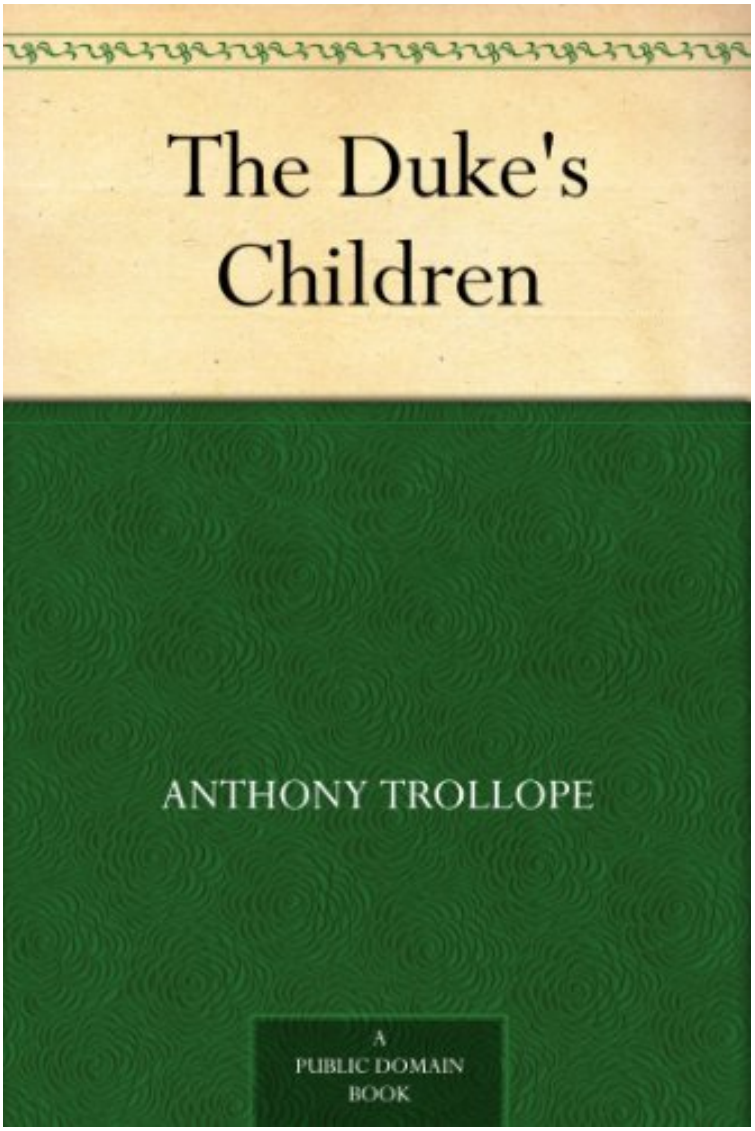
The Duke's Children (English Edition)



Par Anthony Trollope
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Par Anthony Trollope : The Duke's Children (English Edition) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Duke's Children (English Edition):

Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurThis book was converted from its physical edition to the digital format by a community of volunteers. You may find it for free on the web. Purchase of the Kindle edition includes wireless delivery.Extraitfrom the Introduction by Max EgremontAnthony Trollope arouses strong feelings for a writer sometimes thought of as soothing. His admirers have been accused of smugness, middle-brow taste, nostalgia, catatonic escapism, intellectual laziness and fear of the avant garde. His fictional worlds have been described as very English, not always in praise, and his prose compared to hunks of roast beef. Thomas Carlyle, echoing many other intellectuals (for Trollope is not a novelist of ideas), thought him irredeemably embedded in the commonplace, and grown fat upon it.His critics are often ambivalent, giving but also taking away. Patronised by Henry James for writing too much and for blandness, Trollope had the

Americans admiration for a complete appreciation of the usual and extreme interest in character. Virginia Woolf liked the sober reality, thought The Small House at Allington as perfect a novel as Pride and Prejudice yet decried his hale and hearty common-sense and the chronicle-like, flat style. W.H. Auden called him the poet of the ordinary. Yet Trollope has brought much pleasure. He can still make us laugh and many of his characters - Mrs Proudie, Slope, Glencora and Plantagenet Palliser, Lizzie Eustace, Phineas Finn, Augustus Melmotte, Archdeacon Grantly still live, perhaps rivalled only among 19th century novelists by some creations of Jane Austen and Charles Dickens. Then theres his evocation of a period in history. Plantagenet Palliser, the Duke of Omnium and the central figure in The Dukes Children, seems what a Victorian Duke should be. Pallisers measured Whig creed and his unquestioned place at the top of society are quite different in atmosphere from the revolutions that exploded in the mid nineteenth century throughout continental Europe. His ideology favours gradualism and is pragmatic - or English. It is also, on the whole, successful.Trollope wished to avoid obscurity or abstract theory. He believed that of all the needs a book has, the chief need is that it be readable for the primary object of a novel is to please. Giving life to his characters is one way that he does this, displaying them at length, as if to show lifes longueurs, unrolling his plots slowly although he wrote at immense speed, scarcely revising at all. Trollope thought that anyone might be trained to be a novelist for it is a craft similar to carpentry, which shocked Henry James to whom the House of Fiction was a sacred place. He suggests in his Autobiography that foxhunting is a better, even more worthwhile, way of passing time, giving the impression that he flung his pen down on completion of his requisite number of daily words and leapt joyfully upon a waiting horse. Of the many characters that he created, Trollope most valued Plantagenet Palliser, putting him alongside only the Reverend Josiah Crawley in the Last Chronicle of Barset. For his creator, Palliser stands firmly on the ground. As Duke of Omnium (since the death of his uncle in an earlier novel Phineas Redux) he dominates The Dukes Children, not only by what he does but through the insoluble regret of his past.The Dukes Children shows Trollopes effectiveness. It is not too long, has no sub-plots that drag or are too facetious such as the rivalry between the farmer Cheesacre and Captain Bellfield in Can You Forgive Her? or the romantic carousel of the Reverend Thomas Gibson, the French sisters and Dorothea Stanby in He Knew He Was Right. A late work, it was published in 1880, when Trollope had passed his time of greatest success and only two years before his death. By