Maidens and Women

There must be love in a novel, Trollope declared; and he became an acknowledged expert in handling a character's intricate vacillations between love and social constraints. It was for such portraits as that of Lucy Robarts that Henry James remembered Trollope as an author who celebrated the "simple maiden in her flower." He is evidently always more or less in love with her. There are several comparable features in Trollope's two major series, the Barset and the Palliser novels. A major character in each is a dominating woman who competes with her husband for power. Anthony Trollope was best known for his five-novel series called Chronicles of Barsetshire. He even tasted his first success as a writer when his novel "The Warden" got published in the year 1855. This novel was based on the lifestyle of the upper-middle-class society of the Victorian Era Britain. This was the first novel from the popular Chronicles of Barsetshire. The next novel in the series, Barsetshire Towers (1857) is regarded as his best comic work. Like the Chronicles of Barsetshire, Anthony wrote another series of novels called "Palliser." This collection includes novels like "Can You Forgive Her?" (1864), "The Prime Minister" and "Phineas Redux" (1876) and "The Duke's Children" (1880). These novels focused on the socio-political matters that impacted the society during those days. The fourth of Trollope's Palliser novels, Phineas Redux is one of his most spellbinding achievements. Trollope shows a remarkably prescient sense of the importance of intrigue, bribery, and sexual scandal, and the power of the press to make or break a political career. He is equally skilled in portraying the complex nature of Phineas's romantic entanglements with three powerful women: the mysterious Madame Max, the devoted Laura Kennedy, and the irrepressible Lady Glencora (now Duchess of Omnium). In his introduction, John Bowen highlights the weaving of public events and private passions.