Dissertation submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of Cambridge

NOTIONS OF CHILDHOOD IN LONDON THEATRE, 1880-1905

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This thesis points to a broadly based change in attitudes underlying the late Victorian interest in childhood which had largely separate roots in the principal class sub-cultures within the society. It takes the theatre, the most widely representative cultural form of the period, as the best index to these, and finds the clearest division in the theatre public between the upper working and lower middle classes, and the middle and upper middle classes.

In the first of these, urban melodrama and the case study offered by George R. Sims indicate a transformation of the child from a symbol of poverty and deprivation to a representative of working class humour and vitality between the 1880s and 1890s. This change reflected general falls in rates of birth and child mortality, but was more directly related to the particular effects on the upper working and lower middle classes of changing economic conditions and suburbanisation, as well as to the sensationalist tendencies of melodrama itself. It took the form of an adoption by the child of existing stereotyped roles rather than of any celebration of childhood itself as a state, and should therefore be seen as largely distinct from the cult of childhood among the middle and upper middle classes.

This was located mainly among the wives of these classes, encouraged as they were to adopt a more sentimental attitude towards their children by a sharper decline in the birth rate among them than among classes below them on the social scale, the general decline in child mortality and the assumption by domestics of the practical aspects of child care. The evidence of the plays suggests that the notion of the child as a miniature participant in adult family and social life, characteristic of the first phase of the theatrical child cult (c.1887-c.1891), was the product of this heightened sentimentality and of efforts to involve children in the rituals of conspicuous leisure.

The thesis goes on to define a second phase of the child cult, beginning late in the 1890s after a hiatus in the first part of the decade and stressing children's unique vitality and the integrity of childhood imagination. The resulting notion of the child as the hero of his own imaginative world is best exemplified in Peter Pan.

Two main conclusions emerge from this argument. The first is that while aspects of the transformation in notions of childhood were general, its expression differed in both kind and degree between the two main cultural groups, and that it was most marked among the upper social classes. The second is that the 'cult of childhood' among these classes evolved through two distinct phases (c.1887-c.1891 and c.1898 to the end of the period) which produced quite different images of childhood.
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FOREWORD

Every thesis owes much to the forbearance and help of a considerable number of people. In my case, I must acknowledge the assistance of the staffs of the British Library, the Cambridge University Library, the Westminster Public Library Reference Library, the State Library of Victoria and the Baillieu Library of the University of Melbourne. My thanks must also go to my supervisor, Dr Gillian Sutherland, and those who have commented on various sections of the thesis at various times, including Dr Peter Searby, Dr Ian Maclaine, Professor Ross Duncan and Professor Alan McBriar. In particular, I thank Dr Ian Britain, Dr Stuart Macintyre and Professor Harold Bolitho for their help and encouragement, and Dr Graeme Davison for whose support throughout the preparation of this thesis I owe a great debt of gratitude. Dr David Mayer made the Sims Papers freely available to me, and Mrs Beverley Goldsworthy's typing has been carried out with unfailing cheerfulness and efficiency.

The dissertation is less than 80,000 words in length; it is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration.
This thesis is a study of notions of childhood among the major class sub-cultures in London between 1880 and 1905 as they were reflected in the theatre. It is not a study in theatre history. Rather, it is one which uses the theatre in attempting to establish a cultural context for the social history of childhood during these years. The premise on which it rests and which is established in the following chapter is that, unlike literature, on which English cultural studies have most frequently been founded, the theatre is the most broadly representative area of cultural expression during the period. It is therefore the best place to look for late Victorian notions of childhood which were widely diffused throughout the community and which can be seen as the groundswell of which major developments involving children, such as the various enquiries into the condition of childhood, the formation of Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, the consequent passage of the Act for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in 1889, the development of child study as an academic discipline, and the New Schools movement, were all particular expressions.

While acknowledging the importance of such specific landmarks in childhood history, the following argument suggests that they were aspects of a broader transformation than a study of any one of them might indicate. By exploring notions of childhood dramatised in the theatre this thesis seeks to gain a more comprehensive picture of that transformation than is obtainable from studies of particular political or social reform groups concerned with childhood simply because the theatre, in an age more given to theatre-going than any other since the seventeenth century, was more representative of the

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population as a whole than any such movement could be. Similarly, the focus of this study on the broader society rather than on classes in isolation is intended to produce an indication of the sources of particular ideas of childhood among particular social classes, and some basis for comparison between the major class sub-cultures in their attitudes towards children.

Two major conclusions emerge from this. The first is that while there was a general trend in both areas of theatre away from moral categorisation of children based on their vitality, the so-called cult of childhood to which literary historians such as David Grylls, Peter Coveney and Peter Green have referred was largely based among the middle and upper middle classes.

As part of this conclusion, it is clear from the following study that for most of the period the upper working and lower middle classes who formed the main audience for melodrama did not place special importance on childhood as a separate state, though they did see particular significance in children as class representatives. Thus the child was defined in melodrama of the late 1870s and up to the end of the 1880s within a Dickensian moral framework in which the main child character types highlighted the child's predicament as a victim of urban poverty: the mother and child in poverty, the orphan, the waif. With the recession of the social crisis by the early 1890s, the melodrama child moved increasingly into the role of another stereotyped character, the comic man, giving rise to the more comic or sentimental (rather than pathetic), active and confident images of the late 1890s. In the work of the popular playwright, journalist and social reformer G.R. Sims, the evolution of the melodrama child is exemplified by children in The Lights o'London (1881) who illustrate slices of London life, the children in a number of his plays of the mid- and late 1880s who are the protagonists in tales of social protest, the cheeky street arabs of his plays of the mid-1890s and the mother-seeking, sentimental and humorous children of Two Little Vagabonds in 1896.

The cult of childhood among the middle and upper middle classes was based on different premises and was dominated by the wives of these classes. It was the product of a greater sentimental interest in children among them, following a differential fall in the birth rate which reduced the number of children in the families of the middle and upper middle classes, and the widespread assumption of the practical aspects of motherhood by domestic servants. The heightened solicitude for children which resulted from these developments conflicted with the demands of a life of conspicuous leisure, partly resolved by a more substantial role for children in adult social and cultural life. With the development of children's balls and the fashion for child musical prodigies, the new fascination with children on the stage was thus an aspect of the more active public life of middle and upper middle class women and its contradiction of the domestic, maternal ideal.

The second main conclusion of the thesis is that the cult of childhood among the middle and upper middle classes went through two main phases, in each of which the characteristic imagery of children was quite distinct. The first of these ran from about 1888 to about 1891 and presented children in sentimental roles partly reflecting issues raised by 'problem' plays like A Doll's House (1891) and The Second Mrs Tanqueray (1893) which dealt with crises in family life. Children here appeared in relationship with adults, typically in family situations and commenting on adult life. Landmarks in this phase of the child cult in the theatre include Little Lord Fauntleroy (1888) and Booties's Baby (1888). The careers of the child stars Vera Beringer and Minnie Terry during these years exemplify the concerns dramatised in these and similar plays during these years.

The mid-1890s saw the temporary demise of the problem play as part of a general rejection of realism and a growing fascination with fantasy, evident as Allardyce Nicoll has noted in a new interest in drama, a 'boom in Shakespeare' (and especially of A Midsummer Night's Dream), a flurry of adventure dramas like The Prisoner of Zenda (1896), the high popularity of J.M. Barrie's early plays and

3. This argument is developed in Chapter 6.
plays on supernatural themes. These provide the context for the second phase of the child cult. Simultaneously came the development of a specialist children's theatre in which matinee productions played a central role, and the rise of musical comedy as the most popular dramatic form in the West End. The success of Bluebell in Fairyland in 1901 demonstrated the now general popularity of children's themes and the importance in that popularity of the vitality imported from musical comedy, and led directly to the production of Peter Pan (1904). In place of the adult-oriented innocence of Little Lord Fauntleroy and Bootles's Baby Barrie's play celebrates the child's independence of adults and his capacity for a rich imaginative life. In this way, the merging of the fantasy themes of children's theatre with those from traditional sources, including Shakespeare, especially A Midsummer Night's Dream, and with the vitality of musical comedy, gave rise to the nostalgic notion of the child who is the hero of his own world of imagination.

The starting point for this study is the marked heightening of interest in childhood during the last decades of the Victorian era, noted by contemporaries and modern historians alike. 'It is the age of child-worship', wrote a contributor to Murray's Magazine in 1888, and when the young poet Ernest Dowson declared the following year that 'there is no more distinctive feature of the age than the enormous importance which children have assumed', he did no more than state what was self-evident to many of his contemporaries, and was to become particularly so in the last four or five years of the century. In 1897, the psychologist James Sully, himself an example of the turn this preoccupation took in the late 1890s, found that the contemporary 'fancy for children's ways' was now beginning for the first time to show signs of gathering the volume and the energy of a new interest.

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and Max Beerbohm, admitting in 1898 that 'children have been, so to speak, "discovered"', was forced reluctantly to agree. Noting the apotheosis of the new passion for children in Peter Pan seven years later, Beerbohm reflected nostalgically that 'Twenty years ago it was quite different. The cult for children did not exist then. Children were not regarded as a race apart — specimens to be carefully preserved and dotingly dilated on'.

Generally speaking, historians have agreed with this picture. Writing of children's position in the family, Lawrence Stone has described the period as encompassing, after the late eighteenth century, a 'second and far more intense phase of permissiveness, beginning slowly among the middle classes in the 1870s and spreading to the social elite in the 1890s'. For Ivy Pinchbeck and Margaret Hewitt, concerned as they are to chart the changing status of children in legislation, the period considered in this thesis marks the child's transformation into a citizen with clear legal rights, including those against its parents. A similarly positive picture is painted by Jean Heywood, and by Nigel Middleton, who dates the beginning of the 'modern concept of the child' from the passage of the Education Act of 1870. Likewise, David Rubinstein writes of a 'remarkable shift in attitudes to the welfare of the child' which he locates in the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first of the twentieth.

Those whose concern has been more with the social origins of reforms in the legal treatment of children during the period likewise concur on its importance as a transitional stage in the evolution of the child's social and cultural status. George Behlmer, in his unpublished study of the child protection movement, notes its transformation in the early 1880s from an association largely of 'medical specialists' whose aims were articulated by the Infant Life Protection Society to a broadly based agitation among the middle classes involving lay people from a wide variety of occupations directing their energies against an extensive range of perceived abuses of childhood through the various Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.\textsuperscript{15}

Other writers, finding their starting point in Anthony Platt's study of the Illinois child saving movement of the 1890s,\textsuperscript{16} have described various aspects of a similar movement in England, based on the middle classes and concerned to impose middle class notions of childhood on working class children and youth, in the second half of the century.\textsuperscript{17}

There is similar agreement among literary historians on the intensity of interest in children during the last decades of the century. As part of the context for his recent study of 'the growth of childhood independence and the decay of parental power'\textsuperscript{18} in Victorian literature, David Grylls notes 'a vast change of attitude' in the treatment of children during the century, so that by 1900 child labour was limited and child mortality reduced, children were protected by

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{16} Anthony Platt, \textit{The Child Savers: the Invention of Delinquency} (Chicago 1969).
\item \textsuperscript{18} Grylls, \textit{op. cit.}, p.11.
\end{itemize}
law at school, at work and at home, were increasingly able to read and had become the subject of specialist study.\(^{19}\) The distinctiveness in this of the 1880s and 1890s is apparent in what Grylls finds to be a boom in publications for and about children during those years, and in the birth of child study as a scientific discipline.\(^{20}\) The social basis Grylls seeks to establish for his account is the source of the difference between his conclusions on the late nineteenth century preoccupation with children and those reached by Peter Coveney in his earlier study of childhood in Victorian literature. Unlike Grylls, Coveney traces the evolution of childhood as an exclusively literary idea and finds it progressively degraded during the century, so that the image of the child who in Blake is a vital symbol in the enactment of a 'total response to adult experience' becomes in Barrie the focus of a cult of childhood whose purpose is to interpose 'a barrier of nostalgia and regret between childhood and the potential responses of adult life'.\(^{21}\)

Despite the different perspectives on the question achieved through different bodies of source material, then, there is general agreement as to the unprecedented prominence children acquired in various areas of English life in the last decades of the century. From other recent work, it is also apparent that this upsurge of interest was neither English in its origins nor limited to England in its extent. Anthony Platt's work,\(^{22}\) for example, examines the social

\(^{19}\) Ibid., pp.72-73.

\(^{20}\) Ibid., p.64.

\(^{21}\) Coveney, op. cit., p.240. See also Peter Green's condemnation of the child cult: 'The child cult of the later nineteenth century was not based on a sympathy for, or consideration of, children as they really were, on their own terms. It had far more selfish motives: relief of guilt, gratification of the ego. Children became the ideal symbol of their elders' glutinous yearning for purity. There was no question of a communication or understanding: the traffic of sentiment all went one way. Children were regarded as objects - dolls, pets, almost mythical symbols, which reflected nothing but the magnanimity and tenderness of their elders'. Op. cit., p.161.

\(^{22}\) Op. cit.
basis and legislative effects of this interest in the United States through a study of the invention of the idea of juvenile delinquency in that country. On a more general level, Christopher Lasch describes the evolution in the United States of a sense of the child as 'a different order of being from the adult - and in some senses a superior order', and finds it to be but one of 'so many independent discoveries of the mystery and sanctity of childhood' which must have owed their advent 'not so much to a set of intellectual influences - romanticism, naturalism - as to the social conditions of the period; to some common experience through which an entire generation had passed'. Richard Hofstadter likewise finds a quickening interest in the child in the United States and Europe by the turn of the century, expressed in the United States by the rapid evolution of progressive educational theories, and Stephen Kern cites a similar context for his account of the development of child psychology in Europe and the United States between the publication of Preyer's The Mind of the Child in 1881 and the appearance of Freud's essay on infant sexuality in 1905.

At the same time, as Lawrence Stone has said of Philippe Aries's pioneering study of European childhood, any study of English childhood during these years must be firmly rooted in a specific 'historical context of time, place, class and culture'. In the absence of a broadly based cultural study of attitudes towards childhood during the period, a survey of articles in four major periodicals and of books published in England on children confirms in general terms the

24. Ibid., p.87.
existence of a burgeoning interest in children and childhood there
in the specific historical context of the last two decades of the
nineteenth century, at least among the middle classes who formed
the audience for such publications. Articles on children, not
including those on educational administration, in the Quarterly
Review, the Contemporary Review, the Fortnightly Review and the
Nineteenth Century totalled as follows in each of the periods of
five years from 1880:

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<th>Period</th>
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<tr>
<td>1880-84</td>
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<td>1885-89</td>
<td>27</td>
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<td>1890-94</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>1895-99</td>
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The equivalent figures for 1870-74 and 1875-79 are distorted by the
nonexistence of the Nineteenth Century before 1877 and by the passage
of the Education Act in 1870, with the concentration this brought on
educational matters at the expense of other questions in which chil­
dren were involved. Nonetheless they are consistent with the trend
apparent later:

<table>
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<th>Period</th>
<th>Articles</th>
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<tr>
<td>1870-74</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>1875-79</td>
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A similar picture, including the temporary decline in 1890-94,
is gained from a count of books on topics to do with children and
childhood in the British Museum Subject Index for 1881-1900, and
1901-05:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Child-rearing manuals</th>
<th>Child study</th>
<th>Children and social welfare</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1881-85</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>1886-90</td>
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<td>1891-95</td>
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<td>1896-1900</td>
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<tr>
<td>1901-1905</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
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28. 'Child study' is a term characteristic of the period. Perhaps the
best definition of it appears in the eleventh edition of the Ency­
clopaedia Britannica (1910-11), which testifies also to child
study's distinctive significance for these years: 'The physical
and educational development of children, from birth to adulthood,
has provided material in recent years for what has come to be
regarded as almost a distinct part of anthropological or socio­
logical science ...' (Entry under 'Child').
The earlier index, for 1870-80, was assembled by a different compiler and some categories of works, like child rearing manuals, are apparently missing from it. While this is a further indication of the greater importance ascribed to children in the succeeding decades, it also presents difficulties in relating figures for the 1870s to those for 1880-1905. Nonetheless, the difference in the number of works on children recorded in the indexes as published in Britain between 1870 and 1880 compared to those published between 1880 and 1905 is notable:

<table>
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<th>children</th>
<th>children's diseases</th>
<th>children's food</th>
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<tr>
<td>1870-80</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>1880-1905</td>
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The new interest in children was registered in a wide range of cultural, institutional and legislative developments which reflect, first, a growing sense of children's separate identity and needs as a class, and, second, a growing preoccupation with the needs and potential of the individual child. These developments were shaped by particular cultural and class stereotypes of childhood which this thesis will set out to define. In the absence, however, of any general and detailed survey of the evolution in publicly expressed notions of childhood outside legislation during the period, it is necessary here to establish, however briefly, something of a background against which a subsequent discussion of the place of this study in the relevant historiography can occur.

