Victorian Literature and Culture (2014), **42**, 387–406.

doi:10.1017/S1060150314000059

THE SQUAB AND THE IDLER: A COSMOPOLITAN – COLONIAL DIALOGUE IN THE *CALCUTTA STAR* BETWEEN WILLIAM THACKERAY AND JAMES HUME

By Gary Simons

THE FIRST ENGLISH LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER in India began publication in 1780; by 1857, almost two hundred papers and periodicals had appeared – and many had quickly disappeared. An 1839 article in the *Calcutta Literary Gazette* partially attributed this high mortality rate to a lack of talented writers and to a desire among colonists for news from England:

> There is not here as there is in London, a class of professional literati, always ready to prepare a certain supply of matter. . . . [T]he London paying system has been introduced, but the writer whose contributions are worth paying for, are a very small body. . . . To all the drawbacks already mentioned we must mention another of no trifling influence; we allude to the disposition in our countrymen to look homewards for their literature. (Chanda xviii-xxi)

Indeed, English newspapers of the time featured the contributions of literati such as Charles Dickens, Benjamin Disraeli, George Eliot, Leigh Hunt, Douglas Jerrold, Henry Mayhew, and William Makepeace Thackeray, but of these figures only Thackeray wrote purposely for an Indian periodical.

Thackeray was in many ways intimately connected with India: he was born and spent his early childhood in Calcutta, his early (and soon lost) fortune was based on his father's Indian revenues, and he had a mixed-race half-sister and other close relatives who spent considerable time in India. Despite these connections, Thackeray wrote surprisingly little *about* India, although he often wrote about Anglo-Indians.[1] However, in the mid-1840s he wrote a homeward-looking newspaper column specifically intended for consumption by Anglo-Indian colonists. Gordon Ray's half-century-old (but still authoritative) two-volume biography of William Thackeray contains just the following brief comment on Thackeray's writings for the *Calcutta Star*:

> Between March, 1843 and August, 1844, he [Thackeray] wrote a long letter each month for the *Calcutta Star*, a newspaper established by his old associate James Hume who had gone out to India in 1842. Though Hume was able to pay him only about three pounds a letter, friendship kept Thackeray

> faithful to his task, and he seems to have resumed his contributions for a time after he returned from the East in 1845. (Ray, *Thackeray* 330)

Ray based his comment on a reading of Thackeray's letters; unfortunately, he apparently was not able to examine any of these *Calcutta Star* articles. In 1963, however, Henry Summerfield examined an incomplete newspaper file at the National Library of Calcutta and was able unequivocally to identify six letters, each headed "Letters from a Club Arm-Chair" and signed "SQUAB," as written by Thackeray. One of these letters contains the salutation "My Dear Idler"; Summerfield glossed that Idler "was a prominent local contributor to the *Calcutta Star* and kindred papers." Arguing that these articles merited examination as "Thackeray's only known attempt at sustained political comment" and that "the excellence of the writing . . . can speak for itself" (205), Summerfield reprinted them in an article in *Nineteenth Century Fiction*. In addition to political commentary, these letters also include interspersed musings on the commonplaces of ordinary English life, such as London emptying in August as people take their vacations, the glory of the writer's view of the Thames, the rapid expansion of London, Prince Albert's fear of traveling fifty miles per hour on a train, and similar Thackerayish "takes" on life presumably intended to bring the home country experience into the lives of the colonists. Nevertheless, with the exception of Richard Pearson, recent Thackeray biographers and scholars have contented themselves with echoing Ray's statement.[2] To date these columns have not been republished in any collected edition of Thackeray's works.

In the following I establish that "Idler" was, in fact, a pseudonym for the editor of the *Calcutta Star*, James Hume. More significantly, the *Calcutta Star* "London" Squab letters were answered in the *Overland Calcutta Star* by a corresponding set of "colonial" Idler letters.[3] And although most of Thackeray's letters are apparently lost, Hume's republished letters are accessible for scholarly examination.[4] Further, although James Hume himself has become almost lost to history, his is an intriguing colonial voice and counterbalance to the cosmopolitan Thackeray. Hume was enterprising and influential, a scion of a prominent Radical political family and a cousin of one of the founders of the Indian Congress party. Not only was Hume a pioneer in the development of the Indian colonial periodical press, he also played a central role in colonial Indian politics, commerce, sports, and justice. Accordingly, the Squab-Idler letters not only provide new insights into the writings of a canonical English author and the personalities and viewpoints of both Thackeray and Hume; they also constitute a culturally revealing dialogue on the issues of the day. This paper explores the background of James Hume and the *Calcutta Star*; clarifies the circumstances of Thackeray's letters to that newspaper; reports the personal touches embedded in this correspondence; and addresses Thackeray's views of English politics and cultural events as sent to a colonial audience and Hume's response regarding the attitudes, concerns, and activities of a prominent Anglo-Indian colonist.[5]

James Hume and the Calcutta Star

JAMES HUME WAS BORN January 23, 1808, the third of six children of a James Hume and a Marianne Grant ("England, Births and Christenings"; Vine; Salmon). The Humes were a prominent Anglo-Indian family (Anglo-Indian in the sense of living in India for lengthy periods rather than being of mixed Indian and British ancestry) that originated in Montrose, Scotland. Joseph Hume, the Radical MP and uncle of the James Hume born in 1808, had

spent a decade in India before returning to England and entering politics. James Hume's cousin, Allan Octavian Hume, went on to become a well-known ornithologist as well as a leading Anglo-Indian politician and co-founder of the Indian Congress party. Most of James's siblings spent part or all of their adult lives in India. James was educated in England, studied law at the Inner Temple (*Calcutta Monthly Journal* 308) and was called to the bar on January 27, 1832 (Foster 231).

William Thackeray was undergoing his own legal training at the Middle Temple in 1831 and 1832 and possibly then met James Hume. In any event, they certainly knew each other when Thackeray was owner and editor of a London-based weekly periodical, the *National Standard and Journal of Literature, Science, Music, Theatricals, and the Fine Arts*, from May of 1833 to February of 1834. A surviving Thackeray letter from December of 1833 identifies Hume as Thackeray's assistant (Ray, *Letters* 1: 270). There are no surviving Thackeray-Hume letters from that period, but, as we shall see, the nature of their personal relationship can be inferred from subsequent correspondence. Their common Anglo-Indian family heritage, shared Radical political views and legal training, and mutual literary and journalistic interests may have drawn them together.[6]

Hume arrived in Calcutta on April 29, 1839 and lost no time getting involved in the judicial, political, and journalistic aspects of colonial life. On June 15 he was admitted to practice as an advocate in the colonial Supreme Court, and in a public meeting on October 5 eulogized the public character of the independent-minded Whig politician, Lord Brougham, and attacked the Bengal regional government (*Calcutta Monthly Journal* 68–69, 308; *Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register* September 1839, 50; "South Asian Library and Research Notes" 134–35). On December 5, 1839, Hume announced that he was starting a new weekly newspaper, the *Eastern Star*, with the first number to be published on January 5, 1840. In June of 1841 Hume took over the *Daily Calcutta Intelligencer and Commercial Advertiser* and repositioned it as the *Calcutta Star*, a daily newspaper which commenced publication on July 1 (Chanda 206, 220).

