



***VICTORIAN
STUDIES
ASSOCIATION***

ONTARIO

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 1988

**The Victorian Studies Association Newsletter
Ontario, Canada**

Number 41

Spring 1988

**Published by the Victorian Studies Association (Ontario)
c/o English Department
322 Pratt Library
Victoria College, University of Toronto**

Editor: Judith Knelman

Copy-editor: Rea Wilmshurst

ISSN 0835-1902

Printed through the generosity of Victoria College

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News and queries

JAMES M. CAMERON (Emeritus, Toronto), creator of our "Riddle-De-De" section, has published a book of poems, The Music is in the Sadness (Porcupine's Quill).

KATHLEEN McCRONE (Windsor) has published Play Up! Play Up! And Play the Game: Sport and the Emancipation of English Women, 1870-1914 (London: Croom Helm; Lexington: University Press of Kentucky).



REA WILMSHURST (Mill Project, Toronto) is editor of a volume of 19 of L.M. Montgomery's short stories, to be published by McClelland and Stewart this spring. The collection is entitled Akin to Anne: Tales of Other Orphans. Watch for her interview with Doug Hall on CHCH-TV later this spring.

EDGAR WRIGHT (Laurentian) is completing an edition of Elizabeth Gaskell's My Lady Ludlow and Other Stories (also known as Round the Sofa) for the Oxford University Press World's Classics series. In September he attended the annual general meeting of the Gaskell Society at Knutsford, which included a tour of Gaskell country with visits to a number of places important for their use in her "Knutsford" fiction.

Conference notes

VSAO CONFERENCE APRIL 16

This year we are celebrating our twentieth anniversary as an association. At our first conference in the spring of 1968, draft by-laws were presented to those assembled for discussion, an executive committee was selected, editors of the proposed newsletter were appointed, and membership was declared "open to all those who are interested in the study of Victorian culture" except undergraduates. Obviously much work had been done before that first conference, and this year, at the beginning of our afternoon session, Michael Collie and Jack Robson, two of the people who laboured to bring forth the new organization, will reminisce a little about our origins as a way of marking our twentieth year.

This year's conference is about melodrama and crime. Judith Walkowitz (History, Rutgers) will read a paper entitled "Melodrama and Victorian Political Culture: 'The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon.'" Part of a projected book called Sexual Danger and the Victorians, it looks at the way the reporting of an earlier case anticipates what the press would do with Jack the Ripper in 1888. Professor Walkowitz comes to this study from two earlier books, her Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class and the State (1980), and Sex and Class in Women's History: Essays from Feminist Studies, which she co-edited with Judith Newton and Mary Ryna.

Many of you no doubt know our second speaker, Michael Booth (Theatre, Victoria) from the years when he chaired the Department of Drama at the University of Guelph. His paper is about "Melodrama and Crime," a topic he

chose on hearing Professor Walkowitz's title. He is qualified to speak on virtually any aspect of melodrama, as he has written several books wholly or partly on the genre--English Melodramas, Prefaces to Nineteenth-Century English Theatre, Victorian Spectacular Theatre--and has published many articles about the acting of the period and about the social and literary context of nineteenth-century drama. He has been one of those who have made the study of melodramas possible by getting some of them back into print in Hiss the Villain: Six English and American Melodramas and in the five volumes of English Plays of the Nineteenth Century.

For our delectation as we digest our lunch, Libby Smigel, a student at the Drama Centre, is preparing several grisly scenes of crime from melodramas. They'll be presented by a few aspiring actors of her acquaintance.

Judith Skelton Grant
President, VSAO

On November 11 several of our members went to the Civic Garden Centre to hear a talk on Victorian gardens by Brent Elliott, archivist of the Royal Horticultural Society and author of Victorian Gardens (1986). To the uninitiated, Victorian gardening perhaps conjures up images of lavender bushes and mixed herbaceous borders. But in fact the Victorian garden was marked by formalism and artificiality, in reaction to the artfully "natural" style of Capability Brown and the eighteenth century. Garden design was based on a theory of colour harmonies and on such models as the Italianate garden with its terraces and parterres, or the Japanese foliage garden. Dr. Elliott touched on the growth of gardening literature and illustrated the social standing that gardeners might achieve by the career of Sir Joseph Paxton, once gardener

to the Duke of Devonshire, later designer of the Crystal Palace. With a superb collection of slides, Dr. Elliott documented the inventive fancy of the Victorians as it issued in conservatories, exotics, sub-tropical gardens, graftings, topiary art, "carpet borders" of small plants laid out in heraldic designs or floral clocks, mazes, and cemented rubble arranged to form a miniature alpine scene or a scale model of the Khyber Pass. Particularly engaging were the "sculptured," three-dimensional plantings grown in wired pots to the shape of a crown, a pipe organ, or, most appropriate, a half-unrolled carpet. Not until the end of the century did the Victorian love of novelty give way to a desire for more natural forms and indigenous plants.

Jean O'Grady
Toronto

The Charms of a Victorian Opera

The first 1987-88 meeting of the Toronto group brought together opera buffs to hear Stuart Hamilton of Opera in Concert fame speak about The Bohemian Girl (Bo Girl to aficionados), one of the most popular Victorian operas and part of what is sometimes known as the "English Ring," though its two companion pieces have long since disappeared from the repertoire. The opera was first produced in London in 1843, then performed all over Europe and in the United States and Canada. The first performance in Montreal was given on 21 October 1858, with one in Toronto following on 9 November 1858 at the Royal Lyceum Theatre.

Those members present whose appetites were whetted by Stuart's backgrounder to the opera (illustrated by some of his singers in the highlights) had the opportunity of hearing it in the Opera in Concert series at the St. Lawrence Centre in November. The plot

is painfully banal, yet typical of the period. Arline, the daughter of Count Arnheim, is kidnapped as a child by Devilshoof, the Gypsy Captain. Thaddeus, a Polish noble who has joined the band, saves Arline's life when she is attacked by a wild animal in the forest, but the Gypsy Queen is jealous and plots against her. Florestein, the Count's nephew, makes advances to Arline at the fair, but she repulses him because she loves Thaddeus. Florestein has them both arrested on a false charge and brought before the Count. The old man recognizes her as his beloved long-lost daughter; when Thaddeus also shows proof of noble birth, he blesses them both amid general rejoicing.

For this former Brit, the St. Lawrence Centre performance brought back fond memories of Sir Thomas Beecham's Covent Garden revival of 1951. It was first given on 6 August 1951 at the Royal Court Theatre in Liverpool, where it received eight performances, as the contribution of that city to the Festival of Britain. I thought readers might be interested in the cast for the August 15 performance at Covent Garden, which I attended:

Count Arnheim	Jess Walters
Thaddeus	Anthony Marlowe
Florestein	Murray Dickie
Devilshoof	Howell Glynne
Arline	Roberta Peters
Gypsy Queen	Edith Coates

Any habitu  of the Garden will remember Jess Walters, Howell Glynne, Murray Dickie, and the inimitable Edith Coates. And Beecham on the podium: whether it was *Bo Girl* or *Die Meistersinger*, he brought an unflinching sense of excitement and enthusiasm. Beecham's revival was a result of close collaboration with Denis Arundel, who revised the original text for a modern audience. The staging and costumes were lavish, while the sets of Frederick Crooke were most effective in the big scenes. The

Marble Halls scene of the last act was very impressive, and the Covent Garden Chorus gave very good support. Beecham, in a beneficent mood, granted an encore for Roberta Peters' rendition of "I dreamt that I dwelt in marble halls." The other American import from the Met was Anthony Marlowe as Thaddeus, who, as I remember, was too much the stereotypical sobbing Italian tenor. Edith Coates ranted marvellously as the Gypsy Queen, while Jess Walters brought taste and pathos to his role of Count Arnheim and received an ovation for "The heart bowed down."

Many critics came to scoff but stayed to cheer. In the Observer, Eric Blom suggested that Sir Thomas's masterly conducting was flattering to the music, making it "appear beautifully scored for the most part." The Times critic declared that the Cavatinas of the opera "when played with the refinements Sir Thomas Beecham brings to them and sung in proper lyrical style exert still the charm that they have always done."

Perhaps the innocent charm of Bo Girl is achieved primarily because of its Victorian sentimentality and sincerity, not in spite of it; for locked in the most cynical modern breast is our Victorian subconscious. As an antidote to the distemper of our times, we are perhaps more open to honest sentiment than we are prepared to admit, even to ourselves.

Clifford G. Holland
Ontario Institute for Studies in
Education

The School of Music at the University of Manitoba held a three-day festival focussing on Victorian music in January. In the keynote address, Professor Nicholas Temperley of the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, said it is the one period of music criticized by everyone, including the

Victorians. Part of the reason for the generally low opinion of Victorian music is its mass production. He argued that the subject deserves greater attention.

The festival included performances of the music of Arthur Sullivan, Edward

Elgar, Samuel Sebastian Wesley, H.H. Parry, Charles Sanford, Liza Lehman, and others, exhibits, lectures, and two symposia, one on the English music hall and women in Victorian church music, the other on Victorian hymnody and Victorian funeral music.



Riddle-de-dee

OLD CAMERON'S Nursery Rhyme Riddles

No. 3

Fixed to a spot
Is the human lot.
How sad to cling
Where it's idle to sing:
Over the hills and far away!--
Idle by night, hopeless by day.

Solution on page 36

The Water Babies Pediatrally and Geriatically Considered

F.E.L. Priestley
University of Toronto

[Following is the text of a talk delivered to the Toronto Group on Dec. 2, 1987.]

I must admit that even in my early youth I was more of a Westward Ho! type than a Water-Babies one. I was at home with R.L.S., with R.M. Bal-lantyne, with Captain Marryat, with G.A. Henty, and with Frank T. Bullen: I found Melville a very poor second to Bullen. I was pleased to note that in the edition I used for this paper, an edition of precisely my own age, the publishers, Blackie & Son, had filled eight pages at the end with a list of 61 works by Henty which they also published (and nothing else). The list seems designed to recapture juvenile customers whose loyalty might have been shaken by wading through The Water-Babies. In my own youth I read Westward Ho!, Hereward the Wake, and even Hypatia, but gave up on the Babies.