The development of the themes in the evolving sense of childhood which I have indicated above is best defined in terms of three major focal points of childhood history during the period: the Education Act, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, and the growth of child study as an academic discipline. The significance of the Education Act in helping to form contemporary stereotypes of childhood lay first in the concern to which its operations gave rise about children as exemplars of the social crisis of

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29. In the figures for 1880-1900 'child rearing manuals' include works on infant feeding and non-specialised works on diseases in children. 'Children and social welfare' includes all works entered in the index under 'Children: Charities: Protection etc.'
the 1880s, and second, in the concern expressed through the school boards about the effects of urbanisation on the condition of working class children, and ultimately on the race.\textsuperscript{30}

While it is true, as a recent commentator has put it, that the Education Act of 1870 represented a degree of official recognition of childhood as 'a universal condition requiring special consideration',\textsuperscript{31} notions of childhood in the community at large which flowed from its activities owed most to the establishment of a body of school attendance officers to enforce compulsory attendance. Together with the School Board's weekly 'B' meetings, to which parents were called to explain their children's absence from school, the attendance officers offered a reasonably comprehensive means of assessing contemporary social conditions. Like Charles Booth's later survey,\textsuperscript{32} G.R. Sims's investigations into the state of the poor in the early 1880s\textsuperscript{33} could not have been carried out without the help of the School Board officers. With Arthur Mearns's \textit{The Bitter Cry of Outcast London} (1883), Sims's work has been recognised as helping to trigger the social crisis of the mid-1880s.\textsuperscript{34}

The prominence of children in Sims's reforming journalism (three of the thirteen chapters of \textit{How the Poor Live} are devoted to the condition of children in the board schools), together with the use made

\textsuperscript{30} See Reeder, \textit{op. cit.}

\textsuperscript{31} Middleton, \textit{op. cit.}, p.173.


\textsuperscript{33} These were reported in G.R. Sims's articles in the \textit{Pictorial World} in 1883 which were reprinted in a booklet of the same name, 'How the Poor Live' the same year. They were not published in permanent form until 1889 when they appeared with additional material as \textit{How the Poor Live and Horrible London}.

of the schools by Radical and Socialist School Board members as channels of social welfare,\(^{35}\) helped to strengthen a sense of children as the special victims of social deprivation. This impression was further reinforced by the series of investigations, prompted by the work of Darwin, Galton and Sully, into the physical and mental state of children, beginning with the British Medical Association's enquiry of 1888 into the 'average development and condition of brain power among school children'.\(^{36}\) Anxieties about the effects of urbanisation and industrialisation expressed in enquiries such as this and later ones by the Royal Commission on the Blind and Dumb reporting in 1889, and by the Charity Organisation Society in 1891 and 1894 led to the formation of the Childhood Society in 1896, devoted to statistical investigations of children as a class, especially in the great cities.\(^{37}\)

In a parallel trend, the campaigns of the Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children from 1883 (in London from 1884),\(^{38}\) publicity of the child rescue societies (notably those led by Barnardo\(^{39}\) and Stephenson) from the 1870s, and the activities of the Vigilance Associations, both before and after the 1885 Criminal Law Amendment Act, combined to create a sense of the degraded state of childhood which was both physical and moral in character. Both the Criminal Law Amendment Act (1885) and the Act for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children of 1889, in which cruelty was defined to include not only physical abuse and neglect but also certain forms of child labour, were indications of the strength of the child saving ethic to which this sense of childhood at risk gave rise.


38. See Behlmer, op. cit.

Perhaps the clearest indication of the range of the new interest in childhood is provided by the parallel activities of the Childhood Society and the Child Study Association. The Childhood Society, founded in 1896 under the chairmanship of Sir Douglas Galton with the original title of 'The Society for the Promotion of Hygiene in School Life', grew out of a concern with the state of the child population as a whole, and accordingly concentrated its energies on statistical investigations. On the other hand, the origins of the Child Study Association lay in contacts established between a group of British lady teachers with the founder of the American child study movement, G. Stanley Hall, at the Chicago World Fair in 1893. The British Child Study Association was formed the following year with the English psychologist James Sully as the chairman of its London branch. In contrast with the Childhood Society's interest in statistical data, the Child Study Association, following Hall, promoted the detailed study of the individual child, exemplified in Sully's pioneering work of child psychology, *Studies of Childhood* (1895), revised and republished in a popular edition as *Children's Ways* in 1897. The popularity of *Children's Ways* gives it an important place in the procession of works on child study between the mid-1890s and 1905, suggesting a considerable non-professional interest in its subject.

The individualist concerns which gave birth to the Child Study Association found expression also in the New Schools movement from the late 1880s. The foundation of Abbotsholme in 1889 by Cecil Reddie marked a revolt among some sections of the professional middle classes, not only against the outdated curricula of the Public Schools, but also against their authoritarianism, their competitiveness, their limited sense of character training, and their failure to give proper attention to developing the unique capacities of the individual child. While they differed in some other respects from Abbotsholme, Bedales (1892), Clayesmore (1896) and the King Alfred School, Hampstead (1898)

40. Hearnshaw, op. cit., p.269.

were further embodiments of the new individualist creed in middle class education fuelled by the educational theories of Froebel, Pestalozzi and Margaret McMillan.\textsuperscript{42}

Other expressions of a new interest both in childhood as a condition and in the development and sensibility of the individual child can be seen in literary form. The period 1890-1914 has been called a Golden Age of children's books,\textsuperscript{43} in which the interests of adults and children merged in a common enthusiasm for stories of fantasy and adventure.\textsuperscript{44} The work of writers as varied as Walter Pater, Mrs Molesworth, Richard Jefferies, Arthur Morrison, Kenneth Grahame, Alice Meynell, Arthur Symons, J.M. Barrie, and Henry James, among many others, is testimony to the extent and range of literary interest in children in the last decades of the nineteenth century.

The simultaneous growth of various forms of interest in childhood, however much they differed in their expression and orientation, suggests something of a general transformation in the ways in which children were regarded and which needs to be studied as a whole. There has been a tendency in recent historiography, however, to approach these manifestations of concern about the nature and condition of childhood in isolation, and this has led to a failure to understand the basis of the concern in a broadly based process of cultural development. Roughly speaking, this historiography can be divided into three categories, dealing respectively with legislation, with the origins of such legislation in middle class reformism, and with the expression of the new interest in childhood through literature. It is appropriate here to examine each of these with particular reference to the work of Ivy Pinchbeck and Margaret Hewitt, Anthony Platt and Peter Coveney.\textsuperscript{45}

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., p.26.
\textsuperscript{45} All *op. cit.*
The starting point for research of this kind must by Ivy Pinchbeck and Margaret Hewitt's *Children in English Society*, volume 2, *From the Eighteenth Century to the Children Act, 1948* (1973). From its account of responses by the English state to the problems presented by children, we can easily discern a growing legislative and reformist preoccupation with children during the late Victorian period, in which the foundation of the first Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in Liverpool in 1883 and the passage of the Children Act of 1908 appear as natural boundaries for the present study and the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act of 1889 as a natural mid-point. On either side of the 1889 Act comes an impressive series of enquiries and legislation concerned with a wide range of social issues involving children, notably the regulation of child labour, the prevention of cruelty to children, and the treatment of young offenders.

The first difficulty presented by the book is its preoccupation with the revelation and legislative rectification of abuses, which leaves little room for analysis of the nature and causes of the changes inside and outside Parliament in the perception of children, and therefore of what constituted abuses of them, during the period. Nor does it comprehend developments which, while highly significant in the evolving position of children in English society, were not necessarily, directly and immediately reflected in legislation. The rise of child study as an area of professional enquiry during the 1890s is one question among many which is thus given less than its due weight.

A preoccupation with the onward march of reforming legislation leads also to the sense the book projects of reform as a process largely independent of cultural and ideological change, proceeding from the revelation of social evils by heroic reformers, 'those whose life-work it was to protect those weaker than themselves', to the confirmation of such evils by Parliamentary enquiry and their treatment by statute. There is little sense in this of the historical particularity of reform ideologies, nor of the cultural or class foundation.

of the images of children on which such reform programmes were based. This difficulty is underlined by the organisation of Pinchbeck and Hewitt's book into successive chapters which explore, not perceptions of and responses to the problems of child life in particular periods, but the progressive development of legislation concerned with particular types of abuse of children throughout the period, or large sections of it.

Broadly speaking, then, legislative histories of childhood, of which Pinchbeck and Hewitt's volume can be taken as a model, confuse legislative change with social and cultural change (this confusion is manifest in the title of Pinchbeck and Hewitt's work), and as accounts of legislative change reveal a number of deficiencies. Among these are their failure to consider either the cultural conditions in which legislation was passed or the ideological content of the reforms enacted in it. Taken together, these constitute a failure to define the historical particularity of reform in terms of its social and ideological context.

In these respects, Anthony Platt's work on the 'invention of juvenile delinquency' in the United States, The Child Savers (1969), offers another perspective on the evolution of public policy towards children (specifically, the evolution of the juvenile court in Illinois) in the context of a developing middle class ideology of reform by which middle class reformers came to perceive and act on what they saw as dangerous differences between childhood, as it was exemplified in their own families, and the forms it took among the working classes. This model of the child saving movement in the United States has been proved valuable by historians including Margaret May, John Gillis and David Reeder in research on the English situation, and the approach it suggests proves relevant also in assessing George Behlmer's work on the NSPCC and Deborah Gorham's on the Maiden Tribute scandal.

47. See also Pamela Horn, The Victorian Country Child (London 1974), as well as Heywood and Middleton, both op. cit.

48. All op. cit.

49. Both op. cit.
For my own work, it provides a background for the depiction of different stereotypes of childhood in theatre for the upper working and lower middle classes, and for the middle and upper middle classes.

Platt's theme is the 'invention of juvenile delinquency', exemplified by the development of a system of separate juvenile courts, established by the Juvenile Courts Act of 1899 in Illinois. Essentially, his argument links two developments. The first of these is the evolution in late nineteenth century American criminology of a 'medical model' of crime as a type of social pathology, together with a corresponding 'rehabilitative ideal' to be striven towards in the treatment of deviants, particularly 'delinquent' children and prematurely independent adolescents. The second is the discovery by middle class women, with more education and more leisure time than ever before, but with a very limited choice of careers, and isolated in the burgeoning suburbs, of philanthropy, and particularly of philanthropic work with children, as an acceptable extension of the female domestic and maternal roles. In practice, the application of the conservative ideals of domesticity became the basis of a new kind of radical social reform. In this way, American child saving could be seen as 'essentially a middle class movement, launched by the "leisure class" on behalf of those less fortunately placed in the social order'.

Compared to legislative histories of the kind represented by Pinchbeck and Hewitt, the methodology of Platt's account of American child saving represents a clear advance in the treatment of childhood history, in that it seeks its evidence in the cultural conditions of the period, and works to establish the historical and class particularity of the ideology embodied in the reform. In so doing, Platt makes an important contribution to the study of childhood during the late nineteenth century through his identification of a movement based on the middle classes. In this, he argues, women played a crucial role, seeking to impose notions of childhood derived from middle class life on working class children whose failure to conform to accepted middle class stereotypes of 'normal' childhood seemed both unnatural.

and threatening. While his account is a case study in middle class notions of childhood and their effects on social organisation, rather than a survey of the development of notions of childhood in Illinois society as a whole in the late nineteenth century, the sense of collision he describes (between evolving notions of 'normal' childhood among middle class reformers and patterns of behaviour among working class youth) contrasts sharply with the positivist picture of reform offered by Pinchbeck and Hewitt. This indeed is Platt's point:

Traditional explanations of the child saving movement in the nineteenth century emphasise the noble sentiments and tireless energy of middle class philanthropists. It is widely implied in the literature that the juvenile court and parallel reforms in penology represent a progressive effort by concerned reformers to alleviate the miseries of urban life and to solve social problems by rational, enlightened and scientific methods. With few exceptions, studies of delinquency have been parochial, inadequately descriptive, and show little appreciation of underlying political and cultural conditions. Historical studies, particularly of the juvenile court, are for the most part self-confirming and support an evolutionary view of human progress.\textsuperscript{51}

Following Platt's study of middle class child saving in Illinois, a number of studies have pointed to a similar process in England in which predominantly female middle class movements attempted to reform the condition of working class children according to their own class-based sense of childhood as innocent and protected.

In discussing an earlier phase of English child saving represented by the efforts of Mary Carpenter and others in the 1850s to restore delinquent and neglected children 'to the true condition of childhood' through the establishment of Industrial Schools, Margaret May\textsuperscript{52} shows that the child-saving idea was by no means new in the 1880s and 1890s.

At the same time, it seems clear from the work of John Gillis on the evolution of the idea of juvenile delinquency in England\textsuperscript{53} and by David Reeder on responses to the apparently degenerating effect of urban life on children\textsuperscript{54} that the child saving idea gathered a

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{51} Ibid., p.10
  \item \textsuperscript{52} May, op. cit.
  \item \textsuperscript{53} Gillis, op. cit.
  \item \textsuperscript{54} Reeder, op. cit.
\end{itemize}
considerable number of new adherents by the 1880s and 1890s. Thus Gillis in his study of Oxford refers to the much greater 'numbers and assertiveness' of respectable child saving women in the various agencies concerned with child welfare, especially by the 1890s, so that 'affluent women provided much of the thrust of child saving in Oxford and elsewhere'. Similarly, David Reeder notes the increasing numbers of women voluntary workers with children in London elementary schools from the 1880s on, and particularly after 1902.

While less directly influenced by the insights offered in Platt's study, two other accounts of efforts to reform the condition of English childhood in the 1880s and 1890s help to confirm the impression of a heightened interest in working class children among middle class women given by Gillis and Reeder. The first of these is Deborah Gorham's study of child prostitution and the idea of childhood, based on the Maiden Tribute scandal of the early 1880s, which refers to the wide gap apparent to reformers between the sheltered, protected and innocent dependence of their own children and the precocious independence of 'outcast' girls of the same age. Gorham goes on to argue that the attempts by the reformers to protect these girls had the effect, like those of Platt's child savers, of imposing controls on their behaviour and limits on their freedom.

By contrast, George Behlmer's unpublished study of the English child protection movement casts it largely as an exercise in humanitarian reform, exemplified in the work of the various Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, federated in 1889. Nonetheless, a sense of the place of these Societies in the pattern of middle class child saving can be deduced from Behlmer's account of their membership and their efforts to restrict child labour in the theatre, from which it emerges that initially at least the SPCCs were broadly middle class.

55. Gillis, op. cit., p.111.
56. Reeder, op. cit., p.87.
58. Ibid., p.355.
59. Behlmer, op. cit.
in origin and were largely concerned with correcting working-class behaviour. 60

The treatment of childhood history exemplified in different ways and different degrees by the work of Platt, May, Gillis, Reeder, Gorham and Behlmer is a clear advance on legislative history of the kind offered by Pinchbeck and Hewitt. Just as clearly, the advance lies in a refusal to take public and formal expressions of concern for childhood at face value or as generally representative statements about contemporary social preoccupations, and in an effort to locate the source of social changes involving children among specific social groups and relate them to specific ideologies of reform at specific points in time.

From the point of view of the present study, these accounts demonstrate that the model of middle class child saving established by Platt is repeated in England between 1880 and 1905 in at least two important respects. The first of these is the significance of women in the evolution of English child saving movements, and the second is the cultural conflict apparent in their attempts to impose middle class notions of childhood on working class childhood and youth through the development of modes of control designed specifically for them. Juvenile delinquency was thus seen to grow from the 'unnaturalness' of working class children, that is, from their deviance from a middle class norm of dependency, and the modes of control which were developed to cope with them were consistent with Mary Carpenter's earlier aim of restoring the working class adolescent to the 'true position of childhood'. 61

Nonetheless, a number of questions are raised by this emphasis on a cultural context. The first is that if the origins of social reform of this kind are essentially ideological, then do we not need to know more about that ideology and the conditions in which it developed in the society at large? Does this analysis need to be directly related to formal legislative and institutional change at all? Cannot developments in cultural stereotypes be taken as events in their own

60. Ibid., p.148.
61. Mary Carpenter, Reformatory Schools for the Perishing and Dangerous Classes and for Juvenile Offenders, cited in May, op. cit., p.22.
right which do not need the authority of Acts of Parliament or the work of reform societies to acquire significance? Indeed, is our sense of what notions of childhood were characteristic of particular classes and the society as a whole not distorted by selecting for attention only those which were expressed in movements for particular social or educational reforms?

