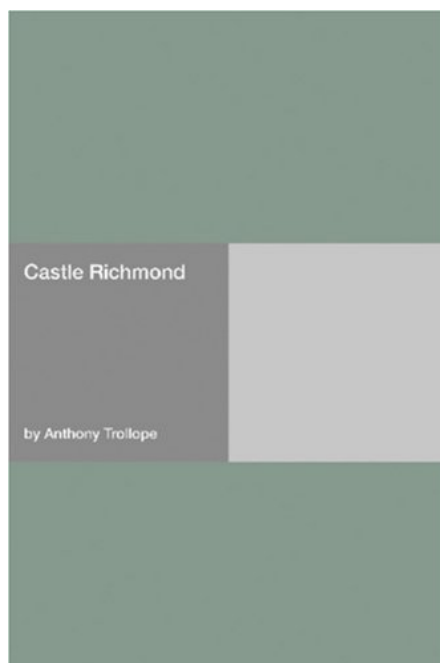




Castle Richmond

Anthony Trollope

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Two gentlemen seek Clara Desmond's hand, and each has a claim to Castle Richmond. Another story of love and law from Trollope, this time set in Ireland during the famine of the 1840's.

Castle Richmond Details

Date : Published November 3rd 2006 by Hard Press (first published 1860)

ISBN : 9781406930245

Author : Anthony Trollope

Format : Paperback 442 pages

Genre : Classics, Fiction



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From Reader Review Castle Richmond for online ebook

Lady Clementina ffinch-ffarowmore says

Castle Richmond, one of Trollope's standalone novels, is the story of two families—the Fitzgeralds of Castle Richmond of the title and the Desmonds of Desmond Court, set in the backdrop of the Irish famine. The story opens with Owen Fitzgerald, a cousin of the Castle Richmond Fitzgeralds, falling in love with young Clara Desmond, then only sixteen. She accepts his love but has to give him up, for her family, particularly her mother, sees Owen as an unsuitable match since Clara herself is penniless and Owen, has neither much money, nor a title. Time passes and Clara meets the Fitzgerald heir Herbert who also falls in love with her and is keen to marry her, this suit having Lady Desmond's wholehearted approval. But something mysterious is afoot in the background, for a couple of blackmailers are targeting Herbert's father, Sir Thomas, and trouble lies ahead for the Fitzgeralds. What happens when circumstances change and difficulties arise, how do the characters react, how do the problems they face shape them as people?this is what the rest of the story deals with.

The book really has three storylines proceeding side by side—the rival suits of the Fitzgerald cousins for Lady Clara Desmond's hand, the blackmail angle (with the secret behind it and its consequences for all the characters), and the famine—and they deal with a range of themes—love, wealth and inheritance, poverty, and religion among them. The famine itself provides a kind of backdrop in which the characters' personal stories are unfolding. None of them are affected by it directly, they being mostly of the upper echelons of society, but they, particularly Herbert and to an extent Clara are working to help the victims, and in the process realise that their own sufferings may be almost nothing compared to what those directly affected by the famine are facing—no work, no money, barely a roof over their head for some, and unpalatable yellow meal, that too in not very sufficient quantities to keep their body and soul together. Religion too is a theme running in the background, the protestant and Roman catholic branches (particularly the clergy) having their differences and much mistrust but this line of the story provides humour to the plot rather than any ground for serious discord.

This was not among Trollope's most popular novels but I quite enjoyed reading it. The characters, are very real people, ones whose situations and dilemmas one can relate to, and whom one can sympathise with; most have shades of grey but one can understand their reasons for acting as they do, and doesn't dislike them for it. The plotlines too held my attention throughout and while not as engrossing as some of his other works (like *Orley Farm*), I was interested to see how things will turn out for in Trollope's world, unlike Dickens', everything doesn't always turn out "storybook".

