A Hand of Steel in a Velvet Glove: Purpose and Fulfillment through the Gender Sphere

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A HAND OF STEEL IN A VELVET GLOVE:
PURPOSE AND FULFILLMENT THROUGH THE GENDER SPHERE

by

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A DISSERTATION

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Modern audiences have come to believe that the nineteenth-century woman was oppressed by a patriarchal society and that until women obtained the vote, they had no voice, and could exert no influence to improve either their lot or that of others. While many scholarly secondary sources, as well as popular culture, strongly support this view, this research challenges it, and posits that this generally accepted interpretation echoes stereotypes that became strong with the second wave of feminism, in the 1960s, but is not representative of nineteenth-century middle-class women in the Anglo-Saxon world.

This research examines the British middle-class woman of the nineteenth century as she defined herself or as her male contemporaries saw her through works of fiction and non-fiction and through various areas where women were particularly active, within the home and without.

The nineteenth century is considered here in its extended length: approximately from the dawn of the French Revolution to the sunset of Victorianism, immediately following the Great War.

Drawing examples from history as well as from fiction, this study focuses on examining primary sources, whether biographies or essays, as well as short stories, novels, and occasionally poems, with women as authors or central characters. Furthermore, artwork, so abundant and so valued through the period, is used here to provide a more exhaustive understanding of nineteenth-century men and women and to see with their own eyes how they perceived life, their aspirations, and themselves rather than to rely on the image projected by contemporary scholars and echoed by the media.
The British middleclass woman of the nineteenth century emerges from this study as multi-talented, educated, purposeful, extremely feminine, and widely influential upon her society, even *without* the vote.

The span of the period studied further reveals that despite technological differences, the ideals and motivations of women, and men, remained much the same and were significantly infused with the strength of their Christian beliefs.
Dedication

This research has proved an exhilarating journey into the past which brought many treasured experiences, as men and women of the nineteenth century revealed their inspiring values through their works and their very lives. However, this project would not have been possible without the invaluable help of several people to whom I wish to dedicate this study:

My husband, Preston, who after twenty-nine years continued to offer his unwavering support, who was genuinely interested in this undertaking and who offered judicious suggestions;

Our children, who were rather enthusiastic at the idea, and particularly our daughter, Roxanne, who invested herself in the research as well and uncovered some primary texts and women that contributed significantly to this work;

My father, Jean-Louis Roche, who lived what he believed and taught me that knowledge is a never-ending story meant to enhance our life and anchor our values. Although my father died in his 100th year this past August, he was very happy about and supportive of this project; therefore its completion is also a tribute to his memory;

And my advisor, Robert Stock, who was interested in my idea when it was but in its early stage, who was always available with motivating insights when I encountered stumbling blocks, and whose open-mindedness, vast and eclectic knowledge, uplifting attitude and witty sense of humor sustained me and helped me indeed "finish the race." I am immensely grateful and felt greatly privileged to have had such an advisor.

Finally, I want to thank the other members on my doctoral committee, Stephen Behrendt, Laura White, and Benjamin Rader for their constructive comments and their strong encouragements.
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INTRODUCTION

1. Genesis

After the first wave of the feminist movement washed the shores of Western civilization in the late 1800s, the nineteenth-century woman has come to embody both the oppression and the triumph of womanhood through the combined proselytizing interpretation of Academia and the media-nurtured popular culture. The study of literature, at the university level in particular, is one of the fields of predilection for the propagation of such an image. For instance, Dr. Karen Droisen's course on Victorian poetry presents this perspective to students:

These poems explore the problematic authority of female authors. Women began to enter the literary marketplace in significant numbers during the 18th and 19th centuries, but given the historical context in which they wrote, they could not easily claim to speak with authority. To write as a woman was to be transgressive: entering the literary marketplace and competing with male authors for readership challenged conventional gender boundaries. As a result, many women authors adopted authorial personae that fit, rather than challenged, conventional gender definitions. Since women were generally understood to be emotional rather than rational, women authors often wrote about feelings, emotions, and, especially, love. They often adopted styles that fit their subject matter: to seem more feminine, they employed highly emotional language. By so
doing, they could find an audience yet not risk being perceived as excessively ambitious.\(^1\)

According to Susan Rubinow Gorsky, author of *Femininity to Feminism*, the woman of the past "had almost no opportunity for education, no chance to develop special interests or choose a career other than wife and mother"; furthermore, her "social status and economic well-being depended on the man in her life, and, to a very large degree, her happiness depended on his good will."\(^2\) This sweeping statement sets the tone of her research: not only does it intimate that the role of wife and mother is imposed, limited, and unfulfilling, it also gives no hint about what education might have encompassed for a woman at the time and further implies that men were generous despots in the best cases, but that women could not hope to achieve anything of value if they did not have at least the protection or help of one of those patriarchal bullies.

Should we not find this disturbing? Are we then to believe that society has evolved so much that the inter-relations of men and women are so radically different from our time that we can not recognize any commonality with the past; that what women can achieve today, including their impact on society, was completely out of their reach before the Great War?

This study does not pretend to undertake a full scale examination of popular culture; however, this representation of the nineteenth-century woman is not limited to scholarship and appears much everywhere today. Popular culture may not have the respected credentials of scholarly experts, but its outreach is ubiquitous and extraordinarily metamorphic. Through a constant crossfire of news, motion pictures, interviews, documentaries, or even advertisements,
the general public is literally bombarded by the repetition of this image of the repressed
nineteenth-century woman to the point that, today, the very notion of imagining her anything else
has been practically annihilated. The Virginia Slims commercials for cigarettes, particularly
popular between 1968 and 1986, provide a striking illustration. Intended to be humorous, these
ads contrasted not only men against women, but more pointedly the "oppressed" women of the
past (synthesized in a circa 1890-1910s representation) with the freed women of the present.

Black and white pictures, meant to look vintage nineteenth-century, presented an overworked
woman who, having tried to find some time alone to relax with a cigarette and having been
discovered by a man--relative or employer, but always authoritarian and ridiculously abusive--
had to suffer the consequences of her misconduct through psychological humiliation and physical
punishment or added labor. Besides the ads found in magazines, there were also video-
compressals, which tended to take on a historical documentary tone. For instance, a lady dressed
in the style of the early 1900s, pulls out a pair of scissors from her reticule and proceeds to cut all
trim and lace until her outfit is that of the 1970s, as a male voice comments:

It used to be, ladies, that you had no rights --no right to vote, no right to own
property, no right to the wages you earned; that was when you were laced in,
 hemmed in, and lived with not a whole lot to do; that was when you had to sneak
up to the attic if you wanted a cigarette. Smoke in front of a man? Heaven
forbid!5

Another significant example features a couple of the same era, sitting at their kitchen table. The
husband looks well pleased, drinking coffee and reading the paper, while the wife, with one hand
rocks a cradle, and with the other opens the door to the oven to check on whatever she is baking,

3 Presented by Philip Morris Company as a "women only" cigarette in 1968, the product's popularity
was due in great part to the savvy ads created by the Leo Burnett Advertising Agency of Chicago.
4 See illustrations A and B.
5Internet Archives: Details: Virginia Slims Commercials, September 8, 2007
<http://www.archives.org/details/tobacco_ndo23e00>.
until she feels quite exhausted. She then gets up, takes hat and reticule, and leaves the room. We
next find her entering a barber shop, where several customers, reclining and lathered up, are
attended by barbers. The woman walks to each man and sticks a flyer for female suffrage onto
the soap on their faces. The commentary as the clip unfolds is as follows:

'The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world,' they said, and for years you
listened, until, one day, you discovered something: you couldn't go anywhere
with that hand on the cradle. And you said, 'Dear, you rock the cradle; I am
going to win the vote.' And you did, and soon you won a lot more.6

In every instance, the transition to the present came with the formula, "You have come a long
way, Baby," accompanying a slim, elegant, independent and assertive modern woman. These ads
contributed to reinforce the twin concepts of demonized men and enslaved women. The notion
that in the past, women were, because of men, tied down by children,7 chained to domestic
duties,8 or slaves to fashion in order to please men9 fueled the resentment of women who were
dissatisfied with their lives as wives and mothers; indeed, feminists of the Sixties felt insulted by
the woman image projected by ads of their time that seemed to echo the nineteenth-century ideals
they found so stifling.10 It is further significant that, although the Virginia Slims "Then and Now"
ads no longer pepper magazines and billboards, they have inspired countless others, for various
products, in which men are ridiculed or denigrated, while women are conveying the idea that,
indeed, they "have come a long way." Whether in commercials--such as the ad for Verizon DSL
representing a very stupid father, who is supposed to wash the dog, but who is fascinated by the
encyclopedia on his daughter's computer although he does not even realize that it is an
encyclopedia he is looking at); when the wife/mother comes in , she understands that the father is

6 Id.
7 See illustrations II A and B.
8 See illustration III.
9 See illustration IV.
10 See illustration V A,B, C, D.
a hindrance to the daughter's learning and tells him to leave her alone\textsuperscript{11}--or in sitcoms and other shows, such as \textit{Home Improvement}, \textit{Designing Women}, \textit{Roseanne}, or \textit{Mad Men}. \textit{The Simpsons} seems to be a favorite of the public; significantly, the very appearance of the father, Homer, with a big mouth, idiotic expression, and ridiculous comments epitomizes the loud, uneducated male with little to no intellectual potential.\textsuperscript{12} Beyond the humor, the fact remains that, since the Sixties, the file of cases in which men are often represented as rude, self-centered, and ultimately, incompetent, ridiculous, and contemptible, while women emerge as superior is getting thicker and thicker.\textsuperscript{13} The authors\textsuperscript{14} of \textit{Spreading Misandry} give the example of entire weeks of various television programs--talk shows, documentaries, entertainment series, and full-length movies--openly and offensively misandric.

This trend is noticeable at different levels and its impact is quite effective in molding modern minds. Early examples can be found with "harmless" children stories, such as the Berenstain Bears series\textsuperscript{15} which, while teaching the young valuable moral lessons, accustoms them to the idea that fathers are nice oafs, dim-witted, and thoroughly incompetent. On the \textit{Berenstain Bears Official Website}, Papa Bear is first described as "the world greatest expert on almost anything, he is often wrong but never in doubt," then only, as a loving and caring father, while Mama Bear is "warm, wise and witty." Indeed in this series, the father acts more like another child than like an adult and responsible co-educator, while time after time the mother proves infallibly insightful and practical, and \textit{always} solves the problems. Since its onset in 1962,

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{11} "Banned Commercial – Verizon (Stupid Dad)", YouTube, November 23, 2007, December 3, 2007. <www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZpgeACOMS9o>. This particular add provoked protest and was removed from the air by Verizon, but many others are left uncontested and do contribute to the spreading of misandry.\textsuperscript{12} See illustration VI.\textsuperscript{13} See illustrations VII A and B.\textsuperscript{14} Nathanson, Paul and Katherine Young. \textit{Spreading Misandry: the Teaching of Contempt for Men in Popular Culture}, (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2001). It is particularly important that they are two and of opposite genders: for that very reason, their claims and objections cannot be dismissed as "gender biases." \textit{Spreading Misandry} is the first volume of a projected trilogy entitled, \textit{Beyond the Fall of Man}.\textsuperscript{15} See illustration VIII.}
the series has produced more than two hundred books, which have expanded into films, games, and educational material, thus reaching a very large audience. The fact that the mother bear is a "stay-at-home mom" does not prevent the strong feminist undertone of the stories. That Stan and Jan Berenstain's main motivation was to write appealing children stories that had humor and taught good principles  

16 might cause us to be indulgent, but should not allow us to shut out the fact that the character of Papa Bear carries a forceful message that will widen the gap between genders a fraction more. Other forms of humor vary from advertisements to simple cartoons as the one showing a woman making a wish to be free from domestic chores and being instantaneously transformed into a man.  

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More damaging yet, books used in the elementary classroom may mention important women who do not fit the stereotype of the oppressed female, but will give a truncated version of their life, their motivations, or their accomplishments. "Remember the Ladies"; 100 Great American Women  

18 is a case in point. The book targets children between the age of eight and twelve, or fourth to seventh-graders. The introduction sets the tone, as Harness explains,

"Newcomers might think that the U.S. is a nation that highly esteems her mothers, sisters, and daughters. Well, yes and no. Men may have worshipped the ideal of woman as though she were a goddess, but, as Carrie Chapman Catt  

19 said early in the 20th century, they 'governed her as

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16 See Kennedy, Elizabeth, "All About the Berenstain Bears and Their Creators: An Interview with Jan and Mike Berenstain," About.com: Children's Books, 2008, September 18, 2008, <http://childrensbooks.about.com/od/authorsillustrato/a/berenstainbears_2.htm>. In 2007 the series celebrated its forty-fifth anniversary. The Bear family was first created by the husband-wife team of Stanley and Jan Berenstain, then one of their sons, Mike, joined in, and since the death of Stan Berenstain, continues the series with his mother.

17 See See Illustration IX

18 Harness, Cheryl, "Remember the Ladies"; 100 Great American Women, (Harper Collins, 2001). Scholastic, a site of teachers' resources, is very laudatory of the book for Harness' description of women "who pushed the boundaries of the feminine sphere to the limits—and then pushed a little further."

19 The simple fact that Harness chose this particular quotation and this particular woman, Carrie Catt (1859-1947)—an early radical feminist, friend and successor to Susan B. Anthony as president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association—is in itself clearly indicative of a feminist agenda.
though she were an idiot.20 The avowed purpose of the book is to "Remember the ladies' who, all along, have held up half of the American sky." However, discrepancies abound. Not only is the information in the book extremely limited, it is also suspiciously selective. For instance, while we expect to find Pocahontas and Priscilla Allen, nothing is said about the fact that they were known through me -- Smith for the former and Longfellow for the latter--who respected and admired them and made a point to write about them and make them known to their contemporaries, and to future generations; Ann Bradstreet is presented as America's first poet, but nothing is said of her love for her husband nor of her faith—the two driving forces of her poetry; similarly, Annie Oakley's (Phoebe Ann Moses) fame and exploits as a marksman are duly noted, but her happy marriage and partnership with her husband, Frank Butler, her significant remark to Edward, Prince of Wales,21 her faith, and her immittigable position against the vote for women are not mentioned; and, while Elizabeth Caddy Stanton, Betty Friedan, and Gloria Steinem receive great coverage as feminist activists and are given key recognition for their effort to "liberate" women, Frances Willard, though she was an educator, a reformer, the founder and first president of the World Woman's Temperance Union and the co-founder, with Susan B. Anthony and May Eliza Sewall, of the International Council of Women, and enjoyed international fame for her accomplishments and lectures, is conspicuously ignored. Children in contact with this book are therefore taught that women were repressed in various degrees until the feminist revolution of the Sixties, as Harness presents Friedan as a sort of feminist Messiah:

Generally, women were shut out from creative, professional work away from their homes. The serious—but unpaid—work of raising a family was a woman's traditional job.

20 Harness 1.
21 Riley, Glenda, The Life and Legacy of Annie Oakley, (University of Oklahoma Press, 2001) 40. Presented to the Prince and Princess of Wales while touring Europe, Annie Oakley saluted Princess Alexandra first (shaking, not kissing, her hand), then she turned to Edward and said, "You'll have to excuse me, please, because I am an American, and in America, ladies come first." Edward, not at all offended, exclaimed, "What a pity there are not more women in the world like that little one."
Young girls were playing dolls with curvy, teeny-footed Barbie and given Miss America as a swimsuited (or evening-gowned) role model. In 1963, Betty Friedan wrote a book about the problem of women not being taken seriously and called it *The Feminine Mystique*.22

As children grow into adults, textbooks mentor them closely in what they should understand the woman of the past to be. Such teaching is not presented necessarily through a whole chapter in a Social Studies book, but most often, it is administered "intravenously" with a constant drip-dripping of comments that pass so inconspicuously into the students' thought process that soon they are convinced and ready to propagate the "information" to others. The few examples listed below are a small sample of the general trend.

In *Western Civilization: A Brief History*, we read, "As the chief family wage earners, men worked outside the home while wives were left with the care of the family, for which they were paid nothing."23 From this students understand that 1) women were "stuck" inside, when they really would have liked to work outside the home and 2) they should have been paid for their labor, since every job deserves a salary; the fact that they were not confirms that their situation was close to that of slaves.

*Western Civilization: A History of European Society* confirms that women were held "in an inferior position" and adds, "The rights of women were exercised for them by men (first their fathers, then their husbands). Women were expected to remain confined to limited *spheres of activity*—Kinder, Kirche, Küche (children, church, cooking) in a famous German cliché. Formal education (especially higher education) and educated occupations were closed to them."24 Again the modern student can easily picture a society in which women's every action and thought is under strict supervision by men, making women much like paroled convicts, except that they

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22 Harness 60.
could never hope to be recognized as full citizens, even after having "done their time."
Furthermore, they are perceived as maintained in a state of intellectual deficiency. No one could ever imagine from this passage that the education of most middle-class women was actually rich and eclectic.

*Created Equal: A Social and Political History of the United States* asserts that "European American women's subordination served as a rationale for their political inferiority." Again woman treated unjustly is the dominant picture here, with a sort of vicious circle in which woman is wrongly considered an inferior but can do nothing about it since as an inferior she has no voice in politics.

In her introduction to *British Women Diaries*, Cynthia Huff asserts that in the nineteenth century, "most women knew their husbands merely cursorily before their married," while the educational website *Spartacus* posits that "In nineteenth-century Britain, women were expected to marry and have children. . . The idea was that upper- and middle-class women had to stay dependent on a man: first as daughter, later as wife" ("Marriage in the 19th Century").

Even in textbooks that make a decided effort toward objectivity, like Robert Divine's *America Past and Present*, which explains that "women used domestic ideology to fashion a role for themselves in the public sphere," and recognizes the importance of the Evangelical movement in further encouraging women's influence on their society, we nonetheless encounter ambiguous sentences, such as "the sociological reality behind the Cult of True Womanhood was a growing division between the working lives of middle-class men and women." Divine does not clearly

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explain that women generally fully approved of the ideals of the Domestic Sphere and took pride in applying themselves to live by them. 27

Similarly, Karen Halbersleben, although she goes on for two hundred pages demonstrating the impact of women's participation in the anti-slavery movement, declares that women "seemed caught between the competing ideals of female passivity and a moral compulsion to further the cause of the oppressed," and carries the contradiction yet further by adding, "Could women's feather-weight of influence tip the balance in the crusade against slavery?" 28

Paradox aside, nineteenth-century women would have certainly objected at hearing their domestic ideals defined as "passive" and their influence as "feather-weight." And they would have had good reasons to do so. Unfortunately, since these women are not given a voice, students leave the classroom with a very crippled understanding of women's range of activity and of their invaluable contribution to nineteenth-century life and society.

Outside the school room, means of crystallizing this distorted interpretation of the woman of the past are also varied and effective; the scope of influence is broad, ranging from bestsellers, such as the recent The Da Vinci Code, 29 by Dan Brown, made into a movie, to the science fiction/dark comedy, The Stepford Wives, 30 to a quip dropped here and there in televised or printed news. Apart from the obvious anti-Christian message of The Da Vinci Code, Brown presents Mary Magdalene, "true" bride of Jesus, as hunted down by the established, male clergy, who sees her as the proof that Christ was a man, not a god, thus as a direct threat to its patriarchal authority as God's minister. Furthermore, this claim establishes essentially a "sacred proof" that

not only Christ is not God, but that women have been the victims of Christian patriarchy since the beginning of Christianity. In The Stepford Wives, men feel so threatened by the superiority of women in general and of their wives in particular, that they try to mold them back into the nineteenth-century stereotyped ideal of the adoring slave who is incapable of thought beyond "my new cookbook, my husband, my family, and making a perfect home," a formula which is directly patterned on Friedan's sneer at the feminine ideals: "The American housewife—freed by science and labor-saving appliances from the drudgery, the dangers of childbirth and the illnesses of her grandmother. She was healthy, beautiful, educated, concerned only about her husband, her children, her home." Of course, the only way these husbands can achieve their goal is to "gang up" and subject their wives to the "Female Improvement System"—a pioneer program in brain surgery which, by the insertion of computer chips, renders these wives properly attractive, devoted, and completely submissive. The message is, of course, that only a woman devoid of personality would allow for a man to feel safe and thus fit his wants.

Ultimately, the sustained reiteration of such mantras has a similar effect on the general public's mind as eroding rain over rock: all nuances, differences, exceptions are smoothed away, leaving no trace of the original reality. Popular culture not only promotes the image of clever women presented as either outsmarting men, or being unfairly victims of boorish men, but it also tirelessly refers to how much women have accomplished since the previous centuries, further propagating the stereotypes of a primitive, if not repulsive, past teeming with women crippled by

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31 See "Housewife," The Oxford English Dictionary Online, 2008, November 15, 2008. Although the OED informs us that the term first appeared c.1225, when it is used by feminists, it loses its respectable meaning of "A woman (usually a married woman) who manages or directs the affairs of the household; the mistress of the family, the wife of the householder. Often (with qualifying words), a woman who manages her household with skill and thrift, a domestic economist." From the "mater familias" of the past, "housewife" has come to label, as we see here with Friedan, either the woman forced by man into a life of drudgery, or the brainwashed, insipid female enthusiast with small I.Q. who genuinely has no other ambition than the stellar fulfillment of a life of pointless servitude and the "worship" of man.

a smothering patriarchy, shackled by tediousness, and longing for justice, independence, and the unhampered release of their creativity.

Academia and popular culture have thus deeply molded contemporary thought about the condition of women in the past, with the result that these women have been generally unquestioningly viewed as repressed, or, at best, frustratingly limited in expression, recognition, and influence. For instance, Marilyn French, author of *The Women's Room*,\(^{33}\) and an advocate of feminism through her teaching and various works, comments:

Educated women in Western countries can choose their own lives; they are not forced into dependency on a man, as they had been for millenniums [sic]. . .

Female leaders have always existed, but not since Theodora in the 6th century (and she was a wife, not an elected leader) has any of them been able to change law or customs to empower women as a class.\(^{34}\)

Although such a conclusion seems firmly secured in contemporary thought--few, for instance, object that Justinian, Emperor of Byzantium and husband of Theodora was not elected either--the present study proposes a radically opposite interpretation of the nineteenth-century woman. Three factors prompted this undertaking. First, when I started teaching English Composition in 2003, I became aware that students, though their belief lacked supporting evidence, shared a general conviction about the woman of the pre-sixties era.\(^{35}\) To them, women until recently could not do much, were not even allowed to be themselves. They were immured in a role they would not have chosen for themselves--an image further encouraged by many


\(^{35}\) See survey in Appendix II.
textbooks. For instance, the following statement from a student's paper expresses a widespread conviction on the topic of women and their impact on society in the past and now:

I have an affinity for this woman [Mary Wollstonecraft] and her strong ground-breaking examination of women's rights in a time where [sic] they were far from the first thing on people's minds... Women need to be taken seriously and not treated as subordinates to men and the children they produce. Women are neither like a family pet nor an errant child in need of supervision.

Second, my personal, varied, and numerous encounters with nineteenth-century works of literature and art did not match at all what I heard and saw in the academic and popular culture contexts about the situation of women of that period. Third, my maternal grandmother, born in 1887, was a Victorian, though born in France. Because we were very close and she lived into her nineties, I was privileged to have a private window into a period that had been long gone by the time I was born in 1956. What my grandmother told me of her youth, what I read of the letters she exchanged with my grandfather (barely a year after their marriage), while he fought in the trenches of the Great War, confirmed to me that the true nineteenth-century woman was something completely divergent from what the somewhat general consensus imagines and believes she was.

It is significant that so many nineteenth-century works of writing and art, authored by women as well as by men, bespeak a totally different woman of the period: one whose world was consonant with my grandmother's remembrances; a woman who, far from oppressed or weak, was strong and assured, delighted in her femininity, believed in her calling as a woman, a wife, a mother, was secure in her position as complementary to man's (even when she remained single, like Jane Austen or Marie Corelli), and who not only enjoyed respect from her family as well as from society at large, but whose impact in the socio-cultural context of her time, through a wide,
and sometimes daring, range of activities, was also recognized and praised by her contemporaries, men included. Such examples as Hannah More, Elizabeth Fry, Josephine Butler, Catherine Booth, Germaine de Stael, or Amelia Edwards demonstrate how much freedom women could indeed enjoy, from one end of the century to the other, and further illustrate the wide range of their activism: education, fight against slavery, prison ministry and prison reform, outreach to prostitutes and moral reform, practical Christianity through relief to the poor and outcast and social reform, political participation on an international scale, world travel, or scholarly contribution. Lastly, this nineteenth-century woman emerges as one who, even when she was in favor of female suffrage, did not advocate it as a political weapon against men, but as a tool necessary to the betterment of society, simply because, men and women having different talents and perceptions, society needed their combined input to achieve justice, welfare, and happiness by sharing the burdens.

Although the purpose of this work is clear, the task of achieving it is far from easy. While separate biographies often reveal the truth about individual women, these works have yet to reverse general opinion. Usually, the discovery that specific women of the past may have enjoyed a life totally different from the accepted stereotype is met with the almost ritualistic disclaimer that "they were exceptions."

When it comes to uncovering the true face of the nineteenth-century woman and to hearing her own voice, primary sources are often enshrouded by layers of modern criticism and a post-modern reconstruction of the past. For instance, Brenda Ayres, editor of Silent Voices, dedicates her essay collection to her sixteen aunts ("who were brought up in a Victorian environment"); however, in her intent to allow the voices of nineteenth-century female writers "silenced and excluded from the Victorian canon, to be heard again for readers to gain fuller understanding of Victorian culture that continues to define many of our current ideals," she paints a picture of Victorian men based on her own grandfathers: one was "a severe patriarch who ruled
the household with an iron fist," who beat one of his daughters "for reading books," because "she was starved for knowledge and wanted more out of life than domesticity had to offer"; the other was "a tyrannical patriarch who reveled in being the head of a large household without showing anything that his children would later call love." These two grim illustrations presented in Ayres' preface are the standard by which her readers are to understand the average nineteenth-century man! Ayres' example is far from uncommon as, among the various "rewritings" or interpretations of history and literature, the modern feminist trend takes center stage in the discussion of the condition of the nineteenth-century woman.

2. Feminist stance

It is first necessary to understand what "feminism" actually implies before we can proceed. The term has a broad scope, ranging from the relatively mild conviction that women, being inherently equal to men, must be able to enjoy the same rights, such as voting, education, access to careers, and equality of pay--which most scholars recognize as the concerns of the "First Wave" of the feminist movement--to a far more radical intent, embodied in the women's movement of the 1960s, which was famous for coining slogans such as, "a woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle." Author and philosophy Professor Christina Hoff Sommers distinguishes the former, to which she refers as "equity" feminism, viewing its claims as legitimate and reasonable, from the latter, which she labels "gender" feminism because of its intent to force men to yield even their legitimate rights to difference--rights which the first feminists had understood and accepted--and to restructure the individual entity, as well as the

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37 See Allen John, The Fish and Bicycle Page, August 12, 2007 <http://www.geocities.com/siliconvalley/vista/3255/herstory.htm>. Wrongly attributed to Gloria Steinem, this phrase was actually coined by Australian Irina Dunn in 1970 as a paraphrase of a nineteenth-century philosophical work.
family and even the nation. Later, this gender feminism was evidenced in the Equal Rights Amendment campaign in the 1970s, and more recently with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 in the United Nations' General Assembly. This radical feminism has fought to implement an aggressive socio-political agenda that seeks to grant women what it considers their due, and finally has reached further extremes such as the rejection of "heteronormativity," as this feminism has come to view gender differences as a means of oppression in general, and men as the embodiment of this oppression. Thus, gender feminism fights against the traditional structure of society and promotes lesbianism as a political choice as well as a sexual preference to a male-dependent sexual option for women. The following excerpt from the Redstocking Manifesto reveals a concern no longer for "equality" between genders, but for female privilege and an abasing of all men:

Women are an oppressed class. Our oppression is total, affecting every facet of our lives. We are exploited as sex objects, breeders, domestic servants, and cheap labor. We are considered inferior beings, whose only purpose is to enhance men's lives. Our humanity is denied. Our prescribed behavior is enforced by the threat of physical violence. . . We identify the agents of our oppression as men. Male supremacy is the oldest, most basic form of domination. All other forms of exploitation and oppression (racism, capitalism, imperialism, etc.) are extensions of male supremacy: men dominate women, a few men dominate the rest. All

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power structures throughout history have been male-dominated and male-oriented. Men have controlled all political, economic and cultural institutions and backed up this control with physical force. They have used their power to keep women in an inferior position. All men receive economic, sexual, and psychological benefits from male supremacy. All men have oppressed women. . . We call on all men to give up their male privileges and support women's liberation in the interest of our humanity and their own. In fighting for our liberation we will always take the side of women against their oppressors. We will not ask what is 'revolutionary' or 'reformist,' only what is good for women.40

Thus, the problem of defining feminism becomes further complicated when feminists disagree among themselves about its meaning. For instance, while the text above grants little value to men, the journalist and feminist activist (in fact, one of the icons of the 1960s movement) Gloria Steinem, founder of Ms Magazine, envisions the possibility of men supporting the feminist cause:

Man will be relieved of his role as sole breadwinner and stranger to his own children. No more alimony. Fewer boring wives. Fewer childlike wives. No more so-called 'Jewish mothers,' who are simply normally ambitious human beings with all their ambitiousness confined to the house. No more wives who fall apart with the first wrinkle because they've been taught that their total identity depends on their outsides. No more responsibility for another adult human being who has

40 The Redstockings Manifesto. 1969. September 10, 2007. <http://www.democraticunderground.com/discuss/duboard.php?az=view_all&address=389x1567558>. The Redstocking Movement, founded by feminist activists Shulamith Firestone and Ellen Willis, was a radical offshoot of the feminist movement; although it proved to be short-lived (early 1969 to fall 1970), its influence, notably through Firestone's famous essay, "The Oppression of Sex" (1970), is still felt in today's most radical trend of feminism advocating the disintegration of nuclear family and gender roles and the promotion of in-vitro fertilization to free women from "the oppression of sex" and of their biological bondage.
never been told she is responsible for her own life, and who sooner or later says some version of, 'If I hadn't married you, I could have been a star'. Women' Liberation really is Men's Liberation, too.41

While lawyer, author, and teacher, Catherine MacKinnon offers an almost esoteric explanation for feminism: "A theory is feminist to the extent it is persuaded that women have been unjustly unequal to men because of the social meaning of their bodies,"42 others, such as Cheris Kramarae and Paula Treicher, authors of A Feminist Dictionary, prefer a sweeping exegesis: "Feminism is the radical notion that women are people."43 As for British writer, journalist, and critic Rebecca West's claim "I myself have never been able to find out precisely what feminism is: I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a door mat or a prostitute"44 it would be difficult to find anyone who is not a feminist under such parameters. On the other hand, The Historical Dictionary of Feminism obscures things further by excluding as "faux-feminists" certain women, such as Camille Paglia, Wendy Shalit, or Christina Hoff Sommers, who consider themselves as feminists, and by declining, paradoxically, to provide any definition of "feminism."45


42 Quoted in James Faulconer's Definitions, November 8, 2008 <jamesfaulconer.byu.edu/definitions.htm>.


44 Quoted in Gibbs, Nancy, "War Against Feminism," March 9, 1992. Time/CNN. September 23, 2007 <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,975019-9,00.html>. This article based on Susan Faludi's Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women, which paradoxically denounces the media for projecting feminism in a bad light. Gibbs rationalizes the fact that if the number of women who preferred having a job to staying at home (as if staying at home was not a job in itself) dropped from 51% in 1885 to 43% in 1991, with 53% preferring to stay at home in 1991, it was not that women had been convinced that their priority was with the home, but rather that they were aware of all they could do and chose to stay at home as best option among many.

45 Boles, Janet and Diane Long Hoeveler, The Historical Dictionary of Feminism (Lanham: Scarecrow Press: 2004) 126. Indeed, on p.126, the entry "feminism" offers only, "See Battered Word Syndrome," which is to be found on p. 51, where the growingly frustrated researcher is left with "demonization of certain terms associated with the contemporary women's movement" for sole definition.
However, although feminism means different things to different groups, the term has come to be largely associated with a "political correctness" particularly suited to women demanding individual, political, and social rights, and capable of imposing new norms, such as the use of "humankind" over "Man" or "mankind," the creation of the title "Ms." to replace "Miss" or "Mrs."--and initially created by women refusing to be acknowledged by their marital status, but extended to all women, whether they wish to be referred to as such or not-- or the obligation to insert "/she" to any originally asexual "he" in writing. Such women have objected, sometimes violently so, to concepts of patriarchy and gender roles, and have become an influential force in modern society. As Nathanson and Young explain in Spreading Misandry:

Ideological feminists have played an important role in creating the gynocentric worldview and disseminating it. But the process of embedding that worldview in popular culture is very complex. For one thing, many negative stereotypes of men (as of women) had long been part of our culture. But feminists have made acceptable... to exploit them. This, and the fact that feminists of all kinds have made it unacceptable (though still not quite impossible) to exploit negative stereotypes of women, has led to not only a cultural preoccupation with misogynistic stereotypes but also a cultural indifference to misandric ones.46

As a consequence, their contribution to anything pertaining to women's issues has been heeded, often without question, as advocates of modern feminism have come to be considered, because of their activism, as specialists on women's issues of today, tomorrow, and more importantly for our study, of yesterday.

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Major tenets of modern feminism have crystallized ideas about women that defy borders of history or geography. Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* has convinced many that the *malaise* of the few was that of all women:

The problem [that has no name] lay buried, unspoken, for many years in the minds of American women. It was a strange stirring, a sense of dissatisfaction, a yearning that women suffered in the middle of the twentieth century in the United States. Each suburban wife struggled with it alone. As she made the beds, shopped for groceries, matched slipcover material, ate peanut butter sandwiches with her children, chauffeured Cub Scouts and Brownies, lay beside her husband at night – she was afraid to ask even to herself the silent question—’Is this all?’ . . . Experts told [women] how to catch a man and keep him. . . how to dress, look, and act more feminine and make marriage more exciting; how to keep their husbands from dying young and their sons from growing into delinquents. They were taught to pity the neurotic, unfeminine, unhappy women who wanted to be poets or physicists or presidents. They learned that truly feminine women do not want careers, higher education, political rights – the independence and the opportunities old-fashioned feminists fought for. . .

Colleges built dormitories for "married students," but the students were almost always the husbands. A new degree was instituted for the wives ---‘Ph.T.’ (Putting Husband Through).47

At this point, we come to a first problem. Assuming (purely hypothetically) that the feminine discontent of the 1960s was reflective of the majority of women, it does not necessarily

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47 Friedan 15-16. Although written in 1963, Friedan's book, called "a feminist manifesto" by feminist activist Ann Quindlen, is still widely read, quoted, and revered today. It addresses women of the 1950s and 1960s and warns them to NOT return to the "enslavement of the "domesroutine [sic] of the housewife" that was the "fate" of women prior to the first wave.
follow, as Friedan as well as the majority of contemporary women and even men seem to believe, that the feminist creed that women could find no fulfillment in their traditional role echoes the voice of the nineteenth-century woman. In other words, while the modern feminists from Simone de Beauvoir and Betty Friedan onward feel as if they speak for all women, across time and across cultures, in their fight for either the equality of rights or the supremacy of women, it is not necessarily true that they actually do so.

Furthermore, Friedan and other feminists clearly posit domestic life as intellectually shriveling. In the quotation above, Friedan presents a choice: either women become devoted wives and mothers, or they defy society and become creative (cf. "poets, physicists, or presidents"). In one fell swoop, Friedan implies that they cannot be both, which blatantly ignores all the women writers, artists, and philanthropists who were extraordinarily influential throughout the nineteenth-century. Denial of the truth, however, is not truth.

The rewriting of history can take other forms. For instance, modern feminists seem to have found themselves caught between the proverbial rock and hard spot. If women were really this much oppressed in the past, how can we reconcile them with the modern woman of today, actively participating in every aspect of society? Would nineteenth-century women not risk to appear as something akin to sub-human primates for enduring enslavement without rebelling until very, very late in history? Rather than admit the possibility that women could find identity, purpose, and fulfillment within their gender sphere, scholarly feminism has opted to reclaim women of the past after the fact, whether or not these nineteenth-century ladies would have approved of being labeled "feminist." I would offer two examples of such betrayal of history; incidentally, they both concern Jane Austen. The first is the 2005 film version of Pride and Prejudice, in which Elizabeth's "tomboy" demeanor and Darcy's sloppy clothing are more fit for twenty-first century teenagers than educated and self-assured young adults of the early nineteenth
century middle class.\textsuperscript{48} The other is \textit{Becoming Jane}, which boasts to be an autobiographical portrait of Jane Austen before she became famous, and convinces the uninformed viewer that Jane Austen was pressured by her mother to marry a wealthy neighbor, was madly in love with another man who married for the welfare of his parents, and wrote as an outlet to cope with personal frustration and a means to fight against life's injustices. The audience is once more told that women had to rebel to amount to anything, that Jane Austen was an overlooked pioneer of the feminist cause, and that men are despicable, (Jane Austen's father is clearly presented as a coward, very much under the thumb of his wife).\textsuperscript{49}

Not only do women of the past tend to be "lumped together" in modern scholarly interpretation, but, as historian Elizabeth Fox-Genovese points out "the field of women's history has also led to an altered focus about what may have motivated women in the past --what Fox-Genovese refers to as "escalated claims," that assume, for instance, that women in history would have considered "the advent of reliable contraception. . . a more important historical milestone than, say, one or another of the wars that have so preoccupied the male imagination?"\textsuperscript{50} Modern criticism, then, in literature and in history has often privileged certain aspects of the nineteenth-century woman over others, thus distorting the whole picture.

3. Scope of this research: the British middle-class woman.

Why "A Hand of Steel in a Velvet Glove"? Because this French expression, which defines a quintessential blend of strength and refined tact, fortitude and propriety, firm assurance and kindness seemed to me the perfect illustration for the character of the nineteenth-century middle-class woman. It bespeaks strong convictions and the courage to defend them, but also


influence enhanced by dignity, intelligence, elegance, persuasive sensibility, and of power to inspire, not force, changes.

I chose to focus my research on middle-class British women and writers, because education was a pivotal element among the accomplishments of the nineteenth-century woman. Upper-class women will be mentioned as they did also have access to education; however, the fact that their number, as members of the aristocracy, represents a small percentage of British society, added to the fact that they did not necessarily adhere to middle-class values, such as the Protestant work ethic, because of their privileged place in society, set them apart. Thus, although occasional references will be made to them, they will remain on the fringe of the present study.

References to the working class will be made only as they relate to the middle class' social and literary activity. For instance, it is not possible to examine the works and influence of Hannah More or Catherine Booth without considering their connections to the working class or the poor.

For the same reason, although this study will focus on British literature and its historical context, the close relationship existing between England and America at the time will occasionally necessitate pointed references to works, authors, or events that are more specifically American than British.

When it comes to "bracketing" the nineteenth century within specific dates, historians differ largely in choosing those dates. In Women in England 1760-1914, a Social History, Susie Steinbach underscores the difficulty of assessing the length of what she calls "the long nineteenth

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51 Although the term was coined after Weber's book in 1904-5, and has been often interpreted negatively in our present era, the spirit of the expression traces its roots to the Reformation. It is viewed here solely in its positive connotations, and is to be generally understood as having a strong sense of diligence and integrity relative to work; it rests upon the belief that good stewardship is pleasing to God, because it projects a honorable model of living, an encouragement for believers and a form of witness toward the unbelievers, and is therefore an expression of God's grace in the believer's behavior.
century” because of the common themes and interests encountered through the era. Since I sought to uncover a certain constancy through the period, I chose to consider literary works ranging from 1789 to 1919. The national spirit, the religious ideals, and social concerns that animated England at the time of the French Revolution were, despite fluctuations, and the variety of events, echoed throughout the period. What preceded the American Revolution could be considered a prelude, while the Great War brought an abrupt change.

4. Disclaimer

Although this research is a quest for the real, average, middle-class woman of the nineteenth century, it does not pretend ignorance of excesses and injustices that did exist, such as the sad case of Caroline Norton. Literature and art treated openly questions of domestic abuse, whether it was Wilkie Collins' The Woman in White or Millais' denunciation of bigamy, or simple caricatures. However, this study intends to challenge the generally accepted understanding that these cases of abuse against women were typical and were thus the accurate illustration of women's situation in the nineteenth century. Thus, the full title seeks to reflect the fact that most women, although they strongly endorsed their traditional representation as feminine, gentle, refined, proved unequivocally that they were also determined in their purpose, firm in their beliefs, and that, as a consequence, they were an important presence in the society and the literature of the time and left behind a legacy that may have been violently attacked by some but has yet the power to inspire many.

While modern interpretation would have us believe that the women presented here were exceptions, I propose that they were more likely the norm, at least within the middle class, and that the "bad cases" were, on the contrary, quite limited in numbers. Furthermore, if difficulties

53 See illustration, Retribution, in Chapter II.
54 See illustration X.
 existed for women of the period, they existed for men as well; after all, suffrage was not extended to all men until late in the century, and divorce was difficult to obtain for men too, as Mr. Rochester in *Jane Eyre* or George Lewes could attest. Similarly, while today, some may, for instance, contemplate as discrimination and oppression against women the fact that men were "favored" in employment, this study will investigate other reasons, supported by the majority of British society at the time and clearly illustrated in works of literature, which would offer an interpretation other than misogynist injustice on this situation.

Although it may seem a radical, or, at least, an unconventional approach, I decided to treat real persons and characters of fiction on equal footing, based on the observation that they echo each other closely, as literature reflects reality or inspires it, in turn. This view is reinforced by the conviction that literature has always had, and especially so in the nineteenth-century, a didactic strength along with its attention to beauty and its value as a source of entertainment. Whether we think of Hannah More, Mary Brunton, Elizabeth Gaskel, or Charles Dickens, it is clear that quickening the conscience of their readers, inviting them to self-examination and empathy, prompting them to action in the service of morality, charity, and justice were primary concerns in nineteenth-century writers. While today some works revel in the arcane that only a small initiated elite can comprehend, nineteenth-century literature, by and large, even when it was allegorical, sought to teach and guide through entertainment; it was truly an essential part of life.

5. Personal bias

No matter how much a researcher may be pledged to intellectual honesty in a work such as this, I believe, taking the example of Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, that informing readers of one's background and motivations sheds a necessary light to better fulfill such a commitment.
The three most influential persons in my growing up years were my father (1908-2008), a "Christian deist," an intellectual constantly thirsty for knowledge, generally tolerant (except toward political or religious dogmatism, especially Catholicism and Islam) and possessed of much humor and kindness, who always challenged me to inquire and look at "the whole picture"; my mother (1914-2002), strongly Catholic with a solid respect for ritualism, yet gifted with great empathy toward others; and my maternal grandmother (1887-1981), a Catholic too, but primarily a Christian whose vibrant faith lit every nook and cranny of her life. All three were avid readers, loved history, and shared the conviction that not only literature and history are inseparable, but also that literature is both mirror and inspiration to life.

When I was seventeen, I fully realized that faith could not be "compartmentalized," that if it were real, it must touch every aspect of one's life; because I totally endorsed the belief in the infallible authority of Scripture and in the priesthood of believers, I left the Catholic Church and became Protestant (Evangelical).

Since 1979, I have shared with my husband (an Evangelical and a historian) a growing passion for uncovering the truth of the past.

These combined currents have contributed to make me who I am and, although I understand that newness is always sought in historical and literary research, such as looking into changes and revolutionary ideas and people, I believe that, through the past fifty or sixty years, this emphasis has altered and even falsified the image of the true nineteenth-century woman. I have also become convinced that the Judeo-Christian values of nineteenth-century women have been minimalized or, worse yet, dismissed by modern scholars.

Inspired, among other works, by Anne K. Mellor's *Mothers of the Nation, Women's Political Writing in England 1780-1830*, who argues that "women, both as writers, philanthropists, and social reformers participated fully in the discursive public sphere and in the
formation of public opinion,"  

I propose that, contrarily to modern assumption, the "woman's sphere" gave great power to women throughout the nineteenth century. Looking at works of literature, fiction and non-fiction, that were popular and important at the time, although some of them may have been forgotten or disregarded by modern scholars, I have selected five areas of woman's influence. Each chapter is listed with some of the main writers that will be used to illustrate the topic:

I. The Home Sphere: offers more than a definition as it undertakes to investigate the value of home as a sanctuary as well as a beacon, thus exploding the traditionally accepted limits of "domesticity." Jane Austen, Grace Aguilar, Elizabeth Gaskell.

II. Education and Exemplarity: takes a look at fundamental aspects of women's education, such as motivations, styles, and subjects studied, but also at how education joined to literature created feminine ideals and models. Ann Radcliffe, Anna Eliza Bray, Fanny Burney, Hannah More, Maria Edgeworth.

III. Defending the Faith: although theology is considered more one of man's specialties, and rightfully so for the period, women contributed directly or indirectly in supporting and proselytizing the Judeo-Christian faith. Charlotte Bronte, Christina Rossetti, Catherine Booth, Grace Aguilar, Hannah More.

IV. Apostle and Ambassador: it was not enough for nineteenth-century women to adhere intellectually to faith and values. These were active women who felt compelled to

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implement their beliefs in social reform, political activism, or mission work, often facing daunting odds. Elizabeth Fry, George Eliot, Octavia Hill, Germaine de Stael, Amelia Edwards, Josephine Butler, Kate Marsden.

V. Two Joined as One: considers not only the respect many men showed to these "multi-tasking" and dedicated women, but also how men offered support of words and deeds. This chapter also takes a look at some of the marriages of the period, which for the most part were based on love and turned out to be epitomes of happy and fruitful partnerships. Through these various aspects, the chapter examines how the two spheres united in belief, hope, and purpose. Charles Dickens, William Wilberforce, Charles Kingsley, William Booth, Oscar Wilde, John Ruskin.

Of course, there is an inherent difficulty in delineating these chapters since, when we begin looking seriously at the Domestic Sphere, we quickly realize that it is not a static reality that can be easily compartmentalized, but rather a vast web in which each thread or characteristic connects with others and extends into the Public Sphere. Therefore the divisions offered above cannot be absolute, and we will find that some of these nineteenth-century women played an important role in each.

Technical note:
All emphases in the various quotations cited in this study are those of the authors themselves; mine figure only in what I wrote personally.
The art selections at the end of each chapter are but a fraction of what exists on the subjects treated here.
APPENDIX A. Dr. Droisen's Victorian Poetry Assignment

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Department of English
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
KDroisen@hotmail.com

ENG 435/635: Victorian Poetry Laetitia Elizabeth Landon (L. E. L.) 1802-1838 and Elizabeth Barrett Browning 1806-1861

Assignment

These poems explore the problematic authority of female authors. Women began to enter the literary marketplace in significant numbers during the 18th and 19th centuries, but given the historical context in which they wrote, they could not easily claim to speak with authority. To write as a woman was to be transgressive: entering the literary marketplace and competing with male authors for readership challenged conventional gender boundaries. As a result, many women authors adopted authorial personae that fit, rather than challenged, conventional gender definitions. Since women were generally understood to be emotional rather than rational, women authors often wrote about feelings, emotions, and, especially, love. They often adopted styles that fit their subject matter: to seem more feminine, they employed highly emotional language. By so doing, they could find an audience yet not risk being perceived as excessively ambitious. But this created a double-bind: to speak as a woman was to play the part of an emotionally sensitive and irrational human being. And whereas male authors could cite an infinite number of literary ancestors to establish their authority, female authors had just a handful of literary antecedents. As a result, Victorian poetry written by women is always in part about poetry itself: can a female poet fit herself into an emphatically male literary tradition? Or can she construct a counter canon for her work made up of female antecedents? What kinds of authority can she claim? How can she begin to cultivate her readership?

www.unlv.edu/faculty/droisen/landon.htm

This survey was performed among first- and second-year students in a two-year community college. I am particularly thankful for the help of some of my colleagues in English, History, Political Science, and Sociology who administered it in their classes so that I could have a large enough basis for this part of my research.

379 students participated in this survey. The percentage of their answers figures to the right of the options offered.

The evidence gathered through my research points to the answers indicated by an asterisk (*).

Except for the two first questions which were very specific, the others required only a general sense of the facts to be close enough to the truth. For a simplified reading, I indicated the sum of the options A and B as one group and options D and E as a second group in the far right column, leaving the "undecided" as it was.

As we can see, the majority of the answers rarely coincide with the facts brought to light and examined in this dissertation. And sometimes, even when they do, like in question 28, it does no necessarily follow that students chose the right answer for the right reason. In the case of this particular question, they recognized the fact, but saw it as injustice rather than as the logical measure it was perceived to be at the time --since the majority of the workers were men, and main, if not sole, providers for their families, but women, if married, or daughters, or sisters would likely be taking a secondary income to their homes while possibly depriving a man from his only means of support for wife and children.

Considering the individuals who participated in this survey as a valid sample of the average student population, we observe that, by and large, twenty-first century students believe that middle-class women of the nineteenth-century were oppressed:
• They could not work outside the home
• They were barred from higher education (college) through the entire century
• They could not influence men
• They could not work in partnership with even their husbands (33)
• They were ruled by men (marriage choice, divorce, work, legislation in general)
• They were incapable of limiting pregnancy
• Christianity was a means of further oppression
• They were deprived of love in marriage, of education, of the right to exist as true citizens since they could not have the vote, and ultimately of purpose (which is why they were bored).
• Furthermore, they lived confined lives:
  • Little interaction with men (11)
  • Bored at home (15)
  • No interaction with women of lower classes (19)

Men are clearly perceived as the threat (if not the enemy) to women's happiness, since they prevented women from getting the vote or higher education, very likely because they felt threatened by women with power and intellect (31). As a result only widows and women who dared to rebel against men and against gender roles were able to influence society (18, 26), and included among those are Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë.

Finally, more than nineteenth-century marriages are modern relationships likely to be based on love.
Survey Results

1. In which of the following countries did Women first obtained the right to vote?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The United States</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>16*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
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6. In the 1800s, men defined what women could and could not do.

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>8*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>4</td>
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2. In the country selected above, when did women obtain the right to vote?

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>21*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>20</td>
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7. In the 1800s, fathers or brothers usually chose husbands for their daughters or sisters.

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<td>25*</td>
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<tr>
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<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. In the 1800s, most middle class women were not allowed to work outside of the home.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly disagree</td>
<td>12*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. In the 1800s, parents (father & mother) usually chose husbands for their daughters.

<table>
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<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tr>
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<td>20*</td>
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<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Throughout the 1800s, women could not go to college.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disagreement Level</th>
<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Totally disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mostly disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mostly agree</td>
<td>46</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
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9. In the 1800s, marriages were the result of bride and groom having freely chosen each other.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disagreement Level</th>
<th>Votes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Totally disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mostly disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mostly agree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
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5. In the 1800s, women could not define what men could and could not do.

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<tr>
<th>Disagreement Level</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
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10. During the 1800s, most marriages were made for financial interest; they were essentially business arrangements.

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<th>Disagreement Level</th>
<th>Votes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Totally disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mostly agree</td>
<td>44</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
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</table>
11. In the 1800s, most middle class men and women interacted very little in or outside the home.

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<th>Opinions</th>
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<tr>
<td>Totally disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mostly agree</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totally agree</td>
<td>4</td>
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12. In the 1800s, romantic love between a woman and a man was less likely to be found than in today's society.

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<td>Don't know</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mostly agree</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totally agree</td>
<td>19</td>
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13. Most middle class women of the 1800s could not influence political decisions (legislation).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Totally disagree</td>
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<td>Mostly disagree</td>
<td>15*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mostly agree</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totally agree</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
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</table>

14. Middle class women of the 1800s were generally depressed because they were bored at home with nothing to do.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Opinions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Totally disagree</td>
<td>16*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mostly disagree</td>
<td>33</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly agree</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totally agree</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
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</table>

15. The reason why we have so many samples of fancy embroidery from the 1800s is because middle class women did a lot of needle work to fill in the empty hours of their lives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Totally disagree</td>
<td>7*</td>
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<td>Mostly disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly agree</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totally agree</td>
<td>13</td>
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</table>

16. During the 1800s, most men were fiercely opposed to women voting and were willing to use almost any means to prevent its establishment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Totally disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly disagree</td>
<td>10*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mostly agree</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totally agree</td>
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</table>

17. Most NC women wanted the right to vote.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Totally disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly disagree</td>
<td>9*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly agree</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totally agree</td>
<td>16</td>
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</table>

18. Women of the 1800s who influenced society were either widows or single women who had broken ties with their families.

A. Totally disagree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mostly disagree</td>
<td>20*</td>
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<td>Don't know</td>
<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mostly agree</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totally agree</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

19. During the 1800s, women of the middle or upper classes had no interaction with women of the working class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Totally disagree</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mostly disagree</td>
<td>18*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mostly agree</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totally agree</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
20. In the 1800s, women forced men, through riots and public speeches, to grant them the recognition they wanted and the right to vote.
   Totally disagree  12
   Mostly disagree  23* 35*
   Don't know  20
   Mostly agree  29
   Totally agree  12 41

21. In the 1800s, men could divorce easily.
   Totally disagree  14*
   Mostly disagree  33 47*
   Don't know  18
   Mostly agree  21
   Totally agree  12 33

22. In the 1800s, a woman could not file for or obtain a divorce.
   Totally disagree  6*
   Mostly disagree  9 15*
   Don't know  16
   Mostly agree  39
   Totally agree  28 67

23. Most middle class women of the 1800s associated sex with sin or, at best, saw it only as a mean to have children.
   Totally disagree  3*
   Mostly disagree  14 17*
   Don't know  23
   Mostly agree  41
   Totally agree  17 58

24. A large number of middle class women of the 1800s disliked sex and were in favor of houses of prostitution so that men, including husbands, could satisfy their "baser instincts" there.
   Totally disagree  18*
   Mostly disagree  24 42*
   Don't know  40

25. Christianity oppressed women during the 1800s.
   Totally disagree  5*
   Mostly disagree  17 22*
   Don't know  39
   Mostly agree  29
   Totally agree  9 38

26. Women of the 1800s who wanted the vote were opposed to gender roles.
   Totally disagree  3*
   Mostly disagree  17 20*
   Don't know  25
   Mostly agree  37
   Totally agree  16 53

27. Although they were born before the term "feminist" was coined, famous women writers such as Jane Austen (author of *Pride and Prejudice*), Charlotte Bronte (author of *Jane Eyre*), Harriet Beecher Stowe (author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*), or Louisa May Alcott (author of *Little Women*) expressed the same beliefs, in their writing, as modern feminists.
   Totally disagree  3*
   Mostly disagree  14 17*
   Don't know  23
   Mostly agree  39
   Totally agree  16 55

28. In the 1800s, women wanted higher education so they could compete for the same jobs as men.
   Totally disagree  6*
   Mostly disagree  17 23*
   Don't know  15
   Mostly agree  37
   Totally agree  20 57
29. In the 1800s, women were paid less than men because most women married and a man was expected to support his wife and family.
   Totally disagree 5
   Mostly disagree 9  14
   Don't know 7
   Mostly agree 39
   Totally agree 35* 74*

30. Throughout the 1800s, women had no idea how to prevent pregnancy; thus, families of 7-10 children were average in all classes.
   Totally disagree 6
   Mostly disagree 18* 24
   Don't know 22
   Mostly agree 33
   Totally agree 17 50

31. Educated middle class women of the 1800s acquired their knowledge secretly and/or against the wishes of their male relatives, since men usually feared that education and/or work would make women independent.
   Totally disagree 5*
   Mostly disagree 13 18*
   Don't know 22
   Mostly agree 38
   Totally agree 16 54

32. Middle class women of the 1800s could not inherit property.
   Totally disagree 7
   Mostly disagree 16* 23*
   Don't know 27
   Mostly agree 29
   Totally agree 15 44

33. In the aristocracy women of the 1800s had no say in the ruling/management of their husbands' estates.
   Totally disagree 3
   Mostly disagree 15* 18*
   Don't know 22
   Mostly agree 38
   Totally agree 16 54

34. In the 1800s, women had no respectable way to survive alone financially other than marriage.
   Totally disagree 4*
   Mostly disagree 14 18*
   Don't know 20
   Mostly agree 40
   Totally agree 16 56

35. During the 1800s, novels in which many women made a difference in society were essentially written by women and did not reflect the reality of the time.
   Totally disagree 8*
   Mostly disagree 21 29*
   Don't know 36
   Mostly agree 21
   Totally agree 7 28
CHAPTER I. THE HOME SPHERE

The world begins at the kitchen table. It is here that children are given instruction on what it means to become human. At this table we sing with joy, with sorrow. We pray. We give thanks.

Joy Harjo, American Indian poet.

I. Why the Division of the Spheres?

1. Modern interpretation

Although the quotation above is from a contemporary poet, the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, by and large, is inspired by feminist icons of world fame, have come to question, ridicule, and reject the notion of a "feminine sphere," a domain fitted to women's specific nature, talents, and aspirations:

The housewife is a nobody, and housework is a dead-end job. It may actually have a deteriorating effect on her mind...rendering her incapable of prolonged concentration on any single task. 56

The housewife's labor does not even tend toward the creation of anything durable... Woman's work within the home is not directly useful to society, produces nothing. The housewife is subordinate, secondary, parasitic. 57

Housewives are mindless and thing-hungry...not people. Housework is peculiarly suited to the capacities of feeble-minded girls. It arrests their development at an infantile level, short of personal identity with an inevitably weak core of self... Housewives are in as much danger as the millions who walked to their own death in the concentration camps. 58

57 Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex, 1949, quoted in Ladies against Feminism.
As long as the family and the myth of the family and the myth of maternity and the maternal instinct are not destroyed, women will still be oppressed. . . No woman should be authorized to stay at home and raise her children. Society should be totally different. Women should not have that choice, precisely because if there is such a choice, too many women will make that one. It is a way of forcing women in a certain direction.\(^{59}\)

The work that remains women's distinctive service to men, regardless of the politics of those men: housework, prostitution, and other sexual servicing, childbearing, childrearing.\(^{60}\) These voices continue to be influential, and their impact has affected deeply how the domestic sphere of the nineteenth century is viewed today.

Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English interpret the development of the domestic sphere entirely negatively: as a setback for an already unfair situation. To them, in the pre-Industrial Revolution era, although the culture was patriarchal, with men controlling major decisions in the family as well as in society, that society was yet "gynocentric" because, in a context dominated by agriculture and cottage industry, "the skills and work of women are indispensable to survival –woman is always subordinate, but she is far from being a helpless dependent." The Industrial Revolution, therefore, dissolved the unity of work and home, and "the traditional productive skills for women –textile manufacture, garment manufacture, food processing passed into the factory system. . . even the quintessentially feminine activity of healing would be transformed into a commodity and swept into the Market. . . [for instance,] midwives [were] replaced by obstetricians and surgeons."\(^{61}\) As they consider the industrialist economy strictly as "masculinist," Ehrenreich and English see domesticity, glorified by Romantic


notions of home, as one of the two reactions to this male takeover, the other alternative being feminism.\textsuperscript{62} In other words, women were either tricked or cowed into accepting a lesser role in society, unless they rebelled.

Judith Flanders, though she is somewhat more conciliatory in her study, \textit{The Victorian House, Domestic Life from Childbirth to Deathbed}, attributes considerable importance to the dramatic changes the Industrial Revolution brought to British society in the nineteenth century, in the "birth" of the domestic sphere. However, she also recognizes other factors, such as a decline of mortality and the Evangelical revival. Two of the direct outcomes of the Industrial Revolution were, indeed, the production of more goods at a lower price and more time and means to be devoted to home-making. This last aspect was further viewed as a sign of social success, since only the aristocracy had been able throughout history to lay claim with any constancy to the luxury of possessing a tastefully and comfortably appointed home combined with the privilege to stay in it and fully enjoy it.\textsuperscript{63}

Both of these recent works, however, construe the very notion of separate spheres as essentially a nineteenth-century phenomenon and as a men's idea to secure their comfort as well as their authority in society. Flanders assures the modern reader that "creating a home was the role assigned to women, but it was not something over which they could exercise free will," and to support her argument, she calls attention to Sarah Ellis' \textit{The Wives of England} advising women, in 1843, on how to run a home properly. Yet is this not akin to say that Martha Stewart's advice about home-making are dictates that prevent today's women from having any freedom or creativity in the way they manage their home?

2. Historical antecedents

\textsuperscript{62} Ehrenreich 24-31.
First of all, is it truly fair to ascribe the creation of the domestic sphere to the nineteenth-century? The wives of crusaders, for instance, were well aware of what it meant to be the "Lady of the house," as many husbands, serving God and king in Palestine, entrusted their manors and their lands to their wives. Conan Doyle's *The White Company*, set during the One Hundred Year War, reminds us of this state of affairs as Sir Nigel, leaving for France to fight under the Black Prince in Spain, entrusts Castle Twynham and all his possessions to his beloved wife, the matronly Lady Mary Loring. Not only does the stout woman fulfill all the duties pertaining traditionally to the domestic sphere, she even directs the men at arms left under her command to successfully protect the manor from the attack of a neighbor, who, in his greed, had underestimated the determination and resourcefulness of a husband-less, yet husband-empowered woman. 64

Here, the romance of fiction is hardly dissonant with the larger reality of history. At the highest level, William the Conqueror made his wife, Matilda, regent over Brittany, when he embarked for his conquest of England in 1066, and during his consecutive absences, while French King Louis IX conferred on his mother, Blanche, full powers over his entire kingdom, as he left for Jerusalem, on the Seventh Crusade, with his wife. Similar instances of trust and partnership have long existed in the middle class, if we think of Shakespeare leaving to his wife, Ann, the management of home while he was away in London, earning the necessary finances for the support of his family. Even in the lower strata of the population, we find Pistol, in *Henry V*, as he joins the king's army to fight in France, leaving the Boar's Head Tavern in the sole care of Mistress Quickly, his wife. While records of such doings might be harder to track down because

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64 Doyle, Arthur Conan, *The White Company*, 1891, (London: Pan Books, Ltd, 1976) Chapters 13 and 29. It is significant that this was Arthur Conan Doyle's personal favorite among his numerous works. Not only does he present the Middle Ages as an admirable period, but the few women in this adventure story stand out as exemplary and inspiring. Only one contrasts with the rest. Lady de Villefranche. Selfish, vain, and totally unmoved by the plight of the tenants on her lands, she and her equally loathsome and proud husband meet with a terrible end. Lady de Villefranche is the very antithesis of Lady Loring.
members of the lower class were often illiterate and left few records, there is no reason to doubt that Shakespeare found the inspiration for these secondary characters through his attentive observation of real life.

3. Spinsters too.

It must be noted that, although this study considers the domestic sphere essentially as the domain of the wife, there were widows and single women who belonged to that sphere as well, and who had, through it, an important impact on the society of their time. In fact, many spinsters were respected precisely because they did not compromise their ideals about marriage for the sake of matrimony, as Zsuzsa Berend points out:

As their diaries and letters show, nineteenth-century women took ideals to be an ultimate, unchanging, God-ordained reality. . . This view was in keeping with the highly voluntaristic and perfectionist outlook of the time. . . High ideals of love and marriage came together with high standards of character, and it became socially and personally acceptable not to marry if marriage involved compromising one's moral standards. . . The spinster [became viewed] as a highly moral and fully womanly creature. . . [Spinsters] remained unmarried not because of individual shortcomings but because they didn't find the one 'who could be all things to the heart.' Spinsters [were increasingly considered] as champions of uncompromising morality.65

While Berend's study focuses more specifically on America, we can find her words to be true for England as well. Indeed we can find numerous examples, such as Hannah More, who broke up her long engagement when she discerned that her fiancé's heart was not really in it; Jane Austen, who rescinded her acquiescence to Harrison Bigg-Wither's proposal on the very morning

following her acceptance; Christina Rossetti, who rejected two fiancés, the painter James Collinson, because of his return to Catholicism, and the linguist Charles Cayley, because he persisted in his agnostic beliefs; or Marie Corelli, who not only took to task some of her female contemporaries in *The Modern Marriage Market*, but also delineated what marriage --the usual foundation of the domestic sphere for most women-- was truly about:

What *is* marriage? Many of you have, I think, forgotten. It is not the church, the ritual, the blessing of the clergyman, or the ratifying and approving presence of one's friends and relations at the ceremony, --still less is it a matter of "settlements" and expensive millinery. It is the taking of a solemn vow before the Throne of the Eternal,-- a vow which declares that the man and the woman concerned have discovered in each other his and her true mate,-- that they feel life alone valuable and worth living in each other's company,-- that they are prepared to endure trouble, poverty, pain, sickness, death itself, provided they may only be together,-- and that all the world is a mere grain of dust in worth as compared to the exalted passion which fills their souls and moves them to become one in flesh as well as one in spirit. Nothing can make marriage an absolutely sacred thing except the great love, combined with the pure and faithful intention of the human pair involved. They have to realise first of all that God exists; and that before that God, Whom they solemnly acknowledge and believe in, they are One.66

These high standards were shared by men as well. A triptych of sketches, made in 1853--

**Married for Rank, Married for Money, Married for Love** -- by John Everett Millais, examines

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matrimony with an accuracy and directness similar to Corelli's. The first depicts a haughty young woman, richly dressed and bejeweled, marrying a man easily thrice her age, while her true love, an impoverished wounded soldier, watches her, heart broken, as she comes out of the church; in the foreground of the second picture, a young woman, clad in dark, observes from the church's upper gallery the scene below in which the marriage of the young man she loves to a rich woman has just concluded--eloquently prominent in the right corner is a Bible; the third drawing invites the viewer to witness a touching, intimate scene. The young wife tenderly kisses her husband, a humble minister, who is working on his upcoming sermon, while their fair-haired toddler is drawing, seated beside the father, at the same table and dipping his quill in the same ink well. The background is divided between a large floor-to-ceiling bookcase and an open window through which a church is clearly visible. Each of these two elements bespeaks a domesticity founded on shared intellectual and religious interests. A globe occupies a significant place in the front right corner of the sketch; it seems to imply that this domesticity should be emulated by the world at large, as it obviously brings true happiness to all concerned.

Short of meeting such standards, then, it was best to operate within the feminine sphere alone. Consistent with her principles, Corelli, having not herself found such a soul-mate, never married. This was not just fashionable rhetoric or shallow poetry; women indeed lived by such parameters. One of the most interesting examples was that of Florence Nightingale. She first rejected the offer of marriage from her cousin, Henry Nicholson, then from the philanthropist Richard Monkton Milness. Although the latter decision seemed pure folly in the eye of many who knew them both--including Nightingale's immediate family--since the two had much in common, socially and intellectually, Nightingale's comments on the subject show that she was

67 See illustrations I A, B, C. From Rosenfeld, Jason and Alison Smith, Millais, (London: Tate Publishing, 2007), which was produced for the exhibition of Millais' works at the Tate Museum, 26 September 2007-13 January 2008.
very insightful and in agreement with More, Ellis, Lewis and others advising against mismatched unions. Very candidly, she explains the reasons of her rejection:

I have an intellectual nature which requires satisfaction, and that would I find in him. I have a passionate nature which requires satisfaction, and that would I find in him. I have a moral and active nature which requires satisfaction; that would not find it in his life. 68

Although, like Rossetti, Nightingale remained in friendly terms with her rejected suitors, she refused to go against her conscience for the sake of convenience. The spinster not only understood what marriage was and should be, as well as the feminine calling in general, she presented also a model of womanhood for the younger generation. However, where Hannah More's and Florence Nightingale offered inspiring examples, at the opposite end of the "spinster's scale," we have Miss Havisham in Dickens' Great Expectations, who does have the means to make a positive difference in Estella's life, and yet chooses instead to vent her own bitterness through her, hurting many, including herself, in the process.

What is of extreme significance, therefore, is the fact that marriage and the domestic sphere were understood equally by spinsters and married women through the century. As a consequence, when Jane Austen describes in her novels what marriage should and should not be, she shows insight and offers sound advice to the prospective bride and groom, even though she personally never married.


As I have shown, then, the domestic sphere does not simply appear as one of the outcomes of the Industrial Revolution; it has antecedents which can be traced all the way to the prehistoric age, with the women tending the cave, watching children, and cooking (after the

68 This comment is written on a notebook page and can be seen at the Florence Nightingale Museum, in London.
discovery of fire, that is). But it is also true that the nineteenth century, though not the creator of the concept, stands as its most ardent defender and offers the richest illustration of this sphere.

If we look attentively at the value of home life through literature and advice books of the nineteenth century, we may discover, however, a very different picture from the one seen by Ehrenreich, English, or Flanders, and diametrically opposed to the feminist interpretation of it.

Several factors enter into the justification of the Domestic Sphere. There is, of course, the pre-disposition that exists in the very nature of woman: as the bearer of children, she stands as the epitome of the nurturer. Not only does she nurse her offspring and watch over their first years, she also generally creates, organizes, and guards their environment, the home. The very term of "house-keeper" should be taken literally and not, as we usually understand it today, as just another word for "cleaning lady." Although much has been argued about the distinction between nature and nurture, studies have been made, such as Men, Women and the Gender Difference, that demonstrate that there are some general natural impulses and interests characteristic of women and others more specific to men. This documentary, for instance, observes that by and large men are better at reading maps, while women orient themselves best by remembering landmarks. It also reports several significant experiments, such as the attempt made by toy makers to sell "boy" toys to girls, which failed and cost the toy industry considerable expenses as a consequence, because girls consistently showed a lack of interest for tanks and guns, and an unshakable attraction to dolls and tea sets. Another experiment consisted in having men and women wait for a few minutes, individually, in a cluttered room. Afterwards each was asked to describe from memory what was in the room. The overwhelming majority of the men did not recollect much of what they had seen, while most women were able to depict the room and its contents in detail, including the position, color, and size of various objects.  

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69Men, Women and the Gender Difference, Dir. George Paul, Presented by John Stossel, Films for the Humanities and Sciences. ABC News Production. 1995. This study, based on a wide range of
If we must accept the overwhelming evidence that there are definite gender constants in human nature, should we then be really surprised that women may have been just as much in favor of the division of the spheres as men were? Indeed, the primary reason for the distinct spheres might simply be natural disposition. Judging by the number of advice books for the management of the home and their immense success, common sense dictates that there had to be more than a sense of obligation and submission to account for women's dedication to the home. This was in fact a field of particular interest for women, both as authors (great names such as Hannah More or Isabella Beeton stand out) and as readers or audience.

The Domestic Sphere gravitates around the home, which first must be understood in its material aspect, the house. In that regard, it answers a variety of needs: shelter, cleanliness (of body and personal grooming, as well as of room, furnishing, and all other items), clothing, food, rest, and record-keeping. If de Beauvoir assimilates housework to "the torture of Sisyphus," Betty Friedan defines the "feminist mystique" in part as men convincing women that "housework was a calling, domestic science, a craft—anything but work," it is doubtful that any woman, in any time of history, including ours, would be truly stupid enough to not realize that housework is work. Furthermore, not only does the doing of such work necessitate daily attention and physical exertion, it also requires knowledge, and thus certainly qualifies as a "domestic science." For instance, it is not enough to recognize that something is dirty and needs to be cleaned, that dishes must sparkle to be appealing, not just wiped off of their grime with a cloth or quickly rinsed in cold water; understanding the use of some cleaners and their danger (such as mixing bleach and ammonia in modern kitchens) may have far greater consequences than improving the look of the home, although this is in itself a laudable undertaking. It suffices to look into Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household Management to perceive that the nineteenth-century homemaker needed to acquire observations, with subjects ranging from toddlers to adults, makes allowance for exception and gives even voice to radical feminists, such as Steinem and Catharine MacKinnon, Conservatives, and scientists.
several learned abilities, what we might call today "hands-on" skills, such as sewing (making and mending clothes) and embroidery skills, culinary competence, as well as some fundamental chemistry acumen, as a woman in charge of her house needed to know how to make many basic products, from a cleaning paste to wash the walls to a concoction to ease a cough. Isabella Beeton's spectrum of information is quite large, from child rearing to nursing the sick, from cooking to charity, and from purchasing quality supplies and equipment to decorating tastefully and economically the home. Mrs. Beeton warns her readers that being the mistress of the house is not for the faint-hearted:

As with the Commander of an Army, or the leader of an enterprise, so it is with the mistress of the house. Her spirit will be seen through the whole establishment. . .Of all those acquirements, which more particularly belong to the feminine character, there are none which take a higher rank, in our estimation, than such as enter into knowledge of household duties; for on these are perpetually dependent the happiness, comfort, and well-being of a family.  

