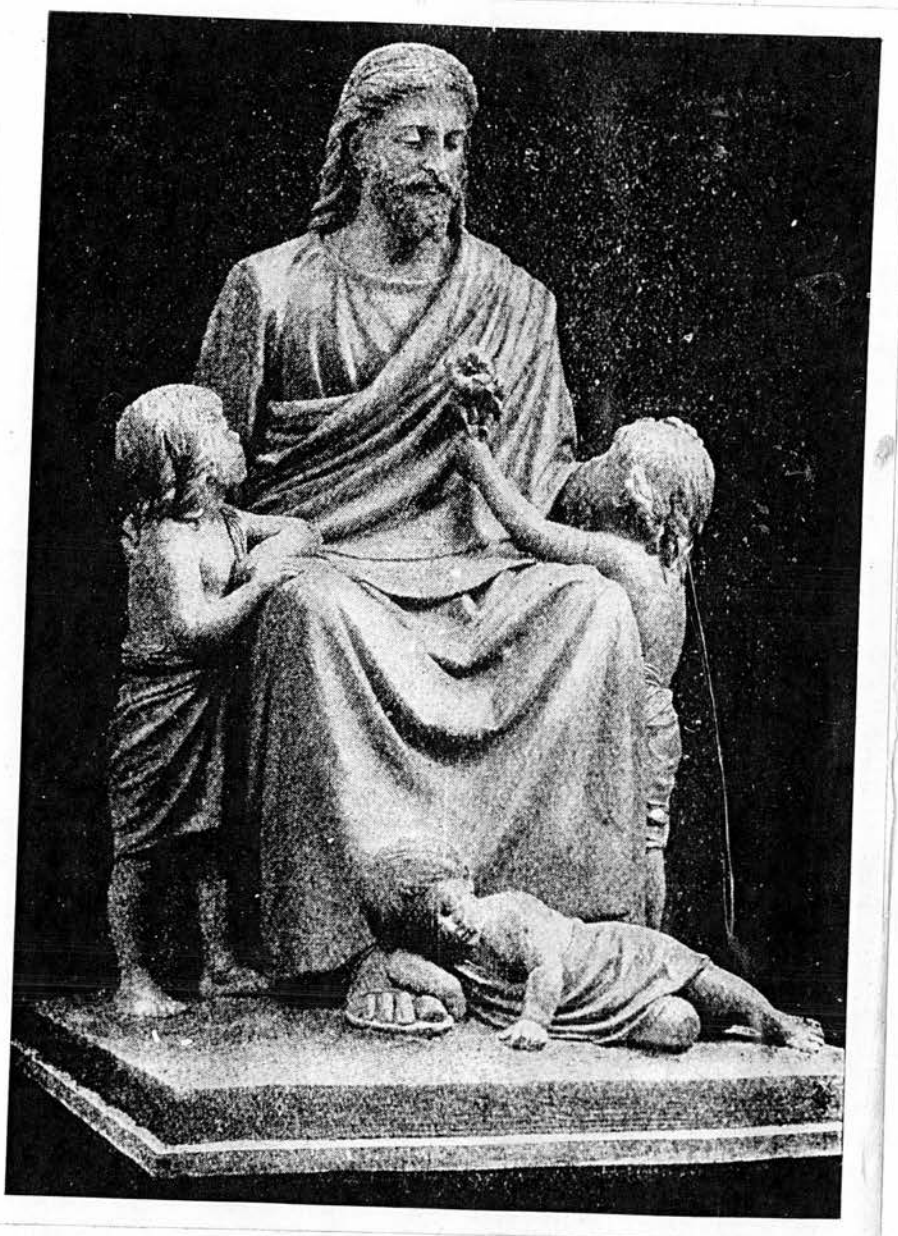


JESUS AND THE LITTLE CHILDREN.
"....that Divine Teacher who himself took little children on His knees...." Dickens. p.131

Frontispiece.
From the Terra Cotta Statue in Whitworth Park, Manchester.

Thesis for the Degree of Ph.D.

University of Edinburgh

THE CHILD IN VICTORIAN FICTION

Some Aspects of his treatment and training
with special reference to the Works of
Charles Dickens and Charlotte M. Yonge.

presented by

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March, 1954.

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PREFACE

The Victorian period provided a complete revolution in the attitude towards children. The progress of this revolution, to which Victorian fiction contributed in no small measure, it is the main object of the thesis to outline. The term "Victorian" is used here not in the strictly chronological but broadly representative sense, and "childhood" is intended to cover all those years of early life when the character is chiefly formed.

b In expressing my thanks to those who have helped me in this work I must mention first my gratitude to Dr. Edwin Muir, C.B.E. and Mr. K.A. Wood of Newbattle Abbey College, Dalkeith, where I was a student for some time. But for their kindly interest and guidance I would have found it impossible to continue this research which I had undertaken some years ago in India. To the staff of the National Library of Scotland, and in particular to Mr. W. Beattie, the Librarian, for directing me to some valuable sources of information, and to the Staff of the University of Edinburgh Library, I wish to express my grateful appreciation of their unfailing courtesy and help. Finally, I have to acknowledge my deep indebtedness to my University supervisors, Professor W.L. Renwick and Miss Marjorie A. Brown but for whose assistance and kindness this difficult and lengthy task would

never have been completed. To Professor Renwick I find it difficult to express my gratitude except in terms in which Dickens spoke of Paul's debt to Florence Dombey: "showed him all that was so rough, made smooth, and all that was so dark, made clear and plain, before him."

University of Edinburgh
3rd March, 1954.

R.G.C.

THE ECONOMIC ASPECT

I. Children Under the Poor Law

II. The Factory Child.

I.

CHILDREN UNDER THE POOR LAW

I

Children Under the Poor Law

As R. H. Tawney points out[1], nothing reveals the true character of a social philosophy more clearly than its attitude to poverty and the treatment of childhood. The children under the Poor Law strikingly bear out the truth of this observation. Friendless and bereft of their natural protectors, they are entirely dependent upon the State for their upbringing and education. The old Poor Law affords little evidence that the State was either alive to the special needs of these children or to its responsibility for their training as future citizens. The early 18th century records, indeed, are replete with instances of the extreme barbarity in which the non-resident expectant mothers were hustled out of the parish, or the lump sums recovered as security made the occasion of a parish feast known as "saddling the spit".[2] In many, if not most, cases[3] the parish children were apprenticed to disagreeable trades and unsuitable masters. Only now and then the public conscience was horrified by cases of gross ill-treatment of the parish apprentices by brutal masters like Mrs. Brownrigg.[4]

It is in the closing decades of the 18th century that we see the general swing towards humanity and the development of a sense of social responsibility, which is

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1. Religion and the Rise of Capitalism. p.268.
2. M. Dorothy George: London Life in the 18th Century, p.216
3. Allsopp: The Change to Modern England, p.96
4. "In Fetter Lane - Mrs. Browning and her son, for the space of two years, subjected their apprentices to ill-usages so horrible that after the lapse of a century it is still well-remembered." Lecky: A History of England in the 18th Century. Vol.III, p.327.

something more than an attempt to protect individuals from ill-treatment. The work of philanthropists like Hanway and the resolution of Manchester justices in 1784[1] refusing to sanction indentures of the parish apprentices to cotton mills are early manifestations of this change.

Even earlier we come across here and there a local body adopting an enlightened policy, but it involved a heavy strain on its limited resources. "The Corporation of the Poor" in the City of Bristol, we are told[2], ran two workhouses. One was reserved for the reception of those young girls that were on their Poor's books, and of such whose parents took no due care of them. About one hundred such girls were taught to read and to spin. They had their wholesome and nourishing diet of beef, pease, potatoes, milk porridge, bread, cheese, good beer, cabbage, carrots, turnips, etc., and had good beds to lie on. Apparel was provided them for Sundays. They went to church every Sunday and were taught their catechism at home. The Corporation had to encounter some opposition from their parents. In the other Workhouse the inmates were classified, the boys were segregated from the old people. The men were lodged in several chambers on one floor, and the women on another. This courageous policy, the writer assures us, answered the expectation of the Bristol citizens and they had great reason to hope that these young plants would

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1. M. Dorothy George. op.cit. p.267
2. "An Account of the Proceedings of the Corporation of Bristol",by John Cary, 1700, quoted by Eden: State of the Poor, Vol.I, p.278.

produce a virtuous and laborious generation. But the Corporation's project of employing the poor in the workhouse did not succeed. The rates were advanced from £3,500 in 1714 to £13,000 in 1791. Eden describes the state of the Bristol workhouse of his time (1795) when like most other workhouses during the regime of out-door allowances it had degenerated into an ill-kept lodging house. The inmates, 287 in number, were mostly old people and children, and the insane, lame and blind, etc. "There are 12 or 15 beds, principally of flock, in each apartment, it is probably owing to this circumstance, and the number of old and disabled persons, that the house is infected with vermin.... The Poor eat their victuals in their lodging rooms."[1] Of the Poor in the Epsom workhouse in Surrey we are furnished with a more minute list. Of its 11 men, three under 50 years were idle and disorderly fellows, one of them somewhat of an idiot. The rest were aged, impotent or afflicted with some disease. Of the 16 women, 6 under 50 were idle, idiots, or profligate, and the rest infirm with age or disease. Other inmates were 7 boys and 16 girls.[2]

The swing towards humanitarianism is noticeable in all the changes in the Poor Laws from 1782 to 1816. The workhouse inmates were treated to a liberal dietary. Meat dinners were served three or four times a week. At Bedford more especially the food of the family in the

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1. Eden: The State of the Poor, Vol.II, p.185.
2. Ibid. Vol.III, p.695

workhouse was better than the most industrious labourer could afford himself at his own house.[1] But this indulgence was offset by the overcrowding, insanitation, filth and gross indecency of the workhouse life during the whole of the 18th and even for the first thirty or forty years of the 19th century.[2] No special provision seems to have been made for the workhouse children who make up perhaps the most mournful group in Crabbe's picture of the workhouse:

> "There children dwell who know no parent's care;
> Parents who know no children's love dwell there.
> Heart-broken matrons on their joyless beds,
> Forsaken wives, and mothers never wed;
> Dejected widows with unheeded tears,
> And crippled age with more than childhood fears."[3]

Through neglect and improper treatment four-fifths of the children born in London, a Parliamentary Committee reported in 1767, died within the first year. This led to the passing of the Hanway Act of 1767[4] directing that all children under the age of six years in the parishes within the Bills of Mortality, should be put out to nurse at a distance of at least three miles from any part of the cities of London and Westminster. The children so put out, were to be nursed and maintained at the charge of these respective parishes for not less than 2/6d weekly, with a bonus of 10s. a year to each successful nurse. Guardians appointed by the parish were to visit and inform themselves of the condition

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1. Ibid. p.286
2. S. & Beatrice Webb: English Poor Law History, Pt.I, p.248
3. The Village
4. George: iiic. p.39

of the children thus boarded in "baby farms" and individual houses. Sir George Nichols instances this Act as an evidence of the human and kindly feelings towards the helpless and infant poor.[1] Sir Sidney and Beatrice Webb write that there is, so far as they know, no evidence as to the success or failure of Hanway's Act. But it may be safely assumed that Hanway's Act ensured the pauper child a better chance of survival. It was nicknamed "the Act for keeping children alive". Parishes burdened with the ruinous expenditure of out-door relief and with the increasing number of pauper children whom they were bound under the Poor Law of Elizabeth to apprentice to a trade, resorted to the none too scrupulous practices of securing by offer of a premium, apprenticeship in an alien parish, to escape liability or in the case of the workhouses of London, Birmingham, and elsewhere, delivering them over by scores to the mill owners, with little or no regard to the character of their employers. A Mr. B. of Manchester boasts to Byng in 1792 of the most wonderful importation of children purchased in London at so much the half score (nine sound and one cripple) by those merchants the most forward against the slave trade.[2]

A Memoir of Robert Blincoe, the subject of which, we are assured, resided at No.19 Turner Street, Manchester in 1832, throws light on the fate of children so consigned to the factory system.

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1. A History of English Poor Law. Vol.II, p.149
2. Torrington Diaries. Vol.III, p.88.

The pamphlet is freely quoted by Alfred[1], Mantoux[2], and lately by Sir Noel Curtis-Bennett[3]. According to himself, Robert Blincoe was supported in St. Pancras Poorhouse from the age of four till his seventh year. He considered himself worse off than a child reared in the Foundling Hospital, for he had no name given him. He acknowledged that he was well-fed, decently clad, and comfortably lodged and not at all overworked. Yet he was weary of confinement and of his company in the workhouse. "The aged were commonly petulant and miserable, the young demoralized and wholly destitute of gaiety of heart."[4] He would have gladly exchanged his situation with a sweep boy; being too small he was rejected by the master sweeps who came to the workhouse to select boys as apprentices. But in 1799 he was one of a large number of children apprenticed to the owner of a great cotton mill near Nottingham. The children were deluded by the parish officer into the belief that they were all, when they arrived at the cotton mill, to be transformed into ladies and gentlemen and fed on roast beef and plum-pudding.[5] Their indentures, in fact, contained no safeguards for their good treatment. At the apprentice house the supper consisted of milk-porridge, of a very blue complexion, and black bread so soft that they could scarcely swallow it as it stuck like bird-lime to their teeth. Blincoe worked as hard as anyone in the mill.

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1. History of the Factory Movement.
2. The Industrial Revolution in the 18th Century.
3. Food of the People.
4. A Memoir of Robert Blincoe. p.10
5. Ibid. p.13

When his strength failed, he endured the strap or the stick, the cuff or the kick with as much resignation as any of his fellow sufferers. Being half starved and cruelly treated, he was many a time tempted to throw himself out of one of the upper windows of the factory. On a representation being made to the parish authorities, conditions had begun to improve when the mill stopped working, and most of the children were handed over to a mill in Derbyshire. Blincoe had by then served four years of his time and Peel's Bill had already become all but a dead letter.[1]

Blincoe's narrative of his sufferings in Derbyshire sounds incredibly revolting, but Fielden cites it in support of his account of the Factory System. He wishes every man and woman in England would see and read this pamphlet.[2] Many details of Blincoe's picture are reproduced in Frances Trollope's novel "Michael Armstrong". The scene of Blincoe's misery was a sequestered glen in Derbyshire, remote from any human habitation. Ill-fed apprentices stole food from the pig's trough. Their work was shamefully protracted to sometimes sixteen hours without rest or food. During an outbreak of contagious fever, so great was the mortality that it was felt advisable to divide the burials in different places. Irons were rivited to some apprentices who were suspected of intending to run away.

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1. Ibid. Ch. iv.

2. The Curse of the Factory System. p.7

Changes in the distribution of the textile manufactures and the character of machinery, together with increasing legal restrictions, gradually displaced the device of wholesale apprenticeship of parish children to capitalist manufacturers. The economic pressure was also wearing down the reluctance of parents to send their children to factories. In his evidence before the Select Committee on Handloom Weavers in 1835 a witness stated his objection to children working in factories in these terms: "For I am determined for my part that if they will invent machines to supersede manual labour, they must find iron boys to mind them". He declared that but for the distressed circumstances he should never let his lad go to the factory.[1]

By 1815 many of the factory children were not pauper apprentices at all, but the children of Lancashire parents who were too poor to keep them at home. Robert Peel's Bill of 1816 was intended to protect the children of this category. It was in support of this that Coleridge wrote to Crabb Robinson: "Can you furnish me with any other instances in which the legislature has interfered with what is ironically called 'Free Labour', i.e., dared to prohibit soul-murder on the part of the rich and self-slaughter on the part of the poor[2]." He dismisses as utterly sophistical the plea that legislative interference with free labour is improper - "It is our duty to declare aloud, that if the labour were

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1. Select Committee on Handloom Weavers 1835. Q.2640 Q.2644

2. The Political Thought of Coleridge. A Selection by R. J. White, p.216.

indeed free, the employer would purchase, and the labourer sell, what the former had no right to buy, and the latter no right to dispose of: namely the labourer's health, life, and well-being. These belong not to himself alone, but to his friends, to his parents, to his King, to his country, and to his God. If the labourer were indeed free, the contract would approach, on the one side, too near to suicide, on the other to manslaughter."[1] He based his argument for shortening the hours of labour of children in cotton factories on commonsense and human sympathy:

> "Who does not know that in a journey too long for the traveller's strength, it is the last few miles that torment him by fatigue and injure him by exhaustion? - Substitute a child employed on tasks the most opposite to all its natural instincts, were it only from their improgressive and wearying uniformity - in a heated, stifling, and impure atmosphere, fevered by noise and glare, both limbs and spirits outwearied - and at the tenth hour, he has still three, four, or five hours more to look forward to. Will he, will that poor little sufferer, be brought to believe that these hours are mere trifles? Generalities are apt to deceive us. Individualize the sufferings which it is the object of this Bill to remedy, follow up the detail in some one case with a human sympathy, and the deception vanishes."[2]

That these words truly interpreted the feelings of an over-worked child is borne out by the evidence of witnesses before the Factory Commission. "When I have been at the mills in the winter season," a witness told the Committee, "when the children are at work in the evening, the very first thing they inquire is, 'What o'clock is it?' if I should answer 'seven,' they say,

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1. Ibid. p.218

2. Ibid. p.219,220.

'only seven! It is a great while to ten, but we must not give up till ten o'clock or past! ' [1]

From the worst evils, however, associated with the apprenticing of pauper children far away from their kith and kin in the great industrial regions where no supervision could possibly be exercised, in many rural parishes, as was the case in Cambridgeshire[2], they seem to have remained free. After 1802 so-called 'free labour' children superseded the apprentices. Technical advances and legal restrictions, too, were making a change for the better. "The interior economy of mills," wrote Gaskell in 1833, "has so much improved as to remove most of the obnoxious agents which fall with such dreadful severity upon the parish apprentices, who first become their victims; and there is nothing in a well regulated mill directly injurious to life, save only the length of time spent there and its consequences.[3] "In the few factories," reports Mr. Muggeridge, Migration Agent in the Poor Law Commission, "in which apprentices are still employed, I find nothing in their condition to lead me to regret that the practice has much diminished. They are, with few exceptions, a dispirited and discontented class, infinitely worse clad, and less happy and respectable in appearance than the children of the same ages who are their fellow work-people in the same factories."[4]

Of the evils and abuses of the old law in their

1.Report 1831-32 Q.460, p.19.
2.Treatment of Poverty In Cambridgeshire. E.M. Hampson p.154
3.The Manufacturing Population of England. p.211
4.Report on the Training of Pauper Children. pp.456,457

effect upon the parish children the Poor Law Commissioners of 1832 condemned in particular the General Mixed Workhouse in respect of the absence of classification, discipline, and employment, apprenticeship under the old compulsory billeting-out and the more general premium systems, and the laws relating to settlement and bastardy. From the evidence of many workhouses they concluded that in by far the greater number of cases the workhouse was "a large alms house, in which the young are trained in idleness, ignorance and vice..."[1] The Commissioners under the Poor Law Amendment Act reinforced their plea for district schools for the training of pauper children by pointing out the danger of a polluting association with the adult inmates.[2] The system of a compulsory allotment of apprentices, as it was pursued in Suffolk and Norfolk, it was argued, tended to weaken filial ties and to breed irresponsibility and improvidence. The combined effect of premiums and the settlement laws was to place the children with unsuitable or impecunious persons in order to rid the home parish of its burden or to shift its responsibility to an alien parish.[3] The result of all this was that the parish children suffered from the ill treatment of the masters and the neglect both of their immediate welfare and future career. The school master to the West London Union deposed that juvenile delinquency had been increased by the neglect of the training of pauper children in the poor houses; by the grossly vicious

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1.Report 1834. p.53
2.Report on the Training of Pauper Children, p.9
3.Ibid. pp.90,94.

examples to which they had been exposed within the workhouses; by their absconding, on account of misconduct and bad treatment from their situations with low mechanics to whom they were apprenticed; and by the consequent temptations to which they were subjected."[1]

The system of out-door relief under the old Poor Law was, it seems, adopted to mitigate the rigours of a period when the economic and social condition of the labourers was "probably at its very lowest level since the Elizabethan Poor Law had been established."[2] But, half a century later, after extensive enquiries into the effect of this mode of relief the Poor Law Commissioners condemned it as "a system which aims its allurement at all the weakest parts of our nature - which offers marriage to the young, security to the anxious, ease to the lazy, and impunity to the profligate."[3] The new policy was, therefore, dictated by the hostility of Poor Commissioners to out-door relief and their desire to suppress "individual improvidence and vice" at all costs. The first and most essential condition to be imposed on the individual relieved was that his situation should not, the Commissioners insisted, be made really or apparently so eligible as the situation of the independent labourer of the lowest class.[4] By the application of strict regimen in the workhouse on the Principle of Less Eligibility, it was intended to deter the able-

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1. Ibid. p.146
2. S. & B. Webb. Op.cit. Pt.ii Vol.I, p.4
3. P.L.C. 1834, p.59
4. Ibid. p.228

bodied applicants for relief. That relief might be so administered "as not merely to relieve, but also to deter," Tawney characterises as the grand discovery of the commercial age, made by utilitarian philosophers.[1]

Harriet Martineau illustrated in her "Tales of the Poor Law" the calamitous results of the old law and improvements that the New Poor Laws were expected to bring about in the moral and material conditions of the labouring classes. Avowedly propagandist in aim and inspiration, her tales are nevertheless enlivened by homely touches. Elsewhere we are given a more direct statement of her views, reflecting, perhaps, the official attitude to out-door relief: "The tendency of all such modes of distribution having been found to encourage improvidence with all its attendant evils, to injure the good while relieving the bad, to extinguish the spirit of independence on one side, and of charity on the other... and to increase perpetually the evil they are meant to remedy - but one plea is now commonly urged in favour of a legal provision for the indigent. This plea is that every individual born into a state has a right to subsistence from the state. This plea, in its general application, is grounded on a false analogy between a state and its members, and a parent and his family."[2]

Her Poor Law tales, however, are not written in the spirit of such a forbidding doctrine as the above passage seems to shadow forth. Her first tale, "The Parish",

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1. Op. cit. p.271
2. Illustrations of Political Economy. Vol.IX, pp.69, 70

exhibits the state of parochial affairs as administered under the old system. Its interest centres on the fortunes of Goldby, the farmer who, notwithstanding his vigilant care and industry becomes a martyr to the maladministration of the Poor Laws in the parish of Thorpe - his rate-burdened land lying uncultivated, his stack yard burned down by refractory paupers. Interwoven with this main story is the struggle of a sober, hardworking, independent labourer, Ashley, to keep himself and his children above pauperism. If Goldby's ruin is intended to illustrate the evils of a pauper ridden parish, Ashley's recovery sets off the virtues of frugality and forbearance of an independent labourer. Of particular interest to us, however, is Ruth's life in Goldby's farm house. Ruth, the eldest of the three children of a widow, is an industrious girl who had early been inured to responsibility and self-reliance, She has always been up in time to wash and dress her poor deformed little sister Biddy and to give her brother Peter his breakfast before she goes to school. At school she learns hemming, seaming, and back stitching. Her mother, Mrs. Brand, having opened a beer shop, the parish has Ruth placed with Goldby. Often had Ruth taken Peter and Biddy to Goldby's farm house and many were the games they played, calling "chick, chick" in the poultry yard, picking up the apples that were showered from the tree over her head and playing hide and seek in the straw on the old barn." Especially dear to Ruth was one lilac hedge whose leaves she and Peter would

gather for an experiment inspired by the story of the Babes in the Wood. They devoutly believed in that story, could never sufficiently admire the industry of the robins in covering the children with leaves, and were anxious to know how many leaves it would take. Under the churchyard wall close by, little Biddy was laid to be covered with lilac leaves, but either for want of materials or of patience on Biddy's part their experiment never succeeded.[1] Very different from this idyllic picture is Ruth's experience at the farm. She had now to do hard and fatiguing work - scouring the dairy utensils, churning, making cheeses, and what not, then the long dinner table was to be got ready, then huge baskets of apples to be carried up to the apple loft and stowed away, then milking again; then supper, with noise and confusion, which made her thoroughly stupid before she was dismissed, weary, to her bed, to be alarmed by the stirrings of the owls in the roof and to cry herself to sleep amidst thoughts of Biddy and home.[2] Mrs. Goldby often seeing her cry, would teasingly ask: "What's this about child? Tears dropping into my milk-pans! Are you salting the milk to make it keep?"

In this realistically conceived picture of farm life Miss Martineau has imaginatively projected Ruth's point of view; how a very young girl would react to her initiation in the duties of a farm house. Objectively

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1. The Parish Ch. I

2. Ibid. Ch. I.

viewed, however, Ruth's work at the farm was the usual training of an agricultural labourer's child; a form of apprenticeship which is favourably noticed by the Poor Law Commissioners.[1] In contrast with Ruth we see in other children the effect of the demoralizing conditions in which they were reared. Mrs. Brand is too pre-occupied with the brawling loungers at her beer shop to take care of her children. Biddy the deformed child serves only to amuse the disorderly customers, Peter is regaled with the exploits of the poachers and game-keepers. Indeed Ruth finds that her people at home are no longer drawn to her by common interests and ideals. It is at her mother's house that she overhears the plot for setting fire to her master's stack yard. Though her daring attempt to warn her master proves unavailing, yet her loyalty and sense of sacrifice bear out the testimony of the rector that the old virtues are not extinct, but are stronger than ever and more severely tried.[2] There is, at times, a shade of priggishness in her character, when she seems to be voicing the views of the author. Seeing for instance that the children of Mr. Blogg the landlord are encouraged to beg from rich travellers, Ruth ventures to ask Mrs. Blogg if the children would be willing to work hereafter, if they were made fond of begging now. On the whole she is fairly representative of Victorian childhood, deeply domesticated, self-reliant, accustomed to assume responsibility from an early age, wise beyond

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1.Report on the Training of Pauper Children.
2.Id. Ch.viii.

her years yet with something touchingly childlike irradiating the earnest seriousness of her character.

From the description of the workhouse it appears that onee their fear of its high walls was got over the children made merry, playing, laughing, and teasing the old and disabled inmates. A mother's remark that the workhouse was a bad place for children evoked the following observation from an old inmate: "and yet - workhouses were meant for such as them and us. It seems odd, but it is quite true that none of them turn out good, and none of us happy."

The effect of the Abolition of Out-door Relief and of the strict application of the 'Workhouse Test' is pictured in Miss Martineau's "Hamlets". The story is undisguisedly propagandist. The opening scene, however, is charmingly imagined. Two orphan children, Harriet, a stout girl of ten and her brother Ben, just turned nine, are boarded out by the parish with Mrs. Monk, a fisherman's wife and mother of a three-year-old boy, Fred. Harriet and Ben are set to work to earn something and to make themselves generally useful in the house. We see the children go out in the early morning to gather what wool they can get from the downs. Having by noon collected a very respectable bundle of flock, and four guillemot eggs into the bargain, they return home, proudly exhibit their pricks and scratches to disarm Mrs. Monk's suspicions that their gains were not honestly come by. The humour and homely appeal of the following scene are irresistible: "When Harriet

had just finished tidying up things a low wail was heard from the next room. It proceeded from Ben, not yet in bed, but standing in his shirt, wiping away his tears with its ragged sleeve. His grief was that he could not get into bed, as the baby was lying directly across; his little feet, appearing where Ben wanted to rest his weary shoulders, and the same little feet being old enough to kick rather vigorously on receiving a hint to get back into their proper places. This matter being arranged by Mrs. Monk in a moment and Ben helped by the same hand to lie down without pushing Fred out upon the floor, the boy was permitted to go to sleep, as soon as he could, under the conviction that he must not move half an inch to the right or to the left."[1]

As we proceed with the story, its propaganda overshadows these human touches: the children outgrow their individual traits and become lay figures to propagate the author's views. Harriet and Ben join the workhouse school as out-boarders, wish to be generous, to do a great deal of good, and wonder why there are so many people on the parish when it is so easy to keep off it. Reared to a state of early independence Harriet and Ben do grow, indeed, to repay their training and protection by taking care of Mr. Monk and his children after the death of Mrs. Monk. Mr. Monk, anxious about his children's future, thought that it might not often happen that such as Harriet and Ben would be at hand at

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1. Hamlets. Ch.I.

such times, Harriet declared: ".. but I do not see why there should not be plenty such as Ben and me, if orphans were timely taught and tended in some place out of the workhouse."

The story closes with a picture of the entirely 'depauperised' village. By refusing the parish relief except on terms of strict regimen in the workhouse, Mr. Barry, the new overseer, eliminates all but the real paupers. Even these latter prefer to rely upon private charity and the mutual help of their relatives and neighbours whose virtues have now been stimulated by the new system of Poor Law administration. The workhouse school, too, is deserted in favour of one where children pay their two pence a week, "thinking more highly of education the more completely it was disconnected with public and private charity."[1]

Miss Martineau's other two tales of Poor Laws do not give us any striking picture of children. "The Town" has a slightly sketched scene of the "workhouse school", exposed to the demoralizing influence of a Mixed Workhouse. The schoolmaster is assaulted by the children at the instigation of an idiot pauper. An interesting piece of evidence is afforded on an independent labourer's diet which is set up as a standard for the workhouse scale. Walter, the beadle, schoolmaster, and shoe-maker, earned ten shillings a week. He, his wife, and six children made up the family. They had some little meat in a week but only Walters touched it to fit him for his

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1. The Town. Ch.IX

work. The others got fried potatoes for dinner and the use of dripping, coffee and bread morning and evening and half a pound of butter now and then.[1]

In the preface Miss Martineau states that all that is most melancholy in her story is strictly true and that she has taken no pains to select the worst instances of parochial abuse and pauper incroachment exhibited in her tales. The tales are intended to illustrate the thesis that vice and misery are to be referred to the errors of a system rather than to the depravity of individuals. A part of this thesis is developed by contrasting two sets of children: those growing free from, and those subjected to, pauperising influence. And the dividing line tends to be too sharply defined. Under the stress of her thesis Miss Martineau's model children seem to grow into moral prodigies, but as our analysis shows, her pictures of Victorian childhood are, on the whole, truly conceived. The subsequent history of the Poor Law Amendment Act, however, belied many of the high hopes in terms of which Miss Martineau pictures the "entirely depauperised" village in "Hamlets."

The new Poor Law provoked fierce opposition and something like rebellion in the North.[2] The poor in Cambridgeshire, said a Cambridgeshire farmer in 1836,[3] "have an amazing prejudice against the Poor Law Bill." "Rightly or wrongly," a contemporary historian of the factory movement wrote in 1857, "the labourers of England believed that the new Poor Law was a law to punish

1. The Town. Ch. V. 2. Tawney. Op.cit., p.272
3. Commons' Committee on the State of Agriculture (1836) Q.2361

poverty."[1] Engels interpreted the Malthusian spirit of the new law as equating poverty with "superfluity". "Live you shall, but live as an awful warning to all those who might have inducements to become superfluous."[2] The workhouses were termed the Bastilles, and several of the best and most honest labourers, it was deposed before the Commons' Committee, said that before they would go to the Union Workhouses, they would rob on the highway.[3] "I have," wrote Engels, "the reports of five cases, in which persons actually starving when the guardians refused them outdoor relief, went back to their miserable homes and died of starvation rather than enter these hells."[4]

Kingsley speaks in 1844 of the horrible effects of the new Poor Law. "You must be behind the scenes to see the truth, in places which the Malthus's and --s know nothing of."[5] On the refusal of out-door relief and the offer of Workhouse, Carlyle's characteristic comment was: "If paupers are made miserable, paupers will need to decline. It is a secret known to all rat catchers."[6] He analysed the chief social principle of the Poor Law Amendment Act as "Laissez faire, laissez passer". "In brief, ours is a world requiring only to be well let alone. Scramble along, thou insane scramble of a world - thou art all right, and shall scramble even; and whoever in the press is trodden down, has only to lie there and be trampled broad."

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1. Life and Labour in the 19th Century, p.103 p.28
2. Engels, F.: The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844
3. Fay, Op.cit., p.103 4. Op.cit., p.292
5. Letters & Memoirs of his Life by His Wife, 2 vols. 1877 Vol.I,p.121
6. Chartism, Ch.III, p.12

Allowing for the colourful oratory of the objectors, whose criticism Sidney and Beatrice Webb characterize as purely negative,[1] the new Poor Law does seem to have brought a new rigour at the same time that it suffered some of the old evils to survive. That Dickens in his picture of the new Poor Law was nearer the truth than was Miss Martineau's prophecy is borne out by what Louisa Twining saw of the mismanagement and the reign of terror in the Strand Union Workhouse in 1853 and in St. Giles's in 1857.[2]

In three respects principally, the position of children under the Poor Law remained unsatisfactory.
(1) General Mixed Workhouses (2) "Child Farms"
(3) Out-door Relief.

The orders and regulations to be observed in the Workhouses and issued by the Commissioners directed the children under 13 to be separated from the adults and classified as: (1) boys above 7 and under 13 (2)girls above 7 and under 16, and (3) children under 7 years of age. To each class a separate apartment or building was to be assigned. This policy recommended in 1834 was abandoned in 1835-1837 and re-adopted in 1838. Yet in 1906, 14,000 children under 16 were still found in the General Mixed Workhouses.[3] The intersection, however, of Gilbert and local act incorporations impeded the work of forming unions and providing workhouses. By 1836, 315 unions were stated to have been formed,

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1.History of the Poor Law. Pt.ii Vol.I., p.155
2.Recollections of Life and Work. pp.114, 115
3.Sidney and Beatrice Webb. Pt.ii. Vol.I.p.254 .History of the Poor Law

thus placing under the new law 45% of the entire population of England and Wales. At the end of 1852 the number of Unions was reported to have increased to 608. This progress was, however, qualified by the admission that these unions were not well provided with sufficient workhouse accommodation and that in some even of the earlier unions the workhouses were still very imperfect.[1] As the able-bodied paupers were kept out by the workhouse test and out-door relief was permitted in cases of distress, the workhouse became increasingly a refuge of "those very classes whom one would least of all select to associate with each other: both sexes, extreme ages, different degrees of imbecility and disease, those who are much to be pitied and those who are much to be blamed."[2] Such a confusion of classes, coupled with the adherence to the principle of "Less Eligibility" gave to the workhouse a character which is analysed by Fowle: "... it is neither school, infirmary, penitentiary, prison, place of shelter, or place of work, but something that comes of all these put together."[3] The difficulty of steering between a jail and an almshouse and, consequently, the impossibility of enforcing any uniform regimen made the workhouse anything but a suitable place for children to be reared in. A very large proportion of the inmates of all the London prisons, it was reported, had passed as a preparatory step some portion of their lives in the workhouses.[4] The

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1. George Nicholls: History of the Poor Law, Vol.II, p.454
2. Fowle: The Poor Law, p.112
3. Ibid. p.142
4. Report on the Training of Pauper Children. p.359

despotism and cruelty of the workhouse officers were frequently reported upon by competent witnesses. Their evidence to some extent, accounts for the dread and hatred of the workhouse which so often found imaginative expression in Dickens.

The metropolitan parishes, in conformity with the provisions of Hanway's Acts (2 Geor.III c.22 and 7 Geor. III c.39) boarded out their children in small private "baby farms" or in infant establishments set up for the purpose in the suburbs of London. Some of these establishments seem to have been directly managed by the parishes concerned, others maintained under contract. Of the private undertakings the two best known were Aubin's at Norwood, and Drouet's at Tooting. High mortality at Aubin's establishment led in 1836 to a special report by Dr. Arnott[1]. Dr. Arnott found the diet excellent and abundant but suggested improvements in warming and ventilating. Reformed by these and other improvements, the Norwood establishment was commended by Dr. Kay in 1839 as a model school of industry: "No workhouse school as yet affords an example of industrial, moral and religious training, the success of which can be compared with that which has already attended only six months' exertions in an establishment containing 1,000 children, though these efforts have been obstructed by all the imperfections incident to a contractor's establishment."[2] "The imperfections

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1. Second Annual Report of the Poor Law Commissioners, App.C. 1836
2. Report on the Training of Pauper Children, p.120

incident to a contractor's establishment" of which Dr. Kay speaks were brought to light in 1849 by an outbreak of cholera in Drouet's school, which earlier in 1837 and again in 1840 was complained of for ill-treatment as well as ill-health.[1] Doubts existed as to the right of the Poor Law Board to interfere with these "farming establishments", but what now occurred at Tooting brought home the necessity of protecting pauper and deserted children, especially of the metropolitan parishes. Dickens launched a vigorous attack against "a trade which derived its profits from the deliberate torture of and neglect of a class the most innocent on earth, as well as the most wretched and defenceless."[2] Again in 1850, being agreeably impressed by the robust looking children in a large metropolitan workhouse, he recollected "that most infamous and atrocious enormity committed at Tooting - an enormity which a hundred years hence will still be vividly remembered in the by-ways of English life, and which had done more to engender a gloomy discontent and suspicion among many thousands of the people than all the Chartist leaders could have done in all their lives."[3]

The 12th and 13th Victoria cap.13 empowered the Poor Law Board to regulate all those places wherein poor persons were lodged or maintained or educated under contracts with parochial authorities.

1.Sidney & Beatrice Webb. Op.cit. Pt.II, p.120
2.The Verdict for Drouet, April 1849. Miscellaneous Papers, Vol.I, p.163
3.Reprinted Pieces. A Walk in the Workhouse
4.Nicholls. Op.cit. Vol.I, p.365

In a supplemental report at the end of 1839 the total number of workhouse children under 16 was stated to be 64,570[1], but the number of children on out-door relief ran into hundreds of thousands. Of these latter, Sidney and Beatrice Webb write that, although their number was the largest, the smallest amount of information is available. Dr. Phillips Kay drew attention to the semi-barbarous state of the indigent poor in Manchester and the racial degeneration that would follow upon neglecting the nurture and education of their children.[2]

For a knowledge of the moral and physical conditions in which children of the poor were being reared we have mainly to depend on what Cazamian has called "Le Roman Social en Angleterre". These children merged into the general mass of the poorer classes come to life in the pages of Dickens. What we owe to Dickens as a contemporary historian is acknowledged in Clapham's reference to "one little changed calling": "For this group there is a bare figure in the census: for the rest inquiry must be made down Dickens' basement staircases and into his shabbier garrets and closets for Susan Nipper and Gusta and the underlings at Todgers. No notes about wages, dietaries, such as exist in abundance for many classes of labour, occur in the public documents of the age in reference to the 670,491 female domestic servants - who were still probably over 50% more numerous than all the men and women, boys and girls in

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1. Nicholls. Op.cit. Vol.II, p.365
2. Four Periods of Public Education, p.132

the cotton industry put together."[1]

Before considering the literary treatment of the child pauper in Dickens in whom "all the scattered points of light appear in a concentrated form as if into focal point" ("endlich greift alle die verschiedenen Ansätze auf er sammelt die zerstreuten Strahlen in einen Brennpunkt.")[2], we shall briefly notice Mrs. Tonna's Helen Fleetwood" (1841), Mrs. Trollope's "Jessie Phillips" (1844) and the anonymously published "Ginx's Baby" (1870). This will give us a true idea of the general trend of contemporary opinion on the subject.

Mrs. Tonna, who wrote under the pseudonym of Charlotte Elizabeth, was the daughter of Michael Brown, rector of St. Giles and canon of the Cathedral at Norwich. She is described by Mrs. Stowe as "a woman of strong mind and powerful feeling" and her delineations of factory life as "just illustrations of what such delineations ought to be".[3] According to Cazamian she is a second Miss Martineau: "meme energic polemique, meme rigorism puritain; mais ici l'ardeur interieure est sentimentale non volontaire et intellectuelle."[4] "Helen Fleetwood" is her tale of factory life and however needfully disguised as to persons and places, the tale, the author assures her readers, is substantially correct.[5] Indeed, it is more a dissertation than a work of art. Dealing principally

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1. Economic History of Great Britain. The Early Railway Age. 1820-1850
2. Else Gutermuth: Das kindin englischen Roman von Richardson bis Dickens. Giessener Beitrage II 1924
3. Introduction to the Works of Charlotte Elizabeth
4. Op.cit. Vol.II,p.156 5. Chap.xx.

with industrial life, the book throws also an interesting side light on how the Poor Law and the factory system play into each other's hands. Prospects of lucrative employment, independence, respectability, schools for children, are held out to beguile the simple village folk like the pious and industrious widow Mrs. Green and her little family from their home parish. A happy household is broken up and after a heroic but unavailing struggle against poverty and distress the widow ends her days in the workhouse. One is impressed by the passionate sincerity of the book. "Le mal," writes Cazamian, "est dépeint avec conscience, exactitude, et médiocrité."

"Jessie Phillips" is an indignant protest against the workings of the new Poor Law. In the suffering undergone by her heroine as an unmarried mother, Mrs. Trollope illustrates the harsh operation of the new law: and animadverts upon its unchristian spirit, its rigid centralised administration, replacing the reciprocal parish ties, the strict enforcement of the workhouse test, subjecting to a degrading penal regimen those whose only crime was their poverty, and its unchivalrous treatment of the unmarried mother.

Jessie Phillips is the village belle and an expert needlewoman. Her lovely, innocent face and light active figure have made her a favourite with the Squire's daughters. But her very innocence betrays her into the seductive snares laid by the Squire's unprincipled son

Frederick. Here the author interpolates a warning against confounding innocence with virtue, and a plea for popular education. In extenuation of her heroine's guilt she writes: "Let her not be harshly judged. The process by which innocence is strengthened into virtue had, in her case, as in ten thousand others, never been applied; and the result was what commonsense might tell us was likely to follow from the deficiency, a deficiency by the way, which is felt more generally than it is understood, and which will continue to be so felt, with all its hateful consequences till our theories of popular education are improved."[1]

When about to give birth to her child, Jessie is deserted by Frederick. Cast out by society she becomes an inmate of the workhouse, undergoing the most painful initiatory process; having to part with her luxuriant chestnut tresses, to wear regulation dress of the Union, and to endure the promiscuous society of the workhouse. Aided by a sympathiser she steals out of the workhouse determined to get redress either from her seducer or the law. But foiled on all sides, she seeks shelter in a farm shed, and sinks into unconsciousness. The subsequent discovery of her dead child leads to her arrest. She is ultimately acquitted, for the real culprit proves to be Frederick, who, fearing disgrace, had meanwhile drowned himself. The sentence of "not guilty" is pronounced in vain upon Jessie, for worn out by suffering she dies unconscious of it. Loosely connected with the

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1. Jessie Phillips Ch.xvi

main story are some episodes picturing other cases of hardship under the new Poor Law.