then, his books were appearing first in serial form in magazines, this one in All The Year Round from October 1879 until July 1880. Other titles considered for it were Lord Silverbridge (the name of the Dukes eldest son), The Duke and His Children or The Ex-Prime Minister. I think that he (or his publisher) made the right choice.The novel is the last in the series beginning with Can You Forgive Her? - published in 1865 (and Trollopes best seller) that features Plantagenet Palliser and his wife Glencora. The Pallisers ascend to high places, partly through birth, partly through merit. Palliser, after the death of his unmarried, uncle, becomes Duke of Omnium and, later, Prime Minister. Glencora is vastly rich in her own right.Palliser appears first in A Small House at Allington, published in 1864, as a minor character: an awkward young man of twenty five, staying at Courcy Castle, in a Trollopian setting of a grand house party, and fumbling towards a flirtation with the stupid, beautiful Lady Dumbello. One of the first things that we read him saying is a brusque protest against Lord De Courcys unpleasant amusement at Lord De Guests discomfiture on having been attacked by a bull; I dont see anything to laugh at. Here - in the challenge to his older host comes a flash of strength from someone who had not seemed capable of it.Different from his rakish, spoilt uncle the old Duke of Omnium, whose vast possessions and houses he will inherit, Palliser dislikes the aristocratic pursuits of racing or field sports. He is bored by luxury and grandeur, preferring work, especially his scheme to introduce decimal coinage. Unusually for a politician, he is a man altogether without guile and entirely devoted to his country. Most important, no one could mistake him for other than a gentleman. He is also virtuous. Alongside the need to entertain, Trollope had views on what was a desirable life: I have ever thought of myself as a preacher of sermons, he writes in the Autobiography. Palliser had become when young, and through family influence, what the novelist believed should be the highest object of every educated Englishmen: a Member of Parliament. Trollope saw the British parliament, presumably both the House of Lords and the House of Commons, as the greatest in the world, admiring its combination of fierce and competitive debate and restrained behaviour. There is nothing like it, he writes in Phineas Finn, the second novel in the Palliser series, or nothing as yet. Nowhere else is there the same good-humoured, affectionate, prize-fighting ferocity in politics.He knew, however (and had seen first-hand while trying to be elected as Member of Parliament for Beverly) that there was dishonesty in the political world, connived at by both sides. In Phineas Finn a Conservative candidate Browborough is charged with bribery and gets off

very lightly, to the relief of the Conservatives and the Liberals. Reform was in the air but in the novel political hacks from both parties Roby and Rattler admit to each other that the old corrupt ways are still useful. In The Dukes Children, Sir Timothy Beeswax represents the less admirable side of politics. Trollope had failed at Beverly. However, he knew the House of Commons, often attending its debates and learning its procedures from politicians who wished to aid his writing. His success, a contrast to earlier unhappiness and failure, let him meet such people. He became a clubman, taking especial pleasure in the Garrick. He sat on committees, was editor of the Cornhill and St Pauls magazines and often dined out as well as entertaining at his house at Waltham in Essex. After his break-through book Barchester Towers, Trollopes fame and earnings grew fast. There are accounts in mid-Victorian diaries and letters of this jovial, large and loud man.The world of the Pallisers, with its country houses, wealth and power, clearly intrigued him. It is only part of the political and social life of his time: that of the upper and upper middle classes. As always in Trollope, its the characters that matter. He declared that he lived with these so intensely that