In the end, the posing of questions like these shows that Gillis, Reeder, Gorham and Behlmer (and in the earlier period May as well) are all concerned, like Pinchbeck and Hewitt, not with the upsurge of interest in children itself and the notions of childhood involved in it, but with the effects of these on the treatment deemed appropriate by middle class reformers for working class children. One result of this is the different explanations they advance for the different aspects of the child saving movement with which they deal. For Reeder, taking the Fitzroy Committee as his point of departure, the concern was based in anxiety about the effects of urbanisation on the new race of city-bred children, while for Gillis the motive force impelling the reformers was the apparently rising rate of juvenile crime. For her part, Gorham points to the sense among the reformers of the differences between their own protected children and those of the 'outcast' classes. 62

In fact, all of these causes might just as easily, and perhaps, from the point of view of understanding the increase in interest in childhood as a cultural event, more usefully, be seen as joint effects with the trends they are advanced to explain. Given this, it is significant that Reeder at one point suggests that the voluntary workers in London themselves contributed to the increase in anxiety at the effects of urbanisation and industrialisation on city children. 63 In the same way, Gillis cites the child saving activities of bodies like the NSPCC as a cause of the apparent rise in juvenile crime in

63. Reeder, op. cit., p.87.
Oxford, and George Behlmer notes that the work of the child protection organisations, especially that of the NSPCC, could be seen as amplifying the concerns to which they owed their inception. It now becomes clear that concern at the differences between middle and working class children, at the effects of urbanisation and industrialisation, at the apparent rise in the rates of juvenile delinquency (and indeed the rise in such rates itself), not to mention the debate about education and the curriculum, are all aspects, and by no means the only aspects, of a wider increase in concern about children and the nature of child life, particularly among the middle classes.

To say this raises further questions about the quality of that concern, its course of development, and the extent to which it was reflected outside the middle classes. What is needed, therefore, as well as discussions of its separate effects in legislation, social welfare programmes and the like, is a detailed examination of the late nineteenth century growth in concern with childhood as a subject in its own right, rather than as a contributing factor to institutional and legislative change, which takes account of the different class cultures to be found in English society. Only in this way will it be possible to arrive at a picture of the changing sense of childhood in English society as a whole, in which specific events, whether these be the establishment of child saving administrative machinery, the passage of particular legislation, or the publication of particular types of books for or about children, can be related to each other within an overall pattern of cultural change.

64. In support of this argument, Gillis notes that while the NSPCC's ultimate aim was to shield children from 'the harsher aspects of the adult justice system', its efforts to curb the older, arbitrary methods of dealing with juvenile misdemeanours left no choice but to bring children to court. Compulsory education, and the consequent loss by schools of the power to expel difficult students, also led to a greater recourse to the law. Gillis points to a range of other groups also whose activities had a similar effect in raising the figures for juvenile crime (op. cit., pp.108-09).


66. Reeder, op. cit., pp.82-83.
In general, the increased interest in children in England during the late nineteenth century has been most fully dealt with as an event within the society as a whole by literary historians, most notably Peter Coveney, though in the American context work by Richard Hofstadter on John Dewey and by Christopher Lasch on Randolph Bourne raises similar issues through their common interest in prominent individuals. The main question in this style of analysis concerns the representativeness of those whose notions of childhood have been chosen for discussion: what is the connection between the individual statement of an interest, attitude or philosophy and its social, institutional or legislative expression? What is the relationship between creeds and philosophies promoted by individuals and the social context in which they are expressed? As Lasch recognises, this is the dilemma facing the social historian engaged on biographical studies of 'representative men'. Such an idea, he confesses, is a contradiction in terms, 'for is not a human being, by reason of all that makes him human, something unique?', The problem is a real one. The relevance to social history of studies of individuals, whether biographical or intellectual, does indeed lie in the representativeness of their subjects, their influence on events, or both. Failure to establish either of these firmly and in detail in respect of Dewey and Bourne vitiates the usefulness of Hofstadter's and Lasch's studies as social histories, whatever their value for other purposes. The point is significant here for its relevance to Peter Coveney's The Image of Childhood, given the concern Coveney shares with Hofstadter and Lasch with the role of artists and intellectuals as spokesmen for the society at large, and their common interest in the notions of childhood projected through the work of such individuals.

The basis of Coveney's interest in his subjects is the quality of their sensibility, and he therefore feels no need to claim for them, as Lasch does for the subjects of his biographical studies, that they are 'representative men'. At the same time, he is aware, as Lasch is, of a need to establish some relationship between the artist and society

67. All op. cit. In Hofstadter see especially Chapter 14, 'The Child and the World', and in Lasch Chapter 3, 'Randolph Bourne and the Experimental Life'.
68. Lasch, op. cit., p.xvii.
for the purpose of understanding not the nature but the causes of the
literary interest in childhood. With this in mind, he suggests that
just as 'some relation of cause and effect lay between Elizabethan
England and the preoccupations of Shakespearean tragedy' in their
shared sense of dissolution and disintegration, so 'it is this sort
of relation between a society and its literature which lies between
modern society and the theme of childhood in nineteenth and twentieth
century literature'. 69 Again, noting the invention of psychoanalysis
as a new phase in the development of attitudes towards childhood, he
writes, 'it is not easy to define the precise relationship between
psychoanalysis and modern literature', going on to suggest that Freud
helped to create the climate in which many authors developed, and
acted as a solvent on late Victorian sentimentality and 'religious
savagery' towards the child. 70 Indeed, at this point Coveney comes
close to admitting the need for a wider context for the study of the
child as a literary theme than literature itself. Raising again the
problem of cause and effect in the 'subtle field of artistic choice',
he recognises that

subjective and social factors are not easy to distinguish
in discussing why an author should write about the par-
ticular theme he chooses.... Even so, the frequency of
treatments of childhood in modern literature suggests the
presence of common and objective factors predisposing so
many authors to their choice. A theme ceases to be
personal or eccentric when it becomes the serious and
deliberate choice of so many over so long a time. 71

The truth of this is hard to deny, and if we apply it more par-
ticularly to the late nineteenth century, it is clear that these common
and objective factors affected other people than artists, so that a
heightened interest in childhood extended further than literature.
Coveney's explanation of the child cult in literature, however, is in
terms, not of a general cultural preoccupation, but of the developing
relationship between the artist and society. By the late nineteenth
century, he writes, the child served 'as a symbol of the artist's
dissatisfaction with the society which was in process of such harsh

70. Ibid., p.34.
71. Ibid., p.34.
development about him'. He goes on to argue that in the child's painful adjustment to his environment the artist found a parallel to his own difficulty in relating to the world around him. In the face of this many authors were tempted 'to take the line of least resistance, and to regress, quite literally, into a world of fantasy and nostalgia for childhood'.

Given a concern with childhood which involved many spheres of life other than literature, this formulation raises serious problems which Coveney never fully overcomes. The notion of a retreat from society into childhood is hard to sustain in the face of a movement by large sections of that society in the same direction. Whatever one makes of the late Victorian interest in childhood (and it may be possible to arrive at different judgements about different expressions of it), it seems clear that the cult of childhood among Victorian authors reflected not, or at the least not only, their alienation from society, but a preoccupation they shared with it, and which they helped to articulate on its behalf.

Coveney's book is something of a classic in literary criticism, and it is possibly invidious to criticise it as social history, especially since, unlike Hofstadter and Lasch, he makes no claim to be writing to that end. Nonetheless, his attempt to trace the development of a theme of this kind, not in one writer but in many, over a considerable length of time, raises problems of explanation which are historical and social rather than literary. It may well be because of

72. Ibid., p.31.
73. Ibid., p.32. At another point, Coveney seems inclined to deny any interaction between the artist and society at all, suggesting that the idea of childhood, so potent a symbol of innocence in the hands of the early Victorian poets, 'was a symbol susceptible to continuous deterioration. The instrument became blunt through over-assertion and special pleading', so that Blake's child, in all its 'strength and richness', gave way in time to the 'static and moribund child-figure of the popular Victorian imagination'. (p. 33) In its reliance on the metaphor of wear to explain the late Victorian decay in literary sensibility, and its implicit denial of a wider cultural transformation of which this might have been a part, this passage clearly leads in a different direction from that quoted above. Nonetheless, the burden of Coveney's explanation is carried more by the idea of the artist's retreat from society than by the metaphor of wear elaborated here.
his recognition of these conceptual difficulties in Coveney's work that David Grylls's study of children in English literature during the nineteenth century, *Guardians and Angels* (1978), establishes rather different terms of reference. The subject of Grylls's book is defined not as the development of a literary idea, but as that of a pattern of social values in the relationship between parents and children. He therefore describes his book as a literary study of parent-child relations in the nineteenth century, and more particularly as an account of 'the growth of childhood independence and the decay of parental power'. Since his basic data are literary sources, and his aim is not to 'establish facts about social behaviour or specify how families lived', but to 'detect and trace attitudes - values, assumptions, popular notions', he argues that his project is a literary study, not one in sociology or literary history. 74

All the same, the question of a social relationship developed over time with which he deals goes, like Coveney's ostensibly pure literary concerns, beyond the evaluation of the sensibility of particular writers, and casts these writers as spokesmen for contemporary attitudes. Again, therefore, the problem is social and historical rather than literary, and the representativeness of these literary commentaries is important for Grylls's argument. It is this which leads him to recognise a number of deficiencies in literary sources as an index to social attitudes. Among these are the distortions of popular opinion effected by the individual writer's 'invention and artistry', selection and interpretation, and 'personal vision of social fact'. 75 Moreover, as he notes at another point, the insights into attitudes and behaviour afforded by imaginative literature, while often 'vivid and concrete', can 'never be more than approximate as regards typicality. How many people lived like this, what classes and areas were involved, how long this kind of behaviour held sway - such questions, after reading literature must remain for the most part unanswered. Literature, in short is not to be used as a substitute for sociology'. 76

It might be added that these questions of representativeness are also

74. Grylls, *op. cit.*, p.11.
arguments against its use as history.

The three bodies of historiography surveyed here are therefore of differing value, and present their own problems of interpretation for a study of the notions of childhood between 1880 and 1905. Legislative history, as exemplified by Pinchbeck and Hewitt, suggests an oversimple picture of social change, equating it with developments in legislation and institutions, and in finding the source of these in humanitarianism, neglects to analyse the ideology thus expressed in the context of class and culture within which it had its roots. Pinchbeck and Hewitt's sense of the change as brought about by heroic reformers like Benjamin Waugh thus ignores the nature and sources of the interest in children which these reformers articulated and helped to heighten. On the other hand, studies of various expressions of the child saving idea by May, Gillis, Reeder, and, to a lesser extent, Behler and Gorham make a real contribution by pointing to the existence of a considerable body of middle class reformers, especially women, who were alarmed at what appeared to them as the deviation of working class children from the type of true, dependent and innocent childhood they saw exemplified in their own families, and who sought by legislative and institutional means to restore them to it. Taken singly, however, such studies do not on the whole comprehend the general character of the interest in childhood exemplified by the movements on which they focus. Since they are concerned with middle class reformers, they do not attempt in any real way to define working class notions of childhood. Moreover in the end, despite their attention to the cultural and social origins of the child saving idea, they are concerned with institutional and legislative change to an extent which may distort their perception of its cultural context. Finally, cultural studies of the evolution of notions of childhood, like those of Coveney and Grylles or Hofstadter and Lasch, which are concerned with the expression of these ideas among cultural elites, whether these be educationalists like Dewey or writers like J.M. Barrie, fail to establish the representativeness of their subjects and their own usefulness as social and cultural history.

This thesis therefore sets out to provide a picture of late Victorian notions of childhood derived, not by generalising from
particular movements for social change or from the work of individual artists or writers, but from a study of the theatre as (with music hall) the most broadly representative of late Victorian cultural forms. In so doing, it attempts to deal with a question of popular cultural attitudes through a major medium of popular culture, rather than leaving conclusions about such attitudes to be deduced from work in other fields.

In developing the argument outlined at the beginning of this chapter, the thesis is divided into three sections. The present chapter is the first half of a general introduction. The second is an argument for the representativeness of the theatre throughout the period on the grounds that changes in the composition of the theatre audience which took place in these years were not comprehensive and came about, not because of a decline in the popularity of melodrama, but because of the inability of melodrama theatres to compete commercially either with the music halls or with theatres catering to the middle and upper middle classes.

The second section (Chapters 3, 4 and 5) is devoted to notions of childhood characteristic of melodrama and its upper working and lower middle class audiences. It begins with an account of the effect of melodramatic sensationalism and conventions on characterisation and representations of everyday life, and goes on, with particular reference to the work of G.R. Sims, to describe the general role of the melodrama child as a class representative. This develops through two main phases, discussed separately, with the child seen as an exemplar of urban poverty from the 1870s to the late 1880s and then, with suburbanisation and a lessening of the social distress of the 1880s, as the type of proletarian humour and vitality.

Chapters 6, 7 and 8 comprise a third section devoted to the two phases of the middle and upper middle class cult of childhood. Chapter 6 argues that the main source of this, as for much of the drive to reform the social and legislative position of children, lay in a large body of middle and upper middle class women whose own families had been reduced by family limitation, who had been relieved of the practical aspects of child care to a greater extent than before by the employment of nurses and nursemaids, and who were propelled into
an active public, social and cultural life by the demands of conspicuous leisure. The influence of such women on legislation and social welfare involving children was complemented by their heightened interest in children of their own class, catered to initially in a first phase of the child cult peaking between about 1888 and about 1891. The careers of the child stars Vera Beringer and Minnie Terry described in Chapter 7 demonstrate the type of childhood characteristic of these years as the innocent, protected and benevolent focus of adult life. Chapter 8 discusses the receding of this image of childhood and its replacement after the mid-1890s by a sense of child life as distinct from that of adults, and of children as the possessors of a superior, heroic vitality and imaginative power, exemplified in Peter Pan (1904).

In the light of the premise on which much of the following argument rests, namely that the theatre is the most representative medium through which to examine cultural attitudes during the late nineteenth century in England, it is appropriate to end this chapter with an account of the measures taken in this thesis to ensure that the evidence on which it is based is itself representative of the theatre in London between 1880 and 1905.

A preliminary list of plays which required study was clearly offered by John Parker's table of plays which ran for over 100 performances which appears in every volume of Who's Who in the Theatre. Checking these against Allardyce Nicoll's classifications as melodrama, farce, burlesque etc. gave a classified list of the most successful productions in the West End which was further amended by reference to J.P. Wearing's The London Stage 1890-99 (1976). The resulting list of productions formed the basis of my investigation. Additions to it were made from accounts of late nineteenth century theatre in general theatrical histories, both contemporary and secondary. The major contemporary source here is H.B. Baker's The London Stage (1904). There are a number of general secondary histories of the theatre, though none exclusively concerned with this period. The most significant work has been done by Michael Booth and George Rowell, whose several publications have been listed in my bibliography. The list was further augmented by a search of reviews in The Theatre.
throughout the years in question. From these reviews I gained both a general impression of the pattern of theatrical activity during the period and a further number of plays which were relevant to my purpose.

The difference in character between popular theatre and that for the middle and upper middle classes dictated different emphases in the use made of the lists of plays gathered in the process described above. The strongly individual style of many of the melodrama theatres suggested the importance of the particular nature of representations of children in their productions. In this context, I have looked at the kind of production which distinguished Drury Lane, the Adelphi and the Princess's as the main melodrama houses in the West End, and the Surrey as a representative minor theatre. At the same time, I have worked to understand the distinctive quality of the work of major individual melodramatists. With this in mind, plays by Merritt, Pettitt, Buchanan, Shirley, Harris, Barrett, Raleigh, Conquest, Jones and the Melvilles have been given particular attention. Since G.R. Sims was the most popular of melodrama playwrights, as well as being especially interesting for his social concerns, I have read all of his melodramas produced during this period.