The much-esteemed and well conducted widow Greenhill, rendered destitute by her son's failure in a business speculation and his arrest for trade debts, applies for parish relief for her daughter in law and five children. One of the guardians shames her into silence by his Malthusian exposition of the new law, "Are you not ashamed, a woman of decent appearance like you are, to come and ask the active, honest, intelligent, thrifty part of the population to rob themselves and their own children (honestly brought into the world, with the consciousness that there was power to maintain them) are you not ashamed, old woman, to come here to take their money out of their pockets in order to feed the litter of brats that you know in your heart and conscience ought never to have been born at all?" [1]

The workhouse with its strict confinement and contaminating atmosphere is painted as the living grave that it seemed to the inmates, shut within its dismal walls with nothing but stone and mortar and miserable faces to look at.

While protesting against the victimization of the unmarried mother under the new law, Mrs. Trollope does not seem to adopt any extreme views on the subject, but counsels patience. From the information given by many it seemed to her that a new Poor Law was absolutely

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1.Id. Ch.ix.

necessary to save the country from the ruinous consequences of the old, but that the remedy which was applied lacked practical wisdom and the proper christian spirit. "Nevertheless," she concludes, "it appears evident that much of the misery so justly complained of might yet be remedied were a patient and truly tolerant spirit at work in all quarters upon the subject."[1]

Cazamian dismisses "Jessie Phillips" with "La valeur litteraire et la force probante en sont aussi faibles que celles de Michael Armstrong. Ne touchant pas au probleme industriel, le livre ne merite meme pas l'examen."[2]

Breathless, impulsive, and warmly affecticnate as she is, Mrs. Trollope impairs the truth of her story by the extreme examples under which she chooses to personify her views. One may add, however, that about the new Poor Law, too, it was remarked: "This is legislating for extreme cases with a vengeance."[3] The truest judgment on the book is Frances Eleanour Trollope's ".... contains some powerful writing. The subject is, however, a painful one; and the work is a vast deal of sound sense and shrewd observation in many of these, but they are undoubtedly somewhat heavy reading material interpolated into the midst of a novel."[4]

We are interested in "Jessie Phillips" for two reasons in particular. It reflects the views of a popular contemporary writer on a subject on which a

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1.Id. Ch.LVI
2.Le Roman Social. Vol.II, note 155
3.Quarterly Review LII 1834, p.239
4.Frances Trollope: Her Life and Literary Work.Vol.II, pp.20-21

a novelist like Dickens, a prophet like Carlyle, an observer like Engels wrote no less vehemently, though this vehemence in expression or in thought detracts from the factual value of their writing. The work, again, we learn,[1] was inspired to some extent by Miss Martineau's attack on Oliver Twist on the ground that Dickens had charged against the new Poor Law the evil consequences of the old.

The new Poor Law question continued to whet the zeal for social reform till, with the rise of democracy in the 'eighties',[2] it became merged with the general issue of social welfare. The misdirection and mockery of philanthropic effort and the State's failure to make any comprehensive provision for the physical and spiritual welfare of the poor are exposed in "Ginx's Baby", the story of a derelict child, which was anonymously published in 1870 and which went into a 36th edition in 1876. The Dictionary of National Biography describes "Ginx's Baby" as a pathetic satire on the struggles of rival sectarians for the religious education of a derelict child. The work, we are told, attracted universal notice and had its influence on the religious compromise in the Education Act of 1870.[3]

Apart from its historical importance as a religious satire, the work is a trenchant criticism of the spirit of the new Poor Law and of the administrative machinery set up under it. If ever there was a case for state

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1. Michael Sadler: Trollope: A Commentary p.94
2. cf. Sijna de Vooys: The Psychological Element in the English Sociological Novel
3. Dictionary of National Biography. 2nd Sup. Vol.II.

aid and intervention it was that of Ginx's Baby. Ginx, a stout navvy and father of twelve children, lived in one of those back-to-back tenements where sanitary reform was unknown, where disease was regarded with the fatalism of despair, and oblivion purchased through gin. In a room measuring 13 ft. 6 inches in height and furnished with one family bed, twelve young Ginxes were variously disposed of. Scarcely able to maintain his existing family and determined never to go on the parish, Ginx vowed to drown the next child if he ever had any. Ginx's Baby happens to be this fated child.

Ginx is carrying the baby to throw it over Vauxhall Bridge when his neighbours intervene. A philosopher witnessing the scene interposes with his dry rationalistic comments on what to the work-people is an intensely human problem. Telling Ginx that he had no right to bring children into the world or even to marry unless he could provide for his family, he addresses other work-people. "Is it not time to think about these things and stop the indiscriminate production of human beings, whose lives you cannot maintain? Ought you not to act more like reflective creatures and less like brutes? As if breeding were the whole object of life. How much better for you, my friend, if you have never married at all, than to have had the worry of wife and children all these years."[1] These words evoke angry murmurs among the assemblage and in Ginx the tender memories of his wife and children, "the bright eyes and the winding arms

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1. Ginx's Baby. Pt.I, Chap.VII.

so often trellised over his tremendous form, the coy tricks and laughter that had cheered so many tired hours."

A stonemason voices the mute protest of his fellow men and gives a more human turn to the discussion, "Are we to live more like beasts than we are now, or do what's worse than murder? I don't see no other way. Among us I tell you, sir, three fourths of our eddication is eddication of the heart. We have to learn to be human, kind, self denyin', and I think this makes better men, as a rule, than head learnin', tho' I don't despise that neither."[1]

Ginx's Baby is taken charge of at a Catholic home. In the fierce controversy that ensues over its spiritual salvation the baby is again abandoned. A tradesman discovering it outside his shop-door conveys it to the workhouse of St. Bartimeus. When brought before the Board for inspection, one of the Guardians, a dog breeder, inquires about his pedigree. "His pedigree," answers one half-witted inmate of the workhouse, 'goes back for three hundred hears. Parents are unknown by name, but got by Misery out o' Starvation. The line began with Poverty out o' Laziness in Queen Elizabeth's time. The breed has been a large un wotever you think of the quality."[2]

The Board of Guardians dispute their liability with the neighbouring parish and pending legal inquiry, confine the baby in an empty room. A notice is put up

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1.Id. Pt.I. Ch.VII
2.Id. Pt.III.Ch.II

forbidding the workhouse officials to enter the room to feed the baby. Access to the baby is not, however, barred to other persons who may assist it if they choose. Fortunately for Ginx's baby, the order is disobeyed and the assistance of the workhouse master and occasional lady visitors save him from starvation.

Some months later a nobleman calling at the workhouse to see a little girl he had saved from infamy is shocked to find Ginx's baby almost starving and suffering from slow fever. The public interest being aroused, the Poor Law Board's intervention is sought, but the Guardians somehow manage to keep on the right side of the law. "They neglected nothing that could sap little Ginx's vitality, deaden his happiest instincts, derange moral action, cause hope to die within his infant breast, as soon as it were born." The author's description of how the Guardians discharged their responsibilities to the poor has a touch of Dickens's mordant satire on the Poor Law administration. On the treatment meted out by the Board to Ginx's Baby the author comments: "The items the Board were really entitled to charge the ratepayers as supplied to our hero were:- Dirt, fleas, foul air, chances of catching a skin disease, fevers, etc., vile company, occasional cruelty, and a small supply of bad food and clothing." Every pauper was to them an obnoxious charge by any and every means to be reduced to a minimum or nil. Ginx's Baby was reduced to a minimum.[1]

;1.Id. Pt.III vi p.163

The Guardians succeed in tracing Ginx to whom the baby is handed over. But Ginx, loth to shoulder the charge, just when he is planning to emigrate, deposits the child at the doorstep of a radical club. Through the kindness of Sir Charles Sterling an influential member, Ginx's baby is adopted by the Radical party as the emblem of the party's concern for "the condition of England question". The baby's fortunes now shift with party interests. The chance kindness of the menials however, enables him to survive. He grows old enough to be a page. After an inconclusive parliamentary debate on the "condition of England question" the baby, now grown fifteen, worn out by the chill indifference of his patrons, decamps with a few things from the club. His subsequent career follows the familiar pattern of poverty driven to crime and punished in the name of the Law.

Some years after Ginx's flight, the author lounging over Vauxhall Bridge suddenly sees a human shadow leaping out and disappearing in the coruscating foam. He is moved by this scene to reflect: "I did not know what form it was that swilled down below the glistening current. Had I known that it was Ginx's Baby I should have thought: 'Society, which in the sacred names of Law and Charity, forbade the father to throw his child over Vauxhall Bridge at a time when he was alike unconscious of life and death, has at last itself driven

him over the parapet into the greedy waters'."[1]

Conceived as a satire, "Ginx's Baby" does not seem to invite criticism as a novel in which the story is realised in the terms of character and drama. The anonymity of the hero should guard us against expecting any individual portraiture of the child. The child, here, serves to lend a pathos and an urgency to the "condition of England question", and to link the various sectarian religious and political interests which join issue over him in the name of philanthropy and education. None the less "Ginx's Baby" throws some light on the character of the home and the conduct of the parents of thousands of children who find no place in the statistics or reports of the Poor Law authorities but to whom Dickens has given "a local habitation and a name".

Of "Ginx's Baby", Hugh Walpole[2] wrote in 1929, "The satire is vigorous and at times savage; it is remarkably alive today, not at all out of date, and one's feeling, as one reads, is that civilisation has progressed not at all - a pessimism unjustified but natural. And does not the concluding paragraph strike home today? In its pages one hears sounded the doom of Victorian uplift and moral behaviour."

The Poor Law gave Dickens a subject with which he found himself and his public in sympathy. The distressing economic situation in 1837-8, and criticism of the new Poor Law both inside and outside the Parliament

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1.Id. Pt.V. p.224
2.The Eighteen Seventies pp.42,43.

made the subject topical. The popular success of Sir Edward Bulwer's "Paul Clifford", treating of an analogous subject justified a similar effort though inspired by a different spirit. The sentimental realism of Smollet, Sterne and Goldsmith suggested a literary style well-suited to a genius like Dickens who also could not separate realism from a didactic strain. Finally, Dickens brought to the subject his reformatory zeal and the recollections of his own unhappy childhood. The social and literary influences, the emotional drive that went to the production of "Oliver Twist", have invested the story with a symbolic significance and the episode in which Oliver asks for more has become, as Arnold Kettle[1] puts it, "a myth, a part of the cultural consciousness of the people." Dickens concerns himself little with the general principles of the New Poor Law. It is against the spirit and the utter inadequacy and insufficient administration of relief that he is fighting. He makes this clear in the post-script to "Our Mutual Friend". "I believe there has been in England, since the days of the Stuarts, no law, so often infamously administered, no law so often violated, no law habitually so ill-supervised."

Two features, in particular, of the Poor Law administration provoked vehement criticism: the position of children and dietary.[2] Dickens's happy inspiration brought the two significantly together in the episode of Oliver's asking for more. Oliver himself is too

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1. An Introduction to the English Novel (1953) p.125
2. See The Lancet 1836-37 and 1837-38.

passive a character, too much of a symbol of purity and innocence, to interest one much. He is seen mainly from the outside. Yet, Dickens succeeds in conveying a vivid sense of childish terror and precocious suffering. His visual accuracy combined with his highly emotional and imaginative way of looking at things creates a succession of highly arresting scenes. The first ten chapters bear out the truth of Cazamian's remark that "Nul artiste ne fut plus capable d'enregistrer les aspects concrets des choses, ni plus incapable de ne pas les colorer de son jugement sympathique ou antipathique. Le réel ne se reflète en lui qu'en images sentimentales."[1] The events and persons that overshadow the work-house child make up a world of appalling poverty and ugliness. An impersonal note lends it an air of callousness and irresponsibility. Oliver's mother dies: "It's all over, Mrs. Thingummy,' said the surgeon....." To the authorities Oliver means no more than another parish child to be badged and ticketed and put into his proper place. When he is nine and his sturdy spirit has survived neglect and starvation at the parish baby farm, Mrs. Mann presents her charge to the beadle: "Oliver makes a bow, which was divided between the beadle on the chair, and the cocked hat on the table." Such touches relieve the horror of the picture. Wretched as the baby farm is, it is endeared to Oliver by his companionship with other children. He bursts into tears as he is led away from his companions

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1. Le Roman Social Vol.I, 218

in misery. Not only has the child, Dickens maintains, the right to the bare necessities of physical existence, but also to sympathy and affection.

Those who preside over the system of oppression are the Board of Guardians - eight or ten fat gentlemen, representative of the utilitarian philosophy of a commercial age. If the gentleman in a white waistcoat is animated by sheer brutality, meeting any assertion of right on the part of Oliver with his threatening prophecy, "That boy will be hung," the chairman, Mr Limbkins, incarnates the grasping tradesman's spirit, striking a bargain with a master sweep to give Oliver "his chance of life". With Oliver's apprenticeship to an undertaker the system of oppression inside the workhouse is linked to the world of poverty and crime outside. The workhouse is but part of a social system in which those seated in authority are cruel, corrupt or inefficient and in which the oppressed die or take to crime. Poverty death and crime loom large in the world in which Oliver spends his early years. Set against this stark reality, Oliver's life with the Brownlows and Maylies seems almost unreal. Oliver starts his career with Sowerberry the undertaker and would, but for surprising coincidences, have ended it with Fagin, the criminal. Death and crime give a significant pattern to the history of a parish boy.

In the episode of Mr. Gamfield, Dickens casts a lurid light on the Trade, Business and Mystery of a

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chimney-sweeper. As early as 1760 philanthropists began to take interest in the climbing boys. As a result of Jonas Hanway's efforts an act to regulate the trade was passed in 1788, affording the first instance of state regulation of child labour. For want of effective means the Act remained a dead letter. After much obstruction from vested interests and public apathy, the zeal and patience of philanthropic reformers secured legislation in 1834 and again in 1864. The Act of 1834 requiring the magistrate's consent to indentures saved Oliver. But the whole legislation, Keeling observes, "is an extraordinary example of the futility of enacting labour laws without providing adequate means of enforcing them ..... In consequence we have the spectacle, at once tragic and ridiculous, of the Legislature spending 90 years in unsuccessful attempts to protect a few thousand boys from the daily risk of being suffocated, burnt, or crippled."[1] Until the Act of 1875 prescribed a licensing system, the evasions and violations of the law were frequent. In literature the cry of sweeps against their wrongs is first heard in Blake:

> "And because I am happy and dance
> They think they have done me no injury
> They are gone to praise God and his Priest and King
> Who make a heaven of our misery."[2]

Lamb, in his essay "The Praise of Chimney Sweepers" (1822) sees the facts of their hardship and sorrow through a romantic haze. Charles Kingsley assigns to a little sweep the principal role in "The Water Babies" (1863).

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1. Keeling, F. Child Labour in the United Kingdom (1914) p.9
2. Songs of Innocence

Living in a world of soot and squalor where he never hears of God or of Christ, Tom unlike Oliver, is gradually assimilated to his vile environment. His idea of happy times coming is to be a master-sweep, drink beer, play cards and bully little sweeps. Only after he has experienced a healing "death-by-water" and suffered sore humilation by doing "the thing he did not like", he is sufficiently cleansed to take his place in the busy world as "a great man of science". It is difficult to say how far this fairy-tale allegory influenced the passage of the Act of 1864. Mr. Digby Seymour, who took keen interest in that legislation, attributed his interest in the climbing boys to an aritcle which he has read in "Good Words". Mr. Phillips emphatically holds that Kingsley's book would not have stirred Mr. Seymour to action with its idyllic charm.[1]

A similar question arises as to the extent of Dickens's influence on the Poor Law administration. What change of spirit, characterised the treatment of children twenty years after the publication of Oliver Twist (1838) may be studied in Augustus Mayhew's "Paved with Gold" (1858) The author vouches for the truthfulness of his picture. He shows how the unimaginative attitude and lack of enlightened policy in the State's treatment of children pave the way to juvenile delinquency. Born in prison and reared in a workhouse there were few events in Phil's youth that he could look back upon with

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1. Phillips, G.L. England's Climbing Boys (Harvard) 1945 p.53 note.

satisfaction. The school rules were reminiscent of a prison cell. The food was weighed to that nice turn of the balance which will keep life in the body. "The whole system is one of prudence rather than of benevolence," the author concludes.[1]

It is, however, gratifying to note that defects inseparable from boarding establishments began to be remedied in the late 'sixties by boarding out children or by setting up "cottage homes".[2]

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1. Paved with Gold Book the Third, Chap.I.
2. see W. Chance Children under the Poor Law

II.

THE FACTORY CHILD

II.

The Factory Child

In any picture of the Victorian child the question of infant labour looms large, so notorious is the publicity given to it by the Factory Reports and the outcry raised by the crusading philanthropists. Dr. Ure (1835) quotes a contemporary newspaper's account of the overcharged picture that obtained currency abroad, as if England were one huge factory.[1] Infant labour was, however, no innovation. Of the Yorkshire woollen industry under George I, Defoe (1661-1731) wrote with frank delight: "Though we met few people without doors, yet within we saw houses full of lusty fellows, some at the dye-vat, some at the loom, others dressing the cloths; the women and children carding, or spinning; all employed from the youngest to the eldest; scarce anything above four years old, but its hands were sufficient for its support."[2] Pitt recommended the extension of the schools of industry. "If anyone would take the trouble to compute the amount of earnings of the children who are already educated in this manner he would be surprised when he came to consider the weight which their support by their own labours took off the country, and the addition which, by fruit of their toil, and the habits to which they were formed, was made to its internal opulence."[3] These words lent themselves to the following interpretation by Faucher: "Vers la fin du dernier siècle, les chefs do l'industrie se plaignant de l'augmentation des taxes, M. Pitt leur signalait le travail

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1. Dr. Andrew Ure: The Philosophy of Manufactures (p.294)
2. A Tour Through Great Britain Vol.III p.145 (Ed.1749)
3. Speech on Mr. Whitbread's Minimum Wage Bill, Feb.12th, 1796

des enfants comme la grande ressource que devait leur permettre d'en supporter le fardeau."[1] These may, also have suggested Michelet's legendary outburst quoted by Hammond: "When the English manufacturers warned Pitt that, owing to the high wages, they had to pay their workmen, they were unable to pay their national taxes, Pitt returned a terrible answer: 'Take the children.' The saying weighs like a curse upon England."[2]

Macaulay (1800-1859) compares favourably the conditions in the 19th century with the widely prevalent practice in the 17th century of setting children prematurely to work: "At Norwich, the chief seat of the clothing trade, a little creature of six years old was thought fit for labour. Several writers of that time, and among them some who were considered eminently benevolent, mention with exultation the fact that in a single city boys and girls of very tender age created wealth exceeding what was necessary for their own subsistence by twelve thousand pounds a year. The more carefully we examine the history of the past the more reason shall we find to dissent from those who imagine that our age has been fruitful of new social evils. The truth is that the evils are, with scarcely an exception, old. That which is new is the intelligence which discerns and the humanity which remedies them."[3]

Even the enormity of this evil did not originate with the factory system. "Factory owning witnesses

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1.M. Leon Faucher: Etudes sur l'Angleterre Tome 2, p.77
2.J.L. & Barbara Hammond: The Town Labourer p.143
3.The History of England. Vol.I. p.417

before the Committee of 1816 had maintained that work began as early and want on as long, in domestic weaving as in the mills, and that it was more laborious."[1] The horrors that outraged the humanitarianism of Richard Oastler (1830: Letter on Yorkshire slavery) could be matched by those in authentic records of the doing to death of apprentices by Mrs. Brownrigg and others which fully justify Crabbe's (1754-1832) story of Peter Grimes. As there was no inspection of domestic conditions of service, the evil-minded and avaricious master could misuse his apprentice with little fear of anything beyond a bad reputation among his neighbours.

> "But none inquired how Peter used the rope
> Or what the bruise that made the stripling stoop,
> None could the ridges on his back behold
> None sought him shiv'ring in the winter's cold
> Pinn'd, beaten, cold, pinch'd, threatened and abused
> His efforts punished and his food refused -
> Awake tormented, soon aroused from sleep -
> Struck if he wept, and yet compelled to weep."[2]

Judged by numbers the extractive and manufacturing industries did not, in the early 19th century, occupy any dominant position in the industrial balance of the country. Out of the total population of approximately 5 million (5,189,000) children under ten years old, in Britain in 1851, "the cotton industry admitted to over 2,000 boys and nearly 2,000 girls under ten, woollen and worsted to nearly 3,000 boys and over 2,000 girls."[3] (J. H. Clapham: An Economic History of Modern Britain).

What gave to child labour its sinister aspect in the early 19th century was, therefore, not its innovation,

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1.J.H. Calpham: An Economic History of Great Britain Vol.I
2.The Borough p.417
3.Clapham supra Vol.I, p.567. Vol.II., p124

nor its extent, nor even its enormity, but its concentration brought about by the factory system and the rise of a new political economy "which seemed to carry with it a sort of justification of the existing constitution of society as inevitable."[1] "Aux environs de 1830," writes Cazamian, "la réussite parallèle de deux grands mouvements, l'un économique, l'autre intellectuel, accroit d'une part le pouvoir et les appétits de l'individu, et d'autre part fonde en droit ce pouvoir et ces appétits. La révolution industrielle et philosophie utilitaire convergent vers l'exaltation du moi social."[2]

The employment of children was now systematised and extended on a vast scale; and excessive hours instead of being an occasional episode, say for once a week, as it was in the domestic workshop, became a regular thing, every day in the week. Over-crowded factories were hot-beds of what was called putrid fever, and it was an epidemic in Manchester causing the death of many factory apprentices that first drew attention to their wrongs, and ultimately led to the problems being tackled seriously in a practical manner. "So far from originating cruelty to children, the factory system called attention to the evil by concentrating it where all could see and so stimulated indignation that brought it to an end."[3] The ultimate emancipation of the factory child, no doubt redounds to the glory of the Victorian age, but it was a long-drawn-out process. Although the first blow was struck with the passing of Peel's Act, "The

1.Arnold Toynbee: Industrial Revolution p.113
2.Louis Cazamian: Le Roman Social en Angleterre Vol.I. p.25
3.G. M. Trevelyan:History of England p.523

Health and Morals of Apprentices Act of 1802", the horrors connected with the factory system continued unabated and in some respects assumed an aggravated form, far into the middle years of the 19th century. Southey (1774-1843) gave his impressions after a visit to a cotton factory. "If Dante had peopled one of his hells with children, here was a scene worthy to have supplied him with new images of torment."[1] Wordsworth (1770-1850) sadly described the cotton mills as:

> "Temples where is offered up to gain, the master idol of the realm,
> Perpetual sacrifice."[2]

Peel was struck with the uniform appearance of bad health, and in many cases, the stunted growth of the children.[3] Robert Owen, soon after he became the owner of the New Lanark Mills, discovered that although the children in his factory were extremely well-fed, well-clothed, and well lodged and very great care taken of them when out of the mills, their growth and their minds were materially injured by being "employed within the cotton mills for eleven hours and a half per day."[4] He testified, what sounded to the commissioners inconceivable, that a little girl of three was employed in a mill at Stockport and that such infants were employed "to pick up the waste cotton from the floor, to go under the machines, where bigger people cannot creep."[5] The usual age, however, at which children commenced work

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1. Letter quoted in England from Wordsworth to Dickens by R.W. King
2. Excursion 3. Report of "Select Committee" 1816 p.132
4. Ibid. p.20
5. Ibid. p.88

was seven. They began as piecers and their work required them to be constantly on their feet, their hours of labour being 5a.m. to 8p.m. and their wages about 2/6d a week.[1] Only half an hour was allowed for dinner, but they got their breakfast as they could, eating while working. They were cruelly beaten for being late in the morning, for letting the ends run down, for speaking to each other, and more frequently to keep them awake toward night. "Some have been beaten so violently that they have lost their lives in consequence of their being so beaten."[2] The Chairman of the 1840 Select Committee cited two cases of cruelty in one of which a girl of thirteen was struck down by an overlooker, and died in consequence. In both cases it had been impossible for the inspector to institute an inquiry, having no authority to do so by the Act.[3] The instrument for chastisement was a strap or a billy-roller. The latter was a heavy rod of wood, from two to three yards long, of two inches in diameter and with an iron pivot at each end. "I have seen them take the billy-roller and rap them on the head, making their heads crack, so that you might have heard the blow at the distance of six or eight yards, in spite of the din and rolling of the machinery."[4] Children cleaning machinery while it was in motion often lost their limbs or their hands. Unboxed machinery endangered the safety of girls in particular. A sub-inspector of factories testified that at Stockport a

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1.Report from the Committee on the Bill to regulate the Labour of Children in the Mills and Factories of the U.K. XI, p.157 1831-32
2.Ibid. p.19
3.First Report from the Select Committee on the Act for the Regulation of Mills and Factories 1840.Q 1388. p.100 4.Rept. 1831-32 p.19

girl had been carried by her clothing round an upright shaft and crippled for life.[1] Work generally pursued in an erect or in a constrained position for 13, 14, or 15 hours a day, produced deformities. What would be the effect of such conditions of work upon the moral and physical welfare of the child is thus hypothetically put by a surgeon of St. Thomas's Hospital: "Take, for instance, a healthy child from an agricultural district in the bloom of health, animated, cheerful, lively, strong, active and free-limbed, and place it in a factory; let it work for 12 hours a day in the stifling heat of some of the work-rooms, confined in the impure air breathed by a hundred others, without any provision of ventilation; let it learn to drink ardent spirits to support its enfeebled frame and depressed feelings caused by overlabour and harassing tasks, with a proportionate disrelish for wholesome food; let it then be turned out of this heated factory on a damp, foggy November evening, to rest its fevered and debilitated frame in some dark and close cellar of an overpeopled manufacturing town, and shall we be surprised, is it not rather a certain consequence, that the unfortunate child becomes the victim of disease?"[2]

It was stated that factory employment disabled people generally at 40; and that lately, with the introduction of speedier machinery, work had increased in intensity.[3] The provision made under the 1802 Act for religious instruction on Sundays, it was asserted, operated prejudicially and had the effect of very much



1.2nd Report from the Select Committee on Mills and Factories,1840,p.37
2.Report 1831-32 3. Ibid. p.452

increasing the children's sufferings, and of depriving them of that rest and proper recreation and freedom which they should enjoy at some time or other.[1] A minister of religion expressed concern over the manner in which the children were confined on the Sabbath day after the very close confinement of the week: "They may think that our system on the Sabbath day is a sort of justification of the system in the week-day."[2]

Such, in the main, is the picture of the factory child as it emerges from the report of Sadler's Committee (1831-32) before which, we are told, filed "a long procession of workers, men and women, girls and boys. Stunted, diseased, deformed, degraded, each with the tale of his wronged life...."[3] The employers alleged that Sadler's Committee had not been fair to their side and on their motion another Commission was appointed whose report Lord Althorp quoted to show how healthy factory life was for children.[4] Ure seems fully to endorse this view: "I have visited many factories, both in Manchester and in the surrounding districts, during a period of several months, entering the spinning rooms, unexpectedly, and often alone, at different times of the day, and I never saw a single instance of corporal chastisement inflicted on a child, nor indeed did I ever see children in ill-humour. They seemed to be always cheerful and alert, taking pleasure in the light play of their muscels - enjoying the mobility natural to their

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1. Ibid. p.281
2. Ibid p.414, 415
3. Hammand Supra p.171
4. J.L. and Barbara Hammond: Lord Shaftesbury p.39

age."[1] This is obviously, an over-statement of the case, and is in a line with Dr. Ure's wholesale condemnation of the Report of 1832: "The partial, distorted, and fictitious evidence conjured up before the Committee of the House of Commons on factory employment of which Mr. Sadler was the mover and chairman."[2] The evidence collected by Sadler's Committee came, on the whole, to be corroborated by the Supplementary Report of 1833. "L'impression qui en reste apres une lecture attentive, sans venir a l'appui de tous les exces signales dans l'enquete de 1832, en confirme assurement les allegations principales."[3]

The wide difference of opinion that strikes us when we compare Dr. Ure's Philosophy of Manufacture with the gloom of Lord Ashley's speeches may be partly due to the fact that working conditions varied widely from one branch of industry to another, even from one factory to another. There were model employers like Robert Owen and John Bright. But as late as 1838 Roebuck after a visit to a cotton mill wrote to his wife that he saw - "a sight that froze my blood."[4] Even in 1849 Fredrika Bremer found that the treatment of children in English factories was still intolerable.[5]

The factory child, who had since the elder Peel's times, aroused so much legislative concern and public interest was little treated in literature. Godwin's (1756-1836) genuine affection for children finds

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1.Ure Supra, p.301
2.Ibid., p.291 3.Faucher Supra, p.88
4.Quoted Hutchins and Harrison: A History of Factory Legislation, p.91
5.Rubenius, Aina: The Woman Question in Mrs. Gaskell's Life and Works (Upsala 1950)

expression in his graphic picture of child labour in a factory. But his picture in Fleetwood (1804) is incidental and his interest centres on things political and philosophical rather than on things sociological. His acquaintance with the problem lacks reality. It is as a theoretical revolutionist that he condemns child labour as morally wrong. "Liberty is the school of understanding." Put the child in a mill and its understanding "will improve no more than that of the horse which turns it."[1] Even Dickens (1812-1870) touches but briefly, though poignantly, upon children whose lives are spent "in the midst of dreadful engines which make young children old before they know what childhood is, and give them the exhaustion and infirmity of age, without, like age, the privilege to die."[2] This passage was inspired by Dickens's recent visit to Manchester (1838) but as Cazamian points out: "L'impression que sa sensibilité en reçoit est trop forte, trop imaginative, elle est aussi trop rapide et superficielle."[3] Mrs. Gaskell (1810-1865) to whom alone it was given to enter into what remained for other English novelists a closed world of industrial life, has mentioned child labour only on a few occasions, and that also with reference to the restrictions that existed: factory inspectors had been appointed who saw to it that no children under the legal factory age were employed. Higgins in "North and South" feels compassion for John Buncher "wi' a sickly wife and eight

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1.William Godwin: Fleetwood 3 vols., (London)(1805), Vol.I, Ch.XI, p.248
2.Nicholas Nickleby, Ch.4
3.Cazamian Supra., Vol.II, p.31

children, none on 'em factory age."[1] Mrs. Frances Trollope (1789-1863) was, therefore, something of a pioneer in taking the factory child as the main theme of her novel: "Michael Armstrong". An abstract of this little-known novel will not be out of place here. Nine year old Michael and his elder brother, a sickly child, are employed as piecers in the factory of Sir Matthew Dowling. Their wages keep their bed-ridden mother out of the workhouse. They live in a typical factory slum - "a long, closely-packed double row of miserable dwellings..... Crawling infants, half-starved cats, mangy curs, and fowls that looked as if each particular feather had been used as a scavenger's broom, shared the dust and sunshine between them."[2] Michael becomes involved in "a marvellously silly adventure" in which he saves Lady Clarissa from being attacked by a cow. To humour her, the snobbish, middle-class factory owner has to adopt Michael, "all for the love of pure benevolence and little boys." This gesture was also intended to divert public attention from the notorious publicity his mill had acquired by the death of a factory girl through overwork.

On this subject his rebuke to his overseer and the latter's boast in defence are revealing: "It was a d--d stupid thing to have a girl go on working and not know whether she was dying or not." "I am noted for being able to keep the children awake and going longer than

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1. North and South, Ch.XVII
2. Vol.I., p.87

any other man in the mills."

To Michael this extraordinary turn of fortune brings nothing but suffering: division from his family and dread of his patron, who devises all manner of ingenious torments for him. Once, Michael is taken to the factory and asked to kiss the 'scavenger' girl as she is performing her dangerous operations. Here is a graphic description of her work: "In the performance of this duty, the child was obliged from time to time to stretch herself with sudden quickness on the ground, while the hissing machinery passed over her; and when this is carefully done and the head, body and outstretched limbs carefully glued to the floor, the steady-moving, but threatening mass, may pass and repass over the dizzy head and trembling body without touching it. But accidents frequently occur, and many are the flaxen locks rudely torn from infant heads in the process."[1]

The knight takes such an aversion to the boy that he determines to get rid of him by apprenticing him in a Derbyshire factory built in a wild, desolate spot to evade Peel's law. Michael is befriended by Miss Brotherstone, a rich heiress, and by Martha Dowling, the kindly-disposed daughter of the factory owner. Sir Matthew has, however, been too quick for Miss Brotherstone's mediation, and the boy is whisked away to the Deep Valley Mills before any help can reach him. But Miss Brotherstone is unremitting in her efforts to trace him. She takes

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1.Vol. I, pp.201,202.

Michael's elder brother and mother under her care and protection. A great-hearted clergyman, Mr. George Bell, aids her efforts, and his long disquisitions, though they retard the progress of the story, serve to give point to her humanitarian resolve and to the more alarming features of the factory system: its bad influence on home life, the early and indiscriminate promiscuity of the sexes, the low moral standards, the decay of parental affection, the neglect of education, the resort to the gin-shop. "All these horrors," she protests, "are perpetrated for the sake of making rich, needlessly, uselessly rich. What I want to find out," Miss Brotherstone explains, "is whether, by the nature of things, it is impossible to manufacture worsted and cotton wool into articles useful to man, without rendering those employed upon it unfit to associate with their fellow creatures?"

Mr. Bell does not think that the remedy lies in abolishing the use of machinery. "It is not from increased or increasing science that we have anything to dread, it is from a fearfully culpable neglect of the moral power that should rule and regulate its uses, that it can be other than one of God's best gifts."[1] While not decrying her individual benevolence, he believed that nothing short of a Ten-hour-day legislation would meet the situation; "but that any of the ordinary modes of being useful on a larger scale, such as organising schools, founding benefit societies, or the like, could be of any use to beings crushed, so toil-worn and so

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1.Vol.II, p.223

degraded, it would be idle to hope." At a time when the 'laissez faire' creed of the Utilitarian philosophers like Harriet Martineau (1802-1876) and of the Manchester school still largely held the field, Mrs. Trollope's plea for legislative protection strikes a courageous note.

Instructed and encouraged by Mr. Bell, Miss Brotherstone sets out to recover Michael, visits some factories and in one of these happens to see a Sunday School at work. Mrs. Trollope vents her scorn upon the piety which keeps children at work until midnight on Saturday and summons them to Sunday School at seven in the morning. That Sunday Schools were made subservient to the manufacturers' interests is borne out by the evidence before the Select Committee.[1] Mr. Brotherstone hears the Evangelical factory owner pronouncing an exhortation, intended to show that obedience to their earthly masters was the only way of saving children from the eternal burning prepared in the world to come for those who were disobedient. She blesses the circumstance that not one of the children was sufficiently awake to listen to the mercy of their Maker thus blasphemed.

Arrived at the Deep Valley Mill, she learns from Fanny, a girl-companion of Michael, that he was one of the many victims of an epidemic of fever which had lately broken out in the apprentice house. The terrible mortality, the burials at night in different cemeteries to avoid notice, are among the facts narrated and borne

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1.Report 1831-32, p.281

out by Parliamentary investigations. Balked of Michael she adopts Fanny and sets out on the homeward journey. Unknown to Fanny, however, Michael meanwhile lies battling with his fever. He soon recovers, rejoices at Fanny's escape, and hopes that she, now grown a big girl, might rescue him. But years wear away and the disillusioned Michael makes a desperate bid for liberty and succeeds. He finds his home empty and desolate, his mother dead, and his elder brother adopted by Miss Brotherstone. In delirious despair he attempts suicide, is rescued by a Westmoreland farmer, and is taken into his service. In almost Wordsworthian vein Mrs. Trollope describes the educative process of nature, elevating Michael's heart and imagination and "preparing him, more effectually perhaps than any other school could have done, for the different sphere of life in which he now hoped to move."[1]

To escape the social criticism provoked by her adoption of the factory children, Mary Brotherstone has settled with her wards in Europe. Thither Martha, whose father, now reduced to Bankruptcy, is dying, intends to follow. Michael, revisiting the Dowling mansion, sees the gruesome end of the factory owner, now haunted by terrible nightmares of the factory children. "Their arms and legs are all broken and smashed, and hanging by bits of skin. Take them away, I tell you, Crockley! Their horrible joints will drop upon me; they are dangling and loose, I tell you!"[2]

1.Vol.III, p.222 2.Vol.III, p.276

Michael's identity is disclosed and he accompanies Martha to join Mary Brotherstone's happy circle. In due course Michael and Fanny marry. Michael's elder brother is restored to health and married to Mary Brotherstone: a stock fictional solution of the class problem.

Mrs. Trollope was, by nature, a woman of ready generosity, impulsive, easily aroused to the extremes of championship, too passionately indignant against oppression to be always just or accurate. "Michael Armstrong" reflects these qualities. A certain want of tact and delicacy characterises her work. In her novel as we have seen, horrors abound, and there are melodramatic and conventional touches and passages of cheap pathos. The whole story hinges on a rather fantastic episode, 'the marvellously silly adventure', as Mary Brotherstone puts it, of Michael's rescue of Lady Clarissa from an old half-starved cow. It reads almost like a parody of romance: a knight succouring a lady in distress. Nevertheless, the work is, on the whole, a courageous defence of persecuted childhood, looking backward to "Oliver Twist" and forward to Mrs. Browning's "The Cry of the Children". Despite exaggerations and some fictional touches, it can claim a basis of fact, as disclosed in the Factory Reports. We cannot endorse Wanda F. Neff's criticism of Mrs. Trollope as one of those who wrote after a rapid survey of conditions of which they knew nothing and were unreliable.[1] Mrs. Trollope's picture

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1. Victorian Working Women (1929) p.44

lacks, no doubt, the intimate touch which long contact with factory life gave to Mrs. Gaskell. But it has vigour and sincerity and J. L. and Barbara Hammond have testified to its terrible truth.[1] The tale was based on notes taken by the authoress and her son Tom on a special journey to Lancashire and Yorkshire when they were shown as much as time allowed of the evil realities of the remote moorland valleys.[2]

The conditions were, in fact, so bad that they could hardly be exaggerated. In a letter dated 29th December, 1838, Dickens wrote to Edward Fitzgerald: "I went, some weeks ago, to Manchester and saw the worst cotton mill. And then I saw the best. Ex uno disce omnes. There was no great difference between them."[3]

Referring to the influences which helped to secure the passage of the Ten Hours' Bill of 1847, the contemporary historian of the Factory Movement, Alfred (pseud. S. Kydd) writes: "Mrs. Trollope's novel, "Michael Armstrong" has been much abused; it has, however, been useful, and so, also, has been "Helen Fleetwood" by Charlotte Elizabeth."[4]

Different in tone from Mrs. Trollope's "Michael Armstrong" is Charlotte-Elizabeth's "Helen Fleetwood" (1841). Her work has a passionate religious earnestness that is lacking in the other book. Daughter of a clergyman at Norwich, Charlotte Elizabeth was born in 1790[5], and brought up under the shadow of the grand old

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1. Lord Shaftesbury, p.73
2. see Michael Sadler: Trollope - A Commentary, p.93 p.22
3. Quoted by Hodder, E.: Life and Work of the 7th Earl of Shaftesbury Vol
4. The History of the Factory Movement(1802-47).(1857)Vol.II.p.295
5. cf. Mrs. C.L.Balfour: A Sketch of Charlotte-Elizabeth (1854)

cathedral. The stories of the Protestant persecutions and 'Fox's Book of Martyrs" inspired the young Charlotte's wish to be a martyr. Her father was an accomplished musician and a tory of the old school. Rendered almost blind from over-reading, Charlotte had to undergo a severe medical treatment, which occasioned her deafness. After her marriage she devoted herself to literary and philanthropic work. In Dublin where she followed her husband, she felt drawn to the Irish people, but hated Popery. A mystic, she felt a continual sense of God's presence. She experienced, in Ireland, a "conversion". Her philanthropy was essentially religious. She adopted a deaf and dumb child and taught him with admirable charity and perseverance. She found it difficult, however, to give to his concrete imagination the idea of God. "God, no", was his reply, when God could not be shown to him. She took the method of blowing in his face with a pair of bellows and asking him if he saw the wind, then the idea flashed on him, "God like wind" - near, unseen. Her devotion was rewarded by her pupil's affection and gratitude and when she returned, his parents resigned him, saying that, "he belonged to her more than to them, for she was the mother of his mind." The moral and spiritual destitution of the Irish residents of St. Giles's touched her heart and she resolved to erect a place of Anglican worship. Starting with seven pounds she was able to collect a sum of thirteen hundred by her zeal and patience. On Sundays at her

cottage at Sandhurst she gave religious instruction to no less than sixty children, for she was convinced of the necessity of religious instruction for a class above the very poor. "They are a most important class, for from them are the Chartist bodies officered, and active agents supplied in works of infinite mischief." "Helen Fleetwood" is written in this spirit.

The Greens are a pious and industrious family who have adopted and brought up Helen Fleetwood, an orphan. The father dies, their cottage lease expires, and destitution stares them in the face. To avert a possible burden on the parish, the guardians conspire with a factory agent the migration of the Green family to a factory town with inducements of lucrative employment. The immigrants are paid good wages, but they also see much suffering, misery, and demoralisation. The author affirms that the evil painted here very faintly shadows forth the realities.[1] Her care and accuracy in facts carry conviction. The defects of the Factory Act of 1834, the means of evasion, are exposed at length. One inspector and four superintendents are expected to visit no less than 1800 factories in widely scattered and remote areas; their powers are extremely limited; there are numerous evasions beyond their scrutiny, such as cheating children out of their proper hours for meals and schooling by altering the clock, by intentionally stopping the machinery for a few minutes to have an excuse for

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1. Chap.XX

working overtime. Magistrates, the natural allies of manufacturers, make mock of legislative regulations by imposing derisory fines. Seven children are proved to have been cruelly overworked. No defence is set up, the offender is adjudged to pay a fine of two shillings and sixpence. The author enters a strong protest against the manner in which children are treated as a matter of merchandise between two parties: parents and mill-owners. "If, 'Train up a child in the way he should go', be a precept that God himself has vouchsafed to give, as the preliminary to an upright walk through life, oh, who could marvel that the little ones so fearfully forced into every way in which they should not go, become in riper years incarnate fiends!" [1]

Her biblical and prophetic accents combined with her factual accuracy inspired respect in circles where Mrs. Trollope's book might have been dismissed as Chartist propaganda. Cazamian writes on "Helen Fleetwood":

"Sur un public habitué aux discussions religieuses, nourri de théologie combative, avide aussi de faits précis, d'arguments concrets, le roman a pu agir à la façon d'un traité didacte que, auguel un minimum d'art aurait gagné bien des lecteurs" [2]

1.Chap. X.
2.Le Roman Social Vol.II, p.160

THE EDUCATIONAL ASPECT

III. In the Steps of Rousseau

IV. Wordsworth

V. To Teach the Young Idea How to Shoot

VI. The Renaissance of English Education.

III.

