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THE CULT OF THE CHILD IN MINOR AMERICAN FICTION OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

by

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Preface

It seemed to me during the course of my study of American literature of the nineteenth century that the child as a character in fiction was more common than had been recognized and was greatly in need of a comprehensive and close study. The fictional children of Hawthorne, Twain, and James are well-known, but their contemporaries are generally only names today--if known at all. These lesser known or even unknown children exist in novels whose overall literary value excludes them from surveys of American literature, but when one considers the overwhelming number of these children and the tremendous popularity they once had, it becomes apparent that they are important for an understanding of the development of America's literary sensibility and even more so of her attitudes as a culture.

Because of the sheer number of novels which focus on the child, this dissertation cannot possibly cover them all. Its aim is not the compilation of a catalogue but the study of the significance of the child in American fiction, how he was conceived and how he relates to the temper of the times. Thus, it contains a selection of what was judged to be most representative of the various types of fictional children as well as, in terms of popularity, of the current taste. The novels to be discussed are primarily ones that were written for adults but because of the different tastes and standards of the general reader a century ago, they will also include a few read by both children and adults and even some written for children which appealed to the adult reader. Included, as well, are

a few stories written during the early part of this century that in their approach to the child continue the patterns and traditions of the nineteenth century; the end of World War I rather than 1900 seemed to be a natural and logical terminal date for this study. Finally, the stories are arranged thematically rather than chronologically, the logic and clarity of ideas taking precedence over a strict fidelity to publication dates.

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I

Introduction

The image of childhood for the nineteenth-century American was a particularly convenient and compelling image, for it readily lent itself to his various ideals--sometimes complementary, at other times conflicting; some static, others changing. The children are always treated symbolically, even those purportedly autobiographical "real" children. The symbolic quality of the child, as well as the recurrence of his image in book after book, invest the child image with a necessity suggestive of myth. The image of childhood in effect embodies a myth of America, "myth" being used here not to mean an illusory idea but rather a mode of belief. The mythic quality of the child is singularly apparent in the constant image of him as an innocent savior despite the various forms he takes. He begins as a Christ-like figure, becomes a pagan savage, and ends as a shrewd capitalist. Although the image gradually tends to belie his pure innocence, the authors persist in believing in it. They make the child image reflect the way in which they want to see themselves.

The child as a symbol of renewal held a peculiar fascination for a people who saw themselves as beginning life anew in a new land. R. W. B. Lewis' description of the American ideal as a myth of Adam is especially applicable:

> The American myth saw life and history as just beginning. It described the world as starting up again under fresh initiative, in a divinely granted second chance for the human race, after the first chance had been so disastrously fumbled in the darkening Old World. It introduced a new kind of hero, the heroic embodiment of a new set of ideal human attributes.[1]

The religious beliefs behind the image of the American as Adam motivated the image of the child as an angelic savior, virtually an incarnation of the Christ child himself. The Puritans' belief in themselves as a chosen people sent by God to a new world in order to establish the true church persisted in shaping the American vision long after America ceased to be a theocracy.

For this religious idea was an integral part of the faith that the people had in America as a utopia, what Henry Nash Smith calls the Myth of the Garden, a pastoral ideal of an idyllic rural life.[2] The proliferation of nostalgic reminiscences of boyhood after the Civil War indicates the strength of this pastoral ideal. Consistent with the increasing secularization of American life, the pastoral ideal manifests itself in a new image of the child as a primitive, savage-like boy passing carefree, happy days in the woods and fields. What is especially interesting about this image is that despite the analogy with the savage, the boy is part, not of an uncivilized wilderness, but rather of a well-ordered rural town. In other words, the technological ambitions of America are implicitly reflected in an image avowedly symbolizing the desire for a pre-civilized, simple life.

America's technological ambitions, long present but not acknowledged as the American ideal, are gradually projected into the child image, the American myth accommodating itself to the actualities of American life. The Horatio Alger boys and finally even the bad boys emerge as capitalists in miniature. But this new image curiously does not negate or replace

the older image of the pious and moral child innocent. For the child, even with his new materialist values, is still presented as an idealized hero; he is still a savior, simply a different kind of savior. No longer the pious, angelic saviors like Little Eva and Elsie Dinsmore, nor the primitive anti-civilization saviors like Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn, the child is a bourgeois savior reflecting the myth of America as a land of limitless opportunity and progress, where a man can make of himself anything he wishes. But all the child images perpetuate the single most abiding myth for America--the myth of continual renewal and ultimate perfection, the American as beginning life over again and creating for himself his paradise here on earth.

The significance of childhood as a recurring motif in American fiction cannot be appreciated unless one considers the prevailing philosophical and religious attitudes towards children at the time, as well as their actual social status. Nor can the American child be viewed as an isolated problem, for his status derives to a very large extent from that of his European counterpart, particularly the English. Moreover, to see what is distinctive and important about the child in American fiction, for both literature and culture, the child, real and imaginary, must be viewed in relation to his predecessors as well as to his child contemporaries. For one cannot appreciate just how new and significant the nineteenth-century concern with childhood was--why it can rightly be called a cult--unless one sees how children were regarded before.

Today we take for granted the importance of child rearing. The child as a very special person with his own particular feelings, desires, abilities, and needs, which must be both understood and respected, goes unquestioned. The thousands of books written during this century on education and child psychology attest to the importance ascribed to childhood as a stage in the development of the individual, as well as to the total responsibility adults feel for this stage. It is not an overstatement to say that our whole society has in fact changed to reflect and encourage this attitude. Children's clothes, food, games, books, movies, and records have become billion dollar industries. Our television entertainment is to a considerable degree determined by its appeal to the child audience. And the special status accorded the non-child, non-adult known as the adolescent is a wholly twentieth-century phenomenon. The latest trends in women's fashions have carried our preoccupation with the child to an unprecedented extreme--the poor-boy look of Oliver Twist, the gangling adolescent-boy look of Twiggy, the little-girl look of puffed sleeves, ruffles, and sashes (with matching outfits for mother and daughter commonly featured), and, of course, the micro-mini-skirt once seen only on little girls no older than six.

Living among all this today, one finds it difficult to realize how revolutionary our current attitudes are. To read about how children of the past--and even the not-so-distant past of the last century--were treated is often shocking and unbelievable.

Particular interest in the child, on the part of philosophers, writers, and parents, has its beginnings in the eighteenth century.[3] Until then, the child had little status or importance. Childhood was short, the child having to learn early to fit into the scheme of life. He had no rights of his own, his status depending wholly upon the convenience of his elders. Infanticide by parents was not uncommon in early societies, particularly with girls, whose economic value was very low. There is little written about children during the Middle Ages, the omission in itself indicating their status. We do know, however, that they married early, girls at twelve and boys at fourteen, and that boys were sent out of the home even earlier, those of the lower classes to be apprentices and those of the upper to learn the duties and graces of noblemen.

In general, the child was regarded as a burden, and childhood an unpleasant stage to be got over as quickly as possible. Among the poor, each child meant another mouth to feed, and among the rich, children were just a nuisance with their noise and messiness. When families of twenty children were not uncommon, they could hardly have the value that they have today when families of four are the exception.

This attitude towards children survived well into the eighteenth century and even the nineteenth.[4] The mother of John Wesley, for example, wrote how she taught her son to cry softly even when being whipped, and others have described how children from six to thirteen years wore iron collars with backboards strapped over their shoulders. Southey's little sister died of hydrocephalus, which many believe was probably

caused by their dunking her every morning into cold water in order to strengthen her. As late as the 1830's the boys at Eton were frequently thought worse off than people in the workhouses. And all of these cruelties in the name of education were practiced upon the children of the upper class. The cruelties toward children of the lower class are, of course, much better known. They worked as early as the age of five in mills and mines for fourteen to sixteen hours a day, and girls of about twelve were frequently sold quite profitably by their mothers to interested gentlemen. English law allowed children to be imprisoned and even hanged for theft. The most notorious surviving record is that of a woman tried in 1761 for putting out the eyes of children with whom she begged; she was convicted and sentenced--to two years in prison.

Such horrors persisted, but a new spirit is felt at this time and parents begin to take more interest in child rearing. Alongside the conviction of the child's duty to his parents developed the awareness of parents' duty to their children. The abundance of child portraits indicates a new interest in and value placed upon children. Such portraits were a rarity until the end of the sixteenth century, but by the end of the seventeenth, every parent wanted portraits of his children. Moreover, middle and upper class children were now given clothes of their own instead of the miniature adult models they had been wearing.

Most influential in changing the status of the child was the reappraisal of the aims of education. To treat the child

as a kind of thwarted adult was seen to be self-defeating. For the child was simply incapable of meeting all the demands placed upon him. Education, it was concluded, must be adapted to the child's physical and mental growth, and is most fruitful when used to guide and cultivate his natural abilities, rather than force him to acquire certain arbitrary facts and behavior.

A century before Locke, who is perhaps most responsible for the revolution in child rearing, Montaigne was already voicing these ideas. Disssatisfied with Scholastic authoritarianism, he condemns the prevailing method of cramming a child with facts and the even more grievous practice of doing so before he has the mental capacity to absorb them. The wise teacher will recognize and respect the stages in his pupil's growth. "It is the achievement of a lofty and very strong soul," he writes in 1579, "to know how to come down to a childish gait and guide it." Moreover, the tutor will not force the child to accept facts on mere authority and trust, but will encourage him to transform and use them as best suits him. A child is not a receptacle for facts, but an individual with a capacity for judgment and choice. Thus, Montaigne could proclaim, "There is not a child halfway through school who cannot claim to be more learned than I."[6]

It was Locke who set in motion the changes in attitude and practice that in fact mark the beginning of modern education. Some Thoughts Concerning Education, published in 1693, is a series of informal letters to a friend, which, in a highly readable prose style, had a widespread popular appeal.[7] Locke

was not, of course, the first great mind concerned with education. What distinguishes him was his belief in the rights of children as rational individuals. And in an age brought up on the theory of infant depravity, his concept of the child as amoral, born neither good nor evil, was indeed revolutionary. It was generally accepted that man, conceived in sin, came into the world the heir of sin and guilt to be redeemed only by God. How could the child, then, have rights of his own? He was an evil little monster who required severe moral discipline, administered usually by force. But if the child is born morally neutral, acquiring a moral sense from the influences in his environment, parents now have the responsibility of subjecting him only to the most benign influences.

"God makes all things good; man meddles with them and they become evil." With this Rousseau opens Émile (1749), the influence of which, in America as well as in Europe, on the status of the child has been incomparably greater than that of any other treatise of the time.[8] His scheme of education is based upon the idea that all education should be directed to one end, that of Nature, which he defines as our natural tendency to pursue or avoid sensation-producing objects. This is at first determined by their pleasant or painful quality and later by our estimate of them in the light of our ideas of happiness or perfection. Man is born without any concept of good and evil; this is learned by reason. The child does good and evil without knowing it. What some regard as evil in the child, when he destroys things around him, is only a manifestation of his growth, his active principle. Right

and wrong have no meaning for him. Any viciousness that develops is only a result of his weakness. His helplessness makes him dependent, and out of his dependency may arise the vicious tendencies to domineer and command if the adult does not deal correctly with the child's helplessness. Thus any viciousness developing in the child is wholly the fault of his teachers. This undesirable effect can best be prevented by their granting children the liberty to do as much as possible for themselves, teaching them to limit their desires to their powers and to require little from others. Harsh treatment only encourages viciousness by generating resentment and mad rage. Moreover, the child has an innate sense of justice and injustice, which causes him to react to an adult's intentions to hurt him.

Education, of course, must be adapted to the natural growth of the individual, which falls into three stages. The first is a state of physical helplessness, when education should do only what is necessary for the release of the child's own activities. One can assume that the child starts with a sound body, which should be developed through physical freedom in fresh, country air, through daily washing, and a country diet consisting in lots of vegetables. The child learns at this time through his own movements and by touching things around him. During the second stage, the boy continues to realize an equilibrium between his powers and his desires, for the free man is he who wants only what he can have. He becomes conscious at this time of happiness and unhappiness, but only through his immediate personal relation to his sur-

roundings. Books are not valuable until the age of twelve because until then the child cannot comprehend them. When he reaches that age he is permitted yet only one book, Robinson Crusoe, because it illustrates just what the boy is learning, how a man relies upon his own arts and devices in a natural setting. Then, in successive stages, he is taught of reason, sentiment, morality or social responsibility, love, and marriage.

Rousseau was not advocating a general retreat to the woods, as his treatise has often been erroneously interpreted. On the contrary, Émile is reared in solitude in a natural setting in order to become the perfect socially integrated man of the new order envisioned in the Social Contract. For this new political order requires a new beginning in morals, which can only be achieved through right education. Social integration and responsibility must be preceded by man's realizing himself as an individual apart from the existing corrupt society. Nor does Émile grow up free and wild, like an animal, but is carefully supervised by his tutor, who regulates and controls his environment by setting up situations and experiences as a training ground for the problems he will meet in society.

Clearly, Rousseau would not have had such an enthusiastic reception if the times had not been ripe for him. England had long been cultivating independently that sentimental naturalism expressed in Émile. It manifested itself there in a cult of feeling that characterizes such minor poets of this period as James Thomson, Henry Brooke, Mark Akenside, and John Gilbert

Cooper, and such novelists as Mackenzie, Richardson, Brooke, and scores of literary ladies. With the publication of Shaftesbury's Inquiry Concerning Virtue or Merit (1709), a School of Sensibility came into its own. The concept of the mind as a strictly rational instrument and the source of all truth was challenged by the belief in man's instinctive moral sense. Through feeling and sympathetic intuition man perceives truth. This attitude developed into a kind of natural religion in Shaftesbury's The Moralists (1711), in which he writes that man could find the response and support for his own instinctive goodness in nature's beauty and harmony. Nature is the universe as permeated by a benign Divine Spirit of truth, beauty, and love; and man, with his benevolent impulses, is part of this universal harmony.[9]

Two important ideas are involved here, both of which affect the status of the child: faith in the instinctive goodness of man and the concept of nature as a primeval standard of goodness and simplicity from which man has been sundered by the corruptions of civilization. Both manifest themselves in the cult of primitivism--the glorification of the child and peasant, leading to the concept of the Noble Savage.

"A Noble Savage," writes Hoxie Neale Fairchild, "is any free and wild being who draws directly from nature virtues which raise doubts as to the value of civilization. The term may even be applied metaphorically to dramatic peasants and children when a comparison between their innocent greatness and that of the savage illumines the thought of the period."[10]

Perhaps the first full-length description of the Noble Savage in literature is Montaigne's in his essay "Of Cannibals" (1579 or 1580).[11] Writing about the natives of Brazil as described by a man who lived there, he believes that they have preserved their innate virtues because they live in harmony with the natural order. "Those people are wild, just as we call wild the fruits that Nature has produced by herself and in her normal course; whereas really it is those that we have changed artificially and led astray from the common order, that we should rather call wild. The former retain alive and vigorous their genuine, their most useful and natural, virtues and properties, which we have debased in the latter in adapting them to gratify our corrupted taste." South Sea Islanders, the American Indian, and the English peasant become favorite subjects for eighteenth and nineteenth-century writers. The child, in his simplicity, his instinctive, spontaneous way of responding to nature, uncorrupted yet by reason and the habits of society, becomes an important image for the major poets, Blake, Wordsworth, and Coleridge. The child is the link between a better past and a better future, the memory of man's original perfection and the visionary promise of his regeneration.

A visionary conception of childhood as a time of oneness with God was already stated by Vaughan, who often used the image of childhood to describe his earlier state of innocence and purity from which, as a guilty adult, he feels exiled and estranged.

> Dear, harmless age! the short swift span,
> Where weeping virtue parts with man;
> Where love without lust dwells, and bends
> What way we please, without self-ends. [12]
> ("Childe-hood")

Childhood becomes a metaphor for spiritual purity through which the poet expresses his longing to recapture the innocence, unselfishness, faith, and love that the child also possesses. He often links it to the image of a journey back, life being pictured as a circle in which the innocent child, in whom lives the Divine Spirit, later, as a man, shuts his soul off from God only to realize his sin and to strive, through faith and suffering, to return to his earlier blessed state of oneness with God.

> O how I long to travell back
> And tread again that ancient track!
> That I might once more reach that plaine,
> Where first I left my glorious traine,
> From whence th'Inlightned spirit sees
> That shady City of Palme trees. [13]
> ("The Retreate")

This circular image of human life as a progression from Eternity, through the temporal world, and back to Eternity is the perspective from which Blake wrote his Songs of Innocence (mostly 1788-89).[14] Blake's "Divine Vision" is the perception of a better, transcendent world that is instinctively perceived by every child through his trust and joy, his faith in God's protection and in the reality of Heaven.

Childhood innocence is not for Blake merely a synonym for the sinlessness and simplicity associated with the peasant and savage. It means a capacity for a particular apprehension of the world, a sense of peace, joy, kindness, and love that adults have lost. The child's innocence, which derives pri-

marily not from his ignorance but from his trust in God, is the highest wisdom man can attain. Implicit is the Christian paradox: "Except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." It is an innocence that suggests a sense beyond the physical and rational, a spiritual sense identified with the Imagination of the poet and the prophet. The "True Man" or the "Divine Human" is the child in man, the "Poetic Genius" being the great inherited possession of children. For the adult, then, to regain this Imaginative or Spiritual Sense means to be reborn into a new and better world of the Divine. The child symbolizes this desired rebirth.[15]

The style of Blake's verse is an extension of the content. The simple, often infantile lines, with their primitive basic beat, jingling rhymes, and repetitive diction resemble nursery rhymes. The adult reader is, consequently, simultaneously child and adult, an adult viewing the child and a child viewing the adult. The profound significance one feels in this childlike verse corresponds to the profound significance of the child himself.[16]

The similarity between Wordsworth's and Blake's concept of childhood has been frequently recognized. The child is for Wordsworth sublime and sacred, a purely intuitive being.[17] His original capacity for intense feeling and wonder is what gives meaning to the later thought of the adult. It is this that makes the child the father of the man. Wordsworth constantly yearns for the fresh, vivid perceptions of nature from which the child derives an intuitive wisdom. Through the child, the

poet tries to bestow upon man a dignity which he feels he has lost in his world of fact and reason. The child, not yet corrupted by civilization, instinctively apprehends the Divine beauty and goodness immanent in nature from which man has been cut off. The child also sees into the heart of things, the unity and harmony in the universe. Thus the child is the "best Philosopher," a "Might Prophet! Seer blest!"[18] while the adult, toiling all his life, is lost in darkness.

He asks in the "Intimations Ode" where the visionary gleam has fled and answers by telling us where it came from. It is a remnant of a pre-existence with which the infant comes into the world but which he soon loses as he grows into adulthood.

> Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
> The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
> Hath had elsewhere 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:
> Heaven lies about us in our infancy![19]

The glory of the infant is given a more naturalistic explanation[20] in the "Blest the Babe" passage in "The Prelude." Maternal affection, not heavenly pre-existence, makes him "like an agent of the one great Mind/Create, creator and receiver both." Maternal love, warmth, and security are the source of "the filial bond/Of nature that connect him with the world." Nor does Wordsworth believe here that man loses this first glory; it is "the first/Poetic spirit of our human life," that in most is abated or suppressed but which in some can survive pre-eminent until death, constituting that "natural

piety" uniting the child with the man.

Coleridge describes his child in "The Nightingale" as having communion with nature and bidding us to listen and respond as she does. He expresses his happiness in "Frost at Midnight" that she shall be reared amidst nature, not in the city as he was, where her spirit will be molded by God, the "Great universal Teacher!"

> so shalt thou see and hear
> The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible
> Of that eternal language, which thy God
> Utters, who from eternity doth teach
> Himself in all, and all things in himself. [21]

Most striking is the immediate effect--or rather lack of effect--of these attitudes in literature upon the actual status of an English child living in the eighteenth or nineteenth century. The change was extremely slow and gradual. Harsh discipline among the rich and abusive cruelties among the poor were, as was noted, still prevalent. It took a long time for schools to change their curricula and methods. The first fruits of Locke's and Rousseau's theories were only isolated experiments by educators with individual children. The uncertain and ambivalent attitude toward children at this time is most noticeable in the books that were being written for them.[22] While they were not the morbid hell and damnation books of the seventeenth century addressed to depraved sinners, neither were they the fanciful stories of a Hans Christian Andersen. They were largely moral, didactic books directed, not necessarily to evil little souls, but to amoral ones

urgently in need of immediate and continual moral instruction.

Countless numbers of books followed Émile, both in England and on the Continent, intended to illustrate the ideal relationship between the perfect teacher--parent, relative, or friend--and the model child. Perhaps the most well-known in its time was Thomas Day's Sandford and Merton (1783-89), which was also the first full-length novel written for children. It is the story of a spoiled, over-indulged, ill-mannered child, Thomas Merton, who reforms under the influence of his teacher, the village parson, who not only knows everything but makes a profitable lesson out of everything.[23] Very popular, also, was Pestalozzi's Leonard and Gertrude (1783), in which a mother is continually instructing her children through object lessons related to daily life. She makes cooking, for example, the perfect opportunity for instruction in chemistry. His highly sentimentalized image of the mother as the source of the child's union with God is seen in the following passage from another of his works, How Gertrude Teaches Her Children:

> An inexpressible something rises in the child's heart, a holy feeling, a desire for faith, that raises him above himself. He rejoices in the name of God as soon as he hears his mother speak it. The feelings of love, gratitude, and trust that were developed at her bosom, extend and embrace God as father, God as mother. . . . The child, who believes from this time forwards in the eye of God as in the eye of his mother, does right now for God's sake, as he formerly did right for his mother's sake.[24]

With the entrance of the ladies upon the writing scene, the child is bombarded with an endless stream of moral, didactic tales. Among the most popular were Maria Edgeworth's The Parent's Assistant (1796) and Moral Tales for Young People

(1800), both intended as agreeable yet profitable relaxation from difficult studies. Sarah Fielding's The Governess or The Little Female Academy (1745), a rambling narrative about an ideal school for girls, and Mary Wollstonecraft's Original Stories (1788), essentially a moral monologue by a woman raising girls, indicate a new concern for the female child. Mrs. Barbauld's Evenings at Home (1792), consisting of stories, plays, and articles for a child's instruction and entertainment, was another favorite, as well as her Hymns in Prose for Children (1781), paraphrases of biblical passages in language simple enough for a child to understand. Of the many religious works published for children, Cheap Repository Tracts by Hannah More was a best-seller. From 1792 to 1795 these tracts, containing a story, verses, and a sermon, appeared three times a month and sold well into the millions. Sarah Trimmer, an avid anti-Rousseauist who devoted herself mainly to educational tracts for adults, wrote one children's book, Fabulous Histories: Designed for the Instruction of Children, respecting their Treatment of Animals (1786), which indicates the huge gap between the popular attitude toward children and that of the philosophers and poets, according to whom the child had an instinctive love and kindness for animals. Her denunciation of "Cinderella" as an evil book encouraging undutiful behavior toward stepmothers epitomizes the major failure of these very earnest women, their suppression of the child's imagination. They were innovators in style, adapting their prose for the child's limited intellect, but conservative in content, perpetuating the traditional belief that children should be exposed only to what is morally instruc-

tive. Fortunately, though, they challenged the perverted influence of the religious fanatics, such as James Janeway,[25] who tormented children with fears of immanent death and the horrors of hell.

Of probably greater influence in taking the morbidity out of religion for children was Isaac Watts, whose Divine and Moral Songs for Children (1715) and Catechisms (1730) emphasized the beauty and mystery of religion rather than the punishments awaiting our sinful souls.

A giant step in children's literature was taken with the establishment of John Newbery's shop in 1745. Retaining the belief that everything in a child's life must be useful and educational, he nevertheless introduced a more gentle and understanding attitude, writing his own stories about naughty, rather than sinful, children, and publishing ancient and medieval tales that would appeal to a child's imagination. His "Juvenile Library," the exclusive domain of children, where they could browse freely and buy what they liked, is most famous for its publication of Goody Two Shoes, generally ascribed to Goldsmith.

Even in the eighteenth century the pious, moral, and didactic stories already had to compete with the fabulous and romantic. Children were reading The Arabian Nights as well as an English translation of Charles Perrault's Histoires ou Contes du Temps Passé, through which children became familiar with Red Riding Hood, Bluebeard, and Cinderella, and the Mother Goose stories from Perrault's Contes de ma mère l'Oye. Almost every child was familiar with the nursery rhymes of Tommy Thumb's Pretty Song Book (1744).

The status of the child in America as seen through his books largely parallels that of the English child because they were reading, for the most part, books published in England.[26] The religious instruction in America, however, was made considerably more intensive by the pervasive influence of Puritanism. Children were treated like adults, not because of a lack of concern for them but, on the contrary, because of an over-anxious fear for their spiritual well-being. The doctrine of total depravity classified children with the most vicious and hardened criminals. Jonathan Edwards called them young vipers and even "infinitely more hateful than vipers."[27] From the moment they could talk they were constantly reminded of their imminent death and warned to prepare for it by giving up worldly pleasures. Sermons were frequently addressed wholly to children and then published for their reading by fanatical ministers who, with their perverse psychological insight, skillfully portrayed hell as a place of complete darkness rather than of fire, knowing well that darkness is particularly dreadful to children. These sermons generally sounded like the following excerpt from one by Benjamin Wadsworth, entitled "The Nature of Early Piety as it Respects God":

> They're Children of Wrath by Nature, liable to Eternal Vengeance, the Unquenchable Flames of Hell. . . . Truly it behoves them most seriously to consider how filthy, guilty, odious, abominable they are both by nature and practice. . . . Those who are not United to Christ by Heart Purifying Faith are Children of the Devil, Slaves to their own Lust, Enemies to God and Christ, the Subjects of Guilt, having no Pardon of Sin nor Title to Glory but are condemn'd by the Law, and are every moment in danger of dropping into Hell.[28]

When one reads the sermons of Cotton Mather one readily understands the parents' severe moral demands upon their children:

> Parents, Consider the Condition of your Children; and the loud Cry of their Condition unto you, to Endeavour their Salvation! . . . Don't you know, That your Children, are the Children of Death, and the Children of Hell, and the Children of Wrath, by Nature. . . . You must know, Parents, that your Children are by your means Born under the dreadul Wrath of God: And if they are not new-Born before they Dy, it had been good for them, that they never had been Born at all.[29]

In addition to the Sunday sermon and the daily catechizing, there was a list of prescribed books for children, which included the Bible, Pilgrim's Progress, the New England Primer (called "The Little Bible of New England"), Foxe's Book of Martyrs, John Cotton's Spiritual Milk for Babes, and Michael Wigglesworth's The Day of Doom.

Spiritual Milk for Babes, "Drawn out of the Breasts of both Testaments, for their souls nourishment: But may be of like use for any Children," printed between 1641 and 1645, was the first book in America to be written and printed for children. It was even translated in 1691 into Indian for the salvation of the little heathen souls. Its catechetical content taught the child of his own depravity:

> Q. How did God make you?
> A. In my first parents holy and righteous.
> Q. Are you then born holy and righteous?
> A. No, my first parents sinned, and I in them.
> Q. Are you then a sinner?
> A. I was conceived in Sin and born in Iniquity.
> Q. What is your birth sin?
> A. Adam's Sin imputed to me and a corrupt Nature dwelling in me.[30]

The New England Primer, first printed in America from 1685-1690, was similar in purpose and content to the English Primer: to keep alive the memory of the persecution of Protestants through lessons in theology, history, and the Bible. Its spirit is summed up in these often quoted lines from it:

> I in the burying place may see,
> Graves shorter there than I,
> From death's arrest no Age is free,
> Young children too must die.[31]

Among its other edifying pieces is a rhymed dialogue between Christ, a Youth, and the Devil, in which the Devil triumphs and Death carries off Youth. Lessons in the alphabet consisted of scriptural comments on the letters in the form of rhymed couplets ("In A dam's fall/We sinned all"), religious exhortations ("G rieve not the Holy Spirit, lest it depart from thee"), and moral admonitions ("F oolishness is bound up in the Heart of a Child, but the Rod of Correction shall drive it from him"). The inevitable catechism occupied a major portion:

> Q. What will be your condition in hell?
> A. I shall be dreadfully tormented.
> Q. What company will be there?
> A. Legions of devils and multitudes of sinners of the human race.
> Q. Will company afford me any comfort in hell?
> A. It will not, but will probably increase my woes.
> Q. If you should go to hell how long must you continue there?
> A. For ever and ever.

Liberally illustrated with realistic pictures of the terrors of hell and the glories of heaven, the Primer's influence unfortunately lasted for well over one hundred years and through one hundred editions.[32]

Stories of exemplary children dying early and joyously were forced upon children to study and to imitate if necessary. The household favorite was Janeway's dreadful A Token for Children, the Massachusetts edition of 1700 based on the original English version. It was augmented in 1749 by Benjamin Franklin and reprinted numerous times, even as late as 1849. It opens with an address to all parents, schoolmasters, and schoolmistresses, urging them to make their children read the book because "they are not too little to die; they are not too little to go to hell. . . . Every mother's child of you are by nature children of wrath" (p. 6). Addressing the children themselves in the Preface, he asks them:

> Did you ever see your miserable state by nature? Did you ever get by yourselves and weep for sin, and pray for grace and pardon? . . . How dost thou spend thy time? Is it in play and in idleness, and with wicked children? . . . Whither do you think those children go when they die, that will not do what they are bid, but play the truant, and lie and speak naughty words, and break the Sabbath? . . . they which lie must go to their father the devil, into everlasting burning; they which never pray, God will pour out his wrath upon them; and when they beg and pray in hell fire, God will not forgive them, but there they must lie for ever. . . . How do you know but that you may be the next child that may die? And where are you then if you be not God's child? . . . Get by thyself, into the chamber or garret, and fall upon thy knees, and weep, and mourn, and tell Christ thou are afraid that he doth not love thee.
>
> (pp. 9, 10, 11, 13, 16)

This is followed by a series of accounts of the admirable deaths of pious children of all ages. A sample of the contents is sufficient description of this ghastly book:

> Chapter I. - Of one eminently converted, between eight and nine years old, with an account of her life and death.

II. - Of a child admirably affected with the things of God, when between two and three years old, with a brief account of his life and death.

III. - Of a little girl that was wrought upon when between four and five years old, with some account of her holy life, and triumphant death.

IV. - Of a child that began to look towards heaven when she was about four years old; with some observable passages in her life, and at her death.

V. - Of the pious life and joyful death of a child, who died when he was about twelve years old.

XII. - Of the excellent carriage of a child upon his death-bed, when about seven years old.

It is not surprising then to read of the convulsions into which children were thrown at religious meetings, of the hysteria that set in motion the witch panic of 1692. The terrors and repressions, the insistent demands of parents and preachers also forced them into an apparent precocity, speaking with an unnatural censoriousness. This last characteristic will come to distinguish one of the most popular types of fictional children.

Education gradually became more secularized in the eighteenth century, especially by the middle of the century. New texts were introduced in the schools, such as The Columbian Primer, The Franklin Primer, Newbery's Royal Primer, Webster's American Spelling Book, and A New Guide to the English Tongue. The influence of John Newbery was quite strong, most of whose books were published in New England by Isaiah Thomas. The writings of Maria Edgeworth, Hannah

More, and Mrs. Barbauld began to circulate freely along with nursery rhymes, fairy tales, and riddle books. Moreover, the novels of Fielding, Smollett, Sterne, and Richardson were not only read aloud in family circles, but Tom Jones, Joseph Andrews, Clarissa Harlowe, and Pamela were abridged for children and quickly became some of the most popular of juvenile books.

> This is the children's age, and all things are subservient to their wishes. Masses of juvenile literature are published annually for their amusement; conversation is reduced steadily to their level while they are present; meals are arranged to suit their hours, and the dishes thereof to suit their palates; studies are made simpler and toys more elaborate with each succeeding year. The hardships they once suffered are now happily ended, the decorum once exacted is fading rapidly away. We accept the situation with philosophy, and only now and then, under the pressure of some new development, are startled into asking ourselves where it is likely to end.[33]

So laments a woman writing in 1888. The status of the child no longer seems alien to us. By the beginning of the nineteenth century the child as a consumer of books written and published solely for him was unquestioned.[34] But the moral and didactic tone persisted for a long while. History, natural history, geography, and biography become favorite subjects for Peter Parley, the pseudonym and fictitious character of Samuel Goodrich, who believed children should read only what is true and morally instructive, openly denouncing the fantasies of Mother Goose. Of his one hundred seventy books, all written from 1827 to 1850, more than one-third are either school texts or for religious instruction. But gone are the terrors of hell and, in fact, the rise of Peter Parley

meant the demise, once and for all, of The New England Primer. The "father of the story series," Jacob Abbott, also believed his proper function was to teach morality, using his stories of child naughtiness as occasions for simple lessons in goodness and duty. His Rollo books, began in 1834, follow the development of a very small boy: Rollo Learning to Talk, Rollo Learning to Read, Rollo at Work, Rollo at Play, and so on. These were followed by the equally popular Franconia Stories (1850-53), narratives of young people living simple, happy, unrestricted lives in small town America, with the too precocious twelve-year-old orphan, Beechnut, the hero. Every child was familiar with some of the two hundred books Abbott published from 1832 to 1879.

At this time the line between books for adults and books for children was often blurred. The one hundred sixteen titles of Oliver Optic belonged to the whole family, as did most of the current periodicals.[35] The Riverside Magazine (1867-70), consisting of critical articles on children's books, as well as stories and verse, was founded by Horace Scudder with the intention of ending the distinction between books for children and adults by encouraging both to read only the best literature of England and America. Ladies enjoyed The Youth's Companion, yet a moral perspective for the child was consistently maintained, no stories about love or killing being accepted.

The continual appearance of new magazines for children is but one indication of the changing attitudes toward children. Of the more popular ones--The Juvenile Miscellany, Parley's Magazine, Merry's Museum, The Schoolmaster--the most

important was Our Young Folk (1865-74), which marked a new era in writing for children by sanctioning reading wholly for recreation. Harriet Beecher Stowe, Louisa May Alcott, James Russell Lowell, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, and Charles Dickens were among its frequent contributors. After it was sold to Scribner's it became the foundation for the St. Nicholas Magazine, which flourished from 1873 until 1930. Under the original editorship of Mary Mapes Dodge, all sermonizing, dry facts, and priggishness were carefully excluded. The Sunday-School stories were on their way out, but it would be some time before Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn would be allowed on the shelves of children's libraries.

In general, then, the nineteenth-century American child was encouraged and permitted to read primarily, or even exclusively, didactic stories from which he could draw some useful moral lesson. This approach to child rearing implies an image of the child as an unformed, non-moral creature, inherently neither evil nor pure, but possessing, rather, both good and evil impulses--assuredly many more good than evil--which could be either developed or suppressed under proper guidance. And this, in fact, is one of the prevailing attitudes that underlie most of the stories about children written for adults at this time.

The "Anti-Calvinist" stories argue specifically against the Puritan concept of the child as inherently evil, the guilty heir of his forefathers, and preach the importance of environment for bringing out the child's instinctive good-

ness. The "Didactic" stories most closely parallel the stories written for the children themselves. Addressed to mothers, they consist of a series of short narratives or scenes, each of which is an object lesson illustrating the right and wrong way to treat children. They reinforce the attitude behind the children's books, that every aspect of the child's daily life contributes in some way to molding his character. Consequently, the mother's every word and gesture, no less than the texts the child reads, must be morally constructive.

The authors of these books for adults overtly state what is basically implied in the books for the children--the ultimate perfectibility of the child. The child is seen as a potential angel who not only can but often must be developed by the right environmental influences. This concept of the child is carried to its logical conclusion in the "Saintly-Child" stories. In some (the "Saintly Redeemer" stories), the child is inherently pure at the outset, radiating, as it were, a Divine purity, while in others (the "Growth of the Saint" stories), the development of the potentially angelic child is portrayed.

The essential point to be noted, however, is that this nineteenth-century attitude toward the child does not reflect a shift away from the earlier repressive attitudes towards more natural ones. The child may be regarded as a blessing now rather than as a burden; he may be considered important enough to have special books written for and about him; kindness, love, and understanding may generally prevail now--but still within the solid framework of a basically repressive

Christianity. An obsessive religiousity and anti-sexuality are, in varying forms and degree, everywhere apparent. In other words, Calvinism as a force shaping American attitudes was still strong during the nineteenth century. Certainly it was diluted by the writings of Locke and Rousseau, by the cult of Primitivism, as well as by Evangelism, but not as much as one would have expected. Even if the child is no longer considered a guilty sinner, he still is not a basically good creature who should be given the freedom to satisfy his natural needs and desires. The change, then, in the concept of the child from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to the nineteenth century was wholly within Christianity, not away from it. It is not until this century that a more natural attitude develops.

Footnotes to Chapter One

[1] The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century (Chicago, 1955), p. 5.

[2] Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth (Cambridge, Mass., 1950).

[3] James H. S. Bossard, The Sociology of Child Development (New York, 1948).

[4] Rosomond Bayne-Powell, The English Child in the 18th Century (New York, 1939).

[5] Bayne-Powell.

[6] Michel de Montaigne, "Of the Education of Children," Essays of Michel Seigneur de Montaigne, trans. Charles Cotton (London, 1711).

[7] (Cambridge, 1913).

[8] Jean Jacques Rousseau, Emilius: or, A Treatise of Education, 3 vols. (Edinburgh, 1768).

The following works were found useful in preparing my discussion of Rousseau:

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J. H. Broome, Rousseau: A Study of his Thought (New York, 1963).

F. C. Green, Jean Jacques Rousseau: A Critical Study of his Life and Writings (Cambridge, England, 1955).

Charles W. Hendel, Jean Jacques Rousseau: Moralist (New York, 1934).

Jeannette Tresnon, "The Paradox of Rousseau," PMLA, XLIII (1928), 1010-1025.

[9] Ernest Bernbaum, Guide Through the Romantic Movement, rev. ed. (New York, 1948).

[10] The Noble Savage: A Study in Romantic Naturalism (New York, 1928), p. 2.

[11] Essays.

[12] Henry Vaughan, The Works, ed. L. C. Martin (Oxford, 1957), Stanza IV.

[13] Ibid., Stanza II, lines 21-26.

[14] William Blake, The Poetical Works, ed. John Sampson (London, 1914).

15 I am largely indebted for my discussion of Blake to E. D. Hirsch, Jr., Innocence and Experience: An Introduction to Blake (New Haven, 1964).

16 Alicia Ostriker, Vision and Verse in William Blake (Madison, 1965).

17 Hoxie Neale Fairchild, The Romantic Quest (New York, 1931).

18 "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood," The Poetical Works of Wordsworth, ed. Thomas Hutchinson (Oxford, 1936), Stanza VIII, lines 110, 114.

19 Stanza V, lines 58-66.

20 The Works, Book II, lines 232-261.

21 Selected Poetry and Prose, ed. Elisabeth Schneider (New York, 1961), Stanza III, lines 58-62.

22 I am largely indebted for the following discussion of children's books to Corneilia Meigs, et. al., A Critical History of Children's Literature (New York, 1953). Useful also was Bess Porter Adams, About Books and Children (New York, 1953).

23 3 vols. (London, 1783-1789).

24 Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, How Gertrude Teaches her Children. trans. Lucy E. Hilland and Frances C. Turner (Syracuse, 1898), pp. 287-288.

25 A Token for Children; Being an Exact Account of the Conversion, Holy Lives and Joyful Deaths of Several Young Children (New York, 1849). First English edition 1671.

26 In addition to Meigs and Adams, I am also indebted for the following discussion of the American child and his books to Sandford Fleming, Children and Puritanism (New Haven, 1933).

27 Works, 4 vols. (New York, 1881), III, 340.

28 A Course of Sermons on Early Piety, pp. 10, 11, 15, quoted by Fleming, pp. 96-97.

29 A Family Well-Ordered (1699), pp. 10-11, quoted by Fleming, p. 114.

30 Quoted by Adams.

31 Quoted by Meigs.

32 Quoted by Adams.

33 Repplier, pp. 31-32.

34 Meigs and Adams.

35 Alice M. Jordan, From Rollo to Tom Sawyer (Boston, 1948).

II

A New Religion: The Anti-Calvinist Novels

The American Adam, starting afresh, unencumbered by a past for which he was not responsible, needed a new religion to free him from the burden of inherited guilt heaped upon him by Orthodox Calvinism. Several novels about children began to appear about the middle of the nineteenth century whose primary aim was to illustrate the stultifying effects of Calvinist doctrine. Oliver Wendell Holmes, one of America's leading antagonists of Calvinism, goes even further in his two novels, Elsie Venner and The Guardian Angel, discrediting the Orthodox Calvinistic doctrine of inherited guilt through scientific or medical arguments. "Perhaps the most succinct statement of Holmes's achievement," writes R. W. B. Lewis, "was that he recast traditional religious concepts in scientific and humanistic terms, that he extracted what he saw as the facts of the human situation from the metaphors of myth and posited them anew in the language of psychology and anthropology" (p. 35).

Elsie Venner (1861) is a kind of exemplum directed against the belief that man comes into the world steeped in guilt, heir to the Original Sin of Adam and Eve. Elsie, as the child of a woman who was bitten by a rattlesnake, is a symbol for all the children of the first mother, Eve, who was corrupted by the serpent.* According to Holmes, Elsie may have inherited the

*The situation brings to mind Hawthorne's "Rappaccini's Daughter" (1844) which is also about a fair and guiltless girl made evil through no fault of her own, in this case by the poisons her scientist-father feeds her.

evil, as seen from her ophidian characteristics, but is unequivocally not guilty because she is not responsible for her flaw. Holmes states his position most explicitly in the Preface to the 1891 edition:

> Believing, as I do, that our prevailing theologies are founded upon an utterly false view of the relation of man to his Creator, I attempted to illustrate the doctrine of inherited moral responsibility for other people's misbehavior. I tried to make out a case for my poor Elsie, whom the most hardened theologian would find it hard to blame for her inherited ophidian tastes and tendencies. How, then, is he to blame mankind for inheriting "sinfulness" from their first parents? May not the serpent have bitten Eve before the birth of Cain, her first-born? That would have made an excuse for Cain's children, as Elsie's ante-natal misfortune made an excuse for her. But what difference does it make in the child's responsibility whether his inherited tendencies come from a snake-bite or some other source which he knew nothing about and could not have prevented from acting? All this is plain enough, and the only use of the story is to bring the dogma of inherited guilt and its consequences into a clearer point of view.

Holmes thus distinguishes between inherited evil and inherited guilt. That Elsie is tainted by the fatal snake goes unquestioned. She is described as having "piercing diamond eyes," that have the power to hypnotize both snakes and people; a singular fascination with the uninhabited rattlesnake area outside the town, the only one fearlessly roaming and even sleeping there; a brooding, passionate temper which isolates her from other girls; and an almost indefinable inhuman quality, which even the sympathetic and enlightened school-master (who is also a medical student) chillingly feels in spite of himself.

Elsie's lack of moral guilt is explained through an analogy with physical defects of the body. Holmes, through the character of a medical professor, writes, "Treat bad men exactly as if they were insane. They are in-sane, out of health, morally!" (p. 243). This idea is developed at length in a "conversation" between Elsie's physician and the minister, in which the physician, equating moral weakness with bodily disease, explains to the minister, "We are constantly seeing weakness where you see depravity. . . . We know that disease has something back of it which the body isn't to blame for, at least in most cases, and which very often it is trying to get rid of. Just so with sin!" (p. 243).

Holmes was certainly not a champion of Locke's tabula rasa or even Rousseau's belief in an essentially good or amoral infant. The influence of blood or heredity is foremost. The doctor goes on to say that out of one hundred children all of a certain known stock, seventy-five might turn ouy moral, even pious, while out of another hundred of a different stock, this time put into the hands of the most moral and pious teachers, seventy-five might turn out to be thieves and liars. "We doctors see so much of families," he concludes, "how the tricks of the blood keep breaking out, just as much in character as they do in looks, that we can't help feeling as if a great many people hadn't a fair chance to be what is called 'good'" (p. 243).