It seems curious that Kingsley, who could write books full of the sort of action boys used to enjoy in my time, should offer a book specifically for children in which there is so little action, and it so scattered and interrupted by episodes, ruminations, soliloquies, sermons, and verbal entertainments which have little or nothing to do with the action. Since the whole peculiar structure is obviously deliberate, and not simply the work of a writer who has no narrative power, and no ability to keep his mind on his main task, the book prompts our curiosity to see what Kingsley is really up to, and what the pattern is meant to be. One of my fundamental principles, in dealing

with a writer of recognizable ability, is to trust that he knows what he is doing, especially when I don't know what he is doing, and to try to get at his purpose and methods until I see what he is up to.

Writers usually leave a number of clues, and Kingsley is very generous with them in this book. The first set of clues is provided by the poetic passages at the head of each of the eight chapters, sometimes supplemented by other verses (including some of the author's own) within the chapters. The theme of chapter 1 is set by Wordsworth's lines:

To her fair works did Nature link
The human soul that through me ran;
And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man.

These lines introduce us to Tom--and what man has made of him.

The second chapter opens with a passage from Spenser, on

the exceeding grace
Of Highest God that loves His creatures so,
And all His works with mercy doth embrace,
That blessed Angels He sends to and fro,
To serve to wicked man, to serve His wicked foe!

The chapter deals with Tom's escape, his death (that is, his transformation into a new life) watched over and guarded by the Irish woman.

Chapter 3 uses lines from Coleridge

to present a third, related theme:

He prayeth well who loveth well,
Both men and bird and beast;
He prayeth best who loveth best,
All things both great and small:
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.

This is followed very shortly by Wordsworth's

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;
The soul that rises with us, our
life's star,
Hath elsewhere had its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory, do we
come
From God, who is our home.

By the beginning of chapter 3, then, these verses have announced the main underlying themes of the whole work, as is apparent if we let the lines echo in our minds as we see Tom enter his new life, watch the marvels of Nature through his water-baby eyes, noting especially the significance of all the transformations, and of his discovering of beauty in what at first he sees as dirty, ugly, or grotesque--until his human perspective shifts to that of his new life.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 all start with familiar passages from Wordsworth: first the one about "our meddling intellect," which "misshapes the beautiful forms of things," followed by the injunction to leave science and art, "come forth, and bring with you a heart/That watches and receives." The next passage is from the "Ode to Duty":

Stern Lawgiver! yet Thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face ...
Thou dost preserve the stars from

wrong;

And the most ancient Heavens, through
Thee are fresh and strong.

This is a very complex quotation from a richly complex ode, and all its implications are important as part of the meaning of the action in Kingsley's story, and as an exposition of his own doctrine. The last Wordsworth quotation is again a familiar one, from the "Ode on Intimations of Immortality"--the lines about the effect on the child's soul of its "earthly freight," a "weight/Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life." This is essentially the theme of the sixth chapter, "the very saddest part" of Kingsley's story.

The last two chapters are headed by quotations from Longfellow. In effect, they continue ideas already presented by lines from Wordsworth, with the addition of the Carlylean view of created Nature as the "Manuscripts of God" (*Natura Naturata*) and Nature (*Natura Naturans*) as "the dear old Nurse" who sings to the child "The rhymes of the universe." The wisdom of the child, as in Wordsworth, is given a fresh emphasis for the last chapter:

For what are all our contrivings
And the wisdom of our books,
When compared with your caresses,
And the gladness of your looks?

Ye are better than all the ballads
That ever were sung or said;
For ye are living poems,
And all the rest are dead.

Poetically and philosophically, this comes as a bit of an anticlimax after the Wordsworth, but its intention, to affirm the eternal value of what the child stands for, is consonant with the earlier passages--and with Kingsley's central argument.

Bunyan based his Pilgrim's Progress upon several sorts of popular litera-

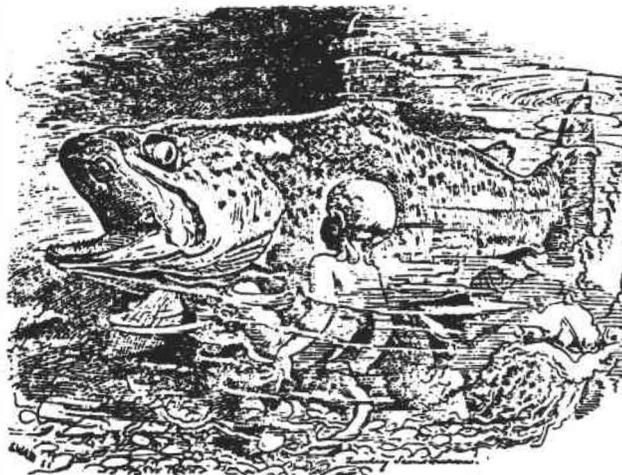
ture: the dream-vision, the morality play, the travel-adventure tale, the realistic portrayal of common life, and fused all together to convey his vision and his doctrine. Swift wrote a more superficially secular pilgrim's progress--one might say, without a pilgrim--using voyage stories and fabulous marvels as his medium. Kingsley chooses the fairy tale as the basis of his structure, but the influence of his predecessors is very visible.

Bunyan's pilgrim moves through this world of temptation and trial to the eternal world, where all the trumpets sound for him on the other side. Wordsworth's child moves from the eternal world which is his home into this world of imperfection, trailing clouds of glory which fade--but never entirely. Kingsley's pilgrim, Tom, leaves this world, trailing dark clouds of ignorance, oppression, dirt, and corruption, to enter, through death by water, into a new world of redemption, regeneration, and spiritual growth--a world of learning and of trial, to be sure, but a world in which his progress is watched over and aided at every point, and guided towards self-knowledge, self-reverence, self-control. At the very end, Tom has become "a man of science" (ch. 8) all "from what he learnt when he was a water-baby, underneath the sea."

The main story, then, is of Tom's progress, and it can be thought of as having two parts: Tom's adventures and travels, and Tom's education. The first is that part of the story which

used to be preserved in abridgements for the very young, in small quarto books with full-page illustrations. Similar abridgements of Gulliver's Travels were available too in my early youth, to be supplanted later by Walt Disney and Classic Comics versions. I fear they all sacrificed complex and earnest books on the altar of mere entertainment. In the case of The Water-Babies, virtually all Tom's education gets left out, which is a pity, since it is also, in effect, the reader's education, and a broad one at that.

Some of the most brilliant descriptive writing in the work is to be found in this adventure-story part, from the superb account of Tom's journey across country in his flight from Grimes, full of sharply defined



close-up views of the moors, valleys, hills and rivers of the North Country, the woods and fells, and their inhabitants, animal and vegetable, down to the underwater descriptions of the Newfoundland cod banks and the beautiful pictures of the Arctic and of the Antarctic and of the gathering of the birds at All-

foulsness (ch. 7). These journeys are, of course, an important part of Tom's education, and of the reader's --young or old; but in large areas of the book, the action stands still while Kingsley delivers an impressive set of lectures aimed most directly at the reader, if less directly at Tom. For these lectures the author adopts a variety of quite different styles. The lessons bound up with Tom's travels are of two sorts, in-

tellectual and moral. The intellectual are dominantly scientific, what used to be called Natural History: zoology, botany, geography and geology. The fascinating life-history of insects which live their pupal lives underwater and metamorphose into flying forms, caddisflies and dragonflies, for example, are closely observed by Tom (ch. 3). Kingsley describes the varied species of fish, and the varied behaviour, the feeding habits, the different kinds of shark, and of whale, an enormous list of coastal birds, and a neat explanation of the effects on sea currents and on weather of the "big copper boiler in the Gulf of Mexico" (ch. 7).

The dominance of biology is a reminder of the period in which Kingsley writes. The seventeenth- and main eighteenth-century great age of mathematics, mechanics, and astronomy is long in the past. The dominant sciences are the descriptive ones, botany, zoology, geology, and the mainly empirical ones, chemistry, magnetism, and electricity. Darwin's Origin had appeared four years before The Water-Babies; seven years after its publication, Clark Maxwell would start the swing back to the exact sciences and the new physics--the new mathematics had been established for half a century, but had so far had no impact on the public and little on the scientists.

Given the date of this work, Kingsley's attitude towards the science of his time--and science generally--is of importance. He often expresses disapproval of scientific dogmatism and the closed scientific mind, as in the story of Professor Pthmlnsprts, who had addressed the British Association, who caught Tom in his net, and, refusing to admit the possibility of a water-baby, wished to claim him as a newly discovered species, Hydrotecnon Pthmlnsprtsianum (ch. 4). He forgot, says Kingsley, "that he was a scientific man, and there-

fore ought to have known that he couldn't know" there were no water-babies, and "that he was a logician, and therefore ought to have known that he could not prove an universal negative." Ellie knows that there used to be children in the water, and mermaids and mermen--she has seen them in a picture called "The Triumph of Galatea." "It is so beautiful, that it must be true," a remark Kingsley calls one of the deepest and wisest speeches which can come out of a human mouth. When will people understand this? "Not till they give up believing that Mr. John Locke (good man and honest though he was) was the wisest man that ever lived on earth; and recollect that a wiser man than he lived long before him; and that his name was Plato, the son of Ariston" (ch. 4).

He is as highly critical of the medical profession as his predecessor Fielding was, and the account of the report by the squabbling doctors of the county on the professor's illness is strongly reminiscent of the leech's report on Tom Jones' bruised shin: the report was "in the true medical language, one half bad Latin, the other half worse Greek, and the rest what might have been English, if they had only learnt to write it" (ch. 4).

As to naturalists, he suggests that they catch dozens of water-babies when they are out dredging, but quietly throw them back "for fear of spoiling their theories" (ch. 4). The one direct reference to evolutionary theories comes in the history of "the great and famous nation of the Doasyoulikes," who lived "in the land of Readymade, at the foot of the Happy-go-Lucky Mountains, where flapdoodle grows wild" (ch. 6). They lived a life of passive enjoyment (described in rich detail, with echoes of ancient Greek luxury) until the mountain blew up, killing two-thirds of them. The rest no longer knew how to

make ploughs, and had eaten up their seed corn. Five hundred years later they were living up in trees and making nests to keep off the rain. Another five hundred and they were quadrumanous, and their chief was all hairy. In the severe climate, only the hairy ones survived. Some millenia later, all were dead but one enormous survivor, who was shot by M. du Chaillu, famous in Kingsley's day as collector of the gorilla. The unfortunate last male of the Doasyoulikes "remembered that his ancestors had once been men, and tried to say, 'Am I not a man and a brother?' but had forgotten how to use his tongue; and then he had tried to call for a doctor, but he had forgotten the word for one. So all he said was 'Ubboboo!' and died" (ch. 6). This is a vivid reversal of Darwinian evolution, a doctrine of reversion, reminiscent of Tennyson's lines in the second Locksley poem.