IN THE STEPS OF ROUSSEAU

III.

In the Steps of Rousseau

> Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
> But to be young was very Heaven!
> (Prelude Bk.XI)

"An age," writes Morley, "touched by the spirit of hope inevitably turns to the young; for with the young lies fulfilment."[1]

During the second half of the 18th century the increasing interest in the young, reinforced though it was by other contributory influences, owed its most genial and generous impulse to Rousseau. Pleading for self activity and self realisation Rousseau would have the child placed at the very centre of any educational scheme. "They (the wisest writers)", he says, "are always looking for the man in the child, without considering what he is before he becomes a man."[2] "Mankind," he pleads, "has its place in the sequence of human life; the man must be treated as a man and the child as a child. Give each his place and keep him there."[3] Against the traditional doctrine of human depravity he sets forth his radiant faith that nature is all good and bounteous: "Tout est bien en sortant des mains de la nature." The child is born good and pure; he is capable of his proper perfection, if he is allowed to develop freely: Every human fault comes from education in the family, the school, and the society.

As is evident from the popularity of Richardson's

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1. John Morley: Rousseau, Vol.II, p.198
2. Emile, Book I.
3. Id. Book II

Pamela (1741) and Marmontel's "Moral Tales", sentimentality dominated the taste of the mid-eighteenth century. We may trace its earlier development in Steele's papers on family life and in the rise of Sentimental Comedy, of which Steele has been regarded as the founder.[1] It had set in as part of a general reaction against the licence, cynicism, and insensibility of the Restoration Age. The popular taste was gradually being weaned from such brutal sports as cock-fighting and bull-fighting, its cruelty to the convicts and its indifference to the treatment of negroes. Out of this humanitarian sympathy for the weak and helpless was born also an interest in the child. It remained, however, a current of vague feeling, until Rousseau's persuasive eloquence directed it into the educational channel - "What had been the most drearily mechanical duties, were transformed into a task that surpassed all others in interest and hope - the entire atmosphere of young life, in spite of the toil and the peril is made cheerful with sunshine and warmth of the great folded possibilities of excellence, happiness, and well-doing."[2]

In England "Emile" won enthusiastic admiration. By 1763 the book was thrice translated. In 1769 Thomas Day writes to Richard Lowel Edgeworth (Vol.I, p.221) "Were all the books in the world to be destroyed, except scientific books (which I except not to affront you) the second book I should wish to save after the Bible would

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1.Ward,A.W.: A History of English Dramatic Literature (1899) Vol.III,p.493

2.Morley op.cit., p.282

be Rousseau's 'Emilius'."[1] Rousseau's theories inspired the pedagogic experiments of Edgeworth and David Williams.[2] These ideas, it is true, were not new, for most of them could be traced back to Montaigne and Locke whose works Rousseau had read. Locke had stressed the necessity of "a sound mind in a sound body,"[3] of inuring children to hardship,[4] of directing their inclination to something that may be useful to them,[5] of cultivating the senses and of evoking the pupil's will by all these means. To this sober sense of Locke's, Rousseau brought his paradoxes, his exhortations and lyricism of such power that the heart was captivated and the mind convinced. "What was so realistic in him (Locke)," observes Morley, "becomes blended in Rousseau with all the power and richness and beauty of an ideal that can move the most generous parts of human character."[6] With all the exaggerations to which Rousseau was carried away by his ideal and in spite of all the errors of his professed disciples, his revival of interest in the child was to prove a factor of utmost importance in education and a source of great inspiration to educationists. "The study of 19th century education," says Adamson, "begins in the "Emile" of Rousseau."[7]

Two other movements gave a momentum to education in England: the rise of Methodism and the Industrial Revolution. "The effect," Leslie Stephen writes, "of

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1. Memoirs of R.L. Edgworth, Vol.I., p.226
2. Lectures on Education 1789
3. Some Thoughts Concerning Education para.1.
4. Id. para.32
5. Id. para.202
6. Morley op.cit., pp.203,204
7. English Education. 1889-1902. Preface

the English Methodist Movement in diverting a great volume of discontent, "into the religious, instead of the political channel, is of an importance not easy to calculate."[1] Educationally, however, the importance of the Wesleyan revival, and of Evangelicalism within the Church itself lay, as Jacques Pons points out, in creating "une ambiance où toute idée de perfectionnement moral devait être bien accueillie. Un besoin d'instruire le peuple, de le diriger vers le beau et le bien, fut donc dans le domaine de l'éducation la contrepartie des tendances évangélisatrices."[2] Indeed, the education of the masses, especially the share which fell to Sunday Schools, was so closely associated with the religious revival that it is impossible to separate them. English education largely derived its characteristically religious and conservative tone from the evangelical impulse of the period, in sharp distinction to the educational movement of a more secular and radical character in Europe.

The new spirit of economic and industrial reorganisation is embodied in Adam Smith. The advance in mechanical invention, the decay of cottage industries, the scientific farming and enclosures, the redistribution of population, and the growth of towns, the minute subdivision of industrial labour, the exploitation of child and adult workers as factory-hands whose ignorance neglect, and degradation constituted a menace to social

1. History of English Thought in the 18th Century. Vol. II. p. 432
2. L'Education en Angleterre entre 1750 et 1800, p.21

order and national stability: all these changes concentrated in England during the last quarter of the 18th century and the first quarter of the 19th, called for remedial measures. The Sunday School movement and the educational clauses in the Industrial legislation of the period were attempts to deal with the new situation in so far as it affected children. Alive to the danger of physical and mental degeneration of the labouring poor, Adam Smith advocates state action in popular education. He recommends the establishment of parish schools - similar to those in Scotland. He reinforces his plea for popular education by utilitarian and police motives:- that the more instructed are less liable to the delusions of enthusiasm and superstition and that in free countries the safety of government very much depends upon the favourable and well-informed judgment of the people. But his main argument is inspired by a higher motive. "A man," he writes, "without the proper use of intellectual faculties of a man, is, if possible, more contemptible than even a coward and seems to be mutilated and deformed in a still more essential part of the character of human nature."[1]

Revolutionary theories, methodism, sentimentalism, social and economic changes are some of the factors which conspired to bring about an educational renaissance in the second half of the 18th century. Two main schools of thought now seem to direct the course of education in England, the one seeking for it a religious, the other a secular basis. Notwithstanding, however, the bitter

1. The Wealth of Nations, Vol.II, p.424 (World Classics)

controversy with which this issue was fought, the secular no less than the theological school recognised the supreme importance of religion in matters educational. What divided them was a shifting of emphasis. The British School Scoiety equally with the National Society made Bible reading an essential part of their teaching. The British Society's view of education was stated to be based upon a belief "that the pure law of Christ's gospel is a law of liberty, and that education, the great liberator of all souls in prison, is so intimately associated with that gospel that it connot be separated from Bible teaching and that, moreover, such teaching ought to be so catholic and so practical in its character as to rise free from sectarian bias."[1]

Lancaster describes his general educational outlook in these terms: "Above all things, education ought not to bemade subservient to the propagation of the tenets of any sect, beyond its own number; ... and yet, a reverence for the sacred name of God and the scriptures of truth, a detestation of vice, a love of veracity, a due attention to duties to parents, relations and to society; carefulness to avoid bad company, civility without flattery, and a peaceable demeanour may be inculcated in every seminary of youth, without violating the sanctuary of private religious opinion in any mind."[2] This very well expresses the Radical policy in England which directed the development of English education

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1. Binns: A Century of Education, p.56
2. Quoted by Binns op.cit.

during the nineteenth century. Dr. Arnold was a shining example of this pervasive spirit of religion in English education. Of him whose watchwords were "Christianity without Sectarianism" and "Comprehension without compromise" it was observed that his education "was not (according to the popular phrase) based upon religion, but was itself religious."[1] It would seem that Dr. Arnold in his reforms at Rugby sought to realise what Milton declared to be the end of learning: "to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him, as we may the nearest by possessing our souls of true virtue, which being united to the heavenly grace of faith makes up the highest perfection."[2]

New pedagogy, philanthropy, religious zeal and a genuine tenderness for children, inspired a host of writers, towards 1770, to produce books for and about children. John Newberry, the first genuine "children's publisher" died in 1767, his firm was sold in 1779, and his books were now passing into neglect. But the rich mine he had opened promised immense possibilities of exploitation to others. The enthusiastic reception and influence again of foreign writers, particularly the French Rousseauists such as Berquin, Madame d'Epinay, and Madame de Genlis, encouraged English writers to attempt something similar in child literature. Into the nursery did the moral tales begin to pour in

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1.A.P. Stanley: Life of Arnold, Ch.III, p.62
2.Of Education, to Master S. Hart lib.

profusion. Rousseau pronounced the fables to be unsuitable and their morality dubious and misleading for children. "Men may be taught by fables, children require the naked truth," he paradoxically declared.[1] His matter-of-fact followers were not slow to take his hint. The child's little walks were haunted by the shadow of the Infallible Parent or Tutor. A war was declared against the child's world of fantasy and fun. Fairies were given no quarter. Madame Leprince de Beaumont, whose "Magasin des Enfants" was published in London in 1757 was one of the earliest writers to attack the fairy tales. "Outre qui ces contes ont souvent des difficultés dans le style," she explains in her foreword, "ils sont toujours pernicieux pour les enfants auxquels ils ne sont propres qu'a inspirer des idées dangereuses et fausses." Mrs. Trimmer agreed with a correspondent that Cinderella was "perhaps one of the most exceptionable books."[2] Maria Edgeworth set out to controvert Dr. Johnson's assertions that endeavouring to make children prematurely wise was useless labour," and that children required to have their imaginations raised by giants and fairies and castles and enchantments. Referring to the supposed preference of children to such tales she asks, "But why should the mind be filled with fantastic visions, instead of useful knowledge? Why should so much valuable time be lost?"[3]

Mrs. Sherwood whose edition (1820) of Sarah Fielding's Governess is cited as probably the fiercest example

1. Emile. Bk.I
2. The Guardian of Education, Vol.II, July 1803, p.448
3. The Parent's Assistant, Vol.I. Preface 1815

of editorial recension,[1] cut out two fairy tales because such stories "can scarcely ever be rendered profitable."

Strictly relevant as the issue of the Moral v. the Fairy Tale is to the subject of children's books, we have touched upon it for two reasons. In the first place, education had assumed an all-pervasive character in which children's books played an important part. As it has been well pointed out, "Education, as represented by attempts to amuse children out of school, was passing from the grasp, on the one hand of the usher and the dame, and on the other hand of the nobility and gentry who had their offspring privately trained for courtliness and good breeding supplemented by a little useful knowledge. It was rapidly growing into a general domestic habit."[2] In the second place, Moral tales served as a vehicle for the diffusion of the new pedagogy. Misguided [illegible] led some writers far astray from the teachings of Rousseau. "I hate books - Reading is the curse of childhood - " said Rousseau[3] and his disciples in England as in France, spent their lives writing books for children! "Leave childhood to ripen in your children, or we shall have young doctors and old children," he, again, warned; in the moral tale, the fictitious little creature placed in the midst of things, no more admires plants and flowers, he dissects; he counts and classifies animals and insects.

These errors and exaggerations evoked protests and

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1. The Cambridge History of English Literature. Ch.XVI, Vol.XI
2. F.J.H. Darton: Children's Books in England (1922) p.145
3. Emile, Bk.2 and 3

the tyrannous authority of the new pedagogy and the moral tale did not long remain unchallenged. "I hate by-roads in education," said Dr. Johnson and advised Boswell not to refine in the education of his children.[1] It was, however, the romantics who, in the name of imagination, ranged themselves most uncompromisingly against the dry didacticism and pedantry of the new school. In close contact with nature they had a true conception of what a "child of nature" could be. Not for them these travesties of nature, the Sandfords and Mertons, the Charles Grandissons, and all the little heroes of juvenile literature, "prodigies of self-conceit, shallowness, arrogance and infidelity..... These nurslings of improved pedagogy who are taught to suspect all but their own and their lecturer's wisdom."[2]

Lamb regretted the disappearance of the old classics of the nursery while in bookshops "Mrs. B's and Mrs. Trimmer's nonsense lay in piles about." "Think," he asks Coleridge, "what you would have been now, if instead of being fed with Tales and old wives' fables, you had been crammed with geography and natural history."[3] In "Hard Times" (1854) Dickens return to attack "this sore evil" which Lamb here complains of. Long had the children to endure this slavery to "facts"!

The Fool of Quality (1766), the History of Sandford and Merton (1783-1789); and the History of the Fairchild Family (1818) deserve to be noticed here, though chronologically, they fall outside our period.

1.Boswell's Life of Johnson, Vol.III, p.169 (Oxford)
2.Coleridge: Biographia Literaria, Vol.I., Pt.I (Pickering) p.11
3.Letter to Coleridge, 23.10.1802

For "Sandford and Merton" and "The Fairchild Family" are listed among the books read by almost every early Victorian family when the children's education and general reading were carefully supervised.[1] They are broadly representative of the two main trends of 19th century education: the one secular and moral, the other religious.

Day complained of the total want of proper books to be put into the hands of very young children. He sweeps the slate clean of most of what was written before him, including Lamb's favourite nursery classics, the Newberry publications. As a good Rousseauist he excepts from his wholesale condemnation a few passages from the first volume of Brook's "The Fool of Quality". "Nor can I help expressing my regret," he says, "that the very ingenious author of that novel has not deigned to apply his great knowledge of the human heart to this particular purpose. He would by these means have produced a work more calculated to promote the good of his fellow creatures, though not his fame, than an hundred volumes of sentimental novels, or modern history."[2] Indeed, the author of "The Fool of Quality" seems to have been a man of rare charm andability. In him the revolutionary spirit of Rousseau was combined with a mystical strain of Jacob Böhme. Born and educated in Ireland, the pupil of Swift and Pope, the friend of Lyttleton and Chatham, the darling of the Prince of Wales, beau, swordsman, wit, poet, courtier, he spent his last days as the saintly

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1.Amy Cruse: The Victorians and Their Books, p.287
2.Day: Sandford and Merton, Preface

recluse of Longfield, lavishing his large fortune on the starving Irish. "The Fool of Quality" which still keeps his memory green, bears the stamp of his excellent qualities; "it is a transparency, a shadow picture, in which the soul of the lovable Henry Brooke is the shining light."[1]

It is the first of the pedagogic novels in English. Though bearing the obvious marks of Rousseau's influence, its genial touches of humour and humanity, its share of Irish eccentricity, invest it with a charm of its own. The hero Henry's natural education in the country is contrasted with his brother Richard's artificial up-bringing in the chateau. Young Harry exposed to all weathers, always occupied in healthful exercise, is allowed to develop according to his healthy original instincts. Dick's promising talents and benevolent heart, on the other hand, are almost ruined by luxury and over-indulgence. At the age of five, little Harry visits his parents and confronted with rank and fashion he behaves most naturally. He values things, as children do, for what they mean to him. A laced hat serves him as an effective missile to play ducks and drakes among the wine glasses; a large Spanish pointer is a convenient mount to display his horsemanship among a group of little misses and masters who are overthrown like nine-pins. He remains unconcerned at the discomfiture he has caused, but gallantly rushes to the defence of his foster-mother when Dick pretends to

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1.E.A.Baker: The History of the English Novel. p.115

attack her. Again, when Dick and his companions simulate distress and petition him for his clothes he strips himself of everything but his shirt, which he moodily declines to give away. Upon this his mother exclaims: "Upon my honour, there is but the thickness of a bit of linen between this child and a downright fool."[1] All these spontaneous expressions of Harry's pure and healthy instincts ran the constant risk of being misunderstood by his mother. He found his ideal preceptor (Dada) in Mr. Fenton, a whimsical old gentleman, who later turns out to be his uncle. Mr. Fenton disproves Rousseau's theory that old age disqualifies a person from being a child's tutor. He enters with Harry into all his little frolics and childish vagaries, opens the boy's mind and cultivates his morals by a thousand little fables. In order to reform Harry of his inordinate desires Dada tells him the story of the three little silver trouts. Such is the charming simplicity and tenderness of the story that the boy cannot help wishing himself to be like the good little trout which is glad to leave everything to God.

He leads him by his example to wait upon his servants and to respect his social inferiors, "for God made us all to be servants to each other." In bestowing charity upon others he guides him by the rule, "that which you cannot use cannot belong to you." By instituting prizes he encourages him to compete with the village boys for championships in "football, hurling,

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1. The Fool of Quality. Vol.I. Ch.III, p.20

wrestling, leaping, running, cudgelling, and buffing."

Formal education too, is not neglected but he would altogether reverse the method of schoolmasters who "generally lay hold on the human constitution, as a pilot lays hold on the rudder of a ship, by the tail, by the single motive of fear alone."[1] He had no sympathy with Harry's first schoolmaster who is deservedly chastised by his pupils for unjustly flogging Harry. He dismisses him but not before giving him some valuable hints on education. He would concede the necessity of fear only as a safeguard against evil. But the application as a rule, of this motive tends to associate pain with virtue or serves to gratify the violent passions of "a giant of a pedagogue, raving, raging, foaming over a group of shrinking infants."[2] In suggesting "caps of shame, wreaths of honour, or a place of eminence" as incentives to emulation he anticipates the methods adopted by the 19th century schools.

Harry's new tutor, a gentleman well read in classics, is charged not to push the boy into learning of the languages beyond his own pleasure, nor to "perplex his infant mind with the deep or mysterious parts of our holy religion." "First, be it your care to instruct him in morality and let the law precede the gospel, for such was the education that God appointed for the world."[3]

Harry is once grief-stricken for having behaved rather proudly and conceitedly with a young lord. This gives Mr. Fenton an occasion to ground him in religion.

1.Id. Ch.VI 2. Id. Ch.VI, p.110
3.Ch.IX, p.210

He explains that Harry has both a good and a bad boy in him, each struggling with the other, that all the evil in him belongs to himself and the good belongs to his God. Such passages dwelling on the need of conversion must have been favourite with the methodists.

Harry's comprehensively planned education is finished off with a visit to London to hold up to him the bright as well as the dark side of the world's picture. Ample funds are placed at the disposal of Harry and his tutor for the relief of debtors in the Fleet prison. Even Mr. Vindex, the disgraced schoolmaster is enlarged and spared Mr. Squeers's fate. "His credit is restored, his school daily increased, and like Job, his latter end was far more blessed than his beginning."

Education so ideally conceived and ambitiously executed cannot but move us to admiration. There is, indeed, the financial snag, but who would ever care to reconcile education with cheese-paring economy. As the estimable Mr. Fenton has well expressed: "I value the instilling of a single principle of goodness or honour into the mind of my dear Harry beyond all the wealth that the Indies can remit."[1]

The book contains an elaborate and sympathetic study of childhood, such as had not yet appeared in an English novel. The author accords to woman, a far higher position than Rousseau concedes to Sophie. In one of the discourses between the author and his imaginary friend the latter describes women's qualities in

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1. Ch.IX, p.210

the manner of Rousseau. "Women unquestionably have their becoming qualities: in the bed chamber, kitchen, and nursery, they are useful to men, but beyond these my friend, they are quite out of the element of nature and common sense."[1] The author refutes this view and recognises her as a companion to man, and as a being of superior order. He inveighs against the way the Society woman is brought to suppress her natural feelings and inclinations.

Since the book describes the whole course of the upbringing of an ideal nobleman, including his own experiences and those of others who cross his path, there is a lack of coherent unity. "The author," says Sir Walter Raleigh, "is so occupied with the works of public benevolence that he starves the child. Artistically, the novel is a chaos, and such unity as it has is due chiefly to the binder."[2] Those who, like Charles Kingsley, regard this book as a witness to an ideal of humanity, will let the author teach his own lesson in his own way, trusting "that each seeming interruption is but a step forward in the moral process at which the author aims, and that there is full and conscious consistency in Mr. Brooke's method, whether or not there be dramatic unity in his plot."[3]

With the publication of "Sandford and Merton" in 1783 the moral tale, properly speaking, appeared in England. Designed for children, "Sandford and Merton" is, at the same time, a social satire and a treatise

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1.Ch.VIII, pp.198,199 2.The English Novel, p.213
3.Preface to The Fool of Quality 1859

on education. As the Preface tells us, the book is a collection of stories drawn from different sources and adapted to children. The inset stories, forming as it were the nucleus, are strung together in a tale in which two children are introduced as the actors to lend dramatic interest and coherence to the whole. The contrast favourite with the Rousseauists, is presented between the pampered, proud and fretful Tommy Merton, an only son of a rich merchant, and the active, strong, and good-natured Harry Sandford, an only son of a plain and honest farmer. The interest of the book is centered in the reformation of Tommy. He was naturally a very good-natured boy, but had, unfortunately, been spoiled by too much indulgence. "His vivacity was greater than his reason, and his taste for imitation was continually leading him into some mischief or misfortune."[1] Thrown in frivolous company he burns to outshine others in fashionable affectations. Struck by the descriptions of the Arabian horsemen he desires to emulate them on his spirited steed, which precipitates him into a quag-mire. The reader F. J. Darton[2] points out, feels a dreadful fascination in wondering what Tommy will be "crimed" for next. The patience of the preceptor, Mr. Barlow, joined to the example of Harry bring Tommy back to the right path.

Miss Barry[3] calls Harry a super-Fool of Quality. He is a lad of invincible courage and chivalry. He twice saves the life of Tommy, at a ball he fights to

1. The History of Sandford and Merton (1795) Vol.III, p.77
2. Op.cit., p.149
3. F. V. Barry: A Century of Children's Books, p.111

avenge the insult suffered by a young lady. Though he suffers Tommy to strike him, he challenges the arrogant Mash and returns a slap of the face by a punch of the fist. Such scenes are interspersed with readings from the old classics, accounts and stories of Laplanders, Highlanders, and negroes, and other exponents of fortitude, simplicity of life, and skill in all natural pursuits. New words in stories serve as pegs to hang on lessons in history, geography, and natural science. It was, says Jacques Pons,[1] in accordance with the pedagogic principle then in favour, "que tout est matière d'instruction à chaque instant de la journée."

Mr. Barlow's complacent priggishness and his socratic method of imparting ethical instruction are not likely to find favour in the eyes of modern readers. Yet when Mr. Merton is in despair at his son's relapse into bad ways, Mr. Barlow shows commendable patience and remains unshaken in his faith "that human nature is infinitely more weak than wicked; and that the greater part of all bad conduct springs rather from want of firmness than from any settled propensity to evil."[2] Even his Socratic method is shot with an occasional gleam of humour. Here is a lesson on kindness to animals. Tommy is surprised at the extraordinary docility of a chicken saved by Harry from the claws of a kite. He thinks that all birds fly away at a man's approach because they are wild.

Mr. Barlow: "Why then it is probable that animals

1. Op.cit. p.187
2. Sandford and Merton, Vol.III. p.12

are only wild because they are afraid of being hurt, and that they only run away from the fear of danger. I believe you would do the same from a lion or a tiger."

Tommy: "Indeed I would, sir."

Mr. Barlow: "And yet you do not call yourself a wild animal? Tommy laughed heartily at this, and said, No. Therefore said Mr. Barlow, if you want to tame animals, you must be good to them and treat them kindly ....."[1]

In its ethical teaching the book reflects the personality of a man whom Robert Edgeworth calls the most virtuous of human being he had ever known. His high sense of manliness, independence, and sterling qualities of character are stamped upon it. In his social philosophy Day shares Rousseau's humanitarian and egalitarian ideas, his contempt for riches and fashionable life and his exaltation of honest industry. The social import of the book is clear from the motto prefixed by Day to his second volume: "I do not know that there is upon the face of the earth a more useless, more contemptible, and more miserable animal than a wealthy luxurious man, without business or profession, arts, sciences, or exercises." (Lord Monboddo). We have some autobiographical glimpses of Day's retired literary life at Anningsley in the account of the virtuous Chares, settled "in a beautiful and solitary spot, and married to a virtuous young woman."[2]

In education Day modifies Rousseau's ideas in the

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1. Sandford and Merton Vol.I, p.143.
2. Op.cit. Vol.III, p.170

light of his own and Edgeworth's educational experiments with their wards. In "Emile" the education of the earliest years is negative. "It consists, not in teaching virtue or truth, but in preserving the heart from vice and from the spirit of error."[1] In "Sandford and Merton" the stress is laid on acquiring habits, on the changing of the sentiments of natural goodness "into fixed and active principles."[2] Here Day's sturdy British morality is more in accord with Locke's teaching and insists on inculcating as early as may be, discipline and love of virtue.[3]

Day rejects Rousseau's ideal of woman. He advocates the same training for boys and girls. "If women," argues the venerable Chares, "are in general feeble both in body and mind, it arises less from nature than from education."[4] He criticises boarding schools for teaching nothing but trifles. "We seem to forget that it is upon the qualities of the female sex, that our own domestic comforts, and the education of our children must depend." "It is remarkable," says Elizabeth Godfrey,[5] "how the child and the books acted and reacted;" whether the book most formed the child's taste or was produced to meet that taste, is not easy to say. Thousands of Victorian children were nurtured upon the History of Sandford and Merton. It was a robust, healthy, and self-reliant type of national character

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1. Emile Book II. 2. Sandford and Merton Vol.III
3. Locke op.cit. para.45
4. Sandford and Merton Vol.III, p.175
5. English Children in Olden Times p.284

that Adam Smith envisaged. In the evolution of that character it would be interesting but not easy to gauge the influence of a book which Day wrote with a view to "inspire in youth" a manly independence of character, and a mind superior to the enticements of luxuriant indulgence.[1] Leigh Hunt while condemning the 18th century children's books for their utilitarian morals, pays the following tribute to Day: "The pool of mercenary and time-serving ethics was just blown over by the fresh country breeze of Mr. T. Day."[2]

To the orthodox there was something unsatisfying in the undogmatic ethics of Sandford and Merton, implying as it did the sufficiency of practical goodness. They fastened, therefore, with avidity upon the Fairchild Family which insists upon regeneration (in the strict sense) as necessary to salvation. "Whoever attempts to keep the commandments without the help of God, is labouring in vain," so the old clergyman told Miss Fairchild when she was but a very little girl living with her aunts. "Go into your own room," he recommended her, "and there kneel down and confess to God that you are a miserable sinner, fit only to go to hell."[3]

We are struck by the pietistic rigour with which the book instils into children a sense of their own depravity and the awful examples with which it seeks to impress upon them the enormity of such sins as lying

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1.John Blackman: Memoir of Thomas Day p.112
2.Autobiography, Ch.III
3.The Fairchild Family (1818) p.396

stealing, evil passions and disobedience to parents. Henry plucks the forbidden apple and being afraid and ashamed to confess his wickedness, is locked up in a little room without food and company the whole day. The children quarrel, Mr. Fairchild whips them, reciting Dr. Watt's verses, "Let dogs delight to bark and bite.." and then takes them to see the shocking corpse of a criminal hung in chains upon a gibbet. This was to be an object lesson to children that death and hell would be the end of their quarrels.[1] Emily steals some damascenes from a jar, spills the red juice upon her frock, wets herself to the skin to remove the stain, and brings on a dangerous illness. Miss Augusta disobeying her parents takes up a candle to look in the glass and is burned to a crisp.

Such incidents in the book are reminiscent of an earlier Puritan tradition as exemplified in James Janeway's "A Looking Glass for Children". Their severity is due to Mrs. Sherwood's evangelical doctrine. They do not reflect her real personality, nor do they constitute the essential interest of the book. Lucy, Emily, and Henry act and talk (save when they are made the mouthpieces of older persons) like healthy and ordinary children. The vivacity and cheerfulness with which they enter into their play and dramatic games are all the more surpsising when we consider the rigid doctrine and discipline to which they have been subjected. In the words of Mrs. Field, we find the well-brought-up child in each chapter in worse mischief than the last.[2]

1. Id. Story on the Sixth Commandment.
2. The Child and his Book

Stern the Fairchilds may be, but they are never unjust or unkind. The strength and certainty of their affection build a castle of comfort and security for their children. How devotedly do the parents nurse Emily in her illness, praying and watching by her all night! How do they rejoice in her recovery! In this picture of the Fairchild Family Mrs. Sherwood draws upon the recollections of her own life. Her journal records her strict but kindly upbringing. She generally did all her lessons standing in stocks, with a stiff collar round her neck, and had the plainest possible food, and yet she was a very happy child,[1] delighting in fairy tales and enacting them in the wood.

The story of little Merton is built in some degree on Henry Sherwood's troublous young days at the Ashford Grammar School. Little Marten had been very tender in his health and the kickings, thumpings, and beatings he got amongst the boys, instead of making him hardy, made him the more sickly and complaining. When his mother was living, he was a cheerful little fellow, full of play and quick in learning; but now he became dull and cast down, and in consequence he got several floggings.[2]

Mr. Bryant[3] describes Sunday observance as one of the salient peaks of the mid-Victorian scene. Here is a picture of Sunday at Mr. Fairchild's. The family generally rise a little earlier than usual. After breakfast they all set off to the village church, chil-

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1.The Life of Mrs. Sherwood (ed.)Sophia Kelly, p.39
2.The Fairchild Family, p.186 3.Arthur Bryant: English Saga, p.136

children walking first (for they were not allowed to run on a Sunday) Mr. and Mrs. Fairchild coming up next and the servants behind. The Fairchilds spend two hours at school, hear the scholars the Catechism, and take them to the church. After the Divine Service the family come home. Children are ordered not to chatter away till dinner but to go into a place apart by themselves to pray or think of what they have been hearing in the church. After dinner they go again to church or hold services at home. After singing some hymns together the children go to bed.

Referring to the plebiscite held by a literary journal by which the Fairchild Family was voted as the most vividly remembered book, Mr. Darton remarks that the Fairchild Family was the dominant book in the nurseries up to the fifties of the 19th century.[1] Victorian England, Sir. S.H. Scott[2] points out, was divided into those who brought up their children on Sandford and Merton and those who preferred the more religious atmosphere of the Fairchild Family.

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1. Life and Times of Mrs. Sherwood
2. The Exemplary Day p.167

IV.

WORDSWORTH

IV.

Wordsworth

It is in Wordsworth that we find the best treatment of the child and his early education. He shares with Shakespeare and Milton the honour of having given England's National Ideal its finest and most characteristic expression.[1] All that concerned childhood evoked his tenderest recollections and deepest sympathies. His own childhood was associated with scenes where, he says, "the fairest of all rivers, loved to blend his murmurs with my nurse's song."[2] He traced the growth of the infant mind with an affection that bordered on reverence. His interest in education was as deep as it was noble in conception. Educational theory, attracted an unusual amount of attention towards the close of the 18th century. Wordsworth was in full sympathy with the liberal thought of the period. He and his sister undertook the education of Basil Montague's son. "The motherless child was," Montague tells us, "entrusted to my protection when I was little able to protect myself - in the wreck of my happiness he (Wordsworth) saw the probable ruin of my infant."[3] Dorothy in her letters to Jane Marshall speaks of the system she and her brother followed in educating the boy, the love and delight with which they watched him gorw. "But I do not think," she writes, "that there is any pleasure more delightful than that of marking the development of a child's faculties

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1. De Selincourt: English Poets and the National Ideal
2. Prelude Book I. p.238
3. De Selincourt: Early Letters of W. D. Wordsworth p.138 note

and observing his little occupations."[1]

Again the mode of Wordsworth's recovery from the chief spiritual crisis of his life turned his thoughts to childhood. Disillusioned by the disastrous issues of the French Revolution and his idolatory of reason, Wordsworth recovered his faith in nature and man by recognising in childhood "the hiding places of man's power."

> O mystery of man, from what a depth
> Proceed thy honours. I am lost, but see
> In simple childhood something of the base
> On which thy greatness stands.[2]

Thus the recollections of his happy childhood, the new pedagogy, his interest in Montague's son, and his spiritual renovation led Wordsworth to glorify the child and to make education the absorbing passion of his life. The entire Prelude is a study in education, and its significance has deepened with our advance in child psychology. The ruling idea of the poem is that childhood is "the seed-time of the soul," that "Dust as we are, the immortal spirit grows, like harmony in music."[3] The interest and importance of childhood and the child mind, as Fotheringham points out,[4] was part of the spiritual movement of the age of Wordsworth. But what gave to this interest, in the case of Wordsworth, its extraordinary strength and conviction was the fact that his own childhood was nursed in fellowship,

> Not with the mean and vulgar works of man
> But with high objects, with enduring things.[5]

1.Id. p.146
2.Prelude XII, ll.272-275. 3. Book I, l.341
4.James Fotheringham's Wordsworth's Prelude as a Study of Education, p.18
5.Prelude Book I, ll.408-409

His childish frolics were as wanton as if he "had been born on Indian plains," his boyish sports, fear and beauty inspired by the Presence of Nature in solitude, life in lowly cottages, school friendships, and excursions, chance encounters with shepherds, descried in distant sky and glorified by the deep radiance of the setting sun (VIII) and books: all things are conceived as bearing a part in the foundation of his powers and ministering to the development of his mind. At first Nature had an incidental role; lending its beauty to rural scenes and sports:

> as a boy I loved the sun...
>
> But for this cause that I had seen him lay
> His beauty on the morning hills.

Nature is later sought for its own sake: "The sounding cataract haunted me like a passion."[1] and finally it is heard through "The still, sad music of humanity."[2] But the growing mind cannot be divided by "geometric rules" in terms of the primary and secondary power of Nature. The mind grows as a unity. Nor is it a matter of things and experiences only; it is also a matter of affections and principles. The child's mind and nature are fitted to each other:

> ".....that calm delight,
> Which, if I err not, surely must belong
> To those first-born affinities that fit
> Our new existence in existing things
> And, in our dawn of being, constitute
> The bond of union between life and joy.[3]

This creative faculty of the mind is already seen at

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1. Tintern Abbey
2. " "
3. B ook I. ll.554-558.

work in the infant, holding "mute dialogues" with his mother's heart, irradiating and exalting "objects through widest intercourse of sense."[1] Such Wordsworth holds, is the first

> "Poetic spirit of our human life
> By uniform control of after years,
> In most, abated or suppressed;" [2]

He therefore, urges us not to mistrust our nature. He overflows with gratitude to his mother who allowed his young imagination to develop itself in freedom. In her simple-minded faith that innocent instincts contain their own self-correcting principle she cherished the freedom and individuality of her children. She was neither anxious from fear of error nor elated by false hopes,

> "Nor with impatience from the season asked
> More than its timely produce; rather loved
> The hours for what they are, than from regard
> Glanced on their promises in restless pride." [3]

All this is in agreement with Rousseau's teaching that the most useful rule of all education is not to gain time but to lose it, that each age, each period of life has its proper perfection.[4] This, too, was one of Froebel's great ideas, that the child, the boy, the man, should seek only to be at each stage of development what this stage calls for.[5] There is little evidence that Wordsworth was directly indebted to Rousseau, but the ideas and spirit of the latter, as Legouis[6] points out, "were

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1. Book II. l.240
2. Book II. ll.261-263
3. Prelude. Book V, ll.284-287
4. Emile, Book II
5. The Education of Man, translated by W. N. Hailmann, p.30. Quoted by Havens, R.D.: The Mind of a Poet (Baltimore 1941) p.405
6. The Early Life of William Wordsworth.

in the air" and "Emile" was on everyone's lips. Consciously or unconsciously influenced as Wordsworth must have been by Rousseau, he derived most of his ideas on education from recollections of his own training and his "naturalism" stands in marked contrast to that of the Genevan philosopher.

With Rousseau, "nature" and "natural being", it has been truly remarked, are largely a fiction of "the revolt".[1] He yields the child freedom with one hand only to take it away with the other. The perfect tutor isolates and selects conditions, over-solicitous to shield his ward against vice, he exercises an influence which is as persistent as it is imperceptible. Consulted by the Abbe M. on his system, Rousseau wrote: "... in such a system one must have all or nothing.... for ten years, at least, you will no longer exist for yourself - vigilance, patience, firmness, those are the three virtues which you must practice unflinchingly if you would not lose everything - a single moment of impatience, of negligence, or forgetfulness, would take from the fruit of ten years' work, without leaving anything behind."[2] "Is it possible more clearly to acknowledge," comments Lamaitre, "that,"Emile" is but the romance of education?"

In Wordsworth there is no sharp antithesis between "Nature" and "Society". Like his skylark "true to the kindred points of Heaven and Home" he has the same

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1. James Fotheringham Op.cit.,p.54
2. Quoted in James Lamaitre's Jean Jacques Rousseau translated by Jeanne Mairet, pp.248,249.

insight into the truth as Shakespeare, that nature contains the secret of its own evolution.

> Polixenes: Yet Nature is made better by no mean,
> But Nature makes that mean, so e'er that art
> Which you say adds to Nature, is an art
> That Nature makes.
> ..... this is an art
> Which does not mend Nature, change it rather, but,
> The art itself is Nature. [1]

He does not subscribe to Rousseau's idea of transporting the child to a Utopia insulated from all "patriotic and domestic love". (Bk.II) He sets high value on home influences, schoolfellowships and social descipline. His mother was "the heart and hinge of all our learnings and our loves." (Bk.V) He thanks Dorothy, the sister of his soul, for all the early tenderness he imbibed from her. Life at school compelled him "in hardy independence to stand up, amid conflicting interests" and made the transition to life amongst men easier and more secure. To all those theorists of the latter part of the 18th century, who would fashion the child into a moral prodigy and "a miracle of scientific lore", he opposes his modest and truthful "naturalism". His own conpanionship has been with

> A race of real children; not too wise,
> Too learned or too good; but wanton, fresh,
> And bandied up and down by love and hate;
> Not unresentful where self justified;
> Fierce, moody, patient, venturous, modest, shy;
> Mad at their sports like withered leaves in winds;
> Though doing wrong and suffering, and full oft
> Bending beneath our life's mysterious weight
> Of pain and doubt, and fear, yet yielding not
> In happiness to the happiest upon earth.

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1. Winter's Tale, Act iv, sc.4, ll.91-96

Simplicity in habit, truth in speech,
Be these the daily strengtheners of their minds,
May books and Nature be their early joy:
And knowledge, rightly honoured with that name - 1
Knowledge not purchased by the loss of power.

Next to Nature he ranks the educative value of books, the old romances and fairy tales. It is because of their imaginative appeal to the child that the poet names in glad reminiscence the Arabian tales, Fortunatus, Jack the Giant Killer, Robin Hood, Sabra in the forest with St. George. He reverences childhood as the period of greatest activity and vigour of imagination. It was his faith that

Not in entire forgetfulness
And not in utter nakedness 2
But trailing clouds of glory do we come.

that, therefore,

Our simple childhood, sits upon a throne 3
That hath more power than all the elements.

The imaginative tales reshape the world, more in sympathy with the child's aspirations, his "dumb yearnings and hidden appetites" than that of necessity. Even a gruesome sight such as nine-year-old Wordsworth saw, of a dead body recovered from Esthwaite's Lake, wears an ideal grace when seen through the eyes of romance writers. Coleridge whom Wordsworth invokes as the brother of his soul, is equally emphatic on the high value of Fairy tales in cultivating imagination. "Ought children," he writes, "to be permitted to read romances and stories of giants, magicians, and genii? I know

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1. Prelude, Book. V, ll.411-425
2. Intimations of Immortality
3. Prelude, Book V

all that has been said against it; but I have formed my faith in the affirmative. I know no other way of giving the mind a love of the great and the whole."[1]

This vindication of imagination by the great romantics admitted "floods of light and air into the tightly closed nurseries and schoolrooms" presided over by the rationalist educators on the one hand, and the exponents of artificial education on the other. Lord Chesterfield exhorted his son not to waste his time on reading "the Oriental ravings and extravagances of the Arabian Nights and Mogul Tales - Fairy Tales - and such sort of idle and frivolous stuff, that nourishes and improves the mind just as much as whipped cream would the body."[2]

What Chesterfield disparaged as "whipped cream" came to be considered in the 19th century as a vital element in education. In his letters Wordsworth was as insistent as ever on books of imagination. His comment on an educational report was that too little attention was paid to books of imagination which are eminently useful in calling forth intellectual power and adds, "We must not only have knowledge but the means of wielding it and that is done infinitely more through the imaginative faculty assisting both in the collection and application of facts than is generally believed."[3]

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1. Biographia Literaria. Vol.II, p.324
2. Letter to his son, 5th Feb.1750
3. Letter to H.S. Tremenheere, Dec.16th 1849. The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth. The Later Years, Vol.III, Edit. De Selincourt, p.1269

Dickens went so far as to declare "that a nation without fancy, without some romance, never did, never can, never will, hold a great place under the sun."[1]

In his eloquent plea for a system of state education Wordsworth, as it has been remarked, was among the pioneer men of letters.[2] He deplores the failure of state and church to "dissolve the crust" wherein the uninformed soul "sleeps like a caterpillar sheathed in ice." (Excursion VIII, l.419) He upholds the sacred, inherent right of all to be taught "the rudiments of letters" and envisages "this imperial realm prizing knowledge as her noblest and best protection." (Excursion IX, ll.294 -295) In reference to public education, however, Wordsworth's enthusiasm is tempered by his wise conservatism. He would guard against that blind zeal, which would confound education with tuition to the disregard of home influences, religion and imagination. Although he welcomes Dr. Bell's discovery as affording facilities for popular education, he is opposed to its tendency to encourage emulation and mechanical instruction.[3] The following passage from his speech sums up what education means to him.

