

Dedication.

To my mum and dad,
Lydia and Tom Redford,
in celebration of their lives and the culture we shared.

Acknowledgements.

I am greatly indebted to my supervisor, Celia Keenan, for her guidance, scholarship and humanity, to Mary Shine Thompson for her invaluable opinion and advice, to Patrick Crotty for his interest and expertise, to Ann Fitzpatrick, Valerie Coghlan, Rosemary Hetherington and Amanda Piesse for the loan of books, to Maureen Redford for the location of otherwise unobtainable novels, to Dominic Dunbar for overseeing the printing, to Derek Darlington, Graham Darlington and Dominic Dunbar for their computing skills and their readiness to use them, to Grainne Darlington for the initial binding of the thesis, to D. and G. for their blessed refusal to take this work or its author too seriously, and to P. for his unwavering love, support, interest, characteristic tolerance, and for my reintroduction "into the wonderful world of books for young people."

The Other Nation -

an examination of the depiction of the poor in the children's fiction of Mrs Molesworth, Mrs Ewing, Silas Hocking and Frances Hodgson Burnett.

by


Carole Dunbar S.R.N. B.A (Hons.)

A thesis submitted to Dublin City University in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of PhD in Children's Literature at the English Department of St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, a college of Dublin City University.

Supervisors: Dr. Patrick Crotty and Celia Keenan

September, 2001.

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of PhD in Children's Literature, is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

Signed: -----

Student Number: 97200010

Date: 19/9/01

Contents

	page
Dedication and Acknowledgements	i
Title Page	ii
Declaration	iii
Abstract	v
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: Nouveau Pauvre	19
Chapter 2: Children of the English Savage	48
Chapter 3: “Not always very refined” - the depiction of the working classes in the children’s fiction of Mrs Molesorth	94
Chapter 4: “Reformatory, Progressive, Experimental” - the depiction of the working classes in the fiction of Mrs Ewing	142
Chapter 5: Cities and Sinfulness - the depiction of the working classes in the children’s fiction of Silas Hocking	240
Chapter 6: From Rats to Royalty - the depiction of class in the work of Frances Hodgson Burnett	289
Chapter 7: Summary and Discussion of Findings	357
Bibliography	387

Thesis Abstract.

The Other Nation - an examination of the depiction of the poor in the children's fiction of Mrs Molesworth, Mrs Ewing, Silas Hocking and Frances Hodgson Burnett.

This thesis examines the depiction of the poor in the children's fiction of four nineteenth century authors. All of these had strong links with the north of England, where the swift and radical transformation precipitated by the Industrial Revolution was most profoundly felt. The region's ensuing social problems and class conflict were highlighted in contemporary adult fiction and in sociological investigations. It is with these works in mind that an analysis of the portrayal of the working classes in fiction written largely for middle class children is presented. This thesis illustrates not merely the notion of the poor which each author wishes to convey, but also demonstrates how childhood was perceived in that context, and the role that literature for children was seen to fulfil. The criteria in the selection of the four specific authors - Mrs Molesworth, Mrs Ewing, Silas Hocking, and Frances Hodgson Burnett - are discussed. Available historical accounts of the lives of working class adults and children in Lancashire and Yorkshire in the nineteenth century and contemporary thinking relating to poverty are examined. In the light of this examination, four separate chapters analyse the relevant works of each of the authors, the principal concern being to ascertain the authorial attitudes which underpin the depiction of the poor. In the concluding chapter a summary and discussion of these investigations affords evidence of how the characterisation of the urban poor reflects the fear and suspicion the English middle classes felt towards the members of the working classes who lived in towns and cities. It also demonstrates how the conventions inherent in nineteenth century children's literature contributed to the way the poor were portrayed.

Carole Dunbar
1st. May, 2001.

Introduction

The phrase "spirit of the age," used by Shelley in his essay "A Defence of Poetry," written in 1821, encapsulates the nineteenth century need to examine and define society. William Hazlitt used the phrase as a title for a book four years later and so general was its acceptance that in Disraeli's *Coningsby*, published in 1844, it appears as the focus for a conversation between two strangers at an inn. Some thirty years later Matthew Arnold captures the same preoccupations in his use of the German word 'Zeitgeist.' This emphasis on capturing the essence of an era suggests the elusiveness of the quality about to be defined and the underlying insecurity and confusion of those who need to seek their sociological bearing in a well turned phrase. Discussing the concept in the first of his series of articles for *The Examiner*, John Stuart Mill suggests that "it is an idea essentially belonging to an age of change." (1)

Arguably the most dramatic and far reaching of the changes during the nineteenth century was the growth of industrialisation. Begun in the dying decades of the eighteenth century, mass production in factories and mills transformed the demographics of England forever. Queen Victoria's reign saw a continuation of the movement of workers from their rural environment to the towns, resulting in England for the first time in history becoming predominantly urban.

This phenomenon, taking place over a relatively short period, was felt nowhere more strongly than in the cotton and woollen producing towns of the north of England. It was largely as a result of the wealth engendered in this region that England in the 1850s was the richest country in the world. It was not, though, a wealth that was reflected in the conditions endured by the workers employed in the region's industries whose products formed the basis of that prosperity.

In some respects, the north of England, represented in this thesis by Lancashire and Yorkshire, can be seen as a microcosm for the country as a whole, and the tensions of industrialisation as a metaphor for the changing relationships amongst the classes. Whilst the factory system was based on an almost feudal regime, the amassing of working people both in places of employment and in high density living conditions encouraged amongst the poor a pooling of discontent manifested in widespread militancy. With the memory of social revolution still reverberating around Europe, public demonstrations of working class vexation unnerved the English upper classes, even at the highest level. On 17 August, 1842, Lord Melbourne sent a grim report to Queen Victoria in which he wrote:

Lord Melbourne hopes that these tumults in the manufacturing districts are subsiding, but he cannot conceal from your majesty that he views them with great alarm - much greater than he generally thinks it prudent

to express. (2)

This concern, and a certain fascination that accompanied it, is reflected in a number of the adult novels of the 1840s and 1850s, many of which used as their backdrop the industrial north of England. Charlotte Elizabeth's *Helen Fleetwood* (1840), Mrs Gaskell's *Mary Barton* (1848) and *North and South* (1854/5), and Charles Dickens's *Hard Times* (1854) all dealt with the relationship between the classes, a preoccupation of fiction that was to last throughout the century and well beyond. Such a theme necessitated the creation of credible working class characters whose role was not perceived merely as that of servants to their betters. Gaskell, especially, depicts the poor in a manner that mirrors their complexity and diversity. She features them prominently and treats them with a sympathy that had not been afforded them previously.

A changing society precipitates a literary shift to reflect the evolving mores. (There are a mere thirty-two years between the publication of Jane Austen's *Emma* and *Mary Barton*.) The nineteenth century, in terms of books for children, is characterised by its diversity. Whilst, as Hunt suggests, the century began with children's literature acting as "a bastion of conservatism" in "revolutionary times," (3) with largely religiously based, didactic texts, the century as a whole is inextricably linked to what are regarded as the classics of the genre, renowned for their imaginative scope. It was an age which saw fiction become an acceptable entertainment for children.

Fantasy blossomed both in children's fiction and verse. Into this multifaceted literary arena in the latter decades of the century came the work of the authors featured in this thesis. The literary influence that informs their writings originated much earlier.

Amongst the publications issued by the chapbook merchants in the eighteenth century were modern reprints of religious material produced for children, John Bunyan's *Divine Emblems*, and Isaac Watts's *Divine Songs*, for instance. (4) Alongside the puritanism of such publications were the more common chapbooks, the popular literature of the masses throughout the country. Increasingly amongst these pamphlets there were ones specifically for the pleasure and entertainment of children. In 1744 *A Little Pretty Pocket Book*, published by John Newbery, was sold with an accompanying ball or pin cushion. (5) These twin strands of amusement and religious and moral inculcation were to vie for supremacy in children's books for the next century.

In 1801 Mrs. Trimmer began her periodical, *Guardian of Education*, which not only reviewed current publications for children but also began "ferreting out hitherto undetected jacobinism and subversion and corruption" (6) in works previously enjoyed by the young. This manifestation of a growing Calvinistic attitude towards children's pleasure coexisted with the fashionable educational theories of philosophers such as Rousseau, whose ideas on the dangers of imaginative writing for children were shared by such notable

and influential figures in the realm of children's books as Thomas Day, Richard Lovell Edgeworth and the evangelist Hannah Moore. (7)

Despite her reservations concerning works of the imagination, (she described the novel as "one of the most universal as well as the most pernicious sources of corruption") (8) Moore was one of the first to utilise fiction as a vehicle for religious teaching. Her *Cheap Repository Tracts*, first published in 1795 and intended to help educate the rural poor, were formulated as an antidote to the bawdiness, violence and politics of the chapbook which they were designed, cosmetically, to resemble. In addition to their religious content they firmly upheld the social *status quo*, even to the encouraging of child labour. (9) Their publication was the beginning of a new cottage literature for working class children, written for their "improvement." (10) By the 1840s two distinct literatures for children were established, one for the prosperous child and one for the poor, a situation which was to endure until the mid-1880s. (11) The evangelical works of writers such as Mrs Sherwood and Mrs Cameron, though, did cross the divide, being found in the majority of literate households. They were as much a part of childhood "as *Alice* was to later become." (12)

Influenced by moralists, educationalists and middle class parents, publishers began producing material for children that reflected the educational theories and the religious sentiments of the age. (13) With the burgeoning of Sunday Schools and

their demands for reward books, the needs of parents for suitable Sabbath reading for their children, and with material needed for the growing number of schools, the publication of religiously based books for children flourished. This evidence of the growing interest in the child and in childhood meant that for the first time it was economically advantageous for publishers to produce an increasing number of books specifically for the young.

Possibly with Moore's example before them, an increasing number of publications for children sought deliberately to attract readers to their essentially religious periodicals. Secular articles on travel or natural history, or pieces with a historical or geographical bent, were used to lure the child. (14) The necessity for entertainment in the world of children's books and periodicals was beginning to be accepted. Evangelical writing itself began to dilute the threat of damnation, and while still didactic, began to amuse. (15) *Aunt Judy's Magazine*, founded by Mrs Gatty in 1866, saw itself as "intended for the use and amusement of children." (16) Although never perceived to be a religious periodical, even this magazine, despite its avowed child-centred approach, saw a need to present itself, at least to adults, as fulfilling a utilitarian role. In her first editorial, Gatty sought to reassure parents of the publication's educational benefits. "Parents need not fear an overflowing of mere amusement. They will find in another place our "Memoranda" or things to be remembered in each month - and these will comprise facts and anecdotes, historical, biographical, or

otherwise, deserving a niche in the brain-temple of the young."
(17)

Decades earlier there had been signs of change. *Holiday House*, written by Catherine Sinclair (1839), featured child protagonists whom she describes as "that species of noisy, frolicsome, mischievous children which is now almost extinct."
(18) Their misbehaviour and lack of decorum are seen as an integral part of childhood. This was in marked contrast to the evangelical notion of the ideal child, and the belief, which accompanied it, that any moral state that falls short of perfection would bring down upon the sinner, however young, eternal damnation. A mere eighteen years earlier *History of the Fairfield Family* was published, which, Townsend declares, "was clearly designed to strike the fear of hellfire into every child's soul." (19)

The 1840s saw the publication of Lear's *Book of Nonsense*, and Browning's "The Pied Piper of Hamelin," while later in the decade the first translation of the stories of Hans Christian Andersen began to appear. These and other fairy stories were to influence fantasy writers for children from Lewis Carroll in the 1860s to J. M. Barrie in 1911. By the 1860s the battle to entertain the young in literature written specifically for them had been won, although this did not preclude the use of heavy didacticism at times. For middle class children the later decades of the century saw school stories, masculine and patriotic adventure books, and softer, more domestic tales

written largely by women.

Even if the subject matter had endeared the material enjoyed by young middle class readers to working class children, the literary sophistication of such books meant they were suitable only for educated young people. (20) It was not until towards the close of the century, with the publication of novels where the middle class ethos was less pervasive, and with an increasing literacy rate amongst children of all classes, that all children began again to enjoy a common literature.

Concerned with the depiction of the working class in realistic fiction for children, this thesis will attempt to explore the work of four nineteenth century authors who wrote in this genre and who have strong links with the north of England. This concentration on realism will exclude, for instance, George MacDonald, who lived in Manchester for a period. His novels are essentially fantasies, despite containing depictions of working class characters who are psychologically and socially convincing. Conversely, of Mrs Molesworth, whose work is studied here, *The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature* says that, "her strength really lay in the realistic portrayal of children's lives - "save in an occasional flight to fairyland." (21) Even those works in which such excursions do take place are firmly rooted in a recognisable social setting.

Mrs Molesworth (1839-1921), Mrs Ewing (1841-1885), Silas Hocking (1850-1935) and Frances Hodgson Burnett (1849-

1924), were born within eleven years of each other, and born at a time which saw Manchester reach national prominence. As Briggs asserts, "all roads led to Manchester in the 1840s." (22) Manchester, and by extension the industrial north of England, embodied a sense of transformation that was unprecedented in its scale and extent. One of the commercial capitals of Europe, its opulence was reflected in the "newness" of its municipal buildings, which Southey sees as vulgar, "as large as convents without their antiquity, without their beauty, and without their holiness." (23) Yet Manchester's social problems were widespread and profound. Many thousands of its workers lived in poverty and squalor. In the depression of 1836 both middle class businessmen and members of the working class were rendered unemployed. Their protracted suffering led to "agitation." (24.)

Industrialisation had ensured that the relationship between the social classes became more complex. Not only did the organised association of workers deem that deference was no longer the basis for intercourse with the middle class, but within the middle class itself tensions were apparent. The industrialists and the businessmen who created and were created by the industrial revolution were "tough, proud, contemptuous of the old aristocracy," (25) while themselves wielding a wealth and power that the established middle class might envy. The contemptuousness that Briggs detects was not confined to the newcomers wishing to change established traditions, but was shared by a middle class society not eager to embrace the

possessors of new wealth.

In the 1840s, then, the north of England was not merely seen as the progenitor of a new prosperity - as Cottonopolis - but as an area where dramatic social change demanded radical solutions, and a reappraisal of old systems and philosophies. The excitement, fear and tensions inherent in such a process are captured in the adult fiction of the decade, which sought to represent and explain a new social landscape, and one which included the "proletariat," the working people whose living conditions had formed the basis for Engels's *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, published in Germany in 1845.

The three women writers to be studied in this thesis were all born at a time when the national interest was focused on the place in which they grew up, and that preoccupation was reflected in sociological studies and in contemporary fiction. It is inconceivable, then, that through such secondary sources as these, and through their own experience, the authors were not aware of the social significance of the evolving society of which they were part. (Indeed, the social realignment of nineteenth century society, already referred to, forms a recurring and often central theme in the children's fiction of all four writers.) Hocking's novels for children leave the reader in no doubt as to their author's interest in and knowledge of the social conditions and their consequences in working class districts of Manchester and Liverpool. That being so, this thesis will study the authors' relevant works for evidence of how, in the light of social changes

and of nineteenth century views of poverty and the poor, the authors present the working classes in children's fiction to their predominately middle class readership. From these findings will be extrapolated the authors' perceptions of their role and of the function that children's literature was seen to fulfil. These extrapolations will be examined in relation to contemporary views of children and childhood.

Although all four authors lived in, and were influenced by, a nineteenth century Lancashire or Yorkshire in flux, they all write from very different perspectives. Molesworth spent her childhood in inner-city Manchester in a middle class family suffering financial constraints. She espoused a narrow Anglicanism which lacked Ewing's "universal sympathy." (26) This is evident in her work *Stories of the Saints*, written in a genre which dates back to the early seventeenth century, (27) and in the latter half of the nineteenth century she still indulges in what Kinnell describes as the "Puritan absorption in educating children for an early death." (28)

Her fiction is aimed at and often set in the nineteenth century middle class nursery. In her later works the stability and potency of the Victorian family are dissipated, reflecting the breakdown of her own marriage, the social upheaval experienced by France, the country she fled to, and that of her native England. This profound change and the dangers depicted in the world outside the protection of home are at the periphery of Molesworth's work. They are often associated with

the working classes, who are portrayed as both foreign and frightening, as much to the author as to her protagonists.

Ewing's experience of working people was more intimate and sympathetic than that of Molesworth. She was the daughter of a Church of England rector and lived in rural Yorkshire until she married, aged twenty-six. Her mother, Mrs Gatty, was a well established children's magazine editor and writer. Ewing's work, set mostly in the countryside, is characterised by a lightness which renders her often mocking and sometimes ironic style playful and mischievous. She wishes to delight, to entertain and to enrapture. Her deep religious conviction is intrinsic to her sense of gaiety and fun. It is celebratory and, therefore, neither censorious nor overtly didactic; rather, the reader is aware of the underlying humanity of the author. The strong moral vision which imbues her fiction is liberating and loving rather than repressive and coercive.

Although her duties as the clergyman's daughter brought her into daily contact with working class villagers, there is evidence to suggest that the relationship between them and the then Miss Julie was one of mutual affection. She was frequently found sketching workers in what her sister describes as "their picturesque occupations of carpet-weaving and clog making." (29) While the word "picturesque" is suggestive of a sense of bemused tolerance on the part of Ewing's sibling, a relaxed and friendly tolerance appears to characterise the relationship between Ewing and the workers. This suggestion of mutual

pleasure is substantiated by one of the students at Juliana Gatty's Class for Young Women who suggests an atmosphere not solely dominated by study, but a period enlivened by story and chatter. Her recollection is that, "Miss Julie were always cayling," (30) "cayling" a dialectic term referring to Ewing's entertaining discourse.

Ewing's work is central to the understanding of how the working classes are portrayed for middle class children. The length of Chapter 4, which analyses her work, reflects her significance.

Hocking, alone of the four chosen authors, did not grow up in the north of England. Born in a Cornish village, it was his vocation as a Methodist minister that brought him to both Liverpool and Manchester. His work amongst the poor of both cities forms the basis for his children's fiction. Seen as "one of the last survivors of the old style writers of Evangelical books for children," (31) Hocking's street arab stories were read widely until the end of the century (32), and, thanks to the Sunday School reward system, were "apparently plentiful" (33) in ecclesiastical circles until the 1930s.

Although the detail and circumstances which imbue Hocking's fiction are, from a historical perspective, impressively accurate, the dearth of realistic and credible characters renders his novels for young people unsatisfactory. They are formulaic and tend to be simplistic and sentimental. As with those who preceded him in the evangelical mode, Hocking's fiction is used as a vehicle

for what he perceives are religious truths. The purpose of his writing, then, is not merely to entertain, nor to produce great art, but ultimately to save souls.

The issue of class is central to the more eclectic and unorthodox fiction of Hodgson Burnett. Born into the family of a prosperous shopkeeper, her family's steady decline into genteel poverty following the death of her father when Hodgson Burnett was a small child led to their emigration to America when Frances was in her teens.

Throughout her Manchester childhood and adolescence the author exhibited a fascination with the manners and dialect of the working class. This was tinged with the dread that through their failing fortunes her family would be forced to join their number. This insecurity informs her fiction, with its recurring theme of the changing fortunes, and often the social position, of her middle class protagonists, who, nevertheless, retain their inherent superiority despite external circumstances. Her life in the more democratic sphere of the United States seems to have added a new world romanticism to her view of the hierarchical structure of English society.

In order that the influence of contemporary events and philosophies on the work of the named authors can be assessed the first two chapters of this thesis will have historical bases. The opening chapter will analyse the changing perceptions of poverty and the poor, while Chapter 2 will

present an account of how poor children were viewed by nineteenth century society. This will be followed by a further four chapters devoted to the fiction of Molesworth, Ewing, Hocking, and Hodgson Burnett, respectively. The authors will be studied in chronological order. In the concluding chapter I shall discuss the fictional portrayal of the working classes in the children's fiction of the named authors. From these findings and in the light of nineteenth century notions of children and childhood I shall examine the nature of nineteenth century children's literature, its evolving characteristics and their consequent impact on the manner in which the poor were portrayed.

Notes

- (1) Newsome, David *The Victorian World Picture*. pp. 2/3
- (2) Newsome, David *The Victorian World Picture*. p. 44
- (3) Hunt, Peter *An Introduction to Children's Literature*. p. 46
- (4) Hunt, Peter *Children's Literature: an Illustrated History*.
Kinnell, Margaret "Publishing for Children 1700-1780." p. 26
- (5) Kinnell, Margaret "Publishing for Children 1700-1780." pp.
35/6
- (6) Avery, Gillian *Childhood's Pattern : A Study of the Heroes
and Heroines of Children's Fiction 1770-1950* . p.14
- (7) Hunt, Peter *Children's Literature: an Illustrated History*.
Avery, Gillian and Kinnell, Margaret "Morality and Levity 1780-
1820." p. 52
- (8) Avery, Gillian *Childhood's Pattern : A Study of the Heroes
and Heroines of Children's Fiction 1770-1950*. p. 33
- (9) Avery, Gillian and Kinnell, Margaret "Morality and Levity
1780-1820." p. 52
- (10) Avery, Gillian *Childhood's Pattern : A Study of the Heroes
and Heroines of Children's Fiction 1770-1950* . p.18
- (11) Avery Gillian *Childhood's Pattern : Study of the Heroes
and Heroines of Children's Fiction 1770-1950*. p. 71
- (12) Avery, Gillian *Childhood's Pattern : A Study of the Heroes
and Heroines of Children's Fiction 1770-1950*. p. 93
- (13) Avery, Gillian *Childhood's Pattern : A Study of the Heroes
and Heroines of Children's Fiction 1770-1950*. p. 18

- (14) Hunt, Peter *Children's Literature: an Illustrated History*.
Butts, Dennis "Beginnings of Victorianism (c1820-1850.)" p. 81
- (15) Hunt, Peter *Children's Literature: an Illustrated History*.
Briggs, Julia and Butts, Dennis "The Emergence of Form 1850-
1890." p. 130
- (16) Briggs, Julia, Butts, Dennis "The Emergence of Form 1850-
1890." p. 135
- (17) Maxwell, Christabel *Mrs. Gatty and Mrs. Ewing*. p. 147
- (18) Hunt, Peter *An Introduction to Children's Literature*. p. 49
- (19) Townsend, John Rowe *Writing for Children*. p. 45
- (20) Avery, Gillian *Childhood's Pattern : A Study of the Heroes
and Heroines of Children's Fiction 1770-1950*. p. 82
- (21) Carpenter, Humphrey and Prichard, Mari *The Oxford
Companion to Children's Literature*. p. 355
- (22) Briggs, Asa *Victorian Cities*. p. 96
- (23) Briggs, Asa *Victorian Cities*. p.89
- (24) Briggs Asa *Victorian Cities*. p. 97
- (25) Briggs, Asa *Victorian Cities*. p. 94
- (26) Gatty, Horatia K.F. *Juliana Horatia Ewing and Her Books*.
p. 4
- (27) Hunt, Peter *Children's Literature: an Illustrated History*.
Avery, Gillian "The Beginning of Children's Reading to c 1700."
p. 21
- (28) Kinnell, Margaret "Publishing for Children (1700-1780)"
p. 26
- (29) Gatty, Horatia K.F. *Juliana Horatia Ewing and Her Books*
p. 20

(30) Gatty, Horatia K.F. *Juliana Horatia Ewing and Her Books*.

p. 12

(31) Carpenter, Humphrey and Prichard, Mari *The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature*. p. 255

(32) Avery, Gillian *Childhood's Pattern: A Study of the Heroes and Heroines of Children's Fiction 1770-1950*. p. 76

(33) Cutt, Margaret, Nancy *Ministering Angels: A Study of Nineteenth-Century Evangelical Writing for Children*. p. 181

Nouveau Pauvre

This chapter is concerned with the ways in which perceptions of the English poor changed between the late eighteenth century and the end of the nineteenth century. It will argue that the profound changes which occurred in public thinking led to the enactment of the New Poor Law. Central to the changes was the adoption of the puritanical notion of work, and, consequently, of censorious attitudes towards lack of occupation. We shall examine other contemporary philosophical and economic notions relating to poverty; in particular we shall consider those of Malthus, which proved highly influential. In the light of his writings we shall analyse the association between the poor, idleness and licentiousness. The perceived sub-human condition of the poor will also be investigated.

Christ's statement, "Ye have the poor always with you," has the effect of separating those afflicted with poverty from the generality of humanity. In the late 1100s Francis of Assisi saw a vision of his "bride," in the form of "true religion, nobler, richer and fairer than others in her poverty." (1) Consequently he became one of the "holy Poor," embracing "poverty as a sacred vow, the better to do God's will." (2) It was, as de Santo Ana asserts, in practical terms an "active criticism of unjust structures at the social and economic level." (3) While castigating the

contemporary ostracism of the poor, Francis sought to associate them and their impoverishment with the divine. Poverty with charity and obedience became a staging post on the road to saintliness. So devoutly and earnestly was poverty embraced that Franciscans were "forbidden by their rule to touch or accept money." (4)

This embrace of poverty by the godly imbues the condition with positive, even spiritual connotations, distinct echoes of which were to be found in provisions made for the poor under the Elizabethan Poor Laws which pertained until 1834. Kidd maintains that "a society's values can be judged by its approach to welfare." The fact that the Old Poor Laws, as the Elizabethan legislation was referred to after the enactment of the New Poor Laws in 1834, were "derived from centuries of old notions of entitlement which were broad and inclusive" (5) was a reflection of the status of the poor.

With the rise of puritanism and evangelical ideology in the seventeenth and eighteenth century came a shift in the secular view of poverty, resulting in a reappraisal of Christ's words. They became a divine benediction on existing social disparity, a Biblical reminder of the rightness of accepting one's condition in life, and by implication, of the sinfulness of discontent. Under this new dispensation, as Dickens illustrates in *Hard Times*, workers were seen as mere "hands," anonymous utilitarian tools in a mechanised process that was the factory system. The growing forces of industrialisation, urbanisation and the

influence of evangelism argued against state intervention in poverty and towards individual responsibility. The emphasis on independence, so prevalent in the nineteenth century, was exemplified by the self-help movement, utilitarianism and, in the religious sphere, the notion of personal salvation. (6) It had the effect of stigmatising and marginalising the poor.

The Old Poor Law tax was based on a property tax which was largely administered through the parish and supervised by the local magistrate. The fact that applicants for relief were known to the administrators of the scheme ensured that the poor were an integral part of society. As Kidd describes it, the Old Poor Laws were both “an expression of communal responsibility yet a potent reminder of social distance.” It was generally assumed by magistrates that the poor were entitled to relief if they required it. This notion was based on what was perceived as the moral right of access to necessities, rather than on any legislative framework. (7)

The impression of a benign regime for the relief of the poor which existed up to the first quarter of the nineteenth century is based on records pertaining to the south and south-east of England. In contrast, in the same period in both agricultural and industrial districts of Lancashire, “the administration of the Old Poor Law was not, and was not designed to be, either flexible, sensitive or supportive.” In order to minimise the growing expenditure on poor relief, the administrators would “err on the side of harshness and exclusivity.” (Echoes of this

unsympathetic attitude towards the poor can be detected in Molesworth's fiction for the young, as Chapter 3 will illustrate.) Caird's agricultural map of England of 1850-51 reflected the areas' different practices. It showed that the *per capita* relief expenditure in the south extending over the half century preceding 1834, when the New Poor Law was enacted, outstripped that in the north by between eighty and one hundred per cent. (8)

No longer associated with positive religious values, poverty, especially of the new industrial proletariat, was deemed unacceptable, and was seen as suggestive of underlying sinfulness and subsequent shame. Indeed, casual labourers, whose precarious careers ensured they were the first casualties of any economic downturn, were castigated for their "irregular habits," the labourers being the perceived cause of their own poverty. Hodgson Burnett's insistence on the commendable industry of several of her rural working class characters, to be discussed in Chapter 6, is the obverse of this. It was only at the end of the nineteenth century that this opinion was revised, with the recognition that the very nature of their employment, the lack of regular work, was to blame for their economic instability. (9)

Idleness was one commonly-held notion contributing to the perception of the poor's "irregular habits," and certainly one that was perceived as meriting censure. Both Molesworth and Hocking denounce the idleness of several of their working class characters. In their novels it is allied to drunkenness, as

chapters 3 and 5 will demonstrate. Wesley denounced as "wickedly, devilishly false," the widely held notion that poverty resulted from a refusal to work. (10) Yet idleness described in terms of sloth or laziness assumes the status of immorality. Isaac Watts's poem entitled "Against Idleness and Mischief," published in 1715 in his collection, *Divine Songs*, associates lack of occupation with wickedness. He uses the bee, the most industrious of insects, to celebrate the benefits resulting from assiduous labour. This lesson from nature spurs the child narrator to insist that

In works of labour or of skill,
I would be busy too,
For Satan finds some mischief still
For idle hands to do. (11)

That the last couplet has been assimilated into common usage is testament to the perceived truth it was thought to contain, confirming as it does a relationship between unoccupied leisure and morally questionable behaviour. *Divine Songs* was reprinted continuously until 1929, (12) indicating a widespread agreement with the philosophy it contained. Despite this public endorsement, however, the work was both criticised and satirised by many writers including Blake, Lamb and Carroll.

Samuel Smiles, whose doctrine of self-help was born out of and fed into the glorifying of industry, wrote in 1887, "labour is one of the best antidotes to crime ... by doing nothing we learn to do ill."

(13) Involved in radical working class politics and education in Leeds where he lived from 1838-1858, Smiles's best known work *Self-Help*, first published in 1859, sold 20,000 copies in its first year and over a quarter of a million by 1905. (14) Its popularity underlines the ambitions of people in a socially more fluid society than that which pertained in England in previous ages. It also indicates a widespread acceptance of the benefits of hard work and independence that were the bedrock of the rising Victorian middle classes. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 of this thesis will illustrate how Ewing's Master Swift (in her *Jan of the Windmill*), Hocking's various protagonists, and Hodgson Burnett's eponymous heroine, Joan Lowrie, respectively, educate themselves and become committed Christians prior to their social elevation. It was an age, after all, that coined the phrase "the gospel of work," (15) with its suggestion of labour as divinely ordained and the lack of constructive employment as ungodly. It is a doctrine that is seemingly implacable. Allying it to commerce, Smiles says, "Under competition, the lazy man is put under the necessity of exerting himself; and if he will not exert himself, he must fall behind. If he do not work, neither shall he eat." (16) It is a sentiment which echoes Carlyle in his essay, "Chartism," published in 1839. In language, significantly enough, which owes much to political economy, he declares, "He that will not work according to his faculty, let him perish according to his necessity - there is no law juster than that." (17) This attitude persisted in the face of the fact, as Asa Briggs reminds us, that there was no natural tendency to full employment, even in the so called mid-Victorian boom years.

Forty-one years before the publication of Carlyle's essay, Thomas Malthus published his *First Essay on Population* (1798), which did much to foster sentiments like those above. Malthus insists that "dependent poverty ought to be held disgraceful," (19) (a sentiment at variance with Pitt's, who, in the spirit of the Old Poor Law, saw poor relief as "a matter of right and honour." [20]) A word such as "disgraceful" is both a manifestation of society's censure and an indication of the reverence in which wealth was held. When applied to poverty and destitution it also suggests that indigence is shameful and that it could have been avoided. There is implicit in the context in which the word is used a belief that the poverty is self-induced. Why else should the sufferer be characterised as a miscreant, deserving of society's disapprobation? Tawney writes that the increasing harshness with which the poor were viewed was "a new medicine for poverty ... a medicine designed not to cure poverty but to punish it." (21) The attitude of the late eighteenth and nineteenth century towards dependent poverty and destitution was synonymous with its view of sinfulness, of criminality: actions deserving of punitive measures. The very fact of being poverty-stricken rendered the poor culpable. Chapter 2 will demonstrate that poor children were linked to juvenile delinquents in the public mind, while chapters 3 and 6 examine the notion of the deserving and the undeserving poor in the work of Molesworth and Hodgson

Burnett. The notion underpinning such categorisation is directly linked to the perceived association between morality and poverty, as discussed above.

Intimately enmeshed in this moral censure of the impoverished was the more secular concern of the middle and upper classes, that of the mounting Poor Law rates. In a pamphlet published as early as 1704, Daniel Defoe champions the mercantile view of society as he repudiates the poor not merely for being idle and unproductive, but for proving a drain on the nation's resources distributed amongst them in the form of charity and poor relief. Such concerns were seen to rise along with the poor rates which, while amounting to £665,00 in 1685, rose to £2,000,000 in the late 1700s, the bill shared between a population of 6,000,000. (22)

Malthus's *First Essay on Population*, considered one of the most influential economic and political documents of the age, (23) echoed the resentment at a rising tax bill. In Lord Brougham's speech in the House of Lords in 1834, he refers to those architects of the Elizabethan Poor Laws who enshrined in their legislation the right of the poor to relief: "Those who framed the statute of Elizabeth were not adepts in political science - they were not acquainted with the true principles of population - they could not foresee that a Malthus would arise to enlighten mankind." (24) The messianic references which close the quotation, coupled with the word "true" to qualify "principle," give the speech a fervour manifested in an absolute faith in the

message and the messenger, the noble lord's conviction of the rightness and righteousness of both.

This recommendation of what was seen by many as an economic and social saviour represents a microcosm of Malthus's enthusiastic following, which in turn is indicative of his influence. In 1876 Charles Darwin wrote,

In October 1839, that is, fifteen months after I had begun my systematic enquiry, I happened to read for amusement Malthus on *Population* and being well prepared to appreciate the struggle for existence which everywhere goes on for long-continued observation of the habits of animals and plants, it at once struck me that under these circumstances favourable variations would tend to be preserved, and unfavourable ones to be destroyed. Here, then, I had at last got a theory by which to work. (25)

Darwin credits Malthus in his introduction to *The Origins of Species* (26), quotes his ideas on population in *The Descent of Man* (27) and in footnote fifty-seven in Chapter Two of *The Descent of Man* describes the *Essay on the Principle of Population* as "ever memorable." (28) Engels's work *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, first available to an English readership in 1892, makes seven references to the political economist, both to support and oppose his views. Parts

of the Royal Commission Report prepared for the enactment of the New Poor Law were "explicitly Malthus." (29) He was, therefore, one of the most influential men of his time. His doctrines were embraced by many politicians, economists and philosophers of his day, including J. S. Mill, Ricardo, Paley, Bentham and Macauley, although many from the literary establishment opposed them. "More important," writes Himmelfarb, "were the untold number of people who accepted his thesis without making public profession of it, sometimes without being consciously aware of it." (30)

The political economist's central tenets were

First that food is necessary to the existence of man.
Secondly, that the passion between the sexes is necessary and will remain nearly in its present state. (31)

With that passion resulting in an increase in population which the production of food is unable to sustain, a dichotomy arises that the author sees as "insurmountable," one which will inevitably lead to "misery and vice." (32) While advocating late marriage as a means of reducing population, he readily admits that this may lead to what he perceived to be sexually illicit relationships. (33) The "tendency to a virtuous attachment," we are told, leads to early procreation which inflicts "severe distress" on the poor. Resulting from an increase in population

comes an increase in the number of workers and consequently a lowering of wages leading to an inability to buy sufficient food. (34) This penury, and the subsequent near or actual starvation tends to lead to late marriage and thus fewer children. Because of a reduction in the size of families, Malthus opines, these children will suffer less, and when they take their place in the workforce, labour being scarce, their wages will rise. This prosperity will enable them to marry earlier than their parents; thus another cycle of deprivation will be set in train.

While Malthus envisages his theories applying to the middle classes, their "misery" amounting to a mere deterioration in their economic and social standing, he concedes, that "the misery that checks population falls chiefly, as it always must do, upon that part whose condition is lowest in the scale of society." (35) An examination of their predicament occupies the essay. His writing is suffused with a tone of immutability; his major principles are described as "laws," linking them with such irrefutable scientific principles as the law of gravity. (In *Pauperism and Poverty* (1981) Karel William denounces Malthus's brand of "empiricist scientificity," because it "naturalises" economic concepts which are not universal scientific law, but cultural products likely to change with time. [36]) Malthus was not merely propounding theories, but, to revert to Lord Brougham's vocabulary, he is declaiming "truths." This had the effect of elevating mere opinions, albeit perceived as informed ones, to the level of divine certainties, endowing them with a disproportionate weight and authority, and this to

arguments that history has shown to have been largely erroneous.

Those Malthus sees as the “mass of society,” the working classes, are not differentiated from their betters merely through their economic disadvantage. Subscribing to the theory of work being divinely ordained, Malthus writes, “The supreme being has ordained that the earth shall not produce food in great quantities, till much preparatory labour and ingenuity has been exercised upon its surface.” This, he feels, is “in order to rouse man into action, and form his mind and reason,” (37) for man is “inert, sluggish and averse to labour, unless compelled to do so.” (38)

The belief in man’s, and particularly the poor man’s, inherent disinclination to work, and the popular notion of this idleness as a manifestation of satanic properties, can be viewed from a psychological perspective as society attempting to exonerate, or at least distance itself from, its share of the responsibility for the needy by placing the blame at the door of those who suffer. Arthur Young in his work *A Six Month’s Tour Through the North of England*, published in 1770, writes, “Every one but an idiot knows that the lower classes must be kept poor, or they will never be industrious.” (39) Twenty-nine years later, Malthus, supporting such a sentiment, speaks of “the good of necessity.” (40) Severe want, then, is seen as a positive force, as a spur to the idle, as necessary if the poor are to conform to the Protestant work ethic, and thereby remain godly and allow society to

prosper. In an autobiographical piece entitled "The Boy Who Became a Socialist" Hodgson Burnett sees the poverty and hunger of her son's friend as character building, as Chapter 6 will demonstrate.

If the necessity to work was removed from "the mass of mankind" Malthus concludes,

we have reason to think, that they would be sunk to the level of brutes, ... than they would be raised to the rank of philosophers by the possession of leisure. (41)

The author, as a representative of "we," is characterised by "reason," which opposes the animality of the poor, "the mass of mankind." The reader is to infer that the natural state of the latter group is that of a beast, and the only component of their lives which prevents them reverting to bestiality is occupation. Chapter 6 will discuss how in several of Hodgson Burnett's novels she emphasises the importance of the poor working and her use of animal images to denote the working classes is examined in chapters 6 and 7. While others' minds are "so far improved by various excitements of knowledge, or of social sympathy," that they would not "relapse into listlessness" under such circumstances, "it can scarcely be doubted, that these stimulants could not be withdrawn from the mass of mankind without producing a general and fatal torpor." (42) Whereas the so-called leisured classes, we are to assume, are elevated "to

the rank of philosophers" by the utilising of time not devoted to hard labour, the working classes have not the wherewithal to drag themselves out of the intellectual primeval swamp nor the inclination to do so. The works of Ewing, Hocking and Hodgson Burnett's *That Lass O' Lowrie's* feature characters who have risen from the working classes through their own efforts.

This portrayal of the lower classes is consistent with that of the savage who, Malthus states,

would slumber for ever under his tree, unless he were roused from his torpor by the cravings of hunger, or the pinching of cold, and the exertion that he makes to avoid these evils, by producing food, and building himself a covering, are the exercises which form and keep in motion his facilities, which would otherwise sink into listless inactivity. (43)

The same inactivity leads to a similar degradation, and the use of the same word, "torpor," unites both groups, while the "pinching," referring to the torments of the savages, is reminiscent of Caliban's punishment by Prospero in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, underlining the notion of debasement. This association of savages with the English working classes is used by Hodgson Burnett, as Chapter 6 will demonstrate.

Malthus uses the image of the savage in his treatment of sexual matters. (Darwin in Chapter Four of *The Descent of Man* states that "savages" are "utterly licentious," and in Chapter 20 he depicts them as "extremely licentious." [44]) He describes "sensual pleasures" as "vain, transient, and continually attended with tedium and disgust." He argues for the superiority of intellectual satisfaction, which he writes of, ironically enough, in language more fitting to the praise of a new lover: "fresh and young" and giving "a new zest to life." (45) "The wisest and best men in all ages had agreed in giving preference, very greatly, to the pleasures of the intellect." (46) Five years previously, in 1793, Godwin asserted, "one tendency of a cultivated and virtuous mind is to diminish our energies for the gratification of the senses." (47) Malthus obviously sees himself numbered amongst "the wisest and the best," the cultivated and the virtuous. He is separated from those with more carnal appetites, who in the context of his *Essay* are members of the working classes. It is to them he directs his advice on late marriages, for the purpose of producing fewer children, and his worries about the consequent danger of "vice." There is an implication that not being sexually continent, unable or unwilling to control their cardinal lust, the poor will resort to promiscuity. Hazlitt accuses Malthus of viewing the lower classes as "so many animals in season." (48) This perceived link between the poor and immorality is reflected in the work of all the chosen authors. Chapters 3, 5 and 6 will demonstrate how Molesworth, Hocking and Hodgson Burnett respectively associate working class girls

with licentiousness. Chapter 4 will examine how Ewing attributes dissolute behaviour to poor young Londoners.

The association of the poor with sensuality and promiscuity is found even in nineteenth century medical works. Acton, a Fellow of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society of London, an author of works on the urinary tract and generative organs, and a noted authority on prostitution, writes in the 1860s that "the majority of women (happily for them) are not very much troubled with sexual feeling of any kind." This expert opinion, however, excludes working class women from what it presents as normal female behaviour. Acton observes that,

Many men and particularly younger men, form their ideas of women's feeling from what they notice early in life among loose, or at least low and vulgar women ... Any susceptible boy is easily led to believe, whether he is altogether overcome by the syren or not, that she, and therefore all women, must have as strong passions as himself. Such women, however, give a very false idea of the condition of female sexual feelings in general. Associated with the loose women of London's streets, in casinos, and other immoral haunts (who, if they have not sexual feeling, counterfeit so well that the novice does not suspect but that it is genuine), all seem to corroborate such an impression, and ... it is from these erroneous notions that so many young men think that marital duties they will have to undertake are beyond their

exhausted strength ... the best mothers, wives, and managers of households, know little or nothing of sexual indulgences. Love of home, children and domestic duties, are the only passion they feel. (49)

Interestingly, the predominant tone of this passage is one of reassurance, an attempt to allay the anxiety of even the most tame Lothario that he will be able to fulfil his marital duties towards his undemanding, indeed, impassive wife, for the "only passion" of a good woman is manifested in her role as mother and keeper of her husband's home. The ubiquitous label "angel in the home," illustrates society's preferred vision of middle class women, as saintly and asexual. This is consistent with the portrayal of middle class women in the children's fiction of Molesworth, Hocking and Hodgson Burnett, as chapters 3, 5 and 6 will illustrate. We shall return in Chapter 7 to the portrayal of women by the selected authors. Sex for women, in Acton's opinion, is fraught with misery. They are "fortunate" in their depleted libidos. Only working class women are seen as sexually proficient, and not merely competent, but, the worst sin of all, are perceived to be capable of enjoying the sexual act. So incredible is this thought that the author suggests the rather more acceptable notion that the pleasure is sham. Acton describes individuals involved in what would have been considered as illicit relationships, probably those of prostitutes and clients or mistresses and lovers. While the woman is depicted as "loose," the male is a "susceptible boy," both words suggesting innocence and vulnerability. He is described as a

"novice" and the female as a "syren," the embodiment of female cardinal appetite, luring middle class youth onto the rocks of sexual folly. Central to Acton's perception of the woman is her working class status - "loose ... low and vulgar women" - which separates her from both her lover and the females of his class.

With the middle classes embodying "reason" and "intelligence" in Malthus's work, and the lower classes being portrayed as lascivious and inherently idle, there is little scope for ambiguity in the author's interpretation of life after death.

Nothing can appear more constant to our reason, than that those beings which came out of the creative process of the world in lovely and beautiful forms, should be crowned with immortality; while those which came out misshapen, those whose minds are not suited to a purer and happier state of existence, should perish, and be condemned to mix again with their original clay. (50)

Given the juxtaposition of the word "misshapen" and the description of the uncultivated mind, it seems likely that the adjectives "lovely and beautiful" in this quotation apply to the ethical and mental in addition to the physical, the more attractive characteristics being assigned to those with both wealth and status and the notion of distortion attributed to the inferior poor. The final image, "being condemned to mix with the original

clay," implies that the lower classes are equated with dirt, with baseness, and, harking back to "misshapen," suggests that the process of sculpting, of creating, a human being has failed, and the original material must either be scrapped, or employed in a hopefully more proficient effort by the celestial potter. Molesworth depicts several of her poor characters as deformed, as chapters 3 and 7 will discuss. Hodgson Burnett portrays beauty as incompatible with a working class status, as Chapter 6 will demonstrate. With the increasing number of references to God towards the end of the essay, the quotation, cited in the book's closing pages, takes on a religious authority, with its echoes of "dust to dust." The effect is to give divine validation to that separation between the poor and the rest of society which Malthus sought implicitly to demonstrate when equating the working classes with savages. We are no longer confronted by a mere difference in class, but a sub-species, for, argues Malthus,

even to the Great Creator, Almighty as he is, a certain process may be necessary, a certain time, ... may be requisite, in order to form beings with those exalted qualities of mind which will fit them for his high purposes. (51)

The poor whom he denounces had, in fact, "high purposes" of their own. The concept of self-help, so beloved of the era, was encapsulated in the attempts of many unschooled workers to educate themselves. Their aspirations were lauded by John

Stuart Mill, who relinquished royalties on the cheap editions of his books so they might be afforded by the working classes. (52) The publication of volumes with such titles as *The Pursuit of Knowledge under Difficulties*, and *Popular Education*, indicate how widespread self-education was. (53) The Rev. Adam Sedgewick, Woodwardian Professor of Geology at Cambridge, was astounded, when walking the streets of Manchester, to encounter "men whose brows were smeared with dirt and whose hands were black with soot, I found upon them the marks of intellectual minds, and the proofs of high character." (54) He spoke to "men - who in many ways were my superiors." (55)

Leonard Horner, visiting a factory in Rochdale in 1836, saw the names "Xantippe" and "Diaphantes" on a register of children employed there. The names attested to the scholarship and love of learning of the girls' parents. For Horner, the awkward juxtaposition of such erudition in the ugly, utilitarian confines of a mill was encompassed in the name of the third child: "Pandora" - Pandora Barraclough. (56)

It was such individuals as these parents who began the Co-operative movement in Rochdale in 1844. By the late Victorian age it was the biggest single retailing group in England. (57) The growing prudence and temperance of the district was reflected in the fact that mid-way through the century Lancashire had the largest Friendly Society in the country. (58) Temperance was the objective of the abstinence movement,

instituted in Preston, Lancashire, in the 1830s, the word "teetotal" being coined at a meeting in the town in 1833. (59) These self-educated men retained their working class status, while those characters in the fiction of Ewing, Hocking and Hodgson Burnett who similarly excelled became middle class.

As with Malthus, Jeremy Bentham's influence on the Poor Law report of 1834 is inescapable. (60) His notion of "less eligibility", an exposition of which was contained in the Pauper Plan of the 1790s, became a central tenet of the New Poor Law. He saw the poor as

a sort of forward children - a set of persons not altogether sound in mind, not altogether possessed of that moral sanity without which a man cannot in justice to himself any more than to the community be entrusted with the uncontrolled management of his own affairs. (61)

The notion that the poor are akin to children is found in the work of Hodgson Burnett, as Chapter 6 will testify. With imputations of insanity, immorality, if not criminality, Bentham envisages the establishing of pauper houses, each containing five hundred inmates. These units operating under the constant, and in Bentham's word, "absolute," authority of the governor, would be run by private enterprise. They would support and employ ten per cent of the English population, amongst them "unruly" apprentices and all the "refuse of the population." (62) He

proposed the establishment of a "Universal Register of names, abodes and occupations" to facilitate the arresting of "suspected depredators." (63)

Bentham's unpublished notes suggest he is well aware of the effects of his recommendations:

Objection - liberty infringed. Answer - liberty of doing mischief. As security is increased, liberty is diminished ... That it (the register) would be an infringement upon liberty is not denied: for in proportion as security is established, liberty is restricted. To one branch of liberty - the liberty of doing mischief - it would be, not prejudicial only, but destructive. -- Public security commands it. Justice does not forbid it. (64)

Not only does Bentham equate the poor with "mischief"; he sets them outside society. The "public security" which is to benefit their more fortunate fellow citizens is to be brought about by their incarceration. The notion of the working classes, and especially the urban working classes, posing a danger to public safety is discussed in the next chapter. It occurs in the work of all the selected authors and will be analysed in the final chapter.

The middle class inherent in Bentham's proposal were not the only reason for the enactment of the New Poor Laws. They were framed at least partly to reduce the tax burden and were

eminently successful in that objective. In 1831, with a population for England and Wales of fourteen million, the total cost of poor relief was £6.7 million. By 1841, with a population of sixteen million, the amount had fallen to £4.8 million. While poor relief for England and Wales amounted to £7 million in 1832, and despite a virtual doubling of the population over the next forty years, it was not to be until 1868 that the total again reached £7 million. (65) While under the new dispensation out-relief was not available to able-bodied men, there were indications that it was being refused to women on grounds of morality. In Manchester females were debarred from benefits for being of "drunken or immoral habits," and for "destitution caused by improvidence." In 1884 Birmingham women were denied financial assistance for having illegitimate children or living in "filthy homes." (66) Chapter 3 will argue that cleanliness was used by Molesworth as a symbol of working class acceptability. Hocking's fiction, as Chapter 5 will illustrate, often featured drunken and immoral women.

With society's concern about the treatment of the poor mounting towards the end of the century, the care of the elderly in the workhouse became more humane. Contemporaneously, agitation for an old age pension was widely articulated. With these moves the principle of less eligibility was surrendered, at least officially. (67) With unemployment affecting skilled workers, who were perceived to be relatively respectable, the notion of poverty and the poor began to be reassessed. While both Booth and Rowntree's appraisals of the poor were, like

reports before them, inclined to make moral judgments, they did begin to address poverty in terms of social and environmental considerations. (68) Chapter 5 will argue that Hocking saw juvenile delinquency as being associated with disadvantage. But the fact that it was not until 1918 that paupers - along with women - were given the vote shows the contempt in which they were held, but yet also suggests hope for their reappraisal as full, responsible and equal members of society.

In summary, this chapter demonstrates that under the effects of Puritan ideology, industrialisation and rising taxes, the largely tolerant and inclusive attitudes towards the poor which had characterised the Old Poor Law began to change. They were replaced by perceptions of the poor as idle, sexually rapacious and sub-human or childlike. From these perceptions arise notions of the impoverished as morally and ethically inferior. They were thus equated with the bestial, with a debased form of humanity. Poverty was seen as self-induced and therefore shameful. This led to punitive treatment of the poor which did not begin to soften until the end of the nineteenth century.

Notes

- (1) Moorman, John *A History of the Franciscan Order*. p. 5
- (2) Himmelfarb, Gertrude *The Idea of Poverty - England in the Early Industrial Age*. p. 3
- (3) de Santo Ana, Julio *Good News of the Poor*. p. 91
- (4) Moorman, John *A History of the Franciscan Order*. p. 185
- (5) Kidd, Alan *State, Society and the Poor in Nineteenth-Century England*. p. 8
- (6) Kidd, Alan *State, Society and the Poor in Nineteenth-Century England*. p. 22
- (7) Kidd, Alan *State, Society and the Poor in Nineteenth-Century England*. p. 13
- (8) Kidd, Alan *State, Society and the Poor in Nineteenth-Century England*. p. 17
- (9) Kidd, Alan *State, Society and the Poor in Nineteenth-Century England*. p. 47
- (10) Himmelfarb, Gertrude *The Idea of Poverty - England in the Early Industrial Age*. p. 33
- (11) Watts, Isaac *Divine Songs*. p. 239
- (12) Watts, Isaac *Divine Songs*. p. 70
- (13) Smiles, Samuel *Life and Labour*. p. 12
- (14) Briggs, Asa *Victorian People*. pp. 25/6
- (15) Briggs, Asa *Victorian People*. p. 24
- (16) Briggs, Asa *Victorian People*. p. 141
- (17) Carlyle, Thomas *English and Other Miscellanies*. "Chartism" p. 177

- (18) Briggs, Asa *Victorian People*. p. 138
- (19) Malthus, Thomas Robert *First Essay on Population* 1798.
p. 85
- (20) Himmelfarb, Gertrude *The Idea of Poverty - England in the Early Industrial Age*. p. 112
- (21) Himmelfarb, Gertrude *The Idea of Poverty - England in the Early Industrial Age*. p. 24
- (22) Himmelfarb, Gertrude *The Idea of Poverty - England in the Early Industrial Age*. p. 26
- (23) Himmelfarb, Gertrude *The Idea of Poverty - England in the Early Industrial Age*. p. 123
- (24) Edsall, Nicholas C. *The Anti-Poor Law Movement 1834-44*. p. 21
- (25) Darwin, Francis *The Life of Charles Darwin*. p. 40
- (26) Darwin, Charles *The Origins of Species. The Descent of Man*. p. 40
- (27) Darwin, Charles *The Origins of Species. The Descent of Man*. pp. 275/6
- (28) Darwin, Charles *The Origins of Species. The Descent of Man*. p. 275
- (29) Edsall, Nicholas C. *The Anti-Poor Law Movement 1834-44*.
p. 21
- (30) Himmelfarb, Gertrude *The Idea of Poverty - England in the Early Industrial Age*. p. 126
- (31) Malthus, Thomas Robert *First Essay on Population: 1798*.
p. 11
- (32) Malthus, Thomas Robert *First Essay on Population: 1798*.
p. 16

- (33) Malthus Thomas Robert *First Essay on Population: 1798.*
p. 29
- (34) Malthus Thomas Robert *First Essay on Population: 1798.*
p. 30
- (35) Malthus Thomas Robert *First Essay on Population: 1798.*
p. 41
- (36) Kidd, Alan *State, Society and the Poor in Nineteenth-Century England.* p.23
- (37) Malthus Thomas Robert *First Essay on Population: 1798.*
pp. 360/1
- (38) Malthus Thomas Robert *First Essay on Population: 1798.*
p. 363
- (39) Himmelfarb, Gertrude *The Idea of Poverty - England in the Early Industrial Age.* pp. 51/2
- (40) Malthus, Thomas Robert *First Essay on Population: 1798.*
p. 148
- (41) Malthus, Thomas Robert *First Essay on Population: 1798.*
p. 357/8
- (42) Malthus Thomas Robert *First Essay on Population: 1798.*
pp. 358/9
- (43) Malthus Thomas Robert *First Essay on Population: 1798.*
p. 357
- (44) Darwin, Charles *The Origins of Species. The Descent of Man.* pp. 315 & 581
- (45) Malthus, Thomas Robert *First Essay on Population: 1798.*
p. 262
- (46) Malthus Thomas Robert *First Essay on Population: 1798.*
p. 261

- (47) Himmelfarb, Gertrude *The Idea of Poverty - England in the Early Industrial Age*. p. 125
- (48) Himmelfarb, Gertrude *The Idea of Poverty - England in the Early Industrial Age*. p. 125
- (49) Marcus, Steve *The Other Victorians*. p. 31
- (50) Malthus, Thomas Robert *First Essay on Population: 1798*. p. 389
- (51) Malthus, Thomas Robert *First Essay on Population: 1798*. p. 325
- (52) Newsome, David *The Victorian World Picture*. p. 148
- (53) Newsome, David *The Victorian World Picture*. p. 147
- (54) Uglow, Jenny *Elizabeth Gaskell*. pp. 134/5
- (55) Aspin, Chris *The First Industrial Society: Lancashire 1750-1850*. pp. 159/60
- (56) Aspin, Chris *The First Industrial Society: Lancashire 1750-1850*. p. 159
- (57) Read, Donald *The Age of Urban Democracy: England 1868-1914*. p. 250
- (58) Newsome, David *The Victorian World Picture*. p. 74
- (59) Aspin, Chris *The First Industrial Society: Lancashire 1750-1850*. pp. 169/70
- (60) Kidd, Alan *State, Society and the Poor in Nineteenth-Century England*. p. 26
- (61) Himmelfarb, Gertrude *The Idea of Poverty - England in the Early Industrial Age*. p. 81
- (62) Himmelfarb, Gertrude *The Idea of Poverty - England in the Early Industrial Age*. p. 80

- (63) Himmelfarb, Gertrude *The Idea of Poverty - England in the Early Industrial Age*. p. 81
- (64) Himmelfarb, Gertrude *The Idea of Poverty - England in the Early Industrial Age*. p. 81
- (65) Kidd, Alan *State, Society and the Poor in Nineteenth-Century England*. p. 10
- (66) Kidd, Alan *State, Society and the Poor in Nineteenth-Century England*. p. 81
- (65) Kidd, Alan *State, Society and the Poor in Nineteenth-Century England*. p. 50
- (67) Kidd, Alan *State, Society and the Poor in Nineteenth-Century England*. p. 56
- (68) Kidd, Alan *State, Society and the Poor in Nineteenth-Century England*. p. 61

Children of the English Savage

This chapter will argue that nineteenth century English society judged poor children in a more puritanical manner than it did their middle class counterparts. This notion will be supported by the analysis of contemporary hymns, poems, and linguistic usage. The role of worker that was imposed upon vast numbers of working class children will be examined. We shall discuss the conditions they endured and the stages by which compulsory universal education became established. We shall also consider the sexual exploitation of working class girls in the light of the repeated refusal of legislators to raise the age of consent. The reasons for the exportation of many thousands of impoverished children will be discussed to ascertain what the practice tells us about how these young people were perceived.

Society's perception of poor children - "children of the English savage" (1) - while being informed by generally held beliefs associated with their class was complicated by the changing notion of both poverty and childhood apparent from the late eighteenth century. Often the seeming increasing harshness and insensitivity which characterised official dealings with the impoverished, as discussed in Chapter 1, were, as the century progressed, at variance with the growing romanticisation and

idealisation of childhood. Romanticism, trailing clouds of glory, appeared to replace the puritanical emphasis on the inherent wickedness of children, with notions of the young as still possessing aspects of the Divine, from whom they so recently had been sent. The future Cardinal Newman in the 1830s described children as being "fresh from the land of God, living blessings which have drifted down to us from the imperial palace of the love of God." (2) The literary construct of childhood has its basis in and is influenced by the predominant social view.

Romanticism established childhood as a unique phase of human development separate from, but profoundly affecting, adulthood. Society, then, could only demand that working class children fulfil the role assigned to them if it distanced them from the generally held concept of children as young people who were seen to embody the innocence and vulnerability which necessitates the protection and love of the adult world. In order that poor children might not be exploited as workers, or their poverty and suffering go unaddressed, they must be perceived to exist outside the realms of childhood. What might be considered as the new enlightenment was diluted by the revival of evangelical religious opinion in the early nineteenth century. This was a philosophy which insisted on the need to control what was seen as children's natural wilfulness and was further manifested in a distinct intensification of adult demands for obedience and conformity on the part of the young. (3) Chapter 3 will demonstrate how the errant children in Molesworth's fiction were invariably disobedient. It was this attitude that characterised

middle class attitudes towards the young poor. Mrs Alexander in hymn twenty-seven of her collection *Hymns for Children* (n.d.) leaves the worshipper in no doubt as to the qualities she demanded of children:

I love a little modest child,
That speaketh quietly.
That blushes up to its blue eyes.
And hardly answers me.

For pure of heart and innocent,
And teachable and mild,
And modest in its ways and words,
Should be a Christian child.

I do not like a loud rough tone,
A look too boldly set,
A greedy hand outstretched to seize
Whatever it can get.

I'd rather meet with downcast eyes,
Sweet voices low and faint;
For gentleness and modesty,
Becomes a little Saint. (4)

The "I" is the voice of middle class morality which, the very act of narrating a hymn suggests, associates its views with those of the Divine. That the anthem is totally dedicated to the inculcation of

social values indicates not merely a total conviction that the values are absolute, but an underlying fear that they are not being adhered to. If all the young singers were "modest," "teachable" and "mild" - all characteristics which facilitate control - there would be no necessity to warn of displeasure when children became "loud," "rough," "bold" or "greedy." These four adjectives imply a freedom, exuberance and experience that those with "sweet voices low and faint" have never known. They are much more in keeping with descriptions of the working class, a view enhanced by the image in the hymn of "a greedy hand outstretched to seize" not only charity but the Poor Law rates from the wealthy. As Chapter 1 argues, this tax was unpopular amongst the middle classes. Thompson claims that the "coarse language and independent manners of the Lancashire mill-girls shocked many witnesses." (5) Lincolnshire Sunday School teachers confronted with their working class scholars were told to

tame the ferocity of their unsubdued passion - to repress the excessive rudeness of their manners - to chasten the disgusting and demoralising obscenity of their language - to subdue the rebellion of their wills - to render them honest, obedient, courteous, industrious, submissive, and orderly. (6)

We see such transformation as implied in this quotation in Hocking's male protagonists, as Chapter 5 will demonstrate.

The hymn seeks to reform, not the sinner, but those whose

behaviour is socially unacceptable. In a similar manner Molesworth teaches her readers the attitudes and conduct consistent with a middle class status, as Chapter 3 will argue. The "I" is more than an adult seeking to guide an erring child, it is a social superior demanding class conformity. As Mrs Alexander says in hymn thirty of the same collection, her demand is for "Children bred in lowly cot" to be

modest, meek, and quiet ,
And contented with their lot.

Within nineteenth century middle and upper classes there is a constant demand for placidity from the working class child, even to the extent that any discontent is deemed ungodly. The Sadler's Committee in 1831-2 were told that during a spinners' strike in Manchester manufacturers toured the local Sunday Schools telling the pupils it was a sin to "withstand their employers, that they ought to be subject to them." (7) These concerns come from a class unnerved by decades of sporadic civil disturbances from, as it were, the parents of Sunday School scholars. To engineer the children's conformity would result in a generation free from the rebellious notions of their parents. (In the wake of the concept of the Romantic child there was even a hope that the pious child would reform the erring parents. (8)) This in turn would ensure the safety and the continued social and material privilege of the middle classes. Mrs Molesworth approves of her working class character, Mickey, in her novel *Farthings*, because his ambition to be a servant is seen as his

embracing his social inferiority, as Chapter 3 will argue.

You must be content and quiet
Your appointed status in,
For to envy, or to covet
Other's goods, is mortal sin. (9)

There can be no ambiguity as to the hymnist's meaning, nor her intended audience here. Gone are the oblique references that characterised hymn twenty-seven. Here she confronts the children of the poor and dictates their conduct - "You must." The central images of the piece are the "lowly daisy," (no doubt flowering outside the "lowly cot") and the "lilac blossoms," which, both literally and figuratively, are found blooming "on high," above the common daisy in the floral and social hierarchy. It is inconceivable that Alexander attributes covetousness to the middle class singers of her hymns as the working classes have so few possessions with which to excite the envy of their social superiors. It is rather an implied threat, as embodied in the phrase "mortal sin," to the young poor, and underlines the inviolability of both middle class positions and middle class possessions.

The sternness with which Alexander views her young social inferiors is shared with others of her class. Mrs Trimmer in 1787 saw it as "a disgrace to any Parish, to see the children of the poor, who are old enough to do any kind of work, running about the streets ragged and dirty." (10) Inherent in the statement is not

merely a criticism of idleness, for the children are not idle, but "running about the streets." Underpinning the quotation is a puritanical condemnation of unregulated pleasure, of the children's enjoyment of spontaneous play. Intimately bound up with this notion is the fact that the children were "ragged and dirty." This is no mere observational detail, but the nub of Trimmer's objection, for hers is no blanket condemnation of youthful vivacity, but a deploring of the poverty-stricken young amusing themselves. The implication is that it is their duty to attempt to ameliorate their and their family's poverty by their toil, and authority's responsibility to see that they do so. Upholding Trimmer's convictions, the Philanthropic Society, established in 1788 to "rescue criminal and abandoned children," regarded "indolence" as the prime source of evil and "industry" as the cardinal virtue. Such attitudes encouraged and sustained child labour. (11) They were integral to the so called gospel of work discussed in Chapter 1.