Elsewhere, Mother Carey, who in one aspect is Natura naturans, describes her mode of creating: "I sit here and make them make themselves" (ch. 7). Since she is also a fairy, a spiritual being, this implies a supernaturally guided process, or at least a Lamarckian, rather than a Darwinian doctrine. A few pages later, we meet the great sea-mother making "world-pap all day long, for the steam-giants to knead, and the fire-giants to bake, till it has risen and hardened into mountain-loaves and island-cakes," but this is no more than a fanciful rendering, somewhat disrespectfully after the manner of Erasmus Darwin, of the scientific facts of Vulcanian geology. It is, in fact, continued by a similar treatment of the formation of metallic veins in rocks.

Perhaps Kingsley's last word on science is Mother Carey's tale of Prometheus and Epimetheus (ch. 7). The children of Epimetheus are the men of science; those of Prometheus are the

fanatics, theorists, bigots, and bores. I would note, however, that this leaves a nice degree of ambiguity as to whether "men of science" are "men who know" or what Huxley and Spencer would call "scientists" and as to whether Huxley or Wilberforce is the bigot and fanatic. Kingsley is fond of ambiguities, and tries to alert us to them, as in the neat Maxima debetur pueris reverentia, "The greatest reverence is due to children," or according to Cousin Cramchild, "The greatest respectfulness is expected from little boys."

He is obviously interested in science and technology, and up-to-date in his knowledge--he refers to the Great Exhibition and Crystal Palace, Tom encounters a screw-driven steamship in the Atlantic, and Mother Carey sends an "electric message" to "the old gentleman in the grey greatcoat, who looks after the big copper boiler in the Gulf of Mexico" to ask for more steam (ch. 7). This would be, of course, electric telegraph, not telephone.

Many of Kingsley's scientific-social concerns have a very modern ring: he is alert to the needs of conservation, especially of marine species, salmon and whales in particular; he is as alert as Greenpeace to the dangers of pollution and filth in the sea.

He shares with contemporaries like Dickens a lively concern over the treatment of criminals, over the abuse of children, and over "modern" education. On these themes he often adopts a Dickensian style and method: Grimes is a Dickensian character with a Dickensian name; Cousin Cramchild at once recalls Dickens' McChoakumchild. Kingsley also shares Dickens' dislike of the fads of the day--patent medicines, spiritualism, mesmerism, hydropathy, etc.--to which he adds pyropathy, geopathy, atmopathy, hermpathy and meteoropathy as sug-

gested new fads (ch. 4).

To concentrate on the ideas in The Water-Babies is to give the impression of dead seriousness. One must remember that Kingsley's predecessors, and to some extent his models, Rabelais, Swift, and Sterne, were intensely serious in their underlying ideas and in their attacks, while intensely--even savagely--jocular in their presentation. Chapter 8 of The Water-Babies is openly and avowedly Swiftian; the influence of Rabelais, suggested directly in chapter 3, is clearly present almost everywhere, in the great catalogues and litanies, like the cutlery in chapter 5, the great account of doctors, medicines, and treatments in chapter 4, down to the solemn and protracted invocation to backstairs in the last chapter. Some of the sheer nonsense passages

are Rabelaisian in manner and style, although Kingsley and Rabelais are rather widely separated in their standards of decorum. This does not prevent Kingsley from using devices to give his work a share, if limited, of the romping zest of Gargantua and Pantagruel.

The whole work is a strange, but effective, gallimaufry of subject matters, styles, moods, and mannerisms. It is perhaps the true successor of Sterne's literary acrobatics, and of Swift's wild imagination and savage wit. Would any other Victorian have defined Antipathy as "using him like 'a man and a brother'" (ch. 4) or suggested at Grimes' death, that "when a man becomes a confirmed poacher, the only way to cure him is to put him under water for twenty-four hours, like Grimes" (ch. 4).



The illustration on p. 9 is from the "new edition" (1885) by Linley Sambourne.

The illustration on this page is from the first edition (1863) by Noel Paton.

A Pocket Guide to the Peerage

Jean O'Grady
Mill Project, Toronto

When Lord Peter Wimsey at last marries Harriet, why is it that she becomes Lady Peter Wimsey rather than Lady Harriet? And why, on the other hand, does his sister Lady Mary Wimsey eventually face the world as part of the team "Mr. Charles and Lady Mary Parker"? Most Victorian scholars have from time to time been confronted with such intricacies of the English peerage, and many will have mastered them to their own satisfaction. In the belief, however, that in our classless society there must be some young researchers as green as I once was, I offer the following brief guide. This knowledge may prove useful even if there is no occasion to address a Duke ("Your Grace") or send a letter to a Marquis ("The Most Hon. the Marquis of"). It is often of material help in research, and, perhaps more important, it allows us to enjoy to the full various refinements in the Victorian novel and in real life that would otherwise be lost on us.

There are five classes, or degrees, in the peerage: in descending order, dukes, marquises, earls, viscounts, and barons. These are the peers who take their place in the House of Lords, providing they have reached the age of 21 and are not felons or (until recently) women.¹ Beneath them

¹The House of Lords in Victorian times included 26 prelates, 16 representative Scottish peers elected from the Scottish peerage of before the union, and 28 similarly representative Irish peers. High judicial officers were generally made hereditary peers, if necessary, so that they could be one of the "law lords."

is the class of hereditary baronets--of the style of "Sir Thomas and Lady Bertram"--who do not sit in the House of Lords, but as gentlemen are either the backbone of the country, or an idle fox-hunting rabble, depending on one's point of view. Beneath these again are the knights--Sir John Falstaff was one--whose title is not inherited by their sons.

Nomenclature among the peers is very precise. Ducal couples are always "the Duke and Duchess of Buckingham," or whatever their territorial designation may be, as are "the Marquis (or Marquess) and Marchioness of So-and-So"; this reflects the feudal origin of the peerage. Earls (whose wives are Countesses) may be Earl of a place or, if this was specified when the title was conferred, Earl plus their family name (Earl Grey for Charles Grey). Viscounts and Barons are not entitled to the "of" (except in the Scottish Peerage), but may take the style "Viscount Palmerston" (his family name was Temple) or "Baron Rothschild" (where Rothschild is the family name). All except dukes may be called "Lord So-and-So" in place of their full title; in fact, barons are almost always known as Lord, Lord Byron being a good example.

High-ranking families dear to their monarch generally have two or more titles; in fact, the Duke of Atholl accumulated nineteen as his family rose through the peerage. All these titles belong by right to the head of the family, but it is customary to bestow one of them on the heir as a "courtesy title." Thus Lord Althorp (John Charles Spencer, eldest son of

the 2nd Earl Spencer) was not a peer, but had the courtesy title of Viscount Althorp, and sat in the Commons by virtue of having been elected, like any commoner. He entered the peerage as Earl Spencer in 1834 when his father died, was elevated to the House of Lords, and left the reform ministry rudderless. In fact the House of Commons was so liberally sprinkled with the sons of peers-- Lord Stanley, Lord Durham, Lord Grey, Lord John Russell (obviously, by his style, a younger son)--that it was no wonder the early Victorian radicals claimed that the House of Commons was dominated by about 200 great families. Certainly it would be false to see the two Houses as respectively representing nobles and commoners.²

Should the family be possessed of a third title, it is used to dignify the eldest son of the eldest son, not the eldest son's brothers. Other sons and daughters of peers have specified titles. All daughters of dukes, marquises, and earls are of the style "Lady Barbara Smith," that is, their first name plus their family surname, and younger sons of dukes and marquises are similarly "Lord Henry Wentworth." Younger sons of earls, however, and all sons and daughters of viscounts and barons, have the style "The Honourable Thomas Collins." Children of these cadet branches have no title at all. Obviously, it is a grave mistake to use the first name of any peer or courtesy peer after the title, as in "Lord Noel Annan"; this is to mix him up with a younger son. If his first name needs to be mentioned, it is in the form "Alfred, Lord Tennyson."

²Palmerston was actually a peer, but was allowed to sit in the Commons because he was an Irish peer representing an English constituency. The rules governing the Irish and Scottish peerage have several peculiarities.

it will come as no surprise to hear that women may take the rank of their husbands, but not men of their wives. The rules governing marriages of peers' daughters are too perplexing for an amateur to master entirely, but it seems safe to say that a Lady Anne Murray (daughter of an earl), having successfully secured the affections of a Lord Edward Sandwich (younger son of a duke), will ascend to her husband's rank and take his title as Lady Edward Sandwich. If she condescends to a mere Hon. George Cracker, however (younger son of a baron), she will retain her own title and become Lady Anne Cracker. If she marries a peer of any rank rather than the holder of a courtesy title, she of course takes the feminine of his title; had she preferred Edward's older brother, she might in time have become the Duchess of Salton.

The general law for the inheritance of a peerage is of course that of primogeniture, whereby the title passes from father to eldest son. The son who is in the direct line of succession is the "heir apparent." If there are no sons,³ the title will go to a brother of the holder, who is known as the "heir presumptive," a slightly less secure position; hence the apprehension, in Victorian novels such as Beauchamp's Career, with which relatives view a childless peer's late marriage with a young wife. If the deceased peer has no brothers either, the title passes to a descendant of his father's brother. It may be necessary to climb up the family tree for generations before finding an ancestor common to the peer who has died and some living sprig; if the common ancestor lived before the family gained one of its titles, the collateral heir will not

³As the peerage puts it, the peer d. s.p.m.s., or died sine prole mascula supersite (without surviving masculine offspring).

inherit that title, but simply those possessed by his own ancestor. Some ancient baronies may be inherited by females in default of heirs male, and in this case a lady would be a baroness "in her own right." In yet other peerages, the Letters Patent that grant the peerage specify an unusual succession by "special remainder"--for instance to the holder's brother, sons of his second wife, or his daughter, who become heirs "at law." In a complete default of heirs, the title may be declared extinct; but if the College of Arms has any reason to believe that an undiscovered heir may yet turn up, it cautiously declares the title "dormant." The vicar in Tess of the D'Urbervilles was not being fanciful in suggesting that Tess might be the descendant of a noble family, as the possibility of a name's being corrupted over time is a real one.