"Education, according to the derivation of the word, and in the only use of which it is strictly justifiable, comprehends all those processes and influences, come from whence they may, that conduce to the best

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1.Frauds on Fairies. Oct.1,1853. Miscellaneous Papers, Vol.I.,p.435
2.A. Charles Babenroth: English Childhood, p.360
3.Letter to H.J. Rose. Dec.11th, 1828

development of the bodily powers, and of the moral, intellectual, and spiritual faculties which the position of the individual admits of. In this just and high sense of the word, the education of a sincere Christian, and a good member of society upon Christian principles, does not terminate with his youth, but goes on to the last moment of his conscious earthly existence, an education not for time but for eternity."[1]

We have devoted more space to Wordsworth than the nature of the thesis seems to warrant. But Wordsworth, it may be submitted, is our true interpreter of English Childhood. "By his secret of bringing the infinite into common life."[2] he succeeds in expressing not only what is truly characteristic of his own age but also what is deeply significant for our own.

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1. The Prose Works of William Wordsworth. Grosart. Vol. I. p. 355
2. John Morley: Introduction to the Complete Poetical Works of William Wordsworth.

V.

TO TEACH THE YOUNG IDEA HOW TO SHOOT

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

To Teach the Young Idea how to Shoot.

"Of all the shortcomings of the 19th century," Professor Fay has written, "the failure to provide national education before 1870 was the most unnecessary." Adam Smith advocated it a century earlier and Scotland enjoyed it two centuries earlier. But 'religion', as Graham said, 'the keystone of education, is in this country the bar to progress.'"[1]

It was partly due to historical reasons and in part to national character that state aid in education was relatively late in England. In the Middle Ages, the Church took the initiative in developing an elementary school system of a sort. "Schools in England," writes A.F. Leach, "are coeval with the coming of Christianity."[2] As part of all the great churches (i.e. in general centres of population) were to be found Grammar Schools and Song Schools. To a large extent the Song Schools performed the function of elementary schools, but they were in essence special and professional schools intended to give training to choristers, whereas the Grammar Schools gave a general education.

In Chaucer's Prioresses Tale there is a charming picture of a Song or elementary school. It was a 'litel scole' where the children learned '..... to singen and to rede, As smale children doon in her childhede.' (11.36-105) Attached to the monasteries or under their trusteeship were also almonry schools. On the ample and growing supply of schools in Medieval England, A.F. Leach writes: "The contrast between one grammar school to every 5,625

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1. Great Britain from Adam Smith to the Present Day, p.355
2. The Schools of Medieval England (1913) p.1

people, and that presented by the Schools Inquiry Report in 1864 of one to every 23,750 people, and even to the enlarged provision at the present day is not to the disadvantage of our pre-Reformation ancestors."[1] However, the schools founded in the 16th and 17th centuries under the Renaissance impulse never contemplated what we call elementary education, nor did they provide instruction specially designed to meet the needs of the poor. The richer classes took little interest in popular education. It was even considered to be in the interests of the lower classes that they should remain ignorant so that they might be more easily governed and might contentedly bear their hard lot. Extremely limited and practical as the aims of the Charity and Sunday Schools were, they did not fail to arouse distrust and opposition. Mandeville objected to the charity schools on the ground that they would make the children of the poor discontented with their lot. As regards Sunday Schools, Byng declared, "the poor should not read, and of writing I never heard for them the use."[2] Opposing Whitbread's Parochial Schools bill of 1807 Davies Giddy argued in a manner reminiscent of Mandeville that the project of giving education to the labouring classes would be "prejudicial to their morals and happiness" and would render them "factious and refractory"[3] More remarkable as an illustration of the opinion of a section of the public upon the education of the people was the speech of

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1. Supra p.331
2. The Torrington Diaries. Vol.II. A Tour in the Midlands 1790
3. Parliamentary Debates. 1st Series. Vol.VIII col.798

William Cobbett in the grant-in-aid debate of 1833. The great "Tribune of the People" opposed the vote on the ground that education was not improving the condition of the country. Reports before the House said that men became more and more immoral every year, though education had been more and more widespread. Education did nothing but increase the number of schoolmasters and schoolmistresses, that new race of idlers. To tax people for the increase of education was nothing but an attempt to force education. He would oppose "this French, this doctrinaire plan."[1] In a later debate he spoke in still stronger terms against Roebuck's plan for National Education. If the child of the labourer, he argued, could not complete his education until he was at least 15 or 16 years of age, who was to keep a great eating, and drinking, and guzzling boy? By useful employment the youth gained habits of obedience and industry, while at school he would only learn habits of idleness and become too great in his own conceit to labour.[2]

The modern age may have little sympathy with the social philosophy of 18th century philanthropists and men of piety whose ideal has been summed up as "Train the poor to poverty."[3] Yet, it is well to remember that even Hannah More's redemptive work among the poor was suspected of fostering Jacobinical tendencies. This seems all the more surprising since she deprecated what she considered the extravagant plan of ultra-educationists

1.Hansard: Parliamentary Debates 3rd Series, Vol.XX,Cols.734-5.17.8.1833
2.Hansard: June 3rd 1834. Vol.24, Cols.132,133
3.Birchenough: History of Elementary Education, p.10

to teach the poor everything.

"And where is all this to terminate? Only cast back your eye upon Athens, when the upper gallery pronounced on Sophocles and Euripedes, and an herb woman could detect the provincial accent of a great philosopher. Yet was there a more turbulent ungovernable rebel?"[1]

It is among the philosophic liberals and a steadily growing phalanx of working class men and women that we have to seek for a democratic faith in, and enthusiasm for, education as a means of political enlightenment and social betterment. Joseph Priestley (1733-1804) and William Godwin (1756-1836) held the doctrine of the progressive perfectability of man and looked to education as the chief instrument of human advance. James Mill sets down his egalitarian ideal in education in these terms.

> "As we strive for an equal degree of justice, an equal degree of temperance, an equal degree of veracity, in the poor as in the rich, so ought we to strive for an equal degree of intelligence."[2]

But liberal opinion was jealous of state control of education. Joseph Priestley stressed the tendency of the latter to unwholesome uniformity and Godwin's rigid individualism apprehended that it would establish a permanence of opinion inimical to progress and individual initiative.[3] This opposition of the philosophic liberals to State control was one of the three factors which were, in the main, responsible for the continuity of the voluntary school system. The other two were the remarkable success of Andrew Bell and Joseph Lancaster's "Mutual system of education" and the widespread conception of

1. Letter to Sir W.W. Pepys (1831) Life of Hannah More (1856), p.314
2. Article on Education. Encycolpaedia Britannica. Supp. 4th, 5th, 6th edits. (1824)
3. Enquiry. 2 vols. 1793, Vol.II., p.144

popular education as a philanthropic enterprise.

The monitorial system recommended itself to the contemporaries as a clear and practical system carried out with a maximum reduction of labour and expense and bringing speedy and calculable results. It was admiringly referred to as "the Steam Engine of the Moral World". "The principle in schools and manufactories is the same," wrote Sir Thomas Bernard with warm approval. "The grand principle of Dr. Bell's system is the division of labour applied to intellectual purposes."[1] In the mechanical regimentation of the system, the moral and intellectual powers of the teachers counted for little. "But in a school properly regulated and conducted on my plan," wrote Lancaster, "when the master leaves the school the business will go on as well in his absence as in his presence because the authority is not personal."[2]

The Lancastrian system inspired the foundation in 1808 of the British and Foreign School Society under the auspices of the non-conformists. Dr. Bell's system was adopted by the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Established Church founded in 1811. Not only did the rivalry of these Societies help to re-organise elementary education in the early years of the 19th century but it revived philanthropic effort which had kept the movement in education alive since the 18th century. So encouraging were the results of private benevolence that Brougham who had, during the

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1. Of the Education of the Poor. 1809
2. The British System of Education (etc. 1810, p.45

best years of his life, been an advocate for the public education of the people, withdrew his support of Roe-buck's bill on the ground that the voluntary system was both adequate and successful.[1] The private purse, the supporters of the voluntary system held, would close, when the public purse was opened.

Successive attempts at state interventions in education, made since the closing years of the 18th century were defeated by vested interests, religious difficulty, philosophic liberalism and voluntary principle. Pitt's Poor Law Scheme of 1795 contemplating parish schools of industry was wrecked by vested interests in juvenile labour. Whitbread's Parochial Schools bill of 1807 was rejected on the ground that it violated the principle of clerical control. Brougham's parish school bill of 1820 had to be withdrawn as it fell foul of the Non-conformists. Roebuck's measure of 1833 met with a similar fate as his proposal that education should be compulsory was distasteful to all shades of political opinion. Hence the question of state provision of education hung fire till 1870, although the inadequacy of voluntary effort had been remarked upon by Malthus as early as 1798. He considered it a great national disgrace that the education of the lower classes should be left to "a few Sunday schools supported by a subscription from individuals"[2] The principle of "laissez faire, laissez aller" in education was attacked

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1.Hansard. 3rd series, Vol.22, April 16th, 1834.
2.Population 2nd Ed. 1806. Vol.II, p.418

by Macaulay in his courageous speech in the House of Commons in 1847. He cited Adam Smith in support of his plea that education of the people ought to be the first concern of the State, "not only because it is an efficient means for promoting and obtaining that which we allow to be the main end of Government (namely, to protect the lives and property of the community), but because it is the most efficient, the most humane, the most civilised and in all respects the best means of attaining that end."[1]

A unanimous resolution of the Commons in 1843 on the necessity of moral and religious education of the working classes showed that all were agreed as to the end in view, differing only as to the means. The liberal opinion was not yet ripe for state intervention. The first recognition of the educational needs of the country by the state was limited to a Government grant of £20,000 made in 1833 to the National and British schools. It was mainly left to philanthropic effort, religious organisations or private enterprise to provide some sort of elementary instruction to the people. How ill or well this task was being attended to, the Reports of Parliamentary Commissions afford us ample evidence. It is almost pathetic to contrast the intrepid zeal of poor scholars for knowledge and the striking deficiency both in quality and extent of public provision for popular education. A twelve years old lad who worked twelve hours a day at a coach makers, literally shortened

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1.Hansard. 3rd series, Vol.91, Col.1010

his dinner hour by half-an-hour to get his work forward to be in time for his evening school.[1] It was calculated from the statistics collected by the Assistant Commissioners in 1858 that more than one-third of the pupils in the average attendance were in private schools. Still more reliable returns respecting certain districts are given in the Report of the Manchester Statistical Society in 1834-5. Of the population estimated as 533,000 the number of children of the working classes from 3 to 13, for whom daily education should have been provided was 80,050. It was shown that 58,093 children out of 80,050 either received no weekly instruction or instruction only in Dame or Common Day Schools. And as for the quality of instruction conveyed in these schools it was regarded as almost worthless, if not, in many cases, pernicious.[2] Some of the instances reported by the Commissioners in 1861 are hardly to be paralleled outside the pages of Dickens. "Indeed, I have seen the children," so runs Mr. Cumin's account of a school,"as closely packed as birds in a nest, and tumbling over each other like puppies in a kennel."[3] The mistress of a Dame School at Birmingham, Lord Ashley told the Commons, being asked whether she gave moral and religious instruction said she could not afford it at threepence a week![4] Dr. Hodgson reports of "a school held at the top of a very steep and broken staircase," where the chief text-books seemed to be a kitten, to which all the children were very attentive.[5] One is reminded of

1.Report of Commissioners.Newcastle 1861,B.P.P. Vol.XXI, Part I, p.41
2.Kay Shuttleworth. Four Periods of Education, p.193
3.B.P.P. 1861, Vol.XXI, Part III, p.84
4.Annual Register 1843. p.54 5.Op.cit.. p.483

Dickens's Preparatory Day School over a dyer's shop, in ascending the steps of which he often grazed his knees. "The mistress of the Establishment holds no place in our memory but a puffy pug dog with a personal animosity towards us triumphs over Time."[1]

The teachers of these schools had rarely been in any way trained to their profession and Dr. Hodgson found evidence to justify the assertion that none were too old, too poor, too ignorant, too feeble, too sickly, too unqualified in any or every way, to regard themselves as unfit for school keeping. By the shameful state of their calling Macaulay was moved to exclaim rhetorically: "... how many of these are now the refuse of other callings - discarded servants, or ruined tradesmen; who cannot do a sum of three; who would not be able to write a common letter; who do not know whether the earth is a cube or a sphere, and cannot tell whether Jerusalem is in Asia or America; whom no gentleman would trust with the key of his cellar and no tradesman would send on a message."[2] Even in 1901 Joshua Fitch complains: "It is a little humiliating to reflect that one half of the schoolmasters and mistresses who enter the profession each year have received no regular training and have had no means of obtaining it."[3] The school was often a dirty room, the closeness of which, it was remarked, rendered fuel superfluous and even kept the children quiet by its narcotic effect. The only instruments for instruction were a dog-eared spelling book and a broken

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1.Dickens: Our School Reprinted Pieces
2.Hansard. 3rd series Vol.91, Cols. 1016, 1017
3.Roberts, R.D. (Edit.) Education in the 19th Century p.53

slate and the instruction itself consisted of occasional reading, the learning of spellings by heart and a little scribble on broken slates. This description, of course, holds true of the the bad private schools, but these, according to the Commissioners of 1861, constituted the most numerous class.

If such was the state of popular education in the Middle and even later years of the 19th century one can well imagine the scanty means of rudimentary instruction before 1803 when the monitorial system had not as yet been introduced. At that date England, as Brougham remarked, might be justly looked on as the worst educated country in Europe.[1]

Owing to the Government's "laissez faire" attitude and what is regarded as the inveterate British habit of "muddling through" the growth of the education system in England was casual in the extreme, dictated now by a religious or philanthropic motive, now by some pressing social problem such as pauperism, and now again by some political exigency. While such freedom in education made for variety, flexibility and independence and could, under the stimulus of an inspiring personality or a vigorous community, achieve results beyond the reach of any centrally directed bureaucratic agency, it was nevertheless, responsible for a chaotic state of affairs.

Crabbe has described the inner working of schools of different grades and academic pretensions, at the close of the 18th century. The conception of an

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1.Hansard. New Series, Vol.II, Col.61. June 28, 1820

elementary education more or less common to all classes was, then, non-existent.

> "To every class we have a school assign'd [1]
> Rules for all ranks and food for every mind."

The only provision other than that furnished by the Charity Schools which existed at the beginning of the 19th century was that furnished by private enterprise. Dame Schools such as that of Shenstone's Village Schoolmistress, and boys' schools such as were described in Crabbe's Borough and in Joseph Lancaster's early tracts, furnished almost the only means of instruction accessible to the children of the poor. We see, therefore, that very many problems in the sphere of primary education clamorously demanded a solution and considering the importance of the subject, surprisingly few novels take up this subject and even these incidentally. Is it because, as has been suggested,[2] both writers and readers in that golden era of the Middle Classes bring little or no understanding to bear upon the educational efforts of the lower classes and indeed, take a negative stand?

From hints and incidental references scattered up and down in major and minor works of 19th century fiction, there does, however, emerge a picture of elementary schools, which, from the historical and literary point of view is extremely valuable. In a number of stories the school serves as a setting for the portrayal of the character of little boys and girls. Some well-known examples of these are "The Governess" (1749) by Sarah Fielding;

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1. The Borough Letter XXIV.
2. Koenig G., Der Viktorianische Schulroman, p.13

"The Village School" by Dorothy Kilner (1755-1836) and "Mrs. Leicester's School" (1807) by Charles and Mary Lamb. Mrs. Teachem in "The Governess" by her calm and good temper combined with her dignity and authority finally succeeds in restoring harmony and peace among her pupils who at one time did not scruple to quarrel over an apple "like so many cats when they extend their claws to fix them in their rival's heart". To "The Village School" kept by good Mrs. Bell come on terms of perfect equality the clergyman's, farmers', and labourers' sons and daughters. She teaches little boys and girls to read and likewise teaches the girls knitting and needlecraft. She treats her scholars with kindness as well as strict impartiality. In the maintenance of order and discipline at her school she has the co-operation of parents. She does not scruple to put Miss Polly Right into a corner with a surreptitiously introduced doll's tea chest suspended from her neck. Though Mr. Right the clergyman marches through the playground, in a shovel hat, wig, gown, and bands, looking the picture of ancient orthodoxy. Master Bill Crafty, a gentleman's son, kicks Master Joe, Frank West's little brother, to annoy Frank West, as the latter, a shoemaker's son, is commended more often than he, a young gentleman. "Don't tell me of his being only a poor boy," said Mrs. Bell, "I think poor boys are just as good as young gentlemen, and better, for they behave better. Though one child's father happens to be richer than another, that makes no difference at all in the children." For being

naughty Master Crafty is not only detained in the school but also whipped by his father, and put to bed without his supper, nor would his father let him have anything to eat next day till he had been to Mr. West and asked little Joe's pardon for using him so crossly.

Such an account of a school makes Miss Yonge wonder whether this was a Utopia or whether village schools were thus really universal and impartial.[1] They did, it seems, collect all those capable of payment and conform, more or less to the typical 18th century Dame's School enshrined for ever by William Shenstone in his poem "Schoolmistress" (1741). Nor does Mrs. Bell's method of reproving and rewarding her pupils differ much from that of the classic "Schoolmistress", who boasts unruly brats with birch to tame but who also has her well-known chest:

> "Whence oft with sugar cakes she doth them greet,
> And ginger-bread y rare; now certes, doubly sweet"
>
> Right well she knew each temper to descry
> To thwart the proud, and the submiss to raise;
> Some with vile copper prize exalt on high,
> And some entice with pittance small of praise;
> And other some with baleful sprig she frays;
> Even absent, she the reins of power doth hold
> While with quaint arts the giddy crowd she sways.
> Forwarn'd if little bird their pranks behold, Stanza 17.
> Twill whisper in her ear, and all the same unfold.

There were a few "teachers by the grace of God" such as Mrs. Barbauld, who shed their lustre on infant establishments, though contemporary opinion as typified by Dr. Johnson was not much appreciative of their work. Condemning precocity in children Dr. Johnson referred to

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1. Macmillan's Magazine. Vol.XX 1869, p.230

Miss Aikin (afterwards Mrs. Barbauld), as an instance of early cultivation: "But in what did it terminate? In marrying a little Presbyterian parson, who keeps an infant boarding school, so that all her employment now, is "to suckle fools, and chronicle small beer". She tells the children "this is a cat, and that is a dog, with four legs and a tail; see there! You are much better than a cat or a dog, for you can speak." Mrs. Barbauld's preface to her Early Lessons gives the best answer to Johnson's criticism, "Her task," she says, "is humble but not mean, for to lay the first stone to a noble building and to plant the first idea in a human mind can be no dishonour to any hand." It is strange that Dr. Johnson did not recognise the nobility of this task as he, himself, had written: "Ethics or morality is one of the studies which ought to begin with the first glimpse of reason and only end with life itself."[1] This might have been the motto of her book.

Some features of early 19th century charity schools are brought to light in Marryat's semi-satirical picture of Jacob Faithful's school life. Jacob was conspicuously dressed in a long coat of pepper and salt and yellow breeches and wore a large pewter plate upon his breast "so that all the world might know that I was a charity boy and that there was charity in this world." The school with sixty-three scholars was staffed by the chief schoolmaster with the ferula, the chief domestic with the brimstone and treacle, and an

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1. Works. (Oxford, 1825) V.p.243 Preface to Dodsley's The Preceptor (1748)

usher. The boys found Domine too learned to teach anything but Latin and Greek and the Usher not over-competent to teach reading and writing; hence they profited little. The Usher makes up by his savagery what he lacked in knowledge. Provoked by the noise and hubbub he would let fly his ruler at the boys as if they were cocks, on Shrove Tuesday. Jacob has something of the same precocity and uncommon capacity for learning with great facility as Marryat himself showed as a boy. Of his school at Ponder's End Marryatt records: "I was superior in capacity to most of my school-fellows. I seldom took pains to learn my lessons previous to going up with my class." "I certainly learnt almost by instinct," relates Jacob, "I read my lessons over once, and threw my book aside, for I knew it all." Impressed by the native vigour and freshness of Jacob's mind, the Domine exclaims with enthusiasm: "I have found a new book - an album whereone I may write the deeds of heroes and the works of sages. Carissime Jacobe!" So the promising pupil made rapid progress under his good and affectionate guide and before he left school in his fourteenth year Jacob proudly listed his attainments. "I had conquered Virgil, taken Tacitus by storm, and was reading the odes of Horace. I had passed through decimals and was busily employed in mensuration of solids....."

When Jacob was articles on board of a lighter, the Domine did not think that it was either useless or wrong

to have taught classics to his poor scholar and the latter himself gratefully acknowledges: "I was no longer a little savage, uneducated and confused in my ideas. On the contrary, I was full of imagination, confident in myself and in my own powers, cultivated in mind and proud of my success. The finer feelings of my nature had been called into play." The Domine defends his action by a still more powerful plea for popular education: "There are many who will tell that knowledge is of no use, for what avail can the Latin tongue be to a boy aboard of a lighter? Others may think that I have done wrong thus to instruct thee, as thy knowledge may render thee vain - or discontented with thy situation in life: such is too often the case, I grant, but it is because education is not as general as it ought to be. Were all educated, the superiority acquired or presumed upon by education would be lost, and the nation would not only be wiser, but happier. It would judge more rightly, would not condemn the measures of its rulers, which at present it cannot understand, and would not be led away by the clamour and misrepresentation of the disaffected.[1]

Jacob's Charity School compares favourably with the establishment of "The Charitable Grinders" in "Dombey and Son"... Major Bagstock is contemplating young Rob, a product of the latter school and deduces that it "never pays to educate that sort of people". Whereupon "the simple father was beginning to submit that he hoped his son, the quondam Grinder, huffed and cuffed, and flogged

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1. Id. Chap.IV

and badged, and taught, as parrots are, by a brute jobbed into his place of schoolmaster with as much fitness for it as a hound, might not have been educated on quite a right plan in some discovered respect, when Mr. Dombey, angrily repeating, "the usual return!" led the major away."[1]

In a spirit of parody Marryat gives us a picture of Johnny Easy's early training. After Mr. Easy's theory of equal rights has had disastrous results, Mr. Bonnycastle's pedagogic practice is offered as a more fruitful alternative. In his newly invented system Mr. Bonnycastle has replaced flogging by caning. That beau ideal of a preceptor in "Mr. Midshipman Easy" proudly claims for his system that he can produce more effect by one caning than twenty floggings. "Look at that cub, doctor," he remarks to his friend Dr. Middleton, when the latter visits the school, "sitting there more like a brute than a reasonable being; do you imagine that I could ever lick it into shape without strong measures?" The intractable Master Easy brought up on his father's theory of equal rights is shown an impressive array of canes and then the first lesson starts:

"Do you see that letter?"

"Yes," replied Johnny, turning his eyes away and pricking his fingers.

"Well that is the letter B. Do you see it? Look at it so that you may know it again. That's the letter B. Now tell me what letter that is."

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1. Dombey and Son II Ch.XX

Jack, determined to resist, "I won't tell, I won't learn to read and write." - with each such answer Mr. Bonnycastle applied the cane unsparingly. Whack, whack, whack, whack; Johnny fell on the carpet and roared with pain. Mr. Bonny-castle left him for a little while to recover himself and sat down. At last Johnny's exclamations settled down in deep sobs and Mr. B. bade him rise up. Somehow or another Johnny, without intending it, stood upon his feet. "That is a good boy; now you see by getting up as you were bid you have not been beaten. Now you will find that letter B." Johnny made no answer. "Tell me, directly, sir," said Mr. Bonnycastle raising his cane up in the air. The appeal was too powerful. Johnny eyed the cane; it moved, it was coming. Breathlessly he shrieked out, "B!" - the first lesson was over."

Johnny is put to bed, supperless, as pain and hunger alone will tame boys as well as brutes. Under Mr. Bonnycastle's severe but judicious system in which mischief is indulgently treated, the idle boy received no mercy. The school conducted on these principles is celebrated for turning its pupils out well. Marryat's attitude to flogging may be judged from the reply he gave when asked whether he was opposed to this mode of punishment in the Navy: "If ever you, one of your sons, should come under my command and deserve punishment, if there be no other effectual mode of conferring it, I shall flog you."[1]

1.Florence Marryat: Life and Letters of Captain Marryat, Vol.I.p.203

It has been remarked that in all his earlier stories the relations of schoolboy and schoolmaster are described as either indifferent or hostile, or contemptuous even when affection is not absent and it seems certain that he was happy neither in his home nor in his school. His high spirits brought him into repeated collision with the imperfect discipline of private schools. His schoolmaster was one day surprised to see him standing on his head, with a book in his hand. Asking his pupil why he chose so peculiar a mode of studying his lesson, he received the still more surprising answer. "Well, I've been trying for three hours to learn it on my feet, but I couldn't, so I thought I would try whether it would be easier to learn it on my head."[1]

Such a rollicking sense of fun and humour would, of course, incline a writer to present his truths with some colour of caricature. Marryat's pictures of schools and schoolmasters cannot, therefore, be taken more than half seriously. Yet Marryat, though he has been called "the Smollett of the 19th centyry" shows an artistic restraint which forbids extravagance or exaggeration. Was there not, again, in the deplorable conditions of Grammar Schools during the early 19th century, provocative material enough to furnish the caricature of a superannuated schoolmaster declining and conjugating aloud to the gobble, gobble of a poultry yard? The Commissioners of Charities reported of

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1. Id. p.13

school houses dilapidated, the masters unfit from age and infirmity or refusing to teach anything but Greek and Latin and instruction confined by the terms of the foundation to Grammar while the anxiety of the poor for elementary education continued not only unabated but daily increasing.[1] The historical value of Marryat's characters may be best summed up in Conrad's words:

> "There is an endless variety of types, all surface, with hard edges, with memorable eccentricity of outline, with a childish effort in the drawing - and yet they live; there is a truth in them the truth of their time."[2]

Before Dickens, no novelist of note except Marryat had treated of popular education with any real interest and sympathy . Dickens bestows upon it that care and thought which its importance deserves. In his works, twenty-eight schools have been dealt with, apart from numerous brief references to the training of children in the home, in institutions, and by professional child-trainers like Mrs. Pipchin. The evening school kept by Mr. Wopsle's great aunt may stand for not an uncommon type of Dame school in the 19th century.

> "She was a ridiculous old woman of limited means and unlimited infirmity, who used to go to sleep from six to seven every evening in the society of youth who paid two pence per week each, for the improving opportunity of seeing her do it."[3]

She kept in the same school a little general shop in which Biddy, her orphan relation,assisted her. Of his progress in the three Rs Pip records:

1.B.P.P. 1835 (449) VII, p.631
2.Quoted: Oliver Warner: Captain Marryat - a Rediscovery 1953, p.176
3.Great Expectations Ch.VII

> "Much of my unassisted self, and more by the help of Biddy than of Mr. Wopsle's great aunt, I struggled through the alphabet as if it had been a bramble bush, getting considerably worried and scratched by every letter. After that, I fell among those thieves, the nine figures, who seemed every evening to do something new to disguise themselves and baffle recognition."

Parents themselves cared little what these schools pretended or were presumed to teach. Their desire, in the words of Shaw,[1] was to escape from the intolerable inroads made by the continual presence of children on their privacy, their quiet, and their pursuits. When Mr. Morton, distracted at the illness of his favourite scholar, gives his pupils an extra half-holiday, several mothers and aunts of pupils look in to express their entire disapproval of his proceeding. What deeply pains him is the reproach that his over-schooling has brought on the illness of little Harry.

"If he hadn't," asserted the grandmother of his pupil, "been poring over his book out of fear of you, he would have been well and merry." The schoolmaster looked around upon the other women as if to entreat someone among them to say a kind word for him, but they shook their heads and murmured to each other that they never thought there was much good in learning and that this convinced them.[2]

Only the love and gratitude of his pupil reassure the gentle schoolmaster that his work has not, altogether, been unrewarding.

For the upper and middle classes, small preparatory

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1. Sham Education, p.291
2. The Old Curiosity Shop, Ch.XXV

schools, R.L. Archer points out,[1] were just then coming into favour. Due to the rise in the age of entering school they were sought after by parents who could not for some reason or other educate their children at home. Mrs. Pipchin's establishment in "Dombey and Son" may be regarded as a bad specimen of this category of schools. In her character and system Mrs. Pipchin exemplifies everything that is educationally wrong in principle and practice. "A marvellous ill-favoured, ill-conditioned old lady," she was generally spoken of as "a great manager of children", and the secret of her management was to give them everything that they didn't like and nothing that they did. While the children dined chiefly on "farinaceous and vegetable" foods, she made a special repast on hot mutton chops. Her choice of their early readings was determined by the violent character of the moral lessons, it being part of her system, "not to encourage a child's mind to develop and expand like a young flower, but to open it by force like an oyster." Sunday evening was the most melancholy evening in the week. Master Blitherstone, whose relations were all in India and who was required to sit, between services, in an erect position with his head against the parlour wall suffered so acutely in his spirits that he once asked Florence if she could give him any idea of the way back to Bengal.[2]

The shadows, here, may have been exaggerated but they seem to have been projected from some such real experience

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1. Secondary Education in the 19th century, p.98
2. Dombey and Son, Ch. VIII

as Thackeray and Kipling, both children from India, record of their own childhood. Of his school at Southampton Thackeray recalled forty-five years later: "...what a dreadful place that private school was (I was but a tender little thing, just put into short clothes): cold, chilblains, bad dinners, not enough victuals, and caning, awful!"[1] Elsewhere in the Roundabout Papers he continues, "We Indian children were consigned to a school of which our deluded parents had heard favourable reports, but which was governed by a horrible little tyrant who made our young lives so miserable that I remember kneeling by my little bed of a night and saying 'Pray God, I may dream of my mother'".[2] Sheltered behind the droll shadow of Bobb Stubbs of "The Fatal Boots", Thackeray relates, again, some reminiscences of his life at a preparatory school. Bobb Stubbs compares his stay at Doctor Swishtail's academy to the bitter and dismal month of February. His recollections of it are entitled "Cutting Weather", for they revolve round a thunder-and-lightning coat of which he was proud as a peacock, the Propria quae maribus, in the Latin grammar of which he never understood a syllable, the brutal flogging from Doctor Swishtail, the rough treatment at the hands of his classmates and the ignominious expulsion which brought his career of petty swindling at school to a close.

Kipling, then a six-years' old child from India, suffered calculated torture at the hands of a woman who

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1. On Being Found Out. Roundabout Papers. Works XX, p.119
2. On Lett's Diary, op.cit., p.183

took in children whose parents were in India. In that House of Desolation and at the terrible little school to which he was sent, did the young Kipling, like the young Punch in "Baa, Baa, Black Sheep", drink deep of the bitter waters of hate, suspicion, and despair. Recalling how he was well beaten and sent to school through the streets of Southsea with the placard "Liar" between his shoulders he genially concludes: "In the long run these things, and many more of the like, drained me of any capacity for real personal hate for the rest of my days - 'Who having known the Diamond will concern himself with the glass'."[1]

In Mrs. Lerriper's lodgings Master Jemmy's lively fancy shapes the hard experience of his school life nearer to his heart's desire. The schoolmaster is pronounced a Tartar, keeping the boys up to the mark, holding examinations once a month, lecturing upon all sorts of subjects at all sorts of times, and knowing everything in the world out of books. They boy and his friend go out to seek their fortunes and return to the school with their pockets full of gold. They proclaim a holiday for an indefinite period. They order the Tartar into instant confinement, and he is to have nothing to eat but the boys' dinner, and is to drink half a cask of beer every day.[2]

If this was how the upper and middle class fared, what of the poor? In 1820 it was estimated that while the ratio of children requiring education as compared with the whole mass of population was 1/9th, the

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1. Something of Myself, (1934), p.16
2. All the Year Round Dec. 1863

proportion of those actually receiving education was only 1-14 or 1-15. At the period of the Education Enquiry in 1833 the number of children between the ages of three and fifteen was estimated at 4,294,230 and of these only 1,276,947 were in receipt of daily instruction. For the school-less poor children, the streets Dickens justly remarks, were the great Preparatory Establishments in which very much that is never unlearned is learned without and before book. The number returned as attending Sunday Schools in 1833 was 1,548,890. While Kay-Shuttleworth regards this as a cheering indication of the extent of the means then in existence for procuring an observance among the children of the labouring classes, and of conveying to them a limited amount of religious instruction upon that day, he does not accept it as an indication of the amount of efficient training of these children. The Commissioners complained that a large part of what the children learned comprised a jumble of sounds with little or no appreciation of the sense. The question from the Church Catechism: "What is thy duty towards God?" was answered as follows:[1]

> "My duty toads God is to bleed in him, to fering and to loaf withold your hearts, withold my mine, withold my sold, and with my sernth, to shirchp and to give thanks, to put my old trast in him, to call upon him, to onner his old name, and his world and to save him truly all the days of my life; end"

As regards Sunday-schools Dr. Hodgson found that the Bible reading was usually drowsy and sing-song,

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1.Report 1861 B.P.P. 1861 Vol. XXI, Part III, p.259

that the teaching, such as it was, consisted of preach- to the children about many things of which they could form but very imperfect and inaccurate notions, and that the teachers, mostly volunteers, were very often remarkable much more for zeal than for knowledge or discretion.[1] A little imaginative colouring to these facts, and we have something like Charley Hexam's first school.

> "It was a miserable loft in an unsavoury yard. Its atmosphere was oppressive and disagreeable, it was crowded, noisy, and confusing, half the pupils dropped asleep or fell into a state of waking stupefaction; the other half kept them in either condition by maintaining a monotonous droning voice, or as if they were performing, out of time and tune, on a ruder sort of bagpipe. The teacher, animated solely by good intentions, had no idea of execution, and a lamentable jumble was the upshot of this kind of endeavour. It was a school for all ages and for both sexes..... All the place was pervaded by a grimly ridiculous pretence that every pupil was childish and innocent. Young women, old in the vices of the commonest and worst life, were expected to be enthralled by the good child's book, the Adventures of Little Margery.... the mudlarks were referred to the experiences of Thomas Twopence, who having resolved not to rob his particular friend, presently came into supernatural possession of three and sixpence - lessons that they were to do good, not because it was good, but because they were to make a good thing out of it.... An exceedingly and confoundingly perplexing jumble of a school in fact, where black spirits, and grey spirits, and red spirits, and white, jumbled, jumbled, jumbled every night. And particularly every Sunday night. For then an inclined plane of unfortunate infants would be handed over to the prosiest and worst of all teachers with good intentions whom nobody older would endure."[2]

In both "Our Mutual Friend" and "Hard Times" Dickens attacked, in particular, the mechanical and utilitarian tendencies which characterised the

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1. Id. p.495 2. Our Mutual Friend Book II, Chap.I

educational theory and practice of the time and culminated in the Revised Code of payment-by-results. Bradley Headstone, Miss Peacher, Gradgrind and M'Choakumchild exemplify the products of a training system dominated by verbalism. Bradley Headstone's mind is a place of mechanical stowage of history, geography, political economy, figures and what not, all in their several places. "Suppression of so much to make room for so much, had given him a constrained manner, over and above. Yet there was enough of what was animal, and of what was fiery (though smouldering) still visible in him, to suggest that if young Bradley Headstone, when a pauper lad, had chanced to be told off for the sea, he would not have been the last man in a ship's crew." His school is described as one of a system of schools in which buildings, teachers, and pupils are all according to pattern and all engendered in the light of the latest Gospel according to Monotony. Mr. M'Choakumchild and "one hundred-and-forty other schoolmasters had been lately turned at the same time, in the same factory, on the same principles like so many piano legs." He knew all the histories of all the peoples, and had answered volumes of head-breaking questions.

"Ah! rather overdone M'Choakumchild. If he had only learnt a little less, how infinitely better he might have taught much more!"[1] Mr. Gradgrind visiting his model school "a plain, bare, monotonous vault", tells Mr.

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1. Hard Times, Ch. I

M'Choakumchild:

"Now, what I want is Facts..... Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else." and he sweeps with his eye the inclined plane of little vessels then and there arranged in order and ready to have gallons of facts poured into them.[1] We feel the keen edge of Dickens's satire in the contrast between the fancy-free Sissy Jupe and the fact-fettered "Bitzer", the model pupil. The former having played with circus horses all her life is unable to define a horse to the satisfaction of Gradgrind, and is declared, therefore, to be ignorant of the commonest facts regarding a horse. After "Bitzer"'s meticulous enumeration of the facts about a horse Mr. Gradgrind turns to Sissy again, "Now, you know what a horse is?"

Sir Frank Smith points out that in caricaturing fact-crammed college teachers Dickens was not attacking the pupil-teacher system whose output in the early 'fifties was too small to make any material change in schools. The evil Dickens attacked belongs to no-one system and no one period of history.[2] In a recently published article it has been pointed out that the consistent unity of "Hard Times" largely depends on the analogies Dickens developed between the ways in which education, popular art, political economy - and in almost every form of expression in contemporary society - the vital forces of imagination and fancy were forced to submit to lifeless principles and rules.[3] But Dickens's

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1. Hard Times, Ch.I
2. A History of Elemtary Education, p.220 (London, 1931)
3. M.L.R. Vol.XVIII, July, 1953.

social criticism seems to be hardly consistent for in his satirical picture of "the third gentleman" in "Hard Times", who is supposed to represent an official of the newly formed Department of Practical Art, Dickens shows himself a supporter of the new industrialism. The representatives of the Department of Practical Art, on the other hand, were critical of the grotesque absurdity of covering flat surfaces such as wall-paper and carpets with fanciful designs reproduced by industrial manufacture and they recommended the conventional designs of the hand-made Indian articles exhibited at Marlborough House. No inconsistency in Dickens, however, can lessen the force and cogency of his plea for imagination in education, for here:

> "..... thou hast great allies;
> Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
> And love, and man's unconquerable mind."

If Dickens usually reveals a wrong principle or practice in the strongest possible light, in order that it may be more easily recognised and remarked, he has not grudged his sincere praise of what was essentially good, and full of promise. He wrote in "Household Words" in 1855 an article[1] appreciative of Froebel. He was full of admiration for the excellent all-round training of boys and girls at the Stepney Pauper Union Schools. He urged the need of following this noble example, as it would clear London streets of the most terrible objects they smite the sight with - "myriads of little

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1. Infant Gardens

children who awfully reverse our Saviour's words and are not of the Kingdom of Heaven but of the Kingdom of Hell."[1] In Barbax Bros. he charmingly sketches an ideal teacher in Phoebe, the bed-ridden daughter of a railway porter. Passing by her cottage Mr. Jackson of Barbax Brothers hears some children singing and afterwards sees them merrily trooping out and kissing their hands to a bright fragile face at the upper window. He makes her acquaintance and is informed that she is not learned in the new system of teaching but has only read about it. Her greatest qualification is that she is very fond of children, treating them like "the merry Robins that they are."[2]

Speaking in 1857 about different types of schools he did not like, Dickens concludes with a sketch of the sort of school he did like:- ".... it is a place of education where, while the beautiful history of the Christian religion is daily taught and while the life of that Divine Teacher who Himself took little children on His knees is daily studied, no sectarian ill-will nor narrow human dogma is permitted to darken the face of the clear heaven which they disclose. It is a children's school, which is at the same time no less a children's home."[3]

His pen proved a powerful ally in the pioneering work that was then being done for elementary education. Pestalozzi (1746-1826) had attracted considerable

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1. The Uncommercial Traveller XXI
2. Mugby Junction. All Round the Year. 1866
3. at the 4th Anniversary dinner of the Warehousemen and Clerks Schools. The Speeches of Charles Dickens (1841-71) ed. Shepherd

attention in Europe. Owen, Brougham, Bell and Miss Edgeworth visited him, but the early years of the 19th century were unpropitious for the adoption of his methods as interest centered on the extensions of educational facilities to meet the needs arising out of the industrial revolution. The monitorial system with its mechanical methods of mass instruction were ill-suited to Pestalozzi's more educative process which, being based on the "anschaulich" principle, aimed at securing the fullest development of each in accordance with the laws of his own nature. English teachers, were, however, being made familiar with Pestalozzian methods by Dr. Charles Mayo (1793-1846) and his sister Elizabeth Mayo.

Robert Owen showed a truer conception of children than was customary at the time. He held that, in order to be effective, education in the right ways of life must begin from infancy. "Much of the temper or disposition is correctly or incorrectly formed before he (the child) attains his second year."[1] In his system of education for the workers' children at New Lanark (1816) Owen laid the greatest stress on play and sports and open air. An atmosphere of mutual consideration on the playground would provide a right basis for the teaching that comes later. Strongly as he insisted on the formative influence of training and environment on character, calling the minds of children "passive compounds" he was always stressing the need for the teacher to study the mind of each child, to treat each as a

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1. New View, Essay III.

reasoning creature. The children's minds are "plastic" but "these original compounds, like all other works of the Great Directing Power, possess endless varieties"[1] and each has to be appealed to by ways that give easiest access to its individual mind.