A contemporary anecdote tells of how millowners warned Pitt that they were unable to pay their taxes due to the high wages exacted by their operatives, and Pitt replies, "Take the children." (12) This may be apocryphal, but it suggests a public perception of governmental cynicism, coupled with the mild amusement, or at least unconcern, of the generality of the public in relation to the employment of children. If a child born into a poor home in the first seventy years of the nineteenth century survived the dangers of his/her environment through infancy and into childhood, the probability was that the child would work for at least part of its

childhood. Molesworth, Ewing, Hocking and Hodgson Burnett all depict working children as an integral part of life. Often their labour took the form of some form of domestic duty which freed the mother to go out to work. In the cotton industry, at least, a woman's wage was generally double that of a child. (13) Lord Ashley, reporting "the testimony of several workwomen," cites M. H., who at "twenty years old has two children, the youngest a baby, that is tended by the other, a little older." (14) Chapter 4 shows Ewing's young Able Lake in *Jan of the Windmill* acting as nurse to his new born siblings. It was the conditions of the children working in the textile industry that forced Parliament, after a "twenty year gap between full knowledge of the facts" to begin "effective action." (15)

Young workers, in addition to having to endure the long hours and unhealthy and arduous working conditions of their elders, had specific dangers and hardships imposed upon them because of their immaturity, both in the physical and psychological sense. The Central Commission found that manufacturers began to employ children as young as five, and that the average working day was fifteen hours, exclusive of mealtimes. (16) In Ewing's novel *Jan of the Windmill*, Jan begins work at six years old as a swineherd, as did his foster brother before him. Francis Sharp, a surgeon from Leeds, in his testimony to the Central Commission described deformities suffered by children that were unknown in his medical practice in other parts of England and which developed only after the child started to work in the mill. "Thus far I have seen about a

hundred cases, and can most decidedly express the opinion that they are the consequence of overwork." (17)

The regime that demanded of children that they remain productive for an extensive period each day relied largely on fear to ensure the co-operation of young employees. William Hall, who began working in the mill at the age of seven, remembers being knocked down "and brutally kicked when prostrate." For being late he was beaten, scourged and kicked "a length of time that would appear incredible were I to name its duration." (18) Not surprising, then, that a correspondent of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Co-operation in April 1832, described how he and a friend, when walking home from a dinner at 2.00 a.m., found a seven-year-old girl shivering outside the factory gates, waiting for them to open. Having been beaten for lateness, she was determined she would be on time. (19)

Such atrocious treatment as child workers endured was not merely endemic in the workplace; it was also very often institutionalised. Speaking before the Sadler's Committee about the discipline in the mills, Joseph Hebergam from Huddersfield explained that there were in his place of employment three overseers, one in overall charge, one to grease the machines, and "there was one kept on purpose to strap." (20) Similar forms of control were used in other areas of work. Mrs Burrows recalls how in Lincolnshire in 1853

children as young as five worked in agriculture. "We were followed by an old man carrying a long whip in his hand which he did not forget to use." (21) The physical punishment of working class children is featured in Hocking's fiction, while that of middle class children is discussed by Molesworth and Ewing.

The practice of children working belonged almost exclusively to the poor. It was an economic necessity for a large section of the population, at least for the first two thirds of the century. Poverty, as we shall see, not only resulted in children being forced to work, but was also instrumental in the early deaths of many young people. With the effects of underprivilege added to bad sanitation, and an insufficient supply of pure drinking water which characterised much of the nineteenth century, disease and premature death were inevitable. The average age of the 5,597 working class people who died in Liverpool in 1840 was fifteen, and of the dead, sixty-two per cent died before the age of five. Illness and death of both working class and middle class children are featured in the work of Molesworth, Ewing and Hocking, and Hodgson Burnett discusses it in her autobiography, as we shall see in the succeeding chapters. Manchester's rates for child mortality were marginally better than those of Liverpool, with fifty seven per cent of the labouring classes dying before they were five, before, that is, the hardships of a working child's life could cause their demise. (22) Several of Hocking's pious children die from diseases exacerbated by poverty and neglect. A

large proportion of the deaths was due to a lack of adequate sanitation. John Simon, reporting to the Privy Council in 1858, stressed that if only a few simple sanitary faults were corrected throughout the country, the average death rate could be reduced by at least 100,000. (23) One of the first cities to implement strategies for sanitary reform was Manchester, albeit in the flawed and inadequate Sanitary Improvement Act of 1845. (24)

It was around the middle of the century that scientific evidence began to emerge that drinking water contaminated by faecal discharge could cause typhoid and cholera. In his paper of 1849 entitled "On The Mode of Communication of Cholera," John Snow, Queen Victoria's anaesthetist, discussed the possibility of the dangers of waste material from cholera patients permeating the ground and infecting water supply. (25) Ewing's interest in disease spread by infected water is manifest in several of her works for children, as Chapter 4 will show.

The repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846, the rise in incomes during the second half of the century, and the import of cheap foodstuffs (26) combined with sanitary reform and improved housing to enhance and expand the life of the working classes, and, indeed, of the nation. A better diet, an increased amount of food, and a delay in beginning work, resulted in an improvement in the health and life expectancy of children. With an increased resistance to disease, even childhood illnesses,

while still claiming the lives of many young people, were less virulent. Scarlet fever, one of the most deadly of common ailments of childhood, showed a steep decline in the figures for 1885 compared with those of 1859. In the former year, 36,273 per million children in the age group birth to five years in England and Wales had died from the disease. In 1885 the number had dropped to 3,681. (27) Chapter 3 will argue that Molesworth used the fact of such a toll on young lives to underpin her portrayal of errant children who bring contagious diseases into the home. Diphtheria, while reduced to a low of 120.8 deaths per million in England and Wales in the period 1871-75, rose, before finally being eradicated at the turn of the century when diphtheria antitoxins came into general use. (28) Towards the end of the century, too, both the death rate and the birth rate were declining for textile workers in the north of England. For the years 1871- 1881 the birth rate was 36.9 and the death rate 23.8. For the period 1891 - 1901 there was a decline to 27.8 and 19.4 respectively. (29)

The Factory Act of 1833 extended its remit to all textile factories, excluding the silk mills. Under the law children under nine were forbidden to work, and nobody under the age of eighteen could be employed for more than twelve hours per day. For the first time inspectors were appointed with powers that had legislative backing. One clause in the Act specified that working children must receive a daily period of education, for which the employer could deduct one penny per week to pay the teacher. (30) The instructor was often a worker whose

services were expendable, and who had few, if any, skills, attributes or personal qualities to fit him for the position. The schoolroom itself was often unsuitable, "sometimes in a coal-hole," and while the onus was on the inspectors to establish schools, they were given no budget with which to carry out this duty. (31)

Succeeding Acts improved the lives of working children in agriculture (32) and in the sphere of chimney sweeping. (33) But it was the Education Act of 1870, establishing school boards with the power to enforce school attendance, that made a profound impact on the lives of poor children and on the wider society. This was the first attempt to impose comprehensive compulsion in the realm of education. The 1870 Education Act established the principle of the nation's children undergoing full-time education for five years, a period extended to nine years by 1914. (34) Chapter 4 will argue that Ewing was critical of the education offered to both working class and middle class children.

It has been speculated that the desire to bring working class children formally into the sphere of education was not motivated by governmental philanthropy but by the recognition that developing technology rendered the employment of cheap infant labour increasingly unnecessary and uneconomical. (35) By the late 1880s mills began to phase out child labour. One factory in Manchester that had employed 500 young people in 1879 had only 40 in 1889. (36) Yet another school of thought

suggests that education was seen as a form of state control. The necessity of such a strategy is linked to notions of the workers as dissatisfied and potentially revolutionary. The so-called 'fear of the mob,' (37) a condition experienced by many of the upper and middle classes, was linked to the closeness, both in chronological and geographical terms, to the French Revolution. It is a subject that is discussed in Chapter 3 in relation to Molesworth's fiction, and one to which we shall return in the concluding chapter. In an ironic allusion to this in the House of Commons, Robert Lowe, a less than enthusiastic supporter of universal suffrage, confesses that he believes that "it will be absolutely necessary that you should prevail on our future masters to learn their letters." (38) The adolescent characters who are promoted to the middle classes in the fiction of both Hocking and Hodgson Burnett are all seen to attend night school, and thereby "learn their letters", as chapters 5 and 6 will testify.

The Act was not a universally popular piece of legislation, being opposed by the parents of children employed in the textile industry in the north of England, among others. (39) There is evidence to suggest that they, in addition to depending on children's income as an economic necessity, saw it as a parental right that the labour of their offspring was theirs to manipulate as they wished. In Chapter 5 we see how Hocking's young protagonists are made to work in order to finance their guardians' drinking habits. As Horn demonstrates, however, many children enjoyed work. (40) The

act did not herald an era of free education. Not only were families deprived of their children's wages, but minimal school fees had to be found. There is no doubt that, as Purvis maintains, for the poorest families children's wages were "vital for the family's existence." (41) Many children Chapter 4 shows that when Jan leaves school in Ewing's *Jan of the Windmill*, he does so, in part at least, to augment the family income. Martha, in Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden*, is depicted giving her mother her wages to help support her many siblings. Dire poverty continued to exist amongst schoolchildren into the twentieth century. A Leeds doctor, who arranged meals for slum children, after diagnosing scurvy said of them that their condition was typical of those who are underfed. "You have the ill-nourished skin, the ill-nourished hair, the stunted growth, the light weight." (42)

From a situation where fewer than half of the children of school-going age received education in Manchester and Salford in 1867, (43) the results of the Education Act led C. H. Parez, a school inspector for parts of Lancashire, to enthuse at the

large influx of rough and ragged children, and in those bare feet and tattered clothes ... one cannot but hail with inward rejoicing the first unmistakable signs of the great moral good which the recent Act is calculated to do for the poor neglected children that swarm about the lanes and alleys. (44)

But, as Best suggests, compulsion to attend school does nothing to guarantee a satisfactory level of education. (45) There was a sense of education as a product at the end of a specific process, this mirroring the mass-production of the factories. The rigidity of the discipline in schools, with its emphasis on corporal punishment, was reminiscent of the regime imposed on working children, as we have seen. Ewing in her fiction both ridicules and savagely denounces punishment by teachers, while Hodgson Burnett and Molesworth both portray injustice in schools, as chapters 3 and 6 will reveal.

Sunday Schools were probably the most frequented educational establishments before the 1870 Act. Several of Hocking's protagonists attended Sunday Schools and graduated to teaching in the institutions. In 1834 a million and a half children attended classes run by the Sunday School Union, rising to over six million in 1906. (46) They were established to teach reading to poor children in order that they might read their Bibles. (47) Their efficacy as centres of literacy tuition, however, is questionable. The Lancashire writer, Ben Brierly, from Failsworth, near Manchester, remembers how, in the 1830s, his Sunday School teacher was unable to read words of more than two syllables. (48) This level of attainment is similar to that of the Dame satirised by Ewing in *Jan of the Windmill*, as Chapter 4 will demonstrate. After 1850 literacy lessons in Sunday Schools began to be phased out.

The decline was directly linked to the number of children employed in full time labour. (49)

Children whose parents were not affiliated to any ecclesiastical establishment often went to Sunday School. These institutions flourished, especially in London and the north of England, but, as Charles Booth maintained in his social survey, "the very choir boys when their voices crack promptly claim the privilege of men and give up church going." (50) Impoverished boys and girls would attend mission halls for free breakfasts, as two of Hocking's characters do, and, perhaps as teenagers might join a church youth group, a boxing club or the Band of Hope. (51) In the north of England the chances of employment in a cotton mill were often enhanced if the applicant worshipped in the same building as the millowner. (52)

The fact that Sunday Schools were established to address the needs of poor children and society's worries concerning these young people illustrates the preoccupation with class in nineteenth century ecclesiastical circles. That the issue of class dominated religious thinking is manifested in the administration of the church buildings themselves and the common practice of pew-renting. The tradition of levying fees on seats has obvious implications for poor worshippers, who were relegated to "free seats". Congregations could elect to exclude the poor by deciding not to offer free seats. There were working class parishes in Sheffield, Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham, according to the census returns, which had no seating

available for the poor. (53) Edward Miall, in his work *The British Churches in Relation to the British People*, published in 1849, writes, "We have no negro pews, for we have no prejudice against colour but we have distinct places for the penniless, for we have a morbid horror of poverty." (54) The attitude referred to by Miall is often cited as part of the explanation for the majority of working class people not attending church, a finding of the controversial census of 1851. According to the census religious observation was lowest in northern industrial areas. Yet this is not to be confused with religious apathy. One stevedore and his wife described themselves as "one hundred per cent Christian, but not churchgoers." (55)

The relevance for the poor of both established structures of worship and ecclesiastical practices and attitudes began to be questioned by both lay people and clerics in the nineteenth century. Pusey, leader of the Tractarian movement, confessed that had he no duties in Oxford he would "long ago have asked leave to preach in the alleys of London, where the Gospel is as unknown as in Tibet." (56) The Labour Church was established in Manchester in 1891 specifically to attract working people. John Trevor, its instigator, was dissatisfied with the arrangements to accommodate poor people in his comfortable Unitarian church. (57) Some established churches in Lancashire allied themselves to various working class movements. The two Unitarian chapels in Oldham played a major role in the development of working class radicalism in

the area, and Methodist Unitarians, who originated in Rochdale, and the Barkerites from the West Riding of Yorkshire were heavily involved in Chartism. (58) The Primitive Methodists, from whose ranks many politicians and Trades Union leaders came, were said by George Edwards, who benefited from their influence, to have "done so much for the uplifting of the toiling masses of England." (59) It is a theme discussed in Chapter 5 in relation to Hocking's destitute protagonists.

The power and influence of various churches was seen to dominate education provision prior to the 1870 Education Act. The Commission of 1858 to 1861 found that the Church of England ran nine-tenths of the elementary schools in the country, catering for three-quarters of school going children, the Roman Catholic Church, five and a half per cent, and the Wesleyan Chapels, four per cent. This close relationship between the church and education was disapproved of by many working class activists. On August 27th 1868 at a Trades Union Congress conference a resolution was proposed that nothing but a system of free, national, unsectarian and compulsory education would satisfy the people of the United Kingdom. (60)

By very definition the children occupied by either work or education were under the control of society. The so called "street children," who were engaged in neither, put themselves beyond the bounds of childhood by seemingly being independent of

adults. Groups of poor children in public places elicited responses which were suggestive of mistrust and anxiety. Prior to his establishing his Sunday School, Robert Raikes witnessed "multitudes of children" prowling the streets "in the shape of wolves and tigers." (61) In the late 1850s Lord Ashley sees them as "bold and perty, and dirty as London sparrows, but pale, feeble, and sadly inferior to them in plumpness of outline." "Spitalfields," he testifies, "teems with them like an ants' nest," while in Lambeth and Westminster, "we find the most flagrant traces of their swarming activity." (62) Raikes perceives these children as predatory, patrolling their territory, ready to pounce and devour the very fabric of society. Metaphorically, they were hunted down, and if not shot, then captured, tamed and neutered by the Sunday School system. From bestial images Lord Ashley descends to a lower form of life, that of the insect, using the word "swarming" not just to denote multitudes but to convey distaste. In a similar fashion Hodgson Burnett uses the images of rodents to characterise both adults and children of the working classes, as Chapter 6 will argue.

This juvenile sub-culture commanded abhorrence and fear from middle class observers. Himmelfarb asserts that "ragged and dangerous classes" were often "lumped together," linking the extremes of poverty with social upheaval and unrest. (63) In a phrase which suggests their separation from the mainstream of society, Lord Shaftesbury talks about the "tribes of lawless freebooters" who render "the state of society more perilous than in any former day." (64) With the palpable fear of revolution, one

writer claimed in 1849 that "we have a class as wild, and even more incorrigible than those spawned forth by the dangerous classes in Paris." (65) There are intimations of this notion in Hocking's fiction and, as we have seen, in Ewing's depiction of young Londoners.

In spite of his stereotypically Romantic depiction of the Irish woman in *The Water Babies*, Charles Kingsley's writing contains images of both working class children and the Irish which suggest they are both sub-human. On July 4th, 1860, while on a visit to Ireland, Kingsley, in a very short diary entry, describes the Irish poor as "human chimpanzees" and "white chimpanzees." (66) This is in stark contrast to Ewing's affectionate portrayal of the Irish in her work, as Chapter 4 indicates. In *The Water Babies*, first published in 1863, Tom, descending the wrong chimney, finds himself in the virginal surroundings of the "sweet young lady's room." Catching his reflection in a mirror, he sees not a boy covered in soot, but "a black ape." (67) In November 1859 Kingsley had the "unexpected honour" of receiving a copy of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species*, sent by the author himself. So impressed was Kingsley that in a letter of thanks he confessed his readiness to "give up much that I have believed and written" if the book's central thesis convinced him. (68) In a letter to Mr. Bates, dated 1863, the same year as the publication of his classic story for children, Kingsley described himself as "a convert to Darwin's views." (69) It is evident, then, that when writing *The Water Babies*, the author was both familiar with and in agreement with Darwin's contention that apes and men have a

common ancestor. In the light of this it is logical to assume that by allying Tom with an ape, Kingsley is deliberately ascribing to the child, as he did to the Irish, a debased and primitive form of humanity. There is a distinct difference between describing a child as mischievous by ascribing to it the attributes of a monkey, as the petulant Miss Ingram does to Adele in Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* (70) and Kingsley's factual description of Tom's reflection. It is because the description is factual rather than metaphorical that it is capable of containing such a strong moral sentiment. Darwin presumably sent Kingsley a copy of his book on the strength of Kingsley's scientific reputation. Kingsley was both a scientist of repute and a practiced and celebrated writer. It cannot be validly argued, therefore, that the insertion of the image of a monkey at this historical juncture was random, nor, in the context of a story which charts the protagonist's moral progress, that it is not suggestive of human and moral degeneration.

"Savages" was the most common designation for the impoverished young, and one which linked them to the adult poor, as we saw in Chapter 1. Hodgson Burnett describes a destitute child as a savage in *A Little Princess*, as Chapter 6 will demonstrate. Propounding this theory in his work *The Descent of Man*, Darwin claims there is a "vast distance" in morality and intellect "between the highest man of the highest race and the lowest savage." (71) It is a notion central to England's role as a colonial power in the nineteenth century.

From the 1840s the notion of the savage facilitated the formulation of ideas pertaining to the children and childhood. (72) In the notion of recapitulation, and the similar theory of ontogeny devised by Ernst Haeckel in 1866, a child's development is seen to mirror the evolution of the human race, (73) beginning life as a primitive being, and as he ages becoming increasingly more civilised. There is an echo of this notion in several of Molesworth's novels, as we shall see in Chapter 3. As Benjamin Kidd affirms in 1898 when referring to native colonial people, Britain was

dealing with people who represent the same stages in the history of the development of the race that the child does in the history of the development of the individual. (74)

The use of the term "savages" to denote street children highlighted a genuine problem of abandoned children. In 1840 statistics for Manchester indicated that 3,560 children were found "straying in the street by police," "shoeless, half-naked, uncombed," (75) while Parliamentary reports maintained that in Leeds street children sported a "spirit of lawless insubordination," and Sheffield had a "great number of vagrant children prowling about the street." (76) Hocking's novels feature such children, as we shall see in Chapter 5. The language of the official report mirrors society's unease at what can be viewed as an unnatural phenomenon, and therefore all the more frightening. These children were perceived to endanger society. They engendered fear in their elders, rather than being subject to

the discipline imposed by adults. While "insubordination" usually suggests a superficial rebelliousness, when preceded by "lawless" the phrase assumes a more threatening aspect, which sets the young people it so describes outside civilised society by virtue of their refusal to be constrained by the very rules that underpin and seek to protect that civilisation. Seen from the perspective of the society so undermined, "lawless" is a tacit acknowledgement of the community's impotence against what is perceived as juvenile anarchy. The word "prowling," while harking back to the bestial images used by Raikes, reflects society's impression of potential danger, and danger, once again, that is at odds with English culture. While "prowling" is associated with jungles, forests, and wildernesses - the nightmare regions of fairy-tale - its juxtaposition with the word "street," the environment man built for his own convenience and protection, reinforces what is seen as the monstrosity of the threat and the vulnerability of the populace. The notion of the unnatural and dangerous quality of the urban environment is discussed in relation to the work of all the selected authors, and we shall return to the theme in the concluding chapter. The Parliamentary comments confirm the perceived link between the bestial, the savage, and poor and destitute children. A diluted form of this association is seen to varying degrees in the work of all the chosen authors.

One aspect of the notion of the savage in particular, namely his/her association with sexual appetite, discussed in Chapter 1, was frequently ascribed to poor children, specifically working

girls. They were seen as sexually precocious. Chapter 3 argues that Molesworth's denunciation of the vulgarity and implied immorality of the newly emerging middle class girls is associated with their erstwhile connection with the cotton industry and, therefore, the working classes. Just as the descriptions of street children negate their very status as children, so the treatment of working girls sought to define them as older than they were and by doing so sought to distance them, and by extension, their appropriate treatment, from their middle class counterparts, who, in the increasing idealisation of childhood, "were looked on with a reverence that would have been applicable to angels." (77) Chapter 5 will argue that Hocking's middle class heroine in *Her Benny* illustrates this notion. While work for poor girls was a socially approved component of their childhood, the move from the shelter of home into the public sphere of the work-place effectively separated them from their perceived innocence, attributing to them instead an aura of knowingness and sexuality. (78)

Mayhew's work *London Labour and the London Poor* comprises a series of articles originally written for *The Morning Chronicle* between 1849-50. In his preamble to his interview with the "watercress girl," the journalist observes, "although only eight years of age, (she) had lost entirely all childish ways." (79) Speaking of street children generally, Mayhew asserts that "the most remarkable characteristic of these wretched children is their extraordinary licentiousness." It is a notion consistent with Ewing's portrayal of young Londoners discussed in Chapter 4.

From his observation Mayhew concludes

that the age of puberty, or something closely resembling it, may be attained at a much less numerical amount of years than that at which most writers upon the human species have hitherto fixed it. (80)

While this is an allusion to the widely held belief in the asexuality of children, which amongst others Dr Acton propagates in his 1857 publication *Disorders of the Reproductive Organs*, it also suggests a sexual precocity which the author finds shocking, so disturbing that he seeks a revision of specialist knowledge as it seems to flout a biological law.

To view working class children as sexually mature and sexually rapacious is to divest them of one of the central properties of being a child, and therefore to make it legitimate to engage them in sexual relations. Yet the fact that "girl virgins were highly prized " (81) (the rape of a virgin was commonly seen as a cure for venereal disease) (82) would suggest that central to the pleasure was the notion that it was a child who was being violated. Speaking of Leonard Smithers, the publisher, Oscar Wilde maintained "he loves first editions, especially of women: little girls are his passion." (83)

To satisfy those who shared Mr. Smithers' "passion" - and at £20 such luxuries were out of the reach of working men - girls were sought from the lower classes; as Pearsall expresses it, "the

thing was to catch them young." (84) The London Society for the Protection of Young Females recorded 2,700 cases of venereal disease in three London hospitals in girls between the ages of eleven and sixteen, and the same society identified 400 individuals who "procure a livelihood by trepanning females from eleven to fifteen years of age for the purposes of prostitution." With 500 prostitutes under the age of thirteen in Liverpool alone, The Royal Commission of 1871 described the traffic in child prostitution in all large towns as "notoriously considerable." (85)

William Stead, the son of a Congregational minister from the north of England, wrote a series of highly publicised articles on child prostitution for *The Pall Mall Gazette* in July, 1885. "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon," as the articles were called, yoked the cause of child prostitution with that of the raising of the age of consent. Five years before the Stead articles appeared in print, Josephine Butler discussed the traffic in young girls between England and the brothels in Belgium. (86) In English law it was not illegal to induce a girl over the age of thirteen to become a prostitute, and as the act of prostitution took place in continental Europe, no English law had been violated. (87) A Criminal Law Amendment Bill to outlaw the practice of the procurement of girls and women to work in foreign brothels, while passed by the House of Lords, foundered in the House of Commons. It was the same Parliament that had repeatedly refused to raise the age of consent, set as it was at twelve in the thirteenth century and not changed until 1875, when it increased to thirteen. Although the law had been altered, its infringement

was not viewed as serious. While it was an "offence" to have intercourse with a child under ten, it was merely a "misdemeanour" if she was between ten and thirteen. (88)

In order to test the veracity of the claim of trafficking in child prostitutes, Stead bought a young virgin in London, this act forming the basis for his articles. Such a public outcry ensued that several months later Parliament raised the age of consent to sixteen, and widened police powers against brothels and procurers. (89) Evidently in Parliament the nation's anger had overcome the members' inconvenience, as manifested in the debate to increase the age of consent in 1884. One noble lord ventured that "very few of their Lordships ... had not when young men, been guilty of immorality," and expressed the hope that they would pause before passing a clause "within the range of which their sons might come." (90)

Two years after the enactment of this legislation, which was designed to protect working class girls from the evils of prostitution, John Everett Millais painted "Bubbles," the picture used by Pears to advertise their soap, which encapsulates the Victorian's romanticisation of childhood. It is a romanticisation that spills over into the often semi-erotic portraits of poor children. In 1859 Charles Dodgeson photographed Alice Liddell as a beggar. (91) The picture reveals that the rags in which she is dressed have slipped down to reveal a bare right shoulder, while the left hand side of her bodice barely conceals her undeveloped girlish chest. Leaning against a wall that is as battered as her

clothing, her right hand is cupped to receive a proffered donation and her left hand is on her hip in what is usually a bold gesture of assertion, even defiance. Alice's rags expose her legs from the knee downwards and show her left leg slightly raised on an overgrown flower-bed, containing common, gaudy nasturtiums, while her right leg touches the ground in such an attitude that it is obvious she is leaning against the wall. Her feet are bare. Both her facial expression and the casualness of her posture are at odds with the position of her two upper limbs. While the attitudes they strike suggest both purpose and determination, her lack of muscular tension and her expression are those of a moderately bored child no longer enamoured of her occupation. Given these discrepancies it would seem reasonable to assume Dodgeson imposed upon Alice both the costume and the attitude.

Conversely, opposite page 183 of Horn's book *The Victorian Town Child* is a photograph of a "juvenile prostitute" wearing an evening dress and staring alluringly from the picture. An attempt to contrast, or perhaps counteract, the unnaturalness of her attire is made by the setting of a country lane, and by the child carrying a bunch of flowers, the phallic dimensions of which, however, merely enhance the impression of the girl's sexual availability.

(92)

In the 1870s artists including Francis Whawson and A.E. Mulready produced sentimental representations of urban children, and in a book called *The Children of the Town* the author does little to disguise his erotic fantasies.

Childhood is always beautiful, but in the town it assumes a form found nowhere else. It is a kind of essence of childhood distilled free from all reserve, all shyness, all restraint. In their every action is visible an utter self-abandonment to the transient emotion of the moment; they resemble some musical instrument which can be made to yield at will sounds of joy and sounds of sorrow, and, like that instrument also, they are as little permanently affected by the old tunes when once they cease to be heard. In this responsiveness lies the charm they have for others and the danger they are to themselves. (93)

Both the charm and the danger are encapsulated in Hocking's description of destitute children eating a free breakfast in *Chips*. The scene is discussed in Chapter 5.

In tandem with such lush and erotic sentiments, society employed very different usages to describe the children of the poor. In Mayhew's writing the terms "race" and "tribe" appear frequently and are used interchangeably. Three years before the publication of *London Labour and the London Poor*, Lord Ashley wrote about "the tribe" of children that "walks the streets of the metropolis." (94) Mayhew often refers to the poor as "residuum," a not uncommon label, and one which originally was used to refer to sewage. "Waifs and strays" is a phrase which dates back to the middle ages, when it referred to ownerless property, not

being used to denote destitute children until the 1860s. (95) Dr Barnardo's published account of his first meeting with a street child is entitled *My First Arab*, from the common designation "Street Arab." (96) Poor children were also dubbed "kaffers," and "hottentots," and the ubiquitous "savage" did not begin to lose any of its popularity until after the turn of the century. (97) Hocking uses similar sobriquets to denote working class children in his writing, as Chapter 5 demonstrates.

The derivations of the common appellation "waifs and strays" and "residuum" suggest these children are seen as disgusting, as worthless, as pollutants, the waste materials of a society that wishes for their removal. "Tribe," "race," "kaffers," "savages," and "arabs" imply an inferior foreignness. The labels immediately denounce those so described as unEnglish, the suggestion being that those so described are so uncivilised, so debased as to make it impossible to encompass them within the nation without negating the virtues England was seen to embrace. In Hocking's so called "Street Arab" novels it is only conversion to religion that saves the protagonists from being viewed thus.

The linguistic association of the poor with the indigenous peoples of other lands continued in the religious sphere. Evangelical churches established "missions" in large towns and cities, and "missionaries" were sent to the slums. Chapter 5 discusses Hocking's involvement with such a mission. As late as 1890 General Booth of the Salvation Army wrote a book entitled *In Darkest England and The Way Out*, the title being an allusion

to Stanley's *Darkest Africa*. The darkness of the title is a metaphor for England's moral degeneracy manifested in its treatment of the poor. Booth writes about

its momentous darkness, its malaise and its gloom, its dwarfish de-humanised inhabitants, the slavery to which they are subjected, their privations and their misery. (98)

The salvationist's attitude is sympathetic, "dehumanisation" being attributed to environmental considerations rather than to inherent characteristics.

It was England's rulers and legislators, however, who were denounced as unEnglish in the first half of the nineteenth century by those agitating for the improvement of conditions for working children. In her poem "The Cry of the Children" (1843), Elizabeth Barrett Browning not only echoes the weeping of William Blake's eponymous child in "The Little Boy Lost," but in effect reproduces that poet's incredulity and anger which resonates in the poem's last line, "Are such things done on Albion's shore?" Denouncing the cruelty of sending young people down coal mines, Barrett Browning ends her first verse with the lines,

But the young, young children, O my brothers,
They are weeping bitterly!
They are weeping in the play time of the others,
In the country of the free.

Equating England with liberty is seen in popular patriotic songs of the period, in, for instance, Thomas John Dibdin's "The Tight Little Island":

Daddy Neptune one day to Freedom did say,
"If ever I lived upon dry land,
The spot I would hit on
Would be little Britain."
Said Freedom, "Why that's my own island." (99)

There was amongst the government's critics a feeling that the systematic ill-treatment of the young would extract retribution. Oastler argued passionately that "if England refuses to interfere in this matter, the God of the little children will strike her, powerful as she is, and make her tremble." (100)

While the plight of working children began to elicit sympathy, as we have seen, street children were perceived as undermining civilised society. In Parliament in 1848 Lord Ashley suggested that such individuals should be made to emigrate to Australia, a practice that had begun for delinquent children in 1717. In the nineteenth century voluntary societies promoted the emigration of destitute but law abiding children, (101) suggesting a link in the nineteenth century psyche between poverty and criminality. Echoes of this association appear in the works of Molesworth, Hocking and Hodgson Burnett, as Chapters 3, 5 and 6 will demonstrate. As if to emphasise the point even more strongly,

young inmates from Parkhurst prison were given the option to have part of their sentence waived in exchange for working in the colonies. Like their felonious peers, child paupers were shipped to England's underdeveloped protectorates and apprenticed to settlers. (102) The identical treatment of the two groups was seen as a good thing. (103) While the practice of sending juvenile offenders to the colonies was abandoned, reformatories - schools for children thought to be in danger of offending - and industrial schools continued to export their graduates. (104) The Poor Law Act of 1850 provided for the emigration of "any poor orphan or deserted child under the age of sixteen having no settlement." (105) An anonymous poem, "The Departure of the Innocents," published in the periodical *Our Waifs and Strays* in August 1887, typifies Victorian views towards child emigration. In addition to the association of poverty and criminality the verses contrast what was considered the unhealthy and immoral environs of the city with suggestions of the physical and spiritual wholesomeness of the open spaces of the colonies. In the work of all the authors chosen here for discussion the urban is viewed in similar terms and contrasted with what is perceived as the morally and physically healthy and innocent environment of the countryside, as we shall see. The number of repetitions of the poem's opening phrase, however, leaves the reader in no doubt that the urgency implied is not for the benefit of the young emigrants, but for a society which wanted to rid itself of an offensive problem, despite the title of the work.

Take them away! Take them away!
Out of the gutter, the ooze, and slime,
Where the little vermin paddle and crawl,
Till they grow and ripen into crime.

Take them away from the jaws of death,
And the coils of evil that swaddle them round,
And stifle their souls in every breath
They draw on the foul and fetid ground.

Take them away! Away! Away!
The bountiful earth is wide and free,
The New shall repair the wrong of the Old -
Take them away o'er the rolling sea. (106)

Annie Macpherson, daughter of a Quaker schoolteacher, opened her Revival Home in London *circa* 1869. So successful was the venture that her sister founded a similar institution in Liverpool. In 1870 they exported 146 children to Canada, a number that rose to 461 in 1871. (107) According to Andrew Doyle, sent to Canada to inspect conditions experienced by the Macpherson charges, amongst the young people were “ “Street Arabs” whom they, or some other charitable society, had swept off the streets into one of the many Voluntary Homes which had sprung up for the care of children. There was no strict requirement regarding consent of the street children to being sent abroad.” (108)

In 1882 the Liverpool home was taken over by Dr Barnardo who,

before the advent of the First World War, had sent 24,346 children overseas, seven times the number exported by the Waif and Stray Society. (109) Cunningham in his work *The Children of the Poor* asserts, "Barnardo pushed the law beyond its limits, and effectively denied parents any say in the destiny of their children." (110) Indeed, the Poor Law Commissioners' Report of 1909 endorsed child emigration as a means of protecting impoverished children from "degraded and undesirable relations." (111) Such notions of the unsuitability of working class parents to raise children is a recurring theme in Hocking's children's fiction, as Chapter 5 will demonstrate. Molesworth raises the topic obliquely in *Farthings*, an analysis of which is to be found in Chapter 3.

Despite the denial of the rights and emotions of the adult poor, and the exploitation and disregard of the helplessness of their children inherent in child emigration, England had seen an immense change in the way it viewed its children and childhood in the nineteenth century. As late as 1780 the penalty for over two hundred crimes was death by hanging and many children suffered such a fate. On one day in February, 1814, five children between the ages of eight and twelve were condemned to be executed at the Old Bailey alone. (112) In 1802 Elizabeth Salmon, an adult, was tried for receiving baby clothes knowing them to be stolen. She could not be charged with kidnapping the child who was wearing them as child theft was not outlawed until 1814, and then only on the second attempt in a decade. (113) Moving from a position where children generally, and not just

children of the poor, were not deemed important enough to be protected by legislation, several decades later the Sadler's Committee, established to investigate the conditions of young workers, invited children to relate their working experiences. This is indicative of not only a movement which recognised the physical vulnerability of the young and wished to alleviate the severity of the regime for many young people in employment, but one which felt that working children deserved to be consulted, and further, that the outcome of the consultation could inform and educate men of a superior class. Yet the recognition of children as individuals and not chattels of their parents was slower to emerge. It was not until 1889 that the Prevention of Cruelty Act became law, (114) three quarters of a century after animals were given similar statutory rights. (115)

In summary, this chapter demonstrates how poor boys and girls, despite their depiction in the work of writers such as Blake, Lamb and Dickens were not afforded Romantic status by the dominant political culture of the nineteenth century. They were largely excluded from the notions of children and childhood promulgated by the Romantic movement. While middle class children were associated with innocence and purity, images of working class children, especially girls, were eroticised. The link between poverty-stricken young people and criminality in the public mind similarly removed them from conventional concepts of childhood. Destitute street children were viewed as foreign, bestial, dangerous and seditious. Sunday Schools and the imposition of compulsory education attempted the socialisation

of such children. The effective removal of the the impoverished young from accepted notions of childhood allowed society to send such children to work, to use them as prostitutes and to export them in large numbers. The virtual transportation of many thousands of boys and girls merely because they were poor suggests both fear and guilt on the part of society.

The next chapter is the first to examine the work of one of the selected authors. It deals with the fiction of Molesworth. Her attitudes are comparable in many respects to those of Mrs Alexander, several of whose hymns were examined at the beginning of this chapter.

Notes.

- (1) Cunningham, Hugh *The Children of the Poor - Representations of Childhood since the Seventeenth Century*. p. 133
- (2) Cunningham, Hugh *Children and Childhood in Western Society since 1500*. p. 74
- (3) Horn, Pamela *Children's Work and Welfare, 1780-1890*. p. 3
- (4) Alexander, Mrs *Hymns for Children*. Hymn 27
- (5) Thompson, E.P. *The Making of the English Working Class*. p.452
- (6) Thompson, E.P. *The Making of the English Working Class*. p. 441
- (7) Laqueur, Thomas Walter *Religion and Respectability - Sunday School and Working Class Culture 1780-1850*. p. 192
- (8) Laqueur, Thomas Walter *Religion and Respectability - Sunday School and Working Class Culture 1780-1850*. p. 7/8
- (9) Alexander, Mrs *Hymns for Children*. Hymn 30
- (10) Horn, Pamela *Children's Work and Welfare, 1780-1890*. p. 1
- (11) Horn, Pamela *Children's Work and Welfare, 1780-1890* p. 1
- (12) Hammond, J.L. and Barbara *The Town Labourer 1760-1832 - The New Civilisation*. p.143
- (13) Aspin, Chris *The First Industrial Society: Lancashire 1750-1850*. p. 80
- (14) Engels, Friedrich *The Conditions of the Working Class in England*. p. 166
- (15) Best, Geoffrey *Mid-Victorian Britain 1851-75*. p. 135

- (16) Hammond, J.L. and Barbara *The Town Labourer 1760-1832 - The New Civilisation.* pp. 144/6
- (17) Engels, Friedrich *The Conditions of the Working Class in England.* p. 173
- (18) Aspin, Chris *The First Industrial Society: Lancashire 1750-1850.* p. 90
- (19) Aspin, Chris *The First Industrial Society: Lancashire 1750-1850.* p. 93
- (20) Hammond, J.L. and Barbara *Lord Shaftesbury.* p. 16
- (21) Burnett, John (ed) *Destiny Obscure.* p. 61
- (22) Aspin, Chris *The First Industrial Society: Lancashire 1750-1850.* p. 134
- (23) Dyos, H.J. and Wolff, Michael (ed) *The Victorian City - Images and Reality* Rosen, George "Disease, Debility and Death." p 638
- (24) Briggs, Asa *Victorian Cities.* p. 110
- (25) Rosen, George "Disease, Debility and Death." p. 637
- (26) Rosen, George "Disease, Debility and Death." p. 660
- (27) Rosen, George "Disease, Debility and Death." p. 665
- (28) Rosen, George "Disease, Debility and Death." p. 666
- (29) Read Donald *The Age of Democracy - England 1868-1914.* p. 206
- (30) Hammond, J.L. and Barbara *Lord Shaftesbury.* p. 34/5
- (31) Hammond, J.L. and Barbara *Lord Shaftesbury.* p. 39
- (32) Hammond J.L. and Barbara *Lord Shaftesbury.* p. 182
- (33) Hammond, J. L. and Barbara *Lord Shaftesbury.* p. 235
- (34) Hurt, J.S. *Elementary Schooling and the Working Classes 1860-1918.* p. 3

- (35) Best, Geoffrey *Mid-Victorian Britain 1851-75*. p. 135
- (36) Hurt, J. S. *Elementary Schooling and the Working Classes 1860-1918*. p. 191
- (37) Newsome, David *The Victorian World Picture*. pp. 39/49
- (38) Read, Donald *The Age of Urban Democracy - England 1868-1914*. p.94
- (39) Hurt J. S. *Elementary Schooling and the Working Classes 1860-1918* . pp. 190/1
- (40) Horn, Pamela *The Victorian Town Child*. p. 112/3
- (41) Goodson, Ivor F. and Bell, Stephen J. (ed) *Defining the Curriculum - Histories and Ethnographies* Purvis, June "The Experience of Schooling for Working Class Boys and Girls in Nineteenth Century England." p. 91
- (42) Hurt J. S. *Elementary Schooling and the Working Classes 1860-1918*. p. 114
- (43) Hurt J. S. *Elementary Schooling and the Working Classes 1860-1918*. p. 54
- (44) Hurt J. S. *Elementary Schooling and the Working Classes 1860-1918*. p. 69
- (45) Best, Geoffrey *Mid-Victorian Britain 1851-75*. p. 176
- (46) Burnett, John (ed) *Destiny Obscure*. p. 141
- (47) In *Her Benny*, p106/9, however, Hocking emphasises the enjoyment of Sunday School outings.
- (48) Burnett, John (ed) *Destiny Obscure*. p. 142
- (49) Purvis, June "The Experience of Schooling for Working Class Boys and Girls in Nineteenth Century England." p. 96
- (50) Read, Donald *The Age of Urban Democracy - England 1868-1914*. p. 257

- (51) McLeod, Hugh *Religion and the Working Class in Nineteenth Century Britain*. pp. 15/6
- (52) McLeod, Hugh *Religion and the Working Class in Nineteenth Century Britain*. p.32
- (53) Inglis, K.S. *Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England*. p. 8
- (54) Thompson, David M. *Nonconformity in the Nineteenth Century*. p 141
- (55) McLeod, Hugh *Religion and the Working Class in Nineteenth Century Britain*. p. 64
- (56) Inglis, K.S. *Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England*. p. 8
- (57) McLeod, Hugh *Religion and the Working Class in Nineteenth Century Britain*. p. 48
- (58) McLeod, Hugh *Religion and the Working Class in Nineteenth Century Britain*. p. 46/7
- (59) Edwards, George *From Crow-scaring to Westminster*. p. 29
- (60) Hurt, J. S. *Elementary Schooling and the Working Classes 1860-1916*. p. 61
- (61) Cunningham, Hugh *The Children of the Poor - Representations of Childhood since the Seventeenth Century*. p. 37
- (62) Himmelfarb, Gertrude *The Idea of Poverty - England in the Early Industrial Age*. p. 375
- (63) Himmelfarb, Gertrude *The Idea of Poverty - England in the Early Industrial Age*. p. 381
- (64) Cunningham, Hugh *Children and Childhood in Western*

Society since 1500. p. 145

(65) Cunningham, Hugh *Children and Childhood in Western Society since 1500.* p. 146

(66) Kingsley, Mrs Charles Kingsley: *His Letters and Memories of his Life.* p. 326

(67) Kingsley, Charles *The Water Babies.* p. 28

(68) Darwin, Francis *The Life of Charles Darwin.* p. 228

(69) Kingsley, Mrs Charles Kingsley: *His Letters and Memories of his Life.* p. 253

(70) Bronte, Charlotte *Jane Eyre.* p. 218

(71) Cunningham, Hugh *The Children of the Poor - Representations of Childhood since the Seventeenth Century.* p. 125

(72) Cunningham, Hugh *The Children of the Poor - Representations of Childhood since the Seventeenth Century.* p. 123

(73) Cunningham, Hugh *The Children of the Poor- Representations of Childhood since the Seventeenth Century.* p. 127

(74) Cunningham, Hugh *The Children of the Poor - Representations of Childhood since the Seventeenth Century.* p. 128

(75) Cunningham, Hugh *The Children of the Poor - Representations of Childhood since the Seventeenth Century.* p. 103

(76) Cunningham, Hugh *The Children of the Poor - Representations of Childhood since the Seventeenth Century.* p. 105

- (77) Pearsall, Ronald *The Worm on the Bud*. p. 431
- (78) Steedman, Carolyn *Childhood, Culture and Class in Britain - Margaret McMillan 1860-1931*. p. 24
- (79) Mayhew, Henry *London Labour and the London Poor*.
p. 64
- (80) Mayhew, Henry *London Labour and the London Poor*. p.
181
- (81) Pearsall, Ronald *The Worm in the Bud*. p. 431
- (82) Pearsall, Ronald *The Worm in the Bud*. pp. 430/1
- (83) Pearsall, Ronald *The Worm in the Bud*. p. 359
- (84) Pearsall, Ronald *The Worm in the Bud*. p. 360
- (85) Pearsall, Ronald *The Worm in the Bud*. p. 359
- (86) Pearsall, Ronald *The Worm in the Bud*. p. 368
- (87) *Victorian Studies* 21:3 (Spring 1978) Gorham, Deborah
“ “ The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon” Re-examination:
Child Prostitution and the Idea of Childhood in Late Victorian
England.” p. 359
- (88) Gorham, Deborah “ “The Maiden Tribute of Modern
Babylon” Re-examination: Child Prostitution and the Idea of
Childhood in Late Victorian England.” pp. 363/4
- (89) Gorham, Deborah “ “ The Maiden Tribute of Modern
Babylon” Re-examination: Child Prostitution and the Idea of
Childhood in Late Victorian England.” p. 361
- (90) Gorham, Deborah “ “The Maiden Tribute of Modern
Babylon” Re-examination: Child Prostitution and the Idea of
Childhood in Late Victorian England.” p. 365
- (91) Stoffel, Stephanie Lovett *Lewis Carroll and Alice* p. 1
- (92) Horn, Pamela *The Victorian Town Child*. p. 183

- (93) Cunningham, Hugh *The Children of the Poor- Representations of Childhood since the Seventeenth Century.* pp. 159/60
- (94) Himmelfarb, Gertrude *The Idea of Poverty - England in the Early Industrial Age.* p. 375
- (95) Cunningham, Hugh *The Children of the Poor - Representations of Childhood since the Seventeenth Century.* p. 137
- (96) Cunningham, Hugh *The Children of the Poor - Representations of Childhood since the Seventeenth Century.* p. 135
- (97) Cunningham, Hugh *The Children of the Poor - Representations of Childhood since the Seventeenth Century.* p. 108
- (98) Booth, General *In Darkest England and The Way Out.* pp. 12/13
- (99) Dibdin, Thomas John "The Tight Little Island"
<http://www.ingeb.org/songs/daddynep.html/>
- (100) Cunningham, Hugh *The Children of the Poor - Representations of Childhood since the Seventeenth Century.* p. 86
- (101) Pinchbeck, Ivy and Hewitt, Margaret *Children in English Society Vol 2.* p. 546
- (102) Pinchbeck, Ivy and Hewitt, Margaret *Children in English Society Vol. 2.* pp. 546/7
- (103) Pinchbeck, Ivy and Hewitt, Margaret *Children in English Society Vol. 2.* p. 548
- (104) Pinchbeck, Ivy and Hewitt, Margaret *Children in English*

Society Vol. 2. pp. 548/9

(105) Pinchbeck, Ivy and Hewitt, Margaret *Children in English Society Vol.2. pp. 556/7*

(106) Horn, Pamela *The Victorian Town Child. p. vii*

(107) Pinchbeck, Ivy and Hewitt, Margaret *Children in English Society Vol. 2. pp. 564/5*

(108) Pinchbeck, Ivy and Hewitt, Margaret *Children in English Society Vol. 2. p. 566*

(109) Pinchbeck, Ivy and Hewitt, Margaret *Children in English Society Vol. 2. p. 575*

(110) Cunningham, Hugh *The Children of the Poor - Representations of Childhood since the Seventeenth Century. p. 145*

(111) Pinchbeck, Ivy and Hewitt, Margaret *Children in English Society Vol. 2. p. 575*

(112) Pinchbeck, Ivy and Hewitt, Margaret *Children in English Society Vol. 2. pp. 351/2*

(113) Cunningham, Hugh *The Children of the Poor - Representations of Childhood since the Seventeenth Century. p. 55*

(114) Pinchbeck, Ivy and Hewitt, Margaret *Children in English Society Vol. 2. p. 625*

(115) Pinchbeck, Ivy and Hewitt, Margaret *Children in English Society Vol. 2. p. 622*

"Not always very refined" (1): the depiction of the working classes in the children's fiction of Mrs Molesworth

This chapter analyses Molesworth's fiction for the middle class child in order to ascertain the attitudes which underpin her portrayal of the poor. We see Molesworth ally herself to the tradition of female story tellers whose tales both entertain children and attempt to inculcate the moral, religious and social values that enable the young to embrace and eventually perpetuate the principles and standards of their class. What Molesworth portrays as the inherent superiority of the middle classes is conveyed largely through a portrayal of the working classes, which emphasises and endorses the gulf that separates the social ranks. Her insistence on the importance of this division is consistent with the fears of revolution, both social and industrial, which are suggested in several of her novels. Such apprehensions, as we saw in the Introduction and in Chapter 2, were widespread among the middle and upper classes.

Molesworth was born in Rotterdam in 1838, the second child of a "merchant and shipper." She moved to Manchester from Holland just before her second birthday. (2) She lived a mere three-quarters of a mile from the centre of Manchester in a district she describes in her novel *Little Miss Peggy*

(1887) as being characterised by “dark poky” streets. (3) The size of her home and its “far from choice situation,” Green argues, attests to her parents’ lack of affluence. It was not until fourteen years later that her family moved to the suburbs, and in 1861, when Molesworth’s father had become “a man of considerable substance,” they rented West Hall in rural Cheshire. (4)

In several respects Molesworth’s childhood resembled that of Frances Hodgson Burnett. Both were middle class and living in strained circumstances in Manchester in houses that overlooked working class districts. However, Molesworth’s move to the suburbs, which symbolised her family’s growing prosperity, coincided with the Hodgson family’s move to Islington Square in Salford, a move dictated by growing financial hardship. (5) While Molesworth’s family fortunes improved, those of the Hodgsons deteriorated. Monetary constraint, as we shall see in Chapter 6, prompted the removal of the Hodgson family from the suburbs to a district adjoining the city centre, and eventually forced their emigration to America. The differing outcomes of the financial situations which influenced the childhoods of the two authors in part explain their attitude to class. While Hodgson Burnett, as Chapter 6 will demonstrate, suffered from an unresolved dread of social demotion, Molesworth was assured in her social position, although she was distressed by the changes in society due to the Industrial Revolution, discussed in the Introduction, which, she felt,

threatened to undermine it.

Molesworth's reverence for tradition, apparent in her disdainful reaction to modernity, extended to the religious sphere, as is indicated by her work *Stories of the Saints*, (1892) referred to in the Introduction. As I shall argue in this chapter, Molesworth's concept of children and childhood as manifested in her books for the young is akin to that found in the hymns of Mrs Alexander, a fellow Anglican. Watson suggests Alexander derives her portrayal of the young from the work of Isaac Watts, (6) whose verses are suffused with a slightly moderated Puritanism. (7) It is a philosophy that also underpins a great deal of Molesworth's writing for the young.

Much of Molesworth's children's fiction, although not overtly religious, depicts errant child characters who follow a well defined Christian pattern of sin followed by suffering. In *Stories of the Saints*, Molesworth writes "It is indeed only right that even as children we should know something about suffering." (8) The sinner acknowledges transgression and embraces a purer life. She is not always content to allow the story to deliver the message. In many of her novels she confesses she has not the ability to express herself as she would wish to. Often she will address the reader personally, emphasising her didactic intent. In *Hoodie*, for instance, she entreats her readers,

Try, my darlings, every hour and every day, to

behave to each other as you would
wish to have behaved, were this day to
be your last together. Then indeed even the
sore parting of death would lose half its
bitterness - the Kingdom of Heaven would
already have begun in your hearts - the
happy Kingdom where there is neither sorrow
nor bitterness, nor tears - the Kingdom over
which reigns the beautiful Spirit of Love. (9)

It is Molesworth's primary objective to guide her young readers to that "Kingdom", by instilling in them, through story, Christian virtues.

There is in the quotation above an echo of the biblical injunction to do unto others as you would they do unto you. Molesworth adds guilt to this as a spur to obedience, by implying that the hurt and bereavement mourners suffer would be magnified if they had inflicted recent pain on the person who died. Being good and kind will ensure not only that one reaches heaven but also that the pain surrounding the death of a loved one will be diminished. This strategy could only work in an environment such as existed in Victorian society where child death was common, as we saw in Chapter 2. Fiction of the period abounds with such deaths. We have, for instance, Dickens's Little Nell and Paul Dombey, and Helen Burns and her school fellows in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. (1847) One of Hodgson

Burnett's sons died in his early adolescence. In her autobiographical work *The One I Knew the Best of All* (1893) she devotes a chapter to "The Strange Thing", as she dubs death. Two children from the small private school she attended as a child die, and, as was the custom, the small Frances goes to view both corpses, not in the company of an adult (that was not thought necessary), but with a classmate. (10) Alexander's hymn, "The Rich Man Did of Pilate Grave," in her collection *Hymns for Little Children* (1848), uses the Victorian child's familiarity with death to discuss the resurrection of the body. The first verse tells us,

There are short graves in churchyards, round,
Where little children buried lie
Each underneath his narrow mound,
With stiff cold hand, and close shut eye;
Bright morning sunbeams kiss the spot,
Yet day by day, they open not.

As Wheeler points out, what may seem to a twentieth century sensibility graphic and shocking material for children merely reflects a scene witnessed by the vast majority of young nineteenth century worshippers singing the hymn. (11) This is an observation given credence by the figures for child mortality cited in Chapter 2.

It is inconceivable that Molesworth would have been unaware of the high rate of child mortality, even in the

relatively privileged circumstances that she and her readers enjoyed. Indeed, her writing career began in an attempt to overcome the grief following the death of two of her seven children, their deaths separated merely by months. (12) What is equally true is that she would have been conscious that her young audience would have been confronted by the death of at least several of their peers. This might have led to an acceptance of their own mortality. It would have inevitably also have resulted in children feeling insecure and vulnerable, and experiencing dread when confronted with illness. That Molesworth is wholly informed as to the effect of even the threat of contagious childhood disease - and therefore of the dramatic impression its portrayal would be likely to have on the child reader - can be ascertained by the reaction of the guardians of those of her fictional children threatened with illness. In *The Girls and I* (1892) when Mother suspected her children had whooping-cough, we are told she "looked very grave." (13) After diagnosis of the disease the narrator, describing the atmosphere in the house, says, "there was a strange and solemn feeling." (14) On learning that her daughters had been exposed to scarlet fever, Hoodie's mother had "tears in her eyes." (15) Their response is consistent with the knowledge of the high mortality rate associated with childhood illnesses as discussed in Chapter 2.

In the short story, "Good-Night Winny," in which the protagonist, visiting her relation with her sister, becomes ill

and dies within two days, we are told of her young aunt who nursed the child, that her face, "had grown white." (16) The story is a fictionalised account of the death of the author's daughter, Violet, to whom the collection in which it appeared is dedicated. Molesworth describes it poignantly as "a narrative of my own children as literal as can be." (17) (It is an interesting comment on the normality of child death and illness featuring in nineteenth century children's fiction that in the collection *Tell Me a Story* [1875] the short stories "Good Night Winny," and "Mary Ann Jolly," which features a girl struck down with fever, are separated by a story entitled "Con and the Little People," without, presumably, the publisher being aware of any incongruity.) Molesworth uses the natural and understandable fear of illness and death in a number of her realist novels to instil in her readers the dangers of sin.

The eponymous heroine in *Hoodie* (1882) is a child so young that her speech is characterised by ungrammatical baby talk (even though people around her speak perfectly grammatically). Her reprehensible conduct, a result of feeling herself unloved, ensures that her family share her unhappiness. Hoodie Caryll's disturbed behaviour is interpreted as "naughtiness" - a word shamefully overused by the author - by those who care for her, and the child's refusal to take responsibility for her infantile crimes increases their seriousness: "I didn't make myself. Tisn't my fault. God should have made Hoodie gooder." (18)

Feeling that reality is so painful, this "autocrat of the nursery" (19) takes refuge in fiction, weaving, as befits her name, fantasies of a "Grandmother in a cottage." (20) Escaping from the garden where her nurse had trusted her to play, Hoodie, in a journey from reality to the ideal, heads for the woods in search of this appealing refuge. The little girl, like her fictional equivalent, Little Red Riding Hood, is now associated with disobedience. The wood that Hoodie enters, although intimidating, is seen not as a punishment for this disobedience but rather as a division between Hoodie and her middle class world and that of the working class, for the cottage at the end of her journey contains not a grandparent, but a baby and its young mother, the family of a labourer. It is here she finds the unalloyed warmth, understanding and kindly indulgence that had eluded her at home. There Lucy, the Carylls' maid tells her, "everybody would love you ... if you'd try to be a good and obedient little girl." (21) This suggestion of love altering when it alteration finds, for a child anyway, is not confined to Lucy. Speaking of church, Alexander, in one of her hymns for children, tells the young worshippers,

"And the great god will not love them
Who forgets his presence there." (22)

That Hoodie chose not to take the servant's advice is

manifest when she again visits the labourer's cottage against the expressed wishes of her nurse. Significantly, it is at a period when, because of the death of her pet bird, which she blames on God, she refuses to participate in the family's various daily religious observations. This ecclesiastical rebellion transmutes into a secular form of disobedience when Hoodie runs away from Lucy and enters the forbidden building. The baby's mother, instead of welcoming Hoodie, urges her to leave. She is fearful that the baby's illness might be contagious. Maudie, Hoodie's sister, arrives to entreat her mutinous sibling to return home.

Scarlet fever comes into the Carlyll household through Hoodie's disobedience, through proscribed intercourse with the working classes. (In *The Girls and I* the narrator says of his nurse, "She's not very fond of things to do with poor children; she's always afraid of us catching illness." [23]) Often in Molesworth's work, when childish wrong-doing is punished by the inflicting of contagious disease, it is not sufficient that the little miscreant becomes ill. Her agony and sense of guilt are often augmented by a virtuous sibling contracting the disease. In *The Girls and I*, John, the narrator, sees his sick sister, Hebe, as an innocent victim, and also infected is "good little Maud, who never did naughty, silly things, or teased anybody." The whooping cough would have been a just punishment for Anne and Serena, who perpetrated "the wild silly thing" (24) - the visiting of a strange house without permission - which resulted in the infection.

As the notion of innocence and guilt implies, disease is portrayed as a penalty imposed for an offence, the physical consequence of what is deemed to be a moral outrage. (It is in keeping with this philosophy that in *Hoodie* the author confesses she prefers the original ending of "Little Red Riding Hood," in which the disobedient child is eaten by the wolf, and not rescued by the woodcutter. [25]) In the works of Molesworth, the characters' "outrages" centre round disobedience and lack of conformity. In the short story, "Mary Ann Jolly," Janet catches fever for merely disobeying her brother's injunction to remain where she is while he gathers flowers. Physical illness, when visited upon a naughty child, is used as a metaphor for moral corruption and disorder. This is a fundamentally different approach to disease from that taken by Hocking, as Chapter 5 will demonstrate. Illness in his child characters is an indication of spiritual excellence, often leading to a heavenly reward. In Ewing's *Flat Iron for a Farthing* the protagonist catches fever from nursing a working class child while his mother goes to buy a blanket. As we shall see in the next chapter, Ewing makes no moral point, but criticises the mother's ignorance for leaving a young boy to tend her sick son.

Maudie's life is balanced precariously between life and death due to the illness she contracted while attempting to extricate her sister from the moral and physical danger occasioned by her visit to the cottage. Hoodie, in desperation, turns again to

God; the linguistic inexactitude, where she replaces "infection" with "affection", perhaps testifies, through a Freudian slip, to the depth of her conviction that she is uncared for.

It wasn't Maudie's fault that she got the affection fever.
It was Hoodie's fault. Oh, please, dear God, make
Maudie better, and Hoodie won't mind if *she* gets the
fever, 'cos it was her fault. Hoodie's been so naughty,
and poor Maudie's good. And everybody loves
Maudie but nobody *can* love Hoodie. (26)

In this echo of Lucy's doctrine of conditional love, we see the child allying herself to belief in the moral dimensions of disease propounded in *The Girls and I*. It is a theory Mrs Caryl supports with her statement that Hoodie "does not know what her disobedience has caused." (27) More importantly, Hoodie's prayer marks the beginning of her spiritual reclamation, as she confesses her sins, repents and embraces the need for reparation. A covenant having been made between the sinner and her God, Maudie recovers and Hoodie becomes "much more ill than Maudie had been." (28)

In the last chapter, entitled "Hoodie Awakes," Molesworth ends her novel with a portrayal of her protagonist's recovery, both physically and spiritually. She regains consciousness immediately after Maudie prays for her sister's return to health, underlining in her prayer how much Hoodie is loved.

(Significantly, it is only after Hoodie is purged by scarlet fever that love is given and accepted.) The story ends with the ousting of exuberant individuality, albeit at times manifested in belligerence. Hoodie the rebel has absorbed middle class Victorian notions of propriety. Her life is a "peaceful one," as she has been transformed into a "simple child," with overtones of dutifulness, humility, subservience and conformity. Hoodie, we are told, "day by day learned new ways in which even she might help and comfort and cheer those about her." (29)

This is a description of the role of a middle class lady, a role Hoodie was destined to occupy, and her creator already did. That her conversion to the Christian ideal is interwoven with the domestic role is central to the message conveyed by Molesworth's books for children. Her philosophy is encapsulated in Alexander's carol "Once in Royal David's City," where she insists,

Christian children all must be
Mild, obedient, good as He. (30)

The word "must" lends the couplet a sense of the imperative, an imperative aimed at its young audience. This is no mere attempt to define "Christian children," but, in the context of the hymn, a demand that they manifest specific qualities. There is no choice, no reaching out to an ideal; the word is not "should," but "must." It is an edict, and all the more

emphatic in the atmosphere of frequent child death and the belief that sin on earth was met with eternal damnation. That Molesworth allies herself with the hymnist's sentiments emphasises the roots of her fiction. Molesworth's treatment of the child made ill by his/her sinfulness finds its roots in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century tracts. Molesworth, however, usually softens the outcome of the child's errant behaviour, allowing repentance and reparation, rather than imposing everlasting torment.

Although saving souls, however young, may have been the ultimate aim of both Alexander and Molesworth, the images employed by both hark back to the domestic. This is a sphere both writers knew about, and one with which the children for whom they wrote would also have been totally familiar. There is a sense, however, in which the relationship of a Victorian child to those who cared for him/her is a reflection of the relationship existing between God and humanity, that similar reverence, that similar duties were owed to parents as to God and to submit to the authority of one, perforce, was to fulfil one's obligation to the other. (It is no coincidence that God is referred to as 'Heavenly Father'.) If this notion were even subliminally passed on to children, the implications for social and familial control would have been profound. As Chapter 5 will argue, Ewing portrays parents as often flawed and confused. Hocking's working class fathers and step-mothers are abusive and cruel, as Chapter 5 will demonstrate.

The third verse of "Once in Royal David's City" places the child Jesus in a domestic setting similar to that recognisable to the carol's young singers.

And through all His wondrous childhood,
He would honour and obey,
Love and watch the lowly mother
In whose gentle arms He lay
Christian children all must be,
Mild, obedient, good as He. (31)

The stanza emphasises reverence for, and submission to, parents, and specifically mothers, rather than duty to God. It has its roots in the commandment "honour thy father and thy mother that" - in the context of Molesworth's sick child characters - "thy days may be long upon the land that the Lord thy God giveth thee." Such a holy and authoritative source, though, is never cited to underscore her directive that "children must". Victorian hymns for children saw social control as a legitimate aspect of their role, as was argued in Chapter 2. Why else would Bishop Walsham (1823-97), in a verse to be sung only by girls, entreat Jesus in their name to,

(O) give that best adornment
That Christian maid can wear,
The meek and quiet spirit,
Which shone in thee so fair. (32)

(These are sentiments that are reminiscent of the reformed Hoodie.)

There is little biblical foundation for the assumption that Jesus' childhood was mild and submissive. Indeed, the only incident relating to the young, as opposed to the infant, Jesus tells of a boy who, without parental consent or knowledge, stays behind in a strange city while his parents and their party journey home. On discovering the absence of their son Mary and Joseph return to find him. Luke chapter 2 verse 40 tells us that Mary said, "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." The episode is hardly indicative of a "mild, obedient" or "good" child in the conventional, and certainly not in the Victorian, sense. This childhood perfection alluded to in Alexander's carol is, then, fiction, or at best assumption, mirroring the hymnist's, and her society's, idea of appropriate childhood behaviour. It is not a divinely revealed pattern.