The more fragmented nature of theatre for the middle and upper middle classes and the greater complexity of the development in it of child roles necessitated a different approach to plays produced for these audiences. The greater interest shown by middle and upper middle class audiences in individual child stars has suggested the importance of tracing the careers of such individuals through the plays in which they appeared. With this in mind, I have read all the plays featuring Vera Beringer and Minnie Terry, two of the most important child stars during the first phase of the theatrical child cult between about 1888 and about 1891. I have also given particular attention to the work of writers with whom the cult of children was especially associated, notably (in its second phase from the late 1890s on) J.M. Barrie, but also lesser known playwrights like Henry Savile Clarke and Basil Hood. In both areas of theatre the pursuit of such case studies has been a means of giving further definition to the themes emerging from a general survey of the theatre between 1880
and 1905 which are described in the earlier summary of my argument.

Other plays, chosen either for their representativeness of general theatrical concerns or for the particular child roles which appeared in them, were added to the basic stock of plays with which I worked from reading among memoirs, reviews and secondary sources other than those already mentioned. In dealing with this basic stock I was in many cases in possession of enough information to decide whether or not to proceed further with individual plays. In others, I looked for plot summaries and other comments from reviews, especially from the Era, but also in the daily papers. The 'acknowledged organ of the profession', the Era is a particularly important source. Unlike most contemporary stage papers, it was published throughout the period. Moreover, as the principal organ of the theatrical profession, it is comprehensive in its coverage of productions and reliable in the structure of its reviews. These unfailingly provide a detailed description of the plot and, more often than not, a good indication of audience response. The conservatism of its reviewing, aimed more at providing a chronicle of contemporary productions than at promoting particular dramatic theories, and the consistency of its critical standards, enhance its value as a record of dramatic productions during the period, especially when used in conjunction with reviews from other sources and the plays themselves. The detail of its descriptions of staging, lighting, costumes and other aspects of productions, not always apparent from written scripts, made it especially valuable for its accounts of pantomimes in which these were principal attractions at a time when the scripts were in any case no longer available to me. An added attraction of the paper is the insight provided by its editorials and correspondence columns into reactions by the acting profession to questions which particularly concerned it from time to time, most notably that of child labour on the stage.

The principal evidence for this thesis, however, is the plays themselves. In all I have surveyed some 520, of which I have studied about 200 in detail, both by reading them at the British Library and

by examining reviews of them from a variety of sources. In general, I have concentrated on the most popular (those which attracted over 150,000 people to their first runs) and those which, for reasons I have outlined, were of special relevance to the themes with which I was most concerned.

In handling this material, my general proposition is that the history of the period should be seen in terms of the operations of its culture as a whole, that study of one area of the culture can illuminate another, and that the theatre, and the evolution of various attitudes to childhood within it, can be taken as in some senses representative of the wider culture. These principles are akin to those which underlie Gareth Stedman Jones's study of working class political attitudes as exemplified in the music halls during the same period, and suggest another and wider perspective on the themes apparent in social reform movements whose historiography is discussed above. In effect, this enterprise amounts to a study of culturally-based images of children as a social group rather than of the legislative or institutional developments to which these images may or may not have led. The extent to which this thesis can be seen as of wider relevance than to the theatre alone depends on the insights it offers into other areas of social history in which children were particularly involved. At the same time, I have tried, by quantitative and other means, to prove or explain those parts of my argument which are provable or explicable, and to distinguish aspects of the imagery of childhood in the theatre which were peculiar to particular theatrical forms from those which are of more general relevance, and to relate these latter aspects to events outside the theatre. In so doing, I hope I have shown the inter-relatedness of late-Victorian culture and society, and thereby suggested ways in which a study of children on the stage can have importance in understanding their place in the wider society.

'The large collection of theatres and music-halls gathered together', reported a Select Committee in 1892,

the amount of capital risked in the enterprise, the great number of persons directly or indirectly pro-

vided with employment, the multitude of all classes of the people who attend the theatres and music-

halls of London, find no parallel in any other part of the country; when it is remembered that a consid-

erable proportion of the visitors to these places are not habitually dwellers in the metropolis, that in London are organised the travelling companies and troupes that have, as we are informed, taken the places of the stock companies which used to exist in provincial towns, that here only is any school to be found for the study of acting as an art - it cannot ... be denied that the control of the London theatres ... is a matter of national as well as of municipal concern.¹

In gross terms, the scale of theatrical entertainments as an industry in London in the late nineteenth century was indeed impressive, commensurate with the city's role as the theatrical capital of the nation. In 1892 there was a seat in a theatre or music-hall for every twenty-five of the population of Greater London.² Even consider-
ering the number of people per seat for theatres alone, eighty-five, the scale of theatrical entertainment appears considerable.³ Charles Booth estimated that in 1896 there were some 205,000 attendances at theatres every week,⁴ or about one for every thirty of the population of Greater London. Successful plays in the 1880s, when runs were generally shorter than they later became, numbered their audiences in the hundreds of thousands. Drury Lane pantomimes, such as Aladdin in 1885, which achieved a fairly normal run of 145 performances, were

1. Report of the Select Committee on Theatres and Places of Entertain-
ment (1892), p.iv.

2. See Appendix 1, 'Population per Seat in London Theatres and Music Halls'.

3. Ibid.

4. Booth, op. cit., vol. viii, p.120.
seen by over a quarter of a million people, while the great melodramas of the 1880s, such as *The Lights o' London* (1881) and *The Silver King* (1882) attracted similar numbers to their first runs. Musical comedies in the 1890s achieved even more impressive runs but, being presented at smaller theatres, were not seen by appreciably more people. *The Geisha*, for example, presented at Daly's Theatre in 1896, ran for no less than 760 performances and was seen by 260,000 people. At the Princess's such a run would have attracted 800,000.

These figures apply only to first runs: a successful play was likely to be revived a number of times, and tour the provinces and overseas for years, attracting a total audience of many millions. Some 240,000 people saw *The Lights o' London* on its first run, but its author estimated that it had also been seen somewhere in the world every night between its first performance in 1881 and 1917, when he wrote his memoirs. The total audience over those years is impossible to estimate, but would not have been unusual among successful plays. No play, however, could achieve success unless it did so at its first run. The critic William Archer, pleading for a minority theatre, judged that to avoid absolute failure a play had to appeal at once to 50,000 people, and to be accounted a success some 150,000 people had to see it in its first season. Nor, given the enthusiasm of

5. Accurate attendance figures for this period are not available. Booth reached his figures for the total weekly attendance at all the London theatres by estimating theatres to be on average half full for their performances. Our concern here is mainly with the West End and the most important of the minor theatres, which were both more popular than the average and subject to higher overheads, due to the greater cost of their productions, necessitating higher rates of attendance (see pp. 41 - 42). I have therefore estimated that these theatres were more likely to be about 60% full than 50%, and on that basis have arrived at total attendance figures for individual plays by multiplying 60% of the capacity of the theatre concerned by the number of performances given of the play as listed in every edition of *Who's Who in the Theatre*. The situation is complicated by the lack of definite capacity figures, in the absence of which I have used those given by Diana Howard in *London Theatres and Music Halls 1850-1950* (London 1970). But see Appendix 2 'Note on Theatre Capacities', and Appendix 3, 'Productions Attracting 200,000 or More to Their First Runs, 1880-1905'.


contemporary audiences, were such rates of attendance at all unusual.\(^8\) 'A generation since', an unknown writer asserted in *The Theatre* in 1893,

the keen students of the contemporary drama were a small, and almost an isolated, class; but at this century-end the theatre (be it dramatic or "varietetic") is the popular amusement of the day. Whether the public at large flock to the playhouse from pure love of acting, or merely to seek temporary relaxation from boredom, is an open question. At any rate, they come; and what is more to the point, they pay. And not only do they fill the house, but they also display an eager interest in everything theatrical.\(^9\)

While cheaper areas of the theatre tended to suffer as the period wore on,\(^10\) a very wide section of the population was catered for by the scale of admission charges at the various theatres. An advertisement in the *Era Almanack* for 1887, for example, gives the prices for Covent Garden:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>boxes</td>
<td>10/6 to 6 gns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stalls</td>
<td>6/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stage stalls</td>
<td>4/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grand circle</td>
<td>3/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>first circle</td>
<td>2/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pit and promenade</td>
<td>2/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>amphitheatre</td>
<td>1/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gallery</td>
<td>6d.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Theatres in the West End in fact generally charged a minimum of 1/- admission during this period, with stalls at about 10/6. Music-hall prices were generally cheaper, being subsidised from profits on liquor sales, while the melodrama houses outside the West End usually charged from 3d to 4d for the gallery, 6d for the pit, and 1/6 for the boxes, with the highest prices no more than 2/6, since the houses were generally larger than in the West End, and could be more tightly packed.\(^11\) Minimum prices were therefore within reach for most of the seventy percent of the population who were not in actual want,\(^12\) and for these

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8. See Appendix 3, *Productions Attracting 200,000 or More, 1880-1905*.
10. See p. 43.
people circumstances at least up to the late 1890s were fairly favourable for theatre-going. Prices at the theatres were relatively low, real wages were rising, working hours, particularly for skilled workers, were being reduced; as a result greater use was being made of the new public transport systems. The theatres and music-halls, as the only forms of public, non-literary entertainment, were bound to benefit.

Numbers attending the theatres remained high throughout the

13. See graph, Appendix 4, 'Real wages, 1880-1914'.

14. Hours were reduced in most skilled trades in the 1870s to 54 or 54½ hours per week. Skilled tradesmen now worked at least an hour per day less than in the first half of the century. Other types of workers were not as fortunate. Shop workers, for example, still worked up to 74 hours per week up to 1914. In general, for the whole of the English workforce, hours probably fell by 2.5% to 5% between 1886 and 1914. (Ashworth, W., An Economic History of England, 1870-1939 [London 1960], pp.193-4.)


It seems likely in fact that more use was made of public transport than is usually supposed, due to much higher use made of omnibuses. The figures supplied to the Royal Commission on London Traffic (1906) (See Report p.127: Appendix no. 6, Table no. 5, which is reproduced by Gareth Stedman Jones in Outcast London [op. cit., p.234]), give the average number of journeys per head by public transport in 1901 as 128.7. This figure, however, does not include those for omnibus companies other than the largest, and in the opinion of the supplier of the figures, Mr. Edgar Harper, Statistical Officer of the London County Council, the true figure was more like 200 (Report, p.6). This would agree more closely with equivalent figures for other cities, supplied by the Advisory Board of Engineers, which gave the average number of journeys per head in 1904 in three major cities as: New York 300; Berlin 270; Paris 200. Harper gives his own figure for New York in 1901 as 334, and for Berlin in 1899 as 225. (Royal Commission on London Traffic 1906, vol. II, Minutes of Evidence, p.166; Q.4594 and Q.4595.)

Up to 1891 it is likely that the figures for the largest of the omnibus companies, the London General Omnibus Company, should be taken as understating the true extent of traffic on their vehicles, due to the custom among their conductors of supplementing their inadequate wages with a considerable proportion of the fares they collected. No tickets were at that time issued. The strike of 1891 indeed came about through the company's attempt to make the conductors issue tickets.
1880s and 1890s (a fact reflected in the increase in successful productions from 149 in 1880-1889 to 169 in 1890-1899) but the dominant group among the audiences changed; and with changing audiences, the nature of the plays presented also changed.

Theatre historians in general agree on the main aspects of the change: the decline of melodrama and the rise of theatrical forms patronised by the upper social classes. Areas of doubt however remain, especially concerning the timing of melodrama's decline, and the reasons for it. The date from which to trace the death of melodrama has been the source of particular confusion. Michael Booth for example variously finds that melodrama was 'strongly entrenched' but 'beginning to die', in the early years of the twentieth century but that 'by 1880 the middle class conquest of the auditorium, and consequently of the drama itself, was complete'. For George Rowell, on the other hand, melodrama as a theatrical form remained prosperous until the advent of the cinema.

Similarly, George Rowell finds the cause of melodrama's decline in the coming of films, while Michael Booth looks to a variety of factors which he cites in a number of different works concerned with theatre during this period. Among these factors is the 'transformation of a popular into a middle class theatre, with a middle class audience and a middle class drama' during the last decades of the century. At the same time, the newly prosperous and respectable music halls siphoned off melodrama's supporters from the pit and gallery, and

16. Success for a play is taken here, as in the list of successful productions in Who's Who in the Theatre, as a run of 100 performances or more. See Appendix 5, 'Successful Theatrical Productions in London, 1870-1900'.
thereby 'cut the ground from under melodrama's feet'.

As a further cause of melodrama's decline, Booth cites a change in taste effected by destructive burlesque, itself a sign of the growing sophistication of the fashionable and intellectual part of the public, who became increasingly intolerant of the old melodramatic verities.

Such an argument does not explain why the number of burlesques fell off during the late nineteenth century, the period of melodrama's decline. Nor does it take account of the fact that the characteristic audiences of burlesque were not those of melodrama. This aspect of Booth's explanation therefore implies that the 'destructive' effects of burlesque on melodrama were most severe just when their impact might be expected to have lessened, and were felt among patrons who were not in any case prominent among melodrama audiences.

More particularly, however, this issue raises the question of the extent to which melodrama's decline can really be seen as the result of changing tastes. Clearly, this is important for an argument which rests, like that advanced in this thesis, on the premise that melodrama was the cultural form most representative of contemporary popular attitudes and assumptions. This chapter aims to present an integrated explanation of melodrama's decline which demonstrates that it was not a decline in the popularity of the plays themselves, nor was it particularly marked until the late 1890s. From these points it follows that melodrama remains a representative form in which to trace the popular imagery with which we are concerned.

The clearest picture of what happened to melodrama in the late nineteenth century in fact emerges from a study not of the plays but

25. Ibid., p.208.
of the theatres in which they were staged. Clearly there is much to be done here in charting the rise and fall of individual theatres, using local evidence as to the nature of their audiences. At the same time, I wish to point in this chapter to the more tangible evidence presented by the financial and business climate in which theatres catering for all classes operated. In thus picturing the theatre as subject to market forces like any other activity dependant on a paying public, we see something of the relationship between late Victorian popular theatre and the society of which it was a part, a relationship which meant that forces which shaped the wider society were reflected in its characteristic cultural forms, and that these altered in response to changes in the groups which supported them quite as much as they did to changes in taste among their traditional audiences.

Evidence thus presented of melodrama's continued popularity with its traditional audiences up to the late 1890s, despite the adverse economic climate which brought the decline of the theatres in which it was presented, is also evidence of a continued representativeness of popular social concerns similar to that which Gareth Stedman Jones has claimed for music hall. 26 While in no way denying the central place of music hall in working class culture, I wish in this and subsequent chapters to indicate not only the similarly close involvement with the theatre of a broad cross-section of the population as a whole almost to the end of the period, but also the peculiar validity of the theatre as a mirror of the social concerns which can be located in the major class sub-cultures of late-Victorian society.

The divisions in late nineteenth century cultural life signified by these class sub-cultures relate clearly to the picture of a stable, two-class society whose evolution in the second half of the century has been defined in the work of historians like Harold Perkin and Gareth Stedman Jones. Perkins's sense of the new 'viable class society' shows the institutions by which the working class had sought to resist the imposition of the middle class ideal acting instead to aid in the transmission of that ideal. 27 Stedman Jones has argued rather for

the success with which a dense and impermeable working class culture resisted middle class pressure forcing it towards middle class norms.28 Both, however, see late Victorian society as comprising two separate and distinct groups of classes. In similar fashion, Peter Keating has shown the function of the social explorers during the late nineteenth century as interpreters of working class life for the middle classes.29 As Michael Booth has put it, 'The Victorian audience, like the world of Disraeli's novel was also two nations',30 and in general terms, these can be taken to be first, the upper working and lower middle classes, and secondly, the middle and upper middle classes. A substantial theme in the history of the theatre during these years is provided by the changing relationship between these two sections of the play-going public. Melodrama was vitally affected by this changing relationship, felt in a decline in the economic viability of the pit and gallery relative to the stalls as the middle classes returned to the theatre after the 1870s. At the same time, the melodrama theatres found themselves competing on unequal terms with the music halls for the same public due to the different licensing regulations applying to each. Taken together, these factors brought a decline in melodrama as a marketable form of popular culture, a decline which bore no real relationship to its intrinsic popularity or otherwise.