The work of Owen was continued by Wilderspin (1792-1866) and others whose efforts gave rise to the London Infant School Society (1824). Lord Brougham, James Mill, and the Marquis of Lansdown founded an Infant School at Westminster in 1818. Before the select Committee of 1834 the Rev. William Wilson, Vicar of Walthamstow spoke appreciatively of an infant school at Walthamstow, one of the first to be established in connexion with the Church. Children admitted at two could generally read the Testament before they left the infant school at six or seven. The instruction was, however, in general elementary; the great object was to form their moral character and to prepare them for further instruction in other schools. On the advantage derived from infant schools in forming good habits and discipline the evidence was unanimous. By 1861 it was being realised that the improvement and extension of infant schools was the way in which the expansion of popular education must next be attempted. "If you leave out the infant school," deposed Mr. Shields, a schoolmaster of experience in London, "you wreck my plan entirely."[2]

The first English training college for elementary

1.Op.cit. Essay II
2.B.P.P. 1861 (2794) Part I, p.31

school teachers, founded by Dr. Phillips Kay and Mr. Tufnell at Battersea (Dec. 1843) affords another laudable instance of private zeal and self-sacrifice in the cause of popular education. They recognised that to rescue the pauper children, victims of destitution and mental darkness, required in the teacher no small faith from Christian faith and charity. They therefore determined to devote a certain portion of their means to the founding of a normal school in the belief "that when the scheme of the institution was sufficiently mature to enable us to speak of results rather than of anticipations, the well-being of 50,000 pauper children would plead its own cause with the Government and the public, so as to secure the future prosperity of the establishment."[1] Equally commendable was the zeal and devotion with which Dr. James Phillips Kay, first as Assistant Poor-Law Commissioner and afterwards as First Secretary of the Committee of the Privy Council on Education (1839) set on foot the reform of the Workhouse Schools. He has been rightly called "the founder of English popular education". David Stow (1793-1864) who in 1826-28 formed the Glasgow Infant Society and in 1836 opened the Glasgow Seminary contributed greatly to the improvement of elementary education. His principle of "moral training" in which the playground was to operate as "the uncovered school" attracted attention from far and wide. To his seminary came students from different counties in England and Scotland, including

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1.Report on the Training of Pauper Children, p.212.

in 1846 two from Madeira and one from Bombay.[1]

These influences began to bear fruit in the middle years of the 19th century. Dickens testified to the high sense of responsibility and earnest humanity which inspired the Limehouse Union Guardians in improving their pauper school.[2] Against the charge that they were over-educating the children, the Chairman of the Board of Guardians expressed himself as follows:-

> ".....even well-intentioned friends are expressing apprehension that the pauper will receive a better education than the child of the independent labourer. Mor myself, I confess, I rejoice at this alarm, perceiving in it, if judiciously met, the means of stimulating to more general interest in the cause of education.....The obvious reply to those whose complaint is founded, not on absolute, but relative objection to our system is, extend and improve education among the classes of independent labourers."[3]

Impressed by the sound practical training given to the boys at the Dundalk and the Templemoyle, Thackeray pleaded for State Schools for the middle classes in England similar to the national schools the Government was establishing for the labouring class. Such a plan, he argued, would spare the sons of the poor gentry the expense, "the frivolous monkish trifling" and "the brutal tyranny" which they have to undergo at the public school.[4]

Good schools for the working class were an exception even in the 'fifties. With the creation, however of the new electorate under the Reform Act of 1867 and in anticipation of the assumption of full citizenship

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1.David Stow: National Education (1847), p.57
2.op.cit.
3.quoted Report on the Training of Pauper Children, p.190
4.The Irish Sketches. Templemoyle Ch.XXXI

by an unknown number of illiterates, the provision of schooling became a matter of urgency. As Robert Lowe had said, "We must educate our masters." The inadequacy of voluntary effort was underlined by Mr. Milly's important speech on March 19th, 1869.[1] In three cities Liverpool, Manchester, and Birmingham, distinguished alike for voluntary effort, sanitary legislation, and municipal action, not fewer than 65,000 to 75,000 children, he said, were growing up unaffected either by the educational clauses of the Factory Acts or by voluntary effort. The remedy was to be found in state intervention. An insuperable difficulty to national education lay in the religious or denominational controversy of the time. In a parody entitled "Old England's Babes in the Wood"[2], Punch attacked the blind fanaticism of the so-called guides who in their sectarian disputes took no thought of the children lost in "the wood of sin and suffering, of ignorance and sorrow". A more unsparing exposure of the futility of the religious quarrel is made in "Ginx's Baby" (1870) by J. E. Jenkins, While rival sectarians undmindful of the present and more pressing needs of a derelict child, wage polemical warfare over his religious education, a member of the Parliament intervenes and pleads for a purely secular education, "Your prayers, your visits, your kindly moral influence and talk, your living example of a goodness derived not from dogmas but from affectionate following of a holy pattern and trust in revealed mercies will

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1. Hansard 3rd series Vol.194, cols.1190 to 1207
2. Vol 24 April.23rd. 1853.

prompt his search after the truth that had made you what you are. Let some good woman do for him a mother's part but choose her for her general goodnes and not for the dogmas of her church. The simpler her piety the better for him I should say." This straightforward speech fell like a new apple of discord, and the meeting adjourned.

The scene brings before us those interminable religious dissensions which pitched elementary education into the arena of party politics and gradually awakened the Legislature to the need for action. The dramatic truth of this picture is borne out by de Montmorency's history of the progress of primary education.[1] "Ginx's Baby" we are informed,[2] attracted universal notice and had its influence on the religious compromise in the Education Act of 1870. With 1870 - with the year of the great compromise - a new era opens.

1.J.E.J. de Montmorency The Progress of Education in England 1904, p.66 and State Intervention in English Education 1902

2.D.N.B. Second Supplement. Vol.II

VI.

THE RENAISSANCE OF ENGLISH EDUCATION

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

VI.

THE RENAISSANCE OF ENGLISH EDUCATION

Secondary Schools

"Secondary Education, "Cholmeley has well remarked "is the key to the position, because without it elementary education has no meaning and university education no root."[1] It plays, again, a vital role as a means of social adjustment for the growing child, during the years when childhood is merging into adolescence and adolescence into youth. A special responsibility, therefore, rests on a nation to ensure an adequate provision of good secondary schools. But State's neglect in this regard was shown up in the Schools Inquiry Report of 1867-68. There was "no public inspector, no public board to give advice, no public reward, not a single payment from the central government for the support of s secondary school."[2] Viewed as a whole, the condition of school education above the primary during the early years of the 19th century has been called a chaos. Professor Dover Wilson suggests that the principal cause for the disgraceful condition of English education between 1750 and 1840 was the fact that the government of the country, once the province of a skilled bureaucracy, had become the private porperty of the landed classes. Birth and bribery superseded education as a means of entry to political, official, and professional life.[3] Mr. Leach contrasts the flourishing

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1. R.F. Cholmeley Secondary Eduation in England
2. Schools Inquiry 1867-68, Vol.XXVIII, Part I, p.107
3. J. Dover Wilson (ed.) The Schools of England 1928, p.10

state of English schools of the pre-Reformation period with their decline at the opening of the 19th century. Whatever little progress there was at this period, was in elementary education. Higher education, as contemporary evidence bears it out, was either asleep or stifled by an Erastian Church, a corrupt government and inefficient Courts of Justice.

There were three categories of schools intended to serve the needs of secondary education (1) The Endowed School (2) The Private School, and (3) The Public School.

(i)

Endowed Schools

The endowed schools were reported upon by the Schools Inquiry Commission in 1867-68 and a very chaotic condition was brought to light. Most of them dated back to the 14th century and on account of enormous changes that had since then taken place in the social position and prospects of the community they were intended to serve they struck the Commissioners as a kind of anachronism in the 19th century. "They now exhibit," the Commissioners wrote, "neither the will of the dead for their time nor the will of the living for our time."[1] Many of them had sunk to the level of elementary schools and a great number did not even give as good an education as an ordinary national school. Yet the terms of a foundation often required a university degree, in

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1.The Schools Inquiry, op.cit., p.115

other words the hall-mark of classical scholarship for the mastership. The Commissioners were of the view that a man so qualified would rarely feel interested in or prove best adapted to his work. This reads almost like a commentary on Marryat's school scene in "Jacob Faithful". The hero of that "autobiographical" novel, after describing his admission to Brentford Grammar School, goes on:

> "As in our school, it was necessary that we should be instructed in reading and writing and cipher-ing, the governors had selected the Domine as the most fitting person that had offered for the employment because he had, in the first place, written a work that nobody could understand upon the Greek particles; secondly, he had proved himself a great mathematician, having, it was said, squared the circle by algebraical false quantities, but would never show the operation for losing the honour by treachery. He was a man who breathed certainly in the present age, but half of his life was spent in antiquity or algebra. Once carried away by a problem or a Greek reminiscence he passed away, as it were, from his present existence - his body remained and breathed on his desk but his soul was absent." [1]

An example such as this shows how literature can both illuminate and influence contemporary history.. We may justly apply to Marryat the remarks which Ruskin made in appreciation of Dickens: "Allowing for his manner of telling them, the things he tells us are always true..... let us not lose the use of Dickens's wit and insight because he chooses to speak in a circle of stage fire." [2]

Ill suited as such learned pedants as Domine Dobbs were for elementary instruction, their classical

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1. Jacob Faithful: Ch.III
2. Ruskin: Unto this Last, p.13-15 note

scholarship did not altogether fall on barren soil.

Jacob acknowledged what he owed to Dobbs in these words:

> "Thrown up, as the Domine expressed himself, as a tangle weed from the river, you have seen the orphan and charity boy rise towealth and consideration - the only capital with which he embarked [1] was a good education and good principles."

The Rev. James Boyer, that beneficent tyrant of Christ's Hospital seemed to have inspired in his grateful pupils a strange amalgam of dread and affection. In Lamb's reminiscences we get a glimpse of Boyer doubling his knotty fist at a poor trembling child (the maternal milk hardly dry upon his lips) with a "Sirrah, do you presume to set your wits at me?" [2] Coleridge ascribes the early moulding of his taste to Boyer's teaching and remembers:

> "Boyer saying to me when I was crying the first day of my return after the holidays, 'Boy! the school is your father! Boy! the school is your mother! Boy! the school is your brother! the school is your sister! the school is your first cousin and your second cousin and all the rest [3] of your relations! Let's have no more crying!'"

Although Christ's Hospital, in the words of the Schools Inquiry Commission 1866-68 is a thing without a parallel, a sui generis, yet in some of its features it was not unlike other institutions of the period. Lamb recalls the severity of masters and worse tyranny of the monitors, the bullying and the spartan diet. It is familiar that in his paper Elia spoke for others as much as for himself, particularly that he entered into the experiences of the schoolboy Coleridge, the inspired charity boy, early separated from home. His account of the Blue-coat diet

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1. op.cit. Ch.XLVI
2. Christ's Hospital Five-and-Thirty Years Ago.
3. Table Talk August 16, 1832

Edmund Blunden points out,[1] is proved exact by other sources. The school kitchen's austerity which prescribes "half pickled Sundays or quite fresh boiled beef on Thursdays (strong as caro equina), with detestable marigold floating in the pail to poison the broth" was alleviated by his aunt Hetty's hot plate of roast veal. Even at many of the expensive public schools the diet has been pronounced by modern authorities[2] to be inadequate and monotonous, rendering the luxury of the "tuck-box" almost a necessity.

Abuses such as maladministration of school endowments and misuse of their patronage by private trustees were disclosed by the Charities and Educational Commissioners. Matthew Arnold's investigation of the system of education for the middle and upper classes on the Continent had forced on him the conviction that the secondary education given in England was neither on the whole so good nor given in schools of so good a standing as on the continent. He recommended public supervision and, if necessary, resettlement of school endowments by public authority. In 1859 as well as in 1866 his reports closed with a warning: "Organise your secondary education". Of special interest, therefore, is George Griffith's "Life and Adventures of George Wilson, a Foundation Scholar" dedicated in 1854 to the middle and working classes in the hope of arousing their attention to the great losses they sustained by the system under which the endowed schools are conducted. The work

1. Elia and Christ's Hospital in Essays and Studies by Members of the English Assoc. Vol.XXII 1937, p.
2. J.C. Drummond: A History of Five Centuries of English Diet. p.406

hardly lives up to its title, the narrative being subordinated to a purpose. The theme turns on the contrast between an endowed school as it was arbitrarily conducted by the headmaster with the connivance of the trustees and the same school as it came to be re-organised on the lines of Realschulen on the Continent. Under the old dispensation, the headmaster of Eastville School had, to the utter disregard of the founder's statutes, taken in rich men's sons as boarders, taught the classics only to his select scholars, enforced social cleavage by keeping the professional men's sons apart from the tradesmen, and admitted only the churchmen's sons to the exclusion of the dissenters. The poorer boys who did not require to learn Greek and Latin had to pay one pound per quarter, whilst the rich men's sons who learnt Greek and Latin were charged nothing. A rich boarder who wanted to dispense with the privilege of having one of the foundation boys as his fag on account of the effect produced on the poor boy's feelings was overruled with the headmaster's exclamation:

"Feelings! did ever anybody hear of foundation boys having feelings. How can men learn the humility taught them in the scriptures if they were not trained to do humble tasks in their youth."[1] Some of this headmaster's practices are reminiscent of Squeers. A half foundationer and half boarder relates his own piteous tale and refers to the case of a delicate boy who sank under similar treatment. The headmaster is

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1. The Life and Adventures of George Wilson A Foundation Scholar Ch. IV

believed to have relieved rich men by taking charge of their illegitimate sons, for a yearly payment.

Lord Eastville, one of the trustees of the school, visiting Europe, is impressed by the superiority of the Continental system of secondary education, particularly by Realschulen in Germany, which embrace the realities of life and aim at imparting "useful knowledge" in preference to the languages and customs of the classical ages. His lordship is told some home-truths by Vehrli: "I believe that the English neglect of education is the most perfect method known for ruining a people that ever has been devised."[1] On his return from the Continent his lordship sets about re-organising the school to meet with the needs of the growth of industry and the spread of the modern spirit. The new school which also served as the museum for the whole neighbourhood is glowingly described:

> "Every creation of the beatiful in the manufactures of the town and district was sent in to grace its walls and galleries; thus not only was desire kindled in the hearts of the ignorant, but the educated were further instructed. The artizan who hitherto only knew little beyond what concerned his occupation found endless fields for delight, and his thirst for beer was converted into a thirst for natural knowledge - the scientists and the classicists became fellow workers."[2]

(ii)

Private Schools

The endowments for secondary education were unequally distributed, and their total amount fell short of the

1. Id. Ch.VI
2. Ch.XVI, p.256

needs of the time. Many of them, as we have seen, were in such a condition as did very little towards fulfilling the true purpose of their foundation. The void thus left was filled by the private and proprietary schools. Of the private schools, difficult as they were of access and reluctant to give any returns, the Assistant Commissioners of the 'sixties still saw enough to recommend that nearly one half of them might be suppressed with great advantage to the community. The schools Inquiry Commission of 1866-68 summed up the situation as follows:

> "In short, the account given of the worst endowed schools must be repeated in even more emphatic language to describe the worst of the private schools. The endowed schools fail to supply one of the great needs of the country - a good education for the lower section of the middle classes. The failure of the private schools that have taken their place, if not so blameable, is perhaps still more conspicuous."[1]

Critics have remarked upon the lack of material for an account of school life in pre-Victorian fiction "Search among early novels for descriptions of school life," observes Harold Child, "is a barren labour".[2] Though we may demur at his bracketing Marryat with earlier writers like Smollett and Fielding who give us only amusing escapades, we cannot but concur with his opinion that the age between Vaughan and Wordsworth had small love of children. Remarking that the story of school life has a history of little more than a hundred years, Mr. Wood goes so far as to assert that, "Before that time so far as the majority of writers were concerned,

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1. Op.cit. Part I, p.285
2. The Public Schools from Within. London 1906, p.293

the child might never have existed."[1] In view of this we cannot expect to see before we approach Dickens, anything more of school life than what appears in episodic scraps of narrative, biographical or autobiographical.

That a good private school can in some respects render educationally and morally, a more valuable service than a Public School is exemplified in "The Barring Out" by Maria Edgeworth (1796). Though the story is avowedly written with a moral purpose, namely to correct the errors to which a high spirit and the love of party are apt to lead, care has been taken, the author assures us, not to falsify life. As it was, perhaps almost inevitable in the anarchic days of pre-reformed Public Schools, Archer has learned at his Public School a sufficient quantity of Greek and Latin, a superabundant quantity of party spirit and a conviction that a schoolmaster is your natural enemy. As a new scholar at Doctor Middleton's school his Public school-spirit- inspired activities culminate in the Barring Out which, playing upon the spirit of mischief of some of his class-mates he plans against the Headmaster. He overrules those who protest that Doctor Middleton is not a tyrant by roundly declaring that all schoolmasters are tyrants. When eventually the kindly firmness and forbearance of Doctor Middleton restores order and good sense it is difficult to persuade Archer that the rebels will be forgiven and are not to be visited with any vindictive punishment. The good Doctor has to disarm

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1.F. J. Wood: The Schoolboy in Fiction. 1949 (xi)

his fear and suspicion on this score: The views of the former on punishment deserve to be quoted: "Sir," said Doctor Middleton, calmly, "I perceive that whatever else you may have learned in the course of your education you have not been taught the meaning of the word Punishment. Punishment and Vengeance do not mean the same thing. Punishment is pain given, with the reasonable hope of preventing those, on whom it is inflicted from doing in future, what will hurt themselves or others. Vengeance never looks to the future; but it is the expression of anger for an injury that is past. I feel no anger - you have done me no injury."

Doctor Middleton's school, it would appear, answers exactly Sydney Smith's requirement that as an alternative to the domestic-cum-school system of education, the best adapted seminary for the education of youth is "a society of twenty or thirty boys, under the guidance of a learned man, and, above all, of a man of good sense."[1] Whatever dramatic interest Miss Edgeworth may have lent to her story to enliven its morality, we do not think that there is anything in her picture to merit Hicks' criticism that it is "a highly coloured account."[2]

To set Dickens's picture of private schools in perspective we propose briefly to notice two or three other novels of the period. Theodore Hook (1788-1841) whom Dibelius[3] considers as the forerunner of Dickens

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1.The Works of the Rev. Sydney Smith 1850, p.186
2.W.R.Hicks: The School in English and German Fiction, p.11
3.Roman Kunst. Vol.II, p.282

in enlarging the scope of the novel for a free intermingling of the comic and the tragic, has made a private boarding school the setting for the opening scenes in his "Passion and Principle" (1825). He is only relevant here for the incidental light he throws on a schoolmaster's status and character. "Amongst the laborious honourable, and ill-paid professions to which men of ability devote their time and talents, that of a schoolp master is, perhaps, the most tiresome and worst rewarded."[1] The readiness with which Mr. Rodney the schoolmaster accepts a lord's offer for the hand of his daughter irrespective of the wishes of the latter furnish Hook an occasion to comment upon "a pursuit ill calculated to give a man insight into the ways of the world." "Good classical scholar as he was, his ideas," remarks Hook, "were bound by the walls of his academy and his skill in the development of human character confined to the detection of juvenile nest stealers."

"The Crofton Boys" (1841) affords its readers as much enjoyment as its free out-pouring gave to its author Harriet Martineau.[2] It is an interesting study in development of character. We are admitted into a middle class home, that sanctuary of domestic tenderness which Taine so admiringly describes with a touch of irony.[3] The eight-year-old Hugh, no longer amenable to the teaching and discipline of a governess, is the object of his mother's anxious solicitude. Young as

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1. Sayings and Doings, or Sketches from Life. 2nd series 1825, Vol.II p.244
2. Harriet Martineau's Autobiography, Vol.II, p.169
3. History of English Literature, Vol.IV, p.160

he is, he is so impatient to be in the society of other boys of his own age that his parents reluctantly allow him to join his elder brother's school at Crofton. Brimming over with expectation, Hugh asks his mother if she thinks he can bear the trials of his life at school. Her reply breathes a spirit of brave piety and noble strength:

> "You will be away from your father and me, but a far wiser and kinder parent will be always with you. Knowing that you have that help, I expect of you that you do your own duty, and bear your own troubles, like a man. If you were to be all alone in the new world you are going to, you would be but a helpless child, but remember when a child makes God his friend, God puts into the youngest, weakest the spirit of a man." [1]

It is interesting to compare this passage with Squire Brown's parting words to his son in "Tom Brown's Schooldays". In both a manly independence of character is stressed. Since, however, it is the mother who is mainly concerned with her son's religious upbringing, the Squire purposely avoids all reference to God and religion, which occupy naturally, a large place in the exhortation of Hugh's mother. A little fellow who has been brought up with girls all his life and has learned of nobody but a governess will have to learn, as part of his initial lesson in socialisation, that life even at the best of boarding schools is no beer and skittles. So we find Hugh miserably alone and helpless. His brother holds off. Nobody teaches him to play. The ragging to which he sees a passionate boy being subjected by his school fellows is hardly calculated to

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1.Chap.III, p.32

reassure him. It is, however, in rescuing this victim of ragging that Hugh proves his mettle and is applauded by his seniors. "You'll do my boy - when you have gone through a few scrapes." Other lessons that this world in miniature has to teach Hugh, he takes in his stride; that "telling tales" is a heinous offence under the schoolboys' code, that it is a braver thing for boys to bear any teasing from one another than to call in the power of the master to help; that to do a difficult lesson well is a grand affair at home but the commonest thing in the world here; that it is not the way of the boys to talk about feelings, that is the reason why they do not mention their sisters and their mothers; that as sure as ever a boy is full of action, excels in sports, holds his tongue or helps others generously or shows a manly spirit without being proud of it, the whole school is his friend. While these lessons make Hugh more sociable there are others which his school experience teaches him and which will stand him in good stead later on in life. His friends, for instance, have borrowed from him but when he asks for repayment he is not only shunned by them but reprimanded by the headmaster. This injustice rankles in his mind until he is made to realise that he should not expect anywhere out of the bounds of home, what he thought justice. He must, of course, try himself to be just to everybody, but he must make up his mind in school as men have to do in the world, to be misunderstood, to be wrongly valued, to be blamed when he felt himself the injured one, and praised when

he knew he did not deserve it.[1]

Such a lofty strain of thought in a schoolboy seems out of character. That this is rather an echo of the author's own thoughts is confirmed by what she says about this book. '"The Crofton Boys" was written under the belief that it was my last word through the press. There are some things in it which I could not have written except under that persuasion.'[2]

We see Hugh growing in moral stature and manly spirit in the stimulating atmosphere and congenial friendships of the Crofton school. Once sullenly refusing to play with others he scrambles on a wall from which he is pulled down by some eager hands. In the fall he sustains an injury which lames him for life, thereby disappointing his dream of being a soldier or a sailor. In this misfortune he displays an exemplary spirit of loyalty and courage. He refuses to give the name of the boy who first laid hold of his foot. He declares it was an accident and that he himself was cross and earnestly desires his master that no further inquiry may be made. Hugh's example has put some spirit into his friend Holt, a child from India, who has come to Crofton, languid, indolent, and somewhat spoiled as little boys from India are apt to be. The two lads gradually become real friends. Receiving an offer of service in India they go out well prepared for honourable duty. As an illustration of irresistible

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1.Id. Ch.VII, p.99
2.Harriet Martineau's Autobiography. Vol.II, p.169

attraction of India for a brave-hearted lad of the period Hugh's words may be quoted: "I never should have gone to India if I had not lost my foot; and I think it is well worthwhile losing my foot to go to India."

The persecution and the tyranny to which a small boy is exposed in the absence of any monitorial system at a private school make part of the "School Experiences of a Fag at a Private and a Public School" (1854) by George Melly. The hero of this autobiographical narrative joins a private school to be "inducted" into the rudiments of a classical education preparatory to entering one of the great public schools. As one of the smaller boys he finds himself thrashed and bullied by everybody, roasted, or tied up as an object to bowl against. Though the schoolmaster is kind and strict, but being constantly engaged with the elder boys he cannot exercise effective supervision. The boys are too many and too rowdy for two or three ushers to look after. Indeed, the latter often find it too hot to stay long at the school. The worst experience that the small boy suffers is his being tied down in a large round bath, and water then poured on to the depth of two inches. Later he is rescued stiff and cold. Again, he feels acutely the lack of privacy. "The great fault of a private school lies in the title never being carried out. Hurried on from public play to public repetition, and from public meal to public study, a few moments of quiet reflection is what a boy struggling in the first entrance into the world's trials most needs."

He wonders how long the few good impulses and pure thoughts a boy has may last in such a place, a field where little blades of wheat are allowed to grow into such a rank crop of tares. The chapter which relates these sad experiences of a fag is not inaptly headed with a quotation from Goethe:

Schuler: Ic bit'euch, nehmt euch meiner an!
Ich komme mit allem guten Muth;
Leidlichem Geld and Frischem Blut.
Meine Mutter wollte mich Kaum enfernen
Mochte gern was rechts hieraussen lernen.

Mephisto-
pheles: Da seyd ihr eben rechtam Ort.

(Faust 1522 ff.)[1]

The narrator does not think his first school to be worse than others under a similar system. His account, he says, is written from the life in order to protest against the unprotected position of a fag in a private school. He adds, however, that it is not a sketch of any individual career, nor a picture of any one school.

After Dickens had condemned the terrible conditions of Yorkshire schools, there arose a certain hatred against similarly constituted schools under profiteering managers. This prejudice affected also many well-conducted private schools. Francis Edward Smedley (1818-1864) considers this exaggerated feeling against such institutions unjustifiable, for he has come to realise their value from his own experience at a private school of the Rev. Charles Millet in Brighton. In "Frank Fairlegh" (1850) therefore, in deliberate contrast to Dickens and in a somewhat humorous vein, Smedley sets out the many-sided life of a well-conducted school. He is

1. George Melly: School Experiences of a Fag at a Private and a Public School. Ch. III

led to a conviction that under good and enterprising leadership private schools may yield results educationally as valuable as any to be derived from Public Schools. In regard to the aim of his novel he states:

> "In the first place, it struck me that, while volume after volume had been devoted to 'Schoolboy Days' and 'College Life', the mysteries of that paradise of public-school-fearing mammas - a 'Private Tutor' - yet continued unrevealed and I resolved to enlighten these tender parents as to the precise nature of the rose-bed into which they were so anxious to transplant their darlings. In the second place, I wished to prove to the young Hopefuls themselves that a lad hitherto shielded from evil by the hallowing influences of home may successfully resist the new trials and temptations to which, on this his first essay in life, he may be subjected, that the difficulties which surround him will yield to a little firmness and decision; and that such a course, steadily persisted in, will alike gain him the esteem of his companions and lay the foundation of the character which it should be his aim to support through life - viz. that of a Christian gentleman."

The book is little more than a series of well-devised incidents marked by a lively sense of humour and love for open-air life and sports from the active participation in which the author himself was debarred by a malformation of his feet. It was first given to the public in the corm of "Scenes from the Life of a Private Pupil" contributed to "Sharpe's London Magazine" (1846-8). Its relevance to school life lies in the example it affords of a kind and deeply learned tutor who inspires esteem and affection, and of high spirited and clean-minded companions in whose society Fairlegh acquires a degree of self-confidence without which "one is alike impotent to choose the good or to refuse

the evil."[1] The riotous relationship of the scholars to their masters at Eton in the early years of the 19th century is satirically touched upon in the boast of an ex-Etonian:

> "I pinned a detonating cracker to old Botherboy's coat tail, so that between the pin and the explosion, it's my belief he would have found himself more comfortable in the battle of Waterloo than he felt the first time he sat down.[2] Ah! Those were happy days!"

In Dickens have we, for the first time, a great novelist who has closely interwoven with his narrative what had hitherto been passingly glimpsed at or episodically treated. In this respect he stands alone not only in English but perhaps in world literature. Noting that writers like Racine, Rousseau, Chateaubriand, Fielding, Scott, and Marryat have given but few child-portraits Munro concludes: "Et ce n'est pas seulement dans la littérature britannique mais peut-être dans toutes les litteratures, que ce trait assure à Dickens une place unique parmi les romanciers."[3] The intensity with which Dickens has felt for the child and the vividness with which he has described the shades of its prison house and the rich realms of its phantasy may in part be accounted for by his own singular childhood.[4] Langton had pointed out the curious omission in Forster of any reference to the house in Ordnance Terrace in Chatham where the child Dickens lived the happiest years (1817-1821) of his childhood, before the family fortunes suffered a decline. It was during this period that he

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1. Frank Fairlegh, Ch.XII. 2. Id. Chap.XLI
3. W.A. Munro: Charles Dickens et Alphonse Daudet, p.33
4. Robert Langton; The Childhood and Youth of Charles Dickens, p.43

roved fancy-free with Don Quixote, Gil Blas, Tom Jones, Humphrey Clinker, and the visionary characters of "The Arabian Nights"; gloried in the Chatham scene: the gay military pageant, the shifting sailor life, the sham sieges, the delightful walks with his father, plays got up by his cousin, birthday parties and juvenile picnics, his recitations of popular songs to the great delight of the company at the Mitre Inn, the wonderful romance with a red-cheeked baby. It was the period of his happy pupillage, first under his mother who taught him the rudiments of English and Latin and later under Mr. Giles an Oxonian to whom he owed his wonderful knowledge and felicitous use of the English language. Soon all this vanished like a dream and he exchanged this Eden of his childhood for a dingy house in a dingy London suburb with squalor for companionship. Then followed his acquaintance with debts and duns, apprenticeship in a rat-riddled blacking business, separation from both his parents after his mother too went to live at the Marshalsea, all culminating in his solitude and sorrows unbearable. He has graphically described the pathos of his recall to London. The juvenile author of a tragedy called Misnar the Sultan of India was playing Haroun al Raschid with eight of the fairest of the daughters of men as his Seraglio when it was gently broken to him "Your Pa's took bitter bad!"

"I was taken home, and there was debt at home as well as Death, and we had a sale there. My own little

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bed was so superciliously looked upon by a Power unknown to me, hazily called "The Trade", that a brass coal-scuttle, a roasting jack, and a bird cage were obliged to be put into it to make a lot of it, and then it went for a song. So I heard mentioned, and I wondered what song, and thought what a dismal song it must have been to sing!"[1]

In contrast to the Chatham period the hardship and humiliation of his warehouse experiences sank deep into his sensitive soul. "Until old Hungerford Market was pulled down, and the very nature of the ground changed," he wrote to Forster,[2] "I never had the courage to go back to the place." He feared himself sinking into, to quote Lindsay,[3] "the proletarian pit yawning under the petty-bourgeois feet". How acute the emotional tension was of this period is shown by his choosing for the arch criminal in Oliver Twist the name of Fagin from one of his fellow-sufferers at the blacking works. Fagin who had been so decent to him came to be associated in his mind with the idea of degrading servitude. In his edition of Forster's "Life of Charles Dickens", J.W. Ley notes with reference to Dickens resentment against his servile toil, that there was no sentiment against such a boy being put to work at a time when his home was in dire need of the smallest help. The house, again, at Camden town to which the Dickens moved from Chatham, may not have been so contemptible as the hurt and disappointed

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1. The Haunted House. 1859, from All the Year Round
2. John Forster: Life of Charles Dickens, Chap.II, p.35
3. Jack Lindsay: Charles Dickens p.171

child thought it. Yet, as Mrs. Baillie Saunders has well expressed it, everyone who has the faintest pity or thought for sensitive children knows what secret agony a humiliation at home can give them - their little hearts are wound up into the very furniture....."[1] One can well imagine the untold misery of a sensitive child in bargaining the household gods with a pawnbroker for a poor sum of money. Has not Dickens told us?

"In the little world in which children have their existence, whosoever brings them up, there is nothing so finely perceived as injustice. It may be only small injustice, but the child is small, and its world is small and its rocking horse stands as many hands high according to scale, as a big-boned Irish hunter."[2] On Dickens's blacking factory experience Chesterton makes an illuminating comment: "The bitterness of boyish distresses does not lie in the fact that they are large; it lies in the fact that we do not know that they are small. About any early disaster there is a dreadful finality; a lost child can suffer like a lost soul."[3]

In David Copperfield he lifts the curtain on the secret agony of being, in his earliest years, wrenched out of his own class by poverty. Of his first day at Murdstone and Grinby's David recrods: "The deep remembrance of the sense I had of being utterly without hope now, of the shame I felt in my position; of the

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1.The Philosophy of Dickens., p.6. 2. Great Expectations Ch.Vlll
3.op.cit. p.34
4. David Copperfield, Ch.XI

misery it was to my young heart to believe that day by day what I had learned, and thought, and delighted in, and raised my fancy and my emulation up by would pass away from me, little by little, never to be brought back any more....."[1]

Out of the misery of his own neglected and outcast childhood was born Dickens's deep sympathy with the sad and broken lives of the exploited children of his own day. They were not, Forster remarks, his clients, whose cause he pleaded with such pathos and humour, and on whose side he got the laughter and tears of all the world, but in some sort his very self. With such an emotional bias derived from the day-dreams and memories of his own childhood, we cannot expect Dickens to show any photographic objectivity in his pictures of child life. To the last, as Andre Maurois[2] has observed he was to preserve that two-fold character of a man who has seen much and has viewed things with the eyes of a child, a lense at once fresh and distorting. We recall, for instance, the letter he wrote to Felton dated "Second March, 1843" in which he told of his and George Cruikshank's experience with an Independent clergyman at Hone's funeral. Forster, who quoted it in the first edition of his "Life", deleted it in later editions because of an article in the Evangelical Magazine denying Dickens's statement. Though we shall rarely find in art complete verisimilitude, exaggeration is entirely, to quote Chesterton, the definition of Dickens's art.

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1. David Copperfield Ch.XI
2. Charles Dickens, p.18

Making allowance, however, for this selective method of art, and Dickens's own tendency to melodrama, the fact nonetheless, remains that we are struck by the intense reality of his works, since he deals so faithfully with human nature. Knowing how shy and secretive children are in their sufferings, he has rendered no small service to them in voicing their mute appeal.

After his servile experience in the warehouse works Dickens became a pupil at Mr. Jones's Classical and Commercial Academy at Wellington House. So too David left Murdstone and Grinby's business for Dr. Strong's school. They had, as Chesterton remarked, their boyhood after their youth. But David was more fortunate in the choice of his school than Dickens. On the whole the latter's two years at the Academy were not unahppy, "if only because of the social contrast between his new companions and those of the immediate past, and the cultural difference between parsing Latin and pasting labels."[1] A profound respect for money, Dickens recollects,[2] pervaded this school. The headmaster seemed to know little beyond ruling and corporally punishing and the boys trained the mice much better than the masters trained the boys. Of other matters, the usher is most gratefully remembered for his sympathy and helpfulness. Dickens's sketch is attested by his classmate Dr. Henry Danson, a selection of whose recollections is given in Walter Dexter's articel "One Hundred Years Ago".[3] A very sympathetic portrait of a teacher is given in the

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1.Hesketh PearsonL Dickens, His Character, Comedy, and Career, p.12
2.Our School Reprinted Pieces, 1858
3.The Dickensian Jan.1926 Vol.XXII.

"The Schoolboy's Story"[1] (1853) where old Cheeseman, formerly a fellow student who never went home for the holidays, is made Second Latin Master and is, thereupon, voted by the boys as a spy and a deserter who has gone over to the enemy's camp for two pound ten a quarter and his washing. He has to live down this prejudice by his friendliness and when, on coming into a large fortune, he bids farewell with "If we have ever misunderstood one another at all, pray, my dear boys, let us forgive and forget," there is sobbing and crying all over the school. It is his greatest delight to watch the boys play and to invite some solitary lad to spend his holiday with him.

Since Mr. Squeers, as Dickens maintains, is the representative of a class, and not of an individual we may consider Dotheboys Hall a composite picture of several schools. In the Preface to Nicholas Nickleby Dickens roundly condemns the indifference alike of parents and the State which suffered any man, however unfit, to trade in education. While action for damages lies against a medical imposter for deforming a broken limb, he expresses his indignant surprise at the impunity of the incapable pettifoggers by whom hundreds of thousands of minds have been deformed. He recalls his first association of Yorkshire schools with some boy who, thanks to a Yorkshire school-master had come home with a suppurated abscess. This incident made upon him an indelible impression and when "Pickwick

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1. from Household Words

Papers" brought him popularity he resolved to verify the facts and to arouse the public conscience. In this resolve he spares no trouble. In very severe winter-time, armed with letters of introduction which spoke of " a suppositious boy who had been left with a widowed mother" he set out with a young artist friend on a tour of exploration. They eventually picked on Bowes Academy, one of the most notorious of its kind, and in spite of the warning of a local attorney "to keep the lattle boy from a 'sike scoondrels while there's a harse to hoold in a' Lunnan, or a goother to lie asleep in!" and the suspicious caution of the headmaster William Shaw, Dickens's persistence was rewarded with a snappy five minutes interview with the latter. That was enough to provide Dickens with hints for an impressionist crayon sketch of a typical representative of Yorkshire cheap schools. T.P. Cooper[1] refers to the trial of Jones V. Shaw, Court of Common Pleas, 30th October, 1823, which brought to light cases of gross ill-treatment. Dickens we learn was shown the memorial inscription to "George Ashton Taylor" who had died suddenly at Mr. William Shaw's Academy. The boy's ghost put Smike into the nevelist's mind, upon the spot. Kitton[2] gives a selection of letters from Notes and Queries which show that at the time of Dickens'visit (1840) Shaw did not merit the severe castigation which Squeers receives at the hands of Dickens. Dickens's story, supposing Bowes Academy to be the original of

1.With Dickens in Yorkshire, p.73
2.F.G. Kitton. Dickensiana, 455 ff.

Dotheboys Hall, might be overdrawn and heightened with dramatic colouring, yet the description was in some respects so correct that everybody recognised it. Dickens, on his part declared emphatically that Mr. Squeers and his school are faint and feeble pictures of an existing reality, purposely subdued lest they should be deemed impossible. It has been pointed out by Gissing[1] that in "Nicholas Nickleby" Dickens was not fighting against the cold-blooded cruelty of a system such as that of the Poor Law which, bad as it was, seemed a necessity, and only needed overhauling, but against block-head ignorance which as exemplified by Yorkshire schools held out no possibility of reform and needed hard-hitting blows to sweep it from the earth.

In Dotheboys Hall the familiar features of bad private boarding schools stand out in bold relief. It plays upon ignorant and gullible parents by advertising as the academy where youth are boarded, provided with all necessaries, instructed in all languages living and dead, mathematics, astronomy, the use of the globe and every other branch of classical literature. All this for twenty guineas per annum with no vacation and diet unparalleled. The advertisement is rendered still more attractive by the appended note that an able assistant, preferably a Master of Arts is wanted for the establishment.[2] Mr. Squeers periodically visits London to take down fresh batches of boys to his school. We see him at the Saracen's Head with three new boys whose total

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1. George Gissing: Charles Dickens ,p134
2. Nicholas Nickleby, Chap.III

charges he is mentally calculating with a skill which makes but a poor show of his claim as a teacher of mathematics.

"Three oughts is a nought - three twos is six - sixty pound." Squeers' interview with Mr. Snawley brings out the character of the schoolmaster as clearly as that of the unscrupulous type of parent who wished to relieve himself of the responsibility for his child. When the visitor is announced Mr. Squeers tries to calm a poor boy whom he has knocked into crying with a fierce whisper: "Put your handkerchief in your pocket, you little scoundrel, or I'll murder you when the gentleman goes." As the stranger enters Squeers affects not to see him and proceeds to mend his pen and comfort the boy: "My dear child, all people have their trials..... You are leaving your friends, but you will have a father in me, my dear, and a mother in Mrs. Squeers."[1]

The first sight of the pupils of Dotheboys Hall, strikes Nicholas, the young assistant, with dismay.

"Pale and haggard faces, lank and bony figures, children with the countenances of old men, deformities with irons upon their limbs, boys of stunted growth, and others whose long meagre legs would hardly bear their stooping bodies all crowded on the view together -" We are almost persuaded to look upon these children as "writhing ghosts who had lived as bad boys in some other world and afterwards come into Squeers' hands for purification."[2] Indeed, the Squeers have a brimstone

1.Id. Ch.VIII 2. Gissing op.cit. p.193

morning set apart, as Mr. Squeers assures Nicholas "to purify the boys' bloods now and then," though Mrs. Squeers would have the new teacher understand plainly that "They (the boys) have the brimstone and treacle, partly because if they hadn't something or other in the way of medicine they'd be always ailing and giving a world of trouble, and partly because it spoils their appetites and comes cheaper than breakfast and dinner. So, it does them good and us good at the same time, and that's fair enough, I'm sure."[1]

The school lessons begin after a breakfast of a brown composition called porridge and a minute wedge of brown bread. The boys who make up Mr. Squeers' first class in English spelling and philosophy have but one torn and filthy book between eight of them. The system followed in the class has, at any rate, utility to recommend it. Mr. Squeers spells and defines and the boys learn the application of his lessons by "experiments in practical philosophy".

"Third boy, what's a horse?"

"A beast, Sir," replied the boy.

"So it is," said Squeers. "Ain't it, Nickleby?"

"I believe there is no doubt of that, Sir," answered Nicholas.

"Of course there isn't," said Squeers. "A horse is a quadruped, and quadruped's Latin for beast, as everybody that's gone through the grammar knows, or else where's the use of having grammar at all?"

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1. Chap. VIII

"Where, indeed!" said Nicholas abstractedly.

"As you're perfect in that," resumed Squeers, turning to the boy, "go and look after my horse, and rub him down well, or I'll rub you down."

It is Squeers' custom on the first afternoon after his return from London to call the school together to make a sort of report regarding the relations he had seen and to read the letters supposed to have been written by the boys' guardians. His announcement that there is no prospect at all of their going excites little interest in the greater part of the young gentlemen who have no parents to speak of. It is Mr. Squeers' boast that in him the forlorn lads have "their best friend at their elbers". Indeed, on the break-up of Dotheboys Hall some children know no other home. One of them, Mrs. Squeers complained, had wished he was a donkey, because then he wouldn't have a father as didn't love him.[1] Dickens makes it clear that the avarice, indifference, or imbecility of parents and guardians was in part responsible for the existence of such institutions of sordid cruelty as typified by Dotheboys Hall.

Some of the atrocities of Squeers' establishment sound incredibly revolting: running the whooping cough through half a dozen boys to make the parents pay Mrs. Squeers medical bill. But Dickens has not made Squeers a figure of unrelieved horror. The schoolmaster lives with such hearty gusto that he amuses us as much as he repels us. Witness his final exit with his delightful piece of parsing: "A double l - all, everything - a

1. Chap.LVII

cobbler's weapon. Up-p-up, adjective, not down. S-q-u-double-e-r-s - Squeers, noun substantive, a educator of youth. Total, all up with Squeers!"[1]

So that, as Chesterton puts it, Dickens had to make Squeers live before he could make him die.

Our examination of Nicholas Nickleby may well close with the following tribute:

> "That these gentry (Yorkshire schoolmasters) - their "Caves of Despair" no longer exist is one of the many debts of gratitude which his fellow countrymen owe to Charles Dickens."[2]

A closer approximation to an average school for the middle classes is Salem House in "David Copperfield" in which Dickens incorporates some part of his experience at Wellington House Academy. Sheer tyranny seems to rule the school life of the period. David joins his school in holiday time as a punishment for some outburst of sullen temper. Placarded with "Take care of him. He bites." he feels the agony of being degraded in the eyes of others. He even begins to have a dread of himself, as a kind of wild boy who does bite. Mr. Creakle announces himself as a Tartar and a screw of David's ear leaves no room for doubt in the matter.

