

Thackeray and the Annuals

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I N an essay, "Pocket-Books and Keepsakes," Leigh Hunt explained the origin of the Annuals:

It struck somebody who was acquainted with the literary annuals of Germany, and who reflected upon this winter flower-bed of the booksellers — these pocket-books, souvenirs, and Christmas presents, all in the lump — that he would combine the spirit of all of them, as far as labour, season, and sizability went; and omitting the barren or blank part, and being entirely original, produce such a pocket-book as had not been yet seen. The magician in Boccaccio could not have done better. Hence arose the *Forget-me-not*, the *Literary Souvenirs*, the *Amulets*, and the *Keepsakes*, which combine the original contribution of the German annual with the splendid binding of the Christmas English present.¹

The "somebody" who brought out the first book of this kind was the versatile and enterprising Rudolph Ackermann (1764-1834), who in November 1822 published *Forget Me Not*, edited by Frederic Shoberl (1775-1853).² The Advertisement at the beginning of the volume declared:

The British public is here presented with the first attempt to rival the numerous and elegant publications of the Continent, expressly designed to serve as tokens of remembrance, friendship, or affection, at that season of the year which ancient custom has particularly consecrated to the interchange of such memorials. The Publisher flatters himself that as well from the nature of the literary department in which it has been his aim to unite the agreeable with the useful, as from the execution of the graphic embellishments, this first volume of the *Forget-me-not* will be deemed not unworthy of the purpose for which it is intended.³

It was wildly successful, selling "in its thousands; even its tens of thousands."⁴ In the next year, a second volume of *Forget Me Not* appeared, with two more Annuals, *Friendship's Offering* (published by G. Kershaw & Son) and the

Graces (Hurst & Co.). Nine Annuals for 1825 were published, and the numbers increased yearly, until in 1832, for instance, sixty-three appeared in England as well as twelve in the United States. The craze for Annuals lasted until the eighteen-fifties. In the eighteen-sixties, only a few were published each year in England and the United States, although isolated examples, mostly American, appeared intermittently until 1902.⁵

Earlier in the essay from which I have quoted, Leigh Hunt talked of "those little editions of popular works which appear in the glasscase of the booksellers' shops every Christmas, and with their varied and glittering bindings tempt the beholders to make presents."⁶ Like these, the Annuals, which usually came out just before Christmas, were showily bound, with covers of embossed or gilt leather, or of watered silk, or of floral designs inlaid with mother-of-pearl.⁷ In December 1837, Thackeray had lying before him "the *Friendship's Offering* embossed, and the *Forget-Me-Not* in morocco; Jenning's *Landscape* in dark green, and the *Christian Keepsake* in pea; *Gems of Beauty* in shabby green calico, and *Flowers of Loveliness* in tawdry red woollen . . ."⁸ At first, they were indeed pocket-books, but duodecimo volumes were succeeded by octavos, and eventually some quartos were published. They were sold at various prices, some costing as much as a guinea and a half in England and five dollars in the United States.⁹

The Annuals contained short stories, essays, and poems, but they were perhaps even more valued for their "embellishments" — coloured prints or (more commonly) steel engravings, either illustrating a poem or a story, or presenting a subject round which a poem or story could be written. In *Pendennis*, Mr. Bacon the publisher "used to present to the world every year a beautiful gilt volume called the *Spring Annual*," which "was daintily illustrated with pictures of reigning beauties, or other prints of a tender and voluptuous character; and, as these plates were prepared long beforehand, requiring much time in engraving,

it was the eminent poets who had to write to the plates, and not the painters who illustrated the poems" (*Pendennis*, ch. xxxi).¹⁰ Nevertheless, writers who contributed to the *Annals* included the most famous of the day. The only notable poet who did not write for them up to 1850 was Browning — an indication presumably of his early unpopularity — but his "Ben Karshook's Wisdom" was published in the *Keepsake* for 1851.¹¹ *Annals* were therefore expensive to bring out: Frederic Mansel Reynolds, the editor of the *Keepsake* in 1828-35 and 1838-39, claimed in advertisements that the 1829 volume cost 11,000 guineas to produce. Its authors included Scott, Shelley, Mrs. Shelley, Wordsworth, Moore, and Coleridge, and its artists Lawrence, Westall, Turner, and Landseer. But contributions from such great names were not generally representative of the contents of the *Annals*. Mr. Bacon's *Spring Annual* was edited by the Lady Violet Lebas, and numbered "amongst its contributors not only the most eminent, but the most fashionable, poets of our time. Young Lord Dodo's poems first appeared in this miscellany — the Honourable Percy Popjoy, whose chivalrous ballads have obtained him such a reputation — Bedwin Sands's *Eastern Ghazuls*, and many more of the works of our young nobles, were first given to the world in the *Spring Annual*" (*Pendennis*, ch. xxxi).¹² The "List of Contributors" to the *Keepsake* for 1839 reads as follows: "Mrs. Abdy, R. Bernal, M.P., the Countess of Blessington, the Hon. Grantley Berkeley, M.P., Mrs. Fairlie, Miss A. Farrer, [the] Marquis of Granby, E. Howard, G. P. R. James, Lord Jocelyn, the Marchioness of Londonderry, the Hon. Henry Liddell, M.P., J. Lindsay, Lord Viscount Maidstone, Lord J. Manners, Lord Nugent, the Lady Nugent, the Hon. E. Phipps, Mrs. Shelley, Miss Louisa H. Sheridan, the Lady Charlotte St. Maur, J. A. St. John, Miss Camilla Toulmin, the Lady E. Stuart Wortley, the Author of Hyde Nugent."

Not surprisingly, many reputable authors, although sometimes yielding to the temptation of handsome financial

rewards, were unhappy about writing for such compilations, and expressed disapproval or mockery.¹³ Two examples, from many, were Scott and Lamb. In 1828, Scott refused the editorship of the *Keepsake*, but was persuaded to allow a dramatic piece and three tales (including "My Aunt Margaret's Mirror") to be printed in it; for these he received £500. But he was displeased with the connection, and in his *Journal* referred to the editor, Reynolds, as a "conceited vulgar Cockney." Lockhart tells us that Scott "regretted having meddled in any way with the toyshop of literature, and would never do so again, though repeatedly offered very large sums — nor even when the motive of private regard was added, upon Mr. Allan Cunningham's lending his name to one of these painted bladders."¹⁴ Even so, pieces by Scott appeared in other *Annuals*. Lamb's disapproval of the *Annuals* was made clear in a letter he wrote on 28 August 1827 to Bernard Barton, the Quaker poet, who was himself a contributor to the *Annuals*:

I have stood off a long time from these *Annuals*, which are ostentatious trumpery, but could not withstand the request of [Robert] Jameson, a particular friend of mine and Coleridge.