In part, the movement of the middle classes back to the theatre was the result of efforts by managements since the 1840s to restore to it the respectability it had lacked since the middle of the eighteenth century. Macready had sought such respectability for Drury Lane as early as 1842, Samuel Phelps worked for it at Sadler's Wells in the 1840s and 1850s, and Kean made real progress at the Princess's in the 1850s. Marie Wilton, later to marry Squire Bancroft, took up where Kean had stopped, establishing a decorous, expensive elegance at the Prince of Wales's when she took it over in 1865. She and

28. Stedman Jones, 'Working Class Culture ...', op. cit.
Bancroft showed the kind of public they had in mind by cutting back the pit and becoming in 1874 the first managers to charge 10/- for a seat in the stalls, with the prices of other seats raised in proportion. When they took over the Haymarket in 1880 they abolished the pit entirely, to the accompaniment of fierce protests which continued for years. 31

In addition to the drive to respectability, rising production costs provided another incentive to managements to recruit the upper social classes. When the Haymarket opened without a pit, Bancroft was forced to justify himself onstage, where he told an angry gallery that the pit did not pay. The Drury Lane pantomimes in the 1880s, for example, cost at least £5000 to £6000 to stage, not counting the normal running costs of the theatre. Some 700 to 800 people were employed, including:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>band</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ballet and extras</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>carpenters</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>props/lighting</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dressers</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>children and supers.</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

all in addition to the principals and house staff. 32 Ballets at the Empire in the 1890s cost at least £10,000, including a corps de ballet of up to a hundred dancers and a forty-five-piece orchestra. 33 These were productions of exceptional scale for the West End, though not for the theatres concerned, but costs increased throughout the West End, and among the minor theatres, not only as the scale of production grew, but also as fixed costs such as salaries increased. The manager of the Britannia estimated the costs of 1900 to be roughly double those of 1880 and treble those of 1860. 34 By 1896, according to the critic and playwright Robert Buchanan, the production of a new play was

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34. A.E. Wilson, op. cit., p.227.
so costly an affair that only enormous receipts for months can make the representation possible without nightly loss. The large and increasing salaries demanded by popular artists, the fabulous rent for west-end theatres, the expense of newspaper and other advertising, added to the cost of mounting and rehearsing, and complicated with the west-end system of filling the house with 'paper' in order to avoid the exposure of empty seats, all make a new production in London a very doubtful speculation.35

Managements, particularly at small theatres, were therefore under pressure to recover costs from the more expensive parts of the house, and to do this they found it necessary to renew their efforts to expand middle class patronage of the theatres.

These efforts were necessarily made at the expense of the pit and gallery. Pre-eminent in the 1870s and for decades before, melodrama drew its public from among the upper working and lower middle classes, the occupants of just these areas of the theatre, those thousands who have not been educated out of the simple pleasures of their youth36 or, as the critic William Archer less kindly called them in 1882, that immense section of the lower middle classes which gets its whole culture from newspaper reading and the study of cheap fiction.37

Nonetheless, it was these people, and particularly the pit, who had traditionally and quite consciously controlled the fate of West End drama, a role which generally earned them more respect than they received from Archer. To Henry Arthur Jones, for example, they were that serried pack of bright, earnest, intelligent faces ... lovers of the drama for the drama's sake,

36. W. Davenport Adams, 'What is the Theatrical Public?', The Theatre, 1 April 1897, p.199.
whose self-appointed task is to give a loud and unmistakable verdict of approval or condemnation. 38

The pit and gallery, however, melodrama's most loyal supporters throughout the century, found their accommodation reduced at the West End theatres from about 56% of available seats in 1866, to 46% in 1880, to 40% in 1900, while in the same years the more expensive stalls increased from 20% to 24% to 36%, and the boxes declined from 19% to 7% to 5%. 39

This trend reflected the rise of musical comedy, the result of a marriage between burlesque and the glittering productions of the Empire and Alhambra music halls. The new form drew first on the growing numbers of wealthy young bachelors, the product of an increasingly late average age of marriage. 40 These were 'the frivolous and the well-to-do', as Davenport Adams called them,

... those who dine well and wish nothing to interfere with the processes of digestion. This is the class which formerly patronised burlesque, was afterwards driven to the music halls, and now has returned to its old love. On the whole [musical comedy] exists mainly for the aristocracy and the Stock Exchange, though, to speak more generally it has attractions for all who at the playhouse frankly seek amusement. 41

Such people were first attracted to the Gaiety burlesques, after Hollingshead went there in 1868. Gilbert's 'fairy comedies' and later the Savoy operas drew to the west End a further addition to middle class groups already going to theatres: respectable family

39. See Appendix 6, 'Fit and Gallery, Stalls and Circle, and Boxes in the West End Theatres, 1866-1900'.
41. W. Davenport Adams, op. cit., p.199. Note: the Gaiety, with a capacity of 1500, did not, like some theatres patronised by the classes it sought to attract, abolish the pit, which in 1868 consisted of all but five rows of the ground floor, (A. Hyman, The Gaiety Years (London 1975, p.4.). Though reduced to only a few rows under the balcony, the pit was included in the new Gaiety theatre, built in 1903.
audiences who in later years formed the public for Pinero, Wilde and Barrie. George Edwardes, following a series of successful burlesques at the Gaiety after he took it over in 1886, was able to win these audiences with a string of musical comedies, beginning with In Town (1892) and A Gaiety Girl (1893) at the Prince of Wales's and continuing at the Gaiety. In the process, the Gaiety traded daring for style, and the 'heavy swells' previously numerous among its audiences fled its new respectability and went to the increasingly elegant music-halls.

At the Gaiety Edwardes had devised a formula which was closely followed and earned the theatre a large, devoted and wealthy following. Plot was overshadowed by entertainment, presented with a glittering verve for which the theatre grew famous. When he added Daly's to his stable in 1895, Edwardes invented a format for it which was just as successful, and well suited to its smaller size. Productions there were closer to operetta, with more plot and rather more restraint than was evident at the Gaiety. In the fifteen years up to 1910 there were twelve successful productions at Daly's, running an average of 450 performances each. Even so, Daly's was a small theatre and most of its productions ran at a loss, made up however by its touring companies, of which there were sometimes three at once.

The new musical comedies engendered a striking degree of loyalty among their audiences. Constance Collier, a Gaiety girl in the nineties, remembered seeing the same faces in the same stalls for the entire season of a play, and Daly's patrons were no less consistent. One of them is said to have seen The Merry Widow seventy times, The Dollar Princess two hundred times, A Waltz Dream fifty times, The Count of Luxembourg thirty-five times, Gipsy Love a hundred times and

43. Ibid.
44. H.E. Wilson, Edwardian Theatre (London 1951), p.213.
45. Ibid., p.216.
The Maid of the Mountains four hundred times. Theatre goers of all types, of course, were to a greater or lesser extent, as Charles Booth said,

\ldots a special class. Those who care, go often; the rest seldom or not at all.

But by the late 1890s rates of attendance like this, possible only where narrative was subordinated to light, colour and music, not to mention the attractions of the chorus line, left the old devotion of the pit to melodrama behind as a basis on which to mount productions, and gave musical comedy a consistency of support among its own devotees previously achieved only by the music halls.

The respectable middle classes now moving into the West End also formed the public for the sentimental drama which was light comedy's complement. J.M. Barrie was particularly successful in tapping the new vein in drama, his success signified by popular productions of The Professor's Love Story (1894) and The Little Minister (1897). Barrie's rise as a playwright pointed to the developing sentimental nostalgia among the new audiences which became a characteristic feature of theatrical culture in the 1890s.

By the late 1890s, then, light comedy had drawn a new mass audience to a number of the West End theatres, a predominantly middle and upper middle class audience, serving the need of the managers to meet rising costs with higher revenues, and also, one may guess, its own desire for another means of conspicuous consumption. Correspondingly, melodrama and its base of support in the pit and gallery lost their pre-eminence. In relative terms, however, their decline was not clearly evident until late in the period. Some indication of the continuing vitality of melodrama is apparent in the numbers of successful melodrama and light comedy productions during the period. Table 1

47. D. Forbes-Winslow, Daly's, the Biography of a Theatre (London 1944), p.34.
49. See J.A. Banks, op. cit., Chapters 4 and 6, and J.A. and O. Banks, op. cit., Chapter 6 for further discussion of the trend to conspicuous consumption in the second half of the nineteenth century.
below shows the number of successful productions of drama and melodrama and light comedy during these years, together with the percentage increase in each over the previous decade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Drama and melodrama</th>
<th>% increase</th>
<th>light comedy</th>
<th>% increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1870-79</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880-89</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890-99</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Though distorted to some extent by dramas which were mainly of interest to the middle classes, these figures give substantial support to the argument that melodrama's appeal remained strong until late in the period. Nevertheless, forces were at work which began to have their effect on melodrama by the end of the century. To some extent, the troubles of the melodrama theatres after 1900 were due to the continuing exodus of people from the central area, where the most important minor theatres were to be found. Between 1881 and 1901 some half a million people left for the suburbs, and it was apparent from the early 1880s that many of these were the better off workmen and clerks to whom melodrama had always appealed most directly.

Also, as by the end of the 1890s prices began to rise and the increase in real wages began to falter, the cost of running theatres continued to climb, leaving the melodrama houses squeezed between

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50. These figures were derived by classifying successful plays listed by John Parker in his list of productions running 100 performances or more (op. cit.) according to the designations given them by Allardyce Nicoll in English Drama 1600-1900, vol. 5 (1959), and arranging them in quinquennial periods. The results of this are given in graph form in Appendix 5.

51. Royal Commission on London traffic (1906) vol. III, p.127: Appendix 6, Table no. 3.

52. Report of the Select Committee on Artizans' and Labourers' Dwellings Improvement (1882), p.x.


54. See graph, Appendix 4.
rising costs and dependence on a public with less money available for leisure pursuits.

As we have seen, the pressure of rising costs was an incentive to managements to woo a wealthier public. In this respect the patrons of melodrama were in competition with middle class theatre-goers with quite different interests for the control of the theatres. At the same time, the melodrama theatres should be seen as institutions operating in a competitive commercial environment, subject to market forces and dependant on their ability to compete in giving value for money. While the pit and gallery faced the competition of the stalls, therefore, the melodrama theatres faced the competition of another form of entertainment, the music halls. The drift of melodrama patrons from the theatres to the halls by the late 1890s is thus more easily explained by the inability of the theatres to compete than by any process of autonomous cultural change.

Fundamental to the improved position of the music-halls was their favoured position under the licensing regulations. Their most obvious advantage lay in their ability to sell alcohol and allow smoking. Not only did this enable them to combine the attractions of the pub with their own entertainment, but alcohol sales also gave them a major source of extra income with which to keep down admission prices and improve the standard of their accommodation. The subsidy of admission prices was noted by the Select Committee of 1892, while the improvement in audience accommodation, initiated by the Metropolis Management and Building Act of 1878, was apparent to many in the halls such as Vesta Tilley, who saw that, compared to them, the theatres were falling behind, with their seating indifferent and their ventilation inadequate.

Moreover, the music-halls could also compete with the theatres on their own ground, by the provision of 'sketches', normally condensed plays or scenes from popular productions, but sometimes themselves original, performed by actors from the theatres and lasting about

55. Select Committee (1892) op. cit. Evidence of Mr. Graydon, Manager of the Middlesex Music-Hall, Drury Lane, p.203, Q.2982-5.
forty minutes. The sketch artist called by the 1892 Select Committee on Theatres and Places of Entertainment was quite clear about the generally derivative nature of these productions, describing a sketch as:

an outline of a drama, a comedy or a farce, an incomplete representation; in the same way as an artist would sketch a picture previous to filling in the details, and completing the same.58

George Conquest, manager of the Surrey Theatre, complained bitterly about the practice which was 'most harmful' to theatres like his where audiences were unable to drink or smoke. The sketch artists, he said, 'pick out the plums from the pudding and give the audience the plums'. Pieces that used to run at the Surrey for eight, nine or ten weeks now had to be taken off after a fortnight,58 as a result of the recent practice among music-halls of playing melodramas. 'While they were playing farces', he said, 'they were not hurting me at all'.59 Seen from the other side the effects of dramatic sketches played in the halls seemed the same. Vesta Tilley, for example, agreed that sketches attracted many theatregoers to the halls, while raising the moral tone and reputations of places previously less respectable.60

Unlicensed stage plays were illegal under the Theatres Act of 1843, but, as Henry Irving told the Select Committee, no machinery existed for prosecuting people who staged them, so such prosecutions had to be brought privately and at the plaintiff's own expense.61 Nonetheless, Irving saw no reason why forty minute sketches should not continue at the halls,62 nor was this perhaps surprising since he was not in competition with them for his audiences. Similarly, the critic Clement Scott, anxious in the cause of moral uplift, pleaded

57. Select Committee (1892) op. cit. Evidence of J.G. Johnson, p.297, Q.4589.
58. Ibid. Evidence of George Conquest, p.208.
59. Ibid., p.214, Q.3230.
60. De Frece, op. cit., p.96.
61. Select Committee (1892) op. cit. Evidence of Henry Irving, p.65.
62. Ibid., p.66.
passionately with the Committee to

Allow [the people] to be happy, and do not drive them to despair. If they cannot afford the luxury of a high-class theatre, do not deny them the good and wholesome influence of a dramatic sketch, an honest song, a little opera, a tale of heroism dramatically told. Do not put out the poor man's pipe, when by means of dramatic action and good dialogue, he is told how the policeman saves the life of the despairing woman who would fling herself into the Thames; how the fireman risks his life as bravely as any soldier or sailor in the land; how the engine driver is often as much of a hero as the winner of the Victoria Cross. 63

Seeing the halls less as competitors of the minor theatres than as recruiting grounds for the Lyceum or the Haymarket, Scott argued that one could create a public for higher class theatre 'from the bottom up':

If you give them little sketches and dramatic entertainments when they are poor people, then when they are rich people they will patronise first class theatres. 65

Whatever the reaction of the Committee to this reasoning, the regulations remained unchanged, while sketches such as A Royal Divorce (first played in 1891), The Fighting Parson and Humanity toured the halls for many years to rapturous applause. 65

In addition to these built-in advantages, the music-hall managers worked to make their establishments respectable through the elimination of questionable material from their stages. In the opinion of the lithographer Matthew Hanly, called before the Committee to give the working man's view, dramatic sketches, with their improving moral lessons, helped to make the music-halls of the east and south-east of London 'the great entertainment of the working man and his family'. 66

With the establishment of music-hall chains, particularly Stoll Empires, at the end of the century, the halls added scale to their competitive advantages, together with the strict attention to propriety which had raised their reputations with working men such as Hanly.

63. Ibid. Evidence of Clement Scott, pp.324-5, Q.5144.
64. Ibid. Q.5158.
66. Select Committee (1892) op. cit. Evidence of Matthew Hanley, for the London United Workmen's Committee, p.327, Q.5171.
Other advantages of the music-halls peculiar to the nature of their entertainment should also be mentioned in explaining the decline of melodrama after 1900. One of these was the introduction of twice-nightly performances, which in effect doubled the capacities at management's disposal, already higher than at the theatres since patrons could come and go as they pleased. Thus according to the information given to the Select Committee in 1892 the halls were able to fill some eighty-five per cent of their total available accommodation every night, with a third of them recording more admissions than their capacity, some with a total of admissions amounting to twice or even three times as many as they could hold at one time, the result both of twice-nightly performances and the ability of patrons to come and go as they liked. At the same time, of course, the music-halls had generally much lower production costs.

It cannot really be said that 'By 1880 the middle class conquest of the theatre auditorium, and consequently of the drama itself, was complete', but by 1900 the pit had been substantially reduced at many of the West End theatres, and by 1905 a number of melodrama houses where the pit had not been reduced, such as the Princess's (1902), the Adelphi (1901) in the West End and the Surrey (1904) among the minors, had abandoned melodrama, become music-halls or closed altogether. As early as 1893 the Olympic had become a music-hall, but, on the whole, the West End melodrama theatres, and popular theatres generally, had survived the competition of the music-halls reasonably well and continued to stage successful melodrama productions until nearly the end of the century, when economic conditions turned against them. Even after this, melodrama continued to thrive at Drury Lane and many minor theatres, and staged a resurgence with the management of the Melville brothers at the Standard and then the Lyceum. It is said, in fact, that the Melvilles, rehearsing twenty-five plays at once at the Standard to send on tour, had a greater following than George Edwardes, reflecting the continuing attraction of melodrama

outside London. And in the West End as late as 1897, William Archer noted the clamorous reception given to a revival of *A Man's Shadow* and sadly prophesied a long run for it 'as we see on all sides the stalls half-cynically, half-obsequiously, take their cue from the pit'.