Christie says

Two comments about Trollope that I have received from others:

1. That reading Trollope as a Victorian reader would be like reading a really good gossip column today -- hilarious and snarky and full of biting social commentary.
2. That *Castle Richmond* itself is a romance that even a 21st century reader can love.

I adore Trollope, possibly because I live enough in the 19th century that I understand the references and the social commentary. He makes me laugh (even his travelogue of Australia and New Zealand made me laugh).

But Castle Richmond is thoroughly entertaining and captivating -- both for the love stories and for the historiography of the Irish famine.

And that last sentence...it gets me.

Nathan says

A story of love and poverty set in the time of the Potato famine of Ireland in the late 1800s. Clara is the poor daughter of a countess and is the object of the affections of two cousins, Herbert Fitzgerald, heir to the title castle, and Owen, the poor bachelor. Owen proposes to Clara and considers throughout the book as rightfully engaged to her. Clara's mother, the Countess of Desmond thinks it not a good match, due to Owen's lack of title and money, and also the fact that she herself is in love with him. The Countess urges Clara to consider Herbert as a suitable match, because he is set to inherit land and money.

In a strange twist of fate, it is discovered that Herbert's parents weren't legally married because Lady Fitzgerald's first husband was still living and tries to blackmail the family. The stress of the situation causes Sir Thomas Fitzgerald to pass away earlier than expected. Because this marriage cannot be considered legal, Herbert cannot be the true heir of Castle Richmond, but rather the title would go to the next closest relative, Owen.

Owen does not care for the title or property and tries to bargain with Herbert to reclaim Clara in exchange for the property. Herbert refuses to give up Clara and Clara also refuses to break off the engagement. The whole of the castle is in a state of flux because there is no master to claim it.

The book paints a neat historical picture in the backdrop of the famine and how the government failed the people. The ending wasn't very satisfactory, but all in all a good read.

Ross says

This is pretty good, almost a 4 star. Set during the potato famine in Ireland, this is a character study by Trollope attached to an engaging tale with a happy ending , which I require these days. At my age I am not wasting time on unhappy endings.

Laura says

Free download available at Project Gutenberg.

INTRODUCTION

"Castle Richmond" was written in 1861, long after Trollope had left Ireland. The characterization is weak, and the plot, although the author himself thought well of it, mechanical.

The value of the story is rather documentary than literary. It contains several graphic scenes descriptive of the great Irish famine. Trollope observed carefully, and on the whole impartially, though his powers of discrimination were not quite fine enough to make him an ideal annalist.

3* Mrs. General Talboys
3* Christmas at Kirkby Cottage
3* The American Senator
3* Orley Farm
2* Miss Mackenzie
2* The Barchester chronicles
2* He Knew He Was Right
2* Castle Richmond
TR The Way We Live Now
TR Lady Anna
TR The Prime Minister
TR Cousin Henry
TR Travelling Sketches
TR Three Clerks

Palliser series
4* Can You Forgive Her? (Palliser, #1)
3* Phineas Finn (Palliser, #2)
3* The Eustace Diamonds (Palliser, #3)
TR Phineas Redux
TR The Prime Minister
TR The Duke's Children (Palliser, #6)

Chronicles of Barsetshire series
2* The Warden
TR Barchester Towers
TR Dr. Thorne
2* Framley Parsonage
2* The Small House at Allington
4* The Last Chronicle of Barset

About Trollope:
TR Anthony Trollope by Hugh Walpole

Rowland Pasaribu says

Sir Thomas Fitzgerald, a wealthy landowner living at Castle Richmond, County Cork, married Mary Wainwright, whose former husband was believed to have died in Paris. There were three children, Herbert, Emmeline and Mary. Nearby lived the Countess of Desmond, with her daughter Clara and her young son Patrick. Owen Fitzgerald, a relative of Sir Thomas, and his heir after Herbert, lived at Hap House not far away. Owen was in love with Lady Clara and considered himself engaged to her, but the Countess would not acknowledge the engagement, giving as her reason the unconventional life Owen was supposed to live in his bachelor quarters. Her real reason was that she herself was in love with him.