I shall hate myself in frippery, strutting along, and vying finery with Beaux and Belles

with "Future Lord Byrons and sweet L.E.L.'s".¹⁵

The result of Jameson's persuasion was "Verses for an Album," which were printed in the *Bijou* for 1828. He reluctantly agreed to let his verses on Hood's dead child appear in the *Gem* for 1829, "which being as it were his property, I could not refuse their appearing, but I hate the paper, the type, the gloss, the dandy plates, the names of contributors poked up into your eyes in 1st page, and whistled thro' all the covers of magazines, the barefaced sort of emulation, the unmodest candidateship, brot. into so little space — in those old Londons a signature was lost in the wood of matter — the paper coarse (till latterly, which spoil'd them) — in short I detest to appear in an *Annual*."¹⁶

It is difficult to gainsay the strictures of Scott, Lamb, and others, although a few twentieth-century commentators have been able to say something in favour of the Annuals. An anonymous writer in the *Times Literary Supplement* (26 November 1925) asserted that "here and there, as from a grave, a flower will raise its head amid the rubbish of the past, a thing of beauty, and look out from its dim and tawdry setting: a Botticelli, as it were, in a plush frame."¹⁷ Ian Jack thinks that for the literary historian they may still retain some interest, because in them can occasionally be found significant work — a story by Scott or a poem by Wordsworth — and because "it is useful to see the work of major writers surrounded by the forgotten literature of their period."¹⁸ Dorothy Wellesley managed to compile an agreeable anthology of readable and even worth-while pieces, *The Annual* (1930), and Bradford A. Booth assembled a *Cabinet of Gems* (1938), a collection of short stories.

Before we consider Thackeray's criticisms, let us look at two representative, popular Annuals, *Forget Me Not* for 1838 and the *Keepsake* for 1839, which were amongst those he reviewed. First, the sixteenth issue of *Forget Me Not; a Christmas, New Year's, and Birthday Present for MDCCCXXXVIII*, edited by Frederic Shoberl. Thackeray rather unkindly called it a "dumpy little" book.¹⁹ It is a 16mo volume, with an embossed maroon and gilt leather cover, and gilt-edged leaves; it is pleasing to the eye and to the touch. On its title page it has some lines by L.E.L. —

Appealing, by the magic of its name,
To gentle feelings and affections, kept
Within the heart, like gold.

(The implication that gold is kept in the heart is typical of the poetess's muddled powers of expression). The *Keepsake* for 1839, edited by Reynolds, is a larger, plainer volume, but it makes up for its comparatively dull exterior by having a shining array of contributors, whom I have already listed.

The prose and verse in both are representative of the Annuals in general. Everything has the same kind of dullness. Nothing is freshly experienced and written; all the authors have forgotten Nature, and are looking at their subjects through the eyes of previous writers. Thackeray required writers and artists to do what he did himself: to observe the person, the place, the thing, and then to write down or portray what they saw and what they thought about it. He told young artists at the end of "Our Annual Execution": "Copy Nature. Don't content yourselves with idle recollections of her — be not satisfied with knowing pretty tricks of drawing and colour — stand not still because donkeys proclaim that you have arrived at perfection."²⁰ Practically everything in the two Annuals under discussion contradicts those commands. To take an example almost at random, Major Calder Campbell (a frequent contributor to magazines and Annuals) writes in *Forget Me Not* a sonnet on a "Scene Near Loch Ness," and tells us that he sees, amongst other things, "a sunny slope, with soothing verdure crowned," three anglers meeting "to ply their guileful trade," and "tranquillity" resting on the landscape. The prose fiction and non-fiction nearly always deals with remote times and places. Going through *Forget Me Not* and ignoring the verse, which is like Major Campbell's, we find an Irish legend, a modern "minikin romance," stories about India, Austria, and Germany, a melodramatic contemporary story, a tale set in Paris an undefined number of years before, a fictional "Scene in the Paris Revolution of 1830," quite a "low" modern story, some reflections on history prompted by seeing a coat of arms, a long fictional episode in the Wars of the Roses, a Milanese romance in 1789, and a brief description of the Church of San Paolo, Rome. The authors, almost all of whom are forgotten today, include Miss Mary Anne Browne, Major Calder Campbell, R. Shelton Mackenzie, the Old Sailor, H. F. Chorley, Mrs. Walker, T. E. Wilks, Isabel Hill, the Reverend Richard Polwhele, Mrs. Lee, and Miss Lawrance. The language of such pieces

is lifeless, marked by periphrastic clichés, for which Scott may be partly to blame. In Lady St. Maur's "The Eve of Allhallows. A Tale of Sixty Years Ago" (in the *Keepsake*), the villain did not quickly change his uniform for a plain suit, and leave the town unseen in the stormy night, but "hastily divesting himself of his military dress, he arrayed himself in a plain suit, which still remained in his possession; and favoured by the gloom of a tempestuous night, he left the house, and quitted the town without being perceived." Also in the *Keepsake*, Lord Nugent fancies "an old foretop gallant-yard" speaking (!):

And, holding converse, as I have so often done, with the beat of various feelings, — sometimes the light upspringing of a careless and thoughtless exultation, — sometimes the throb of a deep and silent sorrow, such as loads the heart from the hour when it bade its first and a long farewell to those friends whom it had loved earliest and dearest, and to that home whose last glimpse, perchance, is fading in the distance, — sometimes the high swelling of ambition, a yearning after some bright vision of glory, deeply pondered and fondly cherished, — all this does make one familiar with the spirit, and almost with each particular thought, that moves and reigns within.

Like the prose and verse, many of the engravings, whether illustrative of the text or not, have a lack of contact with actual English life of the eighteen-thirties. Their subject-matter is of past times and other lands. To take two typical examples from *Forget Me Not*: "Rosanna" (engraved by C. Rolls from a painting by Joseph Jenkins) is Austrian, and "The Phrenologist" (engraved by Rolls from a painting by Miss Eliza Sharpe) is dressed in late eighteenth-century costume. Two other characteristics are common. First, the pictures are frequently sentimental, most obviously in the portraits of women and children, who tend to have simpering smiles and eyes upturned to heaven. The expressions and poses of the Countess Guiccioli, the lady and the girl in "Maidal" (both pictures are in the *Keepsake*), and the "Rich and the Poor" (in *Forget Me Not*) all show this characteristic to various degrees. Secondly, they are almost completely without vitality and power. Groups (as in "Earl

Warwick's Seal Ring" in *Forget Me Not*) are posed lifelessly; although the face of "La Sevillana" (in *Forget Me Not*) has firmly realised features — the curve of her lips, the sparkle in her eyes — her shoulders and bosom are vaguely sketched; the cliffs in "The Shipwreck" (in the *Keepsake*) have no solidity. Thackeray, as we shall see, seized particularly on this deficiency of execution, and expressed his opinions with cogency, wit and humour.

Thackeray wrote much criticism, mostly of literature but also of art. In fact, over 340 pages of the second volume of the Oxford Thackeray are devoted to the latter, excluding the articles he wrote on the Annuals. He had, of course, a first-hand, practical knowledge of — and interest in — both subjects, and had at one time seriously considered becoming a professional artist.²¹ Reviewing the Annuals, in which pictures, verse, and prose were all important, gave him therefore the opportunity to express his opinions on various aspects of literature and art and their relationship to society. An examination of the articles he wrote about them will reveal some fundamental points of his critical creed and his approach to writing novels, and will also show the similarities and differences between his attitude toward the Annuals and the attitudes taken by contemporary critics. Above all, some of the admirable qualities of his criticism should be made clear.