Generally speaking, however, genuinely popular theatre was greatly reduced in the West End after 1900, and the dominant concerns of the theatre were no longer those of working and lower middle class audiences, but those of the middle and upper middle class audiences which had displaced them. To take up the ideas outlined at the beginning of this chapter, this process involved not so much a change of taste among theatre audiences as a new dominance by the middle and upper middle classes of theatrical institutions. It came about less because of a loss of interest in melodrama among its patrons than because of a need for respectability and the pressures of rising costs which led West End theatres to cut back or eliminate the pit and gallery, and because of the favourable conditions under which music halls operated, and their adroit management. The broad cultural groupings represented in the theatre retained their identity, and the theatrical forms peculiar to them remained representative of them, a fact unchanged by the financial troubles of the melodrama theatres and shown by the persistence of melodrama in the music halls and later in silent films.

The decline of the melodrama theatres is an important feature of the cultural history of the late nineteenth century. As I hope I have indicated in the foregoing discussion, however, the cultural evolution of which it was symptomatic reflects the growing influence of audiences drawn from sections of society which were previously comparatively uninvolved in the theatre, rather than a change in the tastes of those who had supported the popular theatre throughout most of the previous century. The melodrama theatres declined not because they had lost their appeal but because they were no longer able, for whatever reasons, to compete effectively in commercial terms.

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CHAPTER 3

MELODRAMA AND WORKING CLASS CULTURE

In his article on working class culture and working class politics in late nineteenth century London, Gareth Stedman Jones argues for a breaking down after about 1850 of the early tradition of artisan democracy through a combination of declining industries, the fragmentation of skilled crafts into a mass of semi-skilled processes, the prevalence of home work (and therefore also of sweating), the decline of a work centred culture (with a consequent evaporation of the corporate sense among the various trades, and therefore the loss also of their political cohesion), the growth of commuting, and the deadening effects of elementary education in the board schools. At the same time, Stedman Jones argues, there was an increase in social distance, resulting from the dissolution of the alliance between middle class Radicals and artisan democracy, together with the movement of the middle classes to the suburbs and the physical separation between the classes which followed. The political and social divorce thus effected brought in its train a series of cultural attacks on the working classes with the aim of instilling in them middle class values and imposing on them middle class standards of life. Stedman Jones argues that these failed, and that in the place of the cultural patterns looked for by late Victorian social reformers there grew up a 'dense and inward-looking' working class culture whose conservative character is clearly reflected in Booth's great survey of London life at the turn of the century. 'What principally impressed (Booth),' writes Stedman Jones,

2. Charles Booth, Life and Labour, op. cit.
In his article on working class culture and working class politics in late nineteenth century London, Stedman Jones argues for a breaking down after about 1850 of the early tradition of artisan democracy through a combination of declining industries, the fragmentation of skilled crafts into a mass of semi-skilled processes, the prevalence of home work (and therefore also of sweating), the decline of a work centred culture (with a consequent evaporation of the corporate sense among the various trades, and therefore the loss also of their political cohesion), the growth of commuting, and the deadening effects of elementary education in the board schools. At the same time, Stedman Jones argues, there was an increase in social distance, resulting from the dissolution of the alliance between middle class Radicals and artisan democracy, together with the movement of the middle classes to the suburbs and the physical separation between the classes which followed. The political and social divorce thus effected brought in its train a series of cultural attacks on the working classes with the aim of instilling in them middle class values and imposing on them middle class standards of life. Stedman Jones argues that these failed, and that in the place of the cultural patterns looked for by late Victorian social reformers there grew up a 'dense and inward-looking' working class culture whose conservative character is clearly reflected in Booth's great survey of London life at the turn of the century. 

2. Charles Booth, Life and Labour, op. cit.
was the growing stability and orderliness of London working class society.... The final impression conveyed by the Booth surveys was of a working class culture which was both impermeable to outsiders, and yet predominantly conservative in character: a culture in which the central focus was not 'trade unions and friendly societies, co-operative effort, temperance propaganda and politics (including socialism)', but 'pleasure, amusement, hospitality and sport.'

In this culture, he argues, the dominant institutions were not 'the school, the evening class, the library, the friendly society, the church or the chapel, but the pub, the sporting paper, the race course and the music hall'.

Stedman Jones's use of the music hall as an index to this pattern of working class cultural concerns recalls Martha Vicinus's call for studies of popular culture which use it as a guide to responses to political and social events, and which seek a guide to popular preoccupations in the topics and images most prevalent in it. More generally, his analysis is stimulating and valuable for its insistence on the link between popular cultural, political and social life, and on institutions of entertainment as the most representative of popular culture during these years. In such an analysis, however, melodrama should also have a special place, not only because of the numbers of its patrons, but also because of the extended dramatisation of social life which took place within it, and the representative quality of its conventions. As Michael Booth has pointed out:


The only form of Victorian drama that dealt with social issues, clumsily and emotionally oversimplified in presentation though they were, was melodrama, which was also the form in closest touch with the needs and dreams of the urban masses. It is therefore to melodrama that we must turn to see some reflection of their lives.\(^5\)

Moreover, as Louis James argues, the significance of melodrama as perhaps the most Victorian of cultural forms is considerable:

> It was a style, located in speech, gesture, mental and emotional attitudes, which can be recognised also in fiction, painting, early film, journalism, or a Chartist sermon. Learning the conventions of melodrama can be a key to a better understanding of Victorian literary and historical evidence.\(^6\)

To say this is to assert the importance of understanding the forms as well as the content of late Victorian melodrama, since the sense of society created within it, and the characterisation which this involved, were conditioned by deeply rooted dramatic and cultural conventions, symptomatic of the conservative and impermeable popular culture described by Stedman Jones. The study of melodrama's characterisation of children and its social implications should therefore be accompanied by an appreciation of the conventions within which that characterisation took place.

This chapter therefore provides a general context for an account of the development of child imagery in melodrama during these years by indicating those conventional and sensational aspects of the form which had the greatest influence both in restricting the variety of melodramatic character types, including those of children, and in dictating the ways in which melodrama related to the world outside the theatre.

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Individuals are rare in melodrama. By and large the process of characterisation was one of modifying already existing stereotypes to fit given situations. A study of children in melodrama therefore amounts to an analysis not of individual characters but of character types and the models on which they were originally based. These in turn should be related to melodrama’s divergent tendencies, on the one hand toward the reiteration of conventional situations, characters and morality, and on the other toward the particular kinds of innovation required by melodramatic sensationalism. The nature and role of child stereotypes in late nineteenth century melodrama were conditioned by these two tendencies, both of which followed from its character as a form of mass entertainment and a product of popular culture.

Melodrama should be understood in the context of both its longevity and its audience, for its close relationship with a mass audience both shaped its forms and dictated the nature of its themes and imagery, while it was the same mass audience which insisted on the maintenance of its elaborate conventions, summarised as early as 1814 by the anonymous author of the preface to Samuel Arnold’s The Woodman’s Hut:

Melodrama depends upon the strength of incident. It places characters in striking situations, leaving the situations to tell for themselves, and carefully avoids encumbering them with language. 8

Melodramatic conventions included a concentration on situation at the expense of characterisation, a reliance on sensation of various kinds, the clear definition of character stereotypes, the rewarding of virtue and the punishment of vice. Lynton Hudson defines it as bearing the same relation to tragedy as farce bears to comedy in its

7. Since J.K. Jerome's humorous account in Stageland (London 1890) descriptions of standard character types have been limited to brief passages in general histories of melodrama. The best of these is Michael Booth's English Melodrama, op. cit. Stereotypes of children have received no detailed attention.

8. Quoted in Michael Booth, English Melodrama, op. cit., p.39.
stress on action and conduct. In this sense, a melodrama should be seen as 'a serious play in which the incidents control and determine conduct'.

Mankind (1881), described by the Pall Mall Gazette as 'a good specimen of the kind of work which finds favour across the water', illustrates the way in which this is true of traditional melodrama. Sweet Alice's child Jessie has been taken from her by her wicked husband Edmund and hired out to a mountebank as an infant phenomenon. Meanwhile, Edmund tries to kill Alice and with the help of various accomplices recover a missing will which names her as heiress to a substantial fortune. Edmund is the play's moving spirit, but his motivation is slight, lying mainly in his role of villain. He acts as he does because it is his role to do so. Thus the play is not concerned with character or with motive and revolves instead around key situations and actions: little Jessie in the hands of the shyster Professor Monkeytrick, Alice bereft of her child, Jessie witnessing the attempted murder of her mother, Edmund taunting Alice with the child, and so on. Such a play depends on strong incidents and situations and to this end everything else, whether elaboration of the plot, development of character or the exploration of moral values, is subordinated. Plots themselves serve largely to link strong incidents, and since conduct is all, characters are defined by the situations and modes of action which are appropriate to them.

Plots were often immensely complicated, but remained quite closely stereotyped, acting mainly, especially in the minor theatres, to ensure a rapid progression between the play's various climactic scenes. As one reviewer complained, dazed by the rapid progression


10. Pall Mall Gazette, 4 October 1881, p.12. Austin Brereton in The Theatre (1 November 1881) urged the thousands flocking to see great West End melodramas like Youth, The Lights o' London, and It's Never Too Late to Mend to go as well to the Surrey, where they would find in Mankind 'a play as good as any of these excellent productions'.
from a shipwreck in the Atlantic to Tattersall's, an exhibition of horses from Myer's Grand Hippodrome, Cremorne and Goodwood race course which distinguished The New Babylon at the Duke's Theatre in 1879:

The incidents follow with such rapidity that the most attentive auditor can secure little more than a bare suggestion of the relation in which they stand to each other.11

The same need to keep the action of the play rapid and, as the preface writer of 1814 put it, unencumbered by language, meant also that it should be unencumbered by any extensive exploration of moral issues raised by events on the stage. It was enough, particularly in the minor theatres, that moral values be clear. Indeed, the clearer they were the more rapidly they could be represented. This was achieved most simply by the identification of characters with particular moral attributes which could be quickly and easily understood. Individualisation of characters was usually perfunctory, and in any case was far from central to the dramatist's purpose. What was much more important was the function of characters as representative and symbolic of the play's highly simplified moral conflicts. This is especially true of transpontine productions such as Mankind in which Alice declares in her representative role as motherhood bereft:

Ah! does he know - can he even think of the terrible suffering he has inflicted on me, how I yearn to place my longing arms around my little daughter's neck and cover her with kisses. Oh! shall I ever see her again!13

For her part, Jessie, forced to perform as an infant phenomenon for a cruel master, muses as the exploited waif:


12. Strictly speaking, transpontine refers to dramatic styles characteristic of theatres south of the Thames. For convenience, it should be read here as applying to all the London minor theatres.

13. G. Conquest and P. Merritt, Mankind (1881), Act I. Note: except where otherwise stated, references to plays relate to manuscript copies in the Lord Chamberlain's collection held at the British Library. Page numbers in these often begin again with each act or are omitted entirely. For the sake of consistency and clarity, therefore, only act and scene numbers will be given here.
I wonder why everybody strikes and beats me. I suppose I must be a very naughty girl or I should have a mother, and a father, and a home like many children I see.\textsuperscript{14}

And Edmund marks himself as the blackest of villains as he threatens to murder little Jessie unless Alice agrees to his terms:

Bring her to me and I'll cut her throat. You see? I am as desperate as you are.\textsuperscript{15}

Some West End melodramas achieved greater moral intensity than this, partly through their greater exploitation of the hero,\textsuperscript{16} a comparatively minor figure in \textit{Mankind}. Denver, the hero of Henry Arthur Jones's \textit{The Silver King} (1882), for example, his hair turned white from his struggles in the American silver mines, shows real heroic power in his battle to redeem himself in the eyes of his family, society and himself. But in representing self-redemption, he, too, is never more than a symbol, albeit a more complex one, motivated in only one direction, and while the play is a more sophisticated production than \textit{Mankind}, it remains essentially another ritual enactment of the triumph of good over evil.

The participants in such rituals had to be clearly distinguished from each other and at the same time familiar for the ritual quality of the drama to be maintained and for the maintenance of their own power as symbols. Character stereotypes were therefore integral to melodrama's ritualistic nature. Stereotyping did not imply that all the same characters had to be present in every drama, nor that new characters could not from time to time be introduced. It was enough that characters be defined in simple terms and be driven by the simplest and most powerful motives. Stock types varied, as between the hero who is young, brave, honest but a little foolish, like Jack Yeulet in Henry Arthur Jones's \textit{Hoodman Blind} (1885), and the hero as a figure of towering moral grandeur as in the same author's \textit{The Silver

\textsuperscript{14} Ib\textit{id.}, Act II.

\textsuperscript{15} Ib\textit{id.}, Act VI.

\textsuperscript{16} See, for example, the three plays in which Wilson Barrett exploited the theme of the hero who recovers his integrity after earlier misdeeds: \textit{The Silver King} (1882), \textit{Claudian} (1883) and \textit{The Sign of the Cross} (1896).
King. Likewise, the comic man could be a cheery coster, as Jerome defines him in *Stageland* (1890), or, later in the 1890s, a foolish aristocrat, as in G.R. Sims's *The Star of India* (1896). The list of stereotypes and variations on them was never a fixed quantity, but the characters were nonetheless largely predictable.  

Melodrama's conventions, seen in the comparatively limited range of its situations, its two-dimensional characters, and its inevitable progress towards the confusion of villainy and the prosperity of virtue, are elements in the ritualism which was basic to melodrama as a dramatic form. Conventions of this kind helped ensure the predictability which was one of the keys to melodrama's popularity. Audiences knew to a considerable extent what sort of entertainment awaited them before they entered the theatre. The product's consistency was the price paid for its enormous and sustained success as a popular form of entertainment. Some individual dramatists, like G.R. Sims, Augustus Harris and Henry Arthur Jones, wrote plays which were distinctive in style, but generally convention severely limited what could be done without

17. J.K. Jerome lists the following stereotypes in *Stageland*: the hero, the villain, the heroine, the comic man, the adventuress, the good old man, the comic lovers, the stage lawyer, stage peasants, two types of servant girl, the stage Irishman, the detective, the stage sailor, and, of course, the stage child. His list is essentially impressionistic and is in any case not particularly based on types in urban melodrama. Also, *Stageland* is a humorous book and not intended as a serious examination of stage stereotypes. Nonetheless it is the most extended discussion of them available and is based on first hand observation, albeit ironic. Jerome himself was a playwright and sometime melodrama actor. Michael Booth lists as the main melodrama stereotypes the hero, the villain, the heroine, the old man, the old woman, the comic man and comic woman. (M.R. Booth, *English Melodrama*, op. cit., pp.15-16. Discussion of these types takes place on pp.15-30.)

18. As The Times reviewer put it in 1891: '... as custom fixes a starting point, so it also fixes a destination for the typical travellers of Adelphi drama: it is enough for the purposes of novelty if on each successive journey the authors change the route'. (The Times, 3 August, 1891, p.6.)
courting disaster at the box office.19

The audience's awareness of the conventions led to an often vociferous responsiveness to events on the stage by which groups within the audience, notably in the West End the pit and gallery, were able to assert their own identity. The pit's belief in its right to pass judgement on first nights, for example, has been discussed in Chapter 2, while the role of the gallery as moral custodians of the drama was commented on by Jerome K. Jerome in 1890:

We doubt if there could be discovered on this earth any body of human beings one half so moral - so fond of goodness, even when it is slow and stupid - so hateful of meanness in word and deed - as a modern theatrical gallery.20

Theatres also, both in the West End and outside it, possessed identities of their own which were formed by the nature of the audiences they attracted and by the kind of drama they presented.21

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19. As Michael Booth notes, this makes melodramas highly repetitive: 'Themes, situations and characters repeat themselves endlessly, and after a while there is nothing new under the sun.' (Booth, English Melodrama, op. cit., p.5.) This uniformity was a characteristic of popular art which melodrama shared with the popular ballad, of which Jacqueline Bratton observes: 'Its styles and conventions became indeed so strong that varieties of talent tend to be submerged in them, and differences between practitioners are discernible only in terms of relative expertise'. (J.S. Bratton, The Victorian Popular Ballad, London 1975, p.8.) Thus the Era describes the success of Henry Pettit's Taken from Life (1882): '... all ends happily for virtue and disastrously for vice, in accordance with time-honoured stage customs, the audience departing well pleased with the arrangement and well pleased with themselves ...' (Era, 7 January 1882, p.11.)