Be sure, however, to distinguish a dormant peerage from one in abeyance. The latter occurs only in a peerage that females are allowed to inherit. Primogeniture, it seems, is a strictly male phenomenon. If only sisters are in the line of succession, they are deemed exactly equal (except in the special case of succession to the throne), and so none can inherit the title, and it falls into abeyance among them until all rival claimants but one are dead. The Barony of Strabolgi probably holds the record, having been almost constantly in abeyance from 1369 to 1916, when Cuthbert Matthias Kenworthy became the 7th Baron.

I will mention two occasions in my own research when a knowledge of the peerage was useful. Actually the first might be said to illustrate the notion that a little learning is a dangerous thing, but it has a happy ending. The problem arose with a passage in which John Stuart Mill, on a tour of the Lake District in 1831, mentions having visited "the woods of

Lord, or rather Lady William Gordon," now a widow. Common biographical dictionaries did not mention the couple, and neither did local histories; Burke's Peerage was the last resort. The style "Lord William Gordon" tells us that we are looking for a younger son of a duke or marquis whose family name was Gordon. It was not too difficult to find a William, second son of Cosmo-George Gordon, third Duke of Gordon, who had married Frances, daughter of Charles, 9th Viscount Irvine. She, however, proved elusive at first, as her dates were not given. Eventually I looked in the indexes for every volume of The Gentleman's Magazine for an obituary of a Gordon, Lady F., in the likely years. I had wasted a good deal of time before I realized that I was looking for the wrong thing; as a viscount's daughter married to the son of a duke, her title really was Lady William Gordon as Mill had said. It was not too long before a full obituary of a Gordon, Lady W., turned up; she was a benevolent soul, who deserved to be remembered, as she left £1,000. to be distributed amongst the poor at her funeral.

The other piece of research that proved to hinge on the peerage occurred when John Stuart Mill (usually my starting-point) in 1866 mentioned English tourists in Spain, "one of whom, Mr. Erskine Murray, devoted to it no small portion of his well-known book." This book may have been well known then, but both it and its author were hard to track down now. Eventually I located A Summer in the Pyrenees by James Erskine Murray (1837), but I could not find any trace of the author in the biographical dictionaries, in the Wellesley Index, in Allibone's Dictionary of Authors, the peerage, the alumni of Oxford and Cambridge, the boys of Eton, and so on. A cost-efficient researcher would perhaps have stopped there, but this was becoming a challenge. The breakthrough came when I

realized that there was in fact a clue in the NUC listing, "by the Hon. James Erskine Murray." Since he had not shown up in parliamentary or judicial sources, he must be in the peerage somewhere. In fact he must be the younger son of an earl, viscount, or baron. I went back to the peerages, checking once again the Murray families, which included the Dukes and Marquises of Atholl, the Earls of Tullibardine, the Earls of Dunmore and Annandale, and, in the Scottish peerage, the Viscounts of Stormont and Barons of Elibank. None had a likely son. But Burke's Peerage treats only families with living descendants; Cockayne's Peerage, while dealing with extinct families, concentrates on the peers themselves, not always mentioning brothers. Only when the stacks of the Robarts Library yielded a Burke's Peerage of 1893 was it possible to find, under the Barony of Elibank in the Scottish peerage, an Alexander Murray whose second marriage had produced a son, James, who had married Isabella, only child of James Erskine Esq., and died in February 1844. With this death-date, I hurried to The Times' index to find an obituary. And here was unexpected wealth (every researcher deserves some). The Times not only

mentioned that Murray had adopted his wife's name on his marriage, but also gave a detailed account of his gallant expedition against the pirates of Borneo, his death from a grapeshot wound, and his burial amid great lamentations.

Now for those who know the period very well, and to whom Erskine Murray may be a household name, it will perhaps seem that I took a slow boat to Borneo to get this information. Nevertheless, had I not known something of the peerage, I should still be in port. Research too often follows this pattern: for a long time one finds nothing, but suddenly a single fact becomes a key to a whole wealth of information. The style of a peer's name may often hold such a clue. If the rules do not seem to apply to a particular case, it may be an exception based on family usage, or the Crown may have granted a special exemption, or I may have misinformed you. As Dorothy Sayers found out when she dipped into campanology, it's easy for an amateur to blunder. But at least she knew that in important matters like the peerage, it is not enough to go where your Wimsey takes you.



Twenty Years After: A Time to Review (?)

Albert Tucker
York University

In the spring of 1978 Michael Collie wrote an essay in this newsletter that was reflective on the first decade of the Association's history. Now that we have arrived at the end of a second decade, it is fitting that another essay should be written --first, to continue the historical account and, secondly, to build further upon the reflections begun by Professor Collie. Readers should be warned that this writer is struck by the continuing relevance of some of his critical observations even after the passage of a decade.

The goals and expectations of the Association seem remarkably intact when one compares its present state with those early discussions about its formation in the fall of 1967. It is still a small group made up of faculty and some graduate students within a fairly confined geographic area. Their interests are concentrated in the literature and history of nineteenth-century Britain; and meetings are held in ways that encourage an informal social milieu for the presentation of subjects and the exchange of dialogue. Indeed, the informality of the annual meetings and their congenial size, together with the three social evenings that are held in Toronto each academic year, bear out the will of the membership to maintain essentially cordial relationships and thus to nourish one of the central goals of those who founded the Association twenty years ago.

Those relationships in turn have helped to sustain a certain interdisciplinary character, with faculty from the two disciplines mingling

easily from a number of universities. The executive of the Association has been a discreet, directing centre, with a president who has not stinted in time or initiative to arrange for speakers and subjects, planning sometimes two years ahead. Beyond this executive function, each president has also contributed a remarkably gracious and generous style of hospitality. It is a pleasure to name and to thank (I am sure, on behalf of the membership), the five presidents who have served in that position since the last review in 1978. They are:

Jane Millgate	(1978-80)
Michael Laine	(1980-82)
Trevor Levere	(1982-84)
Ann Robson	(1984-86)
Judith Grant	(1986-88)

Altogether, the steady hand of the executive has contributed substantially to keeping the original constitution intact; there has been no need even to think of replacing its simplicity with a more formal centre or institute. The budget, too, has been managed carefully, so that there is no problem of debt even though of the two institutions that originally provided some modest support to the Association, York and U of T, only the latter has continued it.

The form of the conference continues to be based on two papers--one in each of the two disciplines, with at least one scholar-speaker from outside the immediate region of central Ontario. In recent years both papers have been presented by scholars from outside this local base. The speakers and their subjects since 1976 have been:

- 1977 Peter Allen (University of Toronto) "Arthur Hallam's Round Table: The Cambridge Apostles"
Peter Marsh (University of Syracuse) "The Conscience of the Late Victorian State"
- 1978 E.S. Shaffer (University of East Anglia) "The Ironic Mode in Biblical Criticism: Samuel Butler's The Fair Haven"
P.M.H. Mazumdar (University of Toronto) "The Blood-Letting Controversy"
- 1979 Asa Briggs (Worcester College, Oxford) "Victorian Things"
J.M. Cameron (University of Toronto) "Dickens and the Angels"
- 1980 F.S.L. Lyons (Trinity College, Dublin) "Yeats and Victorian Ireland"
William Whitla (York University) "William Morris's 'Huge Mass of Reading'"
- 1981 Robertson Davies (University of Toronto) "Melodrama in Victorian Theatre and Fiction"
J.F.C. Harrison (University of Sussex) "From the Margins: Phrenology, Mesmerism, and Spiritualism in Victorian England"
- 1982 Mark Girouard (Yale University) "Modern Babylons: Aspects and Attitudes in the Nineteenth-century City"
Michael Millgate (University of Toronto) "Hardy the Professional"
- 1983 Frank Turner (Yale University) "The Opponents of the Oxford Movement"
Joseph Gold (Waterloo University) "The Dickens-Davis Dispute and the Demythologizing Process"
- 1984 Albert Tucker (York University) "The Victorian Liberal State and the Problem of Military Power"
U.C. Knoepfelmacher (Princeton) "Macdonald and Carroll"
- 1985 Owen Chadwick (Cambridge University) "Lord Acton's Victorian Religion and Victorian History"
David Shaw (University of Toronto) "Philosophy and Genre in Victorian Poetics"
- 1986 Noel Annan (King's College, Cambridge) "The Victorian Age"
Richard Rempel (McMaster University) "Conflicts and Changes in Liberal Theory & Practice, 1890-1918: The Case of Bertrand Russell"
- 1987 Eileen Yeo (University of Sussex) "Gender, Class, and the Social Science Association, 1857-86"
Elaine Showalter (Princeton University) "After George Eliot: Daughters and Sons"
- 1988 Michael Booth (University of Victoria) "Melodrama and Crime"
Judith Walkowitz (Rutgers University) "Melodrama and Victorian Political Culture: The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon"



The subjects indicate a diverse range of interests and flexible criteria of selection, sometimes dwelling on the recent work and reputation of a scholar, sometimes on a broadly-defined theme. The result for the conferences generally has been a mix of disciplinary interest, which has led on each occasion to a stimulating balance of listening and discussion.

Finally, any reflection on the very positive features of the Association must include the editors of this Newsletter. Again, their work has been voluntary; their success has often been dependent on their ingenuity in tapping institutional resources at nominal costs to the Association, and patience has been a requisite virtue in eliciting articles and reviews from the membership. The editors since 1978 have been Elizabeth Waterston and Allan Austin from the University of Guelph (1978-80); Bruce Kinzer, who worked first with the Mill Project at the University of Toronto and then in the History Department at McMaster University (1980-84); Patricia Morton from Trent University (1984-86); and, most recently, Judith Knelman of the Communications Department at the University of Toronto.

Clearly, the theme of voluntarism runs through every aspect of the Association. It does not flow from the Victorian Protestant virtues of duty, conscience, and self-denial, but from genuine academic interest, the physical proximity of members, and a desire on the part of each member to pursue intellectual inquiry in a field of study that, however concentrated it may be chronologically, **seems** especially conducive to interdisciplinary curiosity.

