Otherwise you might fancy it was I who was sneering at the practice of devotion, which Miss Sharp finds so ridiculous ; that it was I who laughed good- humouredly at the railing old Silenus of a baronet—whereas the laughter comes from one who has no reverence except for prosperity, and no eye for anything beyond success. Such people there are living and flourishing in the world—Faithless, Hopeless, Charity­less : let us have at them, dear friends, with might and main. Some there are, and very successful too, mere quacks and fools: and it was to combat and expose such as those, no doubt, that laughter was made.”

As to another accusation which was brought against the book when it first came out, that the colours were laid on too thick, in the sense that the villains were too villainous, the good people too goody-goody, the best and completest answer to that can be found by any one who chooses to read the work with care. Osborne is, and is meant to be, a poor enough creature, but he is an eminently human being, and one whose poorness of character is developed as he allows bad influences to tell upon his vanity and folly. The good in him is fully recognized, and comes out in the beautiful passage describing his farewell to Amelia on the eve of Waterloo, in which passage may be also found a sufficient enough answer to the statement that Amelia is absolutely insipid and uninteresting. So with the com­panion picture of Rawdon Crawley’s farewell to Becky : who that reads it can resist sympathy, in spite of Rawdon’s vices and shady shifts for a living, with his simple bravery and devotion to his wife? As for Becky, a character that has since been imitated a host of times, there is certainly not much to be said in her defence. We know of her, to be sure, that she thought she would have found it easy to be good if she had been rich, and we know also what happened when Rawdon, released without her knowledge from a spunging-house, surprised her alone with and singing to Lord Steyne in the house in May Fair. After a gross insult from Steyne, “ Rawdon Crawley, springing out, seized him by the neckcloth, until Steyne, almost strangled, writhed and bent under his arm. ‘You lie, you dog,’ said Rawdon ; ‘ you lie, you coward and villain ! ’ And he struck the peer twice over the face with his open hand, and flung him bleeding to the ground. It was all done before Rebecca could interpose. She stood there trembling before him. She admired her husband, strong, brave, and victorious.” This admiration is, as Thackeray himself thought it, the capital touch in a scene which is as powerful as any Thackeray ever wrote—as powerful, indeed, as any in English fiction. Its full merit, it may be noted in passing, has been curiously accented by an imita­tion of it in Μ. Daudet’s *Fromont Jeune et Risler Aîné.* As to the extent of the miserable Becky’s guilt in the Steyne matter, on that Thackeray leaves it practically open to the reader to form what conclusion he will. There is, it should be added, a distinct touch of good in Becky’s conduct to Amelia at Ostend in the last chapter of the book, and those who think that too little punishment is meted out to the brilliant adventuress in the end may remember this to her credit. It is supreme art in the treatment of her char­acter that makes the reader understand and feel her attrac­tiveness, though he knows her extraordinarily evil qualities; and in this no writer subsequent to Thackeray who has tried to depict one of the genus Becky Sharp has even faintly succeeded. Among the minor characters there is not one—and this is not always the case even with Thackeray’s chief figures—who is incompletely or inconsistently de­picted ; and no one who wishes to fully understand and appreciate the book can afford to miss a word of it.

*Vanity Fair* was followed by *Pendennis, Esmond,* and *The Newcomes,* which appeared respectively in 1850, 1852, and 1854. It might be more easy to pick holes critically in *Pendennis* than in *Vanity Fair.* Pendennis himself, after his boyish passion and university escapades, has dis­agreeable touches of flabbiness and worldliness ; and the important episode of his relations with Fanny Bolton, which Thackeray could never have treated otherwise than delicately, is so lightly and tersely handled that it is a little vague even to those who read between the lines ; the final announcement that those relations have been innocent can scarcely be said to be led up to, and one can hardly see why it should have been so long delayed. This does not of course affect the value of the book as a picture of middle and upper class life of the time, the time when Vauxhall still existed, and the haunt for suppers and songs