

of Arthur Pendennis' mode of proceeding was unquestionably drawn from his own :

Smirke and his pupil read the ancient poets together, and rattled through them at a pleasant rate, very different from that steady grubbing pace with which the Cistercians used to go over the classic ground, scenting out each word as they went, and digging up every root in the way. Pen never liked to halt, but made his tutor construe when he was at fault, and thus galloped through the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey," the tragic playwrights, and the charming, wicked Aristophanes, whom he vowed to be the greatest poet of all. But he went so fast that, though he certainly galloped through a considerable extent of the ancient country, he clean forgot it in after-life, and had only such a vague remembrance of his early classic course as a man has in the House of Commons, let us say, who still keeps up two or three quotations, or a reviewer who, just for decency's sake, hints at a little Greek.¹

Dr. Russell's pupil was required to plough up the stubborn soil, and the Devonshire tutor allowed him to skim lightly over the surface. A circumstance mentioned by the Vicar of Ottery St. Mary contributed to Thackeray's estimation of Aristophanes. Dr. Cornish lent him Cary's translation of "The Birds," and says it was read by him with intense delight, and returned with three humorous illustrative drawings.² It was the translation he read with delight, and, without the aid of the poetical translator, the poetry and the charm of the wicked Aristophanes would have been but darkly visible to him through the veil of the original Greek. He has been blamed for parading these relics of his juvenile schooling. He was high above such paltry affectations, and what honour could he get by citing a word or two of Latin and Greek, which thousands could do as well as he? He introduced the classic allusions because they offered themselves, and were, in the extent to which he used them, his natural language. He neither sought nor rejected them. That he had "clean forgot" all the rest reminds us once more that the bigger portion of his education was drawn from authors nearer home. His friend Procter made the same confession :

¹ "Pendennis," chap. iii.

² "Thackeray, the Humourist and the Man of Letters." By T. T. Taylor,