The emphasis on objective observation as a better guide to truth than blind adherence to dogma is illustrated by the religious transformation of the Reverend Doctor Honeywood.

Observing his wholesome, hearty sixteen-year-old granddaughter, he is forced to admit in spite of everything he believed "that she was a little angel,--which was in violent contradiction to the leading doctrine of his sermon on Human Nature" (pp. 181-182). Here is the theological counterpart to the medical arguments given by the physician. The minister, laying aside the old scholastic abstractions, becomes instinctively humanized, suddenly conceiving of God in a new light. "If by the visitation of God, he asks, "a person receives any injury which impairs the intellect or the moral perceptions, is it not monstrous to judge such a person by our common working standards of right and wrong" (p. 188). If we don't blame visible cripples--hunchbacks or the insane--he thinks, then why blame those with the unseen mutilations, such as Elsie's? He concludes with the conviction that the Creator is bound to guard his children against the ruin pursuant upon inherited ignorance; i.e., the errors of the Church. "Are not men children, nay, babes, in the eye of Omniscience?" (p. 189) This is a far different God from the stern, wrathful, vengeful Deity of the Puritans who mercilessly doomed babes even before their birth and from whom no pity or reprieve could be expected.

The Guardian Angel (1867) continues the same theme, with the inheritance derived this time from human ancestors, rather than from an animal--a less sensational, though far more believable story. Based on the theory that the dead may enjoy a secondary life in their living descendants, the story traces the two conflicting strains, one good, the other evil, in a

young girl, Myrtle Hazard. Myrtle feels the good influences in her to be much stronger, the legacy of Anne Holyoake, a Protestant martyr burned by the Papists in the sixteenth century, who, in addition, most closely resembles Myrtle's mother in spirit. It is she who is her "guardian angel." The evil influences of the beautiful and passionate Judith Pride are less strong, though strong enough to precipitate a moral crisis for Myrtle. (Holmes' theory is somewhat weakened by the fact that Judith Pride is not a blood ancestor; she was the first wife of Myrtle's grandfather, while it was the second who was Myrtle's grandmother.) Also influencing Myrtle's personality is the Indian blood she feels in herself, believing in an old legend about Indian blood in the family. To this she attributes her feeling of being like a wild creature when she is alone in the woods. She is virtually hypnotized by this feeling at one point into reacting as her supposedly savage ancestors would have. While playing the role of an Indian in a school play, she is provoked by a jealous girl, who tramples her wreath of flowers, into giving out an Indian battle-shriek and raising up her knife. Terrified by the passion that has involuntarily overcome her, Myrtle lives in fear for a long time of this demoniac force within her.

Aside from this one incident, however, the two forces contending for dominion over Myrtle are not as clear-cut as they were in Elsie Venner, for Myrtle is never overcome by real evil. The conflict, rather, is between the bold, worldly, impassioned spirit of Judith Pride and the spiritual, ascetic force of Anne Holyoake. Holmes associates the first with

lawless impulses, but never actually makes it clear just what these impulses are; Myrtle is never seen doing anything that one might call lawless. Her conflict comes to an end when, inspired by the self-sacrificing Puritan martyr, she tirelessly nurses the soldiers during the Civil War and finds serenity in her love for her husband.

Holmes' theory of inherited influences anticipates the Jungian theory of the presence within the unconscious of personality types from the past, whom one encounters on a kind of psychic journey into the unconscious in an attempt to integrate them into the conscious present. Myrtle, in fact, when she runs away from home and falls into the river after having a vision of her mother, is symbolically enacting the Jungian myth of psychic reintegration,[1] escaping from the conflicts of the present into the past through visions of her forebears and finally finding peace and fulfillment by coming to terms in her daily life with these haunting influences.

Equally important are Holmes' comments on the Calvinistic theory of child rearing. Myrtle is an orphan living with her Aunt Silence Withers, a stern Calvinist spinster whose one obsession is her own personal welfare in the hereafter. Holmes sardonically points out that Protestantism, unlike Catholicism, provides no aids for such people, no good works, no prescribed road to salvation, thus leaving them highly nervous. In her self-righteous anxiety, Aunt Silence bases her treatment of Myrtle on the approved doctrine that all children are wrong in motive, thought, and deed as long as they remain subject

to their natural instincts. These instincts must, therefore, be eradicated: as soon as the child manifests evidence of intelligent and persistent self-determination, break her will. When four-year-old Myrtle doesn't want to eat brown bread, Aunt Silence ties her up in the attic without food or water to reflect and repent for no less than eighteen hours. The still obdurate Myrtle is finally rescued by, as Holmes put it, the stupid Irish maid who had no theory of human nature, just plain love and kindness. When Myrtle, now fifteen, in desperation runs away, Silence wishes she herself were dead, fearing that her own salvation was in jeopardy if Myrtle were alive and living in sin.

In a typically romantic manner, Holmes didactically uses the plant metaphor to explain how children must develop freely according to their own inherent propensities.

> Look at the flower of a morning-glory the evening before the dawn which is to see it unfold. The delicate petals are twisted into a spiral, which at the appointed hour, when the sunlight touches the hidden springs of its life, will uncoil itself and let the day into the chamber of its virgin heart. But the spiral must unwind by its own law, and the hand that shall try to hasten the process will only spoil the blossom which would have expanded in symmetrical beauty under the rosy fingers of morning (p. 73).

Silence, Holmes explains, was untwisting the morning-glory without waiting for the sunshine. The child is born with good and evil, but with God's help and the strength of her own moral sense, the good in her will ultimately prevail. As Holmes melodramatically puts it, "The World, the Flesh, and the Devil held mortgages on her life before its deed was put in her hands; but sweet and gracious influences were also born with her; and the battle of life was to be fought between

them, God helping her in her need, and her own free choice siding with one or the other" (p. 27).

Oldtown Folks (1869), which Harriet Beecher Stowe described as a novel, is essentially a critical historical essay on the declining Calvinism of New England five generations ago. The plot involving the plight of two orphan children is little more than a convenience for criticizing the Orthodox Calvinist attitudes on child rearing, showing first their blighting, oppressive effect and then, in contrast, the healthy results of a more humane attitude. The basic ambivalence toward Calvinism of Mrs. Stowe, who was brought up in the teachings of Jonathan Edwards and who in 1854 could write, "Calvinism, in its essential features, will never cease from the earth, because the great fundamental facts of nature are Calvinistic, and men with strong minds and wills always discover it,"[2] is, however, evident throughout, in her very sympathetic descriptions of Puritan New England, as well as in some of her comments upon child rearing. She, for example, qualifies her indictment of the narrow and rigid Puritan education, not with a defense of Church doctrine or of the parents' motives, but rather with a nostalgic regret for the simpler life of a primitive society.

> It was the fashion of olden times to consider children only as children pure and simple; not as having any special and individual nature which required special and individual adaptation, but as being simply so many little creatures to be washed, dressed, schooled, fed, and whipped, according to certain general and well-understood rules.
>
> The philosophy of modern society is showing to parents and educators how delicate and how varied

> is their task; but in the days we speak of nobody had thought of these shadings and variations. It is perhaps true, that in that very primitive and simple state of society there were fewer of those individual peculiarities which are the result of the stimulated brains and nervous systems of modern society (p. 148).

The children are very much in the tradition of the domestic sentimental novel, little saints who function as a touchstone, bringing out the good or evil in adults. Nine-year-old Harry and seven-year-old Tina have been wandering about the countryside with their dying and forsaken mother. Their father, a dissipated drunkard, deserted the mother, going back to his native England and declaring their marriage invalid. A saintly martyr, the mother maintains her faith in God's loving goodness even on her death-bed, reassuring her children that in their sufferings they can count on God as their protecting Friend.

Harry is the boy-counterpart to Little Eva. Asexual with his yellow curls, large, clear blue eyes, delicate skin, and sensitive, quivering lips, he has taken his father's place in his mother's life. Precocious, responsible, courageous, and steadfast, his innate purity has been strengthened by religious training and suffering. Mrs. Stowe writes:

> Harry was naturally one of those manly, good-natured, even tempered children that are the delight of nurses and the staff and stay of mothers. Early responsibility and sorrow, and the religious teaching of his mother had awakened the spiritual part of his nature to a higher consciousness than usually exists in childhood. There was about him a steady, uncorrupted goodness and faithfulness of nature, a simple, direct truthfulness, and a loyal habit of prompt obedience to elders, which made him one of those children likely, in every position of child-life, to be favorites, and to run a smooth course (p. 149).

Tina, on the other hand, is pure in a different way. She is a romantic child of nature, a wild, beautiful creature--passionate, self-willed, pleasure-loving, and imaginative--in whom "the moral and religious faculties were as undeveloped . . . as in a squirrel or a robin" (p. 151).

These two uncorrupted souls are taken in by people who are wholly insensitive to them, not only as children, but as individuals with feelings and desires; they are simply utilitarian acquisitions, Harry for Old Crab Smith and Tina for that "valiant virgin," allegorically named Miss Asphyxia. Mrs. Stowe explains Miss Asphyxia's typical Puritan attitude: "Miss Asphyxia did not hate the child, nor did she love her. She regarded her exactly as she did her broom and her rolling-pin and her spinning-wheel,--as an implement or instrument which she was to fashion to her uses. She had a general idea, too, of certain duties to her as a human being, which she expressed by the phrase, 'doing right by her,'--that is, to feed and clothe and teach her. In fact, Miss Asphyxia believed fully in the golden rule of doing as she would be done by; but if a lioness should do to a young lamb exactly as she would be done by, it might be all the worse for the lamb" (p. 160). Innocent, free Tina, who partook of the Divine as do the lilies of the field, is suddenly fettered by the gloomy and ominous religion of the catechism. It is not Miss Asphyxia personally who is blameworthy, however, but the laws of the society, according to which she was righteously doing her duty. "She was as ignorant of the blind agony of mingled shame, wrath, sense of degradation, and burning for revenge, which

had been excited by her measures, as the icy east wind of Boston flats is of the stinging and shivering it causes in its course" (p. 169). But this in no way exonerates her, for it is the people who make the laws, people whom Mrs. Stowe calls "obtuse in sensibility and unimaginative in temperament, guilty of soul-murder; the cause of a slow moral insanity which gradually destroys all that is good in the soul" (pp. 169-170).

The children run away and are finally taken in by kind and loving people. Tina becomes "an angel of the household," a savior, inspiring her foster mother, Miss Mehitable, to a renewed faith in God. Miss Mehitable writes to her brother:

> I think God has been merciful to me in sending me this child, to be to me as a daughter. Already her coming has been made a means of working in me that great moral change for which all my life I have been blindly seeking. I have sought that conversion which our father taught us to expect as alchemists seek the philosopher's stone. . . .
>
> How many hours have I gone round and round this dreary track,--chilled, weary, shivering, seeing no light, and hearing no voice! But within this last hour it seems as if a divine ray had shone upon me, and the great gift had been given me by the hand of a little child. It came in the simplest and most unexpected manner, while listening to a very homely humn, repeated by this dear little one. The words themselves were not much in the way of poetry; it was merely the simplest statement of the truth that in Jesus Christ, ever living, ever present, every human soul has a personal friend, divine and almighty (p. 248).

Thus Tina, in her simple, instinctive, uneducated religion based upon a faith in an all-loving God, inspires the true sense of Christianity that the Church, in its repressive, terrifying dogma had not only not accomplished but had perverted.

Harry, too, in his more formal piety of prayer and

praise relieves the despair of men taught to regard themselves as the hopelessly predestined unregenerate. "It would seem to be the most natural thing in the world that the child of an ever-present Father should live in this way,--that weakness and ignorance, standing within call and reach of infinite grace and strength, should lay hold of that divine helpfulness, and grow to it and by it, as the vine climbs upon the rock; but yet such lives are the exception rather than the rule, even among the good. But the absolute faith of Harry's mind produced about him an atmosphere of composure and restfulness which was, perhaps, the strongest attraction" (p. 280).

Mrs. Stowe may seem very liberal and modern in her unequivocal denunciation of Puritan methods of child rearing, but in relation to the contemporary theories of education, she appears rather conservative. She has no use for those champions of reason, who believe that a child will only benefit from what can be thoroughly understood by his own limited powers of intellect. Much can be gained, she feels, from the traditional method of ritualistic family prayers and Bible-reading without commentary or explanation. "For my part, I am impatient of the theory of those who think that nothing that is not understood makes any valuable impression on the mind of a child. I am certain that the constant contact of the Bible with my childish mind was a very great mental stimulant, as it certainly was a cause of a singular and vague pleasure" (p. 295). Moreover, she takes a rather sardonic view of all the currently popular books on education which enlight-

ened and conscientious mothers felt duty bound to read. "Miss Mehitable, like many another person who has undertaken the task of bringing up a human being, found herself reduced to the doing of a great many things which she had never expected to do. She prepared for her work in the most thorough manner; she read Locke and Milton, and Dr. Gregor's "Legacy to his Daughter," and Mrs. Chapone on the bringing up of girls, to say nothing of Miss Hannah More and all the other wise people; and, after forming some of the most carefully considered and select plans of operation for herself and her little charge, she was at length driven to the discovery that in education, as in all other things, people who cannot do as they would must do as they can" (p. 297). In other words, plain common sense, with natural love and kindness, are the best and only guides.

The child heroine of Margaret (1845) by Sylvester Judd is also used to demonstrate the evils of Calvinism and, in addition, those of Revivalism. Writing about New England just after the Revolution, the author envisions a Christian Utopia based upon Unitarianism. Innocent, pure, heaven-sent Margaret, child of the woods, is the symbol of a brave new world, infused with the Divine and constantly aspiring to the Infinite. Margaret, as God's creation, is all children everywhere, the key to a Transcendental vision of a harmonious world united in the Divine spirit. The author describes the infant Margaret as being "in the centre of fantastic light. . . . It is God's own child, as all children are. The blood of

Adam and Eve, through how many soever channels diverging, runs in its veins, and the spirit of the Eternal, that blows everywhere, has animated its soul" (p. 3).* The following description of the child as universal savior, uniting all men in the one God whose spirit lives in all children, regardless of their race or nationality, tends to suggest the spirit behind Walt Whitman's vision of a world united through the Divine presence in every man, the diseased and depraved no less than the healthy and respectable.

> As we now look at the child, we can hardly tell to which of the five races it belongs; whether it be a Caucasion, Mongolian, American, Ethiopian, or Malay. Each child on this terraqueous ball, whether its nose be aquiline, its eyes black and small, its cheek-bones prominent, its lips large, or its head narrow; whether its hue be white, olive, or jet, is of God's creating, and is delighted with the bright summer light, a bed of grass, the wind, birds, and puppies; and smiles in the eyes of all beholders. It is God's child still, and its mother's. It is curiously and wonderfully made; the inspiration of the Almighty hath given it understanding. It will look after God, its Maker, by how many soever names he may be called; it will aspire to the Infinite, whether that Infinite be expressed in Bengalee or Arabic, English or Chinese; it will seek to know truth.(p. 4).

As a child of nature, Margaret partakes of the Divine, and not just in the present; through it she feels the immortal influences of the past, uniting past and present into a potentially glorious future.

> The woods,--where Adam and Eve enjoyed their pastime and sought their repose, where the Amorites and Assyrians learned to pray, and the

*Note that here the blood of Adam and Eve is not tainted by the serpent.

> Israelites to rebel . . . where Pan piped, the Satyrs danced, the Fauns browsed, Sylvanus loved, Diana hunted . . . whence came enchantment and power to Spenser, Shakespere, Milton, Wordsworth, Scott, Cooper . . . the Shelter of beasts, the retreat of mosquitoes and flies . . . the woods, green, sweet-smelling, imparadisaical, inspiring, suggestive, wild, musical, sombre, superstitious, devotional, mystic, tranquillizing;--these were about the child and over her (pp. 22-23).

Like the boy Wordsworth, she does not intellectually comprehend these influences; she only feels intensely, having an unconscious, intuitive sense of God within and around her. "She was <u>beginning</u> to know and to feel. Could the Immortal Spirit of the Woods have spoken to her? But she was not prepared for it; she was too young; she only felt an exhilarating sensation of variety, beauty, grandeur, awe. . . . Yet . . . there seemed a new sense aroused, or active within her, an unconscious instinct, a hidden prompting of duty; she trod with more care than usual; and fly, or beetle, or snail, she turned aside for, or stepped protectingly over" (p. 23).

Despite her mean and vulgar drunkard parents, who give her no love or affection, Margaret remains pure, protected by the Divine Spirit within her.

In her experiences with both the Calvinist Church and a Revivalist meeting, she is an "innocent eye," revealing and rejecting their hypocrisies and perversions. She witnesses the grotesque writhing, foaming, hysterics that occur at a midnight Revivalist meeting in the woods. She is tormented by the preacher with fears of death and the devil and urged to imitate another child her age who is flat on his back, groaning and shaking spasmodically.

Next she goes to a Sabbath Day meeting at the church,

where she is lectured by righteous matrons, as well as by the Deacon, on her sins and depravity. She is castigated for not knowing the catechism and, symbolically, prohibited from bringing her wild flowers into the church.

That night Margaret has a dream in which Christ and John appear before the congregation, putting an end to the existing church and proclaiming the children his co-workers in redeeming the true spirit of Christianity. Just as the Deacon is telling Margaret and all the other children that they cannot follow Christ because they are sinful and depraved, Christ appears with John, who says: "Christ bids me say . . . Suffer the little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven. . . . Whosoever thirsts . . . let him come . . . everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God . . . No human being is sinful by nature. If she have deep love in her soul, that will remove all traces of the carnal mind" (pp. 124-125). As Margaret and the other children approach Jesus, without the fear of the adults, and give him those wild flowers that the Deacon had ordered out of the church, John again speaks: "Look at these children . . . the very flowers and berries they bring are the affectionate tribute of their hearts to the Infinite Goodness and Divine Beauty that appear in Christ; it is the out-flowing of a pure love; it is the earnest fore-shadowing of the salvation that has already begun in their souls" (p. 127). Finally Christ Himself addresses Margaret: "God is Love . . . to you it shall be given to know the mysteries of heaven. . . . The Church

has fallen. The Eve of Religion has again eaten the forbidden fruit. You shall be a co-worker with me in its second redemption" (p. 128).

Like Oldtown Folks, Margaret is largely concerned with the evocation of historical New England. The author tirelessly details every aspect of personal daily life--dress, work, amusements, food, the evils of liquor--as well as the town's institutional life--its politics, army, jails, and, of course, its churches--in a dry, turgid prose that is almost unreadable. There is no narrative progression or unifying plot, rather disconnected episodes each with its historical and moral explanations. Margaret is never realized as a character, being only a wooden figure upon which Judd hangs his religious thesis.

Footnotes to Chapter Two

[1] The American Adam, pp. 38-39.

[2] Sunny Memories of Foreign Lands, II (Boston, 1854), 277.

In subscribing to Calvinism, Mrs. Stowe specifically excludes the doctrines of Original Sin and limited church membership. Based upon her reading of the Magnalia Christi Americana (1702) by Cotton Mather, who defends the Half-Way Covenant of 1662 and whose comments on church membership are generally obscure, she condemns Jonathan Edwards for leading the New England Church away from its original Anglicanism as established by the first founding colonists. It is very probable that her misinterpretation of Edwards was influenced by Catharine Beecher's Religious Training of Children in the School, the Family, and the Church (1864), in which she attacks Edwards for reviving the restrictions on church membership, limiting it to the regenerate, those able to give proof of divine illumination.

Charles H. Foster, The Rungless Ladder (Durham, N.C., 1954), pp. 161-202.

III

The Didactic Stories

A. The Sentimental Domestic Novel

During the 1850's The Scarlet Letter, The House of the Seven Gables, and The Blithedale Romance were all published, yet together their sales did not even approach that of the contemporaneous The Wide, Wide World or The Lamplighter alone. One can readily understand the small interest in Moby Dick, or White Jacket, or Pierre, also published at this time, but why in the more appealing novels of Hawthorne? To be sure, the average reader was less educated than he is today, but that is not the whole of the answer, nor even its major part. It was an age in which the literary scene was dominated by women, both as readers and writers, "a damn'd mob of scribbling women," as Hawthorne called them. It was common for booksellers to advertise: "To the Ladies: Novels for Winter Evening Amusements." Fiction was considered to be as much a part of the exclusively female world as the tea-table and the nursery. Men saw themselves as too occupied with the real problems of business to waste their time on the make-believe world of fiction. And since the women, to whom their husbands left the moral upbringing of the children as well as the responsibility for a happy family life, were naturally interested in novels about love, marriage, and children, there was a ready market for the domestic, sentimental, pious story, which, by the same token, was an easy and familiar subject for the women writers. The domestic novel was in fact the perfect answer to the two main demands placed

upon literature: pious moralism and sentimentalism.[1]

The excessive sentimentalism characterizing the taste of women at this time is seen in the popularity of the gift books, annual collections of maudlin stories and verse profusely illustrated, variously called "Affection's Gift," "The Casket," "The Dew Drop," "Love's Garland," "The Remember Me," and so on. They describe well the spirit behind the almost hysterical reception given to Dickens when he toured America, the rage over Jane Eyre, as well as the popularity of Scott and Byron.[2]

Dickens was probably the most widely read of all the English novelists. He did not create American sentimentalism, but certainly did more than any other author to encourage it. The pathos and moralistic reformism were perfectly suited to the prevailing American temper. By the time he visited America in 1842 all of his characters were familiar household terms. The reception given him was overwhelming, crowds cheering him on the streets, store-windows displaying his portrait. A lavish Boz Ball was held in his honor in New York, the ballroom decorated not only with a huge portrait of him, but also with twenty vignettes portraying scenes from his novels. The climax of the evening was a series of tableaux in which the best loved scenes from his works were portrayed by living statues. It soon became common to see dramatic adaptations of his novels, as well as to listen to songs inspired by his characters, such as "Dora and Agnes" (from David Copperfield) and "Florence" (from Dombey and Son). His later visit in 1867 was equally successful, thirty-one

different editions of his collected works issued in that one year alone, and a series of readings from them bringing him over one hundred thousand dollars.[3]

The insistence upon the moral and pious was of course made by the Church. Puritanical and self-righteous ministers, who felt obliged to protect the precarious morality of maidens and mothers sinfully seeking vicarious thrills, set themselves up as the arbiters of literature. Fiction was denounced in the pulpit for inflaming the passions and corrupting the heart. The religious and social hostility to fiction, which was a serious blight upon American writing for a long time, has its roots in the Puritan belief that literature could not exist for its own sake, for entertainment alone, but had to instruct man morally and theologically by illustrating the ways of God in the universe. For this reason history was the only acceptable literature, besides the sermon, for the early colonists since its sole purpose was to show how the past and present are all part of God's wise and deliberate plan, and, in so doing, to inspire humility, obedience, gratitude or fear. This same standard was adhered to for the poetry written at that time, Michael Wigglesworth's Day of Doom being not only a favorite among adults, but obligatory among children. This spirit was too strong in American culture to die easily. Fiction was openly written and read during the nineteenth century, but those books popularly sanctioned and devoured were based upon a clear and conventional framework of reward and punishment, where sinners either reformed or perished.[4]

Nourishing this moral attitude toward literature were two other factors. One was the various moral "causes" to which the nineteenth-century woman fervently devoted herself, such as abolition and temperance. The other was the practice of reading novels aloud within the family as a form of evening entertainment. This meant that they had to be both morally suitable and instructive for the children of the family.

What then could be more moral than a story about a child? It was not only a "proper" subject but an important one too about which every woman should be knowledgeable and from which every child could profit. And it was as easy to be sentimental as it was to be pious about the child; innocent and helpless child victims were guaranteed to draw sighs and tears. Thus the domestic novel was the perfect literary compromise, satisfying the moral and religious scruples of the Church while feeding the sentimental longings of the ladies.

The American reaction to Wordsworth is one of the best examples of the literary mood at that time.[5] By the 1850's Wordsworth had a considerable following in this country, but hardly for the same reasons that we admire him today. Steeped in religious sentimentalism, the average nineteenth-century American admired Wordsworth as a great Christian philosopher, preferring above all else the "Ecclesiastical Sonnets" because they excited a spirit of devotion and faith. Many read and liked the "Intimations Ode," but with more of a religious enthusiasm than an intellectual understanding. Typical is

the sentimental reaction of Henry T. Tuckerman, writing for The Southern Literary Messenger in 1841: "The parent reading the poem must derive a new sense of the sacredness of children, and learn to revere their innocence and leave unmarred their tender traits, and to yield them more confidently to the influence of nature."[6] Most believed that Wordsworth wrote from biblical authority, giving credence to Jesus' admonition to suffer little children to come unto him. (He, of course, had a more intellectual and aesthetic appeal to such major writers as Emerson and Thoreau.) After his death in 1850 numerous eulogies were published, especially by church magazines, in which Wordsworth is called a genuine Christian poet, sympathetic to the humble, the poor, and the child, an interpreter of God to man, rightly showing religion to be the only source of happiness.

B. The Didactic Stories

Although all the sentimental domestic stories about children written during the nineteenth century are didactic, there is a certain type that can be classified separately as "the didactic" because its raison d'être seems to be wholly to instruct, the characters and incidents being merely vehicles for stating and illustrating a theory on child rearing. The characters have no individual interest and the story is generally episodic. They are addressed to mothers, but written in a style so simple, often juvenile, that the author was obviously trying to be as easily readable as possible, even for the uneducated. It is largely the province of female authors, but not exclusively; in fact, the most prolific and popular in this group is a man--Timothy Shay Arthur.

The premise upon which most of these books is based is that the child is born essentially non-moral and that his moral character will be wholly determined by the influences in his environment. What is particularly distinctive about these authors, though, is the emphasis placed upon the mother as the most important, and for a long time the only, force shaping the child's character. They establish an ideal mother, a super-human, angelic, all-knowing and all-virtuous being, whose every smile or frown will have untold consequences upon the child forever after, and in whose power lies the unquestioned possibility of the happy home, without which the child is doomed. The pious element is generally played down in favor of lessons in deportment, the art of

developing a pleasing and persuasive personality so as to create family harmony and win the love, respect, and above all the obedience of one's children.

Before discussing the stories, it might be profitable to look first at one of the most popular books on education in America at this time, The Mother's Book (1830) by Lydia Maria Child, as a measure of the attitudes inspiring the domestic scenes in the stories.

Familiarity with English writers' ideas on children is seen from the title page on which there are two epigraphs:

> The child is father of the man;
> And I could wish his* days to be
> Bound each to each by natural piety.
> Wordsworth

> Do you ask, then, what will educate your son? Your example will educate him; your conversation; the business he sees you transact; the likings and dislikings you express,--these will educate him; the society you live in will educate him.
> Mrs. Barbauld

The influence of Wordsworth, however, remains largely on the title page, except, perhaps for the notion of children coming from heaven, "with their little souls full of innocence and peace." But even this is qualified in the spirit of Sarah Trimmer when she urges parents to teach children to be kind to animals, for their natural spirit is one of revenge. For Miss Child, it seems "the child is father of the man" not in Wordsworth's sense of the child having an intuitive wisdom lost in adults, but rather in the sense that as the character is formed in childhood so it will remain in adulthood.

*The correct reading is "my days."

All her admonitions have as their premise the Lockean concept of the child as a tabula rasa. "The mind of a child is not like that of a grown person, too full and too busy to observe everything; it is a vessel empy and pure--always ready to receive, and always receiving."

"Every look, every movement, every expression, does something toward forming the character of the little heir to immortal life" (p. 9). The burden is entirely the mother's, the father being virtually non-existent as far as children go, and, what is more interesting, it is not merely the fate of her children for which she is responsible but that of the whole nation. The book is dedicated "To American Mothers, on whose intelligence and discretion the safety and prosperity of our republic so much depend." This was truly the woman's age. It is assumed that with just a little effort, the potential angel in every mother will come forth. "A mother's influence should not interfere with the influence of angels." Because children are imitators, she must teach by example, being invariably calm, loving, gentle, kind, and always in full control of her own temper. The mother cannot be an ordinary human being with moods and weaknesses.

Obedience above all should be developed in the child. In the first edition of the book Miss Child sanctioned mild punishments, but only constructive ones that furthered the child's sense of right and wrong, never ones that merely cause him to suffer, and especially none that shame or degrade him. In the 1844 edition, however, she unequivocally

condemns all whipping.

The goal of education is the well-rounded child, one who has an imaginative love of books, a healthy, robust body, common sense, and practical skills, the girls as well as the boys. Usefulness is invaluable for both so that they will always be able to support themselves. "The business of parents is to develope /sic/ each individual character so as to produce the greatest amount of usefulness and happiness" (p. 155). Consequently, everything is an occasion for learning, daily household chores as much as school lessons. Amusements are permitted, but should be educational whenever possible and should not encourage vanity or frivolity, as dances, for example, do.

The spiritual atmosphere of the home is the single most important part of a child's upbringing but, surprisingly, not so much for the welfare of the child, as for the salvation of the parents. "Is not our heavenly Father kind to entrust to our care these little innocent souls, that we ourselves may enter his kingdom, by the prayerful effort to keep them forever near their guardian angels?" (p. 175) It seems that God will reward through redemption those parents who dutifully educate them properly, which means essentially a faith in God and heaven. She tells mothers to teach them that God is their Heavenly Father (they seem to lack an earthly father), that God never withdraws from his children, but it is rather that wicked men withdraw their hearts from Him, that this life is merely a preparation for another, not, however, to be anticipated with grief and terror, but

with the joy of returning to live with the angels in heaven. Gone are the catechism and the Puritanical morbidity of religion. Children must observe the Sabbath, but she is tolerant of their inability to be as still and controlled as adults are.

Extremely valuable for us today is her commentary on contemporary books for children, which she feels must combine instruction with their amusement. History and biography are to be read, rather than fiction, which usually introduces the child to vices never before heard of, as well as encouraging pity for sinners. Charlotte Temple, for example, does the greatest harm to girls of about fourteen years. Juvenile stories about naughty children, as well as frightening fairy tales are bad, but unlike Mrs. Trimmer and Samuel Goodrich, she thinks "Cinderella" is fine. The best fiction in her estimation is that of Frederika Bremer, who is religious without being theological. Mary Howitt, though not as deeply spiritual, is admirable for her simplicity and naturalness, as is Catharine M. Sedgwick, whom she commends for the absence of "sickly sentimentality" and "unhealthy excitement." She likes her "quiet, pleasant pictures of life," especially her excellent moral teachings, "everywhere pervaded by the genial spirit of that true democracy, which rests on the Christian religion as its basis" (p. 97). It is for her very lack of spirituality that she can have only qualified praise for Miss Edgeworth. She is "full of practical good sense, philosophical discrimination, felicitous illustration, and pure morality;

but the sentiment of worship is absent. There is nothing in opposition to religion; it simply is not there. It was once beautifully said, 'Her system of education has helped the deaf to hear, and the lame to walk. If she had only said, "Arise in the name of Jesus," the miracle would have been complete'" (p. 96). Walter Scott, too, although good as history, admirable for his "fresh and beautiful paintings of man's outward life," unfortunately has "no high spirituality" (p. 97). Most recommended are Mrs. Barbauld, Jane Taylor, Miss Leslie, Mrs. Trimmer, Sandford and Merton, and the Rollo books, about the latter, saying: "The Rollo Books, by Jacob Abbott, have found universal favor, both with parents and children. They relate, in very simple and familiar style, the everyday trials and temptations of juvenile life. They are well calculated to impart clear ideas of right and wrong, to encourage habits of observation, and form characters of plain practical common sense" (p. 104).

One should read the ancients, but only from the perspective of Christianity; Ulysses, for example, was great and yet a "cunning, lying knave." Poetry is valuable for producing refinement, the best being that of Wordsworth and Mary Howitt who are "at once attractive in style, and healthy in their moral tone" (p. 101). So much for Wordsworth.

Timothy Shay Arthur is perhaps best remembered today for his fervently moralistic temperance tales (Ten Nights in a Bar-Room and What I Saw There), but he was also popular in his day for stories about the home. The three books that

will be discussed are a prototype of the simple, domestic story for instructing mothers through familiar situations on how to raise their children. They are based on the belief that children are born with both good and evil impulses but that with the right home influence, the evil can be suppressed and the potential angel developed. The right education means a pious faith in and love for God as learned from a mother who is herself guided by love and religion.

The Mother (1845) is a series of illustrative episodes, rather than a sustained narrative, involving model parents, the Hartleys, to whom less successful ones are contrasted. They are the genteel poor, having recently lost their fortune. Somehow virtue and original poverty or continued wealth never go together in this kind of story. The romantic idealization of the humble and poor has been fused with Victorian snobbery and prudery. Both Mr. and Mrs. Hartley, who preach rather than talk to one another, vow to place all their confidence in God for the Herculean task ahead of them in raising their child. "Angels love infants and children most tenderly, and they will be our teacher if we keep our minds elevated above all mere worldly and selfish ends, and seek only the highest good for our offspring" (p. 12). The stilted, unnatural language is typical. It is Mrs. Hartley, however, who really has the burden, for fathers are too absorbed in business to devote themselves to the children. And Mr. Hartley nobly acknowledges the superhuman calling and power of his wife. "Can there be a higher or holier end than a mother's, when she proposes to herself the good of her child? . . . Into that end will there most assuredly be

an influx of wisdom to discover the true means" (p. 11). Her guiding principle is to be firm but mild, for children are only happy when obedient and good, and can only become so through imitating a loving and gentle mother. The importance of proper training is emphasized by the fact that each of the five Hartley children is born with a different temperament, one quiet, one timid, one buoyant, another wilful, passionate, selfish, and domineering. The last, of course, will be the true test of Mrs. Hartley's wisdom and moral strength.

Other, ill-guided parents are shown in relation to the Hartleys. The evils of liquor, for example, are illustrated by the Archers. The husband who comes home drunk provokes his wife into being irritable and harsh with the children, who consequently are wilful and disobedient. Mrs. Fielding is another example, this time of a vain, selfish mother who loves herself more than her children, handing them over to nurses and teachers.

The later results of good and bad mothers are shown at the end of the book when Clarence Hartley and James Fielding are college class-mates. James breaks every school rule and is expelled, while Clarence, described by his mother as born with "an evil and perverse will--a will thoroughly depraved" (p. 9), is redeemed by her and receives formal commendation from the college president for his moral strength and integrity.

The reader is intermittently entertained with sentimental verse on mothers, such as these lines by Thomas G.

Spear describing his dream about his mother:

> She spoke of the days of her girlhood and youth--
> Of life and its cares, and of hope and its truth;
> And she seemed as an angel just winged from above,
> To bring me a message of duty and love.

The harassed, martyred mother could indulge in dreams of ultimate recognition of her saintliness.

Stories for Parents (1851) is a collection of separate stories each involving a different set of parents and children, and each illustrating a different lesson for parents. The pervading theme is that parents must understand a child's feelings and needs. In his Preface, Arthur urges parents to give more and wiser attention to their children: "Our business life absorbs so much time and thought, that the best interests of our children are often seriously neglected. Worldly well-being is regarded as the primary thing, and the well-being of children comes in, as a consequence for a less earnest consideration. The perusal of this volume, the author believes, will have the effect to make many who love their little ones at home, think of and for them with a wiser consideration."

The first, "Obedience in Children," teaches that every child has the potential for being an angel, but cannot be so without learning obedience to God, which is taught and measured by his obedience to his parents. Mrs. Carver is an intelligent, fine lady, but lacks order and firmness, being ruled more by impulse than reason. Consequently her three children are disobedient, spoiled, and rude, and both children and parents are unhappy. Before and after scenes are presented, the story ending with a happy Carver family

in which Mrs. Carver is firmly and calmly disciplining a child. Arthur sounds quite modern when he advises parents not to threaten punishments that can't be believed, such as "I will skin you alive," or "I'll break your head."

The other stories focus on the father--a surprising change. "Haven't Time" shows the evil effects of a father's lack of discipline. Mr. Green is too occupied with business to concern himself with John who is dismissed from two schools for disobedience. Finally John runs away to sea and comes home "a rough, tobacco-chewing, cigar-smoking, dram-drinking, overgrown boy of eighteen, with all his sensual desires and animal passions more active than when he went away, while his intellectual faculties and moral feelings were in a worse condition than at his separation from home" (p. 205). Mr. Green finally repents and reforms after John is stabbed in a drunken brawl and dies.

A warning to basically good but indifferent fathers is given in "Seeing About It." When seven-year-old Edgar asks his father for a paint-box, his father replies, "I'll see about it," only to forget and perfunctorily tell Edgar that he hadn't time. The vicious cycle has begun: Edgar cries, Mother is harsh, her reaction only making Edgar angry and stubborn, who provokes his mother into putting him in a dark closet as punishment. A wise friend explains to mother that the guilt lies with her, and not with her son. Children's moods usually have causes and it is the duty of parents to understand them. In this instance, Edgar is only showing a child's normal inability to cope with disappoint-

ment. He is, of course, then given the paint-box, and is, like all children, immediately happy. The friend concludes with the sentimental apostrophe: "Artless, innocent childhood! . . . how brief is thy remembrance of wrong!"

Sunshine at Home and Other Stories (1864) can hardly be called stories at all; they are rather a series of lengthy exhortations to the reader using the favorite nineteenth-century analogy of a child to a plant. Sunshine or love in the heart of parents is vital for the growth of the seeds of the child's character. Evil may exist, but it is only latent, and the wise parent will cultivate the seeds rather than pull out the weeds, for the latter only results in digging up the seeds as well and thus destroying the plant altogether.

> Sunshine for homeplants is just as necessary as sunshine for garden plants; yet from how many homes is the sunshine banished! It is no wonder that so many children grow up morally blanched, or with strange, one-sided developments of character.
>
> Without heart-sunshine, beaming from radiant faces at home, the affections cannot blossom in a fragrant promise of good fruit. (p. 9).

In "Digging Up Seeds" the child who, impatiently waiting for seeds to sprout, unwittingly digs them up is an example of what the mother does when she punishes the child for his impatience. The ever-present wise friend observes and lectures mother:

> It is quite probable that that [sic] every parent treats the seeds of thought he sows in the mind of the child with an impatience just as foolish as that of the child over his flower-seeds. He tells him a truth, and expects it to spring up and bear fruit as soon as it is sown. He looks to reap the harvest in the character of his child be-

> fore the seed-time is over. He probes his child's heart with questions to find out if the truth he sows is germinating, before the warmth of the Divine love has had opportunity to expand the germ and quicken it into life. He will not wait for the gradual way in which Divine Providence, through the ministry of circumstance, quickens the spiritual nature of the child; and then by the rain of His truth and the sunshine of His love causes the seeds sown, it may be, years before, and lying till then darkly and inert to take root and grow and bear fruit many fold (p. 221).

When she finds her son playing with her toilette case, and even breaking a perfume bottle, she controls her anger and is properly rewarded with a repentant son.

An unequivocal rejection of Puritan Orthodoxy is the content of "A Little More Sunshine" in which, to a father who declares that the heart is by nature "corrupt, depraved, godless," the wise friend replies:

> Children are born in innocence. The evil in them is only latent, and becomes developed through favoring circumstances. The proclivity exists, nothing more; and like a germ in the seed, will, as external things conspire, start into life. We will compare them to a garden of rich ground, in which lie thistle seeds and the seeds of all manner of vile and poisonous plants. This ground will nourish good seed if they be planted and produce good fruit in abundance. God has made it our duty to plant these good seeds, and to nurture the tender shoots that first spring up. This is even more essential than the repression and weeding out of evil plants, to which most parents solely confine themselves. The good seed may drop in as it will--the good plants grow and thrive as best they can. The parent finds more congenial work, if I may venture the assertion, in striking down and rooting out evil, than in cultivating what is good. Most people, I fear, have no faith in good, and therefore do not attempt its growth and culture. Evil is something about which they are better instructed, and they have, besides, more faith in force than in development (p. 239).

The father finds this proven when, upon his reform, the

child immediately becomes obedient and respectful, and loses the hardness in his face, taking on a "soft, child-like beauty."

What is striking about all these stories by Timothy Shay Arthur is that underneath all the sentimental and pious morality, as well as the traditional emphasis on obedience, is the very modern attitude that love and understanding are the best and most natural means for bringing out the inherently good qualities in every child.

Another plea to parents to understand and respect their child's feelings is made by Frances Hodgson Burnett in The One I Knew Best of All (1893). Although born in England, she emigrated to America during her early teens, and all her books were published first in this country. Based on her own childhood, The One I Knew Best of All is the story of a girl, referred to as "the Small Person," from the age of three or four until her early teens. What is interesting about this book is that the focus is on the child herself rather than on the parents. Instead of instructing parents on how to handle their children, she tries to give them an insight into the inarticulate thoughts and feelings of a child in an adult world, to make them see the child as an individual, rather than as a blank slate, an empty vessel, or so many seeds to be cultivated. Moreover, the child is not an inferior, limited, undeveloped person, but, in the tradition of Wordsworth, an infinitely more sensitive person than any adult.

> What I remember most clearly and feel most seriously is one thing above all: it is that I have no memory of any time so early in her life that she was not a distinct little individual. . . . It is so natural, so almost inevitable, that even the most child-loving among us should find it difficult to realize constantly that a mite of three or four, tumbling about, playing with india rubber dogs and with difficulty restrained from sucking the paint off Noah, Shem, Ham, and Jophet, not to mention animals, is a person, and that this person is ten thousand times more sensitive to impressions than one's self, and that hearing and seeing one, this person, though he or she may not really understand, will be likely, in intervals of innocent destruction of small portable articles, to search diligently in infant mental space until he or she has found an explanation of affairs, to be pigeon-holed for future reference (pp. 3-4).

She tearfully sighs over "the strange, touching sensitiveness of the new-born butterfly soul just emerged from its chrysalis--the impressionable sensitiveness which it seems so tragic that we do not always remember" (p. 11).

The children's century, she writes, had not yet begun, particularly not in England where this Small Person spent her early childhood. Morals and manners were the sole concern of well-meaning adults, not emotions and intellect. To have well scrubbed children, who made little noise and knelt down every morning and night to say their prayers was the goal.

The delights of reading Mrs. Barbauld, Miss Edgeworth, and Peter Parley were severely diminished by those "horrible little books containing memoirs of dreadful children who died early of complicated diseases, whose lingering developments they enlivened by giving unlimited moral advice and instruction to their parents and immediate relatives, seeming,

figuratively speaking, to implore them to 'go and do likewise,' and perishing to appropriate texts" (pp. 110-112). The terrible effect was that an otherwise untroubled little girl began to suffer keen pangs of conscience and thought she was wicked because she neither liked the books nor believed in the children. She was convinced that she would go straight to hell for this to be devoured by fire.

The effect of her emigration to America at about the age of twelve is overwhelming. She gives a wholly romantic, rhapsodic description of the girl's immediate and instinctive harmony with nature. In moments of pure ecstasy, she seems to become all spirit.

> Without knowing why--because she was too young to comprehend--she felt that she had begun to be alive, and that before, somehow, she had not been exactly living. . . . the full bounty of all Nature poured out before her in one magnificent gift seemed to be something she had always known--something she must have been waiting for all through her young years of exile --a native land which she could not have been kept away from always. And the most perfectly rapturous of her moments always brought to her a feeling that somehow--in some subtle way-- she was part of it--part of the trees, of the warm winds and scents and sound and grasses (p. 264)

Here is a variation of the pre-existence, exile, renewal formula. The child growing up in industrial England is an exile from a better world, which is her real home, that happily can be reclaimed in the yet uncivilized parts of America.

