PREFACE

This work endeavours to present a comprehensive study of Thackeray's characters. The stress is on the devices of characterisation he used in his novels. But a discussion of characters and characterisation is meaningful only in the context of the intentions of the author. The themes of the novels give a clue to his intentions, and so they need to be considered first. The themes are included in the study in order to see his technique in relation to them. This gives an insight into his works and helps towards a better understanding and evaluation of his method of character painting.
This study has been divided into six chapters. The introductory first chapter has been divided into two subheads, Biographical and Historical. The biographical introduction deals with Thackeray's life and the chronological order of the novels. The development of the novel as a literary form has been discussed by way of historical introduction. The elements of characterisation have been traced as far back as in Chaucer's tales though the regular novels came in the eighteenth century. Towards the end of the chapter the salient points of Thackeray's fiction have been included.

Chapter II deals with the subject-matter and theme of Thackeray's novels. In the first part, a few terms like story, theme, motif and plot have been explained. After that there is a general discussion of his themes.

Chapter III includes a discussion on characters as a whole in fiction. It describes what place characters have in a novel, and what function they may perform in a work of fiction. After that some general classification of characters has been
attempted - round and flat, individual and type, independent and dependent; and according to their social status (upper, middle and lower) and according to the moral status (moral, immoral and amoral).

Chapter IV has been devoted to the classification of Thackeray's characters in particular. The basis of classification is the prevalent moral code of the Victorian period.

Chapter V, dealing with devices of characterisation, is the main part of the study. This has been divided into two parts (a) the general devices Thackeray employs in his works and (b) how these devices are used in particular characters, major as well as minor.

Chapter VI, which is the last, gathers up points which have been made in the preceding chapters - and evaluates Thackeray's success as a novelist on the basis of his skill in the portrayal of character.