For some time before the story opens, Matthew Mollett, representing himself to be Lady Fitzgerald's first husband, had been blackmailing Sir Thomas, threatening an exposure that would make their children illegitimate and give the estate to Owen. Mr. Prendergast, the family lawyer, urged a frank acceptance of the situation. Sir Thomas died, broken-hearted, and the family were preparing to leave the castle when the lawyer discovered that Mollett had been married before he met Mary Wainwright and that consequently her

marriage to Sir Thomas was a legal one. Herbert succeeded to the estate and married Lady Clara Desmond.

Throughout the book there are moving descriptions of the famine of 1846-47.

It's about love affair and the taint of illegitimacy that explored by trollope in here, good book anyway.

Becky says

First sentence: I wonder whether the novel-reading world — that part of it, at least, which may honour my pages — will be offended if I lay the plot of this story in Ireland! That there is a strong feeling against things Irish it is impossible to deny. Irish servants need not apply; Irish acquaintances are treated with limited confidence; Irish cousins are regarded as being decidedly dangerous; and Irish stories are not popular with the booksellers.

Premise/plot: Castle Richmond is set in Ireland at the start of the Irish Potato Famine (1845-1849). Is it solely about the potato famine? No. Not really. Would it be better if it were? Maybe. Maybe not. You see what the plot turns around mainly are two men in love with the same young woman: Herbert Fitzgerald and Owen Fitzgerald are cousins in love with the same woman, Lady Clara Desmond. If that were all, it wouldn't be all that surprising and unusual. But that's not all.

Lady Clara's mother--also named Clara, a countess and a widow--is madly in love with Owen Fitzgerald. It is for herself that she invites this man into her home, into their lives. She doesn't suspect that Owen will be more likely to fall in love with the young daughter instead of herself. Patrick, Clara's brother, is best, best friends with Owen. So Owen is at their place a lot of time. Until...one day he declares his love for Lady Clara. Lady Clara says YES, I'll marry you. Her mother and brother say NO, NEVER. GET OUT AND STAY OUT. Why the rejection? Owen Fitzgerald is a poor man. He has no estate, no wealth, no title. And Lady Clara deserves an estate, wealth, and title.

Herbert Fitzgerald will have an estate, wealth, and title--when his father, Sir Thomas, dies. When the story opens, that is looking like it will happen soon. Sir Thomas is STRESSED. It seems that his wife's first husband is very much alive and that Herbert--and his other children--are illegitimate. Herbert will not inherit after all. And the next in line....is, of course, Owen.

You would think, Owen will win the approval of the family now! Owen and Lady Clara will live happily ever after. All will be well. But I forgot to mention one little thing. While the potato crop is failing, and Owen is sad and depressed--Herbert Fitzgerald starts wooing Lady Clara. Though she swore to be true to her love forever and ever, her mother has said that the marriage is impossible. And Lady Clara finds herself more and more okay with that. When Herbert proposes, she says YES. This happens days--maybe a couple of weeks--before the big reveal. And it isn't long after the big reveal that Sir Thomas dies.

Lady Clara has said I love you to two different men. She's accepted two proposals. Now that the poor man will be the rich man, and the rich man will be the poor man....who will she stand by? who do we want her to stand by?

Owen doesn't want the estate. Owen wants Lady Clara. Herbert does want the estate. He wants Lady Clara too. So when Owen offers to sign the estate back over to Herbert in exchange for Herbert breaking the engagement, Herbert says NO. Owen pouts. But that doesn't really change anything. Owen still doesn't want

the estate. Owen still loves and wants Lady Clara.

Meanwhile, Clara (the mother, the countess) is breaking her heart over Owen. If she can't have him for herself, maybe Lady Clara can still have him. At least he'd be part of her life. Maybe that would be enough. Patrick returns (oh so briefly) but Lady Clara says she won't break her engagement with Herbert (no matter how poor) to marry Owen (no matter how rich). Patrick and Lady Clara are a bit confused. Could Lady Clara really have fallen out of love so quickly with Owen and into love so quickly with Herbert?!