Being the mistress of the house implies the carrying out of a routine of various tasks, some of them monotonous and even unpleasant, and investing considerable time in doing so. Of course, we have grown so accustomed to modern technology for the running of our own homes, from the basics, such as washer and vacuum cleaner, to the more sophisticated, such as the microwave, the dryer, and the electronic access to millions of recipes on websites at the touch of our computer keyboards, that we may forget what "home management" used to encompass.

Margaret Horsfield's *Biting the Dust*, a study of housecleaning based on a variety of sources from scholarly studies, to magazines, newspapers, domestic advice books, novels and

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children stories, to conversations with modern day home-makers, and spanning England, America, and Canada, offers a delightful as well as sobering reminder:

Strict notions about cleanliness arose at least partly in response to the alarmingly dirty conditions out of doors. Every foot that touched the pavement or the sidewalk could be tainted with manure or sewage; the hem of every long dress was in danger of being dragged through stinking messes, the smells were beyond description, the water supplies unreliable. If we had to deal with such conditions on a daily basis we, like many of our forebears, might be driven to the conclusion that no effort is too great to attain a clean home and we too might be harshly and openly critical of those failing to attain decent standards.\(^7\)

An advice book of 1877 describes dust in grim details:

Household dust is, in fact, the powder of dried London mud, largely made up, of course, of finely-divided granite or wood from the pavements, but containing, in addition to these, particles of every description of decaying animal and vegetable matter. The droppings of horses and other animals, the entrails of fish, the outer leaves of cabbages, the bodies of dead cats, and the miscellaneous contents of dust-bins generally, all contribute... and it is to preserve a harbour from this compound that well-meaning people exclude the sun,\(^2\) so that they may not be guilty of spoiling their carpets.\(^3\)


\(^2\) In this passage from *Our Homes*, quoted by Flanders (9), I understand the sentence, "it is to preserve a harbour from this compound that well-meaning people exclude the sun, so that they may not be guilty of spoiling their carpets" as either "people don't go out" or "don't open their windows," so no filth—not even air-born—can make its way inside. Flanders explains it as a measure of prevention against fading by the sun, as she inserts, "by excessive drapery" after "sun." It seems obvious to me that the author of the article is concerned by filth, a far more serious matter than the colors of the carpet fading; thus the heavy layers of curtains are not "excessive" but viewed as necessary to effectively filter the disease-carrying dust from entering the home, much as a person would do with a mask over his mouth and nose. Then, to this primary function, draperies further added beauty, and yes, fading prevention, but only as a secondary advantage.
The streets in which everyone had to walk were therefore ever-filled with filth and the promise of diseases, which presented a dark contrast indeed to lights and culture of every large city in general, and of London in particular, as it revealed it a breeding ground for epidemics. We are reminded of Dickens' description in the first chapter of *Bleak House*:

> Smoke lowering down from chimney-pots, making a soft black drizzle, with flakes of soot in it as big as full-grown snow-flakes. . . Dogs undistinguishable in mire. Horses, scarcely better; splashed to their very blinkers. Foot passengers. . . losing their foot-hold at street corners, where tens of thousand of other foot passengers have been slipping and sliding. . .

> And in this unending mess, "Jo sweeps his crossing all day long. . . He knows that it's hard to keep the mud off the crossing in dirty weather, and harder still to live by doing it."

The very fact that there was such a job as "street sweeper" says much about the sheer amount of muck in the street as well as about the general awareness that constant cleaning, even as limited as Joe's efforts, was a necessity. Epidemics of typhoid and cholera and their deadly tolls were always lurking in the shadows. Edwin Chadwick's *Report on the Sanitary Conditions of the Labouring Population of Great Britain* was published in 1842, and certainly took filth seriously as it denounced it as responsible for:

> The various forms of epidemic, endemic, and other disease caused, or aggravated, or propagated chiefly amongst the labouring classes by atmospheric impurities produced by decomposing animal and vegetable substances, by damp

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Arguing such a point seems to be fussing about insignificant details, yet the term "excessive" struck me as not only pejorative, but also as a condemnation of Victorian decorating born of a lack of understanding for the Victorians' motives, which then contributes to the general distortion of the picture of the past.

75 Id. Chapter 16, 256.
and filth, and close and overcrowded dwellings prevail amongst the population in every part of the kingdom, whether dwelling in separate houses, in rural villages, in small towns, in the larger towns.\textsuperscript{76}

While the working classes were more at risk because of their crowded living conditions, ultimately everyone stood to gain in the sanitary reform since "the primary and most important measures, and at the same time the most practicable, and within the recognized province of public administration, [were] drainage, the removal of all refuse of habitations, streets, and roads, and the improvement of the supplies of water." The report set in motion a monumental program, but improvements were not dramatically noticeable until the 1880s. Indeed, as Flanders underscores, "Hygiene was not just a matter of removing dust. Three things were paramount: the extermination of vermin (which encompassed insects as well as rodents), the protection from dirt of various kinds, and the proper regulation of light."\textsuperscript{77} It is significant that Florence Nightingale revolutionized the hospitals of her time by starting with a sanitary overall established on five essentials of hygiene that are the very basics of a healthy home: "pure air, pure water, efficient drainage, cleanliness, and light."\textsuperscript{78}

It is only too clear that the mundane side of housekeeping in the nineteenth century, especially but not only in town, meant a great deal of work, which required physical stamina, organization, resourcefulness, as well as perseverance and a sense of responsibility. Even though most middle-class households usually counted one or two servants,\textsuperscript{79} there was enough to do for the mistress of the house to participate, such as in cleaning the windows, making the beds, mending or cooking. Even though the Brontë household, for instance, had a servant, the Brontë sisters "pitched in" and as their number decreased, more tasks befell to the survivors. At one

\textsuperscript{76} Quoted in Del Col, Laura, "Chadwick's Report on Sanitary Conditions," \textit{The Victorian Web}. January 12, 2008 <www.victorianweb.org/history/chadwick2.html>.

\textsuperscript{77} Flanders 8.

\textsuperscript{78} Florence Nightingale, \textit{Notes on Nursing} (1859) quoted in Horsfield 81.

\textsuperscript{79} Flanders 94.
point in fact, the family servant – by then an older woman-- becomes ill and must leave the house. Although some outside help comes temporarily, the Brontë sisters take on the household tasks until the servant is well enough to return, as Charlotte Brontë mentions in one of her letters, "I manage the ironing, and keep the rooms clean; Emily does the baking, and attends to the kitchen."  

But all these necessary tasks were accomplished with more than the obligation to "do what has to be done." Beyond the duty of taking care of a material need, there is a driving sense of motivation strong enough to generate enthusiasm and even joy. For instance, Jane Eyre finds purpose and even exhilaration in helping Hannah, the Rivers' family servant, to prepare Moor House for Christmas and the return of her cousins, Diana and Mary--something the ethereal, and somewhat sanctimonious, St John can hardly understand:

> My first aim will be to clean down (do you comprehend the full force of the expression?)—to clean down Moor House from chamber to cellar; my next to rub it up with bees-wax, oil, and an indefinite number of cloths, till it glitters again; my third, to arrange every chair, table, bed, carpet, with mathematical precision; afterwards I shall go near to ruin you in coals and peat to keep up good fires in every room; and lastly, the two days preceding that on which your sisters are expected will be devoted by Hannah and me to such a beating of eggs, sorting of currants, grating of spices, compounding of Christmas cakes, chopping up of materials for mince-pies, and solemnising of other culinary rites, as words can convey but an inadequate notion of to the uninitiated like you. My purpose, in short, is to have all things in an absolutely perfect state of readiness for Diana

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and Mary before next Thursday; and my ambition is to give them a beau-ideal of a welcome when they come.81

Disney's adaptation of Mary Poppins captures surprisingly well--since it is primarily a movie made for children, not a documentary--the spirit of the age about housekeeping, as Mary Poppins points out to Jane and Michael, "In every job that must done, there is an element of fun. You find the fun and, snap! The work becomes a game!"82 Mary Poppins and Jane Eyre embark into house cleaning with the same gusto, and nineteenth-century women by and large, in England as well as in America, did invest themselves energetically in the sphere that most found best suited to their sex.

5. Spiritual Commitment

Keeping a house implied a spiritual commitment. Not only was there a multitude of mundane tasks that needed attention, but there had to be a conviction that this was important, not only for reasons of basic hygiene, but also because it was part of what a true family was about; the house could only have a soul if the most humble tasks were done for love, for the desire the truly make home a sanctuary for the nurturance and spiritual replenishment of all living within it. This was the heart of a woman's mission. Women, however, did not resent the responsibility; on the contrary, they reveled in being wives, mothers, hostesses. The popularity of the multitude of household management books, such as Mrs. Beeton's, should be proof enough. Having a family to cherish was understood as a natural thing, but haste and mixed priorities were warned against. Nothing short of mutual and selfless love could ensure lasting happiness.

This is why Sarah Stickney Ellis devotes the first long chapter of her book addressing not the "wives" of England, but women who are thinking of getting married or who are even already

81 Brontë, Charlotte, Jane Eyre, 1846, Charlotte and Emily Brontë, the Complete Novels (New York: Random House, 1975) Chapter 34, 235.
engaged. Wife of the congressionalist minister, missionary, and writer William Ellis, Sarah Ellis knew much about commitment, having married a widower with four children. Though she may sound grim in her warning and questioning, it is evident that she wanted women to fully grasp what a gigantic step they were about to take, and what the life-long consequences of a bad choice (marrying the wrong man or marrying a good man for the wrong reasons) would be. In fact she defines marriage as "crossing the Rubicon"; "like death," she says, "marriage is a beginning, not an end." In fact, far from seeing the married/domestic state as the enslavement modern feminists declare it to be, Ellis is adamant that to be ready for marriage means to be ready for "independence and respectability." She makes very clear that the responsibility of being a wife and mother is so great, and so multi-faceted, that no woman should embark upon it if she has even the slightest doubt about herself or about the man to whom she is engaged.

Her book is in fact more a philosophical essay than a simple "how-to" tips-and-recipe handbook, although she does give a few practical advices, for example on how a young bride is to handle in-laws living in the same household. The tone and content of Wives of England might be best explained in modern terms as a work blending the input of James Dobson with that of Martha Stewart. For Ellis, being the mistress of the household entails a myriad of abilities: reflection, organization, self-discipline, carefully planned spending—to avoid living above one's means—realism, self-denial, charity, cheerfulness, insight, high principles—enabling one to resist temptations—and of course, great love, which, among other blessings, would "lessen privations" during times of hardship. The cultivation of personal talents is further viewed as an asset to the domestic calling. In other words, managing the domestic sphere is not for the faint-hearted; it is work and no romantic dream about marriage and being mistress of one's own home will allow

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84 Christian psychologist, founder of Focus on the Family, an organization that has a worldwide broadcasting outreach.
85 Ellis 21.
one to waive the quotidian, and un-glamorous, realities that are part of the married state and the
domestic sphere. To the Christian Ellis, household management is a spiritual mission, great in its
difficulties, its harsh requirements of constancy and selflessness, but also rich in its reward of
finding one's own happiness by putting the welfare and happiness of others first. The home-
maker must constantly keep in mind her commitment and her impact on others:

The married woman cannot, then, too frequently ask herself. . . 'at what standards
do I really aim?' . . . If it be essential to integrity that we should be sincere with
others, it is no less so that we should be sincere with ourselves. . . And if we
would ascertain with certainty what is the actual standard of excellence which in
idea we set up for ourselves, . . . we have only to ascertain to what particular
purpose our thoughts and actions most uniformly tend.86

At the very beginning of the nineteenth century, Hannah More voices the same caution,
because she, too, believes in the God-ordained ideals of the domestic sphere. Her advice book
might be more attractive to the reader because she understood well the effectiveness of giving
advice through examples. Coelebs in Search of a Wife is a didactic novel that offers a charming
and inspiring illustration of the far-reaching power of godly families blossoming from a faith-
based domestic sphere. Coelebs, a devoted son, is reared by loving and insightful parents, and
by adulthood, he has matured into an honest, educated, and kind young man. He takes care of his
parents until their death; afterwards, now in early twenties, he decides to fulfill his father's wish
and to go visit his father's life-long friend, Mr. Stanley.

The main purpose of Coelebs’ quest is finding a wife. The Stanleys have several lovely
daughters, but it is first the harmony and love within the family that enchants Coelebs. Soon, he
falls in love with the eldest daughter, Lucilla, not only because she is pretty and of a pleasant

86 Ellis 74-75.
disposition, but most importantly because she is the epitome of a godly woman; her priorities are in the right order, her actions match her words and her beliefs, and her exemplary training, under the guidance of a no less admirable mother, has enabled her to become a stellar mistress of her sphere. With such true compatibility between the young lovers, it is not surprising that the book closes on their approaching nuptials. The ideal home of the Stanleys is more than an attractive model here: More contrasts it with realistic situations that pepper the story, ranging from the bigoted household to the home where either the husband's or the wife's flawed character and behavior (superficiality, infidelity, irresponsibility, selfishness) endanger the family's happiness and further contribute to the corruption of society's mores. In the following passage two friends of the Stanleys summarize women's power thus:

'Women,' said Mr. Carlton, 'in their course of action describe a smaller circle than men; but the perfection of a circle consists not in its dimensions, but in its correctness. There may be,' added he, carefully turning away his eyes from Miss Sparkes, 'here and there a soaring female, who looks down with disdain... who despises order and regularity as indication of a groveling spirit, but a sound mind judges directly contrary... [Sir John adds] 'A philosophical lady may boast of her intellectual superiority... may decorate all the logic of one sex with the rhetoric of the other; yet if her affaires are délabrés, if her house is disorderly, her servants irregular, her children neglected, and her table ill-arranged, she will indicate the want of the most valuable faculty of the human mind, a sound judgment.' 87

87 More, Hannah, Coelebs in Search of a Wife, 1809, Ed. Mary Waldon, (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1995) Chapter 36, 184. Miss Sparkes is the "feminist" in the story. She often visits the Stanleys and loves arguing with Mr. Stanley; she is cantankerous, a somewhat reckless rider who wear breeches, and unlike some other characters in the story, she does not change.
From one end of the nineteenth-century to the other, from Hannah More to Josephine
Butler or Marie Corelli, the Domestic Sphere is understood both as an ideal ordained by God and
as an empowerment for women to better society. It is the feminine domain *par excellence* in
which women not only feel fully in their element, but are also acutely aware of their power
through the influence they have on their inner circle and of the respect and support they receive
from men. As Sarah Lewis says:

Power, while it regulates men's actions, cannot reach their opinions. It cannot
modify dispositions nor implant sentiments, nor alter character. All these things
are the work of influence. Men frequently resist power, while they yield to
influence an unconscious acquiescence. . . Even Christianity has achieved, and is
to achieve, its greatest triumphs, not by express commands and prohibitions, but
by a thousand indirect influences, emanating from its spirit rather than its letter.88

In her short story, "The Authoress," the Jewish writer Grace Aguilar offers the very same
message by contrasting two women who share an interest in writing. Granville Dudley refrains
from proposing marriage to Clara Stanley, with whom he was falling in love, when he learns from
a well-intentioned but misguided friend that she is a writer. Granville's own experience has
prejudiced him against such women. However, where Mrs. Dudley, Granville's own mother, had
neglected husband, child, and home to pursue her own literary aspirations, in which she was but a
"shallow pretender," Clara, the heroine, not only has true talents in the field, of which she does
not boast and with the fruit of which she has been able to help others (such as her widowed
mother), but she also puts home and family first. Reunited fortuitously eight years later, the two

Lewis, the civilizing role of the domestic sphere upon society is unquestionable. *Woman's Mission* is her
only lasting work. Nothing is known of her personal life. Her book, however, was reprinted many times.
In fact, the copy I found was an 1840 American reprint of the original 1839 text, which bespeaks its
popularity, since not all British authors gained fame across the Atlantic.
lovers find happiness at last when Granville, now Sir Dudley Granville, a widower after a bad marriage and father of a little girl, discovers the true greatness of Clara's accomplishments. He is definitely reconciled with the idea of his wife being a writer, because he can see that her writing is but an extension of her dedication to the domestic sphere. As Clara says:

In my opinion it is impossible to divide [the literary from the domestic characters]. Perfect in them, indeed, I am not; but though I know it is possible for woman to be domestic without being literary—as we are not equally endowed by Providence—to my feelings, it is not possible to be more than unusually gifted without being domestic. The appeal to the heart must come from the heart; and the quick sensibility of the imaginative woman must make her feel for others, and act for them, more particularly for the loved of home.90

While the Industrial Revolution brought demographic shifts, as well as material advantages beneficial to the development of domesticity, the religious revival brought a heightened consciousness of the value of home, as Protestants (like Hannah More, William Wilberforce, Charles Kingsley), Catholics (like Coventry Patmore), and Jews (like Grace Aguilar) viewed the home in a spiritual light, as a sanctuary. Numerous examples could be used from Old and New Testaments, in which women clearly bring out the godly dimension of the home. Three however stand out: Ruth, the woman of Proverbs 31, and Martha and Mary; and in these three, we can recognize specific characteristics with which women of the nineteenth century clearly identified.

89 Aguilar, Grace, "The Authoress," Home Scenes and Heart Studies, 1853, (London, n.d.) 238-39. This collection of Grace Aguilar's short stories was first published after her death by her mother in 1853. Paradoxically while guarding himself against what he mistook for the wrong type of spouse, Dudley deluded himself in the notion that he could find happiness and stability in a woman with charm and elegance, but with no intellectual aspirations. However, weakness of health matched the weakness of intellect in his wife, and she soon died, leaving a husband not broken with grief but wiser from the ordeal of such a marriage.

90 Aguilar 242.
Ruth offers the spiritual foundation of the home through marriage. Her commitment,
"Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your
God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried"\textsuperscript{91} brings her to Boaz. Inspired
by her widowed mother-in-law (again, a reminder that the domestic sphere concerns all women,
not just married ones), Ruth turns away from a lesser life and she blossoms as wife, mother,
daughter-in-law, and a woman of Israel, her adoptive country; all the facets of her womanhood
speak of her spiritual commitment and resulting happiness.

The dedication the woman of Proverbs 31 demonstrates for home and family comes
through her remarkable skills as an administrator: She is alert to every need—"She works willingly
with her hands. . . She gives meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens"\textsuperscript{--}, alive with
purpose and energy—"She rises also while it is yet night. . . her candle goes not out by night"\textsuperscript{--},
and her expertise covers a variety of areas, from providing food for those under her roof to
purchasing and managing land—"She considers a field, and buys it: With the fruit of her hands
she plants a vineyard,"from farming to spinning and weaving, and from doing charity work —"She
stretches out her hand to the poor; Yea, she reaches forth her hands to the needy."\textsuperscript{--}to providing
wise counsel, known and respected through the entire city—"Her husband is known at the gates,
when he sits among the elders of the land. . .Strength and honor are her clothing. . .She opens her
mouth with wisdom." Everyone benefits, from husband and children, to the servants, the outside
poor, the town and herself—"Let her own works praise her at the gates. . . Her price is far above rubies." \textsuperscript{92}

Martha and Mary cannot be separated; not only are they both close friends of Jesus, it is
the balance of their respective focus that establishes the truly godly home, one where both
material and spiritual needs are met, and attention is given to each in the proper proportion and at

\textsuperscript{91} Ruth 1:16-17. New International Version.
\textsuperscript{92} Proverbs 31. The Holy Bible, King James Version.
the right time—not always an easy task to accomplish. It has been said that the home was to be separate from the place of work, the public sphere, full of hardship, competitiveness, dissension, danger, corruption, and ruthlessness. Although this is only half of the truth, we will examine this particular side for the moment.

6. Home as Sanctuary

One of the most striking examples of home as a sanctuary can be found in the clerk Wemmick, in Dickens' *Great Expectations*. Not only does Wemmick establish a complete separation between his work and his home, he even changes personality. Dry and all-business as a clerk, he reveals himself a congenial, gentle man when he is at home. His devotion to his old father, the Aged One, is genuine and profoundly touching. It gives the full flavor of home being a harbor of peace and love, a place where the other comes before self. Interestingly, Wemmick takes to heart the expression, "a man's home is his castle," as his house looks indeed like one, complete with Gothic door and windows, a flagstaff (with "a real flag") and a mock drawbridge -- a further underscoring of its sanctity and its separateness from the selfish, brutal, soul-less outer world.93

Though treated with much humor, George and Weedon Grossmith's *The Diary of a Nobody* describes in Charles and Carrie Pooter the same value of home. Charles might be overly pleased with himself, but his appreciation of his wife, of her skills as a home-maker, of her sound counsel, as well as her devotion to him underscores the sanctity of home, the close companionship of husband and wife, and their treatment of each other as equals. Figuring at the forefront of the story, however, is the house itself, "The Laurels," of which the Pooters are very proud. A rather large house with six rooms, basement, and front and back gardens, this is where the Pooters receive their intimate friends Cummings and Gowing as well as the special place

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where Charles and Carrie can simply enjoy each other. Sometimes Charles' efforts for home improvement do not always meet with success, especially when he decides to give a touch of class to the bathroom and paints the tub red; unfortunately the hot water dissolves the paint, and after giving Charles a big scare for he thought he was bleeding to death, leaves his skin stained. Nevertheless, even if we laugh at the Pooters, their very ordinariness illustrates the importance of home across the middle class.

We can see that it is not just a woman's idea, but an ideal shared by both genders. In fact, the notion of the house being "a man's castle" is much anterior to the nineteenth-century. Benjamin Barros, in Home as a Legal Concept, looks at the importance of home as a space of "individual safety, autonomy and privacy." Although his study focuses on the topic from a legal point of view and with particular attention to the U.S., he sketches a brief history of the home and traces the origins of what he calls the "castle doctrine" to the sixteenth century, analyzing the impact of such a concept within the larger western understanding of Liberty, especially in the context of the American Revolution. Barros explains that in less than two hundred years, the "castle doctrine" evolved from "'A man's house is his castle (except against the government)'" to "'A man's house is his castle (especially against the government),'" citing the powerful statement made by the elder William Pitt in Parliament in 1763:

The poorest man may in his cottage, bid defiance to all the forces of the Crown.

It may be frail; the roof may shake, the wind may blow through it, the storm may enter, the rain may enter, but the King of England cannot enter—all his forces dares not cross the threshold of that ruined tenement.

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94 Grossmith, George and Weedon, Dairy of a Nobody, 1888, (Wordsworth Editions, 1994) 29-30. Charles' unfortunate experiment with home decorating further underscores the fact that the domestic sphere is not his domain, and things get back in order when he defers to his wife.

Home is made sanctuary by the love, trust, and mutual devotion of those living together in it; thus there is an osmosis between the actual building and the atmosphere within to the point that it becomes difficult to discern the boundary between the house and its people, especially those who are mainly responsible for giving it a soul. This theme is rendered particularly vividly in Dickens; we find it in his major works, as for instance, *A Christmas Carol*, *Bleak House*, and *Our Mutual Friend*. It is at home that Bob Cratchit, despite his dreadfully strained circumstances, can "revive." It is there that the love he finds gives him reason to live; it is there that he replenishes his strength and his Christian charity. The generosity he displays in drinking a toast to Scrooge's health is genuine and triggered by an acute consciousness that the joy that permeates his home, humble as it is, is an outcome of Scrooge's existence. He is able to discern the proverbial silver lining of the cloud; home truly brings out the best in Bob. It is interesting to note that in the same scene, Mrs. Cratchit expresses a ferociousness toward Scrooge that is not at all in contradiction to her role of mistress of the domestic sphere; her protective attitude is no more than the expression of her love for and total devotion to Bob. She may lack in Christian forgiveness, but at the same time, her primary focus, husband and family, is in its right order of priority. She is also aware of both the external reality, Scrooge's miserliness, and the spiritual value of Bob's attitude, and manages to join him in the toast without compromising her conviction that Scrooge is evil: "I'll drink to his health for your sake and the Day's," she tells Bob, "not for his." 96 A reluctant case of loving one's enemy. Meanwhile, in a different part of town, Scrooge's nephew, Fred, also enjoys the blessings of home as he and his wife share the warmth of family and friends under their roof. Although Fred's material circumstances are better than Bob's, the two families are identical in the richness and the appreciation of home.

In *Bleak House*, Esther is the very soul of the home: she loves, nurtures, protects, reaches out, and yet seeks no recognition. Her reward is the happiness of those around her. By contrast,

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almost as a caricature à la Cruikshank, Mrs. Jellyby's home is a desecrated sanctuary, where priorities are topsy turvy, and where, in consequence of her "telescopic philanthropy" everything goes wrong, and everyone in her family suffers:

The children tumbled about, and notched memoranda of the accidents in their legs, which were perfect little calendars of distress, and Peepy was lost for an hour and a half, and brought home from Newgate market by a policeman. The equable manner in which Mrs. Jellyby sustained both his absence, and his restoration to the family circle, surprised us all. 97

Esther, indeed, though an outsider and neither a wife or a mother, sees immediately what needs to done and proceed to give the Jellyby children a taste of what a true home is, as Ada describes to Jarndyce: 'Esther was their friend directly. Esther nursed them, coaxed them to sleep, washed and dressed them, told them stories, kept them quiet, bought them keepsakes...softened poor Caroline, the eldest one.' 98

Dickens multiplies the illustrations in Our Mutual Friend. Once Bella understands what really matters in life, her world loses the tension and discontent triggered by misplaced ambitions; her trust in John is so complete that when an apparent threat arises with the inspector's visit, she never doubts that John is innocent. Having suffered all his childhood and early youth from a mercurial parent--thus an unstable home life--it is understandable that John relishes this unconditional love and is reluctant to reveal his lie--though he has committed no crime even in lying in this instance. In the couple Lizzie-Eugene, it is Lizzie who brings out the best in Eugene, she who makes him want to achieve something, in a way that his father's threats, criticism, or cajoling never could. Lizzie simply trusts Eugene absolutely. She knows his true generosity and

98 Dickens. 84-85.
assumes that the rest of his nature is equally admirable. It is her assurance that really creates in Eugene the desire to become what she believes him capable to be, that awakens in him a true sense of purpose, and that fuels his energy and determination. The Boffins offer a stellar example of what the domestic sphere encompasses when it has been properly established from the start. Although not blessed with children of their own, the older couple acts as one for John's welfare, once Mrs. Boffin recognizes him. Their love for each other reaches outward to Bella and many others. Although they are willing to lose their new home, their true home is each other, and fittingly, it is in their home and John and Bella's that the story is finally resolved. Their very generosity underscores all the more the blessing that a home—a place for family, love, harmony, values—truly is.  

II. The Scope of the Domestic Sphere.

1. Marriage and Partnership

Sarah Lewis quotes these lines from Ben Jonson about marriage, which summarize the nineteenth-century outlook on the foundation of the domestic sphere:

> It is a golden chain let down from heaven  
> Whose links are bright and even,  
> That falls like sleep on lovers, and combines  
> The soft and sweetest minds  
> In equal knots; this bears no brands, no darts,  
> But in calm and godlike unity  
> Preserves community.

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Richer than time. . .

For the century at large, marriage was understood as described in the Book of Common Prayer, as "ordained [by God] for the mutual society, help, and comfort, that the one ought to have for the other, both in prosperity and adversity." It is important to underscore the fact that the division of the spheres does not translate into something akin to the (former) Berlin Wall. While to some, especially in the working class, it did mean a change from husbands and wives working somewhat side by side in the field to working separately in factories or home/factory set-up, to many others such a change was either not a difficulty or simply did not happen. For many women the duties of their sphere were numerous enough and their responsibilities significant enough to have given them a very satisfying sense of purpose and accomplishment. But as the poem above makes clear, marriage establishes an equality of value between the genders; their complementarity enhances their intrinsic talents and benefits all the members of the household and even society.

Whether or not husband and wife shared a common interest "outside" the home, as did Sam and Eliza Beeton with writing, or Elizabeth and Darcy with the management of their estate at Pemberley, their partnership was articulated around the home. The husband established it by marriage, giving it his name, and supported it financially, while the wife nurtured it and made it a place of warmth and spiritual fulfillment. It would be an error to summarize this by thinking the husband a sort of outsider, as Flanders does in her introduction, "Men set the agenda, while it was up to women to carry it out. Men are present often by their absence. . . It is clear, however, that men were barely concerned with the running of the house." In the education of children for instance, fathers took often a very active part; Hannah More, Jane Austen, the Brontë sisters,

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100 Lewis 69.
101 The Book of Common Prayer, "The Form of Solemnization of Matrimony," 1662, January 28, 2008 <http://www.vulcanhammer.org>. The 1662 version was the one used throughout the nineteenth century.
102 Flanders xxxi.
Florence Nightingale are but a few examples of the eclectic role of women. In the same manner, it would be a mistake to picture the wife as weaker and in constant need of protection; sometimes she had to be the stronger of the two, or to take risks alone or side by side with her husband. We see this with Lizzie nursing Eugene back to life and purpose, in Our Mutual Friend; with Fanny holding firm when all around her, even the usually wise Edmund, advise her to marry Henry Crawford, in Mansfield Park; with Effie Grey Ruskin daring to divorce the respected Ruskin and face scandal; or with Josephine Butler, fully supported by her husband, defying society's conventional charity by rescuing prostitutes and bringing them to her own home. Numerous illustrations of this strong woman exercising to the fullest the powers granted to her through the domestic sphere can be found in various paintings as well.

John Everett Millais, regarded "as the greatest of British artists, internationally renown" and "the most culturally engaged artist of his time, the continually innovative painter. . .the unrepentantly bourgeois yet non-aesthete Academician," gave great attention to marriage and the essence of the domestic sphere. His The Order of Release, 1746, for instance, tells the story of a brave, young Scottish wife who has walked a long way to secure an order of release for her husband, prisoner of the British after the uprising that culminated so tragically at Culloden. He is wounded, humiliated; the defeat of Scotland has deprived him of part of his identity as a Scot (claymores, bagpipes, kilt were to be prohibited for many years), the sufferings of the recent past have left deep scars in mind and body, and the future is fraught with uncertainty and trials. Yet, we can almost feel his relief, not only because he is freed, but also because he is reunited to his family. Indeed the trio father-mother-child stands out and solemnly asserts the greatness of

\[103\] This will be developed more in Chapter II.
\[104\] Stephen Deuchar, director of Tate Britain, in Millais 7.
\[105\] Jason Rosenfeld in Millais 13.
\[106\] 1853. See illustration II
domesticity even against negative odds. The sleeping baby and the joyful dog further testify of the security and reliability of a true home.

Another of Millais' paintings, Peace Concluded, 1856, echoes the same belief. A wounded officer has just read in the newspaper that the Crimean War has ended. Home to recover from his wounds, he is both the support and the object of comfort of his wife. While she sits close to him, in mutual embrace, on a settee, their two daughters play with animals from their toy Noah's Ark—significantly, a bear, a lion, a rooster, and a turkey, respectively representative of Russia, Great Britain, France, and Turkey, the four countries involved in the Crimean conflict. The crimson backdrop created by the rich garnet color of the mother's dress has been interpreted as symbolical of the blood spilled in the conflict. I think it is that but it also keeps the traditional representation of love: in other words, the world that has been plunged into a blood bath, was meant for love, just as in the part of the Matrimony triptych seen earlier, with the globe on the forefront of the picture. Both adults are joined in reflection over the losses, the pain, the dark memories of the battlefield the war left in its wake. Both obviously draw comfort from each other and the blessings of home; this is further underscored by the myrtle bush in the background (symbol of erotic love), the dog on the right side of the painting (symbol again of faithfulness and domesticity), and the toy dove (symbol of peace) the oldest girl hands to her parents. The stratified construction of the work is significant as well with mother resting on and blended in with the father, the animals in the mother's lap (very possibly a representation of the world at large) and the children (the next generation that will carry the nurturance received at home into their own adult world). The youngest daughter plays with her father's medal, which further underscores both the cost of war (courage means taking risks of being wounded or killed), and its secondary value in comparison to that of home. The 110 years that separate the two events historically in these works are erased by the perenniality of the sentiments they reflect. In both

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1856. See illustration III.
works, it is clear that whether foolish or justified, wars are abnormal; even if life is spared, they divest people of their humanity, of their potential, of what they have been intended for: happiness through the conjugated purposes of domestic and public spheres. The home is either destroyed by them or it gives defeat and victory equal solace after the battle is over, because, beyond all worldly ambition, the home alone is the place where the human heart can find true and lasting fulfillment.

It is also clear that the distinctness of each gender is an essential element of partnership. Sarah Ellis, for instance, denounces what she sees as the error of her time:

Because [women's] talents and virtues place them on a footing of equality with men, it is maintained that their present sphere of action is too contracted a one, and that they ought to share in the public function of the other sex... Two principal points... can here be brought forward which oppose this plan at the very outset; they are – 1st. Placing the two sexes in the position of rivals, instead of coadjutors, entailing the diminution of female influence. 2nd. Leaving the important duties of woman only in the hands of that part of the sex least able to perform them efficiently. 108

Equality therefore is not a matter of both sexes doing the same things, but of each fulfilling its respective responsibilities, aware of the equal value of each sphere within the shared vision that their combined efforts achieve God's plan.

2. Children

It is important to note that although children occupy a place of enormous importance within the domestic sphere, although motherhood is abundantly represented in all its attentiveness and tenderness, as we see in the lithograph of E. K. Johnson, Going to Bed, 109 it does not mean

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109 See illustration IV.
that parents treated their children as equals, as many modern parents do today, or that they sought to be their children's "playmates," or even believed they needed to be constantly together with them. We do have examples of closeness in history or literature: Jane Austen, for instance, enjoyed love and encouragement from her parents and siblings, and the Austen family's life was brimming with affection, joy, and mutual trust;[110] William Wilberforce loved to play with his young children—he closed one of his letters with, "I am irresistibly summoned to play a game of marbles." Garth Lean also reports in his biography of Wilberforce:

> A friend was with him at Gore House one day when, with rising frustration he was searching for a lost dispatch. Just then the clamor from the nursery above reached a crescendo. The friend thought that now, at last, Wilberforce would give way to irritation. Instead he paused and with a delighted smile remarked, 'Only think what a relief, amidst other hurries, to hear their voices and know that they are well.'[111]

Nonetheless, we should not generally look for an exact replica of what we see today in parent-children intercourse. It was not that nineteenth-century mothers, and fathers, were incapable of communicating freely as many parents do today, it was that two essential factors dominated their lives: first, their Judeo-Christian beliefs that humans have been assigned purpose by God and are accountable to Him; second, their awareness that life was fragile and often too brief—a fact hardly deniable with too many women dying in childbirth, high infant mortality, and the very real threat of epidemics. As a consequence, parents focused their attention, not on indulging their children's every whim, but on preparing them adequately for this life and the next, imprinting in them the sense that all the facets of their life—education and talent, power and responsibility, philanthropy, and aspirations—were to be used in the service of God and their fellow men. Both the Protestant

work ethic and the consciousness of one's domestic responsibilities compelled parents to "train up
their children the way they should go," so their natural life would be fruitful and pleasing to God,
and their eternal life should not be paved with hopelessness and regrets.

Particularly revealing is the very moving story of Dean Archibald Tait and his wife,
Catherine, who lost seven of their nine children; the first five, all daughters ranging in age from
five to ten, died of scarlet fever in five weeks in 1856. Patricia Jalland reports that both parents
kept a diary of this terribly painful trial. Dean Tait noted that May, the second oldest daughter,
only nine years old, understanding well what would happen, requested to have one her favorite
hymns, "Victory in Death," read to her. Not only was she not afraid of death, but she also
reassured her parents, telling them not to grieve, knowing that she would be happy in her new
life. Though young, these little girls were very aware of their upcoming death. The spiritual
education they had received at home and the closeness of the family in love and faith enabled
them to even comfort their parents. Twenty-two years later, Tait, now Archbishop of Canterbury,
was to endure another blow when his only son, a promising young curate and about to be married,
was struck down and his death was followed by his mother's a mere six months later.¹¹²

Less traumatic to the reader, but underscoring the same theme, Hester Chapone's Letters
on the Improvement of the Mind, Addressed to a Young Lady, written in 1784, a book of advice
on conduct, and most importantly on outlook on life, composed in the shape of letters from an
aunt to her fifteen-year old niece, devotes three of her ten chapters to the importance of religion,
Scripture, and godly behavior. She warns:

Virtue and happiness are not attained by chance, nor by a cold and languid
approbation; they must be fought with ardour, attended to with diligence. . .

Consider, that good and evil are now before you; that if you do not heartily

their grief, or rather because of it, Tait was able to inspire and comfort those who has endured a similar
tragedy. Nonetheless, Jalland's chapter is heart-wrenching.
choose the one, you must undoubtedly be the wretched victim of the other. . . it
is a truth never to be forgotten, that God has annexed happiness to virtue, and
misery to vice. 113

Virtue, learned through and within the domestic sphere, is therefore essential as it is destined to
be the very "fabric" of the individual. As Chapone reminds her niece:

It is impossible to love God, without desiring to please him, and, as far as we are
able, to resemble him; therefore the love of God, must lead to every virtue in the
highest degree: and we may be sure, we do not truly love him if we content
ourselves to avoid flagrant sins, and do not strive in good earnest, to reach the
greatest degree of perfection we are capable of.114

Indeed, the reality of a domestic life whose material comfort increased through the
century should not mislead us to believe that the possession of a well-appointed home was
intended as an end in itself. It was the backdrop for the training of children in the multiple areas
of life. The outward appearance of the house was to reflect the godliness of the household. To
some extent, nineteenth-century mothers were capable of wonders, their attentiveness
unrelenting, especially if we contrast the fruit of their labor and philosophy with today's situation,
with so many trying children allowed to throw fits in public places, for instance. I remember my
grandmother telling me that she would take her three children with her-- and this when the
youngest was probably no more than three or four--when she was invited to tea. As the plate of
tea cakes was passed around, the children would first look at their mother, as a way to ask
permission to take a piece. A nod from my grandmother would grant consent; on the second
round, the same process would take place, but if Grandmother shook her head, the children would

113 Chapone, Hester, "Chapter I, On the First Principles of Religion," Letters on the Improvement of the
Mind, Adressed to a Young Lady, 1784, (Philadelphia, 1786) January 5, 2008
<http://www.archive.org/stream/lettersonimprove00chapiala>
abstain from taking any sweet. No begging, no crying, no argument, and certainly no tantrum. To this day, I find her handling of children amazing. Although this took place in the early twenties, her Victorian upbringing carried into the post-WWI era, enabling her to bestow a solid foundation for her offspring in the context of a time in history whose confidence and optimism had been tragically shaken.

Children were reared with love and limits. Their days were structured; their hours--whether doing their lessons or taking a walk in the park--were regulated with purpose. To us it may seem too austere and demanding, even unrealistic, but to nineteenth-century parents it was part of what was necessary to raise the citizens of tomorrow. It is interesting to note that Marie Wollstonecraft's first work was a collection of stories for children, *Original Stories from Real Life*, in which two girls are rather spoiled and selfish, as their father indulges them in an effort to compensate for the death of their mother. Fortunately, they are soon taken under the care of a wise and kind woman, Mrs. Mason, the widow of a minister, and transformed into well-educated and generous young ladie by the time they return to their father. The stories are linked together by the presence of Mrs. Mason and the children and by her comments on the moral lessons she applies to the various situations the threesome encounter. Mrs. Mason's methodology relies on observation, reason, common sense, and moral goodness. Decidedly religious, the book concludes with Mrs. Mason's summarizing the fruit of her teaching in a few last words of advice:

Avoid anger; exercise compassion and love truth. Recollect that from religion your chief comfort must spring, and never neglect the duty of prayer. Learn from experience the comfort that arises from making known your wants and sorrows to the wisest and best of Beings, in whose hands are the issues, not only of this life, but of that which is to come. . . . You have already felt the pleasure of doing good.
and the good you intend to do, do quickly; -- for know that a trifling duty neglected, is a great fault, and the present time only is at your command.  

Again the ephemerality of time makes the moment of the essence. There is a consciousness throughout the nineteenth century that society must improve and that this improvement must begin with the individual in the home. For that very reason, Sarah Lewis considers the tradition of sending boys early to public boarding school a grave, if not fatal, error because many temptations and much corruption can eradicate virtues yet unsettled in the young. She recommends that boys be kept at home as long as possible, so that under their mother's daily supervision of their moral and religious education they may be properly equipped before they enter the outer world fraught with snares. She does not imply that the home can replace further education, but she is convinced that intellectual improvement, to be fruitful as divinely intended, must be built upon a spiritual foundation that can nowhere be as efficiently received as in the home.

3. Education

Although the next chapter will treat this topic in more detail, education is also a multifaceted aspect of the domestic sphere. Education addresses the children first, but not only, since from one end of the century to the other, many women underscored in essays as well as in works of fiction the importance of an educated wife and mother as mistress of the domestic sphere. Children started their education at home, but while boys usually left to go to boarding schools and universities, girls often remained at home. Generally, a middle-class girl received a practical education destined to equip her to be mistress of her own home. Mothers would introduce their

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115Wollstonecraft, Mary, Original Stories from Real Life with Conversations Calculated to Regulate the Affections and Form the Mind to Truth and Goodness. 1791, UNL Electronic Library, January 13, 2008 <http://0-galenet.galegroup.com.library.unl.edu/servlet/ECCO?c=1&stp=Author&ste=11&af=BN&ae=T043449&tiPG=1&dd=0&dc=flc&docNum=CW113495427&rsvn=1.0&srchtp=a&d4=0.33&n=10&SU=0LRK&locID=linc74325> 87. This work was first published in 1791, with See illustrations by William Blake.
daughters to basic understanding of economy, household management, and the likes. In humbler homes where the number of servants was limited, older daughters would learn to be second mothers, helping with taking care of younger siblings, as we see in *An Outing.*  

There was another facet to girls' education, which aimed at making them fit for interaction with polite society, essentially by giving them the means to be attractive and helpful to others. To Mary Wollstonecraft, Hannah More and many others this tendency had gone too far, creating shallow women, totally unprepared for their true important role: that of civilizing society through the domestic sphere. It would be erroneous, however, to conclude that girls' education was overall superficial and limited. It is true that many writers condemned vehemently confining girls' education to the acquiring of "accomplishments"; however, those need to be clearly defined. This "superficial" education was not as defective and lacking as modern criticism would have us believe today. It was generally comprised of singing, playing the piano (usually, although Mary Crawford in *Mansfield Park* plays the harp), oral and written fluency in French, sometimes also in Italian, a general understanding of history, and needlework. Most middle-class women in the nineteenth century were known to be avid readers and prolific writers of letters and diaries, even those who never published their writings. Feminine accomplishments enabled a woman to be a pleasant, attentive, and interesting hostess, which in the social activities of the middle and upper classes was rather a necessary tool. Indeed, the French critic, thinker, historian, and Academician Hippolyte Taine spoke admiringly of the English hostesses he met during his sojourn in England, and remarked that one of their key characteristics was their talent to make everyone feel at ease, valued, and included. He noted the breadth of their conversation and appreciated the genuine attention with which they listened to their interlocutors:

> Suffice it to be introduced to be welcomed with perfect politeness. The French are wrong in believing themselves alone possessors of such qualities; in this

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116 See illustration V.
regard, in Europe, there is a similarity among all well-educated people. . . Two
times out of three, when one speaks with a woman here, he feels rested, touched,
almost happy; their welcome is warm and friendly, and what a smile of sweet
goodness and serenity! No hidden motives, the intention, the expression are all
open, natural, cordial. One is much more at ease than with a French woman,
with whom he must worry about being judged or ridiculed; he does not feel as if
he is in the presence of a sharpened, cutting, piercing mind which will quarter
him in an instant, neither does he feel as if he is dealing with a vivid imagination,
demanding, bored, which asks for anecdotes, brilliant *esprit*, entertainment,
flattery, all that sort of sweets, and which will leave him there if he is unable to
provide what is expected. Conversation is neither a duel, nor a competition. One
can speak his mind without artifice; one has the right to be his ordinary self. We
can even, without boring her or sounding pedantic, speak with her of deep
subjects. . . reason with her as with a man\textsuperscript{117}.

Significantly, those who, like Hannah More, Sarah Ellis, or Louise Creighton, criticized
the education of accomplishments objected that the means had been mistaken for the end. Sarah
Ellis, for instance, reminded her readers that the goal of education must be "to prepare the young
for life; its subsequent trials; its weighty duties; its inevitable termination." This is the domain,
more specifically of what Ellis calls, "intellectual education, or that of the mental powers." The
"education of accomplishment," on the other hand, had value but it must take second place. It
should never be a means to put one's talents on display. Ellis, thus, castigates her contemporaries
for having lost the right perspective on education (of girls' in particular) and having invested
everything into "the temporary power to dazzle and to charm."\textsuperscript{118}

\textsuperscript{117} Hippolyte Taine. *Notes sur l'Angleterre*. (Paris,1883) 90-91.
\textsuperscript{118} Ellis "Chapter VI, Education of Women," 58- 63.
This criticism, however, does not hold men responsible for limiting women's education but lambastes women for not taking opportunity of bettering themselves, for being vain, foolish, self-centered and forgetting that these accomplishments will grant only ephemeral rewards. She calls on women and parents to remember the (godly) purpose of education, and assures them that by truly making it a means to enhance the domestic sphere, it will have a far more profound and praiseworthy effect on self, family, society, and even history.

Until the very end of the century, the majority of women, even those supportive of higher education, understood it as a benefit to the domestic sphere, not as a means to be independent from men, to choose career over marriage. Many thought a woman should be able to support herself until she married; she should also be able to acquire a supplemental income if it was needed for the welfare of her family. However, it cannot be stressed enough that this position about education as a means of income was not intended to promote a competition in career pursuit between men and women.

4. Order, Taste, Beauty, Joy

Taking their cue from John Wesley that "cleanliness is next to godliness," women gave great attention to home decoration. As the century progressed, furniture and the general appointment of rooms became increasingly rich and elaborate. Part of the reason for this was the intentional effort to make the home more intimate and enjoyable. If we think, for instance, of what modern terminology would call "window treatment" of the Victorians, the multiplicity of layers, from shades to double curtains, reinforced the separation between the "inner sanctum" and the outside, where the city lay with its filth, solid or air-borne, and its no less unwelcome noises.

Mrs. Beeton is known among other things for her famous formula, "a place for each thing, and each thing in its place." Order was not only practical, it was necessary to survival in a world where few devices existed yet to alleviate the heavy burden of household chores. Certain tasks, for instance, were assigned to certain days, so everything would get done and there would
be no confusion. In larger households, specific tasks were assigned to specific people, (for instance there was the parlor maid and the chamber maid). Activities were carefully catalogued as "daily," "weekly," or "seasonal," usually according to the dictates of common sense, but also the requirements imposed by circumstances. We can see, for example, that nineteenth-century people were accustomed to host parties, and receive guests for several days at a time. This implied great skills of organization, whether to plan the courses of the dinner, the type of the entertainment, or to know how to properly place the guests around the table, so as to respect precedence of rank and to avoid offending anybody.

The specific function of the rooms of the house also reflected efficient management. For instance, there were private rooms intended for the members of the household alone and "public" rooms where guests would be received. There existed also a class-delineation between the family quarters and the servant quarters. Some rooms were the domain of a specific person or function. Mrs. Bennet may have the charge of the whole house, but Mr. Bennet has made the library his inner sanctum within the sanctuary of the home, while Mr. Jarndyce retires in his "growlery." Unlike today where, for most of us, rooms serve several purposes, nineteenth-century women were accustomed to houses with single-purpose rooms (parlor for visitors and conversation; library for books and study, etc.). It is interesting that, as Flanders points out, for many "ownership [was] of less importance than occupancy and display. . . [only] 10 per cent of the population owned their own home, the rest rented." Rents varied from "weekly" (for the poor) to "seven-year leases" for wealthier families.119

Was it because of the transience of life (even for the Victorians, despite medical improvements and longer longevity) that nineteenth-century people seemed to have put little value into owning their home? This might be hard to answer, but the attention given to the look

119 Flanders xxxix.
of the inside was of far more value than that of owning the building. From a woman's point of view this makes sense after all; domesticity is an "inside" job, so to speak.

As Mary Poppins pulls an elegant lamp and potted plant out of her carpet bag, she comments, "a thing of beauty is a joy forever." This, I believe, captures well the nineteenth century's outlook on beauty, particularly in its association with the home. Hunt's illustration of a middle-class interior gives us a glimpse of the importance of images within the home. Indeed, Wellington's Apsley House is rich of the painting collection the Victor of Waterloo acquired through his life. Comments at the museum pointing out some of Wellington's personal favorites further enlighten the visitor about the man's character and values. Beauty in art throughout the nineteenth century serves the double purpose of giving joy and of inspiring, of elevating the soul, two characteristics that fit specifically the *raison d'être* of the domestic sphere.

Some of the objects representing England at the Great Exhibition of 1851, such as the "armor-stove" or Pugin's Gothic-style stove, bespeak the nineteenth century's desire to associate the practical and the beautiful. The fact that such objects were specifically designed for the home underscores not only a certain perfectionism, but also a near obsession with making the most and best out of even the mundane. For instance, if a screen was needed to protect the face from the heat of a stove or fireplace, it soon combined beauty with serviceability, and these wood panels were thus enhanced with embroidery. Similarly, it was not enough for lamps to provide light; they must also be beautiful, and soon objects became more and more ornate, with glass prisms festooning the lamps and multiplying the reflection of light. To experience life to the fullest, individuals must surround themselves with everything that was good, looked good, or represented the good. Thus symbolism was ubiquitous in nineteenth-century painting, for instance, as we have seen with several of Millais' works. Even from the art of flower

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120 See illustration VI.
121 See illustration VII
arrangement could a moral lesson be learned, as there was a language of flowers in which colors, shape, types of flowers conveyed a subtle but very articulated message, as Sheila Pickles reminds us:

Poets have always extolled the virtues of flowers and since Elizabethan times have written of their meanings, but it was the Victorians who turned flower-giving into an art. . . . They practiced the new floral code with the same dedication with which they built their cities and furnished their houses. The choice of flowers was all important, but so too was the manner of presentation. . . . thus tulips presented with their stems uppermost meant blatant rejection from a lover.122

The American Mrs. Rayne dedicates an entire chapter of her deportment book to the "Literature of Flowers," their names and meanings, as she explains:

Flowers are now universally worn and used throughout the civilized world. They are worn by maiden and matron; they decorate every church altar; they adorn the bride and consecrate the dead. In our homes, in the sick-room, in the halls of amusement and the places of business. . . . [flowers] soothe the unrest of human nature.

She further provides a "complete list of flowers," with their interesting connotations, which offer a myriad of possible combinations. Here are just a few examples: "Bachelor's Button: Hope in love; Cherry-tree: Education; Golden Rod: Encouragement; Grape: Charity." Not all flowers meant well, however: If a rose chrysanthemum was a declaration of love, a yellow one indicated slighted love; hellebore signified scandal, lavender: distrust, hyacinth: jealousy, or peony: anger.

As for roses, they could intimate at least twenty-nine things—depending on their colors and types—not all favorable to the receiver.\textsuperscript{123}

5. Reaching outward

Creating a home of beauty not only reflected high moral standards, but it also opened the doors to the edification of the outsiders and/or bore witness of one's moral dimension. As mistress of the house, a woman was hostess to guests as well as to business relations of her husband. Although one is warned "to not judge by appearances," women in the nineteenth century knew much about the "importance of making a good impression." They were very much aware, as the woman of Proverbs 31, that how well the woman functions within her sphere has far reaching-repercussions for the entire household. While it is true that nineteenth-century women did not vote, Sarah Lewis reminds us of something too many modern critics tend to ignore: "A man takes counsel with his wife... The man carries with him to the forum the notions which the woman has discussed with him by the domestic hearth. His strength there realizes what her gentle insinuations inspired."\textsuperscript{124} In other words, husbands and wives discussed political, social, religious concerns at home, and the woman's input was, more often than not, reflected in the husband's own stand and vote in his own sphere. If we further keep in mind that most middle-class marriages were based on love and companionship, it is not surprising that husband and wife would usually share the same ideas, as it is often the case today. The difference with our own time is that nineteenth-century society was satisfied, until the very late part of the century, with the man's vote as representative of the household's views. The home was an embassy through which new ideas, like the abolition of the slave trade, could be discussed and ultimately made their way to the body of authority--Parliament--whose power thus became but the extension of

\textsuperscript{123} Rayne, Mrs., Gems of Deportment and Hints of Etiquette, A Manual of Instruction for the Home, (Detroit: 1882), Chapter 18. Although Rayne is American, she makes abundant references to British authors. She is also well-aware of differences of etiquette or customs between Britain and the U.S.

\textsuperscript{124} Lewis 38.
woman's influence. This is what I meant earlier when I argued that the separation of the spheres was not as rigorous as it is usually understood to be. We can see how the inner circle of influence quickly filters out into the wider circle of the public sphere. Indirectly, through example and good stewardship within their sphere, or directly through interaction with the public sphere, women were capable of enormous contributions even to political decisions without the vote.

However, the same may be true of the opposite. Mrs. Jellyby, with her characteristics of being always immersed in complete chaos, with her servants stealing from her and ignoring their tasks, and with her pitiful husband and her neglected children, some of them small, is the very antithesis of the true woman, and she reaps a sad reward: her home brings shame and pity upon her husband, deprivation and bitterness upon her children, while her extravagant dedication to foreign missions produces no noticeable results and further contributes to make her despicable and ridiculous. It would be, I believe, a mistake to dismiss Mrs. Jellyby as no more than a caricature. As journalist and writer, Jim Forest points out in his essay, "Mrs. Jellyby and St. John of the Cross," Mrs. Jellyby has real-life counterparts whose activism is ultimately shallow and self-serving:

It hardly matters what movement it is that one belongs to: left or right, red or green, nationalist or trans-nationalist, large or small. It could be pacifism, feminism, marxism, anarchism, vegetarianism, human rights, animal rights, some political party, or one’s religion. In any case, ideology, not compassion, tends to become the driving force. Compassion, however much the word may be used, rarely thrives within the climate of movements and causes, except a very narrow compassion focused like a spotlight on a victim group whose needs legitimate the cause. Perhaps one of the main functions of ideology is to confine the area of compassion, so that, for example, one feels compassion for the baby seal being slaughtered for its fur but not for the man whose family may presently depend
upon the fur trade; or feels compassion for one group of war casualties but not another.125

The home was also a beacon. Not only could beggars find some help from the mistress of the house, her participation in charity work could make a difference for many. She was directly involved with the education of the poor in England, Hannah More leading the way with her Cheap Repository Tracts. She viewed her role as that of a Reformer, with a capital "R" because she felt invested with the responsibility to affect others in the service of good. Her presence in the home, as man's companion, equal to him in the divine plan, permeated all in the household. Her civilizing influence could even reach far beyond the home to foreign land, with British wives traveling to India and elsewhere with their husbands, looking at either a future within the strata of diplomacy or on the mission field, worldwide, which was often filled with danger. Indeed, many (women) advocates of the domestic sphere saw no reason to change the status of interaction between men women.

III. Between Pedestals and Trenches (Conclusion)

Within the domain of the domestic sphere, the nineteenth-century woman occupied a position of influence as well as one fraught with challenge. Her teaching, her behavior, her attitudes toward others within and without affected her household and could even transform society.

The importance of the domestic sphere was ubiquitous through the nineteenth century. Almost all the works of literature can relate directly or indirectly to it. For instance, Dr. Frankenstein ruins his chances of domestic happiness because of his refusal to accept God-

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imposed limitations on life on earth and because his motivations are not entirely pure, since he seeks recognition and fame, not just the betterment of Mankind. Instead of listening to the wise counsel of his fiancée, he pursues his obsession and soon finds complete destruction.

Waverley almost commits the same error, but comes to his senses just in time. Scott shows us that the Jacobites in the novel, men as well as women, are literally married to their cause. They bring destruction and chaos, even to themselves, without regret. In contrast, those who demonstrate common sense and a right outlook on life, such as the colonel who rescues Waverley, have a family, and by fighting for the preservation of Great Britain as one nation, they do not fight so much for a political ideal as they do for the defense of what makes all the difference in life: domestic happiness. It is this same domesticity which grants Waverley the inner peace and the excitement he had sought in a war that was really not "his," once he marries Rose.\textsuperscript{126}

In Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler's short story, "Wanted, a Wife" written in 1896, the heroine makes a good man an even better one. Enjoined by his employers to find a wife if he wants to keep his job as headmaster, Jack Mortimer reluctantly starts looking; he has, after all no grand ideals about marriage--" He regarded a wife very much as he regarded a sideboard--viz., as a useful piece of furniture which no middle-aged householder should be without, but which would prove a ridiculously troublesome and cumbrous trinket for a young man to drag all over the country with him." But the one he eventually falls in love with, Violet Majendie, is the one who antagonizes him and teases him until he realizes how mercenary and stuffy he is. Having admitted the truth of her criticism and his love for Violet, Jack resigns, but in declaring his love and finding it requited, gains a wife and even his job back.\textsuperscript{127} As with Elizabeth and Darcy, humor blended with true love makes solid marriages in which the partners are really equals.

Incidentally, the author's own life reflected the same harmony as her heroes after she married (at forty-three) Alfred Lawrence Felkin, a teacher at the Royal Naval School at Mottingham, and wrote a novel with him, *Kate of Kate Hall*.

Although Silas Marner does know something of the solace of home as a sanctuary while he keeps to himself, it is really when Eppie enters his life that he ceases to be an anchorite, silent in his cell. Eppie's home decorating adds curtains to the window, furniture in the room, flowers on the table; she transforms Silas' Spartan hut to a cheerful abode, complete with *domestic* animals. More yet, she civilizes Silas himself. For her sake, he sets aside bitterness and gloom, finds his voice (literally), and discovers anew the blessing of human intercourse.\(^{128}\)

The list of works could go on at length, but the examples above suffice to show that home influence is at the forefront of the nineteenth-century's concerns and ideals, both for women and men. The recognition of the value of the sphere is not understood by most as a means to subjugate and control women, but rather a logical outcome of human nature, talents and interests.

The nineteenth-century woman exists somewhere between being a queen and a soldier fighting in the trenches. She achieves the first through her faith primarily, which motivates her to emulate biblical examples, champions of the domestic sphere, such as the woman of Proverbs 31. The Evangelical revival does bolster the sense of immediacy of the home influence. One of the biggest changes between the earlier and the later parts of the nineteenth century can be found at the government level. With the Regency, people witnessed too many years of immorality, idleness, and extravagance. This moral decay combined with the spiritual revival awakened a desire for improvement. With Victoria at the head of the state, the domestic sphere was invigorated. Middle-class women had more than ever a sense of purpose, a mission before them. They set out to change the world *through* the domestic sphere.

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CHAPTER II  EDUCATION AND EXEMPLARITY

"Such of us as wished to learn, never wanted the means."  Jane Austen.129

The Two Educations of the Nineteenth-Century Woman

Today we understand the idea of "getting an education" as going to college to graduate with a degree that will make the student a more "marketable" candidate in the professional arena. Furthermore, for a woman, access to higher learning is both a given, a right that society owes her, and an opportunity to demonstrate that she is just as competent as a man, if not better, in any career. The fact that she can now choose fields that used to be considered man's alone crowns her success not only in those fields but in her general competition with man since the ante-suffrage age.130 For men and women of the twenty-first century, most often, the understanding of success in career or in life is more a matter of how much money they make, which is interpreted as the recognition of their knowledge, skills and expertise, rather than how harmoniously they fit, with their personal and social calling, within the greater scope of their country's projected image and even in God's plan. Thus, if the modern woman is still concerned with the desire to promote a model, it is one that is dedicated to the pursuit of personal achievement, competitiveness, and independence. There lies, as this chapter will undertake to demonstrate, one of the fundamental differences between the nineteenth century and our modern age.

Not only is our outlook on education and its objectives often at variance with that of the nineteenth century, but also the general interpretation, from Academia to media, is that women then were pretty much barred from learning and were even deliberately maintained in a state of

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130 Education is after all only one battlefield in the war among the sexes. This "war" has always existed and can easily be traced in the past all the way to Lysistrata, for instance. However this rivalry has, with some variations, usually taken the form of intellectual sparing, but has never reached the levels of open hostility brought in by modern radical feminism.
fashionable superficiality and general ignorance. When dealing with nineteenth-century cultured
or even scholarly women, the modern public is told that these were rare exceptions to the norm
and should in no circumstances be considered as a significant part of the educational spectrum of
the period. By and large, nineteenth-century women are to be understood, as dictated by modern
canons, as Joan Perkins describes them in *Victorian Women*:

> They read novels from the circulating library, wrote letters or did embroidery in
the morning, spent the afternoon shopping or visiting, and their evening drinking
tea or going to concerts or parties. This was the life of an unmarried young
woman that Florence Nightingale described as 'listless and purposeless'." 131

This dismissive simplification would be amusing if it did not come from a scholar.

While matters of schooling address first the unmarried woman, it is understood that the
effects of her upbringing are felt long afterward, in her married life, in her impact as a mother,
and in her interaction with the world at large. It is therefore not surprising to discover that in
today's estimation the married woman of the nineteenth-century is viewed as somewhat
intellectually deficient as well:

> To get ready for courtship and marriage a girl was groomed like a racehorse. In
addition to being able to sing, play an instrument and speak a little French or
Italian, the qualities a young Victorian gentlewoman needed, were to be innocent,
virtuous, biddable, dutiful and be ignorant of intellectual opinion. . . Whether
married or single all Victorian women were expected to be weak and helpless, a
fragile delicate flower incapable of making decisions beyond selecting the menu
and ensuring her many children were taught moral values. 132

The modern assumptions about the nineteenth-century woman no doubt stem, in part, from the fact that women did not go to universities until the late 1840s, with the creation of Queen's College in 1848. However, as we shall see, this does not mean that they were actually lacking in academic knowledge, nor does it imply that their intellectual influence upon society was negligible.

When we look at the nineteenth century as a whole, from about 1789 to 1919, we are compelled to distinguish between two major types of education. The first, which I call "mercenary," is the "superficial" teaching decried by many then and erroneously interpreted now as the norm of women's schooling for the period, while the second, which I contrast as "substantial," is of a deeper intellectual content, yet does not suggest that women pursuing higher learning did so generally as a means to break away from the domestic ideal.

I. Mercenary Education

1. Objectives and Criticism

Upon entering society, a young woman of the middle or upper classes was expected to be "accomplished," which is to say that she was to be able to display the mastery of skills, acquired from childhood, that were fit for her gender and social status. There were two primary purposes to this form of education: the first was to enable the young woman to shine in society, and attract attention to herself by making a good impression; the second, directly linked to the first, was to "catch" a husband of rank and means equal or superior to her own. Throughout the century, women writers express disapproval of as well as alarm about this form of training for girls.

In her famous A Vindication for the Rights of Women, Wollstonecraft denounces this kind of upbringing as the characteristic of the rich and middle classes: "Perhaps the seeds of false refinement, immorality, and vanity, have ever been shed by the great. Weak, artificial beings, raised above the common wants and affections of their race, in a premature, unnatural manner,
undermine the very foundation of virtue, and spread corruption through the whole mass of society.\footnote{Wollstonecraft, Mary, \textit{A Vindication to the Rights of Woman}, 1792, (New York: Dover Publications, 1996) 7-8.} Although she was rightfully considered a radical, Wollstonecraft's views echo in many ways those of the Evangelical Hannah More, Sarah Lewis, or Sarah Ellis, as she reminds her contemporaries that "elegance is inferior to virtue" and that this type of education tends to make girls "vain and helpless" and to place them "in a state of perpetual childhood, unable to stand alone."

First appalled by the lack of substance in what girls learned, which they translated as a means to not only maintain women in a state of prolonged, if not perpetual, irresponsibility, but of mental and moral shallowness as well, what really repulsed these women writers was the fact that the main aim of such an education was not what it should have been--desire to be the best one can be in the service of God and others--but to render young women attractive and polished enough to secure wealthy or titled husbands (preferably both) and ensure a future of financial security and social respectability. Wollstonecraft, for instance, expresses her contempt in no uncertain terms: "They [women] spend many of the first years of their lives in acquiring a smattering of accomplishments; meanwhile strength of body and mind are sacrificed to libertine notions of beauty, to the desire of establishing themselves. . . by marriage."

Already in 1777, Hannah More had pointed out the true place of appearance and virtue, in her \textit{Essays for Young Ladies}: "Let the exterior be made a considerable object of attention, but let it not be the principal, let it not be the only one.—Let the graces be industriously cultivated, but let them not be cultivated at the expence [sic] of the virtues.—Let the arms, the head, the whole person be carefully polished, but let not the heart be the only portion of the human anatomy, which shall be totally overlooked."\footnote{More, Hannah More, \textit{Essays on Various Subjects, Principally Designed for Young Ladies}, 1777, (Project Gutenberg, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/19595/19595-h/19595-h.htm>) 37.}
Since middle-class women were rarely understood as having a need to find a remunerated profession, it was considered the natural course of things that they would marry and rear children, just as it was expected that young men would marry and be the providers of their families. Katherine Chorley, who was born in 1897, remembers, as she writes in 1950, that in the early 1900s, "no woman in her family circle had a career or a paid job since it would have cast 'an unbearable reflection of incompetence upon the money-getting male."\footnote{Chorley, Katherine. \textit{Manchester Made Them}, 1950, quoted in Purvis, June \textit{A History of Women's Education in England}, (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1991) 7. From Chorley's account here, it seems evident that the pressure was really and primarily on the men: they had to be good providers. If things deteriorated to the point that middle-class women \textit{had} to get a paid job, it was first an embarrassment for the husband, father, or brother who was thus revealed as failing the responsibilities of his sphere. Second, it was also an embarrassment to these women, who must acknowledge that the men of their family had failed their duties.}

Equipping both genders for their future responsibilities would hardly have been amiss, had it not become clear to the attentive observer that this form of instruction was focusing more on "show" than on practicality. In 1839, Sarah Lewis was outraged at the misconstrued priorities given by parents for the education of their daughters: "Is it not cruel to lay up for them [young women] a store of future wretchedness, by an education which has no period in view but one; a very short one, and the most unimportant and irresponsible of the whole life?\footnote{Lewis 61.} Lewis emulates the writing of French educationist, Pierre-Aimé Martin, whose key belief in the matter of girls' education was "To instruct young ladies is to found a school in each household."\footnote{Original, "Instruire les jeunes filles, c'est faire une école de chaque maison."} For him as for nineteenth-century British women, and many men, like Charles Kingsley, girls had the power to change society through the home. Lewis' alarm, therefore, grows further as she considers the effects, in the short and long terms, of an education given with complete disregard for this principle:

\begin{quote}
To live for the applause of the \textit{foolish} many, instead of the approbation of the well-judging \textit{few}; to rule duty, conscience, morals, by a low worldly standard; to
view worldly admiration as the aim, and worldly aggrandizement as the end of life. . .these have infected every rank, from the highest to the middle to the lower classes of society. . .The so-called mental cultivation frequently consists only of a pedantic heaping up of information valuable indeed in itself, but wanting the principle of combination to make it useful. Stones and bricks are. . .very valuable; but they are not beautiful or useful until the hand of the architect has given them a form, and the cement of the bricklayer has knit them together. . .

How can the vain and selfish exhibitor of paltry acquirements ever mature into the mother of the Gracchi, --the tutelary guardian of the rising virtues of the commonwealth?

Sarah Stickney Ellis, in 1843, expressed the same apprehension:

There is scarcely a fact presented to our knowledge. . . a subject brought to our consideration, which may not be ennobled by conducing in some way or other, to the improvement of our moral being. It will readily be perceived, however, that this exercise of the power of conversation would be utterly unattainable to a woman of ignorant or vulgar mind. . . And here I would again advert to an expression not unfrequently [sic] heard among young ladies, that they do not wish to be clever; by which we are left to suppose, by their neglect of their own minds, that they mean either well-informed, or capable of judging rightly. Yet without having paid considerable attention to the improvement and cultivation of their intellectual powers, how will it be possible for them to raise the general tone of thought and conversation at their own fireside?

138 Lewis 59-66.
139 Ellis 36.
The concern continued as the century progressed. Maria Grey echoed her predecessors' criticisms in a paper she read before the Society of Arts in 1871: "What [women] are educated for is to come up to a certain conventional standard accepted in the class to which they belong, to adorn (if they can) the best parlour or the drawing-room, as it may be, to gratify a mother's vanity, to amuse a father's leisure hours, above all, to get married."140 Although their wording is scrupulously proper, these writers go as far as associating this form of education to prostitution, especially when, added to the absence of mutual love, or even respect, there was a discrepancy in age, as we saw in Millais triptych on marriage in the previous chapter.141 Wollstonecraft exclaims, "Surely these weak beings are only fit for a seraglio!" While Hannah More, whose Evangelical convictions place her at the opposite end of the British ideological spectrum from Wollstonecraft, issues in her extremely popular Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education a similar condemnation:

[For women] to use their boasted power over mankind to no higher purpose than the gratification of vanity or the indulgence of pleasure, is the degrading triumph of those fair victims of luxury, caprice, and despotism, whom the laws and the despotism of the voluptuous prophet of Arabia exclude from light, and liberty, and knowledge." She fervently hopes that, instead, women, "richly endowed with the bounties of Providence, will not content themselves with polishing when they are able to reform; with entertaining, when they may awaken; and with captivating for a day, when they may bring into action powers of which the effects may be commensurate with eternity.142

141 See Millais, Marriage for Rank, in Chapter One.
What already surfaces in these texts is the interesting fact that the blame for girls' and women's limited education and insubstantial minds cannot be put entirely at men's door, not even fathers', for it appears that many a young woman was more than willingly embracing glamour and superficiality, even if she had the option of something better, as More or Ellis clearly suggest she had. The trend is a persistent one, because from one end of the century to the other, writers condemn such selling of one's self for material security. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth is horrified to see her friend Charlotte, though far superior in intelligence to Mr. Collins, willingly bind herself to a man she despises, simply because she knows her material security will be assured by doing so. Charlotte definitely indulges her mercenary instincts. Although many, even today, excuse her shallow choice from the fact that her options were limited, it should not be forgotten that at that point in the story Elizabeth's own prospects are equally limited, yet she never envisions a compromise. In the same way, Fanny, in *Mansfield Park*, or even Jane Austen herself may have been tempted for a moment to allow convenience to supersede ideals and insight, but eventually the depth of their moral conviction enabled them to resist such degrading impulses. The scathing remarks of Mrs. Rayne, who wrote her "manual of instruction for the home" for the American readership in 1882, show that mercenary tendencies were not limited to Britain: "The girls of the present time are more sordid than their grandmothers were. . .They have luxurious tastes, and wish to keep them, and govern their lives accordingly." 143

It is important to note that, as we see with Charlotte Lucas, mercenary education does not necessarily imply that these young women were lacking in intelligence--although that could also be the case, if we think, for instance, of Maria Bertram--but that they were trained, and accepted such training without much objection, to be "showcased" to their best advantage. While being an "accomplished" young lady sounded laudable, these "accomplishments" for their own sake carried no real depth of mind and heart and were no more than a means of advertisement for

143 Rayne 176.
marriage. Although the men, young and old, caught in the trap of choosing a "pretty face" for
wife may have in some instances deserved their fate (like the pitiful Mr. Rushworth) because of
their lack of insight, many worthy men also paid the high price of conjugal misery for mistaking
appearance for content. In Middlemarch, George Eliot lets us witness the down-spiraling life of
Dr. Lydgate, essentially a good and intelligent man, whose noble ambitions for the welfare of
mankind come to nothing because of his tragic error of marrying the wrong woman. Indeed,
Rosamond possesses all the "qualities" of the "accomplished young lady": she has taste, plays the
piano, knows what it takes to be a proper hostess, and she is aware of what a successful
physician's home should look like to project respectability; she has, however, absolutely no
understanding of her husband as a man or as a doctor. He desires to be remembered for his
medical contribution to the world; she desires to be admired and envied by all for being the
wealthy wife of a handsome and successful physician. Far from Ruskin's conviction that "All
such knowledge should be given to her [woman] as may enable her to understand, and even to
aid, the work of men," 144 Rosamond is the frightening epitome of this mercenary schooling in
which all the right priorities are misplaced for the sake of opportunity, worldly satisfaction, and
self-gratification.145

2. Contents and Pedagogy of Formal Schooling

It would be hasty, however, to overlook what this education truly consisted of simply
because its objectives went amiss. The notion of "accomplishments" can be traced back to the
seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, although even before then a young woman of "good family"
was already expected to dance, sing, and speak a foreign language well. Purvis, in A History of
Women's Education in England, lists singing, language, drawing, dancing, deportment, sewing
and embroidery, moral and religion, reading, and some history and geography as the norm of

145 Eliot, George, Middlemarch, 1872, (Read by Kate Reading, Audiobooks: Tanto Media, 2006).
formal education in the upper middle class. Depending on the family's means and interests, music, study of the classics, arithmetic, science, and Latin, philosophy or even Greek could be added to the curriculum.