A listing of the holdings of the National Library of India at Calcutta notes that the *Calcutta Star* contained:

> Advertisements, Notices, Domestic occurrences, Commercial Intelligence, Shipping Intelligence, Bank shares, Price of Bullion, Rates of interest and discount, Literary articles, Sporting intelligence, Original correspondence, Editorial paragraphs, Orders of the Governor General in Council, European intelligence with special reference to England, House of Commons reports, Parliamentary miscellanea, Precis of miscellaneous events, Europe – births, marriages and deaths. ("South Asian Library and Research Notes" 134–35)

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Library holds microfilm of *Calcutta Star* numbers from July 14, 1843 to August 21, 1843; these issues are fully consistent with the above listing and with the newspaper's intended role as a general mainstream newspaper targeted to the English community in Calcutta. During that time period, at least, the paper was published in eight-page editions, with each page containing four columns. There are no firm data on the circulation of the paper, but Hume himself wrote in May of 1844:

> When the *Calcutta Star* was started, it addressed itself to no particular section of the community here, nor body of the Europeans in India. . . . [I]t entered the field, careless of whom it displeased by

> the publication of opinions honestly believed to be true, and material to the public good – and what has been the result? There are papers with a larger circulation, but there never was one which met with greater success. It has a very much larger circulation in little more than 2 ½ years than as I am informed the *Englishman* had in more than double the time [according to another Hume *Calcutta Star* letter, in 1842 the *Englishman's* circulation was about 1200 a month (Hume, *Letters*, June 1842, 4)], and I have very little hesitation in saying, that here, where it is best known, it has a larger bonâ fide circulation than any Paper in Calcutta has, or ever has had. (Hume, *Letters*, May 1844, 272)

Hume's name next surfaces in Thackeray's surviving letters in August of 1842 when Thackeray wrote his mother that "Hume wrote me a kind letter" and reported that "he is flourishing at Calcutta, where he may set up his papers." Apparently Thackeray had lent Hume money, because Hume promised "to pay 100 this year"; bills sent by Thackeray to Lubbocks on Hume's behalf were, however, not honored (Ray, *Letters* 2: 73).[7]

Hume, indeed, flourished in Calcutta. A correspondent offers as a capsule description of Hume that

> He was the Police Magistrate of Calcutta and Justice of the Peace. He was Secretary to the races. He was proprietor and editor of the *India Sporting Review*, and Secretary to, and General correspondent of the Agricultural and Horticultural Association. He was the acknowledged proprietor and editor of the *Calcutta Star*. He was a Director of the Inland Steam Navigation Company. (Sanyal 154)

Indeed, other evidence adds credence to this miniature biography. The *History of the Royal Calcutta Turf Club* notes that Hume resigned as secretary of the club in 1849 (Frith 24–25, 36). The June 1846 issue of *Simmonds Colonial Intelligence and Foreign Miscellany* states that in April "Mr. James Hume, the editor of the *Calcutta Star*, has been appointed to the vacant magistracy" ("Colonial Intelligence" 382). The *Madras Journal of Literature and Science* reprints January 1849 and May 1850 letters which James Hume signed as Secretary of the Agricultural and Horticultural Society of India ("Proceedings of the Madras Literary Society" 253, 453). Reginald Burton asserts that Hume edited the *India Sporting Review* starting in 1845 (249); as Sidney Laman Blanchard reports, the long-standing relationship between Hume and this periodical was "killed by the mutinies of 1857 – nearly all its contributors being besieged somewhere or engaged in besieging somebody, and its editor, Mr. James Hume, the senior magistrate, not able to find sufficient aid at hand to support it" (272–73). Hume outlived the great mutiny by only five years, as he died at Galle (outside of Calcutta) on September 21, 1862 (Murdoch 248; "London, November 8, 1862" 3).

Hume had dramatic and literary aspirations. A contemporary journalist revealingly reports that "Hume had an idea that he was a tragedian. His declamatory powers were fine, and he had a tendency to tear a passion to tatters, which found room for gratification in *Othello* and *Macbeth*; but his figure was thick and stumpy, and his face devoid of suitable expression" (Stocquelor 116). Exercising his literary bent, in 1854 Hume published a biographical memoir of the Anglo-Indian author and colonial administrator Henry W. Torrens (Hume, *A Selection*). And, most significantly for this analysis, W. F. B. Laurie made clear that it was Hume himself who "wrote the famous letters . . . by an Idler" (326).

Indeed, starting in June of 1842, a series of long letters addressed to various European friends was published each month in the overland edition of the *Calcutta Star* as "Letters from an Idler." These letters contained opinionated commentary on both local news and

events in England. Three volumes of these collected letters were subsequently published, the first covering June 1842 – May 1843; the second, June 1843 – May 1844; and the third, June 1844 – May 1845. It is not clear when these monthly letters terminated; they could not have gone on for much longer as *Allen's Indian Mail* reports that Hume resigned as editor of the *Calcutta Star* on April 29, 1846 (72). In any event, there is no indication that a fourth volume of letters was ever published.

These volumes collectively include 36 letters; 10 of these, starting in June 1843 and ending in May 1845, are addressed to "SQUAB" and are, thus, letters to Thackeray.[8]

The Particulars and Circumstances of Thackeray's Letters to the Calcutta Star

BOTH THE SQUAB LETTERS RECOVERED by Summerfield and the collected Idler letters to Squab shed light on the particulars and circumstances of Thackeray's writings for the *Calcutta Star*.[9] Five of these six recovered letters contain internal header dates indicating that approximately forty five days elapsed between the writing and the publication of each Thackeray letter. This delay is associated with the slow Indian mail service of the 1840s; mail from England was transported with intermediate stops at Marseille and Malta to Alexandria, sent overland across the Isthmus of Suez, and then shipped to points in India, including Calcutta. As one might imagine, the arrival in Calcutta of mail from England was something of an event, and detailed records are available about specific mail departure and arrival dates in 1843 and 1844 (*Asiatic Journal and Monthly Miscellany 1844* 107, 663; *1845* 111, 165). In January of 1845 the normal single monthly mail service to India (usually leaving London around the 6th of each month and arriving in Calcutta around the 20th of the following month) was replaced by a bi-monthly service, under which letters from London could be sent on the 7th or the 24th of each month (Ritchie 478–79). Indeed, the letters recovered by Summerfield show that Thackeray took advantage of the bi-monthly mail to write two letters each month. In fact, in September of 1844 Thackeray reminded Hume in a *Calcutta Star* letter that "when the fortnight mails are established" the remittances to him should be doubled (Summerfield 211).