> "Half the establishment was writhing and crying, before the day's work began; and how much of it had writhed and cried before the day's work was over, I am really afraid to recollect, lest I should seem to exaggerate."[3]

On such a system Dickens's judgment is well expressed through David: "In a school carried on by sheer cruelty, whether it is presided over by a dunce or not,

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1.Id. Ch.LX 2. Notes and Queries. Jonathan Bonchier, Oct.25th, 1873
3.David Copperfield, Ch.VII

there is not likely to be much learnt. I believe our boys were, generally, as ignorant a set as any schoolboys in existence; they were too much troubled and knocked about to learn, they could no more do that to advantage than anyone can do anything to advantage in a life of constant misfortune, torment, and worry."[1]

Salem House is not merely shown or criticised from outside. The children here are not just shadowy figures as in Squeers' Academy. We have here a remarkably true study of the child-mind. The child Dickens had been never really slept for long. Here he awakes again and speaks eagerly and spontaneously. His heart responds to Traddles, that simple and honourable lad whose optimism and resilience of spirit no Creakle could cane out of him.

> "After laying his head on the desk for a little while, he would cheer up somehow, begin to laugh again, and draw skeletons all over his slate, before his eyes were dry. I used at first to wonder what comfort Traddles found in drawing skeletons, and for some time looked upon him as a sort of hermit, who reminded himself by those symbols of mortality that caning couldn't last for ever."

The idealism, hero-worship, and need for protective love which draw a child to someone who is senior to him in years, handsome, high spirited, and easy and affable in manners are finely brought out in David's relationship with Steerforth. David adores Steerforth, places all his pocket money and presents at his disposal, shortens his repose at night to relate him stories and in all this he says: "I was moved by no interested or selfish motive, nor was I moved by fear of him. I

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1. David Copperfield, Ch.VII

admired, loved him, and his approval was return enough."[1]

That such generous enthusiasms of youth should have to propitiate a remorseless idol like Mr. Creakle is the pity of the whole situation. "What a launch in life I think it now, on looking back, to be so mean and servile to a man of such parts and pretentions."

Dickens's fine analysis of the child-mind in 'David Copperfield" evokes the following encomium: from William Dibelius.[2]

> "Unvergleichlich reich sind dann die Erlebnisse Copperfields in der Schule. Hier wird nicht bloss geprugelt, wie es in den üblichen Schulschilderungen bisher üblichwar, sondern wir horen etwas von dem Idealismus, der Begeisterungs fahrgkeit, dem Bedürfnis der Kleinen nach Heldenverehrung und der Grossen, zu schutzen und anzuspornen...."

In contrast to Mr. Creakle's school Dickens presents Doctor Strong's. The latter appealed to the honour and good faith of the boys who had a part in its management and sustaining its character. Doctor Strong was the kindest of men. He was engaged in research in Greek language with a view to a new Dictionary. Thus he kept his mind in the state of a running stream, as Doctor Arnold thought it ought to be if it would form or feed other minds.

Doctor Blimber's system is as short-sighted and cruel as the regime of Squeers or Creakle. In his hot-house mental green peas are produced at Christmas and intellectual asparagus all the year round. This forcing system with its attendant evils of arrested

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1. Id.
2. Wilhelm Dibelius: Charles Dickens 266f.

development, lack of correlation in studies, exclusive attention to classics, Dickens condemns in the strongest possible terms. To Doctor Blimber's query whether they should make a man of Paul, the latter only replies: "I had rather be a child."[1] This is the sum of all objections to any educational system which is conducted on the hot-house or forcing principle. Both in life and literature the 19th century is replete with examples of children brought up at high pressure. By the time J.S. Mill was eight his reading extended from the historian Herodotus to Burnet's "History of My Own Time". The sad plight of the young Prince of Wales touched the heart of Punch in whose pages there appeared toward the end of 1859 some verses entitled "A Prince at High Pressure" They begin:

> "Thou dear little Wales, sure the saddest tales
> Is the tale of the studies with which they are cramming thee
> .....
> and conclude
> "'Gainst indulging a passion for high pressure fashion
> Of Prince-training Punch would uplift lyal warning;
> Locomotives we see over-stoked soon may be,
> Till the super-steamed boiler blows up one fine morning." [2]

The same passion to breed prodigies carried away some governesses. Miss Fennimore the governess with the Fulmorts in "Hopes and Fears" was excellent as a teacher but her strong conformation prevented her from under - standing that young girls were incapable of such tension

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1. Dombey and Son, Ch.XI
2. Quoted by Dorothy M. Stuart, The Boy Through the Ages, p.278

of intellect as an enthusiastic scholar of 42. Her very best pupil she had killed. Finding a very sharp sword in a very frail scabbard she had whetted the one and worn down the other, by every stimulus in her power till a jury of physicians might have found her guilty of manslaughter.[1]

How far Dickens's picture of secondary schools corresponded with the facts of the situation, it may suffice to quote Matthew Arnold, than whom no one pleaded more powerfully and incessantly for a better system of secondary education. "I have this year," he says in a letter to Sir Joshua Fitch in 1880 "been reading David Copperfield for the first time. Mr. Creakle's school at Blackheath is the type of our ordinary middle-class school, and our middle class is satisfied that so it should be."[2]

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Public Schools

The public school education of the early 19th century, Strachey[3] has characterised as a system of anarchy tempered by despotism. Inspired by the desire for a more moral tone on the one hand, and by the need for a more liberal curriculum on the other, the rising middle class opinion was beginning to feel dissatisfied with the then existing state of public schools. As early as 1693 Locke warned parents against hazarding

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1.Charlotte M. Yonge: Hopes and Fears, Part II, Ch.II, p.107
2.Sir Joshua Fitch: Thomas and Matthew Arnold (1897), p.230
3.Lytton Strachey: Eminent Victorians, p.180

their sons' innocence for a little Greek and Latin.[1] "Public Schools," we read in Fielding, "are the nurseries of all vice and immorality."[2] We feel the keen edge of Day's satire in the contrast between a farmer's son, honest and polite and a young gentleman educated at a public school where he learned every vice and folly which was commonly taught at such places, without the least improvement either of his character or his understanding.[3] See, says the author, your young gentry who are ultimately expected to hold high positions in the State, but the great object of whose knowledge and education was only to waste, to consume, to destroy, to dissipate, what was produced by others. Both Cowper and Crabbe attest the low moral tone of the publich schools where the pattern was set by the school bully. The latter's wild excursions, window-breaking feats, robbery of gardens, quarrels in the streets are referred to in Tirocinium.

Crabbe writes:

> "The school we name a world, for vice and pain
> Fraud and contention, there begin to reign;
> And much in fact, this lesser world can show[4]
> Of grief and crime that in the great grow."

While admitting the necessity of public schools, the Edgeworths felt themselves compelled to caution parents from expecting that the moral character, the understanding or the tempers of their children, should be improved at large schools.[5] They were especially

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1. Para. 70 Some Thoughts Concerning Education
2. The Adventures of Joseph Andrews, Book III, Ch.V
3. Sandford and Merton, Vol.II (1795), p.208
4. George Crabbe: Tales of the Hall, Book III
5. Practical Education, Vol.II, p.149

alive to the danger of the very strong sympathy the young people have for each other, and consequently of their learning most effectually from each other's example. Maria Edgeworth drove the moral home by her story "The Barring Out" (1897). It is the story of a rebellion in a small school against a good and kind master, led by a Public School boy who had learned ambition and party spirit at his former place of education.

A more unsparing attack was opened against the Public School system by the Rev. Sydney Smith in a series of articles contributed to the Edinburgh Review. He compared the life at a Public School to the vegetable struggle of a forest. In a review of Edgeworth's "Professional Education" he combated the excessive abuse of classical learning in England and asserted that it was no uncommon thing to meet with Englishmen whom, but for their grey hairs and wrinkles you might easily mistake for schoolboys.[1] Exclusive as the teaching of Latin and Greek was, it did little according to Kinglake, to create a genuine taste for classics. Kinglake had learnt in earliest childhood to love Homer. To the eyes of the child the Iliad had grown "familiar as his mother's shawl". It was for him a sad intellectual fall to exchange this bright world for his schoolboy life "when their meagre Latin (the same for everybody) with small shreds and patches is thrown like a pauper's pall

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1. The Works of the Rev. Sydney Smith. p.166

over all your early lore."[1]

The gravamen of the charge against the Public School, however, was not so much on the intellectual as on the moral score. "Not a single doctrine of moral excellence is taught, not a single moral principle inculcated," declares Lytton. The only moral principle at a public school, he points out, is that which the boys themselves tacitly inculcate and acknowledge. "But how vague it is, how confused, how erring! What cruelty, tyranny, duplicity, are compatible with it!"[2] Reviewing Stanley's "Life and Correspondence of Thomas Arnold", James Martineau was not favourably impressed by the public school system even as worked by Arnold and remarked:

"If there is any place in the world- where a state of war is the nature, ever and anon resumed to settle the exact sphere of every newcomer and determination of rights has to be fought out - certainly that place is our English public school."[3] Doctor Arnold's own experience at first was not reassuring and it taught him "the monstrous evil of a state of low principle prevailing amongst those who set the tune to the rest."[4]

When the Established church, as Halevy has remarked, was apathetic, sceptical and lifeless,[5] it is hardly to be expected that the Anglican strongholds as the public schools were in these days

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1.A.W. Kinglake: Eothen, Ch.IV
2.E. B. Lytton: England and the English (1833), Vol.I, p.273
3.Essays and Reviews, Vol.I, p.68
4.A.P. Stanley: Life and Correspondence of Thomas Arnold, Ch.III, p.70
5.Elie Halevy: A History of the English People in 1815. p.359

should have presented any very edifying spectacle of religious education. Wilberforce deplored the growth among young men of the upper classes, of an attitude of doubt and indifference to religion and ascribed it to the fact that the study of Christianity formed no part of their education and that their attachment to it was merely a matter of hereditary succession.[1] Considering how the school chapel came to be the centre of Dr. Arnold's system of education, it is interesting to read T. A. Trollope's Wiccamical reminiscences (1820-28) of chapel service. Boys' religion consisted in abhorring religious feelings as "very ungentlemanlike propensities". Although the chapel was attended with assiduity, the perfunctory service there was hardly calculated to inspire due reverence. A sportsman chaplain was in the habit of interpolating with the verses of the Psalm he was reading, sotto voce, anecdotes of his sporting achievements, addressed to the youth at his side. "We had none of us," Trollope significantly adds, "the faintest idea that we ought to have been shocked or scandalised."[2]

In the absence of any effective appeal to the boys' moral or religious principles, in the absence of praepostorial supervision, authorised fagging or organised sports, the Public School system, to quote the Report of 1864,[3] was at once too lax and too severe - severe in its punishments, but lax in

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1. A Practical View 6 ff.
2. What I Remember, Ch.VI, p.140
3. Clarendon Report 1864, Part I., p.56

superintendence and prevention. The wild, rough life at Eton typified by its notorious "Long Chamber" drew the attention of the Quarterly Review and evoked the following comment: "We are stating no imaginary grievance - we know that we are guilty of no exaggeration, when we assert that, in point of manners, habits and morals, a gentleman's son is exposed to a most dangerous ordeal in passing through the College at Eton."[1]

Hannah More was well enough informed about schools to fight against Macaulay's going to one:

> "Throwing boys headlong into those great public schools always puts me in mind of the practice of the Scythian mothers, who threw their new born infants into the river - the greater part perished, but the few who possessed great natural strength came out with additional vigour from the experiment."[2]

While some defended such a state of affairs on the ground that the daily ill-disciplined intercourse roughened boys into manhood, others like Dr. Arnold and Edward Thring were well aware of the dangers which it entailed upon the average boy. "A firm character," remarked Sydney Smith, "survives this brave neglect, but it cannot be the main object of education to render the splendid more splendid - a public school does this effectually, but it commonly leaves the idle almost as idle and the dull almost as dull as it found them."[3] Vastly as the public schools had improved the Royal Commission in the 'sixties seemed to concur, still in one respect, with the Rev. Smith that these schools in very different degrees were too

1. Quarterly Review, Vol.LII, 1834, p.145
2. Roberts, A. (Ed.): Letters of Hannah More to Zachary Macaulay, p.45
3. op. cit. p.185

indulgent to idleness or struggled inefectually with it, and that they consequently sent out a large proportion of men of idle habits and empty and uncultivated minds.[1]

Such being the state of things and men's minds in the early years of the 19th century, so far as the public schools were concerned, we can reach a fair estimate of the reforms effected by Dr. Arnold and others and of the novels as both mirroring and moulding the public school life of the period.

In "Shadows of Clouds" published in 1847 Froude tells the story of Edward Fowler, a boy who is driven by ill-treatment at the hands of his masters and schoolfellows at Westminster into systematic falsehood and deceit. To the neglect of his health and character his precocious talent was pushed forward by his teachers from "the vanity of having a little monster to display as their workmanship". Singularly lacking in moral courage, no attempt having beenmade to inculcate that virtue, the poor boy at Westminster found everyone's hand against him. At Westminster, he says, for one year at least to all boys, and to some for every year, the life was as hard and the treatment as barbarous as that of the negroes in Virginia. "What it may be now I do not know. I am speaking of what it was fifteen years ago."[2] His most painful memories as a junior at the school are

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1. Clarendon Report, Part I, p.55
2. Shadows of the Clouds, by "Zeta", Ch.III

dining on scrapped mutton bones and refuse fat, running into long bills for supplying the seniors with stationery, being scarred and blistered for weeks by a lighted cigar stump held against his cheeks by the older boys stalking round college at midnight. Very much in the manner of Kipling's Baa, Baa, Black-sheep, torture drives the lad into a system of small deceptions. He used to invent excuses of illness. This was soon found out and the masters were foolish enough to treat him as if it were school he wished to shirk, instead of the young tyrants up the college stairs.

The narrator of this painful history of Fowler adds a few remarks on the treatment of a child at home and at a public school. In the little world of a public school the system is intended to deal with boys in the mass and it is impossible to attend to minute shades of character. An exceptional boy, no doubt, suffers thereby. It is a pity, but it cannot be helped so far as the school is concerned. Parents can, however, repair this defect, but they, like Canon Fowler, are too busy to attend to peculiarities in the disposition of their children, and they readily fall in with the customary mode of parental discipline. "Punish" not "prevent" is the old fashioned principle, and accordingly not very different methods are employed to break boys as well as dogs. But men learnt to use gentler methods soonest with

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the lower animals. Natural Home, the author pleads ought to be real home, the scene of all our happiness, ease and absence of restraint. Such a home would have brought Edward Fowler to trust himself rather than circumstances.

The framework of this story, we learn, bears many resemblances to Froude's own life. It appeared in 1847 with another story "The Lieutenant's Daughter" under the pseudonym of "Zeta". The greater part of the edition is said to have been bought up and destroyed by Froude's father. In "Coningsby" (1844) Disraeli portrays Eton as the ideal training school for a brilliant band of young aristocrats all ambitious and generous, and inspired by an ardent national spirit. It is a study of Young England and reflects the educational ideals of one whose Tory paternalism was to play an important part in English life and thought. As stated in his glowing and ornate phrases Eton education consists in a free life among equals permeated by aged loveliness and patterned by customs derived from the consecrated past. The scion of a noble house waits upon his Fifth-form master and would rather be bullied by him than his classical tutor. Coningsby, the gilded youth of quick and brilliant apprehension and Millbank, a manufacturer's son, possessed of strong will and perseverance, mix on terms of amity and emulation. Thus through the romantic imagination of Disraeli is

presented the shady meads, the sunny glade, the boys at books or sports, the colourful Eton Montem, the dinner and champagne at the Christopher, the lively talks and debates, the lasting friendships. The whole picture lacks reality and concreteness of detail. Disraeli knew very little about Eton and whatever little veneer of local colour he imparts to the picture he gathered, we learn, during a stay with an Eton tutor. He compassionates, for instance, "with the hard lot of an unhappy wight who is told that he must be delivered of fourteen verses at least in the twenty-four hours, and who is conscious that he is pregnant with none!".[1] In Thackeray's works we come across many little scraps and sketches of his life at Charterhouse (1822-1828). The deep hold of the latter on his mind is attested by his frequent though brief references to it, and, but for the exigencies of his fictional plots he would have treated of it at greater length. He contents himself with giving us a passing glimpse of Master Rawdon at Whitefriars with the following excuse:

> "Our business does not lie with the second generation and Master Rawdon's life at school, otherwise the present tale might be carried to an indefinite length." [2]

A lonely, impressionable child from India, separated from his parents by his father's death and his mother's remarriage, and rendered over-sensitive by injudicious treatment at a bad private school, was

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1. Coningsby, Book I, Chap.XI.
2. Vanity Fair, Ch.LII

ill-equipped for the rough life of a public school. And Thackeray joined Charterhouse when it had just passed into the hands of Dr. Russell, a vigorous, unsympathetic, and stern though not severe headmaster. The little boy was intimidated and informed that if he did not know his Horace, or could not construe his Greek play "he was a disgrace to the school, a candidate for ruin in this world, and perdition in the next".[1] One of the educational reforms effected by Dr. Russell was the abolition of the fagging system, but its only result was the the "Uppers" retained all their old privileges and discharged none of their old duties.[2] The boxing match with a bully who is seen belabouring some poor little fellow[3] is a recurrent feature in Thackeray's stories. Thackeray himself had been at Charterhouse only a few months when in a fight with a schoolfellow he received the injury to his nose which left its effects through life. He and his opponent remained friends for life and the incident is pleasantly recalled in young Tommy "bartering a black eye, per bearer, against a bloody nose drawn at sight, with a schoolfellow, and shaking hands the next day."[4] Being very short-sighted the young Thackeray could not join in the school games with any comfort or pleasure, but for a non-playing boy he was wonderfully social, full of vivacity, and enjoyment of life. Very much in the manner of Traddles in"David Copperfield" his talent for caricature must

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1.History of Pendennis, Ch.II 2. Tod.A.H.: Charterhouse, p.17
3.Fitz-Boodle Papers, Mr. & Mrs. Frank Berry, Ch.I
4.The Newcomes Vol.I, Ch.II

have afforded him immense relief in his sedentary seclusion and under Dr. Russell's scoldings. His later years at Charterhouse were more tolerable, yet in his last year at the school he wrote (Feb.19th, 1828) to his mother, "I really think I am becoming terribly industrious, though I can't get Dr. Russell to think so. It is so hard when you endeavour to work hard, to find your attempts nipped in the bud.. There are but 370 in the school. I wish there were only 369."[1]

Though Thackeray later came to regard the old school with sentimental affection, nothing seems to reconcile him to the public school system, associated as it was in his mind with the tyranny of classics and bullying by tutors and schoolfellows. As regards sound practical education the best public schools, according to him, compare unfavourably with the Agricultural Seminary at Templemoyle. "There are at this present writing five hundred at Eton, kicked and licked and bullied by another hundred.....They are proud of it - good heavens! - absolutely vain of it, as what dull barbarians are not proud of their dullness and barbarism?"[2]

How a sensitive boy could suffer under his master's castigation Thackeray reveals us in the following exhortation:

> "Remember your own young days at school, my friend - the tingling cheeks, burning ears, bursting heart, the passion of desperate tears with which you looked up, after having

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1.Letters (Oxford 1945): Ed.G.N. Ray, Vol.I.p.24
2.Irish Sketchbook (1842)

> performed some blunder, whilst the Doctor held you to public scorn before the class and cracked his clumsy jokes upon you - helpless and a prisoner! Better the block itself, and the lictors, with their fasces of birch-twigs,1 than the maddening torture of those jokes."

To such a boy the solace of imaginative literature was a necessity. Here is a glimpse of him "at a desk, he has great books before him, Latin and Greek books, and dictionaries. Yes, but behind the great books which he pretends to read, is a little one with pictures, which he is really reading, It is - yes, I can read now - it is the "Heart of Midlothian".[2]

Poor William Dobbin, jeered and bullied by everyone at Dr. Swishtail's school for his incapacity to acquire the rudiments of Latin snatches some moments of happiness in spelling over a favourite copy of "The Arabian Nights". The author puts in an eloquent plea for safeguarding to children the right to such happiness. "

> "If people would but leave children to themselves; if teachers would cease to bully them; if parents would not insist upon directing, and domineering their feelings - those feelings and thoughts which are a mystery to all (for how much do you and I know of each other, of our children, of our fathers, of our neighbour, and how far more beautiful and sacred are the thoughts of the poor lad or girl whom you govern likely to be, than those of the dull and world-corrupted person who rules him?) - if, I say, parents and masters would leave their children alone a little more - small harm would accrue, although a less quantity of 'as in praesenti' might be acquired." [3]

With "Tom Brown's Schooldays" (1857) a new genre in fiction evolves itself, which George Koenig has

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1. Roundabout Papers, Thorns in the Cushion, July 1860
2. Id. De Juventute
3. Vanity Fair, Ch. V

styled the Schulroman.[1] Its concern is not with following a person from the cradle to the grave or to the climax of his career nor exposition of any special questions of pedagogy, but the portrayal of that period of life which he spends at school as a preparation for life. Besides its literary value as the originator of a new form, "Tom Brown's Schooldays" is historically important as a record of the silent transformation of Rugby (1833-42) under Dr. Arnold, of whom it was predicted that he would "change the face of education all through the public schools of England". The book owes its immense popularity to three sources. Arnold who though he appears but seldom in the book, yet sheds his pervasive influence; the hearty gusto with which the author preaches; the hero Tom Brown, a typical English boy of the upper middle class, not too clever, nor of any remarkable moral strength, but possessing animal life in its fullest measure, good nature and honest impulses, hatred of injustice and meanness, and self-confidence. Dr. Arnold's ideal of Christian education not only helped to raise the moral tone of public schools which the Rev. John Bowdler had declared to be "the very seats and nurseries of vice" but also did justice to the new demands called forth by Great Britain's assumption of imperial responsibilities. "He governed the school," wrote Stanley, "precisely on the same principles as he would have governed a great empire.

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1. Viktorianische Schulroman (Berlin 1937)
2. Quoted by Koenig, op.cit. Ch.III, p.24

His boys were to go forth amidst the strifes of tongues and minds with the spirit of wisdom and power. It was being increasingly realised that far-flung territories could not for long be held at the point of bayonets. Hence the idea of "Christian gentlemen" came to leaven the training of enlightened administrators, who should be capable of inspiring confidence and gaining the necessary authority among peoples of many races and creeds. Education is always in alignment with those values and duties which a nation holds good and which it has evolved in the course of its chequered history. This is particularly tnue of the Victorian era, and the one person who gave the educational ideal of that age its characteristic stamp is Dr. Arnold whom Jones has called "England's greatest schoolmaster."[1]

"Too much preaching," was the great fault critics laid against "Tom Brown's Schooldays" but Hughes declared that to be his whole object in writing. The subject seems to possess him entirely and gives to the book its quality of "inevitableness". He views every part of the subject through the medium of Kingsley's doctrines. It was said of Kingsley that "the two most distinctive features of his religious teaching were that the world is God's world and not the Devil's and that manliness is entirely compatible with godliness." With this "muscular Christianity" Hughes combines his father's Tory

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1.A.J.Jones: Charakter-bildung in den englischen Schuling in Theorie und Praxis. p.3

paternalism and his own democratic leanings, and sentimental memories of country life. His glowing love for home and country scenes and sports speaks through each line of his spirited description of the Vale of White Horse. Tom's journey to Rugby is full of the charm and romance of travelling:

> "First there was the consciousness of silent endurance, so dear to every Englishman - of standing out against something, and not giving in. Then there was the music of the rattling harness, and the ring of the horses' feet on the hard road, and the glare of the two bright lamps through the streaming hoar frost, over the leaders' ears into the darkness; and the cheery toot of the guard's horn."[1]

The whole picture, Tom on the top of the Tally-ho, in a tight Petersham coat, his feet dangling six inches from the floor, stands out clear and crisp. Hughes knows how to build up such scenes artistically and to make us see them through the eyes of his hero.

At Rugby Tom is at once taken in hand by Harry East and is spared that sense of desperate loneliness and helplessness which the new boy would feel if he were left to himself. However, the ordeals of initiation into the public school life, Tom cannot escape. Dr. Arnold had succeeded, as old Brook makes it clear in his parting speech, in stamping out some bad old customs which brought the boys into repeated collision with the townsfolk. But his personal influence and character had not had time to make itself felt, and such brutal practices as "roasting" and "tossing" which Tom undergoes like a "young trump" and such

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1. Tom Brown's Schooldays, Part I, Ch.IV

incidents of the "old heathenism" as that of young Arthur kneeling in prayer by his bedside being "slippered" and called "sniffling young shaver", though exceptional, were still not unknown. If the praepostors happened to be either small young boys or else big fellows of the wrong sort all threatened to return into darkness and chaos again. Such a state of affairs after he had been so many years fighting against it, often threw Dr. Arnold into despair at the evil of boy-nature. But this very feeling as Stanley points out, led him to catch at every means to hasten the change from childhood to manhood and to impose upon the Sixth Form a duty which some supposed too heavy for their years and to turn them prematurely into what Fitzjames Stephen characterised as a "sacerdotal fraternity" of over-earnest men.[1] However, this side of Dr. Arnold's influence, his "moral thoughtfulness" which Stanley's "Life" impresses upon one, is not given prominence in "Tom Brown's Schooldays". It is what Hughes terms "Arnold's manly piety" that finds an answering echo in the hearts of "reckless, childish boys" like Tom:

> "It was not the cold, clear voice of one giving advice and warning from serene heights to those who were struggling and sinning below, but the warm, living voice of one who was fighting for us and by our sides, and calling on us to help him and ourselves and one another."[2]

Although the only occasions on which the lower forms were brought into direct relationship with

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1. Edinburgh Review, Jan. 1858, p.85
2. Tom Brown's Schooldays, Part I, Ch.VII

Arnold were his weekly sermons, and monthly examinations, yet each pupil, writes Stanley,[1] felt assured of Arnold's sympathy in his own particular growth and character of talent. Tom who found himself in the lower-fourth form where there was no age-grading soon fell away and got into all sorts of scrapes. At this point Dr. Arnold's discipline is brought on the stage. A quiet, timid, clever boy (Arthur) is allotted to the hero for a chum. Arthur reclaims Tom who in return weans him by degrees from his physical timidity, initiates him into the athletics of the place and the corporate life of the school. It is through this complementary relationship that an ideal type of the Victorian student emerges: healthy, strong, self-reliant, deeply religious, morally upright English boy who holds his own both in sports and studies, in fact "a Christian gentleman". "And that's the way," the young master informs Tom, "that all the Doctor's reforms have been carried out - quietly and naturally - the best thing that could be done for the time being, and patience for the rest." Tom learns that his friendship with East which had been the making of them both had been planned by the Doctor in the hope "that when you had somebody to lean on you, you would begin to stand a little steadier yourself and get manliness and thoughtfulness." The significance of this measure of Dr. Arnold's is well brought out by Koenig:

1.Op.cit. Ch.II

> "In dieser einem weisen Massnahme Arnolds is symbolisch der gesante Grundplan des ganzen Romans zum Ausdruck begracht. Hughes will zeigen, dass gegenseitiges Becinflussen und Erzeihen der Schüler unter der gutigen Leitung eines mit väterlicher Liebe erfüllten Lehrers von schonstern Erfolg gekrönt sein wird." [1]

Nowhere is the practical insight and true character of Englishmen better shown than in their love of sports. In his "Discoveries in England", M. Emile Cammaerts remembered hearing a schoolmaster shouting to his boys during a football match, "Don't play with it" - wondering what such an exclamantion could mean "I did not know then that it was only on the Continent that games are played; in England they are performed like some kind of religious ceremony."[2] Physical training has always been regarded as an essential factor in a gentleman's education. In 1570 we have Roger Ascham demanding that a well-cultivated mind must itself reside in such a body.

> ".....to ride comely; to run fair at the tilt or ring; to play all weapons; to shoot fair in bow or surely in gun; to vault lustily; to run, to leap, to wrestle, to swim; to dance comely; to sing, and play of instruments cunningly; to hawk, to hunt, to play at tennis and all pastimes generally, which be joined with labour, used in open place, and on the daylight containing either some fit exercise for war, or some pleasant pastime for peace, be not only comely and decent, but also very necessary, for a courtly gentleman to use." [3]

And in 1861 Herbert Spencer is no less insistent that body and mind must both be cared for, and the whole being unfolded.[4] Hughes' stress on sports therefore is in keeping with English tradition. From the

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1.Op.cit. p.35 2. Op.cit. (Routledge 1930) p.153
3.The Schoolmaster, Book I. Works ed. Giles (London 1864) p.139
4.Education (London 1861)

country "Veast" with its backswording and wrestling and racing Tom is transported to Rugby where he starts his school career with a football scrummage and ends it with leading the school eleven against the M.C.C. This picture of a public school with its predominance of the athletic over intellectual interests seems to explain and justify, in the eyes of one critic[1], the famous epithet of "Barbarians" which M. Arnold was wont to apply to the English Aristocracy. However, it is to be remembered that "Tom Brown's Schooldays" is a work of art, not a social document. In Tom, Hughes relives his own boyhood and thus endows the book with its extraordinary kind of reality. And such acts of wanton mischief as thefts from farmyards, fishing out of bounds, and rows with the townsfolk, into which the excess of animal spirits frequently led Tom and East were relics of the pre-reform period. Already the Christianising influence of Arnold was at work and conscientious praepostors like Holmes were trying to bring home to the young depredators that there was no real difference between chickens running about and apples on a tree, and the same articles in a shop.[2] To persuade East to give up "cribs" Tom refers to the Doctor's practice of treating boys as gentlemen and points out that they were no longer in a state of war with the masters who seemed to him to treat them quite differently.[3] In his "Memories of Arnold and Rugby Sixty Years Ago" the writer, a

1. Thomas and Matthew Arnold, p.106 2. Tom Brown's Schooldays Part II Ch.IV
3. Id. Part II, Ch.VII

a member of the school in 1835-37, states that the Rugby boys were allowed to wander about the meadows without interruption from the farmers. He recalls his earlier experience of the Shrewsbury boys who plundered the orchards and were hated by the farmers.[1]

The author of a school story cannot present a complete picture of all school life any more than a novelist can of all grown-up life. Within the limits permitted him Hughes gave a fairly representative cross section of the public school community. Arthur, the intellectual boy, Martin the eccentric one, and so out of place in the then public school system with its hide-bound curriculum, Flashman the bully, a type perhaps almost extinct now: all these characters though not so important as Tom and East, yet contribute to a fuller understanding of the public school life of the period. Other aspects of school life, too, are dealt with, in one form or another in "Tom Brown's Schooldays": school friendships, games, relation between masters and boys, association of boys with one another, the public school spirit, the Prefect system, fagging, bullying, the schoolboy humour, religion and training in patriotism. Later novelists, as Koenig[2] remarks, have merely elaborated this or that aspect without essentially shifting Hughes' standpoint. "Tom Brown's Schooldays" has a solemn and touching close: Tom kneeling down in the

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1. The Parents Review, Vol.VI, 1895-96, p.646
2. Op.cit., p.58

school chapel, at the grave of his old master beneath the altar. "It is impossible," writes the Edinburgh Review, "not to feel that there must be very great merits in a system which could inspire such an affection. If any method of education can confer upon or encourage in its pupils the simplicity, the light heartedness, the honesty, purity, and courage which are manifested in every page of 'Tom Brown's School-days' it has solved a far more important and more difficult problem than is involved in the production of any amount of classical or mathematical knowledge."[1] In a letter to the Rev. George Cornish, dated Nov.30 1827, Dr. Arnold wrote: "I should like to try whether my notions of Christian education are really impracticable, whether our system of public schools has not in it some noble elements which, under the blessings of the Spirit of all holiness and wisdom, might produce fruit even to life eternal."[2] The progress of the public school system since then has largely justified the hope and exertions of Dr. Arnold. Among other influences the Public School Commission of 1864[3] specially mentioned Dr. Arnold for a large share of credit due for the improvement of the public school system and of the moral tone of the universities, and he is, therefore, rightly regarded by Findlay as the genius of the renaissance in public school education.[4] "The School Experiences of a Fag" (1854) a book written by one who had been at

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1.Vol.CVII 1858, p.176 2. A.P. Stanley, Op.cit., Ch.II
3.Clarendon Report, Part I, p.44
4.J.J. Findlay: The School (1911) p.235

at Rugby during Arnold's time applauds the prefect system as being the chief distinguishing feature of a public school. Under an efficient governing body as it was during his days the writer attests that such gross forms of physical bullying as he was subjected to in his private school or such moral persecution of the pure-minded lads as formed the dark reminiscences of some "Old Harbeans" were impossible. However, the efficiency of the prefect system depended largely on the character of the Sixth and Arnold's greatness, as Bradby[1] points out, lay in the fact that he did inspire a very large proportion of boys placed in authority with something of his own spirit of duty, and that even in the minds of boys who did not come into personal contact with him, he implanted a feeling of their responsibility as members of a great society. That a system conferring such power and liberty unless animated by this spirit was liable to misuse or disruption is exemplified by A. G. Butler's "The Three Friends" a story of Rugby in the 'Forties (1900) Some members of the Sixth have, through their over-zeal and roughness, made themselves unpopular. Some of the big Fifth form fellows are on the look-out for an opportunity to punish them. So in the great scrimmage during a match between the Sixth and the Schoolside, savage hacks are dealt on defenceless shins and the game is reduced to a private vendetta to be fought to the bitter end. Such

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1.H. C. Bradby: Rugby (1900) p.62

incidents lead to a great deal of friction between the Sixth and the School, culminating in the Mutiny of the Lower School boys, when Tait, the headmaster, lies dangerously ill. Chartism at home and revolution on the continent have fired the young heads with liberty and the Sixth is denounced as the "Thirty Tyrants". Thanks to the discipline of the Sixth and a drenching rain, the rising proves abortive, engineered as it is by a few ring leaders, who see in it only a vent for their high animal spirits. But Tait's comment shows the onerous responsibility of the headmaster who is always sitting, as it were, on a volcano.[1] Moreover it was no easy task to fill the place vacated by the sudden death of a man whose influence was so great, "and Tait," remarks Bradby, "with all his good qualities was not Arnold".[2] The more moderate and thinking section of the Sixth are beginning to find burdens imposed on them too heavy and doubt the wisdom of measures, once perhaps necessary, designed "to anticipate the common time of manhood". They feel that there may be a good deal of truth in the taunts that filter down to them from the University that Rugby men are often great prigs. "Might not the time have come for easing away the distinction between the Sixth and School and putting all on a more natural and friendly footing."[3]

In the portrayal of one of the Three Friends, an irresponsible Irish lad O'Brien, we see that mere

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1. The Three Friends Ch.VII 2. Op.cit, p.63
3. The Three Friends Ch.I

appeals to obey rules, to keep the games up, and the House going, provide no adequate outlet for his exuberant animal spirits. O'Brien wants to have a bit of a row once a fortnight like an extra holiday. His case serves to remind us of the justice of the Edinburgh Review's remark that much of what Dr. Arnold considered "awful wickedness" of boys was mere fun. The zeal of the Doctor's whole character, the paper points out, prevented him from sympathising with or even understanding the younger boys.[1] Five articles anonymously contributed in the Parents Review, November 1895 to March 1896 under the title "Memories of Arnold and Rugby Sixty Years Ago" refer to rows between the boys of the school and the town and incidents of tension between boys of the Sixth form and seem to confirm the view expressed by the Edinburgh Review. In his Introduction to "The Three Friends" the author welcomes the change which has replaced the old, listless, and lounging life of so many at school by a more general and compulsory practice of games and the ambition to excel in them. For this has furnished a vent for high spirits once sought in mischief and adventure. A. G. Butler holds, however, no brief for the games "cult". He shows in Fleming a boy whose love of athletics is closely allied to the love of excellence. "And thus it was a Greek nature, coloured by Scotch puritanism and English truth and culture, grew to be something

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1. Edinburgh Review, Vol.CVII 1858 p.185

very good and useful."[1]

"What noble histories would the records unfold of honour and success, of baffled temptations and hard-won triumphs; what awful histories of hopes blighted and habits learnt, of wasted talents and ruined lives."[2] This rhapsody over Eric's schoolroom strikes the keynote of F. W. Farrar's "Eric, or Little by Little. A Tale of Roslyn School" (1858) which appeared only a year after "Tom Brown's Schooldays". Founded on the Awful Example principle of "The Fairchild Family" it represents according to Hugh Kingsmill,[3] that compromise which the mid-Victorians had effected between the imaginative renaissance of the early 19th century and Evangelical puritanism. Its immense popularity, thirty-six editions appearing in the author's life time, attests its having answered some deep chord of mid-Victorian emotionalism. It was also a favourite with a youthful audience. Many boys, remarks Amy Cruse,[4] read it probably even more than they read Tom Brown, deeply susceptible to mass emotion as boys are during their pre-adolescent period. The story is partly autobiographical and its predominantly emotional and religious tone is to be accounted for, to some extent by Farrar's own upbringing and career. A child from India where his father was chaplain of the Church Missionary Society, he was brought up in the pious household of two maidenly aunts at Aylesbury

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1.The Three Friends Ch.X 2.Eric Part I, Ch.VII
3.After Puritanism 1850-1900. 4.The Victorians and Their Books p.300

After his early education at King William's School Isle of Man, where the religious teaching was strictly evangelical, he took a London B.A. and entered Trinity Cambridge as a sizar, and devoted himself principally to theological studies. Living as he did in this limited world, his school-world was indubitably real to him and he asserts in the Preface to the book: "to the best of my belief, the things here dealt with are not theories but realities: not imaginations but facts." As he himself was a precocious child and almost fanatical as a moralist he treats his characters not potentially but as actually mature. Their sins of omission and commission are visited with what Farrar imagines to be their fitting consequences. The ultimate ruin and early death of Eric, for example, are traced to his desire for popularity which prevented him from speaking out when, in dormitory he for the first time heard indecent words. That little matter, that beginning of evil, will be like the snow flakes. Little by little temptations grow stronger, character weaker, and consequences more frightful, till even repentance comes too late for this life though Christ's mercy is promised thereafter. Eric learns how his mother has died of grief and despair at his ruin:

"Oh, I have killed her, I have killed my mother!" said Eric in a hollow voice, when he came to himself. "Oh God, forgive me, forgive me.'"[1]

One lays down the book with some sense of dissatisfaction. Involuntarily the question arises:

1.Eric, Part II, Ch.XIII

was this terrible punishment for the offences of one who is at heart a noble boy really necessary? Could there be no other solution to this problem of Eric's gradual alienation from God? Led by his evangelical puritanism Farrar presents even his angelic boy Russell dying young. As the century wore on this over-strained morality inevitably provoked a reaction an example of which is afforded by Kipling's "Stalky & Co." (1899) and D. F. T. Coke's "The Bending of a Twig": "Didn't I Eric 'em splendidly?" sneers Beetle of "Stalky & Co.", at what he regards as the maudlin sentimentalism and superior moral airs of the school prefects.[1] Two angelic deathbeds in Eric prove a puzzle to the young Marsh in the "Bending of a Twig":

> "Did he really care to be Russell any longer? Would he rather be the vicious Eric and keep alive? The two really pious boys had passed away. The vicious twelve year old Wildney who drank brandy and led the "Anti-Muffs" showed no symptoms of dying. The boy's gropings after moral truth are far more poignant than the philosophic quibblings of the full-grown man." 2.

It was because Eric appeared to be eminently calculated to involve a nervous and conscientious lad in all sorts of useless and injurious speculations that the Saturday Review was severely critical of it. Representing the commonsense tradition of the 18th century and foreshadowing the change to which Victorian emotionalism submitted itself from the 'Sixties onwards, the paper remarked that in Eric "The boys are

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1. Stalky & Co. Last Term.
2. The Bending of a Twig, Part I, Ch. II

always getting worse or better, they seem never to enjoy themselves quietly for a moment."[1]

F. Austey's "Vice Versa" (1882) is important as an indication of the lowering of the emotional temperature after the 'Sixties. Relations between the old and the young were marked by greater freedom and naturalness of feelings. The century which began so grimly for children went out, as Max Beerbohm remarked "in a cloud of pinafore".[2] Fantastic in conception and facetious in its treatment, "Vice Versa" has an undercurrent of serious criticism as suggested by its sub-title. "A Lesson for Fathers". Dick Bulditude ill-treated at Dr. Grimstone's private school wants to join a public school. His father withholds his consent. Prevented by his age and love of ease from entering into the troubles of his son, Mr. Bulditude. expatiates on "the innocent games and delights of boyhood". Through an Indian charm, by a thoughtless wish uttered by Mr. Bulditude in a moment of tolerant superiority, the roles of father and son are inverted. This change is confined to their outward form and appearance and productive of many comic situations. After Mr. Bulditude has experienced in his own person the real trials of a private school he readily agrees to his son going to a public school and begins to value the new understanding which from this experience he has gained between himself and his son. The individual scenes in the book, in spite of their

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1.Saturday Review, VI, 453. Nov. 1858
2.Works (Heinemann, 1922) Vol.III, More

humorous garb, faithfully reproduce some aspects of life at a private school. Some of the situations are so realistically imagined and the atmosphere of suspense so well-managed that it is not surprising that Sir Winston Churchill, during his own escape from the Boer prison camp, thought of Paul Bulditude's escape from school in "Vice Versa".[1]

Both "Tom Brown's Schooldays" and "Eric" were inspired by Dr. Arnold's principles which were, the Saturday Review believed, widely adopted at public schools of the period. Later the influence of Dr. Arnold's teaching was very much modified by the prominence assigned to games in school life. Games, as we have seen, figure largely in Hughes' book, but they seem to have played a smaller part in the corporate life of the school and were far less organised than they are today. In "Tom Brown's Schooldays" Tom, the captain of the school eleven, is talking about Arnold and Aristophanes while his school is playing against the M.C.C. and does not know that it is his turn to go in. Today that would be an inconceivable situation. During the latter part of the century emphasis shifted from the moral and religious side of school life, as implied in Dr. Arnold's theory of education, to games and team spirit. This is well exemplified in "Gerald Eversley's Friendship"[2] (1895). whose theme is the adoration felt by the pious and scholarly Gerald for the athletic and essentially

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1. My Early Life (London, 1930), Ch.XXI, p.287
2. Rev.J.E.C. Welldon: Gerald Eversley's Friendship

pagan Harry. The latter was like so many English boys when they enter upon public school life, a splendid animal, healthy, vigorous, proud, elate, with no low tastes, possibly without any high aims, taking life as it came and being content to enjoy it fully. Such a boy was well-qualified to make his mark at a public school, where social opinion pays homage to physical qualities and performances and the achievements of the intellect, if they stand alone, are but little appreciated. For Gerald, a delicate shy, unsophisticated scholar, public school life, though far milder than it was in the days of Tom Brown, still proves the modern bed of Procrustes. His eccentric dress, singular piety, and intellectual interests meet with little sympathy from his schoolfellows who but for his friendship with Harry would have driven him to the verge of despair. His helplessness itself is a title to the service of a generous soul like Harry's. And there arises in his mind "A passionate admiration, a sentiment akin to hero-worship, for the boy, his inferior in intellect but so brilliant, so prominent in the common ways of school life."[1] He wins a Balliol scholarship while Harry is elected to the cricket and football elevens but the former's singular attachment to the latter grows still deeper and holier with the passage of time. At the Communion service of their last Sunday in the school we see the two friends kneeling side by side.