Death and illness are not the only themes used to instruct Molesworth's young readership. Several of her books which contain didactic stories adopt the style of traditional folk tales, employing many of the motifs of the genre: magic, quest, the transformation of humans into animals, endurance and the redeeming quality of love. In the vast majority of cases the storyteller, as opposed to the novel's narrator, is a grandmother figure who is seen as the repository of wisdom

and tradition, in addition to being an enthralling relater of tales. It is a notion that has its roots in the author's childhood. Referring to her memories of her grandmother, Molesworth writes,

I can see her now, sitting in her favourite window looking out on the lawn of a very old country house in Scotland, with my brothers and myself, and later on a little sister, round her in a group, while she told us 'The Fair One with Golden Locks,' or 'The Brown Bull O' Norrova,' and sometimes stories of her own children when young.

With the death of her grandmother, Green tells us, of the author, "it fell to Louisa to retell the stories to the younger children." (33) The female narrator of tales whose mantle Molesworth assumes and who features so prominently in her work is a magical, moralistic Mother Goose of prose. (It is no accident that the creator of this all knowing, all pervasive female influence is herself a woman.) At her most primitive, she is referred to in the story about her grandchildren, Arminel and Chloe, in *An Enchanted Garden*. (1892) She entreated her charges to, "keep love and pity in your hearts and never let any fear prevent you doing a kind action." (34) Disregarding this advice leads to unhappiness and quarrelling between the sisters, while the girls' adherence to it results in harmony and the alleviation of their poverty.

The old woman who tells the story, Mrs Caretaker, as the children call her, embodies the ambiguity that characterises her kind. Even her name is open to different interpretations. To her young audience, Rafe and Alix, she is called after her occupation, but as a metaphorical overseer of the children's imaginative and moral welfare she assumes a more important role. Her status as mortal or fairy is tantalisingly unclear. She lives in a home reached by an underground passage in a deserted estate which the children hope is populated by fairies. With echoes of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, the tunnel seems to separate reality from fantasy, the mortal world from the fairy one. Mrs Caretaker's house, once reached, is no wonderland, but disappointingly, if reassuringly, recognisable. In its confines, however, the magic of story transports the children to fairy-land, returning with a gem of wisdom loosely woven in with their pleasure.

It is the sound of Mrs. Caretaker's voice, and, significantly, the clicking of her knitting needles that have a mesmeric effect on Alix and Rafe. Knitting, from a puritanical viewpoint, can be seen as a constructive occupation which will excuse the time spent on entertaining children. It has, too, notions of the manufacturing of an imaginative structure; we talk about the spinning of yarns, meaning the telling of stories, or the weaving of dreams. As importantly from Molesworth's perspective, it identifies the telling of stories to children as a female art. In *Carrots - Just a Little Boy* (1876) Carrots'

father and brother are both depicted as "hot-tempered," and "hasty," an allusion, perhaps, to the author's husband's "uncertain temper," one of the grounds for the couple's separation. (35) Molesworth, speaking of men, says, "I do not think on the whole that they understand much about children." (36) The author explains that Carrots' parent left his offspring, "entirely to his wife, and scarcely considered them any of *his* business." (37) The notion of the pre-eminence of women in the domestic and childrearing spheres is one Ewing advocates, as the next chapter will demonstrate. In the work of both Hocking and Hodgson Burnett mothers are idealised, yet the fiction of both authors contains characterisations of maternal figures who are cruel or neglectful. Mary's mother in *The Secret Garden*, in a sense, dies as a direct result of her failure to love for her daughter, while, as Chapter 6 will discuss, Hocking's fictional step-mothers are invariably abusive.

The person whose business it was to look after children in a middle class Victorian household was the nurse. In Molesworth's novel *The Tapestry Room* (1879), set in France, that role was filled by Marcelline. She is both a nanny and a teller of tales, a more sophisticated form of Mrs Caretaker. (*The Enchanted Garden* was written sixteen years before *The Tapestry Room*.) She is, as befits the antiquity of the art of story-telling, indeterminably old: "Marcelline was Jeanne's old nurse, and she had been her mother's nurse too." (38) Her equivalent in *Christmas Tree*

Land, Godmother, confesses, "I am both old and young." (39) The mystery surrounding Marcelline's timelessness and the ambiguity of her human condition is captured in Jeanne's observation, "I don't believe you ever were a little girl." (40)

In addition to her role of *seanchai*, Marcelline is associated with the magic properties of the tapestry which allow Jeanne and her cousin, Hugh, access to adventures in enchanted lands. The last of these adventures takes place in a totally white room, where, reminiscent of the grandmother figure in George MacDonald's *The Princess and the Goblin*, published seven years before *The Tapestry Room*, "Madame," a white haired lady, sitting before a spinning wheel, has been waiting for the children "for three hundred years." (41) As a symbol of her art, she is "old, but not really old." (42) To the lulling rhythm of her spinning wheel, the children sit on the floor, resting their heads on her knee, as they did with Mrs Caretaker. "Once upon a time," allies both children and storyteller to the ancient tradition of which they are all part

The ubiquitous nature of this female tradition is suggested as the hum of Madame's spinning merges with, and then gives way to, the clicking of Marcelline's knitting needles. Hugh awakes with "his face against Marcelline's soft white apron and tries to fancy it the fairy lady's fairy robe." (43) The white of the nurse's apron associates her with Madame, the implied suggestion being that the imagination could transform a nurse into a "fairy lady," and a pair of knitting needles into a

spinning wheel.

But for Molesworth flights of fancy are not the ultimate goal. Godmother in *Christmas Tree Land* (1884) personifies the author's higher aspirations. She displays divine attributes, as her name suggests, and these are added to the qualities embodied in the figure of the wise woman of the nursery. One of the protagonists, young Maia, witnesses godmother as "quite different from godmother as she had hitherto known her." With echoes of Christ's transfiguration, she exudes light, being "right *in* the moonlight, looking indeed almost as if the bright rays came from her." (Again there are echoes of MacDonald's *The Princess and the Goblin* in which grandmother is associated with moonlight.) As if calling a disciple, godmother asks, "Maia, are you ready?" (44) Being assured that she is, the lady dresses her in "sky colour" for a journey in a boat that will take her up to the heavens. Godmother assures her young friend that even though she might be invisible, "I am with you, my child," and Maia's friend Silva assures her three companions in the boat, "Godmother is steering us" (45) through life as well as through the skies.

The divine capacity to create worlds, albeit of the imagination, to influence events therein, and to act as protector, entertainer and moral guide, to be invisible but omnipresent and timeless, is inherent in the role of the children's writer. When the click of knitting needles gives way to the scratching

of a pen, Molesworth is revealed, self-created, as the *doyenne* of the art she extols. The realm of influence of the Victorian woman was largely confined to the domestic sphere, to ruling the world by rocking the cradle, and ensuring the continuation of the values of that world by the teaching of those children within the cradles. (46) The author believes that telling stories, and especially stories to nursery children, is woman's work. The woman may be called gossip, scandalmonger, godmother, nurse or novelist. It is a theme Warner addresses in her work *No Go the Bogeyman*.

Molesworth's young characters are associated with sin either through being punished for their wrong-doings or being taught to avoid evil by moral tales. By contrast, chapters 4, 5, and 6 demonstrate that in the work of the other selected authors there are instances of children bringing their elders back to God, or, in the case of Hodgson Burnett, back to moral goodness. This attitude, as we shall see, is consistent with the way in which boys and girls are depicted in many nineteenth century books for adults.

Adult fiction of the period does not generally ally children with evil. In many of Dickens's novels, *Oliver Twist* (1837) or *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838) for instance, they are portrayed as victims of a corrupt and exploitative adult society, whereas in the case of George Eliot's *Silas Marner* (1861) we have a child depicted as saviour. Eppie, the foundling whom Silas adopts, is associated throughout the novel with the

brightness, optimism, openness, vibrancy and divine radiance of the colour yellow. The blessed naturalness of the relationship between adopted father and child is captured when they walk together through a field of buttercups. To emphasise Eppie's goodness, Eliot depicts her as "seeking and loving sunshine." (47) Silas describes this "new hatched gosling" (48) as his "restored treasure," his "gold - his own gold," (49) replacing, as she does, the stolen hoard of coins he had hidden in the dark, under the floorboards. Metaphorically buried in the blackness with his money, and trampled underfoot, are his human emotions, the exercise of which would have enabled him to care for others and be loved in return. Once exposed to the life-giving light of little Eppie, Silas's social, emotional and spiritual growth match the physical progress of his beloved child.

Silas Marner is not the study of the relationship between an old man and a young child, although this is a central element of the novel. The emphasis, as the title suggests, is on Silas. Eliot depicts the reawakening and growth of a previously isolated and limited human being. The vehicle for Marner's reclamation is a child. "If you hadn't been sent to save me, I should ha' gone to the grave in my misery," (50) confesses Silas to Eppie. These are similar sentiments to those expressed by Ewing's Daddy Darwin to young Jack March in her *Daddy Darwin's Dovecot*, as we shall see in the next chapter. It is utterly appropriate that Eliot quotes Wordsworth at the beginning of her novel,

A child, more than all other gifts
That earth can offer to declining man,
Brings hope with it, and forward looking thoughts.

Eppie is not romanticised or simplified, yet neither in the novel nor in the lines above is there any suggestion of sin, inherent or acquired. Nor is there the notion that children are prone to transgression and if not dissuaded will be in danger of everlasting damnation. Interestingly, the greatest failure of Silas's fatherhood was the lamentable farce when he attempted to punish this child of light by locking her in the coal hole, a foreign notion pressed upon the weaver by a well-meaning neighbour.

In addition to the relationship between child and adult, Molesworth's fiction discusses class in a manner that demonstrates the author's perception of the superiority of the middle classes. In *Carrots - Just a Little Boy*, a novel in which no substantial working class figure features, a remark made to the protagonist by his father is telling. Thinking his little son had stolen money, Carrots' father says, "I must whip you for this. Do you know I am ashamed to think you are my son? If you were a poor boy you might be put in prison for this." (51) Leaving aside the question of the punishment of small children, this speech illuminates the difference in treatment meted out to working class and middle class children in the nineteenth century. While theft by a middle class child could

be dealt with in the family, as we see from *Oliver Twist*, his/her working class equivalent is subject to the terrors of the judicial process and the threat of a harsh penalty. By citing this discrepancy in social fairness in a sentence succeeding the one in which, in a moral sense, he disowns his son, Carrots' father is, by implication, allying his son to a class he perceives as dishonest and morally corrupt. This association of the poor with immorality is a recurring motif in Molesworth's fiction for the young, and, as was demonstrated in Chapter 1, formed a central argument in both Malthus' and Bentham's proposals for the treatment of the impoverished.

The yoking together of the fortunes of a working class boy and a middle class boy is one of the major themes in Molesworth's *Farthings*. The protagonist, Tony, is adopted by his father's godmother, Miss Grandison, when he is orphaned by his father's death. She collects him from the "gloomy, uninviting town" (52) of Liverpool, from the home of a lower middle class woman, where she is received by a poor "general servant, less dirty on the whole than such small people often are." (53) The use of the word "small," suggests an imperious distaste that is not placated by the limited degree of cleanliness of the girl. Miss Grandison chooses to see this quality relatively negatively, "less dirty," ensuring that no praise is attached to either maid or mistress. Appropriately, Tony is whisked off to a rural district of southern England, distancing him socially as well as geographically from that "great smoky manufacturing or

shipping town up in the north." (54)

From Liverpool, Tony takes with him his collection of farthings and under the care of his new guardian adds to them regularly, intending, given his comparative poverty in Liverpool, to donate the money to "some poor boy, poorer and worser off than I was even." (55) The eventual recipient of Tony's generosity is Micky, a boy abandoned as a child on the steps of a caravan occupied by Pete and his wife, Mrs. Pete. Pete is portrayed as a Bill Sykes figure. The impression is underlined by his terrifying Micky into opening Miss Grandison's window so that Pete can steal what he thinks is her gold, but in fact is Tony's farthings.

Pete, like Sykes, is portrayed without subtlety, as having no redeeming features. In just one page of prose, the author has endowed him with stupidity, greed, drunkenness, theft and bad language. He shares many of these characteristics with Hocking's stereotypical working class fathers, as discussed in Chapter 5. We first meet Micky as he is sent to The Black Bull to bring his "uncle" home. On his return home, it is obvious from the text that Mrs Pete asks Micky if Pete is drunk. We are told he says " "No" - in reply to a muttered question from the woman - "he's not that bad." "(56) The question is not stated, the reader is left to surmise. The author, it appears, feels it is acceptable to portray a child in pursuit of a drunk, for he is a working class child, but it is not appropriate for her to articulate to her largely middle class

readership the fact that he had been drinking. This is done by implication.

Even Mrs. Pete, to whom the author is relatively sympathetic, both for her endurance of a bestial husband and for her love for Micky, is not left her dignity. On going to bed, having been roughly dismissed by her spouse, Molesworth tells us, "she lay down just as she was, without any attempt at undressing, and very soon was fast asleep, snoring very likely." (57) The telling phrase "very likely," is not direct authorial reporting, but supposition phrased so that snoring is seen as part of an accepted pattern making up working class mores.

Acquaintances of Pete and his family, the Snells, are the antithesis of their corrupt neighbours. This meets not with authorial rejoicing and approval, but with condescension and incredulity. The Snells, Molesworth tells us, "were, strange to say, a sober pair, and though they were dreadfully ignorant, they were honest," (58) and again, "Mrs Snell had been seen coming out of a post-office at one of the villages on their road with a Savings-Bank book in her hand, though this was *almost* beyond belief." (59) Saving was a growing practice amongst the working classes, as the increase in the number of friendly societies mentioned in Chapter 1 suggests. As with the observations of Mrs Pete, it is the sub-clauses that are so revealing. The phrase "strange to say" detracts from the positiveness of the couple's sobriety and transforms what might have been a statement of

approval of an upright couple into a denunciation of the class to which they belong. Before she concedes the Snells' honesty in the quotation, the author has first to denounce them. Not satisfied with unqualified ignorance, she employs the word "dreadfully," which not only suggests an extreme of ignorance, but also has implications of shame. Similarly, the praiseworthiness of Mrs Snell's monetary prudence is neutralised by the amazement of the chronicler. The phrase "has been seen," spoken before an incident is related, is reminiscent of gossip, a middle class woman repeating rumours of the strange behaviour of the lower classes. Yet these are not stories swapped by ladies over teacups, but prejudices being passed to children by the authoritative, moralistic authorial voice. One must conclude that Molesworth sees middle class obligations in terms of perpetuating a mode of behaviour and cultivating feelings of social superiority.

The exercise of that social superiority which forms such an integral part of *Farthings* entails judging of the poor, and differentiating between those few who are worthy of middle class sympathy and those who are undeserving. It is a differentiation that puzzles Tony. He wonders of his guardian,

why, for instance, she did not at once pay
Thomas Fryer's rent and save his home from
being broken up and his motherless children

separated among relations. *Poor Thomas*, whom Tony had passed on the road, crying and sobbing near the 'Crooked Billet' on the boy's way back from school one day. (60)

The young boy's innocence prevents him from equating the vicinity in which Poor Thomas's lamentations take place with the man's financial and moral ruin. Tony has not yet learned what Mrs Molesworth wishes to teach her readers, that it is the working classes' immorality and self-indulgence that, as it were, distorts their billet, makes their houses uninhabitable, due, we are to infer, to the rent money having been spent on alcohol. If they make their billets crooked, they must lie in them, or, in this case, be evicted from them. They must endure the horrendous consequences that ensue both for themselves and their children.

Both Poor Thomas and his counterpart, Mr Welds, are fleetingly dealt with, and equally stock characters: they are used exclusively to illustrate conventional middle class concepts regarding the lower classes. Their circumstances are reported and not narrated. Tony's guardian tells him that Mr Welds "is not able to do as much work as he would like, owing to being lame." (61) His respectability is signalled by the use of his title, rather than his Christian name, and his association, albeit a thwarted one, through both his surname and the frustration implied in the quotation, with the work ethic referred to in chapters 1 and 2 above. He is both

morally acceptable to the middle class, and highlights their superiority by his disability which renders him an object of their charity.

As earlier in the chapter, we have the outline of a conventional evangelical or temperance tract here, in which the working classes, as we saw in the case of Pete, are inextricably bound to the image of inebriation. Because of their sobriety and prudence, the Snells are viewed as exceptional and therefore perplexing. The adjective "motherless," referring to Poor Thomas's children, is characteristic of the emotional language used in the genre, and in addition to the implied vulnerability, suggests that if Thomas's wife had been alive such a situation would not have occurred. The ability of wives to control their husbands' inherent inclinations towards sinfulness and alcoholism is, as we shall see in Chapter 5, a recurring theme in Hocking's fiction for the young. The depiction of women in the works of the selected authors will also be discussed in Chapter 7.

There is a sense in which Molesworth, again embracing Malthusian precepts discussed in the opening chapter, sees her working class characters not merely as socially inferior, but as alien, as being devoid of human sensibilities. It is a tendency not exclusive to her. Of the squire's son in *Silas Marner*, Eliot observes,

many of the impressions Godfrey was likely to

gather concerning the labouring people around him would favour the idea that deep affections can hardly go along with callous palms and scant means. (62)

Eliot, though, criticises such received prejudice, whereas Molesworth seems to simply endorse it. Just as Godfrey negates Silas's all-consuming love for Eppie, so Molesworth cannot equate the finer feelings which underpin the relationship between Miss Grandison and Tony with those of Micky and Mrs Pete. (Even the title "Mrs Pete" strips Pete's wife of her individuality, and, therefore, her right to be viewed as a person, not merely as a representative of a working class wife.) We are told Micky "loved Mrs Pete too, I suppose, after a fashion." (63) Here are not one, but two, begrudging statements qualifying a positive emotion of this little boy, both suggesting that love is not love when experienced by the lower classes, but an inferior emotion. Tony's attachment to his foster mother, his "dear, dear old friend," as he calls Miss Grandison, is allied to the divine. "He was full of gratitude to God" (64) for the ministration of the old lady. In the true style of a gentleman, Tony, metaphorically, fights a duel in her honour, attacking a schoolfellow who dared to utter a disrespectful word against the woman to whom he owed his happiness as Micky owed his to Mrs Pete.

Similarly, the old lady's rescue of Tony from the squalor of Liverpool was seen as divinely blessed, but Mrs Pete's

similar act of love and generosity in bringing up the abandoned infant, Micky, with very few resources, is seen as an act "low down in the scale," (65) a little kindness but to her credit. The author, like Tony's dishonourable fellow pupils, belittles a woman who rescued a destitute child. Molesworth's comments, however, are, seemingly, legitimised by Mrs Pete's lowly rank, and by a perceived responsibility of writers for children to demonstrate the importance of the upholding of social status by, in this case, devaluing the humanity of her social inferior. The relationship between Micky and Mrs Pete is comparable with that between the working class Mrs Lake and her middle class foster son, Jan, in Ewing's *Jan of the Windmill*. The love between the woman and her children, whether fostered or natural, is all embracing, as will be argued in Chapter 4. It is a devotion Jan reciprocates. Love in Ewing is seen as an emotion common to all classes.

The classes come together in *Christmas Tree Land* (1884) where two middle class children, Rollo and Maia, are sent to a relative's castle to be looked after while their father is away. In the enchanted forest that skirts the castle, they visit a cottage, only visible to those who have the imagination to perceive it. The cottage belongs to their two lower class counterparts, Silvo and Walder, with whom Rollo and his sister become friends. On behalf of her brother, Silvo confesses to their social superiors, "We know we are not the same as you - in the world, I mean, we could not be as we are

here with you, but this is not the world." (66) There is an implied link here between magic and social cohesion; the gap separating the classes is equated with that between the real world and the enchanted one. The possibility of crossing the social divide is as likely as entering fairy-land. It can only be achieved in the imagination.

Beneath the middle class portrayal of working people, as figures of fear, as bogey-men or in some way other, there lies a fear encapsulated beautifully in Molesworth's short story "The Man with the Pan Pipes" (1892) from the collection of the same name. As with much of her work, this tale is openly derivative, this time of Browning's "The Pied Piper of Hamelin." (1842) Like that musician, "silly Davy" was a "furriner," (66) as the other lower class character in the story describes him. He is foreign, too, in the sense that his non-conformity puts him outside society, his origins somewhat explaining his social divergence, as though Englishness is a guarantee of propriety and outside its conservatism lies anarchy. This impression is consistent with the sobriquets given to the working classes and to street children, which, as we saw in Chapters 1 and 2, suggested the unEnglishness of the poor. Since Davy was involved in a road accident, suffered head injuries and had his means of livelihood, his barrel-organ, "busted," (68) like his sanity, he has been roaming the street, clutching the pipes he cannot play and followed by a crowd of jeering children. Addie, the story's middle class narrator, is frightened of Davy.

Addie and younger brother are taken to call on a house in the working class district with her nurse and left outside to watch children playing. Into the street comes Davy accompanied by a group of young followers. Addie is convinced he is "piping them away." (69) Terrified that he will collect her as he passes, she runs off, leaving her sibling exposed to the barbarity of the lower orders. There is a sense in which at the heart of the little girl's fear is not the thought of being forced to enter a strange hillside, but that this demonised exponent of working class culture would pipe her into poverty, into the embrace of an alien people whom she fears, into a working class childhood. Plotz describes the child exploitation she sees at the centre of "The Pied Piper" as a lament "for the lost labouring children ... sacrificed to the greed of the "Mayor and the Corporation." "The needs of the state," she claims, "lump them with vermin." (70) The fact that poor children and rats were often equated was demonstrated in Chapter 2 and in Chapter 6 we shall examine Hodgson Burnett's use of the image to denote the working classes of all ages. Chapter 7 will further analyse her use of such imagery.

Addie becomes lost and encounters a poor householder, who "was almost a dwarf, and with a slight hump on her shoulders." She does, however, fulfil the criteria set down by the author for being tolerable enough to expose to young middle class readers; she is "clean." (71) (Addie was allowed to watch the children play in the street only because

her nurse, the personification of middle class propriety, saw they were "clean, tidy-looking children." (72) Taking the distressed child into her home, the woman listens to Addie's fears, fears the girl had been unable to speak about in her own home. When she "heard the poor crazy piper spoken of in a matter-of-fact way," (73) her fear of Davy and, symbolically, of the class he represents, is allayed.

Of the working class characters in the story one is insane and the other deformed. It is no accident that the protagonist had been reading Grimm. The distorted fears she holds are transmuted by Molesworth into distorted humanity. It is this deformed humanity, this working class, who "see to" Davy, the phrase encompassing the community's acceptance of Davy and the practical steps they take to ensure his health and safety. In contrast, a group of "well meaning" middle class ladies have the piper committed to an asylum as "he wasn't fit to be about." (74) Again we have cosmetic criteria used to separate the tolerable poor from those who are totally unacceptable. It hangs on the world of appearances. Addie's sister says of Davy, "It's very disagreeable to see people like that about. I think they should always be shut up." (75) The world "disagreeable" suggests an aesthetic superficiality, that, in the context of the quotation, can be interpreted as arguing that all that is not pleasing should be removed from view. Harsh reality, far from engendering sympathy for its victim, produces the reaction that it should not be allowed to encroach on middle class sensibilities.

While it would seem that Molesworth's portrayal of the working class in this story depicts its members as more tolerant and less censorious than their social superiors, there is no evidence that the author views their actions as virtuous. She neither indicates her disapproval of Davy's committal nor applauds the consideration of the working class. The story ends with the thoughts of Addie's mother - Molesworth always allies herself to the middle class mamma in her fiction, seeing her as the embodiment of sympathy, goodness and wisdom - who feels that "if they can be taught anything, as some can, it is the truest kindness to send them to an asylum." She knew of an "idiot boy" who had been "at a school for such as he, and has learnt to knit." (76) This combination of compulsion and the emphasis on the occupation of the poor is one, one feels, of which Molesworth would have approved. The incarceration of these "idiots" appears to have much in common with the exportation of working class children discussed in Chapter 2. It removes a social problem from the streets, and from the sight and minds of the middle classes.

It is not merely her characters who manifest fear of their social inferiors. In *The Carved Lions*, published in 1895, and *The Tapestry Room*, published sixteen years earlier, there are indications that the author had apprehensions of a social upheaval which would change society irrevocably. The dramatic domestic disruption which transforms the life of

Geraldine, the protagonist in *The Carved Lions*, published in 1895, can be seen as a metaphor for the social changes taking place in nineteenth century society. Her parents, the source of her security, discipline and values are removed from her life as they emigrate to South America, leaving their daughter in the uncongenial and morally unjust environment of a private school.

The Carved Lions is thought to be one of the most autobiographical of Molesworth's books for children. (77) The fictional town of Great Mexington, "a rather large town in an ugly part of the country," with "great tall chimneys giving out black smoke," (78) is a thinly disguised Manchester. Geraldine's family, although described as "poor," (79) has an impeccable middle class pedigree. There are echoes of the idea propounded in Hodgson Burnett's *The Lost Prince*, as we shall see in Chapter 6, where the definition of a "toff" is divorced from the concept of wealth. From their elevated social position, Geraldine's mamma criticises the new stratum of society, those whose wealth is founded on the burgeoning industrialisation, who "were very rich, and had large houses and carriages and horses and beautiful gardens," for "they were not always very refined." (80) The phrase, "not always very refined," suggests the speaker perceives herself as superior, and is haughtily dismissive of those who deem to see themselves as her equal, while the use of such a protracted list gives the impression of envy. The vulgarity of which she speaks is embodied in the red feather worn in the

hat of one of Geraldine's fellow pupils, which Mamma dismisses as "rather common looking --- but that was not unusual among the rich Mexington people." (81)

Guest, in an essay on *Mary Barton*, refers to the "exotic savagery of the mill workers." She quotes Gaskell, who in *North and South* writes of their "over-loading" their clothes "with colour" and "gaudy patterns," that Gaskell sees as characteristic of the Mancunian "taste that loves ornament, however bad, more than plainness and simplicity which are of themselves the framework of elegance." (82) There is, then, in the image of the red feather, not merely a denunciation of what is perceived as the vulgarity of the *nouveau riche*, but also a suggestion of their probable origins as textile workers. Contemporary notions articulated in *The Morning Chronicle* that "there is hardly such a thing as a chaste factory girl," (83) if considered alongside Guest's observation that "prostitutes were characteristically represented in 'flash' clothes that travestied those perceived as appropriate to a more affluent class," (84) add a moral dimension to the argument. (85) Considered in this light, being "rather common looking" becomes not merely a denunciation of aesthetic taste, but a euphemism for immorality. There is an obvious linguistic association with such a phrase as "a common prostitute," while the red of the offending feather finds an echo in the expression "red light district." In the context of prostitution, the red feather conjures up an image, not of a hat decoration, but of a gaudy scarlet feather boa worn by an equally scarlet

woman. Sherwood's aptly titled novel, *The History of Susan Grey*, published in 1838, describes itself as "designed for the benefit of young women when going into service." (86) It provides its readers with a biblical reference which exhorts women to "adorn themselves in modest apparel." (87)

In Molesworth's novel *Little Miss Peggy*, Peggy's mother links the working classes with immorality. She is bringing up her family in reduced circumstances in a "dreary and ugly town where poor neighbours were rarely the sort of people she could let her children know anything of." (88) This is a recognition of her duty as a middle class mother to keep her offspring in ignorance of the very existence of the vast majority of the urban working classes. The word "could" indicates the mother's lack of choice; her social status, and her role as protector of her children's morals render it necessary that the very knowledge of the lower classes must be concealed. The inference to be drawn is that even the exposure to the fact of their existence would be detrimental, would in some way corrupt the innocence of middle class children. The poor are viewed as almost pornographic, too odious to speak of.

With the establishment of the *nouveau riche*, perceived by Geraldine's mother and, by extension, by the author herself as both powerful and devoid of class, culture, refinement and morals (all qualities that Ewing's socially elevated Master Swift in her *Jan of the Windmill* has in abundance, as we

shall discuss in the next chapter), the reader is aware, not merely of radical change, but of a feeling that things are beginning to fall apart. Gone is the stability that characterised *Hoodie*, where the only upheavals take place in the nursery and the familial and social *status quo* is re-established at the end of the novel with Hoodie's change of demeanour. The confidence and strength of the middle classes are reflected in the number of Hoodie's siblings who populate the nursery, a realm that is reigned over by a nurse. Geraldine and her brother constitute the family's next generation and their mamma acts as governess and nanny.

While in *Hoodie*, published in 1882, the middle classes, as we have seen, stay safely at the other side of the wood, in *The Carved Lions*, issued thirteen years later, the middle class protagonists are seen to take a walk in the same location as the proletariat. Geraldine tells us that "we felt a good deal of interest in them and liked to hear their queer way of talking, though we could scarcely understand anything they said." (89) There is suggested here a far more formidable barrier between the classes than a mere wood. The fact that the leisure spot is used by both classes is indicative of a shifting society in which nobody is certain of their place. That this is not a forerunner of egalitarianism is indicated by Geraldine's failure to understand her social inferiors. This lack of comprehension is not restricted to questions of dialect or accent, but is much more profound than that. It suggests an inability on the part of the middle

classes to appreciate the lives, the very humanity of the lower orders; the use of "them" and "their" in the quotation distances the chronicler from those she speaks of, rendering them as exotic as specimens in a zoo. Literally and metaphorically, they speak a different language, and so the story, as we see in Molesworth's work, of the vast majority of their fellow citizens is untold, is alien, is incomprehensible, and deemed by the author to be inconsequential to the young middle classes.

The sense of industrialisation as central to social upheaval is underlined by Lucy, the maid, as she tells Geraldine and her brother Haddie of pre-industrial Manchester when her mother was young. Instead of factories, people worked on hand looms in their cottages, cottages covered "with creepers and honeysuckle," which have now given way to "ugly rows of houses as like each other as peas." (90) Although the weavers' dwellings are described in romantic, almost hackneyed terms, the description does suggest a wholesomeness, a naturalness which, by implication, extends to an approval of the working conditions of the cottagers. (91) Creepers and honeysuckle might be more attractive than dark satanic mills, but, like the vehemently denounced red feather, they suggest an over concern with appearances. If not totally illusory, they probably hide, so Engels tells his readers, a worker who,

must sit at his loom fourteen to eighteen hours a

day. Most woven goods require moreover a damp weaving-room to keep the weft from snapping, and in part, upon this reason, in part because of their poverty, which prevents them from paying for better dwellings, the work-rooms of the weavers are usually without wooden or paved floors. I have been in many dwellings of such weavers in remote, vile courts and alleys, usually in cellars. (92)

Little sign of any kind of flora here.

Individuals in their cottages have given way to the masses, as unattractive and indistinguishable from one another as are "peas." The seeming solidarity of the urban working classes, as we saw in the Introduction, threatens to undermine the established middle classes. In the light of the changing face of England, it is not only Geraldine we perceive as experiencing "the strange feeling of change and trouble." (93)

Although in *The Tapestry Room* Molesworth portrays the sometimes aching poignancy of growing up, the novel ends with the fearful and shocking misery that attends the death of certainty. Dudu, the raven, while manifesting attributes of the divine, is predominately a symbol of tradition, of stability and certainty. He has paced, sentinel-like, the gardens of Jeannne's ancestral French home for "three or four hundred

years." (94) Speaking to Hugh and Jeanne for the last time, he bemoans the passing of a more genteel, courteous age which has been swept away by the events suggested by the increasingly ominous imagery. Dudu tells Jeanne and Hugh, "the shadows I have told you of grew darker and darker," until "the storm" which was the French Revolution "burst forth," and the "kindly inhabitants" (95) he had given his life to protecting were forced to flee, taking with them, the implication is, the old, decent values which characterised their society. On dismissing the children, Dudu tells them to, "take a look at the beautiful stars overhead before you go," (96) the stars representing the only form of stability left to humanity. Implicit in the phrase "before you go," is a suggestion that the children's privileged position is not assured in this unstable world. This transience of the human condition, and therefore of human society, is captured in the departing words of an old lady who visits the house where she had found happiness as a child. It was a happiness made possible by the selfless kindness and thoughtfulness of Jeanne's great-grandmother. "Au revoir, au revoir in a better country." (97) Heaven, to which she alludes, can be seen as the only remaining bastion of middle class values, and, we are told, eternal. Hocking's view of Heaven emphasises its middle class ethos, as Chapter 5 will illustrate further. Dudu's disappearance underlines the fact that the old order changeth.

The French Revolution for Dudu, as the Industrial Revolution for his creator, symbolises the end of the stable world in

which the upper classes held a dominant place and seemed destined to retain it. But with the overthrow of a set of values which kept the upper and middle classes in power, and the poor enmassed in the new industrial cities ill-equipped to receive them, there is a destabilisation of society. This leaves its erstwhile leaders insecure, bewildered and sad. These qualities are uppermost in a speech of Dudu's through which the author's voice resonates: "I don't think I should care to live another two or three hundred years in a world where changes come so quickly." (98)

In summary, Molesworth's attitude to the working classes as manifested in her writing for children is consistent with that held in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century by the architects of the New Poor law, as examined in Chapter 1. She portrays the poor as a sometimes foreign and often morally and physically distorted form of humanity. The few she finds acceptable consent to her view of class by embracing their own inferiority. The necessity of underlining traditional class structures is seen in the context of the social realignment experienced in the nineteenth century, as discussed in Chapter 5, and to which Molesworth scathingly alludes. In contrast to this somewhat imperious view of the working classes, the next chapter considers the work of Ewing, whose sympathetic and affectionate treatment of the rural poor strikes a much more modern note.

Notes

- (1) Molesworth, Mrs *The Carved Lions*. p. 50
- (2) Green, Roger Lancelyn *Tellers of Tales*. p. 106
- (3) Molesworth, Mrs *Little Miss Peggy*. p. 33
- (4) Green, Roger Lancelyn *Tellers of Tales*. pp. 106/7
- (5) Thwaite, Ann *Waiting for the Party*. p. 12
- (6) Watson, J. R. *The English Hymn - A Critical Study*. p. 432
- (7) Carpenter, Humphrey and Prichard, Mari *The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature*. p. 563
- (8) Molesworth, Mrs *Stories of the Saints*. p. 2
- (9) Molesworth, Mrs *Hoodie*. p. 263
- (10) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The One I Knew the Best of All*. p. 152
- (11) Wheeler, Michael *Heaven, Hell and the Victorians*. p. 59
- (12) Green, Roger Lancelyn *Tellers of Tales*. p. 109
- (13) Molesworth, Mrs *The Girls and I*. p. 85
- (14) Molesworth, Mrs *The Girls and I*. p. 90
- (15) Molesworth, Mrs *Hoodie*. p. 248
- (16) Molesworth, Mrs *Tell Me a Story*. "Good-Night Winny" p. 61
- (17) Green, Roger Lancelyn *Tellers of Tales*. p. 109
- (18) Molesworth, Mrs *Hoodie*. p. 7
- (19) Molesworth, Mrs *Hoodie*. p. 15
- (20) Molesworth, Mrs *Hoodie*. p. 31
- (21) Molesworth, Mrs *Hoodie*. p. 253
- (22) Watson, J. R. *The English Hymn - A Critical Study*. p. 432

- (23) Molesworth, Mrs *The Girls and I*. p. 145
- (24) Molesworth, Mrs *The Girls and I*. p. 85
- (25) Molesworth, Mrs *Hoodie*. p. 227
- (26) Molesworth, Mrs *Hoodie*. p. 255
- (27) Molesworth, Mrs *Hoodie*. p. 248
- (28) Molesworth, Mrs *Hoodie*. p. 259
- (29) Molesworth, Mrs *Hoodie*. p. 267
- (30) *Church Hymnal*. p. 255
- (31) *Church Hymnal*. p. 249
- (32) *Church Hymnal*. p. 249
- (33) Green, Roger Lancelyn *Tellers of Tales*. pp. 108/9
- (34) Molesworth, Mrs *An Enchanted Garden*. p. 51
- (35) Green, Roger, Lancelyn *Tellers of Tales*. p. 112
- (36) Molesworth, Mrs *Carrots - Just a Little Boy*. p. 43
- (37) Molesworth, Mrs *Carrots - Just a Little Boy*. p. 44
- (38) Molesworth, Mrs *The Tapestry Room*. p. 8
- (39) Molesworth, Mrs *Christmas Tree Land*. p. 115
- (40) Molesworth, Mrs *The Tapestry Room*. p. 29
- (41) Molesworth, Mrs *The Tapestry Room*. p. 94
- (42) Molesworth, Mrs *The Tapestry Room*. p. 97
- (43) Molesworth, Mrs *The Tapestry Room*. p. 137
- (44) Molesworth, Mrs *Christmas Tree Land*. p. 177
- (45) Molesworth, Mrs *Christmas Tree Land*. p. 180
- (46) Tucker, Herbert F. (ed.) *A Companion to Victorian Literature and Culture*. Harrison, Antony H. "1848 - Revolution and Reform." p. 30
- (47) Eliot, George *Silas Marner*. p. 125
- (48) Eliot, George *Silas Marner*. p. 109

- (49) Eliot, George *Silas Marner*. p. 110
- (50) Eliot, George *Silas Marner*. p. 164
- (51) Molesworth, Mrs *Carrots- Just a Little Boy*. p. 47
- (52) Molesworth, Mrs *Farthings*. pp. 1/2
- (53) Molesworth, Mrs *Farthings*. p. 5
- (54) Molesworth, Mrs *Farthings*. p. 4
- (55) Molesworth, Mrs *Farthings*. p. 95
- (56) Molesworth, Mrs *Farthings*. p. 114
- (57) Molesworth, Mrs *Farthings*. p. 117
- (58) Molesworth, Mrs *Farthings*. p. 133
- (59) Molesworth, Mrs *Farthings*. p. 134
- (60) Molesworth, Mrs *Farthings*. p. 78
- (61) Molesworth, Mrs *Farthings*. pp. 73/4
- (62) Eliot, George *Silas Marner*. p. 155
- (63) Molesworth, Mrs *Farthings*. p. 119
- (64) Molesworth, Mrs *Farthings*. p. 180
- (65) Molesworth, Mrs *Farthings*. p. 118
- (66) Molesworth, Mrs *Christmas Tree Land*. p. 63
- (67) Molesworth, Mrs *The Man with Pan-Pipes and Other Stories*. "The Man with Pan-Pipes." p. 28
- (68) Molesworth, Mrs "The Man with Pan-Pipes." p. 27
- (69) Molesworth, Mrs "The Man with Pan-Pipes" p. 23
- (70) Plotz, Judith *Aspects and Issues in the History of Children's Literature*. "Literary Ways of Killing a Child: The 19th Century Practice" p. 12
- (71) Molesworth, Mrs "The Man with Pan-Pipes." p. 25
- (72) Molesworth, Mrs "The Man with Pan-Pipes." p. 21
- (73) Molesworth, Mrs "The Man with Pan-Pipes." p. 28

- (74) Molesworth, Mrs "The Man with Pan-Pipes." p. 28
- (75) Molesworth, Mrs "The Man with Pan-Pipes." p. 31
- (76) Molesworth, Mrs "The Man with Pan-Pipes." p. 31
- (77) Laski, Marghanita *Mrs. Ewing, Mrs. Molesworth and Mrs. Hodgson Burnett.* p. 57
- (78) Molesworth, Mrs *The Carved Lions.* p. 1
- (79) Molesworth, Mrs *The Carved Lions.* p.3
- (80) Molesworth, Mrs *The Carved Lions.* p. 3
- (81) Molesworth, Mrs *The Carved Lions.* p. 50
- (82) Snell, K.D.M. (ed.) *The Regional Novel in Britain and Ireland 1800-1990.* Guest, Harriet "The Deep Romance of Manchester: Gaskell's *Mary Barton* ." p.89
- (83) Guest, Harriet "The Deep Romance of Manchester: Gaskell's *Mary Barton*." p. 90
- (84) Guest, Harriet "The Deep Romance of Manchester: Gaskell's *Mary Barton*." p. 91
- (85) See Gillian Avery, *Childhood's Pattern*
- (86) Sherwood, Mrs *The History of Susan Gray.* p. 1
- (87) Sherwood, Mrs. *The History of Susan Gray.* p. 7
- (88) Molesworth, Mrs *Little Miss Peggy.* p. 37
- (89) For a more detailed discussion of workers' cottages see Karen Sayer, *Women of the Fields.*
- (90) Molesworth, Mrs *The Carved Lions.* p. 32
- (91) Molesworth, Mrs *The Carved Lions.* pp. 32/3
- (92) Engels, Friedrich *The Conditions of the Working Class in England.* pp. 163/164
- (93) Molesworth, Mrs *The Tapestry Room.* p. 140
- (94) Molesworth, Mrs *The Tapestry Room.* p. 157

- (95) Molesworth, Mrs *The Tapestry Room*. p. 164
- (96) Molesworth, Mrs *The Tapestry Room*. p. 164
- (97) Molesworth, Mrs *The Carved Lions*. p. 34
- (98) Molesworth, Mrs *The Tapestry Room*. p. 164

“Reformatory, Progressive, Experimental” (1) - the depiction of the working classes in the fiction of Mrs Ewing

This chapter will examine Mrs Ewing's radical approach to the depiction of the poor. It will argue that her affectionate and intimate knowledge of the rural working classes, her benign form of Anglicanism, and her logical mind, manifested in her interest in things scientific, ensured that she saw the poor as human beings, distinguishable from the middle classes only through their poverty and the effects of deprivation. This perception allowed her to portray her social inferiors in a complex and sympathetic way, featuring them as protagonists in several of her novels. Ewing's interest in the social hierarchy will be demonstrated through an analysis of her novels which deal with inter-class adoptions, and two interpolations in her short stories which highlight respectively the destitution of Irish immigrants and the emotions, sensitivities and priorities which unite women of utterly different backgrounds. We shall discuss Ewing's view of authority and how, contrary to the practice of most of her colleagues, she debunks notions underpinning conventionally accepted forms of power.

In Ewing's novel *Six to Sixteen* (1875) Margery, the narrator recalls her childhood and a train journey she and her dearest friend, Eleanor Arkwright, took to Eleanor's home on the

Yorkshire moors. The countryside begins to change until

tall chimneys poured smoke over the landscape and
eclipsed the sun, and through strangely shaped
furnaces and chimneys of many forms,
which here poured fire from their throats
like dragons, and there might have been the
huge retorts and chemical apparatus of some giant
alchemist, we ran into the station of a
manufacturing town. (2)

In contrast to the "horror and wonder" of Margery's reaction,
Eleanor manifests a practicality and sense of beauty that,
unlike Margery's, is not restricted to the pastoral.

It's a very busy place, I hear trade's good just now, too
... You should see the furnaces at night, Margery,
lighting up all the hills. It's grand. (3)

The last word of her speech, indicative of her northern
origins, suggests Eleanor's partiality, a feeling her friend
gives voice to as she tells her readers she suspects Eleanor
of sniffing "up the smoke with, I might almost say, relish, I felt
that she did not sympathise with my disgust." (4)

Before Margery could remove the iron filings the wind had
blown into her eyes, the train had moved on to the grandeur
of the moors.

This brush with the industrial north and Eleanor's reaction to it are striking examples of the author's depiction of the area and its ethos in her work. There is certainly a "relish", a pride in things northern. Master Swift, the schoolmaster in *Jan of the Windmill*, published in 1873 and Mr Andrew, the rector and Reginald's tutor in *A Flat Iron for a Farthing*, published two years previously, are both Yorkshiremen, although the settings for the novels in which they appear are not northern. Both men are seen as cultured, both are the epitome of moral and professional rectitude in their various spheres, and although each man has lived outside his native county for most of his adult life, both retain a "slightly rough accent" (5) The Yorkshire that Reggie visits to attend his mentor's funeral in *A Flat Iron for a Farthing* is very much that experienced by Eleanor and Margery, with "the glare of the furnace fires among the hills." (6)

Ewing's niece and biographer, Christabel Maxwell, quotes from an article in an American magazine written shortly after her aunt's marriage to Major Ewing, while the couple were stationed in Canada. Her husband is, Ewing declares, a

double of myself and that feels like the addition of a few new faculties - a large accession of *strength* and a sort of mental companion, footman, courtier, lady's maid, lover, and attendant geni rolled into one. (7)

This indication of happiness and exuberance comes from a woman whose health was always fragile. During that two year sojourn, however, there comes evidence of a wistfulness for home, not for England, but specifically for her village in Yorkshire: "Whatever I have been doing and thinking during the day, I almost invariably dream of Ecclesfield." (8)

The ordinary villagers and their work constitute intrinsic elements of Ecclesfield. The furnaces, although aesthetically thrilling to the middle class Miss Arkwright in *Six to Sixteen*, are a potent reminder of the industrial economy which underpins the area. Reggie, travelling through Yorkshire, notes that on the moors, "there was often a hamlet as well as a mill." (9) The same incongruous intimacy between beauty and the reminders of a less natural way of life is illustrated by Ewing's sister, Horatia K. F. Gatty in her book entitled *Juliana Horatia Ewing and her Books*, when describing Ewing's haunts,

beautiful valleys blackened by smoke from iron-furnaces, and the wood beyond the church ... filled with desolate heaps of black shale, and refuse. (10)

Mrs Gatty, writing to a friend shortly after arriving in the parish of Ecclesfield as the wife of the rector in 1839, refers to schooling in the village:

The children are employed in Factories during the day-time from five in the morning to half-past seven at night, which precludes the possibility of their learning much. (11)

Gatty's personal observation confirms the reports of the excessive hours children were expected to work, as discussed in Chapter 2.

The theme of industrialisation is rarely present in Ewing's children's fiction: as though glimpsed from a passing train, the subject, if it arises, soon passes. As Avery asserts in her monograph on the author, Ewing was at her best "when she dealt with country matters." (12) That, though, does not preclude the depiction of the working class, though largely it is the familial and community aspects of the lives of the poor that interest Ewing, rather than their role as workers. Ewing was one of four daughters of a Church of England minister in a rural parish, where the sisters would, according to their mother, "teach and visit the sick and are as good as four curates." (13) They were not, even in early adolescence, sheltered from the poor or life's problems.

Most of Ewing's books for children do not have portraits of the working class at their centre. Her novels predominantly feature the lives of middle class children living in rural surroundings. But in a significant number of her stories class is seen as a central preoccupation. In both *Jan of the*

Windmill and *Lob Lie-By-The-Fire*, both published in 1873, the author explores class through the adoption of a baby into a household of a different social standing. It is a theme often found in the fairy-tale genre, taking the form of the changeling, or, as in "Rapunzel," of a witch or other enchanted extra-human fostering a child. It plays, too, on the popular literary device of child kidnap, used by Dickens in *Oliver Twist*. Ewing's *Lob Lie-By-The-Fire*, where a gypsy child is abandoned by his family and found by two middle class sisters, is a reversal of the notion of gypsies stealing babies, or even, as happens in *Oliver Twist*, of a child from the upper class being brought up as working class. In the opening chapter of his novel, Dickens plays with the idea of class as it pertains to the newly born Oliver:

Wrapped in the blanket which had hitherto formed his only covering, he might have been the child of a nobleman or a beggar; it would have been hard for the haughtiest stranger to have assigned him his proper station in society. (14)

Mark Twain manipulates these themes of class, children and society's reaction to both in his novel *The Prince and the Pauper*, published seven years after *Lob Lie-By-The-Fire*. Twain sent Hodgson Burnett an inscribed copy of *The Prince and the Pauper* in 1881, five years before the publication of Hodgson Burnett's *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, a novel which, as we shall see in Chapter 6, deals with a child's change of

social status. (15)

Like Eliot's Eppie in *Silas Marner*, John Broom, the protagonist in *Lob Lie-By-The-Fire*, is abandoned under a gorse bush. Ewing describes it as "a broom bush." It is the same species of plant under which Eppie's mother, Molly, died, although Eliot dubbed it a "furze bush." (According to the Lancashire writer, Samuel Bamford, "A gorse bush indicated a woman notoriously immodest." [16]) Even the association between finding a baby and the loss of a precious substance is similar in both novels, as John Broom is discovered by Miss Betty as she searches for her lost diamond. Ewing uses the devices in her own work to suggest the foolishness of the sisters. The very fact of a middle-aged, respectable middle class matron scrambling under a bush in the dark to retrieve her jewel and emerging with a child has a comic absurdity which is in keeping with the gentle satire Ewing employs to caricature Miss Betty and her sister, Miss Kitty.

The oblique reference to Eliot's portrayal of an adoptive parent of a child who, as it transpires, is not of his social class, underlines Ewing's agreement that in the face of such love and devotion as exists between Silas and Eppie questions of social propriety are both meaningless and ridiculous. The absurdity is reflected in the behaviour of the sisters towards the child, the implicit references to *Silas Marner* rendering their actions all the more preposterous. It

also underpins the gentle mocking tone the author utilises in the chapters dealing with the relationship between the two spinsters and the child they call John Broom - John Broom because "the boy is to be brought up in that station of life for which one syllable is ample." (17)

For the sisters, described by Ewing as "heiresses", had, in addition to an income and a farm, "inherited some prejudices of their class," (18) by which they view people they deem their inferiors. When Miss Betty discusses the *nouveau riche*, or "mushroom millionaires," as she dismissively calls them, alluding to their sudden rise to fortune, she expresses sentiments similar to those articulated by Molesworth in *The Carved Lions*, discussed in Chapter 3. She denounces the lack of refinement of a manufacturer's daughter:

How should she know how to walk? Her mother can't have taught her, poor body! that ran through the streets of Leith with a creel on her back, as a lassie and gets out of her coach (lined with satin, you mind, sister Kitty?) to her dying day, with a bounce, all in a heap, her dress caught, her stockings exposed (among ourselves, ladies!) like some good wife that's afraid to be late for the market. (19)

The authorial observation concerning inherited prejudices distances Ewing from the views of Miss Betty, views which

are supported by risque comments regarding underwear which, the speaker's aside implies, can only be voiced in the company of like-minded ladies. The irony that she is stooping to unladylike behaviour and ungrammatical language in order to denounce another's lack of refinement does not occur to Miss Betty.

The lady's dogmatic prejudices satirised by Ewing prepare the reader not merely for a woman who will brook no opposition but for one whose feelings on matters of class are irrevocably fixed. As the foundling was thought to be the offspring of gypsies he was to "be brought up in his proper station in life in the kitchen and the farmyard" (20) by Thomasina, the sisters' servant. Yet in a real sense, by giving in to her social bigotry, Miss Betty and her more compliant sister deny their female nature. Both sisters secretly "waylay" John Broom - the word has overtones of illegality, associated as it is with cut purses and highwaymen - in "passages and gardens," (21) plying him with gifts. Speaking to the cynical and unemotional lawyer, Miss Betty, while agreeing with his assessment of the likely scurrilous nature of the baby's parents, nevertheless succumbs to the child's charm:

I have no doubt his relations are shocking people;
but when you see his innocent little face and his
beautiful eyes, I think you'll say yourself that if he
were a duke's son he couldn't be a finer child. (22)

We have the contrast between the child's "innocence" and the "shocking" nature of the people who gave him life, the gulf between the two effectively distancing - excusing - the baby from the negative aspects of his race. Miss Betty is so enamoured of the infant that she forgets her characteristic condescension and allies the vagabond's son with an aristocrat.

If the discovery of the infant John Broom shares elements with that of Eliot's Eppie, as he grows up John assumes a likeness to that other fictional child thought to be of gypsy origin, Heathcliff, in Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*. Their complexions, and even their features, are described in similar terms. Ewing tells us of her protagonist that "the very demon of mischief danced in his black eyes," (23) while Nelly Dean describes young Heathcliff's eyes as "black fiends, so deeply buried." (24) The blackness of their eyes is at once emblematic of separateness and of the demonic, as eyes are often viewed as being the mirror of the soul. The colour enhances the suggestions of satanic properties. Although John's "demon" is seen as more superficial, less infernal, than that which inhabits Heathcliff, nevertheless John's eyes manifest more than mere childish naughtiness. The word "danced" implies a relish of his misdeeds, a delight in his ability to create havoc which goes beyond that of ordinary childhood.

Both John and Heathcliff have, the respective texts imply, not merely inherited the swarthiness of their race, but what Ewing's lawyer calls "the propensities of the vagabonds."

(25) What informs the characterisation of John is the public fear of travelling people, which is closely allied to the prejudice about the working class discussed in chapters 1 and 2. Just as Ewing satirises middle class opinions surrounding the social elevation of members of the working classes, as seen above, she subverts middle class attitudes to travellers by characterising John with humour and lightheartedness. Molesworth in contrast endorses the sentiments of her class by using travellers to instil feelings of superiority in her young middle class readers, as we saw in Chapter 3. Initially John Broom's inherited characteristics are manifested in his fondness for the outdoors and in his refusal to wear shoes and socks. As with Heathcliff, John's education is cut short. He leaves school at eleven due to utter lack of interest in learning, and, as Heathcliff does, John runs away due to ill-treatment; in his case, this is the threat of another beating from the farm bailiff, who sees him as idle and indulged by Thomasina and her mistresses. Where the portraits of the two characters diverge utterly is with their re-emergence into the societies they had abandoned. Heathcliff's reaction to the past forces him into a pagan journey of vengeance, where, with ruthless, logical persistence, almost as a figure of justice, he attempts to extract retribution for the acts perpetrated against him.

Even though John returns in the form of the Lubber-fiend, the house Brownie or Puck figure, taking on domestic and farming duties as the humans sleep, he does so in Christian humility and repentance for his "rebellion against the duties and ingratitude for the blessings of home." (26)

He returns to Lingborough in obedience to the dying wishes of M'Alister, his military friend. In the soldier's final moments, "home" is merged with visions of Heaven, which not only assures the reader of his final destination, but underlines the sacredness of our earthly abodes and suggests the divine attributes that they encompass: love, forgiveness, happiness. This association of Heaven and home appears in Hocking's fiction, as we shall see in the next chapter, but whereas Hocking's notion of Paradise is allied to images of middle-class houses, Ewing depicts the characteristics of both home and Heaven as classless, as universal. By definition, John, in the role of Lob Lie-By-The-Fire, becomes domesticated, determined to embrace both the responsibilities of home and the emotional comforts embodied in the image of the fire, such as warmth, comfort and consolation.

Nor is the change one-sided. John's disappearance results in an increase in the drinking of the farm bailiff, who tries to dull his conscience over his ill-treatment of the boy. His almost permanent inebriation leads to the virtual ruin of the farm. This ruin is reflected in the emotional lives of Thomasina and her two mistresses. Their consternation at

the idleness of the young John Broom and their succeeding grief at his absconding change to thankfulness both for his return and his quiet industry, and for his moral example, which enables the farm to flourish once more.

Central to the spirit of Christianity is sacrifice, and it is the skilful depiction of Ewing's protagonist's relinquishing of selfish impulses which differentiates the story's ending from the less subtle depictions of religious conformity found in formulaic Victorian evangelical books for children. Crucially, the nomadic impulses seen to be inherent in John are not obliterated but suppressed for the greater good of the family, and, incidentally, for John's greater happiness. In portraying his limited freedom, Ewing likens him to the ladies' exotic pet bird, both settling for the merits of domestication "with one wing clipped." (27) In later life, we are told, John's wife keeps a child's sock filled with money so that when the irresistible urge to wander assails her husband he can give way to it. The child's sock as a reminder of both responsibility and loving attachment will bring him home.

The author uses John's youthful odyssey as a metaphor for maturity, moving as he did from childish egocentricity to a realisation of the effect of self-centredness on the people he purports to care for. The shame of his dereliction of duty, an aspect of his immaturity, reaches its pinnacle at M'Alister's deathbed, where John had to admit that he played rather than worked at school and consequently was unable to read

the Bible, and, thereby, unable to offer consolation to his dying friend. But this is not used by the author merely as a conventional, if extreme, example of the fruits of indolence of an individual affecting the eternal destination of another's soul. It is not, the reader feels, only the soldier who feels it is right to take responsibility for one's own actions, and, therefore, one's eternal fate:

I'm not that presomptuous to think I can square up a
misspent life ... it's not a prayer up or a chapter down
that'll stand between me and the Almighty. (28)

The casual, almost jocose tone used by M'Alister when referring to prayers and Bible readings encapsulates the author's rejection of the earnest solemnity which characterises much of the nineteenth century's evangelical literature for children. Ewing creates no Ministering Children, whose lives are dedicated to good works and the spreading of Biblical knowledge, nor does she portray children who exhibit unworldly saintliness, as Hocking does, as will be demonstrated in Chapter 5. Ewing's fiction quietly places importance on selflessness, love and duty within a child's world. There is some evidence that the author disparages both the simplicity and extremes of contemporary religious writing. Her sister quotes a remark made by one of the villagers as she returned a book from the lending library established by Ewing in Ecclesfield. Complaining of the irrelevance to her experience of the evangelical novel she

had borrowed, the villager says, "My 'usband does not attend the public 'ouse and we've no unrewly children." (29)

Similar criticism of the stereotypical nature of the genre can be found in the mouths of various of Ewing's characters. In "Melchior's Dream," Richard, sitting down to enjoy a story complains,

I don't like stories like tracts. There was a usher at a school I was at, and he used to read tracts about good boys and bad boys to the fellows on Sunday afternoon. He always took out the real names, and put in the names of the fellows instead. Those who had done well in the week, he put as good ones, and those who hadn't as bad. He didn't like me, and I was always put in as a bad boy, and I came to so many untimely ends, I got sick of it. I was hanged twice, and transported once for stealing; I committed suicide one week, and broke into a bank the next; I ruined three families, became a hopeless drunkard, and broke the heart of my twelve distinct parents. (30)

The author ridicules evangelical literature through the mouthpiece of Richard; she thereby distances herself from the excesses of the genre. She rejects the overtly simplistic and formulaic plots, coupled with heavily laboured didacticism, often culminating in what are meant to be

horrific scenarios, and suggests that they could not be taken seriously by intelligent children. What Avery calls Ewing's "simple practical piety" (31) permeates her narratives, and unlike the tractarians she leaves "her lessons to be inferred." (32) The very lightness of her tone suggests that she writes to entertain as well as to edify. The general message of her fiction can be seen on the frieze which decorates the protagonist's first school in *We and the World*, (1877): "Keep innocence and take heed of what is right, for that shall bring a man Peace at last." (33)

The concept of "innocence" here is not restricted to the notion of childhood. The whole thrust of the precept has to do with maturity, and ultimately, with death, but also encompasses notions of blamelessness, with lack of corruption and guilt. Ewing, characteristically, lays emphasis on the eternal; the initial capital letter of the word "Peace" attests to that quality that passeth understanding, and which is given as a benison to the righteous by their God.

While John Broom is from the lower class, he is in no sense a mere representative of that stratum of society, but a complex individual in his own right. Ewing does not satirise his station, but the reaction to it of the members of the upper-classes. It is the personal and spiritual growth occasioned by John's dealings with the world that interests her. *Lob Lie-By-The-Fire* was not the only piece of Ewing's fiction to use a gypsy child to highlight adult sensibilities. In the short story,

"Father Hedgehog and his Neighbours", published in 1876, three years after *Lob Lie-By-The-Fire*, a discussion on the universality of maternal concern and the kinship of women is woven round the experiences of a gypsy boy. That the emphasis of the story is placed firmly on concerns surrounding the female characters is underlined by the fact that other than a cameo role as an eight-year-old, the child appears in the story merely as an infant; the experiences of his life, which act as a framework for the piece, are conveyed to the reader only through others. The most extraordinary thing about this singularly interesting and illuminating short story is that such an adult subject, treated sensitively and utterly seriously by Ewing, should be seen as material for children's fiction, and that the author, having decided that it was, should choose to have the piece narrated by a hedgehog!

The story of two desperate women buying and selling a gypsy child interpolates an anthropomorphic fantasy of a creature's domestic concerns during the summer in which he and his wife produce eight offspring. The main plot concerning the hedgehog takes the form of an exposition on the domestic life of the woods and on the responsibility of being a father to such a large brood. The reputed fondness of gypsies for baked hedgehog seems the only tenuous link to the main plot. The animal episodes are written with humour and a degree of irony aimed at the self-importance of Father Hedgehog. (As we shall see, Ewing is often critical of

the dominance of men in domestic situations.) It highlights his favourite strategy for keeping order amongst his large family. He announces that he smells vermillion, whereupon the young ones put out their noses to share his enjoyment, and he runs at their sensitive organs with his spikes. The juxtaposition with the human element of the tale is startling.

The reader, with the adult hedgehogs, eavesdrops as an old gypsy woman recounts the reason for the hurt and guilt that have dogged her old age, culminating in the imprisonment of her grandchild, Christian. Speaking of Christian's birth, she tells of the harsh winter which resulted in a scarcity of food so severe that Christian's mother, we are to infer, died of starvation shortly after her son's birth. Feeling that the child was soon likely to follow his mother, the grandmother took the child to the local town to have him baptised. Given the child mortality figures quoted in Chapter 2, this was an understandable fear. She allows the vicar's wife, Gertrude, whom she dubs "the clergywoman," to choose the infant's name: "Call him Christian, for he shall be one." (34) With the fear of starvation, feelings of alienation from the child because of the jealousy she felt for his mother, and with the conviction of Christian's imminent death, the old woman exchanges her grandson for ten pieces of gold, given to her by the childless clerical couple.

The old gypsy woman recognises the suffering Gertrude has endured. She reasoned that Gertrude "must have fretted

hard before she begged the poor tinker's child out of the woods." (35) This quotation is the first indication in the story that human, and specifically a woman's and mother's, feelings, transcend social boundaries. The gypsy's insight into Gertrude's desperation for a child is enveloped in perceptions of social hierarchy. The clergywoman was not only willing to adopt a "tinker's child" but "begged" to be allowed to do so. By using the word "begged" Ewing reverses preconceived notions of the relationship between the classes in order that social barriers may be laid aside and the relationship of Gertrude and the old gypsy can be seen as merely one between one woman and another. Begging is conventionally seen as the province of what the old woman refers to as "tinkers," yet with an abrupt reversal a clergyman's wife, the embodiment of nineteenth century middle class respectability, relinquishes all her social advantages, and metaphorically exposes her humanity and vulnerability to one who would be perceived to be outside the pale of the English class system. The gypsy had sufficient discernment and sympathy to recognise another's need and to respond to it: not selflessly, for part of her motive was mercenary, but this does not negate her humanity.

Although the grandmother's ten pieces of gold are not akin to Judas's thirty pieces of silver, the use of the word "pieces," rather than a specified denomination, does suggest a link, conjuring up impressions of betrayal which the gypsy herself shares. A growing love for her absent grandchild resolves

the old woman to save and "buy" him back: "One must act honourably." (36) Honour is seen in commercial terms, in not reneging on a bargain; to pay back the money would entitle her to reclaim Christian. It is her womanly conscience, then, and not some spurious sense of scrupulousness, that cries against the selling of the child.