Although Summerfield did not state specifically the ways in which the *Calcutta Star* file he examined was incomplete, a separate list of the holdings of that periodical in the National Library of India at Calcutta is available and provides that information: "1843: July-Dec.; 1844: July-Dec.; 1845: Jan.-June, Aug.-Dec.; 1846: Jan.-Dec.; 1847: Jan.-June; 1848–1849: Jan.-Dec.; 1850: Jan.-June." ("South Asian Library and Research Notes" 134–35).[10] Since Summerfield did not find any Squab columns after August of 1845, even though copies of the *Calcutta Star* were available for the rest of 1845 and all of 1846, presumably the letter published on 21 August of 1845 was Thackeray's last in that paper. Likewise, the failure to find any Thackeray articles in the second half of 1843 strongly suggests that Thackeray's writings, which began in early 1843, were interrupted – an interruption that will be subsequently confirmed and explained. On the other hand, Thackeray's letters may well have been published in July of 1845, bridging the gap between his June and August articles, since that month's issues of the *Calcutta Star* were not available for Summerfield to examine.

Idler's first letter to Squab is dated June 8, 1843. Hume's introductory paragraph of this letter states: "There have now appeared three of your letters in the *Calcutta Star*. I recognized your style before I saw your signature, and should have written you last month to correspond directly with your humble servant, had I not desired to close out the first dozen

of my letters to the esteemed friend with whom they began" (Hume, *Letters*, Jun 8, 1843, 1). In 1843 mail service from London to India was usually once a month; the three mail deliveries to Calcutta prior to June 8 arrived, respectively, on March 23, April 23, and May 23. Presumably, Thackeray's letters were published within a few days of their receipt. Working backward, and looking at mail shipping records, these letters must have been written and sent from London by, respectively, February 6, March 4, and April 6. Summerfield was unable to recover copies of these columns, but Idler's letter provides indirect confirmation that they were written and that they marked the initiation of Thackeray's journalistic involvement with the *Calcutta Star*. In further support of this conclusion, Gordon Ray published an undated Thackeray letter, which he suggested was written in March of 1843, in which Thackeray wrote "I sent off a long letter yesterday to Hume and his Star" (*Letters* 2: 97). However, Ray's assertion that Thackeray submitted monthly letters for the next 12 months is demonstrably incorrect; in fact, apparently only these first three Squab letters were published in 1843. The July and August 1843 numbers of the *Calcutta Star* maintained at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign Library do not contain any letters from Squab. Further, in his July 1843 Idler letter Hume acknowledged that Squab had not written "by the May Mail" (Hume, *Letters*, July 1843, 23), a mail which left London on May 6 and arrived in Calcutta on June 14 (*Asiatic Journal and Monthly Miscellany* 107, 663). Hume's letter contains a tongue-in-cheek admonishment of Thackeray:

> You have no right to excite expectations if you are not prepared to gratify them. If you wrote to order, I should find some apology for you . . . but this idea cannot be entertained of a gentleman of ample fortune; albeit, with a wife and nine children, a town and country home, two carriages and a seat in Parliament to keep up. (Hume, *Letters*, July 1843, 23–24)

At this point of his life Thackeray, of course, was far closer to a starving artist than to "a gentleman of ample fortune." He wrote *only* "to order," i.e., for specific committed payments, and Hume's farcical commentary suggests that uncertain payment prospects stilled Thackeray's pen. Remember, as of August of 1842, Hume had apparently still not repaid an old debt to Thackeray. Indeed, all the remaining Idler letters for calendar year 1843 were addressed to people other than Thackeray. In further support of this understanding, note that even though the appropriate issues of the *Calcutta Star* were available for his examination, Summerfield was unable to identify any Squab letters dating from July – December 1843.

By late 1843 the relationship between Thackeray and Hume must have been repaired, for Hume's January 20, 1844 Idler letter is once again addressed to Squab. Hume announced that Squab's "last letter, first I hope of another long series, was the most welcome new year's gift it was my fortune to receive" (Hume, *Letters,* January 1844, 142). Indeed, "new year's gift" is a well-selected descriptor, because a special mail leaving London on November 15, 1843, arrived in Calcutta on New Year's Day (*Asiatic Journal and Monthly Miscellany 1844* 107). Accordingly, Thackeray must have written a mid-November letter which was published in very early January. Presumably Thackeray also wrote a letter for the next India mail which left on December 6, 1843 (and would have arrived in Calcutta and been published around January 19, 1844), since Hume's next interactive response to Thackeray is dated February 18, and the January 6 London mail hadn't arrived in Calcutta by February 18. Thackeray's records do show that he continued this series and wrote letters to the *Calcutta Star* on January 3, 1844 and in early February (Ray, *Letters* 2: 142, 166, 840). It is, however, unclear

if Thackeray wrote letters in March, April, or May. Moreover, it is unlikely that he wrote a letter in June because Summerfield did not find a published Squab letter in the National Library of Calcutta July 1844 file of the *Calcutta Star*, and it is certain he did not write a letter in July.[11] A Thackeray diary entry indicates he was anticipating a payment in March from Hume which he did not get; this failure to receive payment may have led Thackeray to cease submitting articles (Ray, *Letters* 166). Idler continued to address his April, May, and June monthly letters to Squab, but, unlike his previous letters to Squab, the tone and content of these letters is impersonal and makes no mention of any prior Squab correspondence. The tone of Idler's July letter to Squab is ambiguous, as some comments might be interpreted as a response to an earlier Squab letter.

On August 5, 1844 Thackeray wrote that he was returning from Belgium to London partially "for the sake of" Hume's letter (Ray, *Letters* 2: 175). Thackeray's diary for August 6, 1844 states that he had "found a letter from Hume with 10 £ only" – this would have covered about three letters. On August 7 Thackeray dispatched a letter to Hume which arrived in Calcutta on September 18, was published on September 21 and overtly acknowledged by Idler in his letter of October 16 (Ray, *Letters* 2: 147–48; Summerfield 207–12; Hume, *Letters*, October 1844, 102). Thackeray was in the Mediterranean from mid-August of 1844 until February of 1845; thus, it is not surprising that neither Idler's letters nor the *Calcutta Star* files suggest that any Squab letters were published during that interval. From late March to early July of 1845 (with corresponding publication dates of May – August), however, Thackeray made semimonthly contributions to the *Calcutta Star*. Why Thackeray ceased his contributions remains a mystery, nor do we know if Idler wrote any letters to Squab after May of 1845. However, Thackeray wrote elsewhere in July of 1845 that he was being offered increasingly larger sums for his writings by London periodicals; hence, it may have been an economic decision that his time was better spent writing elsewhere that ended his contributions to the *Calcutta Star* (Ray, *Letters* 2: 203). A reconstructed bibliography of Thackeray's writings for the *Calcutta Star* is included in an appendix to this paper.