It is interesting that Mrs. Burnett should hold this attitude toward America in 1893, for by this time most American writers were lamenting the losss of their Eden to industrialization. A wistful farewell to a once idyllic

America redeems an otherwise banal book called The Annals of a Baby (1877). It is stated on the title-page that it was written by "One of its Slaves," but is catalogued under an author by the name of Mrs. S. B. Stebbins. It is very possible, however, that it was written by John Habberton because the book is described as a companion to Helen's Babies (1876), which was written by him, and, moreover, it was common for male authors to write under a female pseudonym, calling themselves "Mrs."*

The story consists of many disconnected episodes, each illustrating a moral, mainly the beneficent effect of Baby on the rest of the family, either directly or indirectly. Some of the subjects are, for example: "Baby's First Gifts," "Naming the Baby," "Baby's Nurse," "Baby's Party," and "Baby's Nose is out of Joint," the last reminding us of the famous episode in Tristram Shandy, when Tristram's father becomes hysterical upon learning that the bridge of baby's nose was broken by the doctor's forceps, casting upon Tristram the suspicion of impotence that hangs over all the male Shandys. Habberton's baby's affliction does not have these implications, though, the author merely stating, "Baby gained her first conception and realization that, come weal or woe, though friends may fail and the world forget, or others share the sacred love, to the Mother's heart no Baby's nose is ever out of joint" (p. 214).

*The book is catalogued under Mrs. Sarah (Bridges) Stebbins, the author also of Galgano's Wooing and Other Poems (1890), but no birth and death dates are given. The name is not included in any listing of American authors.

It is the frame story, in which the baby plays no direct part, that gives the work a certain charm and depth. A poor spinster aunt wants to give Baby a gift but can't afford a proper one. Sensitive and loving, she still has the childlike belief in fairies, and so goes hunting for a five-leaf clover with the hope that if she held it in her hand at midnight she would see the Fairy Court and could ask the queen to bestow a gift on the Baby. Her wish comes true; Titania and Puck and all the fairies appear. But Titania laments that much of the power of fairies is gone because, owing to modern science, man has lost his ability to believe in them. "The gnomes and elves," she says, "have all died, so we have no more tribute from the earth and mines; your electricity has desolated the water-kingdom of the sylphs, and we receive no longer the treasures of the seas" (p. 15). But they promise to give the Baby all they can, and one after the other they bestow upon her a light heart, a free wit, a winning smile, a rose-hue on the cheeks, a soft hand in sickness and a strong one to protect the weak, and of course, grace, modesty, tenderness, and talent. Finally they tell the aunt she must choose between the Rose of Life and the Lily of Death for her gift. Knowing that life is wonderful, yet always beset by sorrow, she asks Titania to choose for her and the queen of the fairies replies, "Sorrow is life's discipline--an angel that leads immortals to loftier grace, and they stand higher in the next world who have suffered in this than they who have died unpained. Give this Baby life, for we, the fairies, have given her gifts that shall make her a glory on earth, and her life shall be an example" (p. 22). But to "make

sorrow sweet, . . . a joy stronger than despair," she gives her Love, "for Life with Love is richer than Death and Peace." The story ends with the aunt visiting the dark and lonely house of her childhood, where suddenly at the stroke of midnight the Fairy Court again appears, very grave and dejected. They have come to bid good-bye to this last person who had kept faith in them but who unfortunately has also at last succumbed to skepticism and Common Sense, for they know that she had come to believe her first meeting with them was only an illusion. Titania tells her that they pardon her, though, "for the Spirit of the Age has inherited our lost power. . . . There is no place for us any longer in this country of steam and schools" (p. 222). She sadly explains that the original wonder and faith of the child, his instinctive belief in the reality of the supernatural are destroyed by reason and fact.

> Can you not understand . . . that when knowledge comes, the fairies must go? In this very house, have there not been gathered in the ignorant children, whose parents brought with them from a far country all the traditions of our rule, to be shown the light of science and taught the power of fact? When a child has pulled a flower to pieces in order to count the pistils and stamens, do you think she will ever again see a fairy peeping from its leaves? Your locomotives have cut through our meadow circles where we danced so merrily of yore; your railroads have tunnelled the hills whose recesses were all Fairy Land, invisible to the spade and measuring line; and the very woods beneath whose shady ferns we slept so securely in the day-time, have been cut down for Telegraph poles, and there is no longer any suitable spot in this wretched land of bare actuality, work, and progress, for beings so delicate and ethereal as we!
> (p. 223)

She ends with the romantic refuge in an idyllic primitivism.

"We will go . . . to some barbaric land whose people are still children; where the eyes have not been dulled by education, nor where ears have grown deaf to the voices of nature. . . . We must go from this civilization to which she /Aunt/ belongs, if we are to live at all, for the March of Improvement treads down such as we, and advancing Reason accounts it good to look upon us slain!" (pp. 224-225) They leave the Aunt with kisses and a rose, and the one comforting thought that "anyone to whom, in the night of sorrow or amid the hours of care, the fairies could come unbidden, or who could behold a vision of Titania, would never be entirely left alone in the darkness without this token of Heart's-ease" (p. 226).

Especially interesting is the pagan element here instead of the traditional Christian piety. The lost innocence of America is seen wholly in terms of a child's world of magic and make-believe. Here in this simple story is one of the most explicit outcries against the machine which even the Eden of childhood could not lock out.

The didactic story aimed at reforming the evil effects on children of city life was less common than would be expected, for the prevailing attitude was that anyone with ambition, perseverance, hard work, and of course moral integrity could be successful and happy. Among the dissenters from this Horatio Alger myth was Caroline Pemberton, who in Your Little Brother James (1896) shows how an innocent boy is the helpless victim of a cruel society. Not just the immediate family but everyone is morally responsible for

the welfare of children. The epigraph states her attitude: "The character of every child is the joint result of environment and heredity. Of the two, the only one under our control and for which we are responsible, is environment." James is referred to as <u>your</u> little brother because she is telling the reader that we are all our brother's keeper. For the cruelty James suffers at home is only the beginning; the effects of the slums in which he lives, of the judges and philanthropists who are supposedly reforming him are equally destructive.

James is an unwanted, illegitimate child of a whore who periodically lands in jail. It seems that the fictional American mother is either a saint or a depraved sinner. The endless fights at home between his mother and her lovers drive James into the streets. Because of his innocent face, he is sent to pawn things for his mother and the neighbors, who, by giving him nothing in return, force him to lie and keep part of the money solely in order to eat. After escaping three times from the "charitable" institutions that keep him while his mother is in jail, he is brought up for commitment to the Reformatory, entering "the ranks of a scientific classification . . . and enrolled as a 'Juvenile Offender'" (p. 14). When asked by the magistrate why he ran away from the charity home, he thinks of the grimness, the regimentation, the humiliating punishments, but deciding that a grown-up couldn't understand why it all was so unbearable, he instead lies and says they whipped him and didn't give him enough to eat. The gap between a child's feelings and the adult's understanding

is the actual cause of what adults see only as vicious deceit. "It is always difficult to produce a creditable reason from that well of lies and dislikes which is the mysterious source of childish energy. The derrick of a daring imagination is occasionally needed to hoist into view the overgrown, puffed-up style of Reason supposed to be acceptable to the adult intelligence" (p. 15). Adults see the charity child simply as another number or case, not as an individual as sensitive to injustice as they. Nor is a child capable of articulating "the degradation and despair which fill the heart of the charity child when he finds himself robbed of all individuality" (p. 8). His "guilt" is compounded by his mean appearance and he is quickly treated as the most hardened criminal. "If the sum of his offences left anything to be desired, his rags, dirt and scowling forehead completed the picture of the juvenile offender, against whom society must arm itself with high-walled reformatories, stripes, bars, compulsory tasks and military discipline" (p. 17). In a passionate appeal, Miss Pemberton draws upon the Bible to drive home the sins of adults in condemning an innocent child for what in effect they have made him. "And as yet he had offended no one--being but a child of nine, homeless and friendless--and many had offended him from the moment of his birth--ay, and before his birth--and of them is it not written: 'It were better that a mill-stone were hanged about their necks and they were thrown into the midst of the sea rather than that they should offend one of these little ones?' But it

is not given to the sons of men to see as do the angels in heaven in whose eyes this child stood as the Offended One and not as the offender" (p. 17). It is the righteous adult who is committing the gravest sin in casting stones upon one who is closest to God. The indictment is complete when she compares this innocent child in his strength and suffering to Jesus. "But this pitiful, unnatural independence of a baby, with its silent reproach for the past and its dreadful significance for the future, served only to fit him with a title that, like the crown of thorns upon the brow of Another, was so effective as to place him at once beyond the pale of human sympathy" (p. 8).

The worst offender is the self-styled "philanthropist" who clears his conscience with the easy theory of original depravity. One such pious hypocrite visits James in the Reformatory and with Puritanical confidence warns him that the way of the transgressor is always hard, that he has very little time to prepare for the hereafter and must try to love Jesus, whose meaning he perverts when he quotes, "And He says, 'Suffer them to come unto Me, even such little children as you.'" The keeper of the Reformatory comments on the bad environment in which James grew up, but this is dismissed as totally irrelevant in a case of natural depravity. "The suggestion of environment as an allied factor in the case did not disturb the old gentleman's theory, for he continued his study of social phenomena from cell to cell without any further unpleasant consciousness of being his little brother's keeper. He felt indeed a renewed confidence in the

eternal fitness of things that ordains from the first that we shall adorn the outside and our brother the inside of a prison cell" (p. 27). The boys in the Reformatory are so brain-washed that they succeed in convincing James of his irredeemable depravity inherited from his mother who conceived him in sin.

The beneficent effects of a good environment are illustrated when James is adopted by a good, kind, loving farmer and his wife, Joshua and Emeline Hillis. Salvation comes to James in his removal from the evil city to the naturally virtuous country. The transformation is immediate. "It seemed as if the Criminal had been laid aside, with the rags and filth of the slums, and the Child was not apparent, proudly conscious of his improved appearance and the glory of his new apparel, which, to his critical, boyish mind, elevated him to a level with all the happy, well-cared-for children in Christendom" (p. 43). It is a kind of rebirth, the angel in the child coming forth. "He seemed . . . a creature from another world--so strikingly handsome and yet with such pale and delicate features, sharpened somewhat by hunger and privation. His deep-set, dark-blue eyes looked unnaturally large, and gave a pathetic expression to his face. The crowning beauty of all was the mass of thick yellow curls which clustered over his forehead, giving almost the effect of a halo" (pp. 43-44). The Hillises, who originally took him in because they needed a boy for the chores, as well as the money paid them for keeping a Reform School boy, quickly grow to love him very much and adopt him.

Their love and kindness prove to have a moral effect never achieved by all the punishments and talks of philanthropists and Sunday-school teachers. Moreover, these sincerely pious people remove all of James' convictions of depravity and eternal damnation, telling him "There's free grace for all, James, if we love God and serve Him" (p. 81). His glory is complete when he stands up in church and confesses his faith. "So the sheath of the criminal withered and fell away, and the face of the Child appeared, turning heavenward like an opening flower. The little Offended One raised his eyes toward those who had wrought this miracle, and answered their looks of love with that smile of happiness that remembers not past sorrow" (p. 92).

The zealous reformism of Miss Pemberton is based upon the concept of the child as a potential saint, a belief that was also voiced by Timothy Shay Arthur. The saintly child is probably the most popular kind of fictional child during the nineteenth century and will be discussed now in more detail.

Footnotes to Chapter III

[1] James David Hart, The Popular Book: A History of America's Literary Taste (New York, 1950), pp. 85-105.

[2] Annabel Newton, Wordsworth in Early American Criticism (Chicago, 1928), pp. 39-41.

[3] Hart, pp. 102-103.

[4] Alexander Cowie, The Rise of the American Novel (New York, 1948).

[5] Newton. pp, 119-122.

[6] VII (February), 105-109, quoted by Newton, p. 124.

IV

The Saintly Redeemers

In 1829 Hawthorne wrote "The Gentle Boy," the story of Ilbrahim, too gentle, loving, sensitive, and fragile for the cruelties of life, which spiritually crush him, and he dies. His death has the beneficent effect of ridding his Quaker mother of her fanaticism. Here in one of the earliest stories of this kind we see the basic pattern for hundreds of stories that will be the favorite reading of nineteenth-century America; the conflict between an innocent child and a soiled society and the demonstration of the ultimate power and triumph of innocence. Each one will have its own variation of the theme and will often be expanded into a lengthy narrative of romance and adventure, suffering and redemption.

The depraved child of Puritanism has come a long way, incarnating now the very divinity of the Christ-child. The words of Jesus to his disciples were taken literally and were given an unprecedented importance:

> At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?
> And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,
> And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.
> Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.
> And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.
> But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.
>
> (Matthew 18:1-6)

> And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them: but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them.
>
> But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.
>
> Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.
>
> (Luke 18: 15-17)

This attitude was in one sense a manifestation of the prevailing sentimental piety. For America, where religious piety had always been a way of life, aesthetically as well as morally, it was a natural expression of the romantic and sentimental idealization of the child as purer and wiser than the adult. What was largely only a symbol for English poets--for those dissatisfied with society, a symbol of a lost Golden Age and of the hope for a glorious new one, and for those disssatisfied with themselves, a symbol for the original innocence from which they had fallen and which they hoped to redeem--becomes for American novelists the embodiment of an actual scheme of salvation for a heaven on earth. The child would bring harmony to an unhappy family, comfort to the wretched, a sense of purposefulness to the bored and desperate, convert skeptics to believers, and bring out the love and gentleness hidden behind bitter, hardened exteriors. Always part of some domestic situation with which the reader could feel familiar and identify, the child made a working reality out of the dream of the perfectibility of man.

There are certain features of the child-saint which, with individual variations, are always present. They are

always orphans, bereft of either one or both parents, and often are foundlings. In addition to the mystery and romance this situation generates, not to mention the pathos, it also gives the child a particular aura of holiness, suggesting an analogy with the child Jesus, whose father of course was in heaven. Moreover, the mother, when living, is usually a pale, fragile, saintly being herself, suggesting the holiness of Mary. When the girl-saints have one parent, it is a father, and the boy-saints, a mother, who is invariably young and very girlish or boyish. The brother-sister kind of relationship that exists between them, marked by an intense, tearful devotion, afforded a safe eroticism for the prudish yet thrill-seeking female reader. The majority of saintly children are girls, the author thereby satisfying the middle-class idealization of womanhood, and when they are boys, they are blessed with effeminate characteristics that guarantee that these sexless creatures will be forever chaste. The sign of inner Grace is a supernatural beauty, either the pale skin and golden curls, imparting an angelic appearance, or the spiritual glow that transforms otherwise plain features. They are misunderstood outcasts, martyrs to their cause, but are always rescued, either by early death or by the conversion of their persecutors.

The image of the child-saint certainly did not come into being in the nineteenth century, nor in fact with the story of the child Jesus. Child-gods and heroes are found in the folk-lore and mythology of many pre-Christian cultures

and share many of the characteristics common to the American child-saint.[1] He is usually an abandoned foundling, who is threatened by extraordinary dangers. He may be devoured, as Zeus was, or torn to pieces, as Dionysus was. Moreover, they both have and do not have a mother. For example, Semele was already dead when Dionysus was born and the nymphs hide him in a cave and bring him milk. Zeus, hailed as the "biggest boy" by the Cretans,was regarded by them as an orphan abandoned by his mother, who actually exposed him in order to save him. And this solitary, exposed child is not only at home but protected by nature, being nursed by divinities or wild beasts. The childhood state was an important part of the myths, not only of Zeus and Dionysus, but also of Apollo, Hermes, and Eros. Homer pays homage to Hermes as a divine child, and Greek vases show both Hermes and Apollo as children.

In his attempt to determine why the plight of the orphan, a tragic situation in the human terms of the folk-tale, should in mythology symbolize the emergence and triumph of a god, Kerenyi writes:

> This material is undoubtedly the primal stuff of mythology, and not that of biography; a stuff from which the life of the gods, and not the life of men, is formed. What, from the purely human point of view, is an unusually tragic situation--the orphan's exposure and persecution--appears in mythology in quite another light. It simply shows up the loneliness and solitude of elemental beings--a loneliness peculiar to the primordial element. If anything, the fate of the orphaned Kullervo /hero of a Finnish fairytale/, delivered up to every force of destruction and exposed to all the elements, must be the true orphan's fate in the fullest sense of the word: exposure and persecution. But at the same time this fate is the triumph of the elemental nature of the

> wonder-child. The human fate of the orphan does not truly express the fate of such miraculous beings, is only secondary [sic]. Yet it is just their symbolical orphanhood which gives them their significance: it expresses the primal solitude which alone is appropriate to such beings in such a situation, namely in mythology (pp. 36-37).

In other words, what mythology has done with the orphan child is not unrelated to what we find in the American stories. While the child is not a god, he is neither just another hero, but is of divine origin, fresh from heaven, watched over by angels and about to return very soon. If they are not angels themselves, they are the closest thing to it as far as mortals go and exert a holy influence on the sinners around them. Moreover, they are not only alone--separated from parents--but even when living with one parent or foster parents, exist apart from others by virtue of their faith and the holy aura that surrounds them. They serve to change the others, and in the process their divinity emerges and triumphs.

The fact that the American authors being discussed were rather unlikely to have been familiar with Greek mythology does not, however, preclude the connection. According to Jung, after having studied the dreams of various individuals, "typical mythologems were observed among individuals to whom all knowledge of this kind was absolutely out of the question, and where indirect derivation from religious ideas that might have been known to them, or from popular figures of speech, was impossible. Such conclusions forced us to assume that we must be dealing with 'autochthonous' revivals independent of all tradition, and, con-

sequently, that 'myth-forming' structural elements must be present in the unconscious psyche" (p. 71). He goes on to explain, "These products are never (or at least very seldom) myths with a definite form, but rather mythological components which, because of their typical nature, we can call 'motifs,' 'primordial images,' types or--as I have named them--archetypes. The child archetype is an excellent example" (p. 72).

Jung is distinguishing two types of dream or fantasy. One, with which most of us are familiar, is of a personal character which relates to personal experiences. The other, which cannot be reduced to personal experiences, corresponds to certain collective structural elements of the human psyche. The products of this "collective unconscious" so closely resemble the types of structures found in myth and fairy tale that he believes it is highly possible that the mythos and the individual fantasy are related in origin. The mythological component of our unconscious, which he calls the archetype, is as organic a part of man as are the kidneys, for example, representing or personifying the real but invisible roots of our consciousness (p. 80).

The child motif as described by Jung appears to offer one explanation for the Adamic American. From a historical perspective, child images are analogous to the early phases of a person's life, becoming autonomous and personified to the extent that there results a division of the self, one's seeing himself as a child. This may arise as a result of a dissociation in the individual between his past and his

present because of various incompatibilities. For example, a man may have cut himself off from his original character in order to fulfill certain social ambitions. One says he has lost his roots (p. 81). The individual analogy can then be extended to a nation when its current patterns come into conflict with its earlier conditions, what is frequently called its "natural" state. It is essentially this kind of conflict that underlies the myth of the American Adam.

But this is only one function of the archetype. "The child motif represents not only something that existed in the distant past but also something that exists now" (p. 81); it strives to correct the one-sidedness of the conscious mind, to restore man's original instincts (p. 81). For America, it would mean the return to a more primitive kind of society in which the natural impulses of man were fulfilled through a direct contact with nature. For the individual as well as for the state, the child then represents the future as much as the past; "the 'child' paves the way for a future change of personality" (p. 83). "It is therefore not surprising that so many of the mythological saviors are child gods" (p. 83) and that the saviors in American fiction are children.

Jung goes on to explain that "abandonment, exposure, danger, etc. are all elaborations of the 'child's' insignificant beginnings and of its mysterious birth " (p. 86). Moreover, its abandonment symbolically involves creating a third unknown self out of the conflict between the conscious and unconscious. That is, "'child' means something evolving towards independence. This it cannot do without detaching

itself from its origins: abandonment is therefore a necessary condition" (p. 87). The child, in so far as it is whole, symbolizes the union of these two parts of the individual, each of which is less than the whole man. And as a symbol of unity it has a redemptive significance. The child as a symbol of redemption fascinates the conscious mind because it is a realization of something the conscious mind longs for but is unable to achieve.

And so long as it is not realized by the individual, "the 'child' remains a mythological projection which requires religious repetition and renewal by ritual. The Christ Child, for instance, is a religious necessity only so long as the majority of men are incapable of giving psychological reality to the saying: 'Except ye become as little children . . . .'" . . . "Everything that man should, and yet cannot, be or do--be it in a positive or negative sense--lives on as a mythological figure and anticipation alongside his consciousness" (pp. 87-88).

The paradox is that while the child is born helpless and threatened by dangers, he possesses powers beyond those of ordinary men. Psychologically he represents for man what is insignificant and unknown, yet also divine, a personification of his vital forces, of the wholeness he feels he has lost and strives to regain. It represents the strongest urge in every being, the urge to realize himself (p. 89). The child then is both beginning and end, symbolizing the pre-conscious and the post-conscious state of man or, in Christian terms, pre-existence and the anticipation of life after death (p. 97). Or for America, a new beginning for man in society.

In the light of the American's dream for a fresh new life, divorced from the failures and frustrations of the Old World, as well as of his excessive concern with the Bible, Jung's theory of the archetypal child of the unconscious seems especially meaningful for American fiction. The universal and timeless fascination with the child as a personal redeemer of the individual psyche was reinforced by his ability to symbolize the American's dream of redemption in the New World.

Fanny Fern's* ecstatic homages to holy childhood in Fern Leaves from Fanny's Port-Folio (1853) typify the almost hysterical adoration of the child that characterizes the minor fiction at this time.

> How sublime! how touching! Holy childhood! Let me sit at thy feet and learn of thee. How dost thou rebuke me, with thy simple faith and earnest love! O, earth! what dost thou give us in exchange for its loss?--Rainbows, that melt as we gaze; bubbles that burst as we grasp; dew-drops, that exhale as our eye catches their sparkle. The warm heart, chilled by selfishness, fenced in by doubts, and thrown back upon itself. Eye, lip and brow, trained to tell no tale at the portal, of what passes within the temple. Tears, locked in their fountain, save when our own household gods are shivered. The great strife, not which shall "love most," but "which shall be the greater;" and aching hearts the stepping-stones to wealth and power. Immortal, yet earth-wedded! Playing with shells upon the shore of time, with the broad ocean of eternity before us. Careful and troubled about trifles, forgetting to "ask God to take care of Johnny," --and so, the long night of death comes on, and we sleep our last sleep!" (p. 74)

She echoes the standard romantic lament of the adult's loss of faith, the inability to feel and to love as symbolized by our alienation from nature. In our concern for material

*Pseudonym for Sara Payson Willis.

things we have neglected our children, and in so doing have cut ourselves off from God and heaven. Thus, the child, with this faith and love, is not only our teacher, but our link with God, our means of salvation, analogous to Jesus.

Her children are victims of poverty and neglect, but their angelic beauty and innocence remain pure under God's loving protection.

> That do you see, pretty one? Large, wondering blue eyes; a tangled mass of sunny curls; small, pearly teeth; plump, white shoulders, that the ragged dress has failed to hide! Saw you never that little face before? A smile of innocent pleasure curls your lip;--ah! you have found out, that little face is fair! Poor and beautiful--holy angels shield you, little one! I look at you with a tear and a smile. Shall sin cast its dark shadow over those clear, pure eyes? Shall the hollow-hearted sensualist find you out? Shall you turn from homely, but honest toil, to honeyed words and liveried shame? Shall you curse the day you first crept to that mirror, and saw your sunny face?
>
> O heard you never of Him who biddeth "little children come?" In your dark and noisome home, heard you never the name of "Jesus," save from blasphemous lips? Closed those blue eyes never with a murmured "Our Father?" Have the rough grasp and brutal blow descended on that fair young head? Has daily bread come sparingly to those cherry lips? Crept you out into the warm sunlight, under the bright blue sky, with a bird's longing to soar?
>
> Soar you may, pretty one;--there's a "song," and a "harp," and a "white robe" for you! Just such as you were "blessed" with holy hands; sacred lips have said, "Of such is the kingdom of Heaven." God keep you undefiled, little earth pilgrim!" (pp. 126-127)

In this collection of pious, moralistic short stories, interspersed with sermons like the ones quoted above, Fanny Fern (whose real name was Sara Parton) illustrates the holy effect of children on adults. When, for example, in "The Still Small Voice," a young, rich, beautiful and contented

mother is suddenly asked by her young son, "Must I die, too, mamma?" she is stirred to contemplate her worthless life and becomes repentant. The husband's scoffing at religion as only for priests and "ancient virgins," is the cue for a sermon on how Christ died on the cross for man.

> See!--up Calvary's rugged steep a slender form bends wearily beneath its heavy cross! That sinless side, those hands, those feet are pierced--for you. Tortured, athirst, faint, agonized,--the dark cloud hiding the Father's face,--that mournful wail rings out on the still air, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" (p. 14)

The sacrifice of Christ for man parallels the function of a child for his mother. "So the good Shepherd hides the little lamb in his arms, that she who gave it life may hear its voice and follow" (p. 15). Note that the father remains unconverted; it is not just that the mother is redeemed, but that it is the mother for whom the child-redeemer is originally intended, "that she who gave it life," etc.

A variation of the theme is found in "Little Charlie, the Child-Angel," where the selfish unloving mother remains unconverted, but a loving childless woman who takes care of Charlie is instead the justly rewarded one, Charlie bringing peace and joy into her lonely life. Charlie is one of those child-saints who die young; the sinful world being too much for his delicate fibres, he must return to the heaven from whence he came. Sitting beside his death bed the old maid is in ecstasy, "There I learned to understand the meaning of our Saviour's words, 'For of such is the kingdom of heaven!'" (p. 199), while his mother neglects him "unmindful that an angel's destiny was intrusted /sic/ to her careless

keeping" (p. 200). The story is a warning to mothers too busy with balls, novels, and embroidery to care for the soul of their child.

In what she calls "Little Charley" Miss Willis rhapsodizes on Charley's death and its beatific effect on the woman who appreciates his sacredness.

> "Dear little Charley! you were as much out of place, in that low, dark, wretched room, as an angel could well be on earth. Meekly, in the foot-steps of Him who loveth little children, were those tiny feet treading. Patiently, unmurmuringly, uncomplainingly, were those racking pains endured. A tear, a contraction of the brow, a slight involuntary clasping of the attenuated fingers, were the only visible signs of agony. What a joy to sit beside him,--to take that little feverish hand in mine,--to smooth that rumpled pillow,--to part the tangled locks on that transparent forehead,--to learn of one, of whom the Saviour says, "Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven!" (pp. 120-121)

The books, which was intended for both adult and child readers, ends with an exhortation to parents on ignoring children's feelings and rights--such as when "some overgrown Napoleon" ejects a powerless child from the window seat on a railroad, or when children are forced to sit through the dry sermon of some pompous theologian, or to sit like "little automatons, in a badly-ventilated schoolroom"--and a comforting word to the innocent victims themselves: "O, I tell you, my little pets, Fanny is sick of din, and strife, and envy, and uncharitableness!--and she'd rather, by ten thousand, live in a little world full of fresh, guileless, loving little children, than in this great museum full of such dry, dusty, withered hearts" (p. 191). Here is the cry of the primitivists for an idyllic world of children and savages (although I don't think Fanny Fern would

have included the latter).

Timothy Shay Arthur uses this concept of the child-saint around which to weave a novel of romance and mystery, as well as to illustrate the child's mystical redemptive powers. He prefaces The Angel of the Household (1854) with a lengthy statement of original innocence, combining a nostalgia for a historical innocence of early cultures with the theory of the inevitable fall from grace in the life cycle of every man:

> In the "Golden Age," angels were the companions of men, holding their spirits in immediate relationship with heaven. But, as the gold of celestial innocence became dimmed by the breath of self-love--the parent of all evil--angels receded; and farther and farther they removed themselves, as men darkened their spirits with sin, until even a perception of their existence faded from the mind.
>
> As it was in the "Golden Age" of the world, so is it in the first, or "Golden Age" of each individual life, when the innocence of infancy finds angel-companionship. Whoever holds a babe to her bosom, and holds it there lovingly, comes within the sphere of angelic influences; for, with infants and little children, angels are intimately near. This is seen in the tender love that fills the heart of even a wicked mother when she clasps her helpless offspring in her arms--a love flowing forth from heaven, and breathed into her spirit by the angels who are with her babe.
>
> Into every household angels may enter. They come in through the gate of infancy, and bring with them celestial influences. Are there angels in your household? If so, cherish the heavenly visitants.

The story is of the unhappy Harding family. The father drinks (for T. S. Arthur "father" is synonymous with "drunkard"), is usually in a bad mood, harsh towards his four children and wife. Mother, provoked by her husband, is constantly beating her children and they, in turn, are nasty brats. Suddenly one night a knock is heard at the door, where

they find a strange basket with an unidentified infant. Mother, whose name just happens to be Mary, immediately and instinctively feels protective and loving towards this abandoned child, while Father, drunk, becomes enraged and orders it taken out. But as soon as he actually looks at the baby, he is transformed, as if a magic spell were cast over him. "How suddenly were the man's steps arrested! The moment his eyes fell upon the placid face of the infant, so innocent, so peaceful, so heavenly in expression, he felt himself within the circle of some strange power that stilled the waves of passion in his heart" (p. 19) The longer he gazes upon the baby, the gentler he becomes, "the human" in him rising above "the bestial." With the influx of these celestial influences brought by the baby, the long suppressed goodness in the whole family comes forth, subduing all their anger and hostility. Mother has a vision in which the woman who brought the child to their door comes back to take her to paradise, an "idyllic land with green meadows, white lambs, and blue mountains," which the woman calls "the land of innocence and essential love." It is here that the angels of childhood dwell, who guard all infants and make selfish and cruel women into tender mothers. She enters a splendid palace where dwell the beautiful virgins who had directed the strange woman to leave the baby at the Harding house because the angels of childhood were about to leave them, innocence now almost dead in the hearts of the Harding children.

Life now in the Harding family becomes tranquil and ful-

filling. Father's basic kindness comes forth; he stops drinking, becomes more loving towards his family and more humane towards his workers. Mother is tender, and the children are obedient. They suffer one setback when Andrew plays truant and father wants to beat him, but under the influence of the baby, whom they have named Grace, Andrew becomes repentant and father, consequently, softened. Andrew, in fact, brings religion into the house by reading the Bible and saying prayers.

They mystery of the baby's origin affords a long and involved story of romance and suspense. A beautiful and elegant middle-aged lady knocks at the Harding door one night seeking information for her journey. She reveals a surprising familiarity with the baby, and finally takes a tearful farewell. She later returns, followed by her young daughter, Edith, who claims to be the baby's mother. When father refuses to give the baby up, they steal her in the middle of the night. After father manages to track them down, the history of the baby is revealed. Mrs. Beaufort, rich, selfish, proud, and strong-willed, wanted her daughter to marry rich Colonel D'Arcy. But Edith, in love with Henry, poor and socially undistinguished, refuses and finally secretly marries her true love. When Henry goes South on business and supposedly dies, Edith is forced by her mother to become engaged to Colonel D'Arcy and to abandon the baby. But the baby has succeeded in casting her magic spell over the grandmother, who is now repentant and agrees to let her daughter keep her. So the Hardings must give up their angel, but the spiritual effect remains, despite frequent trials. They are duly rewarded, Mr.

Harding being given employment by Mrs. Beaufort, as well as a house on her estate. As expected, Henry returns one day, revealing the evil of D'Arcy who tried to murder him. And all live happily ever after, with Grace the angel now of two households.

Here in essence is the prototype of the kind of novel that became a best-seller in the nineteenth century: the mystery and romance were entertaining and absorbing, while at the same time the story was justified by being not only a moral but a piously moral story of domestic salvation. Here was something the female reader, either a mother or potential mother, could identify with and hopefully learn from. It is the mother who through her baby can make a happy home, keeping husbands out of taverns and older children loving and obedient. Moreover, the story has just enough mysticism for the lady reader seeking poetic refinement and elevation. Written in a simple, fairy tale manner, it was not intellectually taxing, yet could flatter the reader into thinking she was reading something serious, even philosophical.

A child-saint well-known to us today is the subject of Bret Harte's "The Luck of Roaring Camp" (1868). The affinity between this child and the child gods of mythology is particularly striking because of the seemingly mystical protectiveness of Nature for the orphan baby and because of its conspicuously natural and original purity. His presence alone (he doesn't live long enough to learn to talk) morally, re-

ligiously, and socially regenerates a whole camp of toughs. But more important is the fact that he is a Christ-like redeemer even though he is the illegitimate child of a heathen, Cherokee Sal, who is not just a non-Christian but a "dissolute, abandoned, irreclaimable" woman.

The awesome response of Nature to the birth of the child is immediately felt in the camp. "Above the swaying and moaning of the pines, the swift rush of the river, and the crackling of the fire rose a sharp, querulous cry--a cry unlike anything heard before in the camp. The pines stopped moaning, the river ceased to rush, and the fire to crackle. It seemed as if Nature had stopped to listen too" (p. 103). He virtually becomes Nature's own child, inexplicably thriving on ass's milk and the almost unearthly atmosphere of his surrounding. "Nature took the foundling to her broader breast. In that rare atmosphere of the Sierra foothills--that air pungent with balsamic odor, the ethereal cordial at once bracing and exhilarating--he may have found food and nourishment, or a subtle chemistry that transmuted ass's milk to lime and phosphorous" (p. 106). He is no longer a child conceived out of mortal flesh. His dissociation from his human parents is made complete. The father was never known, and the mother is obliterated when they decide to give him a wholly new name, Tommy Luck. Moreover, they bring in no other woman to nurse and care for him, judging that no decent woman would come to their camp and deciding that they wanted no more of the other kind. "This unkind allusion to the defunct mother," writes Harte, "harsh as it may seem, was the first spasm of propriety--the first symptom of the camp's regeneration" (p. 105).

It was as if the baby had some power over them which they not only could not, but really did not want to resist. The christening is originally planned as a burlesque, but when the moment arrives they instinctively perform a serious ceremony. For the first time "God" is mentioned, other than profanely, in the camp, and no one laughed or found it ludicrous. "And so the work of regeneration began in Roaring Camp" (p. 107).

Gradually and almost imperceptibly this group of one hundred reckless men living apart from society, one or two actual fugitives from justice, some criminal, all gamblers, become morally and socially transformed. The Luck, outfitted in the best filigree lace, in a handsome rosewood cradle, in a cabin scrupulously clean and whitewashed, boarded and papered, set in motion a total improvement in the appearance of the camp. Carpets and mirrors were imported, the latter provoking the men into stricter habits of personal cleanliness. Moreover, anyone who wanted to hold the baby had to wash and put on a clean shirt. No shouting was permitted, profanity was prohibited in his presence, and the popular "Damn the luck!" and "Curse the luck!" of gamblers were abandoned.

A rough mining camp becomes an idyllic garden. They spend their nights sitting around under trees smoking and listening to "man-o'-War Jack" sing his ditty and rock the baby to sleep in his arms. "An indistinct idea that this was pastoral happiness pervaded the camp" (p. 108). During the day they carried him to the woods while they worked in the

ditches, decorating his bower with flowers of all kinds, the men suddenly seeing the beauty of nature for the first time. They are completely spellbound by this almost inhuman child, with his peculiar gravity, the "contemplative light in his round gray eyes," always tractable and quiet, whom Nature seemed to single out for herself.

> Howbeit, whether creeping over the pine boughs or lying lazily on his back blinking at the leaves above him, to him the birds sang, the squirrels chattered, and the flowers bloomed. Nature was his nurse and playfellow. For him she would let slip between the leaves golden shafts of sunlight that fell just within his grasp; she would send wandering breezes to visit him with the balm of bay and resinous gum; to him the tall redwoods nodded familiarly and sleepily, the bumblebees buzzed, and the rooks cawed a slumbrous accompaniment (pp. 109-110).

And luck came to the whole camp, bringing unprecedented prosperity. But the Garden of Eden is destroyed by civilization. They build a hotel and invite a few decent families to come for the sake of the baby. And immediately after, the whole camp is destroyed by heavy waters flowing down the hillsides, tearing up everything in their path. The baby disappears in the deluge, only to be found later dead. But it is as if, paralleling the fate of Jesus, he is sacrificed for the redemption of man. He is found along with the dying "Kentuck," to whom he had attached himself at birth, exerting a singular influence over him by grasping his finger and not letting go, or as Kentuck kept repeating, "Rastled with it--the d--d little cuss." Now the Kentuck experiences an ecstatic joy in believing that this supernatural baby was leading him to heaven. "A smile lit the eyes of the expiring Kentuck. "'Dying!' he repeated; 'he's

a-taking me with him. Tell the boys I've got The Luck with me now;' and the strong man, clinging to the frail babe as a drowning man is said to cling to a straw, drifted away into the shadowy river that flows forever to the unknown sea' (p. 111).

Unlike the other stories of the redemptive capacities of children, here is no simple faith in a heavenly hereafter. The irony of the last scene underscores the pathos of the human condition. Man is a victim of a Godless universe, ruled by an indifferent Nature, at once benign and destructive. The now powerless babe, no more than a straw to the drowning man, simply drifts away with him into an unknown death. This baby, who was seemingly divine, like the Christ child himself, holds out the promise of salvation, but it is all an illusion.

The redemptive power of a baby in the heathen wilds of the American West is also the theme of Charlotte Clark's Baby Rue (1881). Here, however, we find the more popular pattern of romance and adventure. Baby Rue is the child of an impoverished Polish nobleman and a rich Southern heiress. Twenty-two-year-old Stanislaus Leszinksky is of sterling character, honest, brave, and faithful. Margaret, ignoring everyone else's suspicion that he wants only her money, believes in his integrity and marries him. A professional soldier, he is sent to the frontier, the story taking place in the 1840's. And there Baby Rue is born, whose birth recalls that of Jesus. "The little wooden chapel of the Jesuit mission had strange visitors that day: wild-looking men, clad

in skins, came to listen once more to the half-forgotten strains that told of the passion and the glory, the cruel death and triumphant resurrection, of the child born eighteen hundred years ago in Judaea" (p. 32). Christened on Christmas day and named Rucheil for the Mohammedan wife of old King Stanislaus, she is the heiress of all cultures, having a pagan ancestress, a Jewish name, and a Catholic christening. She is, as it were, a symbol of man's past and future, uniting all the diverse strains of his heritage into a new being, a new wholeness which promises a glorious future. "The gray depths of the clear eyes . . . flash and lighten with a weird consciousness of something we are too far off to fathom. Is it the Past, crying its memories to the soul that is escaping from a riven shell, or the gathering of lost elements that have at length developed new power to force themselves into visible form and shape?" (p. 35) Implied in her significance as the reincarnation of her ancestral line is her redemptive value as a symbol of man's psychological past and future, the uniting of the original vital forces of his unconscious with his existing conscious self.

Baby Rue is never realized as a character; she is rather the moving spirit of the book, affecting everyone ~~with~~ whom she meets and in fact being the catalyst for all the action. Her kidnapping by an Indian during a massacre sets in motion endless pages of battles and heroic efforts to reclaim her. She so captures the heart of a Pawnee warrior that he risks his chieftainship and even his life to save her from death, thus bringing out the innately good Christian soul in the

seemingly blood-thirsty savage. She converts swaggering soldier drunkards into remorseful teetotalers. She is not an orphan, but is separated from her parents and exposed to many dangers. Unperturbed by her plight, she is unflinchingly brave, defiant, and optimistic, as if she intuitively knew that she was under Divine protection. And of course she is safely returned to her parents.

Not all the child-saints of nineteenth-century American fiction were passive creatures through whom the Divine spirit entered the fallen hearts of men and women. In fact, the majority of them are quite active, glibly spouting passages from the Bible and doing charitable deeds. The queen of them all, who most readily comes to everyone's mind, is, of course, Little Eva of Uncle Tom's Cabin (1852), without whom all of Harriet Beecher Stowe's fervent abolitionist exhortations would not have had the overwhelming emotional response that they did. Her appearance alone is the very incarnation of an angel:

> Her form was the perfection of childish beauty, without its usual chubbiness and squareness of outline. There was about it an undulating and aerial grace, such as one might dream of for some mythic and allegorical being. Her face was remarkable, less for its perfect beauty of feature than for a singular and dreamy earnestness of expression, which made the ideal start when they looked at her, and by which the dullest and most literal were impressed, without exactly knowing why. The shape of her head and the turn of her neck and bust were peculiarly noble, and the long golden-brown hair that floated like a cloud around it, the deep spiritual gravity of her violet blue eyes, shaded by heavy fringes of golden brown,--all marked her out from other children, and made every one turn and look after her, as she glided hither and thither on the boat (p. 161).

She is not an orphan in fact, but surely a figurative one, her mother dissociating herself from her. To Mrs. St. Clare, she is not merely a bother, but a serious and successful rival for her husband's love and attention. Mr. St. Clare is the standard youthful, sensitive, utterly devoted "Papa," for whom his little girl is the sole meaning and purpose of an otherwise unhappy life. Having lost his first and only true love, and now unhappily married to a selfish, petulant, vain woman, his attachment to Eva is greater than that which ordinarily exists between father and child. A good, kind, charitable, and loving man, he lacks just the one remaining virtue to make him as perfect as his daughter--an instinctive faith in God.

This is the gift only of the child and the child-adult, like Uncle Tom. In their innocence and trust, Eva, the child in years, and Tom, the "old child" (as Mrs. Stowe refers to him) in spirit, become best friends, each growing spiritually under the influence of the other. To Tom, Eva seems something almost divine, half believing, in his first sight of her, that he saw one of the angels stepped out of his New Testament. And for Eva, Tom is the means by which her innate Christianity develops into a more knowledgeable and distinct piety. He not only teaches her hymns, but also explains biblical passages that she reads to this illiterate yet wise Christian. At first she reads just to please Tom, but later she finds it is for her own pleasure as well. In his simple piety, Tom is a kind of surrogate father for her, complementing her real one.

Eva is by no means supposed to be representative of all

children; it is made quite clear from the description of her beauty and from her extraordinary sensitivity that she is one of God's chosen few, who, like Jesus, was sent here to convert the sinner and help those sinned against.

> Has there ever been a child like Eva? Yes, there have been; but their names are always on gravestones, and their sweet smiles, their heavenly eyes, their singular words and ways, are among the buried treasures of yearning hearts. In how many families do you hear the legend that all the goodness and graces of the living are nothing to the peculiar charms of one who <u>is not</u>! It is as if Heaven had an especial band of angels, whose office it was to sojourn for a season here, and endear to them the wayward human heart, that they might bear it upward with them in their homeward flight. When you see that deep, spiritual light in the eye,--when the little soul reveals itself in words sweeter and wiser than the ordinary words of children,--hope not to retain that child; for the seal of heaven is on it, and the light of immortality looks out from its eyes. (p. 283)

And so Eva too must die. Day by day she inexplicably grows more languid and feverish despite the best medical attention. Judged by everyone else to have merely a common childhood illness, only Eva is certain of her imminent death, to which she joyously looks forward, having visions of the angels in heaven that she will soon be privileged to join.

The closer she gets to death, the more unworldly she becomes in feeling and thought, and the more dedicated in her acts of charity. Papa notices the change, with both awe and despair: "The thing that struck a deeper pang to his heart than anything else was the daily increasing maturity of the child's mind and feelings. While still retaining all a child's fanciful graces, yet she often dropped, unconsciously, words of such a reach of thought, and strange

unworldly wisdom, that they seemed to be an inspiration" (p. 284).

She is singularly affected, for example, by Tom's story about old drunken Prue, who was forced to sit by helplessly and listen to her starving baby cry himself to death. "She did not exclaim, or wonder, or weep, as other children do. Her cheeks grew pale, and a deep, earnest shadow passed over her eyes. She laid both hands on her bosom, and sighed heavily," saying, "These things sink into my heart, Tom, . . . they sink into my heart" (p. 237). When she sees the suffering slaves, she tells Tom that she can understand why Jesus wanted to die for us, for she would be glad to die for them if it could stop all their misery.