Herbert runs away to London, and begins to study law. But this study is cut very short because of two letters the family lawyer receives. One is from Owen saying he has no plans whatsoever to accept the estate. The other is from the book's villain. The son of Lady Fitzgerald's first husband. He has news that will change everything....or so he claims.

Throughout the book, readers get a few sketches here and there of how the failure of the potato crop has disastrous effects on the poor. It is very here and there coverage. And it's mainly on how the gentry and clergy come together to offer "relief" to the poor. One minor plot revolves around whether Catholics and Protestants can come together to help the poor.

My thoughts: This book reminded me of Spin Doctors' Two Princes. "I ain't got no future or a family tree. But I know what a prince and lover ought to be. I know what a prince and lover ought to be." I had a hard time connecting with Lady Clara. I feel there was a definite lack of development. I know that both men loved and adored her. But we're not shown why exactly. Other than the obvious: she's young; she's presumably beautiful.

It wasn't clear--at least to me--which direction Trollope would take with Owen and Herbert. Would this be a story of young lovers overcoming the objections of their families to be together and live happily ever after? Would Lady Clara prove loyal to her first love and not be persuaded by her family, or by the lure of money?

Trollope never clearly shows us the moment when Herbert and Lady Clara fall in actual love with one another. It's more a matter of Lady Clara accepting an invitation to visit his estate and get all chummy with his mother, his aunt, his two sisters. The visit lasts a few days, and after that visit he proposes and she says yes. They'd never really had a relationship before that visit.

Personally, I could see why Owen would be like WHAT'S GOING ON?!?! IS SHE SERIOUS?!

Lady Clara doesn't appear to be a gold digger; she does appear--to me--to be FICKLE. Perhaps readers are supposed to be oh-so-impressed by the fact that when Herbert loses his inheritance, she sticks like glue to her man and refuses to end the relationship. I wasn't. I wasn't sure why she was in relationship with him--so quickly--to begin with.

Both Owen and Herbert are good men. Neither is a villain necessarily. Lady Clara wouldn't be throwing away her life by marrying Owen. She wouldn't be throwing away her life by marrying Herbert. She has in many ways equal chances of happiness with either man. My question: DOES SHE LOVE EITHER MAN? I'm not sure Lady Clara is old enough, wise enough to know her own mind and her own heart. I think she was "caught up" in a moment--twice. I'm not sure she knew either man well enough to say yes.

Lady Clara's mother--pathetic as she may come across--is more developed. One of the sad, awkward moments of the novel comes when Clara pours out her heart and soul to Owen confessing that he is the love of her life. There will be no happy ending for Clara....or for Owen.

Terry says

This is not one of his higher-rated novels; having said that, I thoroughly enjoyed Castle Richmond!!! I savored a slow, self-indulgent reading! So very satisfying!

Monty Milne says

It starts off rather conventionally: young aristocrats, stately homes, conventional love story with conventional difficulties in the way....pleasant enough if you like that kind of thing, and though it's been done many times before, Trollope does it as well as most. But after the first couple of chapters you start to realise this novel is far more than that. The narrative is driven by a Mysterious Secret, and whether that secret is hidden or partially exposed, it causes chaos and upheaval.

Two thirds of the way through, I paused in my reading, stared into the fire, took a sip of port, and thought to myself - there is an obvious way the problems caused by the revelation of this Secret can be resolved. Like an astronomer predicting the existence of an undiscovered planet by the oscillations in the orbits of other planets, I felt pretty certain that Trollope would at some point reveal a hitherto unknown character who would be the Key to putting all things right. And so it came to pass, but it did not lessen my enjoyment because I had seen it coming first.