Personalities and Personal Commentaries

THE SURVIVING SQUAB-THACKERAY LETTERS are friendly and collegial in tone, but they rarely address Idler-Hume in a personal manner, and they do not characterize their recipient. They do, however, characterize Thackeray, or at least the Squab persona that Thackeray adopted for this correspondence. For example, Thackeray starts the *Calcutta Star* letter written on August 7, 1844, and published on September 21, 1844, with a paragraph that concisely establishes Squab as socially-involved, sarcastic, witty, artistic, indolence-loving, indulgent, urbane, humorous, and self-mocking:

> The Club Arm-Chair will very soon find but few occupants – honourable members are pairing off in the most touching union. Steamers are carrying away people by shoals to Boulogne and Ostend; dinners are becoming scarce; the opera boxes are filled with the queerest dubious faces and figures – the common sort are rushing by myriads to Gravesend whither six-pence will carry you, and where shrimps, bad music, and the fresh air recreate the Cockney weary of the season. I don't know where my next letter may be dated from – from Munich, probably, for a stay in this metropolis will be impossible: indeed, I failed you in last month's packet, having nothing to write about from a quiet little German Bath whither I had betaken myself. (Summerfield 207)

Squab effectively maintains this persona – which is, arguably, very much Thackeray's own personality – throughout the correspondence. For example, later in this same letter Thackeray notes that "This is written at Greenwich" where "Mr. Derbyshire has received orders to frapper the brown hock ever so little"; a few paragraphs later Thackeray actually appends to a paragraph the italicized parenthetical sentence: "*(Here enter whitebait, water souchy, Etc. and the correspondence suddenly ceases.)*" and the reader envisions Squab interrupting his writing precisely at that point to greedily consume his dinner.

Idler-Hume's letters, on the other hand, while never as expressive, nuanced or self-mocking as Thackeray's, are much more passionate and personal; accordingly they provide insight into Hume's attitude toward and relationship with Thackeray and, indirectly, into Hume's own personality. In his June 8, 1843 letter Hume writes:

> I perceive, Squab, that you are the same wicked wag and professing Radical as ever; but in politics never was your particular delight: I doubt whether you would ever have thought of them unless the follies of party had attracted alike your satirical pencil and pen. I suspect you found more to laugh at in musty Toryism than in Whiggism, and the other two isms [Radicalism and Chartism] of party together, and that this decided you. . . . If I have measured you wrongly in politics, and your heart should be more in the cause than I believe, I am sorry we should both have made a mistake. (Hume, *Letters,* June 1843, 1–2)

These comments suggest that Hume viewed Thackeray as a jokester and as a not entirely sincere Radical, despite his 1836 service as a foreign correspondent for his stepfather's avowedly Radical newspaper, the *Constitutional*. Thackeray emerges from this correspondence as a political skeptic, while Hume defines himself as a true-believer Radical. To Hume, Toryism was inconceivable as a political home. Further, Hume wrote that "Whiggism has become so contemptible, that Radicalism is the only refuge for a reasonable man. Chartism and its five points must stand over for the present, and it will be a long future before the five are carried" (Hume, *Letters*, June 1843, 1–2).

Indeed, it is apparent that Thackeray's missing letters must have poked fun at party disloyalty and political inconsistency. Some of the contents of Thackeray's early letters can be inferred from the additional responsive comments in Hume's June 8, 1843 letter:

> You are very severe upon him [Lord Brougham]. . . . Then again you remind us of the Marquis of Londonderry, who threatens to quit the Tory camp because he didn't get the Blues; hint that even republican Roebuck might perchance be black-balled at the Reform Club, had he again to pass the ordeal . . . and tell us that the faith of Radical Leader is to be questioned. (Hume, *Letters*, June 1843, 5)

Thackeray's letters were not entirely political: in that same June 8, 1843 letter Hume writes that "You speak of a model [of an Aerial carriage] having flown; the papers mention nothing of the sort. Were you trying to get a rise out of us?" Indeed, on March 30, 1843, just in time for Thackeray's *Calcutta Star* letter which must have been written the first week of April, the *Times* published an article, "The Aerial Steam Carriage," describing the ideas of a Mr. Henson for a light-weight steam engine to be incorporated into an airplane. The project was in development; nothing, of course, had actually flown. The tone of the *Times* article

is reserved but optimistic regarding eventual success; one wonders how the "wicked wag" Thackeray presented this story.

In his July 1843 letter Hume testifies to his appreciation of Thackeray's skills as a writer. Complaining that Thackeray had not written by the May mail, Hume wrote:

> I am about to pay you a compliment, and you must listen to the truth which is tacked on to it. You know so much of what is going on, and write so well, that not to hear from you is a double disappointment. We lose many items of interesting intelligence, and the pleasant vein in which they would have been told. Your letters are most acceptable, and your silence most unpardonable. (Hume, *Letters*, July 1843, 23)

In his January 20, 1844 letter Hume welcomed Thackeray's renewed correspondence and indirectly highlighted aspects of its contents through his responses. Hume wrote:

> May you live till your great English Revolution is realized, and write me faithfully the particulars of its progress. I am afraid Clubs, in which you so much luxuriate, will share the fate of so much of aristocracy as you would gladly see swept away. . . . It surprises me that a backbone Radical can regard them without horror. . . . You are a Radical, and you are eloquent in your denunciations of cliques and coteries, and parties – you are all for the people, the industrious, hard-working unwashed, and the intelligent, modest, moral middle class; so am I, but my dear S. just tell me don't you think there is something anti-liberal in your Clubs, don't you exclude a man because he is this, or is not the other. . . . You may quarrel, my dear Squab, with this letter if you will, and growl over it in your Club Arm-Chair, but the Mail, generally, you will find is interesting. (Hume, *Letters,* January 1844, 142–43)

Hume's response suggests that the Thackeray-Squab letter written in mid-November of 1843 and published in early January of 1844 did indeed comment on the desirability of a "great English Revolution" and was "eloquent in [its] denunciations of cliques and coteries, and parties." This would be an interesting and new aspect of Thackeray's public writings, as his published works – including those Squab letters that have been recovered, all but one of which are from 1845 – generally maintain a tone of ironic detachment and skepticism on issues of politics. (In a letter to his mother dated November 24, 1843, Thackeray enthuses about the abolition of the corn tariffs, suggesting that "It will be a great and magnificent peaceful Revolution – the government of the country will fall naturally into the hands of the middle classes as it should do: and the Lords and country gentlemen will – only have their due share" [Ray, *Letters* 2: 129]). Presumably, these private attitudes bled into his Squab letter written approximately ten days earlier.

Further, in his letter Hume identifies and probes a dichotomy in Thackeray's values. Thackeray was a professed Radical; in 1840 he wrote his mother that "when is the day to come when those 2 humbugs ["rascally Whigs & Tories"] are to disappear from among us? Don't be astonished. I'm not a Chartist, only a republican. I would like to see all men equal, this bloated aristocracy blasted to the wings of all the winds" (Ray, *Letters* 1: 458). At the same time, Thackeray valued elitist club life and sought out aristocratic society. (Apparently in later years Hume relaxed his own attitudes toward clubs, as he reportedly was one of the chief promoters of a Cosmopolitan Club in Calcutta which included both European and native members (Choudhury, *Calcutta* 46).