In these last weeks she has a profound redemptive effect on almost everyone. She calls for all the slaves, giving each a lock of her hair, and urges them not to live idle, thoughtless lives if they want to go to heaven; all they must do to become angels is to pray to Jesus who will help them. To the impish, unmanageable Topsy, who declares that nobody can love niggers, she passionately exclaims that not merely she, but Jesus loves her, and the seemingly insensitive child bursts into tears and is instantaneously converted. "Yes, in that moment, a ray of real belief, a ray of heavenly love, had penetrated the darkness of her heathen soul!" (p. 304).

No less is her effect on whites. Her Aunt Ophelia from Vermont, morally righteous in her indignation at slavery, preaching equality and democracy, lacks, however, love or compassion, and, as Topsy puts it, "would just as soon have a toad touch her as a nigger!" Through her effect on Topsy, Eva succeeds in bringing out Ophelia's hidden love and

warmth. Her effect on Papa is great, but unfortunately not complete. She brings back his mother's own angelic influence upon him, and, as if he were summoned before God on the Day of Judgment, repents his whole seemingly worthless life. "He saw no more the deep eyes, but the voice came over him as a spirit voice, and, as in a sort of judgment vision, his whole past life rose in a moment before his eyes: his mother's prayers and hymns; his own early yearnings and aspirings for good; and, between them and this hour, years of worldliness and scepticism, and what man calls respectable living" (p. 300). But try as he will, he never succeeds in believing in the Bible, in Christ or heaven. The one person whom she never touches is, surprisingly, her mother. But this failure is not unique when we remember how Fanny Fern's "Little Charlie" also died beatifically, leaving behind a still selfish and frivolous mother dancing at a ball. Also, the orphan aspect of Eva would collapse if her mother grew to love and care about her. This idea also suggests why Papa never quite achieves Divine truth; his flaw makes Eva that much more surely the true daughter of her Heavenly Father, to whose home she at last returns. Papa is at this ecstatic moment quite removed spiritually from his daughter who achieves something he never will. She has a high, almost sublime expression on her face, "the dawning of immortal life," a triumphant brightness, and when Papa asks what she sees, she replies, "Oh! love,--joy,--peace!" (p. 319)

When we read Uncle Tom's Cabin today (if at all, only for historical reasons), it is hard to believe that millions of copies were being eagerly bought up, that hardly an

American house was without one. Five thousand copies were sold within the first two days of its appearance and during the first year alone, more than three hundred thousand. Uncle Tom songs flooded the market, far more melodramatic stage versions were soon being produced, and people were playing a parlor game with pawns called "Uncle Tom and Little Eva."[2] Clearly, the reformism was the main attraction at a time when the slave issue was on everyone's lips, but Little Eva was no less cried over and idolized than Uncle Tom--and when she dies, about two-fifths of the book still remains, lots of space in which to be forgotten in favor of Tom and the equally heroic Eliza. Evidently this quite unbelievable little girl had a hypnotic attraction for a people ready to claim her as a national savior. It is interesting that this particular character was chosen by Mrs. Stowe as best serving her reformist aims. She was evidently well attuned to the prevailing pious sentimentalism and decided to capitalize upon it, for it was not the only way she knew how to write, as is evident from Oldtown Folks, for example.

In its day Queechy (1852) by Susan B. Warner was often called the Great American Novel. Published the same year as Uncle Tom's Cabin, it never achieved the other's popularity, mainly because it was not concerned with social reform, but also because its child-saint heroine could never capture the heart as Little Eva could. Eleven-year-old Fleda Ringgan is a far more reserved and less ethereal creature than Eva. She has no impassioned desire to save the world,

nor is she too spiritual to survive among its sinners; the book in fact traces her maturity into womanhood. She has all the angelic ingredients--virtue, piety, selflessness, faith, optimism, cheerfulness, and precocity--but she is described as being rather more womanly than child-like in her decorum, self-discipline, independence, resourcefulness, and common sense. Orphaned, of course, she lives with Grandfather Ringgan whom she manages and fusses over like a wife. Her mother died in childbirth, but her father, who died only three to four years ago, she has idealized in memory as "a kind of guardian angel." Against this noble, moral, brave yet gentle hero, she judges everyone else, and since no one measures up, she shrinks away from people, living isolated in a world of her own. She is conscious of being different from others, but without pride or feelings of superiority. It is her very separateness, rather than the involvement of Eva, that distinguishes Fleda as a saint among mortals. She finds peace and comfort in God and nature only. As she stands at the window gazing at the stars, she has a mystical sense of Divine protection. She longs for the "soothing speech of nature's voice; and child as she was she could hear it. She did not know, in her simplicity, what it was that comforted and soothed her, but she stood at her window enjoying it" (p. 40). In her natural affinity with God and nature she is pure child, but in her stoical endurance of suffering, she is a woman. Sitting beside her dying grandfather, she watches by him "in that gentle sorrowful patience which women often know but which hardly belongs to

childhood" (p. 104). But again it is the child faith that sustains her, as she is soon joyed by the memory of her mother and father in heaven and the belief that the Lord will always provide for his children. She comforts the dying man with pious verses and "holding her to his breast he pressed one long, earnest passionate kiss upon her lips and released her" and dies (p. 107). (A rather safe and morally acceptable bit of eroticism, more common in other books between father and daughter.

Like Eva, Fleda is not saintly simply by virtue of being a child. Most children are innocent only until maturity, but Fleda has the permanent innocence of angels. "Many a child's face is lovely to look upon for its innocent purity, but more commonly it is not like this; it is the purity of snow, unsullied, but not unsullyable; there is another kind more ethereal, like that of light, which you feel is from another sphere and will not know soil" (p. 115). Her dying mother's prayer that she be kept "unspotted from the world" has been answered.

Here is this orphan child-woman-saint after her grandfather's death with no one to care for her materially and socially and with no one whom she can care for spiritually and morally. One can guess by now what the solution will be: a man old and rich enough to be her guardian, young and dashing enough to suggest romance, and, though moral, noble, and sensitive enough to be a proper and worthy companion, a skeptical, restless, unhappy man in whom Fleda can inspire faith and teach the way to a purposeful, fulfilled life.

Twenty-year-old Carleton is this man who, with his mother (the final touch to insure respectability), takes her to his home in England. Upon first meeting her, he is completely captivated by her and has the unique capacity of being the only person to "appreciate" her; even his mother feels she is a "sensitive plant" out of her reach. He sees her as "a flower of the woods, raising its head above frost and snow and the rugged soil where fortune has placed it, with an air of quiet patient endurance;--but if its gentle nature be not broken, it will look up again, unchanged, and bide its time in unrequited beauty and sweetness to the end" (p. 80). He has decided to care for this "gentle nature" as one would a rare, exotic flower in a hothouse.

Fleda immediately senses Carleton's understanding of her and easily attaches herself to him, but she also senses that something was wanting in him--religion. "A character of nature's building," comments the author, "is at best a very ragged affair, without religion's finishing hand;--at the utmost a fine ruin--no more" (p. 128). So she begins to go to work, singing him hymns and spouting biblical passages. His problem is the familiar despair of the romantics, man's stifling reason. Listening to her glibly explain that the Bible says God takes care of us, that it is true because the Bible was written by men who were taught by God what to say, and that she knows this because it says so in the Bible, he notes the fallacious logic, and grieves, not for her, but rather for himself: "A child's answer!--but with a child's wisdom in it, not learnt of the schools. 'He that is of God heareth God's words.' To little Fleda, as to every simple

and humble intelligence, the Bible proved itself" (p. 157). As with Little Eva's father, it was as if the Day of Judgment had come, and he begins to repent of his foolish and wasted life. The crisis comes when he asks her how she knows there is a God and, giving him a look of sorrow and pity that he imagines an angel might have worn, she points to the setting sun and asks, "Who made that?" Carleton was an unbeliever no more. But her work was far from complete, for Carleton must yet learn how to make his belief a working part of his life. His was still a vague and fruitless belief that did not bring him any fulfillment, and, in fact, only greater dissatisfaction with himself now that he had gained self-awareness. Off he goes then, with Fleda's Bible in hand, to roam the Continent seeking his duty.

Meanwhile Fleda finds a home with her aunt and uncle, Mr. and Mrs. Rossiter, and their son Hugh who is Fleda's age. He too is a kind of saint, but far more fragile in constitution than Fleda. Slender and graceful, as delicate as a girl, with a melancholy sweetness in his face, Hugh appeals to Fleda, and together they decide to be like John the Baptist and make everybody good and happy by teaching them to love Jesus. In American fiction the boy-saints are always effeminate, as if somehow goodness and masculinity were a contradiction. The motive no doubt was the Church's equation of purity with virginity; thus the males had to be emasculated. Moreover, it made the relationship between Fleda and Hugh wholly safe.

Three years pass, during which time the Rossiters lose

all their money. Once again Fleda is tested (as she was when her grandfather died, leaving her penniless) and she triumphantly comes through as "the angel of the household," taking everyone back to Queechy were she runs the house and supervises the rehabilitation of the farm. Queechy is a lengthy double-decker novel, with volume two continuing Fleda's trials and triumphs as wife and mother.

What distinguishes Fleda as a child-saint is her strength and competence; she is no frail victim of a world too crude for her to withstand. She provokes reverence rather than sympathy and tears, thus serving as an inspiration to American womanhood.

The child-woman duality of Fleda Ringgan is developed into two separate but complementary characters in Elizabeth Oakes Smith's Bertha and Lily (1854). Lily, about ten years old, is an ethereal child who inspires and redeems others merely through her presence; Bertha, who at the end of the book is revealed to be her mother, has a divinely inspired sense of duty as a social reformer; faithful, selfless, dedicated, independent, resourceful, she actively works to help people have better lives.

The story begins with Bertha, a mysterious, rich, unmarried woman, who returns to her home town to live there permanently. She immediately persuades the parson, Ernest, to adopt two alms-house children, Kate and Willy, for the sake of the parson as much as for that of the children. Ernest is a variation of St. Clare (Little Eva's father) and Carleton (Fleda's protector and pupil). He had faith,

but is now experiencing doubts and conflicts about himself and his religion, and is tortured by the feeling that he is not as pure as others think a parson is. Religion among his congregation is dull and mechanical, and he longs for some revitalizing spirit, even wishing his people would sin in order to have the zest of repentance. But he is only a dreamer with nothing but vague, unrealized desires for a meaningful and useful life. Bertha brings him the answer in the form of the two children.

Kate immediately captivates him. He calls her "Lily" because she seems like "the lilies of the field, who partake of the Divine." Lily seems to move in an impenetrable sphere of her own, having fequent mystical visions of a child-angel visiting her--a beautiful child with long flaxen curls, heavenly blue eyes, bare feet, and a white robe. She often speaks of it as of a dear, loved companion, saying it plays with her and loves her, but that it doesn't understand our words; it communes in heaven language which only good children understand. She says the angel never comes where there are no children, and never where the children are unholy and unloving. Thus, here again the child-saint is not typical or representative of all children, but rather a very special child of God. Willy, for example, does not have this mystical intuition.

Under the daily influence of Lily, Ernest's whole life changes. The titillating ambivalence in the relationship between the girl-redeemer and the errant man is in this book more openly acknowledged. In one sense, she is all Christian

soul, inspiring Ernest to renewed faith and purpose. "It seemed to me," he writes in his diary, "that I had come to a new birth. I was like a stream far up amid the hills, which worketh onward silently, unconscious of its own power; till some intervening barrier obstructs its course, and compileth it up to the light--when, gathering volume, it leaps onward from pass to pass, singing ever the song of its disenthralment" (p. 87). Yet in another way, she is the very sensual pagan goddess. "I put my arm around her slight figure reverntly, as if it had been Psyche's self. How beautiful she seemed as she came back from her distant life, and laid her cheek tenderly against mine" (pp. 89-90). She is purer than any of the beautiful, passionate heroines of literature, but in simply making the comparison, Ernest is suggesting her erotic attraction. "Oh! sacred seemed Lily, as well as beautiful, with her exquisite sensibilities, and her pure instincts. Goethe's Mignon was a rare creature of poetry and romance, a fair child of beauty and passion, and I thought of Mignon as Lily arose and leaned against my bosom. But Lily was not Mignon--she was no impassioned earth-child--no seedling of a Cleopatra--but she was Aspasia, and Sappho, and Cleopatra, seven times refined" (p. 181).

The rather perverted sexuality is fairly typical of Victorian prudery and American Puritanism. Lily as both angel and nymphet is a safe and morally acceptable source of eroticism for Ernest (as well as for the genteel female reader). In contrast are the other two women in his life.

At one extreme is the soft, voluptuous Julia, also a mysterious foundling living with Ernest (quite a ménage for a minister), with whom he feels comfortable but yet dissatisfied. As her fiancé, he loses his visionary enthusiasm. At the other extreme is Bertha who haunts his mind and soul, but who seems too cool and distant. He finally marries Bertha, in what seems to be an essentially non-sexual union. A normal man-woman love simply cannot be accepted. What is even more interesting is that Bertha is a Mary Magdalene type, having had a lover years ago with whom she had Lily. In her repentance she is more austere and virginal that the actual virgins, Lily and Julia.

Bertha introduces a new attitude toward the innocence of childhood not met in the other novels: the superiority of redeemed over original innocence. "The state reached by a hearty grasp of life," she says, "is a higher one than that innocence which is but ignorance." The woman should be more joyous than the child. The influence of Wordsworth here seems quite probable, for her familiarity with him is evident from the frequent quotations for the chapter epigraphs. One thinks especially of the lines from the "Intimations Ode":

> What though the radiance which was once so bright
> Be now for ever taken from my sight,
> Though nothing can bring back the hour
> Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;
> We will grieve not, rather find
> Strength in what remains behind;
> In the primal sympathy
> Which having been must ever be;
> In the soothing thoughts that spring
> Out of human suffering;
> In the faith that looks through death,
> In years that bring the philosophic mind.
>
> (Stanza X)

In its Christian sense, Miss Smith is echoing the theory of the "Fortunate Fall" preached by Jonathan Edwards and later given support by the elder James and Horace Bushnell.* But she invests it with a special significance for women, who are the seers and prophets with the divine mission of morally and socially saving mankind. Sainthood is thus not confined to children; the woman may not have the capacity for mystical communion, but her saintliness is not, for this reason, inferior; it is rather different, if not more profound and purposeful, for in her wisdom and maturity she can that much better serve others. Here at last was the perfect myth for the American woman.

Similar in theme is Caroline Lee Hentz's novella "The Lost Daughter" (1857) about a child-saint who falls under worldly temptation, only to rise a firmer and more celestial woman. The story has all the melodrama, sensationalism, and mystery of the Gothic. It begins in an isolated cabin along a deserted, rocky seacoast on a stormy night, replete with sighing trees, mournful sounding waters, and the low plaintive howl of a dog. Father Angelo, aged, wise, holy, and majestic, is reading the Bible in his hut when suddenly a wailing cry is heard. Opening the door, he finds an abandoned infant who immediately has a profound spiritual effect

*They describe the higher state of redemption after the Fall as a richer, more fulfilled life. The wisdom and dignity of man, Bushnell writes in Christian Nurture (1847), derive from his experience of tragedy--the confrontation with evil, the choice and struggle, and finally the triumph of good.

upon him. "Father Angelo continued to gaze down on this strange burden in an ecstacy /sic/ of wonder. It was the first time infant innocence had ever been cradled in his powerful arms; the first time its pure breath, mingling with his, had penetrated, like a sweet south wind, to his innermost spirit, whispering of heaven and heavenly things" (p. 10). The usual description of angelic beauty follows: "The little rose-leaf lips curling so delicately, the clear, translucent eye lighted up with such heavenly lustre, the soft, round cheek dimpling and smoothing, and dimpling again, like the play of waters in the sun, while a tender, brooding sound issues from the dove-like throat. How lovely, how touching this assemblage of infant charms! Father Angelo felt his very soul dissolving within him" (p. 11).

No less is the hermit's influence upon the babe, to whom he is God incarnate. "To her, Father Angelo was the incarnation of beauty and power, and she clung to him with a love, and looked up to him with a worship, such as the creature feels for the Creator. . . ; and he did, indeed, resemble, in lineament and expression, the magnificent figures which Raphael's bold hand has sketched of Jehovah presiding over the birth of Creation, and calling out light from the gloom of chaos." He keeps this "Heaven-dedicated child" secluded from society and its influences, removing all books save the Bible. He teaches her of divine truths and, teaching her to sing and play the organ, brings forth her exquisite sensitivity to beauty and harmony. And thus she grows up "the purest and most innocent of created beings."

But this Edenic existence can't last. A handsome young man arrives one day in a boat seeking shelter for the night. He is both awed and intimidated by her purity. "She was surrounded by such an unapproachable atmosphere of childlike innocence and saintly piety, it seemed sacrilege to address her in the language of earthly passion." But this is exactly what makes her so desirable and, consequently, against Father Angelo's unrelenting disapproval, they marry and go away together.

Despite her purity, Blanche, as she has been named by the hermit, is an easy victim of earthly passion and desire. She at first has an intense idolatrous love for Clarence, then gradually, succumbing to vanity and pride, seeks the admiration of other men. Once the novelty of all this is over, she realizes the utter waste and folly of her life. "She had tasted of the tree of experience, and found its fruits bitter to the taste" (p. 39). She longs for her childhood innocence and thus after Clarence, in a jealous rage, kills another man, Blanche returns to the hermitage. "She had gone forth a guileless, saintly, blessed child; she returned a heart-crushed, smitten, blighted woman. She went forth a scarce unfolded flower, sparkling with the dews of the morning; she came back a faded blossom, bearing a dark spot on its petals, that told of the gnawings of the cankerworm in their folds." But nothing is left there for her now: Father Angelo is dead. She goes forth a repentant woman, that much holier by virtue of her fall. The original innocence is replaced by a curtained soul, the light and

gladness by pensiveness, and the impulse by a calm saintliness. Her work, like that of Bertha, is in the world. The first person to be redeemed is her father, who suddenly appears after having searched for her for years, wanting to atone for his abandonment of his child and her mother. Next they meet Clarence, equally sad and remorseful. Her first early illusion of him as an angel is replaced now by a knowledge of him as an erring son of passion. She longs to love him again, but not with her first blind instinct; rather with "that noble sympathy, that electric attraction which blends the soul with a kindred soul, till they both rise, as it were, in one cloud of incense unto heaven" (p. 63). United forever in pure heavenly love, "kindred to the divine love which God, himself inspires," Clarence surrenders himself wholly to his guardian angel. "My Christian bridge," he cried, again folding her in his arms, "to your holier, purer influence I henceforth and forever yield myself. Be my partner on earth, my guide to heaven--my companion in Eternity" (p. 65).

Blanche's childhood saintliness, though not protecting her from earthly temptation, enables her to recognize her sin and profitably gain from her experience and suffering a higher wisdom and purity than she had in her early innocence and ignorance. What is interesting is that while Bertha's sin was sex out of wedlock, Blanche's was sexual passion within marriage; in other words, the legality of the union is irrelevant--the pure woman must be chaste. Both live with husbands at the end, but in a purely spiritual union.

A very different kind of child-saint is found in Frances Hodgson Burnett's The Dawn of a To-Morrow (1906), a story of the city slums. Your Little Brother James was similar in subject, but far different in theme. Miss Pemberton's motive was reform, and thus she set about showing the evil effects on children of bad environment. Miss Burnett, however, is solely concerned with preaching the value of simple Christian piety and the rewards of faith in God and humble submission to his will.

In true Dickensian fashion, the story opens amidst soft, thick yellow London fog. Antony Dart, anguished and desperate, lay as in the form of a cross. For months he had so lain each night "like a crucified thing," haunted by thoughts of God. Everything has lost meaning for this rich and socially successful man now about to commit suicide. Dressed like a pauper, he leaves his seedy boarding house to buy a gun, "a man on the way to Death--with no To-morrow."

While lost in the maze of foggy, black streets, he accidentally drops a coin and a ragged twelve-year-old girl, who, in appearance is a very unlikely saint, seizes it. "She was, for her years, so ugly and so ancient, and hardened in voice and skin and manner that she fascinated him" (p. 36). Watching Dart as he contemplates jumping off the bridge, she persuades him not to and then takes him along for coffee. This impudent, wise-cracking, but cheerful, girl succeeds in dispelling his morbidity and for the first time in years he feels some stirrings of interest and curiosity. She tells him all about her kind of life

in a completely matter-of-fact tone, with no self-pity and with no intent of playing upon his charity. She finally takes him home with her, thinking he wants to sleep with Polly, the eighteen-year-old streetwalker with whom she lives.

This curiously cheerful and optimistic child is appropriately called "Glad" and though not angelic in appearance, had all the inner qualities of spirit that distinguish the holy from the ordinary child. "She was the leaven which leavened the lump of their humanity. What this leaven is--who has found out? But she--little rat of the gutter--was formed of it, and her mere pure animal joy in the temporary animal comfort of the moment stirred and uplifted them from their depths" (p. 69). She is a spiritual inspiration not only to Dart and to Polly, but to the whole neighborhood, ironically known as "Apple Blossom Court." She is an orphan, not remembering ever to have had a family or home, but despite all the hardships of taking care of herself in a rough city slum, she preserves an original belief in the Divine. "This ragged thing who knew nothing whatever, looked out on the world with the eyes of a seer, though she was ignorant of the meaning of her own knowledge. It was a weird thing" (pp. 80-81). She has the simple faith of a child that the curate sadly realizes he lacks. Her original cheerfulness and optimism developed into a real piety and confidence in God under the influence of a one-time dance hall entertainer and drunkard who, after breaking her legs, becomes converted by a pious, charitable lady visiting her in the hospital. From her Glad learns that

there is a real God watching over his children on earth, and thereby comes to terms with an otherwise wretched life.

Dart is of course redeemed; he learns to believe in God and his life acquires meaning and purpose, beginning with his care of Polly and Glad. He fits right into the pattern of the basically good, decent, honest, respectable man whose sole flaw is his lack of belief in God and the consequent sense of the meaninglessness of life.

What is particularly striking about this story is the reversal of the traditional city-country motif. The romantics idealized the purity of the simple rural life where man could feel the benign influences of nature, as opposed to the evils of the city. "Your little brother James" attained his salvation on a farm. Here, however, good and pure Polly meets her ruin in her mother's country home where a boarder makes her pregnant and then deserts. And Glad, uncorrupted, kind, loving, generous, faithful, and pious, is a child of the city slum. It is not environment then, according to Mrs. Burnett, that makes the child, but rather a God-given and protected soul.

The influence of Dickens is apparent, but the skill of the master is strikingly lacking. The slum child victims with no normal home life are familiar, but the attempt to make Glad a kind of grotesque by emphasizing her ugly hardness is totally unsuccessful. Neither the humor nor the pathos of Dickens is achieved. Moreover, instead of any satire, we are given only sentimental moral piety.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century a more secular kind of child-saint becomes a literary fashion. That is, this child is saintly in so far as he is morally perfect and invariably converting sour, discontent adults into happy, loving people. He of course believes in God as all good little children do, but he does not go around singing hymns and quoting the Bible, nor is he ethereal or other-worldly, neither having mystical communion with the divine nor dying young and joyously. He is wholly a flesh and blood child very much intent on enjoying himself here in this world and in making others enjoy themselves as much. But he is certainly not what one might call a realistic child; he is far too good and stoical in enduring injustice and suffering. It was noticed that once the element of mysticism was taken out of the child, the romance and mystery were lessened, and thus in subject and style these stories are intended more for the child than for the adult reader. It is, nevertheless, relevant and useful to consider them briefly not only because some of these saints were so popular and have even become part of the English vocabulary, but because they are valuable expressions of the changing concept of the child. Best known among them are Little Lord Fauntleroy and Pollyanna.

The hero of Frances Hodgson Burnett's Little Lord Fauntleroy (1886), the delight of mothers, the bane of boys (particularly her own son), seems almost like a parody of the child-angel to the modern reader, though he was taken entirely seriously in his time. With his girlish prettiness, long golden curls, velvet suit, replete with

ruffled shirt and scarlet sash (indelibly imprinted on the reader's memory by illustrations in the text), Little Lord Fauntleroy has become a synonym for "sissy" for people who have never even read the book. In the tradition of nineteenth-century child heroes, however, he was simply a variation of the angelic child. Because he is a boy, it is "Papa" who died when he was an infant and "Mamma" whom he lives with now in genteel poverty. Girlish, angelic, she is treated more as a sister than as a mother by him, even being called "dearest," rather than "Mamma." Since his mother is already perfect, the author finds him someone else to redeem--a rich, old, crotchety grandfather, who hates little boys and particularly this child of a poor, socially undistinguished daughter-in-law. But Cedric, undaunted, wins him over through his incessant goodness and cheerfulness.

In true saintly fashion, he is the only one to perceive and bring out the hidden goodness in this bitter and seemingly ferocious man, hated and feared by everyone else. Cedric is the worldly, reformist kind of saint, bringing cheer and comfort first to all the unfortunates in his lower-class American neighborhood and then, as an English lord, to his tenants, rebuilding all the houses on his estate. His original democratic spirit remains intact despite his new found aristocratic status, making friends with all the tenants and not only retaining but financially helping his old American friends, the grocer and the shoe-black. He is not only precocious but has the gravity and understanding of an adult, combined with the peculiar child sensitivity to others' feelings and needs. His fearlessness, confidence,

and trust distinguish him as one of God's chosen.

The threat to Cedric from a pretender to his title--the supposed son of his father's elder brother--provides the plot, which of course turns out to be false. Once again, the saint is endangered and saved.

What saves this book and really makes it more enjoyable than most of its contemporaries is its humor. Cedric is perhaps a bit too cute, or "quaint," as the author describes him, but his naiveté and especially the incongruity of his observations and judgments of situations and people are often quite humorous, and effectively undercut much of the sentimentalism. For example, when riding the four miles up the driveway to his castle, he remarks that "it's a long way for a person to live from his front gate." And another time, insisting that the heavy, gouty grandfather lean upon him as they walk, Cedric, nearly collapsing from exhaustion, his face growing redder and hotter, produces a fantastically garish handkerchief given him as a farewell present by his friend the bootblack--red with purple horseshoes and horses' heads--and calmly remarks to the old man, "It's a warm night, isn't it?" A comic, almost Dickensian touch is given by Hobbs the American grocer, who, reading every book since Ceddie's departure on the English nobility, gets into a cold sweat when he comes across one about Bloody Mary and the Tower of London and sadly remarks, "It was a pity to make a <u>earl</u> out of him. He would have <u>shone</u> in the grocery business--or dry goods either; he would have <u>shone</u>!" (p. 167)

Despite all attempts to make him a red-blooded boy--winning races, galloping fearlessly on a horse, making friends easily with sailors and workers, Cedric is unfortunately stigmatized by his ridiculous outfit and will never escape persecution for the blow he struck to American boyhood.

Equally well remembered today and no less an object of derision is Eleanor Porter's Pollyanna (1913). This eleven-year-old "glad child" is an apostle of good cheer and undaunted optimism despite personal hardship and very resistant adults. Her mother having died when she was a baby, she was brought up by her minister father who taught her the game of looking for things to be glad about, which means, if you break one leg, be glad that it isn't two. When her father dies she goes to live with her aunt, who, along with the rest of the town, will ultimately learn to play the game too. Her aunt, a bitter, unkind, unloving old maid, doesn't want her and treats her rather meanly, but Pollyanna is simply incapable of seeing anything mean in people and turns every injustice into a blessing. For example, when she is given a tiny, stuffy attic room she is glad for the view. She soon wins the heart too of a rich, secluded, unhappy bachelor who lives nearby and finally wants to adopt her. But, believing that her aunt really loves her, she refuses and arranges for him to adopt instead an orphan boy whom nobody wants. In her earlier attempts to get the Ladies Aid Society to take care of him, she becomes a kind of "innocent eye," seeing through the hypocrisy of

organized charity. For these pious ladies are too busy giving money to orphans in India to care for an orphan in their own town. She finally has to practice the glad game on herself when she is hit by a carriage and suffers paralysis of the spine and legs. She tells herself she is glad for the sunshine, for the boy's finding a home with the rich bachelor, etc. And of course she is justly rewarded by being cured.

Pollyanna is a non-religious saint; neither God nor the Bible ever mentioned by her; but she is a true Christian in spirit (as contrasted to the self-styled philanthropists of the Ladies Aid Society), doing good for everyone. What today strikes us as an almost imbecilic simplicity was once praised by mothers as the true spirit of childhood.

Footnotes to Chapter Four

[1] The following discussion of the child as an archetypal image is derived from C. G. Jung and C. Kerenyi, *Essays on a Science of Mythology: The Myths of the Divine Maiden*, trans. R. F. C. Hull (New York, 1963).

[2] Hart, *The Popular Book*, pp. 111-112.

V

The Growth of the Saint

When one tries to draw a line between the saintly and non-saintly children one finds it blurred at best. It does not actually distinguish the holy from the unholy, but rather different kinds of holy children. For the majority of nineteenth-century fictional children are angelic, if not in the narrow sense of having a mystical affinity with the Divine, certainly in the wider sense of being innocent and pure. It is in this latter sense that the children to be discussed in this chapter are as "saintly" as the ones explicitly so labeled in the preceding chapter. The difference between them, which merits their separate grouping, is that these children are not perfect at the outset (although they certainly seem so to a modern reader) and only become so through self-will, discipline, and wise teachers. They are never evil, but rather are just one step away from true saintliness, and thus through various object lessons, the potential angel gradually is realized. The standard pattern is very similar to that in the books already discussed, the child as orphan and redeemer, only here, because of the emphasis on moral development, the child is always exposed to either hardship or injustice, growing spiritually by virtue of his suffering--in other words, he or she is as much the redeemed as the redeemer.

These stories portraying the development of the saint were especially popular because they were in effect sermons teaching and justifying faith in God. They were more comfort-

ing than the Bible, presenting practical everyday rules for the good and happy life and reassuring the reader of his ultimate success by showing what happy men and women the girls and boys become. Most influential in encouraging these attitudes was, probably, the religious revival that began in the latter part of the eighteenth century and that was still strong well into the nineteenth. The Evangelical preachers, by reviving the concept of Original Sin, made man feel his inescapable need to rely upon God. To the Puritan God of wrath and stern justice they added the special emphasis upon Jesus' love, which made salvation not only attainable but easy. It is this confidence in Jesus' loving care and redemption of man that the child saints continually preach. Because of their role as spiritual guides, as lay preachers, those apparently angelic, pure girls are made to berate and mortify themselves as sinners; they are in effect acting out for the sinful reader the means for a wholly attainable salvation here on earth. One can really understand the popularity of these stories which eliminated the hopelessness, the hell and damnation of Calvinism but without denying man his faith in a just and omnipotent God.

These novels tend to fall into two basic types: those about boys and girls who live in domestic security, their problems being wholly of the heart; and those about the poor and homeless, which I have called "The Rags-to-Riches Stories." The latter especially appealed to an ambitious, materialistic, middle-class commercial society grounded in Calvinism by presenting material well-being as a sign of

God's reward for industriousness and thrift. Surely a man who was successful could not be immoral or sinful.

Among the first type most popular in its day was Susan B. Warner's The Wide, Wide World (1850), second only to Uncle Tom's Cabin. Flooded by tears, its guiding message is that true happiness comes only through love for Jesus and humble submission to God's will. The lengthy two-volume novel hammers out its message in an endless series of illustrative episodes each concluded with an appropriate lesson addressed to the reader. Didactic in purpose, the story simply traces the child's spiritual growth, episode by episode, without any integrated plot involving romance or mystery. And typically, the characters have no complexity, each a moral type either affecting or affected by the child-heroine.

Ten-year-old Ellen is in the beginning a kind of half-orphan, her father too occupied with business and too restrained in manner for Ellen to feel any affectionate bond with him. He is away from home most of the time, and even when present, he is too detached to have any influence upon his daughter's character. As expected, her mother is a saint. Not only loving and tender, she has an other-worldly piety, often overcome by an immediate apprehension of the Divine. She is the spiritually ideal woman, against whom Ellen's defects are evident and who represents the goal toward which Ellen must strive. A true Puritan in spirit, she places little value on the vanity of earthly love and la-

ments over the fact that Ellen cares more about her than about Jesus. She preaches to her that if her heart were not hardened by sin, she would love Jesus more than she does her mother. Too frail for earthly life, Ellen's dying mother must leave for a healthier climate, entrusting her to the care of her aunt. Abandoned Ellen soon becomes an orphan in fact when both her parents die at sea.

Despite the efforts of her earnestly pious mother, Ellen is flawed by "a passionate temper," compounded by pride and selfishness. Her problems and reform begin once she is separated from her indulgent parents and finds herself thwarted and frustrated by her shrewish aunt. The pampered Ellen, brought up in the luxury of a city home, is shocked and dismayed by the crudity of farm life, by having to do household chores. Implied is the conventional idealization of the honest, simple, virtuous life of the country. It is not romanticized into the idyllic life of the pastoral, but, on the contrary, the tediousness and dullness of the laborious round of daily chores are valued for teaching Ellen humility and self-discipline.

More significant, however, is Aunt Fortune's harsh, unloving attitude toward Ellen, which encourages her to seek solace in the Bible. Her pious inclinations, still very tenuous, are developed under the influence of neighboring Alice Humphreys and her brother John. Angelic Alice, eight years her senior, becomes a surrogate mother. A pious Bible-quoter and hymn-singer, she is not only the savior of Ellen, but of the whole village, giving Bible lessons to

children and performing charitable deeds for the unfortunate. After a couple of years of having Ellen periodically collapse upon her virtuous bosom in a flood of repentant tears, Alice, too pure for this sullied world, dies beatifically. Her work is carried on by her equally pious brother John, who, two years older, is more of a father to Ellen than her own ever was.

By this time Ellen is a self-acknowledged repentant sinner, a humble, loving, obedient child of God who has conquered her pride, temper, and selfishness. She dutifully and cheerfully does all the odious tasks her Aunt gives her, reads to her feeble grandmother, and befriends the friendless, converting a seemingly wild and unregenerate girl of her own age to a good Christian. She easily takes Alice's place in the Humphreys household, bringing love and comfort to the bereaved brother and father. Once the recipient of others' goodness and pious teaching, she is now, in turn, the savior of others. She not only converts the basically good, but unreligious foreman on her aunt's farm into a pious Christian, but she makes the Humphreys men even better Christians than they were. She softens the too rigid John and renews the faith of his father (who is, moreover, a minister), despairing over Alice's death, bringing "light in the darkness" of his soul. It is hard to believe that Ellen is only about thirteen years old at this time, for she is more like a woman in her independence and resourcefulness, as well as in her dignified manner.

Especially in her relationship with John is she more

woman than child. Here again is the safe sexuality found in so many of the novels of this period. In his role as a fatherly older brother, intellectual mentor as well as spiritual guide, John is a safe companion. His Puritanical austerity makes him even safer. But in his total devotion to Ellen, reinforced by frequent kissing upon the lips (which, it is remarked, Ellen gradually begins to like more and more), there is a repressed eroticism that must have aroused a few passionate heart-beats in the breast of the nineteenth-century lady reader. Moreover, Ellen is simply carrying on the original relationship between John and his sister Alice, whose favorite pastime was to lie in one another's lap, soothingly caressing each other's very sensitive nervous constitution.

As with all saintly-child heroines, Ellen is not the typical, but rather the exceptional, child. She is contrasted to the other girls her age who are vain and frivolous, interested only in clothes and dances, and who taunt her for her Bible-reading and pious observance of the Sabbath.

Ellen's new found moral and religious strength is tested when she goes to live with relatives in Scotland. Good, kind, generous people, they are, unfortunately for Ellen, not religious and thus are unsympathetic to her grave piety and rigid self-discipline, even taking away her Pilgrim's Progress. They find her singularly grave, innocent look unnatural for a girl her age, accustomed to seeing it only on infants. But despite their pressures, Ellen never falters and is rewarded with John paying her a visit and giving

her moral support through his expressed admiration. The story ends with his going back to America and the promise that he will send for her in a few years, implying, probably, that he will then marry her.

Religion and discipline, it is reiterated throughout, have saved Ellen, love for Jesus and obedience to his teachings. The nineteenth-century girl and mother must surely have found this an inspiration, not very different from the way people today respond to Norman Vincent Peale's preaching on the power of positive thinking. Ellen is clearly different from the saints discussed earlier because she must earn her purity through Bible study and self-discipline. What strikes a modern reader is that what the author describes as Ellen's sins, for which the child subjects herself to intense mortification--such as having a mild temper tantrum when treated not only unkindly but unjustly by a rather mean aunt--we would consider just normal childish behavior. The meek, always obedient child is for us unnatural, if not abnormal. Moreover, the demands placed upon this ten-year-old child who is suddenly taken away from her parents and put in the home of a total stranger, and a hostile one at that, are extraordinary. What becomes apparent is that the child is not really understood as a child but rather as a miniature adult. Alice and John Humphreys, her teachers, expect her to be as mature and self-disciplined as they, who are eight and ten years older. Ellen is simply not allowed to be a child. This concept of the child underlines the fact that the influences of Puritanism were still very strong in

nineteenth-century America. Ellen is not regarded as a hopelessly depraved sinner, nor is she tormented with the terrors of death and eternal life in hell (although she does witness the joyful death of a young boy and is asked by Alice and John if she knows what it is to be a sinner and a forgiven child of God), but she has the same religious demands placed upon her that the Puritans placed upon their children, and is forced into a similarly unnatural gravity and precocity.

A true child of the Puritans is the heroine of Martha (Farquharson) Finley's Elsie Dinsmore (1868) who, in her meek submission to the will of God, was idolized by mothers as a model and inspiration for their own young sinners. Unlike Ellen, eight-year-old Elsie is at the outset completely pious, or as the author puts it, "And young as Elsie was, she had already a very lovely and well-developed Christian character. Though not precocious in other respects, she had clear and correct views on her duty to God" (p. 35). But like Ellen, she is guilty of a "passionate temper." She was not "submissive and content," the author explains. "It is indeed true that she ought to have been as it was; but our little Elsie, though sincerely desirous to do right, was not yet perfect" (p. 109). It is simply assumed, without question, that a child can and should be perfect.

The familiar pattern is once more repeated. Elsie's frail angelic mother died when she was a baby and her father has abandoned her to his unkind and unloving family. Hav-

ing married against his father's will a wealthy but socially unacceptable girl whose father made his money by trade, Elsie's seventeen-year-old child-father is forced to leave his fifteen-year-old orphan-child-bride. She is then falsely told of his death and dies of a broken heart. Once he is separated from his wife, Horace Dinsmore, sharing his family pride, becomes ashamed of his marriage and considers Elsie a disgrace to himself, refusing to set eyes on her for the first eight years of her life.

During this time Elsie suffers persecution and humiliation from all the Dinsmores, particularly Horace's brothers and sisters who are little older than herself. Her one solace is the Bible. Despite every injustice, she remains meek and obedient. Nevertheless, Elsie experiences guilt and remorse for just feeling angry, condemning herself as a sinner for not following Jesus' admonition to suffer in patience. Over and over again she reads these words from the Bible:

> For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? But if when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow His steps.

But Elsie is not entirely alone in a hostile world, receiving love and spiritual support from her Negro mammy, Aunt Chloe, and from seventeen-year-old Rose Allison. Her dying mother put the week-old Elsie into the arms of Aunt Chloe, asking her to care for her and to teach her to love God. Parallel with the Little Eva-Uncle Tom relationship,

Elsie's innate goodness and piety are nourished by this simple, uneducated, but true Christian soul, Rose is really a kind of second mother. She reminds us very much of Alice Humphreys in The Wide, Wide World. Sickly, she spends the winter in the southern Dinsmore home to regain her strength, during which time she and Elsie are united in their mutual love of Jesus. Rose is even closer to Elsie, though, than Alice was to Ellen because Rose considers herself a sinner, having rejected the Savior for fifteen years, rebelliously resisting His Holy Spirit. "I am a sinner," she penitently confesses, "lost, ruined, helpless, hopeless, and the Bible brings me the glad news of salvation offered as a free, unmerited gift. . . . I find that I deserve the wrath and curse of a justly offended God. . . . I find that all my righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and it offers me the beautiful, spotless robe of Christ's perfect righteousness" (pp. 25-26). It sounds almost like a Puritan sermon. Together, in frequent outbursts of hysterical tears, they mortify themselves as the most vile, depraved criminals. Rose must finally leave, comforting the seemingly friendless Elsie with the thought that God is her Friend.

"Papa" now returns and the major portion of the book consists of episodes illustrating the struggle between a father who is Christian only in outward form and a daughter who is the true child of God. Upright, moral, respectful in every way to the forms of religion, he cares not for the vital power of godliness, regarding Christians as hypocrites and deceivers. Thus he is prejudiced against Elsie even before he knows her. He is described as a basically good man,

whose rigid disciplining of his daughter is motivated solely by a concern for her well-being. For example, his taking away from her breakfast the hot rolls, butter, meat, and coffee that everyone else enjoys (including himself) and substituting dry bread and milk is motivated by his conviction that the former are unhealthy for children. His cold, severe, unaffectionate manner belies the inner love and kindness that Elsie senses and thus undespairingly tries to bring out through continual love and obedience. Elsie and her father will serve to be each other's savior, Papa ridding Elsie of her wilfulness and temper (which is unobserved by this reader) and putting an end to her childish crying (which is welcome), and Elsie converting her Papa into a true Christian. The main source of contention between them is the fact that Elsie loves God more than she does her Papa; Horace cannot tolerate this perversity and Elsie, under pain of death, if necessary, will not concede to him. Of course, it is Elsie who is right and Papa who must grow as wise and humble as his child.

Episode after episode illustrates Elsie's unquestioned devotion to Papa despite his utterly unnatural severity towards her. His exacting demands for obedience, which are beyond all reason or belief, make Papa look very much like a sadistic pervert. There is no room for Elsie ever justifying and exonerating herself through explanation; as long as she disobeys Papa's commands, she is guilty and deserving of punishment. Papa is in a sense a personification of the Old Testament Jehovah, demanding obedience from his children,

who were never to presume to question his ways. Disobedience meant Divine wrath and punishment. Elsie can be compared to Job whose loyalty to God is tested under seemingly inexplicable and unjust suffering. Horace would have been right at home with Cotton Mather and Jonathan Edwards. All Elsie can do is "send up prayers" to Jesus for help, as one would send up S.O.S. signals.

Suddenly, however, Papa begins to soften, realizing the angel in his care. "The darling!" he murmured to himself; "she is lovely as an angel, and she is mine, mine only, mine own precious one. . . . Ah! if I were but half as good and pure as she is, I should be a better man than I am" (p. 227). She now gets her hot buttered rolls and coffee, but Horace is still not reconciled to her loving Jesus more than she loves him. It is Horace's best friend, Mr. Travilla, who alone can understand and approve of this. Thoroughly sensitive to this rare child, he comments, "I am sure if ever I saw one who possessed that new nature of which she spoke, it is she herself" (p. 258). The first hints are given here of the larger role Mr. Travilla will come to play in Elsie's life. Elsie Dinsmore ends abruptly with no resolution reached between father and daughter. It is left for its sequel, Elsie's Girlhood (1872), which continues the story.

When this book opens, ten-year-old Elsie and her Papa are already perfectly reconciled, a crisis having been gone through in the interim between the first and second volume of Elsie's story. We are told how Papa had pushed Elsie one

step too far, forcing her to choose between obedience to him or banishment to a convent or boarding-school. The choice was totally impossible for Elsie, who promptly contracted a brain fever, and, thereby, on the verge of death, forced her father suddenly to realize his mistake. This book, which carries us through Elsie's teens, is concerned with testing Elsie's obedience to her father through two objectionable engagements. Elsie's relationship with her father today would be questioned as dangerously Oedipal, except for the fact that Elsie harbors no resentment toward Horace's new wife, Rose. The repressed sexuality characteristic of Puritan and Victorian attitudes is well illustrated by the continual passionate embracing and kissing between father and daughter, which never occurs between Horace and his wife and, of course, not between Elsie and her suitors, not even the man she will finally marry. Her "ruby lips" are for Papa alone. Once, after confessing that she was kissed on the cheek by a suitor, Papa sighs in relief that it was not on the lips. "'I am truly thankful for that!' he exclaimed in a tone of relief; 'to know that he had--that these sweet lips had been polluted by contact with his--would be worse to me than the loss of half my fortune.' And lifting her face as he spoke, he pressed his own to them again and again" (p. 258). Papa is more like a jealous lover than a simply protective, interested father. "You are mine;" he declares, "you belong to me; no other earthly creature has the least shadow of a right or title in you" (p. 73). Implied of course is the concept of the pure woman as a chaste, vir-

ginal being. In her perfection, Elsie can be no less than an angel.