While it is true that girls' education, for the most part, took place at home with the mother, and often with the help of governesses, the latter were often chosen because they were natives of France or Italy, so they could speak constantly to their charges in their native tongues, which even today is considered the best way to become fluent in a foreign language. At the boarding school of Madame Beck, Lucy Snow is first hired as nanny for the headmistress's three children, precisely because she is English in an otherwise French-speaking context.146 French was usually the favored foreign language, followed closely by Italian. The abundant use of French words and quotations without translation in nineteenth-century works of fiction and non-fiction shows plainly that both authors and readers were familiar with it.

Of course, the depth of this formal education was susceptible to vary greatly depending, as today, on the quality of the teacher as well as on the level of intelligence and eagerness of the pupil, the degree of intellectual inclination of the parents, and the resources available. For instance, for a determined student, the existence of a well-appointed library in the house could sometimes palliate the limited knowledge of a governess.

Sometimes girls were sent to day schools for a few years. Characteristically, the teacher, a widow or spinster, taught in her own house and kept the number of her students small so as to maintain a home atmosphere. When it was convenient or affordable, young ladies went to boarding schools or "finishing" schools to put the last polish on their education. Again the family atmosphere was viewed as particularly important. In her article, "Behind the School Walls," Christina de Bellaine compares French and English boarding schools for girls between 1810 and

1867, and notes that, "in England, schoolmistresses tended to cultivate warm relationship with their pupils and often characterized their role in maternal terms."\textsuperscript{147} Indeed, although Jane Eyre's life is marked by painful episodes while she is at Lowood, the kind and attentive Miss Temple creates, in her private rooms, a small home for Helen and Jane. Purvis mentions that often schoolmistresses were called "aunts" by their students.\textsuperscript{148}

3. Perspective

Of course, even in the schools, excesses existed. The former student of a boarding school in Brighton (1836-38) wrote, "Everything was taught in the inverse ratio of their true importance. At the bottom of the scale were Morals and Religion, and at the top were Music and Dancing."\textsuperscript{149} Not only did writers of both genders denounce this counter-productive form of education, but it was also the target of caricaturists. Edward Francis Burney's caricature, An \textit{Elegant Establishment for Young Ladies} \textsuperscript{150} displays several aspects of the learning process of these accomplishments. The general chaotic atmosphere is striking and bespeaks misguidance of the parents registering their daughters in such establishments (visible in the far left, with possibly the headmistress, seated at a desk, writing the name of the new recruit), of the various and ludicrous teachers and their pedagogies, and of the girls who willingly submit themselves to such teaching, to the point of exhaustion (as testify the two fainted girls in the center, unless they are practicing a good posture exercise). Many typical aspects of girls' education are recognizable here. From left to right, we see a soldier teaching deportment with military thoroughness and exigency to two girls; next, a sort of Mameluk instructs a young woman how to dance properly with a tambourine (the very presence of such a character hints at the "seraglio" mentioned by Wollstonecraft and More which they associate, as we saw, with this mercenary education), while a muscular helper


\textsuperscript{148} Purvis 72.

\textsuperscript{149} Quoted in Purvis 69.

\textsuperscript{150} See illustration I.
under the supervision and approval of an older schoolmistress (who looks like a witch or, maybe more to the point, like the provider for a house of ill-repute) stretches another young lady by the jaw; her posture is supposedly improved by the contrary pulls exerted by this "hanging" and the weights she holds in her hands. In front of them, a dandy gives dancing lessons; the girl holding a string or ribbon for measurement, to the right, rests her elbow on a table that reads, "All the world is a stage" which further underscores the ridicule play these people, instructors and students, are willing to make of their life. Farther back, in front of the window, an art teacher seems more interested in his pretty student than in her work; another young woman sings or disclaims with great drama before her instructor, while the girl on the far right exerts herself at the piano.

Furthermore, in this world of display, clearly represented by the conspicuous mirror in the room, no attention is given to morality and religion: young ladies paste inscriptions on the back of several instructors, an evident mark of disrespect, and worse yet, beyond the large window in the back, we can see a young woman escaping through another window, probably to elope with the young man waiting below with his carriage. This girl could be the wisest of the group, but her recourse to deceit bears yet a negative tone on the form of education illustrated here in two possible ways: either this schooling is superficial and unable to teach girls real values for life, or this foolish teaching is so vain and ridiculous, that the sensible girls are forced to break the rules to escape its damaging influence. Either way, this reflects very poorly on the value of acquiring "accomplishments."

4. Nuances and Legitimations

The concept of "image" is at the core of education ("mercenary" or "substantial" alike). Women, as well as men, must project an outward appearance that is to be representative of their status, their beliefs, ideals, and mores at their best. The higher one's position is in society, the more in view it is, thus the justification of the time that schooling is particularly justified for those
likely called to be examples to those beneath them in the social scale. However, the Industrial Revolution ushered in abundance, created new wealth, and enlarged the prospects of many, causing shifts in the social set up. Mr. and Mrs. Boffin, in Our Mutual Friend, for instance, must consider altering their circumstances, once they find themselves in possession of a fortune. While their looks pronounce them to belong to the wealthy circle of the middle class, their language and limited education reveal them as part of the working or lower middle classes. Fortunately, the Boffins are gifted with a heart of gold, humility, morals, and common sense, so they emerge as truly admirable at the end of the novel. People moving upward on the social ladder do not necessarily fare as well as the Boffins, however. It becomes clear that "education" means more than acquired knowledge when we look at Gilray's 1809 caricature, Farmer Giles and that the main purpose of this family is to imitate their "betters" now that they have the means to do so. If their pride blinds them to their unfitness, the dog in the right corner of the picture is painfully aware of it.  

Although this essay does not ignore the real superficiality that could exist in the century, it also seeks to avoid overlooking the justifications that could be legitimately found for this formal and accomplished education. The same truth extends to America. For instance, Mrs. Lincoln has been judged severely by modern historians for the extravagant sums she invested into the refurbishing of the White House, which she found in terrible shape: "The furniture was broken down, the wallpaper peeling, the carpeting worn, and the draperies torn. The eleven basement rooms were filthy and rat-infested. The whole place had the air of a run-down, unsuccessful third-rate hotel." It is true that she did get carried away and greatly overspent, but her objective, if not her strategy, was valid. She was aware that the presidential house should reflect the greatness of the nation it represented. It was obvious to her—as it would have been to

151 See illustration II.
any woman of her class and in her situation--that mismatched dishes, faded drapes, and worn carpets would never do.

Modern criticism of nineteenth-century formal or accomplished education overlooks other significant details. For instance, while such schooling did not require young women to be masters in any of the subjects mentioned above, the ratio teacher-student alone, whether at home or in girls' schools, allowed for a better chance to learn than in a modern classroom of twenty or thirty pupils, and the skills acquired, though some of them seem obsolete to the twenty-first century analyst, did have a use. For example, music and dancing were an important part of middle- and upper-classes' life, and before we dismiss them as vain, we should maybe reflect on the occupations and entertainments of our own age and compare them in terms of "wasted time" to watching television or playing video games. Deportment, fashion, drawing, embroidery, attention to decoration, and the art of letter writing--all had their purpose within the daily routine of middle- and upper-class young women called to make their future homes a sanctuary as well as an embassy. For instance, a former student writes, "We were taught how to write notes to our equals, invitations, acceptances; inquiries for invalids, characters of servants, letters to our elders, and letters to strangers who [sic] we were supposed to have met."153

Letters play a significant role in Pride and Prejudice (once an epistolary novel, in fact); they show Darcy and Elizabeth as insightful and wise. For Darcy, his letter to Elizabeth concerning Wickham is a means to explain himself thoroughly but with self-control. The same letter has more impact than spoken words would have on Elizabeth, because reading allows for pause, reflection, and analysis. Although Darcy writes the letter, Elizabeth's attitude is transformed by it, because it is medium she respects more than what Darcy could have said directly. Letters were an efficient means of teaching as well. For instance, Hester Chaponne in her Letters on the Improvement of the Mind, Addressed to a Young Lady, takes the persona of an

153 Purvis 72.
aunt writing to her fifteen-year-old niece and advising her on the importance of religion and morality, and providing her with other tips on education and conduct. The importance correspondence played then should not necessarily surprise us if we compare it (at least in frequency and variety of addressees, if not in quality of content) to today's internet mail exchange. Furthermore, it is because so many women (and men as well) took the time to maintain a regular and abundant epistolary life and kept diaries that we are able to know so much about them.

II. Substantial Education

1. Contrasting Perspective

It must first be observed that the essential difference between "mercenary" and "substantial" educations resides less in the contrast of the subjects taught than in the purpose, we could even say "vision," with which they were taught. Again we get our first clues from Mary Wollstonecraft and Hannah More. The former held that women should receive an intellectual schooling so they could be fit companions to men, intelligent teachers to their children, and better citizens; the latter objected that education, instead of pretending to serve God when it really aimed at satisfying the self, should be the first step to true godliness. More argued that reading gives direct access to Scripture, from which one can learn about God and His interaction with Mankind, salvation, and the Christian walk; once one understands one's place in life as part of God's plan, then one can strive to improve one's self, to be a better Christian. By doing so, one becomes a better woman (or man), spouse, parent, and citizen.

There was nothing particularly wrong with the subjects taught in the curriculum of an "accomplished" young woman, as long as it was done with the proper perspective in mind, which was to bring out the finest of Christian womanhood in young women. As Sarah Lewis points out,

154 Strictures 7-8.
"Let the light of intellect and the charm of accomplishments be the willing handmaids of cultivated and enlightened conscience." 155 With this understanding, music, for instance, is a means of creating beauty and joy, of elevating the soul, of bringing pleasure to self and others. "There is no feeling, except, perhaps, the extremes of fear and grief, that does not find relief in music," exclaims George Eliot.156 Therefore, making display the sole purpose of music is demonstrating narrowness of mind and misuse of a godly talent. In the same spirit, More began writing plays for her pupils so they could enjoy the exercise, and learn the benefits of good diction from it, without endangering their minds with corrupting worldliness.

The scope of a substantial education was far broader than that of its mercenary counterpart. Not only did it seek more than the immediate outlet of the "advantageous" marriage, it also combined religious, intellectual, and practical interests, and required hard work and determination to achieve a greater good. Josephine Butler, who played an active part in support of higher education for women, in the second half of the century, describes it in these terms: "This question of woman's education is far from being of intellectual progress merely; it is a question of deep moral import, and enters far into the heart of society, affecting the best interests of men as well as those of women." 157

The religious element is consistently present in matter of education through the century from Hannah More who, as Susie Steinbach notes, "encouraged elite women to take their personal moral values seriously and to extend their public influence,"158 to Anna Leonowens, who bravely traveled to the court of Siam to teach King Mongkut's children, to Florence Nightingale, Josephine Butler, and the pioneers of women's higher education. Louise Creighton stresses the

155 Lewis 65.
158 Steinbach 86.
importance of making time for learning in youth so education can fuel later life and be most beneficial to self, family and society:

Few complaints are heard more frequently than the lament or excuse, "I have no time"... they [those who complaint so] allow other people, conventions, fashions, society to control it [time] for them whilst they are carried along powerless... Soon life will be gone, and only very few will be able to feel that they have made out of it anything like what they hoped and intended... Each different period of life has its differing duties and opportunities. Youth is the time of preparation, of learning. It is hard to acquire afterwards the mental and physical training which can be acquired in youth with comparative ease. Middle life is the time for work and activity. We have found ourselves, we know the work we have to do, we know the work we can do, we are in full stream. Old age is the time of fruition, when the garnered wisdom of years can be given out for the service of men.159

In passing, it is interesting to note that, although the primary goal of "substantial" education was not to be noticed by the other sex and to make a "good match," many educated women found love and life-long happiness in marriage through higher education; among some of the most famous examples, we can cite Louise and Mandell Creighton, Josephine and George Butler, or Mary and Humphry Ward.

2. Religious Foundation

This close connection between Christianity and education was not new and can be traced to the Reformation, as the belief in the priesthood of all believers stressed by Luther made it imperative that the biblical text be accessible, in the vernacular, to anyone, provided one could

read, of course. The Sunday school movement, which started in 1784, was born of this fervent desire to enable even the children of the poor to read the Bible. George III had expressed the wish "that every poor child in my kingdom be taught to read the Holy Scripture"\textsuperscript{160} and Protestant Britain fully understood the importance of this objective, both religiously so as to fend off any Catholic endeavor to reclaim England, and politically so as to grant people enough freedom so they would see no need to destroy the strength and unity of the kingdom by bringing about a revolution like the one that had devastated France. Individual access to Scripture has indeed always been a Protestant trademark; in Catholic France under Louis XIV, for instance, a peasant who could read was immediately spotted as a heretic and sent to jail or the galleys. Not only was reading the portal to religious freedom, it offered, for those willing to seize it, the power of knowledge and wisdom, the last thing a despot like the "Sun-King" wanted his people to have. It is not surprising, therefore, that in the early schools of England the Bible itself was used as a primer.

By and large, English schools began as religious establishments, whether they were privately owned and directed, like the Day schools, or controlled by groups, such as the "British Schools," founded in 1808, supported by non-Conformists and the Foreign Bible Society. The National Schools that appeared in 1811 were also established on Biblical principles. Although Quakers were non-Conformists, they pioneered Christian education in Britain, reaching out beyond the middle-class, to which many of them belonged, to the poor. As Kerry Allen and Allison Mackinnon point out in "Allowed and Expected to be Educated and Intelligent," George Fox, founder of The Society of Friends, believed that girls should be educated as well as boys, a position in accordance with the sense of equality between the sexes, and the freedom recognized to Quaker women in general, from the right to commercial enterprise to that of public expression of their faith. Because Quakers firmly believed that poverty, crime, and prostitution were the

\textsuperscript{160} Perkin 45.
result of poor or inexistent education, women Quakers played a key role in establishing schools, teaching, training teachers, raising funds for the purchase and maintenance of school buildings, supervising curricula, and inspecting existing schools, as Camilla Leach notes in her article, "A Civil and Useful Life." However, religious convictions did affect, at first, the curriculum followed in Quaker schools: music, dancing, singing, and "fancy" needlework were abandoned for their worldliness; Latin, because of its association with Catholicism, was also discarded. Instead more attention was given to English literature, history, geography, arithmetic, grammar, writing, and elocution. Later, in the 1870s, science, and especially the teaching of art and music were added, as they were essential to any young woman with any hope of being hired for the position of governess.

Quaker or no, however, teaching was early on a field of predilection for the middle-class woman; one in which she could fully use the feminine attributes of her sphere: nurturing, being a moral and spiritual guide, setting an example to help girls blossom into godly women. Even for a spinster, it opened the possibility to be a surrogate mother (to use Josephine Butler's expression) to her students, as she built on the intellectual and religious foundation that had first begun at home.

Parallel to and because of Christianity, the discipline of history played an important role as wisdom was to be acquired from the lessons of the past. Apart from the works addressed to adult readers, authors paid careful attention in awakening interest in history among the young, with examples such as Dickens' *A Child's History of England*, Agnes Strickland's *Lives of the...*
Queens of England and Tales from English History, or Charlotte Yonge's Young Folks' History of France.

3. Home Education

While mothers were primarily involved in the education of their children, it would be an error to think fathers had no input in their daughters' learning, as the frontispiece to Samuel Goodrich's Fireside Education illustrates. While it is not in question that some parents were more gifted than others, home education followed, by and large, a demanding and effective discipline. In Helen Allingham's Lessons, the comfort of the schoolroom and the gentle expression of the teacher (mother or governess) certainly does not imply getting away with poorly-done work, and the little girl looks very much like she is getting in trouble for not knowing her lesson. Despite the modern verdict on the subject, the number of intellectual women in the nineteenth-century is indeed impressive, and what is even more exciting is the discovery that many, many fathers were not the repressive patriarchs they have so often been painted to be by twenty-first century analysts.

Hannah More studied theology, Latin, Italian, Spanish. She and her sisters were strongly encouraged by their father, who personally initiated Hannah to Latin and arithmetic, and also helped his daughters set up a school. More's literary talents received recognition outside the home by the time she was sixteen. Like Fanny Burney, she enjoyed the esteem and friendship of the redoubtable Samuel Johnson, one of the greatest authorities in the British literary world of the late eighteenth-century.165

164 See illustration III.
165 Johnson, Henry, “Hannah More,” Excellent Women, London: ca Late 1800s, Project Gutenberg: 2003, February 15, 2008 <http://www.gutenberg.org>, (This anthology is a collection of ReligiousTract Society publications). It is reported that on first meeting Hannah More, Dr. Johnson recited one of her poems, which shows that her reputation had preceded her and that his admiration was genuine, for it was not in his habit to flatter.
Maria Edgeworth possessed the complete trust of her father, who greatly appreciated and supported her talents as a writer. The Edgeworth family having grown quite large--twenty-one children from Richard L. Edgeworth's successive marriages--Maria Edgeworth's didactic talents were duly recognized as she supervised her siblings' schooling. Furthermore, her father also treated her much as a partner in the administration of the family's estate. As a pedagogue, Edgeworth, like Hannah More with her Tracts, chose fiction to convey moral guidance through entertainment, perceiving that children are not the only ones reachable through tales. However, even her works for adults carry moral edification and compelling readers to good stewardship.  

Jane Austen was encouraged by her entire family to write. Reverend Austen was so convinced of his daughter's talent that he, himself, took her first book (Sense and Sensibility) to a publisher. I have no doubt that the closeness between Elizabeth and Mr. Bennet was inspired, in part, by Austen’s relationship with her father, although her mother was equally supportive of her daughter's writing interests. It is no accident that Jane Austen has Elizabeth say to Lady de Bourgh, "Such of us as wished to learn, never wanted the means." With Reverend Austen not only teaching his sons at first, but also taking in boarders to prepare them for university, there can be no doubt that Jane Austen grew up in an atmosphere propitious to the development of talents and wit. The strong family bond was an added encouragement, even if her brother Henry was so enthusiastic about her success with Pride and Prejudice that he was probably single-handedly responsible for breaking the secret of her anonymity to the public.  

The Anglophile and Protestant Swiss-French Germaine (Necker) de Staël learned early from her parents the importance of thinking for herself. At twelve, she went with her mother to visit Voltaire; at thirteen, she began to participate actively in her mother's literary salon.

Germaine de Stael was, like Austen, or Nightingale, very close to her father. The Neckers devoted all their loving attention on their single daughter, and although she later strayed from the moral principles taught by her mother, with her numerous affairs tainting her personal adult life, she put the freedom of speech, the dedication to culture, and to political liberty she had inherited from her parents to courageous use, and contributed significantly to the literary world of her time.168

Charlotte Brontë, it is true, had first dreamed of becoming an artist; however, she was forced to renounce this project because of the combination of her poor eyesight and the family's limited funds, not because of any opposition from her family. The Brontë children had indeed great freedom of creation in art and writing. Elizabeth Gaskell reports how Patrick Brontë, despite a life peppered with trials and tragedies that could have made many despondent and bitter, was exceedingly pleased when Charlotte presented him with the news of her success with Jane Eyre.169 She may not have enjoyed teaching much, but her father had made it possible for her to learn French; her fluency, clearly evident in Villette, was a solid asset, had she chosen to pursue the field of education.

Christina Rossetti grew up in a home of artists, scholars, and revolutionaries bound with family love. Taught, with her siblings, by her mother, she was thoroughly encouraged in her writing by her family; her maternal grandfather, proud of her literary accomplishments, had a collection of her poems privately printed.170

Florence Nightingale learned music and drawing; her father personally took care of teaching Florence and her sister Greek, Latin, French, Italian, history, composition, mathematics,

169 Gaskell. Life 319-327.
170 Duguid, Lindsay, “Rossetti, Christina (1830-1894) poet”, ODNB. February 12, 2008.
and philosophy. Although her parents did not like her choice of a career, the family remained close, and she later gained an added supporter to her cause in her brother-in-law.  

Despite his initial disapproval of his daughter's decision to become a doctor, Elizabeth Garrett's father subsequently spared no effort to support her, threatening with legal action, for instance, the Society of Apothecaries until it conceded that she would be able to take the examinations if she completed the courses. While her determination and intelligence allowed her to eventually reach her goal, her father's trust in her ability and respect of her choice played no little part in her ultimate success.

Amelia Edwards was an insatiable reader from childhood. She not only wrote poems and short stories early, which began being published in periodicals when she was only fourteen, but she also illustrated her works. Her passion for music led her to write compositions and even to be appointed organist at St Michael's church, in Wood Green (Middlesex), at the age of nineteen. While she taught music, her mastery of French and Italian was strong enough for her to publish translations, until she decided, in 1853, to become a full-time writer.

Agnes Strickland's father believed that "girls should be educated upon the same plan as boys because. . .it strengthened the female mind," instead of "over-stressing" it as some thought, so he taught his daughters Latin and mathematics and made them write synopses and analyses of the works of literature and history they read. Agnes and her sisters were encouraged to occupy the winter months with writing stories, becoming patrons of the library, and join the local intellectual elite. In fact, along with one of their two brothers, all, except one, of the Strickland daughters who survived to adulthood became writers. Poet and historian, Strickland contributed a

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"picturesque" approach to the Past, endeavoring to develop in children, in particular, a love for history. Grace Aguilar's early life is closely mirrored in the character of Clara, in "The Authoress." Like her heroine, she enjoyed a loving and nurturing home. She established with her mother a religious (Jewish) school for boys. Although very open and tolerant toward Christianity, she became a Jewish apologist through works of fiction and non-fiction; she also wrote novels and stories that expressed values of home, love, faith, morality, and women's role shared by Christians and Jews alike. It is to Mrs. Aguilar, her mother, that we owe the preservation and publication of most Grace Aguilar's works.

Sometimes, husbands were the greatest supporters of their wives' talents. Such were the cases of Ann Radcliffe, Fanny (Burney) D' Arblay, Mary Brunton, Elizabeth Gaskell, Sarah Ellis, Eliza Beeton, George Eliot, Anna Eliza Bray, Mary Ward, to name a few.

Catherine Booth, although weakened with health problems, learned much at home under her mother's supervision and through her avid readings, which, by the time she was twelve, included the Bible (read several times) and the writings of John Wesley and Edward Finney. Her husband, William, recognized and rejoiced in her talents, valued her ministry as well as her writings, and fully treated as his equal and partner. Josephine Butler received first a deeply religious education from her parents, with a sense that Christianity required social action, in which she

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176 Even though Marian Evans was not legally the wife of Henry Lewes, they lived, in all but name, as a married and devoted couple; the same situation applies to Mary Elizabeth Braddon as well, except that the death of John Maxwell's first wife, in the mental asylum where she had been confined for insanity, allowed them, after having lived together for thirteen years, to marry and enjoy the legitimacy of their union for twenty-one more years, until John Maxwell's death.
blossomed as a youth; she further enjoyed the full support of her husband in her most daring undertakings, as we shall see more specifically in Chapter IV.\textsuperscript{178}

The list could go on with personages of lesser or greater fame. Yet, despite the evidence of the success of home education in the nineteenth century, which is striking both in its number and in its depth, modern critics often ignore or quickly gloss over what was an essential part of the education picture for the period. Purvis comments, for instance, "the quality of home education was variable, especially in the early and mid-Victorian periods when the majority of middle-class girls were taught by amateurs, such as mothers, fathers, older sisters or family friends." Purvis' contempt for those "amateurs" is palpable, but she neglects the fact that not only girls, but boys as well, received an important part of their schooling at home. While we are clearly meant to understand that only people who received schooling outside the home amounted to anything, yet doing so would eliminate as qualifying as "successful" people (added to the examples listed above) like John Stuart Mill, Dickens, George Bernard Shaw, Churchill, Beatrix Potter, Charles and John Wesley, as well as Mark Twain, George Washington, Abigail, John, and John Quincy Adams, Abraham Lincoln, or Benjamin Franklin (just to select a few names from the Anglo-Saxon pool)!\textsuperscript{179}

Other hasty assumptions about the state of middle-class education in the nineteenth-century should be noticed and challenged. For instance, Flanders comments about nineteenth-century women's intricate needlework, an activity which she obviously considers a complete


\textsuperscript{179} Sadly, this unwarranted prejudice (considering the impressive results of such schooling then and now) against home education found its echo recently on the Nebraskan and Californian political stages, where bills were proposed that would have imposed restrictive measures over home-schooling parents, capable in the long run to snuff out homeschooling entirely (See For Nebraska: "LB1141", bill proposed in January 2008. <http://uniweb.legislature.ne.gov/FloorDocs/Curret/PDF/Intro/LB1141.pdf>. For California: Randy Hall. "California Home-Schooling Ruling Called 'Assault on Family." CNS News <http://www.cns.news.com>. March 10, 2008).
waste of time, "That these women had a good deal of spare time to be filled indicated that they were not helping with the housework, or educating their children or their younger siblings." Evidently this scholar has no experience with home education; otherwise she would not make such a sweeping and erroneous statement. Indeed, any home educator "worth his or her salt" understands well the paramount importance of efficient time management. One common way to do this is to have the child read aloud the lesson of the day in the textbook. While her mind is attentive to the child's words, or the tone of his voice (reflective of his degree of attention and comprehension), the mother (instructor) can do something with her hands. Mending, ironing, preparing dinner are only a few possibilities. The mother's power to think and speak are not impaired; thus she can ask questions related to the reading, make comments to complement the lesson in the book, test the child vocabulary by asking him to give the meaning of a new word encountered in the text, discuss the ideas brought about in the day's chapter, etc. In fact, Frances Mary Buss, co-founder with her mother of the North London Collegiate School (NLC) in 1850, believed that the school should contribute social service to society; as a result, the Dorcas Society (a charitable organization) provided sewing projects. Molly Hugues, a former student, explains that "Miss Buss encouraged both plain sewing and Christianity by ordaining a Dorcas meeting once a month." While the girls sewed shirts for the poor, the teacher read to them. This practice made for a more relaxed atmosphere, in which the students were "encouraged to discuss any little point that arose in [the book], even while we sewed," which Molly enjoyed very much. Samuel Gompers, co-founder of the American Federation of Labor, learned much through a similar method when he worked in a factory as cigar maker: "Workers would 'hire' one of their own to read aloud while the others worked; in return, the reader was paid in cigars at day's end so that no

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180 Flanders 161.
181 Purvis 80.
one lost wages. This was an effective way to acquire information about political, economic, and social issues, and discuss them.

Purvis' criticism should seem all the more amiss in an age when "commuting" has become a common phenomenon, with an increasing number of drivers listening to books on tape. Apparently, best-seller writer, Stephen King, finds it an intellectual blessing for our time: "Reading is the creative center of a writer's life. I take a book with me everywhere I go. . . . You can even read while you are driving, thanks to the audiobook revolution. Of the books I read each year, anywhere from six to a dozen are on tape."183

4. Intellect and Skills

This paper does not intend to look at the nineteenth century with "rose-tinted glasses" and pretend that everything was perfect; there were indeed plenty of opportunities for a middle-class woman to be shallow and idle and several were. However, criticism of the time invested in needlework by nineteenth-century women can also overlook the fact that, even in the first colleges for women, the main focus was the home sphere. Men and women alike, especially those directly connected with education, continued to firmly believe that woman was to be the civilizing force of the country, if not of the world. As Josephine Butler reminds her contemporaries, "The facts remain the same, that women constitute one half of the human race, that whatever affects them, for good or evil, affects not one half, but the whole of the human race, and that the primary education of all generations of men rests in the hands of women."184

This virtuous influence was at the heart of the feminine sphere. Therefore, there was no feminine accomplishment that was not directly connected to the service of this calling. Not only was basic sewing obviously practical in the making and mending of clothing, but "fancy"

184The Education and Employment 14.
needlework had it place as well, either as a means to embellish the home and create home-made gifts, or as an outlet for charity bazaars and auctions; it was not, as Flanders believes, just "endless fancy-work to fill the empty hours for upper-middle-class women." Although today, the number of women who can sew or enjoy doing embroidery has considerably decreased, many modern women find pleasure in making "crafts." Selecting among many modern possibilities, let us consider quilt making. While this is a hobby, it is also used much like needlework was in the nineteenth-century: For instance, quilts are donated to nursing homes or given to victims of diseases, natural catastrophes (flood, fire, etc.), or terrorist attacks, or raffled off for fund-raisers. They are also displayed in art exhibitions, and more moving yet, as memorials, such as the impressive 9/11 Victims Memorial Quilt. One cannot help thinking of the famed Bayeux Tapestry as another example of time-consuming needlework that serves no practical purpose, per se, and yet, has become a priceless witness of history. Obviously, it takes time and skill to do this sort of things--something the middle or upper class woman was more likely to have than her working-class counterpart--yet art and practicality were not antithetic even there. It would have taken longer for a woman of lower means, with a brood of children, to sew a quilt, but at the same time, the necessity of wasting nothing would have been incentive enough to undertake the task of making something from scraps of fabric. In pioneering America, "putting a favorite quilt on the bed gave a woman a sense of connection with her former way of life. Something of beauty was very much needed in her barren home." We are not to doubt that the English woman, following her husband to India or the West Indies, experienced the same feelings. In America, it

185 Flanders 160.
186 See illustration V. The project has come to life through the work of 3,600 quilters from seventeen countries, including the U.S. See “9/11 Memorial Quilt,” February 7, 2008 <http://atlanticville.gmnews.com/news/2005/0519/Front_page/033.html>. Other memorials of this type include The Columbine Memorial Quilt, and more recently The 2008 Victims Memorial Quilt made in memory of victims of murder, homicide, and drunk driving.
has been estimated that there is, on average, a grave every eighty yards along the Oregon Trail. It was not uncommon to bury a loved one in a quilt.\textsuperscript{188} "What a waste!" we may exclaim, as we consider the long hours of minute craftsmanship that would not only thus be condemned to rot away with a decaying body, but that could have been better used on the living. But it is clear that in England as in America, nineteenth-century men and women did not see things that way, and spared no effort on that "fancy work" some may now consider pointless. Furthermore, what right has one to say that the hours invested in sewing were "empty" or wasted ones? No only did the finished product have, as we saw, more significance than imagined, but also, in school or at home, sewing was often an activity done in group; women enjoyed each other's company, just as they do today, and their manual occupation was an opportunity of talking with one another without being idle.

Of course, to an extent, we could say that today we have reversed the situation decried by Purvis, making the useful useless: In the United States, the quilts that our great-grandmothers sewed for warmth and daily handling have become revered works of art that we would not dream of using as blankets. They serve no \textit{practical} purpose.

5. Salons and Higher Education

This fragile equilibrium between the mundane and the intellectual is a recurring concern of the nineteenth-century. It was good to be educated, yes, even for women, but it was wrong to become arrogant or pedantic, simply because one possessed a refined and quick intelligence. This over-confidence in one's own intellectual achievements was a rich field for caricaturists, and Cruikshank depicts this "Age of Intellect"\textsuperscript{189} as a child who is not content to be child anymore (the toy basket is now overflowing with heavy works of literature, theology, mathematics, and the grandmother is left with her story of "Who Killed Cock Robin?" untold in her lap) but believes he

\textsuperscript{188} Id.
\textsuperscript{189} See illustration VI
understands the world better than the previous generations (represented by the grandmother), when, in fact, he does no more than reiterating the same knowledge with a more convoluted wording. Hence the ambiguous position of the "bluestocking," for instance.

Hannah More explains the origin of the term thus:

The mistake of a Foreigner of Distinction, who gave the literal appellation of the *Bas-bleu* to a small party of friends, who had been often called, by way of pleasantry, the *Blue Stockings*. These little Societies have been sometimes misrepresented. They were composed of persons distinguished, in general, for their rank, talents, or respectable character, who met frequently at Mrs. Vesey's and at a few other houses, for the sole purpose of conversation, and were different in no respect from other parties, but that the company did not play at cards.\(^{190}\)

It remains, nonetheless that "bluestocking" was the label applied to the intellectual woman in general, the good and the bad connotations all blended in one term and interpreted negatively or positively, according to one's own convictions about it. It is no wonder that, even today, it is not that simple to establish whether bluestockings were scholars or viragos! Mary Wollstonecraft may have had much in common with Hannah More, as we saw, in matter of education, but when one considered her intellect in conjunction with her rather Jacobin ideas, with her beliefs in free love, her criticism of men, and her sometime overly passionate campaigning approach, she gave bluestockings a bad name, which resulted in somewhat throwing the proverbial baby out with the bath water.

If mercenary polish of girls education hid a rapacious design, intent solely upon attracting admirers and material security, substantial education could also lose its perspective, as well, and

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fall lower than no education at all. While Purvis caustically asserts, "intellectual education was supposed to make a woman into that monstrous being, a 'bluestocking,' whose erudition frightened men," I would propose, instead, that it was rather a question of attitude and vision. Tennyson poked fun at them in his amusing poem, "The Princess," but in general serious bluestocking were respected by educated men. Indeed, if the acquisition of knowledge was the end and not the means, if the one possessing it increased not in wisdom, but in contempt of those inferior to her, then she quickly became odious, not only to men, but to women as well. In fact, the men who did feel threatened by true intellectual women were those whose pride was considerably greater than their knowledge and who sought power through a show of intellect, rather than those who were genuinely interested in the pursuit of wisdom through knowledge. They were the Cassaubons, not the Johnsons, the Wilberforces, the Mills, the Kingsleys, or the Dickens.

The "odious" bluestocking could take different forms: in Bleak House for instance, Mrs. Jellyby knows a great deal about Africa and the natives of Borrioboola-Gha, but all her knowledge is of little use, even to the said natives. As for Mrs. Pardiggle, she is indubitably an expert in Bible and morality, but only in the letter of it; she knows nothing of its spirit. As a consequence, she does not bring about the good she proselytizes; instead, hatred follows in her wake. In "The Authoress," Dudley's mother basks in the glory of thinking herself a writer, but even if she had any talent, her contempt and neglect of others render her completely useless and despicable. In Coelebs in Search of a Wife, Miss Sparkes is the prototype of the modern feminist. She prizes her intellectual powers and her ability to do other things as well as a man, like driving a carriage with four horses, but her contempt for domesticity, for femininity (she does not hesitate to wear breeches), her argumentativeness about nearly everything, her resentment toward men (though she imitates them in many ways) make her masculine, coarse, very irritating, (unless one
has the patience of Mr. Stanley) and render her ineffective and unconvincing in the changes she
would like to make in society.

At the other end of the bluestocking spectrum, however, we find the literary salons. It is
important to note, once more, that these highly intellectual gathering are not exclusive of genders.
On the contrary, the great minds of the time, men and women, enjoyed getting together to discuss
literature, art, philosophy, or politics. Neither gender felt threatened by the other, while both
contributed the characteristics of their respective spheres. Women were generally the hostesses
and made their home welcoming to guests, stimulating to the exchange of ideas, while they set a
tone of refinement of manners. Men, coming from different parts of the public world, contributed
their own expertise and insight, such as those of a soldier, like Wellington; of a poet's, like Byron;
of a writer and critic's, like Johnson; of an artist's, like Garrick or Reynolds; of a statesman and
philosopher, like Burke; or of an émigré's, like Chateaubriand or D'Arblay. Anderson and
Zinsser, authors of A History of their Own, recognize the salon as, "the base of influential
women who swayed kings, political opinion, literary, and artistic taste," and without whom, they
claim, the Encyclopedie would not have come to exist.191

Many modern critics, like Purvis, believe that the women's movement for higher
education "seems to have begun almost abruptly in the late 1840s and to have gathered
momentum in the 1850s and 1860s."192 However, Deirdre Raftery challenges this assertion; her
article questions, "'Unexpected Revolution' or Inevitable Change?" She proposes instead that
"Changes that may have seemed swift in implementation and radical in philosophy were well
signposted in print culture, in public debate, and in private discourse from the late seventeenth

191 Anderson, Bonnie and Judith Zinsser, A History of Their Own: Women in Europe from
192 Purvis 73.
century onwards." She traces women scholars in England, with significant examples, such as The Learned Maid, or Whether a Maid May Be a Scholar, first written in Latin by the Dutch scholar, Anna Maria van Schurman, and translated and published in England in 1659. Others contributed to underscore the importance of women's higher education. Batshua Makin (1600-1675), for instance, was an impressive scholar who knew Greek, Latin, French, and even some Hebrew and Syriac; she was an author of works on education, but she also knew and practiced medicine "on the side." Recognized by her contemporaries, men included, she was appointed by Charles I as tutor to his daughter, Princess Elizabeth. Later, married and mother of eight (only six survived infancy), she went on to found a school for gentlewomen. She advocated the serious study of the Classics and mathematics, but, above all, she was convinced that "educated women were of great benefit to their family and to the nation." In 1695, Mary Astell's A Serious Proposal to the Ladies for the Advancement of Their True and Greatest Interest, by a Lover of her Sex saw a direct link between the cultivation of women's intellect and the greater glory of God, while in ignorance resided the root of all evil.

Educated women can be found even earlier in history such as Hypatia of Alexandria, Hildegard von Bingen, Christine de Pisan, but what seems to develop more specifically through the examples brought to light by Raftery is the connection between women's education and welfare of the family and the country—a theme that would fully blossom throughout the nineteenth century.

The movement for women's higher education has been attributed to the presence of the "women surplus" noticeable by mid-century. Due in part to the emigration of men to the colonies, which seems to have been less attractive to women, there were, combining working and

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194 Raftery 337.
middle classes, about 2,000,000 women in England, in the second half of the nineteenth-century, who needed to work in order to survive. Widows and especially spinsters constituted the larger part of that number, which meant that they could not find support through the traditional norm--marriage.\textsuperscript{195} In the later part of the century, some middle-class women worked in post offices or as telegraphists, but the majority of them were teachers. Josephine Butler and others wanted to improve the formation of teachers, so they could draw a decent salary, since many were underpaid and some even worked for nothing, just to have a shelter over their heads, and too many were mediocre. Within the question of women education, Butler was campaigning for two major issues: broadening the intellectual field for those who wanted to learn, and giving women who needed employment a better professional training. For the latter, education reformers, like Josephine Butler, Louise Creighton, and Mary Ward envisioned other fields, beside teaching, for women, such as "healers, preachers, physicians, artists, organizers of labor, captains of industry."

The main difference between the literary salons of the early part of the century and these women reformers is their primary focus on the Christian perspective of the woman's calling. As Julia Bush notes, not only was the education issue distinct from that of the vote, as supporters of women's education counted men and women, suffragists and anti-suffragists, but they also shared the same vision of the important role women were called to play in national life: they "emphasized the centrality of marriage and motherhood in women's lives."\textsuperscript{196} Lucy Soulsby stressed "the complementarity of male and female roles, as well as on the special strengths and duties of women."\textsuperscript{197} As Louise Creighton best expressed it:

\begin{center}
To meet all these claims, what education and training can be too much? The professional woman has to fit herself for the work of her profession, but the wife
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{195} Butler 4.
\textsuperscript{197} Bush 402.
and mother, the mistress of a household, can see no limit to her beneficent activities. To fit her for so wide a sphere, no education can be too high; she needs not the higher only but the highest, and she needs, above all, to continue her education through life.  

Hannah More had earlier made a similar point in Coelebs, as well as in Strictures of Female Education, and Character of a Young Princess.

To some extent, modern thinkers could consider that the intellectual women of the salons were satisfied to be recognized for their knowledge and the influence they had within the upper circle of society, while the reformers of the second half of the century, who wanted access to higher female education and promoted the opening of universities for women, although they possessed themselves considerable learning, respect, and persuasive power amid their class, sought to help not only the middle-class, but also the working-class women to become better women. Yet, the segmentation is not quite so clearly delineated, since concerns for the education, the significant social, mental, and spiritual improvement of the poor, men and women, existed already with Elizabeth Fry and Hannah More, early in the century. It is, indeed, significant that from one end of the century to the other, the question of women's education does not spring from a competitiveness with men, but from a renewed conviction that women have a God-given responsibility to improve themselves in all areas, so they can in turn, within their own sphere, and in complete collaboration with men, improve society.

III. Learning Outside of School

1. "Hand-on" Training at Home

Home was, as we saw earlier, the first intellectual and spiritual school of the middle class.

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Lessons in academic matters were essential, but they were not enough; practical skills were necessary for a young woman to be truly fit to rule within her sphere. Home-making was multi-faceted, ranging from knowing how to cook to how to host a formal dinner, from sewing to knowing how to administer an estate. Domestic apprenticeship, as illustration VII shows, varied from personal improvement (singing or playing piano) to service of others (helping with small tasks, like holding yarn, as well as bigger ones, like caring for younger siblings).

The routine of home-management has been mentioned in Chapter I, but it should also be remembered that sometimes duties could be extensive, exacting much from young "apprentices." For instance, Eliza Beeton and Maria Edgeworth, both belonging to families of twenty-one children, not only helped considerably their mother/stepmothers with the education of younger siblings, they became surrogate mothers to them.

Josephine Butler and her siblings "had learned that book learning is only part of a larger experience. . . They accompanied their father on horseback, making a round of the tenants and learning first-hand about rural poverty." At evening parties they did more than dancing, they "absorbed practical lessons in party politics." 200

Nature was also a teacher for men and women of the nineteenth century, not only as a source of inspiration, as was the case for many of Christina Rossetti's poems, but as an open field for scientific observation as well as a retreat for reading and reflection. In one of his sermons, Charles Spurgeon remarked: "There are times when solitude is better than society and silence is wiser than speech. . . Hearing, reading, marking, and learning all require inwardly digesting to complete their usefulness, and the inward digesting of the truth lies for the most part in meditating upon it." 201

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199 See illustration VII.
200 Boyd 27.
Indeed, middle-class women were closely associated with nature. Even in London, there were parks and gardens enough to offer spaces propitious to thoughts. Elizabeth, for instance, takes long walks from the Bennets' home as well as wherever she happens to be travelling both for enjoyment and meditation.

The mundane course of existence was also a harsh school. For instance, although it was a natural occurrence, birth required attention; it was a normal thing for women to assist a family member or a neighbor in attending a birth and helping with post-natal care. Even as midwives were progressively replaced by professional—male--doctors, there was still much to do in staying with the new mother until she had recovered and adjusted to change. Sometimes, women did not survive the ordeal or succumbed to diseases. Such cases would propel an older daughter into the role of mother. In the absence of an older daughter or if she was yet too young, a spinster or widowed aunt could come to help. In Barchester Towers, Mary Bold has come to live with her widowed sister-in-law, Helena, to help her rear little John Bold. Similarly, Elizabeth Branwell went to live with her brother-in-law, Patrick Brontë, to help him take care of his six, and soon only four, children. She remained faithfully at her post until her death.

Even without such tragedies in the immediate family, women often had the grim responsibility to care for the dead--washing, dressing the body in preparation for burial (as most still do in Europe today). As Georganne Rumblad reminds us, professional undertakers at that time did not assume the responsibility for that part of the funeral arrangements.202

There were others, happier activities, such as charity work and religious responsibilities that were also part of this school of life. The former could vary from visiting the poor and taking food or other needed supplies to them, to more involved responsibilities, such as we see Esther perform in Bleak House, among other things teaching working-class girls how to read. Directing

Sunday school classes, organizing charity bazaars, sewing clothes, writing letters, or even taking an active part in a campaign (like Josephine Butler) were worthy and time-consuming tasks that served real needs and in which women found not only purpose, but also respectful recognition of their talents and feminine sense of empathy.

2. Life Awareness

It is often assumed in modern criticism that women were somewhat naive and "clueless" about sexuality. It might be true that many a bride went to her wedding night without a clear picture of what sexual intimacy encompassed, but, since nineteenth-century men and women considered the topic a private one, they did not see fit to write at length about it (although various pamphlets on the subject did exist); therefore, we might be making hasty assumptions as to what they *said* on this delicate subject. It was, indeed, delicate, because the same act that was good and holy within marriage was debased in prostitution, and the latter was certainly in plain sight. It was also delicate, because mothers might feel awkward and be reluctant to unveil indirectly their own conjugal intimacy when they taught the "facts of life" to their daughters. There were, however, other ways of disseminating information. My father, who was born in 1908, told me that when he and his younger brother were respectively fourteen and twelve, their parents made sure that a certain book was left lying around in the evening, in the living room (where the youngest children were not admitted without adult supervision). The book explained everything matter-of-factly, with a few illustrations. This method seemed a better solution for these teen-aged boys as well as for their parents. The need to discuss the issue further was never felt. Although this took place in the early 1920s, the adult generation of that period had been the children of the Victorians, and very likely passed down much of what they had learned themselves.

Now, however, sex education in school and a plethora of Hollywood productions have not only obliterated the former intimacy attached to the conjugal act, they have completely
prostituted its respectability. Consequently, many, today, maybe out of ignorance or out of rebellion, consider the nineteenth-century prudish, authoritarian, hypocritical, or frigid. I find this verdict preposterous because it is based on very superficial evidence. First it clashes with what we see in the literature and art of the time, in which love, both pure and impure, is ubiquitously represented.

Sexual immorality is exposed in William Hunt's The Awakening of Conscience, painted in 1854, for instance. The work is rich in very revealing symbols: some of the most obvious, such as the woman displaying rings on every finger, except the "marriage" one, pronounce her the mistress of the man seated behind her; her somewhat loose clothing, his leering expression, the disorder and relative darkness of the room point to the immorality of the relationship. Initially, the expression on the woman's face was one of horror, when the work was first exhibited, which further underscored the sin in the situation. The painting is all the more poignant in that Hunt was once affianced to Annie Miller, the model for the woman here. However, he broke off the engagement upon discovering her infidelities (she was the mistress of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, among others). Yet, the title, the reflection (in the mirror) of the window opened to a sunny garden, and the smile and hope on the woman's face bespeak repentance and second chance. For the very religious Hunt this idea is likely to imply that for society, as well, it may not be too late.

Anne Brontë also addresses the problem of adultery in The Tenant of Wildfell Hall, but from the point of view of the victim, Helen Huntingdon. Any of her readers would have had no illusion about what marriage to a man deprived of self-control through alcoholism and sexual license encompassed. As for the shy author, it was evident that her peaceful and retired life in Haworth did not mean that she was sheltered from the ugliness of the world or afraid to speak of it.

203 See illustration VIII. For a close-up look at the details, see <http://www.artchive.com>.
Millais denounces bigamy, another sexual evil. His 1854 ink drawing, *Retribution*, clearly places the responsibility and the blame on the man alone. The suffering of the true, neglected wife, and the righteous outrage of the would-be bride add to the plight of the abandoned children and compound the guilt of the degenerate husband and father. The little girl, too young to understand, still reaches out in trust and affection; the boy, slightly older but sadly too mature for his age, stands back in contempt of his father and in protection of his mother; both bring to life the tragedy of innocence shattered, the contrast between lust and love, the exemplary incorruptibility of virtuous women. Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* also exposes this form of deception, but this time, the bigamist is a woman. Her conjugal and maternal betrayals are heightened by her recourse to murder and her cold un-repentance for her crimes.

In *Found*, Dante Gabriel Rossetti approaches the problem of prostitution, which he depicts with sympathy for the women who have become its helpless victims. In this painting, there is hope yet for the girl, as she is recognized and rescued by a young man from her former village, who truly loves her. When, later in the century, Josephine Butler undertook her twenty-year-long campaign for moral reform, daring even to take prostitutes into her home, it is doubtful that many could have been unaware that corrupt sexuality was a real issue that demanded attention and change if British society was to survive.

Earlier, Fanny Burney exposed the "deliberate" prostitutes, the courtesans, who have completely given themselves over to their mercenary instincts. They feel no remorse, no shame, and bask in the satisfaction of breaking the rules while they still frequent the upper layers of society. Two of them have a fortuitous encounter with the (pure) heroine, Evelina, and Burney exploits the situation to criticize society for its tolerance of immorality and its blindness to

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205 See illustration IX.  
206 See illustration X
Indeed, women might have been sheltered to some extent, as was Evelina or its creator, but that does not mean they were in a state childish ignorance. On the contrary, not only were they informed, but they took positions and voiced their opinion publicly on a variety of issues. Hannah More, for instance, contributed to reforms in education, to the abolition of slavery, and is even credited for averting lower-class uprisings.

Contraception is another problematic question. Although many consider it today one of the biggest taboos of the nineteenth century, we should remember, once again, that not everything on the subject can be found through written records. While modern scholars assure us that it was practically not known, statistics register a decrease in the average number of children born in the middle class from the 1850s onward. It is therefore safe to assume that means of limiting the number of pregnancies had been found, even if there is little written evidence of their existence.

A few pamphlets existed on the topic, such as Richard Carlile's 1826 "What is Love?" or George Drysdale's 1855 "Physical, Sexual, and Natural Religion," as Michael Bush points out in "the Rise of the Sex Manual" 208

In 1887, however, Dr. Henry Arthur Allbutt's pamphlet, "The Wife's Handbook" was an immediate success among the public. Unlike the other examples mentioned, Allbutt was not professing a radical philosophy (such as polygamy), but was concerned with overpopulation, uncleanness, and rampant venereal diseases. The booklet was nonetheless considered dangerous primarily because its low price made it accessible to youth of both sexes, giving them information which, "however legitimate in its proper place, may be used for the worst purposes." 209 Although his license was revoked and his name removed from the list of physicians, Allbutt continued to

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practice; he later wrote to a newspaper, "I am in a better pecuniary position, have a better
practice, better fees and more reputation than ever and can afford to snap my fingers at the
Council." Not only did the pamphlet provide practical information on the existing contraceptive
methods of the day, but it also gave cautionary advice to women before their marriage:
Before giving her consent to marry. . .she [the prospective bride] should also be sure that he [her
prospective husband] is free from any contagious disease which can be communicated through
sexual relations. . .A young woman may be ruined in health for life, and have her innocent
offspring diseased, if she is allied to a man who has disease lurking in his system. I refer to what
is called syphilis. I should like to see it the custom for women and their parents to demand a
recent certificate of freedom from syphilis from all men proposing marriage. In this matter, false
delicacy should be dropped.\(^\text{210}\)

Allbutt is often mentioned as evidence that this type of information was denied to most
people of the nineteenth century. But was it? I believe one should be cautious before answering
this question by the affirmative. In fact, within seven years of its appearance, the pamphlet was
already in its twenty-third edition, and went on being sold until 1926! The information was
obviously being disseminated; a large number of people were learning from it, so common sense
commends us to assume that at least part of the population was not as ignorant as might have
been assumed. On the other hand, the concern of the medical authorities is not to be dismissed as
simply obscurantist or ludicrous.

At the time, the one group of society primarily associated with the desire of not having
children was that of the prostitutes who lived (by choice or misfortune) on the side of immoral
sexuality and for whom children were primarily a hindrance to their "trade." For the majority of
women (and men) children were viewed as blessings, and their loss (far too frequent at the time)

\(^{210}\) Quoted in O'Dowd, Michael and Elliott Philips, *The History of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, (New
was a source of the deepest grief. Therefore, for even open-minded physicians, the idea that contraception could be made easily available implied the removal of the one bulwark of sexual purity: the fear of unwanted pregnancy. Without that Damocles' sword over their reputation, maybe some young women would be less hesitant to engage in unwise relationships, and young men might become more reckless yet. The fact that many advocates of contraception, like Annie Besant, also supported ideas that threatened God-instituted marriage and family further gave cause of alarm—a fact that should be considered when analyzing the defensive attitude of those opposed to the dissemination of contraception. In fact, to a certain extent, have not those alarmists proved right in the light of today's sexual mores?

Allbutt is not the only one to warn prospective brides about knowing the health history of their future husbands. Sarah Ellis mentions it as well in the first chapter of Wives of England; although she essentially refers to mental illness, for a woman to be bound, unknowingly, to a man either insane or syphilitic (which could also in its latest stage lead to madness) was equally bad. As for the "frigidity" of the nineteenth-century men and women, twenty-first century analysts rarely mention the erotic drawings Victoria and Albert exchanged, or they overlook that Victoria's journal entry after her wedding night, despite the very proper wording, clearly shows her enthusiasm for marital intimacy. But, maybe the most revealing testimony on the subject comes from a highly respected and influential religious figure: Charles Kingsley himself. Although they were published late in the twentieth century, his erotic drawings, representing himself and his wife, Fanny, in a state of Edenic harmony with Christian symbolism,211 constitute an artifact of the utmost importance in showing that men and women of even the very "proper" Victorian era knew very well what love, in both its spiritual and physical aspects, meant. Their letters further demonstrate their openness, their deep feelings for and attraction to each other, as well as the greater Christian dimension of their marriage. For instance, early in their engagement,

211 See illustration XI
it seems evident that Kingsley feared the possibility of having contracted a venereal disease, and he is admirably honest about its danger to his future wife as he confesses, "You, my unspotted, bring a virgin body to my arms. I do not to yours. Before our lips met, I sinned and have fallen. Oh, how low! If it is your wish, you shall be a wife only in name. No communion but that of mind shall pass between us." Maybe their long engagement (three years) was, in part, to assure himself that there was nothing to fear. As their wedding approached, Fanny wrote the following letter that clearly bespeaks her passion, as she anticipates their wedding night, even if the words are touchingly delicate:

And then after tea we will go up to rest! We will undress and bathe and then you will come to my room, and we will kiss and love very much and read psalms aloud together, and then we will kneel and pray in our night dresses. Oh! What solemn bliss! How hallowing! And then you will take me up in your arms, will you not? And lay me down in bed. And then you will extinguish our light and come to me! How I will open my arms to you and then sink into yours...212

The fact that nineteenth-century couples tended to shield the most private sector of their life from the prying intrusion of the outer world is no ground for the modern observer to draw the conclusion that they were lacking in their love and natural passions in any way. Kingsley and his wife, whose union, as Wilson remarks, did "remain, for its entire duration, a marriage which was soaked in sexual appreciation and pleasure" testify to the fact that nineteenth-century passions had nothing to envy of our age. But then again, our century having largely lost any sense of faithful conjugal intimacy may have difficulty recognizing its extraordinary value.

3. Vernacular Education

It is paramount, I believe, to always keep in mind that the primary tool of education for nineteenth-century women as well as men was reading. Even for those who did not go to higher

institutions of learning, the number of books, articles, and letters they read seems often phenomenal. Charles Kingsley gives a clear idea of the importance of books in nineteenth-century lives:

This is the age of books. And we should reverence books. Consider! except a living man there is nothing more wonderful than a book—a message to us from the dead, from human souls whom we never saw, who lived perhaps thousands of miles away, and yet in those little sheets of paper speak to us, amuse us, terrify us, teach us, comfort us, open their hearts to us as brothers!

We ought to reverence books, to look at them as awful and mighty things. If they are good and true, whether they are about religion or politics, trade or medicine, they are the message of Christ, the Maker of all things, the Teacher of all truth, which He has put into the heart of some men to speak. And at the last day, be sure of it, we shall have to render an account—a strict account—of the books which we have read, and of the way in which we have obeyed what we read, just as if we had had so many prophets or angels sent to us.²¹³

America and England shared a close relationship in the diffusion of works of literature. Samuel Beeton made a fortune in being the first to publish Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin in England, for instance, and we can see in the reading program suggested by the American Mrs. Rayne that English works found an avid readership in the United States, as well:

Read, to begin with, one good summary of universal history. . . One good history of your own country, and one of your state and town. . Then a good history of England, one of France, one of Germany, and so on. . . Then take Homer, Shakespeare, and Byron. . . [Her primary list includes], The Bible, Homer, Virgil,


She even proposes a reading calendar, "January: Lamb's writings; February, David Copperfield, by Charles Dickens; March, read Abbott's Life of Napoleon. . ."  

Lending libraries played a key role in serving and sustaining the passion of readers, especially in the middle-class. The opening in 1857 of the new Reading Room in the British Museum saw an increase of the women readership. Although they had their own section, women usually preferred the general seating area. Within this temple of learning, boasting of more than one million volumes, they "constituted a quasi public sphere," as they met and exchanged ideas with men or did research along with them. In fact, to be permitted entrance, one had to get a reading ticket for which one had to be able to define one's self as a scholar, to describe one's research, and to present a recommendation from a householder.

However, as Jennifer Phegley reveals in, Educating the Proper Woman Reader, a far greater number of women accessed an almost unlimited field of learning through the family literary magazines, which during Victoria's reign reached the number of 50,000. Samuel Beeton's monthly The Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine, for instance, offered practical advice for good home management, as well as articles that varied from entertainment to encyclopedic knowledge. This trait is also characteristic of Eliza Beeton's Book of Household Management, in which culinary recipes mix with advice about the care of the home, of the sick, insights on legal issues, as well as savory tidbits of historical, cultural, or social values, such as quoting excerpts of

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214 Rayne 114-126.
Byron and Milton in the introduction to her chapter on "dinners and Dining." The Beetons' magazine was also the first one to contain patterns, so women could make their own dresses. These publications, explains Phegley, targeted women as readers and also invited them to respond, and consequently offered them new opportunities of contributing writings of their own. Several of Elizabeth Gaskell's and Amelia Edwards' stories, for instance, were published in Dickens' *All the Year Around*. Serialized novels as well as articles found an ever-avid readership, on both sides of the Atlantic. Women were also editors of such magazines; Mary Elizabeth Braddon even founded her own magazine, *Belgravia*. Each had its particular traits. Through *Belgravia*, Braddon took a stand in favor of sensationalism, declaring it a new form of realism that was more artistic and effective than traditional idealized narratives. \(^{217}\) *Victoria Magazine* took the Queen as a model of "women's ability to be powerful public figures and proper wives and mothers." \(^{218}\)

The "aristocratic" literary magazines tended to give the impression that they were bestowing "their wisdom upon less educated literary consumers" and looked at family literary magazines as inferior and amateurish, which explains why the latter distanced themselves from the former. The family literary magazines gave women the opportunity to be informed and participate in the important issues of the time. Illustrations in these magazines further contributed in projecting woman's image. One of the most interesting among them is "Cousin Phillis and her Book\(^{219}\) which shows Elizabeth Gaskell's heroine alternating her domestic task with reading Dante's *Inferno*, as she sits at the kitchen table, which, of course was not only encouraging to women, but also reinforced the idea for everyone that reading and domestic virtue worked hand-in-hand for the benefit of all. In fact, many men were highly supportive. Thackeray and Lewes were editors, in turn, of the *Cornhill Magazine*, for instance. Lewes, comparing the educated

\(^{217}\)Phlegley 22-23.  
\(^{218}\)Phlegley 77.  
\(^{219}\)See illustration XII. George du Maurier's See illustration for Elizabeth Gaskell.
women of Ancient Rome to those of his day, said, "Stockings would have been blue then as now only stockings had not been invented."\textsuperscript{220}

Despite the enormous intellectual impact of magazines in women's life, the Encyclopaedia Britannica, though a generally respectable and reliable tool of research, contributes to the distorted perception of the nineteenth-century woman, by propagating twenty-first century stereotypes:

Women's magazines frequently reflect the changing view of women's role in society. In the 18th century, when women were expected to participate in social and political life, those magazines aimed primarily at women were relatively robust and stimulating in content; in the 19th, when domesticity became the ideal, they were inclined to be insipid and humourless. After about 1880, magazines began to widen their horizons again.\textsuperscript{221}

The multiplicity of magazines and the variety of their topics not only wide-spread information, but also enhanced interest in reading and in learning. In fact, for the second half of the century, Phugley argues that these magazines supported women's higher education and encouraged them to seek professions, "as a means of assisting the development of the newly defined 'professional gentleman,' who was emerging as the leader of the British nation."\textsuperscript{222}

There was indeed a genuine and profound interest in bettering one self among nineteenth-century women as well as men. For instance, today we forget--especially with the renewed debate over Darwinism versus Intelligent Design, which Ben Stein has brought to light in his daring and controversial documentary, \textit{Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed}\textsuperscript{223}--that Samuel Smiles'...

\begin{footnotes}
\item Phlegley 77.
\item Phlegley 21
\item \textit{Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed}, Dir. Nathan Frankowski, Co-written and presented by Ben Stein, Premise Media Corporation, 2008.
\end{footnotes}
Self-Help, published the same year as Darwin's Origin of Species, far outsold it. The nineteenth-century middle class was far more interested becoming better men and women than in postulating on a new theory about their beginning as a species, as Smiles' book's multiple reprints and translations of all over the world for the entire second half century prove.

IV. Literature and Life (Conclusion)

The English Novel of the nineteenth century can boast a unique role in the story of literature. Not only did it provide women with an extraordinary tool of expression and influence, but its realism invited the readers to reflect upon their own lives and upon the state of society. The English novels of the time also touched of serious subjects but often, though not always, ended happily. This approach effectively allowed authors to denounce evil, show dangers, call readers to awareness, inspire them to support worthy ideals, to learn from mistakes, and to improve as individuals, as Christians, and as citizens without traumatizing them with the systematic destruction of the hero or heroin, leaving them with the depressing evidence of forever-lost opportunities, or hardening them into cynical judges of a depraved (and most likely unredeemable) world. This is particularly appealing and significant, if we compare English and French novels. Often mentioned by British writers for their licentiousness, French novels of the time fall essentially in two major categories: the reader is left with either cynical humor in the philosophical novel, or with the tragedy of good destroyed in the “regular.”

British novelists understood early that leaving the readers with an uplifting ending was not only far more satisfying, but it was also more inspiring. For instance, Tiny Tim in A Christmas Carol stands as a sort of representative of the poor and working children of the real world. The reader not only comes to love him but also develops a desire to protect the real-life children to whom Tiny Tim has given face and name in embodying their plight. His survival
saves more than his life; it shows the transformation in Scrooge and underscores therefore that such a transformation can take place in the real world of which fiction is only the mirror.

To critics who feared the negative effects of readers living in fiction instead of in reality (an argument that is used now particularly by people who don't like to read), defenders of the novels, like Austen or Braddon, praised its entertaining and moralizing values, and proved without doubt that the genre was particularly apt to promote benefic social reforms. Thus it was an essential part of education as indeed it supplied information as well as analysis of ideas and various facets of life. Novels were therefore didactic in many ways, as Charles Kingsley observed:

Novels will be read; but that is all the more reason why women should be trained, by the perusal of a higher, broader, deeper literature, to distinguish the good novel from the bad, the moral from the immoral, the noble from the base, the true work of art from the sham which hides its shallowness and vulgarity under a tangled plot and a melodramatic situation. They should learn—and that they can only learn by cultivation—to discern with joy and drink in with reverence, the good, the beautiful, and the true, and to turn with the fine scorn of a pure and strong womanhood from the bad, the ugly, and the false.\[^{224}\]

Although education today tends to compartmentalize learning in separate and distinct subjects, the nineteenth century recognized literature as a conduit of knowledge for various other fields, such as history, philosophy, religion, ethics, art, or even science.

Nineteenth-century novels first delineated gender roles and promoted the aristocracy of the *true* gentleman and lady, not created by bloodline, but by personal choice and virtue. While women often displayed feminine qualities (nurturing, gentle, refined, etc.) and men masculine ones (courage, strength, dignity), the collaboration of the two gender spheres tended to blend those respective qualities. Dr. Woodcort and Esther, in *Bleak House*, for instance, show the same

\[^{224}\text{Kingsley (Daily Thoughts)} 85.\]
generosity, self-sacrifice, and courage in their interaction with others; Dorothea and Ladislaw, in *Middlemarch*, strive for social reform with the same passion, perseverance, and logic; In *Our Mutual Friend*, Mr. and Mrs. Boffin are almost interchangeable in their self-sacrificing sense of justice, and their unadulterated goodness; Mina and Jonathan Harker risk their lives with the same heroism against Dracula’s supernatural powers; while in *Pride and Prejudice*, Darcy and Elizabeth prove equally demanding, insightful, and virtuous. Furthermore, the complementary of the spheres was perceived as capable of producing true harmony in society. For instance Darcy is initially very respectful of conventions while Elizabeth is willing to defy them; the ideal is reached by an osmosis of the two--in their marriage--resulting in just the right balance between the two initial tendencies.

Novels also taught bluntly the dangers of seductive evil. Whether we think of Lady Audley or Henry Crawford, of Rosamond, Mr. Wickham, or Mr. Cassaubon, we are looking at "white sepulchers" who give all the appearance of good, polite, virtuous citizens but who are totally wretched and who can easily trap the genuinely good within their deadly web. In this respect, novels operate much like a dictionary or a registry, listing types of human characters, complete with the rank they may occupy in society, the power they hold, the tactics they use, thus equipping readers with references and strategies for the real world.

The same truth applies to discerning the overlooked good, such as Mr. Rochester, Eugene, in *Bleak House*, or Irene Adler, in Conan Doyle’s “Scandal in Bohemia, although the most striking example, I believe, is found in Jerome K. Jerome's 1908 short story, "The Passing of the Third Floor Back," in which the Christ-like hero helps inconspicuously the other characters to discover and become the honorable beings they were within, and were always meant to be, if only they had been more observant. The warning could sometimes be grim. Emily Brontë clearly exposed Heathcliff and Catherine’s passion for each other as insufficient to atone for the agony they have caused to others, no matter how "romantic" some readers and Hollywood
have chosen to perceive them. The same painful lesson is learned by Helen Huntingdon, the 
eroin of The Tenant of Wildfell Hall, through which the shy Anne Brontë, as her father advised 
one of his own parishioners, dared to say that in such situation, leaving the abuser was the only 
practical solution.

Ultimately, nineteenth-century novels, stories, and even personal narratives were a 
religious school. Not only were character traits and behaviors illustrations of biblical conduct, 
but there was a constant understanding of this life in the light of the next. In Mary Brunton's 
Self-Control, written in 1810, Laura is able to recognize and resist the advances of the wrong 
suitors (Colonel Hargrave) and hold firm against the worldly advice of her own aunt, because of 
her solid faith and moral principles. Anna Leonowens' experience is not only interesting because 
of its autobiographic quality, but also because of the contrasts she displays between the British 
Christian culture and its exotic Buddhist Siamese counterpart. Indeed, Leonowens is 
representative of the intellectual advances of her country --for which she is hired; but in her role 
as a British teacher, she also underscores the association of education and Christianity. In fact, 
King Mongkut is very much aware of this and warns her, when he hires her, that she is not to do 
any religious proselytizing; however, given the very nature of a nineteenth-century instructor's 
calling for whom learning is a tool in the service of God, indissociable from the Christian walk, 
such a requirement is absurd and ultimately impossible to fulfill.225

Therefore, through the women modeled in fiction and non-fiction, we can discern that the 
nineteenth-century women, not only could be, in many ways --even before they had access to 
universities--extensively educated, but knowledge was viewed as a virtue, and pursuing this 
virtue actually granted them true immortality. They did not have to compete with men in the 
public sphere; they had to exercise the duties and privileges of their own sphere, in which

225 Leonowens, Anna, The English Governess at the Siamese Court Being the Recollections of Six 
Years in the Royal Palace at Bangkok, 1870, (Oxford University Press, 1988) v-vi.
education was absolutely pivotal. Josephine Butler is very clear on this point: "Mr. Francis Newman\textsuperscript{226} says, 'The increased influence of women' (through education chiefly) 'will keep in check the liquor traffic, and the other abominations which men too readily excuse.'\textsuperscript{227} Doing so assured them respect and influence during their own life, but even could add, as a "bonus," a fame that would outlive them and inspire future generations. As Kinsley reminds us:

> In teaching women we must try to make our deepest lessons bear on the great purpose of unfolding Woman's own calling in all ages—her especial calling in this one. We must incite them to realise the chivalrous belief of our old forefathers among their Saxon forests, that something Divine dwelt in the counsels of woman: but, on the other hand, we must continually remind them that they will attain that divine instinct, not by renouncing their sex, but by fulfilling it; by becoming true women, and not bad imitations of men; by educating their heads for the sake of their hearts, not their hearts for the sake of their heads; by claiming woman's divine vocation as the priestess of purity, of beauty, and of love.\textsuperscript{228}

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\textsuperscript{226} Younger brother of Cardinal Newman, and a brilliant classical Scholar and moral philosopher.
\textsuperscript{227} Butler 11.
\textsuperscript{228} Kingsley 45.
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CHAPTER III  AN AGE OF FAITH

*Take my life, and let it be consecrated, Lord to Thee. . . Take my hands and let them move at the impulse of Thy love. . . Take my lips, and let them be filled with messages from Thee; . . . Take my intellect, and use every power as Thou shall choose.*  . . . Frances Havergal

The late twentieth and the twenty-first centuries have insisted in seeing the nineteenth-century as a period of tremendous changes, greatly due to the Industrial Revolution, in which the exhilaration triggered by technological progress soon transformed into disillusion born of the materialistic race for power compounded by the hopelessness brought in by Darwinism. Because the modern academic intelligentsia has worked really hard to snuff out any opposition to evolutionist theories--refusing to acknowledge any dissenting voice from reputable scientists proponent of Intelligent Design\(^{229}\) --our century not only treats Darwinism as a *fait accompli*, but also, in a forceful undertaking of revisionist history, lends its own conviction to the nineteenth century. David Newsome, for instance, in *The Victorian World Picture*, asserts:

What is not a matter of doubt is that Darwin had seemed to deliver body blows to Christian orthodoxy in three main respects. In the first place, his careful analysis of the transformation of the species made it impossible to adhere to the traditional view of "special creation" – the notion that at some historic moment God determined that birds should be birds, beasts should be particular beasts, and that man should be man. Secondly, the process by which organisms developed and modified, through adaptation, was not according to some benevolent design, but in response to the exigencies of chance. . . The third disquieting element was

\(^{229}\) A few examples would be, David Berlinski, PhD. Philosophy (Princeton); post-doctoral fellow in mathematics and molecular biology; William Dembski, PhD. Mathematics (Chicago) and PhD. Philosophy (Princeton); Alister McGrath, PhD. Biochemistry and PhD. Theology (Oxford); Richard Sternberg, PhD. Molecular Evolution (Florida) and PhD. Systems Science (Binghamton); Charles Thaxton, PhD. Physical Chemistry (Iowa).
Darwin's picture of the amorality of nature: the survival of the fittest, suggesting that it was certainly not the meek who inherited the earth.\textsuperscript{230}

Another highly respected scholar, Walter Houghton, whose 1957's \textit{Victorian Frame of Mind} still figures prominently in graduate reading lists, goes even farther. Saying not a word about the great revivals that infused the entire century with new life and bespoke of its vibrant Christianity, he first assures the reader at length (chapter 3 through 14) that the loss of Christian faith permeated nineteenth-century British society, bringing in its wake fear, powerless anger, restlessness, and \textit{ennui}. Then, he asserts that, since the notion of absence of God and purpose was intolerable for Victorians, they went on \textit{pretending} they believed, filling their now empty lives with "ersatz" ideals of morality, domesticity, and hero worship. It is evident to the attentive reader that Houghton accords no value to Christianity, in fact it refers to it as "superstition,"\textsuperscript{231} and therefore he cannot conceive that it could, and did, have value for anyone else. Thus, he does not hesitate to label Victorians as hypocrites for their refusal to admit the "obvious," a universe without God:

One, they concealed or suppressed their true convictions and their natural tastes. They said the "right" thing or did the "right" thing: They sacrificed sincerity to propriety. Second and worse, they pretended to be better than they were. They passed themselves off as being incredibly pious and moral; they talked noble sentiments and lived –quite otherwise. Finally, they refused to look at life candidly. They shut their eyes to whatever was ugly or unpleasant and pretended

\textsuperscript{230} Newsome, David, \textit{The Victorian World Picture; Perceptions and Introspections in an Age of Change} (London, Rutgers University Press, 1997) 207.

it didn't exist. Conformity, moral pretension, and evasion – those are the hallmarks of Victorian hypocrisy.232

Kristen Escobar, in her essay on Christina Rossetti's "Goblin Market," denounces the same hypocrisy, "Woman's reign of home largely [translated into] a societal platitude to which Victorian vaguely conformed." In fact her essay completely by-passes Rossetti's faith and religious concerns, and claims that they are rather an expression of feminist sisterhood.233

It is greatly disturbing, indeed, to see reputed scholars propagate such slanderous interpretations and distortions, since students generally trust their professors to be genuine authorities on the Past. Yet, time and again, the repetitive notion that the nineteenth-century was an age of doubt, especially because of the combined attacks of German higher criticism and Darwinism, is to be found in many secondary sources, as David Empton from *Christianity Today* points out:

> The loss of faith has become a dominant motif in 19th-century British studies that has seeped its way into textbooks, general histories, and encyclopedias as the chief characteristic of Victorian religion. As British intellectual life has become more secular, and as religion has diminished in social salience, the intelligentsia has looked increasingly to the Victorian period for roots of its secularity.234

Few dare, like Timothy Larsen with *Crisis of Doubt: Honest Faith in Nineteenth-Century England*,235 to challenge "the notion that the loss of faith (and the secularization this implies) was

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232 Houghton 394-95.
233 Escobar, Kristen, "Female Prodigal: Christina Rossetti's 'Goblin Market,'" *Religion and the Arts*, Vol. 5, Numbers 1-2, 2001. This essay interprets "Goblin Market" in a religio-feminist way, as a retelling of the parable of the Prodigal Son, in which the goblins are men constantly watching and preying on women, causing Laura to become a fallen woman. Lizzie, Escobar argues, is Rossetti's rewriting of the indignant older brother of the parable. As a woman, Lizzie proves "superior" to him since, instead of his objecting to his brother's return to grace, she reaches out to her sister and restores her.
the dominant paradigm through the nineteenth century," and to observe that, "instead there were so few who needed to reconvert since there were so few who lost their faith in the first place."  