In an incident reminiscent of Hoodie's escape from her nurse and her discovery of a working class family in the woods, eight-year-old Christian in Molesworth's novel *Hoodie*, discussed in Chapter 3, meets, unbeknown to himself, his grandmother in the woods. He ran away despite his nurse's warning that, "the gypsies would steal me." (37) The implications of this display of irony distance him from his origins, as does his use of the "language of the gentility ... who are accustomed to order what they want instead of asking for it." (38)

Yet, as with John Broom, the conventionally associated aspects of the nomadic life are present in the boy. Christian dislikes hats, shoes and stockings and his aspiration, indicative of his genetic desire to travel, is to be "a wild man on a desert island, and dress in goats' skins." (39) John Broom's bedtime stories were traditional and oral, featuring spirits who lived among humans. They did not include Christian's more literary and middle class fiction, exemplified by his allusion to *Robinson Crusoe*. Christian, even in his fantasy life, manifests a mixture of inherited traits and the

results of exposure to an English middle class milieu. In a disparaging remark the old gypsy accuses the clergywoman of trying to suppress notions of her adoptive son's origins. Christian's dark hands, she says, are symbolically "covered with the kid gloves of the gentry." (40)

Another meeting in the woods highlights the most telling incident of Ewing's story. After Christian's history is scornfully related to him at school, he attacks his school fellow, and runs away back to the woods, his origins and his family. Gertrude, grey and distraught, accompanied by her young nephew, eventually finds the encampment. Feeling regret and guilt about her role in Christian's fate, the gypsy tries to discredit Gertrude's motives. " "I want a son," you says, "and having the advantage of gold and silver, I can buy one." " (41) Portraying herself as a hapless victim, the old woman ascribes blame to her wealthy acquaintance, merely because of her wealth. The suggestion is, that being impoverished, the old woman was exploited, and therefore not culpable. But the clergywoman insists on truth, a truth that sees them as morally equal: "If I bought him, you sold him." (42)

Gertrude's feeling of equality is not restricted to the realms of morality. She thought of the gypsy's pain "night after night" and her assertion that, "I know what you must feel and I thought I should like you to know that I knew it" (43) is not used as a conventional offering of sympathy, but rather a

recognition of the strength of the woman's love for her grandchild and the acceptance that it was as strong as her own. That Gertrude wished Christian's grandmother to know of her feelings suggests not only a wish to share her emotions but that she cared about the gypsy's opinion. (How different is this portrayal of the relationship between a travelling woman and a middle class lady drawn together by their mutual love of a child from that depicted in Molesworth's novel *Farthings*, discussed in the last chapter, where only middle class feelings and actions carried legitimacy.) This recognition of fellow-feeling turns to a unity of purpose as Gertrude suggests "we might perhaps make the best of it together." (44) The tentative "perhaps" attests to the speaker's sensitivity, not audaciously expecting the gypsy's acquiescence, but rather giving her the option of dissent.

This, though, is no romantic egalitarianism on the part of either Ewing or Gertrude. There is no suggestion that people are uniform or that their economic circumstances are immaterial. Christian's adoptive mother recognises her son's nomadic tendencies and will finance his "wandering life." (45) Indulging in a little very human day-dreaming, the details of which betray her middle class aspirations, she seems to relish his becoming "a famous traveller." (46) Gertrude wishes to persuade the older woman that Christian's mix of upper-class education and gypsy genes needs to be accommodated and that with her money, "he need not fall into any of the bad ways to which you know

people are tempted by being poor." (47) There is a recognition, here, that immoral or criminal behaviour is usually resorted to in adverse circumstances, and, therefore, is not inbred, as Miss Betty's attitude to John Broom's unknown parents suggests. A similar connection between poverty and lawbreaking is made by Hocking in his novel *Her Benny*, as we shall see in the next chapter.

One aspect of her son's education that she begs he be allowed to retain is his religion, a determination as well as a dearly felt wish which she had encapsulated in her choice of his name. ("Call him Christian, for he shall be one.") It is not merely that, in a phrase which again allies her suffering to that of the gypsy, she declares that faith sustained her, "when my heart was as heavy as yours," (48) but that should she be denied the opportunity of seeing her son's face again in this world - she acknowledges the prior claim of the grandmother - she pleads, "spare me the hope of seeing it when this life is over." (49) With a suggestion as to the foundation of her feelings of respect and fellow feeling for the gypsy woman, Gertrude begs, "do not stand between him and the Father of us ail." (50)

With the voice of the establishment, the clergywoman's nephew rails: "I've bitten my lip through in holding my tongue, but I won't see you kneel another minute at the feet of that sulky old hag." (51) The reply of the "hag" referred to is telling: "This is no matter for boys to mix and meddle in."

(52) This sentiment and the very fact that it is expressed is complex and central. It may be seen at one level as a subconscious criticism by the author of herself for using such strong, intimate and radical material in a story for children. Critically, though, it establishes the gypsy's right to admonish a member of the middle classes for suggesting a knowledge of women's emotional and experiential bond and sympathy which he cannot possibly have. In Ewing's novel, *A Flat Iron for a Farthing*, published in book form in 1872, four years before "Father Hedgehog and His Neighbours," a similar situation is depicted.

The protagonist, Reggie, a petted and protected middle class child, is discussing the parish poor with his nurse, Mrs Bundle. The nurse describes the starved, beaten wife of a drunkard as having "nothing inside, and the poker outside."

(53) Leaping to the defence of the inebriate, partly, but only partly, to rile his attendant, Reggie recalls an incident when the woman in question was reputed to have entered the public house

and made a row before everybody. I'm sure if I'd a wife who came and hunted me up when she thought I should be in-doors, I'd well, I'd try and teach her to stay at home. Besides, women ought to be gentle, and perhaps if she were sweeter-tempered with him, he'd be kinder to her. (54)

After explaining that the woman confronted her husband because he was buying drink with the money for the children's food, Nurse Bundle, with a mixture of weariness and contempt, says,

Go to your tutor my dear ... and talk Latin and Greek
and such like, as you know about; but don't talk
rubbish about pretty looks and ways for a woman as is
tied to a drunkard. (55)

This is the only occasion in the novel that the servant castigates her charge. Bundle, like the gypsy, is not merely criticising the boy's youth (both Reggie and Gertrude's nephew are in their mid-teens) but his inexperience of the world, attributable in some measure to his class and sex.

The contempt shown by the boys to their inferiors is mirrored in the disdain with which the working class women dismiss the prejudice and intransigence of their young superiors. In telling Reggie to go back to the sphere with which he is familiar, Mrs Bungle both suggests his ignorance of the difficulties of lower class women and implies the inferiority of his brand of learning and she feels confident in doing so through the medium of her ungrammatical English. Her language, indeed, is used to symbolise a body of experience which allows her to understand and empathise with the suffering of her peers. Reggie's impeccable speech acts as his badge of exclusion. It is significant that the subjects, Latin

and Greek, to which the nurse wishes her charge to confine himself, are both dead languages: interesting in an unworldly, abstract sense, but divorced from the practicalities and realities of modern life. There is a sense that academic pursuits are all very well for the male adolescent, but, taking the word "Greek" to imply foreignness and incomprehensibility, then the world and its affairs is all Greek to young, middle class boys.

Males in the two instances cited are seen not merely as lacking understanding, but as being responsible, either in an active or positive role, for woman's ills and for trying to interfere with the natural sympathy between females. Reggie sides with the drunkard, largely absolving him of his moral responsibility, and placing the blame for his abusive behaviour onto the victim. Gertrude's young relative could not comprehend that the only note of incongruity struck in the relationship between the gypsy and the clergywoman is that of his male interference. He fails to realise that their allegiance goes far beyond the bounds of convention and that to attempt to judge their relationship in terms of social propriety is to negate both its profundity and its essential equality. Ewing presents to the nineteenth century middle class child reader, who largely made up her audience, an impression of a humanity shared between the female members of different classes and depicts what she sees as the legitimate censure of middle class young people by working class women - legitimate because of the experience,

intuitiveness and moral superiority of the women, all attributes of which the boys are impervious.

In 1873, the same year as *Lob Lie-By-The-Fire* was written, Ewing published another novel which had at its centre an inter-class adoption. In *Jan of the Windmill*, Jan, a middle class child of an artist, is fostered by a miller and his wife. Of primary importance, then, are the concerns of a working class family. In the context of the contemporary separation between the material written for middle class children and that intended for a poor readership which is discussed in the Introduction, a literary children's novel outside the genre of street Arab fiction and for an educated, and therefore a middle class, readership which has as its backdrop a working class home presented difficulties. Charlotte Yonge, who wrote fiction in different genres for children of disparate social positions, reviewed Ewing's rural stories, including *Jan of the Windmill* and *Daddy Darwin's Dovecot*, with a degree of consternation in her pamphlet, "What Books to Lend and What to Give" (1887). She writes,

These exquisite pieces are too delicately worked for the ordinary style of children of the poor, though they may be appreciated by those who have time to dream over them, and, as it were, imbibe them. (56)

There is in the quotation an implied discrepancy between the quality of the writing and the lowliness of a setting usually

associated with literature for the working class child. While this says much about the quality of prose thought permissible in fiction for the young of the lower classes, it also suggests that featuring the poor as protagonists in books for middle class children is highly unusual, if not suspect.

Like *Oliver Twist*, *Jan of the Windmill* depicts, through mystery, adventure and intrigue, the journey the eponymous hero takes which leads him back to his origins. Both the emphasis and the strength of the novel reside in the portrait of Jan as a member of the family of Mr Lake, the miller. Despite Mr Lake's being self-employed, Ewing portrays the family as poor and working class. Of the forty-two chapters of Ewing's book, thirty-one are set in the windmill and revolve around the depiction of a small boy's rural childhood. Unlike *Oliver Twist*'s speech, which is standard English, contrasting markedly with that of, for instance, the Artful Dodger, Jan's manners and articulation are similar to those of his peers. But, as with John Broom and Christian, Jan inherits qualities from his parents. In Jan's case they are manifested in his precocious ability both to draw and paint. In effect, the novel is the portrait of the artist as a young child.

Prominently featured in *Jan of the Windmill*, as in so many Victorian children's novels, is the subject of death. As we saw in Chapter 3, disease and death, or the threat of death, are themes that recur in Molesworth's children's fiction. As has been referred to above, death is often faced by

Hocking's young characters, and it is an aspect of his writing that will be discussed in Chapter 5. Ewing's biographer, Christabel Maxwell, referring to the mortality rate amongst the characters who populated her childhood reading, remarked that

some of us who were young at the close of the century, fiercely resented the way we were harrowed by the early deaths of children (especially male) in the books that were given us to read. (57)

The mother of Ida, one of the young readers of *Aunt Judy's Magazine*, which published Ewing's *The Story of a Short Life* in serial form before it appeared as a book, wrote to the author:

All I fear about your story is that it is going to end sadly, being entitled *The Story of a Short Life*. Ida spotted this and declined to begin the story until the end should appear and I could confirm for her whether her presentments were correct, as she said she wasn't going to be made miserable by reading it if it were going to be sad. (58)

Although not a universally appreciated theme, then, Ewing's work nevertheless often features death, both human, and as in one of her most famous poems, "The Death of a Linnet", animal. In a sense, the infant Jan replaces the Lakes' dead

baby in *Jan of the Windmill*. On hearing Jan's cries, seven-year-old Abel, the miller's eldest child, wakes and inquires "Have the Lord sent us another?" (59) and hearing that he had, rose from sleep to fulfil his role as "nurse-boy," as he had with his recently dead sister. There is no such simple acceptance of the infant's death on the part of her mother, however; unlike Abel's, her distress is not easily assuaged. Mrs Lake's grief at the loss of her baby is exacerbated because the miller refuses to allow the doctor to be called when the child became ill, and when he at last consents, the infant's condition is untreatable.

With his fatal interference in the realm of the domestic and child-rearing, which Ewing portrays as feminine, Mr Lake is, in a sense, allied to Gertrude's nephew and to Reggie. Ewing's depiction of the sexes, though, is not simplistic. She neither overtly apportions blame nor attributes goodness. The quality of her writing would not brook such oversimplifications; neither does she view male and female at opposite ends of a moral spectrum; indeed the moral centre of *Jan of the Windmill* is the schoolmaster, Mr Swift. In the realms of the domestic, however (and essentially that is the sphere in which the incidents cited from "Father Hedgehog and his Neighbours" and *A Flat Iron for a Farthing* take place), men are seen as lacking intuition and sensitivity, which makes unjustifiable their determination to impose on women the authority which society has vested in them. Molesworth, as Chapter 3 demonstrated, has similar

reservations concerning men's childrearing abilities.

Implicitly, the portrayal of Mrs Lake as "a model of domestic obedience" (60) is used subtly but consistently by Ewing as a criticism of Mr Lake's obdurate authoritarianism, as encompassed in the phrase, "never yield and you will never have to." (61) While this is a recipe for tyranny, it also indicates a fear of releasing control. Underpinning his dogmatism is a fear that his authority will be challenged. It is this absolute authority that is in effect responsible for the death of the Lakes' sixth child. It is seen by Ewing as the antithesis of the female qualities of love, instinct, and practicality. We are told of Mrs Lake that

her watchful eyes have seen symptoms of ailing in the child long before the windmillers' good sense would allow a fuss to be made, and expense to be incurred about a little peevishness up or down. (62)

The phrase "watchful eye" suggest more than mere vigilance; it encompasses unblinking, untiring love and devotion. Her observation and her experience of raising five other children ensure that Mrs Lake perceives the danger her daughter is in. Her husband, who alone, the quotation suggests, has the power to summon medical help, rejects not only his wife's opinion, but also, by extension, her emotional and instinctive qualities. These in balance against the windmiller's self-assessed "good sense" are seen as worthless. When

maternal love and experience are disparaged and dismissed, the vacuum created is filled with such debased attributes as meanness and arrogance, which warp the judgment, reducing a fatal illness to mere "peevishness." It is an indictment indeed that in her grief - a grief that undermined her "blind belief" (63) in her husband's infallibility - Mrs Lake, unable to articulate her criticism, for the first time upbraids her spouse to herself. He should, she maintains, have called the doctor sooner, "were it only for love's sake." (64) The simplicity, vulnerability and brokenheartedness of the words testify to the woman's abject sorrow, her feeling of impotence and utter desolation. It takes the more forceful utterance of a female neighbour, come to help with the last offices, to articulate a view that links the windmill's intrusive male egotism to that of Reggie and Gertrude's cousin:

It was as foolish for a man to have a say over babies and housework, as it would be for his wife to want her word in the workshop or mill. (65)

As this quotation implies, the issue is not one of equality between the Lakes but a need for recognition and respect for Mrs Lake's individuality, expertise and role. The reproach she feels towards her husband because of his treatment of her, coupled with her overwhelming distress, causes Mrs Lake to abandon her usual passivity. When her husband, in what appears to be a bewildered (and bewildering) and

desperate attempt to stem her emotion, claims that "other people lost children and that they had plenty left," (66) we are told, "she laughed in his face that wild laugh which drove him back to the mill and to the storm." (67)

The storm is an externalisation of the bereaved mother's feelings, suggesting a turbulence which shakes the natural order, the very planet: the timeless, universal wailing of mothers for their lost children. It is only towards the end of *Jan of the Windmill*, after the death of all their natural children, that Mr Lake begins to soften towards his wife, only when her mental state can no longer appreciate it that he outwardly manifests affection. "The miller himself," Ewing tells us, "paid a respect to her intellect, now it was shattered, which he had never paid whilst it was whole." (68) It was only when the strength and potency of the maternal role were diminished and Mrs Lake was left empty and weak that her husband too could show his vulnerability and act as a man, a spouse, as opposed to an autocrat.

The author's use of irony in the portrayal of the miller - when, for instance, his "good sense" led to his daughter's death - indicates that Ewing does not see him as a morally neutral figure, but neither does she demonise him. As we see in his reaction to his wife's suffering at the end of the novel, he undergoes, in the Christian sense, a purging, in which adversity and affliction are seen to mellow him. The lives and preoccupation of the Lakes are taken seriously by the

writer; they are complex psychological studies which are invested with artistic honesty and truth. They develop and change as events are seen to shape them. Ewing has created two working class characters who are as astutely formed and profoundly credible as any of their upper class counterparts. In the realms of nineteenth century children's fiction Ewing is unique in the realism with which she depicts working people. As will be argued in Chapter 6, we have to go to Hodgson Burnett's portrayal of the servant girl, Martha, in *The Secret Garden*, published thirty-eight years after *Jan of the Windmill*, before an author presents as credible and authentic a representation of a member of the working classes. Chapter 5 will argue that while Hocking's novels authentically depict the squalor, filth and drunkenness which bedevilled most Victorian conurbations, the same authenticity was absent from his portrayal of the people who inhabit these areas.

As Avery claims, Ewing's attitude to authority, and particularly parental authority, is more in line with twentieth century sensibilities than with the thinking of her own time. (69) The windmill's paternal role is held in healthy respect by his offspring but lacks the efficiency and ruthlessness born of self-righteous confidence that, for instance, Dickens's Mr. Murdstone exhibits in *David Copperfield*. (1849) Lake's ineffectiveness is seen in his dealings with his one employee, George, whose shirking of duty when not closely supervised goes unnoticed by his employer. Mr Lake might,

however, see himself as inheritor of the absolute power of the Victorian patriarch; unlike Mr Fairchild in Sherwood's *Fairchild Family*, published in 1818, he cannot claim to his children that "I stand in place of God to you whilst you are a child." (70) Whilst acknowledging the potency of the windmill's censure, the author is debunking him, ridiculing the notion of absolute authority and quietly mocking the conceit of any male who aspires to it. In contrast, as we saw in Chapter 3, Molesworth demonstrates no desire to criticise her often austere and aloof fictional fathers. Unlike Ewing she does not see male authoritarianism as a cause for ridicule, but merely as a contrast to women's patience, wisdom and natural affinity with children.

Since the Lake household is physically part of the windmill, Mr Lake's success with George is seen to be repeated with his children. His discipline is not viewed as something to be dreaded, but just as one ingredient in the family turmoil, an ingredient whose potency is diluted, significantly enough, by his wife. This comes from no desire to subvert it on her part, but from a wish to comfort her children. Of the Lake children Ewing says:

They dirtied their clothes, they squabbled, they tore the gathers out of her dresses, and wailed and wept, and were beaten with a hazel-stick by their father, and pacified with a treacle stick by their mother, and so they tumbled up, one after the

other, through childish customs and misdemeanours.
(71)

The hurly-burly and untidiness of family life are captured here; the clauses, each one following immediately and breathlessly after the other, suggest the frenetic nature of life dominated by young children. Inherent in the quotation, and highlighted by the repetition of the word "stick", is an indication that the author is making light of the punishment; the hazel-stick, in effect, is being neutralised by the "treacle stick." Ewing is highlighting in children's fiction parental disagreement surrounding the discipline of their children, divergence that seems to loosen the power of the father figure. It is not the case that Mrs Lake is portrayed as being against physical chastisement of the young, for, "like other mothers of her class, she served them whilst her patience lasted, and slapped them when it came to an end." (72) As an object of her husband's authoritative attitude, she empathises with her children's suffering and seeks to alleviate it.

The highlighting of the idiosyncrasies of authority figures is not restricted to parents. Ewing is scathing about that branch of the teaching profession that sees the establishment of a school as a form of private enterprise. In *Jan of the Windmill*, Dame Datchett runs the local school and although more gifted than the schoolmaster Ewing cites in *We and the World* who "signed the receipts for his money with a cross," (73) she

was, nevertheless, protective of her ignorance, saving her severest punishment for children who had the audacity to ask questions. The wonderfully loving, dutiful and eager Abel Lake asks her the meaning of a word which appears on his list of spellings:

"What's a motive, dame?" say I. "I've got un here,"
says she quite quiet-like. But I see'd her feeling
under's chair, and I know'd 'twas for the strap, and I
ran straight off, spelling book and all. (74)

Although *Jan of the Windmill* was published in 1873, eleven years after what Horn in *Labouring Life in the Victorian Countryside* describes as "official regulations" dictated that state aided schools must be "under the charge of a qualified teacher," as late as the 1890s a small number of unregulated dame schools still existed. Ewing's ridicule of the ignorance of Dame Datchett mirrors the incredulity of the Reverend J. C. Atkinsons in Horn's study, who, moving to a new parish in Yorkshire in the 1840s, discovers that the local schoolteacher is a failed farmer. When he asked why the man had been appointed, the rector was informed, "whea, he could do nowt else. He had muddled away his land and we put him in scheealmaster that he muu't get a bit o' bread." With such a disregard for both children and education it is little wonder that Dame Datchett's pupils were sent to school mainly to give their mothers a rest, a motive seen as all too probable by Horn. (75)

If the ilk of the dame is satirised through Abel's teacher, and through her the ludicrousness of the education system generally, it is with a very different tone that Ewing approaches the boys' boarding school in *We and the World*. Purportedly narrated by Jack, the young protagonist, when an adult, the narrative technique is similar to that employed by Dickens in *David Copperfield*, published in 1850. Yet while the proprietor of Jack's private school, Mr Crayshaw, shares many characteristics with Dickens's Mr Creakle, there are institutionalised horrors in the school which are reminiscent of the underlying inhumanity of Dickens's Dotheboys Hall in *Nicholas Nickleby*, published in 1839.

In his dealing with his pupils, Mr Crayshaw, like Mr Creakle, displays a sadistic nature, and Jack, the narrator, like David Copperfield, lives in a state of permanent apprehension; speaking of which, Jack describes, "the pain that knew no pause, and allowed no revival, the evil that overbore us, mind and body, was the evil of constant dread." (76)

Gone is the author's characteristic light, humorous, slightly teasing, gently mocking tone, and it is replaced by a tense gravity, a hurt and an immediacy that belie the adult narrator's assertion that "the old wounds are scars now." (77) In *David Copperfield*'s description of his school days there are two succeeding paragraphs beginning, "Here I sit," while the next one starts, " Here I am in the playground." This not

only conveys the impression that the traumas of youth are being relived as they are written, but also suggests that the recollection of events conjures up such profound and absorbing memory that terror, even in retrospect, has a mesmeric effect on the writer until it becomes his only reality. "Here I sit," (78): the past has become the overwhelming present, memory its only verity.

The past possesses Jack to such an extent that we see both adult anger and childish impotence reflected in his narrative. The protagonist recounts an occasion when he was fighting and "Old Crayshaw found us, and oh, how he did beat us." (79) The schoolboy's dubbing the principal "Old Crayshaw," the child's inarticulacy and suffering captured in the leadened sigh of "and oh" speak volumes, not of a past pain but of a present trauma. Returning to the wretchedness of himself and his brother at school, Jack tells us, "Jem and I cry dreadful in bed." (80) The baldness of the statement, the use of the present tense, and the youthful grammatical inaccuracy, testify to the adult Jack's regression. It is as if to protect the child that he has become, he then reasserts his adult's articulacy and through the authority it imposes, he denounces his tormentor:

I say quite deliberately that I believe that Mr Crayshaw was not merely a harsh man, uncultivated and inconsiderate, having need and greed of money, taking pupils cheap, teaching them little or nothing,

and keeping a kind of rough order with too much flogging, but that the mischief of him was that he was possessed by a passion (not the less fierce because it was unnatural) which grew with indulgence and opportunity as other passions grow, and that this passion was for cruelty ... a lust for cruelty growing fiercer by secret and unchecked indulgence, a hideous pleasure in seeing and inflicting pain, seems so inhuman a passion that we shrink from acknowledging that this is ever so. (81)

The relatively uncomplicated child's world of the senses which is reflected in both the simplicity of the sentence structure and the lack of description and comment, has been replaced by a long, complex sentence which analyses, and with the experience of life, generalises, where the rawness of pain has given way to a hurt that is experienced through the intellect.

The exploration of power, the cruelty of the strong towards the weak, manifested in *We and the World*, is a recurring theme in Ewing's fiction. In the short story, "Bengy in Beastland," for instance, it takes the form of a child being cruel to animals. In *We and the World*, after depicting the bestiality of the headmaster, the author, in a sense, steps outside the narrative and delivers a powerful address in which she demands public scrutiny and accountability of those in control of any institution in society which purports to

care "for those who have no voice," because "man is no more to be trusted with unchecked power than hitherto." (82)

The antithesis of Mr Crayshaw is Master Swift, Jan's teacher in *Jan of the Windmill*, although at their first meeting Jan refuses to join Master Swift's school because of the teacher's reputation for liberally wielding the stick. At six years old, Jan, with his mother's agreement, has left school and taken a job as a pig-boy, just as his foster brother, Abel, had done before him. Again Ewing highlights the *ad hoc* nature of education for the children of the poor. She also highlights the early age at which a child may begin to work, both issues raised in Chapter 2. The text suggests that Mrs Lake's permission was motivated by both lack of interest in education and poverty, which even a child's wage might help to alleviate. As Chapter 2 demonstrated, parents in the North of England had similar reasons for objecting to compulsory education later in the century.

Ewing reassures us of Master Swift's humanity through a description of the teacher, which reflects the tone she herself uses in much of her writing: "His speech ... had a tone of mockery, but his face was unmistakably kind." (83) Master Swift is seen as the moral and cultural centre of the novel. The first time Jan hears Master Swift speak, it is through the medium of poetry. The teacher is inspired by the natural beauty of the woods in which he finds himself and by the cloud formation of the heavens. While the study of the sky is

indicative of the character's spiritual inclinations, it also obliquely refers to an episode in Jan's early life when he was found in the darkness lying on his back on the ground, crying pitifully with his abandoned slate and pencil, from which he was inseparable, discarded on the ground. The embryonic artist was upset and frustrated because he could not capture to his own satisfaction the scudding clouds in the night sky.

It is the artistic propensities of both Jan and Master Swift that act as both an introduction and a bond. Arrested by the first poetry he had heard, Jan drops the bluebells he is carrying. On seeing the little boy, the teacher begins to approach, only to be arrested by the child's scream. Explaining that it was not fear of the stranger, but apprehension that Master Swift was about to step on his picture, Jan shows his companion his portrait of the woods, not on the slate which hung at his waist, but on the ground and made up of the natural materials of the area itself; the dropped bluebells were to represent the sky. "Wonderful! wonderful! The poetry of it. It's no child's play, this. It's genius. Ay! we mun see to it. Good Lord! Have I found him at last." (84)

This speech encapsulates the reasons for Master Swift's interest in the child, at least initially. In the word "poetry" we have a linking of Jan and an art that is central to Swift's existence. It is, too, an allying of the creativity of the child with the greatness of the writers whom the teacher both talks about and quotes - Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, and, for the

sake of Jan's evolving spirituality, Herbert. In the determined assertion "Ay! we mun see to it" (85) is a betrayal of his northern origins. The pursuit Master Swift alludes to is twofold. It is the search to find in a small rural community a child whose talents hold the seeds of greatness, one who, if those talents were fostered, would become celebrated. This is almost a religious quest. Discussing it with Jan some years later, he describes "seven generations of lads" - reminiscent of the seven lean years that Joseph predicted in Egypt - who were his pupils, but, in italics he asserts, "*he has never come.*" (86) Swift's search ends when he discovers Jan's artistic genius.

This sense of reincarnation feeds into the notion that, in a sense, Master Swift is also seeking his dead son in whom he invested both his love and his ambition - or at least his replacement. He was to "begin where his father left off." (87) Because as a young man Master Swift recognised he had "the ambition without the genius" to be what he terms a "Great Man" (88) (the use of capital letters testifies to the importance with which he invests the concept), he projected his ambitions on to his son. But it is not merely academic or intellectual prominence that the young father wanted for his heir, but the social position such prominence would bring in its wake, a status far in excess of the one his father enjoys.

For what is interesting about this central character whom Ewing invests with qualities she holds dear - morality and

learning - is that Master Swift is a "self-educated man" from a "mining and manufacturing district" (89) where, as he tells Jan, his childhood was characterised by "more mischief than you need ever know, and uncommon little else." (90) His ambition for his son was for him to be so cultivated that he "thinks me rough and ignorant" (91) and to stand "at my burying in a good black coat and a silk scarf like a gentleman," (92) the attire representing an elegance betokening wealth and privilege unknown to Master Swift. The reader's first glimpse of the schoolteacher is of "a coarsely-built old man, dressed in thread-bare black" (93); progress would have been the "thread-bare black" of the father being replaced by the "good black" of the son. The inherent foolishness of such paternal dreams is underlined by the childhood death of the boy. Yet in Master Swift and in his aspirations for his son we see manifestations of the kind of social mobility which Hocking holds out to his working class protagonists, as we shall see in Chapter 5. But with Ewing and Master Swift the medium of elevation is not religion but education, although, as with Hocking's protagonists, the two co-exist. It is the emphasis that differs. As we saw in Chapter 3, the social elevation of members of the working classes concerns Molesworth. Hodgson Burnett's fiction, while it deals with changes of fortune, usually does so within the confines of the middle classes, as we shall discuss in Chapter 6.

Although Master Swift is portrayed as loving, generous and

kind, he is not without flaws. His instincts and judgment are shown to be faulty. He disregards the boy's inherent gift, and dismisses Jan's ambition to be a great painter, declaring "science is the ladder for a working-man to climb to fame," (94) and, it might be added, out of the constraints of a working class environment. The only time the teacher shows anger to Jan is when he feels that his advice for the boy's betterment is being ignored and Jan is concentrating on what Master Swift describes as "the fine arts." (95) Jan is not only late for school because he stops to capture the beauty of the snowy landscape on his slate, but is so enraptured that when he arrives in the classroom, instead of concentrating on his lessons, he attempts to finish his picture. Master Swift snatches up the slate and smashes it on the corner of the desk. "Jan," Ewing tells us, "would much rather have been beaten." (96) This is not merely an act of frustration, but in a subconscious sense, an attempt to obliterate his pupil's attachment to art because, "fine arts are not the road to fame for a working man." (97) It is an indication of the limit of the teacher's imagination, a limit which prevented him fulfilling his literary ambitions when young; it also indicates that in his dreams for Jan he cannot rise above the utilitarian. Art is excluded because it is not viewed as a path to success. It is only on the eve of his death, and when Jan is in his teens and apprenticed to an artist, that Master Swift is convinced by Jan's master that his prodigy will be a great artist, and the values fostered in the young man by his schoolteacher will be an integral element of his art. At the beginning of his

friendship with the boy, Master Swift tells him that as a consolation for his own failures, he will be content to be known as "the great man's schoolmaster" (98) and with the assurance of his vicarious immortality he dies.

In *Lob Lie-By-The-Fire* and *Jan of the Windmill* the seminal influences on both John and Jan are old men, M'Alister, the Scottish soldier, and Master Swift respectively. Both men act as moral guides, pointing the way to the boys' adulthood. Paradoxically, there is an element of the uncertain child seeking guidance about both adults; the direction is supplied by the children they care for. John is portrayed as M'Alister's saviour when, during guard-duty, the soldier is lying in an alcoholic stupor at the bottom of a ditch with a commanding officer approaching. John, concerned and athletic, runs to warn his friend. Thanks to him, M'Alister is not caught in dereliction of duty, a capital offence. The boy had "saved an old soldier's honour, and let him die respected in his regiment." (99)

The soldier might be "respected," but only John supplies him with love; only John is present at his deathbed. He acts both as the man's son and his father, learning from the soldier, but also feeling himself responsible for M'Alister's welfare. It is in this young life, this new Adam, that M'Alister's mistakes are rectified. Under the soldier's influence, John gives up drink and eventually returns to his family, obviating the need for the regret and guilt that dogged M'Alister to his death. The

moral, social and spiritual aspects of life, under-developed in the Scotsman, come to fruition in John Broom. In Chapter 5 we shall also see that elderly working class men are instrumental in the religious lives of several of Hocking's young characters, and in his *Her Benny* we have a child who brings the knowledge of Christ's salvation to an old nightwatchman who had taught her about God.

More subtle than the shortcomings of M'Alister are the flaws of Master Swift. They, interestingly, are centred on his adamant assertion that art cannot be a major concern of the working class, that, at best, it must be relegated to the sphere of leisure. Jan succumbs to his teacher's plan for his scientific future because it offers the hope of being able to finance painting as a hobby.

There is, of course, an ambiguity surrounding the social standing of the protagonist, although Jan himself is in no doubt of where he belongs, sharing, as he does, the author's certainty as manifest in the novel's title, which allies him to the working class environs of the windmill. After the devastation of the Lake family through a typhoid epidemic, Jan is the only one of their children left alive. We see him acting as his demented mother's intimate nurse, dressing her, fastening her petticoats. Ewing assures her readers that

he loved the windmill and the windmillers' trade. He loved his foster parents, and desired no others. He

had a miller's thumb, and he flattened it with double pains now that his right to it was disputed. (100)

The "miller's thumb" is reputedly the physical sign of a born miller, handed down from the miller to his sons. From early childhood, Jan and his beloved foster brother Abel used to rub the grain between the thumb and finger to educate the digit in the miller's art. It is Jan's badge of belonging.

While Jan inherits from his upper class parents a prodigious gift for painting, the aesthetic of the working class culture in which he is raised is centred in the life of the church. Because of the calibre of his voice, Jan is recruited to the church choir, Abel accompanying him in recognition of his enthusiasm. Both boys are entranced by the beauty of the stained glass windows. Such is their impression on Abel that his dying vision takes the shape of the Jesus featured in the church window, who comes to claim him. The novel ends with the quotation of the inscription incorporated in the new window which depicts the Good Shepherd. The stained glass is dedicated to Abel and designed by Jan, the new squire. Although Jan enjoys an exalted position, it is significant that he earns his living through his work; the diverse social strands of his existence, then, continue to intertwine. The two aspects of Jan's life are brought together in the last page of the novel when the working class village inn-keeper escorts a prosperous "man of business" (101) from London round the church. The publican was the first

person to pay the young Jan for his art, while the gentleman was associated with Jan's natural father.

Their coming together in the church underlines the author's conviction of the universality of the aesthetic and spiritual legacy that religion offers. (It is a theme she returns to in several of her later novels.) As working class boys, sharing the church with the squire's family, Jan and Abel are steeped in culture through the art and music of their local church, very often the nineteenth century working person's only exposure to what Master Swift called the "fine arts." In Ewing's fiction the exalted realm of human expression and emotion encompassed in the phrase "the arts" is not only open to the working class, but they inhabit it as of right. Her marriage to the composer of the hymn "Jerusalem the Golden" might have enhanced her appreciation of church music; it is an appreciation she wishes to share.

Another novel which revolves round the relationship of an old man and a young boy, *Daddy Darwin's Dovecot*, is not complicated by seemingly conflicting issues of class. If one excludes a small number of peripheral scenes in the vicarage, the whole story unfolds in the working class milieu of a rural village. Here again we have art in the form of church music, explored this time through the medium of pigeons, rather glorified in the title of the novel. The protagonist, young Jack March, lives in what the "Gaffers" (old village men the author uses as a form of Greek chorus)

describe as "t' wukhus." (102) In a telling image which captures the look of institutionalised boys, the reader is told Jack has "cropped black hair, as short and thick as the fur of a mole" (103) and fittingly enough our first sight of him is of his working in the workhouse garden. Although his feet are planted on the ground, his eyes and his imagination are engaged in watching pigeons flying home, "performing gymnastics" (104) as they go.

The birds' freedom and suggested lightheartedness are contrasted with the boy's incarceration within the high walls of what Ewing describes as "the house that never was a home." (105) While Jack is kept in the workhouse forcibly, the birds fly willingly, joyfully, home. The pigeons symbolise liberty and Jack's determination to achieve it, an aspiration and a longing which are given voice by a duet the boy hears in church.

Oh that I had wings - Oh that I had wings like a dove,
Then would I flee away
And be at rest - flee away and be at rest.
The chorus rose, as the birds rise, and carried the
strain ! (106)

The repetition underlines the young worshipper's desperation, the desire that will give him no respite until it is assuaged. The boy's exhilaration as the rhythm and the stirring sound of the hymn envelopes him associates him

with Jan and Abel's sensibilities. The grandeur and urgency of both words and music capture, as only art does, the essence of emotion, the epicentre of feeling. "Could words of man go more deeply home to a young heart caged within workhouse walls?" (107) But the boy is not content to spectate, to have others articulate his feelings: "Jack's voice nearly choked with the longing to sing too." (108) The wing of the bird now represents not only his wish to leave the workhouse, but to have the freedom to transcend the mundane, to ally himself with great art and, like Jan, to sing in the choir.

The image of the dove is connected in religious iconography with the holy spirit. Daddy Darwin, the owner of the pigeons, who appoints Jack as his apprentice and offers him a home, says, years later, " 'Twas that sweet voice o' thine took me back again to public worship, and it's not t' least of all I owe thee." (109) Once again in Ewing's work the reader is reminded of *Silas Marner*. Like Eliot's Eppie, Ewing's Jack March reintroduces his guardian to the ecclesiastical commune and the wider secular society. In Daddy Darwin's oblique confession of unworthiness - "what have I done in my feckless life to deserve a son?" (110) - we see, in effect, a prodigal father repenting, not the squandering of his fortune but of his life. The use of the word "son" conjures up images of Christ, who, as Daddy Dovecot implies of Jack, brings salvation and shows love and devotion to those who do not necessarily merit such considerations. The notion of the sins

of the fathers being visited on their children is reversed and the goodness of the younger generation expunges the wrongs of the old. In that sense, the relationship between Daddy Darwin and Jack is a working class equivalent of that between Lord Fauntleroy and his grandfather. As we shall discuss in Chapter 6, Hodgson Burnett imbues her child protagonist with similar qualities to those Ewing invests in Jack. As his name suggests, Jack March is emblematic of spring with the hope and rebirth that accompanies it. The boy reawakens the spiritual and human love of his adoptive father, replacing the cold rationality that the name of Darwin conjured for Ewing. (Ewing's mother, Mrs Gatty, "accepted Darwin's autograph, but placed it in her collection in juxtaposition with that of Voltaire and Tom Paine, in her chamber of horrors!" [111])

The strength of Ewing's writing is dissipated once she leaves the rural environs. The detailed and loving description of landscape, which owes much to her love of painting, the depth of her characterisations, and the vivid vignettes of rural villagers, give way to generalisations concerning the populace. She depicts Londoners as "that seething mass, which represents ten thousand heartaches and anxieties, doubtful shifts and open sins." (112) Jan's London contemporaries are described as, "little boys and little girls of eight or nine or ten years old, who are also drunkards, profane swearers, thieves, gamblers, liars and vicious." (113) Their preferred pastime is found in the so called penny gaffs,

where, Ewing insists, "the depravity of the entertainment was a light matter to the depravity of the children by whom the place was crowded." (114) Significantly, neither the theatricals nor the alleged immorality of the youth is described. In his journalism, Mayhew discusses what he sees as "the obscenity and unrestricted debauchery" (115) of the entertainment offered to young people who frequent penny gaffs. As with Ewing's writing, his account contains few specific details; unlike her, Mayhew tends not to criticise the children, seeing them as victims. There is, however, an implicit suggestion of immorality linked to what is perceived as inappropriate female attire, a suggestion, as we saw in Chapter 3, that is contained in Molesworth's work and is not uncommon in nineteenth century writing. Mayhew writes:

Some of the girls - though their figures showed them to be mere children - were dressed in showy cotton-velvet polkas and wore feathers in their crushed bonnets. They stood laughing and joking with the lads in an unconcerned, impudent manner, that was almost appalling. (116)

With what appears to be little more than youthful exuberance, indiscretion and sartorial vulgarity being so strongly condemned, the reader may legitimately question Mayhew's definition of "obscenity and unrestrained debauchery." Mayhew's failure to produce detailed evidence with which to substantiate his claim leaves the reader to speculate whether

his opinion, like that of Mrs. Trimmer in the incident related in Chapter 2, may have been influenced by the fact that the children so described were urban and poor, and in the case of Mayhew's critique, female. This association of poor, urban girls with immorality was common, especially when the children were also workers, as Chapter 2 explains. (117)

There is an uncharacteristic lack of immediacy in much of the writing that deals with Jan's life with Cheap Jack in London, which may be caused by the fact that Ewing is depicting events and people of which she had no first-hand knowledge. Mayhew, as his writing makes clear, did visit the haunts of poor urban children. Along with penny gaffs, he denounces as "habits of gross enjoyment" the attendance at "their two-penny hops, their beer shops, their gambling grounds," and attributes them to the "non-development of the aesthetic faculty." (118) As this chapter argues, Ewing portrays the "aesthetic faculty" as central to the lives of many of her rural working class characters. Thompson maintains that in the nineteenth century there was a concerted effort to legislate against what he describes as "the amusements of the poor," the "two-penny hops, the gingerbread fairs and obscene pictures." He contrasts this with the unsuccessful attempts to make adultery an imprisonable offence, arguing that "unlike penalties imposed upon common Sabbath breakers, vagrants, tinkers, stage-dancers and tumblers, ballad-singers, free-thinkers and naked bathers," adultery "might discriminate against the amusement of the rich as well

as the poor." (119)

It is probable that the widespread perception of the immorality of the poor, manifested in the puritanical quashing of recreational pursuits participated in solely by the working classes, influenced Ewing's view of the urban proletariat, with whom she had little contact. This, coupled with the perceived threat from poor urban children discussed in Chapter 2, could account for her condemnation of the London working classes. Her portrayal of them is characterised by a censoriousness she does not apply to their rural equivalents. While, then, Ewing's depiction of the rural poor differs substantially from that of other contemporary children's writers, her portrayal of the urban working class, as will be argued in Chapter 7, contains many of the same qualities that characterise their representation in the work of Molesworth, Hocking and Hodgson Burnett, as chapters 3, 5 and 6 will attest.

Four years before the publication of *Jan of the Windmill*, Ewing had written of an urban child in an idiosyncratic interpolation in a short story entitled "The Land of Lost Toys," published in serial form between 1869/70, but here she deals with the psychological and the specific, rather than the sociological and the general. With the incongruity of the feminist element in "Father Hedgehog and His Neighbours," we have an account of the neglect and death of a small child in a story which describes the realm to which discarded or

mislaid toys go. In a tale which mixes fantasy and reality, Aunt Penelope finds herself in a land populated by dolls, jack-in-a-boxes, nodding Chinese Mandarins, a slate, and a paint box. Amongst this plethora of play things is a potato, which, her guide informed her,

belonged to an Irish child in one of your great cities. But to whom the child belonged I don't know, and I don't think he knew himself. He lived in the corner of a dirty, overcrowded room, and into this corner one day the potato rolled. It was the only plaything he had ever had. He stuck two cinders into it for eyes, scraped a nose and mouth, and loved it. He sat upon it during the day for fear it should be taken from him, but in the dark he took it out and played with it. He was often hungry, but he never ate the potato. When he died it rolled out of the corner, and was swept into the ashes. Then it came down here. (120)

According to her sister, Ewing "had a weakness for the Irish nation." (121) Certainly, Irish nationals pepper her novels, either as prominent characters, as in *The Story of a Short Life*, or in cameo roles like the flower-seller in *Six to Sixteen*. Largely characterised by their ready wit, intelligence and humanity, Ewing's Irish creations are individualistic. In one of the most influential documents of the period to emanate from Manchester, *The Moral and Physical Conditions of the Working Classes Employed in the Cotton Manufacture in*

Manchester, Kay-Shuttleworth, a prominent local doctor who later entered main stream politics, sees Irish immigration as "a serious evil," (122) accusing the Irish of inculcating in the English working class "most grievous ways." (123) They are denounced in terms very similar to those employed by Malthus, and discussed in Chapter 1. Kay-Shuttleworth equates the Irish with savages and castigates their "barbarism," (124) while recognising "the debasing consequences of uninterrupted toil." (125) The Irish were, then, seen as socially and morally inferior to the indigenous urban working classes, a fact that makes Ewing's portrayal of an Irish child for her middle class readership all the more surprising. The notions of what was permissible subject matter in nineteenth century children's fiction will be discussed further in Chapter 7.

The child in Ewing's story, we are told, lives in squalor in a metropolis. Given the child's nationality, and the author's attachment to her native north of England, it is likely that it is in a northern manufacturing city, the largest and most prominent of which was Manchester. During the riots against power-looms in the cotton industry in 1826 there were said to be between thirty and forty thousand Irish weavers in Manchester (126) and in the 1840s alone it is estimated that 400,000 people fled to Britain from starvation in Ireland, the vast majority to the industrial north of England. (127) As was demonstrated in Chapter 2, Manchester had some of the most appalling and insanitary living conditions in nineteenth

century England, the worst of which were to be found in the district dubbed Little Ireland, which housed approximately 4,000 people, most of whom were Irish. (128)

Although Ewing's vignette depicts horrendous poverty, there is a sense in which she is once again highlighting the creative imagination of children, which so stunned Master Swift on his first meeting with Jan. In the case of the Irish child, whom, we are to infer, nobody loves - he "belongs" to no one - his energy and talent are channelled into making and protecting a love object. In the description of the Irish child the narrator's tone is neutral, allowing the awfulness of the physical surroundings and the emotional deprivation to speak for themselves. The only time the narrator, in the guise of the beetle who escorts Aunt Penelope through the strange country, speculates is on the question of relationships, of "belonging." Ewing was a member of a close family of eight children; so intimate were they that Maxwell feels, "it was as if the umbilical cord which bound them to their mother had never properly been severed." (129)

The absence of name, of specific identity, invites, indeed demands, that the reader sees the boy's plight as a microcosm of the suffering and abject poverty of Irish emigrants. No blame is ascribed for the child's isolation, but it is the solitariness he finds intolerable. Life without love, the passage suggests, is almost a contradiction in terms. It is then in reaction to his most basic need - not to receive

affection, that is never stated - to give love, that the child's imagination transforms a prosaic vegetable into a person to love. The sacred bond which exists between it and the boy is illustrated by the secrecy that surround their liaison, Like lovers they meet unobserved, their feeling only given vent in the privacy that darkness affords. In an environment where physical survival is perilous, and therefore all-consuming, the emotional needs of a child which are sacrificed by adults are sustained by the boy himself.

Although the author's tone is neutral, her words are not. They are subtle but effective. It is no accident that she, through the beetle, uses the word "great" to describe the city in which the child lived. It conjures up images of opulence and pre-eminence, images that contrast sharply with the little boy's portion of that wealth, "a dirty, overcrowded room." Besides the exclusive intimacy of their relationship, the other reason the boy does not show his potato to others is that the privation described brings with it hunger, if not starvation, and in those circumstances, it would almost certainly have been eaten. The boy's hunger is mentioned and immediately afterwards his death reported. Although the two events are not linked by the author, their juxtaposition leaves the reader to infer that the child stood martyr-like between the destruction of his imaginative creation, his love object, and his own death. Despite impending death, "he never ate the potato," preferring as an act of love to risk his own life to save that of the one he adored. He laid down his life for his

friend.

The twin concerns of disease and death are recurrent themes in Ewing's fiction, as they were in the books written by Molesworth. Molesworth's interest lies mainly, however, in childhood contagious disease, which, as we saw in Chapter 3, she uses as a plot device. Ewing's interest is in public health, and specifically in drains and typhoid. Her interest in, and knowledge of, current scientific thinking is not altogether remarkable. Her mother, Mrs. Gatty, in addition to writing and editing children's fiction, was an eminent amateur naturalist. In 1863 she published *The History of British Seaweed*, which seventy years later was still used by the Scottish Marine Biological Association. (130) Such was her eminence that two leading experts in the field, Dr Harvey from Dublin University, and Dr Johnson, named newly discovered species after her. (131) (In Ewing's *Six to Sixteen*, this honour is reserved for young Jack Arkwright.) In payment for her first published book, Gatty requested not money, but "Dr Johnson's book on zoophytes." For the second edition she was given his work, *History of British Sponges and Lithophytes*." (132)

Gatty's scientific interests were comprehensive. In a letter as early as 1839 she discusses photography knowledgeably and excitedly. (133) She was a skilled homeopath and had studied fungi and astronomy. She was an advocate of pain relief in childbirth and used the newly available preparations

in her deliveries. In 1851 Gatty exults after giving birth, "I was under chloroform for the last hour and felt nothing. Laus Deo!" (134) Her granddaughter and biographer writes:

In my opinion Margaret Gatty was by nature a scientist rather than a writer. To me, she is a frustrated Madame Curie, hampered by the times in which she lived. (135)

Since she taught her daughters at home, it is inconceivable that Gatty's knowledge of, and enthusiasm for, things scientific was not communicated to her children. (Both Ewing's love of art and knowledge of botany were gleaned from her mother.) The combination of acting as her father's "curate," ministering to the village poor, and an appreciation of basic scientific principles would explain the way that disease, and especially typhoid, is treated by Ewing in her fiction. There is often a mixture of exasperation, anger and didacticism in her remarks surrounding typhoid. Stepping outside the narrative of *Jan and the Windmill*, Ewing tells us:

A mother with all her own and her neighbours' children sickening about her, would walk miles with a broken shoe to fetch the doctor or a big bottle of medicine but she won't walk three yards further than usual to draw her house-water from a well that the sewer doesn't leak into. (136)

She does not dispute the poor woman's devotion to family and friends; her sacrifice is suggested by the image of her traversing unlimited distances in inadequate and dilapidated footwear. However, what Ewing criticises is the working class's disregard of simple measures to prevent disease and their failure to implement medical advice. "Uneducated people will," she asserts, "take anything in from the doctor through their mouths, but little through their ears." (137) It is this ignorance that allows children to play "happily," floating boats on open drains "that ran lazily under the noon tide sun, by the footpath of the main street." (138)

The almost pastoral tranquillity of the scene conjured up by the innocent normality of the children's pastime and the conjunction of the water flowing dreamily under the heat of the sun is a perversion. Just as the open drain is no pure stream, so the scene depicted by Ewing is not one of innocence, for, we are told in the next clause, the children are "coffined for their hasty burial before the sun had next reached his meridian." (139)

When discussing typhoid, Ewing does not restrict her criticism to the working class. As the author concedes in her description of the typhoid epidemic that struck Jan's family, the disease is not attributable to lack of domestic hygiene, but largely to the pollution of drinking water. Prince Albert's death in 1861 was attributed to typhoid, underlining the fact that, unlike typhus, typhoid is not exclusive to the poor. At

the centre of the author's short story "Sunflowers and Rushlight," published in 1882, are two orphaned middle class sisters, whose parents and brother died from "fever." Returning home after the deaths, young Grace, the narrator, remembers being confronted by "a deep dark hole near the pump" (140) and thinking that it was her parents' grave. The maid assures her it is only the work of the men "digging for drains." (141) There is here an implicit connection between water, drains and death. The cause, and a graphic reminder of the effect of the disease which devastated her family, is to be found in the hole. This link is scathingly reinforced when the voice of scientific rationality, in the person of Dr Brown, is present when the girls' grandmother is grieving her loss. She talks in terms of "submitting" to "a heavy judgment." (142) Dismissing this display of quintessentially Victorian pious sentimentality which effectively removes responsibility from humans, the doctor retorts, voicing Ewing's view, "A very heavy judgment indeed, Madame, for letting the cesspool leak into the well." (143)

The attribution of blame to the ignorance and neglect of a member of the middle classes is comparable to Ewing's denunciation of the lack of health education of the working class villagers in *Jan of the Windmill*. The old woman's ignorance is roundly condemned. Her unenlightened attitude leads her to dismiss her daughter's fears that the smell and taste of the water indicated that the well was polluted. The doctor's castigation, though, is not limited to

the uneducated of any class, for he concedes that his own profession have been lax in its duty to inform.

In Hodgson Burnett's novel, *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, part of the old aristocrat's estate, called Earl's Court, has been reduced to a slum, and, consequently, people "have fever and children die." (144) One of the defects of the area is "bad drainage." This does not represent any deep interest in sanitation and health, it is merely a device to advance the plot. Even Mrs Errol's interest in the district is primarily concerned with her insistence on the virtues of work, similar to those discussed in chapter 1 and 2. "She found," in Earl's Court, we are told, "idleness, poverty and ignorance where there should have been comfort and industry." (145) It is only in the next paragraph that the physical manifestations of slum dwelling are enumerated and the effects on the inhabitants described.

It appears, then, that Hodgson Burnett, and through her, Mrs Errol, is concerned primarily with morality. With Ewing the motive is outrage that the subject is not taken seriously, resulting in a dreadful annual toll, as was discussed in Chapter 2, and a determination to educate her readership. "Sunflowers and Rushlight" is a thinly disguised attempt on the author's part to effect a connection in the reader's mind between defective sanitary arrangements, polluted water and death. Dr Brown provides her with a vehicle through which to harangue the complacency of the general public. In *A Flat*

Iron for a Farthing Reginald becomes sick after caring for a poor cottage boy who has "fever." (146) While the incidents surrounding his convalescence are an essential component of the plot, Ewing does, through Nurse Bundle's censure of the boy's mother, take the opportunity to emphasise the dangers of leaving a child in charge of a boy dying with a contagious disease. The treatment of the typhoid outbreak in *Jan of the Windmill* begins, as we have seen, with a general warning as to the fatal consequences of open drains. The main thrust of the narrative is concerned with the personal and communal devastation that the epidemic causes. The author, however, does insert a section which deals with the necessary hygienic practices in the aftermath of contagion; the burning of infected belongings and disinfection. Ewing asserts that if disinfection had taken place before the disease descended, it might have prevented the calamity.

In "A Great Emergency," published in 1874, we have an exploration of the organisms that cause typhoid. The protagonist, speaking of taking water out of the canal to mix with Kali (a type of North of England sherbert), admits that it often made him feel sick. His friend, the doctor's son, explains it is the "dragons out of the canal water lashing their tails inside us." (147)

He had seen them under his father's microscope. In *Chambers's Journal of Popular Literature, Science and Art* for Saturday, March 4, 1876, two years after the publication

of Ewing's "A Great Emergency," is an article entitled "The Germ Theory," in which W. C. (presumably William Chambers, who, with his relation "conducts" the magazine) describes new scientific theories in the realm of disease. So new is perceived to be the content to the readers of *Chambers's Journal* that when the word "germ" appears in the body of the article the word is often given a capital letter, presumably to underline the word and emphasise its meaning. The journalist rightly attributes the discovery of germs to Pasteur's work, some thirteen years previously. Interestingly, the name of Pasteur has to be qualified by nationality and occupation, indicating that to the general public he was not well known. Similarly, the word "bacteria" is so new a concept that it is written in italics. Mr Chambers quotes a German physician who describes germs as "a great perplexity," admitting that, "medical men are not yet thoroughly alive to their operation." (148) Ewing and her doctor's son, then, seem more than usually well informed. The regularity with which the disease appears in Ewing's books and the almost clinical information with which she surrounds it indicate a real and lasting concern not only with the disease but with its consequences.

Ewing was not the only prominent children's writer to adopt the cause of sanitation. In 1871 Charles Kingsley preached a sermon at the Chapel Royal, St James's, in thankfulness for the recovery of the Prince of Wales, who suffered an attack of typhoid. In it he expressed the hope that the royal

illness would propel

all loyal citizens to demand and to enforce, as a duty to the sovereign, their country and to God, a sanitary reform in town and country, immediate, wholesale and imperative. (149)

Sanitary reform was a genuine passion. Kingsley, we are told by his wife, gave evidence on "sanitary matters" to the House of Commons in February, 1854. (150) In a letter dated 1859, he avows to "throw myself into this movement ... I am tired of most things in the world. Of sanitary reform I shall never grow tired." (151) In the same year he was the speaker at the inaugural meeting of The Ladies' Sanitary Association. (152)

Not all ladies of the era were so fascinated by the subject. Ewing in a letter discussing her interest in drains as manifested in "Sunflowers and Rushlight" confesses that her subject matter

rather scandalised my Aunt who is staying with us. She is obviously shocked at the plain speaking about drains and doctors and thinks that part ought to have been in an essay - not a children's tale. (153)

Aware of her tendency to enthuse, Ewing begs, with the exclamation mark might indicate, tongue in cheek, her

correspondent, "If you think I am growing coarse in the cause of sanitation - I beseech you to tell me!" (154)

As we saw in Chapter 2, premature death in the Victorian era was not restricted to those who perished from typhoid, and Ewing's fiction reflects this. Indeed, it is the very casualness with which the death - albeit not recent death - of the young is mentioned and dealt with in a number of stories that suggests its prevalence. In the short story, "Timothy's Shoes," first published in serial form in 1870¹¹, a cottager whom the young hero asks about his family replies, "four buried and four living." (155) With a similar lack of drama, the Weeding Woman in "Mary's Meadow," published in 1883, when describing her aunt's family, says "zum married, zum buried." (156) This is not callousness but resignation, the acceptance of a common situation. It is a common occurrence that Molesworth's writing reflects. Death and the fear of death are recurring motifs in her fiction, as we saw in Chapter 3. As Chapter 5 will illustrate, several of Hocking's child characters die saintly deaths. While Hodgson Burnett's fiction features adults dying, these, Chapter 6 will argue, act as little more than plot devices.

Ewing's novel *The Story of a Short Life*, published in 1882, intertwines death with the military life, another popular subject in her writing. As an epigraph for Chapter IV of that novel, Ewing quotes from Eliot:

My mind is in the anomalous condition of hating war,
and loving its discipline, which has been an
incalculable contribution to the sentiment of duty
the devotion of the common soldier to his leader (the
sign for him of hard duty) is the type of all higher
devotedness, and is full of promise to other, better
generations. (157)

The military as depicted in Ewing's fiction is, as for Eliot, a manifestation of a social order of which she approves. If this is considered in conjunction with Ewing's devout Christianity, it becomes, in Eliot's phrase, a "higher devotedness." The hierarchical structure in the army and the idea of the relationship between God and humanity have obvious parallels: both are founded on a strict ethical code, which has obedience as a central tenet. Both, at their best, demand selflessness and committed service, and whether it be for Christ or a commanding officer, both insist that ultimately its followers be prepared to lay down their lives. (This parallel between religion and military life is one, as we shall see, that is commonly used by hymnists.) In both Eliot and Ewing it is the duty of the lower ranks to show "devotion" to their superiors, but officers must be worthy of such reverence.

Ewing's conception of the army differs radically from Hodgson Burnett's portrayal in *The Lost Prince*, published in 1915, where, as will be argued in Chapter 6, it is used both as a metaphor for, and an endorsement of, a strict social

hierarchy. As Plotz suggests, Ewing sees the army as a family (158); she also views it as an ante-chamber to heaven. In a hymn she composed we see military images, popular in nineteenth century songs of praise, which suggest life's struggles and the heavenly reward.

Hard is the strife, but unconceived the glory,
Short is the pain, eternal the joy,
Soldiers of Jesus! Blest who endure,
Stand in the battle; the victory is sure. (159)

In a Victorian collection of hymns for children entitled *Golden Bells*, in which a wide variety of hymnists' work is gathered, there is a section of "Hymns for Boys' Meetings" in which the metaphor of war predominates. Hymn 569 asserts that God "is your Captain," and the worshipper is seen as "Onward marching, firm and steady," towards the "Victor's crown" and "Conq'ring hosts with banners waving." The next hymn is entitled, "This is the Victory" and is followed by "Onward Christian Soldiers," who are "Marching as to war." Anthem 572 is called "Sound the Battle Cry" and in "Yield not to Temptation," which follows it, boys are exhorted to "fight manfully onward, dark passions subdue." (160)

These images of warfare and Ewing's confident assertion that "victory is safe" come, of course, from citizens of a country which had, largely by dint of military might, amassed an empire and which, in the nineteenth century, needed

young men to sustain its power. As if in self-justification, goodness is inextricably bound with winning wars; evil is equated with one's enemies, with those who lose. There is a fusing - or, perhaps, a confusing - of the religious and the patriotic. Ewing, in rather a clichéd image, talks about "Soldiers of Jesus." With the interweaving of war and religion, comes a romantic expectation of the military. In "Yield not to Temptation," it is not sufficient that soldiers "fight," they must attack "manfully." In that word is invested both the physical courage and spiritual purity, and superiority, which is seen to lift the British soldier above debased, earthly considerations, the "dark passions," of the merely human.

The motifs of religion, patriotism and purity of manhood suffuse much of Victorian fiction written by men for boys. Ewing, as a woman dealing with the same material in several of her novels for a mixed sex audience (*We and the World*, though, was, so the book tells its readers, written for boys) must be viewed as, if not unique, then highly unusual. In 1869 the author married Major Ewing, a serving soldier. Posted to Canada for two years, the couple returned to England and lived until 1877 in the military camp at Aldershot. The warmth and unity of the enclave are reflected in her fiction and this emphasis on the personal was to be what differentiates her portrayal of the military life from those of her colleagues whose fiction tends to depict stories of adventure. Although in *Jackanapes* (1879) there is a battle

scene in which the protagonist sacrifices himself for his friend, it is the human, social and psychological make-up of her characters that occupies Ewing. These characteristics, however, have been informed, in a very real sense, by the romanticisation of military life in Victorian stories for boys, with their almost mediaeval code of chivalry, and, as is emphasised in Ewing's work, the close camaraderie and mutual support of a community which shares what she depicts as high ideals.

In *The Story of a Short Life*, the author imbues with romance the figure of V. C., the soldier whose exploits were rewarded by the presentation of his country's highest honour for bravery. Ewing's approbation is reflected in the young protagonist, Leonard, who hero-worships him. Again, with the aligning of the military and the divine, it is appropriate that the first meeting between the boy and the soldier marks the beginning of the spiritual redemption of the former.

The novel opens with Leonard portrayed as the indulged son of an artistic father and a Scottish mother from a military family. Upon the wall of his home is a portrait of a young man and his pet, an ancestor the boy dubs "Uncle Rupert," a valiant young soldier, who died in battle at the age of sixteen, whom Leonard wishes to emulate. So close is his identification with his "uncle" that, we are told, "he wished he could get inside the frame with the dog." (161)

Leonard sees himself as aspiring to the heights that Rupert attained, and thereby, in a sense, merging with him, deserving, as his ancestor did, the immortality of art to represent the everlasting qualities epitomised by an early sacrificial death.

Rupert is both the child's role model and his playmate. As a small boy, Leonard would attempt to hide from the gaze of the painted figure, but the eyes were all seeing, following the child round the room. Uncle Rupert's supervision is as pervasive as his influence, acting almost like a conscience, an embodiment of the moral absolute. He watches, so the boy is told, "to see if you are growing up a good boy, a gallant young gentleman, such as he was." (162) (The intimate bond between morality, class and the military is captured succinctly in the sentence.) In the portrait of Rupert, the young Cavalier, painted, we are told, by Vandyck, the arts and the military are united. The unity not only characterised the author's married life, but bridges the sympathies of Leonard's parents and dominates their son's dying moments.

To the great delight of the boy, smitten with the idea of the glory of combat, comes the news that his aunt and uncle, a serving army officer, are to be posted to the local military camp. Invited to a display at the barracks, Leonard becomes so excited that he falls and in falling breaks his back and consequently is paralysed. Ewing's portrayal of what she describes as "that imperious little invalid" (163) anticipates

Hodgson Burnett's protagonist, Colin, in *The Secret Garden*, published in 1911, and discussed in Chapter 6. Although Leonard's back injury, unlike Colin's, is real, his frustrated behaviour is very similar, culminating in tantrums in which he threatens to cry "himself into convulsions." (164) His attitude towards his maid, Jemima, is ruthless. Not only does he attack her with his crutches, but, Ewing informs us, she leads the "life of a prisoner on a treadmill." (165) Her master is ruled by his own egocentric dictate: "I am an invalid, and I ought to have what I want." (166)

It is a situation alleviated by the invalid's mother, Lady Jane, and what her husband calls her "Scottish conscience," (167) which enables her to see beyond her love for her son, to her duty as a mother. The word "duty" harks back to the story's dominant theme, the military ideal, and in effect places Lady Jane in the position of benign commanding officer, who, if she is to be denied the opportunity to "gird on" the sword of her soldier son, will not "fail to help him carry his cross." (168) In place of Leonard's frustrated ambition to be a "brave soldier," his mother sets him a mission to be a "brave cripple." (169) As the use of the word "brave" in both phrases suggests, the commitment, selflessness, courage and discipline are seen as the same in both states.

The moral and the military become synonymous when V. C. endorses the regime envisaged by Lady Jane. Explaining his mother's philosophy to the young officer, Leonard

declares:

Mother says I could try very hard, and think of poor
Jemima as well as myself, and keep *brave* in spite of
feeling miser able, that then (particularly as I shan't be
very long before I die) it would be as good as if I'd
lived to be as old as Uncle Rupert, and fought bravely
when the battle was against me, and cheered on my
men, though I knew I could never come out of it alive.
(170)

Asked whether he thinks a commitment on the boy's part to
"be always good, from this minute right away till I die" (171)
would amount to "the courage of a V.C.," the soldier
answers, "God knows it could, a thousand times over!" (172)
This is not merely the emotional reaction to the bravery of a
dying child, but, by using the word "God", it is the ultimate
allying of righteousness with the duty of a soldier.