21. Melodrama in the West End was centered on three theatres, Drury Lane, the Princess's and the Adelphi. Spectacular dramas, often with high life settings, were a speciality of Drury Lane, while Adelphi dramas were closer to the transpontine. The Princess's was the scene of Sims's early urban melodramas. Dramas there were typified by the elaborate settings of the Sims dramas and the grandiose hero-centered plays built around Wilson Barrett, rather than the mechanical spectacles characteristic of Drury Lane. Other West End theatres also staged melodrama from time to time, but were less popular in character than these three. Minor theatres were almost all melodrama theatres, their identity coming from the local character of their audiences.
The broadest distinction was between West End and minor theatre. A comparison between the noisy, violent and often careless productions for which theatres like the Surrey, Standard, Pavilion, Elephant and Castle and Britannia were known, and the more carefully constructed, more inhibited fare at, for example, the Princess's, shows the ability of melodrama towards the end of the century to strike resonances with the shared values and needs of very different audiences. In the West End, this was achieved by the evolution at theatres like the Haymarket and the Princess's of a more sophisticated brand of melodrama, but in the minor theatres the bond between play and audience was preserved by an insistence on the old conventions.

The demands of convention and a mass audience thus necessitated a conservative approach to the basic elements of plot and character and to the moral values which the play affirmed, since audiences required a constant diet of the familiar and conventional for their loyalty to be retained. But at the same time events on the stage had to be made exciting, and various forms of sensation were required to animate ritualised situations. Sensationalism indeed was fundamental to melodrama, and served as the energising force which gave life to its elaborate conventions. To make the point another way, the presence of sensation in some form was itself a melodramatic convention.

Many of the stock situations in melodrama, like fortuitous meetings and coincidences of birth, were of course themselves sensational in concept, though they became conventional through frequent use. But designed as it was to combine the conventional with the unexpected, a melodrama had to startle as well as satisfy expectation.

22. A striking example of this occurs in Henry Arthur Jones's and Wilson Barrett's Hoodman Blind (1885), in which Jack Yeulett, the hero, having cast out his wife Nancy in a fit of mistaken jealousy, is about to hurl himself into the Thames, when Nancy's twin sister Jess, the source of all his troubles, but of whom he has been ignorant until now, literally leaps into the river ahead of him. Jack of course rescues her and as she lies dying on the pavement she tells him the truth. The reviewer for the Pall Mall Gazette was taken aback: 'Such a crowning coincidence, with no attempt to conceal pure fortuitousness, staggered the audience and endangered the play at a critical moment'. (Pall Mall Gazette 19 August, 1885, p.4.) But other reviewers on the whole accepted the scene without complaint, as apparently did the 180,000 people who attended the play during the 172 performances of its first run.
Augustus Harris was a specialist in achieving this through spectacular physical sensation scenes around which his autumn melodramas were built, while William Archer complained of Harris's collaborator Paul Merritt that in pursuit of the same end he produced plays which were written in consultation with the stage carpenter, to suit the prisons and precipices, shipwrecks and waterfalls which happened to come in handy.

Or sensation could be achieved more economically, by an acting tour de force, like Charles Warner's spectacular death from delirium tremens as Coupeau in Drink (1879), Irving's famous Matthias in The Bells (1871), a part with which he was identified throughout his career, or Beerbohm Tree's Fagin in Oliver Twist (1905).

Again, the attention of audiences, especially in the minor theatres, could be held by appealing with sensational effect to their fascination with the topical and the familiar. Sometimes events of technical interest could be referred to, like the biograph in Hearts are Trumps (1899), and ballooning in The Great Ruby (1898), or melodramas could draw their themes from events more distant, like the Irish problem in A Life of Pleasure (1892), and the many Boer War dramas, such as When Darkness Falls (1903), or contemporary anarchism.

23. These included: The World (1880), Youth (1881), Pluck (1882), Freedom (1883), Human Nature (1885), The Derby Winner (1894), Cheer, Boys, Cheer (1895), The Great Ruby (1898) and Hearts are Trumps (1899).

24. William Archer, English Dramatists of Today (London 1882), p.159. Jerome describes a stage shipwreck thus: 'A wreck at (Stage) sea is a truly awful sight. The thunder and lightning never leave off for an instant; the crew run round and round the mast and scream; the heroine, carrying the Stage child in her arms, and with her back hair down, rushes about and gets in everybody's way. The comic man alone is calm!

The next instant, the bulwarks fall down flat on the deck, and the mast goes straight up into the sky and disappears; then, the water reaches the powder magazine, and there is a terrific explosion. This is followed by a sound as of linen sheets being ripped up, and the passengers and crew hurry downstairs into the cabin, evidently with the idea of getting out of the way of the sea, which has climbed up, and is now level with the deck.

The next moment, the vessel separates in the middle, and goes off R and L, so as to make room for a small boat containing the heroine, the child, the comic man and one sailor'. (Jerome, op. cit., p.79).
as in The Last Chance, Sims’s drama produced at the Adelphi in 1885. Again, melodramas could be built around events in the past which were still topical to the extent of being well remembered by their audiences, like the dynamiting of the wall of Clerkenwell Prison by Fenians in 1867, re-enacted in Taken from Life (1881). Even events of foreign interest could sometimes be dramatised, as the Dreyfus case was in One of the Best (1895).

More often, however, particularly in the minor theatres, melodramas drew on sensational local events of the kind being exploited by popular journalism, in a way which was itself journalistic. 'On the whole', wrote Henry Arthur Jones,

> a melodrama has succeeded much in proportion as the general impression left by it is the same as the general impression left by the front page of the Illustrated Police News ...

William Archer broadly agreed, finding contemporary melodrama to be:

> largely an outcome of the modern newspaper. It is a collection of exciting 'crimes and disasters' welded into dramatic shape. It forms an exact counterpart to the idea of modern life gathered by an habitual student of the police paragraphs, law reports, and 'special' columns of the Daily Telegraph and the lower class Sunday newspapers.

Likewise, sensation could be achieved by reproducing scenes and places familiar to the audience from their everyday lives or from the press but made novel by being seen in the theatre. The scenes reproduced might vary with the audience characteristic of particular theatres. Thus scenes of high life were a speciality of Drury Lane, where, for example, The White Heather (1897) included scenes of the

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27. In the case of the reproduction of familiar scenes, or the introduction on to the stage of familiar objects, like the hansom cab in Halliday's The Great City (1867), the effect intended can be compared with that aimed at by modern artists who abstract everyday objects and place them in art galleries, so that the beholder's appreciation of them as objects might be heightened by seeing them out of their normal context.
interior of the Stock Exchange, Battersea Park with cyclists and promenaders, Boulter's Lock 'on a fine Sunday, crowded with launches, skiffs and canoes', the bottom of the sea, where the final struggle between the villain and the hero took place, and, as the final tableau, the Duchess of Devonshire's recent fancy dress ball celebrating the Jubilee.

Audiences of all kinds, however, were particularly interested in scenes of low life. This was a development of the traditional interest in urban melodrama which had its origins at least as early as the 1840s. From a concern with the horrors of city living compared to the idyllic rural past, urban melodrama developed an almost journalistic interest in the picaresque, in which London was identified as the representative city and the reproduction of familiar city sights became in the last quarter of the century increasingly important.

One of the more extreme examples of this trend was a dramatisation of Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor* entitled *How we Live in London*, and produced at the Victoria in 1878. Vast audiences were treated to a 'realistic view of Covent Garden in the early morning', the arches of the Adelphi 'with their "sleeping accommodation for...


29. In the case of working class audiences, these scenes of low life were scenes with which everyday experience had made them familiar, and this heightened their interest. As Michael Booth notes, London audiences like their stage Londoners to act like people they knew. (M.R. Booth, 'The Metropolis on Stage', op. cit., p.221.)

30. For a fuller discussion of urban melodrama, see Michael Booth, 'The Metropolis on Stage', op. cit.

31. Frank Rahill (*The World of Melodrama*, University Park, Pa., [1967] p.216) names the first of the London melodramas as *The Great City* (1867), an adaptation of Dickens's *Great Expectations*, though this is clearly arguable. See, for example, the following footnote.

32. Another play claiming to be based on 'Mayhew's cyclopaedic work' was produced at the Pavilion in 1860 as *London Labour and London Poor, or Want and Vice*. It was a local drama about a wife persecuted by a Guards officer, set among scenes of thieves' kitchens, station-houses and boozing dens. (Disher, *Melodrama*, op. cit., p.68.)
the million" and a costermongers' ball which was particularly popular and encored by popular demand', a view of the outside of the very theatre where the play was being performed, and, to end, a 'terrific and imposing effect of the Old House in Flames'. 33 The play's subject meant a subordination of plot to spectacle even greater than usual. While other plays did not go so far, there were many productions which combined conventional plots and situations with realistic representations of London scenes and aspects of low life. The most successful example of this kind of play in our period was probably G.R. Sims's The Lights o' London (1881). As ever, the motive was the quest for sensation, shown in titles like London's Curse, How London Lives, The Boom of Big Ben, The Mysteries of London, and The Great World of London, to name only a few, but with the social crises of the 1880s urban melodramas in many instances, while chiefly concerned with the exploitation of sensational subjects, at the same time came closer to becoming plays of real social criticism than at any time since the 1840s. 34 The plays of G.R. Sims 35 are clear examples of

33. Era, 28 April, 1878, p.6.

34. See Michael Booth's discussion of social protest in melodrama, especially in the 1840s. (M.R. Booth, 'The Metropolis on Stage', op. cit., p.217.) As P.J. Keating notes, there were two periods in the nineteenth century 'when a significant number of novelists seriously attempted to present the working classes in fiction', the 1840s and 1850s, and the period 1880-1900. (P.J. Keating, The Working Classes in Victorian Fiction, London 1971, p.2.)

35. Sims is also an example of the link pointed to by Archer and others between journalism and melodrama. An untiring social investigator, he was already widely known for his sentimental ballads about the poor, the most famous being 'The Workhouse: Christmas Day', when he published a series of articles in 1883 under the title How the Poor Live in the Pictorial World, a few months before the appearance of Andrew Mearns's The Bitter Cry of Outcast London. Anthony Wohl notes how Mearns 'acknowledged his debt to Sims, and contemporaries mentioned How the Poor Live in the same breath as The Bitter Cry'. (A.S. Wohl, 'The Bitter Cry of Outcast London', International Review of Social History, vol. XIII, pt. 2, p.204.) Sims's reputation as an authority on the subject was such that he was the only journalist to be called as a witness before the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes (1884-5). Evidence of his expertise is apparent in many of his plays during the 1880s and early 1890s, notably The Lights o' London (1881), The Last Chance (1885), Master and Man (1889) and The Black Domino (1893). See Chapters 4 and 5 below.
this, but the groundswell of interest on which Sims built his success is shown by the prevalence in transpontine drama of titles like *The White Slaves of London*, *The Slums of London*, *Outcast London*, titles which, though often unrelated to their contents, clearly referred to great social issues of the time.

Melodrama, as Bernard Shaw noted, was a 'drama of action and feeling', and depended on evoking a variety of emotional responses. Audiences who in music halls were used to a succession of acts of different kinds were in melodrama theatres treated to a range of emotional experiences similarly wide.

Make your public laugh, make them weep, stir their emotions, and you are certain of their approval and their gratitude. as the *Era* reviewer wrote of *How London Lives*, produced at the Princess's in 1897. Thus they were called on to love the simple, manly hero, to pity the persecuted heroine, and to hate the villain or adventuress who was the author of their misfortunes. But exciting as the conventional plots and the various sensations which enlivened them were, they gained further impetus by contrast with scenes whose function was to create an emotional change of pace. Relief from the powerful emotions aroused by the main plot was provided by sub-plots and individual scenes usually comic in character. Such is the function of the Jarvis family in Sims's *The Lights o' London*, for example, and of Charity, the 'work'us kid' in Clement Scott's *Sister Mary* (1886). It also explains the presence of a curious exchange just before Jack's fortuitous rescue of Jess in *Hoodman Blind* between an old soldier who has eaten nothing for two days and a tipsy swell suffering from a surfeit of lobster salad.

Traditionally, the comic man and characters associated with him provided the requisite change of interest and emotional pace. Jerome describes the comic man as usually a working class figure much occupied

with making unsuccessful love to servant girls and quarrelling with
the comic woman, but who was nonetheless often the architect of the
villain's downfall. Variations on this idea could be found in many
of the period's most popular melodramas, especially in the 1880s, in
characters like Jakes, the faithful family retainer in The Silver
King, and John Biddlecombe, the 'zlow but zure' miller in Alone in
London (1885). Sims himself presented the comic man and his family
in classic form in the Peckaby family in The Golden Ladder (1887).
But at the same time, the need to relieve the dramatic tension of the
main plot created a flexibility in melodramatic structure which
dramatists like Sims could exploit to include material not directly
relevant to the main substance of the play but striking as representa-
tions of well-known scenes of ordinary life. While the comic man
frequently figured in such scenes, his functions not only in providing
light relief but also, later in the period, in helping to bring about
the traditional happy ending could as easily be fulfilled by a char-
acter type of more topical interest: the waif or street arab.

In conclusion, then, melodramatic characterisation was limited
by convention. The focus of interest was therefore on the acting out
by stereotyped characters of conventional plots punctuated by dramatic
sensations of various kinds. Urban melodrama nonetheless showed some
flexibility in reflecting contemporary urban life through a strong
concern for the realism of its settings, an interest in topical themes,
and the use of interlude scenes of everyday life which separated

38. Jerome, op. cit., 'The Comic Man'.
39. This ability was particularly marked in representations of the
comic man, who appeared in many and varied shapes. Of the
three examples quoted, Peckaby in The Golden Ladder is probably
closest to Jerome's description. The comic man was basically
a comic character role, and while up to the end of the century
he was generally, as Jerome suggests, a working man, aristocratic
comic men were in evidence by the early 1890s. Sims included
one such character in The Black Domino (1893), in the shape of
a wealthy young gentleman in love with a music hall artiste.
The same idea recurs in Hearts are Trumps (1894). Other
character types also evolved in response to changing interests
among West End audiences. See, for example, Michael Booth's
account of the evolution and increasing importance of the
adventuress between the 1860s and the 1890s. (English Melo-
drama, op. cit., p.159.)
episodes in the main plot and changed the emotional pace of the play. As we shall see, the use of the child as part of this realistic background helped to ensure for him a role which was representative rather than based on individual characterisation and which evolved with the dominant concerns of the popular audience. In tracing the development of this role, the following two chapters will pay particular attention to the plays of the highly popular dramatist, journalist, ballad-writer, and social reformer, G.R. Sims, since it is Sims whose work most effectively illustrates the evolution of the melodrama child and relates the child stereotype most closely to the ordinary life of the melodrama audience.
As we shall see in Chapter 6, much of the interest in children in the 1880s was focused on middle class stereotypes embodying sentimental values which the middle class public saw as inherent in childhood as a state. But a concern with the physical needs and social position of children was also strong, and was voiced from various quarters over a range of issues and from time to time throughout the decade with the result that the problems of child exploitation or deprivation were never long absent from the centre of public attention. Thus, for example, W.T. Stead’s exposure of child prostitution caused a public outcry in 1885, while in 1886 the Royal Commission on Education assessed the social as well as the educational implications of the Education Act, and the campaigns of the Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children brought their reward in the shape of the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act in 1889. Similarly, as noted in Chapter 1, the 1880s saw the beginning of a series of investigations into the condition of childhood with the British Medical Association’s inquiry of 1888 into the ‘average development and condition of brain power among school children’, and the presentation of the report of the Royal Commission on the Blind and Dumb in 1889. In between such peaks of concern, the activities of organisations such as the school boards, the rescue societies and the SPCCs themselves helped to maintain public interest in children’s social position.

While many, if not most, of these expressions of concern were generated among the middle classes, they emerged against a background of substantial, if less spectacular, shifts in popular attitudes, whose effects on popular notions of childhood will be explored in this and the following chapters.