Going against the generally accepted trend, this study seeks to understand the true spiritual state of mind of the nineteenth century and sees no reason why writers of the period should not be taken literally or why their profession of faith should be doubted. Therefore this chapter posits that the nineteenth century in England (and in America) was essentially an age of faith that expressed itself ubiquitously in literature and in art, as well as in religious and social missions.

Furthermore, within the context of dynamic religious motivations and debates, women, through the century, from Hannah More to Marie Corelli, played a significant role and did not hesitate to contribute their particular talents and their energy in the service of what they, along with their male contemporaries, saw as pivotal to personal as well as to national welfare. Christian symbolism and allegory were particularly popular at the time, and writers and artists recognized them as powerful tools to convey and emphasize their message with both depth and subtlety, illustrating all the more how religious convictions were, indeed, at the very core of the nineteenth-century. Thus, as a small and symbolical token of recognition for this age of faith, I chose to place this third chapter at the center of this study.

When considering England, one of the first observations one is compelled to make is that Protestantism plays an essential role at all levels of society. "Tell me what you believe, and I'll know who you are": this French saying seems particularly fitting, indeed, to Britain in general, and even more particularly to nineteenth-century Britain. Although there existed non-Christian groups, such as Unitarians and Jews, the ideas of the Reformation took such a hold in Britain that it would be impossible and foolish to attempt to separate the two. It is therefore through the Christianity and believes them to be indicators of the "strength of the Christian tradition in nineteenth-century Britain."  

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"Protestant" lens that I propose to examine the works and motivations that defined this very rich age as strongly evangelical.237

It is important in order to understand those under scrutiny to try to look at the events and ideas of their times from their perspective. Religion is, in that sense, particularly difficult to assess "neutrally" because either the researcher believes or he does not; there is no middle ground. The agnostic's third party has ultimately no place here because either he will lean toward doubt that God can, in any significant measure, be part of Man's daily life, in which case he will find more affinities with the atheistic, or he will hope for the possibility of a personal and intervening God, which will help him sympathize with the believer; and even if, intellectually, the agnostic insists in defending his position, the way he lives, and, for our particular purpose here, how he interprets history and the convictions behind the events of the past will reveal him as belonging clearly to one or the other only two options. As for the "clock-maker" God of the deist, his conspicuous absence makes him, in all objective practicality, a non-entity, pairing thus, paradoxically, the deist and the atheist.

We have already seen what an atheistic interpretation of nineteenth-century spirituality looks like: a summary dismissal, a labeling of Christianity as "superstition" and an Inquisitor's suspicion so bent on distrust that the only conclusion left is that faith does not exist, there is only hypocrisy. At best, it has only bewilderment to offer, as expressed by Susan Griffin, in Anti-Catholicism and Nineteenth-Century Fiction, who exclaims, "How did such narratives, with their eighteenth-century titles and seventeenth-century bigotry, come to be written in the nineteenth-century?"238 As long as a scholar does not hesitate to call religion "bigotry" and refuses to grant believers the full status of intelligent and courageous individuals who thought their beliefs

237 Unless otherwise indicated, the term "Evangelical" is to be understood through the chapter in its general meaning of "faithful to the Gospel" and not as a reference to a theological party.

through (even if the researching scholar happens to disagree with those beliefs), we cannot expect to receive enlightenment about those for whom religion explains life, helps them to understand the person and the will of God, makes them aware of their failings and their responsibilities, guides them in their mundane as well as life-changing decisions, and gives them the courage to endure even tortures and horrible forms of death, and to die with praises on their lips for their God and forgiveness for their tormentors.

Faith is a blend of trust in what one cannot see and reason, observations and emotions; if it is sincere, it affects all the facets of life. In that sense, the notion of "separation of church and state" is almost absurd since religious beliefs then as now cannot but have a direct impact on political and social decisions, as well as on cultural behavior. Therefore, convinced that it is imperative that to best analyze the British religious mind of the nineteenth-century, while keeping in mind the difficulty of balancing empathy with objectivity, I chose to assess the situation essentially from the then-dominant Protestant perspective.

I. Beacon on the Religious Landscape

1. A Long Tradition

A. Pre-Reformation and Edward VI

From the very beginning of its existence, England occupies a unique place on the Christian map of history. Even before the Reformation, streaks of independence from Rome appeared sporadically but significantly, whether with shady King John or the honorable Wycliffe. This vivid religious past not only was essential in making Britain what it was, but nineteenth-century thinkers, writers, artists, spiritual or political leaders constantly drew strength and inspiration from historical figures and events of that past with which they identified and by which they considered themselves invested with the task of preserving the good that had been handed down to them. For instance, it is not surprising that Ford Maddox Brown's painting of
Wycliffe\textsuperscript{239} presents the fourteenth-century preacher as addressing the outside observer more than the audience figuring in the work. Wycliffe is indeed facing us, the viewers, with nothing between him and us except the Bible, which underscores the common foundation of faith that abolishes the distance of class or time, as it unifies the believers of the Text (inside and outside of the picture) in universal brotherhood. This can be interpreted as an invitation as well as a reminder. It is no less interesting that George Clausen’s \textit{The English People Reading Wycliffe’s Bible},\textsuperscript{240} made in 1920 but in the style of nineteenth century paintings, focuses again on the universality of Scripture, which addresses and concerns all, regardless of age, gender, or rank. In a lecture on Wycliffe given in Oxford, Pr. Montagu Burrows exclaimed, "To Wyclif [sic] we owe, more than to any one person who can be mentioned, our English language, our English Bible, and our reformed religion."\textsuperscript{241} Early on therefore, the reading of the Scripture is associated with British individuality, independence, and faith, tenets which, through the nineteenth century, will be at the forefront of the opposition with Rome as well as of the educational and social reforms.

While the beginnings of the English Reformation were somewhat entangled with Henry VIII's personal and complicated domestic life, the breach from Rome was unquestionable with Edward VI, who established England as a Protestant monarchy with its forty-two articles and Prayer Book. As Dyson Hague explains:

[The reign of Henry VIII brought] the repudiation of papal supremacy, and the deliverance of the English Church from the tyranny of the Pope, [while the

\textsuperscript{239} See illustration IA: Wycliffe Reading His Translation of the New Testament to John of Gaunt (1847).
\textsuperscript{240} See illustration IB. This painting is part of the works decorating Saint Stephen Hall in the Houses of Parliament. While Clausen's usual style was closer to that of the impressionists, this work imitates the clarity and attention to detail that we find in the Pre-Raphaelites.
Prayer Book] stands for the victory of the Reformation. . . the victory of the Bible. . . [it] will ever stand as a monument to the nationalizing of England's Church, and of that great epoch in England's History when the Pope was turned out, and the Bible was brought in. . . As if to say, 'Rome rule in England's Church is over. Never again shall Englishmen worship their God in a language which they do not understand.'

Edward VI also made England a sanctuary for Protestants from the continent, fleeing persecution for their faith. Maybe one of the most significant sites of refuge is to be found in Canterbury where Huguenots settled and where the king granted them one of the crypts of Canterbury Cathedral—the seat of the most important religious figure in the English ecclesiastical hierarchy (after God and monarch, that is) --formerly known as the Black Prince's Chantry-- as their own place of worship, and where, to this day, services in French are still held weekly.

B. Mary Tudor

However, it was, paradoxically, Mary Tudor's brief but traumatic restoration of Catholicism that would confirm England in its profession of Protestant faith. The memory of the Catholic Queen's systematic repression of Protestants, later to be immortalized in Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, left her with the unenviable nickname of "Bloody Mary" and made Elizabeth, by contrast, appear all the more as the savior of England. Not only had Mary relentlessly endeavored to extinguish any trace of the religious individualism the Reformation had granted to believers, but, by marrying Philip II, she had also bound England's national independence to Catholic Spain, where the religious tribunal of the Inquisition had doubled in efficacy, because it was also a state institution under the monarch's control. Froude informs us that even before the Inquisition had been officially established in England under that name, "the introduction of the

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243 See illustrations II.
Register was the Inquisition under another name." Furthermore, a commission was created, headed by Bishop Bonner, "To search and find out the sellers of heretical books, or those who in any way professed heresy or taught it; to ascertain who refused to attend mass, to walk in procession, to use holy water, or in any way betrayed disrespect for the established religion." And Froude grimly adds, "No Spanish inquisition possessed larger or less tolerable powers; no English sovereign ever more entirely set aside the restrictions of the law." This chief concern about "burning the books" was a trademark of the Church against anything deemed "heretical" even before Luther; again freedom through the written word and direct access of the general public to the Word of God, which was to the Protestant Christian the greatest privilege, appeared to the Catholic clergy as a personal threat to the Roman Church.

Mary became a synonym of "horror" in British memory because she actually believed she was doing the will of God in sending heretics to the stake. In a recent post found on the Roman Catholic site, EWTN History Forum, Warren Carroll simply explains, "Heretics are revolutionaries against the Church, and if they are given a free hand they can and will imperil the salvation of millions and begin the upheaval of society." To some extent, burning at the stake was even viewed as a "good" thing for the condemned who had recanted his heresy, because it prevented him from relapsing into it! Even for the one who had not recanted, while yet alive in the flames, he was given a vision of hell's eternal damnation and could be saved from the latter in extremis. In Villette, Lucy Snow is confronted with this belief at the Belgian school of Mrs. Beck:

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245 Warren H. Carroll. EWTN History Forum. May 20, 2002. June 3, 2008 <http://biblelight.net/burn-heretics.htm>. This catholic site is enlightening as to the controversy existing within the Catholic Church even today about the methods used by the Inquisition to eradicate heresy, and particularly Protestantism. Although Carroll rejects the use of burning at the stake for today, we have the eerie feeling that it is more because, "in the present climate of opinion, it would hurt the Church" than because "we should not deliberately inflict such great pain, nor deprive the heretic of the opportunity to repent."
The opinion of my Catholic acquaintance concerning my spiritual prospects was somewhat naively expressed to me on one occasion. A pensionnaire [boarding student], to whom I had rendered some little service, exclaimed one day as she sat beside me:

'Mademoiselle, what a pity you are a Protestant!'

'Why, Isabelle?'

'Parce que, quand vous serez morte, vous brûlerez tout de suite dans l'Enfer.'

[Because when you die, you will burn in hell right away.]

'Croyez-vous?' [Is that what you believe?]'

'Certainement que j'y crois: tout le monde le sait; et d'ailleurs le prêtre me l'a dit.'

[Of course I believe this: everybody knows this; and moreover, the priest told me so.]

. . . She added sotto voce, 'Pour assurer votre salut là-haut, on ferait bien de vous brûler toute vive ici-bas.' [To secure your salvation above, we should burn you alive down here.]246

Although Lucy dismisses the comment: "I laughed, as, indeed it was impossible to do otherwise," Charlotte Brontë does not find it so amusing. She writes the novel in the context of the recently restored Catholic hierarchy, and the pressures her heroine later faces reflect the concerns that many Protestants had about the Catholic Church given greater range of action. As for the Inquisition, Lucy is put under a form of mental torture: she is under the constant observation of Mrs. Beck; she is also isolated from friends and craving true fellowship with other human beings. When she reaches a mental crisis, her Catholic foes pounce on the opportunity to try to convince her to join their ranks and even to become a nun. One should not forget also that

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the last bastion of the Inquisition, in Spain, was not suppressed until 1834, an event that is
separated from Brontë's novel by less than twenty years.

In 1808, in his etching, *Truth Has Died*, Goya pointedly represented Truth as a woman
killed and buried by clerics. The scene is evocative of the Inquisition's methods and goals, just
as the British mind understood them. Despite the glow emanating from the corpse of Truth and
bespeaking of the hope of her rising again, the powerlessness and despair depicted here is
incentive enough for the viewers presently enjoying freedom, based on truth, to want to preserve
it at all costs.

In 1857, Millais produced *The Escape of a Heretic, 1559*. The painting captures the
urgency of the moment: there is no time for the would-be victim to change garb, only to throw
over the ghastly "San Benito" costume the cape of the monk, who has been tied up in the
background. The terror on the woman's face is almost haunting. Even though, she is going to
escape a horrible death, she is in a state of shock, and we can easily imagine that once removed to
the safety of possibly another land, it will take time for her to be free of nightmares from her
ordeal. The monk, who was supposed to take her to her execution, feels not a shred of sympathy
toward his escaping charge; his visible anger and unsuccessful effort to prevent the woman's
escape (holding back her cloak with his tied hands!) bespeaks of the obstinate mercilessness of
the Inquisition. The image on the costume itself, a figure burning at the stake, surrounded by
dancing demons, describes the fate to which the young woman had been destined, but it is also
meant to underscore, along with the priest's attitude, the evils of Roman Catholicism. There is
also a touch of dark humor, as the priest has been gagged not just with a cloth, but with his rosary
as well. What is, furthermore, extremely significant is the text that accompanied the painting,
which is the deposition of the overpowered priest, relating the escape of Maria Juana de Acuna y

247 See illustration III.
248 See illustration IV.
Villajos exactly in the conditions described in the painting.\textsuperscript{249} Thankfully for the intended victim and her rescuer, they were never found.

When Pope John Paul II authorized the opening of the Inquisition files in 1998, the documentary filmmaker David Rabinovitch was surprised to discover that its primary target was not, as many had first imagined, the persecution of the Jews (although the latter were certainly among its victims, especially in Spain) but the obliteration of Protestantism and other heresies "deemed to be dissident forms of Christianity."\textsuperscript{250} And, as Presbyterian elder Robert Jones points out, the Inquisition proved remarkably effective in removing Protestantism from Spain and Italy. While it is true that Catholics, in turn, fell victims of Protestant leaders, including in England, "as an institution, the Inquisition stands alone in terms of the length of time it existed (600 years), the number of its victims, the ruthlessness of its methodology, and the intolerance that it fostered."\textsuperscript{251} Some believe that the nursery rhyme, "Mary, Mary quite contrary" refers, in fact, to Mary Tudor and that her "garden" is the graveyard of Protestant martyrs, the "silver bells and cockleshells" are names of instruments of torture, and the "maids" refer to the executions.\textsuperscript{252} Whether this is the true key to deciphering the rhyme might be arguable, but what is not open to doubt it that Mary managed to accomplish exactly the opposite of what she set out to do: Never again would England tolerate Catholicism as the State religion.

\textsuperscript{249} Rosenfeld 110. Later critics have questioned the authenticity of the text, but those who viewed the painting in the nineteenth-century did not. In fact, we know that the Pre-Raphaelites were very concerned with accuracy and details, as we saw with The Order of Release, 1746, for which Millais had sought and found an original order of release; there is no clear evidence given by these critics to justify dismissing the text as a fraud. Effie Millais related that this painting was initially planned as a diptych with A Huguenot, and that the idea of this painting came from a visit to Sir William Sterling, who was a historian specialized in Spanish history and culture.


One of the grim figures of the period was Bishop Bonner mentioned before, who, like his queen, earned the nickname of "bloody" for his persecution of Protestants. Hannah More's poem, "Bishop Bonner's Ghost," written in 1789, depicts him as shocked and angry, as he returns as a ghost two hundred years later, to discover that Protestantism has succeeded in England:

Where now that holy gloom which hid/ Fair truth from vulgar ken?/
Where now that wisdom which forbid/ To think that monks were men? . . .
Ah! fatal age, which gave mankind/ A Luther and a Faustus!253 . . .
Our influence longer had surviv'd/ Had laymen never read. . .
Oh, shame! A peasant now can tell/ If priests the truth impart.

More contrasts, in fact, two bishops in this poem: Bonner, the "narrator," and his Nemesis, the un-named godly bishop, who brings "the moral light" to the poor and causes "the intellectual night" to flee. We can guess him to be Beilby Porteus, bishop of Chester, and later of London, who was an ardent promoter of Sunday Schools, a dedicated abolitionist, and a friend of Hannah More. Bonner's ghost rants and raves against [Porteus], but his powerlessness underscores More's religious message: every item of grievance that Bonner holds against his successor stands as a positive quality in the Protestant view, and Porteus' "heresy" is, indeed, the true faith. All the tenets of the Catholic faction that held England in darkness during Mary's reign have been defeated in Porteus' time.

The very fact that More chooses to contrast the two historical periods and these two men is significant: she demonstrates to us how vivid the events of the sixteenth century were to the

253 It is not clear to which Faustus More is alluding. One was Faustus Socinus (1539-1604), who rejected the belief in the Trinity, and was a forerunner of Unitarianism; the other was the historical Faust, Johann Georg Faust/Faustus (c.1480-1540) whom Marlowe immortalized in his play. This one was, according to an article in the Britannica, an unsavory character who dabbled in the black arts, after having sold his soul to the devil, in exchange for knowledge and supernatural powers. While sixteenth-century humanists dismissed him as a fraud, Luther did not, as the Scriptures do mention demon-possesion. In the eyes of Bonner, though, either one of these Faustuses would easily be thrown in together with Luther, as Bonner sees them both as equally heretical, since they both have broken away from the established Roman Church.
nineteenth century, but also she clearly stresses the link between Protestantism, individual thinking, personal as well as national freedom, and ultimately happiness. A third person appears as the writer of a footnote dated "1900" commenting on the last stanzas of the poem, which hint at the evangelical outreach to far lands and the abolition of slavery, and with a recognizable reference to William Wilberforce ("an active young reformer for the abolition of a pretended traffic of the human species"). By using the date of "1900," More imagines that slavery will have been so completely eradicated from history, that only scholars would know of it. Common people, to which the "author" of the footnote belongs, will believe it one of the "exaggerations of history... one of those fictions not uncommon among authors, to blacken the memory of former ages."

Written in 1828, Anna Eliza Bray's *The Protestant* is also set during Mary's reign and denounces the Catholic persecution of the Protestants. In this novel, we have, again, the contrast of two ministers: Owen Wilford, friend and former secretary of the martyred Cranmer, and Thornton, suffragan bishop of Dover. The former is older, wise, courageous, generous, and sincere; the latter is cruel, cunning, lustful, and uses the circumstances of the times (repression of Protestantism by order of Mary) to assuage his own revenge and satisfy his own ambitions. Bray, however, expands the comparison of both religions through two women who occupy key roles in the novel. Arabella Southwell is the daughter of Sir Richard, a Catholic friend of Wilford, who, though sincerely Catholic, disapproves of violence and conversions by force. He believes it best that Arabella should renounce her love for Edward Wilford (son of Owen) because of his faith. Arabella is the perfect target to be bullied into conversion, because her loyalties are divided. She is also very emotional and impressionable. Secluded in her home and eventually drugged by the evil Friar John de Villa Garcina—the *eminence grise* behind all those in power and the embodiment of the Inquisition—to accept Catholicism, it is only when she makes a personal commitment of faith (Protestant) that she is able to resist and escape (with Edward's help) the
pressure of her persecutors. Rose Wilford (daughter of Owen), on the other hand, is the epitome of the unshakable believer. Despite her young age (seventeen), her faith is strong enough to resist psychological torture from Thornton as well as physical torture from the sadistic Archdeacon of Canterbury, Harpsfield. She stands as a sort of Protestant Joan of Arc. Although she may first appear passive, because of her quiet behavior, she is a perfect illustration of "the hand of steel in a velvet glove"; with inner peace, gentle behavior, and unshakable resolution, she is prepared to the ultimate sacrifice, and yet she is devoid of hatred. Her attitude reminds us of that of John Rogers, friend of Tyndale, one of Mary's first victims:

When the time came that he should be brought out of Newgate to Smithfield, the place of his execution, Mr. Woodroofe, one of the sheriffs, first came to Mr. Rogers, and asked him if he would revoke his abominable doctrine, and the evil opinion of the Sacrament of the altar. Mr. Rogers answered, "That which I have preached I will seal with my blood." Then Mr. Woodroofe said, "Thou art an heretic." "That shall be known," quoth Mr. Rogers, "at the Day of Judgment." "Well," said Mr. Woodroofe, "I will never pray for thee." "But I will pray for you," said Mr. Rogers.254

It is also no accident that Rose is submitted to the same form of torture that we find mentioned by Foxe, Froude, and Spurgeon255 in relation to Thomas Tomkins, a weaver, whose hand was held by Bonner (he again!) over the flames of candles, but who refused to recant.

While the news of Mary's death and Elizabeth's accession to the throne comes in extremis to bring the story to a happy conclusion, Bray's message should not be overlooked: her treatment of Arabella and Rose points out that, in the Protestant perspective, if it is true that Catholicism

certainly encourages and expects young maidens to be pure and virtuous, it also demands of them blind obedience and spineless submissiveness, first toward their fathers, later toward their husbands. As with More's Bonner, education is dangerous; "knowledge is power," indeed! Power to be informed, to think for oneself, to make independent decisions, and to be directly accountable to God through Scripture. To keep control over others, women in this case, it must not be permitted that they receive any depth of education, or be given a chance to think on their own. Any hints of true character and courage are viewed and condemned as marks of a dangerously rebellious nature that needs to be brought back under proper authority, by any means if necessary. By contrast, the Protestant woman is taught early to think for herself, and she is held in respect by those of her faith. This is one of the themes recurring through the century and which reaffirm women's value within the religious context of the time. For instance, in Rachel McCrindell's 1846 *The Protestant Girl in a French Nunnery*, several English Protestant girls in the 1840s have been sent to a French Catholic school to "perfect" their education, but they are put under considerable pressure, constantly monitored, and submitted to a strict discipline to abjure their faith and convert to Catholicism. One of the heroines exclaims:

O happy, happy England. . .blessed land of Freedom and peace! Where girls of fifteen or sixteen are looked upon as rational beings and capable of distinguishing between right and wrong;--where they are gently led into the paths of virtue, without being subjected to degrading coercion, which is more likely to disgust them than benefit their minds. . . I would not exchange the privilege of being an English girl for all the wealth of the Indies, or all the boasted advantage which France is so proud of possessing.256

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Eventually, when Emily, the heroine, is about to return to England, one of the nuns who truly cares for her worries that she will go to hell unless she converts to Catholicism. But when the nun invites Emily to visit her one last time so she can show her, using the New Testament in the convent, that Scripture vouches for Catholicism, she is barred from talking to Emily again. The novel is an unabashed warning to British Protestant parents against the danger of sending their daughters to such schools, where more than French will be taught to them.

Symbols play an important role in these stories. For instance, in Bray as in More, they expand the scope of the story. The fact that the plot is set in Canterbury is significant for reasons already mentioned, but also because the tower, the prison in the text, is mentioned in the introduction as in its present (1828) state, a ruin. Symbol of Catholic persecution, by the time Bray writes it has lost its power to oppress; it is no more than a testimony of an abolished era of repression. As with More's poem, obscurantism has left England for good. In fact, the happy resolution of the novel is more than that. Yes, it satisfies the readers, but it also underscores the benefit of Protestantism for England, ushered in by Elizabeth. After all, even Bonner, despite his repeated refusals to take the oath of Supremacy, ended his life in prison, not at the stake.257

Although Bray is a forgotten author today, her novel spoke to the heart and mind of her contemporaries, as we can see in this enthusiastic comment from The Age, in November 1828: "The Tale of 'The Protestant,' just published, develops, in a striking manner, the sanguinary and vindictive schemes of the Catholics, during their short return to power in this kingdom, in the reign of Mary, the events of which reign were among the most startling of any recorded in our annals." Later critics have sometimes tried to rehabilitate Mary, but even Cardinal Newman, in a speech, "on the Conversion of England," given at a meeting of the Catholic Union, in 1880, deplored:

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Queen Mary did not do much for us; in her short reign she permitted acts as if for the benefit of Catholics which were the cause and the excuse for terrible reprisals in the next reign, and have stamped on the minds of our countrymen a fear and hatred of us, viewed as Catholics, which at the end of three centuries is as fresh and as keen as it ever was.258

The five years of Mary's horrific reign taught the British people three essential lessons: first, the religion of the sovereign was of foremost importance and must take precedence even over gender in the most direct line of inheritance, as the Glorious Revolution would illustrate; second, adherence to Catholicism meant more than a choice of faith: it entailed dangerous alliances with foreign powers and allegiance to Rome; and third, there could be no spiritual compromise with Rome if England was to have religious as well as political freedom.

C. Elizabeth

With Elizabeth I, England not only achieved independence and prosperity, it also rose as the Beacon of Protestantism--an image that Milton would immortalize. It is interesting to note that taking such a stand was enormously important, not only because it meant open and successful opposition to Rome, which was spectacular in itself, but also because it proclaimed direct allegiance of a nation and its sovereign to God. As David Neff's article, "Positively Protestant," reminds us, "When the word "Protestant" came into currency in England (in Elizabethan times), its accepted significance was not "objection" but "avowal" or "witness" or "confession."259 England's insular situation reinforced its image of strength as a place of refuge for Protestants from other lands. In this respect, one particular episode was to leave a very deep impact in British minds, the massacre of St Bartholomew's day in Paris, in 1572. While the city was celebrating the marriage of the Protestant King of Navarre to the Catholic Princess Marguerite,

Catherine of Medici, the queen-mother, jealous of the growing influence of the Protestants over her weakling son, Charles IX, convinced the young king to seize the opportunity of his sister's marriage, which had brought many Huguenot leaders to Paris, to eliminate the Protestant threat to the unity and authority of the Roman Catholic Church. This infamous act of betrayal galvanized British opinion even more against Rome and its allies. Indeed, Philip II was strongly encouraging France to "strike a decisive blow against the Protestants," with the agreement of the Church, as a letter from the Spanish Archbishop of Rossano to the Secretary of State to Pope Gregory XIII, Cardinal Come, testifies:

The King (Philip II) bids me say that if his Most Christian Majesty means to purge his kingdom of its enemies, the time is now opportune, and that by coming to terms with him (Philip II) His Majesty could destroy those who are left. Now, especially as the Admiral (Coligny) is at Paris where the people were attached to the Catholic religion and to their king, it would be easy for him (Charles IX) to do away with him (Coligny) forever.  

Furthermore, Charles IX's other sister had become Philip II of Spain's third wife, while, Charles' widowed sister-in-law, Mary Stuart, was constantly plotting, with the support of Rome, against her cousin Elizabeth. The Massacre struck a spiritual chord in the English public.

Meyerbeer's famous opera, Les Huguenots takes place in Paris during the fateful event. The two heroes Raoul, a Huguenot nobleman, and Valentine, daughter of the leader of the

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260 Gaspard de Coligny (1519-1572) was Admiral of France and leader of the Huguenot Party. He was widely respected and had gained influence on the young Charles IX. He was also opposed to Spain. After surviving a first attempt against his life two days before the Massacre, he was attacked, on the night of St Bartholomew, by Henri, Duke of Guise, one of leaders of the Catholic party, and thrown yet alive from a window in the street below.


262 Les Huguenots, By Giacomo Meyerbeer, Libretto by Eugene Scribe and Emile Deschamps, Paris Opera, 1836. Although hardly performed now, it has been considered the most popular opera of all time, and was staged, in Paris alone, 1,000 times.
Catholic faction, are united in love and in a martyr's death. This opera was first performed in England in 1842, in the midst of the Oxford Movement; ten years later, while the "Papal Aggression" was still very much a heated topic in England, Millais produced his own illustration of the story in A Huguenot on St. Bartholomew's Day Refusing to Shield Himself from Danger by Wearing the Roman Catholic Badge. Like Arabella (in Bray's novel), Valentine is at first divided in her allegiance and seeks primarily to save Raoul's life. On the other hand, the young man has his priorities in the right order, and although his love for Valentine is pure and honorable (he marries her that night, though they both die shortly afterward), he belongs to God first and refuses to be spared the fate that awaits his co-religionists. His gentle refusal of the scarf matches the inner peace reflected in his expression, and contrasts with Valentine's anguish. Millais makes it clear that true freedom cannot exist apart from religious freedom and thus requires refusal of compromises on what makes life worth living, even if death is the price. At the same time, in the context of the reinstatement of the Catholic clergy, the story and Millais' illustration of it stand as powerful reminders that the price of freedom is unrelenting vigilance.

Spurgeon, in 1866, dedicated an article to the massacre and reminded his readers that, "The monstrous deed received the high approval of the Pope and his Cardinals, and thanks were impiously made to Heaven for the distinguished favor that had been rendered to the Church." Spurgeon was well informed, for, indeed, Pope Gregory XIII had ordered a commemorative medal minted for the occasion; significantly, it depicts the avenging angel of God (the Catholics of France) destroying the heretics. To Spurgeon as to many British men and women of the nineteenth century, the experiences of the past fueled suspicion toward the events of the present, as he continues:

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263 See illustration V
265 See illustration VI.
It must not be supposed that in consequence of the respectable appearance which Catholicism is now necessitated to put on that the nature of Popery is changed. It is, and from its organization must continue to be, ambitious of supremacy. A purely religious power the Roman Catholic Church never has been, is not now, and it seems to have made up its mind that it never will be.\textsuperscript{266}

Isaac D'Israeli, father of Benjamin, also mentioned the Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre, noting "The dreadful massacre of St. Bartholomew took place in the reign of Charles IX.; on which occasion the English court went into mourning."\textsuperscript{267} Looking at it more from a political angle, he condemned it, of course, but denounced it as a political blunder as well, since it backfired against its perpetrators.

However the most unexpected reference to the Massacre might be found in Eliza Beeton's Book of Household Management. As we saw in the preceding chapter, education was not limited to school in the nineteenth century, and there was a widespread fervor to learn. Some may look at it with contempt and dismiss Beeton's effort as trivial or "anecdotic,"\textsuperscript{268} but the fact remains that her approach was popular and probably broadened significantly the scope of general education for the users of her book. Besides, for women (like me) who do not like cooking, adding a bit of history makes the chores more palatable. Thus, at the end of her chapter on "General Observations on Preserves, Confectionary, Ices, and Dessert Dishes," we find this closing note, "Do ladies know to whom they are indebted for the introduction of ices, which all the fair sex is

\textsuperscript{266} See illustration VII.
\textsuperscript{267} D'Israeli, Isaac. Curiosities of Literature, Consisting of Anecdotes, Characters, Sketches, and Observations, Literary, Critical, And Historical. Edited by his son, Volume II. 1848. April 18, 2008, Gutenberg Project.
\textsuperscript{268} Nicola Humble is very condescending and dismissive of Beeton's approach of mixing recipes with historical cameos of information, and denounces it as "learning with no object, and [which] tended to exercise the memory rather than the intellect." (xiii).
passionately fond of? –To Catherine de' Medici. Will not this fact cover a multitude of sins committed by the instigator of St. Bartholomew?"269

It is significant that although politically the relations between England and France had always been volatile, spiritually they were marked by the unbreakable ties of brotherhood.270 When, in 1627, the Huguenots of the port city of La Rochelle, objecting to the progressive shrinking of their legal freedoms, found themselves besieged by the royal troops headed by Cardinal Richelieu, England attempted to rescue the city by sea. Unfortunately, the Duke of Buckingham's fleet could not break down the sea wall erected by Richelieu's engineers. Motte's painting clearly shows Richelieu, with his armor and cardinal garb, as a redoubtable figure, who combines temporal and spiritual powers, as he looks defiantly at the powerless British fleet from the safety of the sea wall.271 In less than fourteen months, when the city finally surrendered, only 5,000 of the initial 27,000 inhabitants were still alive.272 In 1685, the odious Louis XIV removed the last vestiges of religious freedom from his Protestant subjects, that his grandfather, Henry IV, had granted, and caused a massive exodus estimated at 200,000 people toward Protestant countries; as many as 50,000 may have gone to England.273

With Elizabeth, England really seized the opportunity to solidly establish itself as a Protestant power, and yet, Anglicanism is a remarkable effort of conciliation between Catholicism and Protestantism. Elizabeth first reduced the forty-two articles to thirty-nine, and while the content of this new denomination was clearly an expression of the Reformation, with items such as, Scriptures as the final authority on salvation, justification by faith in Christ alone,

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269 Beeton 305.
270 A trait still noticeable today: the French Protestant community has never been as hostile to the Anglo-Saxon world as the rest of France.
271 See See illustration VIII
marriage of the clergy recognized and even encouraged, communion under both kinds for all believers, only sacraments of baptism and communion recognized, it kept a liturgy very close in form to that of Catholic worship, and it retained essentially the church hierarchy and ecclesiastical titles of the past. But the effort of creating a via media, which was, given the circumstances, all that Protestant England could concede without sacrificing its religious convictions, failed to satisfy the Church of Rome. When Philip II gathered his fleet and organized a massive attack on England, it really looked like brave Britannia did not stand a chance.  

And then, a miracle happened.

To the skeptic, evidently, the defeat of the Spanish Armada can be explained away as a fortuitous conjunction of circumstances, essentially meteorological, but to the Protestants of England, it was clearly the doing of divine Providence. Even Philip II was quoted to have said, "I sent my ships to fight against the English, not against the elements." Medals were minted to celebrate the astonishing victory, with the inscription, "Jehovah blew with His winds and they[Philip's ships] were scattered." References were made to "Protestant winds." The entire country celebrated in thanksgiving (as we can see on one of the medals with a family, husband, wife, daughter and son kneeling in prayer), and, I must admit to finding it nearly impossible, even as a researcher, to remain stoically dispassionate and refrain from cheering with England in this instance.

Kingsley celebrated the event nearly three hundred years later with his enthusiastic Westward Ho!. At first sight, Amyas Leigh is a hero of adventure, sure to thrill the imagination of young boys, but the generous and courageous giant, devoted to God, country, and family becomes

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274 The recent movie, Elizabeth, the Golden Age, though historically uneven, does capture the spirit of England and its queen: more than British nationalism and independence were at stake; had Spain won, the religious repression would have been horrific and the hopes of Protestantism for the rest of Europe would have been terribly curtailed.

275 See illustration IX.
the embodiment of Protestant righteousness after he comes face to face with the horrors of the
Inquisition when his brother Frank--more a scholar than a soldier but not lacking in courage or
sword skills--is captured, tortured, and eventually burned at the stake by the Spanish Inquisition.
Amyas even gets carried away and lets vengeance take the place of justice in his relentless pursuit
of Don Guzman, whom he considers responsible for the loss of Rose (who pays with a martyr's
death for her foolishness) and Frank. It is only when God strikes him blind that, like John
Newton, he really sees his own sin of having tried to take on God's role. The novel presents
interesting similarities with The Protestant. As in Bray's novel, one of the villains is a Catholic
cousin of the hero, who uses his allegiance to the Catholic cause as a means to assuage his own
revenge. Unlike Amyas who sins because he lets his righteous grief and desire for justice get out
of hand, and later repents and accepts God's judgment with faith and humility, Eustace hides his
jealousy of Amyas under the cover of his faith; he plots and cares nothing for the consequences
until it is too late, and then, he disappears from the story with the quiet oblivion to which his
mediocrity has doomed him.

Women play an important role in Kingsley's condemnation of Catholicism. Rose
Salterne first lets passion for the gallant Don Guzman be her guide, never thinking of what her
Protestant faith would mean once she was in a Spanish context. Her initial coquetry, however,
gives way to true courage, as she endures torture and death at the stake rather than renouncing her
faith. Ayacanora, daughter of Sir John Oxenham, has been kidnapped as a child by Spaniards and
then has been lost and eventually has become a sort of warrior/prophetess among the Omaguas
Indians. A little like Tarzan, she has learned to survive in a primitive form of life. Her "savage"
ignorance, however, is not blamed on the tribe but on her Spanish kidnappers who, we can infer,
care nothing about women and about women's education in general. It is only when she is
brought back to England that she can truly have access to learning and civilization through the
Bible and the guidance of true Christians, and that she can be the perfect wife and helpmeet for
Amyas. Amyas' mother is the epitome of the mature woman of faith. She enjoys the respect of not only her husband and sons, but of all who know her. She displays the feminine qualities praised by nineteenth-century standards, and it is clear that these qualities exist in her because of her unflinching faith. Adviser, comforter, teacher, she blesses those who come in contact with her. She is also the loving mother Ayaconara never really had (for she lost her own mother in traumatic circumstances, before she was seven) and nurtures her into a godly young woman. In so doing, she is the agent of God in making Amyas and Ayaconara's happiness possible. It would be a mistake to imagine that this model of Christian womanhood is the stuff of fiction alone. Mrs. Leigh is reminiscent of Susanna Wesley, and the words that Charles Spurgeon addressed to his own mother could have easily been found on Amyas' lips:

You, my Mother, have been the great means in God's hand of rendering me what I hope I am . . . You, by God's blessing prepared the way for the preached word. . . If I have any courage, if I feel prepared to follow my Saviour, not only into the water, but should He call me, even into the fire, I love you as the preacher to my heart of such courage, as my praying, watching Mother.\footnote{Drummond, Lewis, \textit{Spurgeon, Prince of Preachers}, (Kregel Publications, 1992) 104.}

And beyond these women in Wesley's novel, stands the ideal figure of Elizabeth, symbol of England and all that Protestant England has to offer.

For the Protestants of Britain, Elizabeth can be perceived as the first and most colorful of godly queens. Mary (with William) and later Anne allowed for a way to do without the Catholic James II. Despite the two Scottish Rebellions of 1715 and 1745, initiated by the Older and Younger Pretenders, England confirmed her Protestant rights over both foreign and Catholic alliances. Queen Charlotte, consort of George III, even before Victoria and Albert, showed the exemplarity of the Christian queen, wife, mother, and woman. Her interest in intellectual pursuits (botany, art, music, literature) further displayed the association of faith and learning. And, of
course, Victoria and Albert strengthened the image of the Protestant rulers, infusing the century with morality, family ideals, and a national sense of mission.

D. Assessing the Past

It is significant that England's prosperity and ascendency as a world power begins with a statement of faith. To an extent, the religious and naval victory of 1588 illustrates the biblical tenet: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" \(^{277}\) and validates the principle of Protestant work ethic: England had been faithful to God's Word, had invested herself totally, efforts and skills, in fighting for what was right, taking a great step of faith in so doing since the odds had been so starkly stacked against her, and God had rewarded her with far more than the preservation of her national and religious independence.

Not surprisingly it is also at that time that the figure of Britannia reappears as a symbol of England.\(^{278}\) Although it had its origins in Roman Britain, it returns and is solidly in place with the Union of the Crown in 1603, with the Union Jack figuring with Britannia from 1606 forward and underscoring Britain as a Christian nation with the red cross of England and the white on blue cross of Scotland. In 1801, the cross of Ireland was added.

Ian Paisley, former First Minister of Northern Ireland and Protestant minister, wrote an interesting essay, "The Source of Britain's Greatness–and the Cause of Her Decline," in which he reviews British history through the lens of divine Providence. Starting with Alfred the Great, as the first "of our God-fearing monarchs," Paisley asserts that when Britain followed the Bible, she was blessed, and when she distanced herself from it, she suffered reversals of fortune as, for instance, under Charles II, when "the star of England was instantly darkened; the country and the king alike became the scorn of foreign courts; the national honour was scandalized by mercenary

\(^{277}\) Matthew 6:3 (King James Version).

\(^{278}\) Hewitt, Virginia, "Britannia (fl. 1st-21st cent.) Allegory of a Nation, Emblem of Empire, Patriotic Icon," June 14, 2008, ODNB.
subservience to France; the national arms were humiliated by a disastrous war with Holland; and the capital, London, was swept by plague and fire.\(^{279}\) Of course, Paisley’s virulent anti-Catholicism may be found offensive, yet his Providential understanding of British history was shared by many writers of the nineteenth-century, also staunch Protestants, such as Richard Blakeney, writing in *Popery in its Social Aspect*, in 1854:

> The Reformation has been the stay, and bulwark, and glory of England. . . When England became Protestant taking the Word of God as her guide. . .when she acknowledged it as her first duty and highest privilege, as a nation, to advance the cause of Christ. . .she enjoyed the favour of Heaven, and became great; her people rose in character and intelligence, and manliness and honesty distinguished their conduct. Her arms prevailed; and the British constitution and British laws –the best that ever existed— were the admiration and praise of all the earth.\(^{280}\)

If Richard Blakeney had personal reasons to distrust Catholicism,\(^ {281}\) others simply relied on national experience based on historical facts, finding in the latter sufficient reasons, not only for caution, but for distrust as well. For instance, the Scottish minister and historian, James Aitken Wylie, was also concerned about what he saw as the encroachment of the Papacy and joined in the movement of defense of Protestantism, constantly reminding his contemporaries of what was at stake:

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\(^{279}\) Paisley, Ian, "The Source of Britain's Greatness –and the Cause of her Decline," *European Institute of Protestant Studies*. June 15, 2008 <http://www.ianpaisley.org/article.asp?ArtKey=England>. Paisley is not the only one to see the Great Plague of 1665 (actually 1664-1667, from its first appearance in London to its final disappearance in the rest of the country) as a Providential chastisement upon Britain; Daniel Defoe’s *Journal of the Plague Year* (1772) draws the same conclusion.

\(^{280}\) Quoted in Paisley.

\(^{281}\) See Wolff, John, "Blacheney, Richard Paul (1820-1884), Church of England clergyman," June 16, 2008. ODNB. Blakeney’s first wife, Anna, seemed to have been held in a convent. Blakeney says that she was "stolen ten years" from him, before she was rescued by her brother-in-law and returned to her husband. Apparently she never recovered and died five years later.
The great secret of England's greatness is her permeation, at the very dawn of her history, with the principles of order and liberty by means of the English Bible, and the capacity for freedom thereby created. This has permitted development of our love for freedom and our submission to law; of our constitution and our national genius; of our power and our self-control – the two sets of qualities fitting into one another, and growing into a well compacted fabric of political and moral power unexampled on earth. If nowhere else is seen a similar structure, so stable and so lofty, it is because nowhere else has a similar basis been found for it. It was Wycliffe who laid that basis.282

Paisley introduces his essay with the mention of the souvenir booklet, "The Royal Way" published for George V's jubilee in 1935, in which figured a key sentence of one of the King's speeches given in 1911, shortly after his coronation, "The English Bible is the first of national treasures, and in its spiritual significance the most valuable thing that this world affords." James I certainly falls short of the mark when it comes to being an admirable monarch, but his one accomplishment, which almost redeems all his considerable shortcomings, is his establishment of the (King James) Bible. For Paisley, this event "became the crowning glory of the Protestant Reformation in Britain and God's eventual mighty answer to the dying cry of William Tyndale . . . 'Lord, open the King of England's eyes!'" The illustration on the jubilee pamphlet, representing Britannia and the Bible reflected this inseparability of Britain and the Protestant faith.283 It is worth noting that the Statue of Liberty presents similar features, not only as a world symbol of freedom, refuge, and opportunity, but in her Moses-holding-Scriptures-like stance, with her light piercing the darkness, the seven beams of her headdress representing the

282 From The Protestant Echo, September 1897, quoted in Paisley in part 4, "Reformation: the Secret of England's Greatness."
283 See illustration X.
seven continents and the seven seas (i.e. the world) she also stresses the religious connotations of freedom and stability.284

2. Landmarks of Religious Tension

"Old sins have long shadows." This saying could have been the motto of nineteenth-century Britain regarding anything Catholic. From one end of the century to the other, there was a constant concern, a blend of suspicion and weariness, toward Catholicism and even more toward the Church of Rome, perceived as a powerful, dark force, always lurking in the shadows through its many, anonymous agents, and ready to seize the first opportunity to regain its old power in England. This Gothic atmosphere was not reserved to fiction. Furthermore, and not surprisingly, this concern often took a hostile tone, as we perceived from Cardinal Newman's words, earlier in this study. To make matter worse, a succession of events kept the fire of opposition and resentment going against Catholicism, and constituted the greater part of the religious debate in the century.

A. The French Revolution

Those in England who supported the French Revolution at its very beginning, writers like Wollstonecraft, Godwin, Paine, and Blake, were viewed as radicals, and indeed, to a great extent they were. They dared to question church and monarchy; some even rejected the tenets of Protestantism, preferring a less binding deism, or even atheism. As a consequence, they were willing to break away from moral and social norms, such as the institution of marriage. This would have been bad enough in itself, but when the French Revolution took a turn for the worse, conservatives felt justified to consider attempts of reform, even reasonable ones such as Wilberforce's abolitionist campaign, as dangerous. To Evangelicals like Hannah More or

284 See illustrations XI. If we further consider that Bartholdi was from Alsace, had fought and lost in the war against Prussia in 1870, which made Alsace German once again after two hundred years of being French, Bartholdi found himself in the situation of an expatriate, since remaining in Alsace would have forced him to become a citizen of Prussia. We can easily imagine that working on the Statue of Liberty had special meaning to him, who had lost the freedom to live where his heart belonged.
Wilberforce, who did not approve of the French Revolution, it was bitter injustice to see their religious and philanthropic motivations lumped together with a movement that had lost its initial intent of reform, as moderates, like La Fayette, had quickly been overtaken by the Jacobin-led mob of France. Moreover, the French radicals, not content to instate the Terror and banish Christianity, added insult to injury with their mockery of religion in the attempt to establish a cult to the Supreme Being and Goddess Reason.

While people in England recognized some similarity between the revolutionary system relying on spying, denunciation, and summary elimination of dissenters, and the Inquisition, strong Protestants, like Hannah More, delineated a clear distinction between Catholicism and Revolution and how British and Evangelical citizens should deal with this complex situation. In a pamphlet intended as a rhetorical response to the speech of the atheist Dupont, a deputy of the National Convention, an avowed atheist calling for a suppression of the clergy, not only in France, but for the rest of Europe where he hoped "similar revolutions [may spread] throughout the world. . .for the happiness of Mankind," More first addresses her preface "To the Ladies of Great Britain and Ireland" to raise money on behalf of the French Catholic Clergy in exile in England:

Some have objected to the difference of religion of those for whom we solicit. Such an objection hardly deserves a serious answer. . .the Christian is not afraid of catching, or of propagating the error of the sufferer he relieves. –Christian charity is of no party. We plead not for their faith, but for their wants. . .bear in mind that if these men could have sacrificed their conscience to their
convenience, they had not now been in this country. Let us show them the purity of our religion, by the beneficence of our actions. 285

A clever move indeed, for on the one hand, she tells her compatriots that the superiority of the Protestant faith need not fear, for it is solidly grounded, and should prove itself in deeds, as in "love your (religious) enemy," as well as in beliefs, while on the other hand, she denounces the French revolutionaries as not only a threat to Britain as a nation, but also as a declared enemy of Christendom, demonstrating that, once again, there is no such thing as separation of politics and religion. She calls Dupont's speech, not the "ideology" but, "the Creed of a public Leader" who "does not here excite the cry of indignation that Louis reigns, but that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." She unveils the Revolution and the Convention as a "compound of anarchy and atheism." Therefore the war between France and England is not a struggle for political domination as much as it is "in defense of our King, our Constitution, our Religion, our Laws, and consequently our Liberty. . .Let France choose this day whom she will serve; but as for us and our houses, we will serve the Lord." 286

This association of Britain with faith, education, order, and prosperity contrasted with Revolutionary France plunged in anarchy, fear, vulgarity and godlessness is brilliantly represented in Rowlandson's The Contrast 1793. 287 It is significant that the first thing that distinguishes wise Britannia from haggish France is religion. It is no less significant that both countries are symbolized by women. The nurturing British ideal, like the woman of Proverbs, brings justice (scale), freedom (Magna Carta) prosperity (the ship) and happiness, while her godless counterpart, in rejecting God's plan, goes against nature, gives free range to her base instincts and consequently, brings out the worst in mankind, infecting her dominions like a

286 Which, of course, is a variation on Joshua 24:15.
287 See illustration XII.
plague, and bringing utter desolation. The same ideas would be echoed by Dickens in *A Tale of Two Cities*, in 1859, at a time when he feared that social discontent in England could lead to a revolution. Yet, as Melten Kiran-Raw points out in "The French Revolution in the Popular Imagination: A Tale of Two Cities," the novel ultimately underscores to the reader the stability of Britain who, in the 1790s as in the 1860s, not only stood firm against anarchy, but also offered sanctuary for those who had endured in other lands injustice, persecution, and threat to their very life. Baroness Orczy would echo, in turn, the same conviction with her famous *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, in 1905. As a refugee from Hungary, Orczy knew from experience that England was indeed a haven of stability and opportunity.

Not surprisingly, at the time of the French Revolution British life was also marked by an evangelical impulse to reform manners, with Wilberforce and Hannah More figuring predominantly at its head. Wilberforce never thought that being a politician was a separate issue from his faith, and in 1797, he writes his *A Practical View of the Prevailing Religious System*, in which he warns:

> Let it not be vainly imagined, that our state of civilization must prevent the moral degeneracy here threatened. A neighboring nation [France] has lately furnished a lamentable proof, that superior polish and refinement may well consist with a very large measure of depravity... The Heathens [of Ancient Times] had only reason and natural conscience to direct them: we enjoy, superadded to these, the

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288 Kiran-Raw, Meltem, "The French Revolution in the Popular Imagination: A Tale of Two Cities." *The Victorian Web*, February 12, 2008. Kiran-Raw comments that in the British imagination, the French Revolution is perceived through the period of 1793-94, the Terror, although the Revolution was a larger phenomenon. This is true, and yet not totally accurate, because while the bloodiest part of the Revolution ended in 1794, freedom as it had been hoped for by the moderates in 1789 was never achieved, even after the Revolution of 1848: religious atrophy, censure of the press, strong government control were always curtailing French freedoms. Furthermore, the fact that the Terror did happen allowed for the fear that it could reoccur, just as for the British the fact that the Marian persecutions of Protestants did take place required constant vigilance and close observation of political and religious events so such tragic times would not return.
clear light of Gospel revelation, and a distinct declaration of God's dealing with them, to be our instruction. . . By all, therefore, who are studious of their country's welfare, more particularly by all who desire to support our ecclesiastical establishment, every effort should be used to revive the Christianity of our better days.\textsuperscript{289}

Wilberforce's religious commitment is not an isolated instance: later in the century, Gladstone will also offer a striking example. The same is true in America. While Francis Scott Key is famous for writing the patriotic poem that was to become our national anthem, he was also the author of several hymns; but, maybe more importantly, he presented a lecture at Bristol College in 1834, underscoring the close association of literature and Christianity.\textsuperscript{290} More's "Cheap Repository Tracts" proved to be very effective in the achievement of the same purpose, as they taught biblical principles through short stories that were easily affordable, but also attractive in their contents, to the working class. More was widely respected by her male contemporaries in that matter. In fact, Wilberforce encouraged her to write a new series of tracts addressed to the more educated strata of society. In a letter, he presses, "Not withstanding your ill health, you have no valid excuse for not taking up the pen, because you do it with such facility."\textsuperscript{291} And, indeed, these tracts had an immense impact:

'Manners of the Great'. . .passed from the Queen and the Court to the hands of fashionable ladies, literary persons, and divines. The "Hints for the Education of a Princess" were read by the Princess Charlotte, by the bishop who was her tutor.

\textsuperscript{289} Wilberforce, William, "A Practical View of the Religious Prevailing System of Professed Christians, in the Higher and Middle Classes in this Country Contrasted with Real Christianity," (Glasgow, 1833) 393.

\textsuperscript{290} Key, Francis Scott, "The Power of Literature and its Connection with Religion," Bristol College Press, July 23, 1834.

. .Her political tracts. . .were distributed largely by prelates, by politicians, by the Attorney-General and Bishop Porteus, by the stout old king and by Mr. Pitt. . 
. .Thus was confirmed the remark made of her in earlier life by John Wesley, that her sphere of good was society, from which he and his preachers were shut out by the notoriety of their religious views, but into which she had easy access.292

B. Catholic Emancipation, 1829

To British Protestants the emancipation was perceived as the first direct threat to their faith. Wellington, who had been hailed as a hero after Waterloo, was suddenly treated almost as a traitor for his support of it, as we see him caricatured as forcing it down John Bull (the British citizenry)'s throat. 293 Another caricature, far more alarming, clearly reveals what British Protestants truly feared. 294 While Wellington and Peel are pulling down the Church of England (which obviously is going to crush the faithful below), a Dominican monk has set powder beneath the Church (symbol of Catholic secretly mining and destroying everything England stands for—a representation reminiscent of Guy Fawkes), while in the background, the Catholic Clergy parades in great pomp (the figure under the dais is likely the Pope), having now the means to take over England. It was not so much that British Protestants wished to maintain Catholics in a state of sub-citizenship, as it was a fear that the steady improvement of Catholic freedoms since 1778 (right to own land) could lead to an take-over, a point of no return in which Protestant Britain would find herself back under Catholic domination, with all that the notion implied (we must remember, for instance, that the Inquisition was still in existence in Spain at the time). In fact, the Irish O'Connell had practically forced the hand of the government, since it looked as if the large number of supporters he had gathered were the prelude to a open revolt. As a consequence, the press was in constant outrage, caricaturists were merciless, and popular fiction produced

292 Id.
293 See illustration XIII A.
294 See illustration XIII B.
innumerable novels in which Catholics had, to say the least, a negative role. These "Protestant Lyrics, written in 1828," give a flavor of the passionate atmosphere of the time:

\[
\text{Wake, protestants of England, awake, the time is come,} \\
\text{The Papist foe is prowling near.} \\
\text{Rise up and speak, or ye soon must fight for the faith your fathers held. . .} \\
\text{Secure again the glorious faith for which your martyrs died.} \\
\text{What are these claims they speak of, have they not what they ought –} \\
\text{Free leave to worship as they will, free speech, free hands, free thoughts?} \\
\text{What want they more? The road to power! Oh, be their wish vain!} \\
\text{Wake, Protestants, I cry. . . for the foe is at your gates. . .} \\
\text{Speak, for your God, your Church and King --shout thousands—let them hear—} \\
\text{That ye know their strength, that ye know their hate, but that ye do not fear!} \\
\]

C. Oxford Movement, 1833-1845

If references to the dangers of Catholicism had been relatively subdued, they exploded now into full-blown antipathy in the context of the Oxford Movement. To Evangelicals it seemed as if their worst fears had suddenly begun to become realities. What had started as questions about forms of worship had evolved into justification of greater ritual, and finally had led to the "crossing over" to Catholicism. Although Anglicanism left much to be desired in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, it seemed that the unthinkable had happened: Influential and respected figures, like Newman, great names of Protestantism, like Wilberforce, were leaving the ranks of Anglicanism, were abandoning the hard-won freedoms of Luther, of the English Protestant martyrs, and of the enlightened rulers of England to join the "forces of darkness," to willingly bind themselves to a foreign institution that discouraged individualism and exacted blind obedience from its disciples. This was not only alarming, it was also completely baffling. Why, when one possessed the best, would one want to choose the worst? And how far
would this craze go? Besides, it was not just a question of some quietly changing their opinions in matters of faith; there was an aggressive streak noticeable as well. For instance, the Catholic controversy toward Foxe's Book of Martyrs was revived, with an effort to undermine and discredit Foxe's account.

The Protestant community could not just sit passively and hope this all would pass; too much was at stake. Evangelicals responded in two ways: analysis of the situation and reaffirmation of Protestant creed. For instance, the Martyrs' Memorial, with its inscription which is as much a defiant statement of (Protestant) faith, was erected in Oxford, a sort of stake firmly planted in the very heart of the Tractarian Movement, in 1841, and stood as a reaffirmation of Foxe's account, as well as a striking reminder of the excesses of Catholic fanaticism. In 1839, The Age called for an alliance of Protestant denominations against the common foe:

Protestant People of Britain! Ye Protestant Nations of Europe, we call upon you—one and all whatever may be the discrepancies of your ecclesiastical discipline—whoever first may have blest the banners of your faith, whether Luther, Calvin, Ridley, or Wesley, we call upon you in the name of the Freedom of the human soul to blend the differential hues of belief among you in the heavenly arch of the Reformation...Without the cordial fraternity of Protestants inspired with a spirit of resistance against the common enemy, we firmly believe that Rome will undermine what she dares not storm...Protestants of the Empire! Let us put An End To The Beginning!

Other responses were more subtle, as for instance the mention in a newspaper in 1845 that the French Protestant Church of London (St Martin-le-Grand) celebrated the 295 years of its foundation under Edward VI. In this tiny article, contemporaries could be reminded of three significant things: first the historical Protestant past of England; second, the international brotherhood of Evangelical Christians, which, third stressed the dividing influence of High churchmen and Catholic converts tearing into the very fabric of British liberty. Added to this, the

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295 See illustrations XIV.
fact that the year is the same as that of Newman's conversion, and that Newman's own mother was of Huguenot descent rendered the whole event more vivid within the greater context of the Catholic-Protestant debate.

Parallel to the inflamed press, literature also sought to alert public opinion to the lurking danger. Particular attention was given, for instance, to the influence of Catholic ideas through education. Frances Trollope's *Father Eustace*, like McCrindell's *The Protestant Girl in a French Nunnery*, warns Protestant readers against sending their children to be educated abroad in religious (Catholic) schools, as well as against mixed marriages in which traditionally the sons were reared in the faith of the father, which, from a British perspective, could be devastating if that father was Catholic. Impressionable young women could be seduced by the emotional side of the Catholic liturgy, convert and bury their lives in a convent, or they could be used to return home to infiltrate further English society to win more souls for Rome.296

D. Papal Aggression, 1850

The situation intensified when a large influx of Irish immigrants came into England and when, as a consequence, the Catholic hierarchy was reinstated in 1850, with Cardinal Wiseman appointed Bishop of London by the Pope. As if this was not alarming enough for Protestants, Wiseman, very unwisely in that instance, wrote his inflammatory pastoral letter, "From the Flaminian Gates of Rome," with words such as, "we govern and shall continue to govern," which immediately triggered an explosion of outrage. The Queen wondered, "Am I Queen of England or am I not?"; some newspapers even demanded Wiseman's arrest. Lord Russell commented:

The late aggression of the Pope upon our Protestantism [is] insolent and insidious . . . There is an assumption of power from all the documents which have come from Rome; a pretension of supremacy over the realm of England, and a claim to sole and individual sway, which is inconsistent with the Queen's supremacy, with

296 Peschier 52-63.
the rights of our bishops and clergy, and with the spiritual independence of the nation.

Lord Russell, however, was not as alarmed as some, "I rely with confidence on the people of England . . . a nation which looks with contempt on the mummeries of superstition, and with scorn at the laborious endeavours which are now making to confine the intellect and enslave the soul." 297 The Catholic Pugin advised decency and calm, but could not refrain from calling Protestantism, "a sort of disease or fungus," which, of course, failed to promote the moderate dialogue he was hoping for. 298

In Scotland, Anglicans and Dissenters united to create a new periodical, *The Bulwark, or Reformation Journal*, "for the purpose of enlightening the public mind in regard to the true nature and tendencies of Popery and Puseyism, and of concentrating the strength of the Protestantism of the empire in resisting both." 299 This publication proved highly popular, as Norman informs us that "by the time of the second number, the magazine already had a circulation of thirty thousand, and was being published simultaneously in London, Edinburgh, and Dublin." 300

One of the fascinating characteristics of the time is what could be called "the literary war." Not content to speak publicly and write sermons or articles, eminent representatives of both sides debated their views through fiction, and in particular through novels, in which women played pivotal roles.

In 1848, Charles Kingsley wrote *A Saint's Tragedy*, which is a retelling of the life of Elizabeth of Hungary, that denounced the Catholic emphasis on celibacy; Elizabeth is convinced by Conrad (her confessor, but also a man who lust secretly after her) that she will serve God best

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299 Preface of the first volume, 1851, quoted in Norman 63.
300 Norman 65.
if she renounces her husband and children; her obedience leads her to a living hell. Then, in 1853, Kingsley published *Hypatia, or New Foes with an Old Face*. Although this pagan woman philosopher, mathematician, and astronomer of the late fourth and early fifth centuries AD was known to have been murdered savagely by a sect of Coptic Christians, Kingsley gives the story a new twist. In his version, Hypatia converts to Christianity through the help of a Jewish Christian, Raphael Aben-Ezra; but she is savagely murdered by fanatic Christians, through whom Kingsley represents Roman Catholic priests—*ergo*, the second part of the title: these foes are new in the timeline of history, but English Protestants will easily recognize them as their old Catholic opponents; another way to interpret it is that the new foes of 1850 England have long been around, since, in fact, the early days of Christianity; either way the message is the same. While this is consistent with the trend, mentioned earlier, of Catholicism being opposed to scholarly women, we also see the Jews presented in a positive light and in close connection with Protestant Christianity—an aspect that will be investigated later in this chapter. The same year, Charlotte Brontë produced *Villette*, which denounces the convent-like isolation imposed on Lucy Snow, who must resist pressures to convert her and to separate her from the man she loves; while he, though Catholic, is more open-minded and is in turn, to a certain extent, persecuted by those of his faith, who want him either to marry Justine Marie or to remain celibate, so they can continue to benefit from his generous financial support.

In 1854, the year the Roman Catholic Church established the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception (declaring Mary, mother of Jesus, born without sin), Wiseman responded with *Fabiola, or the Church of the Catacombs*, in which the heroine renounces the world to enter the Church, and Newman wrote, at Wiseman's request, a prequel to it in 1855, *Callista*, in which the heroine abandons paganism for the Church and succumbs to a martyr's death. Both of these works strongly praise celibacy as the ultimate way to serve God. The same year *Westward Ho!*
came out, and, as we saw, the novel denounces Catholic Inquisition and control and praises Protestantism, evangelical womanhood, and marriage.

But maybe the "gold medal" in this religious debate should go to Reverend George Townsend, Canon of Durham, for his undaunted dedication to the Evangelical faith, expressed through the pages of his *Journal of a Tour in Italy in 1850, with an Account of an Interview with the Pope, at the Vatican*. What Townsend set out to do was no less than to convert the Pope! As he explains, "I believe, against all appearances to the contrary, that the omnipotent power, and grace, and influence of the Spirit of God will finally make the Church of Rome what it is not now, but what it once was, when St. Paul approved and blessed it." 301 Prompted to undertake his journey because of his concern for the unity of Christendom, he does not let his friends discourage him: "If God could make Saul the persecutor, Paul the Apostle, God can make the Bishop of Rome himself the opponent of old Popery." Townsend eventually did get an interview with the Pope, pleasant and courteous, in which he presented his concern: "As the church of Rome could not conquer the Church of England, nor the Church of England, the Church of Rome, the time had arrived when the common enemy, Infidelity, must be met by an effort on the part of all Christians to reconsider the past," which, in Townsend's view, should lead to the Catholic Church's recognition of the sole supremacy of the Scriptures and to the reunion of the churches.

Of course, the Pope decided to remain Catholic, but it would be an oversimplification to imagine Townsend as either naïve or like a forceful fanatic. He has interesting exchanges with various prelates and is perfectly capable of showing his genuine respect and appreciation for the

301 Townsend, George, *Journal of a Tour in Italy in 1850, with an Account of an Interview with the Pope, at the Vatican*, (London, 1850) iv.
302 Townsend 19.
303 Townsend 168.
erudition, courtesy, good taste, and simplicity he observes in those he meets, while he returns home saddened that things will remain unchanged.

Not least significant is that Townsend travels with his wife, who is his translator for French and Italian; she accompanies him everywhere, and although Townsend manages a few direct conversations with his Italian interlocutors in Latin, the difference of pronunciation of this common tongue makes it necessary to rely on her help most of the time: "I found . . . that I could not have had a more excellent interpreter."304 His appreciation of her is evident and is further extended to educated women in general, when, on their return journey, the Townsends are invited by a Lutheran family. Townsend notes that at the end of the meal, the ladies do not retire apart but that ladies and gentlemen retire together to the parlor, a custom he wishes would be adopted in England. "Why should it not be so in England?" he asks, "the conversation of well-educated women is as interesting, as useful, and as agreeable as that of educated men. There is no sex in souls."305

Catholic practices have been said to attract most particularly women. The confessional, for example, offered them attention and guidance, although it was not always the case as some feared that it was more a trap.306 Lucy Snow in Villette experiences this double aspect: first she finds comfort in simply talking with an intelligent human being, something of which she has been deprived to the point of near-hysteria:

My heart almost died within me . . . Twilight was falling . . . It seemed to me that at this hour there was affection and sorrow in Heaven above for all pain suffered on earth beneath . . . This house-roof [was] crushing me as the slab of a tomb . . . The mere relief of communication in an ear which was human and sentient, yet

304 Townsend 158
305 Townsend 240–41.
306 See illustration XV
consecrated—the mere pouring out of some portion of long accumulating, long
pent up pain into a vessel whence it could not be again diffused—had done me
good. I was already solaced.\footnote{Brontë (Chapter 16) 858.}

But soon, the first hints of pressure are made, all the more seductive that they are said with
kindness:

It is my own conviction that these impressions under which you are smarting are
messengers from God to bring you back to the true Church. You were made for
our faith: depend upon it our faith alone could heal and help you—Protestantism
is altogether too dry, cold, prosaic for you . . . On no account would I lose sight of
you. Go, my daughter, for the present; but return to me again . . . You must not
come to this church . . . I see you are ill, and this church is too cold; you must
come to my house."\footnote{Brontë 861.}

Lucy realizes the danger: "Did I, do you suppose, reader, contemplate venturing again within that
worthy priest's reach? As soon should I have thought of walking into a Babylonish furnace. That
priest had arms which could influence me . . ."

However, men could also be seduced by Catholicism: even the very likeable Reverend
Francis Arabin of Trollope's \textit{Barchester Towers} has a close encounter with the temptation of
Catholicism:

Now came the moment of his great danger . . . The great prophet of the
Tractarians confessed himself a Roman Catholic. Mr. Newman left the Church
of England, and with him carried many a waverer. He did not carry off Mr.
Indeed, High-Churchmen were sometimes blended with Catholics for their desire for increased ritual and pomp in the worship, which they saw as more befitting God. The architectural atmosphere, such as depicted in "the Grand Staircase of the Cathedral of Burgos,"\textsuperscript{310} for instance, seemed a better setting, or at least one that was needed to counterbalance the humble one of family devotions.\textsuperscript{311} Eventually, it is a humble curate who makes Arabin realize that

\begin{quote}
The highest laws for the governance of a Christian's duty must act from within and not from without; that no man can become a serviceable servant solely by obedience to written edicts; and that the safety which he was about to seek within the gates of Rome was no other than the selfish freedom from personal danger which the bad soldier attempts to gain who counterfeits illness on the eve of battle.\textsuperscript{312}
\end{quote}

British Protestantism offered also a subtle but no less powerful response to the threat of Catholic influence through the Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace, in 1851,\textsuperscript{313} which displayed the prosperity of Protestant Britain as well as offered an invitation to all countries to imitate her. More than a triumph of technology, it was a triumph of the Protestant Work Ethic and of Christian-based openness and tolerance, since it was inclusive of all talents that made a nation grand, as testified, for instance, by Pugin's medieval court.\textsuperscript{314} The exhibition was the particular project of the strongly Protestant Prince Albert; it was given full recognition by the Queen and opened with the blessing of the Archbishop of Canterbury, whose very presence underscored once more Britain's accomplishments as indissociable from her faith; later when the palace was

\textsuperscript{310} See illustration XVI
\textsuperscript{311} See illustration XVII
\textsuperscript{312} Trollope 171.
\textsuperscript{313} See illustration XVIII
\textsuperscript{314} The Gothic Revival was probably the least controversial element in the great Catholic/Protestant debate. It had supporters on both sides, like the Catholic Pugin and the Protestant Ruskin.
moved to Sydenham, Charles Spurgeon preached before an audience of 24,000 people.\textsuperscript{315} The very concept of the building seemed to imply that Britain had nothing to fear, nothing to hide, no need of secrecy—as contrasted to "Catholic" buildings, dark churches, obscure convents filled with recessed mysteries, sinister \textit{eminences grises}, and narrow-minded opponents to the light of knowledge and truth. This latter aspect is a \textit{leit-motiv} in Evangelical fiction and non-fiction; Townsend, for instance, often comments on the artificial candle lights and the suppression of natural light in the churches he visits, which, of course, is to be interpreted at the physical as well as at the spiritual levels.

E. Infallibility of the Pope, 1870

While the announcement of the Infallibility of the Pope still caused outrage among Evangelical ranks, by that time, it had become quite clear that there could be "no sympathy between the English mind which believes upon evidence; and the Italian mind which believes upon authority, and implicitly defers to it."\textsuperscript{316} With the awareness therefore that the two Christian denominations could simply not harmonize their views, this new offense affected less the general public than the intellectual elite. The most significant and celebrated response was made by Gladstone in his pamphlet, "The Vatican Decrees in Their Bearings on Civil Allegiance: A Political Expostulation":

\begin{quote}
The Rome of the Middle Ages claimed universal monarchy. The modern Church of Rome has abandoned nothing, retracted nothing . . . [yet, in the end] The inhabitants of these islands, as a whole, are stable, though sometimes credulous and excitable; resolute, though sometimes boastful: and a strong-headed and sound-hearted race will not be hindered, either by latent or by avowed dissents,
\end{quote}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{315} Spurgeon Archive, \\
\textsuperscript{316} Townsend 136
\end{flushright}
due to the foreign influence of a caste, from the accomplishment of its mission in the world."317

Gladstone, like Russell earlier, trusted in the common sense and sturdy Evangelical faith of his compatriots to withstand this new attack from Rome. Interestingly, there were Catholics, like Newman, who were rather lukewarm supporters of the Papal announcement.