But first the question of his authorship of one of the articles must be discussed. The Oxford Thackeray contains three articles on the Annuals attributed to him: "A Word on the Annuals" (*Fraser's Magazine*, December 1837), "The Annuals" (*The Times*, 2 November 1838), and "Our Annual Execution" (*Fraser's Magazine*, January 1839).²² Critics and bibliographers, including George Saintsbury and Gordon N. Ray, have accepted all three as Thackeray's, but some doubts concerning his authorship of the first, "A Word on the Annuals," have been expressed by Edward M. White.²³ No external evidence that Thackeray wrote it seems to exist. It is not mentioned in any letters, for example, and it was

not reprinted under Thackeray's name in his lifetime. White says that the only external evidence that Thackeray might have written it is a footnote referring to "our friend Mr. Yellowplush," but, as he rightly points out, this could have been written by anybody on the staff of *Fraser's*: "it is altogether possible that the editor added the footnote to another writer's review — and other *Fraser's* contributors could write brilliantly — to remind his readers that more 'Yellowplush' papers were to come." It was common practice for the *Fraserians* to collaborate or comment in such a way, and Thackeray himself had written articles in conjunction with Maginn and others. Rather strangely, however, White asks "if we credit the above footnote, what are we to do with the one on the preceding page, which maintains that the author 'obtained his intimate knowledge of Persian in a forty-three years' residence at Ispahan?'" But this typically facetious footnote, unlike the second, is signed "O.Y.," the initials of "Oliver Yorke," the persona of the editor or editors of *Fraser's*, and so presumably was not written by Thackeray, but was an editorial addition. In my opinion, the omission of those initials at the end of the footnote referring to Yellowplush seems to indicate that the author of the article wrote it himself, and the reference to Yellowplush makes it probable, though not certain, that that author was Thackeray. White points out that no instalment of the "Yellowplush Papers" was published in this December issue of *Fraser's*. This fact may suggest that Thackeray wrote the article on the *Annals* instead, but again, as White implies, this is untrustworthy testimony.

White admits that the article contains "brilliant writing" expressing Thackeray's "known sentiments," but he places little reliance on this as evidence. It is risky to trust internal evidence alone, especially when a periodical such as *Fraser's* has a strong house style, and contains articles that were written in collaboration. But I think that there are enough indications in the article of Thackeray's authorship. Brilliance of writing is not sufficient proof, but the detail

of some of the opinions is closely echoed in the articles by Thackeray in *The Times* of 2 November 1838 and in *Fraser's* of January 1839. In the first of the three articles, the writer makes the point that "the poor painter is only the publishers' slave: to live, he must not follow the bent of his own genius, but cater, as best he may, for the public inclination." He says further that "the publishers of these prints allow that the taste is execrable which renders such abominations popular, but the public will buy nothing else, and the public must be fed . . . [the painter] must live, and he has no other resource." In the second, Thackeray writes: "the public *will* have works of only a certain standard . . . the artist must live before all things." In the third, he refers to "the public — with respect be it spoken, in matters of art the most ignorant, the most credulous public in Europe."²⁴ The critic talks in the first article of a portrait of a woman with "no bone or muscle in that coarse bare bosom"; in the second, of women depicted with "tapering boneless fingers"; in the third, of "spider-waisted monsters! who have flesh, but no bones."²⁵ In the first article, the reviewer writes of "a large weak plate, done in what we believe is called the stipple style of engraving," and in the second Thackeray writes about "printing the plates upon what we believe painters call a middle-tint"²⁶ — both are, perhaps, references to the knowledge he acquired as an art student in Paris. In these examples, the close similarities of thought and phraseology seem to me to show that one writer must have been responsible for all three articles. Two other small points are worth noting regarding the disputed authorship of the first article. First, there are references in it to the fictional "Lady Carolina Wilhelmina Amelia Skeggs," a name from the *Vicar of Wakefield* adopted and adapted by Thackeray in the *Book of Snobs* and elsewhere. Secondly, Thackeray says in the second *Fraser's* article that "we" had "belaboured one or two of them [the writers and draughtsmen for the *Annuals*] twelve months since," although admittedly this statement does not

prove that he wrote both.²⁷ As well as the similarities in detailed points, there are several important general likenesses in the opinions expressed. In the first article, all the main criticisms that Thackeray made in the other two are made plain: the refusal of the contributors to copy Nature, the indecency of some of the female portraits, the inadequate execution of the pictures, the re-use of engravings (especially in Fisher's publications), the foolishness of some of the verse and prose, and (as I have already shown) the "execrable" taste of the public. I think that a reading of all three articles will show that they are by the same author, and I shall therefore assume that "A Word on the Annuals" was written by Thackeray.

In the years 1837 and 1838, when Thackeray wrote the articles, the Annuals were at the height of their popularity. He reviewed fifteen in "A Word on the Annuals," seven in "The Annuals," and fourteen — five of which he already reviewed in *The Times* — in "Our Annual Execution."²⁸ These articles are included in his "Art Criticisms" in the Oxford Thackeray, as he pays a good deal of attention to the engravings, which many of the publishers considered the principal part of the Annuals. "As for the poets," Thackeray comments, "they are always ready, and will turn you off a set of stanzas regarding either or every one of the characters [in the plates] with ingenuity never failing." In *Pendennis*, we read that the picture of "The Church Porch" in the *Spring Annual* cost Mr. Bacon sixty pounds, and it was therefore imperative that acceptable verses were written to accompany it. Fortunately, Pen could produce five stanzas, but the rate for verse, it appears, was only "a couple of guineas a page" (*Pendennis*, ch. xxxi).²⁹ Because the "wicked critics" had already "sufficiently abused" the literary content of the Annuals, Thackeray's business, he states toward the beginning of the first article, is "chiefly with the pictorial part of the books."

A recurrent theme of his criticism of the "pictorial part" is that the painter was the publisher's slave, and that the

publisher was in turn the slave of the public, whose artistic taste was deplorable. This was an ironical situation. According to Thackeray, the facilities for reproducing pictures were cheaper and more highly developed in England than on the Continent, and hence it was possible to reproduce the works of such worth-while painters as Sir Joshua Reynolds and Sir David Wilkie, "thanks to the wondrous perfection of steel engraving." But instead of such pictures, the public preferred ill-drawn, sentimental, and unnatural pictures of such subjects as "beauties" from other lands (for example, "the Chinese ladies, the Hindoo ladies, the Swiss ladies" in a book entitled *Beauty's Costume*) and historical events (for example, "Queen Elizabeth coming from her coronation at Westminster Abbey" in the *Book of Royalty*). His strongest condemnation of such pictures occurs in the third article, "Our Annual Execution," in the course of his discussion of *Findens' Tableaux of the Affections*, a book edited by Mary Russell Mitford:

They are bad figures, badly painted, and drawn, standing in the midst of bad landscapes; the whole engraved in that mean, weak, conventional manner which engravers have nowadays, — in which there is no force, breadth, texture, nor feeling of drawing; but only that paltry smoothness and effect which are the result of pure mechanical skill, and which a hundred workhouse-boys or tailors' apprentices would learn equally well — better than a man of genius would do.