he could know how they might behave under almost any circumstance. I think that Plantagenet Palliser, Duke of Omnium, is a perfect gentleman, Trollope wrote in his Autobiography. If he is not, then I am unable to describe a gentleman.Trollope liked his heroes either to be or to aspire to be gentlemen and usually gave them the means to achieve this. His own family, however, had been expelled from the condition which may have been why he put such a value on it. Related to a Lincolnshire baronet, Anthonys father had tried to maintain what must have seemed his natural place, becoming a barrister and sending his sons to the public schools of Harrow and Winchester, yet fell into debt, bad luck, anger, ill health and depression. This condemned Anthony to humiliation; his father could not always pay the school fees or give him as much pocket money as his school mates. The family lived in increasingly wretched circumstances and he was dragged further down by adolescent confusion and gaucheness, what he termed the state of a hobbledehoy.Could the bleak childhood have been exaggerated, perhaps to match Dickenss time in the blacking factory? His older brother Thomass memories are not so dark. But the young Anthony may have had a worse time than Thomas for the familys poverty and debts came later with the complete failure of their father. Thomas was also their mothers favourite. It was Frances Trollope, author of The Domestic Manners of the Americans and other best sellers, who redeemed the family. Anthony remembered her getting up at 4 am to write at the kitchen table. Later, as if in part emulation, he would be called each day at 5.Patronage saved him; the Trollopes had a friend in the Post Office who secured the boy a job. Although a Liberal, he remained against competitive examinations for the Civil Service, partly perhaps because his poor educational attainments might have made him fail. There are places in life which can hardly be well filled except by gentlemen, he wrote in the Autobiography. Competition throws these open to people of all types, perhaps thwarting men such as Plantagenet Palliser, Duke of Omnium, who are without ambition or guile.Trollope, like Palliser, was a Whig, or a Liberal with conservative leanings: a belief that for years had attracted aristocrats but came to have less meaning or possibility as the nineteenth century faded. The Dukes Children came out in 1880 when aristocratic power (or power of the great rural landlords) was waning. Agriculture was in decline and new men, from manufacturing or finance, were in the ascendant, often becoming peers themselves; the franchise had already been extended in a series of reform acts. There were, however, still rich landowners with urban property or minerals such as coal or iron ore and certain families still had parliamentary seats where they still influenced the selection of a candidate. Also, the idea of the gentleman had stayed powerful, reflected in the revival of interest in medieval chivalry.But what is a gentleman? Trollope suggests that money and inheritance are not enough. In A Small House at Allington, Crosbie considers the ancient De Courcy family of Courcy Castle and the Hartletop family of Shropshire, measuring them against the Dales of Allington who are small squires. The De Courcys, he thinks, are arrogant, hollow, hard, soulless compared to the Dales. Yet their grandeur has conquered his reason; after all Satan knew that heaven was better than hell; but he found himself to be fitter for the latter place, for Crosbie is a villain. Some twenty years later, Henry James wrote of the effect of such seductive powers on Hyacinth Robinson in The Princess Casamassima and Isabel Archer in The Portrait of a Lady. The Dukes Children also pitches an American girl, Isabel Boncassen, into this exotic and proudly unequal world. The chaotic and decadent De Courcys, with their vicious quarrels between father and son, are different from the Pallisers. The old Duke of Omnium is sensible in his discretion and good relations with Plantagenet Palliser, his heir. Although selfish and immoral, he is one version of a Duke, in his elegance, pleasures and mystery. By the time of his death, insouciance and style have made the old man strangely totemic, even (as Trollope writes) a necessary, figure. Doubt is expressed in the clubs as to whether the heir the irreproachable Palliser can match the old