It is almost as if, without conceding any beliefs, British Protestants had grown tired of the debate and decided instead to concentrate their attention on the defense of the faith through their actions, from writing to social activism. As Kingsley writes, answering both Catholic provocation and the new threat of fashionable disbelief among intellectuals:

Stick to the old truths and the old paths, and learn their divineness by sick-beds and in every work, and do not darken your mind with intellectual puzzles, which may breed disbeliefs, but can never breed vital religion or practical usefulness. . . I keep to the orthodox faith, and the orthodox formulae, without tormenting my soul, or my hearers, with fruitless argument on things which we shall never know, save by taking our Bible in hand, and obeying it.318

Some have interpreted this remark as a rejection of higher learning, but that is absurd when we consider Kingsley's own education and his active and effective support of higher education for women. As we saw, to Evangelical minds, education was the soil in which faith could blossom. Through reading faith was first discovered, then examined and deepened, and finally spread. The same perspective existed in America, which is why any attempt of the Catholic Church to influence Protestant culture was viewed as aggression, as we can see in Thomas Nast's American River Ganges.319

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317 Quoted in Norman 215-221.
319 See illustration XIX
The realm of ideas was important and deserving of attention, but as William Booth would later point out, one cannot preach to someone with an empty stomach. Britain may have been the best country in Europe in which one could live, but it was not Heaven. There were needs and injustices to correct, and while the spiritual should never be neglected, which is evident through the literature of the time, the physical needs should also be attended to. Evangelicals all over Britain shared such views, from Hannah More and Wilberforce to Charles Spurgeon, William Booth and Josephine Butler, and women played a considerable role in this as well. In fact, in the Protestant perspective, good works are the outcome of faith and salvation. In this light, the nineteenth century, maybe more than any other, is an age of fantastic accomplishments of faith, whether we think of George Muller's determination to never ask for money and to totally rely on God's Providence to help him feed, shelter, educate thousands of orphans and who did just that with complete success; of Spurgeon who preached to tens of thousands, reached even more through his printed sermons, and is credited with the conversion of over a million souls; of William and Catherine Booth and the creation and fast-spreading range of the Salvation Army; or of Josephine Butler who undertook to reform morals and, like William Wilberforce, had to fight for twenty years before the unjust Contagious Diseases Acts were repelled, the age of consent raised, and society at large was made fully aware of the horrors of prostitution.

Interestingly, one of the most acclaimed biographies of saints, Catherine of Siena, was written at that time by the very Evangelical Josephine Butler. It may seem at first paradoxical, but this captivating account, I believe, is intended to achieve two aims (and indeed succeeds brilliantly in doing so): first, it moves the focus of interest from the endless theological debate, since we have a Protestant writing positively about a Catholic figure, and it re-appropriates the saint for Protestant ends, that of a model of Christian faith to emulate, not to worship. To Protestants, Butler admonishes: "It is not for us to limit the possibilities of the communications and revelations which the Eternal may be pleased to make to a soul which continually waits upon
Him." To scoffers and doubters, she suggests they should devote their own life to God first, before they can be in a position to make a judgment about a "soul's dealings with God." To Catholics, she points out that saints are human beings, that Catherine was not an apologist of dogmas, that, in fact, all her written prayers are addressed to God the Father, Christ, or the Holy Spirit (with only one to the Virgin Mary, although only briefly, then it is directed to God), and that what really made her great was that, "She loved, she prayed, she endured. She fought a good fight; and she fell, in the heat of battle, vanquished, and yet a conqueror."³²¹

The empathy of Butler for Catherine is genuine and touching. Though separated by time and denomination, it is clear that there exists a Christian brotherhood truly capable of transcending the disputes of churches. Butler goes farther than Townsend in the sense that, despite present differences and outrageous proclamations, she sees that Christianity is bigger than the failings and righteousnesses of believers and that theological arguments need to leave the field to a life of true faith, which shall speak by its fruits. Butler's closing remarks remind Protestants and Catholics of England of what they have in common as Christians: the Trinitarian God, true, loving, and approachable, prayer, and the empowerment to be blessings to others, to make a difference on the side of good against the side of evil. To underscores her point, she even, significantly, speaks of Wycliffe and Catherine of Siena as equals.³²²

Although Butler never draws a direct parallelism between Catherine of Siena and herself, the two women are bound in two very moving aspects. Catherine had asked God, and been granted, the gift "of seeing the loveliness of human nature even in its utmost degradation"; Josephine Butler demonstrated she possessed the same gift from the moment she began her outreach to prostitutes. Catherine also suffered physically from, it seems, invisible stigmata, which she understood as given to her as a means to understand Christ's suffering and love for

³²¹ Butler 242.
³²² Butler 338.
sinners, and Josephine Butler never recovered from the loss of her four-year old daughter, Eva, in particularly dramatic circumstances,\textsuperscript{323} which prompted her to seek "a pain greater than [her] own," so that, though crushed as she was, God could use her grief for the good of others which, as her legacy testifies, He did.\textsuperscript{324} Butler writes her life of Catherine of Siena as an urgent call to some of her contemporaries, Christians who "do not hear the earnest call to join with God's advanced guard in the battle against vice and oppression and diabolic cruelty," as she warns: They love so much their own secure and safe 'retreat.' And well it is they do so. Our secure and virtuous homes are the strength of the nation . . . Yet a time will come when the possessors . . . will have to give an account of their stewardship of such wealth. For an exceeding bitter cry is arising from creatures standing outside our doors, God's redeemed ones also, who have neither home nor hope on earth . . . It seems prophetic of woe to those who dare to answer with pious sophistries\textsuperscript{325} . . . We have one Source, approachable by us all . . . The Holy Spirit . . . who now waits each moment at the door of every heart, to be admitted, and to bring light, life, and peace.\textsuperscript{326} This last image of the door is echoed in art, as well, with the famous painting of William Hunt, The Light of the World,\textsuperscript{327} now a permanent fixture of Saint Paul's Cathedral. Significantly, the door, symbol of the human heart and soul, has no handle on the outside, because it must be willingly opened from the inside. Christ does not force Himself into the human heart; man has free will to receive or refuse Him.

F. German Higher Criticism and Darwinism

Two landmarks in the religious landscape of nineteenth-century Britain occupy a non-Catholic place and yet their interaction with religion is undeniable. Much has been said about the

\textsuperscript{323} In her hurry to welcome her parents returning from an outing, the little girl rushed down the stairs and fell over the balustrade to the floor below; she died in her father's arms. The Butlers had three sons and one daughter.


\textsuperscript{325} Butler 269.

\textsuperscript{326} Butler 336.

\textsuperscript{327} See illustration XX.
devastating effects of both on the spiritual state of nineteenth-century Britain, but it may have been grossly exaggerated, as Larsen points out.328

George Eliot played an important role in the introduction of German Higher Criticism in England by her translation of David Friedrich Strauss' *Life of Jesus Critically Examined*. Influenced in a large part by the Enlightenment, German Higher Criticism ranged from a questioning of authorship of biblical texts to metaphysical assertions, such as the idea that the existence of God was ultimately Man's creation, as expressed in Ludwig Feuerbach's *The Essence of Christianity*. Orthodox Christians reacted in different ways to this new attack: condemnation, dismissal, or effort to nuance some of the statements made by higher critics. Because Higher Criticism took on scientific aspects, it was associated with modernism, and as such offered the attraction of the "new," which often seems truer than the old simply because of its newness and because it is identified with a certain daring in its challenging of what is established.

However, Dyson Hague explains this association of Higher Criticism with attempting to discredit the Bible:

> No study perhaps requires so devout a spirit and so exalted a faith in the supernatural as the pursuit of Higher Criticism. It demands at once the ability of a scholar, and the simplicity of the believing child of God. For without faith no one can explain the Holy Scriptures, and without scholarship no one can investigate historic origins. In the first place, the critics who were the leaders, the men who have given name to the whole movement, have been men who have based their theories largely upon their own subjective conclusions. They have

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328 In fact, Larsen, in his introduction, blames English or literature studies as "a major contributor to this distortion."
based their conclusions upon the very dubious basis of the author's style and supposed literary qualifications.³²⁹

As Hague indicates, Higher Criticism can and does have its uses for Evangelicals as well, in matters of "historic origins, dates, and authorship of the various books of the Bible" and complements Lower or Textual Criticism, which focuses on the accuracy of translations from original manuscripts. However, just as science cannot assess faith, Higher Criticism is "out of its league" if it pretends to give theological answers.

Joseph Barker, a former minister who abandoned Church and creed for political activism, even before his reconversion to Christianity, forcefully declared, "The Gospel is a system of liberty throughout; . . . it does not forbid free inquiry, but commands it; . . . it requires no blind faith, but such only as has truth and proper evidence to rest upon."³³⁰ From this insight, we may understand that it would not be so much Higher Criticism which caused people like George Eliot to lose their faith, but rather that those whose religious beliefs were indifferent, uncertain, or inexistent found their own justification in the rationalist version of Higher Criticism.

However, George Eliot, despite her beliefs to the contrary, seemed to have longed for the quiet convictions of people of faith. We find them in prominent and successful places in her most famous works. For instance in *Middlemarch*, Dorothea marries Casaubon because she believes him to be what he should be, a Christian scholar who respects her, and with whom, as partners of one faith and one vision, she will able to do much good for the people of Middlemarch. Her own concerns for the welfare of the tenants, her selflessness, as well as her gentle firmness make her a heroine who fits the Evangelical ideal. Reverend Farebrother maybe complementing his insufficient income with the earnings he gathers playing whist, but this seems to be the only truly unorthodox aspect of his character, and Dorothea chooses to give the Lowick rectory to him

³³⁰ Larsen 141.
because she recognizes his qualities as a minister. By the same measure, Mary Garth who, like her parents, epitomizes the solid British Protestant family and ideals, loves Fred, but does not accept his marriage proposal until he has proven himself and chosen hard work instead of the easy way out into the clergy, for which he has no talents and no aspirations. Even for the unbelieving Eliot, a clergyman should believe what he preaches and should live what he believes. No Evangelical would find fault in her estimate.

In *Silas Marner*, the criticism toward the narrow-minded sect of Lantern-Yard, to which Silas first belongs and which treats him with such stark lack of Christian charity, is balanced with Eliot's obvious affection for the cheerful and generous Mrs. Winthrop, whose simple faith guides her life and expresses itself through genuine goodness. Moreover, the novel is an illustration of divine Providence, as well as divine justice. What had seemed extreme injustices and meaningless sufferings, when Silas was betrayed by friend and fiancée and expelled from the Lantern-Yard community, and later when his gold was stolen, is turned into blessings and evidences of God's plan, as the story closes with Silas completely happy. On the other hand, the fate of Lantern-Yard echoes passages of the Old Testament, and brings closure on those who let self-righteousness replace true religion.

Darwinism, like Higher Criticism, presented itself as science; yet, here again we should be cautious about drawing hasty conclusions as to its impact on society at large. Two books were published in 1859, Darwin's *Origins of Species* and Samuel Smiles' *Self-Help*. Contrarily to traditional understanding, however, it was the latter that had, by and far, the greater impact on the nineteenth century. Not only was it an immediate "best-seller" but it continued to be extremely popular and had sold 258,000 copies by 1905 in Great Britain alone. It had also been widely translated world wide, including in Arabic, Indian, and Japanese. Although *Self-Help* is not, *per*  

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331 Charles Darwin's full title is actually, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or The Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life.*
se, a religious work, its main argument is the importance of character, personal values, and perseverance in the achievement of success, and its main example, who is not treated in a single chapter, but returns through the book, is the French Huguenot, Bernard Palissy (c. 1510-1589) who tried for sixteen years to pierce the secret of Chinese porcelain, and instead created a new form of pottery. Not only does Smiles focus on him as an admirable craftsman, but as a Huguenot, whose skill earned him the protection of even Henri III (who did not want to lose such a unique artist), but whose faith was steadfast even when, toward the end of his life, even the king could not save him. Self-Help is also a dynamic, practical work that imparts the idea that success is within everyone's reach, with determination and perseverance. On the other hand, Darwin, who already by that time lived much like a recluse, preferring the comfort of familiar surroundings to public interaction, could only offer his contemporaries a life based on human origins common with the basest of animals and random changes. Should we be surprised that the nineteenth-century public found Self-Help more encouraging, more interesting, and certainly more inspiring?

The famous Oxford debate between Huxley and Bishop Samuel Wilberforce was not the victory for evolutionist theories that our modern age believes it to have been. In fact, "far from any lasting significance, the event almost completely disappeared from public awareness until it was resurrected in the 1890s."332 The debate did show, as it would now, that the transformation of one species into another could not be observed. Brooke even reports that one Darwinian, Henry Baker Tristram, actually "de-converted," convinced by Wilberforce's arguments. Interestingly, it seemed that both sides left the debate with an equal sense of success and failure. We owe to the twentieth-century the rewriting of the event, but as with the threat created by the declaration of the Pope's infallibility, the Christians of England continued as before. This is not to say that

Darwinism had not impact at all on the second half of the nineteenth century, but that, by and large, only those whose faith was not solidly grounded sought to find an acceptable explanation in Darwin's theory. However the seeds were planted for the next century. Since Higher Criticism and Darwinism addressed more the educated elite of society, those who endorsed these new ideas were influential in the next generation. The tragedy of the Great War left many shaken in their faith and more receptive to doubt and determinism. The further rejection of anything Victorian, especially after 1818, consequently tended to promote ideas the nineteenth century had condemned. In the second half of the nineteenth century though, things were different. Reverend John Hunt even thought that Darwinism should be

Credited with the honor of having brought God back to His Creation. The Deistic idea had thrust Him far off. He was thought only as transcendent, but now evolution 'in the guise of a foe did the work of a friend'. . . As God has made worlds by causing them to make themselves . . . so Christ took the intractable material of humanity, and is working it into higher forms by the instrumentality of men.333

Without going as far as Nietzsche who discovered in Darwin's ideas the seeds of justification for the theory of a superior race, which the Nazis were later only too eager to exploit for their own ends, there were, of course, some, like Thomas Hardy, who found in Darwinism more fuel for their philosophy of despair, but it would not be accurate to focus on him as representative of the age when one of the most, if not the most, popular writer at the end of the century was Marie Corelli, whose works are far from depressing. In fact, Corelli's The Master Christian, written in 1900, is a powerful reaffirmation of true Christianity (Protestant) in action. The main character, the likeable French Cardinal Bonpré, aged, meek, faith-full, and generous is

uneasy about the riches and the temporal power and ambitions of the Church (Rome) in contrast with the poverty of the people and Christ's command to follow Him, to love others and to discard amassed wealth and worldly fame. Bonpré, though he does not realize it, is a model (master) Christian close to God's heart. Christ Himself comes into his life in the guise of a poor boy, Manuel, whom Bonpré adopts. The whole novel (which is more than 600 pages in length) is actually a page-turner as Bonpré travels to Rome, and encounters various situations and characters—victims, villains, or heroes. Most of the villains belong to the high Catholic clergy (what a shock!)—which further demonstrates the perenniality of Protestant apologetics through the nineteenth century. These prelates were proud of Bonpré for his exemplary Christian life while he was in his French province, but now that this famous figure puts Christ's commandments before Rome's rule, traditions, and interests, and even performs a miracle (though taking no credit for it himself) they alternatively try to cajole or threaten him into passive obedience. Bonpré's faith and conscience are too strong for such compromise. Eventually Bonpré dies in prayer at the foot of the cross, as Manuel reveals himself as Christ and bids him "Enter into the joy of thy Lord!"334

Among the other heroes of the book we find Aubrey Leigh, whose character is clearly built on Charles Kingsley. Aubrey is the epitome of "muscular" Christianity; he is all that a Christian man can be, including a husband, as he marries the young Countess Sylvie, who shares his vision and invests with him her large fortune into helping the poor and bettering society. The dynamics of the novel as well as its enormous success further demonstrate that Darwinism had, by no means, triggered a general crisis of faith in the later part of the nineteenth century. Furthermore, even with Christians, like Charles Kingsley, willing to credit Darwin's theory of evolution, we notice that it is never an essential issue for them: first, because it makes little difference to them whether God created life as literally described in Genesis, or, if, a day being to

334 Corelli, Marie, The Master Christian, (new York, 1900) 600.
Him as a thousand years and vice versa, He chose to do it through an evolutionary process; it remains that God is Creator and that His Word stands. Second, ultimately the question of the origins of human life is moot. It cannot be reproduced or proved, but more importantly humans can do nothing about it (whatever theory they adopt) and what really matters is what they can do, which is to love and serve Christ, by living according to His will as expressed in Scripture. Corelli closes The Master Christian with a very significant reminder to a Christian society to never become complacent:

He[Christ] is ever with us, watching to see whether His work is well or ill done, - -whether His flocks are fed, or led astray to be devoured by wolves—whether His straight and simple commands are fulfilled or disobeyed. And the days grow dark. . . and the Churches are as stagnant pools from whence Death is far more often born than Life. And may we not ask ourselves often in these days the question,—'When the Son of Man cometh, think ye He shall find faith on earth?'

In other words, the true threat to faith was not this new idea that Darwin had, but what it has always been: affluence generates misplaced pride, self-assurance, and spiritual stagnation unless one gives God's His true place in one's life.

One word must be said about the Decadents, who decided to shun philosophical despair and social undertakings with equal contempt, and purposed to find meaning, fame, and pleasure not only in the satisfaction of the senses, but in the cult of beauty for beauty's sake, in rebellion against the principle of the Pre-Raphaelites, for instance, who believed that art should express beauty and morality conjointly. First, the Decadents were a very small group. They had money and time at their disposal; they were also young and enjoyed the idea of being rebels, moreover their Antigonian defiance was not meant to win but to trigger interest, and ultimately, their

335 Corelli 601.
influence was relatively brief and limited to the wealthier and more intellectual part of society. Second, the most famous of them was Oscar Wilde, whose children's stories as well as his main works are not only moral and underscore the necessity of selfless love and charity in justice, but are also permeated with Christian spirituality. His flawed heroes in Lady Windermere's Fan or in The Ideal Husband remind those in the play, as well as the audience, who have put those heroes on pedestals, that, as Josephine Butler said, even "the greatest of the saints were flesh and blood." In Wilde, women continue to fit the feminine ideal of the nineteenth-century. To an extent it is because they are so admirable and virtuous that they have difficulty, especially in An Ideal Husband, accepting that those they love and idealize come short of perfection. The Picture of Dorian Gray is even more definitely religious; the magic portrait of Gray acts as God's record of Gray's soul. Gray, in realizing that, does not repent, but attempts to destroy the evidence, committing in so doing a sort of "sin against the Holy Spirit," the deliberate and defiant rejection of Truth, the ultimate sin, which annihilates him.

Furthermore, Wilde's apparent levity is a mask: beyond the refined elegance of plot set in high society, there is yet this genuine spirituality which understands the deep torment of Sir Simon—The Canterville Ghost—who seeks the peace of absolution, and which prompts Lord Darlington to exclaim "We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars."336 This single sentence holds in fifteen words the acknowledgment of original sin and the awareness of and hope in a salvation that is outside of man's control. Third, it is significant that several of the Decadents converted to Catholicism, in which they were able to find true meaning and fulfilling expression for their creed of beauty. It is interesting to note in passing that women seem to be conspicuously absent from the Decadent movement.

Finally one must keep in mind that the nineteenth century was peppered with religious revivals: 1792, 1830, 1857, 1882, and 1904.

II. Literature as Illustrated Apologetics

A picture is said to be worth a thousand words, but a work of fiction can be more effective than a thousand articles or sermons. In the tremendously active religious context of the nineteenth century, novels and short stories were as many parables for the reading public. The same could be said for our own time, but the message would be drastically different, and its focus would probably be more centered on the self than on God and godly living. During the nineteenth-century that message was essentially Protestant and was expressed through several key themes which, in part contrasted Catholicism and Protestantism, and in part promoted active Christian lifestyle. We could therefore say that literature not only reflected the concerns of society but was meant as an illustration of the Word of God. Women were full participants in this undertaking as writers or as characters, and as theoreticians or activists. Not only in taking their domestic vocation seriously were they aware of the importance of religion and morality, but the external outreach of their sphere, through charity for instance, made them aware of spiritual and material needs, while their homes were a perfect setting for writing.

1. Stability of Protestant Life

*Coelebs in Search of a Wife* was meant as an advice book as well as a novel and it does fulfill this double goal. Coelebs and the Stanleys are practical examples of what true Christians should be like. Some may find the text too didactic, but its popularity among nineteenth-century readers underscores Hannah More's influence as well as the Christian motivations that are present in all her works. We find the same home harmony in Pastor La Luc (a Huguenot) and his family, in Ann Radcliffe's *Romance of the Forest*, written in 1791. For the heroine, Adeline, who has spent her youth between deprivation and fear, the contrast is striking to the point that even when she is
restored to her rightful wealth and social rank, she leaves it all behind to marry and establish her own life on the same principles. Although the story is set in France and Savoie in the seventeenth century, the British Protestant Radcliffe scatters a few significant symbols through the text. For instance, the contrast of upbringing between Adeline, at one end of the spectrum, and Theodore and Clara at the other underscores the differences between the Catholic system of education, in the oppressive context of the convent, and the open, gentle nurturing of La Luc, who treats his daughter and son as equals. Radcliffe juxtaposes purposefully the dark deeds of the villains to the enlightened kindliness of the good, not only through their actions, but also with the added clue of the latter's names, as "La Luc" and "Clara" mean "light" and "Theodore," "gift of God."

Respect for women is a central theme in Protestantism, whether the author is a man or a woman. Walter Scott in Waverley, for instance, presents Rose Bradwardine as intelligent, level-headed, responsible, and wise. Even if Waverley is temporarily distracted by Flora's outstanding beauty and demeanor, it is to the sound Rose that he returns and with whom he can find happiness. Also by that time, he has had opportunity to recognize her wisdom as superior to his own, and has learned from her as well as from his multiple mistakes to become wise in turn. Not surprisingly, Flora is unable to feel true love for another human being, and retires to a convent in France. In Coelebs, besides the obvious ideals of womanhood found in Coelebs' mother, Mrs. Stanley, and her daughters, another striking example is that of the wife who wins her husband over to the Christian faith by her godly behavior, just as expressed in Paul's epistle to the Corinthians. Mary Brunton's Self-Control, which has been considered a Scottish Coelebs, is a novel and a guide depicting how Christian morals can triumph against a rake. Because Laura has been well-prepared by the minister's wife, Mrs. Douglas, she is able to enter society without falling into its snares, even under the unsound advice and the pressure of her aunt.

Education and educated women figure prominently as a pillar of stability in Protestant households, and by extension, in Protestant society. The wise and godly Esther of Bleak House
starts as a school teacher; Lizzie in Our Mutual Friend acquires means of greater independence by learning how to read with the gentle Jew, Riah. It is significant that, between the two men who claim to love Lizzie, Bradley headstone and Eugene Wrayburn, the one who truly loves her is the one who provides for her the means to be independent, while the other, whose profession is teaching, offers no such thing and clearly would prefer her to remain illiterate and completely dependent upon him (had he secured her love).

2. Lurking Monks and Dark Convents

Matthew Lewis' 1794 best seller, The Monk, was deliberately melodramatic, yet the popularity of the novel can be easily explained by the fact that the readers delighted in seeing there what they believed, or wanted to believe, about the Roman Catholic clergy; they felt vindicated, finding comfort of sorts in the fact that their suspicions were founded. We must not forget, however, that there existed also non-fiction accounts that were not questioned as they are today. Maria Monk's, Julia Gordon's, or Barbara Ubryk's narratives are some the most famous of such texts. Monk escaped her convent, Julia Gordon died in giving birth to the baby conceived after her rape by a priest, Barbara Ubryk was buried alive in a dark pit for twenty-one years for refusing the advances of a priest. These accounts, which were also illustrated relate situations similar to those found in fiction: abusive priests, despotic abbesses, naïve novices, tortures and deprivations, nuns murdered, immured, driven to madness, their illegitimate babies killed and thrown in lime pits. Modern scholars, however, dismiss these narratives as "Protestant propaganda." Cassandra Berman, for instance, writes, "[these texts] may have been written by Protestant clergy, after the women had divulged their experiences to them, or after their stories had been fabricated." Either way, we are to understand that the narratives are fraudulent. To Berman the real purpose of these texts was not even religious:

337 See illustrations XXI.
Victorian Protestant femininity could not withstand female emancipation—with greater freedoms came masculinization and corruption, or so thought conservative Protestants . . . Even those women who did not gain power and freedom would be degraded in the process . . . The same would be the case if the Caroline Nortons and George Eliots were allowed to continue their quests for autonomy—all of English womanhood would be injured, and Protestant morality would be forever destroyed. Despite reactionary Protestants' best efforts, religious orders persisted in England and continued to offer women an alternative to marriage, motherhood, and patriarchy.338

Not surprisingly, this whole religious concern is ignored as such and re-interpreted as a feminist issue by modern criticism, which paradoxically does not hesitate, Berman among others, to make later a one-hundred-and-eighty-degree turn and to present the convent as an outlet for individuality and independence—a definition even Catholics would reject, considering the very strict and structured routine that is the convent rule. However, whether this negative interpretation was justified is not really the question, since we are looking at beliefs and perceptions, but although they may not have constituted the bulk of female monasticism, there were recorded cases that were not questionable; maybe the most famous of those is the experience of Katharina von Bora, Luther's wife herself, who had to escape the convent hidden in a fish barrel to live the life she had chosen.

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Nineteenth-century writers were not alone in their dark depiction or their criticism of Catholicism. The testimony of formers Catholic priests, like Alessandro Gavazzi, reinforced convictions; the practice of demanding a dowry for a nun entering the convent further stained the Catholic hierarchy with greed—a theme we find in Scott's Ivanhoe with the Knight Templars, or in Amelia Edwards' "A Legend of Boisguilbert," in which an Abbot and his forty monks kill, in order to seize his riches, a pious knight, who, returning from the Crusades, trusted them to give him shelter for the night. And this, on Christmas Eve, no less.

In the Protestant mind, monasticism seemed restrictive and even against nature because it prevented marriage which was God-ordained. John Everett Millais expressed this in a very creative way. Effie had been married nearly five years to Ruskin in an unconsummated and unhappy union when she and Millais fell in love. This particular situation led to Effie demanding and obtaining divorce (a rare occurrence) and marrying Millais. In St. Agnes' Eve, which he gave to Effie in 1854, Millais painted himself as a nun longing for the brightness of the snow-covered landscape, as she/he looks out the window of her dark cell. The gate of the convent stands invitingly open. The association of the Eve of Saint Agnes, patron-saint of virgins and betrothed couples, further underscores the longing and the hope the nun—representative both of Millais and of Effie, who was bound to Ruskin in a loveless and in-name-only marriage—for an alternative to the gloom of celibacy.

339 Gavazzi (1809-1889) left Rome after the French invasion of Italy, and went on a campaign against Catholic priests and Jesuits, in Britain and North America. He organized the Italian Protestants of London, was Chaplain of Garibaldi, established the Evangelical Free Church of Italy, founded a Theological College (which he apparently built across the way from St. Peter), and wrote, My Recollection of the Last Four Popes, and of Rome in Their Times: an Answer to Dr. Wiseman, in 1858. Catholics found him highly inflammatory in his criticism of the Catholic clergy and the Pope, and of Catholicism in general.

340 Interestingly, these evil monks have the same name as the villain Templar in Ivanhoe.

341 Date. The ghost of the knight, however, returns every Christmas Eve and takes the Abbot first, then one monk each year, and continues to appear after they have all been punished, as a reminder to the living.

342 Later in the century, with the problem of the "women surplus" Anglican sisterhood became an acceptable alternative isolated "singlehood," but it never bore the stigma Catholic sisterhood did in England.

343 See illustration XXII.

344 Girls could get a glimpse of their future husbands in their dream, on the eve of St. Agnes.
3. Supernatural Encounters

As we saw earlier, Josephine Butler reminded her contemporaries that human beings should not scoff at miracles, because it would be like deciding what God could and could not do—a pretentious as well as a precarious stand, indeed, for Man to take. Evangelicals not only believed in miracles, but many were aware that the battle of God and Satan, good and evil could take many forms, including the seduction of self-righteousness, as we see with Robert Colwan in The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner who eventually lets Satan manipulate him into perpetrating murders and convince him that they are godly deeds, until he commits suicide and dies still persuaded he has committed no wrong. By contrast, the courageous governess in Henry James' The Turn of the Screw, although she is young and scared, faces alone two evil ghosts who have taken possession of her young charges, Flora and Miles. Although Flora is removed physically from the haunted house and her fate left unclear, Miles is literally wrestled from demonic possession through the sheer love and determination of the young governess. His death would seem a failure but in the last sentence of this short novel, the adjective in appositive (emphasis my own) reveals it a victory from a Christian point of view: "We were alone in the quiet day, and his little heart, dispossessed, had stopped."345

Another woman, Minna Harker in Bram Stoker's Dracula, proves her spiritual acumen as well as her courage as she joins her husband, Jonathan, and a band of gallant men,346 under the leadership of Professor van Helsing, to destroy Dracula and his band of vampires. The story is a spiritual tale as well as a political parable: These six characters, by pursuing their enemy back into his lair, in Transylvania, are ardent defenders of England, threatened by Dracula and his hordes. Minna takes particular risks in facing Dracula, since his attack on her has made her more vulnerable, yet she does not hesitate. Her purity of faith, devotion, and self-sacrifice are the very

346 They share similarity with Kingsley "brotherhood of the Rose," as young men devoted, in their own way, to the same woman but who remain loyal friends to one another.
antithesis of Dracula's thirst for power and his rebellion against God's appointment of man's years on earth. Dracula wants to be God, to be immortal, to control others by fear and his mastery of the Black Arts, but in the end, Minna's innocence and willingness to obey van Helsing, to act for the welfare of all, even if it should be accomplished the greatest cost to herself, makes her a David to Dracula's Goliath.

In Wilde's "Canterville Ghost," which is much more than a satire of American and British behaviors, it is the courage and empathy of Virginia that make all the difference and allow Sir Simon to find the peace that had evaded him for three hundred years. Although this is a hilarious story, the Christian message should no be missed: just like sinners who cannot save themselves but need Christ to do it for them, Sir Simon cannot weep or pray and therefore cannot have peace unless someone is willing to do those things for him. Unlike her family, Virginia sees in him more than a nuisance that needs to be eliminated. She is willing to listen to him and help him, and in the process she finds insight, as she later tells her husband, "He made me see what Life is, and what Death signifies, and why Love is stronger than both."347 This particular aptitude in women to sense the spiritual is found also, although in a more subtle way, in Westward Ho! When Mrs. Leigh reveals to Amyas that she knew before he told her that Frank was dead, "The dear lad has often come to see me in my sleep."348

In Jerome K. Jerome's 1908 short story, "The Passing of the Third Floor Back," the main character, the Stranger, is really Christ. Although all the boarders at Mrs. Pennycherry's boarding house are selfish, hypocritical, vain, or greedy, the Stranger, whose sole particular feature are his piercing eyes which seem capable to read through the façade into the very soul of each, addresses first the women. His gentle, apparently ordinary conversation brings each to reveal herself, next

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347 Wilde 204.
348 Kingsley, Charles, Westward Ho!or the Voyages and Adventures of Sir Amyas Leigh, Knight of the Burrough, in the County of Devon, in the Reign of her Most Glorious Majesty Queen Elizabeth, 1855, (N.p.: The Spencer Press, n.d.) 488.
to feel a deep conviction within, and then to metamorphose into what they were meant to be. The Stranger's strategy applies first to women, but the transformation he operates in them, then spreads to men. The supernatural here is very subtle, but undeniable, and its Evangelical connotations cannot be missed.

4. Beacon of Protestantism

Milton had compared England to a beacon of faith and freedom. Nineteenth-century writers and artists still endorsed this image. Evangelicals endeavored to be the illustrators of Protestant characteristics. As we saw, the importance of Scriptures was pivotal in the context of nineteenth-century Britain, and to a large extent almost every work could be read as a parable. None more so, however, than Christina Rossetti's "Goblin Market." This is no less than a retelling of the Fall and Salvation story. The two sisters, Laura and Lizzie are recognizable as Adam and Christ, the goblins as Satan, and their tempting fruits as the apple of original sin. Just as Christ lived a sinless life, Lizzie resists the temptation while Laura, although knowing the warning, prefers to succumb, only to find that the pleasure is short-lived and the penalty devastating and irreversible by her own efforts. It is through the love and self-sacrifice of Lizzie, who endures beatings from the goblins and who secures the antidote for her sister, that Laura is restored, as a Christian is a restored Adam. Not surprisingly, it is Laura on which the story closes, and we see her bearing witness to her own children of what Lizzie had done for her, just as Christians are called to bear witness of Christ's Gospel, at home and abroad. Laura teaching her children reflects the domestic role of women, as well as their missionary calling in general, in response to Christ's gift of salvation.

We find this effort to spread the Good News in Anna Leonowens' account, The English Governess at the Siamese Court, who, though the king had warned her not to try to preach Christianity, succeeds in sharing her faith and sees one of the king's daughters convert shortly before she dies:
Never did work seem more like pleasure than it did to me as I sat with this sweet, bright little princess, day after day . . . oftener listening, her large questioning eyes fixed upon my face, as step by step I led her out of the shadow-land of myth into the realm of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. 'The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God'; and I felt that this child of smiles and tears, all unbaptized and unblessed as she was, was nearer and dearer to her Father in heaven than to her father on earth . . . She would not forget her way; she would nevermore lose herself on the road to Heaven. Beyond . . . she had soared into the eternal, tender arms of the P'hra-Jesus, of whom she was wont to say in her infantine wonder and eagerness. . . 'Mam dear, I love your holy Jesus.'

In *Villette*, one of the essential characteristics that denotes Lucy as different from the rest is her independence, which at first Madame Beck seems to admire: "Only British women can undertake such things. . . how intrepid those women are!" she comments when she learns that Lucy has travelled alone from England to Belgium, with little money and no French. Yet, there is also self-examination, a practice from which British Protestants do not shy away. The fact that Brontë recognizes Brockelhurst as a Protestant cleric shows her willingness to admit the flaws that can exist within her own faith. Kingsley goes even further in showing us the likeable Amyas under not so pleasant a light in two important occasions: first, in his racist/bigotic disgust at the notion presented by his mother that Ayaconara loves him and that he should love her; the idea that she is half-Spanish repulses him and he does not heed his mother's advice that it is wrong to visit the sins of the parents upon their children; second, in his thirst for revenge, which transforms him into a stubborn, obsessed sea captain, who cares nothing about the safety of his men, who, although a Christian, refuses to listen to the godly advice of his two most religious

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349 Leonowens 118-119.
350 Brontë 805.
friends, who point out that his attitude has more to do with pride than with justice, and that he is trying to play God. Yes, Amyas eventually returns to sense, but these two episodes are humbling for a hero. By extension, our admiration for Amyas is called into question as we, readers, have been only too willing to forget that heroes have feet of clay; they are humans, not gods.

Even when there seems to be no overt religious message, closer examination will make it clear. For instance, there is in all of Jane Austen's novels, an unquestionable denunciation of worldliness. All the characters that fail in one way or another "live for this world." Some do it with more class than others: the Crawfords are more elegant in their mercenary and selfish ways than Maria Rushworth, or Mr. Wickham, but they seek the same things--wealth, popularity, power. They do not die in horrific circumstances, as they would in Gothic adventures; nonetheless, the lives they eventually lead are the direct result of the poor choices they have made. They may not even fully recognize how contemptible they are—indeed, the Crawfords seem to end up with what they wanted— but the readers do not envy their lives. Peter Leithart, in fact, believes "that despite her apparent indifference to both theology and the public realm, [Jane Austen] can be read as a public theologian" because of Christianity's "public and institutional dimension, [and] its role as a national "teacher" of morals" and considers in particular Mansfield Park, in which indeed, Austen's message is clear as she contrasts good manners in the Crawfords with Christian principles and truth in Fanny and Edmund. More generally, as Mark Knight and Thomas Woodman note:

Writers who are not centrally notable for their religious content, such as Charles Dickens, can be seen to explore the specifics of theology at certain points. . . novels may be written by believers for believers. . .[but] 'secular scripture' is only a literary form of the much more widespread social and cultural process by which

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religious ideas are modulated by the processes of secularization. . .It would be a mistake. . .to think that the possibility of transcendence can only be expressed in mythic and anti-realistic forms.352

Because the novel, which has been said to be a feminine genre par excellence, is realistic in nature, its religious and moral lessons are conveyed more effectively, because characters and situations ring true and the readers can recognized themselves or aspects of their own experience in theirs. Whereas with a sermon or lecture they are made conscious that they are learning something, with the novel they are much more affected emotionally, because the story suppresses the distance. It is therefore evangelization through entertainment, and whether one of Hannah More's tracts or one Charlotte Brontë novels, women have not needed to receive church orders to contribute significantly to the dissemination of Judeo-Christian values and beliefs.

5. Marriage

One outstanding characteristic of British Protestant literature as well as of real life is the enormous importance given to marriage. In real life, we find striking couples at all levels of society. Not only are those unions extremely happy, but the partnership that exists in these couples is more than inspiring and multi-faceted. The Spurgeons worked together on a collection of Puritan sayings, Smooth Stones from Ancient Brooks, and although Susanna was not as prolix as Charles, she yet wrote devotionals. The Booths wrote, preached, educated, but whether apart or together, it is clear they were of one heart and of one mind and invested themselves completely in the effort of saving bodies and souls.

We saw in the preceding chapter that Kingsley did not hesitate to associate marriage intimacy with Christian faith and if we consider the illustration of the couple on the cross,353 we find the

353Chapter II, See illustration XIB.
same symbolism in modern Christian representations;\textsuperscript{354} either one reflects this fundamental Evangelical conviction that marriage is a blessing from God, as well as a privileged association in the service of God. The same passion about this theme is reflected in literature. Our century may scoff at happy endings and label them "naïve" or "cliché," but to the nineteenth-century British and Protestant mind it was essential because it underscored the blessing of marriage, which was meant as a life-commitment of love; it but also it illustrated the happiness brought into life through Christian living. Both aspects are indeed significant, if we compare, for instance, with French literature of the same period, in which writers, without going always as far as Hardy, tend to give their heroes a tragic end. I believe this difference is based on faith. British literature reflects the Evangelical principles we find lived by real couples and dedicated believers of the period.

Josephine Butler's "The New Godiva" is the dialogue between two brothers, one just returned from Australia, catching up on the news, the other, married to a Christian activist. Husband and wife share the same views and inclinations, and he is willing to support her in her social campaign, which, in its daring and difficulty, puts her firmly on equal footing with the "old" Godiva:

\begin{quote}
There is no question of allowing between my wife and myself. That is the relation between master and slave; or, if you will, between parent and child, not between two grown human beings endowed with reason. I admire Mary's "enthusiasm" and I share it, for reasons which I shall presently explain.\textsuperscript{355}
\end{quote}

\textit{Pride and Prejudice}, of course, epitomizes the same Evangelical style of marriage, illustrated here in Elizabeth and Darcy. In the microcosm of their Pemberley estate, they

\textsuperscript{354} See illustration XXIII.
demonstrate that, "the purpose of reason is to inform the moral conscience and the manners of the individual and the community,"\textsuperscript{356} as Michael Giffin explains. Before they get to that point, however, Darcy's sin of pride, and Elizabeth's of prejudice have nearly destroyed their chance at conjugal happiness. The novel also calls attention to the biblical responsibility of those to whom "much has been given, and of whom much will be demanded." Elizabeth and Darcy are partners in Christian leadership, which means in Christian stewardship as well. We must not forget that the heroes of the novel are the embodiment of the author's beliefs; the detachment for which Brontë reproaches Austen is actually perfect self-control, which in turn promotes shrewd observation, self-examination, and improvement -- things that both Darcy and Elizabeth achieve, making them worthy models to emulate.

In \textit{Bleak House}, we are presented with two major exemplary couples. Esther and Alan, through education and social concern, epitomize Christian philanthropy. The other couple, Inspector Bucket and his wife, is more uncommon. We never see Mrs. Bucket, but the partnership is vividly expressed by Bucket constantly referring to her, always admiringly. Although occupied with her domestic duties and her boarders, she helps her husband in his investigations, and plays a vital role in the capture of the murderer in the novel. In \textit{Our Mutual Friend}, the Boffins reveal that closeness and harmony only increases with time. The love and gentleness they have for each other guide Bella and John in their own marriage. As for Mrs. Cratchit and Bob, they complement each other, his meekness to her vivacity, as well as present to their children an inspiring example of strong love for each other and devotion to their family. Paradoxically, opinionated and fiercely protective of those she loves, Mrs. Cratchit also manages to blend submissiveness and independence. She consents to drink to Scrooge's health, "for the Day's sake" and for Bob's. She knows that from a Christian point of view, one is to love one's

enemy, but duties and passions are not the same, so she compromises to please God, because He is always just and merciful in His commandments, and to not mar Bob's Christmas happiness, simply because she loves him. Doing so, she contributes with Bob to give their children a good model of Christian living. For nineteenth-century British readers, all these examples illustrated and confirmed the superiority of the Protestant choice of conjugal companionship over Catholic imposed celibacy.

III. Protestantism and Judaism

A brief note must be added concerning the relationship between Protestants and Jews. While Protestants, through the nineteenth century, were finding it difficult to recognize Catholics' rights, such prejudices seem to have been considerably less toward Jews.

1. From a Jewish Author's Perspective

Grace Aguilar's works may give the clue to this surprising situation. On the one hand, she is a writer of Jewish apologetics; on the other, she is a full supporter of the domestic ideal. As an apologist, as Katie Klein points out in, "An(Other) Scribbler: Grace Aguilar's Anglicized Jewish Woman,"\textsuperscript{357} Aguilar shares with Protestants the distrust of Catholicism, as well as a historical horror of the Inquisition. As a descendent of Spanish Jews, her religious and ethnic histories are blended together, and although she is aware of attempts at converting Jews to Christianity, she sees in England essentially a land and a society in which "her religious past [can be] reborn in the English present." As an educated woman, she finds that Jews and Protestants are compatible because of the mutual respect each has for the other. As a supporter of domesticity, Aguilar focuses on all that Protestants and Jews have in common in their daily routines, aspirations, and values. As a consequence, she addresses both Protestants and Jews

because, since these novels, such as Woman's Friendship: a Story of Domestic Life, are cleared of specific religious allusions, they benefit both communities.

2. From a Christian's Perspective

It would be erroneous to imagine Dickens to be anti-Jew, simply because of the unsavory Fagin. Dickens also provides us with the gentle Riah, who laments being forced into the stereotype of the heartless money-lender. Scott gives us Rebecca's father, Isaac of York, industrious and honorable, and he also contrasts him to traitorous "Christian" knights, and even to the Templars. The "divine" judgment that was to befall Rebecca, strikes instead, and in its own terms (no need of fire, scaffold, and the likes), the real villain, Brian de Bois-Guilbert. Rebecca, though unhappy in love, leaves the novel with the respect of the author and the readers for her kindness, her courage, her dignity, and the sincerity of her faith.

While Disraeli, himself a convert to Christianity, with no trace of Crypto-Judaism afterward, reminds his contemporaries that the roots of Christianity are the Jewish faith, other writers prod the Protestant public to continue to share their faith unobtrusively. One short story is particularly interesting in that respect, Amelia Edwards' "The Story of Salome," written in 1873, in which the hero, Harcourt Blunt, travels in Venice with his friend, Coventry Turnour, who constantly falls in love, and who takes him to see his "true" love, Salomé, whom he must convert first, because she is Jewish. The friends part ways, then Harcourt returns to Italy and learns that his friend married someone else. He discovers the Jewish cemetery on a small island, and sees in the distance the young Jewish beauty he had meet earlier. She looked infinitely sad, and does not notice him at first. Upon inquiry, Harcourt discovers that Salomé died before his return. Eventually, he learns that she secretly converted to Christianity and that her ghost needs the peace that her true faith be acknowledged. Harcourt finds a stonemason to cut a Christian cross on the headstone.
One of the shaking events of the end of the century was the Dreyfus affair, in France, which motivated public opinion, for or against, beyond France's borders. By and large, Protestants tended to believe in Dreyfus' innocence and fought for his rehabilitation. France came very close to a civil war and the division for or against Dreyfus could be almost cut along the line of Catholics (against) and Protestants and Liberals (for). The Affair went beyond French borders, and one of Josephine Butler's last campaigns was in support of Dreyfus, who, eventually was fully restored in 1906. Marie Corelli also makes a brief allusion to Dreyfus' unjust condemnation in *The Master Christian*, as she depicts two bishops in Rome pleased by the discomfiture of a Jew.

**Conclusion**

Modern scholars have largely labeled the nineteenth century as an age of doubt, of crisis of faith, leaving the modern readers with the impression that Georgians and Victorians were sinking in the quick sands of despair, or wearing only the "masks" of believers, when they really did not, could not believe anymore. Modern interpretation has explained this rejection of faith as the result of Darwin's revolutionary theory, although the latter did not truly take root until the twentieth century. It is possible that some may have confused instances of "the dark night of the soul," a questioning of faith or an overwhelming of sense of despair and loneliness, that occurs, for various lengths of time in most believers, yet this difficult trial of faith is a fairly common crisis, and does not translate as an abandon of the faith. It is drastically different from the situation described by scholars, like A. N. Wilson who asserts, "By the end of the nineteenth-century, almost all the great writers, artists, and intellectuals had abandoned Christianity: many
had abandoned God altogether. These comments do not match the evidence in England or in America. I would, therefore, agree with Timothy Larsen that indeed, "it is time to reintegrate faith positively into accounts of Victorian thought."

By and large, Britain was actively Christian and more particularly Protestant. Her historical past was very vivid in her national memory and fueled the creative imagination of artists, thinkers, writers. Although we did not look at faith in the nineteenth century from a Catholic perspective, Catholicism indirectly benefited from Darwinism, as the beauty of its form of worship and the brotherhood of its religious orders was for some the perfect response to Darwin's explanation of life based on chance and determinism.

More than in the preceding centuries, faith was indeed so strong that it could not be satisfied to remain within the safety of Britain itself. As we shall see in the next chapter, the efforts of missionary organizations were hugely effective and contributed to implant or re-implant Christianity even in hostile areas, such as in China with Hudson Taylor. The seed planted then have borne fruits into today; although Chinese Christians are victims of persecutions, their faith is very much alive. From one end of the nineteenth century to the other, we find a militant faith that permeates all the strata of society, and effectively introduces social improvement. Most of Britain faith could be represented in the last two illustrations.

In the midst of this very vibrant Christian spirituality, women played an enormous role. They may not have all have been preachers like Catherine Booth or Elizabeth Fry. Catherine Booth argues skillfully and convincingly in her "Female ministry or Woman's Right to Preach the Gospel" that Christ and the Scripture truly empowered, from the beginning, women as co-workers with men for the salvation of mankind. She pointed out that tradition invented by (some) men had obscured the place Christ gave women. Her essay is truly an impressive and thorough Bible

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359 See illustrations XXIV.
study if one is interested in looking up all the biblical references she provides for every facet of her argument. A minister's wife had to share her husband's faith and vocation if his ministry was to bear any fruit, and most ministers wives did, as we shall see more in detail in Chapter V about partnerships between men and women in the nineteenth century.

Many women were hymn writers. The introductory quotation to this chapter is taken from Frances Havergal's (1836-79) very popular hymn, "Take My Life and Let It be," written in 1874. This hymn, in a way, summarizes the spirit of nineteenth-century Christianity, in which women took an extremely active and wide-ranging part which they saw as pertaining to their responsibilities within the Domestic Sphere. Faith could only be fully alive if expressed in actions as well as in words. Hannah More illustrates this through the story of "Dan and Jane or, Faith and Works," in which Dan (faith) and Jane (works) are man and wife and argue as to which of the two is best until they realize they are both using an example from Abraham's life and understand that the two, like man and wife, are to be as one.
CHAPTER IV APOSTLE AND AMBASSADORS

"Action is the life of virtue, and the world is the theatre of action."

Hannah More, Manners of the Great (1788)

Because, as we saw in the preceding chapter, the faith of the nineteenth century was deeply rooted, it demanded to be expressed in action. This was to take many forms: voicing publicly one's position (through lectures or petitions, for instance), relying on the support of the press to spread information, as well as to gather and galvanize supporters, missionary work, and even legislation. While these are facets of the Public Sphere in which we expect to find men, they proved to be fields of great activism, indeed, but not just for men.

Our twenty-first century is well-aware of the Suffrage Movement -- although it tends to make it a universal phenomenon among all nineteenth-century women, born of a desire to rival men, which it was not; however it forgets too often how ubiquitous and life-changing the undertakings of women were in moral, social, academic, patriotic, political, missionary, philanthropic, and colonial action without the vote, and how much most of these women perceived this unrelenting engagement as a legitimate and necessary part of their Domestic Sphere, not as an alternative to traditional femininity, or to marriage and motherhood, and not as a means to overtake men's roles. Indeed, it would be fair to say that if modern Academia has often gravely distorted the true image of domesticity and has failed to assess accurately the depth and significance of religious convictions of the nineteenth century, it seems to have either largely deleted the real and considerable impact of nineteenth-century British women within the Public Sphere, or to have recuperated as "feminists" those too famous to be ignored--like Florence Nightingale or Josephine Butler, simply because they took a position in favor of the suffrage for women--thus misleading the modern student into assuming a closer kinship than actually existed between nineteenth-century women and modern feminists.
The modern mind has been so well conditioned to the mantra that women were and could do nothing, unless they broke the rules and openly rebelled, that many today assume that the words of Victoria Wignall, one of Karl Marx' daughters, "We just got instilled in us the feeling of being second best, of not coming up to scratch. We were girls, you see, and what use were girls anyway?" reflect the true situation and state of mind of nineteenth-century women in general. Once such parameters have been delineated, it becomes harder to recognize the reality, the scope, and the impact of women upon their century, especially when these women were indifferent or even opposed to women's suffrage. Today's Academia and popular understanding have no room for these influential women who do not "fit the mold" and recognize them only when they are too important to ignore.

While, as mentioned earlier, this study does not pretend that all men were supportive of women, it seeks to correct the record, and this chapter proposes to sample key categories in which nineteenth-century British women immersed themselves for the betterment of global society. Although some philanthropy, for instance, existed outside of religious convictions, most sprang from deep Christian beliefs, or, as in the case of Florence Nightingale, from a Christian "tincture," therefore the chapter will focus on women's accomplishments as the natural and necessary outlets of faith.

I have divided this section into five main areas of activity; however, consistent with the fact that these women's convictions affected all the aspects of their life, these five fields are interconnected. To a certain extent, there is a progression, as well, from one focus to the next. For each, women wrote abundantly, using poems, fictional stories as well as true, personal narratives, letters, and essays, and were widely read. Although most of these works are now (unjustly)

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360 Perkins 6. Perkins supports the idea that women of middle and upper classes were, with extremely rare exceptions, despised, unhappy, and considered as little more than means of perpetuating the lineage and caring for aging parents.
forgotten, they played in their time an essential role in turning the tide of public opinion and in
influencing national legislation.

Against sometimes formidable odds, these women established themselves as apostles and
ambassadors of the "British way," which to them and to their compatriots meant largely ideals of
freedom and culture, founded on Christian (Protestant) principles. Although the two terms have
occasionally similar definitions, they are distinguished here in the sense that "apostles" deals
more specifically with women defending ideas and pursuing reforms within Great Britain, while
"ambassadors" focuses on women seeking to represent the plight of a group before the state or to
export British ideals abroad, through colonialism or missionary work.

From beginning to end, the nineteenth century was marked by events, crises, and ideas that
compelled women to take a public stand. Although many issues were pressing--education, the
living conditions of the poor, slavery, medicine--one in particular, moral reform, had to take
precedence as it affected all the others and was to serve as necessary foundation for them.

I. Moral Reform and Anti-Slavery

The concern for moral conduct of the individual and of the nation is not unique to the
nineteenth century. The licentiousness and open corruption in Charles II's reign, for instance,
contributed to the disgrace of the Stuarts among the people; however, if, as Roberts indicates,361
the Society for the Reformation of Manners appeared in the wake of the Glorious Revolution, it
did not succeed in eradicating the growing problems of "drunkenness, gaming, profane, licentious
or disorderly behaviour." Women as well as men were deeply concerned about the situation; for
instance, William Wilberforce declared, "God Almighty has set before me two great objects; the

suppression of the slave trade and the reformation of manners, and in 1787, George III issued a Proclamation against Vice and Immorality. Turning the tide of vice, however, was an undertaking of colossal proportions that would require years of continuous and ubiquitous effort to succeed.

1. Hannah More and the Setting of a Godly Norm

While, as Kate Bethune points out in her study, *Hannah More, Moral Reform and The Cheap Repository Tracts: Preaching to the Poor or the British Nation?*, religious tracts were not a new or particularly unusual way to reach the poor, especially since the creation of the Society for Distributing Religious Tracts, in 1782, there was also a powerfully competitive secular and worldly trend found in newspapers, songs, and pamphlets that ran drastically counter-current to morality, with their focus on scandals, executions, ribald stories and illustrations, as Richard Altick explains:

> There was—and had been for many years—a brisk traffic in unseemly reading matter for the masses. Chapbooks, broadsides, and ballads, many of them heartily vulgar if not actually licentious, had ridden in peddlers' packs to country fairs and markets, and through the mired lanes to the cottages of peasants and handicraftsmen. As the eighteenth century wore on, more and more hole-in-the-wall printers had sprung up to supply these hawkers.

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363 Bethune, Kate, *Hannah More, Moral Reform and The Cheap Repository Tracts: Preaching to the Poor or the British Nation?*, 2005. July 2, 2008. <www.leeds.ac.uk/history/studentlife/e-journal/bethune.pdf>. *Bethune* argues that the *Tracts* were not directed solely to lower/working-class readers, but to the upper classes as well. It certainly was read and encouraged by the upper classes, although sometimes in a paternalistic way, nonetheless More's main works toward the educated and powerful of the nation were generally more substantial in length and more demanding; except for *Coelebs*. More elected the essay over the fictional narrative. However the *Tracts* were short, light, and left the reader entertained as much as encouraged and instructed. The power of entertainment intrinsic to the fictional narrative is enough to explain the popularity of the *Tracts* among all strata of society.

Moreover, thanks to the efforts for the improvement of literacy amidst the lower classes, reading material, good or subversive, could now reach a wider audience. Charlotte Yonge in her biography of Hannah More further informs us that

> There were plenty of young people by this time . . . who could read; but there was absolutely nothing for them to read, easy to understand or inexpensive, beside the ballads and broadsheets of last, dying speeches, and the tracts which the disciples of Tom Paine and the Jacobinically inclined were endeavoring to circulate. The only book hitherto written for the poor was Mrs. Trimmer's "Instructive Tales"; and there were not enough of these, nor was the volume cheap enough to supply what was needed. . . [Hannah and her sisters decided] to produce three tracts a month, --stories, ballads, and religious readings at so cheap a rate as to undersell the revolutionary publications.\(^{365}\)

Although women's political involvement will be examined later in this chapter, we already get a glimpse of how interconnected moral, social, and political issues were. For instance, the upgrade of the reading situation, in itself a moral improvement, allowed people to risk being "contaminated" by the French revolutionary (political) ideas propagated in England by British Jacobins such as Mary Wollstonecraft or Paine, an exposure which could bring political as well as social disaster. The publication competition was obviously considerable and overwhelming; for Hannah More and her sisters it meant self-sacrifice—selling at a loss—for the welfare of the individual and of the nation. While, as Anne Mellor reports in *Mothers of the Nation*, many modern scholars deplore that Hannah More's program of reform was not egalitarian, it would be equally erroneous to believe that she "criticized, rather than supported, the existing social order."\(^{366}\) In reality, it would be fair to say that the success of More's moral reform had a far-reaching and long-lasting impact on the entire century, precisely because it shunned


\(^{366}\) Gerald Newman cited in Mellor 19.
utopian egalitarianism and recognized that not everyone has the same talents, intelligence, character, but that everyone has a purpose. Her understanding of the proper functioning of the nation was similar to Paul's depiction of the Church as one body with many parts in Romans 12:4-8, different in function but equal in importance. She also firmly believed that education, perseverance, and honesty would eventually allow members of the working class to become part of the middle class. Her accomplishments are all the more remarkable in that, as opposed to the French Revolution that brought about the destruction of the existing political system under the guise of establishing equality and offered in the end only dictatorship, she upheld British institutions and principles, which she believed to be essentially good, but she was also convinced that they could not properly function or last without a religious and moral overhaul; thus, she too brought about a "revolution," but because it spoke to heart and conscience, it started with the individual and spread forth, without cataclysmic upheaval and without bloodshed.

Her strategy was very thorough and organized. Too often, she is remembered for her effort in the education and moral improvement of the poor, for whom she wrote her Cheap Repository Tracts. She first began, however, with the aristocracy and those in power—a logical step, since she considered that members of the upper classes not only governed the nation but set an example by which the lower classes regulated their own behavior and principles. Three works stand out in her crusade to reform the powerful: Thoughts on the Importance of the Manners of the Great to General Society, An Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World, and Hints toward Forming the Character of a Young Princess. What is further interesting is that More seemed to have kept consistently her attention on society as a whole, not focusing on one aspect while forgetting or moving away from another. Morality, education, slavery were constantly on her mind. The same year, 1788, she wrote her Manners of the Great, she also composed her poems on slavery, while within four or five years between each, she addressed questions of female education (Strictures on Female education, in 1799), education of the heir to the throne,
Princess Charlotte (Education of a Young Princess in 1805), and spiritual and moral education of middle-class young men and women (Coelebs in 1809), and all this, while producing the Tracts, with her sisters—at least between 1795 and 1798, and at the rhythm of three tracts per month.

It would be a grave misinterpretation to imagine that Hannah More first published her Manners of the Great anonymously because she feared the reaction her work would trigger. As she candidly explains in her introduction to a second edition in 1809, which joins Manners of the Great with Religion of the Fashionable World in one volume published under her name:

> It has occurred to the author. . .whether it argues more vanity when a writer prefixes his name to his book, or when he publishes without it; whether it implies more self-sufficiency to suppose that his name is of so much value as to attract readers to his work, or to trust so confidently to the merit of the work itself, as to depend on its own unassisted strength for making its own way. . . There is, however, one decided advantage. . . [to anonymity]. He [the author] is not restrained. . . from the most pointed censure of existing errors, by the conscious apprehension that his own faults may be brought forward.367

In the case of Hannah More, it really mattered little whether she chose to remain anonymous or not: The success of her works was always great, and, ultimately her true identity was found out and praised.

Although tactful, More does not mince words in her address to the "great." Having made clear that her work is not "a satire upon vice, or a ridicule upon folly," she underscores that an "exemplary constitution," "beliefs transfused into laws," "public worship and religious education" are wonderful, but they are not enough; the nation needs to rouse from its "moral slumber" and Christianity must "quicken vigilance."368 To those among the upper class who would approve, in

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368 More 1-2.
a condescending way, of moral reform for the poor and working class, she responds with this stern rebuke:

Reformation must begin with the great, or it will never be effectual. Their example is the fountain whence the vulgar draw their habits, actions, and characters. To expect the reform of the poor while the opulent are corrupt is to throw odours into the stream while the springs are poisoned. If, therefore, the Rich and Great will not, from a liberal spirit of doing right, and from a Christian spirit of fearing God, abstain from those offenses, for which the poor are to suffer fines and imprisonments, effectual good cannot be done.\footnote{More 78.}

More is no fool, and does not imagine that the most corrupt will be transformed by her admonitions; this is why she does not address them, but directs her effort toward those who act wrongly "by habit and want of reflection," rather than by deliberate, willful choice for evil, and who can be found among "the sober, the decent, and the regular." Some could label her an optimist because she does not believe the majority of wrong-doers to be hard-core villains; but, considering the welcome her works received and the far-reaching improvement of her moral campaign, her optimism seems justified. She insists that the great must remember their place and their role: They are patterns for the rest of society, and while enjoying credit and popularity among those of lower rank can, indeed, be a positive thing, it has also its darker side, contributing to complacency and indolence. However, More does not exempt the lower classes from their own responsibility as she muses, "It is somewhat strange that the extravagance of the great should be the criterion of their goodness with those very people who are themselves the victims to this idol."\footnote{More 15.}

It may surprise us to find at the top of her list of "corruptions" the non-observation of the Sabbath, but to her, it denotes first a neglect of God and His commandment on the subject and,
second, a neglect of family for whom the Sabbath should mark a special time of gathering, closeness, and strengthening. As we see in Coelebs as well, godly, close-knit families are the backbone of the nation; they are essential to maintain its morality, its unity, and its strength.\textsuperscript{371} Indeed, what is first learned and practiced within the family becomes the pattern of belief and behavior for later life in society.

As Dickens in \textit{Bleak House} denounces Mrs. Jellyby's misplaced missionary zeal, More equally deplores that "It is strange that there should be so little constancy in human conduct, that the same person should gladly contribute to spread the life of Christianity in another hemisphere; while, by their example, they actually obstruct the progress of it at home."\textsuperscript{372} This is not to say, of course, that she disapproved of missionary efforts, but rather she admonished that to be an effective ambassador of the Gospel necessitates a behavior free of discrepancies.

She further wages war, throughout the book, against prejudice and contradiction, and undertakes to counter and annihilate those errors which she considers an "impediment to religious progress" and thus to moral reform. For instance, the idea that "we must take the world as we find it; [that] reformation is not our business" is in blatant contradiction with the fact that, in all other areas of life, man strives for improvement, if not for excellence, that "in arts and letters the most consummate models are held out to our admiration. We never hear of anybody cautioned against becoming too wise, too learned, or too rich." She warns against the popularity of dangerous maxims or attitudes, such as "there is no harm in it," which under the cover or indulgence and tolerance, offer an easy way out of responsibility and contribute to the "moral slumber" of the nation. As she observes, this deplorable \textit{laisser-faire} is really the outward expression of a deeper problem: "It is, perhaps, one of the most alarming symptoms of the

\textsuperscript{371} This is one of More's recurring themes (see also chapter IV of \textit{Religion of the Fashionable World}).
\textsuperscript{372} More 23.
degeneracy of morals in the present day that the distinctions of right and wrong are almost swept away in polite conversation." 373

Continuing to ridicule human kindness and to paint religion into a "life of hard austerity and pining abstinence" will first lead to indifference and eventually to hopelessness and enslavement; on the other hand, the notion that "only great and actual sins are to be guarded against" gives a false sense of security when actually, sins are "the more dangerous for being little ostensible." Those who feel secure in presenting a proper front, she mercilessly unsettles by demanding that they analyze whether their thoughts and actions away from the public eye match their outward behavior. Not only, she reminds her readers, do the people imitate their leaders, but outside observers, potential enemies, taking the nation as a whole, will compare its principles with its practices, and if any inconsistency is to be found, they will exploit it to their advantage. Although she foresees that some will balk at her criticism and advice--"I shall, probably, be accused of a very narrow and fanatical spirit," she candidly confesses--she is overall rather positive and practical; she warns, but does not crush; she peels away layers of hypocrisy and self-satisfaction, but she also encourages and gives a glimpse of the ultimate good that will be achieved for the nation, which will be both gratifying and pleasing to God. She also offers, in her postscript to the 1809 edition, practical suggestions on suitable occupations for Sundays, underscoring "the pleasures of friendship, the pleasures of intellect, and the pleasures of beneficence." 374

Religion of the Fashionable World is really an extension of The Manners of the Great with a particular focus on the direct link between Christianity and morality. Hannah More offers a closer examination of the spirituality of the rich and powerful and its consequences for the nation. Although it is a religious work, it also brings the discussion into the political arena through the

373 More 41-49.
374 More 84.
criticism of "the beautiful mask of enlightened philosophy," which she interprets as "another word for unbelief." She is particularly disgusted with Voltaire, as her footnote indicates, who has played a laudable part in denouncing "the fanatical tragedy of Toulouse (the murder of Calas)" but who, "by mixing some truths with many falsehoods, by assuming an amiable candour, and professing to serve the interest of goodness [has] treacherously contrive[d] to leave on the mind of the unguarded reader impressions the most unfavourable to Christianity." She accuses philosophy, which she associates much with the French, of distorting Christianity: "They dress her up with the sword of persecution in one hand and the flames of intolerance in the other; and then ridicule the sober-minded for worshipping an idol which their misrepresentation has rendered as malignant as Moloch." However their approach "indicates as little knowledge of human nature as of Christian revelation, when it addresses man as being made up of pure intellect, without any mixture of passions, and who can be made happy without hope, and virtuous without fear."

More denounces the "domino effect" that starts with the lack of proper religious education among the members of the upper classes, those "unfruitful professors. . . are thus in great measure accountable for the infidelity of others, and of course will have to answer for more than their own personal offenses", this attitude generates corrupted morals, aggravated by the fact that the rich and powerful encourage and expect of those below them socially adherence to a standard of integrity and religiosity they do not practice themselves, and eventually, the result is

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375 More 116.
376 In 1761, Jean Calas, a Huguenot, was accused of murdering his son to prevent him from converting to Catholicism. He was summarily and brutally executed on the wheel and his body was burned, while the son was buried as a Catholic martyr. Voltaire, outraged for this blatant display of religious fanaticism, led a powerful campaign that resulted in the revision of the case. Eventually, Calas was found innocent after all, the son having taken his own life, so the family received a financial compensation.
377 More 168.
378 More 172.
general corruption, unrestrained self-centeredness, and cynicism. Furthermore, if nothing stems such decline, it will lead to insurrection, anarchy, and destruction or tyranny.

Finally, More insists on the importance and nature of true charity, which must first be the "steady conviction of bounden duty" sustained by the desire to "obey the whole will of God" and be part of the general behavior. More reiterates the same message in Character of a Young Princess. In 1805, Princess Charlotte was only nine years old, but with an absentee mother and a dissolute father, More had good reasons to be concerned about the child who was expected to become sovereign of England. Technically, the work is intended for the royal preceptor, but at the same time, we are permitted to wonder if the daring writer was not also addressing the Prince Regent himself, who certainly could, and should, have used some advice. Yet again, she suggests that much of a princess' education should be similar to that of "the daughter of a private gentleman," which, in turn, implies that much of her book can apply to middle-class education.

The influence of Hannah More is most interesting in the context of this book, because even though Princess Charlotte died in childbirth and never became queen, four years after More's death, in 1837, another young princess would ascend the throne and take to heart the advice the great woman moralist had provided. Victoria's first vow upon learning she was queen, "I will be good," is in this regard particularly significant: her first focus was a moral one, and despite her faults, she did live up to her commitment.

In this book, Hannah More, straight-forward as ever, reminds her readers that, more than others, a pupil of such high rank is at risk: overindulgence, flattery, superficiality of knowledge, capriciousness of nature are likely pitfalls. Even a royal pupil must have restrictions, and More underscores that "the laws of human nature will not bend to human greatness." She insists on the importance of history, not only as a means to emulate the great examples of the past and learn

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380 More 134.
382 More 4.
from the failures, but as a means also to grasp fully the sinful nature of man and the providential interventions of God on behalf of mankind. To prove her point, she discusses selected sovereigns, such as Alfred, who showed dedication for the cause of public justice and public liberty, upholding laws and morals, encouraging those willing to reform, punishing "the most irreclaimable," and making "himself a scholar, a philosopher, and the moral as well as the civil instructor of his people." She contrasts Alfred and Charles II to underscore that out of similar circumstances in youth, free will led one to become the inspiration for "the perfect king of fiction" and the other to self-indulgence and immorality. With King John, she warns of the dangers of making one's reign rife with injustice and oppression, but also points out that Providence turned a bad situation into a positive one, as John's excesses were "the providential means of rousing the English spirit and of obtaining the establishment of the Great Charter."383

While Alfred was a popular hero and John a popular villain in British mentality, she takes a more daring stand concerning Elizabeth. She praises her education, her prudence, her self-control, and her many accomplishments: "We owe her much as Englishmen. As Protestants what do we not owe her?" However, she is not blind to Elizabeth's shortcomings and concludes warningly that "her sun set so ingloriously after so bright a day of prosperity and honour"384 because of her corrupt principles, her vanity, and her jealousy. In other words, More does not hesitate to "desecrate" this great figure of British history, by analyzing objectively the person behind the fame, to demonstrate the necessity of keeping a close watch on self in order to avoid moral decline, which is all the more damaging when found at the head of the nation.

Having established that "religion and morals will stand or fall together,"385 More also believed that morality must also go hand in hand with education. As she stated in other works,

383 More 169-70.
384 More 186-88.
385 Quotation borrowed from Strictures of Female Education 42. We find the very same argument of feminine influence in Sarah Lewis in the middle of the century and from Mary Ward, at the end of it.
she is adamant that education should be pertinent and purposeful, not an end in itself or a means of self glorification. Although there should be a certain entertaining side to education, overall knowledge is "the fruit of pain," and the royal pupil should be trained to endure much of such pain, not just for her own good, but for the wisdom that such knowledge will ultimately bring, if properly cultivated, from which the whole kingdom will benefit.

**Strictures of Female Education** calls women to commit themselves to moral reform. More points out that, "among the talents for the application of which women of the higher class will be particularly accountable, there is one, the importance of which they can scarcely rank too highly. This talent is influence." Although women may not always realize "where their true importance lies," More explains that "the general state of civilized society depends more... on the prevailing sentiments and habits of women, and on the nature and degree of the estimation in which they are held," than superficial observers might think. A shrewd analyst of human nature, More has noted men's propensity to seek to please women and be held in their esteem. While she severely criticizes the misuse of such power, she also gives practical examples of how it can be wielded wisely. For instance, women can first ensure the future morals of society by paying close attention to the education of their children; other worthy areas of influence include convincing a man to decline a duel, noting that, indeed, "it requires more courage to refuse a challenge than to accept one," turning away from a successful libertine instead of treating him with complacency, or opposing immoral literature--especially French and German novels, and over all denouncing openly and forcefully anything that contributes to public corruption.

The latter command encompasses endless possibilities, even the boycotting of sugar produced by slave work as a means to support the anti-slavery campaign. Indeed, slavery to Hannah More was a blatant act of immorality. Fighting it was a natural part of her moral reform.

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These women, representative of the majority of middle-class women, establish a significant line of consistency of thought that is traceable from the dawn of the long nineteenth-century to its sunset.

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Her two poems, "Slavery" (written in 1788) and "The Sorrows of Yamba; or the Negro Woman's Lamentation" (written in 1797) clearly advocate abolition not simply as a goal toward which a Christian nation should strive, but as a natural outward expression of Christianity. In other words, as we saw with "Dan and Jane" in chapter II, putting an end to slavery is the work that no self-professed Christian can shun. Although both works are poems, "Slavery" is written more as an essay, in twenty stanzas, addressed by the moralist to slave traders and supporters of slavery. At times, however, the British nation as a whole seems to be indicted, exposing the enslaver of men as, in fact, the enslaved to wealth:

What wrongs, what injuries does Oppression plead
To smooth the horror of th' unnatural deed?
What strange offence, what aggravated sin?
They stand convicted--of a darker skin!
Barbarians, hold! th' opprobrious commerce spare,
Respect his sacred image which they bear. . .
Let Malice strip them of each other plea,
They still are men, and men shou'd still be free.
Insulted Reason, loaths th' inverted trade--
Dire change! the agent is the purchase made!\(^{387}\)

The poem, worthy as it is, is even more interesting because of its few footnotes. Although More keeps a dignified tone in the stanzas, she vents her indignation with less decorum in the footnotes. For instance, in stanza 11: "Plead not, in reason's palpable abuse, /Their sense of * feeling callous and obtuse"; the footnote reads, "*Nothing is more frequent than this cruel and stupid argument, that they do not *feel* the miseries inflicted on them as Europeans would." She calls the supporters of the trade "White Savages" and denounces their lust for gold; she praises William

Penn whose philanthropy "has linked dissever'd worlds in brothers bands" and has "effac'd the shame / Inscrib'd by Slavery on the Christian Name." More poignant and more eloquent than her elegant rhetoric, however, are the words of her footnote for the line in stanza 13, "When the sharp iron * wounds his inmost soul":

*This is not said figuratively. The writer of these lines has seen a complete set of chains, fitted to every separate limb of these unhappy, innocent men; together with instruments for wrenching open the jaws, contrived with such ingenuous cruelty as would shock the humanity of an inquisitor.

