

THE delight expressed by those who saw the Thackeray Letters when their publication was begun in serial form is more than justified by the whole series as now brought out by the Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons, in a superb octavo, and in a second limited large paper edition with many portraits, reproductions of Thackeray's drawings, and fac-similes of his letters printed on letter-paper the exact size of the original, and bound in such a way as to give the closest impression of the actual letters. This edition is limited to five hundred copies, and is fully warranted by the unique character of the publication, and by the interest which has already been shown in the letters now published under the modest title of *A Collection of Letters of Thackeray, 1847-1855*. Mr Thackeray's emphatic directions to his daughter Mrs. Ritchie which debarred her from the publication of a Memoir and of Letters in her possession, have operated unfavorably to his reputation by opening the way for partial and one-sided impressions of the man to get abroad, and by holding back the only vindication such a man can have in a Memoir that is worthy of him. The present collection applies only to a brief period of eight years in the author's life. They are, however, a peculiarly vigorous, active and interesting eight years, in which youthful force and manly maturity are both at the highest. They give an impression so wonderfully complete and satisfactory that the reader forgets their fragmentary character and accepts them as the true portrait of the greatest of the English novelists. The collection is composed of letters written to his friends the Rev. A. H. Brookfield and Mrs. Jane Octavia Brookfield, who, as editor, supplies necessary notes, and has taken pains to verify the date of each letter and arrange the series in chronological order. She has been aided in this by the Hon. James Russell Lowell. In everything but the cold and chaste propriety which is associated with the word, the collection is a classic. The letters glow with warmth and color as they also spring and bound with life and vivacity. As to the purity, gentleness, affectionate generosity, genial humanity and religious seriousness of Mr. Thackeray, this collection must forever remove all but the best impressions. Americans will turn, perhaps, first to the few letters written during his first visit to this country in 1852 and '53. We should like to have a corresponding series for his visit after the War to read in connection. But as they stand, they are altogether charming, and contain nothing to be complained of—unless, indeed, some hard-hearted abolitionist quote against him his genial view of slavery and of life as he saw and enjoyed it in Richmond, Savannah, and other Southern cities. For ourselves, we interpret these letters only half seriously. They must not be read too literally, but as the protest of an inveterate humorist who loved peaceful, quiet life, against the rush and drive of the Northern cities. New York was to him "splendacious," city, people, manners and all. Broadway was "miles and miles long," not so full as Cheapside, but more rushing. New York was "more civilized than Manchester and Liverpool," but not as much so as London, yet he liked the American cities mightily. "For bright people, pleasant people, and people worth knowing," he has a quick eye, and full catholic appreciation. The editor republishes in the collection the famous "Imaginary Letter from New York."