Perhaps Idler's attacks on Thackeray's clubbish sympathies did indeed create a quarrel. Although no copy of Thackeray's response letter(s) has yet come to light, Hume's February 18, 1844 letter begins with an angry retort:

> You tell me I am a Whig at heart. What can I have done to deserve this? If you mean that I am of that party it amounts to gross defamation: if you mean that my political principles are Whig, then I can only surmise something discreditable, for I never had the opportunity of discovering what Whig principles were. I told you in my last that I was, equally with yourself, for the people; the industrious, hard-working unwashed; and the intelligent, modest, moral middle class. Is that what you understand by Whiggery? . . . Can you understand a man being in favour of the monarchical form of government – hereditary if you will, as saving a good deal of trouble, – but opposed to the poisonous influences exercised by a class interest to the destruction of the principle of the thing professed, making that despotic in their hands which should be limited by the laws, in which laws the people should be heard. . . . I say, my dear Squab, if you understand there being a party who would for these days of popular instruction uphold the form of government under which we live, give reality to a fiction and substance to a shadow, and can find a generic name for that party, you may enroll me as soon as you please but if you love me call me not a Whig. (Hume, *Letters*, February 1844 166–69)

Without knowing the tenor of Thackeray's comments which appear to have provoked Hume, we can nevertheless take from Hume's response both the sincerity of his strongly held anti-Whig and anti-party views as well as, perhaps, his personal tendency to take too seriously what in all probability was gentle teasing. In any case, over the next several months Idler's letters addressed to Squab are generally impersonal, and it is not clear if Thackeray was continuing his end of the correspondence.

Hume's letter of October 16, 1844 takes a less political and more personal tack in its response to the Thackeray letter written on August 7 and published on September 21, as it begins with the comment "You began your last letter by telling us that all the London world was going out of town" (Hume, *Letters*, October 1844, 102). At one point in his letter Hume personally reaches out to Thackeray; after favorably noting the positive use by the new Governor General of India (Sir Henry Hardinge who had replaced Lord Ellenborough) of the phrase "diffusion of knowledge," Hume asks Thackeray: "Do we not well remember when these words were words of contempt to the ear of a Tory?" (113). This suggests a shared recollection, perhaps from their time together in the mid-1830s, of their distaste for Tory rejections of the value of education for lower classes.

Hume's letter of May 10, 1845 once again responds to a Thackeray letter that is missing. Hume begins in what is likely a response to a jocular account by Thackeray of the end of his extended Mediterranean travels:

> I received your letter by the last Mail with unfeigned pleasure: I highly approve of your determination to abandon travel and attend your Club, where everything that goes on in the world is picked up without the smallest possible fatigue, and at the cheapest possible rate. . . . pleasure parties to the Pyramids are talked of so familiarly that they threaten to become another plague in Egypt. . . . My dear Squab you have been there [the desert] lately; tell me – do you think there is any chance of the Bedouin taking heart and doing a bit of bold robbery with a touch of violence, say, carrying off a pretty girl or two on a fleet dromedary, and shooting some chivalrous fellow who might attempt a rescue. Unless something of this sort should occur, the interest of the Overland journey will speedily become a thing of the past. (Hume, *Letters*, May 1845, 219–21)

England's Game with the World

"THE GREAT GAME," AN EXPRESSION attributed to Arthur Conolly (1807–42), an officer of the British East India Company's Sixth Bengal Light Cavalry, refers to Britain and Russia's nineteenth century strategic rivalry in Central Asia (Siegel xv). But to Thackeray, as he wrote in a *Calcutta Star* letter published on May 7, 1845, "the tremendous game which England is playing with the world" referred more generally to English international policies: free trade; the enormous growth in wealth, commerce, communications, and power associated with the simultaneous industrial and commercial revolutions occurring in Britain; and the associated loss of established power in traditional figures "from the Pope down to the Squire" (Summerfield 216). The Squab-Idler letters were written during the 1841–46 ministry of Robert Peel, a Tory Prime Minister who, against his party's historic positions, repealed tariffs, promoted international trade and colonialism, and sought conciliation with Ireland. Peel's Foreign Secretary, Lord Aberdeen, advocated peaceful resolution of international conflicts. Nevertheless, in Asia these years saw the disastrous English intervention in Afghanistan, the conclusion of the first Opium War with China, and further English conquests in India. Thackeray and Hume, from their respective vantage points in London and Calcutta, commented on the events of the day through their published letters.

Writing from the center of the growing British Empire, Thackeray had an overarching sense of the sweep of British power. Thackeray's *Calcutta Star* description of a summer view of the Thames can also stand as a metaphoric representation of the seat of British power:

> [I]f you could but behold the River Thames you would see a glorious sight. There is a bright sky and a terrible strong wind blowing. All the ships have their flags up; all the churches have theirs; there is [a] union jack floating from the top of the monument, and from the tower a prodigious royal standard, as big really as two [of] the corner turrets of the building. (Summerfield 207–08)

After returning from his several-month trip to the Mediterranean in 1845, Thackeray viewed London with an exuberant sense of English commercial power. His *Calcutta Star* essay written on March 24, 1845, exclaims:

> Each time a Londoner returns to his native place, after ever so brief an absence, he can't but admire how his darling village has expanded . . . where there used to be poor little cabbage gardens and rows of cottages devoted to washerwomen; and in the city grand streets of palaces rising splendid out of the dingy ruins of old courts and allies. . . . The wonder is who fills the new houses; where does all the money come from? As soon as the Bayswater washer-woman and cabbage garden have disappeared, up springs a fine mansion, with plate-glass windows. . . . There is something frightful almost in this energy of procreation, this prodigious efflorescence of London wealth; it always strikes a man, especially coming from the Continent, out of the sleepy regions of the dozing effete old world. (Summerfield 214–15)

Thackeray, of course, knew very well where all the money was coming from. Writing expressively about London's financial center, he enthused:

> As for the city, the movement there is just as wonderful and startling. In those grand palaces which are daily springing up each garret is battled for by a hundred claimants, and let for a hundred guineas, there are offices on every floor, and every office contains the clerks, and the directors, and officers

> of undertakings, in which millions of money are wanted, found, spent, and beget more millions. (Summerfield 215)

Despite his characteristic skepticism about human foibles and the prospects of personal improvement, Thackeray's *Calcutta Star* essays offer a vision of national and international progress based on capitalism, commercial growth, and free trade:

> [I]t is all in the cards of that tremendous game which England is playing with the world just now, and which is carrying us, who knows whither? to free trade – to abolition of nationalities and war in consequence – to universal equality, peace, republicanism; far in the distance as yet, no doubt, but each consequence, I do believe, resulting from its predecessor. We are covering Europe with railways, that we may sell our goods there: Peace, freedom, personal and national equality, for all Europe, are the results of our desire to sell our cotton and iron. A new epoch of man's history begins; no more conquerors, glory, violence, now – it is all over with tyrants of every description from the Pope down to the Squire. (Summerfield 216)

Thackeray's optimism was not totally blind; he did foresee the collapsing of the railroad bubble: "The crash is to come at the end of May, the wise ones say" (Summerfield 226). As always with Thackeray, there is a self-mocking overtone in his writing which questions his own enthusiasm.