In embracing the family motto, *Laetus Sorte Mea* - Happy in
My Lot - Leonard abandons frustration in favour of
contentment. Given the unity in the text between the
laudable and things military, it is significant that towards the
end of his life Leonard requests that he be allowed to live at
the barracks with his uncle and aunt. In the context of
Ewing's imagery, this symbolises the young invalid's
growing spiritual maturity, which he manifests by his daily
worship at the camp's church. That Leonard, and by

extension his morality, is accepted as part of the military establishment is embodied in the act of presenting him with, not the uniform of an active soldier, but an adapted regulation dressing-gown of the soldier invalid.

It is the strains of his favourite hymn, sung by the soldiers who stand outside the church so that Leonard might hear them, that comforts Leonard when, in Ewing's phrase, "my hero lay dying." (173) The ambiguity surrounding the word "hero" suggests that Leonard was no mere protagonist, but that at his death he embodies the qualities his creator extols: strength, courage and spirituality, sufficient to merit the award of even the most highly prestigious of medals. From the army camp (that seems to shelter a veritable earthly communion of saints) it is V. C. in a solo who sings out Leonard's life, with a couplet which fuses the child's courage with his own:

They climbed the steep ascent of heaven,
Through peril, toil and pain. (174)

Leonard, through the acknowledgement of wrong, and the relentless pursuit of moral excellence despite extreme physical suffering, reaps his reward. We have, at his death, the union of Ewing's blessed trinity: art, manifested in church music, religion and the values that underpin military life. It is fitting, then, that Uncle Rupert appears in the barracks to escort the boy to paradise. (Interestingly, although written three years before Ewing's death of what is commonly held

to be cancer of the spine, (175) *The Story of a Short Life*, which features a protagonist with a broken back, was issued in book form only four days before her death. [176])

Behind V. C. was the whole company of ordinary soldiers, united and harmonious, come to honour and to mourn the courageous boy. Unlike most nineteenth century authors who depict the military either for adults or for children, Ewing does not restrict herself to depicting the officers. She features convincingly, sympathetically and prominently members of the army's lowest ranks; she does this at a time, as Maxwell's biography reminds us, when the enlisted soldier "was regarded as a pariah by his kinsfolk." (177) In this Ewing anticipates the work and sentiments of Kipling, an enthusiastic reader of her prose. (178) Echoing the mutual fondness of John Broom and the Scottish soldier M'Alister, in *Lob Lie-By-The-Fire*, Leonard's relationship with O'Reilly, an Irishman serving in the ranks in the army camp, is one of shared love and respect. Ewing describes the soldier as Leonard's "new and deeply-revered friend," (179) as the boy, in emulation of the gravity of his companion, stands to attention "as near to the Irish private as he could squeeze himself." (180) It is, though, the upper-class officer, V. C. who eventually supplants O'Reilly as the boy's military hero, a man with the same physical beauty and social class as his admirer. (The working class John Broom is allowed to retain Private M'Alister as idol.) Leonard's lingering affection for his former icon is reflected in O'Reilly marrying Leonard's nurse

and living at the gate lodge on his retirement from the army.

Closely allied to the theme of death are funerals, a subject which formed the basis of the author's favourite childhood games. (181) In Ewing's poem "The Burial of a Linnet", (written a year before the author's marriage, and therefore before her experience of military life) death and play intermingle. Although the poem depicts merely the funeral of a bird, it is an event invested with all the pomp and ceremony of which childish imagination is capable. This high seriousness is then set against the novelty of the props, causing both amusement and affectionate condescension on the part of the reader.

Muffle the dinner bell, mournfully ring.

...

Bid the black kitten march as chief mourner,

Waving her tail like a plume in the air. (182)

In the line, "Bury him nobly, close to the donkey," we have the adult, not to say military, virtue of nobility being compromised, if not negated, by its close relationship with "the donkey," an animal, as Chesterton reminds us, which is far from embodying nobility. It is, however, only the adult reader (and author) who would be aware of the incongruity, a quality used by Ewing to emphasise both the innocence and the earnestness of children's pretence. It is a device used frequently by Hodgson Burnett, as we shall see in Chapter 6.

And yet even in a poem whose subject is the imaginative life of children, as opposed to death itself, there are reminders that the demise of a bird has resonances of the human condition: "Tell his poor widow kind friends have found him." (183) There is a recognition, here, of the sorrowful consequences of death. The phrase "poor widow," indicates both the children's sympathy with what they perceive to be the hen's sorrow and their attempt to alleviate any possible pecuniary worries "poor" might suggest, by relieving herself and her dead spouse of the ignominy of being buried in a pauper's grave.

So prevalent a force is the subject of death in Ewing's writing that it is seen to suffuse children's games. The Blind Baby in *The Story of a Short Life* shares Ewing's youthful enjoyment. He is said to be "playing at funerals all the time." (184) as he bangs the base of his basket in lieu of a drum and runs after the band as they play "The Funeral March." But it is only play; the rhythm of the last line of "The Burial of a Linnet" leaves the reader in no doubt about that. Gone is all the mock funereal solemnity, dispelled by the hurry and urgency of life itself. The tempo reflects the notion inherent in the concept of children, the affirmation of life and the promise of its renewal. "And now! Plant his grave with whatever grows fast." (185)

The abrupt "And now!", followed by its exclamation mark,

indicates the resilience of children, abandoning death for life, leaving the past for the present and the promise of a future. The image of sowing seeds and of planting flowers carries with it the Christian concept of resurrection, the hope that life will return in all its colour and beauty. The word "fast," which ends the poem, emphasises this notion, denoting the renewal of the liveliness and vitality of the children.

In Ewing's poem "A Soldier's Children," written in 1879, the narrator, the oldest of the young people cited in the title, contrasts military funerals with their civilian counterparts, which the children witness after they leave the barracks:

There's only been one funeral since we came, an
ugly black thing with no Dead March or Union Jack,
and not
even a firing party at the grave. (186)

Underpinning the child narrator's fixation with things military is the lonely, serious and potentially catastrophic adult world in which the children's parents exist. Although Ewing allows us glimpses into what we are to perceive as the real world, as opposed to the world of the children's imagination, the reader sees the reality only through the narrator who cannot comprehend its significance. By definition, then, as with "The Burial of a Linnet", it is only readers of experience who will recognise what the voice behind the poem does not.

Nurse says we oughtn't have battles now Father's
gone to
battle, but that's just the reason why!
And I don't believe one bit what she says about it's
making mother cry. (187)

Here is a military family which, because their father is fighting abroad, is living outside the army enclave, and while the mother and the nurse worry about the safety of the head of the household, the narrator's discontent is ostensibly centred around being denied the drama, colour and fun of military life. This is a manifestation of the boy's insecurity at being removed, not only from his father, but from his familiar surroundings, a deprivation that can only be compensated for by the dragooning of his sibling into his military games, thereby creating an illusion of normality. In this realm of the imagination, the narrator has control of his environment. He rules over his younger siblings who have been induced to share his games, and by extension, their brother's uncertainty.

Father's away, and he's gone to war;
Which is why we play at soldiers and fighting battles
more
than ever we did before. (188)

There is a sense that if their wars are just games, this by extension will ensure that their father's is too and that he will

emerge as unscathed as they.

While brother Dick, whose youthful inexperience is denoted by his "dark blue Frock," uses "Grandpapa's stick" as a weapon, the narrator's badge of office is "a real tin sword." His sister Mary, who is "so good she might easily be a chaplain," he realises, "can't be anything that wants a man." (189) Mary accepts her lot, and such is her sense of duty, according to her brother, that if she was a soldier's widow, she would dedicate her life to growing flowers for his grave.

On Sunday, in deference to their mother's Sabbatarian wishes, they put away their toys and games and instead enact a "church Parade," officiated over by Dick as padre, with his "nightgown over his knickerbocker suit." He prays for soldiers at war who "mightn't have much time for their prayers." (190) The poem ends with Mary's emotions and insight, more mature than her brothers', causing her to cry in the verse which declares, "soon, soon, to faithful warriors come their rest." (191) The narrator's exuberant determination that, "we can play soldiers every day till Old Father comes home from the war," reminds the reader again about the perpetual presence of death, and the thin veil that divides not only life from death, but the innocence of childhood from the experience of adulthood. It is an innocence that Mary is passing beyond as she unites her tears and terrors to those of her mother and nurse.

Seemingly, Ewing's sympathy for matters military had not always been so strong. In the preface to *Miscellanea*, an unnamed sister - probably Horatia K. F. Gatty, author of *Juliana Horatia Ewing and Her Books* - explains that this collection of Ewing's writing, published posthumously, was unlikely to be outstanding as "the fact that she did not republish the papers during her life shows that she did not estimate them very highly herself." (192)

Yet there are reasons other than quality for not publishing work. Contained in this collection is a translation from the work of Jean Mace entitled "War and the Dead - A Dramatic Dialogue," which Horatia Gatty dates as 1866, the year before her sister's marriage to Major Ewing, and the sharing of his military life that it entailed. Although it is dangerous to extrapolate the views of translators from the material they translate, in the case of Ewing there is nothing to suggest that this was any kind of commission; the fact that it was not published would militate against such a notion and as it is subject matter for adult sensibilities it is unlikely that she meant to use it in her work for children. It is, therefore, likely that the content of the piece was intrinsically interesting to her.

In the work the two characters, War and Peace, dispute the morality of war, summoning the dead from various battles to give evidence. A Grenadier and a Hussar are called, only to find that while they fought on opposing sides, their lives and

views are comparable, and they have not, nor ever did have, any quarrel with each other. They both venomously declaim, "cursed be those who forced us to fight." (193)

This is not merely anti-war rhetoric - though as part of the work of a writer who relies so much on the army for subject matter, that in itself would be interesting enough - but the piece has a strong sense of political unease rooted in class. While the quotation stops short of revolution - there is no incitement to overthrow the social order - there is a bitterness of tone in the words "cursed" and "forced," a bitterness centring on the ability of governments to compel, in this case, farmer to kill farmer, working man to destroy working man. In the coming together of the two erstwhile enemies, there is a strong suggestion of working class solidarity, antagonistic to those who rule - obvious echoes of the French Revolution.

To support his assertion of the glory of war, Death summons the women who share the soldiers' lives. They enter veiled and testify to the loneliness they suffered when the men were absent, and the horrors they experienced, thinking their warriors either injured or dead. After each testimony, one of the soldiers claims the female, her opinions having convinced him that she is his relation. When the women's veils are removed, every fighter stands beside a stranger, not one having guessed the identity of his kin. Thus we have the universal anti-war sentiments of women being recognised and supported by men they have never met, who yet identify

themselves and their loved ones with the emotions being expressed. There is, then, a consensus between working class male and female of all nations:

Peace: These are sisters, wives, daughters and mothers everywhere, my children, and Nature has but one language in all countries. (To War) As for you, go and sound your trumpet in barracks and drinking houses, but invoke the Dead no more, and do not reckon upon women. (194)

It is, Peace maintains, unnatural for women to uphold war, or, as Death would wish them to do, to glorify the injury or annihilation of the men they love. Although Ewing can be "reckoned" on for an overall favourable (if not laudatory) portrayal of the military, there is a sense in which this is divorced from the aspects of war discussed by Mace. Her portrayal of the army has little relationship to the radicalism of the piece she chose to translate, a piece which contains no suggestion of the notion of nobility that Eliot and Ewing agreed upon.

The tone of the translation discussed above contrasts sharply with that which characterises her stories for children. What separates Ewing's fiction from that of her contemporaries writing for children is the lightness and humour that usually pervades her prose and the complexity and depth of her characterisations. Most important, however, is her view of

humanity. To be poor to Ewing is an economic, not a moral, state. In contrast, the portrayal of the working classes by the other authors discussed here is closely allied to notions of immorality, as was argued in Chapter 3, and which will be discussed in chapters 5 and 6. In Ewing's work the effects of poverty have practical implications which are felt by most poor people - bad housing, lack of education, little food; this is no more reason to use working class characters as symbolic of their social group than to depict the upper classes as indistinguishable from each other because they all enjoy prosperity. The individuality of Ewing's characters from all levels of society is attributable to the Christian concept to which she subscribes of the intrinsic worth of each of God's people, and to the fact that, as Margery, in *Six to Sixteen* remarks of her adoptive family, the Arkwrights - a thinly disguised Gatty clan,

our politics, on the whole, were liberal; our theology inclined to be broad; our ideas on social subjects reformatory, progressive, experimental. (195)

Ewing's children's fiction, written for a largely middle class readership, offers a view of the poor more in keeping with modern sensibilities than those prevalent in the second half of the nineteenth century. Her satirical treatment of the simplistic and overtly didactic nature of evangelical writing for children, by implication, criticises a large body of work for the young which relies for its impact on the portrayal of children

and the poor as outrageous sinners. In contrast, Ewing's "Father Hedgehog and His Neighbours" illustrates her conviction of the moral equality of people irrespective of class. It is a conviction that underpins the portrayal of Master Swift in *Jan of the Windmill*. Ewing's approval of his elevation to the middle classes contrasts with Miss Betty's prejudice towards such social mobility in *Lob Lie-By-The-Fire*, which Ewing ridicules. In several of her novels Ewing portrays young working class protagonists bringing their errant elders back to God. It is a view of the Romantic child that is neither simplistic nor sentimental. Most unusually outside evangelical literature, several of Ewing's novels are set in poor households, and feature the familial and social life of their inhabitants. Ewing, like Molesworth, sees domestic matters and child-rearing as the realms of women. Interference by a man has catastrophic consequences in *Jan of the Windmill*. She also depicts the empathy and emotional bond that exists between women as incomprehensible to both men and boys. As with her middle class characters, she depicts her fictional poor as moral, religious and artistic beings, capable of a wide range of sympathies and behaviours. This complex and sympathetic portrayal of the working classes, however, does not extend to the urban poor, whose representation is much more clichéd. Ewing's approach to the rural poor relies on the author's moderate religious precepts which underpin, rather than dominate, her fiction. The same religious precepts inform her portrayal of military life, which is depicted as harmonious,

compassionate and self-sacrificing. Its benign hierarchical structure is viewed by Ewing as a metaphor for ideal class relationships. It is this same ethical stance she adopts when she critiques and ridicules those who seek to exploit their positions, be they men over women, adults over children, or the middle classes over those below them. In Ewing's work death is ubiquitous. It is casually referred to and forms the basis for children's games. In several of her stories she portrays outbreaks of typhoid and discusses the scientific and public health aspects of the disease.

While Hocking's children's fiction also concerns itself with the lives of the poor, most of his working class characters, at least initially, inhabit urban slums. Hocking, like Ewing, is concerned with questions of class, but as we shall see in the next chapter, his depiction of the impoverished lacks the insight and subtlety of Ewing's portrayal of the poor.

Notes

- (1) Ewing, Mrs *Six to Sixteen*. p. 226
- (2) Ewing, Mrs *Six to Sixteen*. p.145
- (3) Ewing, Mrs *Six to Sixteen*. p. 146
- (4) Ewing, Mrs *Six to Sixteen* p. 146
- (5) Ewing, Mrs *A Flat Iron for a Farthing*. p. 244
- (6) Ewing, Mrs *A Flat Iron for a Farthing*. p. 243
- (7) Maxwell, Christabel *Mrs Gatty and Mrs Ewing*. p. 163
- (8) Maxwell, Christabel *Mrs Gatty and Mrs Ewing* p. 18
- (9) Ewing, Mrs *A Flat Iron for a Farthing*. p. 243
- (10) Gatty, Horatia H. K. *Juliana Horatia Ewing and Her Books*. p.50
- (11) Maxwell, Christabel *Mrs Gatty and Mrs Ewing*. pp.78/9
- (12) Avery, Gillian *Mrs. Ewing*. p. 57
- (13) Maxwell, Christabel *Mrs Gatty and Mrs Ewing*. p. 115
- (14) Dickens, Charles *Oliver Twist*. p. 3
- (15) Thwaite, Ann *Waiting for the Party*. p. 72
- (16) Thompson, E.P. *The Making of the Working Class*. p. 446
- (17) Ewing, Mrs *Lob Lie-By-The-Fire or The Luck of Lingborough and Other Tales*. "Lob Lie-By-The-Fire" p. 26
- (18) Ewing, Mrs "Lob Lie-By-The-Fire." p. 5
- (19) Ewing, Mrs "Lob Lie-By-The-Fire." p. 5
- (20) Ewing, Mrs "Lob Lie-By-The-Fire." p. 19
- (21) Ewing, Mrs "Lob Lie-By-The-Fire." p. 32
- (22) Ewing, Mrs "Lob Lie-By-The-Fire." p. 22
- (23) Ewing, Mrs "Lob Lie-By-The-Fire." p. 27

- (24) Bronte, Emily *Wuthering Heights*. p. 54
- (25) Ewing, Mrs "Lob Lie-By-The-Fire." p. 21
- (26) Ewing, Mrs "Lob Lie-By-The-Fire." p. 52
- (27) Ewing, Mrs "Lob Lie-By-The-Fire." p. 85
- (28) Ewing, Mrs "Lob Lie-By-The-Fire." p. 70
- (29) Gatty, Horatia H. K. *Juliana Horatia Ewing and her Books*. p. 12.
- (30) Ewing, Mrs *Mrs. Overtheway's Remembrances and Other Tales*. "Melchior's Dream." p. 185
- (31) Avery, Gillian *Mrs Ewing*. p. 47
- (32) Gatty, Horatia H. K. *Juliana Horatia Ewing and Her Books*. p. 37
- (33) Ewing, Mrs *We and the World*. p. 28
- (34) Ewing, Mrs *Jackanapes and Other Tales*. "Father Hedgehog and His Neighbours." p. 88
- (35) Ewing, Mrs "Father Hedgehog and His Neighbours." p. 89
- (36) Ewing, Mrs "Father Hedgehog and His Neighbours." p. 91
- (37) Ewing, Mrs "Father Hedgehog and His Neighbours." p. 92
- (38) Ewing, Mrs "Father Hedgehog and His Neighbours." p. 93
- (39) Ewing, Mrs "Father Hedgehog and His Neighbours." p. 92
- (40) Ewing, Mrs "Father Hedgehog and His Neighbours." p. 116

- (41) Ewing, Mrs "Father Hedgehog and His Neighbours." p.
116
- (42) Ewing, Mrs "Father Hedgehog and His Neighbours." p.
117
- (43) Ewing, Mrs "Father Hedgehog and His Neighbours." p.
117
- (44) Ewing, Mrs "Father Hedgehog and His Neighbours." p.
118
- (45) Ewing, Mrs "Father Hedgehog and His Neighbours." p.
118
- (46) Ewing, Mrs "Father Hedgehog and His Neighbours." p.
119
- (47) Ewing, Mrs "Father Hedgehog and His Neighbours." p.
118
- (48) Ewing, Mrs "Father Hedgehog and His Neighbours." p.
119
- (49) Ewing, Mrs "Father Hedgehog and His Neighbours." p.
119
- (50) Ewing, Mrs "Father Hedgehog and His Neighbours." p.
119
- (51) Ewing, Mrs "Father Hedgehog and His Neighbours." p.
120
- (52) Ewing, Mrs "Father Hedgehog and His Neighbours." p.
120
- (53) Ewing, Mrs *A Flat Iron for a Farthing.* p. 205
- (54) Ewing, Mrs *A Flat Iron for a Farthing.* p. 206
- (55) Ewing, Mrs *A Flat Iron for a Farthing.* p. 207
- (56) Avery, Gillian *Mrs Ewing* . pp.57/8

- (57) Maxwell, Christabel *Mrs Gatty and Mrs Ewing*. p. 228
- (58) Maxwell, Christabel *Mrs Gatty and Mrs Ewing*. p. 228
- (59) Ewing, Mrs *Jan of the Windmill*. p.16
- (60) Ewing, Mrs *Jan of the Windmill*. p. 9
- (61) Ewing, Mrs *Jan of the Windmill*. p. 9
- (62) Ewing, Mrs *Jan of the Windmill*. p. 10
- (63) Ewing, Mrs *Jan of the Windmill*. p. 11
- (64) Ewing, Mrs *Jan of the Windmill*. p. 11
- (65) Ewing, Mrs *Jan of the Windmill*. p. 11
- (66) Ewing, Mrs *Jan of the Windmill*. p. 11
- (67) Ewing, Mrs *Jan of the Windmill*. p. 11
- (68) Ewing, Mrs *Jan of the Windmill*. p.117
- (69) Avery, Gillian *Mrs Ewing* p. 46
- (70) Avery, Gillian *Nineteenth Century Children - Heroes and Heroines in English Children's Stories - 1780-1900*. p 86
- (71) Ewing, Mrs *Jan of the Windmill*. p. 45
- (72) Ewing, Mrs *Jan of the Windmill*. p. 45
- (73) Ewing, Mrs *We and the World*. p. 95
- (74) Ewing, Mrs *Jan of the Windmill*. p. 31
- (75) Horn, Pamela *Labouring Life in the Victorian Countryside*. p. 44
- (76) Ewing, Mrs *We and the World*. p.104
- (77) Ewing, Mrs *We and The World*. p.100
- (78) Dickens, Charles *David Copperfield*. pp. 94/5
- (79) Ewing, Mrs *We and the World*. p. 96
- (80) Ewing, Mrs *We and The World*. p. 97
- (81) Ewing, Mrs *We and the World*. pp. 100/1
- (82) Ewing, Mrs *We and the World*. p. 102

- (83) Ewing, Mrs *Jan of the Windmill.* p. 78
- (84) Ewing, Mrs *Jan of the Windmill.* p. 78
- (85) Ewing, Mrs *Jan of the Windmill.* p. 78
- (86) Ewing, Mrs *Jan of the Windmill.* p. 91
- (87) Ewing, Mrs *Jan of the Windmill.* p. 89
- (88) Ewing, Mrs *Jan of the Windmill.* p. 88
- (89) Ewing, Mrs *Jan of the Windmill.* pp. 88/89
- (90) Ewing, Mrs *Jan of the Windmill.* p. 88
- (91) Ewing, Mrs *Jan of the Windmill.* p. 90
- (92) Ewing, Mrs *Jan of the Windmill.* p. 90
- (93) Ewing, Mrs *Jan of the Windmill.* p. 77
- (94) Ewing, Mrs *Jan of the Windmill.* p. 86
- (95) Ewing, Mrs *Jan of the Windmill.* p. 86
- (96) Ewing, Mrs *Jan of the Windmill.* p. 88
- (97) Ewing, Mrs *Jan of the Windmill.* p. 91
- (98) Ewing , Mrs *Jan of the Windmill.* p. 85
- (99) Ewing, Mrs "Lob Lie-By-The-Fire." p. 69
- (100) Ewing, Mrs *Jan of the Windmill.* p. 117
- (101) Ewing, Mrs *Jan of the Windmill.* p. 151
- (102) Ewing, Mrs *Jackanapes and Other Stories.* "Daddy Darwin's Dovecot" p. 60
- (103) Ewing, Mrs "Daddy Darwin's Dovecot." p. 64
- (104) Ewing, Mrs "Daddy Darwin's Dovecot." p. 65
- (105) Ewing, Mrs "Daddy Darwin's Dovecot." p. 65
- (106) Ewing, Mrs "Daddy Darwin's Dovecot." p. 72
- (107) Ewing, Mrs "Daddy Darwin's Dovecot." p. 72
- (108) Ewing, Mrs "Daddy Darwin's Dovecot." p. 72
- (109) Ewing, Mrs "Daddy Darwin's Dovecot." p. 105

- (110) Ewing, Mrs "Daddy Darwin's Dovecot." p. 104
- (111) Maxwell, Christabel *Mrs Gatty and Mrs Ewing.* pp. 125/6
- (112) Ewing, Mrs *Jan of the Windmill.* p. 110
- (113) Ewing, Mrs *Jan of the Windmill.* p. 125
- (114) Ewing, Mrs *Jan of the Windmill.* p. 125
- (115) Mayhew, Henry *London Labour and the London Poor.* pp. 36/7
- (116) Mayhew, Henry *London Labour and the London Poor .* p. 38
- (117) See Steven Marcus, *The Other Victorians*
- (118) Mayhew, Henry *London Labour and the London Poor.* p. 42
- (119) Thompson, E.P. *The Making of the Working Class.* pp. 442/3
- (120) Ewing, Mrs *The Land of the Lost Toys and Amelia and the Dwarfs.* "The Land of the Lost Toys." p.26
- (121) Gatty, Horatia K. F. *Juliana Horatia Ewing and Her Books.* p. 60
- (122) Shuttleworth, J.P. Kay *The Moral and Physical Condition of the Working Classes Employed in the Cotton Manufacture in Manchester.* p. 6
- (123) Shuttleworth, J.P. Kay *The Moral and Physical Condition of the Working Classes Employed in the Cotton Manufacture in Manchester.* p. 7
- (124) Shuttleworth, J.P. Kay *The Moral and Physical Condition of the Working Classes Employed in the Cotton Manufacture in Manchester.* p. 7

- (125) Shuttleworth, J.P. Kay *The Moral and Physical Condition of the Working Classes Employed in Cotton Manufacture in Manchester* p. 12
- (126) Hammond, J.L. and Barbara *The Town Labourer 1760-1832 - The New Civilisation.* p. 13
- (127) Newsome, David *The Victorian World Picture.* p. 16
- (128) Engels, Friedrich *The Condition of the Working Class in England.* p. 98
- (129) Maxwell, Christabel *Mrs Gatty and Mrs Ewing.* p. 18
- (130) Maxwell, Christabel *Mrs Gatty and Mrs Ewing.* pp.94/5
- (131) Maxwell, Christabel *Mrs Gatty and Mrs Ewing.* p. 99
- (132) Maxwell, Christabel *Mrs Gatty and Mrs Ewing.* p. 93
- (133) Maxwell, Christabel *Mrs Gatty and Mrs Ewing.* p.72
- (134) Maxwell, Christabel *Mrs Gatty and Mrs Ewing.* p.100
- (135) Maxwell, Christabel *Mrs Gatty and Mrs Ewing.* p. 91
- (136) Ewing, Mrs *Jan of the Windmill.* p. 100
- (137) Ewing, Mrs *Jan of the Windmill.* p. 100
- (138) Ewing, Mrs *Jan of the Windmill.* p. 100
- (139) Ewing, Mrs *Jan of the Windmill.* p. 100
- (140) Ewing, Mrs *Mary's Meadow and Other Tales of Fields and Flowers.* "Sunflowers and Rushlight." p. 165
- (141) Ewing, Mrs "Sunflowers and Rushlight." p. 165
- (142) Ewing, Mrs "Sunflowers and Rushlight." p. 165
- (143) Ewing, Mrs "Sunflowers and Rushlight." p. 165
- (144) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *Little Lord Fauntleroy.* p.140
- (145) Burnett, Frances Hodgson. *Little Lord Fauntleroy.* p. 143

- (146) Ewing, Mrs A. *Flat Iron for a Farthing*. p. 82
- (147) Ewing, Mrs A *A Great Emergency and Other Tales*. "A Great Emergency." p. 41
- (148) W.C. *Chambers's Journal of Popular Literature - Science and Art 1876*. "The Germ Theory" pp. 145/7
- (149) Kingsley, Mrs. *Charles Kingsley - His Letters and Memories of His Life*. pp. 316/7
- (150) Kingsley, Mrs. *Charles Kingsley - His Letters and Memories of His Life*. p. 157
- (151) Kingsley, Mrs. *Charles Kingsley - His Letters and Memories of His Life*. p. 222
- (152) Kingsley, Mrs. *Charles Kingsley - His Letters and Memories of His Life*. p. 227
- (153) Maxwell, Christabel *Mrs Gatty and Mrs Ewing*. p. 237
- (154) Maxwell, Christabel *Mrs Gatty and Mrs Ewing*. p. 237
- (155) Ewing, Mrs *Lob Lie-By-The-Fire and Other Tales*. "Timothy's Shoes" p.111
- (156) Ewing, Mrs *Mary's Meadow and Other Tales of Fields and Flowers*. "Mary's Meadow" p. 79
- (157) Eliot, George *The Story of a Short Life* p.28
- (158) Plotz, Judith A. *Romanticism and Children's Literature in Nineteenth-Century England* "A Victorian Comfort Book: Juliana Ewing's The Story of a Short Life." p. 185
- (159) Gatty, K. F. *Juliana Horatia Ewing and Her Books*. p.18
- (160) *Golden Bells - or Hymns for our Children*. Hymns number 157/8
- (161) Ewing, Mrs *The Story of a Short Life*. p. 6

- (162) Ewing, Mrs *The Story of a Short Life*. p. 6
- (163) Ewing, Mrs *The Story of a Short Life*. p. 43
- (164) Ewing, Mrs *The Story of a Short Life*. p. 44
- (165) Ewing, Mrs *The Story of a Short Life*. p. 44
- (166) Ewing, Mrs *The Story of a Short Life*. p. 43
- (167) Ewing, Mrs *The Story of a Short Life*. p. 30
- (168) Ewing, Mrs *The Story of a Short Life*. p. 46
- (169) Ewing, Mrs *The Story of a Short Life*. p. 48
- (170) Ewing, Mrs *The Story of a Short Life*. p.51
- (171) Ewing, Mrs *The Story of a Short Life*. p.52
- (172) Ewing, Mrs *The Story of a Short Life*. p.52
- (173) Ewing, Mrs *The Story of a Short Life*. p.71
- (174) Ewing, Mrs *The Story of a Short Life*. p.74
- (175) Carpenter, Humphrey and Prichard, Mari *The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature*. p. 171
- (176) Gatty, Horatia K. F. *Juliana Horatia Ewing and Her Books*. p. 72
- (177) Maxwell, Christabel *Mrs Gatty and Mrs Ewing*. p. 229
- (178) Maxwell, Christabel *Mrs Gatty and Mrs Ewing*. p. 229
- (179) Ewing, Mrs *The Story of a Short Life*. p.27
- (180) Ewing, Mrs *The Story of a Short Life*. p.27
- (181) Gatty, Horatia K. F. *Juliana Horatia Ewing and Her Books*. p. 52
- (182) Ewing, Mrs *The Golden Staircase*. "The Burial of a Linnet." p. 116
- (183) Ewing, Mrs "The Burial of a Linnet." p. 116
- (184) Ewing, Mrs *The Story of a Short Life*. p.22
- (185) Ewing, Mrs "The Burial of a Linnet.." p. 116

- (186) Ewing, Mrs *Jackanapes and Other Tales*. "The Soldier's Children." p.59
- (187) Ewing, Mrs "The Soldier's Children." p. 61
- (188) Ewing, Mrs "The Soldier's Children." p. 59
- (189) Ewing, Mrs "The Soldier's Children." p. 60
- (190) Ewing, Mrs "The Soldier's Children." p. 62
- (191) Ewing, Mrs "The Soldier's Children." p.64
- (192) Ewing, Mrs *Miscellanea*. p. (v)
- (193) Ewing, Mrs *Miscellanea*. p. 303
- (194) Ewing, Mrs *Miscellanea*. p. 306
- (195) Ewing, Mrs *Six to Sixteen*.. p. 226

Cities and Sinfulness - the depiction of the working classes in the children's fiction of Silas Hocking

This chapter will examine Hocking's portrayal of the urban poor in his children's fiction. It will argue that the intimate association between religious conversion and social elevation portrayed in the novels militates against a sympathetic depiction of the working classes. This will be demonstrated by highlighting the characterisations of impoverished fathers and step-mothers, who are invariably portrayed as alcoholic and abusive. The religious and social salvation of the young, the books suggest, can be attained only when children leave what Hocking depicts as immoral homes. The connection the author makes between cities and sinfulness will be contrasted with the pastoral tranquillity to which his destitute male protagonists flee both to avoid temptation and to embrace Christianity. The roles of the females who influence the boys' espousal of religion will be analysed. The angelic qualities these girls and women exhibit will be contrasted with the inherent weakness and immorality which characterise the urban working class men.

The previous two chapters analysed the work of Molesworth and Ewing, which, as is argued in the Introduction and chapters 3 and 4, is informed by their Anglicanism. Much more overtly religious, however, is the evangelical children's

fiction of Silas Hocking, who was a Methodist minister. His Methodism suffuses the depiction of the religious conversion of boys from inner-city slums, which features so prominently in Hocking's fiction. In a less obvious manner the history of Methodism is reflected in his treatment of class in the novels.

At its inception, Methodism was associated with the working classes. Thompson tells us it "was a religion of the poor." (1) Many of the first generation of evangelical preachers were working class, as the itinerant preachers in Eliot's *Adam Bede* would suggest. In his autobiographical work, *My Book of Memory*, published in 1923, Hocking states that up until the early decades of the nineteenth century Methodist ministers "were entirely self-taught. They were taken from the mine and the mill and the work-shop and rushed into the ministry without any previous training." (2) Indeed, one of Hocking's clerical colleagues had been a tailor and left school when he was nine. (3) John Comfort, the Methodist minister in one of the author's adult novels, *God's Outcast*, worked in a coal mine between the ages of twelve and eighteen. The link between early Methodism and the working classes, then, was an intimate one.

That this relationship did not last long is attested to by Edwards who tells us that from the early decades of the nineteenth century Methodism drew "its largest number of adherents from among the middle classes who made and had been made by the industrial revolution." (4) This

loosening of the relationship with the poor is confirmed by Inglis, who states that

socially, the Church of England and Methodism were moving in opposite directions; the Church was turning slowly and clumsily to face classes which it had long ignored, and the Methodists, sprung from these classes, were in many places shedding their humble associations. (5)

Hocking was one of the "adherents" to whom Edwards refers. As a son of a mine owner he enjoyed "a protected middle class upbringing." (6) His ministry in Liverpool and Manchester brought him into contact with the abject poor. As a member of the City Mission in Manchester, Hocking distributed leaflets, inviting the homeless and exploited young to attend meetings where food and spiritual comfort were distributed. (7) He depicts such a meeting in his children's novel *Chips*. (1894)

In Hocking's children fiction, as this chapter will demonstrate, religious conversion and social elevation are portrayed as indivisible. Contained in the novels are Methodism's original concern for the souls of the poor and its later association with the middle classes. The wife of the founder of the Salvation Army remarked that "Christ came to save the world, not to civilise it." (8) Hocking's writing seeks to do both.

It is Hocking's experience as a cleric in both inner-city Manchester and the slums of Liverpool which, he claims in *My Book of Memory*, leads him with some authority to dismiss what he sees as Hesba Stretton's fanciful and over-critical depiction of the impoverished young. He left the Sunday school prize giving at which he was distributing Stretton's novel *Jessica's First Prayer* (1867) determined to write a book for children which would illustrate the real plight of street children in nineteenth century industrial cities. (9)

The fruit of this determination, Hocking's first book for the young, *Her Benny*, (1880) along with, ironically enough, *Jessica's First Prayer*, enjoyed unrivalled circulation. (10) It became the template for two other stories for children, *Chips* and *Cricket*. (1886) The male protagonist in each of the books, Benny in *Her Benny*, Billy in *Cricket*, and the eponymous Chips are all exuberant, humorous and, initially, religiously sceptical. They all suffer frequent beatings and extreme deprivation, but these profound traumatic experiences do little to dampen the boys' effervescence. (The psychological portrait of these abused boys is extremely suspect. Robert Roberts, writing of ill-treated children in Salford at the turn of the century, characterises them as "broken in spirit, scurryingly obedient, bleak in personality." [11]) The similarities in the characterisation of the boys are mirrored in their use of language and attest to their sunny dispositions. While Billy opts for "jabbers," (12) Benny prefers "be jabbers," (13) and Billy's phrase, "murder an' bees-wax,"

(14) is amended by Benny to "murder and turf." (15) Both boys employ alliteration, with Benny favouring "my stars and stocking," (16) while his counterpart in *Cricket*, using the next letter in the alphabet, adopts "turpentine and treacle." (17) (The idiom of both boys would seem to fit more comfortably in the sphere of a nineteenth century Greyfriars School than in the slums of the industrial north.)

In *My Book of Memory* Hocking confesses that as a young clergyman he "started out with drawn sword to slay the giants of intemperance and impurity." (18) It is a fight he takes on to the pages of his writing for children. In all these three novels we see homes destroyed by drunkenness. In *Chips*, brothers Chips and Seth are exploited by the couple they believe to be their parents, who not only beat, starve and neglect the boys, but send them out to sell firewood to finance the adults' drinking. The industry of the children is contrasted with the slothfulness of their guardians. As we discussed in Chapter 1, lack of occupation is associated with immorality, a state which is consistent with Hocking's portrayal of working class fathers and step-mothers. When siblings Nelly and Benny Bates in *Her Benny* leave home after being unjustly beaten by their drunken father for not bringing home enough money from selling matches, it is with the author's blessing. We are told that Benny

had never heard the command, 'Honour thy father
and thy mother,' and even if he had, it would not have

troubled him on the present occasion. He had a feeling that he had been wronged, cruelly wronged, and that he ought not to stand it any longer. (19)

Here Hocking absolves this brother and sister from their sacred duty of obedience and respect for parents and parental authority on the grounds that the adults had forfeited any such claim by reneging on the unwritten aspect of this holy contract, by not loving, caring for and protecting their children.

In his non-fictional work *Sweethearts Yet*, the content of which is summarised in its sub-title, "Chapters on Love and Home," Hocking writes, "If children are to be good, the parents should be good." (20) The corollary of this is in Hocking's novels is that if parents are bad, children, in order to remain virtuous, must leave home. In *Cricket* the author deviates from the role of narrator and assumes the voice of the cleric and the social reformer as he argues that if abused children are to retain their purity and sobriety they

need to be rescued from their parents, for their parents are their greatest enemies. Rescued not only for a few years only, and then allowed to go back, that the parents may receive all the advantages of the training their children have received, and worse still to undo and destroy all the good Christian charity has accomplished. If lasting good is to be

wrought, these poor waifs must be taken out of the
clutches of their parents altogether and *kept* out, till
they are able to defend themselves. (21)

The author's acquiescence in (and engineering of) the children's abandoning home and parental authority seems extraordinary in an age that emphasised and romanticised the concept of home. Such notions underpin M'Alister's dying remarks about his birthplace in Ewing's *Lob Lie-By-The-Fire*. As we have seen in Chapter 4, John Broom's reverence for home in the same novel is also emphasised. It is no accident that it was the Victorian period that gave birth to the song "Home Sweet Home." In his autobiographical work, *The Classic Slum*, depicting life in Salford in the early Edwardian period, Robert Roberts remembers houses decorated with

coloured strips of paper ... attesting to domestic
joys; EAST, WEST, HOME'S BEST; BLESS OUR
HOME; GOD IS MASTER OF THIS HOUSE ... HOME
IS THE NEST WHERE ALL IS BEST. (22)

In part, though, Hocking is merely upholding the reverence for home by excluding from the definition domestic arrangements, like those administered by Mr Bates. These, the author feels, are contrary to the spirit of warmth, love and benign hierarchical family structures that characterise the relationship between the middle class Eva Lawrence and her

father in *Her Benny*. There is a similar polarity in domestic behaviour between the classes in Molesworth's novel *Farthings*, as we saw in Chapter 3.

In the sphere of nineteenth century children's literature, what Hocking advocates seems revolutionary. It is to be seen in the context of the agitation which preceded the Prevention of Cruelty Act of 1889, referred to in Chapter 2. *Cricket* was first published three years before the act became law. Not only does he uphold the right to leave home of those who are physically and morally neglected, but in the passage quoted from *Cricket* he is advocating outside religious intervention. This will interpose in the sacred relationship between parents and children. The use of the word "rescued" in the quotation suggests the unnaturalness of the adult in placing the child in a position of danger or harm. It also implies that some external authority has assessed the situation and come to the conclusion that the children's "enemies" are their parents. Their abhorrent behaviour has perverted loving parental embraces into "clutches," evoking images of monsters intent on harm. Here we have a complete reversal of the role of fault in Victorian children's novels which depict family life in a realistic vein. Parents are no longer unassailable, their position no longer underscored by the ten commandments. What Hocking is denouncing is more evil than the exploitation of power Ewing satirises and that we discussed in Chapter 4. He is talking about children's rights, not merely stressing their duties, as Molesworth's fiction tends to do, as was evident in

Chapter 3. In *Her Benny* it is the parents who sin against the moral code, it is they who are not merely naughty, but consciously and appallingly cruel and abusive. It is, however, of the utmost significance that the familial relationships the author condemns in his three novels are all from the working classes. In none of his three children's books discussed is there a loving or even non-abusive relationship between fathers and their children in the industrial north, nor is there an unloving or violent middle class parent. Inherent in Hocking's attitude is the conviction that the urban working classes are incapable of rearing moral children. It is this supposition which underpinned the exportation of large numbers of poor children, often without their parents' consent, as Chapter 2 argues.

Hocking's actual experience of working class fathers, however, is not all negative. In *Sweethearts Yet* he recalls a pastoral visit to a workman's home. The man was on the floor of his cottage, wrestling with several of his children for the ownership of a ball. Hocking writes, "I could not express my pleasure in seeing him in such delightful terms of companionship with his boys and girls." (23) This incident is related to counteract what Hocking sees as middle class concerns that relaxing social stringencies could have an adverse effect on children.

We have, then, an implicit advocacy of the relaxed working class attitude towards children. Indeed, Hocking denounces

contemporary middle class childrearing regimes in which children see their parents only "on state occasions; and then just for a few minutes." (24) He is opposed to children's upbringing being entrusted to servants. He concludes that

perhaps the truest family life is to be found where
parents cannot afford to pay servants to do what
Nature clearly intended they should do themselves,
and where the necessities of space demand that
children shall share the living rooms

even if this means "less ease for the mother, and a diminished repose for the father when he returns from the city." (25) Implicit in his recommendations is the assumption that their practice is not common amongst the middle classes. The life Hocking is describing is more characteristic of working class homes. It is significant, though, that implementing a lifestyle he sees as natural and moral within the context of the family can only be achieved in a family headed by a father who works in the city. The positive parenting of men who return home from the factory is ignored.

In Molesworth's middle class world, things are viewed differently, as Chapter 3 demonstrates. The eponymous protagonist in *Hoodie* leaves home, like Benny and Nelly, because of what she perceives to be parental negligence. She feels her parents show her neither love nor understanding, a notion which her mother concedes at the

end of the novel has some validity. While the author shows sympathy for her character's unhappiness, there is never any indication that she colludes with her against her erring mother and father as Hocking does with Nelly and Benny.

Molesworth's view of corporal punishment in *Carrots*, which was discussed in Chapter 3, differs from Hocking's outrage precipitated by Bates's assault on Benny and Nelly. Certainly, she feels the proposed whipping of her young hero is unjust and harsh, but that, at least in some part, revolves round the innocence of the proposed victim. There is no revulsion or shock when Carrots' older brother reports a similar punishment which he had endured. In Hughes's *Tom Brown's School Days*, first published in 1857, physical punishment is seen as a positive element in the development of a boy's moral character. A bully who was given "a good sound thrashing" while at school years later thanks his attacker, "saying it had been the kindest act which had ever been done upon him." (26) The barbarity which Hocking portrays when Benny's father removes his belt and attacks his child with it is absent from middle class chastisements. It is as if there is perceived to be a civilising aspect to the beating of the middle classes both in the instrument used - a whip is not as common, in either sense, as a belt - and the immediacy of its application. Working class passion, as manifested by Benny's father, is seen to be less acceptable than the chill of the almost clinical calm of the middle class father who inflicts on his small son, Carrots, a period of waiting in a darkening

room for his dreaded punishment.

That working class and middle class children are perceived by nineteenth century society to be different is seen in the works of both Molesworth and Hodgson Burnett, as argued in chapters 3 and 6. It is a recurring theme in Chapter 2, and one to which we shall return in the final chapter. The indifference to the working child's plight is demonstrated by Blake and Lamb writing in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries respectively. Blake's young chimney sweeper, victim of the apprenticeship system, says in the most unconcerned tone, "My father sold me." (27) The casualness of what is to the boy a mere statement of fact attests to the sweep's conviction that this unnatural and morally shocking and reprehensible act is a normal occurrence, not meriting ethical comment or emotional response. The boy's attitude, the poet implies, mirrors society's indifference. As Cutt points out, Charles Lamb exhibits an uncharacteristic insensibility to the exploitation of so many children in his essay "The Praise of Chimney Sweepers." He characterises the working class children forced up chimneys as figures of fun. (28) Significantly enough, he collaborated with his sister to write books for the entertainment of upper and middle class children. He seemingly viewed his young readership as having little relationship to those seen as mere resources, those who risked their health and life to ensure their master's profitability, Lamb's amusement and the cleanliness of his

flue.

When Benny Bates claims that he and his sister had been “wronged,” then, he is not referring merely to the fact that they are sent out to work. The practice is far too widespread in his social sphere, as Chapter 2 demonstrates, to be seen as anything but normal, and therefore not meriting radical reactions on the part of the two children. His objection is that the money they earned is not used for food, clothing or shelter, but to finance the drinking habits of their parents. The second reason revolves round his sister. In *Her Benny* the reader is told that Benny was often beaten. What differentiates the incident which causes the siblings to flee is that for the first time Nelly is attacked while attempting to save her brother from further punishment. (A similar shamefully blasphemous assault by a father on his blameless daughter is encountered in Dickens's *Dombey and Son*, where the treatment Florence receives causes her to flee the cruelty and lovelessness of her home and father.) Nelly, like Florence Dombey, is the embodiment of purity and innocence. Joe Wrag, the old nightwatchman at whose fire the children warm themselves, calls her “purty little hangel.” (29)

In the middle of beating Nelly, Dick Bates, the drunken father, in answer to a remonstrance from his son,

looked down upon the pleading face of his suffering child, and into those great round eyes that were full of

pain and tears, and the hand that was raised to strike
fell powerless to his side, and with a groan he turned
away. (30)

With the phallic image of the upright arm followed by the post-coital flaccid impotence - "powerless" - it is almost an image of incestuous rape. This notion is consistent with the sexualising of young working girls discussed in chapters 2 and 3. Added to this grievous sin and betrayal of duty is Nelly's association throughout the novel with the divine. To her great innocence and beauty is added an unshakeable piety and faith which causes Joe Wrag to see her as one of the "Lord's elect." (31) This, then, is not a mere attack on a mortal child, but a sacrilegious violation of purity, a purity which holds the dark deed which sought its violation in awful relief. The beating represents, metaphorically, a frenzied attack on goodness and innocence, a perversion of the relationship between parent and child. The Bates children are sent out to endure hardship in order that they might provide for the excesses of their parents. They are denied love, protection and succour, receiving, instead, harshness, lovelessness and abuse. In fulfilment of Christ's teaching that it would be better for those who perpetrated harm against "one of these little ones which believe in me," if they were "drowned in the depths of the sea," Dick Bates, with his metaphorical millstone tied tightly round his neck, falls into the water and is killed. He was searching Liverpool in abject sorrow and repentance for his lost children. It is only after the

destruction of her cruel earthly father that Nelly becomes totally conversant with her heavenly one.

Dick Bates embodies the bestiality, lasciviousness and indolence which Malthus views as characterising the poor, as Chapter 1 demonstrates. Hocking's female characters suffer similar stereotypical treatment. As so often in unskilled and didactic hands, women are seen in the religious tradition of either Eve, the evil tempter, or Mary, blessed amongst women for her purity, humility and her association with the domestic and child-rearing role. In *Cricket*, *Her Benny* and *Chips*, it is no coincidence that the mothers of the main characters are dead, and therefore no longer subject to the vicissitudes of life. Their idealisation will not be challenged by the unfolding of events. The children's fate in each of the three novels is intimately bound up with the neglect of duty and the negation of natural bonds which, we are to infer, intemperance brings with it. It is the removal of what are seen as a woman's inherent virtues, love, protection, wisdom and moral guidance, that heralds the disintegration of the family unit. The author's maternal figures are seen as giving succour to their children, and, often thanklessly, keeping their husbands from temptation and the moral collapse that ensues after their deaths.

In *Cricket* the city is used as a metaphor for corruption, the place with "drink shops at every corner," and populated by "dissolute companions," who would "tempt him into evil

paths." (32) (The "him" referred to is Cricket's father.) This contrasts with the countryside where the Chase family live, and more especially with Cefn-Lee, the Welsh home of Martha Chase's childhood, whose hills are discernible from the Chases' home. Martha, young Cricket's mother, reflects the purity and naturalness of her surroundings. She is portrayed as all that stands between her husband, Richard, and life in the city, which would herald his moral downfall. This association of the urban with immorality is made by all the authors discussed in this investigation. It also underpins society's view of street children, as Chapter 2 argues. In the country, under the influence of his wife, we are told of Cricket's father,

his ears, instead of being polluted by ribald songs,
were charmed by the singing of happy birds. His eyes,
instead of gazing on wretchedness and vice, saw only
Nature's unstained beauty. (33)

Yet what sustains his wife is dismissed by Richard:

Hang the mountains ... yer talk as if the
mountains were o' use to us. They gives us neither
vittels or clothes, so what's the use? (34)

Although Hocking concedes that Mr Chase's work amounts to "almost slavery" (35) and he has no possibility of bettering his situation, the utilitarianism manifested in the quotation is

telling, negating as it does the aesthetic, the spiritual.

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence
cometh my help,
My help cometh from the Lord which made heaven
and earth.

Psalm 121 equates the mountains with divine grace, a grace that the novel implies is mirrored in the pastoral nature of the Chases' surroundings. To Martha Cefn-Lee is "a veritable garden of Eden" (36) and linked to that "happier country still," (37) where her dead child, Bob, was taken. Later in the novel it provides shelter, care and honest work for Billy, Cricket's friend. He escapes from urban degeneracy with little Jack to live a Christian life in its shelter. By implication, then, Richard's rejection of the mountains is a renunciation not merely of his wife's values but ultimately, of God. (Significantly, after his wife's death and his removal to Liverpool, Chase becomes a drunkard, a fate which his wife had prophesied.)

The role of wife as heavenly mediator is seen too in *Her Benny*. Immediately after we hear of Bates's beating his children, Hocking tells us that while Bates's first wife was alive he was an upright citizen. They both went to church and she would read the Bible to him, "but when she died all this was changed." (38) He abandoned sobriety and lapsed into bestiality. This is not an inevitable consequence of the death

of a wife in literature, as we see from the works of Ewing and Hodgson Burnett. In *Flat Iron for a Farthing* and *The Little Princess* the motherless protagonists have loving, indulgent fathers. These paternal figures, however, like Eva's widowed father in *Her Benny*, are middle class. In *Sweethearts Yet*, a book which discusses relationships within the family, Hocking characterises men's unfair expectations of their wives: "*She* must be a saint, while he, if he likes, may be a brute." (39)

The antithesis to the angel in the home can be seen in the step-mother, who exhibits a wickedness common to her kind in the fairy-tales of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. We are told of Dick Bates that,

he married again, a coarse drunken woman, who had ever since led him a wretched life; and every year he became more drunken and vicious. (40)

The fate of husbands in Hocking's work appears not to be in their own hands, but in those of the women they marry. Just as men under the influence of a good woman are seen to be able to keep their bestiality at bay, men who marry morally suspect females are dragged down to the level of the sordid and depraved. The clerical hero in Hocking's adult novel, *God's Outcast*, is reduced from the incumbent of a prosperous, flourishing parish, to destitution, lying in a fevered state on straw in a London slum. This is portrayed as a form of divine retribution for relinquishing the strong, upright

woman he loved for his morally dubious fiancée. (His rescue is due to another woman, a former parishioner.) His social and professional disintegration mirrors the moral decline of the fathers in Hocking's children's books.

Cricket's step-mother is "a low vulgar woman," (41) a close literary relation to the second Mrs Bates. She not only drinks with her new husband, but also teaches his baby, Jack, to drink whiskey. When Cricket objects, she hits her across the face and "loosened two of her front teeth." (42) This attack is perpetrated against goodness and godliness, qualities personified in Cricket. She follows her attack upon goodness by starving the girl and confiscating her bed clothes.

We are told that Cricket, "cherished her mother's memory with a reverence that almost amounted to worship." (43) This is no mere statement of a child's partiality for, and love of, a dead mother. Cricket is the moral centre of the novel and as such her judgment is synonymous with truth. The words "reverence" and "worship" link the mother to the sacred, to a spirit which, because of its moral perfection and abounding love, deserves adoration. Contrasting sharply with images that confer saintliness, we are told that under the regime of her step-mother, "Cricket could go to church and Sunday-school only by stealth." (44) This statement encapsulates the failure of Hocking's step-mothers to undertake the duty of moral educators to their adopted families. It is a role we shall return to in relation to Hocking's novels in Chapter 7. The

quotation also alludes to the results of the 1851 census discussed in Chapter 2. The failure of the vast majority of urban working class families to attend church is, by implication, attributed by Hocking to the failure of mothers from the lower orders to fulfil what he perceives to be one of their most sacred duties. The woman is not only godless herself but breaks Christ's injunction that we "suffer little children and forbid them not to come unto me." If Cricket wishes to do her religious duty, she is forced, ironically, to resort to deception. Again, Hocking does not wholly disapprove of this shirking of obligation to parents, seeing duty to God above obedience to a drunken, abusive guardian.

The ability of mothers (as opposed to step-mothers) to keep their potentially degenerate men from succumbing to their inherently sinful natures is passed on to their daughters. These girls, imbued with the innocence of childhood, are portrayed as angelic messengers. Their deaths, or seeming deaths, like those of their mothers, leave them incorruptible, their moral superiority inviolate. (The schoolmaster in Dickens's *The Old Curiosity Shop*, responding to the description of Little Nell as "happy", says, "in this and in all goodness, she was like her mother.") (45)

The daughters, then, attempt to save the males of their generation, their brothers and friend, from their propensity for dishonesty. In *Chips*, the romanticised role of the innocent

and virtuous child is left to Chips's brother, Seth. As if to remind his reader that Seth's role is indistinguishable from those of Nelly (in *Her Benny*) and Cricket, Hocking makes Chips say of his brother, he "might 'a been a girl, he's so purty." (46) The word "purty" allies him to Nelly, the physical perfection of both children reflecting the flawlessness of their moral character.

Hocking suggests that amongst urban working class children this divine innocence is rare and is capable of being corrupted. It is a view endorsed by the other chosen authors as chapters 3, 4, and 6 attest and as will be expanded on in Chapter 7. It is no accident that Seth and Nellie die young before they, like their peers, morally "sink beneath the burden of their existence." (47) In a speech which alludes to prostitution, Joe Wrag says of Nellie, "I hope she'll grow up good, or - or die - ay, or die." (48) This notion, that death is preferable to dishonour, especially in a girl, recurs in *Chips*. The narrator is musing on the future of a group of destitute children partaking of a free breakfast. He tells us that

there were little children in that company munching greedily on their buns, with round dimpled cheeks and blue eyes, and sweet pouting lips that one almost longed to kiss - little innocents fit to dwell with angels. What would become of these? Alas! that they should be trampled upon like the snow in the street until they became as foul. If before winter came again they

should be sleeping in their graves? Better death than shame a thousand times. (49)

While the sex of the children is not specified, the colour of the eyes and the dimpled cheeks suggest the narrator is referring to girls. This view is lent credence by the underlying eroticism of the description of the lips, and the narrator's adult passion encapsulated in the word "longed." It is an eroticism that belies the conditional "almost." The sexualising of the young poor implicit in the description allies the destitute girls to immorality. This is consistent with child prostitution, which Hocking is ostensibly denouncing. It is an industry that is discussed in Chapter 2. Hodgson Burnett describes an Italian beggar boy in similar terms, as we shall see in the next chapter. The discussion of sexuality and the young will be extended in Chapter 7.

The perfection which characterises Hocking's pious children cannot be attributed to childhood innocence alone, but to God, the *raison d'être* of these saintly children's lives. Unlike Billy, the male protagonist in *Cricket*, and Benny Bates, Nelly and Cricket do not sleep in church, but are greedy for the spiritual truths they glean there. Significantly, the first sermon that homeless Nelly hears is about the Saviour who "invited all to return home," (50) all who are "wanderers from our Father's house." (51) This image of God as parent replaces the thoughtless cruelty and insecurity of her earthly home with promises of love and protection in one of the many mansions

in "my Father's kingdom." All that is missing on earth will be furnished in heaven. Nelly becomes convinced "that for *her* **the** saviour had provided a home." (52) The italics emphasise **the** personal nature of Christ's sacrifice. Nelly saw Jesus not just as the saviour of all mankind, but as her saviour, an essential component in the process of being "saved" from the author's evangelic perspective. Gone is Nelly's confusion over the technicalities of salvation of the previous evening when at the end of the service she felt she would very much like to "come to the Saviour," but alas! she did not know how." (53) The acceptance of a personal saviour was sufficient and all the ceremony Hocking demands.

After the same service at which his sister finds her salvation, Benny, upon leaving the chapel, is asked by an official if he had found the Saviour, "Lor' a massy ... are that little chap lost again." (54) From a religious standpoint it is Benny who is lost, his moral dubiousness epitomised in his temptation to steal a "cross-over" cardigan for Nelly, who is ill with tuberculosis. With a "presentiment that all was not right," (55) she leaves the house where she is confined because of her sickness and arrests her brother in his attempt to pilfer. It is **his** sister's pity, embodied in her words, "my poor Benny," (56) and her grave upset that her brother's sin against God had caused her, that drive Benny to pray and repent.

Here we have child as mediator between the sinner and his God. As we saw in the last chapter, Ewing attributes similar

roles to several of her young characters. From a more secular perspective, Lord Fauntleroy is responsible for the moral re-evaluation of his grandfather in Hodgson Burnett's novel *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, as will be argued in the next chapter. It is in compliance with Nelly's entreaties, and not those of any deity, that Benny repents. Through doing her bidding he comes to the Father. Her role is reminiscent of that of Jesus who said, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." The attribution of Christ-like qualities to children is seen again in *Cricket*, when the eponymous heroine is locked out of her home and forced to spend the night on the step with her friend, Billy. Anxious that Billy will catch cold, Cricket removes her shawl and places it round his shoulders. Subsequently the girl becomes ill, and because of an administrative confusion at the hospital, Billy is convinced she is dead. "Oh, Cricket, an' to think yer should have died for me" (57): Billy's words unmistakably ally Cricket to Christ, her sacrifice to his. As with Benny's experience, it is through love and reverence for Cricket that Billy forsakes his previous, morally ambiguous life. Hocking tells the reader that "but for the influence of Cricket he would have gone back to his old ways." (58)

Female goodness in Hocking is valued most highly for the effect it has on the morally weak males who populate his fiction. Rather than the power behind the throne, these women and girls are seen as the ethical and religious consciences behind the men and boys who are persuaded

into righteousness. While Hocking's virtuous females are portrayed as morally superior to men, their role as morally servicing men and boys still leaves them in a subservient position. While Hocking magnanimously states of a wife, "I would have her extend her sympathies over the broadest possible area. I would deny her no pure social enjoyment," (59) in the same chapter he states, "a wife's true sphere is in the home her husband has made for her. He has a right to find her there when the day's work is done; a right to anticipate a bright, cheerful fireside when the darkness of night comes in." (60) Although there is a recognition here that married women have legitimate interests outside the home the legitimacy is conferred by the husband. His, the first quotation implies, is the definition of "purity", and his is the notion of aptness regarding his wife's pastimes - outside concerns which must leave her free to welcome her spouse home each evening. His, therefore, is the power of censure. The phrase "I would have her," appears almost like a dictate, as if to broaden her interests is a wifely duty and not about personal pleasure and fulfilment. That a Victorian, even a late Victorian, husband assumes that, in the main, a woman's place is in the home is in no way startling. However, Hocking's phrase, "in the home her husband has made for her," carries almost an insidious threat. It implies that unless she fulfils her duty by being, like the fire, bright and cheerful, and present at home, she will be deemed to be disgracefully ungrateful, unworthy both of the home that has been provided and of the beneficence of the provider. In exchange for giving

his wife a domestic sphere in which to have her being, Hocking talks about the man's "right" to be cosseted and deferred to.

Hocking's depiction of the role of women as being to serve men is utterly consistent with the author's portrayal of the virtuous female in his children's novels. It is no coincidence that the song which Eva Lawrence, the person who becomes Benny's future wife, sings both as a child and later as a young woman is entitled "Love at Home." It is no accident that her "smiling face reminded him more of his little dead sister than any face he had ever seen." (61) For Eva takes over from Nelly the moral stewardship of Benny. Like Nelly, she is seen as a divine being. Hocking, referring to Eva, tells his readers at the end of the novel, "the angel that years ago brightened his childhood, now brightens his home." (62) The word "angel" here refers the reader to Joe's term of endearment for Nelly, "hangel." The removal of the extraneous "h" indicates Eva's superior social standing. The three novels end in domestic harmony. In *Cricket* and *Her Benny* we have children born to industrious, sober, happily married parents, Cricket and Billy and Benny and Eva respectively. In *Chips* Hocking promises an imminent union between the protagonist, and significantly, the housekeeper's assistant. In the author's children's books virtuous females leave the domestic setting only through want, neglect or illness. Nelly goes out to sell matches and the physical hardship she endures leads to her hospitalisation and subsequent death.

Nelly's last words are spoken to her brother: "Be good, Benny, an' the Lord will provide, an' we'll meet in heaven." (63) Implicit in this is a recognition on the part of the dying child of the boy's tendency to dishonesty. With the command to virtue comes the veiled assurance that, given divine generosity, sinfulness will be unnecessary. There is also faith, both in the love of God and the ability of her brother to respond to that love. The first manifestation of God's bounty to Benny is in the form of his meeting with Eva Lawrence, a little middle class girl, disembarking with her father from the Liverpool ferry. Benny, bare-foot and ill clad, is abruptly dismissed by Mr Lawrence when asked if he could carry his bag. Feeling pity for the boy, Eva gives him her shilling. This gesture presents her as the embodiment of Nelly's dying prophecy. It is also a manifestation of Eva behaving like a "little missionary," (64) "lending a helping hand," (65) in compliance with her teacher's instructions. This associates her with Maria Louisa Charlesworth's ministering children, described in her book of that title, published in 1854. Charlesworth writes in the preface:

Difficulty being sometimes felt in training children to the exercise of those kindly feelings which have the Poor for their object, it was thought that an illustrative tale might prove a help towards this important end.

(66)

The use of the collective proper noun suggests that the

impoverished in the novel have no relationship, no similarity of age or species to the middle class "children" alluded to. Interestingly, in Hocking's preface to *Her Benny*, the word "children" never appears. He uses the terms, "little Arabs" and "poor little waifs." (67) These are phrases that distance working class children from the generality of the young, as Chapter 2 demonstrates. What is central to both evangelical writers is the belief expressed by Charlesworth towards the end of her preface:

Let children be trained, and taught , and led aright -
and they will not be slow to learn that they possess
a personal influence everywhere; that the first
principles of Divine Truth acquired by them, are a
means of communicating to others present comfort
and eternal happiness. (68)

In *Nineteenth-Century Children*, (1975) Avery says of *Ministering Children* that it seems to suggest, "that God has created a world where the poor exist to train the consciences and charitable instincts of those better off." (69) Eva Lawrence does manifest a condescension to Benny when they meet as children, addressing him as "little boy" (70) even though they are of the same age, and advising him on his spiritual life. In contrast, the attitude of her teacher, which Eva rehearses to her father, suggests that Hocking sees poverty and its relation to crime in a sociological light, not merely accepted as an unalterable fact as poverty is in

Charlesworth's novel *Ministering Children* published twenty-five years before *Her Benny*. There is evidence of some analysis in Hocking. If blame is not apportioned for society's ills, connections are made. Eva's Sunday school teacher,

was telling us only last Sunday that lots of people would be better off if they had better surroundings; and that if something could be done to get those little street Arabs more out of the reach of temptation, they might grow up to be good and honest men and women. (71)

This is no egalitarian stance on the part of either the author or Eva Lawrence. There is, however, a recognition that environment plays a part in human behaviour, and if that is so, the improvement of that environment might lead to the betterment of its inhabitants and, through them, of the wider society.