This may not be quite in the same league as the Barchester Chronicles, but it is good fun nonetheless, and a fluent and absorbing read. There are some very interesting things in it about the Irish Potato Famine, sectarian tension between Protestant and Catholic, and between English and Irish. Trollope - a conservative English Protestant - is frank about the failings which exacerbated the Famine, and lambasts Protestant bigotry. It is a painful chapter in Anglo-Irish history, and one which still casts a shadow. But Trollope reminds us that what binds us is more significant than that which divides. When Protestant pastor and Catholic priest meet on the Famine Relief Committee and extend a wary hand to one another, Trollope shows us that different political and theological understandings need not - should not - stand in the way of mutual respect - and even affection - in working for the common good.

Elizabeth (Alaska) says

I read my Trollope from the volume Complete Works of Anthony Trollope. This one had a short introduction, which told me not to expect much in the way of characterization or story.

The best, indeed the only piece of real characterization in the book is the delineation of Abe Mollett. This unscrupulous blackmailer is put before us with real art, with something of the loving preoccupation of the hunter for his quarry. Trollope loved a rogue, and in his long portrait gallery there are several really charming ones.

Trollope used this same analogy of the hunter after his quarry late in the novel. There was no fox hunt in the novel and I feel as if he must have missed one. He managed to make me quite appreciative of the way a fox can elude the hunter, how the fox is crafty and devious. The analogy goes for almost an entire chapter and was as much fun as almost any other part.

This was my first read of what is called Trollope's "Irish Novels" and takes place during the Potato Famine.

Trollope worked in Ireland for many years in his capacity as postal inspector, came to know Ireland and the Irish quite well, and was present during the famine. I doubt I could have taken an entire novel of the telling of people starving and dying, but I almost wished that the plight of the peasantry had been a more integral part of the novel. It was more of side action, though very real.

Trollope cannot write without a romance, and in this the romance was central to his story. However, the back story that prompted the blackmail is one he had not told before. In this way, though the novel isn't a "must read" it added another piece to the completeness of British/Irish life that is Trollope. As much as I enjoy him, I just can't bring myself to give this even 4 stars.

Alice Yoder says

A contemporary of Charles Dickens, this book by Anthony Trollope is a much more enjoyable read than any Dickens I've read. I highly recommend it.

Two cousins -- Owen and Herbert -- in love with Clara. Poor Clara in a horrible situation, brought on by her own mother, the Countess of Desmond. Throw in the Irish potato famine and bigamy (no, it doesn't include those mentioned above) and let the fun ensue!

Rebecca Lewitt says

Excellent

Quite possibly my favorite of the many Trollope novels I have read. I was enthralled from the beginning and unable at any time to predict the outcome. Excellently drawn characters as usual, but also an interesting and riveting plot. Trollope waxes a little too long in his descriptions of the Irish potato famine, but at least it makes an interesting backdrop for his novel. I thoroughly enjoyed this one, beginning to end.

Tricia says

Trollope is a genius. I figured it HAD to turn out the way it did, but he kept me guessing as to the method he'd use to bring about the resolution.

Lucia says

Quo Musa tendis? (Ch XXXI)

On the background of the Irish potato famine our hero, Herbert Fitzgerald, has to face the loss of his name, fortune, love. I agree on what has so often been said about this novel: *the characterization is weak and the plot is mechanical*. Yet Trollope thought well of this novel as to claim its intrinsic merit. In CR "characterization does not reign over plot", because characterization, plot and subplots are functional to display people's (un)ability to adapt themselves to the struggles of life. CR was published soon after *On The Origins of Species* and shows an understanding of Darwin's ideas. Herbert embodies the adapted mind and therefore gets his happy ending. But to me the spotlight is on the narrator, driving the narrative, commenting

on the events and interacting with the reader. Also his impartial voice is consonant with Darwinian theories. Here lies the merit of CR: the technique and story are a lens on how the turmoil of revolutionary ideas can inspire writers of their times.

Tony says

CASTLE RICHMOND. (1860). Anthony Trollope. **.