The inadequacy of technique, and the lack of "force, breadth, texture" and "feeling" in the drawing were due to — or, at least, indissolubly linked with — the artists' refusal to copy Nature:

And ye, O young artists! who were made for better things than to paint such senseless gimcracks, and make fribble furniture for tawdry drawing-room tables, look at Nature and blush! See how much nobler she is than your pettifogging art! — how much more beautiful Truth is than your miserable tricked-up lies.

The sentiments just quoted, which appear toward the end of the third article, are repeatedly expressed in all three (and indeed in much of Thackeray's art criticism). In the

first, for example, he asks the reader to compare Kenny Meadows' portrait, "The Pansies" (in *Flowers of Loveliness*, 1838), with a German print, the "Two Leonoras." What is praiseworthy in the latter is the detailed realism, for everything in the print is "carefully copied from nature." The "poetic" approach adopted by Meadows — the process of drawing from imagination rather than from reality — is to be deplored on the grounds of technique and morality. Inaccurate copying from Nature and lack of observation — the failure to keep the eye on the object — lead to imperfect execution. In addition, deliberate heightening or distortion of Nature is practised by those artists who draw "ladies in voluptuous attitudes and various stages of deshabelle," so that young misses sigh to imitate them and old bachelors gloat over them. It is not surprising that in another contribution to *Fraser's*, "A Second Lecture on the Fine Arts" (June 1839), Thackeray should find some of Turner's later performances incomprehensible:

On n'embellit pas la nature, my dear Bricabac; one may make pert caricatures of it, or mad exaggerations, like Mr. Turner in his fancy pieces. O ye gods! why will he not stick to copying her majestical countenance, instead of daubing it with some absurd antics and fard of his own? Fancy pea-green skies, crimson-lake trees, and orange and purple grass — fancy cataracts, rainbows, suns, moons, and thunderbolts — shake them well up, with a quantity of gamboge, and you will have an idea of a fancy picture by Turner.⁸⁰

Nevertheless, Thackeray did not want to see mere photographic reproductions of Nature, although they would be preferable to distortions. Realism had to be there, as the basis of the picture, as it were, and then the artist could suffuse it with the glow of his imagination, providing that he did not indulge in "mad exaggerations." And this is what Turner triumphantly achieved in the "Fighting Téméraire"; the artist's power is to make "you see and think of a great deal more than the objects before you; he knows how to soothe or to intoxicate, to fire or to depress, by a few notes, or forms, or colours, of which we cannot trace the effect to the source, but only acknowledge the

power."³¹ Of course, Thackeray did not expect the contributors to the *Annuals* to attain to such powers of expression, but at least they ought, in his opinion, to observe the basic principle of copying Nature, and then they would inevitably be truthful and honest, if nothing else. In this insistence Thackeray anticipates the theory and practice of the Pre-Raphaelites, who, in the words of Millais, wished "to present on canvas what they saw in Nature."³²

As it is, the engravings in the *Annuals* are so characterless "that one may look at them year after year, and forget them always; especially if a new set of verses appear every Christmas, being fresh illustrations of the old plates." Thackeray refers in all three articles to this practice of reprinting engravings from former publications with fresh titles and verses attached to them. The chief perpetrator of this deceit was the publisher Fisher, about whose doings Thackeray gives detailed evidence in each article. There is, for example, a long and amusing comparison in "The *Annuals*," where he first quotes Lady Blessington's lines accompanying a picture of Selim and Zuleika in *Heath's Drawing-Room Portfolio* two years previously, and then some of L.E.L.'s "very smooth incomprehensible verses" accompanying the same picture in *Fisher's Drawing-Room Scrap Book*, one of the compilations he is currently reviewing. Apparently, plagiarism was also practised: Thackeray suspects that parts of some of the engravings in *Findens' Tableaux* (1839) have been taken from other artists, including Johannot Deveriae, Winterhalter, and Frank Stone. Such detection is something of a tribute to his keen visual memory, and is evidence as well of the close — and probably delighted — attention that he devoted to displays of pictures, however second-rate, in giftbooks and art galleries. Some of this enjoyment can be felt in his "catalogue raisonné" of the pictorial contents of the *Keepsake* for 1839, where a typical comment is that on an engraving of a picture by Alfred Chalon, "The Reefer," an impossibly delicate and angelic-looking boy:

One of Mr. Chalon's pretty affectations. A young midshipman leans across the foretop-gallant yard, and turns towards heaven the largest pair of eyes ever seen. The dear little fellow's collar is sadly rumpled, and his hair entirely out of curl. Sweet fellow! Pray Heaven he don't catch cold!

But a few of the "embellishments" deserve commendation, and all three articles contain words of praise: the "*Children of the Nobility* — a charming series of portraits by Chalon, Bostock, and Maclise," deriving its beauty from the artists' copying from Nature; Dyce's portrait of Mary Danvers in the *Keepsake* for 1839 is also "charming"; the "Unearthly Visitant," an engraving of a picture by John Herbert in the same Annual, "is in the very best style of English art, carefully drawn, well composed, graceful, earnest and poetical"; and so on.

It will be remembered that toward the beginning of the first article Thackeray wrote that his business was chiefly with "the pictorial part" because "the wicked critics have sufficiently abused" the literary part already. Nevertheless, in that article and in the other two he pays a good deal of attention to the prose and verse. In "A Word on the Annuals," the two sentences he soon writes about the verse are probably more damaging than any previous more extensive abuse, for amusing, exact parody is followed by a memorable, clinching sentence with a Johnsonian ring:

Miss Landon, Miss Mitford, or my Lady Blessington, writes a song upon the opposite page [to an engraving], about water-lily, chilly, stilly, shivering beside a streamlet, plighted, blighted, love-benighted, falsehood sharper than a gimlet, lost affection, recollection, cut connexion, tears in torrents, true-love token, spoken, broken, sighing, dying, girl of Florence, and so on. The poetry is quite worthy of the picture, and a little sham sentiment is employed to illustrate a little sham art.

In the same article, he chooses for comic summary and occasionally more serious comment an anonymous story from the *Keepsake* for 1838 entitled "My Turkish Visit," which has been "tagged" to a print of a fierce Persian and a melancholy girl. Who, he wonders, wrote the history?

“Is it Lord Nugent, or Lady Emeline Stuart Wortley, or Lady Blessington, or my Lord Castlereagh, or Lady Carolina Wilhelmina Amelia Skeggs?” After making fun of the writer’s ludicrously inaccurate description of a Turk, he quotes the description of a luxurious apartment, commenting that

This description alone is worth a guinea, — let alone twelve engravings, and a pink calico cover. Mr. Bulwer has done some pretty things in the upholstery line of writing; but, ye gods! what is *Pelham* to compare with our friend at the kiosk, — dirt, at which the delicate mind sickens — dross, pinchbeck, compared to this pure gold. In this kiosk on the Versailles road, nay, in one little chamber of it, we have, *imprimis*,

Four different kinds of scents, viz.:

1. Scented orange-trees;
2. Scented exotics;
3. Scented water in the movable fountain;
4. Scented fire in the golden brazier;

Three different kinds of sofas, viz., light-green velvet and gold; rose-pink and silver; white satin, edged with down, and embroidered with seed pearls.