Here, a close observer of the Association must pause and give rein to **some** balanced if not critical commentary. Reviewing the list of annual conferences in 1978, Professor Collie

wondered whether or not the title of lectures taken together adequately reflected the wide interests of the membership and potential membership. He went on to point out gaps, only some of which have been filled. Most are still there--subjects such as music, science, recreation, sport, and popular art. Melodrama, theatre, and women's studies have been introduced to stimulate very interesting sessions, but the Association may be faced with a more perplexing problem than simply the addition of subjects. Questions might have to be asked about the limitations arising, first, from a concentration on only two disciplines; and, second, from restricting all discussion only to Britain. What of disciplines such as the history of science, politics and philosophy, and the history of art?

Is it possible to reconsider the original restriction of subjects only to Britain? A beginning might be made by exploring the terms "Victorian" and "nineteenth century" as applied to the British Empire, and to incorporate into the Association discussion of the colonial cultures, particularly those of Canada, Australia, and India. Expanding interests in this way could also be enhanced by relaxing the chronological bounds at both ends, reaching earlier into the nineteenth century and extending the later period to the First World War. Nor is there an unwritten clause in the constitution that says that the Association must confine its interest only to the medium of print. From time to time, slides have been projected to illustrate lectures, but film and television have never been considered in our discussions as other than marginal media to interpret the nineteenth century.

The issue of sources, however, might be resolved more clearly by examining first what is meant by interdisciplinary study, a question that has never been thoroughly explored within

the Association. In many ways, the two disciplines of history and literature have existed in tandem, their relation to each other dependent on amicable personal relationships rather than on intellectual curiosity about definitions. Given the developing and even changing interests of some members, which itself may reflect changes coming over the disciplines themselves, the time may have arrived to focus a little more attention in this area of theory.

Certainly, some re-assessment or review seems to be necessary. In addition to these more substantive questions, there are formal problems that one observes after comparing the Association of today with that of twenty years ago. The annual conferences have on the whole been very successful; some have been outstanding; all have been pleasant occasions. Nevertheless, their format has become fixed and predictable. Some faculty have simply dropped out of participation with little explanation as to why. New and junior faculty have not appeared in numbers, and graduate students still take part as

spectators very much on the margins, rather than as participants. And the original connection between the Association and the Victorian Studies Option in the M.A. programmes of York University and the University of Toronto has faded so far from our discussions as virtually to have disappeared. Those involved with the Option are aware of serious problems that will not easily go away. If the two entities--the Association and the Option--are now entirely separate, that separation might be formally recognized. It would clear the air, and both would benefit if the original relationship between the two were at least discussed in terms of comparison with the present conditions.

On balance, we can be pleased at the continuity of the Association, and pay tribute to those who have so willingly given of their time and their intellect. If my concluding comments seem negative, they are intended to offer constructive criticism toward discussion, and possibly to strengthen the Association for the next twenty years.



On the Anniversary of the Death of Matthew Arnold

John Atkin

Matthew Arnold died 100 years ago--on 15 April 1888--while in Liverpool to meet his daughter Lucy, who was arriving from America. She had married a New Yorker whom she had met while accompanying her father on his 1884 tour of the United States and Canada.

When he died, after 37 years as an inspector of schools, Arnold was one of the few upper-class Englishmen who understood and appreciated the rising middle class. He learned of the class by immersion. Until 1870, he inspected dissenters' schools, and these included the high-quality schools sponsored by the Wesleyan Methodists. He sought to transform England and Wales through a revitalized school system and, eventually, a strong middle class. "Enliven and form the minds of your pupils," he advised.

While everyone knows Arnold by the slogans from Culture and Anarchy--Barbarians and Philistines, sweetness and light--few seem to consider what qualified him to speak as a prophet for a new and workable ideal, the power of culture. Yet I am not alone in suggesting it was his immersion in schools.

In a Catholic country, Arnold would probably have founded a religious order to embody his ideal. In a new country he might have become superintendent of education. But in powerful Victorian England, despite many attempts to improve his position, he remained a school inspector.

As Arnold's spirit floated into the residence of eternal genius, it might have noticed, over in the corner, the embryo of T.S. Eliot preparing to

enter earthly existence in September. What would the Victorian prophet of culture have said to the English spirit of the succeeding age? He might have foreseen the Common Market and "England, with her empire gone, knocking on the door of Europe," but he would not have anticipated the two great wars of Eliot's century and the devastation that ensued. The centre of the universe was London and its clubs, with ties to Oxford, Cambridge, and Bentham's university. The age of knowledge was coming, but the kind of knowledge that Eliot, Freud, Jung, and the anthropologists had would be much more universally spread throughout the world, so that the best that had been thought and said would go far beyond the fog-bound island off the coast of France that ruled the seas.

As the anniversary of Arnold's death arrives, he may be smiling at those who are returning to his insight into the religion of Christ, or culture, or the school system, and wondering whether the social disturbance since his death and the great advance in the understanding of life have left a space for a unity of all this.



Books

Robert Keith Miller. Carlyle's Life of John Sterling: A Study in Victorian Biography. Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1987.

The best part of this revised doctoral thesis (Columbia, 1978) is the third chapter, in which Miller argues that The Life of John Sterling demonstrates an important change in Carlyle's values and view of life. The idea of the poet or man of letters as hero has been abandoned, and Carlyle has come to see the human condition as irredeemably tragic. "The entire text of The Life of Sterling," Miller concludes,

has worked to convince us that we should put no faith in any established creed. Art, education, religion--these are all inadequate; each offers only an illusion of meaning. And by attracting young minds through the promise of sanctuary from the difficulties of the time, each has become a corrupting social force.

The only remaining value is that of love: The Life of Sterling exemplifies "the Victorian celebration of personal feeling and devotion as a last resort in a world where ignorant armies clash by night." Sterling's ineffectual life is representative of the fate awaiting all of us, whether we know it or not. The language in which Carlyle describes Sterling is sometimes that of an infatuated lover: his feeling for Sterling seems a powerful attraction "to the very qualities his own nature so often held in check"--weakness, uncertainty, spontaneity of feeling, and above all the capacity to attract and express love. Thus The Life of Sterling vividly dramatizes Carlyle's state of mind at the time he wrote it, and it

was exactly this quality of personal revelation of character that attracted many Victorian readers to his writing.

This argument could have been the basis for an especially interesting and valuable article, and there is much in other chapters that Miller might have used to support it, without necessarily going beyond the scope of an article. In chapter two Miller comments usefully on the structure of The Life of Sterling and shows that biography is here being used as "a means of expiation" of guilt and that its subject can be seen to be "Carlyle's relation with John Sterling and his overwhelming need to both recreate and justify" it. Chapter four, though somewhat repetitious and anticlimactic, reinforces Miller's thesis by demonstrating the consistency and complexity of Carlyle's imagery, and this material might also have been brought to bear on the central subject in a shorter and more effective form.

The remainder of Miller's work does not seem to me to justify publication at present. The problem seems to be that he does not know enough about the several subjects that might have been usefully illuminated by further consideration of his chosen text and its aesthetic and social context. The first chapter, which treats Carlyle as a Victorian biographer, shows that Miller's knowledge of critical theory regarding biography/autobiography is well behind the times. Carlyle's simplistic and rather conventional view of biography is never critically examined, although Miller does show that Carlyle did not always practise what he seemed to preach. And Miller's own view of biography often seems naive, as when he says that The Life of

Sterling illustrates "the essential Carlyle." Similarly, Miller has not read enough to cast fresh light on the social context of The Life of Sterling. He seems unacquainted with the considerable body of research on the set Sterling belonged to (sometimes rather misleadingly labelled "the Tennyson circle"). On the subject of J.C. Hare, for example, he relies on the DNB, despite the availability of Merrill Distad's biography, and he takes at face value Carlyle's very questionable explanation of how and why he came to write The Life of Sterling. A more thorough study of Carlyle's relationship to this set would have made much clearer the significance of this text in Carlyle's life and his place in the literary world of his time and would have allowed a reinterpretation of the controversy over Sterling, who was indeed significant for what he represented rather than for what he actually accomplished. Miller writes well and likely could produce in time a really good book on Carlyle. But his editors at UMI Press (Juliet McMaster is the series editor and G.B. Tennyson the consulting editor) have perhaps done him a rather questionable favour in permitting him to bring his scholarship before the public in book form at this early stage in its development.

Peter Allen
University of Toronto

David Grylls. The Paradox of Gissing. London: Allen and Unwin, 1986.

As an aesthete who was also a social critic, a classicist who was obsessed with contemporary life, a writer of proletarian novels who expressed loathing for the poor, and a misogynist who wrote sympathetically about female emancipation, George Gissing was, says David Grylls, pre-eminently a paradox, his life and work reflecting a mind deeply divided and perpet-

ually at odds with itself. In this lively, informed, and consistently readable book, Grylls explores the nature of Gissing's paradoxical imagination, identifying the tensions and dichotomies within it as the most distinctive feature of all Gissing's work and the key to an understanding of both individual novels and the overall development of his career. Other critics, beginning with Jacob Korg in "Division of Purpose in George Gissing," have commented on the self-divided and often contradictory quality of Gissing's fiction. Grylls' contribution is to work through the implications of these self-divisions and to make a convincing case that they are the source not only of Gissing's weaknesses but also of his characteristic strengths as a novelist. In the process he demonstrates that there is in fact pattern and continuity amid the inconsistencies, the jarring shifts of tone and judgement, which are so readily apparent to any reader of the novels.

The most basic and deep-rooted of all Gissing's self-divisions, says Grylls, was the conflict between pessimism and will power, between "energetic aspiration and the certainty that all ambitions are vain." Gissing was a pessimist by both temperament and conviction, the latter having been reinforced most strongly by his reading of Schopenhauer, the former by his experience of expulsion from Owens College and imprisonment for theft, a blow that put an end to what had promised to be a brilliant academic career. Pessimism appears not only in the tone and incident of the novels but also in their structure: as Grylls notes, Gissing's favourite narrative strategy, no matter what issue he is dealing with, is to present a wide range of alternatives, all of which prove to be hopeless. This commitment to pessimism, however, coexists with a dogged belief in the importance of effort and perseverance. In his own life, of

course, Gissing's frequently voiced despair was combined with an extraordinary degree of energy and application, a sustained productivity in the face of adversity that resulted in more than twenty books before his death at age 46. In the novels themselves Gissing repeatedly explores, with obsessive fascination, what he regards as positive values, various forms of dedication and positive endeavour. While he persistently sets up ideals which obviously hold great appeal for him (social reform, art, intellectual achievement, love, female independence), his sceptical intelligence and habits of self-doubt lead him just as persistently to question, qualify, criticize, and ultimately to undermine those ideals.