man.But perhaps a gentleman should not be too interesting or too stylish; clearly the old Duke, in spite of his grandeur, is not one. Trollope seems to have believed that gentlemen were more likely to be those who do not have great fortunes: perhaps squires such as the Dales or landowners based principally in the country for country houses were to him the most perfect expression of England. Visitors to England who have not sojourned at a country-house, whether it be squires, parsons, or farmers, have not seen the most English phase of the country, Trollope wrote.Palliser, although hugely rich, has complete integrity and scorn for material things. He has also pride and humility, works very hard, but is dull and literal minded, lacking in fantasy, almost a prig. Trollope, as if to balance these deficiencies, gives his Planty Pal a wife of a very different type. Lady Glencora has charm and social ease although she can be silly and rash. There was no woman then in London better able to talk to a dozen people on a dozen subjects, Trollope writes of her in Phineas Finn. The emotional gap between them is clear in Pallisers tentative words when, as a young Member of Parliament and heir to a fortune, he asks her to marry him: You have heard what our friends wish?There is ice in this arranged marriage. Early on, she almost leaves him and he has to break off from duties as Chancellor of the Exchequer to take her on a long journey to the continent, away from the infinitely more dashing Burgo Fitzgerald. Plantagenet and she learn to be friends, even to be almost in love, aided (for Glencora) by his success which brings her admiration and position.Six long novels chart the rise of the Pallisers, also encompassing much else, including the dramas of the adventuress Lizzie Eustace (in The Eustace Diamonds) and the romantic and political life of the charming Irishman Phineas Finn. These brought criticism that the author wrote too much and The Prime Minister, The Dukes Childrens predecessor, had not been received well, the Spectator critic disliking its vulgarity of thought. There were suggestions of tediousness and Trollope himself thought the book as far as the public was concerned a failure. Tolstoy, however, called it beautiful. The reception of The Dukes Childrens was better. Critics wrote of the books broad and genial spirit, its readability, resemblance to real life and absence of esoteric doctrines.Revue de presseTrollope is that rare thing: a strong writer with a trustworthy imagination . . . Yet, beyond saying that his writing feels like life, its hard to say just how he works his magic . . . Trollope, quite uncynically, understands both whats necessary to make the world go round and which way the world ought to be made to turn . . . Politics and gossip are still the essential life of the world . . . and any writer who can turn them into art will survive. Adam Gopnik, The New YorkerThe Dukes Children is a novel about sorrow and loss, and about a parents pained discovery that our children inevitably grow to love us less than we love them . . . The new version will most likely not change anyones view of The Dukes Children, and yet all those tiny excisions do add up.The restored version is a fuller, richer book. Charles McGrath, The New York Times Book Trollope has brought much pleasure. He can still make us laugh and many of his characters . . . still live, perhaps rivalled only among nineteenth-century novelists by some creations of Jane Austen and Charles Dickens . . . Trollope denied that he had any mysterious genius, calling his achievement comfortable but not splendid. This modesty, one feels, was genuine. It was also misplaced. The Dukes Children shows an ability to go deep enough to see the anxiety and pain that can accompany death and change. from the Introduction by Max Egremont