BIOGRAPHY

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

(1811 - 1863)

William Makepeace Thackeray was born on July 18th 1811, in Calcutta. He was the only child of Richmond Makepeace Thackeray and Anne Becher. When he was 5 years old, after his father died, he was sent back to school to England by his mother, so that he should be separated from his mother who married again with Major Henry Carmichael-Smith, a former suitor. This period of separation, the period when he always dreamt of his mother, marked Thackeray's character deeply. He portrayed his mother, who had influenced in his life greatly, in his later fictional works as Helen Pendennis, in Pendennis (1848-18), and also as Rachel Esmond, in Esmond (1852).

In 1822, he went to Charterhouse, his stepfather's old school, to study. The brutal, and snobbish characters he met at that school were also portrayed in his <u>The Newcomers</u> (1853 - 1855). He wrote almost all of his works from his own life experience and he also portrayed his wife, Isabella Shawe, whom he married in 1833, as Amelia Sedley in his' Vanity Fair (1848).

Thackeray also wrote his novels based on the society like what he he did in his early works. Thackeray was interested in human life in his time, the Victorian Age.

The Professor (1837), his first work, is about the love story between two h-dropping cockneys; The Yellowplush Correspondence (1837 - 1838), is about the memoir of a mercenary; and Barber Cox (1840), is about the tale of a barber and his wife who are trying to live as rich people when they get a fortune in their life.

Thackeray lived until December 24th, 1863, in London. He passed-away after he finished his last work, <u>Dennis Duval</u> (1864).

SYNOPSIS

Helen Pendennis, after her husband passes-away, becomes a single parent for her son, Arthur Pendennis. Helen Pendennis has a big ambition for her son. She wants her son to be fit and useful for the society. Therefore, she tries to interfere in her son's life. When Arthur tells his mother that he wants to go to be a soldier, she says that it is a bad job, and that he should not go to that place. Also when Arthur asks his mother's blessing for his relationship with an actress, Emily Costigan, Helen and her friend, Doctor Portman, try to make Arthur understand that he should not marry that girl. However, Arthur still insists on marrying that girl. So, Helen asks her brother in-law to separate her son from that girl, so that he will never remember her again. Helen does that to her son, because she feels that Emily is not fit to be his wife. She thinks that Laura Bell, her ward, is the ideal girl for Arthur Pendennis. When Helen hears false news or a bad rumour that Arthur is the Don Juan of London which is tied to Fanny Bolton, she uses all means to make Fanny go away from Arthur's life. When Arthur knows about that, he feels very angry to his mother. He expresses his anger by insulting his mother with a loud noise, and an angry tone.

After Arthur's friend, George Warrington, talks about his past life, which is almost like Arthur's, Arthur becomes to realize his mother just wants to keep Arthur away from the dangers that exist in the society. After his mother passes-away, Arthur begins to realize that his mother's choice, Laura Bell, is the suitable wife for him. He becomes a gentleman, marries Laura and lives happily together.