Grylls traces this pattern of advance and retreat, of "prickly reassessment and underlying continuity," through a series of chapters devoted to the major themes that preoccupied Gissing: "Workers and Reform," "Art and Commercialism," "Poverty, Intellect and Art," "Women, Feminism and Marriage." He demonstrates that Gissing's thoughts on all the central questions of his day were ambiguous and shifting, and argues that almost all his later beliefs can be seen as a recoil from earlier ones. This recoil took two forms: either an "outright rejection of earlier values" (as in the scorn with which he increasingly viewed any efforts to improve the condition of the poor) or else a "determined detachment" from what he saw as the exploitation of beliefs he genuinely held (as in his reaction against different forms of emancipation when they were translated into popular catchwords and bandied about by shallow characters like the Denyer girls in The Emancipated or Alma Frothingham in The Whirlpool). He even came to reassess his own pessimism, most scathingly in the 1893 story, "The Pessimist of Plato Road," but also through characters like Harvey Rolfe in The Whirl-

pool who reject the posture of despair in favour of a quiet resignation not incompatible with industriousness and modest achievement.

Gissing's intellectual and emotional divisions are responsible for many of the flaws in his work: contradictions, uncertainties of tone, narratives at odds with the narrator's commentary, love stories that fail to coalesce with the social analysis they are intended to embody, oxymoronic combinations of the progressive and reactionary (most striking perhaps in his treatment of the woman question). Those same self-divisions, however, are inseparable from Gissing's peculiar strengths and most successful strategies. They are directly related to his pervasive use of irony, a mode especially congenial, as Grylls notes, to a writer with ambivalent and paradoxical responses. They also contribute to the psychological acumen which allows him to enter sympathetically into the minds of very different human types.

Because he recognizes that Gissing himself was capable of holding conflicting views on almost any subject, Grylls avoids the tendency of many other Gissing critics to single out individual characters as direct spokesmen for the author. Waymark in The Unclassed, for instance, has at times been taken as the exponent of Gissing's shift from a reformist to an aestheticist stance in the early 1800s. While not denying that such a shift took place, Grylls points out that the structure of The Unclassed undermines the position of Gissing's supposed spokesman: Waymark's aestheticism, he says, is shown to fail as a sustaining creed. By the same token, New Grub Street is not constructed simply around an opposition between the two men, Milvain and Rardon, the latter of whom is a straightforward representation of Gissing, but rather around the contrast and counterpoint of two rela-

tionships, a strategy that keeps the conflict between integrity and worldliness from having a schematically black and white quality and allows for much greater subtlety of judgment and characterization. Grylls argues that Gissing's novels are nearly always shaped around conflicting ideas and contrasting groups, another outgrowth of his divided imagination, and that while these juxtapositions may be forced and mechanical in his weaker books, in his best they make for works that are genuinely complex rather than merely confused.

The conception of Gissing as a writer who "believed simultaneously in determinism and determination" proves to be a fruitful starting point, in Grylls' hands, for an analysis of what is most problematic and most distinctive in Gissing's achievement. While Grylls' study does not represent any radically new departures in Gissing criticism, it does provide a fresh and coherent perspective on this often exasperating but always intriguing novelist.

Phyllis Rozendal
York University

George W. Stocking, Jr. Victorian Anthropology. New York: Free Press, 1987.

Anthropology is still very much an interdisciplinary discipline, and George Stocking shows how its intellectual forebears included anatomy, archaeology, ethnology, history, mythography, and philology, to say nothing of anthropometry, geology, and phrenology. He begins his study of Victorian (i.e., British Victorian) anthropology, moreover, with a rapid overview of the Enlightenment, and closes it with a "prospective retrospect" in which he reaches forward into the twentieth century. In between, and inter alia, he examines the work of such pioneers as Knox and

Prichard (physicians), Muller (philologist), Maine and McClellan (lawyers), Buckle (historian), Lubbock (geologist, archaeologist, parliamentarian), Tylor (ethnologist, philologist, mythographer), and that arch polymath, Herbert Spencer, not to mention such key figures in the story of evolution as Darwin, Wallace, Lyell, and Huxley.

The danger with such a book, of course, is that "the centre cannot hold," that "things fall apart." And there are times when the reader loses track of what is holding things together. But all such digressions return to, and most merge into, one of the book's major themes. Of these, overriding all others is the emergence of a developmental or evolutionary "paradigm," to which the sundry tributaries of the new discipline eventually conform and contribute. Initially any such tendency was held in check by a bible-based monogenism, coupled with a diffusionist version of the growth of civilization. Supporters of such a view, however, found Archbishop Ussher's 6,000-year time limit increasingly constricting, especially since archaeologists were preempting more and more of those years on behalf of Egyptian civilization, and ethnologists were examining existing cultures whose members still seemed to have a great deal more catching up to do than the sons of Noah ever did. One solution proposed was that some of Noah's descendants had degenerated rather than progressed since the flood. But an increasingly persuasive case was being made by polygenists in favour of separate "centres of creation" for the different races of man.

The highly nationalistic basis for such thinking was dealt a serious blow by the discovery, in 1858, of human artifacts in Brixham Cave, Kent. These were of such antiquity that quite clearly Britain itself, the apex of civilization, had once

been inhabited by "savages" as primitive as any yet known to man. Coming on the eve of The Origin of Species, this and similar discoveries helped ensure the fairly rapid extension of Darwin's developmental paradigm so as to include anthropology.

Post-Darwinian anthropology showed a revealing preoccupation with religion and marriage. Stocking sees these biases as to some extent extrascientifically motivated. Tylor may have revealed his ironic nostalgia for the simplicities of faith when he wrote of spiritualism's fraudulence: "Blessed are they that have seen, and yet have believed." But he still insisted that religion arose out of premature attempts to explain things "scientifically." So it behooved those unavoidably engaged in invalidating such a key source of consolation and guidance to inculcate a new faith in man's autonomous capacity to give "meaning to human life and direction to human history."

The case of marriage is more complex. Constrained by the dual vision of woman as angel and as temptress, Victorian marriages were undoubtedly more patriarchal than those of the previous century. And arguably anthropologists who depicted sexual relationships as having risen from sheer promiscuity through polyandry to the ideal, monogamy, were thereby protecting its Victorian apotheosis from the retrogressive threat of middle-class feminism. But such a defence of the marital status quo may have had other motives. For the middle-class male arbiters of Victorian morals were aware as never before that in their very midst, in the slums of Britain's great cities, were "savages" as heedless of the civilizing benefits of monogamy as any from the wilds of Australia or Africa. Freed from the social and religious restraints of village life, and untempted by the fruits of self-help and self-restraint offered by the laissez-faire jungle of city life, the



From Charles Wilkes, *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition during the Years 1838, 1839, 1840, 1841, 1842* (Philadelphia, 1850)

poor saw no reason to postpone such meagre immediate gratifications as lay within their grasp. Yet unless they could be brought to value and engage in the classic Victorian trade-off of present pain for future gain, and above all to do so in sexual terms, they would never possess the motivation or the energy to prosper and take their rightful and unthreatening place in a society where "Civilization ... was self-improvement writ large."

In the last two paragraphs I have dealt with Stocking's speculations as to how Victorian anthropologists may have tried to influence, as well as to record, human development. And in his final chapter he deals with ways in which they may in fact have influenced the future of anthropology. In this, as in so much else, he is himself a true Victorian. Quibble I may wish to over his cavalier reversal of Haeckel's "ontology recapitulates phylogeny" to the anthropological equivalent of "phylogeny recapitulates ontology," or about whether Bagehot's Darwinism is any more Lamarckian than Darwin's Darwinism. But the abiding impression made by this book, over and above the wealth of anecdotal detail, the sudden insights, and the provocative conjectures, is its bold sweep and scope. In his willingness to pull together material from so many sources and fields of enquiry, the author has shown himself willing to risk appearing to be, from time to time, the gifted amateur that so many of those whose work he examines were proud to be. Would that more of today's specialist scholars had that kind of courage.

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Zuzanna Shonfield. The Precariously Privileged: A Professional Family in Victorian London. London: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Zuzanna Shonfield's story of the family of a prominent London surgeon and anatomist, John Marshall, is based on the diary kept by his elder daughter from 1870, when she was 15, to 1892, the year following her father's death and the year of her marriage at 37 and the birth of her only child, Rosalind. Jeannette Marshall does not rank among the world's great diarists and her record is remarkably free of acute perception, reflection, wit, and humour, except unwittingly when complacency carries it perilously close to the Diary of a Nobody.



Although the father was a friend of the pre-Raphaelites, a lecturer in anatomy at the Schools of Art and Design as well as University College, a moving spirit in the Ladies' Sanitary Association, and a proponent of better education for women, his two daughters remained largely impervious to the forces of liberation in the late nineteenth century. But her conventional outlook and unvarnished style make Jeanette Marshall a better

guide to typical middle-class life than more self-conscious, intellectual, polished, and rebellious diarists.

John Marshall was the son of a lawyer in Ely, and one of the interesting features of this book is the contrast between life in that relatively stable and backward society and in London. In Ely, for example, sedan chairs were still being used in the 1880s, half a century after they had disappeared from the capital. When visiting Ely the Marshalls would often go to the cathedral twice on Sunday, partly for the magnificent music but also for relief from the tedium of the provincial sabbath; in London they went to church only rarely, to hear an outstanding preacher or to exchange gossip at the fashionable St. James's, Piccadilly, or St. George's, Hanover Square.

As Marshall prospered in London his income rose to a peak of £4-5,000 a year (about £125-150,000 after taxes in present values). If he had pushed his claims more forcefully he could reasonably have expected a knighthood. All this seems to put him solidly in the upper middle class. Yet although he managed to save two-thirds of his income at its height, the expenses of maintaining his family in the appropriate style meant that he left no great fortune. Like most professionals in London Marshall rented his houses, first in Savile Row and later in Cheyne Walk, and accumulated no equity in them. And since his income was dependent on his surgical and political skills within his profession, the family's economic and social status was more precarious than if it had been based on property, three-percents, or a continuing business. In the years before his death at 73 Marshall was understandably concerned both in self-esteem and economically about the declining number of patients.

