



The Way We Live Now (Barnes & Noble Classics)

Anthony Trollope

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Ruthless greed, relentless self-promotion, corporate swindles and scandals on a grand scale—indeed this sounds like “the way we live now.” Though **Anthony Trollope’s** title actually refers to 1870s England, his scathing satire of a money-mad culture cuts close to the contemporary bone. At its center stands Augustus Melmotte, a crooked financier whose enormous schemes ensnare an array of avaricious aristocrats, politicians, and “important people.” Among them are Lady Carbury, who earns the family bread by churning out fatuous potboilers (as did Trollope’s mother) and her spendthrift, ne'er-do-well son, Felix, who sets his sights on Melmotte’s dangerously beautiful daughter, Marie. Meanwhile, Felix’s sister, Hetta, falls for Melmotte’s partner, Paul, who’s encumbered with an American fiancée, herself a widow who may have shot her husband. As the frauds expand and the romantic entanglements grow ever more complex, Trollope revels in the antics of his characters while pillorying the corruption of their morally bankrupt society. Nathaniel Hawthorne said it best, praising Trollope for putting England “under a glass case, with all its inhabitants going about their daily business, and not suspecting that they were made a show of.”

Karen Odden received her M.A. from the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor and her Ph.D. in English literature from New York University. Her dissertation on the medical, legal, and literary discourses that surrounded Victorian railway disasters discusses works by Trollope and his contemporaries, Wilkie Collins, Charles Dickens, M. E. Braddon, and Mrs. Henry Wood. Chapters and articles have appeared in books of literary criticism, anthologies, the *Journal of Victorian Culture*, and *Studies in the Novel*; she has taught at the University of Michigan, New York University, and University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Currently a freelance writer and assistant editor for *Victorian Literature and Culture*, she resides in Arizona with her husband and two children.

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