In his unequivocal possessiveness and demand for obedience, Papa is an earthly incarnation of Elsie's Heavenly Father; she is equally loving and submissive to both. In this respect Elsie seems no different at eighteen than she was at eight, always the grave, timid child-woman. She must still ask Papa's permission for everything, from staying up past her usual bedtime to wearing a particular hair ribbon or eating candy. Her fear of his rejection is not dissimilar to her fear of being forsaken by God. Elsie in fact constantly talks of her earthly and Heavenly Fathers, to each of whom she feels she owes cheerful obedience and love. But Papa is a far more forbidding father. She often seeks the solace and forgiveness from Jesus that she doesn't get from Papa.

The story has more of a plot than its predecessor. Through the scheming of Horace's vicious brother seeking revenge for being denied money to pay his gambling debts, the unscrupulous Bromley woos and nearly wins the hand of trusting, naive Elsie. She is rescued by the perceptiveness of Travilla who alerts Horace to the situation.

As expected, Elsie marries Travilla, and by so doing is actually being given the only acceptable substitute for her father. Travilla is just her father's age and someone whom Elsie, ever since childhood, had always thought of as a father or uncle. He enables her to remain a child-woman always, a protected, simple, obedient, timid wife-daughter. And since he is not a passionate young lover, he poses no threat to

her relationship with Papa, nor will he taint the innocent, pure unearthly Elsie. The submissive obedience characterizing the perfect child equally characterizes the perfect woman.

Delia Arlington in Step by Step (1856) by Anna Athern is a similar child-woman, perfect in every respect save her capacity for total, unquestioned obedience. The author explains that although she was religiously educated and possessed religious sensibility, she was not guided by religious principle but rather by her own will. She had kindly feelings and noble impulses, which wanted just that stability of purpose and consistency of action which Christian principle alone could impart to them.

Ten-year-old Delia, motherless, lives with her rich, elderly father, who encourages her sedate womanliness, deliberately keeping her home, away from boarding-schools and the pettiness, vanity, and frivolity of other girls. When Delia is fourteen, her father dies and she goes to live with his sister, Mrs. Grafton and her family, who serve to test, and thereby strengthen Delia's religious convictions. The Graftons are described as a haughty and proud un-Christian family, too concerned with the vanities of social status. All of the children, save one, share their sins. Three-year-old Herbert, in his love and innocence, not only gives Delia comfort, but wisely reveals her faults to her. He is the holy babe speaking with the pure voice of Heaven. Thus Delia is affected by his criticism in much the same way as if God Himself were speaking to her. "Delia felt, that, as she

stood condemned in the eyes of that little child, who judged from outward signs, much more was she condemned in the sight of Him, whose eye readeth all the secret thoughts of the heart. Day by day came to her some new revelation of her true self" (p. 84).

Delia, like Elsie Dinsmore, must learn to obey regardless of the rightness or wrongness of the command, and without requiring any explanations or reasons. Never justifying any disobedience no matter how good the motives or results are, the author admonishes "that no situation or circumstances could ever call forth feelings which had no existence in the heart" (p. 84). That is, the perfect child could not even be capable of disobedient feelings or thoughts; they would be non-existent. Only then is one wholly united with Christ.

The story consists of many tedious episodes relating the moral growth of Delia, her "step by step advance to Christ," during which her Christian obedience and submissiveness are tested by various unjust demands on the part of this sinful family. She finally is worthy of partaking of communion and membership in the Church but, the author concludes, this was just the beginning, not the end, of her life in Christ. "But her life-journey had only been commenced in the new relations in which she now found herself; and step by step she must travel on,--on in the strait and narrow way which leadeth to everlasting life. . . . Delia Arlington stood on the threshold of womanhood . . . a new creature in Christ Jesus" (pp. 447-448).

Louisa May Alcott's Little Women (1869), still a favorite today, although only among girls, is, despite popular protestations to the contrary, wholly within the tradition of the sentimental, didactic domestic novel which presents the moral growth of the child saint. Such critics of children's literature as Corneila Meigs[1] have praised it for its natural, realistic, very human children, who, however, are actually as unnaturally and unrealistically good as their fictional contemporaries. They may not be Elsie Dinsmore or even Ellen of The Wide, Wide World--they complain about work, they play childish games, they are not addicted to tearfully morbid and passionate supplications to God--but they are just as good, just as moral and pious. Like the other child saints, they supposedly have flaws, but these are very minor and very easily corrected through Christian humility and discipline.

They are sort of half-orphans, at least for half the book while their father is away in the army. The spirit of their noble and selfless minister-father, however, is with them always as a continual source of strength and inspiration. Their mother is the conventional saint, although a rather robust one who dedicates herself to helping others, rather than languishing in bed on the verge of death. It is she who starts her girls on their moral journey to perfection when she proposes that they make their daily lives a Pilgrim's Progress and encourages them to read the Bible regularly.

Of the four girls, one is already a saint and the

other three are potentially perfect, their moral development comprising the story. Sixteen-year-old Meg learns to overcome her vanity, which consisted mainly in her desire for a rich, fashionable life, finally marrying a poor, but honest and good man. Fifteen-year-old Jo learns to control her quick temper, her anger and resentment, by turning the other cheek. Twelve-year-old Amy undergoes the greatest moral development, conquering her vanity, willfulness, and selfishness. And she in turn becomes the angelic redeemer of their friend, and her later husband, Laurie, who becomes self-disciplined, industrious, obedient, and more thoughtful of others' feelings. Laurie, though perfect at the end like the girls, marks somewhat of a change in the concept of the boy common to this type of book. Though not the rugged, athletic, bad boy, neither is he effeminately asexual, becoming a ladies' man in college, fervently wooing Jo, and finally marrying Amy.

Thirteen-year-old Beth is the pure, angelic child, self-sacrificing, piously humble and uncomplaining. Too good for this world, she soon dies, joyously, of course. She feels her impending death for a long time, and as her body grows weaker her soul grows that much stronger through her faith in God. Miss Alcott describes how Beth, "cherished like a household saint in its shrine" (p. 456), waited for her joyful deliverance:

> Simple, sincere people seldom speak much of their piety; it shows itself in acts rather than in words, and has more influence than homilies or protestations. Beth could not reason upon

> or explain the faith that gave her courage and patience to give up life, and cheerfully wait for death. Like a confiding child, she asked no questions, but left everything to God and nature, Father and mother of us all, feeling sure that they, and they only, could teach and strengthen heart and spirit for this life and the life to come (p. 412).

When she finally dies, her look of joy and peace brings reassurance and comfort to the family; it is impossible for them to despair, "seeing with grateful eyes the beautiful serenity that soon replaced the pathetic patience that had wrung their hearts so long, and feeling with reverent joy that to their darling death was a benignant angel, not a phantom full of dread" (p. 461).

The book is not only a celebration of pious humility, obedient submission to God's will but also a hymn to the middle-class morality of honest hard work and practicality. The poor but genteel March family, who have recently lost their fortune, find fulfillment in cheerfully and selflessly doing their duty. The girls are all permitted aesthetic talents and ambitions, but not allowed to make a career of them. Amy tries her hand at painting, but relegates it to a pastime in deference to the more important work of being a wife and mother. Jo writes stories, but she too finds her primary fulfillment as a wife and as a mother to a school full of boys. Beth always kept herself occupied with various household chores, her piano playing reserved only for spare moments. Laurie, the talented pianist and grandson of a very rich man, goes to Europe with the hope of becoming a professional musician, only to return home chastened, eager

to enter his grandfather's business.

The March family is indeed a more normal family than the Dinsmores, with none of the perversions of an obsessively demanding father or morbidly guilt-ridden children; wholesome good fellowship and love prevail. But the unfailing optimism, cheerfulness, and selflessness provide a too neat moral lesson for the book to be regarded, as many would like it to be, as outside the domestic novel tradition of its day.

The Rags-to-Riches Stories

The Lamplighter (1854) by Maria Cummins is perhaps the most comprehensive of the novels describing the development of the child-saint, for it combines two popular motifs, the influence of environment and the virtues of Christian discipline, with still a third motif not yet encountered in the books discussed, the blessings of bourgeois comfort and security as a reward for true Christian piety.

Unlike Ellen of The Wide, Wide World and Elsie Dinsmore, eight-year-old Gerty's "dark infirmity," her passionate temper, is the result of her bad environment. Fatherless and motherless, she is the helpless victim of mean, unChristian slum-dwellers, the most ragged, ill-treated child in the neighborhood. But beneath her sullen and hostile manner is a potential angel that only needs to be recognized and brought forth through proper education. The good lamplighter, Trueman Flint, sees her pure heart and feeling great pity for this victimized child, takes her home to live with him. But the process of reform is in no sense complete; on the contrary, it can only now begin through religious instruction. Using the familiar plant metaphor of Timothy Shay Arthur, the author explains:

> The plant that for years has been growing distorted, and dwelling in a barren spot, deprived of light and nourishment, withered in its leaves and blighted in its fruit, cannot at once recover from so cruel a blast. Transplanted to another soil, it must be directed in the right course, nourished with care and warmed with Heaven's light, ere it can recover from the shock occasioned by its early neglect, and find strength to expand its flowers and ripen its fruit. (p. 47)

Thirteen-year-old Willie Sullivan, neighbor to the lamplighter, provides this spiritual guidance. Also fatherless, his innate Christian spirit has fortunately been nurtured by the influence of his mother, a good, kind, loving woman, pious in her own simple way. Angelic Willie, distinguished by his unusual beauty, is selfless, optimistic, trusting and loving. Forced to quit school in order to earn money, he is a genteel Horatio Alger figure, showing the ennobling effect of honest labor, diligence, and thrift. The author rhapsodizes on how work teaches virtue, builds character, and how the lack of it in the lives of the rich accounts for their decadence. Willie and Gerty, undaunted by their present poverty, with God-given confidence in a glorious future, represent the faith-and-hope morality of the domestic novel.

> Happy children! happy as children only can be! What do they want of wealth? What of anything, material and tangible, more than they now possessed? They have what is worth more than riches or fame. They are full of childhood's faith and hope. With a fancy and imagination unchecked by disappointment, they are building those same castles that so many thousand children have built before,--that children always will be building,to the end of time. Far off in the distance, they see bright things, and know not what myths they are. High up they rise, and shine, and glitter; and the little ones fix their eyes on them, overlook the rough, dark places that lie between, see not the perils of the way, suspect not the gulfs and snares into which many are destined to fall; but, confident of gaining the glorious goal, they set forth on the way rejoicing. Blessings on that childhood's delusion, if such it be. Undeceive not the little believers, ye wise ones! Check not that God-given hopefulness, which will, perhaps, in its airy flight, lift them in safety over many a rough spot in life's road. It lasts not long, at the best; then check it not, for as it dies out the way grows hard.
> (pp. 63-64)

The popularity of the sentimental domestic novels becomes, when one reads this passage, easily understood because the author has replaced the preacher in the pulpit and is, in fact, far more comforting and inspirational, threatening not the sinner with damnation, but feeding the American dream of having a paradise on earth.

Gerty's initial lessons in Christianity are augmented by the traditional sister-mother angel, a young woman of piety, love, and goodness, Emily Graham. An added touch of sentimentalism is given by making Emily blind; physically blind Emily, who has an inner Divine light, befriends the sighted, but spiritually blind, Gerty. Through Emily's example as a humble, submissive, patient sufferer, Gerty becomes a true child of God. Therein lies happiness, explains wise Emily, experienced by "those only . . . who have learned submission; those who, in the severest afflictions, see the hand of a loving Father, and, obedient to his will, kiss the chastening rod" (p. 134). Gerty, originally the object of salvation, now in turn becomes savior, nursing the sick Emily, the lamplighter, and Willie's grandfather, and sustaining them with spiritual comfort. And, interestingly, the happiness of Christian humility is encouraged by the comforts of wealth, Gerty going to live, after the lamplighter's death, with Emily and her rich father.

The remainder of the book is about Gerty, now called Gertrude, as the perfect, saintly woman, the testing of her virtue through suffering, and the unravelling of her mysterious past. The mark of Gertrude's holiness is not the

innocent look of the round-faced, rosy-cheeked, blue-eyed, golden-curled angel, but rather the beauty and aura of an inner divine presence, a face revealing sentiment and sorrow. Hers is a beauty of soul and character that seems to radiate from within and convey a certain power and intrigue that virtually hypnotizes everyone who sees her. One such victim is a mysterious man, youthful looking yet seemingly aged, as if prematurely from hardship. He becomes Gertrude's guardian angel, suddenly appearing in moments of physical and spiritual crisis. Melancholic and cynical, disillusioned with life, without faith in God or trust in man, he is captivated by Gertrude. After pages and pages of hints that he is a pursuant lover, he turns out to be Gertrude's father and no less than the lost lover of Emily, who had accidentally blinded her and has been a disconsolate, remorseful man ever since, unsuccessfully seeking salvation. He finds it now in a forgiving, loving Emily and the passionately devoted Gertrude, who throws herself upon his bosom, trembling uncontrollably, bursting "into a torrent of passionate tears . . . sealing his lips with kisses." He marries Emily, Gertrude marries Willy, and all ends happily. The rewards of Christian humility, patient suffering and obedience are distributed to all: Emily is reunited with her lover, Willie becomes a rich heir, and Gertrude the wife of a rich husband as well as the daughter of a rich father. What more could a reader want?

A somewhat more melodramatic version of the same themes--the effects of environment for suppressing **or** developing the child's inherent saintliness, the blessings of humble submission to the will of God, blessings meaning not only inner peace but also earthly rewards of wealth, comfort, security--are found in another one-time best-seller, Beulah (1859) by Augusta Jane Evans, which is strikingly similar in its characters and situations to Jane Eyre (1847). This is not surprising in light of the fact that, as Frederick Lewis Pattee puts it in his study of "the feminine fifties," Jane Eyre "ran through the community like an epidemic,"[2] read not only by every middle-class woman of leisure, but also by every working girl. He notes that his own mother read it five times. An imitation, then, was guaranteed to be a highly profitable undertaking. What is interesting is that Jane Eyre, included in every English curriculum as one of the classics of literature, fits so perfectly into the tradition of the Popular American novel. All the standard ingredients are there: the pathos of the victimized child orphan; the sentimentalism of lovers at first thwarted but ultimately united, purer and nobler in their feelings by virtue of their suffering; the sensationalism of mystery, coincidence, terror--and all within the conventional moral framework of reward and punishment, with due emphasis on the virtues of Christian humility and suffering.

Beulah, like Jane Eyre, is the unwanted, ugly duckling orphan, deeply sensitive within but outwardly hostile and bitter owing to the unjust cruelties inflicted on her by a

heartless world. Both are outcasts from the benign influences of kindly family affection and care. Beulah, who lives in an orphan asylum, is continually bypassed for adoption in favor of the more conventionally pretty children, and is finally sent out as a nursery maid to a family similar in its vanities, selfishness, and unkindness to the one in which Jane suffered. Her loneliness and isolation there are compounded by the humiliation of her status, her confinement to the worst attic room in the house with only the rats for neighbors.

Beulah is one of those undiscovered saints whose plain, homely appearance belies her inner worth. To the uninitiated she seems ugly, but to the sensitive eye her "sickly pallor" and "sad expression," with "lips firmly compressed, as if to prevent the utterance of complaint," indicating her acquaintance with cares and sorrows, is more interesting than any conventionally beautiful face could be (p. 9). Her almost mystical communion with nature marks her one of God's own. "Every breath which sighed through the emerald boughs seemed to sweep a sympathetic chord in her soul, and she raised her arms toward the trees as though she longed to clasp the mighty musical box of nature to her heart. . . . She loved loved nature as only those can whose sources of pleasure have been sadly curtailed, and her heart went out, so to speak, after birds, and trees, and flowers, sunshine, and stars, and the voices of sweeping winds" (p. 17).

But this originally sinless child of nature becomes tainted by the evils of society, which provoke in her new and unnatural feelings of anger and hatred. While attempt-

ing to visit her sister, a beautiful fairy-like creature who has been adopted by a rich family, she is spurned at the door by the mistress of the house and contemptuously tossed some money. The once serene and stoical Beulah walks away stony-faced, her eyes "brimful of burning hate . . . unconscious that her lips were crushed till purple drops oozed over them" (p. 40). No longer is she receptive to the comfort and peace of nature. "The setting sun flashed his ruddy beams caressingly over her brow, and whispering winds lifted tenderly the clustering folds of jetty hair; but nature's pure-hearted darling had stood over the noxious tarn, whence the poisonous breath of a corrupt humanity rolled upward, and the once sinless child inhaled the vapor until her soul was a great boiling Marah" (p. 40). In a true romantic outcry against the evils of society, the author condemns the "miserable affectation of refinement, which characterized the age" as "the unyielding lock on the wheels of social reform and advancement" (p. 41).

The once pious, humble, patiently suffering Beulah, who found comfort as much in her Bible as in nature, now becomes bitter and vindictive, finding her life so utterly hopeless that she longs only to die. This fallen child undergoes a kind of death and rebirth when she contracts brain fever and narrowly misses death only through the devoted care of a Dr. Hartwell. This mysterious stranger is singularly sensitive to the despair of the forsaken thirteen-year-old girl and takes her into his comfortable home. Dr. Hartwell is Beulah's Rochester, "a proud, gifted and miserable

man," but with a handsome, though "repellently cold and grave" face which suggested a baffling, fascinating past of suffering and loneliness (p. 61). He is the typical romantic hero who seemingly has everything but despairs of life. Young, rich, handsome, educated, imaginative, and aesthetic, he finds life is without meaning or purpose because he lacks faith and love.

Beulah and Hartwell now become each other's savior, she inspiring him to Christian faith and he turning the homeless, poor, ugly maid into the beautiful princess. After much misunderstanding and suffering, owing mainly to Hartwell's jealous sister who fears that her daughter will no longer become Hartwell's heiress, Beulah and Hartwell marry. His conversion, of course, is not complete; Beulah will continue to be the guardian angel of his household, the story ending with her as his wife characteristically preaching to him: "Alas, for that soul who forsakes the divine ark, and embarks on the gilded toys of man's invention, hoping to breast the billows of life, and be anchored safely in the harbor of eternal rest! The heathens, 'having no law, are a law unto themselves;' but for such as deliberately reject the given light, only bitter darkness remains. I know it; for I, too, once groped, wailing for help" (p. 509). Like Jane Eyre, as well as Bertha and Blanche, she has become that much purer and deeper in her spirituality by virtue of her fall and redemption--the redeemed making the best redeemer.

Less sensational than Jane Eyre, with no insane first wife to part the lovers and no fire to cripple Hartwell for

life, Beulah, with its happier Cinderella ending, perhaps more accurately reflects the American temper. Based upon a more unequivocal scheme of goodness rewarded and evil punished, Beulah no doubt had a greater inspirational effect, confirming the honest and good working girl's invariable dream of a just and loving God sending a knight-in-shining armor to her rescue.

Most popular, however, of the rags-to-riches stories were those about the boys, those penniless, forsaken orphans who became the self-made businessmen and statesmen--the heroes of America. D. H. Lawrence perhaps identifies them best:

> The ideal man! And which is he, if you please? . . .
> Old Daddy Franklin will tell you. He'll rig him up for you, the pattern American. Oh, Franklin was the first downright American. He knew what he was about, the sharp little man. He set up the first dummy American. [3]

Benjamin Franklin may have set up the "dummy" American but it was Horatio Alger who immortalized him. The dazzling rags-to-riches rise of his boy heroes probably had the greatest influence in creating the myth of America. The unequalled enthusiasm for his one hundred thirty-five books, of which close to two hundred million copies were sold, attest to the fascination his modernized fairy tales had for the American people. They were avowedly boys' books, but the sheer number of their sales, as well as the widespread familiarity with his characters, his name becoming a part of our everyday vocabulary, indicate that they were read by adults as much as by children. The appeal of his boys, who are no more realistic than Little Eva, Elsie Dinsmore, or

Little Lord Fauntleroy, and who are, in fact, saints in their own way, was wholly inspirational. They unequivocally justified faith in America as the golden land of opportunity, as well as the American religion of middle-class morality, the blessedness of hard work, perseverance, thrift, integrity, clean living--and a measure of piety.

The belief in the Horatio Alger stories is explained by Ray Allen Billington in his study of the frontier:

> Acceptance of the rags-to-riches myth was almost universal in the United States long before it found literary expression in the pious stories of Horatio Alger and Oliver Optic. Thanks to an abundance of cheap land, limitless natural resources, and a benevolent political system that assured freedom to the individual, people believed, no one needed to stay poor. Any man with gumption, with ability, and with a go-ahead spirit could climb to the pinnacle of society. This was not a dream, but a sober fact.[4]

He goes on to explain that basic to this dream was "the tradition of the self-made man, reaching back at least to the Jacksonian era when birth in a log cabin became virtually a requirement for political success; American leaders boast of humble origins, while those of more tradition-governed nations take pains to hide their lower-class backgrounds."[5]

The first and probably the best of the Alger stories is Ragged Dick (1867), which can be discussed as the prototype for all the others. Dick conforms to the saintly-child pattern in many ways. He is an orphan, his mother having died when he was three years old, and his father having gone to sea before then, never to be heard from since. Dick has been on his own since he was seven, selling newspapers

and matches on the streets of New York, and currently blacking shoes. He is distinguished from the other bootblacks and ragamuffins by his total self-reliance, eagerness, honesty, and cheerfulness but, like the others, wastes his time and money in gambling and going to music halls. In his typical moralistic, didactic fashion, Alger preaches, "Now, in the boot-blacking business, as well as in higher avocations, the same rule prevails, that energy and industry are rewarded, and indolence suffers" (p. 156). Dick, then, has the potential for greatness, but it needs to be encouraged and developed through proper advice and inspiration. This he is given by a middle-class boy and his uncle whom he meets on the street. "Remember that your future position depends mainly upon yourself," the uncle admonishes, "and that it will be high or low as you choose to make it" (p. 205). With these prophetic words, five dollars, and a new suit of clothes, Dick turns over a new leaf. He rents a permanent room and puts his money in a savings account. Alger approvingly comments, "He had been accustomed to joke about Erie shares, but now for the first time, he felt himself a capitalist" (p. 218). Thrift and determination are now added to his other virtues, making his dream "to grow up 'spectable" a reality.

"Determined to make the most of himself--a resolution which is the secret of success in nine cases out of ten" (p. 246), he goes about becoming educated and respectably religious. He offers to share his room with a penniless, friendless but educated boy his own age in exchange for

tutoring. He attends Sunday school classes at the fashionable Fifth Avenue Church at the invitation of a prominent businessman, Mr. Greyson, who was impressed by his honesty. The blessedness of piety is pointed out by Alger, "Our young hero had taken an important step toward securing that genuine respectability which he was ambitious to attain" (p. 227). The redeemed now becomes the redeemer, lending his room-mate money for new clothes in order to get a better joy and charitably giving money to other less fortunate bootblacks. The self-righteous middle-class gratification from philanthropy is justified by the author's praise of his hero: "In more ways than one Dick was beginning to reap the advantage of his self-denial and judicious economy."

The turning point in Dick's career comes when, on the Brooklyn Ferry one night, he saves from drowning the six-year-old son of a rich business man. Impressed with Dick's manners, education, and attitudes, the father rewards him with a good job in his counting house. From there it is an easy climb for Dick to the top.

The total emphasis on self-help reveals a striking unconcern with social reformism. At no time is society blamed for not taking care of the forsaken, homeless street urchin. Alger does urge private support of homes for boys, but this in no way challenges the social system. Moreover, he curiously ignores the part that chance plays in the lives of his heroes. If Dick had not met the boy and his uncle on the street, or if he hadn't been on the Brooklyn ferry just when a rich man's son was about to drown, he might still be a

penniless bootblack. To acknowledge this would, of course, destroy the myth.

It is easy to see how these didactic books became the Bible for what was actually the middle-class religion of thrift and industry when such virtues were supposedly being rewarded in the lives of the Vanderbilts, the Rockefellers, and others. Dick is simply a variation of the child-saint, incarnating all the virtues that bring blessed happiness to man. And a particularly appealing saint he was, for his rewards were reaped here in this world, not in some shadowy afterlife. He was proof of a good and just God in heaven who could be relied upon to reward his virtuous children. D. H. Lawrence in his usual sardonic way, aptly pinpoints the American myth.

> "And that God will certainly reward virtue and punish vice, either here or hereafter."
> Now if Mr. Andrew Carnegie, or any other millionaire, had wished to invent a God to suit his ends, he could not have done better. Benjamin did it for him in the eighteenth century. God is the supreme servant of men who want to get on, to produce. Providence. The provider. The heavenly storekeeper. The everlasting Wanamaker.
> And this is all the God the grandsons of the Pilgrim Fathers had left. Aloft on a pillar of dollars (p. 10).

As expected, a torrent of Horatio Alger imitations soon flooded the market. Some, like James Otis Kaler's Jenny Wren's Boarding-House (1893), drew also upon the older motif of the mysterious foundling as the protective angel dropped from heaven.

Fifteen-year-old Jenny, together with her mother, starts a boarding house for newsboys in order to earn a living. The

first five boys, aged twelve to fifteen, become the directors, investing ten dollars each with the promise of fifty per cent of all later profits. Here again are the forsaken orphans, whose salvation, however, is not the Bible but the more reliable and lucrative capitalism. God's blessing comes in the form of an abandoned baby on their doorstep whom they take in and eagerly and lovingly care for. The baby brings out the innate goodness in these boys who never knew the love and security of a family, and, in fact, turns a business arrangement into a home. Indirectly the baby turns out to be their good-luck piece. While trying to get medicine for it they become the victims of some thieves; the lawyer who wins their release later lends them money to get started again after their house burns down. Thus, they are tested through hardship only to be redeemed. Their final grace comes when the mother of the baby, who it is now learned was kidnapped and abandoned, turns up. The wealthy woman rewards them with a beautiful house.

These children are even a step ahead of the Alger hero, being thrifty and ambitious from the outset. Theirs is a secular faith, like Pollyanna's, comprised of a selflessness, optimism, and cheerfulness which sustains and rewards them.

Ragged Dick had its rural counterpart in Tom the Ready; or, Up from the Lowest (1888) by Randolph Hill. The fourteen-year-old honest, moral, pious, courageous, ambitious, industrious, and persevering boy hero is set up as a direct

challenge to the Huck Finns and Tom Sawyers. When he runs away from the orphanage and hides for days in a mountain cave, he is severely admonished by a wise adult: "Now I don't like your living in this mountain cave. It's too much like the boys of a sensational story-book. It will do for a time, because you are in a tight place; but successful men don't stay on a raft longer than is necessary to get ashore. You must go down among men and win your way by your two honest hands, a clear head with knowledge in it, and a true heart" (p. 43). Tom dutifully obeys, going to school, saying his prayers, and finally starting his own Express Company. He triumphs over every machination of the evil rich, who try to ruin this threatening rival. But justice prevails, with good rewarded and evil punished. Tom marries the beautiful and rich girl of his dreams and lives out his days as the wealthy and respected Governor of Vermont.

The novel that would seem to end all novels of the glorious rise of the forsaken orphan is Elizabeth Oakes Smith's The Newsboy (1854), surprisingly the earliest (together with The Lamplighter) of all these rags-to-riches stories, and the earliest, as well, of the city urchin stories, antedating Ragged Dick by thirteen years. I decided, nevertheless, to discuss it near the end rather than at the beginning of the chapter; because it is such an elaborate and often confused compendium of styles and motifs, I thought that the simpler, comparatively skeletal Alger story and its derivatives would provide a clearer and more

obvious outline of the kinds of ideas and characters typical of these stories.

As might be expected from a female author, the Alger kind of boy's story of how to win fortune and fame in three easy steps is expanded for the ladies into a melodramatic saga of the unrecognized prince in pauper's clothes. She out-sentimentalizes and out-preaches every one of her contemporaries to the point that, to the modern reader, the book seems no less than a self-parody, though, to be sure, it was taken quite seriously in its time. Every motif and device of the genre is used--joyous deaths of child victims, mystical visions of angels and paradise, tear-jerking descriptions of wretched slum victims, ecstatic hymns in praise of Mother and the self-made business man, faith in God as all-loving and protective, as well as the sensationalism of a mysterious kidnapping and maudlin homilies to a sympathetic nature.

Bob the newsboy is the friendless and forsaken city orphan whose innate goodness protects him from the surrounding evils of his environment. Honest, self-reliant, and courageous, he is the prince awaiting his fairy-godmother to remove the tatters and reveal to all the world who he is. "Bob never saw himself as a skin-of-a-little-old-boy, thin and ragged, despised and poor, but he saw only the soul of goodness and human kindness, and manly courage, waiting to emerge from his rags and poverty into a true beautiful life" (p. 161). His total faith in himself is reinforced by a total faith in God, who sends down "a soft

smiling angel" to shield him with her wings" (pp. 104-105).

Two motifs run throughout the book--the pathos of the forsaken child victims of the city slum, and the all-loving and protective God who does not forsake his children--the inconsistency of which is typically ignored by the author.

There are long descriptive passages on the life of the homeless city child, which are of sociological and historical interest for us today. With the zeal of a reformer, the author directly attacks society for neglecting her unfortunates, echoing the romantic despair of the city as "a wilderness more solitary than the wild country region can furnish forth--where people seem to each other dim and shadowy like trees walking, for no one sees his neighbor face to face, only a moving mass of tailoring and dress-making, placed upon machines, with cold, hard eyes looking out from painted faces. You wouldn't think," she concludes, "there was ever a heart amongst them all" (p. 153).

But then in the next breath she praises God not only for protecting all children but also for blessing the poor and wretched ones with glorious dreams of salvation.

> He poureth into the soul of the poor squalid child of poverty, dreams as fair, it may be fairer than those which come to the daintiest cared-for child of wealth.
>
> I love children, for in truth I am little less than a child myself. I don't mind it. Children are nearest heaven, you may be sure of that. Bad men and women, whose crimes make them afraid in the night time, have no fears if they can have an innocent child to sleep with them, for the angels come wherever the child is, and they keep evil spirits at a distance, holding ward and watch over the pure in heart. Did not the good Saviour love little children, declaring the heavenly to be such? (p. 163)

Thus, despite every hardship and persecution, the newsboy, protected by that first God-given innocence of mankind, is the paradigm of virtue. "Nothing skulking, nothing mean, nothing vicious lurks in the aspect of the true Newsboy" (p. 33) who has "a code of morals, very old, very safe, and very respectable, . . . written upon the heart in the first creation of a man" (p. 72).

Echoing the romantic cry for a world born anew in the freshness and wholeness of the child's love, trust, and faith, the author has a vision of a universe united in joy, peace, and beauty. "A new thought had been born to the world. Something had gone from heart to heart at that time, which had caused every man to look into his neighbor's face, and he whom he had supposed a foe, an outcast, the off-scouring of the earth, was found to be a brother; and when men saw this they as naturally looked up, and with one voice they chanted, '<u>Our Father</u>'" (p. 107).

Bob is the saintly redeemer who in his own limited way will bring love and comfort to others, rich as well as poor. He rescues the abandoned five-year-old hunchback, Minnie, and by virtue of his Christ-like love for her, his face is virtually transformed, radiating the divine in him. "People who came near to Bob saw a gleam of beauty, heard a chord of music, and felt a thrill of joy, they couldn't tell how nor why, but it was because of the good angels that went up and down with him" (p. 151). Minnie, too, though crippled and forsaken, has her own"good angels that look after forsaken orphans,--of whom it is said, 'when father and mother fore-

sake me, the Lord will take me up'" (p. 151), and finds her salvation in a better hereafter, dying joyously with visions of heaven and hosannahs on her lips. Bob then comforts Mollie, a friendless, wretched prostitute, who similarly dies with beatific visions of being welcomed by the loving and merciful Jesus.

In his "Ishmael-like wanderings" (p. 10) the newsboy apostle next comes upon an abandoned baby girl, Dady, whom he adopts as his own and who, this time, doesn't die. He simultaneously befriends an old beggar woman, "Rack-o-bones," taking her in to live with them in order to provide a woman's care for the infant.

Bob's divine mission is not limited to the poor, for the rich, the author writes, are as needy in their own way. They are guilty of hypocrisy and uncharitableness, maintaining the letter of Christian law but without the true spirit of Christ. With all the mystery and sensationalism of the Gothic, Bob becomes the Christian knight who saves the fair damsel from the devil. He becomes singularly fascinated by the fair, golden-haired, angelic Imogen who lives in a big, beautiful but cursed house that is haunted day and night by three sinister, Satanic men--"a little Paradise within but evil-haunted without--like Eden environed by Satan" (p. 230). Imogen is kidnapped by them and in his attempts to rescue her Bob becomes an adopted member of her family. The author uses the occasion for a sentimental eulogy on the American merchant (Imogen's father) as the savior of the world and an ecstatic hymn in praise of holy mother-

hood. "Woman, thou art the angel of the home . . . an angel of light, causing sunshine over the sill, . . . making "bird and blossoms cluster there--white doves coo from the eave-tops" (pp. 232-233). She even outdoes Timothy Shay Arthur in her melodramatic warning of the dire consequences of a loveless home in which the mother has forsaken her divine mission. "Snake-like creatures keep ward and watch. Moles, and bats, and moths, and reptiles silently destroy. . . . Sorrow comes, and the 'silver cord' which binds together the great human family, draws him into the circle, and owns him brother. Passion and crime pluck at the miserable man . . . Woman, look to it. This is thy work--this blood is upon thy skirts" (p. 234). Through his own suffering and Bob's inspiration, the proud and hard father learns humility and submissiveness, becoming a repentant and charitable child of the Lord. The aunt, good, loving, and pious in every respect save for the crowning grace of tolerance and forgiveness for those who do not rigidly follow the laws of the Church, learns from Bob true Christian love. For the mother, who was already a saint, there is nothing left but to die beatifically.

After years of unrelenting searching for Imogen, Bob, now an educated, cultured gentleman and a successful businessman under the tutelage of the father, finally rescues the girl. But he does not win her hand, for the author must preserve to the end the inspirational pathos and melodrama of her wandering Ishmael, "the unknown, unaided, self-reliant, manly young Newsboy" (p. 527).

The vision of the American as a man reborn, not in the first innocence of Adam, but in what many, notably the elder Henry James and Horace Bushnell, considered the higher state of redemption after the Fall is perhaps nowhere so thoroughly and unequivocally developed among these minor nineteenth-century novels as in The Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come (1898) by John Fox, Jr. It is the story of Chad's development, moral and social, from the age of eleven until young manhood in the hills and Blue Grass country of Kentucky, spanning the period just before, during, and after the Civil War.

Chad is the forsaken orphan, a wandering waif who knew neither father nor mother. He has been living with a mountain family in the Cumberland until now, when the plague kills them all, leaving him destitute. In his despair and loneliness he bitterly addresses a seemingly indifferent Almighty:

> God! . . . I hain't nothin' but a boy, but I got to ack like a man now. I'm a-goin' now. I don't believe You keer much and seems like I bring ever'body bad luck: an' I'm a-goin' to live up hyeh on the mountain jus' as long as I can. I don't want You to think I'm a'complainin'--fer I ain't. Only hit does seem sort o' curious that You'd let me be down hyeh--with me a-keerin' fer nobody now, an' nobody a-keerin' fer me. But Thy ways is inscrutable--leastwise, that's whut the circuit-rider says--an' I ain't got a word more to say--Amen (p. 9).

Very soon after he undergoes a spiritual crisis, in which his faith in God is restored, bringing him peace, hope, and new determination. His crisis is romantically externalized through the description of a storm which regenerates the

earth. The author stresses that this was more than the first upheaval of Creation; it was a redemptive, triumphant victory of life over death.

> Chad had seen other storms at sunrise, but something happened now and he could never recall the others nor ever forget this. All it meant to him, young as he was, was unrolled slowly as the years came on--more than the first great rebellion of the powers of darkness when, in the beginning, the Master gave the first command that the seven days' work of His hand should float through space, smitten with the welcoming rays of a million suns; more than the beginning thus of light--of life; more even than the first birth of a spirit in a living thing: for, long afterward, he knew that it meant the dawn of a new consciousness to him--the birth of a new spirit within him, and the foreshadowed pain of its slow mastery over his passion-racked body and heart. Never was there a crisis, bodily or spiritual, on the battle-field or alone under the stars, that his storm did not come back to him. And, always, through all doubt, and, indeed, in the end, when it came to him for the last time on his bed of death, the slow sullen dispersion of wind and rain on the mountain that morning far, far back in his memory, and the quick coming of the Sun-king's victorious light over the glad hills and trees held out to him the promise of a final victory to the Sun-king's King over the darkness of all death and the final coming to his own brave spirit of peace and rest (pp. 14-15).

It is, as it were, a symbolical Day of Judgment and redemption.

In his subsequent wanderings Chad is both redeemed and Redeemer, the Christ analogy implied by his being called "The Little Shepherd" and his finding his first home in an area called "Kingdom Come." He is in the heart of America, the land of rebirth, for here are both the rich farming lands of the valley as well as the cattle and sheep owner's grazing lands of the hills. He lives with the Turners who take advantage of both, having settled here while on their westward march. Chad, in his progression from his first home in the "mountain wilds," where his unknown ancestors had roamed

after the Revolution, to the prosperous but crude farm life of the hills, down to the rich Blue Grass country with its highly civilized Southern aristocracy of plantation holders, and finally back up the mountain from where he will forge on westward, embodies the saga of America, the ritual of perpetual growth and renewal.

The next stage in his journey begins with his trip, along with the Turner boys and the village schoolmaster, to the university down in the Blue Grass country. Again he is forsaken when he gets to the railroad station for the trip back home too late, finding that his companions have left without him. While wandering along the road he comes upon a rich plantation owner, Major Burford, to whom he is no less than the incarnation of Daniel Boone. Thoroughly delighted with the novelty of his pioneer, the Major takes him home with him. For the first time Chad experiences the evils of society in the form of social prejudice: to everyone but the Major, masters and slaves alike, he is nothing but poor white trash. He flees, taking refuge in the hills whose free air fills him with pure ecstasy. Believing that he is a bastard child, he is determined to make his own defiant way in the world, the instinct of pride and stubborn independence overruling all supplications by the Major to return. But in the spirit of the ambitious, proud American, he cannot stay in the hills for long, now that he has been made aware of his intellectual and cultural deficiencies. Courageous and resourceful, he returns to the university from which he emerges several years later an educated, cultured,

poised young man, inferior to no one. He is described as epitomizing the glory of America. "In his own short life, he already epitomized the social development of the nation, from its birth in a log cabin to its swift maturity behind the columns of a Greek portico. Against the uncounted generations of gentle people that ran behind him to sunny England, how little could the short sleep of three in the hills count! It may take three generations to make a gentleman, but one is enough, if the blood be there, the heart be right, and the brain and hand come early under discipline" (p. 213).

When the nation becomes divided by the Civil War, Chad symbolizes its ultimate unity and wholeness. Possessing the best qualities of both sides (though the South seems to furnish more of them), this child of the South chooses to fight with the North while, symbolically, insisting upon preserving his horse's name, Dixie. Spurned by everyone, he nevertheless has the strength to follow his conscience. "In him the pure spirit that gave birth to the nation was fighting for life" (p. 241). He emerges triumphant in every respect at the end of the novel, the valiant soldier, the heir to the rich Major, who has meanwhile discovered that he, not only is legitimate, but also a long lost relative, and the promised husband of a beautiful and rich Southern belle. But this Christ-like Shepherd of America must fulfill his calling and onward he goes to the promised land of the Golden West, re-enacting the pilgrimage of his forefathers, renouncing the security and luxury of his new status.

> Once again he was starting his life over afresh, with his old capital, a strong body and a stout heart. In his breast still burned the spirit that had led his race to the land, had wrenched it from savage and from king, had made it the high temple of Liberty for the worship of freemen--the Kingdom Come for the oppressed of the earth--and, himself the unconscious Shepherd of that Spirit, he was going to help carry its ideals across a continent Westward to another sea and on--who knows--to the gates of the rising sun (pp. 403-404).

Here is the American myth, in its most romanticized, idealized form, Americanism becoming virtually a religion, the heroic American the earthly realization of post-Judgment Day man reborn in the image of Christ. And it is all crowned with the fulfillment of solid middle-class ideals, the legitimacy, wealth, and social distinction of the Savior assured.

Footnotes to Chapter Five

[1] A Critical History of Children's Literature (New York, 1953).

[2] The Feminine Fifties (New York, 1940), p. 53.

[3] D. H. Lawrence, Studies in Classical American Literature (New York, 1964), Chap. II, p. 9.

[4] America's Frontier Heritage (New York, 1966), p. 113.

[5] Ibid., p. 114.

VI

The Bad Boys

> It is, after all, what we know from a hundred other sources that is here verified: the regressiveness, in a technical sense, of American life, its implacable nostalgia for the infantile, at once wrong-headed and somehow admirable. The mythic America is boyhood.[1]

After the Civil War a widespread resentment among the male writers towards the unreal, precocious, prissy saintly children of the domestic novels resulted in a proliferation of bad boy stories. They all declare that their sole aim is to rectify a false record, to rescue all boys and men from the ignominious stigma of the Lord Fauntleroys. Actually, however, the overwhelming majority of the saintly children were girls, and Little Lord Fauntleroy did not appear until 1886, almost two decades after the beginning of the bad boy movement and two years after the publication of Huckleberry Finn. It seems, therefore, that more was involved than just the desire to tell the truth. The precocious, pious, angelic little girl idolized by mother and aunts into a symbol of America's ultimate perfectibility was not the answer to the American male vision. The obedient and humble submission of the Elsie Dinsmores to all authority, temporal as well as divine, did not seem to reflect the true spirit of America--the ruggedness, aggressiveness, self-confidence that have become immortalized today by the Hollywood cowboy.

The carefree, spirited, mischievous small-town boy was

the perfect answer during the decades just after the Civil War. The image here described holds true for all the stories except The Lawrenceville Stories and Peck's Bad Boy, which, as will be discussed later, present a different image of the boy, reflecting the further changes in American attitudes. during the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century.

The bad boy who, unlike the girls, is not only not pious but often as mean as he is good in a primitive, savage kind of way, suggests that the influences of Rousseau and Primitivism--a more natural concept of the child--were felt, though to be sure within a still strong Christian tradition. He suggests the primal, unself-conscious innocence not only of Adam but also of the Noble Savage--an analogy that is explicitly made by many of the authors. What is especially interesting about the image of the boy as a "savage" is the way in which it gradually changes. It is at first the image of a wholly moral and pure innocent who has all the virtues of a supposedly "natural," pre-civilized man which, curiously enough, include beside the primal instincts and impulses of the primitive, the Christian virtues of hard work, honesty, and chivalry toward women, without any of the vices of an uncivilized barbaric society. It then becomes the image of an ignorantly amoral innocent primitive, as mean as he is noble, enjoying a mystical rapport with the universe yet lacking an acceptable sense of morality and justice. Both, however, are equally idealized and sentimentalized for the one quality seemingly lost in civilized man--an instinctive harmony with

the natural world.