Of Marshall's four children, one son died at 13 and the other, after being expensively educated as a barrister, went to Russia in some disgrace in 1888, became a teacher, and returned around 1905 to haunt the British Museum and bore his relations. Most of Jeanette's account naturally concerns the daily life of herself, her younger sister Ada, and their mother, and above all the efforts to secure appropriate marriages for the two daughters. The status of the entire family was involved in their marriages, but for women of this narrow social group the chances of success were not great. They did not have sufficient wealth or property to marry up, but neither did they feel they could marry down. Moreover, although Marshall was socially prominent, the family did not go out much in society or entertain others at home. The two sisters attended lectures at University College, but despite their father's urging they were not interested in preparing for examinations. Jeanette studied music for a time before abruptly stopping, and then in her late twenties and thirties became a great reader and to some extent educated herself.

The high point of their life was the annual holiday in Switzerland, Germany, or Italy, where they went less to enjoy the scenery or relax than in the hope of meeting the right kind of English bachelor in the relatively informal atmosphere of continental hotels. The expense of travel was a useful social filter; but although Jeanette had a few promising overtures abroad and at home, all her possible suitors turned out to lack money or perseverance, to be committed elsewhere, or to be bores. Ada never married, and only after her father's death did Jeanette precipitously settle for another doctor, Edward Seaton, a widower eight years her senior. His income, in proportion to his talents, was about a third of her father's, but it was sufficient

to keep them in a more modest version of the same kind of style, first at Clapham, then Pimlico, and finally Chelsea.

Jeanette was never in the forefront of fashion or thinking, but her diary is a true mirror of conventional life in a small but vital segment of Victorian society. Zuzanna Shonfield has extracted from the diaries much rich detail on dress, customs, mourning rituals, attitudes, and much else. But over the whole account hangs a claustrophobic air against which the liberated of the time were revolting. The decline in Seaton's income, his death in 1914, the First World War, and the rising cost of living freed Jeanette's daughter from the golden cage that had imprisoned her mother and allowed her to work, to go to nightclubs, to dance, to smoke, and to ride pillion on motorcycles. She did not grow up in the same wealthy surroundings as her mother, but in every other way her life was richer.

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J.V. Beckett. The Aristocracy in England, 1660-1914. Oxford: Basil Blackwell; Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1987.

This is an impressive book. A great deal has been written about land ownership, especially in recent years, but most of it is on particular counties or areas or on certain estates. There is inevitably some overlapping between Dr. Beckett's book and two similar surveys by G.E. Mingay and F.M.L. Thompson which appeared in 1963, followed by Harold Perkins' broader Origins of Modern English Society, 1780-1880 in 1969, but many specialized studies in the area (including several by the author) have been published in the last quarter-century, and Beckett has taken a rather different approach than his

predecessors. Such works of integration can be very valuable, but unfortunately most historians tend to shy away from them, preferring their own more specialized original research and perhaps mistakenly assuming it to be more important. Dr. Beckett, however has done a great service in producing such a study, based on a remarkable range of monographs, articles in learned journals, some contemporary printed sources, and a number of unpublished doctoral theses, supplemented at some points by his own research in manuscript sources. His extensive footnotes provide a bibliographical mine of information, but unfortunately the publishers, presumably because of the great length of the book, appear to have vetoed the inclusion of a bibliography listing all these sources in proper order.

The book is divided into three parts, the first explaining in three chapters who the aristocracy were and the channels of admission; the second part entitled "The Aristocracy and the Economy," with six chapters examining estate management, the aristocracy and the agricultural revolution, their role as entrepreneurs in industry (mainly mining), in promoting communications and in respect to the towns, and their contribution to the national economy in general. This is a rational approach to the subject, but it does lead to a certain amount of overlapping. For instance, in Chapter 2 we learn about the size, in Chapter 4 about the management, and in Chapter 5 about the improvement of estates, but not until Chapter 9 do we tackle the consequent topic of their indebtedness. Despite their high incomes the great landowners, we learn, often borrowed heavily to purchase more land, to build new houses or renovate old ones, to drain land and to develop mines, on top of heavy expenses providing portions for their daughters and maintaining a great house in London as well as one

or more in the country, all in the style expected of people in their social position. While Beckett does not try to hide the weaknesses of these aristocrats, particularly their indulgence in conspicuous consumption and their tendency to absenteeism, he is generally sympathetic to them and inclined to give them the benefit of the doubt in assessing the role they played. Some undoubtedly performed their duties very conscientiously, while others were indolent and spendthrift, poor landlords and bad employers; but generalization is very difficult on the basis of the many individual cases that he records.

Dr. Beckett spends all of his first chapter attempting to answer the difficult question, "who were the aristocracy?" The short answer seems to be that they were the landowners (and their families) who were so recognized by their peers on account of their lineage or in particular cases for other reasons. He accepts an estimate that they numbered some 10,000 in Victorian England. The trouble is, however, that this book does not seem to be about those 10,000, most of whom would have been mere gentry, but rather about the much smaller élite at the top, since most of the information is drawn from the records of these more distinguished people and most of the generalizations he makes seem to be about them.

The final chapters dealing with the role of the aristocracy in British political life are in my view the weakest in the book, since they involve a rapid examination of more than two centuries of complicated political history. The author is less at home in this field, to judge by a few unfortunate slips, such as his putting Lord Salisbury's accession as prime minister in the 1890s and his reference to the Conservatives' remaining in office with a peer prime minister until 1905.

Nevertheless, overall the book deserves to be widely read and will be a most useful reference for scholars and especially for doctoral candidates preparing fields in modern British history. Much that is in the book will be familiar to informed readers, but it covers so much ground that for most of us there will be much that is new or that will throw new light on old questions, such is the author's familiarity with a very wide range of historical literature regarding the British aristocracy, 1660-1914. He is to be congratulated.

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Mark Kipperman. Beyond Enchantment: German Idealism and English Romantic Poetry. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986.

Mark Kipperman's study of what he calls by such names as "parallels" between Romantic poetry and Idealistic philosophy (78, 80) and "models" in German Idealist thought for Romantic poems is both intricate and impressive. It suffers from the usual faults: for example, there is a tendency to set up some critics as always useful guides, while others are sometimes reliable, and still other are rarely so. Harold Bloom is one critic of the Romantics Kipperman apparently finds infallible ("as Bloom recognizes" is the ordinary kind of reference to him); Earl Wasserman has occasional insights; M.H. Abrams seems rarely to rise to adequate readings of Romantic poetry or adequate appreciation of the ideas expressed in or implicit in it (his view of Coleridge's "Dejection" ode, referred to at 137, is symptomatic of his limitation as a critic, since he appears to misconceive the poem completely).

A second defect, perhaps of more concern to the layman than to the student or scholar, is the intricacy of

the language in which Kipperman presents the intricate ideas through which he moves, and whose contradictions he often tries to resolve. To some extent, the nature of his vocabulary is given him by the philosophic texts by Kant, Fichte, Schelling, etc., which he seeks to explicate and to integrate for the reader. The reader interested in the subject will simply accept such discussion of Fichte as:

Opposed to the Absolute is negation; but also opposed to the Absolute (from another perspective) is the finite. The act of the I that will allow both absolute principles to be asserted without annihilation, while preserving their opposition, is limitation. Both the I and the not-I will be posited to the degree that the other is not. (79)

But the language sometimes leaves justification behind and soars into an obese academese that few scholars, one hopes, will find tolerable. This comparison of the views of Byron and Shelley is symptomatic:

For both men, I believe, the general goal of a redemptive romance was a freedom from the regressive Sehnsucht that nevertheless allowed man the infinite self-creative promise of his prelapsarian myths. (201)

Otherwise, apart from his theses, which follow logically enough from his premises, the only regularly recurring dilemma for the reader is the appearance, from time to time, of a passage which suggests that Kipperman, while basically explicating the Romantic quest-myth and exhibiting parallels between English Romantic poems and German Idealist philosophy, is engaged on a quest of his own. An example would be the discussion of the proposition "Jesus remained silent, and Pilate condemned him,"

which is used to explicate Schelling's view in Chapter 6, "Schelling's Idealism and the Development of Romantic Quest," which sounds rather like latter-day Talmudic commentary than an integral part of his argument; another would be the discussion in Chapter 10, "Encountering the Actual: Childe Harold and the Limits of Idealism," in which Kipperman tells us how "we turn our own hands upon it to destroy" our "prelapsarian dream," explaining "this is man's nature and his fate." Here it is not clear whether Kipperman is preparing to explicate Byron or if Byron is merely the occasion for a Nietzschean descant upon perverse human nature.

These criticisms aside, the book is remarkable for its suggestiveness and its insights. Idealist philosophy is examined at a length which enables Kipperman to develop his sense of the unity of purpose and the common goals of the Idealists, and in the course of this examination he points ahead to such distinctions as he will make later between the fundamental propositions of the philosophers and the poetic assertions (and those in prose) of the poets. In different ways he develops and argues a number of theses, partly to make plain that "The philosophic system of Transcendental Idealism informed the romantic movement and paralleled it in many fundamental structures, but ... the outcomes of the philosophers' systems were quite distinct from the dark perplexities and only tentatively intuited or longed-for resolutions of the romantic poets" (99).

Kipperman makes numerous statements about his goals in the book, which altogether give some sense of the many directions in which he takes Idealist philosophy and Romantic poetry, but none of which in itself (for example, "my aim is to assert the implicit assumptions about mind and its object shared in the romantic

era"--105) discloses either the method or the scope of the book. Essentially, however, he is intrigued by the similarities and the differences between the two bodies of material and the drive towards unity by the philosophers on the one hand, and the "efforts of the romantic poet to define the psychological fact, the experience in its elusive richness, of living out the dilemmas bequeathed by that very idealist revolution" on the other (104). While he sees Romantic philosophy as in an important sense culminating in Schelling's view that "God's love would be powerless without the dark ground of individuation through which to act: becoming requires Being" (112), he asserts that the "problems raised by transcendental philosophy were felt by romantic poets as psychological imperatives" (113). Hence, while the same concerns are raised in both, the same consternations appear in both about secure grounds from which to perceive and on which to create, the result in general in the philosophy is acceptance and affirmation, while in the poetry it is usually--or characteristically--despair, perturbation, and pessimism. Hence, the "Dejection" ode is a more representative Coleridge work than "Frost at Midnight." The central element in this argument is an elaborate reading of "The Ancient Mariner" and its "real pessimism," which is not about the "malignity of the universe" but rather about the Mariner's "helplessness before his own unconscious will."