This link between surroundings and behaviour is further explored by Perks, the counterpart of Dickens's Artful Dodger, who tries to lure Benny into crime. During Benny's last meeting with him, just before he started a twenty-one year prison sentence for manslaughter, we are told, "he would insist upon it that society had made him what he was, and was to some degree responsible for his wickedness." (72) In his preface to *Her Benny*, Hocking sees Perks's complaint as "just". (73) Engels, in *The Conditions of the Working Class in England*, published in 1845, discusses the impossibility of

normal family life in a society where the whole family, children included, works, "the whole day through," coming home to "a comfortless, filthy home." (74) Hocking in *Chips* describes the house the brothers share with their guardians:

There was no furniture in the room, not even a fireplace. In the farthest corner of the staircase was a heap of dirty shavings and sawdust on which Seth and his brother ... slept at nights; but beyond this there was nothing. (75)

Engels implies that society's treatment of the working poor cannot be divorced from the conditions of the slums they inhabit nor the industrial system foisted upon them. He is much more contemptuous than Hocking, a fact demonstrated in the scathing tone of his remark that

children growing up in this savage way, amidst these demanding influences, are expected to turn out goody-goody and moral in the end. (76)

The difference between Engels and Hocking is that Hocking can envisage situations where the story-book romanticism frowned upon by the social commentator can and does exist. (In his preface he describes Benny and his rise to goodness and prosperity as "drawn from life." (77)) What divides the two men's writings is not merely that one writes factually about conditions endured by the working classes of the

nineteenth century, while one produces work of the imagination. Essentially, Engels envisages the solution to the inhuman and corrupt society he describes to be in the hands of the people, whereas in Hocking change comes as a result of man turning to God, and that change is personal rather than social. A bonus of this religious conviction is that earthly success follows in its wake. This is not a doctrine to which Hocking alone subscribed. It was shared by his fellow Methodists. Thompson quotes Wesley himself as saying, "Methodists in every place grow diligent and frugal ... consequently they increase in goods." (78) In 1856 a historian discussing the rise to eminence and riches of many Methodists attributes their success to their religion:

It was she that saved him from rags - put him on his feet - gave him a character, and placed him in the path of industry in which he has found both affluence and position. (79)

In Chapter 1 we saw many M.P.s and trade union leaders who rose from the working classes ascribe their elevation to religion. It is a path trod by both Benny and Billy, and, to a more modest extent, by Chips. Armed with the religious precepts of their siblings, or in Billy's case of his friend, they embark on actual and metaphorical journeys which result in their maturation, both in human and spiritual terms. Benny's quest is partly a pilgrim's progress and partly an aspect of courtly love, sanctifying him for both heaven and the divine

object of his affections. As Hocking's young women are conduits of divine grace and objects of veneration, the two paths, for the most part, merge. Significantly, to embark upon their spiritual quests, all three of Hocking's male protagonists have to leave the corruption and temptation of the city. They undergo spiritual, physical and psychological trauma before coming to rest, at least for a short time, in a pastoral idyll. Benny, falsely accused of theft, flees Liverpool and what he fears will be the besmirching of his previously good name. (The value of a stainless reputation is a recurring theme in Hocking.) He fears the effect that belief in his dishonesty will have on his friends, especially the idolised Eva. Until he is taken into Scout Farm by the Fishers (overtones, here, of "fishers of men," those who help others to Christ), he endures hunger, exhaustion and hardship that almost prove fatal. With these external afflictions comes a resignation to the will of God, a resignation he attributes to Nelly and Eva, "the angel that gived me the bob." (80) Similarly in *Cricket*, Billy, in compliance with what he thinks is Cricket's last request, kidnaps his friend's little brother, Jack, from his alcoholic step-mother. Walking from Liverpool to the safety of Jack's grandmother's house in Wales, Billy and Jack, like Benny, lie down and wait for death, for Cricket to come and take them to that "far off country." (81)

Both protagonists stay for a number of years in their rural retreat, and by dint of chapel, night school and the purity of their surroundings, they progress intellectually and spiritually.

(Chapter 6 argues that these three components are instrumental in Joan Lowrie's social elevation which will culminate in her marriage to the middle class man she loves in Hodgson Burnett's *That Lass O' Lowrie's*.) Only then are they worthy to meet again their childhood loves, Benny by saving Eva's life (as she had saved his soul) and Billy by returning to Cefn-Lee to visit young Jack. He is confronted with, not his risen Lord, but his Lady come back from the dead. The note of married and familial bliss on which both *Her Benny* and *Cricket* end brings the reader back in a cyclical fashion to the images of children and home seen at the beginning of the novels. The new unions rectify the horror of the relationships of the previous generation. They replace fallen man, as exemplified in Bates and Chase, by Benny and Billy, who are born again and pure.

There is more to the ending, though, than wedded bliss. It is with a degree of disingenuousness and didacticism that Hocking portrays Benny as a Sunday school teacher in Liverpool telling his own story to the "ragged and neglected children who make up his class." (82) He "pointed out a bright future that might be theirs if they would be industrious, truthful and honest." (83) It is the possibility of this "bright future" that separates Hocking's working class boys from, for instance, Micky, the lower-class lad in Molesworth's *Farthings*. As we saw in Chapter 3, Micky is, like Billy and Benny, from an impoverished and abusive background, and, like them, to some degree educated. He is tolerated by Molesworth, like

few others of his ilk, because his ambition is to become the servant of the novel's middle class protagonist. He knows his place, has recognised and accepted his inferiority, and never seeks to question, let alone step outside, the social *status quo*. Of Hocking's heroes, however, the adult Benny is a prosperous businessman while the grown-up Billy is a thriving bookseller. Hocking, like Ewing, sees the social promotion of the talented and moral as praiseworthy. While Ewing's Master Swift follows a vocation which encompasses learning, service and art, Hocking's protagonists become men of commerce, in keeping with the spirit of the industrial age.

Social elevation - through either marriage or enterprise - in the nineteenth century, as all the chosen authors suggest, was not unknown. In his work *The First Industrial Society* Aspin quotes Lord Ashley of Wigan, who in 1841 said:

On looking into the origins of the manufacturing firms in the town, I find that the masters have, almost to a man, begun with nothing and risen by little and little till many of them have got to be very wealthy. (84)

Although Aspin challenges the view that the majority of industrialists came from humble origins, he does concede that a minority, between five and twenty-five per cent, did indeed come from the proletariat.

This picture of social mobility as unusual but not impossible is consistent with its portrayal in Hocking's work. In *Her Benny*, Benny is the only character who experiences a change of class. Joe Wrag is still a nightwatchman, and the ragged boys in the Sunday school class are no more prosperous than their teacher was as a child. But for those who believe and endure, a taste of heaven can be theirs in the form of the alleviation of earthly deprivation, and the acquisition of a pure and angelic wife. The relationship between Benny Bates and Eva Lawrence is reminiscent, at least in childhood, of that between Tom and Ellie in Kingsley's *The Water Babies*. In Hocking a relationship between a destitute working boy and a middle class girl above the water, and in the real world, is possible. Even in the depths Kingsley restrains Tom from kissing his idol because she is "a lady born." (85)

Significantly, but obliquely, the author registers another change in Benny. Not only is he now middle class in marriage, fortune, occupation and speech, but he is pictured both at Sunday school and at home with children round his knee while they listen to his stories. This image is reminiscent of the illustrations of Christ in children's Bibles as he chides his disciples who would keep them away, to "suffer little children and forbid them not to come unto me." In Benny's meeting with Joe Wrag when, as an adult he returns to Liverpool, we have, symbolically, the old exclusive religion that had caused such misery to Joe, give way to the new, all embracing God whom Benny worships. In a sense, too, their

meeting is the reflection of the exclusion of the working classes from an earlier society, as represented by the old man, and the advent of a meritocracy that Benny embodies. Upon seeing Benny, the nightwatchman says, "Now, Lord, lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." (86) These were the words old Simeon uttered as the baby Jesus was brought before him for baptism. Joe, then, implicitly recognises Benny, as he had recognised his sister before him, in the role of Christ, as the old order gives way to the new.

The salvation Joe sees inherent in Benny comes with death and the attainment of heaven. As Hocking's novels, like those of Molesworth and Ewing as argued in chapters 3 and 4, mirror a society where the death of both adults and children is encountered frequently, the prospect of an after-life is often discussed. The orthodox Christian doctrine where the good inherit eternal bliss and the miscreants unending agony in an unquenchable fire is not acceptable to Hocking. After reading Milton's "Paradise Lost" and Dante's "Inferno," he had

lain for hours trying to reconcile infinite mercy with eternal torture, and at the end of all my mental conflict I found myself up against a brick wall. (87)

He allies his belief in God's all-embracing and infinite love and forbearance with that of George MacDonald, himself a minister, but of the Congregational Church. MacDonald was

threatened with a reduction in his stipend after he preached a sermon in which he suggested that heathens might be saved. (88) The universality of God is captured in MacDonald's description of the divine as "father, mother and home." (89) This is an interesting notion in the light of Hocking's preoccupations. MacDonald proffers the image of God as "the Prodigal son's father with his arms outstretched." (90) (The doctrine that MacDonald offended against was the Calvinist principle that only the "elect" will find salvation, a doctrine that rendered miserable the life of Joe Wrag until little Nelly persuaded him that God's love and salvation were for all.) We see the author's conviction of God's boundless mercy borne out in *Her Benny* when Dick Bates falls into the water while searching for the children he had cruelly mistreated. His last words are "Saviour of my Mary, save me." "Was it God," Hocking muses, "that was working in his heart? ... Who shall say it was not?" (91) The author envisages the possibility of even this drunken, bestial, exploitative sinner still in the divine embrace.

Heaven in Hocking's work, as in Victorian writing generally, is seen as a pastoral utopia, a society that is recognisably human, but which has had all the negative and painful elements removed. In a hymn written by Francis M. Knollis the first line of each verse implicitly contrasts life on earth to that experienced after death. The first verse begins, "There is no night in heaven." In succeeding verses he replaces the word, "night" with "grief," "sin," and "death," respectively. (92)

When Benny visits the dying Nelly in hospital, a nurse tries to comfort him by, like Knollis, stressing the better life the little girl will lead:

But if your sister leaves you she'll be better off,
and will not have to tramp the streets in the cold
and wet, so you must think that your loss is her
gain. (93)

But there is evidence to suggest that Hocking's view of heaven, or at least that which he attributes to his characters, may have more elements to it than simply being an escape from intolerable and seemingly unchangeable conditions. In *Chips*, Seth, although ill, is made to rise from his sick bed and go back on to the street on Christmas Eve to sell his sticks. He stops to listen to his favourite hymn being sung in a middle class house. Seth looks through the window and sees a scene totally different from any that could be witnessed in his own home, as the description earlier in this chapter attests. (It is an occurrence that is reminiscent of Cathy and Heathcliff's first visit to Thrushcross Grange where the pair fled after being unjustly and cruelly treated in Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*, published in 1847.) Hocking describes what Seth saw:

On the floor was a thick, spongy carpet of warm
cheerful colours, and on the walls hung beautiful
pictures set (in what Seth thought) were frames of

gold. A bright fire was blazing in the polished grate, flinging a ruddy glare across the room, while beautiful and well-dressed boys and girls were seated in the soft roomy chairs, or were moving gracefully up and down the handsome apartment. (94)

Consistent with the popular view of the after-life, the starving, freezing and ragged little boy likens the warm, luxurious and aesthetic spectacle to heaven. In a scene reminiscent of "The Little Matchgirl", Seth is rendered unconscious by the cold, but instead of the visions of his grandmother which Andersen's protagonist enjoys, Seth sees

the wall of the house begin to melt and vanish, and the beautiful room he had seen begin to stretch itself out in all directions, until he found himself in the centre of a very fairy-land of beauty. And the flowers in the carpet lifted up their heads and began to live, and the golden frames of the pictures became gateways to other scenes of loveliness that stretched as far as the eye could reach, and instead of a dozen or twenty children, there were hundreds, dressed in the most beautiful raiments he had ever seen, and carrying in their hands the lowliest flowers. (95)

Interestingly, when the angelic children ask Seth to join them he feels ashamed of his rags. Switching to another of Hans Christian Andersen's creations - a selection of his stories was

first published in England in 1846 - we have "The Ugly Duckling," in the form of Seth, looking at his reflection in still water and seeing that his rags had been transformed into the celestial elegance of his angelic peers. (Billy's present of a suit of clothes in *Chips* was an important element in his social climb.)

Couple this with a significant change to which the author does not refer, that of Seth's Liverpool dialect being replaced by the English of the establishment, and we have not only the transformation from earth to heaven, but from the working classes to the middle classes. With the disintegration of the house wall, Seth is in the very heart of respectable nineteenth century society, the Victorian home, heaven being a mere extension of its boundaries. While Seth's body is covered in snow and unrecognised by the young middle class party-goers who pass it on their way to the house, Seth's spirit is accepted, as it were, at the eternal party. Exclusion, along with cold and hunger, is vanquished, but Hocking's message is confused. Social boundaries in heaven are not recognised, not because tolerance is a characteristic of that realm, but because part of salvation seems to involve the automatic social promotion of the working classes. Children are not pictured all in rags, or naked, carefree and happy, as they are in Tom Dacre's dream in Blake's poem "The Chimney Sweeper (Innocence)". They are allied to the middle class children, bedecked in their party clothes, and "moving gracefully." It is as though a working class status is

incompatible with goodness and piety, the possession of these qualities leading to membership of the middle classes. It is a notion central to the portrayal of Joan Lowrie in Hodgson Burnett's *That Lass of Lowrie's*, which will be discussed in Chapter 6. Joan's removal from the industrial north to the pastoral south of England at the end of the novel mirrors her growing gentility, her superiority to those she had so recently worked amongst. Similarly, Seth and Nelly Bates's removal to heaven are seen as both a reward for, and a reflection of, their saintliness and Christian witness.

Several passages in Hocking's work indicate that he ascribes blame to those in his own class for the dire conditions working children have to suffer. In *Cricket* we are told of Billy

how little would make him comfortable, and even happy; how many could give him that little and be none the poorer. And yet here he was, this winter's night, homeless, destitute, forsaken. (96)

Just as Hocking sees escape from the working classes as an individual quest rather than a social movement, he sees, as the quotation above suggests, alleviation of poverty coming from right minded philanthropists and not from a realignment of English society. Unlike Joan Lowrie, Benny and Billy both return to the city as professional men. Both serve as Sunday school teachers in their native place, teaching the counterparts of themselves as children. They are missionaries to their own people, whose lack of religious observation, as we

have discussed, was noted in the official report of the census of 1851. The document concluded that,

even in the least unfavourable aspect of the figures -- it must be apparent that a sadly formidable portion of the English people are habitual neglecters of the public ordinances of religion. It was plain, moreover, that most of the neglecters belonged to the masses of our working population ... These are never or but seldom seen in our religious congregations. (97)

This lack of contact with any official church body leads to an ignorance of things religious in Hocking's young working class characters. In *Cricket* Billy does not know what a catechism is and has little notion of conventional morality. "I don't know what "wicked" are ----- but I know what it are to be 'ungry." (98) Although the young protagonists' fathers are portrayed as godless, it is adult members of the working class who give the children their introduction to religious education. Joe Wrag and Granny not only discuss theology and read the Bible to the Bates children, but they provide them with a home. Levi, the sexton at the local church, allows Billy to sleep in the boiler-house in addition to exposing him to Christianity and the church. Pious old Ebenezer takes Chips as his son, and they are pictured reading from the Bible and praying. In all cases practical Christianity preceded indoctrination.

In a sense, the physical destitution of the street Arabs is a metaphor for spiritual impoverishment, an impoverishment induced and shamefully ignored by erring parents. Hocking's interest is not with the urban masses, but with individuals from that number, who, like Benny and Billy, might return to their origins and spread the gospel of the twin effects of Methodism. Their testimony accredits their religion with the diminution of spiritual and material want, which enables those who grasp the opportunities it offers in the new age of self-help, and who work for religious and educational enlightenment, to take their place in a society very slowly moving towards a meritocracy.

In summary, in Hocking's formulaic evangelical children's fiction, set in city slums, the degeneracy of the areas is reflected in the portrayal of working class fathers who are represented as drunkards who exploit and abuse their innocent and pious children. This is despite Hocking's personal experience of loving and joyful relationships between poor men and their children. Hocking's step-mother characters, like the men they partner, are alcoholic, ill-treat children and shun their domestic roles. Conversley, his virtuous and impoverished women and girls are seen as restraining what is depicted as the inherent immorality and weakness of working class men and boys. Like their middle class counterparts these women uphold religious observation and are associated with home and family. The importance of home to Hocking is indicated by his characterising Heaven in

Chips as an extension of middle class domesticity. The linking of the middle classes to virtue implicit in the image is central to the depiction of the indivisibility of religious conversion and social promotion that Hocking's young working class male protagonists undertake. The process which leads to both can only begin when they leave their urban homes for rural retreats. The working class children who remain in the city are associated with criminality and immorality, which Hocking sees as partially explained by their social deprivation. The protagonists teach poor young people in Sunday School the virtues of purity, industry and religion for, Hocking's writing suggests, social change occurs only through the religious conversion of individuals.

Just as social elevation is a recurring motif in Hocking's fiction, it is a central theme in Hodgson Burnett's work, as we shall see in the next chapter. This is manifest in her children's books in the advancement of members of the middle classes to the aristocracy, either literally or metaphorically. The chapter will also demonstrate that it is only in her adult fiction that she depicts the social promotion of an industrial worker.

Notes

- (1) Thompson, E.P. *The Making of the English Working Class* p. 14
- (2) Hocking, Silas *My Book of Memory*. p. 62
- (3) Hocking, Silas *My Book of Memory*. p. 62
- (4) Inglis, K. S. *Churches and the Working Class in Victorian England*. p. 9
- (5) Inglis, K.S. *Churches and the Working Class in Victorian England*. p. 9
- (6) Hayes, Cliff *Her Benny* Hocking, Silas *Introduction*
- (7) Hocking, Silas. *My Book of Memory*. p 97
- (8) Inglis, K.S. *Churches and the Working Class in Victorian England* : p. 175
- (9) Hocking, Silas *My Book of Memory*. p 79
- (10) Cutt, Margaret Nancy *Ministering Angels*. p. xi
- (11) Roberts, Robert *The Classic Slum*. p. 46
- (12) Hocking, Silas *Cricket*. p. 88
- (13) Hocking, Silas *Her Benny*. p. 7
- (14) Hocking, Silas *Cricket*. p. 88
- (15) Hocking, Silas *Her Benny*. p.7
- (16) Hocking, Silas *Her Benny*. p. 7
- (17) Hocking, Silas *Cricket*. p. 119
- (18) Hocking, Silas *My Book of Memory*. p 170
- (19) Hocking, Silas *Her Benny*. p. 27
- (20) Hocking Silas *Sweethearts Yet* . p.48
- (21) Hocking, Silas *Cricket*. pp. 203/4

- (22) Roberts, Robert *The Classic Slum*. p.53
- (23) Hocking Silas *Sweethearts Yet*. p. 60
- (24) Hocking, Silas *Sweethearts Yet*. p. 61
- (25) Hocking, Silas *Sweethearts Yet*. p. 6 4
- (26) Hughes, Thomas *Tom Brown's Schooldays*. p. 209
- (27) Blake, William *The Faber Book of Political Verse*. "The Chimney Sweeper (Innocence)" p. 214
- (28) Cutt, Margaret Nancy *Ministering Angels*. p.37
- (29) Hocking, Silas *Her Benny*. p. 11
- (30) Hocking, Silas *Her Benny*. p. 19
- (31) Hocking, Silas *Her Benny*. p. 41
- (32) Hocking, Silas *Cricket*. p. 17
- (33) Hocking, Silas *Cricket*. p. 17
- (34) Hocking, Silas *Cricket*. p. 16
- (35) Hocking, Silas *Cricket*. p. 16
- (36) Hocking, Silas *Cricket*. pp. 3/4
- (37) Hocking, Silas *Cricket*. p. 9
- (38) Hocking, Silas *Her Benny*. p. 20
- (39) Hocking, Silas *Sweethearts Yet* . p. 26
- (40) Hocking, Silas *Her Benny*. p. 20
- (41) Hocking, Silas *Cricket*. p. 131
- (42) Hocking, Silas *Cricket*. p. 133
- (43) Hocking, Silas *Cricket*. p. 114
- (44) Hocking, Silas *Cricket*. p. 135
- (45) Dickens, Charles *The Old Curiosity Shop*. p. 651
- (46) Hocking, Silas *Chips*. p. 16
- (47) Hocking, Silas *Chips*. p. 21
- (48) Hocking, Silas *Her Benny*. p. 32

- (49) Hocking, Silas *Her Benny*. p. 21 See also Gillian Avery and Kimberley Reynolds, *Representations of Childhood Death*.
- (50) Hocking, Silas *Her Benny*. p. 72
- (51) Hocking, Silas *Her Benny*. p. 72
- (52) Hocking, Silas *Her Benny*. p. 74
- (53) Hocking, Silas *Her Benny*. p. 72
- (54) Hocking, Silas *Her Benny*. p. 74
- (55) Hocking, Silas *Her Benny*. p. 92
- (56) Hocking, Silas *Her Benny*. p. 94
- (57) Hocking, Silas *Cricket*. p. 159
- (58) Hocking, Silas *Cricket*. p. 139
- (59) Hocking, Silas *Sweethearts Yet*. p. 39
- (60) Hocking, Silas *Sweethearts Yet*. p. 40
- (61) Hocking, Silas *Her Benny*. p. 134
- (62) Hocking, Silas *Her Benny*. p. 288
- (63) Hocking, Silas *Her Benny*. p. 129
- (64) Hocking, Silas *Her Benny*. p. 141
- (65) Hocking, Silas *Her Benny*. p. 141
- (66) Charlesworth, Maria Louisa *Ministering Children*. p. iiv
- (67) Hocking, Silas *Her Benny*. Preface
- (68) Charlesworth, Maria Louisa *Ministering Children*. p. iv
- (69) Avery, Gillian *Nineteenth Century Children*. p. 90
- (70) Hocking, Silas *Her Benny*. p. 137
- (71) Hocking, Silas *Her Benny*. p. 141
- (72) Hocking, Silas *Her Benny*. p. 287
- (73) Hocking, Silas *Her Benny*. Preface

- (74) Engels Friedrich *The Conditions of the Working Class in England*. p. 154
- (75) Hocking, Silas *Chips*. p. 8
- (76) Engels, Friedrich *The Conditions of the Working Class in England*. p. 154
- (77) Hocking, Silas *Her Benny*. Preface
- (78) Thompson, E.P. *The Making of the English Working Class*. p. 391
- (79) Inglis, K.S. *Churches and the Working Class in Victorian England*. p. 9
- (80) Hocking, Silas *Her Benny*. p. 208
- (81) Hocking, Silas *Cricket*. p. 181
- (82) Hocking, Silas *Her Benny*. p. 287
- (83) Hocking, Silas *Her Benny*. p. 287
- (84) Aspin, Chris *The First Industrial Society, Lancashire 1750-1850*. p. 114
- (85) Kingsley, Charles *The Water Babies*. p. 131
- (86) Hocking, Silas *Her Benny*. p. 284
- (87) Hocking Silas *My Book of Memory*. p. 28
- (88) Carpenter Humphrey and Prichard, Mari *The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature*. p. 328
- (89) Raeper, William George MacDonald. p. 262
- (90) Raeper, William George MacDonald. p. 262
- (91) Hocking, Silas *Her Benny*. pp. 50/1
- (92) *Church Hymnal*. p. 191
- (93) Hocking, Silas *Her Benny*. p.120
- (94) Hocking, Silas *Chips*. pp. 47/8
- (95) Hocking, Silas *Chips*. p. 50

(96) Hocking, Silas *Cricket*. p. 91

(97) Inglis K.S. *The Churches and the Working Class in Victorian England*. p. 1

(98) Hocking, Silas *Cricket*. p.48

From Rats to Royalty - the depiction of class in the work of Frances Hodgson Burnett

This chapter will examine a selection of Frances Hodgson Burnett's adult and children's fiction together with a number of her non-fiction works to ascertain how the working classes are depicted in her writing. It will discuss the portrayal of both the urban and the rural poor and will highlight any discrepancies between their portrayal. Hodgson Burnett's attitude to the English class system, which underpins her presentation of her social inferiors, will be analysed. Her autobiographical pieces will be referred to in an attempt to extrapolate from them influences and experiences that inform her fiction.

We are told by Engels, writing of Manchester, Hodgson Burnett's native city, four years before her birth, of the peculiarity of the city's layout. He writes, not without a degree of irony, that

the finest part of the arrangement is this, that the members of this money aristocracy can take the shortest road through the middle of the labouring districts to their places of business, without ever seeing that they are in the midst of the grimy misery that lurks to the right and the left. ... I have never seen so systematic a shutting out of the working class from the thoroughfares, so tender a concealment of everything which might affront the eye and the

nerves of the bourgeois, as in Manchester. (1)

The perceived necessity for the division of the social classes inherent in the city's planning is seemingly subverted by the young Frances Hodgson who tells us, in a work in which she refers to herself when young in the third person, that she

adored Street children. She adored above all things
the dialect they spoke, and the queer things they said.
To stray into a forbidden back street and lure a
dirty little factory child into conversation was a delight.

(2)

Unlike Molesworth's child protagonists in *The Carved Lions* (1895) who, as we saw in Chapter 3, could not understand the Manchester dialect, Frances was "fluent." (3) The very use of the word, however, suggests that the language, the use of which is so described, is one other than the speaker's own, that it is a foreign tongue. This impression is supported by the use of the adjective "queer," describing either what was said or the manner of its articulation. It gives a sense of the abnormal, the strange, the exotic, which feeds into the notion of the "forbidden" territory from which it emanates, with its overtones of danger and menace. When linked to the term "lure", these proscribed, these unexplored regions suggest images of the jungle, consistent with both the nineteenth century designation for inner city slums and the bestial images used to describe street children, both discussed in Chapter 2. The word "delight," with which the quotation ends, ostensibly

refers to the enjoyment of conversing with poor children in their own dialect. The conversations between the young Frances and the working class children she encountered, however, are not recorded. The abiding impression the adult Hodgson Burnett gives is of her own youthful daring in undertaking a foray into the regions Disraeli saw as another nation. It was an experience outside the constraints of her middle class childhood.

In essence, Hodgson Burnett's expedition into a working class district, and her vivid memories of the thrill of excitement it brought, emphasise the gulf between the classes by stressing the otherness of the poor, and thereby underlining the author's middle class status. This superficial appearance of radicalism, in situations and actions which are essentially conservative, can be discerned in Hodgson Burnett's fiction. Hocking's theme of social elevation is likewise only ostensibly radical. As we saw in the last chapter, however, the characters who are promoted serve to reinforce middle class values rather than extending middle class sympathies. This is in contrast to Ewing's fiction in which, Chapter 4 argued, progressive ideas are raised. While Hodgson Burnett may deal with liberal issues, for example the social elevation of a manual labourer, as will be discussed later in this chapter, the stance she adopts reflects the established middle class view of social status. Even in *The Secret Garden* (1911) where impoverished characters have an autonomy and an individuality not seen in literature for children since the novels of Ewing, there is ultimately in the novel an endorsement of restrictive contemporary views relating to both social position and gender. While Martha embodies working class

independence, her potential impact on the novel is softened somewhat, as will be demonstrated, by the contrasting romanticisation of both her mother and her brother. Martha is the only member of her family to be portrayed exclusively realistically. The ever practical Martha (the biblical Martha and Mary reflect the nature of maid and mistress, diverse in character, but united in their adoration of their Lord. In the context of *The Secret Garden* that Lord is Dickon.) acts as a conduit for the details of working class existence, giving the portrayal of the underprivileged in the novel what credibility it has. Martha tells Mary, "There's twelve of us an' my father only gets sixteen shillings a week," (4) and although "the rent for our cottage is only one an' threepence it's like pullin' eye-teeth to get it." (5) Consequently, Martha's siblings "scarce ever had their stomachs full in their lives." (6) It is a portrayal of poverty consistent with that discussed in Chapter 2.

The impact on the reader of this depiction of the deprivation and perpetual hunger of the rural poor is, however, diluted somewhat by Mrs Sowerby, Martha's mother. Her belief is that "th' air of th' moor fattens 'em." (7) This is a reference to one of the book's main themes, the healing power of nature. In addition, it seems both a reassurance to the reader and a declaration of intent by the author, that even though poverty is suggested, it will not be discussed. The Sowerbys' chores of patching clothes and mending socks, made necessary by privation, for instance, are romanticised. They are portrayed as occupations to accompany storytelling. This apparent protection of her young readership is similar to that seen in Chapter 3, when Molesworth refuses to deal openly with Pete's

drunkenness. In contrast to Hodgson Burnett's adult novels set in the North of England, her fiction for children does not develop those contemporary social issues which appear peripherally in her writing for the young. Where such matters do arise, as will be argued, they often seek to illuminate middle class characters or are used as plot devices.

Martha is no mere vehicle for the portrayal of working class mores; she is arguably the most successful character in *The Secret Garden*. She manifests the curiosity of a child - for child she is, albeit a working one - faced with an exotic creature, creeping, as she does, to the bed of the sleeping Mary to see what colour she is. Confronting the exotic produces neither fear nor awe. Mary reflects the wonder of her servant. She is astounded by Martha's presumption as she treats her "as if they were equals." (9) In this Martha is reminiscent of Nellie in *Wuthering Heights* (1847), a servant, certainly, but one who refuses to keep her place - as Cathy Earnshaw reminds her. Other than referring to Mary as "Miss," Martha treats her with the natural affection and the occasional censoriousness of an older sister. She is indubitably more at home with her mistress than with her fellow servants.

What Hodgson Burnett suggests superbly in the relationship of Martha and Mary is the magnetism which attracts children to each other, regardless of what social or cultural gulf separates them. A combination of being what Hodgson Burnett describes as "an untrained rustic" (10) and holding the position of older sister in a large, poor family colours Martha's reaction to the girl from India in

much the same way as Mary's experiences dictate how, initially at least, she behaves towards Martha. Martha's knowledge does not go beyond her native moorland, and being "untrained" she sees no necessity to hide her disbelief and even scorn at what she sees as the shortcomings of her mistress. When Mary asks who will dress her, Martha answers in 'Yorkshire', "Canna' tha' dress thyself!" (11) The author's use of an exclamation mark instead of a question mark underlines the reader's impression of the incredulity of the questioner. When brushing aside all excuses for not managing independently, we can hear the sarcasm of the older sibling as Martha asks her mistress, "Hasn't tha' got good sense?" (12) It is the self-confidence which comes from the feeling of status in her family, a self-confidence that has not been dented by education, that enables Martha to demand the recognition of her inherent dignity. When Mary upbraids her by calling her, "you daughter of a pig," Martha's immediate and instinctive retort is that of a child demanding of another child, "Who are you callin' names?" (13) No deference, here, no consideration of class or position, merely an automatic and feisty deprecation of unfairness.

In contrast to the flesh and bones actuality of Martha's depiction, her mother is a somewhat mystical figure. Her advice is sought as if she were an oracle and it is her wise, if audacious, intervention that brings about the reconciliation between Colin and his father. In the only scene in which she appears, as opposed to the numerous times she is evoked in conversation, she is described as like a "softly coloured illustration in one of Colin's books." (14) This is an image which stresses the ideal, a notion of artificial perfection.

Significantly, she appears as the strains of the Doxology fade away. The children receive her with awe and thankfulness. Her welcome is a muted form of the emotional reaction of "a crowd of hunger-and-trouble-worn factory workers" when the first bales of cotton arrive in Manchester after the end of the American Civil War. Hodgson Burnett writes that there were "sobs and tears, and cries of rapturous welcome." It was through the singing of the Doxology that the workers expressed their feelings. (15)

Enveloped in a blue cloak and smiling beneficently, Mrs Sowerby's similarity to the Virgin Mary is inescapable. Each woman is defined by her very motherhood, and the birth of a remarkable son. Mrs Lake in Ewing's *Jan of the Windmill*, discussed in Chapter 4, like Mrs Sowerby, is poor and has a large family. Ewing's emphasis, however, is on the depiction of the normality of such a situation. She deals with children's demands and the ensuing maternal frustration which contrasts with Hodgson Burnett's romanticised portrayal of Mrs Sowerby.

When free from notions of the divine, Mrs Sowerby is portrayed as an earth mother, connected as she is with growth, home-making and the sustenance of children. She is inseparable from fecundity, warmth and nurturing and as such is reminiscent of Kingsley's Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby in *The Water Babies*, (1863) who is described as,

the most nice, soft, fat, smooth, pussy, cuddly,
delicious creature who ever nursed a baby; and she

understood babies thoroughly, for she had plenty of her own. (16)

Indeed, the three "babies" in the walled garden received her with the eagerness the water babies lavished on their idol, but it was an eagerness tinged with awe, as befits a child's first meeting with a saint. There is reverence in Colin's "royal shyness" and devotion as "his eyes quite devoured her face." (17) For Colin and Mary, both motherless, it is the maternal love they both revere and respond to, recognising not only the affection in which Mrs Sowerby wraps them, but the love of a mother of which their childhoods have been deprived.

In *The Secret Garden*, it appears that the further the author strays from realism, the more unsuccessful her characterisations are. Of the triumvirate of the Sowerbys, Martha is by far the most potent creation. Conversely, Dickon, who embodies the novel's central concern with nature and its healing properties, often fails to convince the reader that underneath the sometimes crude symbolism there beats a truly human heart. Colin, Mary and Martha are complex, rounded characters, whose shifts in mood and emotional and physical development the author depicts skilfully and subtly. If they are creatures of light and shade, the unchanging Dickon perpetually has the full glare of the mid-day sun lighting up his features. As with his mother, his character precedes him, and the testimonies are universally and enthusiastically favourable. Being the embodiment of the beneficence of nature, he is depicted as the intimate of animals, almost so natural that he takes on the

characteristics of a young creature himself. We see him conversing with a robin and keeping the "secrets" of birds and small mammals. (18)

Our first sight of Dickon is as he, Pan-like, plays the pipes in the wood which is the home of the creatures that surround him. Indeed, Mary sees him as a "wood-fairy". (19) As the scene and the language suggest, there is a sweet sentimentality that surrounds this character that we now would associate with Disney. He tames and charms all that is wild. There is also a notion in his portrayal of an infant St. Francis, habitually pictured as he is with a bird on his shoulder and small creatures gathered at his feet. Yet his effusive boyishness does permeate the symbolism which at times threatens to crush him. His enthusiasm for Mary's garden brings him to Misselthwaite Manor just after he had watched dawn breaking on the moor, "when th' sun did jump up, th' moor went mad for joy, an' I ran like mad myself, shouting an' singin'." (20) There is real youthful exuberance, here, real *joi de vivre*, devoid of the whimsy often surrounding him.

Dickon is associated with creation, with the idea of a fundamental universal life-force. It is he, leading his menagerie, who symbolically transforms Misselthwaite Manor from Colin's mausoleum into a place of light, airiness and vigour. He comes, Christlike, as a good shepherd, carrying a lamb, the emblem of springtime, of regeneration, young life and innocence. Dickon brings seeds to the garden and insists that he will sow them himself. He is central to the garden's association with strength and natural

growth. What Mary does when she turns the key in the door of the secret garden is, in effect, to roll the stone from the tomb. What she finds is not death, as she fears, for Dickon conquers death, cutting it back with his knife, but resurrection in the burgeoning seeds, the green shoots and the growing into health and joy of both herself and Colin. She finds Eden with Dickon as the gardener.

The garden in a real sense is Colin's alter ego; both were abandoned after Mrs Craven's death, both wasting away from neglect. Colin's mother is said by Ben to have loved roses "like they was children," (21) kissing them as a sign of her affection (an act echoed by Mary's kissing of the crocuses, an appropriate flower given the child's age). The care and attention lavished on her garden represents the maternal devotion death denied her son. It is only when Mary and Dickon take him from the previously sterile house and place him in his mother's kingdom and surround him by attention, care and encouragement that Colin, like the garden, thrives. The support of his friends helps Colin to develop an inner strength and self-confidence which are central to the quality the children dub "magic". It is an ousting of the negative, selfish and insular, symbolised by the Manor with its ancestral portraits which seemed to frown as Martha skipped in the gallery. In another sense the Manor represents traditional values, just as the house does at the centre of Molesworth's novel *The Tapestry Room*, (1879) discussed in Chapter 3. It is with sadness and fear that Molesworth suggests the ending of an era. Hodgson Burnett displays similar reluctance to relinquish traditional hierarchical structures, as we shall see, when Colin walks towards the Manor in

the novel's last scene.

The antithesis of the manor is the secret garden which embodies life-enhancing and life-affirming qualities. The growth is as much psychological and spiritual as it is physical. This "magic" is reminiscent of the doctrines which underpin Christian Science, to which Hodgson Burnett turned for help. Her son and biographer, Vivian, asserts that *The Secret Garden* "is generally credited with being a Christian Science book," although he concedes that his mother "never absolutely enrolled herself as a Scientist." (22) The impression of embracing the philosophical and psychological elements of the religion, yet refusing to marry these with notions of the divine, is consistent with Colin assuring Ben, during the recitation of their mantra, "You're not in church." (23) Indeed, Hodgson Burnett's central tenet voiced by Colin, "The magic is in me. The magic is making me strong," (24) seems a negation of traditional Christianity, whose doctrines were propounded in the very tracts that Martha read. Hocking's fiction for the young, as we saw in the last chapter, is based on the relationship with God as encapsulated in the notion inherent in the form of address - "Saviour" and "Redeemer" - commonly applied to Jesus. The implied belief in human powerlessness and in an almighty deity which Hocking's fiction propounds is the antithesis of Colin's confidence in his own absolute ability to help himself.

From a social as well as a religious viewpoint, the ascribing of potency and self-reliance to children is revolutionary indeed. Taken at its face value, it sweeps away the contemporary notion of

children, wrapped up as it was with both romanticism and authoritarianism. If adults recognised such a force in those they had considered, arguably even rendered, powerless, then, perforce, they would have to concede their autonomy. There is, however, little in the rest of the novel, nor in children's fiction in the years immediately following the publication of *The Secret Garden*, to suggest that children were taken that seriously.

While Hodgson Burnett invests Mary and Colin with self-determination, this quality does not immediately lead them to face the outside world, to look, even obliquely, upon the society they will eventually join. Metaphorically, what prevents them is the wall of the secret garden erected by the author. For the garden is the sphere of women and, more specifically, mothers. Its presiding spirit and its designer is Mrs Craven. Mrs Sowerby came, and seeing it was good, blessed it. There is a sense in which the author allies herself with both women. Like Colin's mother, she was a life-long dedicated gardener and if we can extrapolate from Mrs Craven's attention to her plants her probable devoted adoration of her child, we have, in retrospect, a probably romantic representation of Hodgson Burnett's care for her young sons.

Mrs Sowerby is the embodiment of goodness, sagacity and human warmth. Like a minor deity, she is loved before she is encountered. She is irresistible to children and has the capacity to wrap them in a spell that is not wholly human. Like the author, she is associated with generosity, giving the equivalent of her widow's mite so that Mary might have a skipping rope. (After the birth of her first

grandchild, Hodgson Burnett called herself the "Fairy Godmother," [25] a title that embodies many of the characteristics attributed to Mrs Sowerby.)

Into the arms of this holy trinity the author leads her two protagonists, for the first time open to and deserving of maternal affection. Their desire and readiness for such love are manifest in their reception of Mrs Sowerby. Centred as it is in the walled garden, this devotion is protective and insular, including nothing of outside influences. Although their realm is out of doors, it is none the less domestic. The notion of the garden as an extension of the middle class home can be seen in Molesworth's *Hoodie*, discussed in Chapter 3. It is only when Hoodie runs from the garden that she encounters the dangers of the working class and disease. It is an image Hodgson Burnett used to indicate a class barrier in *That Lass O' Lowrie's* (1878), as we shall see.

It is significant that Hodgson Burnett wrote *The Secret Garden* in her late fifties and early sixties, a season, Greer argues in *The Change*, when a woman grieves for her children's lost childhood, (26) for, in the case of the author, "the two little fellows with picture faces and golden locks whose going has left me forever a sadder woman." (27) Thwaite tells us the author found her boys' adolescence trying (28); indeed, she escaped abroad for much of it. In a letter of the period, her son upbraids her for not writing. (29) This interweaving of the fictional and the familial is seen as early as 1886, the year of publication of *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, in which Mrs Errol's pet name, "Dearest," was one given to Hodgson Burnett by

her two sons. Chapter 15 of Vivian's biography of his mother is entitled "Dearest and her Children." (30) Colin and Mary were children who need never grow up, who would always need a mother, but, as in their real life, Hodgson Burnett allows the boy to leave her and stride off with his father. We shall return to Hodgson Burnett's relationship with her sons and its association with her fiction in the next chapter.

Reality impinges even in Hodgson Burnett's Eden with the return of Mr Craven. Although he begs to be taken inside the garden to hear of Colin's miraculous recovery, he leaves soon after with Colin, the garden being ultimately a place merely for, and of, the imagination and the feminine. They stride across the lawn, talking of an adult future, of "The Lecture, the Scientist, the Scientific Discoverer." (31) During their short journey, Colin turns his back actually and metaphorically on the garden of his childhood and anticipates his place in the man's world that was the turn of the century society. The *status quo* is upheld, the paterfamilias has returned as guardian not only of his child, but, as the house which they approach reminds us, of the social system, of England and her future. While Colin dispels the mystique to which he owes his new virility with the phrase "it need not be a secret any more," (32) and resolutely walks to his adult destiny, Mary, and Dickon, the working class boy, are left with the women who abide, enclosed and restricted in the garden.

This upholding of the *status quo*, this manifestation of Hodgson Burnett's inherent conservatism, underpins her first published

novel, *That Lass O' Lowrie's* which was written for adults. The central theme of the relationship between a female manual worker and a middle class man indicates authorial courage, as suggested at the beginning of the chapter. The resolution of the problems such a liaison causes, however, upholds nineteenth century orthodoxy. The character of pit-girl Joan Lowrie, Hodgson Burnett's female protagonist in *That Lass O' Lowrie's*, owes its genesis to a childhood incident. The author, then living in Manchester, had been mesmerised as an impressively statuesque young mill-girl had stood knitting inside the middle class square in which the Hodgson family lived. What impressed the embryonic writer was the seeming discrepancy between the dignity and beauty of this young woman and the inferiority of her social position. In her autobiographical work, *The One I Knew the Best of All* (1893), the author, describing the girl, says, "She was that saddest story of all, which is beauty and fineness and power - a splendid human thing born into a world to which she does not belong by any kinship, and in which she must stand alone and struggle in silence and suffer." (33)

Although this could be taken for a synopsis of Joan Lowrie's portrayal, it is equally revealing of the author herself. There is an implication here that the isolation of this working class girl is due to her physical perfection and the impressive inner qualities Hodgson Burnett sees them as symbolising. The inherent suggestion is that to be working class is only tolerable if one's other qualities are not pronounced, for any form of distinction would divorce one from the sympathy and understanding of one's peers. The words "struggle"

and "suffer" suggest a battle with one's superior nature, one's heightened sensibilities, an attempt to repress them. Their emergence would render life in the insensitive, drab and mundane milieu of the proletariat not merely incompatible, but intolerable. Hodgson Burnett describes even such a paragon as the pit worker as, "a splendid human thing," as if, even given such superiority, the difference in class militates against the writer claiming full human relationship.

There is a sense in both Hodgson Burnett's writing and her life that the question of class is one that arouses a fundamental insecurity. It is a theme we shall pursue in the next chapter. Due to her father's early death and a recession, the Hodgson family, like those of Joyce and Dickens, moved house several times from economic necessity. Their last house before their emigration to America backed on to a row of labourers' cottages and in the darkness of the early morning the silhouettes of the factory workers were reflected on the nursery ceiling. (34) To have had the possibility of one's social and financial ruin, the stuff of one's worst nightmares, rehearsed daily above one's head, even in as insubstantial a form as shadows, must have led to feelings of unease.

Thwaite, Hodgson Burnett's biographer, claims that the author, when eminent and rich, bought her English home, Maytham Hall, in part because she "relished the idea of the role that went with the house - Lady of the Manor, distributor of charity." (35) Indeed, in a letter to a friend Hodgson Burnett admits her attraction to the title and role of duchess. (36) In her introduction to her series of

vignettes, *Children I Have Known*, (1892) in which she rather too insistently claims she loves and understands children, she says of a child beggar, "class does not matter, here. He may be a poor little eager man waiting in the mud and drizzling rain in a crowded London street, and rushing to open my carriage door in hope of being given a few coppers." (37) This seems to suggest that the author's concern for poor children is bound up with the notion of her being the conduit by which largesse is distributed. She is not horrified at the circumstances which dictate that a child undergoes physical hardship for a "few coppers". The word "eager" in the quotation appears to neutralise "poor", so any concern the reader might experience is thereby defused. The tone of the passage is light and uncritical.

In both "Giovanni and the Other" (1892) and "A Pretty Roman Beggar," (1892) Hodgson Burnett places herself in the role of patron to poor, and, significantly, pretty, street boys, even financing an operatic career for Giovanni. At the end of both *Sara Crew* and *A Little Princess*, we see the protagonist, now secure in middle class affluence, return to the bakery to arrange for hungry, homeless children to be fed. Again Hodgson Burnett depicts the alleviation of want by direct middle class intervention. She accepts the root of that want; she neither challenges nor analyses it. There is a sense that in order for Hodgson Burnett to feel secure with her middle class status there has to be an under class to whom she can minister. Her mamma dictated that she was to "remember to be always a little lady," and be "good to people who are poor." (38)

Hodgson Burnett's view of working class people and the proletarian society to which they belong, as manifested in *That Lass O' Lowrie's*, is a restricted one. Joan Lowrie is separated from her class by her superior qualities. By extension, the narrow parameters set by the author are confining. The working classes are not seen as an economic and social group consisting of many disparate types of co-existing human beings, but as the debased and dependent masses. This is consistent with the Malthusian view of the poor described in chapter 1, and with Molesworth's portrayal of the poor, as Chapter 3 demonstrated. This perspective leads to the image of the amorphous group of pit-girls at the beginning of the novel. One of the authorial convictions which underpin the novel is that manual work, by its very nature, is not compatible with civilised life, and, what is more, is corrupting. Hodgson Burnett writes of the pit-girls:

It was not to be wondered at that they had lost all bloom of womanly modesty and gentleness ... they had breathed in the dust and grime of coal and somehow or other, it seemed to stick to them and reveal itself in their natures as it did in their bold unwashed faces. At first one shrank from them, but one's shrinking could not fail to change to pity. (39)

These women are not allied to the domestic sphere as the middle class ladies are in the work of all four selected authors. Working class females in Hocking's novels who, either from necessity or immorality, enter the public arena, are either castigated, or if pious,

suffer illness or die, as we saw in the last chapter.

One of the central themes of *That Lass O' Lowrie's* is the fusion between class and femininity. The quotation above sees "modesty" and "gentleness" as being inherently female, both words contrasting sharply with the adjective "bold" used as a denunciation of these women. The pollution, the destruction of their womanliness, is directly related by the author to their occupation. The precise process that leads from manual labour to what she later refers to as "their half-savage existence" (40) is alarmingly vague, occurring, "somehow or other," but this lack of precision does not deter the author from articulating her conviction. There is an element of condescension in the last sentence which centres on the use and repetition of the word "one". This seems an attempt on the part of the author to distance herself from the pit-girls - "them"- and to ally herself to the sensitivities of the reader. The last sentence reads like a conversation between equals about a group they consider different, inferior. It has the feeling of intimacy, the sense that the reservations and emotions which underpin the quotation would be shared and understood by the reader without further explanation. (Hodgson Burnett uses a similar device in *The Secret Garden* when she describes Mrs Sowerby as "nice in a moorland cottage sort of way." [41]) This condescension is not relieved when "shrinking" becomes "pity." It suggests that these workers are abhorrently inhuman, connecting with the author's description of the mill-girl of her childhood as being a "thing", albeit a "splendid" one. This dehumanising of the working classes is akin to Molesworth's depiction of the poor as deformed and distorted

humanity, as Chapter 3 illustrates.

This view of the demeaning role of manual labour is by no means universal in Victorian fiction. George Eliot's novel *Adam Bede* (1859) is in part a celebration of both work and workers, in both the domestic sphere and the world outside the home. Adam, a carpenter, is, like Joan Lowry, described as tall and imposing, indicating a moral uprightness and intelligence. They are both literate, excelling in their respective night schools, but while Adam is "working hard and delighting in his work," (42) Joan finds her occupation incompatible with her awakening sensitivities. It could be argued that Adam is a craftsman and that his trade, associated as it is with nature and tradition (not to say legitimised by its relationship to Christianity), fits perfectly in the pastoral setting Eliot creates, while Joan is an industrial worker and industry destroys what is natural, what is pure. Writing of her childhood in industrial Manchester, Hodgson Burnett observes "one's daisies and buttercups in the public park, always slightly soiled with tiny dots of black," (it is an image she uses in the short story, "The Quite True Story of an Old Hawthorn Tree") and "even the pure, untrodden, early morning snow - was spoiled so soon by the finer snow of black which fell upon its fair surface and speckled it." (43)

There is a valid distinction in the public mind between traditional, skilled crafts and industrial labour, the aesthetic dimension alone ensuring the former is more acceptable, more celebrated, and, by extension that those who are craftsmen are viewed with more approval than factory workers. In contrast, however, to Hodgson

Burnett's thesis that hard physical work dehumanises people, rendering women coarse and corrupted, it is interesting to note that the epitome of female goodness, gentleness, propriety and intelligence in *Adam Bede* resides in Dinah, a mill-worker.

The difference in the approaches of the two authors to the depiction of the working class and their occupations is highlighted in Eliot's definition of realism as "the doctrine that all truth and beauty are to be attained by a humble and faithful study of nature, and not by substituting vague forms, bred by imagination on the mists of feeling, in place of definite substantial reality." (44) Both *That Lass O' Lowrie's* and *Adam Bede* open at the protagonists' workplaces. Before the end of Eliot's first chapter, the layers of painstaking detail that combine to give the impression of a firm sense of actuality ensure that each worker is differentiated from his colleagues by some physical, attitudinal or philosophical characteristic. In addition, the interest and interaction of the group act as an indication of the preoccupations of the wider community. The carpenters' workshop is seen as a microcosm of the larger society in which it is situated.

Conversely, the group of pit-girls who open Hodgson Burnett's novel remain an undefined mass, an industrial Greek chorus. No individual is either named or described, and its sole function is to emphasise Joan's difference and to introduce a new aspect of her story. This lack of detail, this absence of analysis, these "vague forms," lead inevitably to a lack of credibility, a negation of "reality." It is a characteristic of the writing which permeates many facets of

the book. The pit village of Riggan, for instance, is never described either geographically or sociologically. It is not a community, merely a location for the unfolding of events. Hence when the pit explosion occurs the dramatic influence is diluted, for whereas we are told that virtually every family in Riggan was affected, we have no involvement, often not even a cursory introduction. The reader's concern centres almost totally on the injured Fergus and the explosion becomes little more than a plot device in a love story, by which Joan and Fergus are brought together.

Unlike Mrs. Gaskell in both *North and South* (1854) and *Mary Barton* (1848), Hodgson Burnett is not interested in issues surrounding industrialisation. Although there is a fleeting reference to a ten-year-old child working down the mine, there is no discussion, no authorial stance taken. Other than the issue of smoking down the mines, workers are not seen to be concerned with their conditions. It is left to middle class Fergus Derrick to champion the cause of pit safety. Fergus, as his surname suggests, is an engineer. A new breed of hero, he is both a worker and a gentleman, the type of protagonist H. G. Wells was to feature in his turn-of-the-century novels. *That Lass O' Lowrie's* portrays the relationship between him and pit-girl, Joan Lowrie.

This novel should not be seen as an attempt to explore class through the medium of an inter-class liaison. From the book's first page Joan is described as superior to her peers. While they are seen as of "stunted growth", she is "tall enough to be imposing." (45) The curate, Paul Grace, asserts that "she stands apart from her

fellows" (46) and Fergus's assessment of her is that she has the "majesty of Juno." (47) She is a "fine creature" (48) with "animal beauty." (49) There is the notion of the noble savage here, with the inherent nobility co-existing with the primitive, the uneducated. In a real sense the novel tracks Joan's reclamation from the jungle of the labouring masses to the middle class drawing-room. Again we have social elevation portrayed, but unlike Hocking's and Ewing's fiction, Hodgson Burnett portrays the promotion of members of the working classes only in her adult fiction. Divorced by the author from the amorphous mass of pit-girls with whom she works, Joan is explored as a psychological, emotional, isolated individual, and not as a representative of her class.

Joan's portrayal is yoked to that of Anice, the rector's daughter, seen as the model of middle class values and female propriety, though within these bounds interestingly modern. Her refusal to carry religious tracts on parish visits distances her from her father's brand of bombastic, condescending evangelism. Her practical Christianity is similar to that of Paul Grace, with whom she teaches at night school. Her femininity is symbolised by her clothes, which are contrasted with Joan's at their first meeting. This strand of the novel may be linked to one discussed in Chapter 3, where we explored the connection between a woman's dress and her perceived morality. Hodgson Burnett also uses dress as a barometer of social acceptability. (50) While Anice was wearing a "soft, white merino dress," (51) Joan wore coal-besmirched clothes which were "more than half masculine," (52) a description that echoes the novel's first phrase, which refers to the pit-girls in these

terms, "They did not look like women." (53) The contrasting appearance of the two women symbolises the gulf that separates them, further emphasised by a holly hedge, which kept Anice in the vicarage garden and excluded Joan: "it was not unlike being outside Paradise." (54) It was, though, a middle class heaven. Entry was debarred to even the most deserving poor. Anice's arrogance in presuming she knew how her father's affairs should be run better than he did is enough to exclude her from any Victorian view of paradise if it were a meritocracy; Joan's courage and selflessness in giving a home to the deserted unmarried mother, Liz, and her baby, would be rewarded with everlasting happiness. Anice, virginal and angelic, is seen in the purity and natural beauty of the garden, where she belongs by dint of her birth and Joan for the first time is confronted with her own lack of conventional femininity, and she "grew discontented - restless - sore at heart." (55) As if she had eaten the forbidden fruit, Joan saw she was, if not naked, then unseemly clad, negating the softness of her sex. She was unworthy. She did not deserve acceptance, entry into the enclosed demesne of the gentry.

Appropriately, the novel ends with Joan in a garden, "where the violet fragrance was more powerful." Fergus finds her there and proposes. He it was who discovered Anice on a railway platform on her arrival in Riggan, bringing with her from her grandmother's garden in the south, "early blue violets," (56) symbolising young exuberant life, colour and an aesthetic sense and feminine culture foreign to Lancashire. Joan has taken her place in her grandmother's house "in the room that had been Anice's," (57)

thereby completing the journey from labourer to middle class woman, from the unaccepted outsider to Anice's equal. To achieve this Joan moves out of the industrial north, just as Tony's shift in social standing was marked by his removal from Liverpool in Molesworth's novel, *Farthings*, (1892) as we discussed in Chapter 3. Master Swift settles away from his native Yorkshire when he becomes a schoolmaster in Ewing's novel, *Jan of the Windmill*. The allusion he makes to his northern working class childhood hints at the immorality which surrounded him. As we saw in the last chapter, Hocking's protagonists all leave the city to return only when religious conversion prevents their succumbing to evil. We shall return to Hodgson Burnett's relationship with the industrial working classes in the next chapter.

Joan's renunciation of her working class roots is undertaken to become deserving of Fergus. It is almost unconscious, manifested as it is in her attempts to be more womanly. As has been suggested, there is a fusion in the novel between the middle class and the feminine; they are almost viewed as synonymous. The pit-girls by their very occupation deny their sex. The desire to better herself comes to Joan after experiencing male "consideration" and "sympathy", (58) for the first time shown in gentle physical contact as Fergus binds up her facial injuries inflicted by her brutal father. Allied to this is the realisation of the unnaturalness of her appearance, and, by extension, of her life, through her meeting with Anice. Joan, in the best traditions of courtly love, but with a reversal of the sexual roles, embarks on a journey containing many obstacles that will result in her being worthy of the man she loves.

Joan applies to Anice for help in mastering the "womanly arts" (59) - needlework - and she, like her role model, is heard singing to Liz's baby. Central to this exploration of femininity is the growing tenderness Joan feels towards the infant. Anice's affection for the child both allies her to Joan and emphasises the rightness and naturalness of such emotions. By contrast, Liz's lack of maternal feeling adds to the impression of the girl's dubious morality. The author uses a woman's love for children as a moral yardstick. As is discussed above, there is a suggestion in *The Secret Garden* that Hodgson Burnett associates her role of mother with that of the writer for children. Unlike Mrs. Molesworth, who emphasises the moral education of the young, she stresses the emotional bond between mother and child. In the preface to her autobiographical work, *The One I Knew The Best of All*, Hodgson Burnett sees the maturing of her own sons, and therefore the lessening of her role as carer, as tantamount to death. The tenderness of her feeling for her children associates her with her two fictional maternal characters. The role of mother in the novel *The Secret Garden*, as we have seen, is suffused with notions of the divine, and while Mrs Sowerby is lauded for her love of children, in the same novel Mary's mother pays for her neglect of her daughter by dying in the first chapter.

While Hodgson Burnett ascribes maternal feelings to both middle class and working class women, religion in *That Lass O' Lowrie's* is restricted to one section of society. It is significant that the hedge that divided Joan and Anice on their first meeting was constructed of holly, for with the association of holly and paganism, we have the

suggestion that one of the barriers between the women, and by implication, their two communities, is that of religion. Certainly, in *That Lass O' Lowrie's* religion is seen as the prerogative of the middle classes. The working classes reject it, equating it with the narrow and rigid didacticism of the tract and the ridiculous pomposity of the rector. In Hocking's children's fiction we have a similar suggestion of the lack of interest of the working class in religion, as the last chapter demonstrated. It is a depiction consistent with the results of the 1851 census discussed in Chapter 2. We shall return to the theme in the next chapter. Joan's religious conversion occurs after she reads a Bible which had belonged to Anice. In their last conversation divided by the holly hedge, Joan confesses her faith. Later Anice asks, "What *now* is to be done with Joan Lowrie?" (60) The italicised "now" in the text indicates that a watershed in Joan's development had been arrived at, an occurrence that excludes her irrevocably from the class into which she was born. Peculiarly, this aspect of the story is not developed, indeed it is never alluded to, nor is Joan's character changed as a result of her conversion. It appears to have been conceived merely as an indicator of Joan's progress towards respectability.

Joan never articulates her feeling for Fergus, although at their first meeting she recognises his insight by saying, "Happen as yo're a gentleman yo' know what I'd loike to say an canna." (61) Nevertheless their growing sympathy suffuses the narrative. It is only in extreme desperation, begging to be allowed to help rescue the trapped miners, that she confesses, "theer's a mon down theer as I'd gi' my heart's blood to save." (62) Even after she has saved his

life with her tender nursing, there remains a gulf between her adoration of this middle class man and her concept of her own value. Her conviction is that "I am na' fit." (63) Any love that Fergus might show her is hers by grace. There is something religious in Joan's devotion, a sense of aspiring to love one so superior to oneself, that, ultimately, one's inherent inferiority will make the attempt futile. There is also a fear that her love will disgrace Fergus. During his illness, his delirious ramblings convince Joan that the strength of her love is reciprocated, and, as soon as his life is out of danger, Joan leaves her suitor, refusing to capitulate to her emotions, insistent that she would not stay, "an let him do hissen a wrong" (64) by his attachment to her.

The character of Joan Lowrie is a powerful one. She stands astride the novel like a Lancastrian Amazon. Her struggles with the harshness of her life, her fight for justice and goodness, the love which causes her to reappraise her situation, the abandonment of an old life to embrace the new habits more conducive to a changing mentality are all clearly and convincingly depicted. She is a fully rounded, if unconventional, nineteenth century heroine. By contrast, the two other prominent working class characters in the novel, Liz and Dan Lowry, are somewhat limited.

In a real sense they are personifications of what is seen, in, for instance, evangelical and temperance literature of the time, as working class vices. As the Introduction stated, Hocking was one of the last of the nineteenth century evangelical writers. His stereotypical depiction of working class fathers and step-mothers

which we discussed in the last chapter are characteristic of the genre. Molesworth's fiction often reflects evangelical literature, as we saw in Chapter 3. While Liz is seen as sexually licentious, Dan Lowrie is depicted as a drunken brute. There are no nuances in the depiction of Joan's father; he merely is the embodiment of the ruthless viciousness of his crimes. So evil does the author consider him that the reader is not permitted to see him in the light. The only daytime scene in which he appears is clothed in the blackness of the pit. He does not have any residues of conscience, nor does he possess the moral sophistication to exhibit shame.

There is no relationship between Lowrie and his daughter outside that of assailant and victim. Often the beatings take place, as it were, off stage; the reader is merely aware that they have happened. This is the case the first time Fergus and Joan speak. His tenderness in binding Joan's lacerations, as we have seen, is contrasted with Dan's brutality in inflicting the wounds. The contrast between the two men informs the characters of both. While Dan is willing to put at risk the lives of his colleagues by smoking down the pit, Fergus attempts to save life by demanding that unsafe machinery be replaced. It is his hatred of the engineer, arising from his being instrumental in Dan's dismissal, that causes Dan, again under cover of darkness, to attempt his murder. Lowrie sees Joan as unnatural for siding with Fergus and a consequence of Fergus's death was to be that it should act as a chastisement to his daughter. Joan, venturing out to save the man she loves from the wrath of her father, enrages Lowrie, who threatens to "teach her summat as she'll noan forget," (65) but inadvertently is mortally wounded in the

ambush he laid to trap Fergus.

Liz is a shadowy character. Her youth and vulnerability are linked by the author to her child's helplessness. They are both seen as "whimpering", both are "pretty and infantile" (66) and they "cling to Joan in a hopeless childish way." (67) The mother's moral weakness mirrors the physical frailty of the baby and although the author concedes that class played its part in Liz's becoming pregnant outside wedlock, it appears to be with slight contempt that Hodgson Burnett describes Liz as "not strong enough to be resolutely wicked, not strong enough to be anything in particular." (68) It is the feebleness suggested in the last, rather extraordinary phrase, which underpins Liz's characterisation. There is an anaemic quality about it which militates against both clarity and sympathy on the part of the reader.

Liz is the antithesis of Joan. While both young women are attracted to men of the middle class, Joan's love is built on strength, unselfishness and a determination that her lover will not suffer social ostracism by an association with her. While Liz absconds with her lover, seduced by promises of a lady's life in London, Joan abandons Fergus, conscious only of what she perceives is his future well-being. The author suggests Liz's superficiality when she pictures her stroking Anice's London-bought gown, and significantly we see the young mother trimming an old hat with new ribbon just before she abandons her child to return to the more glamorous world of her lover. Again the clothes of the poor are used to signify their moral state. The offending red feather criticised in

Molesworth's fiction in Chapter 3 has been replaced here by ribbon.

The relationship between Liz and her lover is as destructive as that between Alec and Tess in Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, and ends, like it, in death. Liz returns to Riggon not knowing that Joan had left. All she finds is a "closed door" (69). The image suggests Riggon's implacable refusal to accept what is perceived to be Liz's immoral behaviour. Liz's body is found prostrate outside Joan's abandoned house.

To publish in 1878 a novel, and a first novel at that, whose concern was an inter-class relationship that we are assured will end in marriage appears courageous. Even in 1891, when Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* was published, the fictional Angel Clare felt unable to tell his parents before his marriage that he intended to unite himself to a milkmaid. In *That Lass O' Lowrie's* there is religious and social acquiescence in the union of Joan and Fergus, albeit given with an element of discomfiture. Both Paul Grace and Anice, representing a young and less prescriptive and condemnatory establishment, assert that the strong mutual love of the pair should override social considerations.