Hume, writing from Calcutta, lacked Thackeray's perspective and certainly lacked Thackeray's poetic prowess as a writer. Nevertheless, Hume apparently shared Thackeray's vision of the advance of civilization through commercial development, although he expressed it in far more pedestrian and practical terms. Hume's *Calcutta Star* essays are studded with generally optimistic comments on the prospects of specific commercial ventures: exporting Indian wheat to English markets, opening up the interior of India through the Steam Ferry Bridge Company or the Inland Steam Navigation Company, the importance of the new Bank of Bengal, a new crop of indigo, new steamships and improved mail and transport systems. Sometimes Hume's "practical" commentaries reflect the self-serving interests and attitudes of his time and class but clash with modern outlooks and sensibilities. For example, on several occasions Hume writes about the opium trade with China. He opines that "a great deal of nonsense has been written by some of your virtuous gentlemen at home on this subject [the opium trade]" and adds "what will the Opium anti-productionists say, when they hear that the last Government sale realized more than £280,000!" (Hume, *Letters*, June 1843, 22). In another *Calcutta Star* letter, Hume writes:

> As for the Opium smuggling on the coast, with that we cannot interfere; the Chinese must protect their own laws, but it is impossible for them to do so! Their only course then is to admit it on duty, and to this I believe it must come in the end. It will be surely smuggled as it will be grown, and it would be grown even were this Government to attempt to prohibit it, which would be absurd. (Hume, *Letters*, July 1843, 34–35)

Similarly, Hume wrote on several occasions about the so called "Cooly trade," specifically the sponsored emigration of Indian workers to the Indian Ocean island of Mauritius to work as agricultural laborers. In his comments the workers are treated as commodities. In fact, Hume deplored the system under which "the Government pays a bounty of £7 per head on every labourer landed there" not because of any supposed

mistreatment of the workers, but because the system "extracts as much as Rs. 40 from the planter for every labourer supplied to his estate." Hume felt this unfairly rewarded middlemen agents and considered it a defect of the system that the bonus to individual Indian workers "unnecessarily" increased from Rs. 8 to Rs. 15 (Hume, *Letters*, June 1843, 14–17).

Thackeray's *Calcutta Star* letters regularly comment on the policies of the British Government and the attitudes of the English populace with regard to France and Ireland. Thackeray's views are arguably representative of educated middle-class English thought of his times, with an added dash of awareness of human self-deception and the ironically self-serving nature of human actions. Thus, although in his *Calcutta Star* letter of September 21, 1844 Thackeray recites, with real rancor, a list of English grievances against France – including the French publication of a pamphlet on how to attack English coastal towns, alleged French misbehaviors in Morocco and Tahiti, and the "charming ingenuity" of French newspapers in finding fault with Britain – he also ironically points out the inherent hypocrisy and self-serving nature of a likely English response:

> We may hear some day of Espartero[12] returning to Spain on account of the intolerable tyranny of Narvaez in that country, and of our benevolent interference with the brutality of O'Donnel in the Havana. That is *our* way of showing our sympathy for oppressed nations and our hatred of French domination, – we were so angry at the murder of Louis XVI that we took the Spanish colonies. The insolence of the French Directory was so unbearable that we seized Malta; and, depend on it, we shall be showing our amiable sympathies soon in some way. These rascals of Frenchmen! what an infernal quarrelsome spirit theirs is! (Summerfield 211)

The Peel ministry wrestled with an Irish movement led by Daniel O'Connell for repeal of the Act of Union of 1800 between Ireland and England (that denied Ireland its own Parliament), and supported the Maynooth Grant, a partial funding by the British Government of an Irish institution to educate Roman Catholic priests. Thackeray's *Calcutta Star* comments on these two controversial issues display a curious mixture of concern and contempt. Thackeray was sensitive to at least some of England's injustices to Ireland; in his characteristically sarcastic manner he praised those pro-Maynooth politicians who "say to the poor Irish, we, the great victorious Englishmen who are always right, were wrong in this case. Our Church will fit you; we acknowledge it. . . . You have a right to worship God your own way . . . we should not keep your Church revenues to pay our parsons" (Summerfield 224). At the same time, Thackeray regarded Ireland's worst enemy to be not the English but the Irish themselves. He acknowledged Irish poverty to be a significant human tragedy, but seemed to consider it a national character flaw rather than a result of geopolitical circumstances; one of his essays contains a stinging and insensitive joke line about "the fertile and prosperous [Irish] districts of Connemara, where you see a pig now every 10 miles, and a beggar every three" (Summerfield 215). Thackeray never treats Irish politicians and the general Irish populace with much respect. When O'Connell was imprisoned, Thackeray satirized his firebrand reputation by writing: "We have been trying to get up some sympathy for O'Connell in his durance, but the old gentleman has himself put an end to any tender feelings one might have had regarding him by his outrageous comfortableness and good humour" (Summerfield 208). Thackeray later painted O'Connell as a humbug, an insincere pawn of the Irish mob:

> The King of the Irish paid us but a short visit. He was wondrous meek and crestfallen in demeanour; and studiously gentle in public manners. But the very day before he left Ireland he gave his subjects a speech about the massacre at Wexford by the brutal Saxons; and immolated those three hundred women whom he has so often slain in his speeches. . . . [B]y the way it is only in Ireland that he professes to be a temperance man. Among the Saxons he cracked his bottle with decent joviality. (Summerfield 231)

Regarding the general Irish populace, Thackeray wrote: "In their dealings with this country, they are mad – these Irish" (Summerfield 231). They are not only blinded by "foolish savage Anti-Englishism" and taken in by O'Connell, they "applaud the cut-throat folly" of suggested military action against England with the supposed support of America and France. Further, the "obstinate refusal on the part of the Irish to be pacified" is due, in part, to the fact that it is the Tory leader, Peel, who is leading these reforms (rather than the Whigs). Irish leaders "have all taken . . . opportunities to disown, sneer at, spit upon, and otherwise mistreat, the new professor of the faith" (Summerfield 227–28). However, Thackeray reserves his greatest vehemence for his attack on the Anti-Catholic reaction in England to the Maynooth Grant. In early April of 1845 Thackeray wrote: "The no-popery cry is now roaring with considerable effect through the land, the tabernacles and the old women are aroused, and the parsons are loud in their denunciation of the scarlet abomination" (Summerfield 219). By late April Thackeray's rhetoric becomes even stronger:

> The pious of the country are in such a rage just now that in event of an election we might find a No-Popery Parliament sent back to govern us . . . [and] pervert the destinies of the world. Yes, the Protestantism of the country is up . . . the legion who amongst them make up the monstrous No-Popery Beast, quite as hideous and disgusting an animal as that Popery monster which they hate so. (Summerfield 222)

An extended argument on the folly of basing political opinion on scripture follows this last quotation.