On the other hand, while Kipperman sees Romantic poetry as constantly tormented by the magnificence and the helplessness of the creating mind, the implication of his study is that its most characteristic utterances (he essentially ignores Wordsworth) are not its greatest. His study moves from the Idealist philosophers to Coleridge and then to Shelley (he also ignores Keats) before culminating in Byron. With Byron, whose nega-

tive capability Kipperman exalts, Romantic poetry stands on the threshold of the modern. "This acceptance of man's being-as-finite, while yet demanding the freedom of the self-conscious mind to create its own uniquely personal response to ... finitude (in rebellion, as Camus would say), marks precisely that point at which romantic quest feeds into a later cultural movement, existentialism" (200-1). The heroism Byron embraces in Childe Harold IV, "the capacity of the individual to act meaningfully in the world," is "the only kind of heroism, perhaps, left to the self-conscious modern author, his sustaining myth crumbling about him" (202).

While the omission of Wordsworth and Keats diminishes this study, it enables Kipperman to make more powerfully his claim that philosophy and poetry during the Romantic period are parallel universes which, though parallel, yet sometimes meet. By linking the parallel universes and their thought at intriguing points of intersection--e.g., Schelling and Coleridge, Fichte and Shelley, Byron and Kierkegaard--he shows in detail where the two seem to unite, where the poetry seems to feed upon the philosophy, how the poets reject or qualify the lessons of the philosophers. The result is a study which, whatever its defects, makes the reader aware more than he or she is ever likely to have been of Romantic poetry as not a search so much as a study--even a study of the dimensions and nature and possibilities of the study itself.

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Bernard Lightman. The Origins of Agnosticism: Victorian Unbelief and the Limits of Knowledge. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987.

The re-invigoration of religious fundamentalism seemingly renews what was once known as the "warfare" between science and religious faith in Victorian England. Yet today a sceptical eye is often turned equally on faith and science. Lightman's book cautions us not to read this pervasive agnosticism-cum-scepticism of our era back into the past. It also reminds us that the Victorian debate was much less clear-cut than it has sometimes seemed in retrospect. Indeed, The Origins of Agnosticism argues that in the Victorian era agnosticism itself grew from and was pervaded by religiosity.

Certainly the growth of Victorian agnosticism was associated as well with the secular forces promoting change and "modernization." Often themselves scientists, Victorian agnostics shared middle-class views of the power of the Established Church as perpetuating the rule of the propertied and titled. Agnosticism worked together with scientific naturalism to forward the professionalization of science which undermined the clerical control of career opportunities and restraint of independent thought. But it also reflected the underlying continuities of this age of transition. In particular, Lightman argues, it evolved from an interpretation of Kantian epistemology grounded in Victorian evangelicalism.

Lightman refers specifically to the Kantian thesis that the structure of the human mind shapes and limits the parameters of knowledge, and that the realm of the transcendent is unknowable by pure reason. In his view, it was largely by way of Henry Longueville Mansel that the "original agnostics" came to Kant. In 1858 this High Church philosopher argued that

it followed from Kantian epistemology that because God is unknowable, man could not, by reason, challenge divine revelation. Thus, the Bible was the true basis of religious belief.

Mansel's argument, published in his The Limits of Religious Thought, was a dangerously double-edged sword. It seemed to show that either orthodox Christianity was to be accepted in its entirety, or else it was all in doubt. And the ensuing "Mansel controversy" promoted a new interest in epistemology, from whence the idea of God's unknowability became the well-spring and ammunition of Victorian agnosticism. That the nature and existence of God cannot be proven by reason or known with certainty underpinned what had become by the 1870s a widespread movement of thought led by a network of learned friends, including Leslie Stephen, Thomas Huxley, and Herbert Spencer.

While it was Huxley who actually coined the term "agnostic," it was Spencer's First Principles (1862) which was seen by contemporaries as the "Bible" of agnosticism. In this, Spencer used Mansel's critique of rational theology to undercut the philosophical foundations of orthodox Victorian Christianity. Presenting God as "The Unknowable" and religious ideas and dogmas as symbolic conceptions mistakenly seen as representations of reality, Spencer argued that natural phenomena were fully explicable by the laws of nature, in particular, by evolution. But, as Lightman has found, "The original agnostics were not atheists, nor were they materialists or Positivists" (28).

Agnostics, generally raised in intensely evangelical homes, mostly experienced a loss of faith in orthodox theology. Victorian agnostics hoped to liberate true religiosity by freeing it from dogma. Moreover, in their virtual worship of nature, they came to embrace a veritable new religion.

Many were avid mountain climbers, and the Alps in particular inspired in them a sense of awe in the face of "The Unknowable." And their faith in nature's "laws"--that cause and effect ruled in an objectively existing, external world characterized by uniformities and order--amounted to belief in a new "Holy Trinity." Kantian epistemology underpinned their fundamentally religious sensibility. From Spencer's perspective, for example, implicit in humankind's awareness of the limits of reason was its "consciousness of the actuality lying behind appearances" (85). In this consciousness of the absolute lay "the basis of the reconciliation between science and religion, for both pointed to a mysterious power underlying phenomena" (86).

With regard to science, however, the Victorian agnostics failed to follow the limits of reason thesis through to its logical conclusion--that the reality and independent existence of the natural world could not be ascertained with any more certainty than that of the transcendental. And in the twentieth century the rise of probabilistic, statistical, and relativity theories in science, the trauma of the great wars, and the threat of nuclear annihilation made their own certainties untenable, and undermined the ethos of "progress" which could make a celebration even of doubt. Thus agnosticism died as a distinct and vigorous intellectual movement.

In Lightman's view, the results have been tragic. Agnosticism has been transfigured from an optimistic attitude of exuberant liberation from a seemingly oppressive Christianity to a world view variously apathetic and pessimistic, and destructive. It is today, in the words of Bronislaw Malinowski, "a tragic and shattering frame of mind" (2). Lightman calls instead for a "healthy agnosticism, which actively questions everything,

including itself" (183).

The insights to be discovered in this book may not be widely accessible. In spite of its cogent logic and impressive scholarship, its subject matter is difficult and not rendered much more intellectually digestible by the spicing of such detail as that Huxley delighted in teasing Spencer that his "idea of tragedy is a deduction killed by a fact" (77). But those who do discover The Origins of Agnosticism will surely find in it an intriguing new window into Victorian intellectual history.

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Beth Kalikoff. Murder and Moral Decay in Victorian Popular Literature. Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1986.

Victorian crime, particularly murder, holds a special popular fascination and has, as Beth Kalikoff indicates in this valuable account, called forth considerable scholarly commentary. Much still remains to be done, of course; both less and more than before her book appeared, for in addition to the answers she provides, her questions as well as her conclusions give guidance to further work.

The explicit questions suggest her range and emphasis. "How are the murders focal? What does the identity of the victim--and the killer--reveal about the values and purposes of the work? How does the treatment of murder change over the period? What themes are common to several genres? What do those themes suggest about the fears and hopes of the reading and playgoing public?" (2)

Her procedure is to analyze samples of popular genres from three periods to find leading themes with variations. The periods are characterized by the titles of her three parts:

"Barbarous and Horrible Murder" (1830-50), "A Skeleton in Every House" (1850-70), and "The Night-Side of Nature" (1870-1900). In the first part a chapter is given to street literature, and two to melodrama and fiction; in the other two the sequence is non-fiction, melodrama, and fiction.

In a relatively short work (only 170 pp. of text), Professor Kalikoff of course cannot do all, and certainly each of us will regret omissions. However, I hope others will share the pleasure and instruction I found through the inclusion of works I knew of but did not know, as well as of some of which I knew not. The selection being based on popularity rather than excellence or representativeness, and our curricula still (praise be) tending more to the latter, she is obliged to include much--perhaps overmuch--summary, for analysis and commentary depend on some acquaintance with content, as we all know from woeful silences in the classroom. And reminders of plots and characters are welcome, as are introductions to new information, especially when presented by someone with a good eye for what is worth summarizing, as well as for themes and structures. Kalikoff demonstrates a general devotion to clarity and directness, interrupted only by some straining at the semantic leash (see "focal" above and "prescribed" below).

The book's organization is somewhat mechanical, i.e., admirable for guidance and reference. Each part begins with an introduction giving the background, adumbrating the argument, and summarizing the conclusions. For example, the introduction to Part I notes "important differences as well as central similarities" in the treatment of murder in the three genres, and continues:

In street literature, for example, motive is secondary or irrelevant, while in some melodrama and in most fiction, causes of crime are central to the action and structure of the work.

And the genres are seen as differing in presenting social environment:

Criminal melodramas and the gallows literature of the street tend to provide rather terse and perfunctory details of class, occupation, and status, although social messages are implied for both victims and criminals. In fiction, on the other hand, murders are often prescribed by the very environments in which they occur.

Kalikoff then goes on to mention similarities in the genres in this period, the homicides being marked by extreme violence, the narratives emphasizing the murderer's psychology rather than puzzling over the identity of the murderer, and divine justice with artistic symmetry visiting retribution on criminals.

These conclusions are then borne out by the evidence in each chapter, the melodramas in this part being Maria Martin; or, The Murder in the Red Barn (1840) and The String of Pearls; or, The Fiend of Fleet Street (1847), the latter featuring that perennial favourite, Sweeney Todd. The parallel novels are Eugene Aram, Oliver Twist, Catherine, and Mary Barton, each treated with a sensitive intelligence that maintains a sense of difference while seeking commonality.

Kalikoff keeps the reader aware of the temper of the times (a.k.a. mentalités), and brings out significant differences among the periods, reflecting changes social, legal, and moral as well as literary. (The religious variations, which have much to do with the discontinuity of judgments about murder and other violent

crimes, are underplayed.) The popular literature here outlined emerges with much more distinctness than in works that "lump" rather than "split," to borrow a distinction from history, while still appearing as a genuine entity for scholarly study.

There is no call to give away more, as every Victorian library, public and private, should have a copy.

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Solution to Riddle

The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes, p. 221. The Oplis comment that this is "the only nursery rhyme to obtain entry into The Oxford Book of English Verse"--that is, the old anthology by Quiller-Couch.

Oh that I were where I would be,
Then would I be where I am not;
But where I am there I must be,
And where I would be I can not.