The fact that she, a gently-bred, respected lady, speaks openly of such torture, as would an eye-witness, makes it impossible for the supporters of slavery to hide or rationalize the horror any longer, and renders her question, "Shall Britain, where the soul of freedom reigns, /Forge chains for others she herself disdains?" all the more uncomfortable. The hope that England will do the right thing and that "The liberty she loves she will bestow; Not to herself the glorious gift confin'd" further casts slavery supporters and sluggish members of Parliament in the roles of materialistic, heathen villains, proving them to be, indeed, "savages"—an intolerably equivocal position for people who claim citizenship in the most advanced country of their time.

It is, however, "The Sorrows of Yamba" that pleads most effectively, I believe, the cause of anti Slavery. In this poem, Hannah More takes the persona of Yamba, a young African woman. Yamba tells her story: kidnapped in her hut with her children while her husband is out, she is separated from them, except her nursing baby who dies during the trip. Humiliated, abused (forced to dance naked before the slavers), whipped, and chained, sea- and home-sick, she is sold to a cruel master. Poorly fed, exhausted, heart-broken, she wishes to die. She manages to escape and tries to drown herself, but she is rescued by an English missionary who helps her recover physically as well as spiritually, as he leads her to the Christian faith, in which she finds the strength to forgive her persecutors and even to discern God's providence in her capture. She
enjoins other slaves to shun revolt and repent for their own sinfulness before God. She is
baptized and will welcome death when it comes, not as an escape, but as a reunion with her
Savior. She thinks of Africa, not to return there, but with concern for its spiritual welfare; she
urges England not only to end the slave trade but to take the Gospel to Africa, and closes with the
hope of meeting her redeemed husband in heaven:

Ye that boast "Ye rule the waves,"/ Bid no Slave Ship soil the sea,
Ye that "never will be slaves,"/ Bid poor Afric's land be free. . .
Where ye once have carried slaughter,/Vice, and Slavery, and Sin;
Seiz'd on Husband, Wife, and Daughter,/ Let the Gospel enter in.
Thou in Afric's distant land, /Still shalt see the man I love;
Join him to the Christian band, /Guide his Soul to Realms above
There no Fiend again shall sever /Those whom God hath join'd and blest:
There they dwell with Him for ever,/ There "the weary are at rest."

With this poem, More, like Dickens with Tiny Tim, personalized, gave a face to the
slave; through these lines, readers ceased to think of slaves (or the poor in Dickens' case) as an
anonymous entity, a faceless mob; they could empathize with the real-life oppressed through the
characters, and were moved to action. Thus, writers like Hannah More truly contributed to make
support or even simple toleration of the slave trade a more untenable position for a nation pledged
to Christianity and liberty. As Karen Halbersleben points out the very qualities defined within the
Woman's Sphere validated and even demanded women's intervention in the anti-slavery
movement as demonstrates the following appeal to women:

Do not seek shelter yourself under the plea of limited influence, or inferior
abilities. . . Woman! Of whatever name or station, gifted by heaven with warm
affections, gushing sympathies, steadfast faith, and enduring constancy, come to help the millions who lie enslaved, weeping, prostrate at your feet.  

In the implementing of moral idealism into action, women demonstrated further their feminine qualities: in their homes they taught their families about the moral evil of slavery and its discrepancy with adherence to Christian life; together they raised funds through bazaars, galvanized public opinion through petition, and established societies for the rescue of slaves, such as The Ladies' Society for the Relief of British Negro Slaves, thus exhibiting their determination as well as their remarkable skills of organization.

Although the anti-slavery movement is often associated in modern scholarship with the "the burgeoning movement for women's rights in England," it is important to remember that for Hannah More, who figures prominently in the period, whose voice in matters of education, morals, and slavery was widely heard by the rich as well as the poor, there was no claim to tenets of feminism as we understand it today. Unlike Wollstonecraft, she viewed men and women as different and complementary; she did not think that women needed more rights, but that they should make use of what they had, which she estimated to be considerable, as she explains at the end of Strictures: "Our religion has not only made them [women] heirs to a blessed immortality thereafter, but has greatly raised them in the scale of being here, by lifting them to an importance in society unknown to the most polished ages of antiquity."  

She expected women to civilize the nation without losing anything of their femininity and without stepping out of propriety. To her, propriety was not the intellectual and social "corset" the twenty-first century imagines it to be: she defines it as, "the center in which all lines of duty and of agreeableness meet. It is to character what proportion is to figure, and grace to attitude."

389 Halbersleben 8.
390 More (Strictures) 41.
391 More 6.
Obviously, she proved through her life that women did not need to vindicate their rights to be influential. Furthermore, her approach clarified the scope of the Domestic Sphere, as she showed women, and men, that the intrinsic feminine characteristics, which Anne Mellor sums up as "moral virtue and ethic of care," could "stake their claim" in any field of public life, without any loss of femininity. This position, implemented in *Coelebs*, also infused the novel throughout the nineteenth century with a greater calling; as William Stafford points out, Hannah More contributed to reform the novel "with regard to its moral influence and aesthetically, purging it of cliché and of unreality." 392

From one end of the century to the other, from Elizabeth Bennet to Jane Eyre, to Lucy Snow in *Villette*, Esther in *Bleak House*, Dorothea in *Middlemarch*, Molly in *Wives and Daughters*, and the list could go on and on, we witness heroines who make a difference without stepping out of their femininity and who reflect faithfully the work and influence of middle-class women of the period. I find this fascinating and revolutionary, because it is remarkably liberating and empowering, but in a solely positive way, without any need to rival or feel threatened by men: women do not have to become male or to create a new socio-political system to find purpose and influence; More demonstrates that they already possess all that is necessary, they only need to use their talents. Thus, there is no need for bitterness, frustration, competition, of self-pity, and all energies can be properly directed into implementing the real changes (education, morals, slavery, etc.).

More further considers the particular position of the British woman (middle and upper classes) to be privileged when compared to her European counterparts, especially in France. While England granted queens the right to rule, France only allowed for a few queen regents of

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less than sagacious accomplishments—except for Blanche of Castile. More remarks pointedly
"[Although France is] a nation in which women have always been held in the highest
consideration, their genius has never been called to its loftiest exercise." What is further
significant is that other evangelical reformers, even those who, like Josephine Butler, were in
favor of women's suffrage, remained faithful to the example Hannah More had set: they were
tremendously effective, yet remained utterly feminine; their purpose was not the overtaking but
the complementing of men, by the contribution of their feminine characteristics (sensibility,
nurturing, virtue, charity, domestic organization) to moral and social reforms.

Despite her enormous success and a popularity which lasted into the last years of the
century, Hannah More is mostly ignored today. Anne Mellor in Mothers of the Nation attributes
this deliberate oversight to the fact that, "Leading historians of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century
England have emerged from a theoretical tradition grounded on Marxist or left-wing socialist
ideologies: they hate Hannah More because in their eyes she did far too much to stop the
liberating French-style political revolution from occurring in England.

Although this is part of the truth, I believe that the deeper reasons for this "oversight" are
More's Evangelicalism and anti-feminism (in the modern understanding of the term). The fact
that a woman could be so influential without being revolutionary, pro-suffrage, and atheist seems
to be far too disturbing for modern Academia. Studying More and respecting her writings (not
truncating or distorting any part of it) would open questions of gender and of values that might
run counter to the trend adopted since the Sixties. Nevertheless, as Anne Mellor adds:

The career of Hannah More, who was virtually canonized as an "Anglican Saint"
after her death in 1833, made the reign—not of Charlotte—but of Victoria and
everything we now mean by Victorianism—inevitable. After the Evangelical

393 Mother of Louis IX, "Saint Louis," of France, to whom Louis entrusted his entire kingdom will full
power of rule while he was away in the Holy Land.
394 More (Education Princess) 177.
395 Mellor 15.
campaigns of the early nineteenth-century, Britain would not have tolerated the rule of another George IV: a fiscally irresponsible libertine devoted to luxury, stylistic display, and dissipation. The new British nation required that its royal monarch be economically prudent, decorous in appearance and taste, and above all moral.396

This revival of morality found its expression even in board games such as "The House of Bliss"397 or the "The Delicious Game of the Fruit Basket; or Moral and Intellectual Desserts,"398 in which the winner marries and establishes a happy and godly family, thus demonstrating he has acquired wisdom; Ann Mellor provides the following details:

The players proceed from the prison to the "Muse of Learning." In the vignettes along the path, females are portrayed as attending public chemistry lectures and art exhibitions, purchasing goods in the bazaar, nursing in hospitals, visiting the poorhouse, educating children in a national school, patronizing a school for the blind, dispensing wisdom (and university degrees). . . attending a Bible Society meeting, and leading a march through the streets under the banner of the "female Benevolent Society."399

Both of these games are significant not only for their object, but because they give us a window into middle-class women's activities and interests. Charlotte Brontë wrote to a friend, "The married woman can call but a very small portion of each day her own," 400 and we can easily believe her, judging by the demands of family, church, philanthropy, and education.

2. Temperance Movement

396 Mellor 38.
397 See illustration I.
398 See illustration II.
399 Mellor 6.
400 Letter to Ellen Nussey, September 1854, cited in Perkin 93
It seems that in history the consumption of alcohol was long in being fully recognized as a major moral and social evil. Indeed, Jean-Charles Sournia informs us in his *History of Alcoholism* that the term "alcoholism" was not coined until the nineteenth-century by Magnus Huss, physician to the Swedish kings Charles XIV and Oscar I. This slow awareness was in great part due to the fact that alternate ways to quench thirst were not necessarily safe: water was often polluted, as dramatically proved by various epidemics of cholera—it is rather revealing in that respect that Henry William Blair, in his *The Temperance Movement, or The Conflict between Man and Alcohol*, calls alcohol the "ally of cholera." As for milk, its freshness was problematic in large towns. Brian Harrison, in *Drink and the Victorians*, explains that London had few public pumps and that the brewers opposed the drilling of deep wells for public use for fear of losing their own water supply. Even though non-alcoholic drinks, such as coffee and tea decreased in price from the 1820s onward, they were not as cheap as alcoholic beverages and moreover drink-sellers were often willing to extend credit.

Alcohol was further endowed with many honorable qualities: it was often understood to be the equivalent of today's "energy drinks," as a way to assert one's virility, to boost confidence, and to show hospitality. It also presented many advantages for the poor: it staved off hunger and cold, and offered oblivion from misery. Even Dickens observed:

Gin-drinking is a great vice in England, but poverty is a greater; and until you can cure it or persuade a half-famished wretch not to seek relief in the temporary oblivion of his own misery,

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401 Sournia, Jean-Charles, *A History of Alcoholism*. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990) 44. Sournia's book offers a particularly interesting study of the problem since Sournia (1917-2000) was a physician and professor of surgical pathology and anatomy as well as a historian; he was also Vice-president of the French Government's commission on Alcohol.

402 Blair, Henry William. *The Temperance Movement or, The Conflict between Man and Alcohol*. (Boston: William Smythe Company, 1887) 85-86. Blair was a Senator from New Hampshire. In his book, he establishes a thorough study of the effect of alcohol from a medical as well as a moral and social perspective. He questions the value of alcohol as medicine and underscores the contradiction of believing that a substance which is essentially a poison, in his eyes, should be less dangerous if ingested in small doses.

with the pittance which, divided among his family, would furnish a morsel of bread for each, gin-shops will increase in number and splendor.\textsuperscript{404}

Temperance advocates were therefore faced with daunting odds, as Harrison summarizes: "Thus alcohol, the thirst-quencher, the reliever of physical and psychological strain, the symbol of human interdependence, was a formidable antagonist for temperance reformers to tackle."\textsuperscript{405} It is no surprise that Cruikshank chose to represent such an enemy as The Great Juggernaut,\textsuperscript{406} which in a way completed Hogarth's 1751 illustration, Gin Lane,\textsuperscript{407} the latter giving a detailed picture of intemperance, with the inebriated mother causing her baby's demise at the forefront, a man to hang himself (upper right) and the symbolical alignment of the shop signs, with the tankard of the drinking house, and the coffin of the undertaker (right); the former illustrating the situation as a whole with the various producers of despair (misery, disease, death), to the providers of destruction under the guise of comfort (the makers and sellers of alcohol under its varied forms), and to its victims, the anonymous multitude crushed beneath the barrel-wheel of the juggernaut.

Indeed, temperance advocates, "like the opponents of the slave trade, were attacking men of substance in their localities,"\textsuperscript{408} they were also attacking drink-sellers who were viewed as benefactors of the poor since they provided recreation and comfort.\textsuperscript{409} As Harrison explains, drinking halls doubled as music halls where, as some songs of the time suggest, men sought, occasionally, to escape "the missus," the domineering wife who ruled their home with an iron

\textsuperscript{405} Earnshaw 44.
\textsuperscript{406} See illustration III.
\textsuperscript{407} See illustration IV.
\textsuperscript{408} Earnshaw 62-63.
\textsuperscript{409} Earnshaw 58.
hand, or simply to forget the squalor of their daily lives. Furthermore, pubs offered "free" conveniences such as light, warmth, furniture, newspapers or simply gossip, food and fellowship. It was not enough to denounce alcohol as evil; the various temperance organizations were keenly aware that they had to do more than preaching, they must offer alternatives appealing enough to drunkards to help them abandon their deadly habit.

The immorality of drunkenness was compounded by other immoralties, such as despondency and idleness, domestic violence, and crime. Cruikshank's famous 1848 series, The Bottle illustrates dramatically the progression from casual drinking to murder. The very success of the these sketches, which sold 100,000 copies at one shilling a piece in just a few days and were even dramatized and played simultaneously in eight London theatres, proves that temperance was a real and widespread concern in British society, not the bigoted obsession of a few. The Bottle and its sequel, The Drunkard's Children, depicted the domino-effect of alcoholism. In the first picture of The Bottle we are presented with a middle-class household, not the working-class poor or the indigent; however, by the end of the first set of etchings, the middle-class family has sunk to the level of misery that was more the lot of the uneducated. This social lowering is the outcome of a moral descent, a case of wasted talents and degeneracy born of self-indulgence: unlike the poor of whom Dickens spoke, this family had the potential to live a decent, moral, even prosperous existence. The fact that the head of the family neglected his responsibilities moved the problem from the personal to the familial, and eventually to the social levels. As Blair puts it, "the moment he [the drunkard] is led by it [his vice] to violate his duty to others, and trespass upon their rights, he becomes a criminal."

Analysts on both sides of the Atlantic agreed that alcoholism was primarily a male problem, since the number of addicted

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410 Harrison 47.
411 See illustrations V A, B, C.
412 Earnshaw 197.
413 See illustrations VI A and B
414 Blair 397.
women was small in comparison to that of men. Elaine France Parsons speaks of the loss of manhood whether man surrendered his free will to alcoholism or was forced by coercive laws to face his responsibilities and fulfill his duties. 

Gin palaces or shops, pubs, saloons were the privileged space of men--Harrison calls it the "masculine republic"--in which women (respectable ones, at least) were not allowed. The consumption of spirits was so much a part of the mundane landscape that sailors and soldiers received part of their rations in alcohol.

The scale and success of the temperance crusade is therefore all the more impressive, when we consider what the women of the movement were up against. As Harrison explains, even if many contemporaries recognized the danger of alcohol consumption, not all agreed about a solution for it. Some supported free licensing; "their campaign was inspired by hatred and fear: by free-traders' hatred of privilege and by the general public's fear of an urban working class maddened by gin." They were convinced that the government's attempts to regulate the drink trade would only result in four evils: high prices, adulterated drink, smuggling, and drunkenness. They thought that a reduced tax on spirits would encourage competition, and by making drink "common" would remove the attraction of tasting the "forbidden fruit." Others believed in moderation of drink and even in total abstinence.

Early temperance began with a medical analysis of the effects of alcohol consumption. Dr. Thomas Trotter was the first scientific investigator of drunkenness and made it the topic of his thesis in 1788, noting that, "drunkenness, carried to a certain length, is a gulf, from whose

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416 Although a different substance, WWII members of the Armed Forces received cigarettes as part of their rations as well, thereby encouraging, when not creating, harmful addiction.
417 It was, indeed, hard to ignore as Harrison mentions that the appalling spectacle of "drunken bearers of pauper coffins dropping their burden and accidentally exposing its contents" (43) was not an uncommon occurrence. The future Lord Shaftesbury witnessed such instance and his philanthropic concern was inspired to action in part because of it.
418 Some hold the same reasoning today concerning the free use of certain drugs, such as marijuana. As for alcohol, this first group obviously "won" in our modern society: advocates of temperance have been liberally ridiculed. However, intemperance, if it has certainly become common, has not become harmless, as testifies the increase in domestic violence and drunk driving.
419 Harrison 64-65.
bourne no traveler returns." (92). Although criticized for it by some of his colleagues in the Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal (1805), he was the first to be convinced that the absorption of alcohol could be traced in the blood stream. Trotter denounced drunkenness as a cause of various diseases, such as apoplexy, hysteric, convulsions, fearful dreams, hepatitis, gastritis, pleuritis, syncope and palpitations, diabetes, lockjaw, palsy, madness and idiotism, melancholy, impotency and abolition of sexual appetite, and premature old age, to name only a few. Ahead of his time, he questioned the wisdom of using even alcohol tinctures for medical purposes, strongly recommended excluding alcohol of any kind from the diet of the young, deplored the continental fashion of drinking wine with a meal, and did not think that an essentially healthy man needed to drink before the age of forty (and if he did, then it should not be more than two glasses a day). Interestingly enough, Trotter also believed that the breath of the chronic alcoholic was charged with hydrogen and rendered therefore the human body highly flammable, susceptible of combustion. When Dickens described such a case, with Krooks' grisly demise in *Bleak house*, he was, as his 1853 Preface indicated, not so much trying sensational as simply relying on scientific research of his days, referring to "the recorded opinions and experiences of distinguished medical professors, French, English, and Scotch."421

While the temperance movement rallied many men, physicians, coffee-traders, industrialists, its two most determining strengths were Evangelicals and women. As Blair points out:

Men alone would seldom lose a day or a dollar in temperance crusades. The war for abstinence is a war for woman and for home. . . Man may help her--But she fights it, if it be fought, and she wins it, if it be won. It is her kingdom which is at stake, and upon her success depend the great interests of society. . . Man

421 Dickens (*Bleak House*) 991.
possesses more of body. It is not clear that he has the strongest mind; and his moral or spiritual nature is as much the weaker as his physical is superior to that of woman. . . But, even if it were not so, the very selfishness of woman compels her to be the enemy of rum; for rum destroys her home as the serpent despoils the mother-bird of her brood.  

Indeed, Harrison reports that, "drinking places on payday were besieged by wives desperately anxious to feed and clothe the family [and] many couples fought over the wage-packet." However, although such efforts were heart-felt and moving, they were sadly ineffective on a large scale; it was the middle-class woman who, in great part, would be able to make a true and lasting difference. It is important to note that, although alcoholism was a danger for all strata of society, the most vulnerable to it were the working class and the poor, and in that regard, middle-class British (and American) women took on the role of advocate and protector of the lower classes.

The first temperance associations appeared in the 1830s, with for instance The British Association for the Promotion of Temperance, in 1835. It must be clearly understood, however, that even when women invaded pubs, sometimes even destroying property, they were not trying to appropriate man's space to themselves, but rather were employing drastic means, a shock treatment of sorts, to remedy a situation that threatened their family and even the future of the nation; in fact, as Judith Lacerte and Donna Harris explains, even men came to respect women who destroyed saloons because they "considered the act to be fundamentally domestic in nature and perceived women as protecting their homes and families in an instinctively maternal way." Once this goal was reached, women were only too happy to return their attention to the more

422 Blair 398-99.
423 Harrison 44.
424 Today still we find the same concern with, for instance, the organization MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving), in which women take a stand both as mothers and as advocates of severe laws for alcohol-related issues.
peaceful and traditional occupations and responsibilities of their sphere. In Dickens' *Our Mutual Friend*, Jenny Wren is forced into such duty; although little more than a child, and lame to boot, she takes on the role of parent to her derelict father. It is she who earns a living for them both, she who inquires of his whereabouts, she who gives advice and orders (even though her handicap and responsibility to make a living prevent her from physically supervising his actions outside their home), she who does the scolding when he strays, she who must always be strong and clear-headed, and ultimately she who must make arrangements for his burial. Her courage is both admirable and wrenching as we recognize in her all the children of addicted and irresponsible parents who were robbed of the innocence and joys of childhood and forced to become adults before their time.

The women's crusade against alcoholism took two main forms: one more rhetorical and proselytizing, focusing on the moral aspect of the situation, with public rallies, protest marches, lectures, and distribution of tracts such as the one figuring in *The Temperance intelligencer*, and one more practical, therefore more social in its outcome, with a direct outreach to the victims of alcoholism. Both were essential to success. As part of the first, there was a plethora of novels, pamphlets, and reports, such as Julia Bainbrigge (Mrs.) Wightman's *Haste to the Rescue or, Work while It Is Day*, depicting the evils of drinking and promoting rehabilitation and virtue. These works addressed both the poor, whom they meant to inspire to a life of sobriety, industry, faith, and happiness, and the middle class, whom they sought to appraise of the situation, of what had been achieved and what needed yet to be done, and to arouse to action. *Haste to the Rescue*, for instance--written under the form of letters essentially from Julia to Caroline, two women dedicated to the Temperance cause--explains the goal at hand: "To rescue those who are placed by God in a less favored position, from the thralldom of THE ONE besetting temptation, which is to them the fruitful source of all their sin and sorrow, and by loving acts of sympathy and

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426 See illustration VII.
427 See illustration VIII.
kindness to elevate them socially and morally." Wightman further puts intemperance in perspective in a dramatic way: "It is appalling when we think of the ravages of war and mourn over the thousands lost in battle. But our loss in this respect in the Crimea and India shrinks into insignificance when compared to the 60,000 deaths WHICH OCCUR ANNUALLY in Great Britain alone from the effects of strong drink."\(^{429}\) This work is a case-book based on the eighteen months of living closely with nearly five hundred workers and their families, visiting them, helping them materially and spiritually, encouraging them in their resolve to stay away from drink, preaching the Gospel to them, establishing schools for them. Reading it, one shares in turn the discouragements, joys and hopes of the author, but also learns of some unexpected frustrations such as the ones mentioned in the following passage:

Having been greatly harassed and perplexed for some months by the medical men breaking down even the staunchest members by prescribing porter, ale, &, I wrote in my trouble to an eminent surgeon in Nottingham, whose name I chanced to see in a temperance pamphlet, in which it was stated that for seven years he had never prescribed alcoholic drinks under any circumstances. To my dismay, after posting my letter, I found that the date on the tract was 1838. However, an answer came by return of post so thoroughly... satisfactory to my mind.\(^{430}\)

The surgeon, John Higginbottom, not only answered but later kept a correspondence on the topic of which I selected the following extracts:

Alcohol as a medicine "is a mocker"... It possesses no genuine property as a medicine...; I am sick at heart with my professional brethren. More mischief is done by medical men than by all others to the temperance cause... I believe

\(^{428}\) Whether or not this number is accurate is actually of secondary import; what is revealing here is that the tragedy of war was circumscribed in time and space, while alcoholism was constant, permeating, ubiquitous and thus seemed a more redoubtable enemy to vanquish.


\(^{430}\) Wightman 243.
many of them know better, but they cannot afford to keep a conscience... For the last twenty-five years... I have not once prescribed it [alcohol] as a medicine or as a beverage... During that time I have never met with a single case in my practice, either in medicine, surgery, or midwifery, but I have been able to treat more satisfactorily without alcohol than with it.\textsuperscript{431}

It can not be noted enough that although these works are now forgotten, out of print, and hard to find, we know that they were, then, both extremely popular and motivating simply by judging from the number of their publications. Unfortunately, because they are never studied today, the numerous women--and some were very prolific, like Clara Lucas Balfour (1808-78)--who wrote them as well as the multitude of women who made such a difference in the life of those in need and who had a tremendous impact on their society are glossed over, at best, and thus is perpetrated and perpetuated the unfounded assertion of today that women in the past had no voice and no power.

It did not take long for those benevolent crusaders like Mrs. Wightman to realize that they could not just tackle alcoholism and ignore the rest: besides putting a stop to the sale of liquor, action was needed to sober up the drunkard, and to provide for the basic needs of himself, his wife, his family. This triggered a network of charitable activity, which distributed meals or clothing, established shelters, created small jobs to help people earn a better living and regain a sense of human dignity, organized schools for the children and the women, and even night classes for the men so they could, in turn, acquire or improve their means of survival, attended to medical needs, and visited the houses of the poor to teach basics of hygiene and home economics. All this flurry of activity was supported by fund-raisers and carried out by volunteers found among the

\textsuperscript{431} Wightman 244-46.
ranks of British middle- and upper-class women, as Kathleen Heasman explains in Evangelicals in Action.\textsuperscript{432}

Philanthropy was the true abolisher of class and gender, as women of upper and middle-classes worked side by side for the same cause, some providing funds, others direct interaction (teaching, visiting etc.) each according to her talents, and as men contributed support in the field, such as Dr. George Holland, who devoted his skills in dispensaries for the poor, or in representation at the political level. Temperance, furthermore, tightened bonds between American and British women, as many women of both countries traveled often across the Atlantic to participate in rallies and share results and encouragements. Often children were the best way to reach the parents; thus providing Sunday schools, clothing and food, or small jobs for the children of the poor established a degree of confidence in the parents, which allowed charitable workers to reach them later. But Temperance was concerned with children as drinkers as well, since many were driven to drink by neglect, example (as we saw in Cruikshank's "The Drunkard's Children" series), or simply in the course of running errands for parents or employers.

Temperance women also undertook or supported projects that could be more unusual and daring. For instance, in 1880, Emma Cons reopened the old Royal Coburg Theater as a Temperance Hall, The Royal Victoria Hall and Coffee Tavern (still familiarly known today as "Old Vic"), "a cheap and decent place of amusement on strict temperance lines."\textsuperscript{433} Emma Cons obviously agreed with Charles Kingsley who had called the theatre, "a licensed pit of darkness, a trap of temptation, profligacy and ruin" for she dropped the term "theatre" altogether because of

\textsuperscript{432} Heasman, Kathleen  Evangelicals in Action: An Appraisal of Their Social Work in the Victorian Era (London: The Golden City Press, 1962) 9-10. This work is absolutely fascinating, not only because it is richly documented and relates many specific cases, but also because the author, instead of taking the patronizing tone of so many more modern scholarly works, shows genuine respect and admiration for the achievements of nineteenth-century philanthropists, taking them seriously in their beliefs and effort, instead of reinterpreting their motives and attempting to give the impression to know them better than they knew themselves. In this aspect, Heasman stand is at the opposite end of the scale in comparison to Walter Houghton, for instance.


its licentious connotations. The Royal Victoria Hall offered variety shows, excerpts of operas and of Shakespeare's plays, and even "penny lectures" which eventually lead to the creation of Morley Memorial College for Working Men and Women in 1889; most importantly, it offered "the cup which cheers but not inebriates" as read the legend of an illustration of it in *The Graphic* in 1881. Old Vic lasted as a very successful Temperance hall until Emma Cons' death in 1912.

Mary Bayley, or Bayly, famous for her *Ragged Homes and How to Mend Them* in 1859—a report on the living conditions of the poor in the Potteries of Kensington—firmly believed that the elimination of drunkenness could only be achieved through the domestic influence of wives and mothers. She was aware, however, that men often needed a place for gathering and relaxation, so, with her husband, a retired officer in the merchant navy, she opened the Workmen Temperance Hall in Notting Hill in 1861, a self-financing coffee-house. Unfortunately, this undertaking was short-lived (surviving only until 1866). Similarly, Georgina King Lewis, a Quaker called "the friend of the oppressed," donated £1,200 for the foundation of the first Ruskin House so workers and trade unionists would have a dry center for their meetings. Highly successful, it was described as one of the greatest achievements of the Temperance Movement from 1912 to 1919.

Lady Isobel Somerset, who had been won to the Temperance cause after the suicide, due to alcohol, of an acquaintance, became President of The British Temperance Movement in 1890. She was a close friend of the American Evangelical, Frances Willard, President of the World Women Christian Temperance Association in 1891. She invested most of her fortune and the remainder of her life in the creation of the Duxhurst Colony on her estate, (founded in 1896) for the rehabilitation of women addicted to drink. The "inmates" had been given the option by

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434 See illustration VII.
436 Ruskin House, July 12, 2008, <www.croydon.org.uk>. Though later moved to a larger building, it is today the headquarters of the Communist Party of Britain and of the Croydon Labor Party. Paradoxically it is equipped with its own bar.
437 See illustrations X.
the court to either go to jail or go to the colony. About forty women lived in groups of six in cottages. These were attributed according to levels of welfare to accommodate lodgers of no, moderate, or wealthy means. "The Nest" was a separate cottage caring for the children of some of the women. The colony is an interesting example within the Temperance context, not only because it illustrates the unavoidable connection between moral and social reforms, but also because it shows how private philanthropy gained the respect of the state and was willing to work in complementarity with it. 438

The Salvation Army was the first organization to have a systematic and large-scale outreach to the poorest, the destitute, the hopeless, those whom William Booth called the "submerged tenth" as he estimated it to be one tenth of the population of Great Britain. Treating its male and female officers alike, the Salvation Army did not seek to shield its women workers from the squalor of the slums. Usually operating in pair, they would live among the poor, in lodgings similar to theirs in all things, except for the cleanliness and absence of alcohol. The "Slum Sisters'" primary mission consisted in "visiting the sick, cleansing the homes of the Slummers, and feeding the hungry" 439 only then could any form of Evangelization hope to bring fruit. Sometimes, female officers had to literally wrestle their rescued charges out of relapse. Booth tells the case of Maggie, an inveterate drunkard and prone to violence while under the influence, who was rescued, converted, and was doing well until a "friend" asked her to drink "lemonade" to celebrate his marriage. The lemonade was so liberally laced with whisky that Maggie was immediately out of control. Someone, however had rushed off to alert the Salvation

438 Moore, Alan, Lady Henry Somerset, the Temperance Movement, and Frances Willard, July 12, 2008, <www.redhill-reigate-history.co.uk/lady%20somerset.htm>. The website offers an interesting selection of vintage and modern pictures of the site. Unfortunately most of the colony is gone. After Lady Somerset's death, it became in turn a village for gentle folk, housing forty-four poor ladies, served as an officer cadet training center in WWII, then as a prisoner of war camp for Italian prisoners. Neglect and vandalism had brought almost complete destruction by the 1960s. Only Lady Somerset cottage remains. 439 Booth, William, In Darkest England and the Way out, (London, 1890) 167.
Army Captain who knew her. The Captain locked herself in with Maggie, but Maggie managed to escape to the nearest public-house:

Down the stairs, Captain after her, into the gin palace; but before the astonished publican could give her the drink she was clamouring for, the "bonnet" [Salvation Army Captain] was by her side, "If you dare to serve her, I'll break the glass before it reaches her lips. She shall not have any!" And so Maggie was coaxed away and shielded until the passion was over, and she was herself once more.440

Catherine Booth herself, though in appearance small, almost frail, not strong in health, began early in her marriage to William to do house to house visitation in the evenings, "because," she said, "it was the only part of the day when I could have found the men at home. . . I used to ask one drunkard's wife where another lived. They always knew."441 She understood first hand the damages of intolerance because her father had had to struggle with alcoholism; as a young girl, she had served as the secretary of a juvenile Temperance society. Coincidentally, she first met William Booth, in 1851, at the house of a friend where he was reciting a temperance poem, "The Grog-seller's Dream."442 As Ruth Vandenbor points out, in "'A Bridge over Trouble Spheres': Women in the Victorian Salvation Army," Catherine Booth's ministry epitomized "the Salvation Army's commitment to 'successfully combining the domesticity and self-sacrificing qualities of mothers with the boldness of women warriors." 443

440 Booth 183.
441 Bramwell-Booth, Catherine, Catherine Booth, the Story of her Loves, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1970) 153. This biography is particularly interesting since it is written by one of Catherine Booth's grand-daughters. The author has dedicated each chapter to a particular love of her grandmother: Love for God, Love for William, Love for Souls, Love for the Salvation Army, Love for her Children, and Love for Mankind.
443 Vandenbor, Ruth "'A Bridge over Troubled Spheres': Women in the Victorian Salvation Army,"December 11, 2002, July 17, 2008, 5-6 <www.ucfvc.ca/writing_centre/ruth%20vandenbor.pdf>. The Salvation Army believes still that indeed, women, if their talents so prepare them, have the responsibility to serve God, even outside the traditional sphere of the home. In the nineteenth century, this was not to be understood as an alternative to the responsibilities of home, however, and Vandenbor relates the astonishment of a witness who after hearing "the greatest woman preacher of the age" (Catherine Booth) had seen her mending one of her husband's shirts. Vandenbor, however, like many modern scholars,
Although the Salvation Army is well known for its outreach to the indigent, one of its major undertakings in the nineteenth century was the moral battle against prostitution and sex trafficking. Cruikshank's *Life in London* depicts vividly the close connection between intemperance and prostitution; whether girls were first seduced and driven to drink out of despair and into prostitution as the only means of survival, or drinking was the first step and prostitution a means to pay for it, the two were pretty much indissociable within the lowest ranks of urban society.

3. Josephine Butler (1828-1906)

Josephine Butler was to be the great leader of this new crusade. At first, she may seem out of place, what with her delicate figure and romantic beauty. Always impeccably dressed, gracious, and elegant, we would expect to find her drinking tea in a lavish parlor, hosting a glamorous reception, or attending the opera, not sitting down in a workhouse picking oakum with women considered the reject of humanity or bringing prostitutes to her home to offer them care, love, and hope. And yet, this is exactly what this remarkable woman did and much more. Despite appearances, Josephine Butler was more than prepared for the stupendous task that awaited her, even if at times she did not feel she was. Born in the Grey family, staunch Evangelicals and abolitionists, she received not only a sound education (she spoke French fluently, was an exquisite pianist, and an admired horsewoman), but she was nurtured in the respect of others, the love of liberty, and the deep conviction that Christian faith demanded personal action. Nancy Boyd tells us that Josephine "had been raised by parents who valued their daughters as people. . .[and that] furthermore she had married a man whose love for her was expressed in the context of an egalitarianism that included the highest regard for the abilities of

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See illustration XI.
women. 445 Indeed, with her husband, George, an educator and minister, she shared complete equality, not only of faith and love, but of vision as well.

Even very young, she had felt a deep burden for the suffering of others. Now newly married and living in Oxford she was shocked to see that the educated elite was "crippled by intellectual detachment" 446 and held to a double moral standard in matter of sexual failings. One of the Butlers' first actions was to take in as a maid a young woman, fresh out of prison, having served a sentence for murdering her illegitimate child after she had been abandoned by her seducer. It was a terrible personal tragedy, however, that would propel Josephine Butler into the heart of the new Crusade. Now parents of three sons and a daughter, George and Josephine enjoyed the closeness of family life, when their little Eva, age four, fell over the railing of the staircase and died a few hours later, in 1864. The grief and the shock almost took Josephine's own life. She wrote:

Never can I lose that memory, -the fall, the sudden cry, and then the silence! It was pitiful to see her, helpless in her father's arms, the little drooping head resting on his shoulder, and her beautiful golden hair, all stained with blood, falling over his arm! Would to God that I had died that death for her!... We called her by her name, but there was no answer. She was our only daughter, the light and joy of our lives. 447

When, in 1866, George was appointed to headmaster of Liverpool College, a new life began for the Butlers. Now with the three boys in school with their father, Josephine sought "some pain

446 Boyd 34.
447 Jordan, Jane, Josephine Butler, (London: John Murray, 2001) 55. This is a truly remarkable biography, the most detailed I found so far on J. Butler. This tragedy, though so keenly felt that Josephine more than sixty years afterwards revealed that there had not been a single morning that she did not wake up hearing the terrible scream of that day and the fatal thud on the floor, strengthened the Butlers' faith. They recognized this horrible event as "the Valley of the Shadow of Death" through which some "emerge into a hopeless and final denial of the Divine goodness, the complete bankruptcy of faith; and others, by the mercy of God, through a still deeper experience, into yet a firmer trust in His unfailing love." (58)
keener than [her] own" to whom she could bring the solace of empathy and say, "I understand. I, too, have suffered." This first led her to the workhouse. The women, some sick, some quite rough, Jordan mentions them referred to as "violent, strong amazons," first laughed at her; but as Josephine candidly explains, "[they] told me my fingers were of no use for that work; which was true. But while we laughed we became friends." And when she offered to pray with these women and knelt down on the damp and less than pristine floor, without concern for her elegant dress, she melted their heart, because she spoke to them with love and quiet dignity and did not patronize them. 448

With George's full support, she opened their home to prostitutes, some of them consumptive. The Butlers did not preach at them but treated them as daughters and sisters. The extended family of Greys and Butlers were also very supportive of this uncommon undertaking; even though Josephine always refused gifts of money from them, she accepted gifts of time or clothing only. One of Josephine's sisters took charge of "The House of Rest" that the Butlers had rented to accommodate more rescued women when their own home became filled to capacity. This first and direct exposure to the world of prostitution convinced Josephine more than ever that action must be taken. She denounced the fact that the problem had not been faced squarely, "in our social homes and in social circles mistaken delicacy has come to the aid of cowardice, and the truth is betrayed even in the house of its friends" 449 and resolved to speak plainly and publicly, condemning the double moral standard as un-Christian and unjustifiable in a Christian nation.

Most of the prostitutes were young women, some mere girls; many had been seduced, or even forced into prostitution. Nothing had been done on their behalf, but now the government had come up with the Contagious Diseases Acts, 450 which not only accepted prostitution as an unavoidable and even "necessary" evil, but also sought to regulate it in the hope to prevent the

448 Jordan 67-68.
450 The first Acts were passed in 1864, then extended to new towns in 1866 and 1869.
wider spreading of venereal diseases. The C.D. Acts granted authority to police in civilian
clothes or in uniform to arrest any woman whom they suspected to be a prostitute, and to force
her to submit to a medical examination (or go to jail). If "clean," the woman was issued a
certificate stamped accordingly, which she was to show to "clients"; if infected, she was sent for
treatment to locked hospitals. Josephine Butler was outraged, not only because women alone
were treated as guilty of immorality, not only because society was condoning a moral evil, but
also because women were treated as human goods, as sexual slaves, not to mention that, in
external appearance, there was little difference between a poor working girl and a prostitute, so
the law was targeting the daughters of the lower classes to serve the vices of potentially all
classes.

This was a tricky situation, because many moral people, including physicians (the
medical journal, *The Lancet* supported it) and even honorable middle- and upper-class women
thought this was the only reasonable way to deal with the prostitution question. Even Elizabeth
Garrett-Anderson, one of the first women MD, believed that it offered the only chance to stop the
spread of venereal diseases, especially to innocent moral wives unaware of their husbands'
philandering. Some joined the abolitionist movement—for this woman exploitation was
considered the new slavery—but got discouraged along the way or decided to give in in mid-
course, when the Home Secretary offered to raise the age of consent from thirteen to fourteen (!)
and pretended to repeal the Acts, although he actually planned the same thing under a different
name and intended to extend the state regulation to the whole of the British Isles. 451 Josephine
Butler was clear-headed enough to see that only total and unconditional repeal would do. She led
her campaign on three fronts simultaneously, abolition, education of women, and vote for
women. Since many had fallen into prostitution as the only alternative to starvation, women, who
could not all marry, especially since there were not enough men, needed to learn a profession.

451 Jordan 134.
Women's votes were necessary to complement men's with females' particular sensibility and understanding. Butler also wrote abundantly -- *The Constitution Violated* in 1871, "Some Thoughts on the Present Aspects of the Crusade against the State Regulation of Vice" in 1874, *The New Abolitionists* in 1876, "Social purity" in 1879-- and travelled to give speeches to mixed audiences (men and women) and circulate petitions.

She faced strong disapproval; one MP declared, "I look upon these women who have taken up this matter as worse than the prostitutes" but her fight had also many supporters within the middle and upper chasses, in Parliament (including Gladstone), and even abroad; Victor Hugo, for instance, wrote her letters of support. She faced physical danger as well and barely escaped stoning and even being burned to death in a barn where a meeting was held and to which her opponents, a strange mix of government supporters of a pro-Acts candidate and local brothel keepers, had set fire. However, such devious practices sometimes backfired on their perpetrators, and against all expectations, in 1870, the anti-Acts candidate was elected, while even in defeat, the abolitionist cause gained greater respect, even from opponents. A petition of more than 2,000 names forced Parliament to pay attention to the protest at hand. Josephine Butler was called to give evidence before the Royal Commission in 1871. She wrote that she "felt rather like Paul before Nero" but impressed the members of the Commission by her dignity and her quiet conviction. The outcome was, however, disappointing. In 1882, she was summoned before a Select Committee to examine the question anew, and eventually after twenty years of relentless campaign, "the death-blow" to the Acts came when Josephine Butler, Catherine Booth, her son, Bramwell Booth, and other Salvationists, Rebecca Jarrett (a former prostitute forced into

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452 Jordan 110-15.
453 Jordan 121-39.
prostitution at the age of twelve by her own mother) and the journalist William Thomas Stead united their efforts to expose the sexual trafficking of young women and children.454

Stead went "undercover" as a client and Rebecca as a go-between. This daring investigation, not only furnished information but proofs that could not be ignored. In 1885, Stead exposed his findings in famous article, published in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon." Stead revealed that a procuress had supplied a London physician with seventy virgins in a year, that physicians were collaborating for a fee and provided "certificates of virginity" to guaranty the "quality" of the girls, and that England was a provider of young prostitutes for several countries on the Continent. Even though, Stead spent two months in prison and Rebecca Jarrett six, because of technicalities, the age of consent was raised to sixteen and the CD Acts repealed.455 Josephine Butler continued to campaign for the same cause worldwide and in 1897 wrote *Truth before Everything*, encouraging correspondents of various foreign leagues in their efforts against immorality, for education, and women suffrage. Although, her *Personal Reminiscences of a Great Crusade* relates in details the ups and downs of her efforts, a smaller volume, *The New Godiva; a Dialogue*, gives us maybe a more vivid window into the life of George and Josephine Butler, as Victor and Mary clearly stand for George and Josephine. What is interesting, however, is that the dialogue is only between the two brothers, Victor and Cecil—the latter just returned from Tasmania—and in explaining and clearly supporting his wife's endeavors, Victor succeeds in freeing Cecil from his assumptions, oversimplifications, and prejudices. The title is no less important as it parallels the woman abolitionist, in her virtue and

454 Although this daring undercover action exposed the trail of children trafficking in full light, a technicality, the fact that the father, afterwards, said that he had not been consulted, gave the court ground to send Stead and Rebecca Jarrett to jail. Stead kept his prison uniform afterwards and wore it on special occasions; he was very pleased with his part in the crusade. Jessica spent six months there (four more than Stead) and in less comfortable conditions than Stead, but she never regretted her participation. Stead later died on the *Titanic*, Rebecca joined the Salvation Army and helped in the rescue of other victims of prostitution.

total dedication, to the legendary and beloved figure of the first Godiva, who exposed herself to plead and win the cause of the oppressed.

Not one to remain idle, even after victory, Josephine Butler joined in the support on behalf of the French Jewish Captain Alfred Dreyfus, who was eventually restored in full rights and rank in 1906, the year Josephine Butler died.

II Health and Social Reform

While today we are familiar with and expect the government to provide, through taxes, for the needs of all under-privileged citizens, the nineteenth-century shied away from the impersonality and limited discernment of state assistance. In this regard, and even when the state contributed some aid, it is truly amazing to consider all that private philanthropy accomplished, and even more so when the initiative and the bulk of the effort was carried out by women, as the range of their determination, resourcefulness, energy, and influence breaks the limitations within which modern interpretation has fenced them. Solidly rooted in the principles of morality analyzed in the previous section of this chapter, these women saw the needs around them and felt compelled to provide for them or to rally the necessary support to do so. They never sought such undertakings as a replacement to their domestic duties, but rather recognized them as an opportunity to use their domestic skills and ideals in order to better the situations they encountered.

1. Elizabeth Fry (1780-1845) and Prison Reform.

This unprepossessing Quaker minister, mother of eleven children, who was involved in education, and was an ardent proselyte of small pox vaccination (she is credited with the near elimination of the disease in her area), had her first encounter with the condition of English prisons when she visited the female prisoners in Newgate, in 1813, at the request of two
concerned Quaker ministers, Stephen Grellet (1773-1855)\textsuperscript{456} and William Forster (1784-1854). The conditions of the inmates were indeed appalling: 822 prisoners crowded in unventilated cells meant for 500, with old, young, sick, lunatics, hard core criminals, first-time offenders, debtors, and children thrown together, living in filth without decent bedding, clothing, light, or heat. Corruption was rampant, as Georgina King Lewis explains, "the severity of their treatment depended entirely on the amount of money they possessed with which to bribe the authorities."\textsuperscript{457} And to make matters worse, "drink was sold to any who had money, and no limit put to the quantity." (46) Even the turnkeys and the governor of the prison were afraid of the female inmates.

Until 1817, family demands and tragedies—the death of a brother, the birth of one child, the death of another—prevented Elizabeth Fry from doing more than giving clothing to the prisoners. By 1817, with her children at school or entrusted to one of her sisters, she was ready to begin her prison ministry for the female inmates of Newgate with the help of a dozen Quaker women fellow workers. In Observations on the Visiting, Superintending, and Government of Female Prisoners, written in 1827, she insists on how important it is that such work be done in group or, as she calls it, "ladies' committees—The Ladies' Association for the Reformation of the Female Prisoners in Newgate had been created in 1817, and expanded, by 1821, into The British Society for Promoting the Reformation of Female Prisoners— as she explains:

There are... a variety of engagements for those who undertake the care of female prisoners; and these engagements will be found suited to a variety of persons. For instance one may attend to the employment, a second to the classification, a third to the instruction of the prisoners; while in the conducting of the system—such

\textsuperscript{456} Milligan, Edward, "Forster, William (1784-1854), Philanthropist and Quaker Minister," July 30, 2008,ODNB. An interesting figure. Grellet, member of Louis XVI's Royal Guard, was sentenced to be executed at the Revolution, but managed to escape to America, where he converted from Catholicism to Quakerism and spent his life in mission work in prisons and hospitals on both sides of the Atlantic.

\textsuperscript{457} Lewis, Georgina. Elizabeth Fry. London: Headley Brothers, 1909) 47.
particularly as appertain to the religious improvement of the prisoners—all the visiters [sic] will unite. . . If, for example, there are seven ladies on the committee, the prison may be properly attended to, if each visiter will devote. . . a part of one morning only a week. . . a committee will often arrive at sounder and wiser conclusions on any practical question. . . And lastly when representations are to be made, or requests preferred, to magistrates or other persons of authority, the deliberation and sanction of a committee with give them their due weight.458

One of her first steps was to discuss with the prisoners themselves what they saw as the most pressing needs. In order, they listed: establishing a school for the children of prisoners, creating a system of classification among inmates (so people would not all be mixed together in cramped quarters), and the instatement of a prison dress (some inmates were in rags that could not even afford a modicum of decency). Fry proceeded to suppress alcohol and playing cards, organized religious and elementary education as well as groups working (for pay) under the supervision of a matron and monitors (the latter chosen from the inmates). Either Fry or a fellow worker visited the prisoners daily, and read to them from the Bible every Friday.

To the amazement of the staff this little woman with her "dignified and stately presence, [her] exquisite voice, and [her] constant, unruffled sweetness of expression"459 not only was not harmed by even the most violent of the women, but began a transforming experiment in the history of British prisons. Elizabeth Fry was not the first to object to England's harsh laws, but she was the first to really do something about it. She was a pioneer in this field in the sense that she believed prisons should be institutions of reform not punishment; they must function as "schools of industry and virtue" and the inmates must be treated with kindness as fellow human beings with the goal to "amend [their] character and change [their] heart." She particularly

458 Lewis 11-12
459 Lewis 57. These were, according to Elizabeth Fry's own daughters, the three great gifts she possessed.
objected to the death penalty. Georgina Lewis informs us that at the time the Old Bailey alone was said to furnish "above one hundred victims a year." Fry did not believe it to be a deterrent to crime at all, since crime was increasing, but rather that it hardened criminals' hearts and led to "unbelief, hypocrisy, and fatalism." Furthermore, capital punishment could be doled out not only for vicious crimes, but also for forgery, pocket-picking, shop-lifting, regardless of motive (for instance, stealing a loaf to survive could justify death). Moreover a sort of mental torture befell the condemned prior to their execution, as they "were herded in the 'condemned pen' around a table on which was placed a black coffin." However, Elizabeth Fry also visited the "condemned cells", Laura Richards tells us, and "Many a poor soul, entering the condemned cell in darkness and despair, left it for the scaffold with a heart uplifted and resigned, looking beyond death to new life, new hope, new endeavor."

Ten months into this revolutionary experiment, Elizabeth Fry was asked to present a report before a Committee of the House of Commons. She was very candid about it: "Our rules have certainly been occasionally broken, but very seldom. . . I think I may say we have full power among them [inmates], for one of them said it was more terrible to be brought up before me than before the judge, though we use nothing but kindness." She further talked about the importance of preaching the Christian doctrine to the prisoners; the value of those women having an occupation and how they had been able to improve their conditions, materially and spiritually (sense of purpose) by their remunerated sewing; how women had abandoned gaming after its evil had been explained to them; how a reward system for good conduct (gift of Bibles or clothing) proved an effective encouragement; she strongly recommended separation of inmates during the day as well as the importance of each having individual sleeping quarters; the care of female

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460 Lewis 61-62.
461 Lewis 46.
inmates assured strictly by women, with the physician and the minister as the only exceptions as male care-givers. 463

Elizabeth Fry impressed the Committee. Soon her influence extended to the convicts who were to be transported to Botany Bay. She inspected every convict ship, except one, between 1818 and 1841. Moreover, "The story of the reformation of Newgate had gone forth, and Mrs. Fry was deluged with letters of inquiry from all parts of the country, chiefly from women who wished to follow her example in country towns."464 In 1818, she also went on a tour of Scotland and Northern England with one of her brothers, his wife, and one of her own daughters, both on a church-related business and to visit the various prisons on their way.465 Her life became one of "increased publicity and increased usefulness"; she made several trips abroad (France, Switzerland, Prussia, Netherland), visiting prisons, giving lectures, distributing tracts, encouragement, advice, promoting reforms, education, working with Catholics, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Quakers, and other Dissenters. In her simplicity, she addressed equally the poor and the heads of states. She met Queen Charlotte, Wellington, was received by Queen Victoria, spoke (at dinner) with Prince Albert about the religious education of their respective children, the importance of religion in government, and the improvement religion had made and could yet make in the European courts and prisons. In France, she was welcomed by the British Ambassador and the Duchess of Broglie (daughter of Madame de Staël); in Prussia, she was treated as a personal friend of the king and queen. In fact, when the King of Prussia came on an official trip to England, he insisted in first seeing Newgate and then visiting Elizabeth and her entire family (her twenty-five grandchildren included) in her own home at Upton.466 Aside from the anecdotal aspect of these acquaintances, we can see that, once again, a woman was able to

464 Richards 116.
466 Lewis 125-130.
have a wide range of influence and evidently enjoyed the respect of men who did not hesitate to recognize the importance of her prison reform and support its implementation. Meanwhile, as her letters and diary testify, she never ceased to be wife and mother, and her love and concern for her family, as well as theirs for her, is plain to see.  

Reverend Thomas Timpson's Memoirs of Mrs. Elizabeth Fry offers an interesting account as he not only knew Elizabeth Fry personally, but also worked on her biography in consultation with her husband and family. He describes how, to the very end, though crippled in health, this indefatigable reformer and benefactress sought the welfare of others, as she invested the last of her energy in providing libraries for the Coast Guards, visiting more than 500 stations along the coastline, raising part of the funds and convincing the government to complete the necessary sums, working with officers from the Navy and eventually equipping even ships of war with religious volumes. When, at last, Elizabeth Fry died, the Seamen of the Coast Guards at Ramsgate wished to honor her memory, but when told there was nothing they could do, "the officer stated that, if the Queen had died, they should have lowered their flag half-mast high until the funeral, and they would do the same in honor of Mrs. Fry." A moving tribute, indeed. Another came from Thomas Carlyle, who had heard her read the story of Mary Magdalene (one of her favorites) in Newgate, and reminisced "Mrs. Fry looking like a little spot of purity in a great sweltering mass of corruption."  

2. Florence Nightingale (1820-1910) and Nursing Reform  

Many today may feel like they know Florence Nightingale well because so much has been said already about her great work in the Crimea, her immortalization as "the Lady of the

467 Memoirs of the Life of Elizabeth Fry with Extracts from her Journal and Letters. Edited by Two of her Daughters, was published in 1847 in two volumes. It is interesting to note that many of Elizabeth Fry's children chose the Church of England instead of Quakerism, but that she never tried to alter their choice, thereby proving that her Christian tolerance applied to her interaction with her fellow workers as much as to her family.

468 Lewis 105. Lewis pertinently describes Elizabeth Fry as moving with ease between "the throne and the dungeon."
Lamp", and because her popular image has been kept alive both on the screen and in the school. However, the real Nightingale might prove more complex than projected. Modern feminists like her because they usually endorse her stereotypical image. In their eyes she stands as the perfect example of the oppressed middle-class woman who broke free: who rejected the traditional, brainless mold in which females of her time were expected to fit, loathed and refused the yoke of matrimony, defied parental and male authority in general, went to the Crimea (something most women did not do), and once there fought tooth and nail against the British military authorities until they gave in to her greater wisdom. I must admit it was not until my visit to the Florence Nightingale Museum in London, last fall, that my eyes were truly opened.

Despite desperate efforts, like those of Elaine Showalter, author of "Florence Nightingale's Feminist Complaint: Women, Religion, and Suggestions for Thought," to make her a feminist, Florence Nightingale refused to join the suffrage committee, and even though, as Nancy Boyd acknowledges, she was in favor of woman's suffrage, the subject was not at the top of her priorities: "[She] was a disappointment to the feminists [of her time] who identified the emancipation of women with the procurement of the right to vote. To John Stuart Mill's overture she replied that there were causes more important than votes for women... She signed Mill's petition but the right to cast a single vote seemed a minor matter... The call to service, rather than rights for women, was the key to a serious and happy life." 469 In fact, in the closing remarks of her Notes on Nursing, a work specifically addressed to the traditional woman of her day, the wife and mother at home, not to professional nurses, Nightingale is unequivocal:

Keep clear of both the jargons now current everywhere (for they are equally jargons);...namely, about the "rights" of women, which urges women to do all that men do, including the medical and other professions, merely because men do it, and without regard to whether this is the best that women can do; and of the

jargon which urges women to do nothing that men do, merely because they are
women, and should be "recalled to a sense of their duty as women," and because
"this is women's work," and "that is men's," . . . Surey woman should bring the
best she has, whatever that is, to the work of God's world, without attending to
either of these cries. . . It does not make a thing good, that it is remarkable that a
woman should have been able to do it. Neither does it make a thing bad, which
would have been good had a man done it, that it has been done by a woman. Oh,
leave these jargons, and go your way straight to God's work, in simplicity and
singleness of heart! 470

Several other distortions need to be eliminated before we can hope to see Florence
Nightingale more clearly. First, the "clash" with her family has been blown out of proportion.
Her father wanted his daughters capable of thinking well and independently and gave them,
especially Florence, who showed more interest than her sister Parthenope, an education that
included philosophy and Greek. William Nightingale expected his daughters to be capable of
dealing with lofty subjects such as politics or religion, and indeed, discussed such topics with
them. In fact, Parthenope wrote anti-war tracts and essays on agriculture (and five novels as
well). 471 Such family and educational background is hardly conductive to intellectual oppression,
and Florence seems to have enjoyed much freedom, whether it was to speak her mind, travel
abroad, or reject suitors. In fact, the authors of An Introduction to the Social History of Nursing
offer another interpretation of the family's disapproval of Florence's career choice: "If they [the
Nightingales minus Florence] occasionally opposed her [Florence], it may have been less a matter
of simple prejudice than of their recognition of her impulsive character and a rationalist suspicion

Edition, New York, 1860, Celebration of Women Writers, August 30, 2008,
471 Boyd 171.
of her mystic religious tendencies." Furthermore, we must not forget that Florence Nightingale did reform nursing, which means that it needed reforming, and not just on the material/medical plane. Nurses' reputation prior to reform was rather dark, with alcoholism and sexual licentiousness figuring at the top of the list.

Regarding Florence Nightingale's contempt of fashionable society, Baly and Matthew remark pointedly that "biographers, particularly feminists, anxious to portray Florence as the frustrated Victorian daughter, have tended to depict her mother . . . as merely a pleasure-seeking hostess, but she attracted some of the best intellects of the day. . . Florence met and enjoyed the company. In private notes, she wrote 'I must overcome my desire to shine in company.' Indeed, Florence enjoyed the music and conversations one finds at such gatherings, and also met there many contacts, who would remain life-long friends and would later support the Nightingale Fund. The closeness to family was also manifest in other ways. Later, when Florence was collecting data for her various works, and had an enormous correspondence to manage, she enlisted the help of mother, sister, brother-in-law, aunt and uncle. During her stay in the Crimea, and even though she had received from her parents far more expensive jewels, she wore constantly a simple bracelet fashioned by her mother and sister with their own hair. It is clear that Florence's mind was made up after she returned from the hospital held by Protestant deaconesses, at Kaiserwerth, and it was through her father that she obtained the post of superintendent for a convalescent home for gentle women. There she began to show her tremendous organizational and administrative skills. In a letter to her father she reveals also her feminine cunning:

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472 Dingwall, Robert, Anne-Marie Rafferty, and Charles Webster, _An Introduction to the Social History of Nursing_, (Routledge, 1988) 36.
473 Baly, Monica and H. C. Matthew, Nightingale, Florence, Reformer of Army Medical Services and of Nursing Organization. July 19, 2008. ODNB.
474 This artifact and its touching story can be found at The Florence Nightingale Museum, but, unfortunately, they do not allow visitors to take pictures, even for documenting a dissertation.
When I entered service here, I determined that, happen what would, I never would intrigue. Now I perceive I do all my business by intrigue. I propose in private to A. B. and C. the resolutions I think A. B. and C. most capable of carrying in committee, and then leave it to them, and I always win. I am now in the hey-day of my power. 475

There is no doubt that Florence Nightingale was animated by a deep concern for those who suffered, but even in her compassion, she never lost sight of the forest for the tree. She was authoritative, exacting, indefatigable, a "thin waspish woman who sent mordant, aphoristic letters to ministers." She not only selected carefully the nurses and supplies she was taking with her to the Crimea, she had secured the full support of the War Secretary, Sydney Herbert, which allowed her to be far less hampered by "red tape" than the military surgeons and staff. Her accomplishments there were indeed spectacular to the point that people spoke of "the Nightingale power" as "she became a Purveyor of Hospitals, a Clothier to the British Army and in many emergencies, a Dea ex machina." 476 She not only cleaned the buildings, bandaged and clothed the wounded; wrote and read letters for them; comforted them in their pains, fever, or through their last moments; kept their wages for them and saw to it that their pay was not held back while they were sick so their families could continue to be provided for; and even arranged for the British government to purchase new burial grounds, as the death toll rose; she also secured the services of a renowned cook to prepare nutritious and restorative food for her patients, and motivated support at home—for instance, the rich heiress and philanthropist, Angela Burdett-Coutts, designed and sent a linen-drier to help with the hospital laundry. 477 She fought against intemperance as well and opened reading clubs and organized lectures, singing classes and amateur theater as an alternative to drinking for convalescent soldiers and others. As a result,

475 Boyd 181.
476 Boyd 183.
477 See illustration XII
several drink shops closed, and any man found drunk ran the risk to be court-marshaled. When she became critically ill in the Crimea, her popularity benefitted also—for instance there was a national impulse to send her gifts, and thanks to her family, who suggested that those gifts enable her "to carry out a service close to her heart, £45,000 were raised.

However admirable Florence Nightingale was as a nurse, it would be an error to picture her as the angelic figure of Krohg's painting.\textsuperscript{478} A recently discovered photograph shows her as she looked shortly after her return from the Crimea; Intelligence, determination, and a certain harshness seemed the dominant traits.\textsuperscript{479} She clearly showed a motherly compassion towards the soldiers in her care, and deeply grieved for those lost long afterwards: "Oh my poor men, I am a bad mother to come home and leave you in your Crimea graves—seventy-three per cent in eight regiment in six months from diseases alone. Who thinks of that now?" The war had been indeed very costly: out of 94,000 troops; 4,000 had died from wounds; 19,000 from disease and infection; and 13,000 had survived as invalids. But she was not the kind of person to let sorrow and regret ground her in despondency and uselessness. Her energy demanded action and efficiency, as she vowed, "I stand at the altar of murdered men and while I live I will fight for their cause."\textsuperscript{480}

As soon as she returned from the Crimea, she was feted, received at court, and was promised that a Commission would be appointed to eventually reform the entire Army medical services. Florence compiled a 500 page report for the Commission, \textit{Notes Affecting the Health, Efficiency, and Hospital Administration of the British Army} in only six months. When she considered that the Commission was taking too long in getting under way, she threatened to publish her own report in the public press. She was fully aware of her popularity, and more than willing to use it.

\textsuperscript{478} See illustration XIII.
\textsuperscript{479} See illustration XIV.
\textsuperscript{480} Baly.
Then she became an invalid. As Boyd notes, the nature of her illness was not fully clear, but real or exaggerated, what is far more important is the fact that she saw how she could use it to her advantage and accomplish the huge task ahead of her. First, illness confined her at home, so she did not have to wait and plead her cause before officials; they came to her (her home was nicknamed "the little war office"). She only received one person at a time and only by appointment. Second, she had a lever on others: after all, refusing anything to this heroic invalid could kill her, and what official was willing to take such a risk? Interestingly these forms of manipulation are essentially feminine. She used her frailty, the exemplarity of her self-sacrifice and gentle female nurturing in the Crimea, her very womanhood as a lever on the men in power, and it worked. It is obvious she did not really need the vote! Even her withdrawal gave her greater clout. It also gave her the means to accomplish or participate in further reforms: military health care, nursing, hospital architecture (in its connection to health), health reform in India (she was nicknamed "the governess of the governors of India"), and even poor law reform. Although her strategy was far different from that of most of the women in this chapter, she fought, very effectively, with a woman's weapons and won international recognition for accomplishments that have affected the medical world well beyond her time.

3. Octavia Hill (1838-1912) and Housing Reform

Like Elizabeth Fry or Josephine Butler, Octavia Hill is another forgotten heroine of the nineteenth-century, although she did not perceive herself as extraordinary, but simply as a Christian fulfilling her calling. She grew up in a blend of idealism and practicality. Her father was an ardent defender of human rights who once rode fifty miles to secure the pardon of the last man condemned to death in England for stealing a sheep. Her mother, an educator and author of articles on education, was also the daughter of a physician, who had contributed to the sanitary reform. Both parents were supporters of education and the arts, and these influences would play

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481 Boyd 189.
an essential role in Octavia's life. Trials came when, after two successive bankruptcies, James Hill became despondent. Caroline Hill, who had brought up her daughters to welcome domestic duties and manual labor, as well as self-sacrifice, proceeded to make a living by becoming the manager of the Ladies' Cooperative Guild, which provided work for artisans. Octavia also found employment there, first reading to the workers, then in charge of supplies, and supervisor of children's work (toy-making). By the age of seventeen, Octavia was doing all the accounting for the guild, ordering the supplies, and organizing the work. Through Frederick Denison Maurice, who was a close friend of the family, she was also secretary of the women's section of classes at the Working Men's College, taking care of book-keeping and serving as mediator in cases of student-teacher conflict. To all these responsibilities, she even added tutoring so she could pay her father's debts for him, until she became overworked. Maurice advised her to go on holidays, which she did, with George MacDonald and his family. When she returned, she organized a school for the children of the Guild. Faced with the living conditions of the poor, she felt she was not doing enough. She was convinced that social progress began with the right to human dignity and to a decent home.

She had for a while taken art classes from John Ruskin, who had encouraged her to continue, but she felt called to a more unusual project: providing decent housing for the (deserving) poor. John Ruskin supported the idea, but psychologically unable to deal personally with the poor, he loaned Octavia the money to purchase "Paradise Place," a dilapidated court. Undaunted, Octavia had the place renovated, the houses rented out, and was even making a profit within a year. This starter grew into a vast network of housing facilities. Octavia Hill was more than a housing social worker; she was convinced that blind charity was no help at all, and if anything, perpetuated rather than stopped indigence. She was also cautious toward "group

482 For instance, on their birthday, the girls gave gifts to other instead of receiving them. (ODNB)
483 Boyd 105.
484 See illustration XV
measures" which she saw as erasing individuality and human dignity. As a result, a committee examined the cases of applicants 485 (who must have a job, be free of drink, and willing to keep their lodging clean). 486 She collected the rents herself (once a week), but also chatted with tenants, and even offered the children little jobs around the lodgings. She wanted to establish a community of self-reliant, friendly tenants. When renters fell into financial difficulties, Octavia and her co-workers did their utmost to delay the expulsion warning and help the family find work.

But, still, that was not enough; so, she organized classes, clubs, saving banks for her tenants. Her housing project owed much to Kingsley and Maurice and their ideals of Christian socialism, but while she could conceive of a Christian community in which people help one another but without losing their own identity, she remained fiercely distrustful toward the State, which, in her view, would paralyze initiative and subsidize rents, which in turn would simply deprive tenants of any desire to improve themselves or to mutually assist one another and would make them more and more dependent. Strongly Evangelical, like Fry and Butler, Hill believed that Christ provides the means to transform ideal into reality and that He infuses life with purpose and consistency, while respecting free will and individuality, unlike the state, which tended to "uniformize" society and forget the individual for the group. Although she had abandoned the project of a career in art, she had not given up on art. Always convinced "that people needed more than food and drains," she founded, upon the initiative of one of her sisters, the Kyrle Society intended to create and diffuse beauty. This beautification took a variety of forms: from window-boxes to playing spaces for children, from tree and garden planting to mural paintings on

485 There were frauds; for instance, Boyd reports that some applicants would hire clothes (paid by the hour) to pass for poor workers.
485 Boyd 113.
public buildings, and even to teaching slum children how to play the violin.\textsuperscript{487} This idea turned out to be a great success and led to the creation of the National Trust, a project to secure open space of beauty and pleasure for urban citizens, out of reach for housing or industrial investors.

One of Octavia Hill's central life's themes was that she had been placed where she was by God, which implied that she had work to do within her given talents and surroundings. The achievements of her life testify that women in the nineteenth-century could both support the ideals of the Domestic Sphere and transform a multitude of lives. While she remained staunchly opposed to woman's suffrage, Octavia Hill never lacked influence as denotes this letter from her sister Miranda in 1884: "It has come to a point when two peers and a cabinet minister call and consult her in one week. She had Fawcett here yesterday, Lord Wemyss the day before to ask what he should say in the House of Lords, and the Duke of Westminster on Wednesday to ask what the Prince of Wales could do in the matter."\textsuperscript{488}

\textbf{III Exploration and Academic Research}

1. Amelia Edwards (1831-1892)

Amelia Edwards was a single child, which no doubt focused her parents' attention on her. Her father had served as an officer under Wellington before making a civil career in banking. Educated at home, she showed talents at a young age: her first passion was music; she could both play and compose, as well as sing. She was also skilled in drawing; at seven, her first poem was published, at twelve, her first story. She became a popular journalist and author of mystery fiction, usually with an element of supernatural and a clear religious implication, reflective of her Christian faith, as we have seen in the preceding chapter. She was particularly thorough in her research and she usually spent two years on each novel (research and writing). The public showed its appreciation, and her literary success provided her with the means to travel. It is in

\textsuperscript{488} Boyd 118.
this regard that she interests us in the present chapter as she contributed, through her travels and
arheological interests, to the broadening of knowledge. Her enthusiasm, colorful depiction,
obvious interest in the people and cultures, and her sense of humor provided learning material as
well as entertainment. Though she never married, she lived and traveled with a friend. The two
women were rather courageous to venture into regions of the world where such freedom of
movement and independence of spirit in women were not only uncommon but met with
disapproval, if not hostility.

In 1870, Amelia Edwards was preparing to tour France, but because the weather was so
bad, she suddenly changed her plans and decided, on a whim really, to go to Cairo where she
would be sure to find sun. Thus, she traveled to Egypt and fell in love with Egyptology. This
was to change the focus of her literary life. A Thousand Miles up the Nile recollects her
enthusiasm and alarm. Enthralled by what had already been uncovered in arheological digs, but
also concerned that history might be destroyed by careless handling or supervision, she felt
compelled to not only inform the British public but mobilize it as well for the preservation of
historical sites and artifacts:

The wall-paintings which we had the happiness of admiring in all their beauty
and freshness, are already much injured. Such is the fate of every Egyptian
monument, great or small. The tourist carves it all over with names and dates,
and in some instances with caricatures. The student of Egyptology, by taking wet
paper "squeezes," sponges away every vestige of the original colour. The
"collector" buys and carries off everything of value that he can get; and the Arab
steals for him. The work of destruction, meanwhile, goes on apace. There is no
one to prevent it; there is no one to discourage it. Every day, more inscriptions
are mutilated—more paintings and sculptures are defaced. ... When science leads the way, is it wonderful that ignorance should follow?\textsuperscript{489}

In this regard, \textit{A Thousand Miles up the Nile} is different from most travel accounts, because it is documented with great care with over eighty illustrations, most of them her own. Amelia Edwards' concern for the preservation of sites and objects motivated her also to write to authorities and publish appeals in the newspapers. Eventually her efforts bore fruits as The Egypt Exploration Fund was established in 1882. Edwards also earned the respect of young archeologists, such as Gaston Maspero (future director of antiquities in Cairo) and Flinders Petrie, pioneers in a field relatively young.

In 1880 she contributed in the foundation of the Egyptological Society, later known as The Egypt Exploration Fund, which, significantly, met in the British Museum, where the Rosetta stone had been brought after Nelson's success against the French in Egypt. Edwards was in charge of subscriptions and publicity. Part of her effort consisted in lectures, which were published in 1891 as \textit{Pharaohs, Fellahs, and Explorers}, in which she reminds people of the responsibility of science: preservation, investigation, and understanding, not just the accumulation of artifacts. Her intellectual campaign brought her in contact with authority figures in the field, such as Sir Erasmus Wilson, who had brought the obelisk from Alexandria to London. By 1889, she had learned hieroglyphs and never ceased to study Egyptology intensely. In her will she left her library and a legacy for the foundation of a chair of Egyptian Archeology and Philology in the University College of London, having taken particular care to ensure that Flinders Petrie be appointed chair of the Egyptology Department.

It is rather shocking to consider that although Amelia Edwards was recognized in Britain for "her services to literature and archeology" and received several honorary degrees from the U.S., no one speaks of her today, and the Encyclopaedia Britannica for which she contributed one

of the first articles on Egyptology mentions not a word about her. However, the Egyptologist and mystery writer, Elizabeth Peters' famous character, Amelia Peabody, is based on Amelia Edwards.490

2. Isabel Burton and Kate Marsden

Although of a different nature, Lady Burton's writings belong also to the travel literature which sought to offer more than a blend of exotic descriptions and personal experiences, but rather to introduce the reader to other cultures as would a documentary today. Lady Burton's tale reads almost like novel; it includes a love story, that of Sir Richard Burton and his wife, and the colorful narrative of their varied travels. Sir Richard Burton is a fascinating person, a military and intelligence officer who seems familiar with all the mysterious or dangerous parts of the world, India, the Crimea, Egypt, an explorer, the first European to discover Lake Tanganyika, and a respected author and linguist, famous for his translation of The Arabian Nights.