If this is not imagination, where the deuce is it to be sought for? If this is not fine writing, genius is dead!

Another quotation from the description of the room leads him to exclaim:

Talk of the silver-fork school of romance, gracious heavens! Give silver forks for the future to base grooms, or lowly dustmen. A silver fork, forsooth! it may serve to transfix a saveloy, or to perforate a roasted tator; but never let the term be used for the future to designate a series of novels which pretend to describe polite life. After this, all else is low and mean.

After a fourth quotation, he says that he will follow “Wilhelmina Amelia” no further, but he pursues the matter of the Annuals in general to the extent of a few more strongly-felt sentences:

But seriously, or, as Dr. Lardner says, *seriatim*, is this style of literature to continue to flourish in England? Is every year to bring more nonsense like this, for foolish parents to give to their foolish children; for dull people to dawdle over till the dinner-bell rings; to add something to the trash on my lady’s drawing-room table, or in Miss’s bookcase? *Quousque tandem?* How far, O Keepsake, wilt thou abuse our forbearance? How many more bad

pictures are to be engraved, how many more dull stories to be written, how long will journalists puff and the gulled public purchase?

Nearly all the remainder of this first review deals with engravings, but Thackeray deploras the fact that Miss Mitford is responsible for *Findens' Tableaux*, and is perhaps surprisingly kind to Miss Landon in calling her talent "great" and in regretting that she degrades her gifts when she writes for the *Annuals*. As a schoolboy, he had written a parody of Miss Landon's verse, but his friendly remarks in *Fraser's* are probably due to his affection for its "editor," William Maginn, who had a prolonged love-affair with her.

In his review in *The Times*, Thackeray devotes about half his space to the literary contents of the *Annuals*. The *Amaranth*, in his opinion, "may very fairly claim the first rank [among the *Annuals*] as a literary work." This is true. But to call the *Amaranth* an *Annual* is a misnomer, as it was issued only once, in 1838. It was a handsomely produced folio of ninety-six pages, edited by Thomas Kibble Hervey (1799-1859); it contains a verse dedication by Horace Smith to Queen Victoria, thirteen engravings, and contributions in prose and verse from many well-known writers, including Douglas Jerrold, Allan Cunningham, William Lisle Bowles, W. H. Brookfield, Mary Howitt, Ebenezer Elliott, "Barry Cornwall," Thomas Hood, Winthrop Mackworth Praed, and Elizabeth Barrett. A comparable list could be found in none of the other *Annuals* reviewed by Thackeray. Out of "a more than ordinary quantity of pleasant prose" Thackeray chooses as the pleasantest piece a short essay on Margate by Joseph Poole,³⁴ finding it "admirable for its point and fine humour." Poole writes facetiously — making play, for example, with the idea that Margate contains no population of its own — though not irritatingly so, and it may not be too fanciful to detect a faint foreshadowing here and there of some of Thackeray's own sentences:

Did you ever chance to go through Tunbridge Wells at the same season [i.e., winter]? The one old woman you

may have seen creeping along the Pantiles, every one of its shops being shut — the one man ringing the bell at the closed doors of the "Sussex", which, after a delay of five minutes, are opened to him by a waiter, grown fat from compulsory idleness — the other one man pacing up and down outside the "Kent", waiting for the arrival of *the* coach, which passes through now only twice a week, — these are a crowd, a crush — this is gaiety running even into riot, compared with what Margate presented.

Thackeray then quotes for our approval a poem, "The Myrtle," by James Montgomery,³⁵ calling it "a pretty *pendant* to Southey's famous 'Holly Tree.'" And it is indeed a sweetly-turned poem, neatly working out a comparison between the fragrance escaping from a bruised myrtle leaf and life escaping from a bruised body. His next example of verse, "The Recreant," is probably more interesting to us than it was to him. Thackeray states that it is anonymous, but in the *Amaranth* it is initialled "J.R."; the poet is the nineteen-year-old John Ruskin, who contributed a number of poems to the *Annuals* and who founded these verses on an incident in Herodotus, suggested to him by his father.³⁶ It is a competent, Campbell-like poem, describing in vigorous diction and rhythm the return of a cowardly Athenian from a battle in which all his fellows perished. Thackeray quotes it in full, thinks it "contains some very fine lines" (although unfortunately he does not specify them), but curiously finds it "careless in some parts, and in other passages most difficult of comprehension" (again, he gives no evidence for his assertion). Finally, in his survey of the *Amaranth* he quotes "some noble lines" (four stanzas) from a poem which he leaves anonymous and which he says is entitled "The Sabbath at Sea"; the title, however, is "A Sabbath on the Sea," and the verses are by Elizabeth Barrett, who was already quite a well-known poet. She writes at length, but emptily, about her subject, leaning heavily on words like "solemn," "mystic," "quietude majestic," and "wondrous sight."

He ranges more widely over the literary contents of the *Annuals* in his third article. From *Forget Me Not* he gives

a long extract from an "admirable marine story" (he does not name it, but it is "Hammer and Nails" by Mrs. Lee), a well-told episode about the supernatural, rather like parts of Marryat's *Snarleygow* (1836-37) and *The Phantom Ship* (1837-39). He turns to the *Keepsake*, and derides some verses, "The Unearthly Visitant" (attached to the engraving mentioned earlier) by a "noble lady" whom he does not identify (it was Lady Emmeline Stuart Wortley), and quotes "Stanzas" by Lord John Manners, written — so Thackeray tells us — when the author was only six years old ("had he been six years older we might have been inclined to be severe"). He gives a specimen of a foolishly overwritten self-analysis "from a sweet tale by the Honourable Grantley Fitzhardinge Berkeley, M.P." (one of *Fraser's* butts), and comments on the author:

This man — we speak it as a Niagara cataract of impetuous emotion gushes softly from each eye, and an abysmal earthquake of storm-uprooted feelings, and smouldering chaotic lava, heaves the tempestuous bosom — this is THE man of the *Annals*! Amid the desert of contributors he stands, a huge and lonely pyramid, in solitary greatness. Let the red simoom rage at his base, what cares he? Awe-stricken, the red Simoom scuds screaming away, and the lustrous stars look calm upon his stalactitic apex! In a word (for if we're to keep the steam of our style *crescendo*, we might blow the Magazine and all Regent Street into atoms), as the *Athenaeum* says, Mr. Berkeley 'may now take his place,' &c., &c., among the brightest spirits, &c., &c., of our time.