It is precisely this "natural" quality of the boy, his inseparability from the landscape, that distinguishes him from all the other fictional children, the boys as well as the girls. For he is no less unrealistic, no less a symbol--rather a symbol used in a different way. The bad boy is the embodiment of pastoral America; the woods and fields are his natural and instinctive home. This image reflects, to be sure, the romantic image of the child, the Wordsworthian boy who has a divinely inspired sensitivity to nature. The authors' frequent allusions to the boy's closeness to God as he ecstatically throbs in unison with nature are often supported by quotations from Wordsworth. But the angelic girls too experience a mystical rapport with the universe, enjoying a private communion with the wind and stars from which adults are excluded. What makes the bad boy different is his own, peculiar relationship with nature. He does not speak to the stars or hear the wind whisper to him. He is blind to a flower or a sunset but fascinated by a cave or a dead animal. Nature is his everyday world, his instinctive habitat. His is an unself-conscious unity and harmony with the natural world, the only world where he feels wholly free and alive. Paradise for the boy is the freedom to kick off his shoes and spend the entire day roaming the woods and swimming in the streams. The boy then symbolizes that simpler, more harmonious life, that existence close to nature that was, and in fact still is, the dream of the American.

The bad boy books reflect a desire to reclaim a sup-

posedly idyllic past, to withdraw from a repressive civilization.[2] They are part of a literary tradition to which Walden and Moby Dick belong and which reaches its climax in Huckleberry Finn. The boy books are all characterized by a feeling of nostalgia, a sentimental longing for an imagined America of the past as a utopian garden where men easily pursued and attained happiness. The image of the carefree small-town boy was especially appealing to a post-Civil War generation. The growing industrialization of America, the rise of cities and their related problems of poverty and employment seemed to be solidifying America into social and economic strata that many felt were strangling the dreams that brought their ancestors to the New World. The fascination with the boy image is a manifestation of the magnetic image created of the West. Henry Nash Smith explains:

> The image of an agricultural paradise in the West, embodying group memories of an earlier, a simpler and, it was believed, a happier state of society, long survived as a force in American thought and politics. So powerful and vivid was the image that down to the very end of the nineteenth century it continued to seem a representation, in Whitman's words, of the core of the nation, "the real genuine America."[3]

In describing the image of the West as "an agricultural paradise" rather than as an untouched wilderness, Smith is making a point that is particularly relevant to the boy books. Beginning with Jefferson the prevailing image of America was of a cultivated, pastoral landscape; the aim was to transform wild nature into a well-ordered "Garden of the World." Crevecoeur idealizes an America of small, genteel farmers. Even Thoreau in his retreat from civilization

does not move to the frontier but builds his hut just a short distance from town and leads a well-ordered life cultivating beans. Nor do the boys live on the frontier but rather in neatly structured small rural towns. They do not lead the primitive life of a Natty Bumpo but belong to proper middle-class families who make them go to school and church. When they sneak away down the river they, unlike Huck, are not really running away but simply playing a game, intending to return home at sundown. Smith makes the special point that the pastoral ideal was not only not in conflict with the technological ambitions of the people but was in fact the chief motivation and saction for conquering the wilderness. In time, however, Leo Marx goes on to point out, the pastoral ideal became more and more of a myth, "a rhetorical formula rather than a conception of society, and an increasingly transparent and jejune expression of the national preference for having it both ways. . . . It enabled the nation to continue defining its purpose as the pursuit of rural happiness while devoting itself to productivity, wealth, and power" (p. 226).

The sentimental, rhetorical quality of the myth is evident in the boy stories written just at or after the turn of the century, the garden becoming a rural prep school retreat for boys largely from urban business families. One boy in fact, the son of a wealthy New York hotel owner, deliberately flees the valets, head waiters, and haberdashers in pursuit of the simple, carefree boy's world.

Most striking about the bad boy authors is that while

the early ones cling to the Jeffersonian ideal of rural peace and simplicity, the later ones easily accommodate themselves to the values and aims of a capitalist society. At first the boys are occasionally fascinated by the opportunity of becoming entrepreneurs, selling new wine or candy or setting up a circus, while in Owen Johnson's The Lawrenceville Stories (1910) they are almost totally absorbed in ingenious money-making schemes, becoming, in effect, small time wheeler-dealers. The image of the primitively innocent child has become the image of the American businessman.

This change in the image of the boy most clearly points up the mythic quality of the child in literature, his function as a vehicle for embodying the prevailing attitudes of the time. His dual quality as an Adamic innocent and as a sophisticated businessman seems to be a variation of "the machine in the garden" image that Leo Marx describes, reflecting the clash in the American mind between the desire to believe in the pastoral myth of America and the awareness, as well as the desire, for the power and wealth of industrialization. For Twain it was an irreconcilable conflict: after the steamboat destroys Huck's raft, Twain was at a loss as to how to continue his story and abandoned it for three years; and later when Huck is again faced with adoption and civilization, he lights out for the Territory. The other authors, however, make the reconciliation by revealing in their boys the early outlines of the successful businessmen they will become, the new heroes and saviors of America.

They are conspicuously different, though, from that other child capitalist, the Horatio Alger type of boy. The latter generally lives in the city, and when he does live in the country, as in Randolph Hill's story, he is perfunctorily admonished to stop his storybook, nonsensical living in caves, and the dutiful boy obeys and quickly gets a job. In other words, the dual aspect of the American myth--the belief in the pastoral ideal while pursuing materialist ambitions--is not present as it is in the bad boy books.

The supposedly realistic, humanized bad boy is then as much a literary creation, a cultural myth, as was the child paradigm of virtue; he is essentially a variation of the saintly redeemer. The Tom Sawyer type--the snub-nosed, freckle-faced, sandy-haired small-town boy, sneaking away from school with a fishing pole over his shoulder, exasperatingly disobedient but, or in fact consequently, irresistibly lovable is no less a literary invention than Little Eva--only this invention captured the imagination of America in a way that the Little Evas never could because it more successfully incarnated the American's image of himself. Interestingly, the bad boy books were not at all unique to America, being quite common in England (such as Kipling's Stalky & Co., which was a best-seller there as well as here), but it was only in America that the bad boy became a widespread cultural phenomenon, a national idol.

A basic pattern is discernible among most of the stories.[4] Actually the bad boy is a good-bad boy: he is not mean or

vicious, but rather disobedient and mischievous. The bullies and liars are the villains, not the heroes, He is part of an exclusively boy-world with its own rigid rules and standards, a world inviolate, jealously guarded from adults by secrecy and mutual loyalty. The tattletale who betrayed it became the most unregenerate of sinners never to be granted grace and re-entry into the sacred temple. Membership was carefully restricted to the "real" or "natural" or "spirited" boy, which meant the wholly physical, gregarious, hard-playing member of a gang who could defend his honor by a good fist fight (the ancestor of today's football-hero fraternity man); the studious or artistic boy, as well as the obedient, polite, scrubbed and shoe-clad boy was excommunicated as a sissy. The bad boy is dutifully respectful to adults when necessary, even chivalrous towards women, and usually falls in love, though in a thoroughly non-sexual, pre-puberty fashion despite the fact that he is often in his teens. He is always distinguished by a very fertile imagination, which supplies not only his mock battles and intrigues, but also the limitless ingenious devices for circumventing the laws and punishments of parents and teachers. Finally, he is the innocent, democratic American hero, easily making friends with social inferiors and outcasts and resenting with a vengeance the privileged rich. He has total faith in the ideals of America as preached in church and whitewashed by his history books, never doubting the ultimate triumph of right and justice. Not at all pious, loathing church and Sunday school, his is a secular middle-class

religion of manly courage and business shrewdness; a wheeler-dealer, he never misses an opportunity to make a few cents (without, of course, too much work).

The boy's badness is the stamp of his boyhood, for he actually has an inherent and incorruptible goodness that will inevitably develop into an adult moral responsibility and sympathy. His delinquency, far from being censored, is rather humored and enjoyed, for it is the declaration of his maleness, a symbol, as it were, of the free Adam--spirited, adventurous, impulsive, rejecting respectability (though always within the boundaries of a respectable middle-class home), but basically good and potentially great.

The use of childhood as a major symbol of the Adamic and pastoral myth was largely created and shaped by Mark Twain. But he, unlike the minor authors, did not confine himself simply to embracing the myth but goes on to use the child as an instrument of social satire. Tom Sawyer was written after Thomas Bailey Aldrich wrote his story, but it preceded all the other bad boy stories and, judging from the style and tone of these later books, it was undoubtedly Twain who was most responsible for shaping the bad boy image into the mythic American that it became.

Tom Sawyer as a character is basically the prototype of the typical bad boy. He outrageously disobeys his aunt, who loves him even the more for it; he loathes school and church; he fights; he runs away from home, coming back in time for his funeral; he is allergic to soap and water, sneaks out of the house with stolen doughnuts, but displays

the manliest courage and nobility when he unhesitatingly takes the punishment for his lady love's misdemeanor. But Tom Sawyer is also very different from the other bad boy books because of the boy's involvement with adult society, his role as an innocent eye revealing the evil and violence in society. As Albert E. Stone points out, "In Tom Sawyer Twain conjures up a vivid sense of the mystery, terror, and excitement behind the innocent eye of boyhood. But the golden patina of his memory, though in places as striking as any of his friends, is nevertheless dulled by an awareness of Tom's insecurity in a world partly violent and evil."[5] Unlike the boy's world in the other stories, which have only brief and generally inconsequential skirmishes with the adult world, Tom's world becomes identical with the larger world of St. Petersburg. Stone continues, "In a way quite unlike Aldrich, Warner, Howe, or Howells, events in Tom's boy-world predict or repeat occurrences in the adult realm. Thus, on the night after Tom and Joe Harper play Robin Hood and pretend to kill each other Tom witnesses the actual murder of Doc Robinson by real robbers in the graveyard" (p. 79). Twain has not written merely a boy's adventure story; nor has he written the more typical nostalgic idyll of a lost golden youth, for Tom's involvement with murder is hardly idyllic. Again, Stone explains it most succinctly: "The novel that began as a satire for adults, trimmed its acerbities to appeal to children, developed into a full-scale social study of a town, and finally emerged as the moral and psychological report of a boy's tentative initiation into manhood" (pp. 87-88). Neither the

strong social satire nor the initiation is found in the other stories, where the boys enjoy a carefree, secure, and static existence in a magic world of their own.

Huckleberry Finn is so different from the typical bad boy book that it can hardly be considered as part of the genre. Whereas the other boys belong to secure, respectable middle-class homes, only playing at pirates and robbers and Robinson Crusoe, Huck actually is a homeless social rebel and outcast, experiencing real violence, fear, and treachery. He will not grow up to be the solid, respected citizen that Tom Bailey and Ike Partington and even Tom Sawyer will be. He created his own myth, which fascinates Americans to this day, but it was not the more popular and widespread myth of the conventional good bad boy of the nineteenth century.

Probably Twain's greatest influence upon the minor writers' conception of boyhood derives from two of his early short stories, "The Story of the Bad Little Boy" (1865) and "The Story of the Good Little Boy" (1870). The first is a thoroughly delightful and pointed story that takes the last breath of life out of the goody-good child. Using every standard characteristic and device of the saintly-child story from the domestic novel and Sunday school books, Twain simply reverses the expected formula of virtue rewarded and vice punished, with the bad boy having a thoroughly enjoyable time and the good boy somehow ending up with all of his punishments.

To begin with, Mark Twain makes it quite clear from the outset that his boy, Jim, has a stout healthy mother who is

not about to die of consumption and with whom there is no very special tie of love and duty, neither willing to sacrifice him or herself for the other. In fact, Jim's mother has often been heard to say, "If he were to break his neck it wouldn't be much loss" (p. 6). And Jim feels perfectly free to play any trick on his mother that he can get away with. For example, he steals jam and, feeling nothing but glee, fills up the jar with tar.

> He didn't kneel down all alone and promise never to be wicked any more, and rise up with a light, happy heart, and go and tell his mother all about it, and beg her forgiveness, and be blessed by her with tears of pride and thankfulness in her eyes. No; that is the way with all other bad boys in the books; but it happened otherwise with this Jim, strangely enough. He ate that jam, and said it was bully, in his sinful, vulgar way; and he put in the tar, and said that was bully also, and laughed, and observed "that the old woman would get up and snort" when she found it out; and when she did find it out, he denied knowing anything about it, and she whipped him severely, and he did the crying himself (p. 7).

Then he steals the teacher's penknife and, afraid of being found out, slips it into the cap of George Wilson, "poor Widow Wilson's son, the moral boy, the good little boy of the village, who always obeyed his mother, and never told an untruth, and was fond of his lessons, and infatuated with Sunday-school" (p. 7). But no omniscient and omnipresent justice comes to save not only poor George from a whipping but also misguided Jim from a dissolute, wasted life à la Horatio Alger.

> And then Jim didn't get whaled, and the venerable justice didn't read the tearful school a homily, and take George by the hand and say such a boy deserved to be exalted, and then tell him to come and make his home with him, and sweep out

> the office, and make fires, and run errands, and chop wood, and study law, and help his wife do household labors, and have all the balance of the time to play, and get forty cents a month, and be happy (pp. 7-8).

Moreover, Jim goes boating on Sunday and not only does not drown but does not even get struck by a single flash of lightning or get caught in the tiniest storm. (Even in Thomas Bailey Aldrich's story the boys get caught in a storm, with one drowning while trying to moor the boat.) Nor does Jim have any hesitation over hitting his sister when he is angry "and she didn't linger in pain through long summer days, and die with sweet words of forgiveness upon her lips that redoubled the anguish of his breaking heart" (p. 8).

The sequel to this is "The Story of the Good Little Boy" (1870), which uses the same reversed pattern of reward and punishment, this time from the side of the good boy, who inexplicably suffers more and more with each attempt to be good. Jacob was one of those boys who obeyed his parents, learned his lessons, never played hookey, was always on time for Sunday school, never played marbles on Sunday, and never lied or stole in his life. An avid reader of Sunday school books, his one aim in life was to imitate those saintly children and be similarly immortalized in print. The one distressing fact that he could not quite reconcile himself to, however, was that good little boys in Sunday school books never lived long enough to read about themselves.

> He knew it was not healthy to be good. He knew it was more fatal than consumption to be so supernaturally good as the boys in the books were; he knew that none of them had ever been able to stand

> it long, and it pained him to think that if they put him in a book he wouldn't ever see it, or even if they did get the book out before he died it wouldn't be popular without any picture of his funeral in the back part of it. It couldn't be much of a Sunday-school book that couldn't tell about the advice he gave to the community when he was dying. So at last, of course, he had to make up his mind to do the best he could under the circumstances--to live right, and hang on as long as he could, and have his dying speech all ready when his time came (p. 68).

But nothing seems to go right with Jacob, not even his death. Every good deed of his to save those other wicked boys from disaster curiously ends with the wrath of God directed at him. When he spies a boy stealing apples, it is Jacob who breaks his arm as the other falls out of the tree and lands on him. And when he sees the bad boys starting off in a boat on Sunday, he dutifully runs out on a raft to warn them of the dire consequences, only to fall into the river himself, catch cold, and lie in bed sick for weeks. Even his death is like nothing ever read about in books, catching him totally unexpected and unprepared, with not the briefest chance for an immortal last speech. While he is trying to save some dogs from mean boys fooling around with nitroglycerin, it somehow turns out that everyone including the dogs have fled except poor Jacob when the nitroglycerin explodes, and his body is flown sky high and scattered in four directions. Mark Twain perplexedly comments, "His case is truly remarkable. It will probably never be accounted for" (p. 70).

Thomas Bailey Aldrich's The Story of a Bad Boy (1869) is one of the first full-length bad boy stories, preceding Tom Sawyer by seven years. Still a popular book for boys in this century (the edition read for this dissertation was published as late as 1930), it had an enthusiastic reception among adult readers as well during its time. It is narrated by an amused, nostalgic, wistful adult remembering his "happy, magical Past" in whose "fairy atmosphere" even his most hated boyhood enemy now "stands forth transfigured with a sort of dreamy glory encircling his bright red hair" (p. 3). It is this "auld lang syne" tone that, despite the frequently enjoyable humor, renders Aldrich's boy just a little too cute, too much on the side of the angels.

Aldrich's deliberate desire to correct the totally unrealistic image of the thoroughly good child is declared at the outset; at the same time, though, he also reassures the reader that his bad boy is in no sense a real villain.

> This is the story of a bad boy. Well, not such a very bad, but a pretty bad boy; and I ought to know, for I am, or rather was, that boy myself.
>
> Lest the title should mislead the reader, I hasten to assure him here that I have no dark confessions to make. I call my story the story of a bad boy, partly to distinguish myself from those faultless young gentlemen who generally figure in narratives of this kind, and partly because I really was not a cherub. I can truthfully say I was an amiable, impulsive lad, blessed with fine digestive powers, and no hypocrite. I didn't want to be an angel and with the angels stand; I didn't think the missionary tracks presented to me by the Rev. Wibird Hawkins were half so nice as Robinson Crusoe; and I didn't send my little pocket-money to the natives of the Feejee Islands, but spent it royally in peppermint-drops and taffy candy. In short, I was a real human boy, such as you may meet anywhere in New England, and no more like the impossible boy in a story-book than a sound orange is like one that has been sucked dry (p. 1).

His boy does not escape the saintly child formula, however, as much as the author thinks. For Tom, too, is a kind of orphan, having left his parents in New Orleans to live with his grandfather and spinster aunt in Massachusetts. He is essentially a variation of the misunderstood abandoned waif, being thrust upon people out of touch with boys, the grandfather long past his child rearing days and the aunt having never been a mother at all. He is for them a highly exasperating, mischievous child almost too much to handle, constantly shocking them with new and unimagined pranks. But the very important difference between Tom and the child saints is that Tom is neither persecuted nor forced to reform through self-mortifying feelings of guilt; on the contrary, he has a thoroughly delightful, guiltless time, and it is rather the adults who must adjust to his ways, and much to their benefit, for he enlivens their otherwise dull placid lives.

Most of the story consists of episodic recollections of the everyday pleasures (which usually means pranks) of restless, imaginative boys, such as setting off the town cannons or staging a mock battle (replete with descriptive diagrams of the fortress, enemy positions, and so on), fights with the town bully, or the persecutions of initiation into the boys' secret club. For the most part, Tom Aldrich is a far less colorful boy than Tom Sawyer. He is not so naughty (never plays hookey from school), far less daring (when he tries to run away his destination is the security and comfort of Mommy and Daddy in New Orleans), and his adventures are less absorbing. A moral Sunday school element directed to

boys, lest they be too bad, is felt from time to time, especially in connection with the dangers of sneaking away in a sail boat to play Robinson Crusoe. The boys do not simply suffer the terrors of a storymy night on a deserted island but one of them drowns in his attempt to moor the boat. It's fine to be naughty, but only within limits.

Only occasionally and very mildly is some social criticism voiced, and not through the innocent eye of childhood but through the wiser, more perceptive judgments of the adult. For example, one of the boys' pranks serves to reveal the greed and duplicity of adults. When the boys set fire to an old stage coach, one of them notes that the owner, knowing he couldn't sell it for even seventy-five cents, deliberately turned his back while the boys burned it, only to charge them each three dollars afterwards for damages, making a neat fifteen-dollar profit. But it is an adult voice that comments: "Mr. Wingate <u>had</u> tacitly sanctioned the act by not preventing it when he might easily have done so. He had allowed his property to be destroyed in order that he might realize a large profit. . . . Such was the duplicity of that aged impostor!" (p. 76) Another time he simply bypasses his boy altogether to comment on the greedy foolishness of men. One Silas Trefethen, expecting another war with Britain from which he planned to reap his fortune, buys up all the old guns and cannon from the War of 1812, mortgaging his house, barn, horse, and grocery to do so. The joke is that everyone profits, collecting old guns and selling them to him for double their value, except poor old Silas, who

dies, still hopeful and radiant, but completely broke.

Aldrich the adult captures well the absurdity of the austere New England observance of the Sabbath, which, unfortunately, was to his boy hardly a source of mirth, but rather awesomely grim. "At seven o'clock my grandfather comes smilelessly down stairs. He is dressed in black, and looks as if he had lost all his friends during the night. Miss Abigail, also in black, looks as if she were prepared to bury them, and not indisposed to enjoy the ceremony" (p. 56). Remembering how she presided over breakfast on that solemn occasion, he writes, "Miss Abigail gazes at the urn as if it held the ashes of her ancestors, instead of a generous quantity of fine old Java coffee" (p. 56).

The oppressiveness of the Church is a point touched on in nearly every one of the boy books, an explicit rejection of the morbid and excessive piety of the saintly-child. Aldrich's boy glumly notes that the only thing he was permitted to do on the Sabbath, aside from going to church, was to read Baxter's Saints' Rest, adding, "I would die first" (p. 57). The critical, but tolerant author writes that he doesn't think all this was hypocrisy, but "merely the old Puritan austerity cropping out once a wekk" (p. 57), which should be replaced by a more cheerful attitude toward religion. In a rather too moral and sentimental tone, reminiscent of the ladies, he quotes a seven-line verse on the "blessed sunshine" of the Lord's day. In other words, he is not rejecting respectable piety, but simply making it more compatible with a child.

The most amusing experience, though today somewhat of a cliché, is Tom's abortive fling with romance. Love for him is simply one more face-saving obligation of the boy's world, like fighting the town bully or going through the club's initiation ritual. Aldrich writes that actually Tom didn't originally care for girls, but seeing his comrades carrying on liaisons with the girls at Miss Dorothy's select boarding school, he felt it was the only proper thing for him to do also. Like a soldier going into battle, he explains, "I resolved, as a matter of duty, to fall in love with somebody, and I didn't care in the least who it was. In much the same mood that Don Quixote selected the Dulcinea del Toboso for his lady-love, I singled out one of Miss Dorothy's incomparable young ladies for mine" (p. 193). After being rebuffed several times, he matter-of-factly concludes "that I was not a boy likely to distinguish myself in this branch of business" (p. 193). Typically, then, he falls in love with his nineteen-year-old cousin and thoroughly luxuriates in his role as the unrequited lover, or as Aldrich puts it, the "Blighted Being." Comparing his reaction to the news of her marriage to that of the people when they heard about the Lisbon earthquake, Aldrich, with tongue in cheek reminiscent of Twain, comments:

> My sorrow was genuine and bitter. It is a great mistake on the part of elderly ladies, male and female, to tell a child that he is seeing his happiest days. Don't you believe a word of it, my little friend. The burdens of childhood are as hard to bear as the crosses that weigh us down later in life, while the happinesses of childhood are tame compared with those of our maturer years. And even if this were not so, it is rank cruelty to throw shadows over the young heart by croaking, "Be merry, for to-morrow you die!" (pp. 199-200)

Young Tom becomes "Hamlet and Werther and the late Lord Byron all in one" (p. 210), brooding in solitude, taking lonely walks, visiting cemeteries, refusing to comb his hair or to eat, reading The Mysteries of Udolpho and The Sorrows of Werther, memorizing Byron and even writing his own "Stanzas to One who will understand them." Aldrich captures exactly the spirit of childhood when he remembers that "if I could have committed suicide without killing myself, I should certainly have done so" (p. 207). He confesses that he never enjoyed himself so much, although "the oddest thing about all this is, I never once suspected that I was not unhappy" (p. 205).

The presexual innocence of Tom's love is typical of the boy books, where girls usually do not even appear on the scene (Shillaber, Eggleston, Warner, Howells), or when they do, as in The Court of Boyville, they are merely the audience for such demonstrations of affection as winning races and fist fights. This reticence in acknowledging the sexual interest of boys in their early teens is particularly striking when we compare these boys, for example, to Holden Caulfield, who is only about a year older than most of them. The reasons are perhaps best explained by Albert E. Stone when he considers this very question in relation to Tom and Huck:

> One reason Twain, in common with his contemporaries, shied away from the fact of sex in the lives of Tom Sawyer and his playmates stems from a deep-seated ambivalence he felt in respect to time and change. Sexual curiosity implied adolescence, growth toward adulthood. Turning his back upon such an implication, he took pains never to specify Tom's age. . . . Tom and Huck

> were conceived as children of indefinite years, whose presexual innocence absolved Twain from confronting certain problems of maturity, in particular physical love (p. 76).

Sexual curiosity would have belied the myth of Edenic innocence they were trying to recapture.

Thomas Bailey Aldrich's emphasis, unlike his contemporaries', was on village life rather than on the natural setting. His boy's world is encompassed by the village rather than the woods and streams. When he does sneak away in a sail boat the escapade ends in disaster. No mention is made, as will be encountered in the others, of the boy's almost mystical rapport with nature. Because of this focusing, one sees Aldrich as, perhaps more than the other writers, totally committed to the pastoral ideal, a cultivated small town America, rather than to a primitive, natural way of life. The great importance that he placed upon the town as the center of American life is evident from the pages and pages he devotes to a detailed description of its appearance and character.

> Oh, when I was a tiny boy,
> My days and nights were full of joy,
> My mates were blithe and kind:
> No wonder that I sometimes sigh,
> And dash the tear-drop from my eye,
> To cast a look behind.

This epigraph to B. P. Shillaber's Ike Partington; or, The Adventures of a Human Boy and His Friends (1878) aptly describes the sentimental tone of the book, a pure hymn to boyhood. The author treats his subjects wholly seriously,

his avowed purpose being to establish in literature the true picture of the real and typical "Human Boy," to end forever the image of the unreal prissy angel of the female novelists.

Half an orphan, fatherless Ike moves with his mother from the city to the most rural part of a small eastern town (this book and The Story of a Bad Boy are the exceptions to the usual western setting). He is, of course, admirably roguish and mischievous, but never malicious, his only aim being to have a good time. And, in fact, his mischief, far from being censored, is glorified to the point that adults even ask for his autograph! The forbidden taint of bookish sissiness is unequivocally eliminated by the author's judgment that the thinking boy is simply not enjoying boyhood. He reinforces this by demonstrating Ike's total inability to spell or to write a grammatically correct sentence. An unbelievably illiterate letter for someone his age, with such spelling as "rite," "whitch," "wen," "becos," is presented evidently not just for its cuteness but to illustrate the real boy's total rejection of book learning. Ike is a kind of Noble Savage.

The child-of-God-redeemer aspect of this basically moral and good-hearted young primitive is more explicit than in Aldrich's story. Shillaber comments: "He lives in a world of his own,--a sort of Ishmael on a small scale. And this name applies very well; for Ishmael means 'God who hears,' and He cares for the human boy, whatever any may say, and all the boy's eccentricities harden in good time into manly character" (p. 11). His intuitive morality, based upon the Golden

Rule, proves him a very precocious judge of human character as well as a source of redemption for those adults found guilty of a sour temper, unkindness or selfishness. He, for example, transforms mean and grouchy Mr. Grum into a jolly old man: because Mr. Grum refuses to help Ike when his sailboat capsizes, Ike and his buddies lock him into his house and play circus on his fastidiously gardened front lawn. Even the teacher who lectures them on the necessary respect for adults, learns from the innocent but perceptive question of one of the boys, "If a man wishes to be respected, ought he not to be respectable?" (p. 77) The author rushes in with a moral reminder of the innate goodness and intuitive wisdom of his "bad" boy, which will ultimately make him a highly moral and respectable man:

> A hint at a moral may be put in here very briefly, instead of at the end, regarding a boy's respect for superiors. The question put by the boy gives the condition of the boyish mind. He has no superiors really, and certainly has no respect for what is mean. He feels that he is as good, as wise, and respectable, as any one; and he acts upon the Golden Rule, as he understands it, of treating others pretty much as they treat him. He doesn't analyze very keenly: that is matter for after time and education. He grows into moral wisdom as he grows into his mature clothes; but while he is a boy he cannot be any thing else. Affections, morals, duties, have not hardened into purpose yet; but they are silently taking form to be revealed in the "sweet by and by" (pp. 77-78).

Here, as in Aldrich's story, adults are judged by the boy's standards, and the best kind of adult is the retired sailor, a kind of eccentric child-adult, who, still living in a now make-believe world of the sea, a world apart from society, can enter into a boy's world and easily subscribe

to its codes. When Ike's boat capsizes, Captain Bob, who could easily have waded out to him in the four-feet deep water, insists on preserving the decorum of seamanship and goes after him in his boat. And when Aldrich's Tom runs away to Boston, Sailor Ben secretly follows him on the train, letting him finish his trip, instead of humiliating him by dragging him off at the first stop. Living in a mock ship cabin replete with portholes and flagstaff, Sailor Ben flies his flag at half-mast the day Tom finally leaves the town for good.

Ike's ingenious talent for pranks as well as his instinctive sense of fairness are combined with a middle-class business shrewdness. Fulfilling his mother's desire that he belong to some church, he not only chooses the one that had the funniest concerts and best picnics, but gets a job pumping the wind into its organ each Sunday. Finding himself exploited by the organist who keeps demanding more pumping for the same fee, he avenges himself. During a special performance he suddenly, at the highest and most exciting point of a song, with the tenors, sopranos, and bassos all hanging in mid-air, stops pumping--the organ stops, and everyone is thrown off in voice as well as in temper.*

Spanning one whole year, the book symbolically ends in spring, with these final words about the boy and his "journey towards manhood." "Ike Partington is a fair representa-

*Here again is a rejection of morbid Sabbath piety, even stronger than Aldrich's, reducing the Sunday church ritual to ridiculousness.

tive of his entire class. His is no phenomenal or exceptional case; and in his adventures and those of his young friends are found the same characteristics that distinguish the human boy all round the world and will become the grandest manhood" (p. 225).

One of the more delightful of the bad boy books is William Allen White's The Court of Boyville (1898), a collection of short stories and sketches about the several boys belonging to Boyville, which he invests with all the wonder and charm of a fairy tale or legend. It is a uniquely "Free Town," "free and independent; governed only by the ancient laws, made by the boys of the elder days--by the boys who found bottom in the rivers that flowed out of Eden; by little Seth, little Enoch, little Methuselah, and little Noah; by the boys who threw mud balls from willow withes broken from trees wherein David hung his harp a thousand years thereafter. For Boyville was old when Nineveh was a frontier post" (pp. xxviii-xxix). Boyville is the oldest of towns and the only one to survive independent and free; it owes allegiance to no one outside the town; "the Free Town has its own sovereign, makes its own idols." The fortunes of the rest of the world have no effect on this stable, secure kingdom, strong and inviolate. "The clatter and clash and hubbub that attend the triumphs of the kingdoms of the earth pass by unconquered Boyville as the shadow of a dream"(p. xxx). And just as the citizens of Boyville mind their own business, so they desire outsiders to do likewise. "The notion that spectacled gentry should come nosing through the streets and

alleys of Boyville, studying the sanitation, which is not of the best, and objecting to the constitution and by laws,--which were made when rivers were dug and the hills piled up,--the notion of an outsider interfering with the Divine right of boys to eat what they please, to believe what they please, and, under loyalty to the monarchy of the world, to do what they please, is repugnant to this free people" (p. xxiii).

Addressing himself to an adult reader, the author sadly notes that we often do not realize "what an impenetrable wall there is around the town of Boyville." No matter how we try to enter the town, "storm it as we may with the simulation of light-heartedness, bombard it with our heavy guns, loaded with fishing-hooks and golf-sticks, and skates and baseballs, and butterfly-nets, the wall remains" (p. xvii). It is odd, he continues, "that we have not learned to let a boy be a boy." It is the very essence and privilege of boyhood to pulsate with nature the way adults cannot. "Why not let him feel the thrill from the fresh spring grass under his feet, as his father felt it before him, and his father's father, even back to Adam, who walked thus with God! There is a tincture of iron that seeps into a boy's blood with the ozone of the earth, that can come to him by no other way. Let him run if he will; Heaven's air is a better elixir than any that the alchemist can mix. What if he prefers the barn to the parlor?" (p. sviii) Moreover, it is the boy's prerogative, if not his duty, to be naughty and to fight as proof of his full-blooded maleness. "What if he fights? Does he not take the risk of the scratched face and the bruises? Should he

not be in some measure the judge of the situation before him when the trouble begins? Boys have an ugly name for one of their kind who discovers suddenly, in a crisis of his own making, that he is not allowed to fight. And it were better to see a boy with a dozen claw-marks down his face than to see him eat that name in peace" (pp. xx-xxi).

In a playful epigraph to the first story, White pays tribute to the conventional bad boy hero, "the ornery boy" who spits, goes barefoot, is at the foot of his class, and can't speak a decent English sentence. Death to the Lord Fauntleroys, who with their neat clothes, polished shoes, obedient ways and good English, are obviously nothing but a fake, hardly a genuine boy. Entitled "A Wail in B Minor," some of the verses are:

> Oh, what has become of the ornery boy,
> Who used to chew slip'ry elm, "rosum" and wheat:
> And say "jest a coddin'" and "what d'ye soy;"
> And wear rolled-up trousers all out at the seat?
>
> . . .
>
> Where now is the small boy who spat on his bait,
> And proudly stood down near the foot of the class,
> And always went "barefooted" early and late,
> And washed his feet nights on the dew of the grass?
>
> . . .
>
> Oh where and oh where is the old-fashioned boy?
> Has the old-fashioned boy with his old-fashioned ways,
> Been crowded aside by the Lord Fauntleroy,--
> The cheap tinselled make-believe, full of alloy
> Without the pure gold of the rollicking joy
> Of the old-fashioned boy in the old-fashioned days?
> (p. 2)

Each of the sketches draws a typical boy event or problem. In the first, for example, "The Martyrdom of Mealy Jones," we read of the problems of a mamma's boy caught in

a conflict between fear of his mother and fear of the other guys. Harold Jones is appropriately nicknamed "Mealy," by virtue of "his skimmed-milk eyes" which "popped out over a waste of freckles which blurred his features and literally weighted down a weak, loosely-wired jaw and kept an astonished mouth opened for hours at a time" (p. 115). White states the hopelessness of his problem as it appeared to poor Mealy:

> If it were the purpose of this tale to deal in philosophy, it would be easy to digress and show that Mealy Jones was a study in Heredity; that from his mother's side of the house he inherited wide, white, starched collars, and from his father's side, a burning desire to spit through his teeth. But this is only a simple tale, with no great problem in it, save that of a boy working out his salvation between a fiendish lust for suspenders with trousers and a long-termed incarceration in ruffled waists with despised white china buttons around his waist-band (pp. 4-5).

The absolutely baffling mystery of boys' ways is illustrated by the close friendship that springs up between Mealy and Piggy. Not only are they complete opposites, Piggy being the sturdy and rough King of Boyville, but they are rivals for the same girl. "And so," White melodramatically concludes, "while the comradeship between Piggy Pennington and Mealy Jones was built on ashes, its growth was beautiful to see" (p. 116). In fact, Piggy and Mealy become such fast chums that Piggy becomes humbly deferential to his rival, descending "from his throne to dwell with the beasts of the field" (p. 143).

The mock heroic courtship of the lady, "Heart's Desire," by Piggy humorously captures the seriousness of the challenge to the King of Boyville. His sending love notes is described

as taking "a header into the Rubicon" (p. 123). The contrast between its importance in the boy's world and its utter triviality in the adult's is conveyed by the hysterical laughter of his father and the giggles of the maid when the family learns what, as White calls him, the "son and heir of the house" has been after. They do not understand that his very status as King hangs on his winning the girl; they do not understand the shame and degradation involved in losing before all the other children. He finally wins the lady through his heroic prowess in a race. And just as the adults could not know his despair, so they cannot now know his joy. "The King of Boyville was full of joy--a kind of joy so strange that wise men may not measure it; a joy so rare that even kings are proud of it" (p. 177).

More significant, however, is the asexual character of Piggy's grand romance, his wooing of the lady consisting mainly of throwing peanut shells at her. When he finally gets up enough courage for a single kiss, he impetuously implants it on her ear and quickly dashes off.

The impenetrable wall separating Boyville from the adult world is nowhere more evident than in the two sketches describing the total insensitivity of adults to a boy's genuine feelings of despair. In the first the author shows how Mrs. Pennington concludes from Bud Perkins' horsing around with her son, Piggy, that Bud has not taken his father's recent death very hard at all. She simply does not understand the boy's way of coming to terms with feelings of despair and desolation, that his feelings are as profound or

perhaps even more so than an adult's, but that he does not enact them in the conventional adult ritual of mourning. "She did not know that the boyish whoop was the only thing that saved him from sobbing, as he left the home where he saw such a contrast to his own." In a swipe at religious hypocrisy, he adds, "How could a woman carrying the responsibilities of the social honor of the Methodist church in Willow Creek have time to use her second sight?" (p. 64) Nor do adults realize the embarrassment a boy suffers if he reveals any "softness," supposedly the affliction of girls only. While at the cemetery Bud wants to lay his best flowers on the grave of Piggy's sister but, seeing some adults come, he becomes embarrassed and pretends he is hunting for stones to throw.

In the second sketch Jimmy steals a chicken as part of a gang ritual, but later wants to go back and pay the owner for it. He is thwarted, however, by the grocer's hostility to what he can only see as a vicious thief. "The grocer thought the boy had bold, mean eyes. The youthful jaw set firmly, and the pain in his foot engraved ugly lines in his face. . . . He was not a boy that looked like a creature of dreams and of high resolve. No boy that amounts to much ever does look the part, as the actors say" (p. 228). Inarticulate in his fear and rage, he picks up two scale weights, throws them at the glass, and flees. "A boy with a grievance," White explains, "or a boy with a sore toe, or a boy with fear at his back, cannot fashion his conduct after the beautiful principles laid down in Mr. Herbert Spencer's

'Data of Ethics'" (p. 233).

The book ends with a rather sentimental description of the boy's instinctive rapport with nature by virtue of his still heaven-fresh innocence, a rapport hidden from adult eyes. As the boys lie in the grass "the undertones of their being were sounding in unison with the gentle music of the hour. Their souls--fresher from God than are the souls of men--were a-quiver, with joy, and their lips babbled to hide their ecstasies. In Boyville it is a shameful thing to flaunt the secrets of the heart" (p. 352). The boy feels only; he cannot intellectualize or even articulate this wonderful sensation. A touch of humor here fortunately saves the passage from mawkishness. Piggy ponders this unexplicable feeling of gladness and longing:

> Life was full of gladness for him, and his throat cramped with a delicious longing for he knew not what. He wondered vaguely if it were not something new and unimaginably good to eat. It was the nearest he could come to a defining of the longing (p. 354).

Continuing from the adult's view, White romantically concludes, "It is that which quickens the blood of all young creatures--the rosebud, the meadow-lark, the dragon-fly, the colt, the boy and the maiden, bidding them glorify God with the show and the example of their comeliness" (p. 354).

By casting his boys into the roles of heroic knights valiantly guarding their honor as well as their proud and ancient monarchy, he greatly furthers the establishment of the boy story as America's myth and legend. The small town "ornery boy" is America's hero.

The thinness of the line separating the saintly-goody-goody children from the good-bad boys becomes especially apparent in Edward Eggleston's The Hoosier School-Boy (1882). Thirteen-year-old Jack is perhaps better described as a good-good boy, for he conforms exactly to adult standards of excellence: he likes and excels in school, willingly obeys and even consults his mother, and prefers to use his wits rather than his fists. He is the man of the house for his saintly widowed mother, whom he adores and reveres as his spiritual guide. Jack has all the proper American values and ambitions; determined to rise socially and economically, he eagerly prepares all his lessons and has a job in the evenings in order to save money for college. But Jack is no girl-boy. He has muscle enough to use when he wants to, and doesn't hesitate to stand up to the town bully even when he knows he will be beaten to a pulp. Moreover, he excels in sports and even becomes team captain. Jack spans the boy and adult worlds, subscribing to all the boy codes and rituals, yet also adhering to adult standards and fearlessly meeting adults on their own terms. For example, the typical boy, if punished unjustly, will simply accept his guilt by virtue of the fact that he is being punished, and will concentrate all his efforts on trying to outwit his tormentor and escape punishment. Jack, on the other hand, when unjustly rebuked by the school-master for deliberately coming to school late, when in fact it was an accident, writes a note of apology for his lateness, but also explains the reasons for it and why the punishment is undeserved. And of course he is commended for his manliness

and the punishment is suspended. In fact, he even receives an apology from the teacher for his hasty harshness.

The traditional running-away episode becomes a legitimate and even constructive trip. When the school closes for lack of a teacher, Jack and his friend Bob want to attend another school eight miles down the river. (Note that they want to attend school; Tom Sawyer would have gasped in horror.) Having no money, they are given free use of a log cabin owned by a wealthy and sympathetic Judge, and set up a cozy, respectable home, even eating the good home-cooked meals sent over by the Judge's wife.

The episode serves especially to point up the saintly redeemer aspect of Jack by his befriending the class underdog. Nicknamed the Pet Owl, this ten-year-old boy, timid, emaciated looking, but precocious to a point not even Jack can approximate, is pushed around and abused by everyone but Jack, who agrees to take him into his log cabin. He promptly becomes their housekeeper, cleaning, bringing in flowers, and so on. This frail, slightly effeminate boy is a useful contrast to the more rugged Jack, enabling the author to reassure the reader that moral, studious Jack is a real boy after all.

The Hoosier School-boy is largely a moral, didactic book, the all-American Indiana boy illustrating the virtues of honest fair play, courage, lawfulness, and moral responsibility. The only element missing (consistent with the genre) from this frontier saint is piety; he never reads the Bible or even goes to church. His innate sense of right and wrong, encouraged by a good and wise mother, coupled with

his strength and determination to make the right and just prevail in his daily life, is his religion. Jack could easily be the forerunner of the Sheriff hero of Westerns, especially of the type who refuses to carry a gun. Decent, peace-loving, a man of principle, defender of the persecuted and victimized, idolized by women and children, grudgingly respected and feared by outlaws and bullies, he is the backbone of civilization without whom the West would be a barbaric country.

The simple image of the boy as a wholly moral, innocent and pure Adam, often too cute and lovable, gradually began to be supplanted by a more complex image of him as a kind of amoral ignorantly innocent savage, as ferocious and depraved as he is noble and great. The basic change seems to be in the moral values that are projected onto the image of childhood. The bad boy developed in reaction to the goody-good girl, yet morally they are not really very different. The boy may be mischievous and naughty, he may hate church and school and find soap and shoes utterly abhorrent, but he is as moral and "Christian" in spirit as the girl. In other words, their differences are, in a general sense, more in behavior than in character. The image of the boy found in the later stories, however, (Howells, Crane, Johnson) is notably different because of his amoral primitiveness; that is, unlike the earlier bad boys, he is shown to be selfish, cruel, vindictive--and finally even a liar and thief. But what is significant is that he is not condemned as being

immoral or depraved, but rather enjoyed as a guiltless savage who is simply acting according to his natural impulses. This later image suggests a dissatisfaction with the sentimentally pious emphasis on the child's God-given purity, which developed in reaction against the earlier Puritan concept of child depravity. It must be noted, however, that the child as an amoral savage is no less an idealized, sentimentalized image than is the child as a Christian primitive, for both are seen as a kind of Noble Savage by virtue of their instinctive harmony with nature.

The change in the image of the boy is most discernible in a comparison of two autobiographical sketches of boyhood, an earlier one by Charles Dudley Warner, Being a Boy (1877), and a later one by William Dean Howells, A Boy's Town (1890). For Warner the boy is the Noble Savage that was idealized by the European Primitivists. He has all the virtues of the "natural," simple, uncivilized man yet none of the vices of an uncivilized barbarian.

> Every boy who is good for anything is a natural savage. The scientists who want to study the primitive man, and have so much difficulty in finding one anywhere in this sophisticated age, couldn't do better than to devote their attention to the common country-boy. He has the primal, vigorous instincts and impulses of the African savage, without any of the vices inherited from a civilization long ago decayed or developed in an unrestrained barbaric society. You want to catch your boy young, and study him before he has either virtues or vices, in order to understand the primitive (pp. 198-199).

In a vein reminiscent of Wordsworth he romanticizes the boy's innate capacity to respond to the glories of nature, those unconscious influences "expanding his mind and nursing

him in heroic purposes" (pp. 215-216). Describing the splendors of the valley, the clouds, streams, and trees, he asks, "Can you say how these things fed the imagination of the boy, who had few books and no contact with the great world? Do you think any city lad could have written 'Thanatopsis' at eighteen?" (p. 217)

Howells too preserves the myth of the almost mystical rapport between the child and nature, even exceeding Warner in his rhetorical, rhapsodical hymn to the "natural" boy who, pulsing in unison with the grass and trees, foreshadows an ultimate unity and harmony in the universe.