But this is not a case of Hodgson Burnett advocating a new social order, a form of classless utopia where the new hero of the industrial age, but superior to it, may find social recognition for himself and any partner of his choice. The author deals not in social revolution but in conformity, as Hocking does in his portrayal of social elevation, as Chapter 5 demonstrates. The delirium

following Fergus's accident in the mine brings images of social collapse, thinly clothed in the actuality of the pit disaster. "How black and narrow the passages were" (70): in this description of the underground tunnels we have the suggestion of an unenlightened, restrictive and claustrophobic society. With Joan's approach comes the pertinent question wrapped round with fear: what "if the props give way?" (71) The coming together of these two disparate young people is seen to threaten the very fabric of nineteenth century England. In contrast, Chapter 5 depicts the marriage of a so-called street-Arab to a middle class lady, and the author perceives no difficulty.

The question posed above in a sense does not arise. From the beginning of the novel Joan's superiority has fitted her for better things. After her preliminary social education at the hands of Anice, Anice's grandmother schools Joan for her role as middle class wife. She refuses to marry until she is "worthy," (72) until her working class speech - moderated at the end of the novel - and manners have been overtaken by more acceptable influences, have been sluiced away like coal dust.

Ironically, this encroaching gentility would seem to negate the very attributes that attracted Fergus to Joan originally. She did not begin her metamorphosis to attract Fergus, but, being aware of his feelings, to be deserving of them. It is her strength and unconventionality and the courageous way she used these qualities that make her desirable to him. He was attracted to the intrepid stance she took against her own community, when she

publicly allies herself to an unmarried mother and her baby, taking them into her own home. In seeking to ensure Fergus's safety she walked before him on his long, dark and dangerous way home - "she could never meet him as a happier woman might, but she could do for him what other women could not do." (73) Here we have Joan's (and the author's) recognition of the relative freedom of the working class woman and the social constraints of her betters, the "happier women", and a realisation, perhaps, that in the physical protection of the man she loves she is willing to overturn not merely social, but sexual taboos. (It is significant that while he protests, Fergus allows Joan's ministrations, yet when his arm is hurt in a brawl with Lowrie, he begs Paul Grace not to tell Anice as it might distress her.) These outstanding characteristics mark her out as being capable and deserving of social advancement and status, but, paradoxically, these are the qualities she will have to suppress in order to become acceptable in a middle class drawing-room. It is a situation that the novel does not address.

Joan's reception into the middle classes will not ruffle the English class system but merely reinforce its superiority, by underlining the impossibility of defining someone with her gifts as working class. As in *The Secret Garden*, the novel finally embraces the *status quo*, instead of the promised radicalism. Joan, in her new role as middle class protegee, is to minister, like the author, to "the wants of those who suffer," (74) but never again as their equal; a sign that the props did not give way, that God is still in his heaven and the English class system is enhanced.

What is innovative about *That Lass O' Lowrie's* is that for one of the first times in English literature a female industrial worker is allowed to marry into the middle class. Discussing the love affair between Fergus and Joan, Laski says, "I think it fair to say that for most Victorian writers such a position could have been resolved only by the death of one of the lovers." (75) That Hodgson Burnett had the imagination and courage to bring the relationship to fruition, even if the resolution is conformist, is to her credit. It is for others to challenge the *status quo* in their exploration of inter-class relationships, expanding on the model left by Hodgson Burnett.

Hodgson Burnett's social conservatism, which as we have seen is manifested in her fiction for both children and adults, finds a forcible outlet in a piece written to both mark and quash her son's concern with social inequalities. In "The Boy who Became a Socialist," (1892) Hodgson Burnett discusses the emergence of her son's social conscience. The amused and softly mocking tone, often found in her work for children, is itself significant. The foundation for much of the humour resides in the Socialist's youth and lack of experience, and the perception that social issues are not the concern of children. Conversely in Ewing's fiction, as discussed in Chapter 4, we have two interpolations in her short stories which deal with the death of a young Irish immigrant, and the issue of social equality, respectively. The reader perceives that if the boy of Hodgson Burnett's title was old enough to be called a man, and therefore to be taken seriously, his mother's concern would be significant. As he is only a child, his questioning of social structures is merely an occasion for amusement, just as Cedric Errol's choice

of friends is in *Little Lord Fauntleroy*. (1885) "Smiling a little," (76) the author attempts to equate socialism in "The Boy who Became a Socialist" with young gentlemanly behaviour: "If you are a good socialist, you will hang up your hat and not leave your bat in the hall or your racket on the piano." (77) This is a far cry from such tenets as that all property is theft.

Hodgson Burnett does not share her son's sorrow occasioned by the discrepancy between his own comfort and affluence and the hardship endured by his friend Sam, a child bootblack (the progenitor of Dick in *Little Lord Fauntleroy*?). While she concedes the poverty of the young worker, she sees it as character- building, a foundation for adult life:

He has a good heart and kind feelings and it did them no harm that he was ragged and bare-footed and even sometimes hungry, and think how much he must have learned about business and self-dependence.

(78)

In contrast, as the last chapter demonstrated, Hocking sees death as preferable to, and an escape from, such an existence.

To illustrate the fact that middle class and working class boys inhabit different spheres Hodgson Burnett catalogues a sample of her son's experiences, contrasting them with those of his friend. Sam's life is characterised as modest and parochial and dominated

by the need to work, while Vivian enjoys foreign travel and is associated with culture, royalty, and power. (79) Hodgson Burnett's catalogue is not a mere list of experiences, but a celebration of advantages, a glorying in privilege, her son's, her own, and those of her class, privileges she does not wish to share with Sam or his associates. She has no desire to relinquish her position and manifests no guilt concerning it. Indeed, as much of her fiction deals with dramatic changes of fortune, it could be argued that this was an indication that she lived in fear of losing her middle class existence. The upholding of the *status quo* is a thread running through her writing for children. It is, after all, Cedric, the middle class son of an aristocrat, who becomes Lord Fauntleroy and not one of his middle class friends, nor the plebeian young impostor. Despite Laski's assertion that *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, "is the best version of the Cinderella story in modern idiom," (80) it is no tale of rags to riches.

An understanding of "The Boy Who Became a Socialist," like an appreciation of both "Editha's Burglar" and *Little Lord Fauntleroy* depends on the reader being more worldly wise than the main character and thus being able to find amusement in the innocence of the protagonist. (It seems a most peculiar requirement for a child reader.) The innocence of the young hero or heroine in the case of all three pieces centres on inter-class relationships, with the child being unaware of their unacceptable nature. The young people do not yet know their place. Although Hodgson Burnett ensures the reader identifies with Cedric and his sympathetic generosity, he/she is expected to interpret literally Fauntleroy's fond chatter about his

three friends, the apple-woman, Dick and Mr. Hobbs, blind as it is to any social incongruities. It is anticipated that the reader will, like the Earl, receive it with a smile, a "gleam of queer amusement," (81) . This depends on the reader and the noble lord recognising the social inappropriateness which underlies the boy's affection for his childhood acquaintances. Mr. Havisham, the Earl's solicitor, recognises such social improprieties as he muses on the impossibility of Cedric playing with the children at the gate-lodge as he wishes.

With Cedric's elevation and his removal to England comes a change in his social sphere; even Mr. Hobbs's emigration does not guarantee the grocer the frequent society of his erstwhile companion. He is pictured walking alone in the portrait gallery. His shop, while patronised by the castle, is in the village with the common people, no longer sharing a neighbourhood with the Errols' residence. Dick, the shoe-shine boy, is banished by the author from the Earl's estate. He does not to appear in the text again until he has "finished his education," (82) (and is, therefore, presumably deemed more worthy) and then only on his way to visit his brother in America. Part of the unacceptable nature of both Mr Hobbs and Dick, at least to the Earl, is their nationality.

There is throughout the novel a tendency to deal with the deserving poor, thus separating them from the undeserving poor. It is a characteristic shared with Molesworth, as the analysis of her novel *Farthings* in Chapter 3 illustrates. The deserving poor are depicted as acquiescent, compliant and hardworking, as the hymns

cited throughout this thesis demonstrate. Mrs Errol condemns the Earl's village where she found "idleness, poverty and ignorance where there should have been comfort and industry." (83) The prominence with which idleness is cited in the list of derogatory features emphasises the importance that is placed on constructive labour, a lack of which, it can be deduced, causes "poverty and ignorance." The same enthusiasm for the Protestant work ethic tinged with Puritanism can be detected in her son's reaction to his grandfather's proud boast that "I told Havisham the boy was to have what he wanted - and what he wanted - it seems, was money to give to beggars." The child replied hurriedly, "Oh, but they weren't beggars ... They all worked." (84) Indeed, Cedric's presents helped both Dick and the apple-woman in their occupations. Similarly, Mrs Errol, in thanking Mr. Havisham for the money to help the sick Michael, stresses his hard-working nature. There are echoes of this attitude in the rector's petition to the earl on behalf of Higgins, who is about to be evicted. His willingness to support his family, which gives legitimacy to his cause, is indicated in the minister's description of Higgins as a "well-meaning man," (85) albeit one dogged by misfortune and illness. The importance placed on work in the nineteenth century is discussed in the first two chapters.

Cedric's generosity in the novel manifests itself in the form of patronage, emphasised by its all being done in the name of Lord Dorincourt. (There is more than a suspicion of the doctrine of the divine right of kings at work here, with aristocratic benevolence mirroring divine grace, and Cedric acting as intermediary, as the Christ child.) The presents bestowed upon his American associates

are no different in essence from the subsidy given to Higgins. The reception of the gifts, though, is dissimilar. The American trio, although touched and grateful, accept the presents as from an equal, while Higgins stands at the church gates in humble reverence, cap in hand, to thank Fauntleroy, as a peasant might have thanked his feudal lord.

This notion of the working classes as peasants features not infrequently in Hodgson Burnett's children's novels. Unlike their urban peers, these rural working class people are characterised, as in the case of Higgins, by their unquestioning acquiescence. In *The Lost Prince* and "Little Saint Elizabeth," where the peasants featured are foreign, they display adulation. While there is criticism of the Earl's temper and regime in both the castle and the village, there is no suggestion that he should be deposed, merely an expectation that Fauntleroy will prove more benign. The only questioning of the English aristocracy is done by Mr Hobbs, an American whose act of capitulation ends the novel.

Another American, Mrs Errol, ministers to the villagers. There is a sense in which she and her son form a contemporary holy family. The lord who fathered the child is not only dead, but, we are told, in heaven. Cedric, with his shock of blond hair surrounding his face like a halo, is his father's representative on earth, considered by his great aunt and his father's former servants to be the embodiment - the resurrection - of his father's saintly qualities. Like the young Jesus in the temple, Cedric leaves his mother, "to be about my father's business," the business of becoming an earl. Mrs Errol, a

widow with a child, but free of sexual responsibilities, is seen almost as the embodiment of the Virgin Mary. She is associated with the holy vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. She is chaste, charitable, and not ostentatiously wealthy, though independent enough not to be beholden to the Earl; she is in no way a kept woman. She manifests obedience by surrendering to what she perceives to be the wishes of her dead husband, that Cedric should inherit the earth, or at least that part of England's green and pleasant land that is forever Dorincourt.

Like the Blessed Virgin, Mrs Errol finds herself the object of veneration. Her maid is a working class Irish woman, a sex, a class and a nation associated with the Marian cult. As Mrs Errol is walking to church the peasantry curtsy, blessing her "because she was Lord Fauntleroy's mother." (86) She, like Mary, is defined by and revered for her motherhood, and uses it to intercede, through her son, to the ultimate power. It is in compliance with his mother's request that Cedric intervenes on the villagers' behalf and pleads with his grandfather to rebuild the ironically named Earl's Court, where "they have fever and the children die." (87)

Cedric is the embodiment of the Romantic child. He represents the innocence and purity of childhood. He brings freshness and spotless morality to the incestuous, debased institution of the English aristocracy. He is the secular equivalent of the children who bring their elders back to God in the fiction of both Hocking and Ewing. There is a suggestion that Cedric's assertion "I am an American" (88) is part of this symbolism. In the Earl's treatment of

his youngest son, one can discern an echo of the tyranny of the English state upon her "new found land." While Cedric's childish innocence can hardly be attributable to a country past its teenage rebellion, (89) he has an American openness, optimism and social ease that makes it natural for him to have held "out his hand" to a servant "as he had to the Earl." (90) But this is not to be confused with egalitarianism. While as in America Cedric is involved with the suffering of the poor, now these unfortunates are no longer to be seen, like Bridget, crying in his kitchen, but living in the village outside the parameters of the castle. This little lord is now the rich man in his castle and they, the poor men at his gate, and there is nothing to suggest that this situation is seen as anything but laudable. Mr. Hobbs refuses to return to his native land because "There's not an aunt-sister among 'em - nor an earl." (91) This sentiment justifies the fact that the rural working classes are governed by kindly overlords. The notion of a benign fudal system is encapsulated in the boy's birthday celebrations. They are a symbol of the castle's bounty and continuity and the villagers' acceptance and loyalty.

This feudal relationship, albeit in a more exaggerated form, is seen in Hodgson Burnett's short story, "Little Saint Elizabeth," (1890) where Elizabeth's aunt, Clontilde, an upper class patron to a village, asserts that peasants "must be cared for like children." (92) It is a sentiment the author appears to be in sympathy with, fond patronage characterising her administration of the Maytham Hall estate. (93) The strictness with which Clontilde ruled her lands is reflected in the upbringing of her niece, the portrayal of which

combines religion with aspects of the erotic. The child Elizabeth is pictured with a rosary and a crucifix at her waist, "rising in the night to pray." (94) She feels herself a failure for being unable to endure the pain of holding her hand over a lighted candle without fainting. This, she reasons, will exclude her from martyrdom, as she could not bear to be burnt at the stake.

Upon the death of her aunt, who died in the chapel while at prayer, the young child moves from rural France to her uncle's house in New York. Elizabeth inherits her aunt's concern for the French villagers although she no longer lives in the country. With the emigration of their protector, all goodness and health drains, symbolically, from the district, nature is in decline with a failed harvest, the sickness of the livestock and illness amongst the villagers. It is only when the maternal care, so necessary for their survival, is restored in the form of money from Elizabeth, that life is saved and normality restored. Elizabeth is established as not only as mother, but also a saviour.

The peasantry as portrayed in *The Lost Prince* (1915) is, like that in "Little Saint Elizabeth," foreign, rural and enthusiastic in its love and praise for its young ruler. Indeed in Samavia, the fervour for Marcus Loristan, the lost prince of the title, verges on idolatry. There is a portrait of the boy suspended above an altar, and the peasants prostrate themselves and kiss Marcus's feet while others, "made deep obeisance as he passed." (95) This form of social order necessitates an under-class recognising the rightness of its subservience and exulting in it. It is a portrayal which has an

underlying romanticism similar to that in the adult novel, *The Shuttle*. (1907) When discussing rural life Hodgson Burnett envisaged, "a manor house reigning over an old English village and over villagers in possible smock Frocks." (96) While the English rural poor in Hodgson Burnett's children's fiction do not exhibit the same fervour as their foreign counterparts, their reverence for their social superiors differs only in degree. We shall return to Hodgson Burnett's depiction of the rural poor in Chapter 7, where it will be associated with the author's social and maternal insecurities.

In depicting the working classes in cities Hodgson Burnett does not seek for idylls. Her descriptions are peppered with animal images, and urban landscapes characterised by narrowness and darkness, symbolic of the degradation of people forced to exist in unnatural, unclean and unhealthy situations, in a literal, spiritual and sociological sense. Nor is class always synonymous with wealth. In *The Lost Prince* we are reminded by the "Squad" that "toffs sometimes lost their money for a bit" (97) (a reference to, perhaps, the financial insecurities that dogged the author's early life.) Social status can be sustained, at least for a while, without the usual fiscal trappings. As we saw in Chapter 3, the protagonist's family in Molesworth's novel *The Carved Lions* suffer financial hardships but are resolutely middle class.

In *The Lost Prince*, Marcus Loristan lives in poverty with his father, later to be crowned king of Samavia, in a back street lodging-house in London. It is a common occurrence in Hodgson Burnett's

children's novels for the central character to undergo a dramatic change in fortune - one thinks of *Little Lord Fauntleroy* and *A Little Princess* (1905) and - but throughout the upheavals the superior quality of the protagonist's class is maintained. Marco and his father, although dressed in ragged, patched clothing, and fed on a sparse, basic diet, are emblems of the aristocracy, their eminence being easily detected in the graciousness of their manners and, as with Joan Lowry, the magnificence of their bearing. To hide his true identity while wandering in Europe disguised as a beggar Marco has to learn to "shuffle a little and slouch as if he were of the common people." (98)

The real slouchers and shufflers, the working class boys who make up the "Squad," like the pit-girls in *That Lass O' Lowrie's*, are seen as a collective. While two of them are named, there is no further attempt to distinguish individuals. In the text they are merely disembodied voices, their cockney accents accentuating their working class status. This group of inner London lads is being drilled by The Rat, their physically disabled leader who is "a gentleman's son," (99) albeit a gentleman who was dismissed from his profession for being a drunkard. Although he had reduced himself and his son to the squalor of the slums, his superior breeding is reflected in the leadership qualities inherited by his son. Sometimes, when only "half drunk," (100) his intelligent, illuminating conversation acts as the boy's education, another element of his life which separates him from those he commands. Even given the boy's physical disability (a grave disadvantage in an aspiring military man, one would think) it is The Rat who is the

"general" and the boys make up the "rabble." (101)

The metaphor of the army reflects perfectly Hodgson Burnett's portrayal of class, with, figuratively speaking, its concept of officers and men. The officers lead by virtue of their inherent authority, which emanates from upper class roots, while the socially inferior men loyally and unquestioningly follow. It was the greatest compliment the new king could pay The Rat, subservient, now, in his turn, when he said, "you have always obeyed orders." (102) Significantly, while the lives of both Marcus and The Rat embody military ideals, "the Squad is only playing," (103) seeing behavioural rigour as nothing but a game. The boy soldiers are variously seen as "fools", "swine," "riff-raff" (104) and "a rough lot." (105) There is a sense that such a collection of the young working class needs discipline imposed on it from above in order to be kept within society's control. This is in contrast to Ewing's portrayal of the army analysed in Chapter 5. As we saw, she depicts mutual respect as characterising relationships between the ranks. The benign hierarchical structure which characterises Ewing's fictional army is reminiscent of that existing in a family.

The difficulty of imposing conformity on the working classes is inherent in Hodgson Burnett's depiction of the proletariat. The only individual working class adult to be featured in *The Lost Prince* is the Loristans' landlady, Mrs Beedle. Hers is not a flattering picture. Even her name has homophonic connections with Mr Bumble, Dickens's beadle in his novel *Oliver Twist*, (1838) and she shares some of his characteristics, including greed, odiousness and

vulgarity. Her dark, unlikely abode, like the stable in Bethlehem, holds a king. The days preceding Marcus's father's ascent to his throne see unusual happenings in their lodgings. Titled dignitaries (wise men without gifts) visit the house in coaches. Mrs Beedle stands in the midst of this splendour, insisting that her rent be paid. She is seen to emerge and "shuffle down" to her "subterranean" (106) cellar-kitchen, like an animal in a burrow, sniffing the air for the scent of money, or to defend her territory from those who would quit the vicinity without paying.

The meanness both of herself and her mission is encapsulated in the word "dusty", (107) an adjective usually applied to dirty, tacky objects that are disregarded and uncared for. She is contrasted with the visiting courtiers, attended by footmen immaculate in "dark brown and gold liveries." (108) A coach appearing at a house described as "dingy" and "ugly" (109) has an element of the fairy-tale about it and Mrs Beedle takes the role of an unprepossessing object that the fairy godmother is to transform magically. Humiliated by her treatment, the landlady prepares to return to her hole, "as if she were not any longer a person at all." (110) Only Marco's aristocratic sensitivities suggest that perhaps Mrs Beedle's behaviour was motivated by need and not mere working class ignorance or ill-breeding, that her survival might depend on her rent money. "It is of great importance to her that she should be sure." (111) It is a probability that the character articulates that which the author's portrayal of the working class woman ignores.

With little Saint Elizabeth's attempt to discharge what she sees as

her religious duties amongst the poor of the New York slums, Hodgson Burnett links the squalor of urban deprivation to the absence of nature, of a garden. Human despair and unhappiness, her work argues, is almost inevitable while people, metaphorically, "have no vineyards ---- no trees and flowers." (112) This negation of what is natural is mirrored in the behaviour of the slum dwellers, where men, instead of protecting their families are seen first to assault them, then throw them into the snow. The abandoned woman, not wholly innocent herself, tries to sell Elizabeth's cloak given to keep her warm. The drunken perpetrator is stereotypically Irish. The Irish, as we saw from Chapter 4, were considered as of a lower social order than the English working classes. Hodgson Burnett's portrayal contrasts with Ewing's sympathetic and varied depiction of the Irish in a number of her novels, as that chapter illustrates.

The theme of the inability of humanity to flourish without nature is found in much of the author's work. It forms the basis for the short story *The Land of the Blue Flower*, (1909) written in the genre of the fairy-tale. It tells of King Amor, who, as his name suggests, is the embodiment of love and wisdom. He also appears to be the literary precursor of Dickon in *The Secret Garden*, absorbed as he is in the natural world, and, like Dickon, intimate with members of the animal kingdom. There is, as with the portrayal of Dickon, the suggestion of Saint Francis surrounding Amor as he acknowledges his own place in nature by referring to both animals and natural phenomena as "brothers." (113) It is one of his companions, a swallow who "loved him very much," (114) who presents him with the seeds of

the Blue Flower to plant in his much loved garden. (The relationship between a swallow and a young royal have obvious connections to Oscar Wilde's short story for children, "The Happy Prince," first published in 1888, eleven years before the publication of *The Land of the Blue Flower*. Hodgson Burnett entertained Wilde in her home in America and it has even been suggested that so impressed was she by the writer that the visit influenced the clothes worn by Lord Fauntleroy [115]. It is highly probable that Hodgson Burnett was familiar with Wilde's work, and that his influence extended beyond the sartorial to the literary. Significantly, however, Hodgson Burnett does not reflect in her fiction Wilde's condemnation of poverty nor his compassion towards the poor.)

Having been brought up in an isolated part of his kingdom, the young monarch does not enter his capital city until the day of his coronation. Amor is portrayed as a young god associated with adoration and light - he is seen to be in communion with the stars; Hodgson Burnett describes him as "radiant" (116) and he carries a lantern when he visits his working class subjects at night. His underprivileged people live in a Victorian Hades, with "forlorn little children," who, like Mrs Beedle, "scud away like rats into their holes as he drew near." (117) The image of the rat is used to describe the adults later in the text, adults who inhabit "black holes and corners." (118) Hodgson Burnett's use of the image of rodents to describe the working classes is akin to Molesworth's use of the poem "The Pied Piper of Hamelin" in Chapter 3. It is an image that will be discussed further in Chapter 7.

The darkness is not merely reflective of poverty, but a metaphor for the unenlightened, the morally corrupt, what the King's advisers describe as "an evil, ill-tempered lot of worthless malcontents and thieves." (119) Fear and viciousness predominate in the lives of the working classes and the districts where they live. Both men and women were said to fight. The narrow, dark neighbourhood, a symbol of the mentality of the inhabitants, is populated by drunkards and petty criminals. When the Blue Flower is in bloom in the far off garden of the King and the scent drifts into the slums, however, fighting and quarrelling stop while people are transported from the mundane and squalid by the exquisite perfume.

As a form of re-education for his recalcitrant under class, King Amor decrees that every citizen must plant seeds of the Blue Flower, tend the ground and protect the young shoots. In addition to providing work - as we have seen, occupation of the under-classes is important to Hodgson Burnett - this is seen as a symbol of man's regeneration, the practice of love and nurturing in natural surroundings. It is into his own natural paradise that King Amor sweeps the Lame Boy, who is unable to sow his own seeds, but helps others to tend theirs. Unlike Browning's creation in "The Pied Piper of Hamelin" this boy was not denied heaven because of his incapacity. He is removed from the darkness of the city to, like the king, "live near the sun and stars," (120) until, as with Colin in *The Secret Garden*, "he grew strong and straight." (121) Corrupted men, city dwellers, are brought back to nature, to a force that heals, reversing the insidious perversion of urban society, and returning humanity to the innocence and happiness of Eden. It will be argued

in the next chapter that Hodgson Burnett found the northern English industrial working classes impervious to such influences.

Hodgson Burnett's "The Quite True Story of an Old Hawthorn Tree" appears to have been written to illustrate the necessity of nature to the wholesome survival of humanity. While set in London it owes many of its industrial images to the author's autobiographical writing featuring her native city. Industry is portrayed as a "great hungry dragon which swallowed up everything beautiful that came its way," (123) almost a rapist, destroying the aesthetically pleasing, the simple and natural. Not only does the smoke deflower the hawthorn tree, robbing it of its "pink, innocent blossom," (124) but the "fresh, rosy children and their games and laughter," (125) are violated, perverting children's features until they are "pale, cunning little faces." (126) The young have lost both their youth and their purity. This image is consistent with Ewing's description of the young Londoners who frequent the penny gaffs in *Jan of the Windmill*, discussed in Chapter 4.

The countryside, where the tree was planted, had been transformed by encroaching urbanisation. The urban dwellers, who populate the mean streets that replaced the fields, are seen as unnatural as the environment in which the hawthorn tree, the symbol of nature, fails to grow. Given her romantic ideas of both mothers and children as manifested in *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, the epitome of the author's disgust for the degradation of humanity that slum conditions impose is saved for the image of infants cursing and mothers falling down drunk and sleeping "their horrible besotted

sleep" (127) where they land. It takes a child, neglected, underfed, "and with the marks of cruel stripes and bruises showing through its rags" (128) to begin the process of creating a garden. This association of urban working class family life with drunkenness and cruelty to children is similar to Hocking's portrayal in his children's fiction, as we saw in the last Chapter 5. Allying a child with the creation of a garden is a metaphor for the reclamation of the evil and corrupt by the innocent. It is a recurring theme in the novels of Ewing and Hocking, as chapters 4 and 5 demonstrate.

Establishing a park brings new life to the area. The tree starts to blossom again and the birds build in its branches. The park, we are told, "sweetened and purified all the air about it, and surely it sweetened and purified the poor lives of those who come to it." (129) Below the branches, instead of the desperate, the sinful and the felonious, we have women, sober now, with their children, whose faces are "quite bright", (130) symbols of the regeneration of a neighbourhood. It is an indication of Hodgson Burnett's optimism that, as in *The Secret Garden* and *The Land of the Blue Flower*, she places in the garden a "lame boy" (131) to benefit from nature's restorative powers. Another characteristic feature of the story is the author's conviction that the reason for the hawthorn tree's sadness is not solely the lack of a rural milieu, but that it lives amidst dirt and squalor. Its spirit, she feels, would have been consoled had its environs looked upon "carriages and horses, the beautiful women and pretty children." (132) As in *That Lass O' Lowrie's*, Hodgson Burnett characterises the working classes as aesthetically unpleasing, although some at least are capable of moral

transformation. In the last chapter we saw how Hocking depicted destitute children who are pretty. Their prettiness, however, is linked to the probability of a future immoral life.

It is into such a world of opulence as is represented by the image of carriages and horses that the author puts Becky, a scullery maid in *Sara Crewe*. The only mention of the character in this novel alludes to her reading habits. Becky is seen to read romantic novels, what the writer describes as "greasy volumes," (133) unlike the working class readers in *The Secret Garden* and *That Lass O' Lowrie's*, who read tracts. Becky's novels, like several of Hodgson Burnett's books, deal with females making advantageous marriages. Marghanita Laski describes *Sara Crewe* as a mere precis of *A Little Princess* (1905). (134) In the latter Becky features more prominently.

She is seen as a representative of her class. Sara first glimpses her through railings, the self-same structures through which as a child in Manchester Hodgson Burnett used to peer at the dirty and noisy army of workers returning home from the mills. (135) Their first encounter as young lady and maid anticipates the meeting, six years later, of Mary and Martha in *The Secret Garden*: both servants are tending fires in their respective mistress's sleeping quarters. Even the story Sara is telling a group of her friends as Becky carries out her duties underlines the inferiority of the servant's class. Becky's "smudgy face" - a phrase used twice in three lines (136) - recalls Tom's blackened appearance in *The Water Babies*, an impression validated by the maid's summary of

Sara's tale concerning "merbabies swimming about laughing."
(137) There is the inherent suggestion that the relationship between Becky and Sara is a reflection of that between Tom and "the sweet young lady," (138) whose bedroom he invades.

Although Becky and Martha share an occupation and a class, there is little else to unite them. It is not the case that Martha's portrayal emerges naturally from the more superficial characterisation of Becky. While the Yorkshire servant is openly critical of her mistress, Becky looks at Sara "worshippingly." (139) (It is an adoration rewarded when Becky, like the undeserving, but believing, "malefactor" at the crucifixion, ultimately finds herself "with me in Paradise," that is, accompanying Sara to live in the Indian Gentleman's home.) Whereas Martha's character is informed in no small part by her position in a rather remarkable family, no reference is made to Becky's life outside the seminary other than in one anecdote, the object of which is to underline Sara's beauty. This lack of biographical detail in a relatively prominent character contrasts sharply with the indication the reader is given of the domestic circumstance of several of Sara's fellow scholars, all of whom play comparatively minor roles. We are told of Ermergarde's father's intelligence and his love of books, of Lottie's motherlessness and we can easily deduce the character of Mrs Herbert from Lavinia's quotations. But evidently Hodgson Burnett thought it unnecessary to bring depth or complexity to the portrayal of Becky, seeing her role as merely that of a working class character who informs the depiction of her mistress. She refuses to see members of the working classes as individuals who exist outside

their relationship with the middle classes. To do so would be to demand recognition of a common humanity. As Chapter 4 demonstrates, Ewing's portrayal of the poor imbues them, by contrast, with autonomy. She creates credible working class families and a convincing working class society, as will be argued in the next chapter.

The attitude described above underlies Sara Crewe's assertion that "If I *was* a princess - a *real* princess ... I could scatter largess (sic) to the populace." By using the phrase "the populace," the speaker implies not only that she does not belong to the group, but is superior to it, an impression given validity by the word "largess", with its overtones of graciousness and magnanimity. This is not another "pretend" by an imaginative child - though there is a sense in which the author is smiling at the earnestness of her creation while applauding motives so like her own - for at the end of the paragraph, Sara, rather complacently, announces, "I've scattered largess," (140) referring to her giving Becky a slice of cake.

The "populace" in the novel is personified by Anne, the starving "gutter-child" Sara meets near the bakery. Although ill-clothed, cold and hungry herself, Sara is avowedly what the Large Family dubbed her, The-little-girl-who-is-not-a-beggar. As with Marcus Loristan, her superiority is apparent; like the fourpence piece she found in the street she was, metaphorically, "shining in the gutter ... a tiny piece trodden upon by many feet, but still with spirit enough to shine a little." (141)

The portrayal of Anne is the most harrowing in the book and when Hodgson Burnett's prose is simple and straightforward, not ornamented by subtle social judgment, her writing is effective. We are told:

The beggar girl was still huddled up in the corner of the step. She looked frightful in her wet and dirty rags. She was staring straight before her with a stupid look of suffering, and Sara saw her suddenly draw the back of her roughened black hand across her eyes to rub away the tears which seemed to have surprised her by forcing their way from under her lids. She was muttering to herself. (142)

The simplicity of the report impresses upon the reader the horrific picture of a starving, abandoned child. Two paragraphs further on, however, the author gives us a very different impression of this "little ravening London savage," cramming food into her mouth. "She was too ravenous to give thanks, even if she had ever been taught politeness - which she had not." (143) Even if this is an attempt to capture Sara's incredulity at such behaviour - which is by no means apparent - the last phrase belongs to the author alone. The juxtaposition of a starving child's attempt to stave off death with the authorial disapproval of her not having the etiquette equal to the occasion renders the sentence arrogantly inappropriate and vaguely ridiculous. Sara's altruism in giving the girl five out of the six buns when Sara herself had not eaten all day is noticed by the baker, who tells Anne that if she is ever hungry to come to the shop for bread, "I'm blest if I won't give it to you for that young one's

sake." (144) There are overtones, here, of Christ breaking bread and exhorting his followers to "do this in remembrance of me."

In a real sense it is Anne who allows Sara to become "a real princess" as the last act of the novel, when she arrives at the bakery in her carriage to order that all starving children who beg for bread are to be fed at her expense. Sara as, imaginatively, a royal personage, has found her constituents - the populace - and the bread is symbolically a recognition and acceptance of their disparate social roles. It is not the receiving of Christ's body, as in the Eucharist, but a recognition of the social contract implicitly struck; the rich will feed the poor and the poor will gratefully uphold the status of their genteel patrons. Chapter 7 will develop further Hodgson Burnett's need for personal recognition, which is reflected in her fiction.

The dominant theme of *A Little Princess* is that of imagination; the very title alludes to it. In the literal sense Sara has no claim to a royal title but in a novel where characters are largely defined by the exercise of their imaginations she is an aristocrat indeed. Lavinia denounces Sara for telling stories about heaven - tales reminiscent of episodes in *The Land of the Blue Flower* - as a "wicked thing." (145) She prefers to adhere to the narrow dictates of contemporary society as epitomised by her mother's Victorian rectitude. Ermengarde does not have the insight to realise Sara is hungry, but when she is told, being generous, she hurries to fetch a food parcel. The table Sara decks out to receive the feast is decorated with discarded frippery. Ermengarde sees "a real party," while Becky

perceives "a queen's table" (146) and the infamous Miss Minchin denounces it as "rubbish." (147) Miss Minchin, however, has imagination; what makes her wicked is that she perverts it with an element of sadism. She watches with eager anticipation to see the torture on Sara's face after her enforced fast. Hodgson Burnett does not restrict the notion of imagination to Sara's childhood games but uses it in a broader sense that links it to sensitivity and ultimately with goodness. Similarly, Ewing's characters Jan, Master Swift and Jack March, as we saw in Chapter 4, are linked to both goodness and the arts. Like Becky, the three were raised as working class, but unlike her, as we shall discuss, they are engaged in artistic pursuits.

Like the novel's protagonist, Becky is intimately connected with the fanciful. Sara senses a fellow spirit on their first meeting when the maid is mesmerised by her story-telling, and recognises that Becky, like her middle class counterparts, "is only a little girl, too." (148) The regular story sessions, the use of Becky as an "ill-used heroine" (149) in one of Sara's imaginings, link the two even in adversity when they become "the prisoners in the Bastille." The necessity for a life of the imagination is the same. After a gruelling day the maid confesses, "twarn't for you an' the Bastille, an' bein' the prisoner in the next cell, I should die." (150) Yet if they are sisters in imagination, the author makes absolutely sure that the reader is under no illusion that their sisterhood remains metaphorical. When Sara "floated in" (151) in her "rose-coloured dancing afternoon splendour," (152) she is contrasted with "poor Becky," (a phrase the author repeats), "an ugly, stunted, worn-out little scullery drudge."

There is a sense in which class distinction is retained even in the world of the story. Although Becky enters into her mistress's "pretends," she does so passively; she is never seen as the instigator of imaginings. There is a silence surrounding the young working class figure in Hodgson Burnett's children's fiction which will only be broken when Martha makes her assertive presence felt in *The Secret Garden*. Until then it is assumed that the adolescent working class has no story to tell, or at least not one that will interest or seem relevant to the author's perceived audience. Given this unequal relationship, story becomes part of Sara's "largess," albeit imaginative "largess." It is dispensed by a bounteous middle class child to the imaginatively underprivileged, as we see when she entertains school friends, or in the case of Becky, the socially and educationally deprived.

This notion of largesse permeates Hodgson Burnett's works "Giovanni and The Other" and "A Pretty Roman Beggar." In the former, the "other" of the title is a young boy who, like Giovanni, sings in the street for money. Since over-use and ill-health have ruined his exquisite voice, the boy will only sing in the dark and the Lady in Black, a thinly disguised Hodgson Burnett, gives him money out of pity. Giovanni is associated with life and light, with the bright sunshine of the morning, and, ultimately, with the bright light of success. In the case of both boys, the narrator tells us about her patronage. Giovanni is enabled to become a celebrated opera singer, and upon the death of "the other," the narrator supported his

mother.

What is most interesting about the portrayal of Giovanni and the pretty Roman beggar is the imagery employed. Although she is relatively successful in convincing the reader that she gives these children money in the name of her beloved sons - she is the Lady in Black because she is in mourning for the death of her youngest son - there nevertheless is an ambiguity in the language. We are told she threw money to Giovanni with an "almost caressing gesture." (155) While we are meant to infer from her description of her pretty Roman beggar that it is merely an observation of a young boy, its length, lingering detail and the dreaminess of its tone give it sexual connotations:

He had such soft, round cheeks, the colour of a very ripe peach - an Indian peach, perhaps, with the red showing through and the downy brown; he had such a dimpling laugh, and such large soft brown eyes and such a lot of thick chestnut brown curls. His curls looked soft too, he looked soft and warm all over as if he would feel like a rabbit or a squirrel if one took him in one's arms. (156)

An older woman giving money to a sensually alluring young Italian male raises the image of the gigolo, a notion enhanced by talk of the beggar seeing their relationship in a purely "professional" (157) light, and as his parting gesture, throwing Hodgson Burnett, "a whole butterfly flight of kisses." (158) The whole piece casts doubt

on the author's assertion that she is interested in the boy because there are so few child beggars in America; rather, her coquettish confession that "I do encourage them disgracefully sometimes," (159) seems nearer the truth.

It is interesting to note that with the exception of Dickon, whose portrayal is not wholly realistic, all the individual working class characters in her novels for children are female. "Boys," she says in "Giovanni and The Other," "always seem near to me," (160) too near to set them with their working class sisters on the peripheries of her novels.

In summary, Hodgson Burnett's portrayal of class is conservative, despite the promise of radicalism in several of her works. The impending inter-class marriage in *That Lass O' Lowrie's* is acceptable because Hodgson Burnett depicts Joan as superior to her class. The working class attributes she does possess are eliminated by middle class values taught her by Anice. Intimately associated with her social elevation is the embracing of female qualities, depicted in the novel as incompatible with the notion of working women. These are essentially domestic in nature, fitting Joan for the role of middle class wife. Working class morals are questioned through the depiction of Liz and Dan, who embody Malthusian notions of the degradation of the poor, as discussed in Chapter 1. In *The Secret Garden*, Martha is a highly credible and assertive individual who is defined by her working class status. She exists independently of her mistress, unlike her counterpart in *A Little Princess*. Martha is the conduit through which Hodgson

Burnett filters details of deprivation. The potency of her portrayal, and thereby the depiction of poor rural people, is, however, diluted by the romanticisation of both her mother and her brother. Similarly, the same novel promises the empowerment of children but it ends with the upholding of patriarchal control and the consequential restriction of women, children and the working classes. The notion of patriarchal power is central to both *Little Lord Faunleroy* and *The Lost Prince*. In "Little Saint Elizabeth" matriarchal rule fulfils a similar function by emphasising the dependancy of the working classes on the charity of their social superiors. Sara Crew captures the essence of this relationship in the word "largess" as used in *A Little Princess*. In Hodgson Burnett's children's fiction the rural working classes are seen to embrace their subservience while their urban counterparts need order imposed upon them. This comes either through the imposition of discipline and values from the middle and upper classes as in *The Lost Prince*, or from their being exposed to the forces of nature, in, for instance, *The Land of the Blue Flower*. Several of Hodgson Burnett's characters are, however, impervious to such influence, as the next chapter will argue.

This concludes the examination of the works of Molesworth, Ewing, Hocking and Hodgson Burnett. The following chapter will synthesise the findings of the preceding chapters before presenting its conclusions.

Notes

- (1) Engels, Friedrich *The Conditions of the Working Class in England*. pp. 86/7
- (2) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The One I Knew the Best of All*. p. 65
- (3) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The One I Knew the Best of All*. p. 66
- (4) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Secret Garden*. p. 32
- (5) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Secret Garden*. p. 76
- (6) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Secret Garden*. p. 33
- (7) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Secret Garden*. p. 32
- (8) Engels, Friedrich *The Conditions of the Working Class in England*. p. 265
- (9) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Secret Garden*. p. 28
- (10) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Secret Garden*. p.31
- (11) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Secret Garden*. p. 29
- (12) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Secret Garden*. p. 51
- (13) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Secret Garden*. p. 29
- (14) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Secret Garden*. p. 239
- (15) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The One I Knew the Best of All* . p. 215
- (16) Kingsley, Charles *The Water Babies*. p. 117
- (17) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Secret Garden*. p. 239
- (18) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Secret Garden*. p. 90
- (19) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Secret Garden*. p. 100
- (20) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Secret Garden*. p. 137
- (21) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Secret Garden*. p. 84
- (22) Burnett, Vivian *The Romantick Lady*. p.377

- (23) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Secret Garden*. p.211
- (24) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Secret Garden*. p. 212
- (25) Thwaite, Ann *Waiting for the Party*. p. 240
- (26) Greer, Germaine *The Change*. p.310
- (27) Thwaite, Ann *Waiting for the Party*. pp. 141/2
- (28) Thwaite, Ann *Waiting for the Party*. p. 142
- (29) Thwaite, Ann *Waiting for the Party*. p. 125
- (30) Burnett, Vivian *The Romantick Lady*. p. 129
- (31) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Secret Garden*. p. 257
- (32) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Secret Garden*. p. 257
- (33) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The One I Knew the Best of All*. p. 72
- (34) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The One I Knew the Best of All*. pp. 76/79
- (35) Thwaite, Ann *Waiting for the Party*. p. 179
- (36) Thwaite, Ann *Waiting for the Party*. p. 109
- (37) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *Children I Have Known and Giovanni and the Other*. "Children I Have Known." p. ix
- (38) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The One I Knew the Best of All*. p.162
- (39) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *That Lass O' Lowrie's*. p. 1
- (40) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *That Lass O' Lowrie's*. p.1
- (41) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Secret Garden*. p. 241
- (42) Eliot, George *Adam Bede*. p. 531
- (43) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The One I knew the Best of All*. pp. 224/5
- (44) Gill, Stephen *Adam Bede*. "Introduction," p. 17
- (45) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *That Lass O' Lowrie's*. p.1

- (46) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *That Lass O' Lowrie's*. p. 3
- (47) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *That Lass O' Lowrie's*. p. 9
- (48) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *That Lass O' Lowrie's*. p. 2
- (49) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *That Lass O' Lowrie's*. p. 1
- (50) See also Frances Hodgson Burnett, *A Fair Barbarian*.
- (51) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *That Lass O' Lowrie's*. p. 28
- (52) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *That Lass O' Lowrie's*. p. 1
- (53) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *That Lass O' Lowrie's*. p. 1
- (54) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *That Lass O' Lowrie's*. p. 28
- (55) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *That Lass O' Lowrie's*. p. 28
- (56) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *That Lass O' Lowrie's*. p. 13
- (57) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *That Lass O' Lowrie's*. p. 149
- (58) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *That Lass O' Lowrie's*. p. 7
- (59) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *That Lass O' Lowrie's*. p. 75
- (60) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *That Lass O' Lowrie's*. p. 74
- (61) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *That Lass O' Lowrie's*. p. 8
- (62) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *That Lass O' Lowrie's*. p. 132
- (63) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *That Lass O' Lowrie's*. p. 149
- (64) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *That Lass O' Lowrie's*. p. 138
- (65) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *That Lass O' Lowrie's*. p. 113
- (66) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *That Lass O' Lowrie's*. p. 118
- (67) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *That Lass O' Lowrie's*. p. 33
- (68) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *That Lass O' Lowrie's*. p. 21
- (69) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *That Lass O' Lowrie's*. p. 150
- (70) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *That Lass O' Lowrie's*. p. 138
- (71) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *That Lass O' Lowrie's*. p. 138
- (72) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *That Lass O' Lowrie's*. p. 152
- (73) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *That Lass O' Lowrie's*. p. 98

- (74) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *That Lass O' Lowrie's*. p. 149
- (75) Laski, Marghanita *Mrs. Ewing, Mrs. Molesworth and Mrs. Hodgson Burnett*. p. 79
- (76) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *Children I Have Known and Giovanni and the Other*. "The Boy Who Became a Socialist ." p. 12
- (77) Burnett, Frances Hodgson "The Boy Who Became a Socialist." p. 125
- (78) Burnett, Frances Hodgson "The Boy Who Became a Socialist." p. 123
- (79) Burnett, Frances Hodgson "The Boy Who Became a Socialist." p. 124
- (80) Laski, Marghanita *Mrs Ewing, Mrs Molesworth and Mrs Hodgson Burnett*. p. 83
- (81) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *Little Lord Fauntleroy*. p. 103
- (82) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *Little Lord Fauntleroy*. p. 210
- (83) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *Little Lord Fauntleroy*. p. 143
- (84) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *Little Lord Fauntleroy*. p. 104
- (85) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *Little Lord Fauntleroy*. p. 103
- (86) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *Little Lord Fauntleroy*. p. 118
- (87) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *Little Lord Fauntleroy*. p. 140
- (88) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *Little Lord Fauntleroy*. p. 77
- (89) Griswold, Jerry *Audacious Kids*. p. 99
- (90) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *Little Lord Fauntleroy*. p. 89
- (91) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *Little Lord Fauntleroy*. p. 210
- (92) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *Sara Crew, Little Saint Elizabeth and Other Stories*. "Little Saint Elizabeth." p. 111
- (93) Thwaite, Ann *Waiting for the Party*. p. 179
- (94) Burnett, Frances Hodgson "Little Saint Elizabeth." p. 101

- (95) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Lost Prince*. p. 317
- (96) Thwaite, *Waiting for the Party*. p. 179
- (97) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Lost Prince*. p. 126
- (98) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Lost Prince*. p. 183
- (99) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Lost Prince*. p. 32
- (100) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Lost Prince*. p. 67
- (101) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Lost Prince*. p. 30
- (102) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Lost Prince*. p. 320
- (103) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Lost Prince*. p. 90
- (104) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Lost Prince*. p. 28
- (105) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Lost Prince*. p. 35
- (106) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Lost Prince*. p. 302
- (107) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Lost Prince*. p. 293
- (108) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Lost Prince*. p. 306
- (109) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Lost Prince*. p. 1
- (110) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Lost Prince*. p. 307
- (111) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Lost Prince*. p. 307
- (112) Burnett, Frances Hodgson "Little Saint Elizabeth." p. 122
- (113) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Land of the Blue Flower*. p. 20
- (114) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Land of the Blue Flower*. p. 23
- (115) Thwaite, Ann *Waiting for the Party*. pp. 70/1
- (116) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Land of the Blue Flower*. p. 27
- (117) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Land of the Blue Flower*. p. 26
- (118) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Land of the Blue Flower*. p. 30
- (119) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Land of the Blue Flower*. p. 28
- (120) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Land of the Blue Flower*. p. 44
- (121) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Land of the Blue Flower*. p. 45
- (122) Dickens, Charles *Oliver Twist*. p. 423

- (123) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *Children I Have Known and Giovanni and the Other*. "The Quite True Story of an Old Hawthorn Tree." p. 224
- (124) Burnett, Frances Hodgson "The Quite True Story of an Old Hawthorn Tree." p. 223
- (125) Burnett, Frances Hodgson "The Quite True Story of an Old Hawthorn Tree." p. 224
- (126) Burnett, Frances Hodgson "The Quite True Story of an Old Hawthorn Tree." p. 226
- (127) Burnett, Frances Hodgson "The Quite True Story of an Old Hawthorn Tree." p. 225
- (128) Burnett, Frances Hodgson "The Quite True Story of an Old Hawthorn Tree." p. 227
- (129) Burnett, Frances Hodgson "The Quite True Story of an Old Hawthorn Tree." p. 240
- (130) Burnett, Frances Hodgson "The Quite True Story of an Old Hawthorn Tree." p. 241
- (131) Burnett, Frances Hodgson "The Quite True Story of an Old Hawthorn Tree." p. 241
- (132) Burnett, Frances Hodgson "The Quite True Story of an Old Hawthorn Tree." p. 225
- (133) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *Sara Crew and Little Saint Elizabeth and Other Stories*. "Sara Crew." p. 20
- (134) Laski, Marghanita *Mrs Ewing, Mrs Molesworth and Mrs Hodgson Burnett*. p. 84
- (135) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The One I Knew the Best of All*. p. 65
- (136) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *A Little Princess*. p. 40

- (137) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *A Little Princess*. p. 47
- (138) Kingsley, Charles *The Water Babies* p. 28
- (139) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *A Little Princess*. p. 154
- (140) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *A Little Princess*. p. 48
- (141) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *A Little Princess*. p. 131
- (142) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *A Little Princess*. p. 133
- (143) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *A Little Princess*. p. 134
- (144) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *A Little Princess*. p. 135
- (145) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *A Little Princess*. p. 42
- (146) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *A Little Princess*. p. 158
- (147) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *A Little Princess*. p. 160
- (148) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *A Little Princess*. p. 46
- (149) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *A Little Princess*. p. 42
- (150) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *A Little Princess*. p.128
- (151) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *A Little Princess*. p. 44
- (152) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *A Little Princess*. p. 45
- (153) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *A Little Princess*. p. 44
- (154) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *Children I Have Known and Giovanni and the Other*. "Giovanni and the Other." p. 212
- (155) Burnett, Frances Hodgson "Giovanni and the Other." p. 151
- (156) Burnett, Frances Hodgson *Children I Have Known and Giovanni and the Other*. "A Pretty Roman Beggar." p. 40
- (157) Burnett, Frances Hodgson "A Pretty Roman Beggar." p. 41
- (158) Burnett, Frances Hodgson "A Pretty Roman Beggar." p. 44
- (159) Burnett, Frances Hodgson "A Pretty Roman Beggar." p. 43
- (160) Burnett, Frances Hodgson "Giovanni and the Other." p.153

Summary and Discussion of Findings

The first two chapters of this thesis discussed how nineteenth century society perceived working class children and examined contemporary thinking relating to poverty and the poor. The four succeeding chapters analysed the depiction of the poor in selected children's fiction by Molesworth, Ewing, Hocking and Hodgson Burnett, respectively. The main purpose in the present chapter is to summarise these findings by examining central concerns common to the four authors and to the wider society. This will enable us to discern and assess the individual writers' attitudes towards the poor as displayed in their work for middle class children. In the light of this information we shall discuss the constraints put on the depiction of the poor by the nature of fiction for children in the latter half of the nineteenth century. We shall begin by reconsidering briefly the fictional and historical accounts of religion, death and illness, the depiction of women, sexualisation of children, and the fear of the urban.

Molesworth embraced a narrow form of Anglicanism which is reflected in her nursery fiction. It has its roots in a puritan ethic which, as we saw in the Introduction, characterised the writing of her religious work, *Stories of the Saints*, written in a genre which dates back to the early seventeenth century. It is a religious tradition which raises the status of parents or their representatives to that of quasi-divine beings and one which underpins Molesworth's portrayal of diseases and death. In a number of her nursery stories disobedience to parents results in the middle class miscreant being visited by a childhood illness. This was a

significant threat, given the high rate of mortality such illnesses exacted, as Chapter 2 reminds us. Illness, then, in Molesworth's writing is represented as both a physical malady and a manifestation of moral corruption. The latter is perceived to be equally dangerous and destructive and as demanding the Biblically ordained Christian pattern of suffering and repentance before health, both physical and spiritual, is restored. As is consistent with the fusing of the religious and the domestic, the sick child often undergoes social re-education, emerging from her illness with her rebelliousness quenched and ready to undertake the duties, and assume the demeanour, consistent with her status as a young lady.

Although Hocking uses his children's fiction as a vehicle for religious didacticism, his doctrine is sophisticated enough to admit sociological explanations for evil. He sees deprivation as a factor contributing towards the ubiquitous wickedness he portrays in inner-city slums. In Hocking's evangelical children's novels death is suffused with the conventional religious sentimentality. His depiction of the deaths of pure, innocent and impoverished working class children emphasises the wretchedness of their earthly existence, which is associated with class. At the death bed of Nellie in *Her Benny*, discussed in Chapter 5, for instance, the nurse comforts Benny by demonstrating that his sister's death would obviate the necessity for her to "tramp the streets in the cold and wet." (1) Death is associated with the end of working class suffering. Heaven in Hocking's work is depicted as a paradise set firmly in the midst of middle class domesticity. Illness and death in Hocking's fiction are visited on the meritorious, those deemed too good to endure their poverty-stricken existence. The reward for their

goodness is, in effect, eternal social elevation. Hocking's fiction associates Christian virtue with the middle classes, a idea which may be directly linked to the 1851 census discussed in Chapter 2. This showed church attendance high amongst the middle classes and lowest in urban industrial working class districts of the North of England of the kind of which Hocking wrote. He portrays widespread religious ignorance amongst the poor and those who are Christian believers are portrayed as isolated within their communities. His working class protagonists who turn to God also, significantly, become middle class. In a similar fashion, Hodgson Burnett's Joan Lowrie and Ewing's Master Swift embrace religion as part of their social advancement.

Religion in Ewing's fiction is joyous. In addition to hope in life and consolation in death it offers the working classes access to art and music. Religious consolation is shared with the middle class protagonist, Leonard, in *The Story of a Short Life*. His protracted illness and death differ from those Molesworth portrays, for the boy's affliction was not depicted as a punishment for his sinful behaviour but rather his frustration, which led to displays of cruelty and temper, was the result of his disability. It is through his own efforts that he overcomes his deficiencies, rather than, as is the case in Molesworth's writing, through the imposition of an external punitive force. The death of adults, children and animals is ubiquitous in Ewing's fiction. Characters casually refer to it and funerals form the basis of children's games. Her preoccupation with typhoid is informed by science and exudes rationality and practicality. The disease is preventable and her writing attempts to educate the ignorant of all classes. There is, then, in Ewing's novel the notion of a sinner, albeit a young sinner, repenting

and consciously working towards his own perfection, while Hocking's dying children are seemingly congenitally angelic.

Hodgson Burnett was not a member of any church, although she embraced the doctrine of the healing of the self inherent in Christian Science. Its influence is seen coupled with her belief in the curative powers of nature in *The Land of the Blue Flower* and *The Secret Garden*. There are in her children's fiction, however, strong Marian influences in, for instance, *Little Lord Fauntleroy* and *The Secret Garden*. She uses overt Roman Catholic imagery in "Little Saint Elizabeth." Sickness and death in Hodgson Burnett's fiction is reduced to little more than a plot device. Sickness demonstrates the charitable nature and the social superiority of middle class characters, as in *Little Lord Fauntleroy* and "Little Saint Elizabeth," while death frees the child protagonist from familial constraints, thereby expanding his/her dramatic potential. Most of Hodgson Burnett's prominent child characters have lost at least one parent and while such a high mortality rate may be originally explained by the author's loss of her father when young it is also linked to the often romanticised figure of the orphan in nineteenth century adult fiction.

Women in both nineteenth century adult and children's fiction were also frequently romanticised. In the work of Molesworth, Ewing, Hocking and Hodgson Burnett women are mostly defined by their domestic and childrearing roles, their goodness allied to the proper discharge of their wifely and maternal duties. In Hocking's fiction, for instance, middle class women are portrayed as angels in the home. Their working class counterparts, the mothers of the protagonists in *Our Benny* and *Cricket*,

are religious women and loving mothers, and are depicted as all that prevents what Hocking views as inherently morally weak husbands from becoming dissolute. Hocking's evil women, all of whom are working class, assume vices usually associated with his male working class fathers. They are anti-religious, drunkards, child abusers and implicated in the moral decline of their partners. Hocking portrays them as shunning the domestic in favour of the wickedness of the wider urban world.

In a similar fashion, Hodgson Burnett in "The Quite True Story of an Old Hawthorn Tree," when describing the immoral and criminal behaviour of the urban working classes, is particularly censorious towards a drunken mother who collapses in an alcoholic stupor. The importance with which Hodgson Burnett imbues motherhood is illustrated by its depiction in *The Secret Garden* and *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, in both of which she deifies the maternal. Her depiction of mothers in those two novels is a reflection of how she perceived her own relationship with her young sons, as Chapter 6 argues.

Both Molesworth and Ewing characterise men as being inherently unfitted to undertake either domestic duties or the care of children. While Molesworth's middle class fathers are often portrayed as strict and remote, her mother figures are invariably wise and gentle. It is Molesworth's nursemaids who foster children's moral, social and imaginative faculties by the art of story-telling. In her novel *Farthings*, however, two working class women are ridiculed even though one shows kindness and love to her foster child and the other practises fiscal prudence.

Ewing's depiction of working class women differs substantially from Molesworth's. In the interpolation in "Father Hedgehog and His Neighbours" she depicts an instinctive bond between a gypsy woman and a vicar's wife founded on their mutual love for a child. The view of class and womanhood that underpins the piece is extremely unusual, not only in Victorian children's literature but in any English fiction of the period. While Ewing's women are associated with the domestic sphere this is not synonymous with female compliance. In *Jan of the Windmill* and *A Flat Iron for a Farthing* there is a strong strain of female rebellion and solidarity amongst working class women against what they perceive to be ignorant and autocratic male behaviour.

Society's view of working class women can be associated with how working class children, and specifically girls, were considered. As Chapter 2 discussed, in an age that equated childhood with innocence and purity, child prostitution flourished and successive parliaments refused to raise the age of sexual consent. Young workers and especially girls were viewed as sexually precocious. As we saw in Chapter 1, Malthus equates the the poor with wanton, lustful savages. Mayhew in his journalism comments on the licentiousness of London's poor children. The sexualising of working class boys and girls is linked to what was perceived as the corrupting atmosphere of cities, a concept to which we shall return.

The link between urban working class children and immorality in the public mind is reflected in the work of the four selected authors. In several of his novels Hocking links destitute children to prostitution,

opining that death would be preferable to immorality. In *Chips*, as we saw in Chapter 5, he adopts erotic imagery to describe a group of impoverished children, which he allies to fears of sexual impropriety. Similarly, Hodgson Burnett uses sexually connotative language to express her feeling towards a beggar boy. The coquettish tone she employs adds to the impression of adult flirtatiousness.

Ewing's feelings towards what she sees as the licentiousness of urban youth are more sombre and censorious. In *Jan of the Windmill* she generalises when describing London's poor children, representing them all as immoral and enjoying bawdy entertainment. Their perverted childhoods are contrasted with Jan's rural innocence, which Ewing feels is endangered by his association with urban children.

Geraldine's mother in *The Carved Lions* condemns the sartorial vulgarity of the daughter of a *nouveau riche* family. As we discussed in Chapter 3, this is a metaphor for immorality, an immorality which can be traced to the family's social origins in the cotton mills. The use of clothing as a moral indicator is also used by Hodgson Burnett in *That Lass O' Lowrie's*. Liz's unmarried motherhood and her role as mistress to a middle class man are not overtly castigated by the author. The underlying immorality is, however, suggested in Liz's love of clothes and their garish ornamentations.

The sexualisation of urban working class children is a manifestation of the middle class fear of the city and its working class inhabitants. As we saw in the Introduction, the newly industrialised cities experienced working class agitation for the first half of the nineteenth century, after

which it began to dissipate. The militancy was associated by the middle classes with the French Revolution and with fears of the overthrow of the established social order. In addition, Malthusian concepts of the poor as being idle, bestial and lascivious contributed to the middle classes' view of them as repugnant and alien. Street children were seen as dangerous and threatening. It was these middle class fears which underpinned the exportation of many thousands of impoverished boys and girls.

Peggy's mother in Molesworth's *Little Miss Peggy* feels that the Mancunian working classes are not fit subject matter for her middle class children to know of. There is a reflection of this attitude in Molesworth's depiction of cleanliness being synonymous with working class respectability. It implies that the generality of the poor, as Malthus maintains, are associated with filth, both literally and metaphorically. Similarly, she suggests that the urban poor are a perverted form of humanity by portraying several working class characters as deformed or diseased. Fear of social upheaval underpins *The Tapestry Room*, set in post-revolutionary France, in which Dudu, the raven, articulates the author's apprehension and her nostalgia for a more gentle, certain age.

Molesworth exhibits a disdainful attitude to those newly promoted to the middle classes, one which contrasts with Ewing's generous acceptance. Ewing satirises such snobbery as Molesworth's in *Lob Lie-By-The-Fire*. The school teacher, Master Swift, in *Jan of the Windmill*, talking of his northern urban working class boyhood, characterises it as suffused with wickedness.

Both Hocking and Hodgson Burnett use urban industrial pollution as a metaphor for the moral corruption of the working classes. In Hocking's novels and in Hodgson Burnett's "The Quite True Story of an Old Hawthorn Tree" we have depictions of the perversion of childhood innocence and the reflection of Malthusian ideas of the adult poor. Both authors depict working class fathers as abusive and in Hodgson Burnett's *That Lass O' Lowrie's* Dan Lowrie is involved in inter-class violence. In several of her stories Hodgson Burnett portrays city dwellers of all ages as rats, and in *The Lost Prince* a group of boys from a London slum is seen to need the control of their social superiors so that they conform to the established social order.

A study of the work of the individual writers shows, that once established, the portrayal of the poor contains little obvious development. One of Molesworth's earlier children's novels, *The Tapestry Room* published in 1879, resonates with the suggestions of class conflict and revolution. Her most caustic denunciation of the poor came in 1892 with her portrayal of travelling families in *Farthings*. In the same year the association of the urban working class with physical deformity was presented in "The Man with Pan Pipes." A social shift might have been indicated by Molesworth's depiction of the working classes and the middle classes utilising the same leisure space in one of her last major works *The Carved Lions*, published in 1895 and sharing an inner-city Manchester setting with *Little Miss Peggy*, published in 1887. Molesworth, however, is eager to emphasise the separation of the two social groups by stressing the inability of the middle class protagonists to understand their impoverished

counterparts. The gulf between the classes in Molesworth's children's fiction remained largely unchanged.

The differentiation between the portrayal of the urban and rural poor in Hodgson Burnett's work was established with the publication of her first two novels for the young, *Little Lord Fauntleroy* and *Sara Crew*, published in 1886 and 1888 respectively. While the impoverished country dwellers in the former exhibit gratitude and deference, in the latter, set in London, the author employs animal imagery when portraying a homeless child in order to instil both revulsion and pity into the mind of the reader. In 1905, when *Sara Crew* was revised and reissued under the title *A Little Princess*, the passage pertaining to the "little wild animal" is unchanged. Hodgson Burnett's last significant work for children, *The Lost Prince*, published in 1915, is perhaps her most savage critique of the urban working classes. Given the year of publication, it would have been, as it were, the slightly older brothers of Rat's "rabble" army who, fighting in the First World War, displayed similar courage, fortitude and patriotism to that which the author describes the middle class Rat and the aristocratic Marco as exhibiting on their trek through Europe. This fact alone calls into question the validity of Hodgson Burnett's depiction of the urban working classes, a representation that essentially had remained the same throughout her writing career.

The didactic and formulaic nature of Hocking's children's fiction militates against a progression in the portrayal of the poor. There is little variation in his novels' portrayal of urban working class life as being characterised by the abuse of children, alcoholism and the lack

of religion, and therefore, of morals.

As early as 1869, eight years after the publication of her first story, Ewing's interpolation in "The Land of Lost Toys" featured the death of an Irish immigrant child in industrial Manchester. In *The Story of a Short Life*, published in 1882, three years before the author's death, the author defends the close attachment of the young middle class protagonist to an Irish private soldier, against the consensus of disapproval from his mother's visitors. (2) She consistently portrayed the despised and marginalised poor with insight and sympathy. As we have seen, however, Ewing's depiction of the urban poor is as trite as that of the other named authors.

Having discussed both the central concerns in the work of Molesworth, Ewing, Hocking and Hodgson Burnett and the consistency of their depiction of the poor, we shall now examine in more detail each author's portrayal of the working classes for their middle class readership.