1.Id. Chap.V

How sports become a part of the glorious tradition of a public school and inspire an unbounded enthusiasm among its alumni is evident from the vivid description of a cricket match in H. A. Vachell's "The Hill" (1905) Things may be looking black in South Africa, but (shades of Drake') Kruger and his troublesome Boers can wait until the match against Eton is decided. "The Rev. Septimus would tell you quite simply that he would sooner see the match and his old friends than go to Palestine; and the Rev. Septimus has yearned to visit Palestine ever since he left Cambridge, and it is not likely that this great wish will ever be gratified."[1]

With "Stalky & Co." (1899) we may fitly close our examination of public schools in Victorian fiction. For it heralds the almost complete break-away from the ideals and values of the Victorian era. There is nothing of hero-worship, no preoccupation with religious or moral issues, athletic or intellectual interests to interfere with its free and lively treatment of school life from rather an unusual angle. The world in other public schools, Major General L C. Dunsterville,[2] the original of Stalky points out, was not in the least like that depicted in "Stalky & Co." The United Services College, Westward Ho, which the originals of "Stalky & Co." attended was but four or five years old when Kipling joined it. Its semi-military character, lack of tradition, and inclusion

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1.The Hill, Ch.XII Lords 2. Stalky, Reminiscences. p.25

of "hard cases" rejected from other schools made it an exceptional institution. "Even by the standards of those days," Kipling writes, "it was most primitive in its appointments." But he hdds that "it was clean with a cleanliness that I had never heard of in any other school." Cornell Price the headmaster to whom the book is dedicated, was a man of rare tact and well-aware of the danger of unduly repressing the youth ex-uberance of animal spirits. Hence, says Kipling, "the wideness of our bounds and his deaf ear toward our incessant riots and wars between the Houses".[1] The reading of "Stalky & Co." evoked some disquieting thoughts in A. C. Benson. The headmaster seemed to him to be without religion and King an uncommonly bad specimen of schoolmaster.[2] The comparative freedom from religious preaching at his school Kipling does not hold to be a drawback. "It is not always expedient," he writes,"to excite a growing youth's religious emotions because one set of nerves seems to communicate with others and Heaven knows what mines a "pi-jaw" may touch off" His defence of his English classics master, the original of King, is characteristic: "One learns more from a good scholar in rage than from a score of lucid and laborious drudges."[3] In respect of its prevailing spirit, and the widely divergent characters of its staff and students, Kipling's school is admittedly

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1. Something of Myself, p.23
2. The Upton Letters (1905) 102 ff.
3. Op.cit. 31 ff.

untypical. The picture based upon it owes to this fact some of its exceptional features. But "Stalky & Co." is a work of fiction and not a historical record. "Stalky himself was never so clever as P portrayed in the book," confesses Dunsterville.[1] "Those wild doings do not depict Kipling's real school-days," asserts G. C. Beresford.[2] The chief figures, realistic though they are, are imaginative and poetic in conception. Kipling had idealised them and so lifted them above the level where we can question their conduct or measure it by standards of conventional morality or probability. The story, free from any kind of ulterior motive whatever is characterised by a breadth of sympathy and indulgent understanding of the boy's point of view on such diverse subjects as work and play, prep., prefects and school rules. Stalky and his cronies are average boys of their type, who for all their high spirits are wholesome minded. Against any form of pedantry or sneaking which masks itself as discipline or vigilance, they wage, on the intellectual plane, war to the knife with housemasters and prefects. But a simple and direct approach made to them seldom fails in its effect. It is these manly lads, possessing no outstanding qualities but remarkable for their daring, resourcefulness, and esprit de corps, who, Kipling suggests, held the outposts of the British Empire. Stalky who had, by way of revenge, set a

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1. Op.Cit, p.25
2. Schooldays with Kipling, p.91

drunken carrier to demolish the window of the offending master's room and break his ornaments, duplicates that trick over again fifteen years later in a campaign against the Afghan tribes on the Indian frontier.

" 'There's nobody like Stalky,' said Dick Four.

'That's just where you make a mistake,' I said, 'India is full of Stalkies - Cheltenham and Haileybury and Marlborough chaps - that we don't know anything about, and the surprises will begin when there is a really big row.' " 1

The author of the Barrack Room Ballads here immortalises the ordinary schoolboy who was the real human material upon which the greatness of Britain was founded. It is this aspect of "Stalky & Co." which has called forth from a German critic the remark that "Stalky & Co." is:

"Der Roman, der durch das wilde Gewirr des Schullbens zwischen den Etappen: Korpsgeist, Patriotismus, Emperialismus, den roten Faden den Entwicklung spannt." 2

1. Stalky & Co. - Slaves of the Lamp, Parts I & II
2. Fehr Die englische Literatur des 19 und 20 Jahrhunderts, quoted by Koenig op.cit. p.57

THE RELIGIOUS ASPECT

VII. In the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord

VIII. The Puritan Tradition

IX. A Family Chronicler

VII.

IN THE NURTURE AND ADMONITION OF THE LORD

THE RELIGION OF THE HOME

VII.

"In the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord" The Religion of the Home.

"No one," writes Ensor,[1] "will ever understand Victorian England who does not appreciate that among highly civilised, in contradiction to more primitive countries, it was one of the most religious that the world has known." The particular type of Christianity which, with its peculiarly direct emphasis upon conduct came to dominate churchmen and non-conformists alike, may, according to Ensor, be broadly termed evangelicalism. And evangelicalism, says Charles Smyth[2] quoting Archdeacon Cunningham, was the religion of the home. Following in the wake of Methodism and having somewhat the same inspiration, the Evangelical Revival within the Church re-awakened individual piety and stimulated associated and corporate action.

Of the position of the Established Church of England, it was remarked that though the fabric was yet standing, her religious life scarcely survived.[3] There was little to distinguish the clergy from the laity, and the "Squarson" in Sydney Smith's facetious phrase was the ideal clergyman. In the year of Wesley's conversion (1738) Bishop Berkeley deplored the moral and spiritual stagnation and declared that morality and religion in Britain had collapsed "to a degree that has never been known in any Christian country." "The youth," he averred, "born and brought

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1. Ensor, R.C.K.: England 1870-1914 (Oxford) 1936, p.137
2. Simeon and Church Order, p.20
3. Paul Thureau-Dangin: The English Catholic Revival in the Nineteenth Century (1914), Col.I, p.4

up in wicked times without any bias to good from early principle, or instilled opinion, when they grow ripe, must be monsters indeed. And it is to be feared that the age of monsters is not far off."[1] A large proportion of the poor remained untaught and spiritually uncared for, who had yet inherited a tradition of the old theology. Wesley's teaching, plain, simple, and level to the lowest capacity, gave just the necessary impulse and "the refuse cast aside took fire by spontaneous combustion."[2] So close is the historical relationship between "Methodism" and "Evangelicalism" that almost, says J. W. Bready,[3] they may be considered as cause and effect. The Methodist crusade reacted on the Church of England and dissenting denominations. It stirred some among the clergy to a discharge of neglected duties lest their parishioners should be drawn away to Wesleyan conventicles. Methodist preachers were as yet unpopular, but they appeared to Byng as useful in their character of Opposition to the Church as is the Opposition in Parliament. "Active Orators, keeping Vigilant Observation, and Preventing any Idleness in, or abuse of their Authority; and so tending effectually to the Preservation of our Rights, as these Methodistical preachers do to the conservation of Religion."[4]

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1. Discourse addressed to Magistrates and Men in Authority Works ed. by A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop (Nelson, 1953) Vol.VI, p. 221
2. Stephen, Sir Leslie: History of English Thought in the Nineteenth century, Vol.II, p.424
3. England Before and After Wesley, p.289
4. The Torrington Diaries, Vol.IVm p.105

Johnson commended their plain and familiar manner of preaching which is the only way, he said, to do good to the common people. "When your Scotch clergy," he observed to Boswell, "give up their homely manner, religion will soon decay in that country."[1] Referring to the abiding influence of Methodism on English life Sir C. G. Robertson[2] writes that Wesley kept the English people Christian. Wesley's appeal, however, was confined to the ignorant and uncivilised. It was the Evangelicals within the Church who by their sincerity and practical piety transformed, to a large extent, the character of society.

To Clapham, the evangelical world, says F. W. Cornish,[3] looked as to a Protestant Mecca, where "every human interest had its guardian, every region of the globe its representative."[4] William Wilberforce (1759-1833) was the very sun of the Claphamic system. Round him gathered men and women notable for their active charity and the beauty of holiness: Henry Thornton (1760-1815); Zachary Macaulay (1768-1813); Lord Teignmouth (1751-1834): John Venn (1759-1813); James Stephen (1759-1832); Charles Simeon (1759-1836) and Hannah More (1745-1833), to name only some. They restored the old tradition of Puritan seriousness and strictness of life, set an example of unobtrusive godliness and raised the level of family life in

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1. Boswell's Life of Johnson ed. by G. B. Hill (Oxford, 1934-50) Vol. I., p.460
2. England Under the Hanoverians (Methuen, 1934) 11th edition, p.210
3. The English Church in the Nineteenth Century (Macmillan, 1910) Part I, p.12
4. Stephen, Sir James, Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography.

England. The revival of family worship, neglected since the Restoration, was one of the most signal and the most gracious of their triumphs.

The character of the evangelical society is best exemplified in Hannah More's writings. Called by Garrick "Nine" as an embodiment of all the muses, and by Johnson as the most powerful Versifacatrix in the English Language, flattered, admired and courted in the best social and literary circles of her day, she gradually retired from the world of fashion and gaieties, in order to devote herself more completely to good works. Her courage was one of her finest qualities. At the beginning of 1788 she published "Thoughts on the Manners of the Great". Thoroughly acquainted as she had been with the higher ranks of society she was well qualified to speak upon their private and domestic habits of life. Christianity, she never failed to point out, is a religion of motives and principles. She therefore, denounces in particular the sins of omission, of "inconsideration", and "carelessness" to which the upper and middle classes reconciled their conscience by the qualifying phrase "that there is no harm" and which they palliate by "gentle names". It is because the fashionable world does not practise the Christian religion which it professes that its manners, customs, and diversions most in vogue cannot but shock an unprejudiced

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spectator. Boys of school age frequent race meetings and gaming tables. The almost infant daughters even of wise and virtuous mothers, (a late innovation) are carried off to an interminable round of Baby Balls.[1] In "Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education" (1799) she again expounds and illustrates her thesis that religion is the only sure ground of morals; that private principle is the only solid basis of public virtue. Though her recommendation of propriety as the first, the second, the third requisite to a woman sounds antiquated, her exhortation to mothers has not yet lost its relevance. They have, she says, "a power wide in its extent, indefinite in its effects, and inestimable in its importance - of infusing the first principles of piety into the tender minds who may one day be called to instruct, not families merely, but districts; to influence not individuals but senates." She maintains, however, the puritanic doctrine of human corruption, and condemns the prevailing systems of education as tending to weaken that principle. "Is it not a fundamental error to consider children as innocent beings, whose little weaknesses may perhaps want correction, rather than as beings who bring into the world a corrupt nature and evil dispositions which it should be the great end of education to rectify?"[2] Anna Seward, "the Swan of Lichfield" regarded this doctrine of original sin as represented by Mrs. Hannah More, Mr.

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1. An Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World, Ch.VI
2. Strictures, Ch.II

Wilberforce, etc. as a blasphemous supposition, founded only upon a few dark texts of St. Paul. "The violent passions, and tendency to evil, often apparent in the infant-state, are no proofs of a nature more corrupt than Adam's, they are but the prevalence of the bad tendencies which may be expected to prevail before reason acquires strength to resist them, and revelation extends its aid." The doctrine of original sin she declares to be contrary to Christ's teaching, inimical to the practice of virtue and productive of misery and despair.[1]

Mrs. More's social and political philosophy and her religious tenets prevented her from sharing Anna Seward's views or sympathising with the new theories of human rights and human perfectability. She thanked God that she lived in a country where, Christianity, driven out from the rest of the world, had still a "strong hold". The Rights of Man brought before her the alarming prospect of the Rights of Woman, and "according to the natural progression of human things", the Rights of Youth, the Rights of Children - the Rights of Babies! However mistaken her views, her remarks on religious instruction are worthy of consideration. She pleads for making religion as inviting and interesting as any other thing by example and lively discussion in which the child is not merely a passive hearer. "Teach them rather, as their Blessed Saviour taught,

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1. Letter to Mr. Whalley Nov.19th, 1801. Letters of Anna Seward Vol.V

by interesting parables - by seizing on surrounding objects, passing events, local circumstances, peculiar characters, apt illusions, just analogy, oppropriate illustration."[1] While some preach as if mankind had only intellect, others as if they had only passions, she would have an intelligent Christian address his pupils as beings compounded of both understanding and affections. Thus will religion grow an indwelling principle from which every act derives all its life, energy and beauty.

Mrs. More's stories which are intended to illustrate her views and raise the principles of the common people are remarkable for their realism, albeit weighted with didacticism. "The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain", "a story of real life", portrays the honest, laborious poor, struggling to bring up a family of six on eight shillings a week. To every question touching the hardship of his lot, the shepherd returns a cheerful answer. Absence of temptation, health, peace, liberty, reading the Bible, teaching it to his children, storing their memories with psalms and chapters: thus he lives in the fear and love of God and with a sure hope of heaven. He seems to us a living example of Sunday school teaching and a Sunday school teacher he ultimately becomes. Curious to observe how the pious shepherd spends his Sunday, Mr. Johnson a very worthy charitable gentleman pays a surprise visit.

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1. Strictures Ch.XII

> "The door being half open, he saw the shepherd, (who looked so respectable in Sunday coat, that he should hardly have known him) his wife, and their enormous young family drawing round their little table, which was covered with a clean though very coarse cloth. There stood on it a large dish of potatoes, a brown pitcher and a piece of coarse loaf. The wife and children stood in silent attention, while the shepherd with uplifted hands and eyes, devoutly begged the blessing of Heaven on their homely fare".

In the words of Charlotte Yonge, altogether an idyll of religious and frugality.[1] Such was the character of truly religious life as was, we are assured, actually lived by the honest and laborious poor, but what is more revealing, as it was ideally conceived by the rich. As an ideal of true religion, Wordsworth[2] presented to the English peasantry the picture of Scottish humble life as it is imperishably enshrined in Burns "The Cottar's Saturday Night":

> The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face
> They round the ingle, form a circle wide;
> The sire turns o'er wi' patriarchial grace
> The big ha' Bible once his father's pride.
> His bonnet reverently is laid aside,
> His lyart haffets wearing thin an' bare:
> Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide;
> He wales a portion with judicious care
> And "Let us worship God" he says with solemn air.
>
> (st.12)

> Then kneeling down, to Heaven's Eternal King,
> The saint, the father, and the husband prays:
> Hope springs exulting on triumphant wing,
> That thus they all shall meet in future days;
> There ever bask in uncreated rays,
> No more to sigh or shed the bitter tear,
> Together humning their Creator's praise
> In such society, yet still more dear;
> While circling time moves round in an eternal sphere.
>
> (St.16)

As an accurate picture of that part of Somerset-

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1. Charlotte M. Yonge: Hannah More (1888), p.113
2. Prose Works, ed. by Grosart, Vol.I, p.356

shire where Hannah More resided and where, by her benevolent zeal, a great reformation was effected among the poor inhabitants we have the spirited story of "Black Giles the Poacher". It exemplified also the spirit and the method of her Cheap Repository Tracts. The latter differ from other moral stories of the time by the predominance of the religious element. All bad actions are exhibited as transgression of the divine rather than human laws. Sufferings are borne not with philosophic stoicism but with the exaltation of a martyr. Dick the least depraved of the poacher's family is made an unwilling accomplice in the robbery of Widow Brown's red-streaked apples. Finding that his kind school friend is wrongly suspected and is about to be punished, his heart is touched by the schoolmaster's lesson on the Eighth Commandment and he comes out with full confession. The lesson itself is an excellent model of its kind and exemplifies Hannah More's principles of religious instruction as laid down in the "Strictures" The teacher by homely and telling details and lively discussion proceeds to show that in breaking one commandment the thief probably breaks not less than six out of the ten commandments. There is more action and exciting interest in this story than in most of them, and touches of humour too. Black Giles, sets off with his sons and their jackasses, laden with their stolen apples. Dick struck with remorse trots silently after the asses, while his father and

brothers laugh at having outwitted the godly ones. "They called him a sulky dog, and lashed the asses till they bled."

The Stanley Grove in "Coelebs in Search of a Wife" (1809) presents Evangelicalism as the religion of the home in an easy and attractive guise. Absence of striking incidents, characters lacking in variety, slight narrative barely serving to hold together the author's sentiments and observations, stiffness of dialogues - all these Hannah More herself acknowledges, but her object is to show how religion can inspire the quiet and regular course of domestic life "without impairing its activity, lessening its cheerfulness, or diminishing its usefulness." In the ordered lives of parents and children the "drudgery of the world", cards, play-going, dancing, polite conversation, are replaced by the habitual service of God, in which there was not only perfect freedom but abiding happiness. Coelebs, the newcomer, finds children who spend their time in steady work, affectionate intercourse, unremitting charities, gay and animated conversation. Morning and evening the parents call the household to family prayer. Daily they instruct the children in secular studies and in religious duties. The eighth birthday of Kate, one of the younger little girls is very prettily celebrated by a tea-drinking in a bower of the children's own planting. This marks for the happy Kate the day when she is to give up all her little story

books and to read such books as men and women read. For it is Mr. Stanley's opinion that the mass of children's books protract the imbecility of childhood "give forwardness without strength".[1] They inculcate morality and good actions on a wordly principle rather than a religious motive. "All morality which is not drawn from this scriptural source is weak, defective, and hollow." His mode of punishing his children for a fault is to curtail not their personal indulgences but their privileges of doing good to the poor. In all his dealing with the children Mr. Stanley is inspired by his supreme concern for the eternal welfare of each child's soul and by the sacredness of the trust committed to his charge. "A soul of such infinite faculties, which has a capacity for improving in holiness and happiness through all the countless ages of eternity."[2] But it is not to be supposed that Mr. Stanley's earnest piety robs his children of their innocent pleasures and turns them into "little melancholy recluses". They freely enjoy their innocent gambols playing, singing, laughing, dancing, reciting verses and their most healthful pleasures are connected with their gardens. It is from young Macaulay and his little sisters that Hannah More is supposed to have drawn her picture of Mrs. Stanley's children. For little Macaulay like Kate Stanley, had soon outgrown

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1.Ch. XXV
2.Ch.XXXI

the stage of gilt books with pictures. The parlour maid told how he used to sit in nankeen frock, perched on the table by her and expounding to her out of a volume as big as himself. At the age of eight he was writing a paper to persuade the people of Travancore to embrace the Christian religion.[1] Mr. Stanley's domestic system is thrown into sharp relief by its contrast to the rigid and gloomy household of Lady Aston on the one hand and the revolutionary and anarchic state of affairs at Mr. Reynolds on the other.

Coelebs, writes A.M.B. Meakin[2], is perhaps the most religious novel that ever was penned, at least by an able writer. According to Birrell, Mrs. More's religion lacks reality. Coelebs, he says, is as odious as it is absurd but he concedes that Hannah More is an explanatory author, helping you to understand how sundry people, who were old when you were young came to be the folk they were.[3] It is precisely from the latter viewpoint that her works have merited here some detailed consideration, for as M. G. Jones[4] points out, Hannah More's exposition of womanly duties and conduct left its mark on English life and literature throughout the 19th century. Hannah More's books and pamphlets paved the high roads to Victorianism, writes M. J. Quinlan in

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1.Trevelyan, G.O.: Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay, Vol.I, 27ff.
2.Hannah More (1911) p374
3.Birrell, A.: Collected Essays, Vol.II (1899) p.258
4.Hannah More (1952) p.195

"Victorian Prelude" and of "The Coelebs" he remarks that no single work better reveals the temper of early Victorians.[1] Writing to Hannah More in 1795 Horace Walpole closed his letter to her with "Adieu thou excellent woman! though reverse of that hyena in petticoats, Mrs. Wollstonecraft."[2] About three years before her death Hannah More had received a kind letter from the Duchess of Kent, telling her that the Princess Victoria had for three years been in possession of her works.[3] Not the radical spirit of the author of the "Vindication" but the conservative and evangelical of Hannah More's writings was destined to set the pattern in the English upper and middle class homes. Verbose and disgresive as "Coelebs in Search of a Wife" is, it is more closely representative of the typical Victorian family life than most other more sensational novels of the period. In the Preface to "Coelebs" Hannah More writes: "Love itself appears in these pages, not as an ungovernable impulse, but as a sentiment arising out of qualities calculated to inspire attachment in persons under the dominion of reason and religion, brought together by the ordinary course of occurences in a private family party." To judge from memoirs and biographies, this was the ideal of love and family life to which many happy evangelical families of England more or less conformed. The ideal finds

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1.Op.cit., p.149
2.Letters. ed, by Miss Paget Toynbee, (Oxford, 1905) Vol.XV,p.337
3.cf. Meakin op.cit.p.395

its best poetic expression in Milton:

> Hail wedded Love, mysterious Law, true source
> Of human offspring, sole proprietie
> In Paradise of all things common else
> By thee adulterous lust was driv'n from man
> Among the bestial herds to raunge, by thee
> Founded in Reason, Loyal, Just, and Pure
> Relations dear, and all the Charities [1]
> Of Father, Son, and Brother first were known.

That the typical Victorian parent was not Mr. Barrett of Wimpole Street, Canon Charles Smyth reminds us and remarks that the real strength of Evangelicalism lay in the home and that it was in the hearts of the Victorian mothers that the Evangelical piety won the most signal and the most gracious of its triumphs.[2] With all attendant evils of a domestic system of education, at once too formal and too luxurious, adopted by his mother who had, says Ruskin, solemnly "dedicated me to God before I was born", Ruskin writes:

> "Walter Scott and Pope's Homer were reading of my own election, and my mother forced me, by steady daily toil, to learn long chapters of the Bible by heart; as well as to read it every syllable through, aloud, hard names and all, from Genesis to the Apocalypse, about once a year: and to that discipline - patient, accurate, and resolute - I owe, not only a knowledge of the book, which I find occasionally serviceable, but much of my general power of taking pains, and the best part of my taste in literature."[3]

For the best and truest beginning of all blessings, he had been taught the perfect meaning of Peace, in thought, act, and word. "I never heard my father's or mother's voice once raised in any question with each other, nor seen an angry, or even slightly hurt

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1. Paradise Lost, Book. IV, ll. 750-57
2. Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians 1949
3. Praeterita. pp. 2,3

or offended glance in the eyes of either."[1] To one of his sons at Oxford Gladstone wrote a little paper of suggestions on the religious duties of daily prayer in the morning and evening and daily reading of some portion of the Holy Scripture and the beneficial habit of frequent and inwardly turning the thoughts to God for his aid and guidance. Fathers, writes Morley, are generally wont to put their better mind into counsels to their sons. In this instance he adds, the counsellor was the living pattern of his own maxims.[2]

1.Id., p.59
2.John Morley : The Life of W. E. Gladstone Vol.I, p.206

VIII.

THE PURITAN TRADITION

VIII.

The Puritan Tradition

The doctrine of the corruption of man's nature, disparagement of the works of imagination, the conception of God as the God of righteousness rather than the God of love, tended to a repressive system of early upbringing. This seems to have been the case particularly with some non-conformist sects. The children of high and low degree of the Church of England or dissenters, baptised in infancy or not, joined together, as Dr. Watts hoped, in his "Divine Songs". A favourite piece for recitation by young Dickens was one of Dr. Watt's songs.[1] "Divine and Moral Songs" are listed in the publications of the Religious Tract Society.[2] The temper inspiring these songs and sought to be inculcated is indicated by Dr. Watt's "Discourse on the Education of Children and Youth". "They may be taught, that their very natures are very sinful, that it is the Holy Spirit of God who must cure the evil temper of their own spirits and make them holy and fit to dwell with God in heaven." This article, the Doctor says, is mentioned in the first place, not only because it is a matter of the highest importance, and of most universal concern to all, but because it may be taught in these early years of life. Typical of this attitude may be quoted the following:

> 'Tis dang'rous to provoke a God!
> His pow'r and vengeance none can tell;
> One stroke of his almighty rod
> Shall send young sinners quick to hell (Song 13.Danger of Delay)

1.Forster, J.: op.cit., p.21
2.Green, S.G.: The Story of R.T.S. (1899)

How the evangelical creed could easily ally itself with imperialism is here foreshadowed:

'Lord, I ascribe it to thy grace,
And not to chance as others do,
That I was born of Christian race,
And not a heathen or a Jew. (Song. 6. Praise for the Gospel)

The children of his century, we are told,[1] regarded Wesley with affection and reverence and readily responded to his presence and preaching. We may quote from Southey's "Life of Wesley", his notions concerning children. "Break their will betimes," he says, "begin this work before they can run alone, before they can speak plain, perhaps before they can speak at all. Whatever pains it costs, break the will if you would not damn the child. Let a child from a year old be taught to fear the rod and cry softly." He exhorts parents never to commend their children for anything; and says "that in particular they should labour to convince them of atheism, and show them that they do not know God, love him, delight in him and enjoy him; any more than do the beasts that perish! "[2]

In the writings of Dickens we see the working out of these ideas in their full rigour. Dickens's early experience of church-going at Chatham determined in a very marked way his attitude to religion. Next door to his home in St. Mary's Terrace was a sort of little Bethel. His mother, like Mr. Weller

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1. The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley. Edit. Nehemiah Curnock. Vol. V p.262
2. Robert Southey: The Life of Wesley (1820) Vol. II, pp 520, 521

may have fallen under the influence of these people.[1] What he suffered from these divines we learn from his paper on "City of London Churches" in "The Uncommercial Traveller":

> "Time was when I was carried off to platform assemblages at which no human child, whether of wrath or grace, could keep its eyes open, and when I felt the fatal sleep stealing over me, and when I gradually heard the orator in possession, spinning and humming like a great top, until he rolled, collapsed, and tumbled over, and I discovered to my burning shame and fear that as to that last stage it was not he, but I. I have sat under Boanerges when he has specifically addressed to us - us, the infants - and at this present writing... I behold his big round face and look up the inside of his outstretched coat sleeve as if it were a telescope with the stopper on, and I hate him with an unwholesome hatred for two hours."

Not finding his mother at home, Kit takes his way to a dissenting chapel frequented by her:

> "The baby in her arms was as fast asleep as she; and little Jacob, whose youth prevented him from recognising in this prolonged spiritual nourishment anything half as interesting as oysters, was alternately very fast asleep and very wide awake, as his inclination to slumber, or his terror of being personally alluded to in the discourse gained the mastery over him." [2]

Mr. and Miss Murdstone, professing to be religious have between them nearly reduced the little David to a state of dullness and sullen desperation. Recalling one of his childhood Sundays in the church David writes: "I listen to Miss Murdstone's mumbling the responses and emphasising all the dread words with a cruel relish - Again if I move a finger or

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1.cf.P. Fitzgerald: The Life of Charles Dickens, 1905, Vol.I
2.The Old Curiosity Shop, Ch.XLI

relax a muscle of my face, Miss Murdstone pokes me with her prayer book and makes my sides ache."[1] The meekest of little men, Mr. Chillip quotes Mrs. Chillip, saying that what such people miscall their religion is a vent for their bad humours and arrogance. "And do you know I must say, Sir," he remarks to David, "that I don't find authority for Mr. and Miss Murdstone in the New Testament." Even before the Murdstones cast their baleful shadow on David's early childhood, his religious training has not proved a source of happiness to him. One Sunday night his mother reads him and Peggotty how Lazarus was raised up from the dead. He is so frightened that they are afterwards obliged to take him out of bed and show him the quiet churchyard out of the bedroom window, with the dead all lying in their graves at rest, below the solemn moon.[2]

On Esther Summerson the puritanic code presses with more than its usual severity. "Submission, self-denial, diligent work, are the preparations for a life begun with such a shadow on it. You are different from other children, Esther, because you were not born, like them, in common sinfulness and wrath. You are set apart." So the pious and strict godmother pronounces her judgment. Under a crushing sense of guilt, constraint, and isolation Esther has no one to open her heart to but her "faithful Dolly".[3]

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1. David Copperfield, Ch.LIX 2. Id. Ch.III
3. Bleak House, Chap.III

Caddy, tortured by her pious and philanthropic Mother, Mrs. Jellyby, is rendered stubborn, rebellious despairing: "I wish I was dead! I wish all were dead!"[1]

Arther Clenham describes his parents as professors of a stern religion. His childhood is recalled in these terms:

> "Austere faces, inexorable discipline, penance in this world and terror in the next, nothing graceful or gentle anywhere, and the void in my cowed heart everywhere." [2]

A Sunday evening in London reminds him of the dreary Sunday of his childhood, when he sat with his hands before him, scared out of his senses by a horrible tract which commenced business with the poor child by asking him in its title why he was going to perdition? Thus he grows up with no more real knowledge of the beneficent history of the New Testament than if he had been bred among idolators.[3] Mrs. Clenham who regards herself elected to reclaim "the otherwise predestined and lost boy" had herself been brought up strictly and straitly. "The corruption of our hearts, the evil of our ways, the curse that is upon us, the terrors that surround us - these were the themes of my childhood."[4]

In the accounts of the childhood of his heroes always representative of his genius at its best, Dickens as W. Kent[5] points out, never introduces religious training as a source of happiness. P.

1.Id. Ch.IV 2.Little Dorrit, Ch.II
3.Id. Ch.III 4.Id. Book III, Ch.XXX
5.Dickens and Religion, (1930) p.12

Fitzgerald[1] suggests that Dickens's attitude to religion was very largely determined by his own early unhappy experience of chapel-going at Chatham. "It made him judge the whole by a corrupt portion and detest all formal sects." His references to the ceremonies of the Anglican church are made in a spirit which is in marked contrast to that of the Oxford Movement. In the Bloomsbury Christening, the ceremony is reduced to a formal pretence, 'to renounce the devil and all his works'. - "all that sort of thing" - as little Kitterbell said, - "in less than no time".[2] In his letter requesting Walter Landor to be godfather to his fourth child, the ceremoney is spoken of as only a means of enabling him to form a relationship with friends.[3] Dickens's will, cited by his biographers as his professioh of religion, affords according to Jackson,[4] no satisfactory evidence on the point, and it is argued that the pious phraseology in it is to be explained as a legal safeguard against the Blasphemy Laws. Though Dickens had little use for religious forms or religious mysteries there is no mistaking the Christian spirit that pervades his writings. It is from this viewpoint that Dickens has been described as "one of the greatest of our Christian writers" whose religious message seems to be "In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of my brethren, ye have done it

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1.Op.cit., p.59 2. Sketches by Boz
3.Forster, J.: Life of Charles Dickens (1872) Vol.I. p.224
4.See T. A. Jackson: Charles Dickens (1937)

unto Me."[1]

In a letter to his youngest son, who was leaving home for Australia, Dickens wrote:

> "Never take a mean advantage of anyone in any transaction, and never be hard upon people who are in your power. Try to do to others as you would have them do to you, and do not be discouraged if they fail sometimes. It is much better for you that they should fail in obeying the greatest rule laid down by Our Saviour than that you should. I put a New Testament among your books for the very same reasons, and with the very same hopes, that made me write an easy account of it for you, when you were a little child - Never abandon the wholesome practice of saying your own private prayers, night and morning. I have never abandoned it myself, and I know the comfort of it."[2]

What repelled Dickens were the unseemly squabbles of the churchmen and dissenters, all obtrusive professions of and tradings in religion which seemed to him to retard the true Christian work of redeeming the neglected and untaught children at home. Over-sentimentalised as the death-bed of Poor Joe is, it serves to embody Dickens's protest against the conventional attitude adopted by the Anglican and Nonconformists to the grave problems of poverty and ignorance. That for many a nameless urchin growing up neglected in the streets of London and elsewhere religion could have little meaning or reality is exemplified in Deputy, the destructive little imp in "The Mystery of Edwin Drood".

> "When they say to me in the Lock-up, a-going to put me down in the book, 'What's your name?' I says to them, 'Find out.' Likewise when they says, 'What's your religion?' I says, 'Find out.' Which it may be observed in the passing it would be immensely difficult for the State, however statistical, to do."[3]

1.The Dickensian. Oct.1926, Vol.XXII, p.258 2.Forster: Life,p.819
3.The Mystery of Edwin Drood Ch.XXIII

Whether it was due to his own neglected childhood, or his preoccupation with social problems clamorous for solution, religion plays but a minor part in Dickens's novels. The subject is well summed up by Kent with the remark that in Dickens there is no attempt to depict a human life lived with constant reference to the will of God, the pattern of Christ, and the duty of prayer and worship.[1]

"The Way of All Flesh", a novel written as far back as 1872-1884, though it was not published till 1903, presents rather an iconoclastic approach to parent-child relationship under the Puritan tradition.

On the one hand we have in Ernest's father, a man, conscious of being ill-suited to his profession, with no affection for children or sympathy with their minds, and firmly persuaded of the necessity of orthodoxy and puritanic severity, especially as these served to safeguard his comforts and privileges. Ernest, on the other hand, is a weakly, sensitive, and affectionate child: "he doted upon his nurse, on kittens and puppies, and on all things that would do him the kindness of allowing him to be fond of them." Overton, a detached and not too friendly observer who is also the boy's godfather tells the story, giving a sarcastic edge to his account and reflections. In keeping with the then universally admitted principle: "Break the child's self will betimes." Ernest is brought up under a system of

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1.Op.cit. p.125

repressive discipline.

> "Before Ernest could well crawl he was taught to lisp the Lord's Prayer and the general confession. How was it possible that these things could be taught too early? If his attention flagged or his memory failed him, here was an ill weed which would grow apace, unless it were plucked out immediately, and the only way to pluck it out was to whip him.." [1]

The system is seen in its full rigour on Sundays. The Sabbath is strictly observed. The young people may not cut out things nor use their paintbox, nor play with their toys. They are indulged however, to choose their favourite hymns. Ernest repeatedly pronouncing 'come' as 'tum' is visited with severe chastisement.

> "'I have sent him up to bed,' said Theobald, as he returned to the drawing room, 'and now, Christina, I think we will have the servants in to prayers,' and he rang the bell for them, red-handed as he was."

The incident provokes Overton's sardonic humour but Theobald justifies himself and says: "Please do not laugh, Overton, it will make the boy think it does not matter, and it matters a great deal." To the parent who believes it is his sacred duty to crush his child's self-will, small occasions are as important as great ones.

What sets up in the child the automatic reaction of resentment is not so much the repressive discipline of parental authority as his father's want of affection and his mother's betraying his confidences and always siding with his father. Until he is fourteen Ernest's life at home and school is

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1. The Way of All Flesh S. Butler. Ch.XX

dominated by a conventional middle-class priggishness and puritanical morality. His conscious and reflecting self bids him act in accordance with them. Butler however, holds "that it is our less conscious thoughts and our less conscious actions which mainly mould our lives". And Ernest's inner yet inarticulate self insists that his conscious self is "a prig begotten of prigs and trained in priggishness."[1] What his inner self feels is disclosed in his musings after his parents have left him at Dr. Skinner's school. His Papa and Mamma are so good and wise, while he is always doing naughty things and can never hope to be like them. He hates Papa and does not like Mamma. He does not like Sunday nor his Bible readings. The Catechism is awful. It seems to him that he has duty towards everybody but that nobody has any duty towards him.[2] In Butler's view the Catechism is the work of one who did not like children and is written too exclusively from the parental point of view.[3]

"The complexes are formed by the time a child has reached the age of six." writes Charles Baudouin.[4] The dominant emotional pattern thus early established in Ernest explains his growing alienation from his parents and even from the family as an ideal. At seven years of age he is looking forward to having a natural child. In his mature years he has arrived

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1. Id. Chap.XXXI 2. Id. Ch.XXIX
3. Id. Ch.VII
4. The Mind of the Child

at the conclusion that there is no inherent love for the family system on the part of nature herself.[1] According to Mrs. R. S. Garnett,[2] Butler's aim in "The Way of All Flesh" was much wider than to drdw a picture of his early years. "He wanted to expose the whole generation and ideals of the age that had formed him."

"The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford" (1889) and Gosse's "Father and Son" (1907) furnish two remarkably illuminating studies of childhood brought up under a puritan tradition which as yet retained something of the old rigour and reality before it was replaced by the late 19th century "culture" and the path of religion, as W. Hale White puts it, was made flowery.[3]

Mark Rutherford was brought up in a "moderate Calvinism" when the rigours of the iron law of predestination had a little abated. He lived much in the open air. "The recollections of boyhood, so far as week-days go," he writes, "are very happy." "I remember whole afternoons in June, July, and August, passed naked or almost naked in the solitary meadows and in the water."[4] Sunday, however, was not happy. Parents, rigid Calvinistic Independents, did not tolerate any book more secular than the Evangelical Magazine. Not a letter was opened un - less it was clearly evident that it was not on

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1. Op.cit. Ch.XXIV
2. Samuel Butler (1926) p.8
3. The Early Life of Mark Rutherford (Oxford, 1913) p.78
4. The Autobiogrpahy, Ch.I

business. Even in the coldest weather hot dinner other than a boiled suet pudding was not permitted. After family prayer and breakfast they attended the Sunday School. They then went to the chapel where three services were held every Sunday, besides intermitting prayer meetings. Each service consisted of hymns, reading the Bible, a long meandering prayer followed by a sermon the theme of which was pretty much the same from January to December. Mark found the service extremely dreary and endured it by tracing curious designs on the flap of the pew. Evening service was still more trying for the child, for he could hardly keep awake, conscious as he was of the sin of sleeping under the Gospel. As a deacon, his father was a lay-preacher and took him on his rounds in the villages. His religious education, notwithstanding its drawbacks, did confer upon him, he acknowledges, some positive advantages, chief of which he counts a rigid regard for truthfulness and purity of life. Impurity was looked upon not merely as an exuusable weakness to be visited with some remote psychological penalties but a sin for which dreadful punishment was reserved. In this he found a strong weapon against temptation. He recommends that parents, by slight yet constant pressure, exercised directly and indirectly should form an antipathy in their children to brutish selfish sensuality.

At fourteen Mark Rutherford became "converted". Of this change supposed to have taken place in his

soul he writes:

> "I had to be a 'child of God', and after a time professed myself to be one, but I cannot call to mind that I was anything else than I had always been." [1]

To this creed he ascribes the following consequences: preoccupation with self, and a certain hypocrisy in professing what he did not feel or understand. It falls beyond the scope of this essay to trace Mark Rutherford's later spiritual development, his intellectual discord, his moral distress and his gradually learning the truth concerning God that "Thy way is in deep waters and thy footsteps are not known."[2]

Edmund Gosse describes his "Father and Son" (1907) as "the diagnosis of dying Puritanism, a study of the development of moral and intellectual ideas during the progress of infancy."[3] It is a literary document of supreme value, revealing as it does, with a singular frankness, not only the shortcomings, but also the pure and virile strength, of Puritan traditions. The reader is deeply impressed by the ceaseless solicitude and jealous watchfulness with which the parents follow their son's earthly career with a view to his spiritual salvation. After his mother's death when the son takes up his residence in London, the father writes:

> "You were left as a solemn charge- to bring you up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. That responsibility I have sought constantly

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1.Id. Ch.I p.72
2.Taylor, A.F.: The Novels of Mark Rutherford E.S.A. (1914) Vol.IV
3.Father and Son Preface

> before me - in my choice of a housekeeper, in my choice of a school, in my ordering your holidays, in my choice of a second wife, in my choice of an occupation for you - and in multitudes of lesser things - I have sought to act for you, not in the light of this present world, but with a view to Eternity." [1]

Shortly after the birth of their child the parents dedicate him to the Lord.

> "Around my tender and unconscious spirit was flung the luminous web, the light and elastic but impermeable veil, which it was hoped would keep me unspotted from the world." [2]

In a family life characterised by such perfect purity, self-abnegation, and earnest piety, yet not without some narrowness and isolation, the childish tastes find little or no indulgence. Story books and toys are sternly excluded. In his fourth year the child learns by heart hymns, psalms, and chapters of scripture. He reads aloud to his sick mother Newton on the Apocalypse. Almost their only relaxation the parents find in the literal interpretation of the Book of Revelation. Their faith, though not mystic, is yet profoundly serene. What a lesson in heroic resignation it must have been to the child when his mother endures the awful agony of her fatal disease and dies without rebellion, without repining, repeating the words: "We shall be one family, one song. One Song! One Family!"