Encouraged, perhaps, by this splendid parody of silver-fork writing, Thackeray writes a little later in the article some extended, brilliant burlesque of Annual verse. A letter, written on pink, scented paper from Rosalba de Montmorency (whose real name is Miss Eliza Slabber), introduces two of her compositions. The first is "The Battle-Axe Polacca," anapaestic stanzas with a refrain, only slightly more ludicrous than the many poor imitations of Scott's poems (I am thinking particularly of "Lochinvar") to be found in the *Annals*. The second is "The Almack's Adieu," "the whole of which is pronounced quite fashionable": Fanny implores her Harry, who had asked her on the staircase of Devon-

shire House to marry him, to return to her. One stanza will show its quality:

At night with that vile Lady Frances
(Je faisais moi tapisserie)
 You danced every one of the dances,
 And never once thought of poor me!
Mon pauvre petit coeur! what a shiver
 I felt as she danced the last set,
 And you gave, *oh mon Dieu!* to revive her,
My beautiful vinegarette!

Then, rather as he had surprised his readers at the end of his review in the *National Standard* (15 June 1833) of Robert Montgomery's poems,³⁷ Thackeray reveals that he had "formed [his] strains" on the popular "vulgar ballad," "Wapping Old Stairs," which he quotes. In justifiable self-praise, Thackeray says that he is ready to acknowledge that Miss de Montmorency's "parodies are to the full as original and spirited as the chief part of the verses in the Annuals." "The Battle-Axe Polacca" is a parallel to the Countess of Blessington's "The Letrilla," apparently a popular poem, which he reproduces for comparison, and which appeared in *Gems of Beauty* for 1839, "a harmless, worthless little book, as ever was seen." There is no doubt that Thackeray could easily have written — and perhaps illustrated — a complete Annual himself, indistinguishable from the real product.

After that long and entertaining excursus into parody, come more quotations: some "good, honest, manly lines," "The Sack of Magdeburgh" by Maginn in *Fisher's Drawing-Room Scrap Book*, and "Song" by Richard Monckton Milnes, which — through understandable confusion — Thackeray states appeared in the *Keepsake*, though "fit for much better company" (in fact, it appeared in the *Book of Beauty*, the engravings in which he briefly considers at the end of the article). And there is a word of praise for the *Amaranth*.

It is obviously impossible to generalise about the critical reception of the Annuals during the many years in which they were popular. But if we choose the years 1837 and 1838, when they were at the height of their fame and when

Thackeray reviewed them, we shall find that he is virtually alone in his just and witty dispensation of praise and blame. Readers of the three articles will note that he is contradictory about their reception at the hands of his contemporaries, as he refers at different times to the abuse and to the "unseemly praises" they received. The welcome a new batch was given by the *Metropolitan Magazine* in November 1837 is representative, however, of a widespread attitude in the periodicals:

The autumnal leaves are falling fast around us, all one sad colour — sere and yellow — and here are the gay Christmas books, bright in all the hues of the rainbow, to remind us of fire-side pleasures, and make an indoor summer in the midst of winter. Truly they are cheerful and pleasant to look upon! So bright and burnished are they all, that by mere externals, any one of them is enough to light up a drawing-room table.

In January 1838, the commentator in this magazine found *Heath's Book of Beauty* reminiscent of "antique, illuminated missals," and its literary contributions "graceful and agreeable." In a survey of the Annuals for 1839 the writer thought *Friendship's Offering* "still as good, in stem, foliage, and flower, as ever, like a good plant that has found a favourable soil, and is renewed year after year."³⁸ The *Athenaeum* devoted nine articles, with long quotations, to the Annuals in 1837, and eight in 1838; they were almost completely commendatory, with the lady contributors especially singled out for praise — Miss Mitford, Mary Howitt, L.E.L., and Lady Blessington, for example.³⁹ The writer in the *Literary Gazette* of 11 November 1837 found that "their literary attractions have much degenerated," largely owing to the fact that "all began to lavish on the embellishments that portion of outlay which was justly due to lettered talent and genius." Most monthly magazines displayed "infinitely more ability and originality." But when the Annuals were first established, "though somewhat obscured by the admixture of contemporaneous imbecility and trash, we are bold to say, that from these volumes a selection might be made, which would do great honour to

the polite literature of any age or country." A year later, the *Literary Gazette* had no reservations, and favourably reviewed the Annuals.⁴⁰ The opinions of the *Gentleman's Magazine* ran counter to those in the *Literary Gazette*: kind remarks in December 1837, but in December 1838 tart comments, especially on the *Keepsake*.⁴¹

The contrast between Thackeray's discriminating attitude and the generally favourable attitude of many other literary journalists is not simply explained by saying that he clearly saw the defects of the Annuals and that they did not. One reason for the difference is to be found in the corrupt practices prevalent in the world of publishing. "Puffing" in the eighteen-thirties was a notorious abuse, with editors and critics in the pay of publishers. At this time, the *Literary Gazette*, for example, "was entirely venal, its editor [William Jerdan] being merely the 'puppet' of the book-sellers."⁴² Probably Thackeray himself was somewhat susceptible to personal influences; his praise in "Our Annual Execution" for the omniscient Doctor's verses in *Fisher's Drawing-Room Scrap Book* and his kind words for L.E.L. can be ascribed to his friendship with Maginn.

His detestation of much of the trash and trivia in the Annuals was genuine enough — no one, I think, can read the three articles and not be convinced of that — but doubtless he was encouraged in his opinions by the Fraserians. Most of his criticisms of the Annuals appeared in *Fraser's*, and it should be remembered that he had behind him — and strengthening him — eight years of that magazine's lambasting the pretentious and the sham. It had attacked the Annuals five times, with rudeness both amusing and fierce.⁴³ In the first article, which is not so slashing as some of the later ones, it had declared that it would like to abolish them "at a blow," except *Friendship's Offering*, the *Amulet*, Hood's *Comic Annual*, and Alaric Watts' *Literary Souvenir*. Its approach was always a commonsense one. The critic or critics might quote a passage, and show its absurdity simply by asking what it meant. Here is the "Man of Genius"

(i.e., John Churchill) wondering about the meaning of the last stanza of T. K. Hervey's "Death of Rachael" published in *Forget Me Not* for 1835:

Now here is as much downright trash as was ever tacked together in seven lines. What can Mr. T. K. Hervey mean by "haughty sculpture"? We pause for a reply; and in the meantime we take leave to express our disbelief in the assertion, that the "flowering sod" remained uncrushed where the "fiery Gentile trod"; or at least, if it did, 'twas "most remarkably odd." And as to childhood "checking its noisy sport awhile *to whisper by the mossy pile,*" we plainly tell Mr. Hervey that it is all fudge! Why, supposing the children left off their run from fatigue or wonderment, what are we to think them whispering about? An explanatory note would here be of great service⁴⁴

Sometimes cruder fun, in a favourite Fraserian style, was made of contributors to the Annuals, as in the first part of the long, comic description written by Maginn and Mahony of proceedings in the "Houses of Parliament" concerned with contemporary literature.⁴⁵

If Thackeray did not contribute to some of these Fraserian papers — and he possibly did — he may well have discussed them with Maginn. At least, he is sure to have read them. Their characteristics, variously modified, reappear in his criticism. The underlying attitude of scorn for pretension and sham is the same, and so is the form of some of the articles — long quotations with searching, amused comments. But Thackeray is less crude: this difference is due partly to his inimitably smooth, allusive prose, and partly to his gift for witty parody. It is unlikely that he would have mocked Hervey's verse with a feeble rhyming phrase like "most remarkably odd," or have written of "trash . . . tacked together," or have used a colloquialism like "fudge" and a hackneyed Shakespearean expression like "pause for a reply." In short, his technique was a refined version of that practised by the Fraserians.