Molesworth's view of the poor revolves around her perception that she can no longer control the world in which she lives. It is a world that refuses to acknowledge her authority or that of her class, unlike the past, which upholds her social status and endorses her moral values. It is in essence a pre-industrial past, inextricably linked to the rural, and therefore to what little Miss Peggy calls "that fairyland ... "the country." " (3) It is no accident that in *Farthings*, *Little Miss Peggy* and *The Carved Lions* the young protagonists move from relative impoverishment in a North of England city to prosperity in a rural landscape, mirroring

Molesworth's own journey from inner city Manchester to rural Cheshire, as discussed in the Introduction.

The deranged and physically distorted working classes of Molesworth's fiction are urban dwellers, their deformities suggesting both the reason for their expulsion from the Eden that is rural life, and the corrupting effects of the cities in which they live. Urbanisation and its corollary, industrialisation, produce ever enlarging working classes, which in the Manchester of Molesworth's childhood was associated, as we saw in the Introduction, with militancy. She sees the urban poor as threatening her safety, and the working people who prosper and undergo social elevation as undermining her superiority. Molesworth's writing suggests that she longs for a return to life before the Industrial Revolution when the paternal discipline portrayed in several of her novels, and in a sense manifested in the punitive effect of childhood illnesses contracted by errant children, ensured respect and order in the home, and was reflected in the wider sphere by a social hierarchy to which, seemingly, everyone adhered. The rebelliousness of children, though, her novels suggest, is more easily quelled than that of society. The industrial era is depicted by Molesworth as a blight on society, a disorder, the cause of society's ills, and the urban working classes, metaphorically, are the embodiment of that disease. It is a malady which threatens the very life of society and crucially endangers the moral, physical, social and economic lives of the children for whom she writes.

The working class bogeymen of Molesworth's fiction are seen as morally and physically distorted. Their disfigured humanity is designed

to deter the young reader from approaching those who metaphorically threaten to devour them, thereby destroying the future of the middle classes and, ultimately, of England. Warner, discussing the portrayal in literature of children being eaten by bogeymen, asserts that "at its heart flourishes anxiety about generational order, the stewardship of the future by the living on behalf of the vulnerable who should inherit." (4) This notion of transmission is at the heart of Molesworth's fiction, but added to her anxiety for generational order is her apprehension regarding social order, both being suggested in the recurring theme of disease. She wishes her middle class readers to accept the values, morality and superiority that they are heir to. For this to happen they must be purged of the unacceptable, and frightened into avoiding the contamination of the working classes. It is Molesworth's self-imposed duty as a maternal story-teller to deploy her craft to uphold the *status quo* that pertained before the Industrial Revolution by demonising the change that had occurred since its inception.

While the attitudes that underpin Ewing's work are highly unusual in English children's fiction of the period written in the realistic mode, what ultimately separates her writing from that of her peers, and what singles her out as being of unrivalled importance in the attempt to trace the portrayal of the working class in nineteenth century fiction for the young, is her portrayal of poor individuals. Of the four chosen authors only Ewing has the personal knowledge combined with the philosophy, ability and, perhaps most importantly, the will to produce complex and credible impoverished character invested with moral and psychological depth. The prominence of the poor in several of Ewing's works, the depth of their analysis, and the seriousness and respect with which

she validates them allies her not to her colleagues who wrote books for children but to those writers who wrote for adults. The sense of individual dignity, profundity and intelligence in Ewing's poor, while having no parallel in contemporary fiction for children, contains many of the qualities that Eliot brings to her working characters. Furthermore, it could be argued that the intense and intimate inter-class relationship between the gypsy and the clergyman's wife in "Father Hedgehog and his Neighbours" anticipates concerns Lawrence explores in his writing. Her successful characterisations of individuals from the working classes enabled her to create plausible working class families and from there to construct a working class culture which, while existing independently, fed into a wider and stratified society. It is a pattern that echoes Gaskell's *Mary Barton*.

Ewing's fiction for young people embodies a philosophy which allows her to embrace social realignment, that sees social elevation as just and appropriate, advancements to be celebrated rather than feared. The sense of justice lies in Ewing's perception of humanity. Unlike Molesworth's, it is progressive, not conservative. As in the works of Gaskell and Eliot, there is no evidence that she advocates comprehensive social reappraisal. Like them she presents her readers with a radically different depiction of the working classes. In Ewing's writing both the middle class and working class characters are portrayed with similar characteristics; there is a moral egalitarianism which underpins her work. Ewing is one of the first English authors for children whose literature depicts impoverished characters imbued with a complexity and humanity with which middle class readers could identify.

In the last analysis, however, Ewing's vision is a restricted one. Her portrayal of poor London children in *Jan of the Windmill*, and by extension of all the impoverished urban young, is clichéd. She sees them not as individuals but as a group characterised by its immorality. There is a wickedness capable of destroying rural and childhood innocence.

The first step on the spiritual path for Hocking's male protagonist is to leave his father or father substitute and thereby reject the qualities identified by Malthus, with the implicit acceptance of the validity of his vision of the poor that that represents. Hocking's impoverished father is a symbol of the degenerate urban masses. His son's literal and metaphorical turning of his back upon him, therefore, is, in effect, a rejection not merely of a parent, but of class. With the awakening of the boy's spirituality and his repudiation of the baseness of the working classes, there is a sense in which, literally and metaphorically, he is no longer at home in an urban environment. Shaking the pollution, both physical and spiritual, from his feet, he seeks to strengthen his burgeoning religious awareness in the purity of a rural landscape. For the young men who do remain, as was discussed in Chapter 5, we see the corroding of the innocence of childhood leading to their gradual decline into criminality and ignominious death. There is the fear that girls will descend into prostitution, a fate, Hocking states, which is worse than death. The working class men who befriend the protagonists before their departure from the cities are portrayed as religious, but are also characterised by their social isolation, which suggests both their rarity and their detachment from the class and ethos

in which they live.

What precipitates the renunciation of class and father is invariably the beating of a child, depicted as a perverted form of working class male sexuality, as is demonstrated in Chapter 5. It is, then, consistent with the rejection of the urban working class male ethos that Hocking's protagonists are seen to be emasculated, even feminised. They are portrayed in the role of carer to younger siblings and in adulthood are depicted as teaching religion to children both in the home and in Sunday School. As Rowbotham argues, the care of children and their religious instruction was associated with females. (5) The asexuality ascribed to Hocking's protagonists is a recurring feature in the portrayal of children in nineteenth century children's fiction. Indeed, given that Hocking's good women share the same characteristics as his birth mothers, either living or dead, the choice of a virtuous wife for the protagonist is almost a reversal to childhood and to maternal care. The courtship and marriage of the main characters is always asexual; the adult relationship of the brother and sister who live together in *Dick's Fairy* is seemingly no different from the married contentment with which several of Hocking's novels end, except that marriage results in children, notwithstanding the protagonists' lack of passion. This negation of sexuality and the extolling of sympathetic relationships between men and women is in keeping with Malthus's view, discussed in Chapter 1. For both Hocking and Malthus the middle class are seen as virtuous, religious and asexual, the very antithesis of the working class.

Hocking's main contention is that in order for society to progress from

the brutish to the civilised working class men must change and the nature of that change must be spiritual. Inherent in his thesis is the notion that, except for isolated individuals, being civilised and being an urban working class man are mutually exclusive.

Marx and Engel's *The Communist Manifesto*, published in 1848, ends with the declaration that communist aims "can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions." (6) In the preface to the English edition published in 1888, Engels explains that the adjective "communist" was used in preference to "socialist" because at the time the work was written socialism was identified with middle class radicalism, while communism was restricted to the working classes. (7) In the light of a threat of class revolt which had middle class support being given expression in widely available published form, and given the persistence of Hodgson Burnett's childhood fears of financial ruin and social demotion, her use of the term "Socialist" to identify her son is more than an amused mother's teasing. She takes the subject seriously enough to write about it, and after the gentle mocking of what she perceives to be the innocence and naivete of her offspring, catalogues firmly the advantages to him of retaining the *status quo*. This whiff of class rebellion from within at a time -1892- when Hodgson Burnett had attained both wealth and celebrity raised the same spectre that had bedevilled her since the death of her father, that she is in danger of losing her status and the money and the privileges that underpin it.

In her fiction this seemingly ever-present anxiety manifests itself most strongly in the portrayal of the urban working classes, "the rabble," as

they are described in *The Lost Prince*. The association of "the rabble" with the ubiquitous term "the mob," connoting unrest and class strife in towns and cities, is unmistakable. Allied to this portrayal is the depiction of the proletariat as rats, a device, according to Freud, which projects the user's "own internal impulses of hostility on to the extended world, to ascribe them, that is, to the objects which (s)he feels to be disagreeable." (8) These hostilities, when ascribed to a character in her adult fiction, find their strongest expression in the depiction of Dan Lowry, who is portrayed as little more than the personification of brutishness. It is Dan's animalistic qualities, his lack of human personality, complexity, or individuality that embody Hodgson Burnett's fears. His attributes are those that were popularly seen to characterise "the mob"; he, like it, will not be civilised. Unlike the urban poor in Hodgson Burnett's children's novels, Dan's sub-human qualities are not amenable to discipline from his social superiors, or amelioration from the various sources of nature. Dan is the symbol of her childhood fear of the working class, bestial power undiluted by the trappings of deference, human sympathy or social responsibility. He emanates from the North of England, is an industrial worker, and although living in a village, nevertheless personifies what is seen as the immorality of the urban masses. Significantly, his discontent and disaffection are made manifest in violence and the attempted destruction of his social superiors. With his anonymous associates he forms a threatening presence, made all the more unnatural by its association with the dark. The suggestions of the Gothic in Lowrie's portrayal are consistent with his almost vampire-like threat, the notion of sucking civilisation dry, destroying the health and strength of the English class system and replacing it by a foreign European philosophy which has at its heart the

threat of a workers' revolution and the overthrow of the existing social system.

Hodgson Burnett's support for the English class system and her desire that she should have a prominent place within that system are central to her work. The very titles of some of her best known novels attest to it: *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, *The Lost Prince*, *A Little Princess*. In America, Hodgson Burnett's adopted country, the wealth, influence and celebrity which flowed from her success as a writer gave her status and prominence. It is these she flaunts to win back her politically incorrect 'socialist' son. Eminence in England demands more than riches; it requires a title, as Hodgson Burnett emphasises in her fiction. This being so, "Dearest," Hodgson Burnett's pet name given to her by her sons, is easily transformed into her self-confessed social ideal, "duchess." (It is a role, as we have seen, mirrored in Hodgson Burnett's purchase and administration of her English estate.) There is an echo of the maternal love which her sons' sobriquet salutes in the relationship between the rural poor, reduced to the status of children, and their various patrons with whom the author identifies. Peasants in her writing display a need that, she implies, only a matriarchal figure, in effect herself, can meet. The relationship between the lady bountiful and the peasant has the supreme advantage of permanence, unlike her sons' dependency. By transforming the urban working class into rodents and the rural poor into children, reality, which Thwaite maintains "shook" Hodgson Burnett "cruelly," need not be faced. (9) With the scuttling of rats into their holes, she in effect obviates the need to address the social unrest she fears, and through her aristocratic, saintly and maternal characters and their relationships with the grateful

needy, she prolongs her caring role with her two sons.

Hodgson Burnett's fiction for children portrays poor adults as castrated; either their needs, as perceived by the author, are met by their social superiors, or they are denounced as verminous and ignored. The growing independence of her children could only be dealt with by separation, and, thereby, by denial. To confront the truth would necessitate the recognition of her sons' autonomy, and therefore her diminishing importance in their lives. Like the effects of the social demotion she dreaded, she would be reduced from a position of pre-eminence to one of much less significance and centrality. Her offspring's maturity, like the industrial revolution for the urban working class, results in a rejection of what Sara Crew calls "largess." (10) Both parties demand, instead of benevolence or charity, the right to determine their own destinies. The acceptance of that right would lead to a diminution not only of Hodgson Burnett's power but also of the power of so many of her fictional characters who fill the role of patron or provider to the poor. With the social and financial insecurities inherited from her childhood, she chooses to ignore contemporary realities, enjoining us all to join in her romanticism, to "keep your pink lamps lighted." (11) In the kind glow of those lanterns she could be forever loved, needed and revered.

Having completed our examination of the way Molesworth, Ewing, Hocking and Hodgson Burnett portrayed the working classes, we shall now consider the constraints placed on nineteenth century children's authors when depicting the poor for a young middle class readership.

Historically, writing for children has always been linked to didacticism. In the nineteenth century, in addition to instilling into child readers what Nicholas Tucker calls "the conventional opinions of the middle classes," (12) there was the suppression of that which was seen to contravene those opinions. The censorship of material for children has a long history. Writing of tales for the young, Plato states that in his ideal republic he would, "establish a censorship over writing of such stories, and shall desire mothers and nurses to tell only authorised fiction, moulding the minds of the young." (13) In an age that bowdlerised Shakespeare, it is perhaps not surprising that Mrs Markham's textbooks for middle class children, *History of England* and *History of France*, published in the early decades of the nineteenth century, were written "with the most unpleasant parts left out, for Mrs. Markham did not think it right to show children the worst side of the villains of history if it were possible to avoid doing so." (14) Writing in the *Foreign Quarterly Review* of 1833, Carlyle, castigating contemporary novelists, thought it

reasonable to prophesy that this exceeding great multitude of Novel-writers and suchlike, must, in a new generation, gradually do one of two things; either retire into nurseries and work for children, minors and semi-fatuous persons of both sexes; or else, what were far better, sweep the Novel-fabric into the dust-cart, and betake them with such faculty as they have to understand and record *what is true*. (15)

Truth, in Carlyle's usage, would seem to imply the depiction of social reality; Carlyle signifies its importance by his use of italics. Yet, replying to Gaskell's present of her newly published novel, *Mary Barton*, Carlyle

writes, "I gratefully accept it as a real contribution (about the first real one) towards developing a huge subject, which has lain dumb too long, and really ought to speak for itself." (16) While Carlyle's basic objection to the fiction of the 1830s and before is its failure to depict what is "real," he sees this transgression, this failure to reflect social truths, as acceptable in, and necessary to, writing for children.

We have, then, a historically established and accepted literary convention which excises "what is true," that which mirrors reality, from reading material for children. This is consistent with the sheltered and private nature of the childhoods of middle class children who largely made up the readership of nineteenth century children's fiction. In contrast to their working class equivalents who worked, played and, as we saw in Chapter 2, often lived in the public sphere, they were largely confined to the nursery. Literature for children, then, in addition to instilling social and religious values, had the function of protecting the young from reality, or at least that reality the adult world considered in some way dangerous. As has been indicated in discussing the works of the four selected authors, Molesworth portrays the poor as largely the manifestation of the fears and prejudices of the middle classes. To offer them prominence would suggest their relevance as human beings to a young middle class readership, something denied by much of her writing for children. Hocking, who ostensibly portrays inner-city working class life, appears to do so selectively. Although he depicts the alcoholism that bedevilled many working people, he largely ignores the working men's positive qualities, such attributes that enabled them, for instance, to establish self-help organisations for themselves and their community. Nor does he depict the often terrible working conditions

endured by many in the communities of which he writes. The deprivation and sometimes fatally insanitary living conditions experienced by large numbers of the rural poor feature briefly in Hodgson Burnett's writing for children. The possible impact these vignettes may have had on readers is largely negated by either the romanticism that surrounds the revelations or by their use as plot devices. While in Ewing's fiction we do encounter the domestic, working, aesthetic and moral lives of the working classes, as is indicated above, the author largely restricts her portrayal of the impoverished to the rural poor. Her forays into the urban are, by comparison, unconvincing, devoid of detail and insight, seemingly informed, not by first-hand knowledge, but merely by stereotypical notions surrounding working class urban youth, albeit expressed, at least in part, with compassion. Given, then, that children's authors in the latter half of the nineteenth century came almost exclusively from middle class backgrounds, and consequently tended to embrace similar values to those espoused by the wider middle classes, the world they portrayed for their young readership tended to be a limited one.

Even in adult fiction the depiction of a world beyond middle class experience was not without controversy. The reception of *Mary Barton*, like that of other so-called industrial novels of the period, did not always reflect Carlyle's enthusiasm. Predictably, many of the middle class were "outraged and mortified" (17) by Gaskell's representation of them. Even industrial novels which purport to portray a child's experiences were written for adults rather than children. Charlotte Elizabeth in her book *Helen Fleetwood*, published in 1840, while envisaging the possibility of "a youthful reader" reading her work, did not see the

young as the target audience. (18) Like *Mary Barton*, *Helen Fleetwood* was written, partly at least, to educate and effect change and so aimed at a more powerful audience than that which children could provide. It is not, however, merely middle class children's lack of political leverage which debars them from the industrial novels but the subject matter itself, with its close association with the working classes. While tracts whose subject matter included slavery and the work of missionaries were available to children before the 1800s, working children were not seen as fit subjects for children's fiction until 1860. Despite the well publicised agitation on their behalf and the parliamentary activity that it engendered, they were, as discussed in Chapter 2, still perceived as objects, not of sympathy, but of shame. (19) It is an impression directly related to the association in the public mind of immorality with factories, and especially northern cotton mills, as we saw in Chapter 3. (20) In *Helen Fleetwood* a working class character, speaking of female cotton operatives, opines, "not a girl in fifty keeps her character clear; and to be sure there isn't a small tradesman's wife would not think herself disgraced to take a factory girl for a servant." (21)

Given the association of cities and towns and the industries they spawn with spiritual and moral degeneration, their portrayal could not have been sanctioned for children's fiction in an age that romanticised the young, seeing middle and upper class children as the embodiment of innocence and purity. These qualities would be destroyed if exposed to defilement by the urban working classes, if only in fiction. It is a fear reflected in the migration of the middle classes to suburbs when transportation made commuting to work possible. In this climate, then, the publication of a juvenile equivalent of the industrial novel was

impossible. Indeed, fictional working class characters who are exceptional enough to attain social elevation, such as Hodgson Burnett's Joan Lowry, Ewing's Master Swift and Hocking's young protagonists, all move from the industrial North of England. As we saw in Molesworth's *Farthings*, Tony's middle class status is confirmed only when he leaves Liverpool for the South of England. The notion that the region is incompatible with middle class sensibilities, suggested by the migration of such characters, is wonderfully captured by Molesworth. In *The Boys and I* the young middle class narrator recalls a conversation she and her two brothers had with their working class nurse who spoke of her brothers. "Some were "up in the north," she said. We didn't know what that meant - afterwards Tom said he thought it meant Iceland, and Racey thought it meant the moon." (22) The strangeness of the area to middle class experience is suggested by the use of quotation marks, while its social alienation is captured in its association with another planet. The North of England is depicted as the sphere of the urban working classes. Middle class characters who live there do so temporarily and only when they are forced to by financial constraints, as in Molesworth's *The Carved Lions* and *Little Miss Peggy*. The working classes and the middle classes, the reader must deduce, are worlds apart.

It was not until thirty-three years after the publication of one of the earliest industrial novels, Frances Trollope's *Michael Armstrong, Factory Boy*, in 1839, that one of the very first novels for middle class children set in a working class home, Ewing's *Jan of the Windmill*, was published. The lapse of time suggests, amongst other factors, the reluctance of children's authors to feature the working class as

prominent characters. Significantly, however, the home was a rural one, and the eponymous protagonist, as we saw in Chapter 4, while ostensibly working class, had middle class parents. The generalised nature of the London slum passages in the book, discussed above, mirrors the perceived necessity to suggest, rather than describe for her young readership, what is seen as juvenile immorality. Yet Ewing's radical and original portrayal of the poor in the realms of nineteenth century children's literature, as argued above, is as radical a step as would have been the portrayal of the urban poor, arguing, as it implicitly does, against accepted Malthusian concepts.

Hocking's evangelical novels for children, as we saw in Chapter 5, were created not as general fiction, but as religiously didactic works which found a market largely, but not exclusively, through the reward system of Sunday Schools, institutions which have a vested interest in proselytising and therefore in the distribution of material which would, it was envisaged, aid them in this task. Given this, the audience for Hocking's fiction would have consisted of more working class children than that of the other chosen authors. This would render the depiction of the urban working class and the urban environment more acceptable than would otherwise be the case. Not unusual in evangelical fiction for children, the depiction of the urban in Hocking's novels was, in a sense, confronting the evil which had to be expunged in order that good might flourish, and as such was consistent with middle class views.

At a time when England changed from being a largely rural country to being predominantly urban, the middle class readership of the four

authors selected for discussion here had portrayed for them a largely rural world. Even those novels with an urban setting had rural elements. Industrialisation, where reflected at all, was only discussed in terms of its pollution or its chimneys. Although in the work of Hocking there appear themes central to contemporary concerns such as poverty, social elevation, urbanisation and alcoholism, the theme of his novels is religious, not social. Similarly with the three women novelists, social concerns, although present in their work, are not central to it. In the varied expression of these concerns, and in the differing authorial attitudes to the poor, though, the reader discerns both nineteenth century attitudes and preoccupations, the lack of consensus mirroring society's ambivalent attitudes to the poor, as reflected in Chapter 1.

This thesis has demonstrated that the children's fiction of Molesworth, Ewing, Hocking and Hodgson Burnett is influenced by and seeks to influence perceptions of the poor and particularly the urban poor. Middle class fears of revolution can be discerned in both Molesworth's and Hodgson Burnett's novels for children. Common to all the authors is fear of the urban working classes, and importantly, fear of the industrial North of England. The authors' apprehensions concern the perceived ability of the urban environment and the poor who inhabit it to corrupt the morals of middle class children, the very children who constitute the readership of the named authors. This authorial distrust and antagonism towards cities and city-dwellers was to last throughout the nineteenth century and beyond.

It is an attitude that is only resolved much later when writers from a working class background begin to write for children. As examples

could be quoted, among many others, the early children's novels of John Rowe Townsend, the work of Janni Howker and the three novels to date of David Almond. (23) All three novelists, like the four authors discussed in this thesis, have strong links with the North of England. Only in writing such as theirs are the urban poor portrayed with a comparable psychological depth to Ewing's rural poor. It is only after that popular cultural revolution that has come to be known as 'the sixties' that working class child readers have had access to a growing body of literature written by authors from their own class and giving expression to the lives of those with whom they can identify. It is a telling coincidence that Ewing began to publish her work in 1861, while exactly one hundred years later, in 1961, Townsend's *Gumble's Yard* was published. The novel was "acclaimed for its depiction of life in deprived inner cities." (24) Gamble maintains that *Gumble's Yard* ushered in "a new era" in children's literature in which "the middle class family was no longer the dominant representation." (25) It had taken precisely one hundred years from Ewing's insightful portrayal of the rural poor for society to sanction the lives of the urban working classes as suitable subject matter for children's reading.

Notes

- (1) Hocking, Silas *Her Benny*. p.120
- (2) Ewing, Mrs *The Story of a Short Life*. p. 32
- (3) Molesworth, Mrs *Little Miss Peggy*. p. 37
- (4) Warner, Marina, *No Go The Bogeyman - Scaring, Lulling and Making Mock*. p. 66
- (5) Rowbotham, Judith *Good Girls Make Good Wives*. p. 72
- (6) Marx, Karl and Engels, Friedrich *The Communist Manifesto*. p. 120
- (7) Marx, Karl and Engels, Friedrich *The Communist Manifesto*. p. 62
- (8) Freud, Sigmund *On Sexuality*. p. 273
- (9) Thwaite, Ann *Waiting for the Party*. p. 247
- (10) Hodgson Burnett, *A Little Princess*. p. 48
- (11) Thwaite, *Waiting for the Party*. p. 226
- (12) Tucker, Nicholas *The Child and the Book*. p. 192
- (13) Tucker, Nicholas *The Child and the Book*. p. 192
- (14) Cruse, Amy *The Victorians and Their Books*. pp. 287/8
- (15) Tillotson, Kathleen *Novels of the Eighteen Forties*. p. 155
- (16) Uglow, Jenny *Elizabeth Gaskell*. p. 217
- (17) Uglow, Jenny *Elizabeth Gaskell* p. 214
- (18) Charlotte Elizabeth *Helen Fleetwood*. p. 52
- (19) Cutt, Margaret Nancy *Ministering Angels*. p. 32
- (20) Guest, Harriet *The Regional Novel in Britain and Ireland 1800-1990* "The Deep Romance of Manchester: Gaskell's *Mary Barton*." p. 90
- (21) Charlotte Elizabeth *Helen Fleetwood*. p. 90

(22) Molesworth, Mrs *The Boys and I* . p. 89

(23) Amongst such novels are -

Townsend, John Rowe (1961) *Gumble's Yard*. (1963) *Hell's Edge*.
(1965) *Widdershins Crescent*. (1969) *The Intruder*.

Howker, Janni (1984) *Badger on the Barge*. (1985) *The Nature of the Beast*. (1986) *Isaac Champion*.

Almond, David (1998) *Skellig*. (2000) *Heaven Eyes*. (2001) *Secret Heart*.

(24) Tucker, Nicholas and Gamble, Nikki (eds.) *Family Fictions*.

Gamble, Nikki, "Introduction: Changing Families." p. 23

(25) Gamble, Nikki, "Introduction: Changing Families." p. 26

Bibliography

Books

- Ackroyd, Peter (1996) *Blake*. London: Minerva (f.p. 1995)
- Ackworth, John (n.d.) *Clog Shop Chronicles*. (Place of publication not cited): Charles H. Kelly
- Adelman, Paul (1986) *Victorian Radicalism - The Middle-class Experience 1830-1914*. London: Longman (f.p. 1984)
- Alexander, Mrs. (n.d.) *Hymns for Children*. London: Novello
- (n.d.) *Hymns for Little Children*. London: Joseph Masters (f.p. 1848)
 - (1880) *Moral Songs*. London: Joseph Masters
- Alderson, Brian W. (1967) *Three Centuries of Children's Books In Europe*. London: Oxford University Press
- Allen, Rick (1998) *The Moving Pageant - A Literary Sourcebook on London Street-Life. 1700-1914*. London: Routledge
- Almond, David (1998) *Skellig*. London: Hodder
- (2000) *Heaven Eyes*. London: Hodder
 - (2001) *Secret Heart*. London: Hodder
- A.L.O.E. (1874) *Upwards and Downwards and Other Stories*. London: Nelson
- (1860)) *Pride and His Passion*. London: Nelson
- Anderson, Michael (1971) *Family Stucture in Nineteenth Century Lancashire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Ang, Susan (2000) *The Widening World of Children's Literature*. London: Macmillan
- Aries, Philippe (1996) *Centuries of Childhood*. London: Pimlico (f.p. 1960)

- Aspin, Chris (1995) *The First Industrial Society: Lancashire 1750-1850*. Preston: Carnegie Publishing (f.p. 1969)
- Avery, Gillian (1961) *Mrs Ewing*. London: Bodley Head
- (1965) *Nineteenth Century Children - Heroes and Heroines in English Children's Stories 1780-1900*. London: Hodder and Stoughton
 - (1971) *Victorian People - In Life and Literature*. London: Collins (f.p. 1970)
 - (1974) *The Echoing Green - Memories of Regency and Victorian Youth*. London: Collins
 - (1975) *Childhood's Pattern*. Leicester: Hodder and Stoughton
- Avery, Gillian and Reynolds, Kimberley (2000) *Representations of Childhood Death*. Basingstoke: Macmillan
- Axon, William E.A. (n.d.) *A Lancashire Treasury - Stories and Folk-tales of Old Lancashire*. Bolton: Aurora Publishing
- Banks, Mrs. G. Linnaeus (1991) *The Manchester Man*. Manchester: E.J. Morten
- Barbault, Mrs (1864) *Hymns in Prose for Children*. London: John Murphy
- Barty-King, Hugh (1991) *The Worst Poverty - A History of Debt and Debtors*. Stroud: Sutton Publishing Ltd
- Battiscombe, Georgina and Laski, Marghanita (1965) *A Chaplet for Charlotte Yonge*. London: The Cresset Press
- Beever, John (1996) *A History of Oldham Churches*. (Place of publication not cited): Neil Richardson
- Benson, John (1989) *The Working Class in Britain 1850-1939*. London: Longman

- Bentham, Jeremy (2000) *Selected Writings on Utilitarianism*. Ware: Wordsworth Classics (f.p. 1780 onwards)
- Best, Geoffrey (1998) *Mid-Victorian Britain 1851-75*. London: Fontana (f.p. 1969)
- Booth, General (1890) *In Darkest England and The Way Out*. London: International Headquarters of the Salvation Army
- Bowen, Desmond (1968) *The Idea of the Victorian Church - A Study of the Church of England 1833-1889*. London: McGill University Press
- Bratton, J.S. (1981) *The Impact of Victorian Children's Fiction*. London: Croom Helm
- Briggs, Asa (1967) *Victorian People*. Harmondsworth: Penguin (f.p. 1954)
- (1990) *Victorian Cities*. Harmondsworth: Penguin (f.p. 1963)
- Briggs, Julia "Women Writers and Writing for Children: From Sarah Fielding to E. Nesbit" in *Children and Their Books*, ed. Gillian Avery and Julia Briggs (1989) Oxford: Clarendon Press
- Bronte, Charlotte (1972) *Jane Eyre*. Harmondsworth: Penguin (f.p. 1847)
- Bronte, Emily *Wuthering Heights*. New York: Norton (f.p. 1847)
- Bullen, J.D. (ed.) (1997) *Writing and Victorianism*. London: Longman
- Bullock, Rev. Charles (ed.) (1886) *Home Words for Heart and Hearth*. London: Home Words Publishing Office
- Burnett, Frances Hodgson (1879) *Haworth's*. New York: Charles Scibner's Sons

- (1881) *A Fair Barbarian*. London: Warne
- (1888) *Editha's Burglar*. London: Warne
- (1892) *Children I Have Known and Giovanni and the Other*. London: J.R.Osgood, McIlvaine
- (1895) *Two Little Pilgrims' Progress*.
London: Warne
- (1925) *Sara Crew, Little Saint Elizabeth and Other Stories*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons
- (1966) *Little Lord Fauntleroy*. London:
Dent (f.p. 1886)
- (1969) *Surly Tim and Other Stories*. New
York: Books for Libraries Press (f. p. 1877)
- (1971) *The Lost Prince*. Harmondsworth: Puffi
(f.p.1915)
- (1973) *The Spring Cleaning*. London: Tom
Stacey (f.p. 1908)
- (1974) *The One I Knew the Best of All*. London:
Warne (f.p. 1893)
- (1976) *Racketty-Packetty House*. London:Evans
(f.p.1906)
- (1992) *A Little Princess*. London: Hodder and
Stoughton (f.p.1905)
- (1993) *The Land of the Blue Flower*. Tiburon:
H.J. Kramer Inc/Starseed Press (f.p.1909)
- (1994) *The Secret Garden*. London: Hodder and
Stoughton (f.p.1911)
- (1997) *That Lass O' Lowrie's*. Stroud:Sutton
Publishing (f.p. 1877)

- (n.d.) *The Hunchback Zia*. London: St. Hugh's Press
- Burnett, John (1982) *Destiny Obscure*. London: Allan Lane
- (1994) *Useful Toil*. London: Routledge (f.p. 1974)
- Burnett, Vivian (1927) *The Romantick Lady*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons
- Carlyle, Thomas (n.d.) *English and Other Miscellanies*. London: Dent (f.p. 1832 onwards)
- Carpenter, Humphrey (1985) *Secret Gardens - A Study of the Golden Age of Children's Literature*. London: Allen and Unwin
- Carpenter, Humphrey and Prichard, Mari (1991) *The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (f.p. 1984)
- Carroll, Lewis (n.d.) *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. London: Dean and Sons Ltd. (f.p. 1865)
- Cate, Dick (1977) "Growing Outward into Life - Frances Hodgson Burnett and the Doll." in *The Cool Web - The Pattern of Children's Reading*. (ed.) Meek, Margaret and Warlow, Aidan et al. London: The Bodley Head
- Champion, Annie Beatrice (1989) *Pettie - Memories of a Victorian Nursery*. (ed. by Thornton, Avis) Milnthorpe: Cicerone Press
- Charlesworth, Maria Louisa (1884) *Ministering Children*. London: Seely, Jackson and Halliday (f.p. 1854)
- 'Charlotte Elizabeth': see Tonna
- Chesney, Kellow (1991) *The Victorian Underworld*. Harmondsworth: Penguin (f.p. 1970)

- Chisholm, Louey (ed.) (1928) *The Golden Staircase*. London: Nelson
- Church Hymnal* (1960) Dublin: Association for Promoting Christian Knowledge
- Clynes, J.R. (1937) *Memoirs - 1869-1924*. London: Hutchinson
- Cook, Tim (ed.) (1995) *The Wordsworth Book of Nineteenth Century Verse*. Ware: Wordsworth Editions Ltd
- Coveney, Peter (1967) *The Image of Childhood*. Harmondsworth: Penguin
- Cruse, Amy (1962) *The Victorians and Their Books*. London: Allen and Unwin (f.p. 1935)
- Cunningham, Hugh (1991) *The Children of the Poor - Representations of Childhood since the Seventeenth Century*. Oxford: Blackwell
- (1995) *Children and Childhood in Western Society since 1500*. London: Longman
- Cutt, Margaret Nancy (1974) *Mrs Sherwood and Her Books for Children*. London: Oxford University Press
- (1979) *Ministering Angels - A Study of Nineteenth Century Writing for Children*. Herts., England: Five Owl Press
- Darton, F.J. Harvey (1966) *Children's Books in England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Darwin, Charles (1990) *The Origin of Species and The Descent of Man*. Chicago: The University of Chicago (f.p. 1859 and 1871)
- Darwin, Francis (1995) *The Life of Charles Darwin*. Twickenham: Senate (f.p. 1902)

- Davenport, Kathlyn (1985) *Some Oldham Times*. (Place of publication not cited): Neil Richardson
- Davin, Anna (1996) *Growing Up Poor: Home, School and Street in London: 1870-1914*. London: Rivers Oram Press
- de Santa Ana, Julio (1977) *Good News of the Poor*. World Council of Churches
- de Vries, Leonard (1967) *Little Wide-Awake*. London: Arthur Barker
- Demers, Patricia and Moyles, Gordon (1982) *From Instruction to Delight - An Anthology of Children's Literature to 1850*. Toronto: Oxford University Press
- Dempsey, Mike (1978) *Bubbles - Early Advertising Art From A. & F. Pears Ltd.* (Place of publication not cited): Fontana
- Dickens, Charles (1975) *Oliver Twist*. London: Dent (f.p. 1838)
- (1974) *Dombey and Son*. Harmondsworth: Penguin (f.p. 1848)
 - (1986) *The Old Curiosity Shop*. Harmondsworth: Penguin (f.p. 1841)
 - (1995) *Holiday Romance and Other Writings for Children*. London: J.M. Dent (f.p. 1868)
 - (n.d.) *David Copperfield*. London: Nelson (f.p. 1849)
- Drotner, Kirsten (1988) *English Children and their Magazines 1751-1945*. London: Yale University Press
- Dusinberre, Juliet (1987) *Alice to the Lighthouse: Children's Books and Radical Experiments in Art*. London: Macmillan

- Dyos, H.J. and Aldcroft, D.H. (1969) *British Transport - An Economic Survey from the Seventeenth Century to the Twentieth*. Harmondsworth: Pelican
- Dyos, H.J. and Wolff, Michael (1973) *The Victorian City - Images and Reality Vol. 2*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul
- Edsall, Nicholas C. (1971) *The Anti-Poor Law Movement 1834-44*. Manchester: Manchester University Press
- Edwards, George (1992) *From Crow-Scaring to Westminster*. London: Labour Publishing Company Ltd.
- Eliot, George (1996) *Adam Bede*. Harmondsworth: Penguin (f.p.1859)
- (1996) *Silas Marner*. London: Dent (f.p. 1861)
- Ellis, Alec (1963) *A History of Children's Reading and Literature*. London: Pergamon
- Engels, Friedrich (1987) *The Conditions of the Working Class in England*. Harmondsworth: Penguin (f.p. 1845)
- Ermath, Elizabeth Deeds (1997) *The English Novel in History 1840-1895*. London: Routledge
- Ewing, Mrs (1877) *A Great Emergency and Other Tales*. London: SPCK (f.p. 1874)
- (1888) *Lob Lie-By-The-Fire or The Luck of Lingborough and Other Tales*. London: Bell (f.p.1873)
 - (1889) *A Flat Iron for a Farthing*. London: Bell (f.p. 1970)
 - (1894) *Jan of the Windmill*. London: Bell (f.p. 1873)

- *We and the World.* (1910) London: Bell
(f.p.1877/9)
 - (1925) *Six to Sixteen.* London: Bell (f.p. 1875)
 - (1933) *The Land of Lost Toys and Amelia and the
Dwarfs.* London: Nelson (f.p. 1869/70)
 - (1954) *The Brownies and Other Stories.* London:
Dent (f.p. 1871)
 - (n.d.) *Mrs Overtheway's Remembrances and
Other Tales.* London: Dent (f.p. 1861)
 - (n.d.) *The Story of a Short Life.* London: SPCK
(f.p. 1882)
 - (n.d.) *Mary's Meadow and Other Tales of Fields
and Flowers.* London: SPCK (f.p.1883)
 - (n.d.) *Jackanapes and Other Stories.* London:
Dent (f.p.1879)
 - (n.d.) *Jackanapes and Other Tales.* London:
SPCK (f.p.1879)
 - (n.d.) *Dandelion Clocks and Other Tales.*
London: SPCK (f.p. 1876)
 - (n.d.) *Miscellanea.* London: SPCK
- Faber, Richard (1971) *Proper Stations - Class in Victorian
Fiction.* London: Faber and Faber
- Farrar, F.W. (n.d.) *Eric or Little by Little - A Tale of Roslyn
School.* London: Partridge (f.p. 1858)
- Fisher, Trevor (1997) *Prostitution and the Victorians.* Stroud:
Sutton Publishing Ltd.
- Flinn, M.W. (1966) *Origins of the Industrial Revolution.* London:
Longman

- Freud, Sigmund (1991) *On Sexuality*. Harmondsworth: Penguin (f.p. 1905)
- Gash, Norman (1979) *Aristocracy and People - Britain 1815-1865*. London: Arnold
- Gaskell, Elizabeth (1970) *North and South*. Harmondsworth: Penguin (f.p.1854/5)
- (1979) *Mary Barton*. Harmondsworth: Penguin (f.p.1848)
- Gathorne-Hardy, Jonathan (1973) *The Rise and Fall of the British Nanny*. Newton Abbot: Victorian (& Modern History) Book Club
- Gatty, Horatia K.F. (1887) *Juliana Horatia Ewing and Her Books*. London: SPCK
- Gilbert, Sandra M. and Gubar, Susan (2000) *The Madwoman in the Attic - The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination*. London: Yale University Press
- Gillis, John R. (1997) *A World of their Own Making - A History of Myth and Ritual in Family Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Gilmour, Robin (1993) *The Victorian Period -The Intellectual and Cultural Context of English Literature 1830-1890*. London: Longman
- Golby, J.M. (ed.) (1986) *Culture and Society in Britain 1850-1890*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Golden Bells - Hymns of Our Children*. (nd) (Place of publication not cited.): Children's Special Service Mission
- Goldthwaite, John (1996) *The Natural History of Make-Believe - A Guide to the Principal Works of Britain, Europe, and America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

- Goodson, Ivor F. and Bell, Stephen J. (ed.) (1984) *Defining the Curriculum - Histories and Ethnographies*. London: Falmer Press
- Gorham, Deborah (1982) *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal*. London: Croom Helm
- Green, Roger Lancelyn (1969) *Tellers of Tales*. London: Kaye and Ward Ltd.
- Greer, Germaine (1991) *The Change*. London: Faber and Faber
- Griswold, Jerry (1992) *Audacious Kids*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Hammond, J.L. and Barbara (1925) *Lord Shaftesbury*. London: Constable
- (1995) *The Town Labourer 1760-1832 - The New Civilisation*. Stroud: Alan Sutton Publishing Ltd. (f.p. 1917)
- (1995) *The Skilled Labourer 1760-1832*. Stroud: Alan Sutton Publishing Ltd. (f.p. 1919)
- Hardy, Thomas (1975) *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. London: Macmillan (f.p. 1891)
- Hartwell, R.M. (1971) *The Industrial Revolution and Economic Growth*. London: Methuen.
- Hattersley, Roy (1999) *Blood and Fire - William and Catherine Booth and Their Salvation Army*. London: Little, Brown and Company
- Haynes, Ian (1993) *Dukinfield Cotton Mills*. (Place of publication not cited.): Neil Richardson

- Hayter, Alethea (1996) *Charlotte Yonge*. Plymouth: Northcote House
- Hempton, David (1996) *Religion and Political Culture in Britain and Ireland*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Higonnet, Anne (1998) *Pictures of Innocence: The History and Crisis of Ideal Childhood*. New York: Thames and Hudson
- Hilton, Boyd (1988) *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought 1795-1865*. London: Clarendon Press
- Hilton, Mary, Styles, Morag and Watson, Victor (ed) (1997) *Opening the Nursery Door*. London: Routledge
- Himmelfarb, Gertrude (1985) *The Idea of Poverty - England in the Early Industrial Age*. London: Faber and Faber (f.p. 1984)
- Historical Tales for Young Protestants*. (nd) London: The Religious Tract Society
- Hoare, Rev. E.N. (1885) *Heroism in Humble Life; The Story of Ben Prichard and Ben Champion. A Temperance Tale*. London: Nelson
- Hocking, Silas (1894) *Sweethearts Yet..* London: Warne
- (1895) *Rex Raynor, Artist*. London: Warne
 - (1899) *The Strange Adventures of Israel Pendray*. London: Warne
 - (1923) *My Book of Memory*. London: Cassell
 - (n.d.) *Her Benny*. Liverpool: Book Clearance Centre (f.p.1880)
 - (n.d.) *Cricket..* Firwood:Northern Publishing Services (f.p.1886)

- (n.d.) *Chips*.. Manchester: Memories (f.p. 1894)
- (n.d.) *God's Outcast*. London: Warne
- (n.d.) *Dick's Fairy and Other Stories*. London:

Warne

Holland, Merlin and Hart-Davis, Rupert (ed.) (2000) *The Complete Letters of Oscar Wilde*. London: Fourth Estate

Hollingworth, Brian (ed.) (1977) *Songs of the People - Lancashire Dialect Poetry of the Industrial Revolution*. Manchester: Manchester University Press

Hood, Thomas (1982) *Hood Winked - Poems by Thomas Hood*. London: Chatto and Windus

Horn, Pamela (1995) *Children's Work and Welfare. 1780-1890*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

- (1995) *Labouring Life in the Victorian Countryside*. Stroud: Sutton Publishing Ltd

- (1997) *The Victorian Town Child*. Stroud: Sutton Publishing Ltd

Howker, Janni (1984) *Badger on the Barge*. London: Julia MacRae

- (1985) *The Nature of the Beast*. London: Julia MacRae
- (1986) *Isaac Campion*. London: Julia MacRae

Hughes, Thomas (1994) *Tom Brown's Schooldays*.

Harmondsworth: Puffin (f.p. 1857)

Hudson, Derek (1974) *Munby - Man of two Worlds - The Life and Diaries of Arthur J. Munby*. London: Abacus (f.p. 1972)

Humphries, Stephen (1981) *Hooligans or Rebels? An Oral History of Working-Class Childhood and Youth 1889-1939*.

Oxford: Blackwell

- Hunt, Peter (ed.) (1990) *Children's Literature - The Development of Criticism*. London: Routledge
- (1994) *An Introduction to Children's Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
 - (ed.) (1995) *Children's Literature - An Illustrated History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
 - (ed.) (2001) *Children's Literature - An Anthology 1801-1902*. Oxford: Blackwell
- Hurt, J.S. (1979) *Elementary Schooling and the Working Classes 1860-1918*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul
- Inglis, K.S. (1963) *Churches and the Working Class in Victorian England*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul
- Jay, Elizabeth (1979) *The Religion of the Heart..* Oxford: Clarendon Press
- Jones, M.G. (1952) *Hannah More*. London: Cambridge University Press
- Jones, Steve (1997) *Manchester: The Sinister Side*. Nottingham: Wicked Publications
- Keynes, Randal (200) *Annie's Box*. London: Harper Collins
- Kidd, Alan (1999) *State, Society and the Poor in Nineteenth-Century England*. London: Macmillan
- Kingsley, Charles (1889) *Poems*. London: Macmillan
- (1902) *Madam How and Lady Why or First Lessons in Earth Lore for Children*. London: Macmillan
 - (1984) *The Water Babies*. Harmondsworth: Puffin (f.p. 1869)
 - (1994) *Yeast*. Dover: Sutton Publishing (f.p. 1848)

- Kingsley, Mrs. (1885) *Charles Kingsley: His Letters and Memories of his Life*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench and Co.
- Klaus, H. Gustav and Knight, Stephen (ed.) (2000) *British Industrial Fictions*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press
- Knoepfmacher, U.C. (1998) *Ventures into Childhood*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- Lamb, Charles and Mary (n.d.) *Mrs Leicester's School or The History of Several Young Ladies Related by Themselves*. London: Wells, Gardner, Darton and Co.
- Laqueur, Thomas Walter (1976) *Religion and Responsibility - Sunday School and the Working Class*. London: Yale University Press
- Laski, Marghanita (1950) *Mrs Ewing, Mrs Molesworth and Mrs Hodgson Burnett*. London: Arthur Baker
- Leavis, Q.D. (1989) *Collected Essays Vol. 3. The Novels of Religious Controversy*. (ed. by G. Singh) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Lerner, Laurence (ed.) (1978) *The Victorians*. London: Methuen
- Lewis, Naomi (ed.) (2000) *Rocking Horse Land and Other Classic Tales of Dolls and Toys*. London: Walker
- Lurie, Alison (1990) *Don't Tell the Grown-Ups*. London: Bloomsbury
- Mallet, Hugh (1981) *Coal, Cotton and Canals - Three Studies in Local Canal History*. (Place of publication not cited.) Neil Richardson
- MacDonald, George (1979) *At the Back of the North Wind, The Princess and the Goblin, and The Princess and Curdie*. London: Octopus Books (f.p. 1870, 1871 and 1882 respectively)

- (1991) *Sir Gibbie*. Whitehorn, California:
Johannesen
- Malthus, Thomas, Robert (1966) *First Essay on Population*.
London: Macmillan (f.p.1798)
- Marcus, Steven (1970) *The Other Victorians: A Study of
Seuality and Pornography in Mid-Nineteenth Century*. London:
Book Club Associates (f.p. 1964)
- Marsden, Gordon (ed.) (1997) *Victorian Values - Personalities
and Perspectives in Nineteenth-Century Society*. London:
Longman (f.p. 1990)
- Marshall, Emma (n.d) *Women Novelists of Queen Victoria's
Reign*
- Matheson, Brenda Dane (n.d.) *The Tender Years - Lewis
Carroll - Around the North*. Darlington: Nordales (Five-
Counties) Publications
- Marx, Karl, and Friedrich, Engels (1982) *The Communist
Manifesto*. Harmondsworth: Pelican (f.p. translation 1888)
- Maxwell, Christabel (1949) *Mrs Gatty and Mrs Ewing*. London:
Constable
- Mayhew, Henry (1985) *London Labour and the London Poor*.
Harmondsworth: Penguin (f.p. 1861-2)
- McGavran, Jr. James Holt (1991) *Romanticism and Children's
Literature in Nineteenth-Century England*. Georgia, U.S.A.:
University of Georgia Press
- McGillis, Roderick (1992) *For the Childlike*. London: The
Children's Literature Association and The Scarecrow Press
- McLeod, Hugh (1984) *Religion and the Working Class in
Nineteenth Century Britain*. London: Macmillan

Meigs, Cornelia, Anne Thaxter Eaton et al (ed.) (1969) *A Critical History of Children's Literature - A Survey of Children's Books in English*. London: Macmillan (f.p. 1953)

Millet, Freda (1989) *Childhood in Oldham 1890-1920*. Oldham: Oldham Leisure Services

Molesworth, Mrs. (1882) *Hoodie*. London: Chambers

- (1892) *The Girls and I*. London: Macmillan

- (1892) *An Enchanted Garden*. London:

T. Fisher Unwin

- (1892) *Farthings*. London: Well, Gardner,

Denton & Co.

- (1892) *The Man with Pan Pipes and Other*

Stories. London: S.P.C.K.

- (1892) *Stories of the Saints*. London: Green

and Co.

- (1894) *The Rectory Children*. London: Macmillan

- (1896) *Little Miss Peggy*. London: Macmillan

- (1897) *The Adventures of Herr Baby*. London:

Macmillan (f.p. 1881)

- (1899) *Two Little Waifs*. London: Macmillan

- (1901) *The Wood-pigeons and Mary*. London:

Macmillan

- (1903) *The Girls and I*. London: Macmillan (f.p.

1892)

- (1905) *Tell me a Story*. London: Macmillan (f.p.

1875)

- (1920) *Carrots - Just a Little Boy*. London: The

Westminster Press (f.p. 1876)

- (1957) *The Tapestry Room*. London: Harvill Press (f.p.1879)
- (1964) *The Carved Lions*. London: Dent (f.p.1895)
- (1974) *The Cuckoo Clock*. London: Dent (f.p. 1877)
- (1981) *Christmas Tree Land*. London: Macmillan (f.p.1884)
- (n.d.) *The Boys and I*. London: Chambers
- Monk, William Henry (1875) *Hymns Ancient and Modern*. London: William Clowes and Sons Ltd
- Moorman, John (1968) *A History of the Franciscan Order*. Oxford: Clarendon Press
- Muir, Percy (1979) *English Children's Books - 1600 to 1900*. London: Batsford (f.p. 1969)
- Nassaar, Christopher S. (ed.) (2001) *Other Victorian Authors and Major Victorian Debates - A Supplement*. Oxford: University Press of America
- Nelson, Claudia (1991) *Boys will be Girls - The Feminine Ethic and British Children's Fiction 1857-1917*. London: Rutgers University Press
- Nesbit, E. (1966) *Long Ago When I Was Young*. London: Ronald Whitting and Wheaton
- Newsome, David (1977) *The Victorian World Picture*. London: Fontana
- Nikolajeva, Maria (1996) *Children's Literature Comes of Age - Towards a New Aesthetic*. London: Garland Publishing Inc.

- (ed.) (1995) *Aspects and Issues in the History of Children's Literature*. London: Greenwood Press
- Nodelman, Perry (1985) *Touchstones: Reflections on the Best in Children's Literature Vol 1*. West Lafayette: Children's Literature Association
- Orwin, S. Christabel and Whetham, Edith H. (1970) *History of British Agriculture 1846-1914*. Newton Abbot: Davis and Charles (f.p. 1964)
- Pattison, Robert (1978) *The Child Figure in English Literature*. Athens: the University of Georgia Press
- Paulin, Tom (ed.) (1986) *The Faber Book of Political Verse*. London: Faber and Faber
- Paz, D.G. (1980) *The Politics of Working-Class Education in Britain 1830-50*. Manchester: Manchester University Press
- Pearsall, Ronald (1972) *The Worm in the Bud*. Harmondsworth: Pelican (f.p. 1969)
- Philip, Neil (ed.) (1996) *The New Oxford Book of Children's Verse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Phillips, Robert (1974) *Aspects of Alice - Lewis Carroll's Dreamchild as Seen Through the Critics' Looking-Glasses 1865-1971*. Harmondsworth: Penguin
- Pinchbeck, Ivy and Hewitt, Margaret (1973) *Children in English Society Vol. 2*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul
- Plomer, William (ed.) (1999) *Kilvert's Diary*. London: Pimlico (f.p. 1944)
- Pollock, John (1990) *The Poor Man's Earl Shaftesbury*. Oxford: Lion Books (f.p. 1985)

Plotz, Judith (1991) in *Romanticism and Children's Literature*, McGavran, James Holt Jr. Georgia, University of Georgia Press. "A Victorian Comfort book: Ewing's *The Story of a Short Life*."

- (2001) *Romanticism and the Vocation of Childhood*. Basingstoke: Palgrave

Pomfret, Joan (n.d.) *Lancashire Evergreens - A Hundred Favourite Old Poems*. Nelson: Gerrard

Poovey, Mary (1995) *Making a Social Body - British Cultural Formation 1830-1864*. London: The University of Chicago Press

Purvis, June (1997) *Women's History: Britain, 1850-1945*. London: UCL Press (f.p. 1995)

Quigly, Isabel (1984) *The Heirs of Tom Brown - The English School Story*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Raeper, William (1987) *George MacDonald*. Tring: Lion Books

Read, Donald (1994) *The Age of Urban Democracy - England 1868-1914*. London: Longman

Reed, John R. (1975) *Victorian Conventions* Ohio: Ohio University Press

Rees-Williams, Gladys and Brian (ed.) (1981) *What I Cannot Tell My Mother Is Not For Me To Know*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Reynolds, Kimberley (1990) *Girls Only? Gender and Popular Fiction in Britain 1880-1910*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press

- (1994) *Children's Literature in the 1890s and the 1990s*. Plymouth: Northcote House

- (ed.) (1998) *N.C.R.C.L. Paper 3 - Childhood Remembered*. London: Roehampton Institute
- Reynolds, Kimberley, and Humble, Nicola (1993) *Victorian Heroines - Representations of Femininity in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Art*. New York: New York University Press
- Roberts, Robert (1971) *The Classic Slum*. Harmondsworth: Penguin
- (1984) *A Ragged Schooling - Growing up in the Classic Slum*. Manchester: Mandolin (f.p. 1978)
- Rose, Jacqueline (1984) *The Case of Peter Pan, or, The Impossibility of Children's Fiction*. London: Macmillan
- Rose, June (1987) *For the Sake of the Children*. London: Futura
- Rosen, Michael (1994) *The Penguin Book of Childhood*. London: Viking
- Rossetti, Christina (1865) *Goblin Market and Other Poems*. London: Macmillan
- Rowbotham, Judith (1989) *Good Girls Make Good Wives*. Oxford: Blackwell
- Ruskin, John (1911) *The King of the Golden River*. Boston: L.C. Page and Co. (f.p. 1893)
- (n.d.) *Selections from the Writings of John Ruskin*. London: George Routledge and Sons Ltd
- Sayer, Karen (1995) *Women of the Fields - Representations of Rural Women in the Nineteenth-Century*. Manchester: Manchester University Press

Sherwood, Mrs (1838) *The History of Susan Gray*. London: Houlston and Son

- (n.d.) *The Fairchild Family*. London: Darton and Co. Ltd (f.p. 1842)

Shoemaker, Robert and Vincent, Mary (1998) *Gender & History in Western Europe*. London: Arnold

Shuttleworth, J.P.Kay (1971) *The Moral and Physical Conditions of the Working Classes Employed in the Cotton Manufacture in Manchester*. Shannon: Irish University Press (f.p. 1832)

Sinclair, Catherine (n.d.) *Holiday House; A Book for the Young*. London: Ward, Lock and Co. (f.p. 1839)

Snell, K.D.M. (ed) *The Regional Novel in Britain and Ireland 1800-1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Smiles, Samuel (1921) *Life and Labour*. London: John Murray (f.p. 1887)

Steedman, Carolyn (1990) *Childhood, Culture and Class in Britain - Margaret McMillan 1860-1931*. London: Virago

Stoffel, Stephanie Lovett (1997) *Lewis Carroll and Alice*. London: Thames and Hudson

Stretton, Hesba (n.d.) *Jessica's First Prayer*. London: The Religious Tract Society (f.p. 1867)

- (n.d.) *Pilgrim Street*. London: The Religious Tract Society

- (n.d.) *Cobwebs and Cables*. London: The Religious Tract Society

- (n.d.) *The Crew of the Dolphin*. London: The Religious Tract Society.

- Styles, Morag (1998) *From the Garden to the Street - Three Hundred Years of Poetry for Children*. London: Cassell
- Styles, Morag, Bearne, Eve and Watson, Victor (ed.) (1994) *The Prose and the Passion*. London: Cassell
- Temple, Nigel (1970) *Seen and Not Heard - A Garland of Fancies for Victorian Children*. London: Hutchinson
- The Children's Friend 1861*. London: Seeley, Jackson & Halliday
- Thompson, David M (ed.) (1972) *Nonconformity in the Nineteenth Century*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul
- Thompson, E.P. (1978) *The Making of the English Working Class*. Harmondsworth: Penguin (f.p. 1963)
- Thwaite, Ann (1974) *Waiting for the Party*. London: Faber and Faber
- Thwaite, M.F. (1966) *From Pleasure to Primer*. London: The Library Association (f.p. 1963)
- Tillotson, Kathleen (1971) *Novels of the Eighteen Forties*. Oxford: Clarendon Press (f.p. 1954)
- Tonna, Charlotte Elizabeth (1841) *Helen Fleetwood*. London: L. and G. Seely
- Townsend, John Rowe (1961) *Gumble's Yard*. London: Hutchinson
- (1963) *Hell's Edge*. London: Hutchinson
 - (1965) *Widdershins Crescent*. London: Hutchinson
 - (1969) *The Intruder*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
 - (1977) *Written for Children*. Harmondsworth: Pelican (f.p. 1965)

- Trimmer, Mrs (n.d.) *The History of the Robins - For the Instruction of Children on their Treatment of Animals*. London: Griffith and Farran
- Trollope, Frances (1840) *Michael Armstrong, the Factory Boy*. London: Henry Colburn
- Tucker, Elizabeth, S. (1896) *Leaves from Juliana Horatia Ewing's 'Canada Home.'* Boston: Roberts Brothers
- Tucker, Herbert F. (ed) (1999) *A Companion to Victorian Literature and Culture*. Oxford: Blackwell
- Tucker, Nicholas (1981) *The Child and the Book*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Tucker, Nicholas and Gamble, Nikki (ed.) (2001) *Family Fictions*. London: Continuum
- Uglow, Jenny (1994) *Elizabeth Gaskell*. London: Faber and Faber (f.p. 1993)
- Vallone, Lynne (2001) *Becoming Victoria*. London: Yale University Press
- Varley, Geo. W. (compiler) (n.d.) *Points for Preachers and Teachers Being a Collection of Illustrations and Incidents Suitable for Illuminating a Text or Giving Point to a Moral*. London: H.R. Allenson
- Walton, O.F. (n.d.) *Christie's Old Organ*. London: The Religious Tract Society (f.p. 1874)
- *A Peep Behind the Scenes*. London: Lutterworth Press (f.p. 1877)

Warner, Marina (1996) "The Absent Mother: Women Against Women in Old Wives' Tales" in *Only Connect - Readings on Children's Literature (Third ed.)* ed. Egoff, Sheila and Stubbs, Gordon et al. Oxford: Oxford University Press

- (1998) *No Go the Bogeyman - Scaring, Lulling and Making Mock*. London: Chatto and Windus

Watson, J.R. (1999) *The English Hymn - A Critical Study*. Oxford: Clarendon Press (f.p. 1997)

Watson, Sydney (n.d.) *Wops, The Waif: A Story of London Arab Life*. London: W. Nicholson and Sons

Watts, Isaac (1971) *Divine Songs*. London: Oxford University Press (f.p. 1715)

Wauchope, George Armstrong (ed.) (1904) *Essays of Charles Lamb*. Boston: Ginn and Co.

Wetherell, Elizabeth (n.d.) *The Wide, Wide World*. London: Ward, Lock and Co Ltd (f.p. 1850)

Wheeler, Michael (1990) *Heaven, Hell and the Victorians*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

- (1994) *English Fiction of the Victorian Period*. London: Longman (1985)

Wheen, Francis (1999) *Karl Marx*. London: Fourth Estate

Whitbread, Helena (ed) (1992) *No Priest But Love*. Otley: Smith Settle Ltd.

Willey, Basil (1949) *Nineteenth-Century Studies*. Harmondsworth: Penguin

Williams, Raymond (1985) *The Country and the City*. London: Hogarth Press (f.p. 1973)

- (1961) *Culture and Society 1780-1950*.

Harmondsworth: Pelican (f.p. 1958)

Wolff, Robert Lee (1985) *Masterworks of Children's Literature Part 1 Vol. 5 1837-1900 - The Victorian Age*. London and New York: Allen Lane

Wullschlager, Jackie (1995) *Inventing Wonderland*. London: Methuen

Yonge, Charlotte M. (1903) *The Chaplet of Pearls*. London: Macmillan

Young England: An Illustrated Magazine for Recreation and Instruction. Vol X1. (n.d.) London: Young England Office.

Periodicals

Bawden, Nina "Returning to the Secret Garden." in *Children's Literature in Education* Vol. 19 No. 3 (1988) pp. 165/169

Benton, Michael "The Image of Childhood: Representations of Childhood in Painting and Literature 1700-1900." in *Children's Literature in Education* Vol. 27 No. 1 (1996) pp. 36/60

Brown, Marian E. "Three Versions of A Little Princess: How the Story Developed." in *Children's Literature in Education* Vol. 19 No. 4 (1988) pp. 199/211

Butts, Dennis "How Children's Literature Changed: What Happened in the 1840s?" in *The Lion and the Unicorn* Vol. 21 No. 2 (1997) pp. 153/162

Cashdan, Liz "Powerful Levers: Margaret Gatty, Juliana Horatia Ewing and Mary Louisa Molesworth." in *Children's Literature in Education* Vol. 20 No 4 (1989) pp.215/225

Chambers, William "The Germ Theory." in *Chambers's Journal of Popular Literature, Science and Art* 1876. No. 636 (Saturday, March 4, 1876.) pp145/147

Gorham, Deborah " "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon" Re-examination: Child Prostitution and the Idea of Childhood in Late Victorian England." in *Victorian Studies* 21:3 (Spring 1978) pp. 353/379

Gunther, Adrian "The Secret Garden Revisited." in *Children's Literature in Education*. Vol. 25 No. 3 (1994) pp. 159/168

Kearney, Anthony "Savage and Barbaric Themes in Victorian Children's Writing." in *Children's Literature in Education* Vol. 17 No 4 (1986) pp. 233/240

Kirkland, Janice "Frances Hodgson Burnett's *Sara Crew* Through 110 Years." in *Children's Literature in Education* Vol. 28 No. 4 (1997) pp. 191/204

MacLeod, Anne Scott "Reappraising the Puritan Past" in *Children's Literature* 21 (1993) pp. 179/184

Merchant, Peter " "Fresh Instruction O'er the Minds": Exploit and Example in Victorian Fiction." in *Children's Literature in Education* Vol 20 No 1 (1989) pp.9/25

Nimon, Maureen "From Faith to Good Fellowship: Sunday School Magazines in the Late Nineteenth Century." in *Children's Literature in Education* Vol. 19 No 4 (1988) pp.242/252

Richardson, Alan "Reluctant Lords and Lame Princes: Engendering the Male Child in Nineteenth-Century Juvenile Fiction" in *Children's Literature* 21 (1993) pp. 3/19

Sircar, Sanjay "Classic Fantasy Novel as Didactic Victorian Bildungsroman: *The Cuckoo Clock*." in *The Lion and the Unicorn* Vol. 21 No 2 (1997) pp 163/192

Silver, Anna Krugovoy "Domesticating Bronte's Moors: Motherhood in *The Secret Garden*." in *The Lion and the Unicorn* Vol 21 No 2 (1997) pp. 193/203

Wilkie, Christine "Digging up *The Secret Garden*: Nobel Innocents or Little Savages?" in *Children's Literature in Education* Vol. 28 No 2 (1997) pp73/85

Electronic

Dibdin, Thomas John "The Tight Little Island"
<<http://www.ingeb.org/songs/daddynep.html>>

Edgar, Cathleen L. "The Care and Feeding of Infants and Children in Dickens's London" <<http://www.gober.net/victorian/reports/child1.htm>>

History of Education and Childhood: <<http://www.socsci.kun.nl/ped/whp/histeduc/linkso9c.html>>

Shelston, Alan "Elizabeth Gaskell's Manchester"
<<http://lang.nagoya-u.ac.jp/~matsuoka/EG-Manchester-Alan.html>>

Victorian Era: Class and Religious Struggles <<http://www.britishliterature.com/era/victoria-classes.html>>

Yi, Jimmy "The Religious Climate of Victorian England"
<<http://www.gober.net/victorian/reports/religion.html>>