Thackeray is at his best in his characterizations of the major political figures of the era. Just as his *English Humourists of the Eighteenth Century* and *The Four Georges* bring to life and endow with personality the literary and political figures of England's past, in these *Calcutta Star* letters, perhaps more than anywhere else in his writings, Thackeray brings to life figures such as O'Connell, Peel, Disraeli, Macaulay, the Duke of Wellington, and Prince Albert. As an example, Thackeray arguably raises political commentary to literature as he brilliantly employs metaphor to describe the parliamentary duels between Peel and Disraeli:

> The Tory aristocracy, that might have raised a dire commotion, and would, had they been left in opposition, are bound over and delivered neck and heels, by their Maroto[13] of a leader. They march out of their forts and strongholds one by one, the enemy occupying each as they retreat, and the free-trade flag flying there, and the poor fellows striking theirs as they disconsolately retreat. . . . He [Peel] is the best general that ever lived – for the enemy. [Only Disraeli] of all the Tory host, has the courage to look his leader in the face and call him 'traitor.' . . . He [Disraeli] delivers his sarcasms in a bland easy manner, watching his points, and, between each, as the house is roaring with delight and laughter, he wipes his nose meekly with his pocket handkerchief. The great Bull, piqued by this Israelitish Matador, is said to suffer most direfully under the punishment. He has turned savage, and tried to rip up his antagonist once or twice; but Moses Almaviva is over his head, and has planted a

> fresh dart in his buttock before the big animal has touched him: there sticks the dart quivering with its silken pennon, and all the boxes shout bravo Matador! (Summerfield 217)

Hume could never match the strength, elegance, or expressiveness of Thackeray's prose, but in his own way his letters also embody a long-gone society. Whereas Thackeray wrote primarily about domestic British and European concerns, Hume, in turn, understandably spent the bulk of his letters dealing with Indian and Asian matters. Hume's bête noire was Lord Ellenborough, the Tory Governor-General of India, whom Hume criticized in virtually every one of his letters. The British East India Company was still in charge of British India, and, under Ellenborough's leadership, the company was pursuing an expansion of its influence and geographical domain. In violation of established treaties, the Western Indian province of Sindh was conquered by the British under Sir Charles Napier in February of 1843. The Punjab was brought under partial British control in 1846. Hume's letters offer an interesting colonial perspective on these expansions of British India as he repeatedly commented on the first conquest and presciently anticipated the second. Despite his role as a colonist, he argued for moral distinctions regarding the expansion of British power. Regarding Sindh, in June of 1843 Hume wrote:

> The "licentious press" of our small colony has had little or nothing to say in palliation of this wholesale robbery. . . . The difficulty the Government will have to grapple with, independent of right or wrong, will be the violation of the non-aggression policy to which the triumphal songster [Ellenborough, who had adopted the slogan 'Peace in India'] pledged himself. My own opinion is that on this occasion he did not change his mind, that he always intended to lay violent hands on Scinde, and that his flourish about natural limits was the tinkling charm of taking phrase . . . (Hume, *Letters*, June 1843, 9)

In a July 1843 follow-up essay Hume referred to the conquest of the Sindh as "the disgrace of having feloniously appropriated the property of others" (Hume, *Letters*, July 1843, 28). In May of 1844 he eloquently came back to this topic: "What a disgraceful figure England cuts in this affair, having seized a country beyond what she had declared the natural boundary of her empire in India – and for *that* being without the shadow of a pretence of a justification . . . why not admit the wrong and repair it?" (Hume, *Letters*, May 1844, 249–50).

Hume had a different attitude regarding the Punjab. He wrote in June 1843 that: "Shere Sing [the Maharaja of the Punjab] is said to be in a precarious state, and on his death the succession will fall on a child of about ten years of age, during whose minority it is next to impossible internal peace should be preserved without some external power. That power must be British" (Hume, *Letters*, June 1843, 10). Shere Sing died in September of 1843, and in February of 1844 Hume noted that Ellenborough "had time to turn his attention . . . to the little boy in the Punjaub – which he is doing without affecting to have an eye in that direction" and added that "our interference is only a question of time" (Hume, *Letters*, June 1843, 170–71). By October of 1844 Hume had concluded that "The future of the Punjaub is one of those matters on which it would be idle to speculate, beyond saying that ere very long we shall be involved in its affairs, and that the probability is, our interference will end in apportioning the country into protected states, to lapse to the British Crown in the event of certain contingencies" (Hume, *Letters*, October 1844, 108–09). Apparently, Hume found explicit treaty violations offensive, but considered a need for (or a pretext of) restoring or imposing order a sufficient cause for conquest and annexation.

The British Afghan disasters of 1842 must have been fresh in the memory of Anglo-Indians, and it is clear looking at Hume's letters that there was continued debate regarding who was to blame for the destruction of the retreating British army. Hume praised those he saw as heroes – particularly Sir William Nott and Major Eldred Pottinger – and assigned villains.

Almost every Hume letter reports on unrest and fighting in one or more parts of India, and there are some reports of discontent in the army that anticipates the Great Mutiny of 1857. In April of 1844 Hume wrestled with the question of what concessions should be made to disaffected troops who were refusing orders to go to Sindh. He concluded somewhat torturously that justifiable grievances should be remedied, but that mutiny should not be rewarded (Hume, *Letters*, April 1844, 222–24). In May of 1844 Hume argued that mutiny was invited "by the perfect immunity which has attended the infamous conduct of even the worst of the late refractory regiments." He argued that leniency should be shown when the "unsoldierly conduct was limited to passive resistance, but that exemplary punishment should have been inflicted on those whose violent conduct betokened a spirit of disaffection." Prophetically, Hume feared that a second mutiny might be more dreadful than the disaster in Afghanistan and "might leave us in considerable doubt of holding what we have long been accustomed to call our own" (Hume, *Letters*, May 1844, 257–59). In July of 1844 Hume reported on a regiment "that refused to take its pay *because it was not what they had expected*" (Hume, *Letters*, July 1844, 40). Reading these letters one senses both Hume's deep concern and the inherent and long-running instability associated with depending on an army of sepoys.

The Squab-Idler correspondence was not entirely political and commercial and thus reached beyond "the tremendous game England was playing with the world." Thackeray wrote about subjects as varied as local murderers, new club houses, Queen Victoria's facial blemishes, Viennese dancers, the Queen's costume ball, Dickens's return to London, Prince Albert reviewing the Life Guards, *Punch* and the world "beginning to come to an end" as people leave London in July (Thackeray, *Calcutta Star* August 21, 1945 qtd. in Summerfield 230). Hume, in his turn, wrote about the advancement of native Indians, colonial celebrations of the birthdays of the Royal family, balls and dances, the local Calcutta theater, the serialization of *Martin Chuzzlewit* in a local newspaper, military dinners, the Hindu *Durga Puja* festival, and the horse races. The letters that Hume addressed to other European correspondents, though lacking the interaction with Thackeray, supply their own insights into Calcutta life. For example, an Idler letter dated July 5, 1842 and addressed to Alfred describes the financial benefits available to Englishmen coming out to Calcutta:

> If he has got £100 worth of property in the world to convert it to cash – it will bring him out in a Liverpool ship and equip him besides. When he is here he has only to be introduced to any one of five or six gentlemen I will point out to him, and if he plays his cards well he will in a few months fall into some berth or another of say £20 per month. Don't let him go mad with joy at the thought of £240 a year instead of £80. . . . [H]e can have a house, four or five servants, a couple of horses and a buggy. (Hume, *Letters*, July 1842, 46–47)

Both the Squab and the Idler letters provide a sense of social immersion and create an indelible portrait of their respective cosmopolitan and colonial worlds.