I am a big fan of Trollope's novels. Unfortunately, this one didn't make the cut. After several stabs at coming up with a synopsis, I gave up. What I can offer instead is a plot summary from the Anthony Trollope website: "Sir Thomas Fitzgerald, a wealthy landowner living at Castle Richmond, County Cork, married Mary Wainwright, whose former husband was believed to have died in Paris. There were three children, Herbert, Emmeline, and Mary. Nearby lived the Countess of Desmond, with her daughter Clara and her young son Patrick. Owen Fitzgerald, a relative of Sir Thomas, and his heir after Herbert, lived at Hap House not far away. Owen was in love with Lady Clara and considered himself engaged to her, but the countess would not acknowledge the engagement, giving as her reason the unconventional life Owen was supposed to live in his bachelor quarters. Her real reason was that she herself was in love with him. For some time before the story opens, Matthew Mallett, representing himself to be Lady Fitzgerald's first husband, had been blackmailing Sir Thomas, threatening an exposure that would make their children illegitimate and give the estate to Owen. Mr. Prendergast, the family lawyer, urged a frank acceptance of the situation. Sir Thomas died, broken-hearted, and the family were preparing to leave the castle when the lawyer discovered that Mollett had been married before he met Mary Wainwright and that consequently her marriage to Sir Thomas was a legal one. Herbert succeeded to the estate and married Lady Clara Desmond. Throughout the book there are moving descriptions of the famine of 1846-1847." Now this should be perfectly clear. Trying to keep all of the players straight was a real problem with this novel. Add to that the fact that none of them comes alive off the page and you have what, for Trollope, was a real turkey. This was one of Trollope's "Irish" novels, based on his experiences while serving in Ireland for the Inland Post. Although set during the Great Famine, the actual effects of it on the Irish people were never really explored. Even Trollope in his Autobiography admitted that this was not one of his strongest works. I'd have to agree.

K. says

Another delightful Trollope. I really loved the trek into Ireland and what he did with portraying the great potato famine. In my Trollope reading so far I haven't seen him yet get into so much detail about the sordid reality of things--there was some pretty gruesome description of the sufferings of the starving Irish peasants. Not so much to give one nightmares, but definitely enough for a true look and some decent empathetic feelings. I would have to do some research to see how this was received in England at the time of publication. Ireland & her people held a special place in Trollope's heart, but he was, from my observation from my reading, not a majority. The Irish were not held in high esteem. It was quite an interesting little look into the circumstances of a true famine in a more modern country. What people thought about it, did about it, how the government handled it, etc.

Four stars because I just didn't love many of the characters. They had lovable qualities, but he just didn't flesh them out as he has in other books. I felt the end fell a little flat. The premise of the story, also, is so very bizarre to one living today, which I will leave off about for fear of spoiling it for someone. Still, because I think Trollope is a master even when not completely at his best, I give it four.

An interesting quote or two:

305) An angry man will often cling to his anger because his anger has been spoken; he will do evil because he has threatened evil, and is ashamed to be better than his words.

353) It was a spacious, lofty apartment, well fitted up for a library, and furnished for that purpose with exceeding care;--such a room as one does not find in the flashy new houses in the west, where the dining-room and drawing-room occupy all of the house that is visible. But then, how few of those who live in the flashy new houses in the west require to have libraries in London!

Bruce says

Published in 1860, Anthony Trollope's novel *Castle Richmond* is set in Ireland in the year 1846, when the disastrous potato famine is at its worst. Castle Richmond, in Cork, is the ancestral home of the Fitzgerald family, including Lord and Lady Thomas Fitzgerald, their son Herbert, and their two daughters. Nearby at Desmond Court live the noble but impecunious and haughty Lady Desmond and her two children, Patrick and Clara. Nearby at Hap House lives Owen Fitzgerald, a cousin of Herbert and the person in line behind Herbert to inherit Castle Richmond and Lord Fitzgerald's title. A year or so before the stories' main events, Owen has pledged his love to the very young and naïve Clara and elicited her promise eventually to marry him, a proposition that Lady Desmond has prohibited because of Owen's poverty and wild life style.