Isabel had known essentially the sheltered life of the aristocracy, until she met Richard. Having braved the dangers of war, one fighting in the Crimea, the other waiting in anguish in England, Isabel and Richard must face together opposition to their marriage. Isabel retells their reunion:

At the end of a fortnight he stole his arm round my waist, and laid his cheek against mine and asked me, 'Could you do anything so sickly as to give up civilization? And if I can get the Consulate of Damascus, will you marry me and go and live there? . . . Do not give me an answer now, because it will mean a very

490 Elizabeth Peters, who has a PhD. In Egyptology, created this series with the first book, Crocodile on the Sandbank, in 1975. Amelia Peabody presents remarkable similarities to Amelia Edwards: she has independent means, hers are inherited, Edwards’ were the fruit of her writings; she travels from Europe, alone with only a female companion, to Egypt; and she falls in love with archeology. There the similarities stop, as Amelia Peabody and her friend, Evelyn, marry two brothers, the former the archeologist Radcliffe Emerson, the latter a linguist in ancient languages. The series, and the Emerson family, grew into seventeen books and spans three generations, starting in 1884 and extending to post WWI so far; therefore, beside mystery and humor, they also offer an interesting historical fresco. (See <AmeliaPeabody.com>).
serious step for you – no less than giving up your people and all that you are used to. . .you must think it over.’ . . At last I found voice and said, 'I do not want to think it over –I have been thinking it over for six years, ever since I first saw you in Boulogne. I have prayed for you every morning and night, I have followed all your career minutely, I have read every word you ever wrote, and I would rather have a crust and tent with you than be queen of all the world; and so I say now, Yes, yes, YES!' . . Then he said, 'Your people will not give you to me.' I answered, 'I belong to myself–I give myself away.' 'That is all right,' he answered; 'be firm, and so shall I.' 491

Romantic as this passage is, it is also perfectly illustrative of the total commitment between husband and wife necessary for the success of such a life. The two must be and truly think as one, as their life style will prevent them from "fitting in" in "normal" society. Whether their peers were to reject them out of disapproval, or would simply be unable to understand them, the Burtons knew that they were going to be somewhat alienated from what should have been their familiar milieu. This underscored all the more how much they must rely on each other.

Circumstances forced them apart again, because of Sir Richard's military duties. Both traveled, though; she in Italy and Switzerland, he in India, then Africa, where he discovered Lake Tanganyika. The parallel description of their whereabouts is interesting as it contrasts safety and classical civilization on her side with mystery and danger on his. Eventually, they married and the marriage, as the author points out, instead of being the end as in fiction, was the real beginning. Beyond the storms at sea and the picturesque sights, we are, however, constantly reminded of the precariousness of life, as well as of the value of adaptability and of possessing a sense of humor as the following passage denotes:

An incident [occurred] which gave me a foretaste of the sort of thing I was to expect in Brazil. Our bedroom was a large whitewashed place; there were three holes in the wall, one at the bedside bristling with horns, and these were cockroaches some three inches long. The drawing-room was gorgeous with yellow satin, and the magnificent yellow curtains were sprinkled with the crawling things. The consequence was that I used to stand on a chair and scream. This annoyed Richard very much. 'A nice sort of traveller and companion you are going to make,' he said; 'I suppose you think you look very pretty and interesting standing on that chair and howling at those innocent creatures.' This hurt me so much that, without descending from the chair, I stopped screaming, and made a meditation like St. Simon Stylites on his pillar; and it was, 'That if I was going to live in a country always in contact with these and worse things, though I had a perfect horror of anything black and crawling, it would never do to go on like that.' So I got down, fetched a basin of water and a slipper, and in two hours, by the watch, I had knocked ninety-seven of them into it. It cured me. From that day I had no more fear of vermin and reptiles. A little while after we changed our rooms, we were succeeded by Lord and Lady Lytton, and, to my infinite delight, I heard the same screams coming from the same room a little while after. 'There!' I said in triumph, 'you see I am not the only woman who does not like cockroaches.'

This amusing episode reveals much about the nineteenth-century woman. First, even with a pampered background, a middle- or upper-class lady had enough pluck and resourcefulness to face situations that less pampered women of today might have more difficulty adjusting to (I, for one, I fear). Second, the teasing of the husband and the initial irritation and repartee of the wife

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492 Burton 232-33. This scene is taking place while the Burtons are in Portugal, on their way to Brazil.
mirror exchanges such as we can find in good couples of today, that have complete ease with each other, and treat each other as equals—as one must have noticed: Richard does not offer to comfort his wife or kill any of the vermin for her. Third, Isabel does not give in thinking she will learn to cohabit with the cockroaches; she sets out to maintain her standards of cleanliness, accepting that it will require more effort than in England.

Although separated at times, the Burtons could rely on each other to face discomforts and dangers. Such was not the case of Kate Marsden, who left on a medical mission in search of a plant alleged to help in the treatment of leprosy and found only in Siberia, and who ended up establishing a hospital for lepers. She recorded her extraordinary odyssey in On Sledge and Horseback to Outcast Siberian Lepers in 1891. Kate Marsden had served as a nurse in 1878, during the war between Russia and Turkey, and it was there that she first saw "the ravages of the frightful disease." Later, after a period of religious crisis, and after serving as a nurse in New Zealand and South Africa, she had the growing conviction that she must go and care for the most neglected of humanity. She was well aware there were suffering poor in England, but accurately noted that they "were within close reach, at least, of abundant Christian and philanthropic efforts. But the lepers in the far-off uncivilized regions of the world—who cared for them? What medical attention did they receive? What tender ministration from the gentle hand of woman soothed their sufferings?"

The first thing we can notice in her concern is that she is convinced it is a woman's mission. It is not just a question of medical attention; this medical care must be provided with the kind of nurturing and comfort—motherly we could say—that a woman is best qualified to give. Again therefore, we are seeing a perfect harmony between Domestic Sphere and outward

influence. This is all the more evident, that as she hears again and again that leprosy is without hope, she meets with those who believe euthanasia the only merciful solution:

My desire...intensified on hearing from some pessimistic and inhumane quarters that the best remedy for such an incurable and loathsome malady was murder. 'Shoot them—poison them—anything to put them out of their misery!' My blood recoiled at such 'method,' as indeed, would be the case with anyone possessing the true love of humanity; and I firmly resolved to use every means in my power, with Divine assistance, to discover a remedy, and, if such efforts failed, to devise efficient methods for alleviating the miseries which accompanied the disease, and for bringing all lepers under the humane as well as the religious influence of the servants of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. 494

She first presented her project to Queen Victoria, who was very enthusiastic about it and discussed it with the Princess of Wales, who also greatly approved and wrote about it to her sister, the Empress of Russia (consort to Alexander III). With this ricochet of approvals, Kate was welcomed in St. Petersburg and provided with abundant funds and all official papers necessary to her enterprise. However, she "was told by very high authorities and even by the Empress herself that there were no lepers in Siberia." 495 Many were very supportive and contributed personal gifts for her journey (someone, having discovered she liked plum pudding, gave her forty pounds of it). Soon, fully equipped for the Russian winter 496 and a journey of 14,000 miles, Kate begins with her interpreter and friend, Miss Field, and an escort of soldiers.

494 Marsden 5-6.
496 See illustrations XVII. She comments, "I was so enveloped in furs that I could scarcely move" and explained how at first it took two men to get her in the sledge.
Her narrative is dynamic and she does not hesitate to poke fun at herself. At times, Kate switches pronouns from "I" or "we" to "you" and writes her narrative almost as a touristic guide:

And now, dear reader, let me introduce you to your somewhat primitive "hotel". 

. Have your pocket-handkerchief ready, if you can find it, and place it close to your nostrils the moment the door is opened. . . your first greeting is a gust of hot, foetid air, which almost sends you back; but you remember the cold outside and the cravings of hunger, and so you go in.497

Added to the abysmal conditions of the roads, the filth of the shelters, the lack of privacy, the little group must beware of bears and wolves. Kate visits hospitals and passes gangs of chained prisoners along the way; she also meets with local officials to discuss relief of poor and establishment of new hospitals.

Sometimes the road has to be cleared, or rather created, through the trees, by lumberjacks, before sledge or horses can pass. Then, she must finish the journey without her friend, who becomes too ill to continue. After a while, the sledge must be abandoned for horses (for a total ride of 2,000 miles), and Kate notes that her previous horse-riding was nothing like the one she must now endure, with a wood saddle, dressed and riding like a man, all day. The weather and the terrain offer a constant challenge; for instance, after the cold, she must face bogs and myriads of vicious mosquitoes. The text is rich in humor and colorful details, such as using the weather as a food preserver: "With regard to food, one of the principal articles was soup frozen in blocks, which were hung outside the sledge. On arrival at a post station, bits were chipped off and thawed as required." Eventually, at Irkutsk, she hears for the first time that there are lepers in Siberia. She also discovers that they live in miserable wretchedness, outcasts hurled together in huts, lacking the most basic needs of existence. The ratio doctor-patient in that area was of 1 for 70,000 people, so the lepers were not at the top of the list for house calls.

497 Marsden 21.
By the time Kate Marsden returned to Moscow, she had consolidated the projects drawn with the various committees along the way. Once back in England, she was welcome and congratulated by the queen and elected Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. She gave lectures and raised funds, through her book and articles among other things, and she also founded the St. Francis Leper Guild.

**IV Freedom Crusaders**

Woman's influence was also to be found in the direct field of political activism. In the first part of the century this took essentially the shape of opposition to the French Revolution and to Napoleon, while later the suffrage question became the main issue.

1. Women against Oppression

Hannah More was fiercely anti-Jacobinist. As we saw, she believed that the only reforms worth having were those inspired by a desire to serve God and others through one's talents, self-discipline and honor. Any radicalism, such as the one caricatured in *Death or Liberty*, was indeed death under cover of liberty. It is interesting to note that Britannia, in this picture, though in dire straights, resists yet because she is supported by religion (rock) and laws (sword). More's most effective political pamphlet is her *Village Politics*, written in 1793, which contrasts Tom, the mason (and representative of Thomas Paine), with the loyalist Jack (as in "Union Jack"?), the blacksmith. Jack summarizes French republican freedom thus:

> To cut every man's throat who does not think as I do, or hang him up at a lamp-post – Pretend liberty of conscience, and then banish the parsons only for being conscientious! – Cry out liberty of the press, and hang the first man who writes

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498 See illustration XVIII.
his mind! . . . No trade! – No Bible! – No Sabbath, nor day of rest! – No safety, no comfort, no peace in this world – and no world to come! 499

Paradoxically, a feminist, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, gives More full recognition for her achievement: "The tact and intelligence of this woman completely turned the tide of opinion and many say prevented a revolution. . . Strange that surrounded by such a galaxy of great minds, that so great a work should have been given with one accord to a woman to do." 500 But was it really so strange? People of all classes seem to have recognized the genuine consistency between what Hannah More preached and what she did: she had proved true, and one can still feel satisfied today of her merited success and the trust she rightfully enjoyed.

Although Swiss by birth and French by cultural affinities, Germaine de Staël can claim admission within the context of influence of the British nineteenth-century woman because of her fervent support of the British political system as the epitome of Democracy, because of close acquaintance with several great British figures, such as Wellington or Byron, and because when England seemed for so long to be carrying alone the burden of the war effort against Napoleon, there was this voice from across the Channel, impassioned, bombastic, exhausting, but profoundly earnest, relentlessly denouncing Napoleon for the despot he was and proclaiming loud and clear the long list of his misdeeds. Interestingly, Madame de Staël is not, in all honesty, all that great as a writer. Her prolixity is punctuated by volleys of exclamation marks, and her wit cannot compare to that of Jane Austen or Dickens. As a person, she is rather flawed: her lovers were almost too numerous to count, she was not exempt of vanity, and there was a touch of the hypochondriac in her. And yet, she was bold and brave; furthermore she knew everybody, intellectuals, government and military officials -- because of her literary salons, because her father

499 Mellor 25.
500 Mellor 15.
was the only popular finance minister of Louis XVI (and probably the only one with common sense), and because she was enormously rich.  

Amazingly, she managed to make herself Napoleon's Nemesis, even if only the size of a thorn in his side. He, the Tyrant of Europe, for whom people were only pawns for his great chess game of power, he, who was a lion to her mouse, could not crush her, when he had destroyed so many others, precisely because this noisy, persistent opponent had succeeded in making herself heard by all his enemies, and those yet undecided; and because she was a woman, he could do nothing against her without making himself look terribly bad. If we forget the tragedy of so many lives lost in the Napoleonic wars, this scenario is ludicrous and quite amusing.

However, neither Napoleon nor Madame de Staël saw any humor in it. Two major works are particularly relevant for this chapter: Considerations on the Principal Events of the French Revolution and Ten Years in Exile, both published posthumously by her son and son-in-law. The first is a vast fresco, which retraces the progression of events from the eve of the Revolution to the advent of Napoleon. While de Staël denounces the excesses of the kings of France before 1789, and those of the populace easily manipulated by the radical leaders of the Revolution, and deplores the loss of opportunity to establish a Parliamentary monarchy, she also denounces Napoleon, indeed, for claiming to be the heir of the Revolution, as well as those he fooled so easily, as she comments:

He who chose to substitute his gigantic self in the place of the human species was a man chosen by the people—a man whom the friends of freedom for an instant mistook for the representative of their cause. Many have said, he is the child of the Revolution; yes, without a doubt; but a parricidal child.  

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Ten Years in Exile is a more personal account and chronicle of Napoleon's persecution of Germaine de Staël, as he condemned her work, On Germany, for its lack of French patriotism and its criticism of his politics, as she "maintained that a public man should never retain his place for an instant, when he could no longer hold it with honor," had the copies of the book destroyed at the printer, demanded the original manuscript, and exiled de Staël to her estate in Switzerland; it is also the chronicle of her daring escape with her children and their tutor (the famous German writer Schlegel) through Europe, to Russia—where she was received with honor by the Tsar in Moscow, which Napoleon would see shortly after her but empty and in flames—then to Sweden, where she conferred with King Charles XIV (formerly a French marshal of Napoleon) and encouraged him to stand firm against Napoleon. From Sweden, she finally sailed to England where she was received as a head of state and where she published the real original of her manuscript of On Germany.

These two works are important at various levels. First, they show the passionate and courageous effort of a woman faced with a redoubtable enemy. And while she did not defeat Napoleon, she was not defeated by him either. Napoleon said of her salons, "She carries a quiver full of arrows... They [her friends] pretend that she speaks neither of politics nor of me; but how, then, does it come to pass that all who see her likes me less?" Most revealing, though, is the remark he made in St. Helena: "That woman teaches people to think who never took to it before, or have forgotten how." And indeed, we can see how much of a problem that would be for the dictator who went as far as writing articles favorable to himself in Le Moniteur Universel, to the point that the newspaper soon acquired the nickname of Le Menteur Universel (the universal liar). Second, after Waterloo, she continued to support England's political system as yet the best and most enduring expression of democracy. Third, she demonstrated by her very example that

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the ultimate guardians of democracy are and must be the intellectuals. They act as moral thinkers capable of inviting the people to seek the true attributes of freedom (morality, education, progress, peace, religion, fairness) after the soldiers have forced the return of peace. They invite leaders to assess their agenda and their accomplishments; for instance, de Staël reminds us that "Napoleon has been more guilty for the good he did not do than for the wrong we hold against him." Fourth, she reasserts the importance of literature as a medium of information and conscience. As she points out, Science and Academic knowledge flourished under Napoleon, in great part because "they do not concern politics, while literature can produce nothing great now without freedom," therefore, "despotism then, if it well understands its interest, will not encourage literature, for literature leads men to think, and thought passes sentence on despotism." Although, Staël was certainly a flawed heroine, she invested herself fully in the service of the liberty she so profoundly cherished. Maybe one the most eloquent tributes to her is James Parton's comment:

The greatest compliment ever paid by a man to a woman was that which Napoleon Bonaparte, in the plenitude of his power, paid Madame De Staël, in exiling her from Paris. Here was a man, the greatest general of his age. . . commanding an army of many hundred thousand men, the arbiter of Europe, and the lord of the world, except that part of it which could be reached and overawed by the English navy; and here was a woman. . . receiving every evening a circle of friends in a modest drawing-room at Paris. They were antagonists, those two! . . The man was dazzling and intoxicating France, while using her for purposes of his own. The woman would not be dazzled. In a city delirious she kept her senses. In a company drunk, she remained sober. Among a people dreaming, she was awake. And, gifted as she was by nature with an excellent mind, a humane

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505 Considerations 313.
heart, and an eloquent tongue, she had power to waken and restore other minds.\textsuperscript{506}

Although less famous than Madame de Staël, the British Jane Porter, contributed to the opposition to Napoleon through fiction, and more particularly through The Scottish Chiefs. The authors of \textit{The Other Mary Shelley: Beyond Frankenstein} explain that this historical romance can be read symbolically:

Satires on a personified French Revolution came to replaced by attacks on Bonaparte. In a historical romance, such as \textit{The Scottish Chiefs}, a conservative writer such as Jane Porter could criticize the Napoleonic regime and suggest strategies (some of which were later implemented) for resistance to the modern tyrant by choosing a historical figure who resembled Napoleon.\textsuperscript{507}

Thus Porter establishes a parallel between Edward III, an "oath-and-treaty breaker," and Napoleon, especially in the light of the rupture of the Peace of Amiens in 1803. The fight for Scotland's independence is in fact that of England against Napoleon. The emperor recognized the allegorical message and banned the French translation of the work, as Porter explained in the preface to the 1828 edition:

But when the work was ready for publication in France, it was denounced by the order of Napoleon, as dangerous to the state, and commanded to be withheld or destroyed. . .He [Napoleon] wished, as a pretended umpire and benefactor, to impose his lasting scepter, on the one people; and to hold in unreflecting subjection the other. We know that with conquerors, who usually fight for power rather than justice, the use of certain sentiments springs more

\textsuperscript{506} Parton 262.  
\textsuperscript{507} Fisch, Audrey, Anne Mellor, and Hester Schor, \textit{The Other Mary Shelley: Beyond Frankenstein}. (Oxford University Press, 1993) 161.
from expediency than principle. Real principle is proved in the result;—a true patriot establishes the liberty of his country, without infringing on the rights of others; a pretender first founds a despotic empire over his own countrymen, and then leads them to put similar chains on their neighbours. 

Women thus contributed to sustain British morale, despite the very real threat to Britain, especially after Napoleon proclaimed himself emperor in 1804. The British did not lose their marvelous sense of humor and fueled the resistance also through caricature. Meanwhile, Napoleon's hatred of Britain was almost unlimited, and so was his arrogance, as not content to prepare the invasion of England, he was so certain of his success that he had commemorative medals of his victory minted in advance, with the mention "frappée à Londres" (minted in London). However, "The Ghost of Elizabeth" is uncanny since it is dated 1803, before Nelson's annihilation of the French fleet in 1805, and yet, almost prophetically, Elizabeth reminds Napoleon of another powerful enemy of England that met with a spectacular defeat at sea. It is no less interesting that Britain is represented by Elizabeth. Granted, she was Queen of England at the time of the Armada, but, as we have seen in Chapter III, she also symbolizes the strength and stability of the United Kingdom established upon a Christian rule—not to mention that she is the Virgin Queen as opposed to a womanizer like Napoleon.

Magdalene De Lancey offers yet another defense of freedom, although a tragic one, since this bride of three months joined her husband at Waterloo only to lose him there. Colonel De Lancey was struck in the back by a cannonball as he was riding next to Wellington. He was

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509 See illustration XIX. The little frog, in front, with its minuscule dagger against the crocodile's sword is particularly amusing.
510 See illustration XX.
511 See illustration XXI.
thought dead at first, then dying, and was eventually removed to a farmhouse. His wife was first told he was dead, then wounded. At last, she reached him, but could only nurse him for a few days as he soon died of his wounds. The narrative she left, *A Week at Waterloo in 1815* is absolutely wrenching, as the brutality and tragedy of war hits the reader all at once. Dickens, who read the manuscript, was deeply moved by it and wrote, "If I live for fifty years, I shall dream of it every now and then, from this hour to the day of my death, with the most frightful reality. . .I shall never dismiss the subject from my mind."512

Charlotte Brontë, who was a great admirer of Wellington since she was a child, also wrote a short story, "Napoleon and the Spectre" in 1833. It is a sort of Gothic tale, in which Napoleon is visited by a ghastly ghost, who takes him through the streets of Paris, then to a hall where he sees beautifully dressed women who wear death-masks; a stench of death permeates the air. Eventually he is left by the ghost in a ballroom where couples—very alive this time—are dancing to lively music. The stench has disappeared, and he finds Marie Louise there, who suggests he leave. Astounded, he demands an explanation and learns that he is in her private drawing-room where she has invited a privileged few from the court, and where he has just walked in, dressed in his nightdress. The shock is so great that he falls into a state of catalepsy from which he does not recover until a day later. We could dismiss this strange story as the musings of a seventeen-year old girl with a vivid imagination, and yet does it not paint effectively the end of Napoleon's reign, surrounded by death and a court created as his puppet, and who eventually was sent away from a wife who had little cause to care for him, and whose life was

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only temporarily part of his? The absolute loneliness\(^{513}\) in which he discovers himself and which provokes his collapse make us feel actually sorry for him: so much power, so many successes, yet, so many opportunities for good left untouched, and eventually so little left from this extraordinary life.

Another case yet, that of Edith Cavell, shows us the involvement of the feminine woman bridging the Spheres, without contesting them. Edith Cavell was a British nurse in Belgium at the beginning of the Great War. Her "crime" was to have helped wounded allied soldiers to escape, instead of turning them over to the authorities of the conquering army. Cavell thought of herself first and foremost as a nurse, and tended to all wounded in her care, regardless of their nationality. Unfortunately, this was not sufficient to spare her from execution at dawn, despite repeated and desperate efforts from the British and American governments for her release.\(^{514}\) As Joy LaValley points out, though:

> Even in death, Edith Cavell caused other lives to be saved. There was such a storm of protest all over the world that the Germans were moved to spare the lives of the other 33 accused prisoners. Another result of the tragic event was that thousands of volunteers in England, Canada, Australia and other parts of the British Empire lined up at recruiting stations. And in the United States, there was enormous popular pressure for America to declare war on Germany.\(^{515}\)

Some of her last words, reported by the chaplain who attended her, were: "But this I would say, standing as I do in view of God and eternity: I realise that patriotism is not enough; I must have no hatred or bitterness towards anyone." Although she died as a patriot, we must not forget that

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\(^{514}\) See illustrations XXII

her nurse's calling alone compelled her to aid others, and in this sense her death marks the turning point of an age: the woman's privileged place in the respect of men had been altered and partially destroyed as the Germans ceased to see in Cavell a woman living up to the duties of her sphere and treated her like a war criminal, a traitor and a spy, instead. Maybe they were the first on whom the ideals of genders were lost, but sadly they were followed by others, until now, though in a peace context, we have reached a gender confusion that permeates Western society. However, in contrast, England honored Edith Cavell with particular reverence by erecting a statue of her at the corner of Trafalgar Square, in the proximity of Nelson.

2. Anti-Suffrage

Without taking into consideration feminists, in the modern sense of the term, who constituted a minority in the nineteenth century, we are left with two groups of women equally educated, equally honorable, and equally motivated who seek the best, not just for themselves, but for society at large. Moreover, each side offers valid arguments. Even though, today we could not conceive of women not having, much less not wanting, the vote, this latter group deserves out attention because until the later part of the century, it constituted the majority of women.

Those who wanted the vote, like Josephine Butler, presented a justification similar to that of the American colonists. Instead of "no taxation without representation," it was "no legislation without representation." The second argument, which was linked to the first, was that of completeness through difference. Male and female perceptions were equally important and needed to be worked together, much like coffee and cream, to achieve the best blend. This group also noted that women numbered over half of the population, so the request to have a voice for

516 Significantly a movie was made on Edith Cavell, Nurse Edith Cavell, in 1939, based on her letters and the testimony of friends and family members. As the representative of the American embassy pleads on Cavell's behalf before the German military authorities that have sentenced her to death, he exclaims that going through with such an unjust sentence would be "committing a crime against humanity"—chillingly prophetic words indeed!
that half was sensible.

Those against the vote interest us more particularly here, because no one speaks of them. As Julia Bush notes in her recent work, *Women against the Vote*, "Modern histories of suffragism all too often ignore its committed female critics, and fail to evaluate the widespread support for their views." Their main argument also rested on gender difference and complementarity, but they carried it farther: If men and women were different, it was counter-productive that they be doing exactly the same thing. For the anti-suffragists, two doing the job of one was redundant. As Octavia Hill explained, "men and women help one another because they are different, have different gifts, different gifts, different spheres, one is the complement of the other; and it is because they have different power and qualities that they become one in marriage, and one also in friendship, and in fellow work." Others believed that women were already powerful as they could influence their husbands and did not need the vote to make a difference. As we have seen in this chapter, it was certainly true of the women mentioned. In this, Octavia Hill echoed Florence Nightingale:

> If you add two million votes, unless you secure thereby better members of Parliament, you have not achieved anything, but you have used up in achieving nothing whatever thought and time your women voters have given to such duties. Whereas, if they have spent this time and heart and soul in the care of the sick, the old, the young, the erring, as guardians of the poor, as nurses, as teachers, as visitors, if they have sought for and respected the out of sight silent work which really achieved something, a great blessing is conferred to our country.

Bush explains that the "maternal reformers", those who considered motherhood essential, constituted the majority of the anti-suffragists, with Mary Ward as the President of the Anti-

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517 Bush 2.
518 Boyd 140.
519 Boyd 141.
suffrage League, and the vast scope and huge impact of philanthropy that we have seen in this chapter was a direct outcome of this vision. So again, it seems that the more women found fulfillment in helping others, the less concerned they were to obtain the vote for themselves. Josephine Butler was asking for the vote on behalf of those who needed to support themselves in the way the middle class did not. They had to work to survive, and were usually alone to make their way through life. However, it remains that many anti-suffragists perceived women's vote much the same way as the Swedish writer Ellen Kay (1849-1926), who posits, "The emancipation of women is probably the greatest egoistic movement of the nineteenth century and the most intense affirmation of the right of self that history has yet seen."  

V. The White Woman's Burden

Probably the greatest aspect of the British woman as ambassador is to be found in her effort abroad. To a large extent, this definition applies to Florence Nightingale, Elizabeth Fry, Kate Marsden and many others, but two groups, in particular, proved main agents of influence: missionaries and the military. Though working from different perspectives, the former in the service of God and men, the latter in the service of Country and civilization, their paths crossed often. I will not mention here the dark side of colonization, which is always brought up by modern scholars, but rather I wish to look briefly at the positive accomplishments of the colonial presence, especially in India, which benefitted first women, with the abolition of the horrible practice of widow burning or sati. As the words of Lord Napier, then Commander in Chief of the British Army in India, as he confronted local authorities protesting the suppression of sati, underscore, military force was necessary, but behind it lay a respect for women, that was born of the Christian concept of genders:

520 Bush 25.
521 The Things They Say: Speaking out against Feminism, July 30, 2008 <http://www.coeffic.demon.co.uk/things.htm>.
522 See illustrations XXIII.
You say that it is your custom to burn widows. Very well. We also have a custom: When men burn a woman alive, we tie a rope around their necks and we hang them. Build your funeral pyre; beside it, my carpenters will build a gallows. You may follow your custom. And then, we will follow ours. 

Another custom, that of marrying very young girls to older men, was linked to the Sati practice. Pandita Ramabai Sarasvati, had the privilege to be reared by erudite parents. She became a scholar herself. After the death of her husband, she moved to England with her daughter and discovered Christianity. She returned to India and dedicated her life to the education of Hindu widows, about whom she wrote, The High-Caste Hindu Woman in 1901, and especially "children widows," and of orphans for all of whom she founded the Salvation House, a Christian mission. She also worked on translation of the Bible and introduced Braille to India. A stamp was issued in her honor in 1989 in (belated) recognition of her enormous contribution to her country. Having beneficiated from a privileged upbringing, and discovered further freedom in Christianity, Sarasvati was particularly motivated to improve the lot of women in India. Analyzing Hindu religious and secular texts, she explains that distrust of and contempt for women's nature and character was at the root of the custom of seclusion of women in India:

I can say honestly and truthfully, that I have never read any sacred book in Sanskrit literature without meeting this kind of hateful sentiment about women. True, they contain here and there a kind word about them, but such words seem to me a heartless mockery after having charged them, as a class, with crime and evil deeds. . . [Furthermore] widowhood is regarded as the punishment for a horrible crime or crimes committed by the woman in her former existence upon

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524 See illustration XXIV.
As Sarasvati explains, the position of a widow was that of outcast, for whom only two ways of redemption were left open: either she was to live an existence of isolation, rejection, and physical deprivation, or to immolate herself on her dead husband's pyre and attain heaven, since "By this great sacrifice, she would secure salvation to herself and her husband, and to their families to the seventh generation... The momentary agony of suffocation in the flames was nothing compared to her lot as a widow." The suppression of the practice, she adds, had not been enough. 

Sarasvati underscores the intimate connection between the treatment of women and the condition of the society in which they live:

Closely confined to the four walls of their house, deprived throughout their lives.

. . . they become weaker and weaker. . . their physical statures dwarfed, their spirits crushed under the weight of social prejudice and superstitions, and their minds starved from absolute lack of literary food and opportunity to observe the world. Thus. . . they grow to be selfish slaves to their petty individual interests, indifferent to the welfare of their own immediate neighbors, much more to their nation's well-being. . . The complete submission of women under the Hindu law has in the lapse of millenniums of years converted them into slavery-loving creatures.

Consequently, these narrow-minded women can hardly give birth to new generations of "liberal-minded and progressive men" capable of introducing healthy changes. Although, extremely appreciative of missionary work in Zenanas, such as Mary Carpenter's educational campaign, Sarasvati looked forward to the time when enough native women would have been educated so

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526 Sarasvati 97-107.
527 Sarasvati 119-123.
they could reach their sisters more widely. Her description of the woman's situation in India incidentally reveals, by contrast, how free, empowered, and happy the British woman was.

This violent treatment of women found its grimmest expression in the massacres during the 1857 Rebellion, in which British women and children were savagely butchered, which, in turn, triggered terrible retaliations. Christina Rossetti was particularly moved by the true case of young Captain Skene, who killed his wife to spare her from the blood-thirst of their attackers, and she wrote the poem, "In the Round Tower at Jhansi" in 1857 as a memorial to them and victims such as they:

Skene looked at his pale young wife./ 'Is the time come?'—'The time is come!'—
Young, strong, and so full of life, / The agony struck them dumb.
Close his arm about her now,/ Close her cheek to his,
Close the pistol to her brow—/ God forgive them this!
'Will it hurt much?'—'No, mine own:
I wish I could bear the pang for both.'—
I wish I could bear the pang alone:
'Courage, dear, I am not loth.'

The accounts by eyewitnesses, men and women, who survived the Indian Rebellion of 1857 reveal women of great substance and courage, who clash with the stereotypical languid, bored, and self-centered mensahib that we see in the beginning of The Secret Garden, for instance. One of them, Lady Inglis stayed with her husband---Colonel Inglis, second- and soon first-in-command of the garrison--through the whole length of the siege of Lucknow. She related her experience in The Siege of Lucknow, a Diary in 1897; a letter to her mother was also published, Letter Containing Extracts from a Journal Kept by Mrs. Inglis, During the Siege of Lucknow in

528 See illustration XXV Massacre at Cawnpore.
1858, in which she gives a sometimes hair-raising account of her experience, but in a very self-composed tone. Indeed, these women had to have nerves of steel to keep themselves useful to their children, their husbands, and the wounded. Not only were they under attack but they also had to deal with disease:

We have been in a particularly safe place during the siege, though bullets have fallen very near us, and an occasional round shot and piece of shell has found its way into our court. Two ladies have been killed in the garrison; Miss Palmer who had her leg shot off the first day, and Mrs. Dorin who was shot dead. . . Some women and children have also been wounded, and many have had hairbreadth escapes. . . The 32d has suffered fearfully; besides the four officers who fell on the 30th June, . . . [Four more] have died of their wounds; Captain Mansfield have died of cholera; Captain Lowe and six officers have been wounded, some of them twice.529

Like Lady Inglis, the young woman in Edward Hopley's painting530 shows lucidity, courage, and self-control in the presence of the surrounding danger, as she holds her baby protectively in the fold of her arm, and reaches for the pistol with her free hand. Kate Erlton, the heroine of Flora Annie Steel's On the Face of the Waters is made of the same mettle as she survives the Rebellion and personal trials (an unfaithful husband). Her love for India is also significant and shared by Jim Douglas, her second husband, an honorable and faithful man. Much of Steel's own affection for India is in fact invested in the novel. Married to a civil servant, she accompanied her husband to all his postings, learned the language, became interested in the people and their folklore, gained their trust and respect, and established schools. She wrote a collection of the tales she had gleaned, as well as a history of India. Steele has been compared to Kipling for her understanding

529 Inglis, Mrs., Letter Containing Extracts from a Journal Kept by Mrs. Inglis during the Siege of Lucknow, (London, 1858) 20.
530 See illustration XXVI.
and love of India. When she left India to return to England, she was given many parting gifts, including a piece of cloth her students had woven, of which she had a dress made. She was, at her request, cremated wearing that dress, when she died in 1929.

British women played an important civilizing role alongside their husbands. By the very fact that they were women, some were able to penetrate the *Zenanas*, or Hindu harems, and bring not only Christianity but education also to women otherwise cut off from the enriching opportunities of the outer world.\(^{531}\) By and large, military wives, of officers as well as of regular soldiers, contributed to the civilizing force within the army and without, according to Annabel Venning's remarkable book, *Following the Drum*.\(^{532}\) Military wives knew danger and were willing to brave much at their husband's side, as we can see in *Persuasion* as well as with the Bagnets in *Bleak House*. The difficulties of living with the troops demanded greater resourcefulness and adaptability, as we can see in the various scenes of Illustration XXVII.

Charlotte Brontë's poem, "The Wife's Will," written in 1846, captures the determination of these women, as vividly as if she had been a "wife of the drum" herself. This text tells the story of the wife who, almost delirious with joy, has just welcomed her husband back, "after long absence –wandering wide," but soon discovers that he must answer the call to duty again and determines that, this time, she will share all with him. At first the husband is hesitant, fearing for her, but, as the title underscores, she is determined and eventually gained his assent:

Give me thy hand that I may feel /The Friend so true—so tried—so dear,

My heart's own chosen—indeed is near;/ . . .this hour divine

Belongs to me—is fully mine. . .

What say'st thou? 'We must once again,/ ere long, be severed by the main?'

. . .I deemed no more,/ Thy step would err from Britain's shore. . .

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\(^{531}\) See for instance, Kent, Eliza. "Tamil Bible Women and the Zenana Missions of Colonial South India". 1999

'Duty Commands?' 'Tis true—'tis just;/ Thy slightest word I wholly trust, . . .

But, William—hear my solemn vow—Hear and confirm!—with thee I go. . .

Such risk as thou must meet and dare,/ I—thy tre wife—will duly share. . .

Passive at home, I will not pine;/ Thy toils—thy perils, shall be mine; . . .

Thanks, William—thanks! thy love has joy,/ Worthy, I feel, art thou to be
Loved with perfect energy. . .

For fate admits my soul's decree,/ In bliss or bale—to go with thee!

There is no question about her patriotism, as she does not complain about the orders he has received, or whether the government is right to send him to back to, if not to the battlefield, certainly to danger. Her love is passionate but not irrational and I believe this precisely why her husband grants her request. Although, we only hear his response through her own, it is clear that the two treat each other as equal, in perfect understanding. We can almost hear Ruth, in the Bible: "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay." This clear-headed woman, aware of the risks, has had time during her husband's previous absence to think the matter through and has made a final decision. Shared hardship is better than physical safety in mental anguish. However, the wife's will triumphs, not because she wants to show her husband that she can be just as strong and enduring as he is, but because she loves him and cannot be another separation. He surrenders not because he is an obedient husband, as Bishop Proudy, but because he loves her equally and, deep down, he agrees with her that being together is worth anything.

This understanding and unity in the couple is necessary in general, but even more so in the life abroad. We find another illustration in Bleak House, with the Bagnets. Mr. Bagnet's trust in his wife's ("the old girl") sound counsel is such that he never speaks at length publicly on his own, but always consults with her and relies on her wisdom. At times, we even have the impression that the boundary between the two is not very clear, so grand is their closeness. In
Married to the Empire, Mary Procida underscores how closely colonial wives worked with their husbands and indeed, viewed their roles as one. This was in fact such a reality that the British government was aware of it and took advantage of it:

For the government, it was both cheaper and more efficient . . . to 'employ' the wives of its officials for certain 'feminine' tasks rather than to recruit female professionals. . . As an Indian official in Hyderabad noted to an Anglo-Indian wife: 'We like our British officers for we pay for one and we get two.\textsuperscript{533}

The artist Elizabeth Butler (later Lady Butler) specialized in army painting even before she met and followed her officer husband to his various posts and through various campaigns. She was nicknamed by some "the Florence Nightingale of the brush," because of her ability to empathize with the soldiers' life in suffering or in victory. One of her most famous painting, The Roll Call, composed in 1874 renders vividly the exhaustion, the grief of hearing the name of a missing comrade or the relief of finding another safe.\textsuperscript{534}

Conclusion

The more one looks, the more one discovers new admirable women of the nineteenth century who never thought of themselves as such; maybe because there were so many of them. So why does our century insist in trying to convince us that they were "exceptional," in the sense of "very few"?

Their radius of influence started from home. They brought their domestic skills and ideals to the fields of life, as far as they were needed. They also received recognition, appreciation, honor, and full collaboration from men. Yet most of them cared little or nothing for woman's suffrage. They were content to leave that to men, not because they were naive,

\textsuperscript{533} Procida, Mary, Married to the Empire; Gender, Politics, and Imperialism in India, 1883-1947, (Manchester University Press, 2002) 44.

\textsuperscript{534} See illustration XXVIII
desperately in need to feel dependant and protected, not because they were vain, but because they had enough to do already. Few areas were really out of their reach, either directly or indirectly, as they also had means of influencing politics, without having to sit for long hours of discussion and frustration in Parliament. Conversations at home with their husbands, information through the plethora of magazines and newspapers, or through lectures were enough to keep them abreast of what went on and what they could do, which varied from writing article in the papers, to volunteering time, money, or their very life. And given their involvement in philanthropy, education, missions, they were obviously well informed.

More importantly, these women were animated by strong beliefs and a determination to accomplish something worthwhile in their lives. It did not have to be grand or to bring them fame, although it often did, but they knew they must invest their talents fully in it. Paradoxically, as Francis of Assisi noticed in his own life, it was in giving of themselves that they received fulfillment, in going through darkness and sadness, like Josephine Butler, that they were able to bring light and joy to others, and in loving that they were loved, not only by those they helped, but by the men who were their fellow laborers.
"I am all gratitude and pride. . . all pride that my life has been crowned by you."

Robert to Elizabeth Browning

"All that I am, I owe you."  Elizabeth to Robert Browning.

We have already witnessed through the preceding chapters that the two gender spheres of the nineteenth century were not the hostile or even foreign entities to each other that they have been over-simplistically depicted to be. Part of the reason why woman's suffrage did not gain immediate and general support among women is due to the fact that women found fulfillment without possessing a direct political tool such as the vote. This might seem astonishing to modern women, even if they are not feminists, but again, we must remember that all British men did not have the right to vote until 1884. Indeed, before British women (aged thirty and over) obtained the vote and entered Parliament, with Nancy Astor, in 1919, they had already enjoyed a long association with men. Whether they were "co-workers" in moral, social, intellectual, or political efforts, or they were more generally recognized and held in respect by men, nineteenth-century middle- and-upper-class women displayed ample proofs that they were neither congealed into the ethereal ideal of Coventry Patmore's "angel of the house" nor the efficient but semi-cloistered mistress of the home. Sometimes, the association went deeper than a relation of mutual respect and friendship and reached its greatest expression in marriage—not the stereotypical "business agreement" so often declared the norm, but full partnership based on shared love and vision.

This chapter proposes to explore several examples testifying of the greater communication and harmony that existed between genders through the century. For this section, I chose to break from the previous pattern of blending real life examples and fictional ones, and decided to proceed in two "diptyches," each with a panel of "real life" examples and a panel of illustrations found in literature, treated in succession. The first diptych concerns the interaction
and association of men and women considered within nineteenth-century society at large, while
the second diptych focuses on partnership marriages. However, although the methodology may
differ, it should come as no surprise that life and literature offer mirroring accounts.

I. Collaborating Spheres

Real Life

1. Men's Respect and Political Support

Although the existing scholarship that ventures to break the stereotypes of the nineteenth-
century woman does exist, it is either still tainted with a sub-feminist current or yet too sparse to
compete with the mass of feminist revisionist material. In Women in England, for instance, Susie
Steinbach deplores that women "justified their participation in politics by invoking their roles as
mothers, not as citizens." However, by what authority is one to decide that "citizen" is a better
qualifier than "mother" in matters determining the moral, intellectual, and social welfare of the
nation? One could argue that "citizen" involves only self, whereas "mother" encompasses
"woman," "individual," "wife," and "mother," with all the specific qualities proper to each of
these human facets; moreover, by seeing themselves as "mothers" and bringing to the political
debate their presence as such, these women bespoke a concern that was not interested in personal
power, but supported reforms meant to improve the present of their children, and to build the
foundation for a yet better future when these children reached adulthood. Steinbach's judgment
that "women were prominent but subordinate...[and] ultimately symbolic and subsidiary"
definitely places these women in a deficient light, in which they never saw themselves, and,
moreover, in which the men they supported through canvassing and fund-raising never saw them.

Similarly, the fact that middle-class women, by and large, did not work for pay is
presented as such a deprivation that too many modern readers or students are led to believe these
women could not and did not work at all, and were therefore bored to tears and living in a
vacuum of parties and needlework, sporadically interrupted by childbirth. Paradoxically, while
the present century is prompt to condemn colonialism as essentially a gain- and power-driven enterprise, it cannot conceive of people putting their talents and time to use, and enjoying doing so, without receiving or even desiring remuneration. Nevertheless, it should behoove us to accept the nineteenth-century women not only for who they were, but for who they strove to be—which, when achieved, gave them joy and a sense of worthy stewardship, not the conviction that they were non-existent entities or sub-citizens at best.

Feminists are prompt to mention John Stuart Mill and his famous 1869 address, *The Subjection of Women*. However, it would be a complete misconstruction to conclude from his intercession on behalf of women, that women were little better than slaves in a "gilded cage." On the contrary, men, as they proved consistently through their writings and their actions, appreciated women as individuals as well as for their contribution as a gender in making Britain what it was and what it represented to the rest of the world. Yes, it is true that legally, women did not enjoy absolute equality until the end of the nineteenth century. However, it is over-simplistic to condemn the situation as blatant injustice. Too often we read the past with the distorted lenses of our own era, which has deliberately and consistently, especially since the Sixties, sought to separate itself from the values and the mindset of the nineteenth-century.

When survival depended strictly on the land and required the conjoined effort of family members, the interests of one meant truly the interests of all, within such a unit. Furthermore, as Sybil Wolfram explains, in *In-Laws and Outlaws: Kinship and Marriage in England*,

According to English thought, husband and wife are not relatives. Instead, they occupy the position of being 'as one,' or as it used to be expressed 'of one flesh.' . . . The unity of husband and wife, which might well be regarded as the centerpiece of the English kinship system, had a vast variety of aspects and implications, [such as] at marriage a husband and wife take on each other's relationships. . . A person is related in the same way and to the same degree to his or her spouse's relations as to his own, with the relationship is one of "affinity" or
'by marriage,' instead of one of consanguinity. . .[Therefore] Husband wife had the same surname. Their property was held in common. Neither could give evidence at law against the other. . . They had the same domicile whether they lived together or not. They enjoyed the same rank and status. Sexual intercourse was supposed to be confined to husband and wife. The union was to all intents and purposes for life.535

Furthermore, while in the land-based context, family units or clans shared interest and provided care for one another, there was no real need for means of supporting economic individualism. With industrialization came the possibility for diversification and affluence, which also allowed for more leisure and what we would call today "quality time." In this sense, we could say that suffrage is an outcome of advanced civilization. By "advanced civilization" must be understood a blend of moral (and religious) and intellectual progress as well as technological improvement that allows for a richer, more complex range of activities and interests. Advanced civilization also gives more freedom to the individual to develop his talents and exercise his creativity. Without annihilating the group, as the multitudes of men's and women's organizations of the period testify, it answers new needs such as those of the "surplus" of women, in second half of the century, who had to survive on their own.

While Mill certainly meant well and sought to demonstrate that legal inequality of the sexes was morally wrong and socially counter-productive for the whole of society, he assumed that marriage was, most often, essentially an economic contract, in which the man offered shelter, clothing and food, and woman the bearing of children and domestic care. Obviously, he left no room for love, despite the fact that there were so many happy marriages through the era, including his own. He also fueled his argument with sweeping generalizations, comparing, for instance, women to slaves:

Men do not want solely the obedience of women, they want their sentiments. All men, except the most brutish, desire to have, in the woman most nearly connected with them, not a forced slave but a willing one, not a slave merely, but a favourite. They have therefore put everything in practice to enslave their minds. The masters of all other slaves rely, for maintaining obedience, on fear; either fear of themselves, or religious fears. The masters of women wanted more than simple obedience, and they turned the whole force of education to effect their purpose. All women are brought up from the very earliest years in the belief that their ideal of character is the very opposite to that of men; not self will, and government by self-control, but submission, and yielding to the control of other. All the moralities tell them that it is the duty of women, and all the current sentimentalities that it is their nature, to live for others; to make complete abnegation of themselves, and to have no life but in their affections. And by their affections are meant the only ones they are allowed to have — those to the men with whom they are connected, or to the children who constitute an additional and indefeasible tie between them and a man. When we put together three things — first, the natural attraction between opposite sexes; secondly, the wife's entire dependence on the husband, every privilege or pleasure she has being either his gift, or depending entirely on his will; and lastly, that the principal object of human pursuit, consideration, and all objects of social ambition, can in general be sought or obtained by her only through him, it would be a miracle if the object of being attractive to men had not become the polar star of feminine education and formation of character.536

Few middle-class women could have recognized themselves in this melodramatic oversimplification ("All men desired . . a willing favourite"; "All women . . .are brought up in

submission," etc.). In fact there is even ground for a nineteenth-century woman to be offended in being thus reduced to either a weak simpleton (letting this enslavement overtake her because she does not realize what is being done to her or she is too feeble to prevent it) or a sort of "legalized" prostitute (who accepts this unjust contract for the material benefits attached to it). Furthermore if education is everything, as Mill seems to imply its absolute determining impact in intellectual and social behavior, then, honestly, what is a woman's vote worth? Would it not turn out to be the twin of her father, brother, or husband's vote?

As we have seen earlier in this research, through word or action, or both, women were able to achieve much, despite flaws in the legal system. It should come as no surprise that not all women agreed with Mill's way of fighting on their behalf, as a Punch cartoon illustrates. An earlier article, "The Enfranchisement of Women" had appeared in 1851 in the radical Westminster Review. It had been accidentally attributed to Mill, but its true author was Harriet Taylor, whom Mill had long loved and recently married after her first husband died. Mill in the republication of this article in 1859, clarified its authorship, but Charlotte Brontë, having died four years earlier, never saw it. We can but only admire the keenness of her perception as she had first sensed the text to be the work of a woman; independently, however, of the authorship question, her response clearly spotted what was missing in the Mills' assessment of women's emancipation:

Well-argued it is, - clear, logical, - but vast is the hiatus of omission; harsh the consequent jar on every finer chord of the soul. What is this hiatus? . . . I think the writer forgets there is such a thing as self-sacrificing love and disinterested devotion. When I first read the paper, I thought it was the work of a powerful-minded, clear-headed woman, who had a hard, jealous heart, muscles of iron, and nerves of bend leather; of a woman who longed for power, and had never felt affection. To many women affection is sweet, and power conquered indifferent - though we all like influence won. I believe J. S. Mill would make a hard, dry,

537 See illustration I
dismal world of it; and yet he speaks admirable sense through a great portion of his article - especially when he says, that if there be a natural unfitness in women for men's employment, there is no need to make laws on the subject; leave all careers open; let them try; those who ought to succeed will succeed, or, at least, will have a fair chance - the incapable will fall back into their right place. He likewise disposes of the 'maternity' question very neatly. In short, J. S. Mill's head is, I dare say, very good, but I feel disposed to scorn his heart. You are right when you say that there is a large margin in human nature over which the logicians have no dominion; glad am I that it is so.\footnote{Gaskell (Life of Brontë) 458-59.}

However, Mill's championing of women was not an isolated instance. From one end of the century to the other, examples abound. Less known to modern readers are Samuel Smiles, who, in 1840, wrote in the Leeds Time (of which he was the editor) the article, "Why Are not Women Enfranchised?" and Charles Kingsley, who published "Women and Politics" the same year as Mill's Subjection of Women. Like Sarah Lewis, Smiles had read Martin's The Education of Mothers of Families and believed that the world could be reformed "not through the masculine agency of politics, but through the feminine agency of motherhood." As Alex Tyrell explains in "Samuel Smiles and the Woman Question in Early Victorian Britain," to Smiles and those likely-minded, women had, from the home, the potential to be the great reformers of British society\footnote{Tyrell, Alex, "Samuel Smiles and the Woman Question in Early Victorian Britain." The Journal of British Studies. Vol. 39, No. 2. April 2000, pp. 185-216. Tyrell's article, though interesting in that it reveals a facet of Samuel Smiles that is not very well known, is also frustrating because Tyrell sees a contradiction between Smiles' position when he was a young man and in the 1880s and 90s, which I don't believe exists. It is true that Smiles objected to radical feminism, but that was no contradiction, nor is it, as Tyrell implies, a mark of senility on Smiles' part. Many women, including those in favor or higher education and of the vote for women, denounced the suffragettes precisely because they saw them as not merely "going too far" but betraying the feminine ideals to which the suffragists adhered.}. Before scoffers begin to dismiss this view as just another way to keep women outside of the political arena, they should pause and consider that there are two ways to reform society: by outside pressure--legislation that imposes changes--or through the opposite movement, starting
with the individual and spreading to the group, the nation, the world. Although this latter strategy seems utopian to many, it is generally the most effective. For instance, today legislation or state programs have failed so far to replace effectively what a Bible-based education had accomplished prior to WWII, when even during the Depression there were less occurrences of theft than there are now. To Martin, Lewis, Smiles and countless more through the nineteenth-century, moral and social influence were to function in concentric circles; like a rock thrown into the water ripples its surface outward until the whole body of water is moved, so was home, woman's special domain, in harmony with man's public sphere, believed capable of achieving benefic and lasting changes. For that purpose men were to help women, through better education especially, reach the full dimension of what God intended them to be and men and women were work together as "companions and equals."

Shorter but no less eloquent than Mill's *Subjection*, Kingsley's article fully shares Mill's convictions that women should have the suffrage. The tone is gentler, even seasoned with humor, but it denounces no less firmly all acts and writings hostile to women through history as expressions of ignorance and "unreason." Kingsley, however, credits the gradual improvement of woman's station to the civilizing influence of Christianity, and particularly since the Reformation. He gives special recognition to Shakespeare's plays for placing "the conception of woman and of the rights of woman on a vantage-ground from which I believe it can never permanently fall again –at least until (which God forbid) true manhood has died out of England." Not only does he make a convincing case for the justice and common sense of granting women, especially single women, the right to vote and even to be elected as Members of Parliament, he also gives us an idea of the range of women's occupations and of men's recognition of their competence in these activities:

540 Tyrell 215.
541 More than one example in favor of women can be found in Shakespeare, whether it is Portia's wisdom or the erudition of Miranda whose education has been entirely under the direct supervision of her father Prospero, himself a scholar.
If it be said that Nature and Fact (arguments grounded on aught else are to be left to monks and mediæval jurists) prove that women are less able than men to keep a house over their head, or to manage their property, the answer is that Fact is the other way. Women are just as capable as men of managing a large estate, a vast wealth. Mr. Mill gives a fact which surprised even him—that the best administered Indian States were those governed by women who could neither read nor write, and were confined all their lives to the privacy of the harem. And any one who knows the English upper classes must know more than one illustrious instance—besides that of Miss Burdett Coutts. . .—in which a woman has proved herself able to use wealth and power as well, or better, than most men. The woman at least is not likely, by gambling, horseracing, and profligacy, to bring herself and her class to shame. Women, too, in every town keep shops. Is there the slightest evidence that these shops are not as well managed, and as remunerative, as those kept by men?—unless, indeed, as too often happens, poor Madame has her Mantalini and his vices to support, as well as herself and her children. As for the woman's power of supporting herself and keeping up at least a lodging respectably, can any one have lived past middle age without meeting dozens of single women, or widows, of all ranks, who do that, and do it better and more easily than men, because they do not, like men, require wine, beer, tobacco, and sundry other luxuries?542

This excerpt confirms indeed that middle-class women possessed, and used, the means to influence society. The scale of their impact, whether with a small business or a large estate, may have varied, but the acumen and efficiency they demonstrated were obviously a common fixture of the nineteenth-century social landscape for Kingsley to mention these examples as simple reminders to his audience.

Men in favor of the women's vote, though little mentioned today, were a felt reality then, as Lesley Hall comments in his review of *The Men's Share? Masculinities, Male Support, and Women Suffrage in Britain 1890-1920*: "A significant number of influential upper middle-class professional men—writers, artists, lawyers, academics, scientists, clergymen, medical men and politicians—gave active support to the struggle for woman's suffrage, as did a number of socialists and other privileged men."543 Like women's suffrage, other instances of male support reached national proportions whether we think of Queen Caroline, who clearly emerged as the victim of her villainous husband,544 of Elizabeth Fry and her prison reform, of Florence Nightingale, or of Josephine Butler's male supporters in her crusade for the repeal of the Contagious Disease Acts. Most women received, at least during their lifetime, recognition of more modest proportions, but which reflects nonetheless that they were accepted and respected by men. When Hannah More was first invited to join Johnson's select circle of friends, for instance, he greeted her by reciting an excerpt from one of her recently published poems. The simple fact that a man of such literary stature and fame saw no debasement not only in accepting this young woman as one of his friends, but in showing his genuine appreciation of her talents and of her works, leaves no doubt that intelligent women had nothing to fear from intelligent men, even powerful ones.545 In fact, Kingsley denounces the assumption that spinsters are lesser women as the prejudice of "silly boys and wicked old men" and quite emphatically objects that

The franchise is considered as something so important and so sacred that the most virtuous, the most pious, the most learned, the most wealthy, the most benevolent, the most justly powerful woman, is refused it, as something too

544 Although Caroline's life lacked immaculate behavior or admirable intellectual or social achievements, George IV's undignified as well as uncharitable treatment of her darkened further his already tarnished public image while correspondingly heightening that of the wife he had tried so hard to discredit. Her death soon afterwards prevented any chance for either of them to alter these images.
precious for her; and yet it is entrusted, freely and hopefully, to any illiterate, drunken, wife-beating ruffian who can contrive to keep a home over his head,' is equally unjust and absurd.⁵⁴⁶

*Punch* endorses the same view in a cartoon that further underscores that the question of worth and possible superiority between men and women lies less in difference of gender than in degree of education, moral principles, and common sense.⁵⁴⁷

2. Friendship

We find the same genuine support repeated in various contexts with little variances at the level of individual relationships. Fanny (Burney) d'Arblay also enjoyed Johnson's friendship; Elizabeth Fry had won the respect and trust of the King of Prussia, both as a ruler and as a friend; Kingsley and Gladstone esteemed Josephine Butler and shared her concerns; the list could go on. In *Family, Love, and Work in the Lives of Victorian Gentlewomen*, Jeanne Peterson, one of the rare scholars who dares to go against the grain in her depiction of the nineteenth-century British gentlewoman, points out that genuine friendship existed at all levels between men and women of the middle-class:

The classic dinner scene. . .—men together after dinner with port and cigars, women retiring to separate social space—may stand as a metaphor for the presumed segregation of men and women in the Victorian era. . . within families and among a family's friends, such segregation did not hold: fathers and daughters, mothers and sons, sisters and brothers, and women and men in groups participated together in educational and social activities—from Latin lessons to cricket games. But one-to-one relations between the sexes, we have assumed, must only have taken place between suitor and courted, or between husband and wife. On the contrary. . . friendships and close associations between men and

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⁵⁴⁶ Kingsley 12.
⁵⁴⁷ See illustration II
women were common, but up to now these relationships have had almost no attention.\textsuperscript{548}

Peterson gives numerous examples of friendship between men and women, which she distributes into two groups: friendship between age peers and mentorships between either older men and younger women or older women and younger men. Although her study focuses on the Victorian period, her observation applies to the whole century.

A. Fanny Burney and Samuel Crisp

Although Samuel Crisp was first a friend of Charles Burney, Fanny's (Frances) father, she was about seven years old when the two men met again after a long separation due to the demands of their respective lives. Crisp played an important role in helping the Burney family overcome their depression after the death of Fanny's mother and he soon became a second father to Fanny, who called him "Daddy Crisp." The Burneys lived in London but they often visited Crisp who resided in the country at Chesington Hall (Surrey), which they nicknamed "Liberty Hall." In fact, for both father and daughter, it must have been an inspiring setting for they wrote significant portions of their works there. Despite the forty-five years in age that separated them, Fanny and Crisp obviously enjoyed a strong friendship, in which they seem to have been totally free with each other, even joking as equals. He called her affectionately his "Fannikin" and relished her long journal-letters. These also enhanced Fanny's writing and, no doubt, contributed to help her overcome her shyness (aggravated by poor eyesight). In her early diaries, Fanny writes, "I long to hear how my dear, dear, beloved Mr. Crisp does. My papa always mentions him by the name of my Flame. Indeed, he is not mistaken–himself is the only man on earth I

\textsuperscript{548} Peterson, Jeanne, \textit{Family, Love, and Work in the Lives of Victorian Gentlewomen}, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989) 68. Peterson's study focuses on "one circle of upper-middle-class women, linked by ties of family, friendship, and work, [whose] families were involved in. . . the law, the Church, the universities, the upper ranks of medicine, and occasionally in business or land-owning." However, as she explained, the truths she discovers through that circle apply to the larger circle of educated (or "upper") middle-class society. I must say that I have found her work an example of refreshing common sense and academic honesty.
prefer to him." Later, when she revealed to him, after she had made him listen to a reading of "Evelina, that she was the author of it, he exclaimed that she was "a young Hell-fire" for "drawing him in to read and praise it unawares." (175) Crisp, of course, was not the only male admirer of Evelina; beside her own father, Burke, Johnson, and Joshua Reynolds also praised her work. If she did keep the secret of her novel until it was published, Fanny consulted Crisp on practically everything else from writing in general, to finances or deportment. She even asked his opinion about some of her suitors (ODNB). In fact, several critics have recognized Crisp and Fanny in Evelina and Mr. Villars, who, coincidentally, communicate through letters in the novel. Crisp also encouraged Fanny to not discard spontaneity, as her writing was enriched by practice and experience:

If once You set about framing studied letters, that are to be correct, nicely grammatical & run in smooth Periods I shall mind them as no others than newspapers of intelligence; I make this preface because You have needlessly enjoin'd me to deal sincerely, & to tell you there is no fault in an Epistolary Correspondence, like stiffness, & study – Dash away, whatever comes uppermost – the sudden sallies of imagination, clap'd down on paper, Just as they arise, are worth Folios, & have all the warmth and merit of that sort of Nonsense, that Is Eloquent in Love – never think of it being correct, when you write to me.

When confronted with women of the nineteenth century who do not fit the stereotype of "oppressed" women, revisionist advocates usually argue that these cases were exceptions. There

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550 When we consider that the Hell-fire Club had an infamous reputation of debauchery, we can see that 1) Crisp was not overly careful about offending Fanny's womanly delicacy and 2) she was neither ignorant of the reputation of that club, nor was she offended, knowing well that Crisp was only speaking figuratively.
551 Laura Hinkley in Ladies of Literature consecrates a chapter to Fanny Burney. Although she makes sweeping assessments as to Burney as a woman writer in a literary world that Hinkley sees as the exclusive domain of man until then, which is preposterous, Hinkley also draws from Burney's works and diaries as well as from biographies of Burney and Johnson and offers valuable anecdotal references.
552 Burney 268.
are two problems with this dismissal: one, the number of these women within the context of literature alone–by this I mean women who left their mark in print–goes far beyond what is generally understood as "exception." The scholarly website *A Celebration of Women Writers* has on record for the period 1800-1900 in England, 885 women writers of various fame and literary output. And the list does not pretend to be exhaustive, so it clearly demonstrates that women certainly had voice and influence (even the works of the most humble among them had to be read by contemporaries at least once). Second, these women did not necessarily start out with uncommon advantages of birth, connections, or fortune that set them apart. Many, if not most, had humble origins, but in either case, it was only really their talents and perseverance that gained them the recognition they deserved.

B. Jane Austen and her Brothers

Jane Austen's background was humble enough. With eight children, George Austen, her father, was far from being a wealthy man and had to tutor students in order to augment his income. What is more important is that Jane had a happy family life, enjoying closeness both with her parents and her siblings, and that most of them, including her father, enjoyed the reading of novels. As Audrey Hawkridge reminds us, "in most households it would be the men who read while the women sewed, and it must have been the same in the Austen home, for Jane sets scenes like that in nearly all her books." Partly because of Mr. Austen's clerical responsibilities and social place in their community, Jane had an active social life; however, most young women of her class experienced a similar situation. While her talent metamorphosed her observations into stories and witty analysis of characters, the men in her family encouraged her writing. Her father was a particular blessing in her life for he blended the qualities of the scholar (who possessed more than five hundred volumes in his library) with those of a kind man, a devoted husband, and

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an attentive father who encouraged creativity and individualism in his children. Cassandra
Austen, Jane's mother, seems to have been gifted with a sense of humor, which we find in Jane as
well.554 George Austen was, in fact, so delighted with his daughter's writing that it was he who
undertook to submit First Impressions (before it became Pride and Prejudice) to a publisher.

Hawkridge argues that Jane's brothers were the most influential men in her life. Perhaps;
although, since Jane was thirty when her father died–well passed the malleable years of early
childhood—it is very likely that father and brothers contributed to encourage her talents.
However, as Hawkridge points out, "It can be no coincidence that the heroes of Jane's major
works are two landed gentlemen, two clergymen and a naval officer. . .[and in Sense and
Sensibility] the two heroines join hand with yet another clergyman and a colonel –one of the
armed services merely being exchanged for the other."555 Henry, her third brother, seems to have
been particularly close to her. He was extremely proud of her, read her novels with genuine
interest, and dealt with publishers. Some might be tempted to attribute to brotherly affection the
words he wrote for Jane's tomb; this is undoubtedly true of the last part of the text, which openly
relates to the family's grief at such a loss, but the central paragraph is clearly a public recognition
of her talents and her magnetic personality: "The benevolence of her heart, the sweetness of her
temper, and the extraordinary endowments of her mind obtained the regard of all who knew
her."556 We owe to the same blend of affection and critical appreciation of her work his successful
effort in having Jane Austen's last novels published posthumously with as preface a first
biographical sketch of the author.557 No less significant is the plaque that was added later, in
1872, after Edward Austen Leigh wrote his Memoir. It assimilates her personality and her works
with the woman of Proverbs 31:26: "She opens her mouth with wisdom and in her tongue is the

554 Hawkridge 51-52.
555 Hawkridge 51.
556 Le Faye 101.
557 Charlotte Brontë demonstrated the same affection and concern for the publication of her sisters' works. In both cases, those who knew the writer best wanted to leave their first-hand experience to posterity and preserve future generations from the misleading of more removed accounts, more likely to betray rather than portray the truth.
law of kindness," thus setting Jane Austen's recognition within the larger context of her message as addressed to a Christian readership and nation. She is honored both as a woman writer and a faithful Christian steward, but, most importantly, the value of her writings transcends her gender; that is to say that her contemporaries (through the nineteenth century) honored her not because she was a great woman, but because she was a talented write, since *Pride and Prejudice* was a success well before the identity of its author was revealed. Henry's own enthusiasm for his sister's genius got out of hand at one point, and he could not keep the secret of her anonymity when he heard *Pride and Prejudice* praised publicly.\(^{558}\) Although the closeness of the siblings was so strong that he was soon forgiven his indiscretion, Jane praised another brother, Frank, one of the two naval officers among the Austen sons, for respecting her wishes better than Henry did:

"I know it is all done from affection and partiality–but at the same time, let me here again express to you and Mary my sense of the *superior* kindness which you have shewn on the occasion, in doing what I wished." \(^{559}\)

Male admiration for Jane Austen was not limited to her family. A surgeon who had helped Henry through a dangerous illness and had become his friend in the process, was an avid reader of Jane Austen's works. He arranged, since he knew the Prince's librarian at Carlton House, James Clarke, for Jane to have a tour of the library. The Prince Regent himself was a "fan" of Austen and possessed a set of her novels in each of his residences. Obviously, Austen's works triggered enthusiasm among men as well as women; however, the outcome of this privileged visit was of mixed success since Jane despised "Prinny" for his shabby treatment of Princess Caroline. She complied in dedicating *Emma* to the Prince Regent, but firmly declined to take up his suggestion of writing something about the House of Cobourg, which shows that this "weak" spinster knew her own mind and could not be led into doing what she really did not want

\(^{558}\) Le Faye 73.  
\(^{559}\) Hawkridge 83. Mary was Frank's first wife.
The fact that Jane found inspiration in her brothers for some of her most endearing characters reflects not only bonds of affection among siblings but also, I believe, her appreciation of the respect in which they held her. Frank, for instance, shared similarities with Captain Harville in *Persuasion*, as both adapted to life on land with ease—both, for example, enjoyed woodworking\(^{561}\)—as well as with Captain Wentworth, as both men were equally capable of extreme self-control. Charles, like Admiral Croft, took his wife with him aboard his ship.\(^{562}\) It was also Charles who brought his sisters topaz crosses, as William Price brings Fanny an amber one. These little parallels contribute to underscore the mutual appreciation that existed between men and women in the Austen family. Another detail deserves to be reported in this context: Jane, then working on *Mansfield Park*, wrote Frank a letter to let him know that she had mentioned the names of some of his ships in her novel, but added, "I *have* done it, but it shall not stay, to make you angry." Hawkridge muses that obviously it did not upset Frank since the *Elephant* and the *Canopus* appear in the text, as well as Charles' *Endymion* and *Cleopatra*. Maybe there is nothing more here than friendly banter between siblings, but I would suggest another, far more serious, possibility. If we take into account that England was at war with France, and that, then as now, names and whereabouts of war ships and positions were military secrets subject to strict rules, it is possible that Jane was making certain that it was all right to make such references in her novel. In this case, her simple remark would reveal two important things: one, Jane was following closely her brothers' careers within the context of the fight against Napoleon\(^{563}\)—this I do not doubt for an instant— and two, she was aware that very little

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\(^{560}\) Hawkridge 76-78.  
\(^{561}\) Hawkridge 80.  
\(^{562}\) Unlike Mrs. Croft and Ann herself who enjoy a long partnership with their respective husbands however, Charles' first wife, Fanny, died in childbirth along with their fourth baby daughter.  
\(^{563}\) We know, for instance, that Frank had captured a French ship, *La Ligurienne*, in 1800 against great odds, had participated in the blockade of Boulogne (whence Napoleon had initially planned to launch his attack against England), and had, under Nelson's command, pursued the French fleet across the ocean.
could be divulged about them in her novels, which further underscores her deliberate choice to make very limited allusions to contemporary events, as Deirdre Le Faye notes as well.\textsuperscript{564} It was not that Jane Austen "knew nothing" of the harsher side of life, but that she preferred, among other reasons, the freedom of studying character to making allusions to military or political events that could be potentially harmful to those in combat. Would that twenty-first century reporters have the same scruples today!

C. Marianne North, the Globetrotter

For Marianne North, it was her father who was her great mentor and friend. It is true that since Frederick North was a wealthy magistrate and several-time elected MP, she had material advantages on her side. However, her two greatest assets were her happy and enriching childhood and her passion for the world's flora, for the painting of which she proved willing to brave nearly anything. From childhood, she had traveled through Europe with her family. The death of her mother in 1855 brought her even closer to her father, and in 1864, after her sister's marriage, Marianne and Frederick North went farther abroad yet, to Turkey and Egypt, together. In her memoirs, Marianne says that her father was "the one idol and friend of my life, and apart from him, I had little pleasure and no secret." Frederick North had done more than encourage his daughter to pursue her artistic talents; he had introduced her to some of his friends who shared the same interests as she. Among them, Sir William and Sir Joseph Hooker, successive directors of the Kew Royal Botanical Gardens, the botanist George Bentham, and Sir Edward Sabine, president of the Royal Society, were particularly supportive; later, she counted among her male friends men as different as Charles Kingsley and Charles Darwin, Edward Lear, or President Ulysses Grant. Significantly, Marianne relates that she and her father often visited Kew and that, on one occasion, William Hooker gave her "a hanging bunch of the \textit{Amheristia nobilis}, one of the and back as it tried to escape to the West Indies (shortly before Trafalgar). Nelson himself had spoken of Frank in laudatory terms ("[Captain Austen] is an excellent young man").

\textsuperscript{564} Le Faye 58.
greatest flowers in existence. It was the first that had bloomed in England, and made me long more and more to see the tropics. We often talked of going if ever my father had a holiday long enough.\textsuperscript{565} Although the death of her father was a terrible blow to her, Marianne was not one to let grief annihilate her usefulness, so she invested herself more fully in her daring project.