> Life has a good many innocent joys for the human animal, but surely none so ecstatic as the boy feels when his bare foot first touches the breast of our mother earth in the spring. Something thrills through him when from the heart of her inmost being that makes him feel kin with her, and cousin to all her dumb children of the grass and trees. His blood leaps as wildly as at that kiss of the waters when he plunges into their arms in June; there is something even finer and sweeter in the rapture of the earlier bliss. The day will not be long enough for his flights, his races; he aches more with regret than with fatigue when he must leave the happy paths under the stars outside, and creep into his bed. It is all like some glimpse, some foretaste of the heavenly time when the earth and her sons shall be reconciled in a deathless love, and they shall not be thankless, nor she a step-mother any more (p. 84).

The image drawn here of the boy is especially interesting because it is so largely derivative of a stylized literary language. The typically nineteenth-century hyperbolic personification of nature ("the breast of our mother earth," the "dumb children of the grass and trees," "that kiss of the waters when he plunges into their arms," "the earth and her sons shall be reconciled in a deathless love,") shapes the exaggerated, rhetorical, humorless conception

of the boy. Howells' style is virtually an anachronism in the bad boy genre, the other authors using either a mock-heroic style, which by its humorous incongruity with the subject suggests the sheer delight and light-heartedness that the wistful, nostalgic adult associates with childhood, or a rural vernacular similar to Twain's, whose simple, native quality aptly captures the spirit of the rural boy. By using the vernacular the writers were able to free themselves of preconceived notions of how they should approach their subject and describe it rather as they saw it, creating a distinctively American image.

Howells, unlike Warner, sees in his boy the vices as well as the virtues of the primitive. Explaining how the boy's world is outside the laws that govern the adult world, he writes that it is governed by ideals and superstitions that "are often of a ferocity, a depravity, scarcely credible in after-life." In a primitive, irrational way, the boy feels these laws to be absolutely binding; "he obeys, but he does not know why, any more than the far-off savages from whom his customs seem mostly to have come" (pp. 67-68).

And like the ignorant savage, the boy holds an ignorantly superstitious egocentric conception of the world as revolving around and existing solely for him. In one sense Howells seems to be awed by the boy's wonderfully naive capacity to believe that God is primarily and continuously concerned only with him, that there was "some sort of supernal Being who abode in the skies for his advantage and disadvantage, and made winter and summer, wet weather and dry,

with an eye single to him" (p. 6). Yet at the same time he seems to pity the ignorant primitive for his superstitious concept of a whimsical, arbitrary God who is not motivated by the laws of justice. "He lives under a law of favor or of fear, but never of justice, and the savage does not make a crueller idol than the child makes of the Power ruling over his world and having him for its chief concern" (p. 6).

Howells seems more to deplore than to admire the absence of a moral sense, a virtue that is especially emphasized by Warner in his image of the boy. Howells, for example, writes that the boy like the savage is brave, but only in the sense of being venturesome and willing to fight for advantage; he does not possess the nobler courage of the civilized man. Furthermore, what makes the civilized man superior to the savage is work. Piercing the romantic idealization of the happy primitive who passes a carefree life hunting, fishing, and roaming the woods, Howells criticizes the immature yearnings of boys and men for a life free of duties and responsibilities. "They wish to escape these, as many foolish persons do among civilized nations, and they thought if they could only escape them they would be happy; they did not know that they would be merely savage, and that the great difference between a savage and a civilized man is work" (p. 151).

Warner's boy, in contrast, has an instinctive moral sense of the value of work and, more importantly, of justice and right and wrong. He is the prototype of all the Tom

Sawyers and Tom Baileys, naughty but never mean or depraved.

> John was not a model boy, but I cannot exactly define in what his wickedness consisted. He had no inclination to steal, nor much to lie; and he despised "meanness" and stinginess, and had a chivalrous feeling toward little girls. Probably it never occurred to him that there was any virtue in not stealing and lying, for honesty and veracity were in the atmosphere about him. He hated work, and he "got mad" easily; but he did work, and he was always ashamed when he was over his fit of passion. In short, you couldn't find a much better wicked boy than John (p. 182).

Lying and stealing are beyond the limits of a boy's rebellion against the adult world if he is to become the expected respectable citizen. Drawing upon the fable device, Warner illustrates the disastrous results of lying and stealing through the hanging of a chicken-killing fox whom the boy had domesticated only to find out later how inveterate his real predatory nature was.

> His fox nature had come out under severe temptation. And he died an unnatural death. He had a thousand virtues and one crime. But that crime struck at the foundation of society. He deceived and stole; he was a liar and a thief, and no petty ways could hide the fact. His intelligent, bright face couldn't save him. If he had been honest he might have grown up to be a large, ornamental fox (pp. 40-41).

The tone of course suggests at the same time a swipe at the society and its values. What does a free-spirited, wild fox want with being "ornamental"? The language, no less than the tone, is interesting for its similarity to Twain's--the rural vernacular that gives a fresh, deceptively naive and childlike view of the world.

The basic goodness and respectability of Warner's boy is always preserved. His most serious transgressions consist os refusing to wash or wear shoes, playing hookey, stealing

sugar, or eating green apples. Very much in the spirit of Twain's stories of the "Good Little Boy" and the "Bad Little Boy," Warner applauds the bad boys who disobey their parents and eat green apples and describes the fatal consequences of obediently resisting the forbidden fruit. The tone here is strikingly similar to Twain's: "One such boy . . .died of the most singular disease: it was from not eating green apples in the season of them. . . . Solomon would not disobey his parents and eat green apples,--not even when they were ripe enough to knock off with a stick,--but he had such a longing for them, that he pined, and passed away!" And in a typically Twainish tongue-in-cheek disavowal of any moral to be drawn, he concludes, "If he had eaten the green apples he would have died of them, probably; so that his example is a difficult one to follow. In fact, a boy is a hard subject to get a moral from. . . . John was a very different boy from Solomon, not half so good, nor half so dead" (pp. 98-99).

In his Whilomville Stories (1899) Stephen Crane departs somewhat from the Aldrich-Shillaber-White-Warner misty-eyed evocation of a lost idyll. Although he is the nostalgic, amused adult reminiscing about the artless charms of boys and sympathetically presenting the emotional world of boyhood, of which parents are ignorant, he at the same time, like Howells, reveals the thoughtless cruelty and insensitivity of children toward one another. Moreover, he uses the children to satirize the foibles of adults--a very mild, rather inconsequential satire that nowhere approximates that of

Mark Twain.

One of his chief targets is the cherubic angelic child, whom he reveals as a complete sham, the hallucination of mothers and aunts. Eight-year-old Cora, ironically dubbed "The Angel Child," is in fact the most spoiled, demanding, and bossy child in town (where, it is interesting to note, she is only a summer visitor from the big city). After imperiously demanding and receiving five dollars on her birthday from her henpecked, milk-sop, intimidated father, the queen of Whilomville proceeds to stuff her spellbound followers on ice-cream and candy; all those angelic darlings, comments Crane, curiously resemble "drunken reveling soldiers within the walls of a stormed city" (p. 559). The festivities are completed with a compulsory haircut for all, those painstakingly washed and groomed golden curls being perfunctorily lopped off. Of course nothing less than pandemonium breaks out when the horrified mothers see their shorn angels.

The story cuts two ways. On the one hand, Cora is thoroughly obnoxious; one wants to give her a good spanking, particularly when her father ends up taking all the blame for giving her the five dollars in the first place. But on the other hand, we applaud her, for in her boldness and audacity she removes those ridiculous halos from such other child "angels" as the Margate twins, whom Crane describes as "out-and-out prize winners. With their long golden curls and their countenances of similar vacuity, they shone upon the front bench of all Sunday school functions, hand in hand,

while their uplifted mother felt about her the envy of a hundred other parents, and less heavenly children scoffed from near the door" (p. 559). Only their grandfather celebrates the fact that at last they look like boys.

A similar point is made in another story, "The Stove," in which Cora forces her father to bring along from the city a certain cast-iron stove which he obediently carries around from room to room for her. One afternoon she and Jimmy take it down to the basement of his house, build a fire in it and proceed to cook a pile of turnips. The putrid smell of the turnips permeates the whole house just when Jimmy's mother is giving a proper tea party. Cora's father, encouraged by Jimmy's, wants to beat her but, fearful of her and her mother, compromises with a very timid spanking, which nevertheless sets up a prodigious howl. He, of course, as usual, ends up being the brute.

Again the story cuts two ways: while the angel child appears thoroughly obnoxious to us, we applaud not only her destruction of her mother's angelic image of her, but more so her ruining the ladies' tea party, the absurdity and pretentiousness of which Crane sardonically points out.

Writing from a male point of view about a boy's world, Crane seems to take a certain vengeance upon the opposite sex. While his boys are often cute, his girls are always little vixens. It is a girl, for example, who is the tattletale, Rose seeing Jimmy write a love letter to his departed cousin Cora and promptly broadcasting the news, causing Jimmie the greatest humiliation and shame possible for a boy.

The story, however, is typically directed against both the child and the adult world. Rose alone is not cruel, for she only serves to rouse the other little monsters who thoroughly delight in Jimmie's suffering. "It broke up all sorts of games, not so much because of the mere fact of the letter-writing as because the children knew that some sufferer was at the last point, and, like little blood-fanged wolves, they thronged to the scene of his destruction" (p. 606). Here is the Noble Savage: "The barbarians were excited only by the actual appearance of human woe; in that event they cheered and danced" (p. 606). But he also points out that Rose is only the product of her adult environment. Coming from a family of nearly all females (again the misogynistic touch), whose solitary joy in their lonely lives was gossip, she learns to detect pretense and concealment on people's faces, thus quickly suspecting something while watching Jimmie write his letter.

In still another story, "Shame," it is again a girl who leads the "little blood-fanged wolves." When Jimmie carries his picnic lunch in a pail, a girl jeers at him and is immediately and irrationally joined by the rest, humiliating and ostracizing Jimmie for no real reason at all. Crane comments, "Carrying a pail was nothing to particularly move the others--especially the boys--but such is the instinct of childish society that they all immediately move away from him, making him 'a social leper'" (p. 630).

The child's almost sadistic enjoyment of another's suffering, his incapacity for empathy and compassion, is no-

where better demonstrated than in "Making an Orator." It is Jimmie's turn to recite aloud in school and he dutifully prepares "The Charge of the Light Brigade." Reciting was for him worse than the guillotine. Wishing the school would catch fire before he has to speak, he thinks, "Anything was better. Death amid the flames was preferable to a recital of 'The Charge of the Light Brigade'" (p. 628). Completely terrorized, he remembers not a single line, and in his torment provides the best possible entertainment for his audience. "The class was a-rustle with delight at this cruel display" (p. 628). But the child is only a mirror of the adult, as Crane adds, "They were no better than a Roman populace in Nero's time' (p. 628). The crowning point comes when poor tortured Jimmie then proceeds to join the other wolves, with not the faintest sensation of sympathy for the next victim. "With the delightful inconsistency of his age he sat in blissful calm and watched the sufferings of an unfortunate boy named Zimmerman, who was the next victim of education" (p. 629).

The episode is equally an occasion for Crane's criticism of contemporary school methods, the ridiculous idea that one could train orators by having students recite a prepared poem or speech they usually didn't even understand. "If it had been ordered that they should croak like frogs, it would have advanced most of them just as far toward oratory" (p. 625).

The Church, no less than the school, comes under mild rebuke as it does in the other books. Crane describes the

mortified feelings of the children as they sit in Sunday school, regarding themselves as the blackest of devils while they gaze on those angels incarnate, the teacher and superintendent. With motives similar to those of Ike Partington, Jimmie chooses his church by the quality of its Christmas tree. (Elsie Dinsmore would probably have been horrified at a Christmas tree as so much pagan vanity.)

Several of the stories are delightful accounts of typical boy fun and the rigid codes and rituals governing their world. In "The Trial, Execution, and Burial of Homer Phelps," the boys enact, in the fashion of Tom Sawyer, an Indians' versus Whites' adventure. The necessity of following the rules is illustrated by Homer's ostracism when he refuses to be executed in the prescribed manner. He is finally rehabilitated when he reluctantly allows himself to be properly buried in the snow under a pile of hemlock boughs.

The reality of the adventure story to the boy is amusingly presented in "The Carriage-Lamps." When Jimmie is punished and sent to his room for breaking the carriage lamps, his pal Willie Dalzel climbs up to his window and promises the "prisoner" that the gang will "rescue" him. Pretending to be "Red Captain" from some story about pirates of the Spanish Main, he exhorts the others to rescue Jimmie from "yond--in that there fortress." They all go along, except one, who is totally committed to the gun-fighters of the West, preferring to be either Deadwood Dick or Hold-up Harry, the Terror of the Sierras.

The absolutely sacred initiation by fighting and the

"do-or-die" value placed on it is revealed by the utter transformation a new boy undergoes once he is in the arena. A chubby boy with fat legs, a round and rosy face, curly black hair, he "resembled both a pudding and a young bull" (p. 731). Now desperate, the formerly timid, frightened boy suddenly goes wild with rage, and not only knocks down his opponent, Jimmie, but also no less than the Chieftain himself, Willie Dalzel, who runs away, panic-stricken. "He ran as a man might run from the sudden appearance of a vampire or a ghoul or a gorilla" (p. 739). Jimmie, of course, is delighted because his own defeat has been vindicated by the Chieftain's cowardice.

Crane makes us aware of the boy's almost pathetic feeling of helplessness in the face of adult laws. When Jimmie and his friends go out lynx-hunting (not only having no experience with guns but not even knowing what a lynx looks like, though no one will admit to either of these defects), Jimmie, aiming at a chipmunk, hits a cow instead. Caught by the farm hand, each boy feels guilty and deserving of punishment. The question of motive never occurring to them, they simply reason that if they are caught they must be guilty. Yet in their terrified betrayal of one another, each blaming the other, they once more mirror adult behavior. For Crane, the boy's world is not really behind the impenetrable wall that William Allen White describes surrounding his Boyville.

The best story in the collection, though not included in the original edition, is "His New Mittens."[6] Twenty-four pages long, it is a fully developed story in contrast to the

others, which are rather sketches, running only a few pages. Presented as a mock melodrama from an adult point of view, the story is delightful for the comic incongruity between the child's intense feelings and the actual triviality of the situation. We are made to understand a child's sense of injury and injustice, his simultaneous desire for vengeance and fear of abandonment, while at the same time we are given the perspective of an adult, to whom it is all rather cute and amusing.

The conflict arises over Horace's new red mittens, which become a test of his rights as a boy. He longs to join the other boys in their snowball fight, but declines, remembering his mother's command to come directly home after school and not to get his new mittens wet. When the boys proceed to taunt him that he is a mamma's boy, he suffers profound humiliation. "In this desperate withdrawal the beset and haggard boy suffered more than is the common lot of man" (pp. 168-169). The thoughtless primitive cruelty of boys is explained by Crane: "In this boyish life obedience to some unformulated creed of manners was enforced with capricious but merciless rigor" (p. 169). His humiliation reaches untold depths when his mother comes along, just as he throws a snowball, and takes him home.

Horace's one thought now is revenge, the most obvious means being not to eat. Yet poor Horace suffers by this deprivation more than his mother. Crane captures perfectly the confused and frustrated feelings of a ten-year-old child: "He was resolved not to sell his vengeance for bread, cold ham, and a

pickle, and yet it must be known that the sight of them affected him powerfully. The pickle in particular was notable for its seductive charm. He surveyed it darkly" (p. 178). When his heroic resistance does not produce the desired effect upon his mother, his feelings of injustice, compounded by his impotence, produce the despair and self-pity that only the child can know: "Then a full conception of the cruel woe of his situation swept upon him suddenly, and his eyes filled with tears, which began to move down his cheeks. He sniffled. His heart was black with hatred. He painted in his mind scenes of deadly retribution" (p. 178). Imagining his mother coming, imploring his forgiveness, he plans how he would refuse: "No; his once tender heart had been turned to stone by her injustice" (pp. 178-179). In desperation his only resort is to run away, with visions of becoming a "bloody-handed person in a remote corner of the globe driving his mother to her grave" (p. 180). Bravely he marches forth into the snow to make his way to California, but absolutely terrified by the time he reaches the front gate. "He moved briskly as far as his mother's front gate on the road to California. He was off at last. His success was a trifle dreadful; his throat choked." The precisely perfect touch is given by Crane when he describes his boy's life-determiniing dilemma: "But at the gate he paused. He did not know if his journey to California would be shorter if he went down Niagra Avenue of off through Hogan Street" (p. 182). Horace's realization of his situation is too much for him to bear. "Panting, stung, half-blinded with the driving flakes, he was now a waif,

exiled, friendless, and poor" (p. 184). The only thing that keeps him from turning back is the child's ideal of form, the code of boyville which cannot accept the "merciless ferocity" of such a woman who would drive him to this terrible fate. Buoying himself up for the long and hazardous journey ahead, he stops for a moment in the butcher shop, where he promptly relieves himself in howls. The butcher of course takes him home, but being a boy of honor, Horace at the doorstep "raised his last flag of pride. He braced his foot against the step and made a very respectable resistance" (p. 188). His honor is saved when he sees his mother "lying limp, pale as death, her eyes gleaming with pain. . . . There was an electric pause before she swung a waxen hand towards Horace" (pp. 188-189). And everybody is reconciled over a glass of root-beer.

This story is thoroughly in the tradition of William Allen White's Court of Boyville, the amused, nostalgic evocation of an idyllic world of youth, where the greatest tragedy for a boy can be precipitated by a pair of new mittens. But it is psychologically a better dramatization of a real, human boy because Crane far surpasses the others in presenting his boy from within.

The metaphorically walled boyville of William Allen White becomes a reality in Owen Johnson's The Lawrenceville Stories (1910), a hymn to the isolated and enclosed boy world of the boarding prep school. Here, more so than in any of the other books discussed, boyhood becomes a cult, a well-

defined system of codes and rituals to which the author nostalgically pays homage. More mischievous, scheming, unscrupulous than the Tom Baileys, the boys' cruelty and selfishness honestly and realistically described, they are nevertheless amusedly applauded as "real," true-spirited, natural boys. Some do not seem at all "innocent," demonstrating the attitudes and behavior censored in adult society--lying, stealing, cheating, duplicity--yet the author is neither criticizing the boy nor using him as a mirror to criticize society. The stories are not, as Cleveland Amory writes in the Introduction, "the classic satire of prep school life" because the tone is too clearly one of sympathetic amusement and admiration, not one of ridicule; nowhere does one feel that the author's aim is to expose or change the boy, but on the contrary, rather that it is to immortalize him just the way he is, to recapture a wonderful time of life and to share it with the unfortunate ones who have not experienced it themselves.

While reading The Lawrenceville Stories one realizes the long road that the child has travelled. The Lawrenceville boys are not the cute, lovable, innocently naughty but basically moral bad boys whose most serious transgression is eating green apples or sneaking off to go swimming. In fact, they are not innocents at all—neither in the sense of Adamic purity nor in the sense of primitive ignorance. Their code is virtually the code of an adult commercial society; aggressiveness, shrewdness, and one-upmanship are their standards. Their motives are not limited to resisting adult authority

but are equally the desire for power and financial profit. Hoodwinking someone into paying one's bill or exploiting a boy's misfortune for the purposes of a money-making freak show is typical. Their code of honor amounts to playing the rules of the game: one does not, for example, crib on an exam unless there is the challenge and subsequent glory of doing it right under the master's nose. Their world is as rigidly stratified as an ancient European monarchy, newcomers painfully learning their proper place.

Although they, like the Alger boys, are part of commercial America, their standards are strikingly different. The Alger hero is thoroughly honest, industrious, thrifty, and, finally, even pious, while these prep school boys are virtual con men whose methods are ingenious conniving and deception. Furthermore, the Alger boy is always a loyal friend and benefactor to other boys whereas the Lawrenceville hero has no scruples about exploiting his comrades, who are just so many pawns for his game. It soon becomes apparent in comparing these boys not only to the Tom Baileys but also to the Ragged Dicks that a new myth of America is taking shape, a myth more compatible to the actual aims and behavior of the society. A Bible-motivated system of ethics, according to which honesty, hard work and thrift were rewarded, gives way to a glorification of a kind of survival-of-the-fittest system.

Originally published in the Saturday Evening Post, The Lawrenceville Stories were obviously written as stories

for adults as well as for boys, the language and style certainly indicating this aim. The three stories, published in a single (and extremely handsome) volume just one year ago after years of obscurity, celebrate three different kinds of heroes, all variations of the bad boy. Ranging in age from fourteen to seventeen, even the oldest can be regarded as a child (and is thus a valid subject for this dissertation) because he, no less than the youngest, belongs to a boy's world which is distinctively different and separate from that of the adult.

The boy's life as presented in these stories consists essentially of two continuous, endless battles--against the authority of adults and against the ambitions of other boys--both of which are tests of the boy's wit and courage, determining his status within the rigid hierarchy of the boy's world. The first is based upon the premise that teachers are the "Great Enemy" to be outwitted, duped, tormented, humiliated at every opportunity. The teacher's motives are of no account; simply by virtue of his being an adult, and especially one with the power to impose obligations and restrictions, he is a foe. Sometimes a scheme or maneuver against him or his rules is designed for some concrete advantage, such as passing a course or avoiding a punishment, but just as often it is simply for the pure excitement of breaking a rule; anything done illegally is fun. For example, the boys devise an elaborate system that allows them to sleep until one minute before the breakfast bell. Contorted, painstaking preparations are made the night before--pants

and shoes arranged in the best position, water poured into the basin, phony shirt fronts rigged up, and so on--without their realizing that all this made life far more difficult than it would be if they just got up the twenty minutes earlier in the morning.

The Enemy was, of course, regarded as an inferior animal--"in mental agility and resourcefulness"--more foolish than formidable. The complete ridiculousness to which he is reduced by the boy's mind is delightfully illustrated by the effect produced by the Headmaster's "heart-to-heart" talk in chapel on the demon tobacco. Playing upon a boy's one soft spot, his mother, he tries to scare them into not smoking by describing the fatal effects upon her of the consequent expulsion.

> "Yes, I know what you boys will say; I know what your plea will be when you are caught. You will come to me and you'll say with tears in your eyes, with tears, 'Doctor, think of my mother--my poor mother--it will kill my mother!'
> "I tell you, <u>now</u> is the time to think of your mother; <u>now</u> is the time to spare her gray hairs. Every cigarette you boys smoke is a <u>nail in the coffin of your mother</u>."

The effect upon the boys is naturally just the opposite:

> It was terrific. The school was unanimous in its verdict that the old man had outdone himself. Boys, whom a whiff of tobacco rendered instantly ill, smoked up the ventilators that night with shivers of delight, and from that day to this a cigarette has never been called anything but a coffin nail (p. 100).

Although the author is wholly sympathetic to the boy's position, he is at the same time equally in sympathy with the teacher, who is portrayed as a basically kind, understanding, and very human person, who usually fights hard to

suppress his amusement behind the stern facade necessary for preserving order. In contrast to the aggressive boys, it is the adult who emerges as the innocent, helpless victim, a martyr to the persecutions of boyhood.

Those young, modern teachers who believe they can win the boy over by becoming his pal, by treating him as an equal, very quickly learn otherwise. Mr. Baldwin, the math teacher, promptly dubbed "Brotherly Love," armed with the latest theories on education, encourages the boys to hold eleetions for the school council in order to learn from their own experience about the processes of government. The idea is eagerly seized upon by one about to fail Baldwin's course, who organizes the boys into parties. Delighted with the idea of a campaign, the boys enthusiastically go along--but just a bit too enthusiastically, for full scale anarchy soon breaks loose. Bed sheets are hung from the windows on which are painted the party platforms, such as "The Abolition of Compulsory Bath" and "Better Food." Turning upon their champion, they hold a torchlight parade, carrying an effigy of Baldwin and signs reading, "Back to the Kindergarten!" "We Want no Brotherly Love!" "Goodbye, Baldwin! Goodbye!" In final desperation, Baldwin admits defeat and wires the Headmaster for help who, to add the crowning touch, is away in Boston giving a lecture on the fine democratic process going on at his school, entitled, "Experiment of Self-Government and Increased Individual Responsibility in Primary Education."

The second conflict, that existing among the boys them-

selves, is based upon the desire first to be accepted and then to be a hero, to be respected and admired by the others. It begins with the boy's initiation as a freshman, not in the formal sense of fraternity initiation rites, but rather in the regulation of his appearance and general daily behavior, according to which he is typed, classified and branded with an appropriate nickname by which he will be known for the next three years. It is during this first year that he finds his place in one of two camps, that of the leaders or that of the followers, with some meeting the worst fate of all--that of the scapegoat.

The utter despair of being a nonentity is illustrated by the plight of one George Barker Smith, who was so undistinguished that the best nickname they could think up for him was "Smithy." "After seven years he was just Smithy--his whole story was there" (p. 87).

> And in the secret places of his heart, which no boy reveals, George Barker Smith grieved. Covertly he felt his obscureness and rebelled. After seven years' afflictions he would pass from Lawrenceville and be forgotten. And all for the lack of a nickname! If Nature had only formed him so that he might have aspired to the appellation of the Triumphant Egghead. The Triumphant Egghead--that was a name to be proud of! Who could ever forget that? There was fame secure and imperishable; neither years nor distance could dim the memory! (p. 87)

Finally greatness comes to George Barker Smith wholly by accident, and he is immortalized with a thoroughly unique nickname. When the boys go up on the roof to smoke, it is George Barker Smith's good fortune to all off and have thirty-seven pieces of gravel removed from his shin. He

is promptly dubbed "Ironsides Smith" and set up on exhibition like a freak in a side show. The sign advertising his talents, illustrating how the boys not only create, but capitalize upon the hero, is too revealing not to be reproduced in its entirety:

OLD IRONSIDES

The Greatest Sideshow on Earth on Exhibition

At Room 67 Upper

MANAGEMENT--HICKS & MACNOODER.

Come one, Come all! Come and View the HUMAN METEOR, THE YOUNG RUBBER PLANT, THE FAMOUS PLUNGING ROCKET, THE WORLD-RENOWNED SMITH, THE BOY GRAVEL YARD!

Come and see the honorable scars! No private exhibition. This afternoon only! Old Ironsides is under contract not to bathe in the canal this fall. This is your one and only opportunity to see the results of Old Ironsides' encounter with the gravel path!

Come and see the 37 original guaranteed and authentic bits of gravel which dented but oould not penetrate!

ADMISSION, 5 CENTS FRESHMEN, 10 CENTS

$500 REWARD $500

To anyone who will duplicate this mad, death-defying feat. MR. MACNOODER, on behalf of Old Ironsides, will offer the above reward. Doctor's or Undertaker's bills to be shared in case of failure.

ROOM 67 ROOM 67

Exhibition begins at 2'o'clock.

(p. 95)

The first story, "The Prodigious Hickey," celebrates the utterly ingenious, incorrigible bad boy who lives a twenty-four-hour-a-day combat with the school authorities. He is the type who lacks the necessary sense of responsibility to become the formally, legally recognized leader, the President of his House, but glories in being its moving spirit to whom it owes its coveted fame.

> The President of the Dickinson, by virtue of the necessary authority to suppress all insubordination, was Turkey Reiter, broad of shoulder, speckled and battling of face, but the spirit of the Dickinson was Hickey. Hickey it was, lank of figure and keen of feature, bustling of gait and drawling of speech, with face as innocent as a choir boy's, who planned the revolts against the masters, organized the midnight feasts and the painting of water towers. His genius lived in the nicknames of the Egghead, Beauty Sawtelle, Morning Glory, Red Dog, Wash Simmons and the Coffee Cooler, which he had bestowed on his comrades with unfailing felicity (p. 8).

The distinguishing characteristic of Hickey is his absolute faith in the letter of the law, his belief that anything is legitimate as long as there is no objective evidence to prove his guilt. When unprepared to recite in class, for example, he glibly lies and says he prepared the same piece as the one just recited by the boy who preceded him. When the teacher expresses his disbelief, Hickey is genuinely injured, feeling it a violation of the code of fair play to be arraigned on suspicion only without evidence. As Johnson so clearly defines the terms of the code:

> Now, the code of a schoolboy's ethics is a marvelously fashioned thing--and by that each master stands or falls. To be accused of an offense of which he is innocent means nothing, for it simply demonstrates the lower caliber of the master's intelligence. But to be suspected and accused on

> mere suspicion of something which he has just committed--that is unpardonable, and in absolute violation of the laws of warfare, which decree that the struggle shall be one of wits, without recourse to the methods of the inquisition (p. 6).

The experience is a shattering one for Hickey who henceforth sees himself, not as an equal citizen of a democracy, but as the victim of an "organized, hereditary and entrenched tyranny that sought to crush him" (p. 13).

> Up to this time, he had been like a hundred other boys, loving mischief for mischief's sake, entering into a lark with no more definite purpose than the zest of an adventure. Of course he regarded a master as the Natural Enemy, but he had viewed him with the tolerance of an agile monkey for a wolf who does not climb. Now slowly it began to dawn upon him that there was an ethical side (p. 7).

How it was open war against "the hydra despotism," and his exploits reach never-before-heard-of-heights. He steals the clapper from the campus bell and sets up shop, selling miniature souvenir clappers at one dollar each, openly taunting the Master by remaining untouched with concrete proof of his guilt, even producing a document from the manufacturers that the souvenirs were made with their own scrap iron. His Pyrrhic victory comes when he achieves the daring feat of sleeping in the Housemaster's bed by arranging a mock burglary in the middle of the night. Still there is no proof against him and so when he is asked to leave "for no reason at all," he is absolutely dumbfounded and enraged. It was against all laws. Self-righteously challenging the Headmaster, "Do you call this justice?" he is further astounded by the reply, "No, . . . I call it a display of force. You see, Hicks, you've beaten us at every point,

and so all we can do is to let you go" (p. 170).

Johnson's treatment of Hickey is strikingly similar to yet also different from Kipling's handling of his bad prep school boys in Stalky & Co. (1897-99), which was as popular in America as Twain was abroad. Their common tone is summed up by Stalky's comment, "Our line is injured innocence, of course" (p. 57). Both authors seem to be subscribing to yet at the same time poking fun at the traditional literary image of the boy innocent. Stalky and his pals, like Hickey, succeed in the most obviously flagrant transgressions of school rules while defending themselves with valid legal proofs of their innocence. As one of the masters puts it, "They have a knack of upsettin' things in a quiet way that one can't take hold of" (p. 109). Consequently, the Head must play their game, eliminating all reasoning and arguments. Whipping them, he says, "There's a certain flagrant injustice about this that ought to appeal to--your temperament: (p. 118). The difference between Stalky and Hickey, though, is that this "flagrant injustice" does appeal to Stalky's temperament, for he not only knows that he deserves the punishment but admires the Head for seeing through his game. When asked by one of his fellow victims why they aren't angry with the Head for the injustice, Stalky can only go into convulsive laughter. Hickey, in contrast, lacks this self-awareness. He becomes angry, believing to the end in his own innocence and the utter lack of justice in the world. The difference seems to reflect the American's commitment to the image of innocence, an

image he can perhaps see through but not deny.

It is in the second story, "The Varmint," that the change taking place in the image of boyhood is most obvious, for the hero is a combination of Hickey and the Hoosier school-boy. We witness the growth of fifteen-year-old Stover from Freshman to Upperclassman--his initiation into the world of Lawrenceville as well as his first step into the adult world.

He arrives at Lawrenceville an independent, cocky boy, basking in the glory handed him by Miss Wandell who has just expelled him from her Select Academy for Boys and Girls, declaring "that her limited curriculum was inadequate for the abnormal activities of dangerous criminals" (pp. 173-174). Confident that he will just as quickly and easily intimidate the students as well as the faculty here, he is immediately shocked into the realization "that he stood on the threshold of a new world, a system of society of which he was ignorant and by whose undivined laws he was suddenly to be judged" (p. 180). Determined to "educate" this outrageously "freshest of the fresh," the established chieftains try to humiliate him into accepting his proper position at the bottom of the hierarchy. They succeed, for example, in selling him all sorts of junk, such as a kerosene lamp and oil can, an old toilet set, and battered football shoes supposedly worn by some school hero, by assuring him that they are all absolutely necessary. With each degradation he becomes more aggressive and stubborn, until the most unendurable of all punishments is inflicted upon him--ostracism.

To be the butt of tricks was all part of the game; it meant, moreover, that you were accepted and even admired enough to be considered an adversary. But to be ignored implied that you were unworthy of their attention.

For the first time in Stover's life the "universe was topsy-turvy." Watching the others from the outside, he realizes that Lawrenceville "was more than an institution; it was a world, the complex, marvelously ordered World of Youth" (p. 225). It is forty years since Aldrich wrote his sentimental hymn to boyhood, yet the idealized image remains intact. Out of rage and pride Stover tries to win his way back into this world by proving his superiority. He becomes more and more hostile, antagonizing the boys at every opportunity. The boys finally give up on him as one totally incapable of becoming civilized. "The blow came. Cheyenne Baxter, as president of the House, appeared one evening and hurled on him the ban of ex-communication--from that hour he was to be put in Coventry" (p. 241). The unbearable loneliness and remorse of Stover are sentimentally described as he is shown sitting alone in his room one night listening to the boys singing the school song. He decides then that he will start afresh the following fall by trying, this time, to fit in with the others by subscribing to their codes.

By showing how a boy is not automatically a part of Lawrenceville simply by virtue of his being a boy, but must adapt himself to its laws and standards, Johnson has idealized the boy world as an unsurpassable moral training

ground in humility, discipline, and sportsmanship. The morality that Stover learns, however, is also that of a capitalist society. He not only learns how to accept defeat in a fair fight and nobly acknowledge the victor, but also to dupe and swindle others as he himself was, in order to reclaim his honor and dignity. Stover, for example, decides to get rid of the junk toilet set foisted upon him through a rigged dressing championship contest with the toilet set as a blind prize. Charging twenty-five cents as the entrance fee, thereby recouping the money spent on the set, he and Tennessee Shad, one of the original swindlers and the fastest dresser in the school, agree that the Shad will deliberately break a shoelace and palm off the prize on the second swindler, Doc Macnooder. As expected, Doc goes them one better; sniffing the pollution, he carries off his prize unopened and "proving his title to Captain of Industry," charges a ten-cent admission to watch him unwrap it. (p. 308)

The dual standard with which Johnson invests his boy is particularly evident in Stover's being elected president of his House and the reasons given for his success. He wins esteem and power by his daring and ingenious schemes, yet Johnson insists on attributing his triumph to his moral sense, explaining that it won him not merely the admiration but the respect of the others, something he longed for without being able to name. As linesman for his house during a football game, he must give the verdict on a questionable goal, which will either win or lose the game for his house.

Forced to choose between loyalty and honesty, he chooses honesty and gives the victory to the other house. To his great surprise, he becomes the hero of the school and elected president.

Unlike the other boys, Stover is brought to the point of adult maturity when he ends his war with the faculty and can accept, like, and even respect them as being perceptive, understanding, good-natured, and above all, fair. He reaches this accord with no less than his chief "Natural Enemy," the Latin teacher, appropriately dubbed by the boys "The Roman." An elderly man with years of experience teaching Lawrenceville boys, he is sympathetic to and always amused by their antics despite his severe manner. He immediately takes a liking to Stover but of course never shows it and Stover, convinced that he is his revengeful foe, mobilizes for a four-year war of wits which, unbeknownst to him, The Roman thoroughly enjoys in a good-natured, amused way. For example, when Stover is asked to translate a passage from Caesar's Gallic Wars that he has not prepared and, pretending to be translating, actually makes up the most fantastic story, The Roman not only does not castigate him, but, wiping tears of laughter from his eyes, commends Stover for his "excellent, fluent, vivid, persuasive, though a trifle free" translation. And when the Headmaster opposes Stover's presidency, it is The Roman who persuades him to approve it, explaining that Stover is just high-spirited but never vicious, "just a case of excess imagination and energy." Asked what it is he likes so much in him, he replies, "Fearlessness . . .

and a diabolical imagination" (p. 377).

The turning point in their relationship comes when Stover, in order to play in the crucial Andover football game, must prove that he can pass Latin and is given a special exam in The Roman's study. Pressured by the other boys, he agrees to use a crib, although it "seemed devoid of the high qualities of dignity that should attend the warfare against the Natural Enemy" (p. 401). The crib is low enough, but to use it openly after The Roman leaves the room, putting Stover on his honor, is totally impossible. Stover is furious. "It was a low-down, malignant trick. It took away all the elements of danger that glorified the conspiracy. It made it easy and, therefore, mean" (p. 402). His terrible plight is compounded by the fact that he really knows two of the three passages to be translated without having to use the crib. Convinced that The Roman will believe he has cribbed if he turns in a correct translation, he hands in a blank paper. The Roman, admiring the boy's honesty, passes him. From that point on Stover's world is all confused. If The Roman were not his enemy, then his whole career at Lawrenceville would have to be reconstructed. Tormented, he goes "to have it out" with The Roman, apologizing to him for wrongly and unfairly misjudging him. But still confused, he asks The Roman why he passed him, and The Roman, revealing his real understanding of boys, explains:

> "John," said The Roman, leaning back and caging his fingers, "it is a truth which it is, perhaps, unwise to publish abroad, and I shall have to swear you to the secret. It is the boy whose energy must explode periodically and often disastrously, it is the boy who

> gives us the most trouble, who wears down our patience and tries our souls, who is really the most worthwhile" (p. 407).

The author sentimentally concludes his story:

> The Roman tapped the table and, looking far out through the darkened window, smiled the gentle smile of one who has watched the ever recurrent miracle of humanity, the struggling birth of the man out of the dirtied, hopeless cocoon of the boy.
> And Stover, suddenly beholding that smile, all at once stopped, blushed and understood! (p. 408)

It is the traditional image of the good bad boy that is unequivocally celebrated in this story. Stover is a direct descendant of Tom Sawyer, Tom Bailey, and Ike Partington, the naughty, rebellious boy who is basically good and who will become a proper citizen one day. Only Stover, as the child of a later generation, of an America more willing to acknowledge its capitalist ambitions, does not reveal any difficulty on the part of the author in reconciling the innocent Adam image with that of the successful capitalist, for he embodies both, subscribing to the values of a commercial world yet preserving a certain innocence and purity. He is one of the chief schemers and manipulators, yet at the same time, possesses a strong moral sense. Moreover, he follows the traditional pattern of the child savior by growing morally.

It is curious that the story of Stover is placed between that of Hickey and that of the Tennessee Shad, both of whom belie the image of the child innocent, both of whom lack that basic Christian moral sense that Stover possesses. This perhaps indicates the ambivalence of Ameri-

can attitudes, the conflict between believing in Adamic and pastoral ideals while actually subscribing to capitalist values. The lack of resolution at the end of Hickey's story also tends to indicate this ambivalence--he is neither victorious (being expelled) nor defeated (vowing to hire a lawyer and make a comeback). The third story, "The Tennessee Shad," however, reveals a less equivocal embracement of capitalist values, for its boy hero is invested with all the ambitions and values of a sharp wheeler-dealer and is applauded not only by the other boys but by the masters as well.

"The Tennessee Shad" is the most original and entertaining of not only this book but of all the bad boy books. The Shad, as well as Doc Macnooder, who plays almost as large a part, is different from the usual boy hero. A wheeler-dealer, he unvercifully hoodwinks and cheats the other boys as much to make a dollar as for the pure sport of it. A sharp, cool administrator and promoter, as well as an ingenious inventor, he illustrates the beginnings of the American entrepreneur. He is not in the tradition of Benjamin Franklin and Horatio Alger because his driving motive is to get the most not through but rather without hard work, thrift, and honesty. Stover and even the more diabolical Hickey seem, in contrast, almost innocent. They are simply imaginative, mischievous, impulsive, enthusiastic beside the cynical, calculating, predatory Tennessee Shad and Doc Macnooder. Stover, for example, sufficiently thrilled by his own success, and the expectant glory from his window-closing alarm-clock

apparatus, is ready to tell everyone about it, when the Shad convinces him of its financial potential and turns it into a lucrative business enterprise, "The Complete Sleep Prolonger," exclusive patent owned by The Third Triumvirate Manufacturing Company. And again, with regard to the dressing championship, Stover simply wants to get rid of the odious toilet set to wipe out his disgrace, but the Shad insists on his making a profit by charging a fee to enter the contest and thinks up the deceitful trick of deliberately losing the contest in order to foist the set upon his arch rival Doc Macnooder. Even when Stover seems to have surpassed himself in ingenuity, organizing a Customs House and taxing the irresistible food packages sent "The Millionaire Baby," by, for example, seizing sixty-five per cent of the plum cake or fify per cent of the anchovy olives, he ends up comparatively naive. For when, after three such incidents, The Millionaire Baby stops all apckages from coming, The Shad chastizes Stover for his failure, shrewdly commenting, "You're a great administrator, but you don't understand the theory of taxation . . . to soak the taxed all they'll stand for, but to leave them just enough so they'll come again" (p. 390).

The Shad's easy manipulation of the other boys is apparent from their eagerness in allowing him to shave their heads in order to join his Criminal Club and enter chapel in rhythmic step as a chain gang. Even when the boys turn on The Shad for this escapade, suddenly realizing that the Prom is only two weeks off and they haven't a hair on their heads,

The Shad, with the help of Macnooder, motivated, of course, by pure selfishness, comes out on top--and by further exploiting the unsuspecting innocents. He and The Doc become partners in a barber shop, The Imperial Tonsorial Parlor, guaranteeing to make the boys' hair grow faster by such devices as a massage for three cents, friction with any hair encourager for five cents, and a complete two-week treatment for only one dollar and a quarter. "The Macnooder treatment," they advertise, "coaxes forth the hair, seizes and stretches it, makes it long and curly." With all the expertise of Madison Avenue, they add: "Long and curly hair means social success at the Prom; social success means retaining the affections of the fair!" with the realistic postscript, "Come early, come often and bring the children!" (p. 442)

What becomes obvious from most of The Shad's schemes is that in his desire to defeat and outrage the Great Enemy, the masters, he is, at the same time, mercilessly exploiting his compatriots. Unlike Hickey and Stover, he seems to be more against them than with them. The intense competition between the two knaves, Tennessee Shad and Doc Macnooder, for one-upmanship results in the other boys being so many victimized pawns. The author never expresses any moral censure but in fact seems to relish each new exploit with more and more delight--and, curiously enough, so does the reader. One starts to blame the others for continuing to be so gullible and allowing themselves to be duped anew each time despite the previous wounds.

Finally, in a complete reversal of traditional Hoosier schoolboy morality, these two scoundrels are made moral saviors. Their unregenerate subject is Montague Skinner, the spoiled, obnoxious son of a rich New York hotel owner, who commits the unpardonable sin of trying to buy his way into the boys' world. Arriving the first day in his dandy clothes and accompanied by his valet, he becomes on the spot a prime victim but as Macnooder carefully warns, of nothing too brutal in order not to discourage the capital. Baptised the "Uncooked Beefsteak" by virtue of his red hair and raw complexion, the cosmopolite to whom headwaiters and haberdashers bowed down is reduced to blacking their shoes and pressing their clothes. They "educate" him in the ways of a democratic, commercial society that believed that the best men always worked their way up from the bottom. The ideal in principle is Benjamin Franklin's and Horatio Alger's, only the methods are no longer theirs, the "pupil" being unmercifully humiliated and flimflammed.

The Beefsteak is such an easy victim, though, that The Shad begins to suffer pangs of conscience--in terms of the boys' code, of course. As with Stover, who couldn't crib when The Roman left the exam room, the similar lack of challenge makes The Shad remorsefully feel he is violating the accepted code and consequently being robbed of the usual elation derived from victory. He heroically swears to leave The Beefsteak alone but is so provoked by the other's patronizing use of his money to win acceptance that "the last grumbling of his thin conscience died away" and he unhesi-

tatingly proceeds with his most outrageous and triumphant scheme of all (p. 486).