His refined technique is indicative of his refined critical approach. He consciously repudiated the coarseness of the venal praise and blame that disfigured the criticism of so

many contemporary journalists, including his colleagues on the staff of *Fraser's*. "Our Annual Execution" opens with a lengthy "apology and exposition of our critical creed." Thackeray praises the rod, which "made good scholars, brave soldiers and honest gentlemen," but which "is dead now." Similarly, the critical rod "is, for the most part, thrown aside." It was, he says, abused; poor harmless fellows have been whipped practically to death or maimed for life, sometimes from "sheer exuberance of spirits on the part of the critic" (for instance, a critic like "the Great Professor," John Wilson),⁴⁶ sometimes from "professional enthusiasm," and "sometimes alas! from personal malice." The proper method is the one Thackeray adopts:

If the subject to be operated upon be a poor weak creature, switch him gently, and then take him down. If he be a pert pretender, as well as an ignoramus, cut smartly and make him cry out; his antics will not only be amusing to the lookers-on, but instructive likewise: a warning to other impostors, who will hold their vain tongues, and not be quite so ready for the future to thrust themselves in the way of the public. But, as a general rule, never flog a man, unless there are hopes of him; if he be a real malefactor, sinning not against taste merely, but truth, give him a grave trial and punishment: don't flog him, but brand him solemnly, and then cast him loose. The best cure for humbug is satire — here above typified as the rod; for crime, you must use the *hot iron*: but this, thank Heaven! is seldom needful, not more than once or twice in the seven-and-thirty years that we ourselves have sat on the bench.

He had intended, he continues, to ignore the Annuals completely, but the rest of the London critics, according to the advertisements, have indulged in "unseemly praises and indecent raptures"; if Thackeray does not cry out, "it is not improbable that the public will begin to fancy once more that the verses which they contain are real poetry, and the pictures real painting: and thus painters, poets, and public, will be spoiled alike." He refutes the dictum — of old Goethe and Scott, for example — that a critic should speak only to praise. Such a maxim is all very well across a table, but "when *I* becomes *we* — sitting in judgment, and delivering solemn opinions — *we* must tell the truth, the

whole truth, and nothing but the truth; for then there is a third party concerned — the public — between whom and the writer, or painter, the critic has to arbitrate, and he is bound to show no favour."

We have seen how he put this theory into practice in his assessments of the Annuals, using parody, ridicule, and sharp comment, but not withholding praise where praise was due. As the years went by, he became less astringent, as he acknowledged in some remarks addressed to "Oliver Yorke," prefacing a review of "A Box of Novels" he contributed to *Fraser's* in February 1844. You are grown mild — we are all grown mild," he says; he intends to leave "these vain sports and savage pastimes of youth" and to turn to "the benevolent philosophy of maturer age."⁴⁷ Nevertheless, he always held to his belief in Nature and Truth, heeding Pope's counsel in the *Essay on Criticism*:

First follow Nature, and your judgement frame
By her just standard, which is still the same.

With that belief went his reliance on common sense, moderation, and the avoidance of extremes. Pretension and falsity were therefore to be attacked, and these faults revealed themselves in the Annuals in inflated language, sentimentality, the respect given to aristocratic contributors, and inadequate literary and artistic execution. In Thackeray's opinion, not only were the writers and artists guilty, but the public should also be blamed for encouraging them. A healthy society would not tolerate literature and art of this kind; conversely, such literature and art were pernicious influences on society. This is a recurrent theme of his, notably in his criticism of Newgate and fashionable novels.

It would be pleasing to claim that Thackeray helped to destroy the popularity of the Annuals, in the same way that similar attacks by him helped toward the demolition of the Newgate novel. Unfortunately, this is not so, for the Annuals continued unflaggingly throughout the eighteenth-forties. The explanation may be that purchasers and readers of them would not be likely to read the criticism in *Fraser's*

and *The Times*. People who liked them were no more interested in literature and painting than many today who give "coffee-table" books as Christmas presents. Furthermore, Bulwer, the chief progenitor and practitioner of the Newgate novel, claimed to have a serious concern with literature, and was sensitive to criticism; it is therefore not surprising that Thackeray's hostility had some effect on him. But although his criticism of the *Annuals* had no practical results in this respect, they make clear to us — and made clear to him — the principles to which he was determined to adhere. In criticism, smart cutting with the satirical rod was necessary because "praise, monstrous, indiscriminate, wholesale, was the fashion of the day." In his own fiction, we find demonstrated his firm conviction in what Dr. Ray calls "fidelity to personal experience";⁴⁸ the avoidance of the grandiose, the impossibly heroic, and extravagance of language and plot; the belief in the necessity to expose hypocrisy and to moralise on human behaviour and society. It is doubtful whether there is full justification for seeing a relationship of cause and effect between his early criticism and later novels, for the principles on which both are based are these constant ones of Nature, Truth, and common sense. In other words, Thackeray's fiction might have been the same even if he had not been a critic first. But at least we can say that some important aspects of his achievement as a novelist are illuminated when related to his criticism. His articles on the *Annuals* are most entertaining, as I hope my descriptions and illustrations have made clear, and there is no doubt that he relished many of the good things — and even some of the bad things — that he found in them. But his underlying seriousness of purpose is plain and is of central importance in our judgment of Thackeray's opinions and practice.

After all this, it may seem rather sad to find Thackeray himself contributing to the *Keepsake*: two stories, "An Interesting Event" (in the issue for 1849) and "Vultigeur" (1851), and two poems, "The Pen and the Album" (1853)

and "Lucy's Birthday" (1854).⁴⁹ The presence of these agreeable pieces is doubtless due to his friendship with Lady Blessington in the last two or three years of her life and with her two nieces (one of whom, Eileen Power, succeeded her as editress of the *Keepsake* in 1850).

Lists of Annuals reviewed by Thackeray. (Where possible, I have used the titles as given in CBEL, III (1969), 1873-78).

¹"A Word on the Annuals." *Fraser's Magazine*, XVI (December 1837), 757-763.

Reviews of *Jennings' Landscape Annual*, the *Keepsake*, *Flowers of Loveliness*, *Friendship's Offering*, *Forget Me Not*, the *Christian Keepsake*, *Fisher's Drawing-Room Scrap Book*, *Fisher's Juvenile Scrap Book*, *Fisher's Oriental Keepsake*, the *Book of Gems*, *Gems of Beauty*, *Findens' Tableaux*, *Portraits of the Children of the Nobility*, *Heath's Book of Beauty*, and *The Authors of England* (all for 1838).

