

The Correspondence and Journals of the Thackeray Family

Editor: **John Aplin**

The Pickering Masters

5 Volume Set: c.2000pp: December 2010

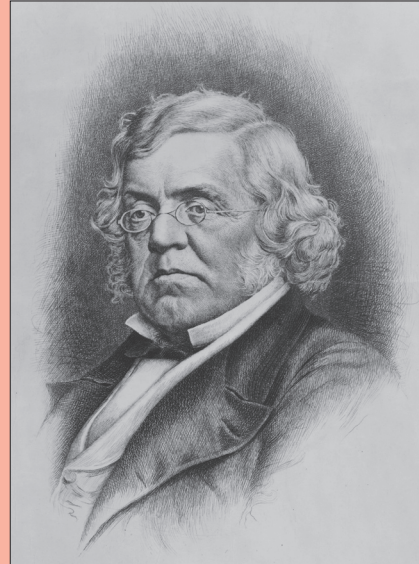
978 1 85196 640 0: 234x156mm: £450/\$795

Planned to mark the bicentenary of the birth of William Makepeace Thackeray in 1811, this five-volume critical edition represents the most substantial collection of hitherto unpublished material relating to the novelist and his gifted family. Drawing on just over 1300 letters and other documents drawn from public collections and private archives, this project presents a wealth of unknown or underused sources that demand scholarly attention.

Whilst complementing the already published volumes of Thackeray's letters, this important work opens up research on the complex and often troubled dynamics within the family, providing evidence for a narrative that suggests elements of psychological disorder, less than orthodox relationships and transgenerational marriage.

Of particular importance in revealing Thackeray's professional life are the substantial collection of rediscovered letters sent by George Smith to the novelist relating to *The Cornhill Magazine*, of which Smith was founder-publisher and Thackeray the first editor. They throw new light upon the working relationship between the two men in their day-to-day planning for the magazine, and represent the largest surviving series of letters to Thackeray from a single correspondent.

As well as many intimate family letters, including those between Thackeray's daughters, also represented are the extensive communications between his elder daughter Anne – herself an author – and many key artistic and literary figures of the time, including Alfred, Lord Tennyson, George Frederic Watts, John Ruskin, Robert Browning, George Smith, Leslie Stephen, Kate Perugini, Julia Margaret



William Makepeace Thackeray, by Jacques Reich, c.1907
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Cameron, John Everett Millais, Lord Frederic Leighton, Fanny Kemble, Henry James, J M Barrie, Margaret Oliphant, Algernon Charles Swinburne, George Meredith, Rhoda Broughton, George du Maurier, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Andrew Lang, Augustine Birrell and Virginia Woolf.

- Many previously unpublished family papers
- New insights afforded into the Thackeray family and their circle
- Includes letters by Thackeray's wife, Isabella
- Significant amounts of uniquely valuable material from private collections and smaller resources not previously studied in context
- Consolidated index in the final volume

John Aplin is an independent scholar

**The Pickering
Masters**

The Correspondence and Journals of the Thackeray Family

Thackeray to Lady Pollock, 11 May ?1849

MS: Eton.

Kensington. May 11

Dear Lady Pollock

I met the Chief Baron two mornings ago¹, and he told me to go and call on you, but I had so much business that day that I had not time to go to Queen Square. I saw in his face, what he was thinking of. Believe me I felt most sincerely for your grief, though I did not like to speak when the blow fell upon you, knowing how vain at such moments all the consolation of friends is. I once lost a child myself: it was but a baby: and I had no idea of the grief w^h. parents suffer until I myself experienced it. I recollect a friend of mine at that time quoting to me an image from Jeremy Taylor, "He who hast lost a child has cast an anchor in Heaven."² It seemed to me very noble and consoling. We still love the little angel standing in the presence of God – The grief for the separation goes off after a time, and gives way to an inexpressibly sweet feeling of love and pity. It is 10 years ago: but I can see the eyes of my little child looking at me now³. And so those of your dear little boy will follow both of you, until yours shut. Meanwhile somebody whom you love with all your heart is in Heaven. There must be another meeting: a happy fraternity, a Divine Father in whose love we reunite. Love and Death prove it. – Suffer them to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven⁴. Ah what a divine tenderness that was w^h. spoke so!

Yours dear Lady Pollock sincerely
W M Thackeray.

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1. Sir Frederick Pollock (1783-1870), first baronet, was Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer. His second wife was Sarah Amowah (d. 1895).
 2. Jeremy Taylor (c. 1613-67), theological writer and bishop of Down and Connor. The quotation may have been prompted by Taylor's letter to John Evelyn following "the death of a little child of mine, a boy that lately made us very glad; but now he rejoices in the little orb, while we think, and sigh, and long to be as safe as he is". Cited in George L. Duyckinck, *The Life of Jeremy Taylor*, New York: General Protestant Episcopal Sunday School Union, 1860, 107-8.
 3. Jane Thackeray had died on 14 March 1839, aged eight months.
 4. "But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come to me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew, 19:14).

Contents:

Volume 1

Richmond Thackeray's 1798 journal; One hundred and twenty-three letters from Thackeray's mother (Anne Carmichael-Smyth) to her son and granddaughters; Ninety-one rediscovered letters from George Smith to Thackeray; The journal of Anne Thackeray Ritchie.

Volume 2

The journal of Anne Thackeray Ritchie (continued); Selected correspondence of Thackeray's daughters and other family members (c.1100 letters).

Volumes 3, 4 & 5

Selected correspondence, continued.

Sources have been drawn from the following collections:

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Eton College Library

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The Houghton Library, Harvard University

The Huntington Library

The John Murray Archive, National Library of Scotland

Kings College Cambridge

National Portrait Gallery

Princeton University

Tennyson Research Centre, Lincoln Central Library

Trinity College Cambridge

University of Liverpool

And from private papers belonging to Thackeray's descendants.

Related title

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