When he is caught illegally with The Beefsteak at the ice-cream shop, The Roman decrees as punishment ten times around the Circle. The humiliation of publicly parading in equality with The Beefsteak is too much for The Shad to bear. Spying a wheelbarrow left by the gardener and recalling that The Roman said ten times around the Circle, not explicitly walk around, he tells The Beefsteak that he would like to turn the laugh on The Roman and manipulates him into noticing and suggesting the use of the wheelbarrow. When The Shad enthusiastically calls him a genius and hero, he gleefully pushes him around the Circle ten times. The others, catching on, pitch in by pretending to cheer The Beefsteak for his labors. Only when it is all over and he sees The Roman doubled over with laughter and actually shaking hands with The Shad does he catch on. As always with The Shad, the motive was not really to outsmart the master but rather to maintain his prestige in the eyes of the boys, particularly his rival, Doc, who finally has to congratulate him for this stroke of genius, as he puts it, "soaring for once above the earthly love of dollars and cents" (p. 489).

Usually however they do not rise above the love of dollars and cents, devising schemes that will fleece The Beefsteak of his unequalled allowance from home. And in this mutual motive the arch rivals are able to subordinate their personal rivalry for glory and join forces--in a manner familiar to the business world.

As one last effort to be accepted, The Uncooked Beefsteak treats The Tennessee Shad, Doc Macnooder, The Triumphant Egghead and The Waladoo Bird (just the names are delightful) to a luxurious week in his father's hotel during spring vacation, including nightclubs, theaters, and private carriages. It is only after seeing that even this produces no change in their attitude or his status that he understands the world of Lawrenceville. Exchanging his fancy duds for old corduroys and a jersey and cutting his allowance to one dollar a week, he fainally becomes one of them. His education at Lawreceville has been realized, for he has learned his proper place as a newcomer at the bottom of their strictly ordered world, as well as how to achieve success by means of their rules and methods. He has not been enrolled in a school but initiated into a society and, ironically, he comes to Lawrenceville to escape his sophisticated New York life for the gay larks of boyhood only to find himself part of a world as sophisticated and complex in its own way.

The shrewd worldliness of The Shad's and Doc's schemes is really beyond the usual antics of the bad boy. The Beefsteak best expresses this when he sorrowfully longs for "the simple frolics of a mere boy" (p. 523). Unlike the boys of the other stories, they really span two worlds, rehearsing on a small scale the practices of a ruthless adult commercial society, while living within the safety of the boys' fortress, where anything can be charged off to youthful energy and imagination, where the worst consequences they can suffer is a sound beating. Johson's unwillingness to

recognize these two con-artists as anything but clever and delightfully amusing boys is evident from his tone as well as from the amusement of the masters themselves. Moreover, their separateness from the adult world is further emphasized indirectly by the traditional absence of any sexual curiosity or experience. Sexual discussions or jokes are never recorded and the only romance in the entire volume is Stover's infatuation from a distance with his roommate's twenty-four-year-old sister. And consistent with the mores of his time, the author observes the taboo on any mention of the homosexuality that often exists in boys' prep schools.

Unlike Stover, The Tennessee Shad and Doc Macnooder do not change. They are the initiators rather than the initiated, the pillars of the boy world, not its aspiring members. But neither are they initiated into a rosy-hued adult world guided by Christian morality; they do not acquire the tolerance, understanding, and sense of responsibility that Stover does. For they already have the outlines of the kind of men they will be, the potenital pillars of an aggressive, commercial society. They reflect the curiously incongruous image of the American during the early decades of this century, the myth of the innocent, Adamic capitalist savior.

Booth Tarkington's Penrod: His Complete Story, though written some years after The Lawrenceville Stories, is more in the tradition of the usual nineteenth-century bad boy story. It consists of three parts: "Penrod" (1913), "Penrod and Sam" (1916), and "Penrod Jashber" (written in 1916 but

not published until 1927). Twelve-year-old Penrod Schofield lives with his parents, a respectable lower middle-class family consisting of a healthy but exasperated mother, an amused, tolerant father, and a nineteen-year-old sister, Margaret, who is a kind of second mother to Penrod. The setting is a small mid-western town, population 135,000. An energetic, imaginative boy who hates school, who goes to the movies on the Sabbath, sneaks off to the circus where he suffers acute indigestion from stuffing himself, Penrod's primary woes stem from his being misunderstood by his parents and being, in turn, baffled by their incomprehensible motives and rationale. Humorously narrated in a mock-heroic manner by a nostalgic adult, it is essentially a hymn to boyhood in the tradition of Aldrich and Shillaber. Coming after The Lawrenceville Stories, it unfortunately seems rather dull, far less original and entertaining, suffering most from the repetitive quality of Penrod's escapades.

The unbridgeable gulf between the boy and the adult is illustrated by the fiasco into which Penrod unwittingly turns the school play, or "pageant" as the teacher prefers to style it. Playing the role of the Child Sir Lancelot, he is outfitted by his mother and sister in Margaret's cape and stockings. Thoroughly ashamed of the girl clothes, he covers them up with the janitor's blue overalls. While his parents are mortified, the rest of the audience set into uncontrollable laughter, and the teacher prostrated in a state of shock and humiliation, the other actors are either calmly puzzled or awed by his ingenious and courageous van-

quishing of the enemy.

> The actors in the "pageant" were not so dumfounded /sic/ by Penrod's costume as might have been expected. A few precocious geniuses perceived that the overalls were the Child Lancelot's own comments on maternal intentions and these were profoundly impressed. They regarded him with the grisly admiration of young and ambitious criminals for a jail-mate about to be distinguished by hanging. But most of the children simply took it to be the case (a little strange but not startling) that Penrod's mother had dressed him like that--which is pathetic. They tried to go on with the "pageant" (p. 34).

Tarkington gives us the accused's defense with which the innocent and exploited victim can only comfort himself secretly. Penrod, the unacclaimed author genius of Harold Ramorez the Roadagent or Wild Life Among the Rocky Mts., a sensational romance about desperadoes, is forced to prostitute himself to some inferior writer, sacrificing his literary honor and integrity.

> His case is comparable to that of an adult who could have survived a similar experience. Looking back to the sawdustbox /his secret writing retreat in the barn loft/ fancy pictures this comparable adult a serious and inventive writer engaged in congenial literary activities in a private retreat. We see this period marked by the creation of some of the most virile passages of a Work dealing exclusively in red corpuscles and huge primal impulses. We see this thoughtful man dragged from his calm seclusion to a horrifying publicity; forced to adapt the stage and, himself a writer, compelled to exploit the repulsive sentiments of an author not only personally distasteful to him but whose whole method and school in belles lettres he despises.
>
> We see him reduced by desperation and modesty to stealing a pair of overalls. We conceive him to have ruined, then, his own reputation, and to have utterly disgraced his family; next to have engaged in the duello and to have been spurned by his lady-love, thus lost to him (according to her own declaration) forever. Finally, we must behold: imprisonment by the authorities /he is locked up in a closet by his parents/; the third degree--and flagellation. (pp. 36-37)

At other times, though, Penrod's resourceful imagination is more successful in routing the Enemy. To fight the boredom of the classroom, he indulges in frequent fantasies in which he is a celebrated hero being heralded by a brass band led by none other than his own teacher. When she rudely interrupts him by calling on him to recite, he irritatedly shouts, "Can't you wait a minute?" Terrified by his own audacity in going beyond the accepted limits of rebellion (even the other children watch him in hushed horror), he extricates himself by inventing a tall story, inspired by a movie he has recently seen, of how he is not responsible for himself, worn out from staying up the night before with his poor Aunt Clara who has just fled from the brutal beatings of her drunkard husband. (Actually Aunt Clara is staying with the Schofields to avoid the measles epidemic in her own town.) Not only is he forgiven by the teacher, but is sympathetically given every possible consideration, such as being allowed to stroll into class late and, of course, unprepared.

Penrod, as the "normal" or "natural" boy, is pitted against the typical boy villains, the rich and pampered and the tough bully. Among the first type is Maurice Levy, who is driven around by a chauffeur in Mamma's sixty-horse power car, and who, moreover, wins the fair hand of Penrod's Lady Love. He and his partner in crime, Mr. Samuel Williams, aged eleven, dupe him into drinking "the small pox medicine" that Sam was benevolently preparing for the sick policeman downtown. It contains all the valuable poisons the cook

was throwing away: syrup from rotten preserves, hair oil, remains of old prescriptions with traces of arsenic bella-- donna strichnine, mouthwash, spirits of ammonia, nitre, quinine, and just enough catsup and essence of beef for taste. They feel quite confident in their success after first trying it out on Penrod's dog, Duke, who promptly vomits. Offering Maurice some licorice water, which they are in fact drinking themselves, Sam dexterously extends his arm within the adjacent room and exchanges the licorice water for the medicine. "Genius is like that--" comments Takington, "great, simple, broad strokes!" (p. 89) With the Lawrenceville touch, Penrod sets the terms of their generosity: Maurice can drink free of charge all he wants to as long as he keeps swallowing without stopping, thinking that after a first sip the plan will fail. But much to their chagrin, Maurice not only drinks the whole glassful, even licking his lips, but suffers not a single painful twinge. After forty-eight years Twain's "Bad Little Boy" finally has an heir.

A second less adept victim is Georgie Bassett, the best boy in town, dubbed the "Little Gentleman." Tarkington explains, "Georgie Bassett was a boy set apart. Not only that; Georgie knew that he was a boy set apart" (p. 225). To aggravate his feelings of separateness, his despair over being an outsider, the boys form a club to which he begs to belong and is given a severe initiation. The extent of the ignominy for a boy to be given such a title is totally incomprehensible to parents. Thus, when Margaret teases

Penrod with the name and he, in a frenzy, precipitates a riotous tar fight among all the children, they simply give up and conclude among themselves that they have a lunatic in the family.

The best and most significant incident, from several points of view, concerning the rich-boy villain has to do with Roderick Magsworth Bitts, Jr., "a home-sheltered lad, tutored privately and preserved against the coarsening influences of rude comradeship and miscellaneous information. Heavily overgrown in all physical dimensions, virtuous, and placid, this cloistered mutton was wholly uninteresting to Penrod Schofield" (p. 96). In other words, he has the worst fate of all--being totally ignored as a nonentity by the other boys. What makes him particularly interesting as a victim is that his snobbish family, "the self-styled aristocracy of town," the "watchguard of community morals and manners," is despised by all the other families, including the Schofields, with whom they would not condescend to associate.

> Magsworth was the important part of the name. Mrs. Roderick Magsworth Bitts was a Magsworth born, herself, and the Magsworth crest decorated not only Mrs. Magsworth Bitts's note-paper but was on the china, on the table linen, on the chimney-pieces, on the opaque glass of the front door, on the victoria, and on the harness, though omitted from the garden-hose and the lawn-mower. (p. 99)

By coincidence, a Rena Magsworth, no relation, is on trial in another town for murder. Roderick, seeing his one chance to be a hero, immediately claims her as his aunt. In a manner reminiscent of Lawrenceville's Ironsides Smith's

rise to fame, Roderick is made by Penrod the star attraction of a circus. Posters are put up all over town advertising Roderick as the only living nephew of the famous murderess. In the process, Penrod has unknowingly become a hero himself among the adults, having dealt the Magsworth name a priceless blow. He and Sam are shocked and puzzled when, expecting to be whipped, they are instead rewarded by their fathers with a quarter. Everyone, except of course the Magsworths, ends up happy--Roderick in his acceptance by the boys, Penrod who as a successful circus entrepreneur has not only become a hero in boyville but has escaped the anticipated wrath of his parents, and the Schofields in the humiliation of the town snobs. This is about the extent of the social satire in the book.

The second type of boy villain, the tough bully, is treated differently in this book from the way he is, for example, in The Hoosier School-Boy. There he is shown up for his meanness and subjugated by the hero, while here he not only intimidates but, moreover, fascinates Penrod. To Penrod, the avid reader and writer of sensational novels, tough Rupe Collins seems the living incarnation of one of his idolized heroes. He begins to imitate him in speech and manner, practicing on Della the cook and his dog, Duke, unsuccessfully trying to scare them with, "And you better look out when Penrod Schofield's around, or you'll get in big trouble! You understan' that, 'bo?" (p. 165)

Penrod's new found friendship with the Negro boys next door points up the author's ambivalent attitude toward Ne-

groes. Elsewhere he admiringly identifies the Negro in general with the boy by describing their similarly instinctive and free capacity for enjoying life, something wholly alien to adult whites. "Penrod was doing something very unusual and rare, something almost never accomplished except by coloured people or by a boy in school on a spring day: he was doing really nothing at all. He was merely a state of being" (p. 44). A less envied appreciation of the Negro as an outcast from society is evident from his presenting the Negro neighbors as so many oddities who delight and fascinate Penrod even more than Rupe Collins or his fictional idols. Herman has no forefinger, his younger brother Verman has a speech defect, his older sister Queenie has a goiter, and their Pappy is in jail for cutting a man with a pitchfork. "Penrod began to feel that a lifetime spent with the fascinating family were all too short." He promptly decides to exhibit the freaks in a show, advertising the inarticulate Verman as "Wild Boy Talks Only in His Native Languages." Their heroic aspect for the boy is qualified by the pity the adult reader feels for their misfortunes. The Negro as a more enviable outcast, however, is suggested by the fact that after the disastrous initiation of Georgie Bassett, in which Herman and Verman participate, only these two are not punished by their mother, about which Herman comments, "Man, man! . . . Glad I ain' no white boy!" (p. 248). But even here the judgment is equivocal, the boys clearly deserving censure for their sadistic treatment of Georgie.

Penrod is basically in the tradition of the idealized innocent, a first cousin to Tom Bailey and Ike Partington. He is, for example, the innocent, instinctive Noble Savage, described in a style very reminiscent of Twain:

> A boy will nearly always run after anything that is running, and his first impulse is to throw a stone at it. This is a survival of primeval man, who must take every chance to get his dinner. So, when Penrod and Sam drove the hapless Whitey up the alley, they were really responding to an impulse thousands and thousands of years old--an impulse founded upon the primordial observation that whatever runs is likely to prove edible. Penrod and Sam were not "bad"; they were never that. They were something that was not their fault; they were historic (p. 253).

He is the oppressed victim of adult attitudes and laws. Sarcastically commenting from a boy's point of view on adult obtuseness and insensitivity, the author describes the wretched plight of a boy trapped in school:

> Next morning, when he had once more resumed the dreadful burden of education, it seemed infinitely duller. And yet what pleasanter sight is there than a schoolroom well filled with children of those sprouting years just before the 'teens? The casual visitor, gazing from the teacher's platform upon these busy little heads, needs only a blunted memory to experience the most agreeable and exhilarating sensations. Still, for the greater part, the children are unconscious of the happiness of their condition; for nothing is more pathetically true than that we "never know when we are well off." The boys in a public school are less aware of their happy state than are the girls; and, of all the boys in his room, probably Penrod himself had the least appreciation of his felicity. (pp. 43-44).

Of course, he is, at the same time, suggesting from the adult's point of view the actual idyllic state of childhood of which the child himself is unfortunately always unaware.

Penrod follows the tradition of his predecessors in being totally unconcerned with sex. He is in love with Marjorie Jones, but shows it by acting so obnoxiously as to be gloriously labeled by her "The Worst Boy in Town."

Like Tom Sawyer, Penrod lives in a fantasy world derived from books and movies (the latter resource, of course, unavailable to Tom). He pictures his father as a ravenous gladiator, a super-demon composed of Goliath, Jack Johnson and the Emperor Nero, and his dog as a South American Vampire. "Penrod Jashber," the third story in the volume, is named in honor of his latest fictional creation, Jashber, the detective, whom Penrod becomes in his day and nighttime dreams. The author notes that, it being the age of crooks and detectives, pirates and Indians were passé.

Yet in other ways Penrod is different from the other boy heroes. In a more realistic and human characterization, the author shows him as somehow more pathetic and vulnerable, defeated more often than triumphant. He does not escape confinement in a clothes closet after the "pageant" fiasco, nor a whipping after the initiation of Georgie Bassett; he is chagrined by the rich-boy enemy who does not suffer from his poisonous concoction; he is intimidated by and even envies the tough bully; and he is out-rivalled for the hand of his girl, again by the odious rich boy. More so than the others, he is the lonely, misunderstood boy with his dog, taking refuge in the private world of his imagination. In this sense he seems to anticipate the contemporary image of the child in fiction.

Footnotes to Chapter Six

[1] Leslie A. Fiedler, "Come Back to the Raft Ag'in Huck Honey!" in *An End to Innocence* (Boston, 1962), p. 144.

[2] For my discussion of the pastoral ideal I am largely indebted to Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York, 1967).

[3] *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge, Mass., 1950), p. 148.

[4] Henry Steele Commager, *The American Mind* (New Haven, 1950), p. 35.

[5] *The Innocent Eye: Childhood in Mark Twain's Imagination* (New Haven, 1961), p. 78.

[6] In *The Monster and Other Stories* (New York, 1899).

VII

Conclusion

The singular fascination that childhood had for the nineteenth-century American author and reader is immediately obvious from the sheer number and popularity of the stories on the subject. This dissertation has been an attempt to understand and explain the attitudes toward the child, how and why the child virtually became a cult--why the child-centered stories with their typically banal plots, often written in an even more banal prose, were avidly read when literature of far greater worth (Hawthorne and Melville, for example) was readily available--why the Elsie Dinsmore books were read by more than twenty-five million people, netting their author a quarter of a million dollars, why forty thousand copies of The Lamplighter were sold in eight weeks and The Wide, Wide World went through its fourteenth edition in only two years. The primary explanation seems to lie in the symbolical importance of the child image, its capacity to create and reflect the American's image of himself--specifically, his sense of himself as the New Man in the New World, a perennial innocent starting life anew.

In an age when daily Bible reading was a common family ritual it is not surprising that the admonition of Jesus, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven," was taken literally. Like the image of the Christ Child, which is necessary as long as man cannot realize Jesus' dictum, the child in

American literature is a continual and necessary image as long as the American feels that his goals are unrealized. All of the fictional children are sanctified redeemers, the bad boys no less than the good girls, who stand outside society functioning as touchstones to illuminate the failures of the adult world and as living embodiments of its ideals. They reflect a feeling of incompatibility in the American mind between the past and the present, between the American's vision of himself reborn in the New World and his actual apprehension of himself as an exile from Eden. The child is a symbol of a mythic past as well as of a present consciousness that strives to integrate the two. As an image of wholeness the child can symbolize the union of past and present, and as a symbol of unity it has a redemptive significance, signifying for man the realization of something he longs for but has not yet been capable of achieving. The child then is both a beginning and an end.

The child heroes and heroines are innocent and pure, freeing the American from the burden of inherited guilt heaped upon him by his Puritan forefathers as well as by the sins of his Old World ancestors. They function in the novels of Oliver Wendell Holmes, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Sylvester Judd to illustrate the "soul murder" of Orthodox Calvinism in contrast to the liberation and blossoming of a God-given pure and innocent soul by means of love and understanding. The many didactic stories instructing parents on child rearing preach that parents are entrusted by God with potential angels who will be the means of their salvation.

"Is not our heavenly Father kind," asks Lydia Maria Child, "to entrust to our care these little innocent souls, that we ourselves may enter his kingdom, by the prayerful effort to keep them forever near their guardian angels?" In the mother's hands, she admonishes, lies the very safety and prosperity of the nation. The child's function in the family is compared to Jesus' role for mankind. "So the good Shepherd hides the little lamb in his arms," writes Fanny Fern, "that she who gave it life may hear its voice and follow." These heaven sent creatures are often sources of redemption simply by virtue of their presence, converting drunkard men into responsible, loving husbands and fathers; selfish, irascible women into devoted mothers; callous gamblers and criminals into moral, sensitive men; savage Indians into gentle protectors. More often, though, they are active evangelists, bringing peace and fulfillment to despairing, self-tortured skeptics by showing them the blessedness of faith.

The emphasis on the growth and development of the child saint especially points up the symbolical importance of the child image as a beginning and an end, the New World as an ultimate Kingdom Come. Significantly, the child is frequently taken into adulthood where the blessed happiness of a loving husband and a secure home is the girls' reward for humble submission to God's will, and financial and social success the boys' reward for a Christian life of industriousness, thrift, and honesty. Both girls and boys are justly rewarded for a moral strength and self-discipline that is

buoyed up by a confidence in God's loving care and just rewards and punishments.

The image of a redeemed America as a land that offers man a second chance seems to be implied by the insistence upon making the virtually angelic little girls mortify themselves as sinners for their "wilfulness," "stubbornness," and "passionate tempers." And the Alger hero is presented first as wasting his life in dance halls and at gambling tables until he is inspired to a life of thrift and hard work. Chad, "The Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come," experiences a spiritual crisis that brings him a sense of rebirth, a redemptive victory over doubt and despair. Symbolically, his story ends with a new beginning as he starts his life afresh, making his way westward to carry forth the ideals of liberty and to continue making out of America "the Kingdom Come for the oppressed of the earth."

In contrast to these forward looking images of childhood which suggest a greater future for America than any past she has ever known are the bad boys who in their original and unchanging innocence people an idyllic world of the past from which their creators see America quickly moving farther and farther away. The boys grow neither spiritually nor physically but are rather idealized just the way they are, boyhood immortalized as a magic world unto itself. William Allen White romanticizes boyhood into a medieval legend about heroic knights belonging to the ancient and glorious kingdom of Boyville that has endured through the ages, triumphantly resistant to the onslaughts of civilization.

Even when a more honest picture of the boy's nature is given, it is blurred by a misty-eyed romanticism and fond amusement. Howells calls his boy a ferocious savage, but then excuses him as innocently ignorant and goes on to deify his instinctive rapport with nature. Crane mocks the image of the angelic child, but in so doing is really using the child to ridicule the parents. The whitewashing of the boy is most evident in The Lawrenceville Stories where lying, stealing, and cheating are all excused with "boys will be boys." Even the seventeen-year-old con-artists, Tennessee Shad and Doc Macnooder, are protected behind the sacred walls of the boy's world, their rather sophisticated scheming humorously presented as the uniquely delightful spirit of boyhood not to be taken seriously or judged by adult standards. What becomes apparent in all of the bad boy stories is that the authors are using their nostalgic reminiscences of their own boyhood to escape from the problems of adjusting to an adult world, to retreat from an America with which they have become disenchanted.

In many ways the bad boy books indicate a purposeful rejection of the goody-good saintly child images. The authors openly announce their desire to write about the "real," the "natural," the "spirited," the "typical" boy who was no angel. And the boys are presented as average, ordinary children, who are disobedient, delight in playing tricks on others, and enjoy most the company of other children. But the differences between the good girl books and the bad boy books are not as great as they might at first

seem, for the latter like the former are projecting into the image of childhood a myth of America. These male authors are protesting the accepted image of a female-centered society, the ideal of perfection being embodied in a female. Such an image belied what they felt was the real image of America--masculine vigor, aggressiveness, and defiance, not feminine passivity, frailty, humble acceptance, and endurance. The woods and the fields, the farms and the ranches were the soul of Ameerica, not the genteel drawing room. America's strength lay in her frontiersmen, her aggressive businessmen and politicians, not in ruffled and white-gloved ladies and gentlemen. Moreover, the carefree, guiltlessness of boys who conspicuously avoid Church and Sunday-school and reveal no awareness of the Bible implies an Adamic sense of innocence incompatible with the saintly child's morbid self-incriminations and constant struggle to make herself worthier in the eyes of God. Why should the American feel fuilt or unworthiness? He was a hard-working, honest, democratic person building a glorious new nation founded on the belief that all men are equal, that life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness is every man's God-given, inalienable right. The bad boy, carefree and confident in his boy-centered world, defending against all adult opposition his inalienable rights as a boy, despising the privileged rich and befriending the underdog is no less a savior than the more obvious saintly redeemers. And both are presented as victims of society--the girls of insensitive aunts or fathers, the boy urchins of an uncha-

itable world that exploits instead of befriends them, and the bad boys of parental discipline that continually thwarts their natural, free, and fun-loving spirit. Moreover, they are all distinguished not only from adults but also from other, non-savior children. The saints are singularly good, their angelic quality often manifested in their appearance, as in Little Eva's "undulating and aerial grace, such as one might dream of for some mythic and allegorical being." And the bad boys are always seen in contrast to the goody-good boys and the bad bad ruffians and bullies. Perhaps most significant is the common ability among the child saviors to experience an instinctive rapport with nature that is denied the adult. Their capacity to feel intensely, to love, to respond to the wonders and beauty of nature make them the saviors of a materialistic America becoming more and more industrial and urban-centered. All the children then represent in contrast to the established patterns and attitudes of society a more moral, fulfilling, and happier way of life.

The American authors of the saintly child and of the bad boy stories seem especially similar in their conception of childhood when compared to European writers. Unlike Blake, Wordsworth, and Coleridge, for example, they are not seeking a continuity between childhood and adulthood, the oneness of all human experience, but are rather using childhood as a substitute[1] for adulthood. The saintly children, at one extreme, are treated as miniature adults, the standards of the adult world imposed upon them indiscriminately

without any appreciation of them as children. They are little women and men: the girls are virtually wives and mothers to their fathers and men friends; the Alger boys become competent businessmen at the age of twelve; and eleven-year-old Chad (the Shepherd of Kingdom Come) becomes a man in spirit, ready to strike out into the world, freed of his former childish self-pity. While the creators of the child saints were generally insensible to childhood, the creators of the bad boys erred at the other extreme, having, what Peter Coveney ascribes to the late nineteenth-century English writers, "acute feelings for childhood which do not become integrated into a truly adult response to the significance of human experience as a whole."[2] They "create a barrier of nostalgia and regret between childhood and the potential responses of adult life."[3] In other words, applying his conclusion to the American writers, one sees them writing about a boy's world that is wholly detached from adult society, showing it either not to reflect any of its problems or to mirror them all too accurately but--which is the important point--with no recognition of the identity. The myth of innocence is consistently preserved.

The emergence of childhood at this time as a cult was undoubtedly influenced by several overlapping factors. The image of the child of course pandered to the prevailing sentimentalism. It was easy to weep over the plight of innocent child victims. Moreover, the child as the subject of a novel satisfied a Church that still censored fiction for

exciting passion and lust in the hearts of pure maidens.

But the literary conventions of the European Sentimental Novel also contributed to the cult of childhood. The Sentimental Novel established what was virtually a religion of Sentimental Love, the Persecuted Pure Maiden replacing Christ as the Savior.[4] She was in many ways a compromise for a God-as-Father-centered Protestant society that rejected yet was drawn to the Catholic absorption of the Courtly Love Goddess into the cult of the Virgin. It was an attempt, writes Leslie Fiedler, "to smuggle the mother principle back into their cultures . . . to satisfy the secret hunger of the puritanical bourgeoisie, which though it believed itself hostile to the warm, scented, brightly colored female aspect of papistry, demanded bootlegged madonnas; it was the function of the early novel to supply them."[5] The result is the "bourgeois Maiden, whose virginity is the emblem of the ethical purity of her class."[6] Morality is equated with sexual abstinence, goodness with chastity. The priggish fastidiousness and repressive refinement of the Victorians further desexed the maiden savior by making her a child. "The flight from sexuality," as Fiedler notes, "led to a literature about children written for the consumption of adults; but the reading of that literature has turned those adults in their own inmost images of themselves into children."[7]

A repressed eroticism between the young girl and an older man--an actual or surrogate father--characterizes the girl-savior stories: Eva and Papa, Elsie and Papa,

Fleda and Carleton, Lily and Ernest, Ellen and John, Gerty and her father, and Beulah and Dr. Hartwell. The pure, virginal relationship is even maintained in their marriages where they are the spiritual guides to grateful and worshipping husbands: Elsie to Travilla, Beulah to Hartwell, Gerty to Willie, and Blanche to Clarence. These relationships are complemented by the spiritual bonds between the virginal "older sisters" and their men: Alice to her brother John, Rose to Papa, Bertha to Ernest, and Emily to Gerty's father. Chastity rather than marriage as the key to goodness and purity is made evident by the fate of Blanche who becomes a fallen woman by marrying out of passionate love, redeemed only after she leaves her husband with whom she later becomes reunited in pure heavenly love, "kindred to the divine love which God, himself inspires,"acting as his "Christian bridge," his "guide to heaven." Bertha, who had a passionate love affair in her youth, also experiences a spiritual rebirth, redeemed not by the legality of marriage but by her divinely inspired role as the austere, chaste wife-redeemer of Ernest.

The neurotic extreme to which this repressive morality, this fear of sexuality was carried is seen in the hysterical pleasure readers experienced in sobbing over the death of Little Eva. Innocence here is, as Coveney describes it for the Victorian mind, "something statically juxtaposed to experience, and, . . . something not so much static as actually in retreat."[8] The image of childhood has become an "image of a purity which must die before it is corrupted. It is a remarkable phenomenon, surely," he concludes, "when

a society takes the child (with all its potential significance as a symbol of fertility and growth) and creates of it a literary image, not only of frailty, but of life extinguished, of life that is better extinguished, of life, so to say, rejected, negated at its very root."[9]

The obsessive necessity for a myth of childhood innocence becomes particularly striking in the light of the popular hostility to Freud's "Essay on Infantile Sexuality" (1905). The similarity between the child as the heir of Original Sin and the child as the heir of libidinal impulses was too great for a people obsessed with an image of their own innocence.[10] The innocent child was a necessary means of expiation, replacing or being the medium for Christ the Savior. The bad boys no less than the goody-good girls are conspicuously sexual innocents, the boys unrealistically devoid of any sexual curiosity or experience, even the seventeen-year-old Lawrenceville boys. Their non-sexuality makes them the innocent redeemers from all worldly experience, not just in the narrow sense from sexual experience, for it preserves them as perennial innocents. The Lawrenceville boys, for example, are never acknowledged to be the sophisticated sharpies that they are, and even those girl saints whom we see become wives and mothers remain virginal and child-like.

This retreat from initiation into adult experience distinguishes the nineteenth-century writer from contemporary authors writing about children. Such writers as Katherine Anne Porter, Eudora Welty, Carson McCullers,

Truman Capote, Shirley Ann Grau, Harper Lee, William Faulkner, and J. D. Salinger are typically concerned with "an innocent's unsuccessful or fatal initiation."[11] In this sense they are the heirs of Twain and James, their adolescents reflecting the American's sense of an "end to innocence," not the heirs of the minor nineteenth-century authors who persist in the myth of American innocence, easily accommodating changing and even conflicting images to it.

Footnotes to Chapter Seven

[1] Peter Coveney, The Image of Childhood, rev. ed. (Baltimore, 1967), p. 240.

[2] Ibid., p. 241. His comments about English writers of the latter decades of the nineteenth century seem especially applicable to their American contemporaries.

[3] Ibid., p. 240.

[4] Leslie A. Fiedler, Love and Death in the American Novel (New York, 1960), pp. 34-35.

[5] Ibid., p. 23.

[6] Ibid., p. 35.

[7] Ibid., p. 272.

[8] Coveney, p. 193.

[9] Ibid., p. 193.

[10] Ibid., p. 301.

[11] Albert E. Stone, Jr., The Innocent Eye, p. 273.

Appendix I

Peck's Bad Boy and His Pa

Mention must be given to Peck's Bad Boy and His Pa (1883) by George Wilbur Peck, whose title became a household phrase as familiar as Little Lord Fauntleroy and Horatio Alger, and whose boy hero anticipates the Lawrenceville sharpies. Appearing first in serial form in Peck's Sun, through which it enjoyed nation-wide popularity, it was published as a book a year later and remained in print until 1925, going through at least five editions. The boy hero establishes a cult of practical jokes that today seem not only completely devoid of humor but, what is more significant, rather cruel if not sadistic. Thus his popularity is puzzling and can only be explained by the fact that, as E. F. Bleiler puts it in his introduction, "it was an era when practical jokes were almost a cult. . . . Thomas Edison," he goes on to point out, "was delighted when Mark Twain was lured upon a vibration device that caused violent diarrhaea" [sic] and "the Prince of Wales is said to have served the Kaiser of Germany a boarhound roasted as a buck" (p. v). There seems, however, to be a unifying purpose on the part of the author behind his boy's jokes, the desire to satirize the accepted morality of the family, church, and business. Pa is a drunken fool who spends his time gambling and chasing after girls; the pious church-goers who try to reform Pa are seen as hypocrites; and the grocery man, to whom the boy relates his pranks, the "pillar of Church and fraternal

organizations," as Bleiler well puts it, "is an out-and-out sharper."

In making his father his chief target, the boy is very much in the tradition of the bad boy books but in the cruelty of his pranks which often result in pain, he is outside the image of the mischievous but basically good-hearted, innocent boy. For example, taking advantage of Pa's poor eyesight and bad teeth, he substitutes pieces of rubber hose for the macaroni on his plate. Another time, playing upon Pa's Don Juan fantasies, he sends him a fake love letter from a young woman asking him to meet her on a certain corner; the boy then gleefully watches him wait for her for two hours, humiliated and catching cold. And when Ma goes out of town, the boy, knowing she has changed her plans and is coming home early, dresses up a pillow to look like a woman and puts it in the bed next to Pa while he is sleeping. Still another time he has his friend dress up as a girl and flirt with Pa, saying to him, "If you love me kiss me in the mouth," while at the same time he has Ma hidden behind a tree watching. Although the boy does not have our sympathy, neither does Pa for whom the boy has supposedly lost all respect ever since he found out he was a sutler in the Civil War selling liquor to the soldiers. What is completely new is Ma's going along with her son's pranks, self-righteously comparing her husband to Job who must accept the pranks as part of his trial. Mother, as always, is on the side of the angels.

It is true that we appreciate the author's jabs at

middle-class morality and of course his rebellion against the goody-good sentimentalism of Horatio Alger and Little Lord Fauntleroy, but all this tends to be negated by the sheer unpleasantness of his boy. It is with great annoyance that we read his inappropriate defense of him: "Of course all boys are not full of tricks, but the best of them are. That is, those who are readiest to play innocent jokes, and who are continually looking for chances to make Rome howl, are the most apt to turn out to be first-class business men" (p. 28). Instead of censuring his boy's nastiness, Peck applauds him as an American hero. The child innocent has indeed been given a wholly new definition.

Appendix II

Chronology of Works Discussed (according to date of composition)

1829 Hawthorne, Nathaniel. "The Gentle Boy."
1830 Child, Lydia Maria. The Mother's Book.
1845 Arthur, Timothy Shay. The Mother.
Judd, Sylvester. Margaret.
1850 Warner, Susan B. The Wide, Wide World.
1851 Arthur, Timothy Shay. Stories for Parents.
1852 Stowe, Harriet Beecher. Uncle Tom's Cabin.
Warner, Susan B. Queechy.
1853 Fern, Fanny. Fern Leaves from Fanny's Port-Folio.
1854 Arthur, Timothy Shay. The Angel of the Household.
Cummins, Maria. The Lamplighter.
Smith, Elizabeth Oakes. Bertha and Lily.
_____. The Newsboy.

1856 Athern, Anna. Step by Step; or, Delia Arlington.
1857 Hentz, Caroline Lee. The Lost Daughter.
1859 Evans, Augusta Jane. Beulah.
1861 Holmes, Oliver Wendell. Elsie Venner.
1864 Arthur, Timothy Shay. Sunshine at Home.
1865 Twain, Mark. "The Story of the Bad Little Boy."
1866 Alger, Jr., Horatio. Ragged Dick.
1867 Finley, Martha Farquharson. Elsie Dinsmore.
Holmes, Oliver Wendell. The Guardian Angel.
1868 Harte, Bret. "The Luck of Roaring Camp."
1869 Aldrich, Thomas Bailey. The Story of a Bad Boy.
Alcott, Louisa May. Little Women.
Stowe, Harriet Beecher. Oldtown Folks.
1870 Twain, Mark. "The Story of the Good Little Boy."
1872 Finley, Martha Farquharson. Elsie's Girlhood.
1876 Twain, Mark. The Adventures of Tom Sawyer.
1877 Stebbins, Mrs. S. B. The Annals of a Baby.
Warner, Charles Dudley. Being a Boy.
1878 Shillaber, B. P. Ike Partington.
1881 Clark, Charlotte Moon. Baby Rue.
1882 Eggleston, Edward. The Hoosier School-Boy.
Peck, George Wilbur. Peck's Bad Boy and His Pa.
1884 Twain, Mark. The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.
1886 Burnett, Frances Hodgson. Little Lord Fauntleroy.
1888 Hill, Randolph. Tom the Ready; or, Up from the Lowest.
1890 Howells, William Dean. A Boy's Town.
1893 Burnett, Frances Hodgson. The One I Knew Best of All.
Kaler, James Otis. Jenny Wren's Boarding-House.
1896 Pemberton, Caroline H. Your Little Brother James.
1898 Fox, Jr., John. The Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come.
White, William Allen. The Court of Boyville.
1899 Crane, Stephen. "His New Mittens," in The Monster.
1900 Crane Stephen. The Whilomville Stories.
1906 Burnett, Frances Hodgson. The Dawn of a To-Morrow.
1910 Johnson, Owen. The Lawrenceville Stories.
1913 Porter, Eleanor. Pollyanna.
1913-16 Tarkington, Booth. Penrod: His Complete Story.

Appendix III

Biographies of Authors

Alcott, Louisa May (1832-88), daughter of Amos Bronson Alcott, spent most of her life in Concord, Mass. Little Women had immediate success, 87,000 copies sold in first three years.

Aldrich, Thomas Bailey (1836-1907), lived mostly in Mass., wrote prose and verse for periodicals, succeeded Howells as editor of the Atlantic Monthly.

Alger, Jr., Horatio (1834-99), born Revere, Mass., attended Harvard College, Harvard Divinity School, and became a Unitarian minister. While associated with the Newsboys' Lodging House in New York as chaplain and philanthropist, he wrote nearly one hundred thirty books about boys.

Arthur, Timothy Shay (1809-1885), settled in Philadelphia, founded Arthur's Home Magazine, author of nearly one hundred moral tales and tracts, best known of which is Ten Nights in a Bar-room and What I Saw There (1854).

Athern, Anna (Frances West (Atherton) Pike), (1819-?). No other information about this author found.

Burnett, Frances Hodgson (1849-1924), born England, came to America in 1865, author of romantic stories, many for children, Sara Crewe (1888).

Child, Lydia Maria (1802-80), Massachusetts abolitionist, wrote didactic fiction, such as The Rebels; or, Boston before the Revolution(1825), a story concerned with Stamp Tax agitation.

Clark Charlotte Moon. No record of this author found.

Crane, Stephen (1871-1900), born New Jersey, attended Lafayette College and Syracuse University, reporter for Herald and Tribune. His first book was Maggie (1893), died of tuberculosis in Germany.

Cummins, Maria Susanna (1827-66), lived in Massachusetts, contributed to the Atlantic Monthly, wrote moralistic romances.

Eggleston, Edward (1837-1902), born Indiana, a circuit-riding Methodist minister, writer and editor of Sunday school and juvenile magazines. The Hoosier Schoolmaster (1871).

Evans, Augusta Jane (1835-1909), an Alabaman, she wrote romances of the South: Inez: A Tale of the Alamo (1855), St. Elmo (1867), the latter a very popular best-seller.

Fern, Fanny (Sara Payson Willis), (1811-72), wrote many books similar to Fern Leaves, also melodramatic tales, best known of which is Ruth Hall (1855). Columnnist for the New York Ledger.

Finley, Martha Farquharson (1828-1909), wrote 100 novels for children, of which twenty-eight are the Elsie books (1867-1905).

Fox, John (1863-1919), born in Kentucky, spent part of his youth among the mountaineers of the Cumberlands, whose life is the main subject of his fiction: A Cumberland Vendetta (1895), The Trail of the Lonesome Pine (1908).

Harte, Bret (1836-1902), printer and journalist in San Francisco. Editor of Overland Monthly, in which he published his local-color stories, mainly concerned with moral contrasts, including "The Luck of Roaring Camp," "The Outcasts of Poker Flat," "Tennessee's Partner." Later lapsed into mediocre writing, finally living his last years in London as a hack writer, imitating his early California stories.

Hentz, Caroline Lee (1800-1856), Mass., best known for her romantic novels, Robert Graham (1855); Ernest Linwood (1856).

Hill, Randolph. No record of this author found.

Holmes, Oliver Wendell (1809-94), graduated from Harvard College, studied medicine at Harvard, from 1847-82 he was Professor of Anatomy and Physiology at Harvard. Militant Unitarian. Leading contributor to the Atlantic Monthly: The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table (1858).

Howells, William Dean (1837-1920), born and raised in Ohio, Editor-in-Chief (1871-81) of the Atlantic Monthly. Wrote novels, drama, travel books, and verse. As a literary critic, he championed realism in art.

Johnson, Owen (1878-1952), wrote popular novels about boys, including Stover at Yale (1911).

Judd, Sylvester (1813-53), Unitarian minister, advocated several idealistic reforms, including a "birthright church" in which all individuals would by birth automatically become members. Wrote Philo, an Evangeliad (1850), a didactic metaphyscial epic.

Kaler, James Otis (1848-1912), Maine author, best known for Toby Tylor; or, Ten Weeks with a Circus (1881).

Peck, George Wilbur (1840-1916), Wisconsin journalist and humorist. Founded the Sun (1874) in which practical jokes of a boy were published. His popularity as a humorist

helped him to become mayor of Milwaukee (1890) and governor of Wisconsin (1890-94).

Pemberton, Caroline H. No record of this author found.

Porter, Eleanor (1868-1920), author of juvenile novels, including Cross Currents (1907), Miss Billy (1911), and Pollyanna Grows Up (1915).

Shillaber, Benjamin Penhallow (1814-90), Boston author and printer, in 1847 created the character of Mrs. Partington, (Ike's aunt), a small town Yankee Mrs. Malaprop. Founded a humorous weekly, The Carpet-Bag (1851-53), in which the first work of Mark Twain was printed.

Smith, Elizabeth Oakes (1806-93), popular novelist and contributor to literary magazines. Her works include: The Western Captive (1842), Black Hollow (1864). Most of her works appeared under the pseudonym Ernest Helfenstein.

Stebbins, Mrs. S. B. Possibly pseudonym for John Habberton (1842-1921), New York journalist, author of the very popular Helen's Babies (1876), humorous account of a bachelor's supervision of two young mischievous nephews. (See p. 70 for further discussion of author's identity.)

Stowe, Harriet Beecher (1811-96), wrote A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin (1853), a compilation of facts drawn from laws, court records, newspapers, and private letters to defend the accuracy of her book. Followed by several novels with a New England setting; The Minister's Wooing (1859), like Oldtown Folks, contains an attack on Calvinism.

Tarkington, Booth (1869-1946), Indiana novelist, won the Pulitzer Prize for The Magnificent Ambersons (1918), the chronicle of an Indiana family, and Alice Adams (1921), about a commonplace girl who has a love affair with a man above her in social rank. Growth (1927) is the title of his trilogy of Midwestern city life.

Warner, Charles Dudley (1829-1900), received LL.B. from University of Pennsylvania (1858), practiced law in Chicago, settled in Connecticut. Author of essays and travel sketches, and co-author with Mark Twain of The Gilded Age (1873).

Wetherell, Elizabeth (Susan B. Warner), (1819-85), New York, author of sentimental, pious novels.

White, William Allen (1868-1944), born Kansas, purchased the Emporia Gazette (1895) and became famous independent editor following the publication of his editorial "What's the Matter with Kansas?" (August 15, 1896), a conservative attack on the Populists. Won the Pulitzer Prize (1946) for his Autobiography.

A Selected Bibliography

Section I lists the works discussed; Section II, other minor nineteenth-century fiction read for its related value; and Section III, primary and secondary works found useful in preparing this dissertation.

I. Works discussed. Whenever an edition other than the first was used, the date of composition is given. The author's pseudonym is used for the alphabetical listing, with his or her real name given in parentheses.

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