Provided with letters of introduction from Charles Kingsley and others, she first embarked for the United States and Canada in 1871, and continued to travel all over the world, literally, until 1884. Sometimes, she spent as much as a full year in one place (Jamaica, India, Australia). She usually traveled alone; with easel and palettes, she was truly, as Dorothy Middleton depicts her, "a painter who travelled, rather than a traveler who painted."\textsuperscript{566} Sometimes, she stayed at government houses and embassies, but she was just as content to live in less sophisticated conditions, as we can see from the account of her arrival in Jamaica:

I saw a house half-hidden amongst the glorious foliage of the long-deserted botanical gardens of the first settlers, and on inquiry found I could hire it entirely for four pounds a month. . . So I did hire it, and also the furniture for one bedroom. I put all but the bed and washstand in the long outside veranda, which . . . opens to the lovely view. . . I gave eighteenpence for a huge bunch of bananas, and hung it up instead of a chandelier from the roof of the veranda. The man who sold it to me could barely lift it; there were more than ninety bananas on it. They began ripening from the top downwards, so I ate my way steadily on, till one day the string gave way, and they came down with a crash and had to be given to the pigs.\textsuperscript{567}

With a couple of old servants, she could thus devote herself to painting with enthusiasm, as she

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{565} North, Marianne. Recollections of a Happy Life, Being the Autobiography of Marianne North, Edited by her Sister Mrs. John Addington Symonds, (London, 1892) 31. \textsuperscript{566} Interestingly, Dorothy Middleton wrote both the ODNB article, "North, Marianne (1830-1890), Painter and Traveller," and Victorian Lady Travellers. New York: Academy Chicago, 1982 (first published in 1965), which retells the adventures of seven British and American women of fearless determination. \textsuperscript{567} North 82.}
explained, "I was in a sort of ecstasy, and hardly knew what to paint first." When she was not
staying at her ramshackle residence, Marianne lodged at the Governor's cottage. The Governor,
Sir John Peter Grant, although he was an irascible Scotchman, hard-working, who demanded
much of himself and of those in his employ, told her "to come and go just as it suited me, and to
consider the house my home. He never took any more notice of me, and I did as I was told, and
felt he had treated me in the way I liked best. He is always my ideal of a 'Governor.' I begged to
be left off formal breakfasts, went out after my cup of tea at sunrise as I did at home, and worked
until noon."568

From these remarks, it is clear that not only could the nineteenth-century woman--were
she so inclined--travel the world much as a man would, but she was also accepted by men in
doing so. In this particular case, it seems that the Governor treated Marianne much as he would
have a male equal, and she appreciated it, whereas a woman more interested in society life could
not, in all probability, have understood Marianne's choice or Grant's lack of protocol toward her.
Therefore, differences could be, in this respect, more a matter of inclinations and personal
interests than a question of gender. Marianne North was extraordinarily adaptable and energetic
which, given the life she had chosen, was not only a good thing569, but generated respect from
men who knew the dangers and difficulties of the regions in which she ventured. She was very
practical as well, as we can see in her account from Sarawak, whose mater-of-fact tone is not
without a touch of humor:

The Rajah lent me a cook, a soldier, and a boy, gave me a lot of bread, a coopful
of chickens, and packed us all into a canoe, in which we pulled through small
canals and forests nearly all day, then landed at a village, and walked up 700 feet
of beautiful zigzag road. . . Life was delicious up there. I stayed until I had eaten

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568 North 83-87.
569 I do not mean by this comment that she was unique. Her courage, determination,
resourcefulness, and optimism were common to all, women and men, who embarked in such a life, as
Middleton's book shows. However, not all women felt called to such life.
all the chickens, and the last remains of my bread had turned blue; then. . . I came
down again, my soldier using his fine long sword to decapitate the leeches which
stuck to me by the way.570

The Ranee of Sarawak (the Rajah's wife), Lady Margaret Brooke, who also wrote an account of
her life there, accompanied Marianne on one of her expeditions and describes her guest as totally
careless of conventions, "with skirts kilted up to her knees, and heel-less Wellington boots as
though born for the Borneo jungles."571

Between journeys, Marianne returned to England long enough to visit her adoring family,
nurse one of her cousins, learn how to etch on copper, set up an exhibit of her work, or design,
finance, and organize the North Gallery at Kew in which her paintings can still be viewed
today.572 Marianne, who also painted the decorative borders around the door of the gallery,
arranged the paintings by continents, labeled them, and wrote a detailed catalogue of them.
Having discovered that she was a little short in pictures from Africa, she sailed there, on what
turned out to be her last trip, to paint the needed items. She returned successful and after the
opening of the gallery was at last convinced to remained in England until her death in 1890.

D. Mary Ward and Theodore Roosevelt

Mary Ward, whom we have encountered earlier, enjoyed the respect of men first within
the intellectual surroundings of Oxford; then her fame grew through her prodigious literary
output, her involvement in women's superior education, and her social work with the
establishment of the Passmore Edwards Settlement (known today as Mary Ward House, or
Center). She is certainly among the most striking illustrations of the fact that men recognized and
honored women in the nineteenth century, even though, in this particular case we are dealing with
the very end of the period under scrutiny, which closed with the Great War.

570 North 243.
571 Middleton ODNB.
572 See illustrations III.
In 1908, Mary Ward visited the United States and Canada. Although, as Esther Smith explains in her biography, she was acclaimed in both countries, she was shocked by the American divorce laws, which clashed with her deep Anglican convictions. The matter was so important to her that she wrote as a response, *Daphné* or *Marriage à la Mode*, in 1909—a critique of divorce as well as of woman's suffrage. However, the most important event of that visit was her meeting with President Theodore Roosevelt, at the White House. It is rather amusing to picture the encounter of such different personalities, but nonetheless, the forceful American and the quieter British lady got along famously. In a letter to her son, Mary reported:

> After dinner he [Roosevelt] sent word that I was to sit by him in the ballroom, at the little concert which followed, and when the music was over, he and I plunged into all sorts of things, ending up with religion and theology! Last night he talked politics, socialism, divorce, large and small families, the Kaiser, Randolph Churchill, the future of wealth of this country... the future of marriage and a few other trifles of the same kind. He is, of course, an egotist, but an extraordinarily well-meaning and able one...  

Sutherland reports that Roosevelt "had coolly informed the German Kaiser that he could spare him only twenty minutes, because he had an appointment with Mrs. Humphry Ward." When WWI broke out, Roosevelt, though no longer president by then, "believed that the English were fighting a just war." He condemned President Woodrow Wilson's reassurances to the American public and wrote a short book in 1915 titled, *Why America Should Join the Allies*. Roosevelt

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573 *Daphné* is the British title; *Marriage à la Mode*, the American one.  
576 Although Wilson is usually credited as the originator of the League of Nations to maintain world peace, Roosevelt outlined the principles of such an organization in this little work.
was convinced that this was a case "when force is required to back up righteousness."

He bluntly criticized Wilson and Taft's lack of foresight in thinking that the conflict was not an American concern:

Such utterances show fatuous indifference to the teachings of history. They represent precisely the attitude which a century ago led to the burning of Washington by a small expeditionary hostile force, and to such paralyzing disaster in war as almost to bring about the break-up of the Union. . . If during its last ten years England's attitude toward preparedness for war and the upbuilding of her navy had been determined by statesmanship such as is set forth in these utterances of President Wilson, the island would now be trampled into bloody mire, as Belgium has been trampled.

What is striking in this context of politics and world conflict is that the one person Roosevelt trusted to "tilt the scales" and help to convince Americans to join the war, was a woman. In 1916, he wrote to her:

My Dear Mrs. Ward --The war has been, on the whole, well presented in America from the French side. We do not think justice has been done to the English side. . . . I wish that some writer like yourself could, in a series of articles, put vividly before our people what the English people are doing, what the actual life of the men in the trenches is, what is actually being done by the straight and decent capitalist, who is not concerned with making a profit, but with serving his country. . . . What I would like our people to visualize is the effort, the resolution and the self-sacrifice of the English men and women who are determined to see

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578 Roosevelt 51-52. The work is prefaced by Stanhope Sprigg, "formerly New York correspondent to the London Standard" who concluded, rather prophetically, "Time alone will show whether they [Mr. Roosevelt's words] have been strong enough to light the torch that will guide the consciences of American politicians into the obvious paths of International Rectitude and Justice."
this war through. Just at present England is in much the same strait as we were in our Civil War toward the end of 1862. . . when men as diverse as Gladstone, Carlyle, . . Marquis of Salisbury were all strongly against us. There is not a human being more fitted to present this matter as it should be presented than you are. I do hope you will undertake the task. --- Faithfully Yours, Theodore Roosevelt.  

Mary Ward's first reaction was to consult friends and officials at the Government Propaganda Department, and they, also, took Roosevelt's letter very seriously. Some American newspapers continued, indeed, to be critical of England and denounced her "blunders, slackers, and shirkers" which was rather frustrating, to say the least, to the British, and to all those concerned by the war, especially since England was producing guns and supplies for the French troops as well as for her own forces. Mary then had an interview with the Foreign Minister, Sir Edward Grey. As she was more than willing to invest herself in this effort, she outlined the project that was already forming in her head, "beginning with the unpreparedness of England. . .the utter absence of any wish for war in this country, or thought of war." The same day she had lunch with Lloyd George, then Minister of Munitions, who not only arranged for her visit of the munition centers, but coordinated meetings on her behalf with the Admiralty and the War Office. Within two weeks from receiving the letter, Mary was ready for her mission. She visited the centers, but also the fleet. Officers treated her with respect, understanding, and kindness--indeed, for this woman in her sixties--the first female war reporter--the task with which she had been entrusted was both thrilling and daunting. After her death, General Hastings Anderson wrote to Janet Trevelyan (Mary's daughter and biographer) referring to Mary Ward's third book:

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579 Trevelyan 268-69. The letter is presented here almost in its entirety for its importance.  
580 Although "propaganda" has long been considered a synonym of "distortion," "brain-washing," in short of "political lies," at best meant to boost morale, I believe that in the present case the original definition of the word, which is to "propagate, diffuse information" is more accurate. Roosevelt did not ask Mary ward to lie, but to report and describe the situation as it was from a eyewitness' direct account.  
581 Trevelyan 270-71.
A gifted writer who did so much to bring home to the ignorant the whole significance of our effort in the war; but also a great Englishwoman. . . What strikes me most in your mother's book is her marvelous insight into the way of thinking of the soldiers. . . who were actually engaged in the great struggle. . . and with knowledge of the thoughts of the high directing staffs. This is no compliment; it can only come from the trained expression of a very deep sympathy, and complete understanding. . . the completed book and its predecessors are a very precious legacy. . .

Three books resulted from Roosevelt's request: England's Effort in 1916, Towards the Goal in 1917, and Fields of Victory in 1919. Chronicles of history, sustained by facts and figures, these accounts are also profoundly humane. England's Effort is written under the form of a collection of letters sent to an American friend, "H." These letters describe the spirit of the war effort in which men and women invested themselves so fully that distinctions of class, and even gender, disappeared as, in factories, women filled the positions vacated by men gone to fight, and produced shells and canons. Other women served as nurses:

As to the work of our women, I have described something of it in the munitions area. . . the army of maidens, who, as V. A. D.'s (members of Voluntary Aid Detachments), trained by the Red Cross, have come trooping from England's most luxurious or comfortable homes, and are doing invaluable work in hundreds of hospitals; to begin with, the most menial scrubbing and dish-washing, and by now the more ambitious and honourable—but not more indispensable—tasks of nursing itself.

Mary also blends cameos of insight in her personal life with the situation in England in general,

582 Trevelyan 302.
which underscores the spirit of unity between the nation and her, its reporter:

At the present moment my only son is a member of the English House of Commons, and a soldier fighting in the war. All my younger kinsfolk are fighting; the sons of all my friends are fighting; and their daughters are nursing as members of Voluntary Aid Detachments. . . or working week-end shifts to relieve munition workers, or replacing men of military age in the public offices and banks. I live . . . within five miles of one of the military camps. The small towns near us are crowded with soldiers; the roads are full of marching infantry, of artillery-trains and supply-wagons. Our village has sent practically all its able-bodied men of military age to the front; the few that remain are . . . only waiting to be called up. A great movement . . . is now beginning to put women on the land, and so replace the agricultural labourers who have gone either into the armies or the munition factories. And meanwhile all the elderly men and women of the countryside are sitting on War Committees, or working for the Red Cross. Our lives are penetrated by the war; our thoughts are never free from it.

There are numerous passages that are absolutely wrenching, and I could not read them dry-eyed. At least one of Mary’s nephews died in the war; Roosevelt himself was to lose his youngest son when his plane was shot down. Mary, who went to visit the field in France, closes England’s Effort with the last letter of a young British officer:

I am writing this letter to you just before going into action to-morrow morning about dawn. I am about to take part in the biggest battle that has yet been fought in France, and one which ought to help to end the war very quickly. I never felt more confident or cheerful in my life before, and would not miss the attack for anything on earth. The men are in splendid form, and every officer and man is more happy and cheerful than I have ever seen them. I have just been playing a rag game of football in which the umpire had a revolver and a whistle. My idea
in writing this letter is in case I am one of the 'costs,' and get killed. I do not expect to be; but such things have happened, and are always possible. It is impossible to fear death out here; when one is no longer an individual, but a member of a regiment and of an army. To be killed means nothing to me, and it is only you who suffer for it; you really pay the cost.

I have been looking at the stars, and thinking what an immense distance they are away. What an insignificant thing the loss of, say, forty years of life is compared with them! It seems scarcely worth talking about. Well, good-bye, you darlings. Try not to worry about it, and remember that we shall meet again really quite soon. This letter is going to be posted if...

Mary adds, "The letter was posted. But its message of Death is also a message of Victory," and she bravely reminds her readers that they "must read it, if one can, dry-eyed. Not tears, but a steeled will, a purer heart, are what it asks of those for whom the writer died."

This contribution of Mary Ward to the war effort was translated in several languages and had a tremendous impact in the U.S. As America had entered the war in 1917, Mary Ward wrote on Christmas Eve, 1917:

> The heart of the world is set on peace. But for us, the Allies, in whose hands lies the infant hope of the future, it must be a peace worthy of our dead and of their sacrifice. "Let us gird up the loins of our minds. In due time we shall reap, if we faint not." And meanwhile across the western ocean America, through these winter days, sends incessantly the long procession of her men and ships to the help of the Old World and an undying cause. Silently they come, for there are powers of evil lying in wait for them. But "still they come." The air thickens, as it were with the sense of an ever-gathering host. On this side, and on that, it is the
Army of Freedom, and of Judgment.\textsuperscript{584}

In \textit{Towards the Goal}, she credited Roosevelt openly for inviting her to undertake her task, and Roosevelt himself wrote the preface of this second volume. His esteem for Mary Ward is plain to see in the following excerpt:

Mrs. Ward shows us the people of England in the act of curing their own ills. . .

Even the Napoleonic contest was child's play compared to this. Never has Great Britain been put to such a test. Never since the spacious days of Elizabeth has she been in such danger. Never, in any crisis, has she risen to so lofty a height of self-sacrifice and achievement. . . Mrs. Ward's book is thus of high value as a study of contemporary history.\textsuperscript{585}

For the writing of this second work, Mary Ward traveled through the British military zone, to Paris, and to some of the areas devastated by the heavy artillery shelling and fighting, like Senlis. Finally the war ended, but Roosevelt died before the publication of her third volume, \textit{Fields of Victory}. In this work, she returns to the now quiet battlefields and reflects on the war, on the role played by the British Empire, and on the future. Despite all the sacrifices and sufferings endured, Mary closes with an appeal imbued with Christian charity:

But perhaps the greatest problem of all is the ethical one. How long shall we keep our wrath? Germany has done things in this war which shame civilization, and seem to make a mockery of all ideas of human progress. But yet! –we must still believe in them; or the sun will go out in heaven. We must still believe that in the long run hatred kills the civilized mind. . . the Christian idea of a common fellowship of man holds as never before. And both the Christian idea and common sense tell us that till there is again some sort of international life in Europe, Europe will be unsound and her wounds unhealed. We call it impossible.

\textsuperscript{584} Ward, Mary.  \textit{A Writer's Recollections}. (New York: Harper Brothers,1918) 260.
But the good man, the just man, the merciful man is still among us, and '– What he wills, he does;/ and does so much/ That proof is called impossibility.'

As Esther Smith points out, Mary Ward's war reports as well as the novels she wrote at that time also invited her contemporaries to reflect upon "deeper things – the responsibility of privilege, the response of men to warfare, the essential importance of individuals over international maneuvers."  

We could cite other examples of manifest recognition of women by men. For instance, Bishop Porteus writing to Hannah More as "My Dear Mrs. Chip," having recognized her as the true author of the anti-Jacobin pamphlet, "'Village Politics,' by Will Chip" and congratulating her for being the "wife" of "one of the finest writers of the age", or Marie Corelli, who was the only writer in Britain invited to Edward VII's coronation in 1901. Corelli also used her writing talents to support the war effort with numerous articles, which she later published collected in book form in 1919, under the title My"Little Bit". However, although she had the esteem and friendship of many men, including Mark Twain, her war articles, varied and interesting as they are, were entirely of her initiative. Her title is also rather unfortunate as it comes across as conceited; then again, despite her genuine talent and attractive personality, Corelli seemed to have always kept in mind the importance of appearances.

Mary Sumner, wife of Archdeacon and Suffragan bishop, George Henry Sumner, developed, in the context of her duties as a clergyman wife, while her husband was yet only a rector, a concern to help wives and mothers in her parish to deepen their "spiritual lives through Bible reading, prayer, and fellowship." She began to organize groups of "cottage mothers" in

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588 Green-Armytage 21.


590 See illustrations V
1876. This grew and in 1885, the Bishop of Newcastle, Ernest Wilberforce, asked her to address the Church Congress in Portsmouth. The Mothers' Union thus became a diocesan organization that spread through the United Kingdom. It counted 60,000 members by 1892, 169,000 by 1900, and has now 3,600,000 members from seventy-eight countries, with only 300 paid workers worldwide. The goal of the organization continues to be "the advancement of the Christian religion in the sphere of marriage and family life." The informal prayer Mary Sumner wrote in the early days of the project still inspires members:

All this day, O Lord,/ Let me touch as many lives as possible for Thee,
And every life I touch, do Thou by Thy spirit quicken,
Whether through the words I speak,/ The prayer I breathe,/ Or the life I live. \(^{591}\)

3. Other Aspects of Male Respect toward Women, or Shirts and Corsets

While middle-class women had means to express themselves because, largely, of their upbringing and their superior education (even if they did not all attend universities), the working-class woman was far from enjoying as vast a scope of freedoms and opportunities as her middle-class sister. Sometimes classes could dim or even disappear. As we have seen earlier, several philanthropic outreaches brought educated women on the doorsteps, literally, of under-privileged families, but the distance between classes was not necessarily abolished by that, especially if the "rich" woman came to the poor one as a lesson-giver with a goodly dose of self-importance. Yet, certain dramatic occasions, such as a war, also brought together women of different backgrounds. Such was the case in the Crusade against the Contagious Diseases Acts, led by Josephine Butler.

Still, women, even of different classes, shared many concerns, so it is not totally surprising to notice the more privileged showing sympathy toward the poorer ones. Too often, however, men's intervention on behalf of women is glossed over. I will endeavor to correct this injustice here with three examples. The first is Thomas Hood and his very famous poem, "The

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\(^{591}\) History of Mother's Union, August 30, 2008, <www.themothersunion.org/historyofmu.aspx>. Although Anglican, the organization holds inter-denominational meetings. It has various programs, including, Literacy
Song of the Shirt." Hood had many problems in his own life, as William Cole, in his introduction of Hood's poems, explains, "He was continually ill—among his galaxy of disorders were deafness, rheumatic fever. . .and malfunctioning of the lungs, liver, and stomach." However, Hood had a warm personality that combined generous humanitarianism, compassion, Christian tolerance and cheerfulness, and a boisterous sense of humor. The comment he wrote to a friend after being so sick that he thought his end near is very revealing of his disposition: "I resolved that like the sun, I would look on the bright side of everything. The raven croaked, but I persuaded myself it was the nightingale; there was the smell of mould, but I remembered that it nourished the violets. . . Allons! Courage! Things may take a turn, as the pig said on the spit." 592

Despite constant worries of health and money, Hood was blessed with a close-knit family life with his wife, Jane, and their daughter and son. His own problems which would have been enough for anyone less generous than he, did not prevent him from trying to better the lot of others. Although he is remembered largely for his humor, some of his works take on a more serious tone. Among those is "The Song of the Shirt," written on behalf of the unfortunate women who worked, often from their homes, to sew ready-cut shirts whose demand had risen in proportion of the increasingly affluent middle class: ". . .Stich –stich –stich, /In poverty, hunger and dirt, /Sewing at once, with a double thread,/ A Shroud as well as a Shirt . . ." The poem was first published in Punch in 1843, barely two years before Hood's death.

It is true, Hood's poem belongs to a greater literary phenomenon of the period with the seamstress as protagonist, but "the Song of the Shirt" is likely the most famous. In fact, although when Thomas Hood died in 1845, and his wife the following year, there was no money for a decent tombstone, the funds were raised by public subscription for a memorial that was erected in 1854. On it figure the words Thomas Hood had chosen himself for the circumstance, "He sang the Song of the Shirt." It is clear that in quitting this world, Hood attached particular importance to having contributed to the effort for social reform through the writing of this poem.

Furthermore, as Beth Harris points out in *Famine and Fashion: Needlewomen in the Nineteenth Century*:

The seamstress figure... existed precisely in the intersection of the rich and the poor, the "two nations' which so painfully polarized Victorian Culture of the 1840s. She was impoverished... but she also existed in a world which appealed to the eye in unprecedented ways because she sewed the dresses worn by the upper-class and aspiring middle-class women, and the men's clothing sold at the ostentatious show-shops... [she] was consistently represented in this period as the virtuous and modest other of a vain and narcissistic femininity. 593

We find the same concept represented in art and cartoons of the time,594 and in particular *The Haunted Lady, or the Ghost in the Looking-Glass* echoes Hood's lines, "But why do I talk of death?/ That phantom of grisly bone,/ I hardly fear his terrible shape, / It seems so like my own."

A second example comes from Samuel Smiles. Although, in his *Character*, he too mentioned a seamstress,595 Smiles interests us here as a physician. Because he became so famous as a writer, it is easy to forget that he started out as a medical doctor after he obtained his diploma from the University of Edinburgh, in 1832. He practiced until 1838, before devoting himself to writing. In 1837, Smiles published *Physical Education, or, the Nurture and Management of Children*. Although, as the title indicates, this volume deals with the necessity of providing children, boys and girls, with proper nutrition, exercise, and hygiene in order to palliate the high mortality among them, Smiles dedicates a section particularly to the danger of corsets:

Everything, then, that tends to limit respiration... must be prejudicial to health.

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594 See illustration
595 Smiles, Samuel, *Character*, 1876, (Chicago: Donohue & Co., n.d.) . Smiles relates the story of a real-life seamstress, Sarah Martin, who, before Elizabeth Fry, was moved to help those in prison; she taught women prisoners to sew, knit, and make straw hats and thus gave them the means of a small income. She also became their chaplain and teacher, devoting so much time to tem that her own business suffered and she had to adjust to reduced circumstances until the Gaol Committee decided to give her a small salary for her labor with the female prisoners.
Of this nature are stays, and all kinds of bandages that confine the chest within an unnatural development of the chest and expansion of the lungs. . . [This] is a chief cause, in the female sex, of the nervous and dyspeptic complaints, and organic diseases of the lungs, which are so prevalent in this country. . . yet does the usage prevail with tyrannous exaction; and not a mother is to be found possessing sufficient independence to break through its trammels and rescue her offspring from disease and deformity. . . The aristocracy of wasp-waists is all-prevailing. . . and the monster Fashion prevails over Nature. 596

It is interesting to note that the "tyrannous exactions" of fashion are the doing of women alone. Men might have been manufacturing women's apparel, but it was women's choice to use such device or to show more common sense and individuality. There is something paradoxical in this situation, if we pause to consider that women used corsets as a means to make themselves more attractive to men, yet the men who really cared about women's health and independence did not wish to see them wear such things. Mel Davies, in his fascinating article, "Corsets and Conception," shows that fashion plates and designs record a peak of narrowness of waist for women between 1841 and 1901; he further explains that already in the nineteenth century, physicians were well aware of the unhealthy custom of "tight lacing" and blamed numerous disorders on such a practice--respiratory problems and fainting, nausea, indigestion, headache, miscarriage, apathy and loss of sexual desire, among others. Davies suggests that the corset might have played a major role in the decline in size of the middle-class family. 597 Indeed, illustrations of the time made clear that the compression effected by a corset on the human body could only be dangerous, 598 while Punch commented, "She who from tight lacing cannot draw a

598 See illustrations VI.
long breath will probably in no long time have no breath at all to draw.\(^{599}\)

William Gladstone, our third illustration, manifested his support of women in yet another way. Concerned with their moral and spiritual welfare, he sought to rescue prostitutes from their hellish life. While it is true that Gladstone himself admitted in his diary that some of these women were pretty and tempting, there is absolutely no reason to suspect that he did more than talk to them and try to provide them with a second, better chance at life. Moved by a genuine desire to help these women from their situation as outcasts, he devoted £2,000 a year to rescue girls or women who either had been forced into prostitution or simply wanted out of it. He supported the House of Mercy that fed and sheltered prostitutes and offered them training for decent employment in Britain or abroad. Like Thomas Hood, he felt compelled by Christian sympathy to help those who could not help themselves. Although such activism is enhanced by the fact that Gladstone was a prominent figure, his was not an isolated case—and in recent years, we might be hard-pressed to find a head of state so chivalric and devoted to a class of society so un-appealing to the general public. Charles Dickens, in association with Angela Burdett-Coutts invested time and money as well in Urania Cottage, also dedicated to the rehabilitation of prostitutes. Modern cynicism toward this type of undertakings often obscures the fact that these efforts were usually successful. For instance, Dickens reported in 1853 that at that point, out of fifty six women, "thirty (of whom seven are now married) on their arrival in Australia or elsewhere, entered into good service, acquired a good character and have done so well ever since as to establish a strong prepossession in favour of others sent out from the same quarter.\(^{600}\)

4. Negative Cases with Positive Results

A. Caroline Norton

She is a favorite among those who like to paint the nineteenth-century woman as oppressed. Indeed, Caroline Sheridan chose poorly when, like Charlotte in Pride and Prejudice,  

\(^{599}\) Davies 627.  
she decided to marry, in 1827, for all the wrong reasons, a man whom she did not know well enough and did not love. Although George Norton claimed to have fallen in love with her, his attitude and actions towards his wife reflected nothing of the devotion declared. Whether Norton was jealous of his wife's superior intelligence, as it is often suggested, or he was mentally unstable, the marriage became quickly a case of domestic violence:

[Norton] seized me by the nape of the neck, and dashed me down on the floor.
The sound of my fall woke my sister and brother-in-law, who slept in a room below, and they ran up to my door. Mr. Norton locked it, and stood over me, declaring no one should enter. I could not speak, --I only moaned. My brother-in-law burst the door open, and carried me downstairs.

Before going further, it is important to note that if her husband was certainly wretched, there were men in Caroline's family who cared about her welfare and rescued her as they could. In the above episode, her brother-in-law told Caroline to stay away from Norton until he had mended his way. Caroline, however, seemed easily convinced by Norton's verbal assurances and returned to him. In 1835, eight years and three children later, Caroline decided she had had enough and left husband and children. When, having reconsidered, she attempted to return once more, she discovered that she could not get admittance and could not see her children. Norton tried to get a divorce on charge of adultery, but she was cleared by the jury, who found absolutely no evidence against her. Matters did not improve as Caroline wrote for income, but Norton appropriated her earnings to which, by law, he was entitled. Caroline, however, petitioned for justice and appealed to her connections, to Parliament and the Queen, first to gain the right to see her children, and second, to be allowed to keep some of her income. In "A Plain Letter to the Chancellor on the Infant Bill," she eloquently pleaded, "I hope that under your Lordship's Chancellorship, and by your Lordship's support, the law may be brought to do justice to those, whose sufferings are not the less intense, because they are born in helplessness, and comparative obscurity." It took time, but eventually Caroline obtained Justice: In 1839, the Custody Bill was passed, and in 1857, two
years after the lawsuit over her earnings, the Marriage and Divorce Act recognized the right of a married woman to her own income.

Caroline's story never became a happy one. Even though Norton eventually died in 1875, and Caroline married a man for whom she really cared, the widower Sir William Stirling-Maxwell, she died shortly after her marriage. Tragic as Caroline Norton's case might be, it should not overshadow the fact that those who sympathized with her plight, those who changed the law in the favor of women were men. They used their power and the responsibility incumbent to their office in order to correct injustice on behalf of women. In this case, though their names might be buried and forgotten in the minutes of dusty records, their gender and their function are enough to grant them the recognition they truly deserve.

B. Dr. James Barry

Elegant and meticulous, this brilliant doctor with a rebellious streak and a sharp tongue, who humiliated Florence Nightingale with public scolding in front of soldiers and fellow nurses, who was a vegetarian and never traveled without a goat for fresh milk, and whom Wellington promoted Deputy Inspector General of Hospitals was actually... a woman.

Although the story sounds like pure fiction, it is documented, as Elizabeth Longford reveals in Eminent Victorian Women. Barry's beginnings are somewhat obscure, but we know that she lived with her mother and sister and an uncle in Scotland. At the death of her uncle, his former patrons, the Earl of Buchan and General Francesco Miranda (a Venezuelan patriot in exile) helped to make her pass as a boy. Since there was no lower age limit at the University of Edinburgh, she said she was ten or eleven, was accepted, and graduated in 1812, dedicating her medical thesis (written in Latin, as required at the time) to her two benefactors. Miranda had returned to South America and Barry was to have joined his staff there, but Miranda was captured and died prisoner of the Spanish. Barry expanded her knowledge of surgery in London under Astley Cooper who taught his students—prophetically in her case—that they must have "the heart of a lion and the hand of a lady."
Because there was a great demand for army doctors, and because it was possible to pass the physical examination without undressing, Barry was found good for service and was sent to Cape Town. She was nicknamed "the Kapok Doctor" because of the padded shoulders of her uniform. Some had doubt, but they soon forgot their questions before her medical skill and her powerful personality. She always worked as a loner, which, considering that her methods were often more modern and effective than those of her colleagues, was probably best. Las Cases, biographer of Napoleon at St. Helena met her:

The Grave doctor was a boy of eighteen, with the form, the manner, and the voice of a woman, but was described to be an absolute phenomenon. I was informed that he had obtained his diploma at the age of thirteen, after the most rigid examination, and that he had performed extraordinary cures at the Cape.601 Barry cured Las Cases' son, as well, and the thankful father had only praises for this unusual surgeon.

Barry, who cared equally for white and black patients, prisoners and freemen, clashed repeatedly with administrators and had no patience for the army's "chain of command": if she was not getting anywhere about a problem, she tried to consult with her direct superior officer first, and when it did not work, went directly "to the top". Cantankerous, she was also a person of integrity and would not follow along in schemes which she judged dishonorable, such as condoning lax medical practices, or treating lepers as criminals. Her insubordination got her in trouble and she was sent to Mauritius. However, she left The Cape with panache when, called to help a woman who was dying in childbirth, she performed in a matter of minutes, a Caesarian section (no anesthetics) and saved both mother and child. This was the only second successful surgery of this type done in the western world.

Barry lived to be seventy, but only after her death was her gender confirmed as that of a woman. Although no scholar seems to have raised questions, I would suggest that it might have

been possible that many knew or guessed her sex but chose, for selfish or generous reasons, to
demand no examination. However, whether her gender was discovered or not, what is significant
is that her skills were recognized for their true value, thus clearly treating her, consciously or not,
on equal footing with a male surgeon.

5. Chivalry

A few words must be said here about the revival of medieval chivalry in the nineteenth-
century. Although it has rightfully been viewed as the expression of renewed religious fervor and
a mystic association between beauty and the holy, it also enhanced anew the respective ideals of
the gender spheres. It invited middle-class men and women to celebrate their difference by
inspiring them to emulate the best they could be within their own sex, and to celebrate their
complementarity as well. The heroes of the Middle Ages had never completely disappeared;
Henry V, for instance, was still well-known through Shakespeare's plays, but with Scott's novels
or gallant war heroes like Nelson and Wellington, an appealing and challenging code of conduct
offered itself to those who wanted to be true "gentlemen." And, indeed, was not the knight's code
of honor very similar to that of the modern gentleman? Nineteenth-century medieval revivalism
was revisionist history at its best: it discarded the brutal, the unclean, and the ugly, and kept only
the noble, the beautiful, the inspiring--not a bad thing when dealing specifically with art and
spiritual intellectualism.

Mark Girouard, in The Return to Camelot, establishes a direct link for instance between
the display of courage from the men about to die onboard the sinking Titanic, in 1912, once the
order, "Women and children first" was given and the knights of old. Punch honored their courage
and dignity accordingly:

What courage yielded place to other's need,

Patient of discipline's supreme decree,

Well may we guess, who knew that gallant breed
Schooled in the ancient chivalry of the sea. Girouard points out that a Christian knight was much like a Christian officer, "And officers were of course gentlemen." Among his admirable qualities, a gentleman stood far above common men because of his behavior towards women: he was always "ready to take issue with anyone he saw ill-treating a woman. . .above all he was always tender, respectful and courteous to women, regardless of their rank. . . He was an ardent and faithful lover, but hated coarse talk, especially about women."

Most importantly, the gentleman was the product of a refined, Christian education. This blend of superior intellect and moral ideals put him above others; yet being part of such elite prevented him from ill-placed pride and thirst for power, and dictated his duties towards his fellow-men. The same parameters applied to America. Mrs. Rayne, for instance, consecrates an entire chapter of Gems of Deportment to the characteristics and behavior of the true gentleman and lady, compiling definitions from British and American writers, but we could maybe summarize them thus:

The man whose strength is for the weak, whose wealth is for the poor, whose understanding is for the world, and whose life is for God. . .nature's nobleman, refined by education and society, chivalrous to women, considerate to dependents, children, animals. . .One who takes truth for his creed, God for his guide, and Christ for his example.

Fiction

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602 Girouard, Mark, The Return to Camelot, Chivalry and the English Gentleman, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981) 4-5. It is interesting to note that W.T. Stead, who had gallantly contributed to the defense of women and girls victim of prostitution and sex trafficking during Josephine Butler's Crusade, died that fateful night, as he had lived, faithful to a code of behavior that put the welfare of others more vulnerable in some way than himself, and particularly women, before his own needs and even safety.

603 Girouard 260.

604 Rayne 60-61.
Literature faithfully confirms the phenomenon just described. Pairs associate in novels either as equals or in a relation of mentor-student. In *Dracula*, although Van Helsing possesses the greater knowledge in the group, he treats each with respect and as part of a team, all united in the mission of ridding England, and the world, of a powerful evil. Not only is Mina Harker considered as one of the group, but Van Helsing considers her wisdom and her courage and guides her to help him in his preparation for Dracula's return and demise.

Mr. Boffin and Mr. Riah in *Our Mutual Friend* fill the position of mentors and guides. Mr. Boffin does not argue with Bella, who is young and headstrong, about how wrong she is in her treatment of John. He knows that she would be unreceptive. Therefore, he resolves to show through a caricature of himself at his worst, what she too would become if she continued on the same selfish and materialistic path. The lesson is learned with complete success and her love and appreciation of the Boffins not only erases all possibility of grudges on Bella's part, but is a reward for the wisdom she has gained. Riah, the peaceful and kind Jew who teaches Lizzie and Jenny Wren how to read, has several facets. He is the girls' schoolteacher, in sharp contrast to Headstone or to Lizzie's own brother, who are both completely consumed with their own interests; he is also their friend. His little garden on the roof top of his lodging is a peaceful oasis, away from all the misery and ugliness of the streets and the city and their vain pursuits. Finally, he is their surrogate father, who loves them and seeks to help and comfort them. With the Boffins, he shares a genuine willingness to sacrifice himself for the good of others, and like the Boffins, he deserves his final reward. Molly and her father in *Wives and Daughters* seem to have much in common with Marianne North and her father. Although the Gibsons do not travel, their relationship is one of closeness, trust, communion of interests, and service to one another and, by extension, to others. Dr. Gibson's only mistake is to think himself incapable of being a proper guide to his daughter. When he marries, he nearly severs the unique bond he and Molly share. Mentor and disciple as well as friends, they also reverse roles as Molly proves wiser than her father about his choice of wife and about facing society after her intervention on behalf on
Cynthia. As for Squire Henley, Molly has won his heart as much as Fanny Burney did with Samuel Crisp's.

In *Middlemarch*, Casaubon's failed relationships (with Ladislaw, Dorothea, and Meriwether) are contrasted to Dorothea's successes. Where Casaubon could have taught Dorothea what she was eager to learn and could have made her his friend and equal partner in a joint scholarly venture, he jealously sought, instead, to keep his intellectual treasure to himself and it turned to dust, as he did, useless to anyone. On the contrary, Dorothea and Ladislaw established a lasting union based on essential ingredients—trust, friendship, common vision, equality. Dorothea also proves to be a better administrator than Casaubon, giving to Meriwether the post that he needs not only to provide for his charges, but also because it suits best his personality and enables him to do much good for his congregation. In the same manner, Dorothea understands Lydgate's desire to heal and make a difference for the better. Her payment of his debt to Bulstrode comes with "no strings attached", thus doing all in her power to help a friend achieve a noble project. Contributing her means to his talents would have achieved the goal, had it not been for Rosamond. Finally, we must not forget that the only person able to outwit the great Sherlock Holmes, is a woman, Irene Adler, who matches him in wit, in depth of perception and even in a talents for impersonation and disguise.\(^{605}\)

II. Partnership Marriages

Real Life

The scholarly world tends to paint a grim picture of nineteenth-century marriages; for instance, *The Victorian Web*, otherwise invaluable for less controversial topics, states in the entry on the Victorian Marriage, "In the Victorian era, marriage was not as romanticized or fairytale-like as depicted in many novels of the time. On the contrary, love actually played a very minor role in the majority of matrimony that took place. An engagement was entered into as one

\(^{605}\) "Scandal in Bohemia" 1891.
would approach a business deal, and there were some generally accepted rules and guidelines to follow." Disturbingly, many students and modern readers seem to endorse this fallacy as if it were the truth, letting it swell and fester, unchecked, to ludicrous proportions, as attests this excerpt from a student's paper: "During the 18th century, English society, men and women, often married for selfish reason such as choosing a partner that would raise their social standing. . . Welcome to the twenty-first century, where couples are no longer confined to finding a mate based on money and social status!"

This is rather paradoxical, because much of the primary evidence in letters, biographies, memoirs, essays, fiction, or art testifies that disharmonious unions and oppressed women were by no means the common picture; yet, countless literary critics perpetuate these stereotypes, as, for instance, (Sir) Charles Petrie in *The Victorians*:

> The stamp of masculine approval was placed upon ignorance of the world, meekness, lack of opinions, general helplessness and weakness; in short, a recognition of female inferiority to the male. . . Most Victorian women accepted almost any sort of marriage that was offered them, and the only relief many of them enjoyed was a prescriptive right to indulge in hysterics in moments of crisis. 606

At the risk of walking a lonely path in the scholarly world, I find that middle-class nineteenth-century marriages were essentially affairs of the heart. There is no doubt that some marriages were embarked upon for the wrong reasons and brought only ugliness and misery, as we saw earlier in this chapter. However cases similar to that of the Nortons were not the norm. Evidence forces the scale overwhelmingly on the side of love and partnership marriages.

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Abraham Lincoln once proposed this question-answer, "How many legs does a dog have if you call the tail a leg? ---Four. Calling a tail a leg doesn't make it a leg." The same logic applies when it comes to observing nineteenth-century marriages. The interpretation mentioned earlier does not quite "fit" when we look closely at the principles of marriage as expressed in The Book of Common Prayer, in literature and art, or through the common voice of men and women themselves: according to The Book of Common Prayer, matrimony is first and foremost "holy," and not to be undertaken "lightly." The three foundational reasons for marriage are "the procreation of children," "as a remedy against fornication," and "for the mutual society, help, and comfort that the one ought to have for the other in prosperity and adversity." Although the husband is required to "love and cherish" his wife, "forsaking all other," and to "keep [himself] only unto her," while she must also "obey" him, his "authority" over her is not compatible with that of an abusive master, since the caveat is straightforward: he must love her "as Christ did love the Church, who gave His life for it, loving and cherishing it even as his own flesh."\textsuperscript{607} The wife's behavior is invested with the same rights and duties as her husband's, all contingent to the mutual vow "to have and to hold, for better or for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health." Furthermore, the husband, in the symbolical bestowing of the ring, expounds further on his promise: "with this ring I thee wed, with my body I thee worship, and with all my worldly goods I thee endow." It is quite explicit that, from the Church's point of view, love and companionship (partnership) are essential to marriage. It is also implied that such a mutual life commitment entails a shared vision, an agreement about life in general--implemented through gender roles, both distinct and in close collaboration--., and is intended to result in mutual fulfillment. And yet, Phyllis Rose ' selection" of five Victorian marriage as a "sample" of the nineteenth century. is rather bewildering\textsuperscript{608}: Jane and Thomas Carlyl --which was more a work association than a marriage; Effie Gray and John Ruskin--which technically was not a marriage at all, since Ruskin

\textsuperscript{607} Ephesians 5: 25-32 NIV
never consummated the union and Effie had ground to sue for and obtain divorce, not a common occurrence at the time; Catherine Hogarth and Charles Dickens—a marriage which ended in permanent separation for reasons which were never clearly elucidated; George Eliot and George Henry Lewes—a happy but illegal marriage; and Harriet Taylor and John Stuart Mill—the only example which truly fits the title. Why this selection when there are so many other and better examples from which to choose? This work offers interesting asides on other couples, on the Kingsleys, for instance, but I do not believe Rose does justice to Victorian marriages, although she candidly confesses, "I make no claim for their being representative." However, her message as a scholar is ambiguous since her selection and the title lead the reader to believe this "sample" of Victorian unions revealing about nineteenth-century marriages in general.

   Thankfully there were happier couples than most of those mentioned above. Some of these unions were intense but tragically short. For instance, Charlotte Brontë very much enjoyed her life as the wife of Arthur Bells Nicholls. Her death less than a year after their marriage seems so unjust after all the grief she had had to endure in her life. Even she, though not questioning God, mourned the separation that was to come, as she told Nicholls, "Must we be parted so soon?" Although Nicholls, after being a caring son to his father-in-law until Patrick Brontë's death, remarried, he asked that his coffin be placed under Charlotte's portrait before the burial. A touching token of his undying affection. Visiting the Soane Museum in London, one should take notice of a little frame in the drawing room. It contains a note written by John Soane after the death of his wife, Elizabeth, in 1815, and is addressed to her: "Dear Friend, I can't hear the sound of your voice anymore; --Teach me what I must do to fulfill your wishes." These words are written in French, and we may wonder if Soane chose it for the circumstance for its reputation of being the "language of love." In any case, it is movingly clear that Soane dearly loved his wife and missed her terribly. Architect and artist, he designed her tomb, and the day of the funeral, he recorded in his diary," Melancholy day indeed! The burial of all that is dear to me in this world, 609 Rose 60.
and all I wished to live for."610

Because of the faith many of these couples shared, their love was magnified into a spiritual dimension, as we can see in the following excerpt of the poem George MacDonald wrote for his wife as a wedding present:

Love me beloved; Hades and Death
Shall vanish away like a frosty breath;
These hands, that now are at home in thine,
Shall clasp thee again, if thou still art mine;
And thou shalt be mine, my spirit's bride,
In the ceaseless flow of eternity's tide,
If the truest love that thy heart can know
Meet the truest love that from mine can flow.
Pray God, beloved, for thee and me,
That our souls may be wedded eternally.611

A modern bride would probably not be too thrilled by so much talk of death on a wedding day, yet George and Louisa shared the same beliefs not only about eternal life but about everything else, which is why he calls her his "spirit's bride." Thus the poem is actually very positive because it asserts the continuation of their love beyond death.

That is not to say that these marriages were solely focused on the religious or metaphysical. Mundane details gleaned from letters or situations reveal tenderness and care for one another into the smallest things in life. This remark from George MacDonald to his father offers a significant illustration: "Will you excuse my writing to you on these scraps of paper, as I am not willing to call Louisa from the garden where she is sowing some flower seeds." And

611 MacDonald, Grenville, George MacDonald and His Wife, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1924) 152-55
Grenville MacDonald further reveals that, when they had to be apart, his parents wrote to each other daily.

Many other couples have already been mentioned in this research, such as Charles and Fanny Kingsley, George and Josephine Butler, Mary and Humphry Ward, the Brownings, Spurgeons, Burtons, and others. It is further significant that even the Queen and Prince Albert enjoyed a loving and fulfilling married life, which not only brought them fulfillment, but was an inspiration to the nation, as well.

William and Barbara Wilberforce

One of the characteristic traits of these couples is their mutual willingness, and even desire, to embark on projects of great magnitude together. The recent movie, Amazing Grace, illustrates Wilberforce's and the abolitionists' effort to suppress slavery, beginning with the slave trade. At a secondary level, we get a glimpse of Wilberforce's marriage to the supportive Barbara Spooner. Surprisingly, the film does not betray history in any major way, although Wilberforce's extreme generosity, in his own home and at his own table is only hinted at. It is true that Barbara did not have to do the cooking, but her husband's kindness could be a strain on the family's finances. The fact that the couple was happy reveals not only love and tolerance, but great adaptability. It was Barbara who took the first steps, in 1796, writing to William to ask for spiritual advice; "Wilberforce took this as providential and a whirlwind courtship ensued." Indeed, the letter arrived April 13th, they met on the 15th, and were engaged

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612 Much has been said about the "woman surplus" of the second half of the century; however one cause of this surplus was the emigration of men towards new ventures in Australia or elsewhere. This begs the question "Why did not women go?" Usually, danger for their lives abroad is advanced, but I am skeptical. I suggest that many of these women preferred the security and affluence of England to the unpredictability and rough conditions of life abroad. This alters slightly the conclusion that many could not marry because there was a "shortage" of men. Although this may be true, it almost sounds like a barely disguised criticism of men, when many women may have sealed their own fate. Furthermore, some must have changed their mind, if we consider the "mail-order" brides who went to America or Australia.

613 2007.
the 23rd; by the 30th of they were married. This short courtship proved a wise decision as they remained close and devoted to each other for thirty-seven years, until William's death in 1833.\textsuperscript{614}

William and Catherine Gladstone

The Gladstones shine also by their long, happy life together. Catherine was very supportive of William's effort on behalf of prostitutes. Sometimes, William brought to their own home one of his rescued girls. Catherine accepted her and treated her kindly until she could find permanent lodgings. Husband and wife were so attuned to each other that, when Gladstone was Prime Minister, occasionally Catherine would invite a prostitute for tea, in the hope of inspiring her toward a more virtuous life. In her endearing biography of the Gladstones, Joyce Marlow notes:

As much as Gladstone remained the focal point of Catherine's life, she was his anchor and provided the warmth, devotion and stability that he needed during the years of his first Ministry. Occasionally he might have wanted her more constantly by his side and more organized in her life, though her lack of concern for social niceties was not an area which worried him. . . The balance of their relationship was as excellent as that of his first Cabinet: there was the mutual respect and trust; he could unburden three quarters of his heart and mind to Catherine, she all of hers to him. Each was interested in the other's work, their families brought them great joy, yet they had their own spheres of activity.\textsuperscript{615}

Probably few people realize that if Gladstone is buried at Westminster, it is only because he was assured that Catherine could be buried there as well. Indeed, his wishes were respected: when Catherine died in 1900, two year after him, her ashes (she wanted her body cremated) were placed with William's remains. We find this love to and beyond death in John Millais for his

\textsuperscript{614} Garth Lean. \textit{God's Politician.} 1987.
\textsuperscript{615} Marlow, Joyce. \textit{The Oak and the Ivy, an Intimate Biography of William and Catherine Gladstone.} (New York: Doubleday,1977) 144.
wife, Effie, as well. As Millais lay dying of throat cancer, Queen Victoria sent word asking what she could do for him, and his reply was that she would not shun Effie from court.\textsuperscript{616}

Francis and Harriett McDougall

The McDougalls are another interesting pair. Harriett was from a family with evangelical and missionary interests; Francis was the son of an officer who lived abroad because of the military life of his parents. Once, having injured himself with broken glass, some overlooked shards had to be removed from his foot. Fascinated, he promised to watch without moving. He kept his word and decided to become a surgeon. When he met Harriett, she encouraged him to do mission work which he also longed to do. However, having been offered a choice between a post at the British Museum or mission work in Borneo, he chose the "safest" for the sake of his fiancée. So certain was she of his heart's desire that she took it upon herself to obtain his release from the first job so he could go to Borneo. Indeed, when she brought the news to Frank, he was delighted.\textsuperscript{617} It is clear that in this instance, two men respected Harriett's initiative: Frank, of course, but also the Museum conservator, who understood and agreed with Harriett's decision.

Once married, they sailed to Sarawak. Despite living through political and private turmoil (they lost five sons in five years), the McDougalls devoted themselves to their work, medical and religious. Harriett also wrote abundant letters to England. Later Frank became Bishop, and eventually they retired in England, near their two surviving daughters. Though, both in declining health, Harriett died before the marriage of her daughter could take place. Heartbroken, Frank followed her six months later. She left an account of their life in Sarawak in the form of letters addressed to her children in England. Her brother, however, wrote their biography, and retells their last moments, which are very revealing about the closeness and love of their union, as Frank writes to a widowed friend:

\textsuperscript{616} One of the most inglorious sides of Victoria who saw any divorce as a scandal, although Effie was truly justified for wanting separation from Ruskin.

\textsuperscript{617} Peterson 167.
My life is broken now,—it is but a feeble one, and all the brightness that was centered in her is gone until the day in which the shadows flee away, and we shall join our souls’ darlings in the presence of Him whose name is love. Pray for me my dear brother, that, like you I may be strengthened to go on bravely, resolutely, and unselfishly to fulfill the work yet left for me to do without the help and support which is taken from me.618

As Peterson explains, nineteenth-century wives worked along with their husbands. We already saw that in India, wives thought of their husband's posts as their own as well; they often referred to their actions or possessions with the pronouns "we" or "our." This was true to a large extent for other professions. Confidants, helpmeets, advisors, secretaries, these wives knew all their husbands' business and delighted in helping and working in duet with them. They did not "wear the pants" as Mrs. Proudly does in Barchester Towers, rather they enjoyed the position of "right-hand."

It was not only women who thought in terms of "we"; men did the same. For instance, when Mandell Creighton proposed to Louise, he was very clear that they were equals: "[We] have a life before us of much good and use to others. . . I do so wish we were settled in life, with our duties clearly put before us. . . I want very much to find a sphere for both you and me"619 His eagerness in making plans with his future life companion is echoed in Brewthal's The Honeymooners.620 Bishop Wescott said of his wife after her death: "Everyone recognizes what she did for the [Durham] diocese. . . she was a perfect Bishop's wife, a mother in God to whom she touched". Again, there is no question in the bishop's mind, that, although he was the bishop, they were of a same spirit in the matter, and had a role in the fulfillment of the diocesan duties.

620 See illustration VII
Elizabeth Browning captures beautifully the spirit of such unions of love, mind, work and vision:

Beloved, let us love so well
Our work shall still be better for our love,
And still our love be sweeter for our work,
And both commended for the sake of each,
By all true workers and true lovers born.621

Peterson adds that wives were often named by their husbands as executors of their wills. Even before they could own property, they could invest money. They could also administer estates as their husbands trusted their sense of management, which was one of the forte of their sphere. In the absence of wives, sisters, mothers, aunts could be found in the same functions.

This type of marriages existed across the Atlantic as well. In the excerpt below from Josiah Holland's "The Ideal Woman," we are left without any doubt about the equality that was possible, and indeed did exist within marriage, as testifies the husband speaking of his wife, here:

She was my peer;
No weakling girl, who would surrender will,
And life and reason, with her loving heart,
To her possessor; no soft, clinging thing
Who would find breath alone within the arms
Of a strong master, and obediently
Wait on his will in slavish carefulness. . .
No fawning, cringing spaniel to attend
His royal pleasure, and account herself
Rewarded by his pats and pretty words
But a sound woman, who, with insights keen

Had wrought a scheme of life, and measured well
Her womanhood; spread before her feet
A fine philosophy to guide her to guide her steps;
Had won a faith to which her life was brought
In strict adjustment ---brain and heart meanwhile
Working in conscious harmony and rhythm
With the great scheme of God's Universe
On toward her being's end. 622

Fiction

Here again, examples abound. Nineteenth-century writers loved to contrast good and bad couples. We see it in Austen, with the neglectful and foolish Lydia and Wickham as opposed to the stellar, well-matched stewardship of Darcy and Elizabeth, or with the Crofts, Wentworth, Harvilles versus the Mussgroves (Junior), or with Fanny and Edmund, quiet and profound, yet far more admirable than the gilded Mary and Henry Crawford, or the vapid Rushworths. Middlemarch contrasts Dr. Lydgate and Rosamond with Dorothea and Ladislaw, or the Garths. In Dickens, The Jellybys are the negative of Allan and Esther, just as the Boffins and John and Bella contrast with her parents. In A Christmas Carol, there are only "good" couples from the Fizziwigs to the Cratchits, or the poor couple under the bridge who will stay together rather than improve a bit their lot but separately in the workhouse, or from Belle and her family to Fred and his wife. In the mist of all this love and unity, Scrooge is left with the cold loneliness that his gold bought him.

As in Hennessy's painting, 623 Jonathan and Mina Harker are representative of two halves making a whole. Dracula introduces the notion of a single woman who has no peer. Although

622 Mrs. Rayne, What Can a Woman Do? (Chicago, 1884) 297.
623 See illustration VIII.
many could marry her, Mina is indifferent to riches and titles, and faithful to her first love. Adaptable, she travels to foreign lands in search of Jonathan, and marries him in the dispensary where he is recovering, not concerned that she finds herself surrounded by members of another religion, without any of the trimmings of traditional marriages. Similarly, Jonathan seeks to protect her, encourages her, and shares her convictions, which is why they are so effective in achieving their quest of putting an end to the evils of Dracula. She lives for Jonathan, and Jonathan lives for her; the rest is of no import, for they can with such love face practically anything.

The quality of a marriage colors its surrounding and creates an atmosphere beneficial to those who visit. Alistair Duckworth makes an interesting case, underscoring the importance of the estate as it is present, in various degrees, in all of Jane Austen's novels, whether it is the "estate abandoned" of Persuasion or the estate as a stage for individualism in Mansfield Park. Pride and Prejudice, however, offers a particular interest as Duckworth sees in it "the reconstitution of society." By the model they set, Elizabeth and Darcy "provide a fixed moral and social center around which the other marriages group themselves." The two heroes and the estate in a way form an osmosis. Pemberley, whose soul is Elizabeth and Darcy, is the place where godly stewardship reigns, where friends gather in joyful fellowship, where the weary Mr. Bennet comes to refresh himself, and where Kitty learns to improve and blossom. The important role of the wife as co-administrator of the estate makes for a perfect blend of the spheres, which clearly results in the best outcome for tenants as well as visitors. From Austen to Dickens, and from More to Corelli, we can see therefore that the "love match" radiates far and wide beyond the couple itself, though it is a great blessing to husband and wife, of course, and has the power to influence and change society.

Conclusion

After looking at these various examples, it is a shock to read modern essayists such as Barbara Graham, who posits in “The future of Love: Kiss Romance Goodbye, It's Time for the Real Thing” that "to be bound by something so conventional as marriage or long-term domestic arrangement" is utopic, the stuff fairy tales are made of. According to Graham, love and passion are no more than an ephemeral chemical reaction, therefore expecting long, fulfilling relationships is akin to going against nature. She takes the high divorce rate as a proof that marriages for life are an impossibility, and she suggests putting "term limits" on love.625 Her radical position finds its further expression elsewhere, in some video games, like Sim2, for instance, in which players act out and tackle relationships based on promiscuity and adultery. The contrast with nineteenth-century role models is quite striking.626

Therefore, although this new trend might first appear so absurd that we should only laugh at it and move on, we are compelled to consider its potentially devastating influence, especially since it figures in a textbook for Advanced English Composition, and students are assigned it in their list of readings. Combined with the already pervasive distortion of the woman condition in the nineteenth century, it is bound to further obscure historical truth, while it contributes to moral degradation. At the opposite end of the gender-relation spectrum, however, nineteenth-century men, contrarily to modern belief, emerge as far more respectful and appreciative of women, usually viewing them as friends and fellow laborers in the various and demanding responsibilities of their daily lives. Women, as we saw, reciprocated. Anna Laetitia Barbauld, for instance, wrote a laudatory poem to Wilberforce, to let him know that she shared his views about slavery, and to support him with her understanding and encouragement in the face of political bickering, frustrations, and delays he had to face.

Those who have been mentioned in this chapter are but a token of the whole. To dismiss those men and women who were famous by assuming that their fame set them apart as

626 See illustrations IX.
"exceptions" would do great injustice to the whole, of which they are representative. The fame is "extra." These men and women were not always thinking of their wealth as we moderns might assume they did. Certainly the vain and the worthless belong to all generations, but they would not figure in this study, which focuses on the majority of the middle class who, fame or no fame, were concerned primarily in fulfilling their calling, and were committed to doing their duty to others, country, and, ultimately, God.

It is rather pathetic that our age seems to be so intent in wasting much time trying to find a chink in the (medieval) armor of the Victorians, re-interpreting their motives, questioning their values, mocking their ideals, when, too often, we can only gloat about technological advances and materialistic possessions. Our gender relations are stilted by political correctness, but to what degree do we yet have this mutual esteem that William Wilberforce and Hannah More, in the early 1800s, or Mary Ward and Theodore Roosevelt, at the close of the nineteenth century, enjoyed? Now that, as Mary Ward so feared, divorce had become easy to obtain, how many couples can claim the same conjugal strength, love, and devotion that was the happy lot of so many husbands and wives of the nineteenth-century?
CONCLUSION

*Where there is no vision, the people perish.* Proverbs 29:18.

The clichés and stereotypes about the nineteenth-century woman partially stem, I fear, from the fact that our own age is self-centered, that it rarely can imagine learning anything from the past, and much less conceding that the nineteenth century may have been, in any way, wiser than we are. I personally attribute this, in part, to an excessive trust—or should I say, blind faith?—in Darwinism, this conviction that the modern era is superior to the preceding one, because everything evolves or progresses for the better. Indeed, while technology has made us more comfortable than the kings and queens of the past, with indoor plumbing, refrigerators, cars or computers, we may have lost far more than we gained.627

It is obvious that too many modern scholars cannot accept the notion that women could have felt complete, assured, happy, and influential, without having the vote and a paying job. There is, however, something more sinister at work. The fact that women are presented in a manner so inconsistent with the evidence found in primary sources is an academic crime even worse than plagiarism. Although, I do not pretend to be a lawyer, I believe withholding evidence or presenting a false testimony in court is punishable by law. Why should the silencing and/or the distorting of a vast segment of history be less?

As I was progressing in my research and finding new evidence of women's achievements and influence, my feelings were divided between anger for having never heard about them before, and exhilaration in discovering their existence, their accomplishments, and their undaunted courage. They seemed to have been everywhere at once, travelling, cooking, educating, entertaining guests, embroidering exquisite needlework, canvassing, visiting, penning detailed

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627 See illustration I
letters and journals, organizing, raising children, leading crusades, researching or exploring, discussing ideas, reading voraciously, devoting time to help and serve others, sketching and painting, playing the piano, praying, loving, and managing the home.

Despite the conveniences of life’s material improvements—from longer longevity, to planes and cell phones—the modern woman has attained independence and the so-craved equality with men, but there is no evidence that she feels more purposeful and satisfied. If she had, would she speak with such scorn of the nineteenth-century woman, as if she were, deep down, jealous of her or felt threatened by her accomplishments? Jane Purvis, for instance, gives the following definition of "housewives": "Violated beings, who were separated from other worlds outside the home." Can any self-respecting scholar look at the evidence honestly and maintain that the middle-class woman in Britain, or the United States, was thus secluded? This description might certainly fit the high-cast Hindu woman in the Zenana, but when women could travel the world on their own, even single women, like Amelia Edwards, and especially Marianne North, there is no basis to make such assertion.

In another instance, Purvis criticizes a piece of advice given by a popular Victorian magazine for suggesting that a woman should not harass her husband with questions if he looks stressed or tired upon returning home, but wait until "he is inclined to talk." However when John Gray says the same thing, his book, Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus, becomes a best-seller!

Since the Sixties, scholars as well as a permeating trend of the popular culture have succeeded in convincing modern audiences that Florence Nightingale and Josephine Butler were feminists because they were in favor of the vote. But those same scholars cannot understand the mind of the nineteenth-century middle-class woman, when they encounter an Octavia Hill or a Mary Ward, or a Jane Austen. Robert Irvine, for instance, writes: "It may seem odd that women

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628 Purvis 5.
writers, given all the restrictions placed on them by a patriarchal society, should be so ready to write in its defense." Such a comment is, actually, extremely insulting toward both nineteenth-century women, for it infers that they submitted for so long that they lost consciousness of their oppression, as well as for today's women who still value their traditional calling, as it infers that only simpletons would find fulfillment in the Domestic Sphere. And this is another trait or modern criticism: the arrogance of deciding what these women of the past should have wanted, and to infuse their lives with the selfish motivations of the modern liberated woman, who looks at man with contempt, or fierce competitiveness at best.

It is important to remember, however, that through history, we can find educated and influential women, who enjoyed men's respect and influenced their society. Feminists like to consider Christine de Pisan as one of their own, because she defended women against narrow-minded men in her Treasure of the City of the Ladies, but they often "forget" to mention that she was a devoted wife and never ceased to mourn her beloved husband, who died of the plague, or that, since she was the first woman writer to live from her pen, that meant that she had the respect and support of men to publish as well as read her works. Bordonove mentions in his life of Saint Louis, that the king's court physician was a woman, and Francesco Gabrieli relates the anecdote in which Usama Ibn Munqidh, a Muslim leader, was shocked to see a knight leave his wife alone to talk to another man. While Hildegard von Bingen or Eleanor of Aquitaine are known figures, there is also Petronille de Chemille, who, in the early 1100s, was appointed by the abbot Robert d'Arbrissel, founder of the great Abbey of Fontevraud, as his successor, and who, as abbess, ruled over both monks and nuns. In the nineteenth century these occurrences of cooperation and mutual respect between middle-class men and women men, were frequent

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629 Not an isolated case of marital love as we can see in See illustration II.
and abundantly recorded in works of fiction, non fiction, as well as in art, which, consequently, leave no excuse for scholars to ignore them.

Finally, this research has also revealed that not only the true face of nineteenth-century women has been obscured, but the Christian faith of that century has also been considerably whitewashed to fit an anti-Christian agenda aiming at describing Christians as hypocrites or in crisis of faith, as Houghton or Newsome have forcefully depicted them. That is significant, because women's freedom was based in Scripture as Hannah More or Catherine Booth observed.

It must be noted, however, that despite strong feminist currents, there is another trend, which I think is encouraging. One of the most popular fiction genres today is Historical Romance, in which heroes and heroines seek to emulate nineteenth-century elegance and behavior and to live by the ideals of the gender spheres we have explored in this study; there is also a number of faithful film productions of nineteenth-century works, such as the 1995 BBC Pride and Prejudice, Our Mutual Friend or of Shakespeare's plays set in the nineteenth century, for instance Kenneth Branagh's Much Ado about Nothing or Trevor Nunn's Twelfth Night. This, I believe, denotes a longing for that period, and, if we consider a movie like Kate and Leopold, for instance, a genuine sense of something lost since that time in the relationships between men and women, and a yearning for a return to gender distinction and complementarity.

This research has been fascinating, not only from an argumentative point of view, but more importantly for the discovery of these, now, unknown women, such as Kate Marsden and her daring ride through Russia, or Flora Steele in India, the long-suffering Josephine Butler, or the witty Mary Brunton, who was nicknamed the "second Jane Austen." All these women did so much and so successfully. Their energy and their achievements prove quite humbling for the

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average twenty-first century woman, like myself. Their self-giving in philanthropic work seemed boundless, and their perseverance in the face of failure or disappointment has much to teach to a society that has grown dependent on instant satisfaction. It is therefore my hope that we, too, as individuals and as society may examine our values and rediscover a vision truly worth living for.
INTRODUCTION ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustration IA:
One cannot miss the sarcasm that accompanies the “vintage” photograph: “In 1913, equal opportunity employer Richard Pittman gave women every opportunity to shine.”

Illustration IB:
The first picture reads, “To celebrate her latest invention, assistant milliner Lisa Wish lit up a cigarette right in the shop.”
The second, “Unfortunately, she soon found herself working for a mad hatter.”

Illustrations II

Whether through caricature, as in B, or not, modern feminists have seen domesticity, especially with large families, as a form of slavery imposed upon the woman of the past, and particularly so in the nineteenth century.
Illustration III, from a Nineteenth-century plate for *Pride and Prejudice*.

Illustration IV, French caricature, *The Corset Fad*, 1809. Note that men are the ones tightening these corsets.

Illustrations V

Facets of the stereotypical “perfect home-maker,” inherited from the nineteenth-century, and so abhorrent to modern feminists since the Sixties.

The kitchens in the model homes of the *Stepford Wives* present striking similarities to this one.
Illustration VI
This “X-ray” of Homer Simpson’s head clearly underscores the significantly inversed proportions of brain and mouth.

Illustrations VII
Whether in exaggeration (A) or not, whether hinted at or boldly asserted (B), men’s image has become ridiculous and contemptible, while women have erected themselves into demi-goddesses in the media. In their abusive and despotic treatment of men, however, they may have lost more than they gained.

Illustration IX

Illustration X
CHAPTER I ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustration A

Illustration IB

Illustration IC
Illustration IV

Illustration V  “An Outing”

Illustration VI
Interior of a Drawing Room with a Lady at a Desk,
by William Henry Hunt (1790-1864)
Illustrations VII
A. Pugin's Gothic stove, exhibited at the Crystal Palace

B. The “Armor-stove” also exhibited at the Crystal Palace
CHAPTER II ILLUSTRATIONS

An Elegant Establishment for Young Ladies
by Edward Francis Burney

Illustration II
Gillray: Farmer Giles
1809

Illustration III
Plate for Samuel Goodrich's Fireside Education
Illustrations IV

A

Although the mother seems much more patient in Helen Allingham’s Lessons (A) than in the French book cover (B) the importance of Education and the strict supervision of children learning at home are the same

Illustration V

The 9/11 Victims Memorial Quilt
(16,000 square feet; 3,550 blocks)

Illustration VI
Illustrations VII  Aspects of Domestic Apprenticeship

"The Duet"
Illustration VII
The Awakening of Conscience
1854

Illustration IX
Retribution 1854
Illustration X
Found

Illustrations XI
Drawings of Charles and Fanny Kingsley, by Charles Kingsley
Illustration XII

“Cousin Phillis and her Book”
CHAPTER III  ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustrations I

A. Wycliffe Reading His Translation of the New Testament to John of Gaunt
Ford Maddox Brown, 1847

Illustrations II

B. The English People Reading Wycliffe’s Bible
George Clausen

Huguenot weavers’ houses, Canterbury

Huguenot cross

Tympanum of Huguenot Church in Soho Square, London, with the Huguenot cross clearly recognizable

Canterbury Huguenot Chapel
“Truth has died”.
Goya from *Disasters of War*

Illustration III

The escape of a Heretic, 1559 (1857)
Illustration V
Millais  A Huguenot  1852

Illustration VI

Gregory XIII’s medal celebrating the massacre as an act of divine justice

Illustration VII

The Massacre of St. Bartholomew
by C. H. Spurgeon
From the April 1866 Sword and Trowel
Le Siège de la Rochelle
(Henri-Paul Motte, 1881)
In the distance, the British fleet is held at bay by the solid sea wall

General view:
With the sea wall in A
The harbor and city in B

Illustrations IX
English medals commemorative of The defeat of the Spanish Armada
Illustration X
Britannia and the Bible, 1935

Bartholdi's Statue of Liberty, 1884

By Ferdinand Bol, 1662

By Guido Reni

Illustrations XI

NB: The man hanging from the street lamp is a literal illustration of a line from an (in)famous revolutionary song, “Ah! Ça ira, Ça ira, Ça ira!”, which promises to hang “the aristocrats to the lantern.”

NB2: It is also interesting that the two women have exchanged symbols: Marianne has Britannia’s trident, Britannia has Marianne’s Phrygian cap of liberty, thereby underscoring that Marianne uses her power only for harm, while Britannia is the true provider of liberty.
Oxford Martyrs’ Memorial:
To the Glory of God, and in grateful commemoration of His servants, Thomas Cranmer, Nicholas Ridley, Hugh Latimer, Prelates of the Church of England, who near this spot yielded their bodies to be burned, bearing witness to the sacred truths which they had affirmed and maintained against the errors of the Church of Rome, and rejoicing that to them it was given not only to believe in Christ, but also to suffer for His sake; this monument was erected by public subscription in the year of our Lord God, MDCCCXLI.

Illustrations XIV

Protestant Descendency, by Heath.
A group of politicians, notably Wellington and Peel, are pulling down Protestant Ascendancy, while a Dominican has set explosive under it in the cave of Catholic Ascendancy.
Illustration XV
“The Soul-Trap of Satan”

A SOUL-TRAP OF SATAN.

Illustrations XVIII
Crystal Palace

Main gallery

XVI
Grand Staircase of Burgos Cathedral
*Illustrated Magazine of Art, 1853*

A display of the achievements and the prosperity of a Protestant country, but also an invitation to the civilized world to participate in progress and endeavors of peace that will benefit mankind.
1876. By Thomas Nast. “Crocodile-bishops” attacking American public schools, while in-land Catholic forces make retreat or fight impossible
Illustration XXI: Anti-Catholic tracts

Death pit, trap door, cell

The smothering of a nun

Illustration XXII
Illustrations XXIII, Christian Marriage
Although different in style, the representation is similar to Kingsley’s drawing (See Chapter I)

Illustration XXIV A  Charity and Britannia recruiting the urchins. From Three Letters on the subject of the Marine Society, Joseph Hanway, 1757

Illustration XXIVB  Christianity-inspired Britannia leads the way to social reform and dispels tyranny, superstition, and ignorance, as it leads the way to progress
CHAPTER IV ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustrations I

Mansion of Bliss Game

Illustration II

Delicious Game of the Fruit Basket

III Cruikshank’s
The English Juggernaut

IV Hogarth’s Gin Lane, 1751
Illustrations V: The Bottle

1. Drink is brought to dinner

2. Husband sacked. Clothes pawned for drink money

3. Bailiffs repossess furniture. Drinking continues
4. Family driven to the streets to beg.

5. Poverty kills the youngest child. Drinking continues

6. Domestic violence is the consequence of alcoholism
7. Drunk husband kills wife with a bottle

8. Father imprisoned and mad; daughter and son involved in Vice.
Illustration VI: The Drunkard's Children

1. Drinking in a Gin shop, Haven of Social Evil

2. Daughter in Dancing Room, on course to Prostitution.

3. Son gambles away his stolen earnings
4. Son arrested in boarding house after Robbery.

5. Son and Daughter on Trial in Old Bailey.

6. Son sentenced to Transportation – Sister Acquitted.
7. Son dies en route to Australia.

Illustration VII

(1840) “Temperance and Intemperance at Home”

Illustration VIII

Illustration IX: Old Vic.
Illustration X
Lady Somerset’s Duxhurst Colony

XI. Cruikshank, “Life in London” 1821

Illustration XII

Illustration XIII
Albertine at the Police Doctor’s Waiting Room, 1886-87
By Norwegian artist, Christian Krohg (1852-1925)

Illustration XIV
Florence Nightingale after the Crimea
We can read: DESCENTE EN ANGLETERRE
And below: FRAPPEE A LONDRES
(minted in London) 1804.
This is a mythological reference to Hercules, who was able to defeat Antaeus, the son of Mother Earth, by holding him in the air, out of touch with the earth, from which he drew his strength. The analogy is rather unhappy, since the British merman drew his strength from the ocean, and there was no way Napoleon could forbid him that.

Execution of Nurse Edith Cavell for helping allied soldiers escape German-occupied Belgium. 1915

Monument in Trafalgar Square
XXV. Massacre at Cawnpore.
XXVI. An Incident during the Indian Mutiny, by Edward Hopley.

Illustrations XXVII

A Wives following the drum

B Barracks

Marching
XVII B  Funeral

XVIII The Roll Call, (1874).
CHAPTER V ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustration I

Illustration II

Illustrations III

Marianne North at work and the North Gallery in Kew
Illustration IVA
The Seamstress (1854) Anna Elizabeth Blunden (1830-1915)

Illustration IVB
The Song of the Shirt (1845) Richard Redgrave (1804-1888)

Illustration IV C

THE HAUNTED LADY or "The Ghost in the Looking-glass"
Madame la Madrue: "We would not have disappointed your Ladyship, at any sacrifice, and the robe is finished à MÉRIBELLE"
Illustrations VI

VII The Honeymooners, by Edward Frederick Brewtnall, presents some similarities with The Painter’s Honeymoon

VIII The Pride of Dijon, William John Hennessy
IX. Contrast: nineteenth-century illustrations of "for better, for worse" call to account the "freedom" our age has acquired.

The advertisement in this Sims ad reads: "Now, a whole new generation is in your hands. Satisfy their primal urges, or pursue less sweaty goals like Fortune, Knowledge, Family, and Popularity. The choice is up to you. Come to think of it, pretty much everything is. Take charge at eagames.com."
CONCLUSION ILLUSTRATIONS

I. Indeed, women, especially after the Sixties, lost much of the respect chivalrous gentlemen showed them in the nineteenth century.

II. Sir Ralph and Lady Katherine Greene (1419) Northamptonshire. Note the couple holding hands as an illustration of their love.
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