Submission to the Divine Will is instilled and enforced in the child both by example and experience. His little aches and ailments are ascribed to divine chastisement. Disturbing his father praying by his

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1. Id. Epilogue 2. Ch. I

sick bed by screaming "Papa! Papa!" at the sight of a beetle, he is severely reproved:

> "If your heart were fixed, if it panted after the Lord, it would take more than the movement of a beetle to make you disturb oral supplication at His footstool." [1]

His religious instructions as carried on by his father are almost exclusively doctrinal and aimed at forcing his spiritual growth. At ten years he is admitted, after "public baptism as an adult" to the Saints. To the devout brethren he is a vessel fit to contain the Holy Spirit. But to himself, a child utterly detached and analytical and repressed he is no more than an "adroit little pitcher." The public baptism is a turning point. After that the rift between the two temperaments slowly widens. As an âme d'élite it is now his duty to speak increasingly "in season and out of season of the blood of Jesus", but his heart never responds to these pious phrases with any inner conviction. Writing of this period Williamson recalls that being a playmate with him was like trying to play with Almighty God![2] Backsliding of some brethren, his father's second marriage, interest in literature and fine arts mark the son's gradual sundering from the faith in which he had been trained. But as the Hon. Evan Charteris[3] points out, the difference between Father and Son was mainly one of form rather than of substance. "Edmund recoiled from what was bleak and puritanical in his father's creed, but he still

1.Ch.VII 3. The Life and Letters of Sir Edmund Gosse, p.16
2.London Mercury Oct.1928, Vol.XVIII, p.634

clung to the core of Christian belief which glowed within it." And it is also to be remembered that across this spiritual divergence was thrown the bridge of tenderest memories and the deepest affection that still existed between Father and Son. A near parallel in literature of affection that binds parent and child in spite of division is seen in Mrs. Browning's relation to her father. She wrote to Mr. Browning:

> "But what you do not see, what you cannot see, is the deep tender affection behind and below all those patriarchal ideas governing grown up children 'in the way they must go!' and there never was (under the strata) a truer affection in a father's heart....no, nor a worthier heart in itself - a heart loyaller and purer and more compelling to gratitude and reverence than his, as I see it!" 1

In a letter Edmund offers a tribute to the excellence of his father's training. "I do not, to be frank," he writes, "think you were wise in all things, but I do think that the general tenour of your example especially the deep consciousness I had that you sought with all your heart to bring me up for God, had an immensely beneficial effect on my character." 2

The Revue des Deux Mondes 3 is struck by the sad and painful picture of "l'éducation d'un jeune âme dans ce milieu de 'saints'" and "l'impitoyable portrait qui remplit son livre."

This criticism seems to overlook the underlying tenderness and gaiety of the book. Shaw spoke of "Father and Son" as one of the immortal pages of

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1.The Letters of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett.(1845-46) Vol.I,p.175
2.Charteris, op.cit. p.54
3.Dec.1907 Vol.42, pp.913,914

English literature. Here is a charming vignette of Gosse's parents:

> "My Father and Mother lived so completely in the atmosphere of faith, and were so utterly convinced of their intercourse with God, that so long as that intercourse was not clouded by sin, to which they were delicately sensitive, they could afford to take the passing hour very lightly - my mother was sometimes gay, laughing with a soft, merry sound. What I have since been told of the guileless mirth of nuns in a convent has reminded me of the gaiety of my parents during my early childhood."

In a letter to Viscount Knutsford, Gosse emphasises the real central point of his book, namely "an exposure of the modern sentimentality which thinks it can parade all the prettiness of religion without really resigning its will and thought to faith. You have most excellently said it is either my father's creed 'or nothing'. To tell you the truth what I should like to think my book might be - if the idea is not of too great temerity - is a call to people to face the fact that the old faith is now impossible to sincere and intelligent minds and that we must courageously face the difficulty of following entirely different ideals in moving towards the higher ideal. But what ideals or (what is more important) what discipline can we substitute for the splendid metallic rigour of an earlier age?"[1]

Charteris op.cit. p.311

IX.

A FAMILY CHRONICLER

CHARLOTTE M. YONGE

IX.

A Family Chronicler

Charlotte Mary Yonge

(1823-1901)

In her criticism of Hannah More 's "Strictures" Miss Yonge writes:

> "Considering that the authoress believed herself a thorough churchwoman her views in the latter chapters of her book are curiously lacking in any references to church ordinances or the means of grace. She had said nothing which was not borne out by the Articles and the Liturgy. The point was what she had not said." [1]

This criticism serves to mark the point of divergence between Evangelicalism and Anglo-Catholic revival of which Hannah More and Miss Yonge may be respectively regarded as typical exponents. The Anglo-Catholic revival or Oxford movement was to quote Paul Thureau-Dangin,[2] a return to a less incomplete and more living Christianity. Newman characterises it as "the spiritual awakening of spiritual wants",[3] signalising Scott and Coleridge among its literary influences. Its ethical note is well brought out by R. W. Church. "It laid stress," he writes, "on the exercise of an inner and unseen self-discipline, and the cultivation of the less interesting virtues of industry, humility, self - distrust, and obedience."[4]

Miss Yonge is regarded as the greatest of all purely Anglo-Catholic novelists in the Victorian

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1. Charlotte M. Yonge: Hannah More, p.129
2. English Catholic Revival in the 19th century, p.14
3. Apologia Pro Vita Sua, p.98
4. The Oxford Movement (1892) p.128

age.[1] The Anglo-Catholic revival coincided with Charlotte's most impressionable years, and the Rev. John Keble, the inspiring genius of the movement, was her spiritual guide. From the time that Keble prepared her for confirmation, to the day she died, the moving spring of her life was embodied in the motto: "Pro Ecclesia Dei". Both her grandfathers were clergymen. Sunday-school teaching and church building were the absorbing interests of her parents. Her father, a hero of the Peninsular War, had to give up his profession on his marriage with Miss Fanny Bargus. They married after an attachment of five years for Mrs. Bargus would not hear of her daughter marrying into a marching regiment. An only child for six years, Charlotte was the object of her parents' constant attention and solicitude. Their tender devotion to their child found it safer to err on the side of strictness. In "Mothers in Council" Charlotte sketches her "repressed" but "real" childhood.

> "The only flat falsehood of those early days was so seriously treated that it is pain to me to remember it now..... Equivocating was shown to be equally heinous, the occasion of my being so taught being that my father detected me making a sort of accompaniment to the responses in church, instead of following the words. His displeasure at my thus acting a falsehood was not to be forgotten. Perfect truth and honour seem to me to have been the strongest of all my early impressions." [2]

Recallang her father's "dark keen eyes" she says: "To think of their beaming smile seems to recall my

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1.Baker, J.E.:The Novel and the Oxford Movement
2.Op.cit. Vol.II, Jan. 1892, p.16

greatest happiness, of their warning glance my chief dread and shame." There was a complete oneness between her parents and herself and "an atmosphere of perfect loyalty between parents."[1]

Except for her longing for a sister, no one, she declares, had a happier or more joyous childhood. Intended by nature to be left-handed, shy, and awkward under restraint, she was a high-spirited and imaginative child. The companionship of her Devon kindred brought out all the liveliness of her character. In the Preface to her "Scenes and Characters" she writes: "An almost solitary child, it was natural to dream of other children and their ways and sports till they became almost realities." This circumstance largely accounts for the extraordinary reality of Charlotte Yonge's imaginative world in which, according to E. M. Delafield, she rehearsed to herself an "endless saga about family life."[2]

With the appointment of Mr. Keble as vicar of Hursley in 1836 came the chief spiritual influence of Charlotte's life. Her works reflect the leading ideas of "The Christian Year". She grew up, moreover, in close intimacy with persons who exemplified the finest traditions of aristocratic culture and chivalric ideal: Lord Seaton, Sir William Heathcote, Dr. Moberley. On the death of Sir William

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1. Ethel Romanes: Charlotte M. Yonge, p.14
2. Introduction to Charlotte Mary Yonge by Georgina Battiscombe

Heathcote she wrote to Miss H. Heathcote:

> "I could not help, when they said I made clergy and good men seem real, almost murmuring that my good men were not ideals, but I had really known their equals (and superiors) in reality- I am sure your father was one of those in my mind." 1

Miss Yonge's favourite quotation was: "Character is the joint product of Nature and Nurture". All the influences that were brought to bear upon her early life contributed to making her one of the truest interpreters of the Victorian family, hallowed as it was by tradition and sanctified by religion. Her life was all of a piece and she never broke away from the traditions of her childhood. The type of religion as exemplified in her works is best expressed in Keble's lines:-

> "The trivial round, the common task,
> Would furnish all we ought to ask;
> Room to deny ourselves; a road 2
> To bring us, daily, nearer God."

"Scenes and Characters", one of her earliest literary efforts was produced under two impulses: dreams of her solitary childhood and the need for a class of books more religious than the Edgeworths, and less Calvinistic than the Sherwood style. The heroes and heroines arrange themselves so as to work out a principle that feeling, unguided and unrestrained soon becomes mere selfishness; while simple endeavour to fulfil each immediate claim of duty may lead to the acts of self devotion. 3

Lilial Mohun the heroine of the tale in reaction

1. Quoted, Christabel Coleridge, op.cit. p.304
2. The Christian Year Morning.
3. Scenes and Characters Preface.

against what she regards as the never-relaxing principle of duty which guides her elder sister decides to act upon her new-found principle of love. After Eleanor, the eldest sister has married, Emily attempts to run the household on Lily's principles. Reading of Scott's novels, for instance, earlier regulated, is now freely indulged by Lily to the neglect of her daily occupations. This occasions the following dialogue with her father:-

> '"I am afraid, papa,' said Lily, 'the truth is, that my head has been so full of Woodstock for the last few days, that I could do nothing.'
>
> 'And before that?'
>
> 'The Bride of Lammermoor.' 'And last week?' 'Waverley. O! papa, I am afraid you must be very angry with me.'
>
> 'No, no, Lily, not yet,' said Mr. Mohun, 'I do not think you quite knew what an intoxicating draught you had got hold of; I should have cautioned you. Your negligence has not yet been a serious fault, though remember, that it becomes so after warning.'
>
> 'Then,' said Lily, 'I will just finish Peveril at once, and get it out of my head, and read no more of the dear books,' and she gave a deep sigh.
>
> 'Lily would take the temperance pledge, on condition that she might finish her bottle at a draught.' said Mr. Mohun." 1

Lily's principle of love, confusing mere feeling with Christianity, leads her from one temptation to another, with consequences as ruinous to her character as to the happiness of others. It is fearful to contemplate that her neglect should involve the innocent little Ada in a serious fireworks accident

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1. Id. Ch.XII

and occasion the death of her favourite Sunday scholar. Ultimately, she sees the fallacy of her theory and Easter marks the day of her repentance and amendment.

There are some autobiographical touches in the portrait of Phyllis, with her highly pitched voice, a round, merry face and her stiff straight brown hair. Called, "not the neat-handed" by her sisters and Miss Tomboy by the maids, terribly awkward when under constraint, but swift and ready at her ease, full of high spirits which frequently get her into scrapes, she remains the 'Honest Phyl' though meeting with the same neglect and temptations as her younger sister Ada. She is saved by her guileless simplicity and humility. No flattery would make her believe herself beautiful, agreeable, or clever. In Charlotte Yonge's own case, her parents' strict training had proofed her against flattery. "Once venturing to ask," writes Miss Yonge, "if I was pretty, I was answered that all young animals, young pigs and all, were pretty."[1] In one incident Phyllis affords us a remarkable example of her rigorous self-discipline and reverential spirit. She is stung by a wasp in the church, and is just about to put her foot on it when she recollects where she is. Though her arm smarts and swells, she lets no sign of her intense pain escape her throughout the service.[2] In both its central episode, the conseqration of church and

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1. Mothers In Council, Vol.II, p.19 2. Scenes and Characters Ch.IX

and its heroine Elizabeth Woodbourne, "Abbey Church" (1844) embodies Charlotte Yonge's aspirations and enthusiasms. In her single-minded devotion to the new church, excitable, impetuous and violent Lizzie has grown more gentle, more fit to govern herself than most girls of sixteen. Yet still her character is lacking in self-control. In her zeal for self-improvement she is intolerant of what she calls waste of time in gossip and hypocritical talk of the drawing room, but is unable to resist the temptation of attending lectures at the Mechanics' Institute. Her cousin Anne, no less enthusiastic than she, but in whom her mother has instilled patience and self-control, expresses herself thus:

> "'As to waste of time,' said Anne, 'perhaps it is most usefully employed in what is so irksome as you find being in company. Mamma has always wished me to remember that acquiring knowledge may after all be a selfish gratification and many things ought to be attended first,' and added: 'knowledge is profitable for nothing without charity.'
>
> 'Charity, yes,' said Elizabeth, 'but Christian love is a very different thing from drawing room civility.'
>
> 'Not very different from bearing and forbearing as Helen said,' answered Anne." [1]

The Heir of Redclyffe (1853) has little direct bearing on early religious training as such; none the less it merits a brief consideration. For in this book, more than in any other, J. W. Mackail[2] writes, may be traced the religious ideals and social

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1. Abbey Church or Self-Control or Self-Conceit Ch. VI
2. The Life of William Morris, Vol. I, p.41

enthusiasms which were stirring in the years between the decline of Tractarianism and the Crimean War. It held up a pattern hero in Guy Morville with his over-strained conscientiousness, his chivalrous courtesy, his pure and sincere effort after self-conquest and his eagerness for all social reforms. Dean Church has pointed out that even more than a theological reform, the Oxford Movement was a protest against the loose unreality of ordinary religious morality.[1] R.H. Froude's journals afford ample evidence of this moral earnestness and of secretay training oneself in submission to the law and will of God. Here is an entry of October 26th, 1826:

> "I am always trying to persuade myself that I endeavour to be better than other people. Disgustingly self-complacent thoughts have kept continually obtruding themselves upon me, on the score of my little abstinences..Only I must prescribe to myself some exercises that I really dislike, that I may feel my weakness."[2]

In an entry of March 4th, 1827, we read:

> "....Or if by no other means I can be preserved from arrogance, bow me down again, O Lord, and let Thy storms pass over me...."[3]

By similar self-chastening and inward battle Guy conquers the weaknesses of his character and the ancestral doom. This he accomplishes by no sudden leap, but by practising self-discipline in his daily life. When he complains of leading too smooth a life with the Edmonstones, Mrs. Edmonstones says:

> "there is nothing that has no temptation in it, but I should think the rule is plain. If a duty such as that of living among us for the present and making yourself moderately agreeable involves temptations, they must be met and

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1.Opcit. p.25 2. Remains Vol.I. Part I p.29
3.Id. p.65

> battled from within. In the same way, your position in society, with all its duties could not be laid aside because it is full of trial. Those who do such things are faint-hearted and fail in trust in Him, who fixed this station, and finds room for them to deny themselves in the trivial round and common task." [1]

Thus viewed, all objects in life, beauty of nature, love, assume a sacremental character as instruments to "Fit us for perfect Rest above".[2] To Guy sitting on a rock, absorbed in the plan of vengeance the sunset recalls him to his truer and better self: "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." Regarding himself as yet unproved and undeserving of trust he asks Mrs. Edmonstone if he should hope for Amy's hand and if it is wrong that an earthly incentive to persevere should have power which sometimes seems greater than the true one. "There is the best and strongest ground of all for trusting you," said she. "If you spoke of keeping right only for Amy's sake, then I might fear, but when she is second there is confidence indeed."[3]

Finally, Guy achieves the supreme sanctification of his life by laying it down for his enemy. Miss Meynell ascribes the immense contemporary popularity of the book to its having a spirituality that other popular fiction lacked.[4] And Miss Coleridge writes: "Trying to be very good was made interesting and romantic to thousands of good girls."[5]

"Heartsease" (1854) exemplifies one of Miss

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1. The Heir of Redclyffe Ch. IV
2. The Christian Year
3. The Heir of Redclyffe, Ch.XII
4. Introduction to Everyman's Edit.
5. Op.cit. p.183

Yonge's favourite principles that by the grace of baptism, by leaving them to healthy action of mind and body, by her simple religious teaching, a mother can do more for her children than any amount of governessing, doctoring, or forcing systems can ever do. Violet, embittered by her husband's unkind absence grieves over her prematurely born and suffering baby and almost grudges the happiness and sunshine that all the other young things - lambs, and birds, and all - seem to enjoy. Her husband's borther recalling the child's christening tries to reassure her.

> "We cannot tell what he may need. We are sure all he undergoes is sent by One who loves him better than even you can do, who may be disciplining him for future life, and fitting him for brighter glory and certainly giving him a share in the cross that has saved him." [1]

Theodora the hoch-beseeltes Mädchen learns the much-needed lesson that the way to subdue a child's obstinacy is not by setting her own against it. For you could "gar her greet" but you could not "gar her know". She sees how by gentle coaxing Mr. Fotheringham softens her Sunday-scholar and makes her sorry. It was a home-thrust at Theodora's pride. There is a touch of pious sentimentality in the portrait of the delicate little Johnnie explaining the parable of the Good Shepherd to his convalescent father, reduced to real contrition by a dangerous illness. Johnnie, is however, offset by the pert Helen, his younger sister, whom her unhappy father over hears-saying:

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1. Heartsease. Part II, Ch. II

"I wish papa would never get well!"

"Helen, Helen, how can you?" pleaded her mother's voice.

"He is so much good-natured when he is ill," was Helen's defence. [1]

Miss Yonge calls "Daisy Chain" (1856) a family chronicle - a domestic record of home events, large and small, during those years of early life when the character is chiefly formed. To show whether aspirations are truly upwards and founded in lowliness and to trace their effects on youthful natures is the governing idea of the tale. But as elsewhere, the characters refuse to serve as mere vehicles of this idea and take up a life of their own.

The book opens on a pleasant scene. Mrs. May is explaining to her large family the Gospel on the taking the lowest place. This strikes the keynote of the story. The mother has greater anxiety for her brilliant Norman and clever Ethel than for her placid and slow-brained Richard who has failed at Oxford. Their talent and success, she dreads, might be their snares, unless all idea of self is eliminated by an inner discipline. When her eldest daughter Margaret confesses that Richard is first in her affection, she considers it too as a form of self-seeking. Early in the story, however, a fatal accident deprives the children of their mother's guiding hand. With the eldest daughter also invalided for life, the task of religious training is rendered all the more difficult

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1.Id. Part III, Ch.X

for the May family and calls forth greater effort after self-discipline. Our interest is centred in Ethel's character. In a letter to her sister, Mrs. May has written about Ethel's odd foibles, her harum-scarum nature, quick temper, uncouth manners, and heedlessness of all but one absorbing object, namely, the regeneration of Cocksmoor. Though keeping a-breast of her brother in alcaics and algebra, Ethel herself complains of her deficiency in little neat-nesses. As her father humorously puts it, she has two left hands. But these manifest defects in occasioning a discipline prove the best thing for her character and keep her high things from being all ro-mance. On the necessity of self-discipline in daily life, Miss Yonge is as insistent in this novel as elsewhere. Dr. May is telling his children the story of David..

> "' So, Tom and Blanche,' he concluded, 'can you tell me how we may be like the shepherd boy, David?'
> 'There aren't any giants now,' said Tom.
> 'Wrong is a giant,' said his little sister.
> 'Right, my white May-flower and what then?'
> 'We are to fight,' said Tom.
> 'Yes and mind, the giant with all his armour be some great thing we have to do; but what did David begin with, when he was younger?'
> 'The lion and the bear.'
> 'Aye, and minding his sheep. Perhaps little things, now you are little children, may be like the lion, and the bear - so kill them off get rid of them - cure yourself of whining or dawdling or whatever it be, and mind your sheep well, and if you do, you will not find it near so hard to deal with your great giant struggle when it comes.' " 1

Impatient idealism is discountenanced as being

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1. Daisy Chain. Part I. Ch.X

inconsistent with true humility. Meta, allowed every luxury and indulgence feels drawn to the May family by their culture and idealisms. She fears that she lives too happy and bright a life.

"Ah! my dear,' said Dr. May, 'the rugged path and dark valley will come in His own fit time. Depend upon it, the good Shepherd is giving what is best for you in the green meadow!" 1

To build a church and a school in the heathenish Cocksmoor is the one great object before Ethel. But great things, she is reminded, cannot be good until they stand on a sure foundation of little things. By inspiring them to self-sacrifice and self-discipline and giving force and unity to their efforts the Cocksmoor church elevates the whole family. Ethel who at the beginning is a harum-scarum girl has later developed a character of remarkable power. Her mother's sister who has earlier been informed of Ethel's foibles and heedlessness now pays the following tribute:

> "There is so much soul in the least thing she does as if she could not be indifferent for a moment." 2

The religion as taught and practised in the May household wears no melancholy hue, has nothing mystical about it, is not drawn into metaphysical speculations and discussions of doctrines. Its spirit

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1.Id. Part I, Ch.XXVI
2.Id. Part II, Ch.XXIV

is in keeping with Keble's teaching, who had warned Charlotte Yonge against too much talk and discussion of church matters, especially doctrines. It is a severely practical and unemotional religion, irradiating with its heavenly grace home affections, and "simple fulfilment of everyday duties in our homely round".[1] To Norman perplexed by controversies at Oxford the thought of his home brings back peace, and his doubt melts like a bad dream, for as Ethel said: "Our dear home has made the truth our joy, our union."[2]

"Hopes and Fears" (1860) touches upon the danger of fostering precocious piety on the one hand, and forcing the intellect on the other. In the education of her wards Owen and Lucilla, Honora Charlecote is led away by her excessive idealism and the devotional turn of Owen to overdo articles of faith and observances. Outgrowing her personal influence and spiritual authority the children drift apart from her in religious doubt or in a spirit of contradiction. On the other hand, the governess, Miss Fennimore, herself rationalist and of sceptical habit, trains her pupil to reason only, concerning herself, as she says, with the moral and intellectual not the religious being. She looks upon Bertha with her good disposition and good abilities as a fair subject for her experiment. However, Bertha's romantic escapade and serious illness bring home to Miss Fennimore the defects of her own character and

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1. Charlotte Yonge: Musings over the 'Christian Year and Lyra Innocentium (1871) p.208
2. Daisy Chain Part II, Ch.XVI

and system. Dr. Martyn, after his inspection of Bertha, exclaims:

> "'That's a first-rate governess! Exactly so! An educational hot-bed. Why can't they let girls dress dolls and trundle hoops as they used to do? - To hear that poor child blundering algebra in her sleep might be a caution to mothers.'" 1

Serious as the consequences of an over-intellectual discipline are, Miss Fennimore blames herself still more for her failure to instil devotional principles, for having guided the hands of the watch and having left the mainspring untouched. In this respect Miss Charlcote's influence and training are shown to be infinitely superior. Even at the worst the higher, purer, standard that had been impressed upon her wards saved them from lower depths. Conscious of her mistakes, Miss Charlcote discusses with the Rev. Robert Fulmort the difficulty of dealing with cases of precocious piety.

> "Then what could you do with such a child as my Owen, if it were all to come over again? His aspirations were often so beautiful that I could not but reverence them greatly: and I cannot now believe that they were prompted by aught but innocence and baptismal grace!"
>
> "Looking back," said Robert, "I believe they were genuine and came from the heart. No; such a devotional turn should be treated with deep reverence and tenderness; but the expression had better be almost repressed and the test of conduct enforced, though without loading the conscience with details not of general application, and sometimes impracticable under other circumstances." 2

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1. Hopes and Fears. Part II, Ch.21

2. Id. Chap. XXXIII, pp. 562, 563.

In "Hopes and Fears" Miss Yonge has handled the relations between young and old with her large and wise humanity and her sympathetic understanding. Bertha's adventure is lightly passed over, and the disillusionment of youth and idealism of age are treated with imaginative insight. Her growing concern for social amelioration informs her reference to the children of a London parish school. Miss Charlcote finds it a hard work to make the little cockneys who have never seen a single ear of wheat, enter into Joseph's dreams.[1]

Felix Underwood of "The Pillars of the House" is the fine flower of religious training as typified in Miss Yonge's works.

As the eldest of thirteen children, his father's death throws upon him the responsibility of a struggling family. To eke out the family finances he renounces his intention to take Holy Orders, abandons his education and apprentices himself to a bookseller. To the sick lad Fernando, fresh from the scene of deadly warfare with the Red Indians, the example of Felix's self-denial is a new revelation of the power of religion: "Is it really," he asks Felix, "what makes you go and slave away at that old boss's of yours?" "Why, that's necessity - my duty," said Felix, and added: "All that is ought comes from God first and last."[2]

1.Id. Part I, Ch.I
2.The Pillars of the House, Vol.I, Ch.VI

It is perhaps this conception so closely resembling "Dharma" in Hinduism that may have impressed the Hindu student whose reading of "The Pillars of the House", Miss Yonge learnt[1], led to his conversion to Christianity.

In their realism "The Stokesley Secret" and "Countess Kate" afford a striking contrast to the moral and religious stories of Miss Yonge's own and earlier times. Miss Yonge's works are, to a large extent, religious in character, but they are so in their spirit and atmosphere and not by any direct exposition or preaching. Her children are not overdrawn types of piety or wickedness, but individual and perfectly human. She said she always thought that Farrar's boys who always died as soon as they began to be good very immoral. Her "Countess Kate" is a fine study in child character. An awkward, boisterous and imaginative child, she dreams of rank and riches, of playing the lady bountiful. Her wishes are suddenly realised, but her disillusionment is extreme at the change from her little parsonage home, the scene of love, reverence, gratitude and a thousand little acts of kindness and self-denial to her life with Lady Barbara, full of restraints and "fashionable falsehoods". The trials of the new situation, however, bring out her real character and chasten her into a less conceited and more contrite girl. Miss Yonge's high-spirited girls often express their instinctive

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1. Coleridge, op.cit., p.337

need for the influence and authority of a strict but affectionate father or brother. Kate admits that her friend's papa is more funny and good-natured than Uncle Wardour but adds: "I shouldn't like him so well for a papa. I don't think he would punish so well."[1] Having suffered for her headstrong folly and conceit Rachel believes that she should have been much better if she had had either father or brother to keep her in order.[2]

Bessie in "The Stokesley Secret" with her refined tastes might find it very trying to be teased and held cheap by her turbulent brothers and sisters. As an only child with parents more in sympathy with her she might have been happy. But her little hardships, acts of self-denial, which are a part of necessary discipline in a large family would, Miss Yonge holds, help to make Bessie the stronger, steadier, more useful woman, instead of living in fancies.

The underlying seriousness of purpose and earnestness of spirit that characterise Charlotte Yonge are not found incompatible with the happy, hearty childhood that romps in and out of her pages. Play-acting in "The Pillars of the House", the game of hide-and-seek in the Stokesley garden, Countess Kate playing Hermione or the Arab Sheikh, picnics and paper-games, provide plenty of scope to youthful spirits for their exuberance and playful fun. Till

1.Countess Kate, Ch.VII 2.The Clever Woman of the Family, p.436

the end Charlotte Yonge retained her genial interest in young people. Referring to King Arthur's Round Table and the Quest of the Sangreal, Dr. May observes: "It's not one youth in a hundred that if he is moderate enough to stop with what satisfied our - my - generation has anything in him.....Tying them down to our Round Rable does no good at all."[1]

The same spirit informs her chapter "Going in" in "Womankind" (1877) Her ideal is "the happy union of 'fervent old age and youth serene', which is symbolised by our grey old Gothic buildings mantled by their green creepers."[2]

1.The Pillars of the House. Vol.II, Ch.XXXV
2.Op.cit. Ch.XXXIV, p.321

X.

Conclusion

X.

Conclusion

I.

We have traced the development of opinion in regard to the treatment and training of children mainly from the institutional side. The case of the solitary child remains to be considered. That a child has an inner life which grows independent of formal teaching, that this private, hidden, not-to-be-shared thing remains the source of all originality and greatness, Alexis Carrel has emphasised in "Man the Unknown". The Brontë sisters furnish an illuminating study of the mental life of the solitary child. Important as this recreational aspect of child life is, a foreigner is unqualified to treat it with any true insight. The subject, moreover, largely falls within the scope of children's literature.

Such invaluable surveys as F. J. Darton's "Children's Books in England", and Paul Hazard's "Les Livres, les Enfants, et les Hommes" attest an increasing appreciation of the child's point of view and a response to his childish appeals. Time was when children were treated as adults, and their books, as much as their clothes, were not especially designed for them. Rousseau's teaching that the child should be treated as a child led to a plentiful crop of moral tales. Their utilitarian morality provoked a reaction towards pietistic literature of "The Fairchild

Family" type. In protest against over-strained didacticism and the forcing of spiritual growth began a movement in the Eighteen-thirties for brighter and more interesting stories for children. "The Butterfly's Ball" (1807) by William ROSCOE (1753-1831), Catherine Sinclair's "Holiday House" (1839) and Felix Summerly's "Home Treasury" series (1841-49) haralded the dawn of levity and freedom. From the oppressive schoolhouse atmosphere the child found an escape in the Wide Wide World of adventure and romance in Marryat's "Masterman Ready" (1841), William Henry Giles Kingston's "Peter the Whaler" (1851) and Robert Michael Ballantyne's "The Young Fur Traders" (1855) Youngsters everywhere fell under the spell of Marryat, "the Wizard of the Sea" and his novels brought spirited boys into the Navy. In the Eighteen-fifties the writing of children's books afforded play-hour o occupation to grave men. During the winter of 1853 in Rome, Thackeray's gold pen was weaving the spell of "The Rose and the Ring" for the amusement of a children's party. Challenged by a lively Scottish child to write a fairy tale the melancholy John Ruskin engrossed in his drawing and geology, produced "The King of the Golden River" (1851) An Oxford mathematician, Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, on a river excursion one summer, oars in hand, and eyes fixed on little Alice's round orbed countenance, allowed the Lewis Carroll in him to slip off into Wonderland. To some magical suffusion of these two, the mathematician's

silent consciousness and the child's, we owe "Alice in Wonderland" (1865)[1] Altogether, a refreshing change in the relations between grown-ups and children. The growth of this sympathetic relationship was part of a general movement for according the child his rightful position in the scheme of things. The course of this movement we have endeavoured to follow in Victorian Fiction.

II.

Under the economic aspect we have seen[2] a growing sense of social responsibility that from the beginning of the 19th century came to inspire the ruling classes in their treatment of child victims of poverty and economic exploitation. The New Poor Law, the Malthusian spirit of which evoked vehement protests from Dickens and Mrs. Trollope, shows nonetheless a greater solicitude for the special needs of the workhouse children than was possible under the administrative anarchy of the old system. Tales of the Poor Laws by Harriet Martineau provide an important literary evidence of the official attitude and therefore serve to balance the one-sided picture by Dickens and Mrs. Trollope. The Benthamite clean-up of the Old Poor Laws was, no doubt, necessary and desirable, but in its attitude to poverty the New Poor Law administration lacked the kindlier christian

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1.See Walter de la Mare: Lewis Carroll (Faber & Faber, 1932) p.61
2.See Chapters I and II

spirit. It was in awakening the "remords social" for human suffering that the novelists of idealistic reaction against the utilitarian ethics and the competitive individualism of the times rendered a great service. Here Dickens is supreme. "I think that Charles Dickens is the greatest novel writer of the 19th century," writes Tolstoy, "and that his works, impressed with the true Christian spirit, have done, and will continue to do a great deal of good to mankind."[1] In his "Popular History of England " (1861) Charles Knight has underlined the social element in contemporary fiction.

> ".....to trace crime to its dens, and finding how much it is identified with misery and with that barbarism which sits grim and dangerous by the side of civilisation, to abate if possible the want, and to remove the ignorance before the dimness of the child becomes the total darkness of the adult:- such are the duties which it is the special honour of many of the present race of our writers of prose fiction to have successfully inculcated. They have brought us to know our fellows in the great community to which we belong -"[2]

In similar terms the Rt. Hon. H.H. Asquith[3] acknowledges the service rendered by Shaftesbury, Carlyle, and Dickens in making the Victorians realise that they might be paying too high a price for capturing the markets of the world in a system of production which crippled and decimated the women and children of the country. The silent social transformation of the Victorian scene between 1831 and 1861,

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1.Letter of Tolstoy to the Secretary of the Dickens Fellowship. London,1908
2.Op.cit. Vol.VIII, p.458
3.Some Aspects of the Victorian Age (Oxford, 1918), p.5

Louis Cazamian ascribes in part to the "Roman Social". During this period the means of popular enlightenment were, no doubt, multiplying, such as official reports, statistical publications, and tracts by philanthropists. But in spite of their wide diffusion and in spite of the fact that many Blue Books were intensely moving human documents, few read them. Here lay the secret of the real power and glory of the humanitarian novel. Into the dry bones of contemporary facts it breathed the warmth of life. The poor it inspired with hope and resignation and the rich with pity. It helped to assuage the social cleavage which, Disraeli feared, was dividing England into two nations. In the words of Cazamian: "Il a sa place parmi les causes d'ordre moral qui ont épargné à l'Angleterre une révolution."[1]

To Dickens flowed in ever-abundant measure spontaneous tributes from all classes and conditions he helped to bring nearer to each other in common humanity and understanding. Even the very defects of his qualities, his emotional immaturity, his melodramatic appeal have made for his immense popularity. "Dickens," writes Q.D. Leavis, "is one with his readers they enjoyed exercising their emotional responses, he laughed and cried aloud as he wrote."[2] There was as yet no sharp division between what is today a "low brow" and a "high brow" public. Readers at all levels responded to Dickens's appeal.

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1. Le Roman Social, Vol.II, p.254
2. Fiction and the Reading Public. (Chatto, 1932) p.157

In A.V. Dicey's "Lectures on the Relation between Law and Public Opinion in England during the 19th Century" occurs the following noteworthy passage:

> "The opinion which changes the law is in one sense the opinion of the time when the law is actually altered; in another sense it has often been in England the opinion some twenty or thirty years before that time; it has been as often as not in reality the opinion not of today but of yesterday.....created by thinkers or writers, who exerted their influence, l long before the change in the law took place."

In arousing legislative concern and interest in the child, as evidenced by the portective and remedial measures undertaken on his behalf, after the Eighteen forties, the Victorian novelists in general and Dickens in particular played no small part. Mr. W. Pett Ridge makes an interesting comparison between the lot of a Joe or of a little Marchioness in Dickens's time and what the State does today for a neglected vagrant child.

> "The State takes him gently by the hand and looks after him and sends him to a Reformatory (which is no longer called a Reformatory) and with any luck he can scarcely avoid reaching one of the first benches of the House of Commons. The point is that the dismal long continued unhappiness of a Joe in fiction helped to secure attention to the real Joes in life." 2

III

Education in England, it has been said, began at the top, spread down to the middle, and ended with the people at large." [3]

1.Op.cit. p.33 (Macmillan, 1948)
2.The Dickensian, Vol.XXI, Jan. 1925
3.Barker, Sir Ernest: Britain and the British People (Oxford,1942) p.98

It is in this light that Dr. Arnold stands out as the central figure in education. Two dominant tendencies of the 19th century life were Evangelicalism and Humanitarianism. In Dr. Arnold they found a living unity. Under his christianising and humanising influence English schools gradually underwent a silent transformation whose effect was felt not only in academic life but in national character and public administration as well. We have only to compare the savage discipline and the moral anarchy of pre-Reform schools[1] with Rugby as it came to be under Dr. Arnold to realise the extent of this change. But it was Thomas Hughes's "Tom Brown's Schooldays" that made the names of Arnold and Rugby household words. Ideas have a strange after-history. It was not the moral earnestness of Dr. Arnold so much as the vigorous muscular element derived from Hughes's own character that the book helped to popularise. Its immediate reaction was Farrar's "Eric", but it was held to be indirectly responsible for the rise of the games cult and the worship of good form. Public schools have been charged with fostering dyed-in-the-wool conservatism, class consciousness, conventional conformity at the expense of individual initiative and intellectual and aesthetic culture. According to George Orwell "Stalky & Co." has had immense influence on boys' literature. To their snobbish appeal and escapism he ascribes the popularity of "public school"

1. See Chpters V and VI. For instances of brutal treatment at charity boarding schools, cf. M.G. Jones, "Charity School Movement" (1938) pp. 102,103. Hogarth makes Tom Nero, in the Four Stages of Cruelty a St. Giles in the Fields' charity school boy. c.f. M.D. George "London Life in the 18th Century". p.255

stories with tens and scores of thousands of people outside "that mystic world of quadrangles and house colours".[1] Dr. Arnold, however, as R.L. Archer points out, "is no more responsible for the development of public schools for all time than was St. Francis for the friars of Chaucer's day."[2] The greatness of Dr. Arnold lies in the fact that he sensed the vital need of the hour, which was to moralise and humanise the Middle Class young men and to fit them for their new role of responsible leadership at home and abroad. He succeeded as well as he did because though considerably democratizing the Public School system he still kept well within the Medieval tradition of knightly education. The time was not yet ripe for the spirit of sweetness and light. The young barbarians and bullies of the 'thirties were not prepared to be moralised by aesthetics. The soil was, however, made ready for the reception of sweetness and light which Matthew Arnold laboured so earnestly to promote. Between them, father and son, it may be said, brought about an educational renaissance in England. Sir Ernest Barker quotes from the "Introduction to the Code of Regulations for Public Elementary Schools" to show that the ideals of the Public School were being extended by Public School trained men to elementary schools. Here is the summary in his words of what the Code sets out:

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1. Inside the Whale and Other Essays (Gollancz, 1940), p.99
2. Secondary Education in the 19th Century (Cambridge, 1921), p.81

> "It sets out that the purpose of the public elementary school 'is to form and strengthen the character as well as to develop the intelligence'; that 'teachers can do much to lay the foundation of conduct'; that 'the discipline of the school can implant habits of industry, self-control and perseverance'; that 'the corporate life of the school especially in the playground should develop fair play and loyalty'; and that in all its efforts the school should enlist the co-operation of parents and home." [1]

Though Dr. Arnold had done the work of reform it was "Tom Brown's Schooldays" that brought his lofty ideas down to a level that made them vastly appealing. It has, therefore, been remarked that "Tom Brown's Schooldays" made the modern public school.[2] R.H. Quick writes that "the influence of 'Tom Brown', however different in kind, is probably not smaller in amount than that of 'Sartor Resartus'"[3]

IV

Modern psychology stresses the vital rold that parental authority no less than individual independence plays in the proper up-bringing of the child and the difficulty of reconciling their rival claims.[4] Victorians may not, any more than we, have succeeded in evolving a satisfactory solution of this difficulty but there is no doubt that religious discipline tempered by parental affection proved an excellent training for the child. Its benefits were gratefully

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1. National Character and the Factors in its Formation (Methuen, 1927) p.267
2. Edward C. Mack and W.H.G. Armytage: Thomas Arnold (Ernest Benn, 1952) p.100
3. Essays on Educational Reformers (1868) p.279
4. See J.C. Flugel: The Psycho-analytic Study of the Family 7th impression (Hogarth Press, 1948) Ch. V

acknowledged even by those who later departed from the faith in which they were brought up.[1] The bleak pictures of puritanical discipline in Dickens are not so much a reflection on religion as on those who profess it. It is in Miss Yonge, however, that we see the fine flowering of religious training. To her genial sympathy with the young ones' experiments she united a strong sense of spiritual discipline. When we realise how strong the instinctive need is in the young for freedom as well as discipline we are not surprised at the immense popularity and influence of her works. One poor girl who fell in love with Ethel in "The Daisy Chain" wrote to the author saying, "You are the mother of all my good thoughts."[2] That the pattern of goodness set in Miss Yonge's novels was no nostalgic medieval idyll but had its counterpart in life is evidenced by the biographies of the period. A curious sidelight on the religious-social world of the 'seventies is thrown by a journal kept by Miss Florence Sitwell from the age of fifteen to eighteen and a half. Entitled "the Vestals and Vestries" it is published by Osbert Sitwell as the second half of his book "The Two Generations" (1940) It records the touching belief of a young girl in the power of religion to support her. Sundays in London, services at the Abbey, earnest hearty sermons make up her paradisiac world. Mrs. R. S. Garnett pictures Harriet Butler as one of those spiritual, intellectual, devoted Church-

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1. See Chapter VIII
2. Romanes, Ethel: Charlotte Mary Yonge (1908), p.148

women whose prototype was to be met in the novels of Miss Yonge.[1] In both reflecting and reacting upon the religious enthusiasms of her time Miss Yonge well deserves the prominence we have given her in our section on religious training. When on her seventieth birthday her admirers presented her with an album and a cheque for £200, the signatures in the album numbered 10,000 and included two Queens - Spain and Italy - and many high dignitaries of the Church as well as a large number of humble admirers.

V.

We have tried to sum up the salient points that have emerged in the course of our study. On this subject Wordsworth, Arnold, Dickens, Charlotte Yonge have shed their pervasive influence. The importance of the subject and the difficulty of dealing with it adequately can hardly be exaggerated. But it has a fascination and interest that can well sustain a life-time of devoted research. In the treatment of the child we see not only the true character of the age reflected but also its dominant tendencies foreshadowed. It is difficult to characterise the Victorian age, "when the fabric of social life and its directing ideas changed more swiftly perhaps and more profoundly than they have ever changed in an age not sundered by a political or a religious

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1. L.S. Butler (Dent, 1926), p.66

upheaval."[1] In spite of its change and variety the Victorian scene takes its characteristic tone from the two dominant tendencies of the time: Humanitarianism and Evangelicalism. Humanitarian zeal impelled the Victorians to be on the side of all progressive forces, to promote freedom and social justice everywhere. We have seen its increasing manifestation, as the century wore on, on behalf of child victims of poverty and economic exploitation. Their Evangelicalism gave them the necessary discipline which makes for orderly progress and social stability. This wise conservatism so characteristic of the British people is best expressed in Burke's definition of State as "a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born."[2] Britian today is progressively realising this lofty conception of State. Victorian fiction may certainly claim a large share of the credit for the inculcation of this ideal. Dickens, more than any other novelist, brought home to Britain the beautiful truth of Ruskin's words:

> "Nevertheless, it is open, I repeat, to serious question, which I leave to the reader's pondering whether among national manufactures, that of souls of a good quality may not at last turn out a quite leadingly lucrative one? Nay, in some far-away, and yet undreamt of hour, I can imagine that England may cast all thoughts of possessive wealth back to the barbaric

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1.G.M. Young: Victorian England (Oxford, 1936), p.181
2.Reflections on the Revolution in France (1790) Works. Vol.III,p.359

nations among whom they first arose; and that while the sands of the Indus and adamant of Golconda may yet stiffen the housings of the charger, and flash from the turban of the slave, she, as a Christian mother may at last attain to the virtues and the treasures of a Heathen one, and be able to lead forth her sons, saying "These are my Jewels". 1.

1. Unto this Last, 1862. (George Allen, 1909) pp.65, 66

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