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https://doi.org/10.1017/S1060150314000059 Published online by Cambridge University Press

APPENDIX: A Bibliography of Thackeray's Contributions to the *Calcutta Star*

The table below details Thackeray's contributions to the *Calcutta Star*. Estimated writing dates and publication dates are based on mail shipping records. Although only six letters have been retrieved to date, this analysis suggests that Thackeray wrote fifteen to eighteen letters between March of 1843 and July of 1845, and would therefore have had an extended literary interaction with the *Calcutta Star's* readers.

Chronology of Squab (Thackeray) *Calcutta Star* letters

Written	Published	Status	Attribution
~2/6/1843	~3/25/1843	Lost	Confirmed by Hume "Idler" Letter reference
~3/4/1843	~4/25/1843	Lost	Confirmed by Hume "Idler" Letter reference; Thackeray letter
~4/6/1843	~5/25/1843	Lost	Confirmed by Hume "Idler" Letter reference
~11/15/1843	~1/3/1844	Lost	Confirmed by Hume "Idler" letter reference
~12/6/1843	~1/21/1844	Lost	Projected by this analysis
1/3/1844	~2/21/1844	Lost	Confirmed by Thackeray Account Book
~2/1/1844	~3/23/1844	Lost	Confirmed by Thackeray Account Book
~3/3/1844	~4/18/1844	Lost	Speculative (?) – this analysis
~4/3/1844	~5/19/1844	Lost	Speculative (?) – this analysis
~5/3/1844	~6/17/1844	Lost	Speculative (?) – this analysis
8/7/1844	9/21/1844	Exists	Recovered by Summerfield
3/24/1845	5/7/1845	Exists	Recovered by Summerfield
~4/7/1845	5/22/1845	Exists	Recovered by Summerfield
4/24/1845	6/9/1845	Exists	Recovered by Summerfield
5/71845	6/21/1845	Exists	Recovered by Summerfield
~5/22/1845	~7/7/1845	Lost	Projected by this analysis
~6/7/1845	~7/22/1845	Lost	Projected by this analysis
7/7/1845	8/21/1845	Exists	Recovered by Summerfield

NOTES

1. In *Vanity Fair*, *Pendennis*, *The Newcomes*, and other novels Thackeray invoked characters who were from India, had made their fortunes in India, or were going to or returning from India, but he set very little of the action of these fictions *in* India. For example, in *Vanity Fair* Jos Sedley, who has grown rich in India, is presented as comically maladroit in English society, but readers do not see him functioning in India. In the same novel Major Dobbin retreats to India after being spurned by Amelia, and then returns to England when she is in distress, but we see very little of Dobbin's life in India. In *The Newcomes* Colonel Newcome, who has lived most of his life in India, returns home at the onset of the novel. A subplot in *Pendennis* involves the Claverings: Lady Clavering, nee Snell, in her youth had gone out to Calcutta to join her father – but we only learn her story after the fact,

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1060150314000059 Published online by Cambridge University Press

not as it is happening. In essence, Thackeray seems very interested in Anglo-Indians (as opposed to Indian natives); India itself, however, is typically the site of off-stage action. Thackeray's early series of stories, *The Tremendous Adventures of Major Gahagan*, is nominally set in India; however, these stories spoof the exaggerations of returned colonial soldiers and administrators and do not attempt to seriously describe Indian society or culture.

2. Pearson (126, 139, 156, 158, 164) suggests that the articles recovered by Summerfield are "parodies of journalistic reporting" (126) and "an alternative version of regular journalism" (139).
3. The *Overland Calcutta Star* was a special edition of the *Calcutta Star* intended for shipment back to England but also available and distributed in Calcutta.
4. Hume's *Letters to Friends at Home* were published in three volumes. The second and third of these volumes are available electronically on *Google Books*.
5. This work is largely drawn from Simons, *A Pecuniary Explication of William Makepeace Thackeray's Critical Journalism,* Diss. U of South Florida, 2011.
6. Thackeray and Hume were in every sense contemporaries; they were born within three years of each other (in 1811 and 1808, respectively), both married in 1836, and they died a year apart in 1863 and 1862. They took different forks in life in that Thackeray remained in England while Hume immigrated to India.
7. Ray's incorrect comment that "Hume went out to India in 1842" is apparently based on this letter.
8. The letters to Thackeray, found in Hume, *Letters to Friends*, are dated June 8, 1843; July 1843; January 20, 1844; February 18, 1844; April 19, 1844; May 13, 1844; June 8, 1844; July 12, 1844; October 16, 1844; and May 10, 1845. Other Idler letters in these volumes are addressed to Mackenzie (June 1842, October 1842, January 1843, February 1843, May 1843, August 1843, March 1844), Charlotte (September 1842, September 1843), and Alfred (July, 1842, November 1842, December 1842, March 1843, April 1843, April 1843, October 1843, November 1843, December 1843, August 1844, September 1844, November 1844, December 1844, January 1845, February 1845, March 1845, and April 1845). None of the Idler letters to addressees other than Squab are overtly part of a bi-directional published correspondence, and there is no information regarding the identity of these other addressees except that they are members of a family, with Alfred and Charlotte respectively being the son and daughter of Mackenzie.
9. The Thackeray-Squab letters recovered by Summerfield were published, respectively, on September 21, 1844; May 7, 1845; May 22, 1845; June 9, 1845; June 21, 1845; and August 21, 1845.
10. Both this listing of *Calcutta Star* holdings and Summerfield's study were published in the 1960s, and it is not clear if these issues of the *Calcutta Star* are still extant. The on-line catalog of the National Library of Kalkutta does not show a listing for the *Calcutta Star*, but rare serials are not necessarily included in the on-line catalog. An inquiry to that library has thus far gone unanswered. The Center for Research Libraries catalog does not show any listing for the *Calcutta Star.* WorldCat does show two related records: the British Library Newspapers Division catalog includes a listing entitled "Calcutta Star and Bombay Times Overland News," with the added note that this paper was "Circulated coextensively with the 'Calcutta Star' and 'Bombay Times.'" Unfortunately, this holding only includes issues published between April 2 and October 20, 1846, after the time-period of the Squab-Idler correspondence. And, as mentioned in the text, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Library possesses a microfilm of the *Calcutta Star* from July 14 to August 21, 1843, which also does not include any Squab or Idler letters.
11. Thackeray's *Calcutta Star* letter written on August 7, 1844 contains the comment "I failed you in last month's packet, having nothing to write about from a quiet little German Bath whither I had betaken myself." See Summerfield (207).
12. General Baldomero Espartero was a regent who temporarily governed Spain in the early 1840s. Espartero was supported by England but opposed by most European powers. See Summerfield (206).
13. Rafael Maroto was a Spanish general who was notorious for switching sides during the civil war in Spain in the 1830s. See Duncan (244).

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