As the main action begins, Lord Fitzgerald is suffering from a precipitous decline in health following visits by two shady and unsavory characters who seem to be blackmailing him. The primary plot revolves around eventual legitimate ownership of the title and property and around who will marry Clara, Owen or Herbert.

As is Trollope's wont, he frequently interjects editorial comments and philosophical musings into the text, but he does so skillfully, forming a partnership with the reader as the tale is told. Furthermore, he weaves descriptions of and history about the famine throughout the narrative, balancing these with his own observations and opinions about measures taken to alleviate the sufferings of the people. Trollope himself, in his occupation as postal inspector, spend a number of years in Ireland, some during this very period, and his sympathies for the people and his insights into their plight is obvious and informative.

Trollope's forty-seven novels are often viewed as falling into three groups, his ecclesiastical novels, his political novels, and his "others," the latter group ranging in type along a wide spectrum. This novel probably falls into this last group, although it is apparently the third of five specifically dealing with issues in Ireland. Trollope's writing is always delightful, and this book in particular deserves an appreciative reading.

Pgchuis says

Lady Clara Desmond (aged 16) falls for Owen Fitzgerald, a man to whom her widowed mother is also attracted. The match is forbidden as Owen is felt not to be sufficiently wealthy/grand for her. Owen takes this badly and leads a "wild" bachelor life. Clara gets to know his cousin Herbert and becomes engaged to him, but then Herbert loses everything and Clara's mother thinks again of Owen for her.

In places this is pretty depressing (blackmail, the Irish potato famine and so on), but thankfully the blackmail

plot is thwarted before too long. I would be interested to know what is thought more generally about Trollope's various comments on the famine; its causes and the efforts made to keep the people alive. Clara's mother was an excellent baddie, as were the Molletts. I kept looking out for matches for Emmeline and Mary, but these never came. At one point I feared that Clara would keep switching between the two men who loved her, but I thought Trollope's description of the decision she made was convincing. Owen was a rather melodramatic character, in whom I did not really believe.

The final plot twists were also rather melodramatic, but satisfying.

Jim says

It would seem to be an unpromising subject for a novel to discuss the loves of English nobility in Ireland during the potato famine of the 1840s. Yet, despite a little unevenness at times, Anthony Trollope carries it off rather well. While he does not dwell at great detail on the famine, he shows us enough to realize that he was not wearing rose-colored glasses.

The main subject is Lady Clara Desmond who is loved by two cousins named Fitzgerald. One is the wealthy heir of Castle Richmond, the future Sir Herbert; the other is the modestly well off Owen Fitzgerald of Hap House. At first Clara, opts for Owen; but then, initially at her mother's urging, she switches her allegiance to Herbert. From this decision her needle does not budge an inch, even when it appears that Herbert will lose his name and fortune because his mother had previously married a man who had deserted her and, after it appeared the ex-husband was dead, he shows up as a blackmailer.

The bigamy plot and the changing fortune of the Richmond Fitzgeralds is the main subject of **Castle Richmond**, but the famine keeps occupying the attentions of the major and minor characters. One particularly horrible scene is when Herbert walks into a seemingly deserted cottage and finds in it a mother and child at the point of starvation, and the body of an infant covered over with straw in a corner of the room.

Trollope's Irish novels have not received their due from the critics. So far I have read all of them but the unfinished **The Landleaguers** and find this to be the best, followed by **The Kellys and the O'Kellys**.

Academama says

This isn't my favorite Trollope, but it's still better than almost anybody else.

The backdrop is quite grim--the Irish potato famine--and it's one of those stories where you know what the main character needs to do and spend the whole book just wondering why she doesn't do it. But it's a good read nonetheless, and has a strong, independent heroine.