²"The Annuals." *The Times*, 2 November 1838, p. 5

Reviews of the *Book of Royalty*, the *Diadem*, *Findens' Tableaux*, *Fisher's Drawing-Room Scrap Book*, *Beauty's Costume*, the *Keepsake*, and the *Amaranth* (all for 1839).

³"Our Annual Execution." *Fraser's Magazine*, XIX (January 1839), 57-67.

Reviews of the *Book of Royalty*, *Findens' Tableaux*, *Forget Me Not*, *Friendship's Offering*, the *Keepsake*, the *Oriental Annual*, *Jennings' Landscape Annual*, *Heath's Picturesque Annual*, *Fisher's Drawing-Room Scrap Book*, *Fisher's Juvenile Scrap Book*, the *Amaranth*, *Portraits of the Children of the Nobility*, *Gems of Beauty*, and *Heath's Book of Beauty* (all for 1839).

NOTES

¹Leigh Hunt, *Selected Essays* (Everyman's Library, London, 1929), p. 223. The essay first appeared in the *Keepsake* for 1828. The Continental origins of the Annual are summarised in Ralph Thompson, *American Literary Annuals and Gift-Books 1825-1865* (New York: Shoestring Press, 1967), p. 3.

²Frederick Winthrop Faxon, *Literary Annuals and Gift-Books* (Boston: Boston Book Co., 1912), p. xi. See also H. R. Tedder's article on Ackermann and G. C. Boase's article on Shoberl in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

³Quoted by A. Bose in "The Verse of the English 'Annuals'", *RES*, new series, IV (1953), 38-51. I have been unable to consult the first *Forget Me Not*.

⁴Victoria Sackville-West, Introduction to *The Annual*, ed. Dorothy Wellesley (London: Cobden-Sanderson 1930), p. ii.

⁵Faxon, *Literary Annuals and Gift-Books*, pp. 129, 130-31, 139-40.

⁶Hunt, *Selected Essays*, p. 222.

⁷Faxon, *Literary Annuals and Gift-Books*, p. xiv.

- ⁸*The Oxford Thackeray*, ed. George Saintsbury (London: Oxford Univ. Press 1908), II, 337. (Hereafter cited as *Works*).
- ⁹Faxon, *Literary Annuals and Gift-Books*, pp. xiv-xv. *Works*, II, 337.
- ¹⁰*Works*, XII, 396.
- ¹¹Bose, "Verse of the English 'Annuals'", p. 40, note 1.
- ¹²*Works*, XII, 396.
- ¹³See Ian Jack, *English Literature 1815-1832* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press 1963), pp. 173-75.
- ¹⁴John Gibson Lockhart, *Life of Sir Walter Scott* (Everyman's Library, London, 1906), pp. 563-64. *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, ed. W. E. K. Anderson (Oxford, 1972), p. 525.
- ¹⁵*Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*, ed. E. V. Lucas (London: Methuen 1905), VII, 747. The quoted verse is by Lamb himself.
- ¹⁶*Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*, VII, 780. The quotation is from a letter written to Bernard Barton on 11 October 1828.
- ¹⁷*TLS*, 26 November 1925, p. 780.
- ¹⁸*English Literature 1815-1832*, p. 175.
- ¹⁹*Works*, II, 363. He uses these words about the 1839 issue, which was the same size.
- ²⁰*Works*, II, 378.
- ²¹Cf. his remark in a letter he wrote from Paris on 6 July 1833 to his mother: "I have been thinking very seriously of turning artist — I think I can draw better than do anything else & certainly like it better than any other occupation why shouldn't I?" (*Letters and Private Papers of William Makepeace Thackeray*, ed. Gordon N. Ray (Cambridge, Mass, 1945-46), I, 262).
- ²²*Works*, II, 337-78. All my quotations from the three articles are taken from the Oxford text.
- ²³Edward M. White, "Thackeray's Contributions to *Fraser's Magazine*," *Studies in Bibliography*, XIX (1966), 67-84.
- ²⁴*Works*, II, 338, 339, 352, 360.
- ²⁵*Works*, II, 344, 354, 378.
- ²⁶*Works*, II, 338, 350.
- ²⁷*Works*, II, 340, 360.
- ²⁸See note 22. To avoid an undue proliferation of footnotes, I shall give no more page references for my quotations from these articles, details of which are given at the beginning of these notes.
- ²⁹*Works*, XII, 397-402.
- ³⁰*Works*, II, 394.
- ³¹*Works*, II, 394.
- ³²Peter Conrad, *The Victorian Treasure-House* (London: Collins, 1973), p. 116.
- ³³Dionysius Lardner (1793-1859) edited a number of serial works, including the *Cabinet Cyclopaedia* in 133 volumes (1829-49).
- ³⁴Poole (1786?-1872) was a popular dramatist and writer of sketches, tales, and verse.

- ³⁵The collected poems of Montgomery (1771-1854) were published in 1841.
- ³⁶*Works of John Ruskin*, ed. E. T. Cook and A. Wedderburn (London: George Allen, 1903-12), II, 71-72.
- ³⁷*Works*, I, 28-29.
- ³⁸*Metropolitan Magazine*, XX (November 1837), 83 (in the literary section); XXI (January 1838), 19; XXIII (November 1838), 82.
- ³⁹Between 14 October and 23 December 1837, 13 October and 29 December 1838.
- ⁴⁰*Literary Gazette*, 11 November 1837, p. 716; 20 October 1838, pp. 658-62; 27 October 1838, pp. 676-78.
- ⁴¹*Gentleman's Magazine*, new series, VIII (December 1837), 613-21; X (December 1838), 637-42.
- ⁴²Gordon N. Ray, *Thackeray: the Uses of Adversity 1811-1863* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1955), p. 222. See Thackeray's "Reading a Poem" (*Works*, III, 461-81) for an amusing skit on the practice of "puffing".
- ⁴³*Fraser's Magazine*, II (December 1830), 543-54; VI (December 1832), 653-72; X (November 1834), 602-23; XIII (January 1836), 5-15; XV (January 1837), 33-48.
- ⁴⁴*Fraser's Magazine*, X (November 1834), 612.
- ⁴⁵*Fraser's Magazine*, XIII (January 1836), 5-15.
- ⁴⁶Better known by his pseudonym, "Christopher North," he contributed mainly to *Blackwood's Magazine*.
- ⁴⁷*Works*, VI, 387-88. His later articles for *Fraser's* on Christmas books are about compilations and novels different from the Annuals, except for some remarks on *Fisher's Drawing-Room Scrap Book* for 1847 in "A Grumble about the Christmas Books" in *Fraser's Magazine*, XXXV (January 1847), 111-26 (*Works*, VI, 581-609). Also of interest is "About a Christmas Book. In a letter from Michael Angelo Titmarsh to Oliver York, Esq.," *Fraser's Magazine*, XXXII (December 1845), 744-48 (*Works*, VI, 538-47).
- ⁴⁸Ray, *Thackeray: the Uses of Adversity*, p. 327.
- ⁴⁹*Works*, X, 575-82, 593-603; VII, 64-67.