As I have suggested earlier, urban melodrama was probably the form of dramatised social interaction which related most nearly to the ordinary lives of the melodrama audience. At the same time, the range
of characters most typical of it included a number of child types which were central in the ritual enactments of melodrama's traditional anti-urban themes and which gave expression to the contemporary concern with childhood at a popular level and in terms of popular cultural categories. These included the mother and child in poverty (as a composite symbol of social deprivation), the orphan, the pair of children supporting each other in a hostile world, the little blind girl, and the waif. These characteristic types, of course, were not mutually exclusive and characters could easily be found which combined two or more of them in one individual. Taken together, they presented the child as an image of urban poverty which was readily adaptable not only to the generation of pathos through the dramatised misfortunes of individuals, but also to a measure of social criticism, at least in the 1880s, and particularly in the plays of G.R. Sims, through the notion, first, of the child as an exemplar of urban poverty, and second, as a problem in his own right. In this way, the uses to which the street-child of urban melodrama was put provide a rough guide to the nature and fluctuations of popular social concern between the 1870s and the end of the century, and to the evolution out of a more general preoccupation with the poor of a specialised interest in the social position of childhood.

The mother and child in poverty represent a collective image of social deprivation which is among the oldest in melodrama. Typically, they find themselves in this state after being forced to leave their happy village home, and to endure dreadful tribulations before being restored to their former bliss. Henry Arthur Jones's Hoodman Blind, first produced in 1885 before an estimated audience of 180,000, provides a representative example of the mother and child in poverty, and demonstrates their characteristic role in the dramatisation of urban deprivation.

Deceived by the villains Krigge and Lezzard into thinking his

1. See Michael R. Booth, 'The Metropolis on Stage', op. cit.
2. See Michael Booth's discussion of this in 'The Metropolis on Stage', op. cit., pp.214-6. Jerome also dwells on this image of the heroine in the chapter he devotes to her in Stageland, op. cit.
sweet wife Nancy has been unfaithful, Jack casts her out with their little son Kit. Together, mother and child make their way to London, where they are next seen in desperate circumstances. Meanwhile, Jack, in despair at the perfidy of womankind, also comes to London. Contemplating suicide on the Embankment, he is forestalled when Jess, whose impersonation of Nancy tricked him into believing her unfaithful, leaps into the water ahead of him, seeking an end to her troubles after the desertion of her lover. Jack rescues her and with her dying breath she tells him the truth. Nancy has by now returned to the village, where Jack finds her and seeks vengeance on the authors of their misfortune, only to be foiled when the law takes its proper course.

Nancy and Kit in their poverty are clearly from a traditional mold and recall many similar scenes when Kit tells his mother:

KIT: Mother, I don't like this place. Why don't Daddy come and fetch us, mother?
NANCY: We must be patient, dear. (Keeps her head behind the pillow [that she is working on] to hide her tears.)
KIT: I don't believe he knows where we are. He'd come pretty quick if he did.
NANCY: Yes, I think he would.
KIT: Mother, isn't it nearly tea time?

3. The polarity of village and city was an old theme in Victorian melodrama, as Michael Booth demonstrates ('The Metropolis on Stage', pp.213-17.) Hoodman Blind is one of a number of plays in which the heroine and her child are used to dramatise it. Others include: Driven from Home (Grecian, 1875; revivals include productions at the Surrey in 1893, 1895, 1897 and 1898), Alone in London (Olympic, 1885; revivals included productions at the Surrey in 1887 and 1891), A Man's Shadow (1889), and How London Lives (1897). The idea of the heroine and child in poverty was a favourite device for representing this duality, but the basically picaresque interest which it involved was also enacted with great success by less sentimental means in plays like G.R. Sims's The Lights o' London (1881), Henry Pettitt's Taken from Life (1881) and Robert Buchanan's Alone in London (1885).
NANCY: No. It isn't four o'clock yet.
KIT: Oh, dear! when we don't have any dinner, tea time is such a long time coming.  

Thus with economy born of long tradition, the child is used in a subordinate role to establish their straitened circumstances and make the emotional connection between their poverty and the absent Jack. In this way the child is defined in terms of his position with the heroine at the heart of the family whose disintegration gives the play its dramatic power.

At the same time, Jack, meditating on suicide, makes it clear that the city is the appropriate setting for the woes that have beset him and his family:

Ah! great city! Asleep! with all your burden of mystery, and crime, and pain, and toil, and sorrow fast bound to you... Is there no end to all this aimless waste of hope, and strength, and love? Is there no answer? Lap! lap! lap! old river, draw the sweet brooks from their country homes and drown them in this hell-pool ...

But Nancy and Kit's plight does not follow from any general dislocation caused by urban life. It is essentially because of the absence of Jack that they are in poverty. The city is simply the traditional setting in which the disruption of their lives can be dramatised. Thus their dramatic significance derives more from a belief in the integrity of

4. H.A. Jones and W. Barrett, Hoodman Blind (1885), Act III, Sc.ii. Jerome writes, 'The stage child's department in the scheme of life is to harrow up its mother's feelings by ill-timed and uncalled for questions about its father'. (Stageland, op. cit., p.48.) And as Michael Booth notes: Old people and small children strongly reinforce pathetic effects in melodrama. In most plays these characters are directly related in pathos to the heroine: aged parent sorrows for the misery of erring daughter, and the feeble cries of hungry child fall heavily on the ears of destitute mother. (M.R. Booth, English Melodrama, op. cit., p.30.)

the family than from a sense of the city as the inescapable agent of misery.  

Since the shattered family unit is the central theme in the play, mother and child are both defined in terms of their relationships with others. Of the two, Nancy as the deserted wife and anguished mother is the more complex character. Kit on the other hand, as Nancy's helpless child, is essentially a prop, and has no existence beyond his role in heightening the emotional effect of Nancy's plight.

If the child in plays like Hoodman Blind was defined by his relationship with his parents, especially his mother, he could also be defined by his lack of such a relationship. The orphan is such a figure. That the orphan, too, represented an old preoccupation is shown by titles from earlier in the century: Orphan Boy (1825), Orphan of Paris (1831), Orphan of the Alps (1823), Orphan of War (1842), The Orphans (plays of this name were produced in 1823, 1825, 1862, 1869, and 1898) and so on. The idea of the passive, suffering child adrift on the world was not unique to urban melodrama, as plays like these indicate, but it was nonetheless well suited to it. A most influential play of this kind was The Two Orphans, staged at the Olympic Theatre where over 100,000 people saw it in 1874. The play seen in London was a version of a French play first performed in Paris earlier that year as Les Deux Orphelines. The English version retained the eighteenth century Parisian setting and left the plot more or less untouched. Poor blind Louise has been deprived of her inheritance by the wicked Marquis de Presles and wanders homeless and hungry in the snow, protected only by her two faithful friends, Henriette, the other orphan, and Pierre Frochard, a crippled knife grinder. Pierre's kindness in shielding Louise from the falling snow on the cathedral steps with his own coat 'sent a thrill throughout

6. Clement Scott, reviewing Hoodman Blind for the Illustrated London News, in fact characteristically regretted the scenes of urban poverty, while enthusiastic about the play as a whole:

We fear that it has been represented to [the author] - these silly theories are so often propagated - that a drama cannot possibly be popular unless low life is generously introduced by way of contrast. (Illustrated London News, 22 August, 1885, p.187.)
the house, and a storm of approbation quickly followed', according to the Era's reviewer. Louise's trials culminate in a scene in the garret of Pierre's fiendish mother, La Frochard, where Pierre's brutish brother Jacques holds Louise in his power. She is saved only by the devotion of Pierre who, as the Illustrated London News put it, 'with sudden energy equal to the peril', slays his brother in a terrific duel with knives, unprecedented in its realism. 'Heaven justifies the fratricide', continued the Illustrated London News, 'for the sake of the innocent whom it preserves'.

As the blind and persecuted woman-child, Louise prompted imitation in a number of plays, including two directly inspired by The Two Orphans, The Blind Sister (1874), and The Blind Girl's Fortune (1874). And the idea of the blind, mistreated orphan girl continued to be grist for the dramatist's mill in such minor theatre productions as The Outcast Poor (1884), A Little Outcast (1901), and Through the World; or, A Blind Child's Peril (1901), which the Era reviewer related firmly to its origins in the 1870s:

'Pity the poor blind!' cries the cruel old woman in The Two Orphans. And the terrible affliction of blindness in man, woman or child always does

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9. Strictly speaking, Louise and Henriette are young women rather than children, but they embody characteristics which are associated with children in later plays. Thus, for example, the idea of the two waifs, the stronger protecting the weaker, recurs in many later plays like Saved from the Streets (1886), Grif (1891) and Two Little Vagabonds (1896), and is almost always enacted by children. The blind girls in the plays listed here are closer to adulthood, but continue the passive helplessness of which The Two Orphans made such effective use, and which engendered much the same response as did the passive helplessness of child characters like Jo in Jo (1876). The ambiguity of such characterisation is repeated in a different context in the image of the woman as a child which is a feature of a number of West End plays appealing more to the middle classes, like W.S. Gilbert's Dan'l Druce (1876), The Little Pilgrim (1886) and Little Nobody (1890). This image was prevalent enough to provoke attack in Ibsen's A Doll's House (1889).
excite pity. The experienced playwright, well aware of this, introduces a helpless little blind child, and half the battle is won.10

Plays such as these served to perpetuate Louise and Henriette's essential characteristics of passivity, suffering and dependency as elements in the representation of urban poverty.

The mother and child in poverty, the orphan, the two children who support each other in adversity, and the blind child victim continued to appear in plays throughout the period, but it was the waif figure which showed the greatest development both as a melodrama type and as a representative symbol of social ills. While this thesis is concerned with the period after 1880, it is necessary to refer briefly to the 1870s for the contributions made during that decade to the definition of the waif as an exemplar of urban poverty which was important to the representation of urban poverty on the stage during the 1880s. In establishing the urban street child in this representative role, Jo in Dickens's Bleak House, adapted in J.P. Burnett's Jo at the Globe in 1876, was of central importance.

If Nell in The Old Curiosity Shop was probably the favourite Dickens child11 of audiences in the early 1870s, it was the image of

10. Era, 6 July, 1901, p.11.
11. Many, if not all of Dickens's major child characters were dramatised at one time or another. These adaptations are discussed in some detail by F.D. Fawcett in Dickens the Dramatist (London 1952), see especially pp.101ff. Fawcett notes that before the appearance of Jo in 1876, the most popular of Dickens's child characters on the stage was Nell. Ellen Terry's sister Florence played the part in Andrew Halliday's version of The Old Curiosity Shop (1870), which was probably the most successful adaptation of Nell, though by no means the only one. Indeed, Fawcett cites no less than eight new adaptations of The Old Curiosity Shop as running at one time in 1872 in various parts of the country, and this takes no account of the many revivals of older versions. Adaptations of the book continued into our period. Miss Lotta starred in a version by Dickens's son at the Opera Comique in 1884, and new adaptations were performed in two successive years after the turn of the century in 1902 and 1903. Oliver Twist was a curious exception to the general tendency towards dramatising Dickens's fictional children. No less than eleven different adaptations of the book were staged before 1880, but most of these centered on Fagin, Sikes and Nancy rather than Oliver. Only two new adaptations of the book were performed after 1880. A not very successful version by G.G. Collingham at the Olympic in 1891 featured a particularly bloody murder of Nancy. The other was a celebrated production at His Majesty's in (over)
Jo, the woebegone little crossing sweeper, which caught the popular imagination, particularly in the West End, as a symbol of poverty and deprivation immediately before and in the early years of the social crisis of the 1880s. The play was written by J.P. Burnett for his wife Jennie Lee and was brought to the Globe Theatre in 1876 after a successful debut in the United States. Essentially, the play is an exercise in sentiment. Dickens's Jo, the cowed and beaten victim of forces he cannot understand, exists in counterpoint to the cynical pedantries of Chancery, the beneficence of Esther Summerson and the perdition which haunts Chesney Wold. Thus Dickens introduces Jo in terms of the mysterious influence which links his fate with those raised far beyond his knowledge:

What connection can there be, between the place in Lincolnshire, the house in town, the Mercury in powder, and the whereabouts of Jo the outlaw with the broom, who had that distant ray of light upon him when he swept the churchyard step? What connection can there have been between many people in the innumerable histories of this world, who, from opposite sides of great gulfs, have, nevertheless, been very curiously brought together?12

In extracting Jo from this mystic context, Burnett found himself with a character who had to carry his own dramatic significance. Jo is a

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(footnote continued): 1905, in which Beerbohm Tree achieved a tour de force as Fagin, and Constance Collier played Nancy. (See R.P. Fulkerson, 'Oliver Twist in the Victorian Theatre', Dickensian 70, May 1974.) Nicholas Nickleby, featuring another suffering waif in the shape of the unfortunate Smike, was adapted with great success by Halliday before an initial total audience of over 170,000 in 1875. It will be discussed in the following chapter as a source of the greater vitality and heroism of the melodrama waif in the 1890s. In a different context George Rowell notes Pixere-court's remark about his own function as a melodramatist to the effect that he wrote for those who do not read. (Nineteenth Century Plays, op. cit., p.ix.) With this in mind it seems likely that dramatisations of Dickens, like film adaptations of other novelists in more recent times, reached a far wider public than did the original books. In the case of children and the images of them which were characteristic of Victorian society, stage versions of Dickens's children were probably those with which the majority of people, especially among the poorer classes, were familiar.

symbol. **Bleak House** provides few actions for him to perform. Moreover, as the victim of largely impersonal forces, he is partly defined in the novel by his lack of personal relationships, thus minimising the possibilities of personal interaction. In the play, therefore, there is little plot and not much incident, and in the absence of context other than a social one Jo is defined in almost purely sentimental terms.

Much of this sentiment derives from Jo's passivity and poverty, which were the basis of the image created of him by Jennie Lee. He is completely ignorant. In the Inquest scene, the baffled Coroner exclaims:

> I never encountered such ignorance. Do you know anything?
> 
> J.O: No, sir, I knows nothink, I don't.13

Nor does he act. When the detective Bucket, Jo's reluctant persecutor and the self-confessed agent of 'Society', asks him, 'Why don't you move on?', the child replies:

> J.O: (whimpering) I'm allers a-movin' on, sir! I've allus been a movin' and a-movin' on ever since I was born, sir. Where can I possible move to, sir, more nor I do?14

Jo's poverty is total, of a piece with his ignorance and passive suffering, because the character is defined in completely negative terms. He has no parents, no home, no money, no-one to love him, nowhere to go. He has, does and knows nothing. At the same time, and in the light of events in the 1880s, it is interesting and important that Jo's negative characteristics, in contrast to those of Louise and Henriette in **The Two Orphans**, are those which define his social rather than his moral status. It is also this which distinguishes him from the children beloved of middle class matinee audiences in the 1890s. In social terms, Jo is a kind of negative ideal, and his death is the logical development of his condition of passive suffering.

Jennie Lee's achievement as Jo lay in establishing an image of suffering and poverty. 'From the very moment', wrote the *Era* reviewer,

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13. J.P. Burnett, **Bleak House** (title later changed to Jo), (1876), Act II, Sc.i.
14. Ibid.
when Jo, broom in hand, and cowering beneath the dreadful magnificence of the parish beadle, comes before us, until the sad end, when, worn out with 'moving on' in obedience to authority, he lies down in the street to die, with his last thoughts turned to the dead man who was once kind to him, Miss Lee had the hearts and eyes of her audience under her control. In appearance she thoroughly realised the part ...15

In the image of poverty thus created lay a very large measure of the play's popularity. Testimony to the effectiveness of the picture of Jo as created both in Dickens's novel and in Burnett's play in exemplifying contemporary poverty is provided by the use made of it by Dr Barnardo, who was in turn influenced by the photographer Rejlander. In reaction against the conventional art photography of the 1860s, Rejlander began to photograph children from the Boys' Home at Chalk Farm, depicting them as crossing sweepers, shoeblacks or simply as urchins. Some of these photographs were used by charities for publicity purposes. Barnardo made a practice of photographing all the children taken into his homes and used many of the pictures on cards printed for sale or gift. As Valerie Lloyd points out, these pictures were as often designed for effect in publicity as for record purposes, and in the achievement of this effect she shows that Rejlander's 'Poor Jo'16 of about 1860 was an influential model. Accused of exaggerating the wretchedness of individual children in his photographs, Barnardo argued that they were not intended to portray individuals but to illustrate the class of children cared for in his homes, and he cited Rejlander's photographs as precedents. The Arbitration Court, however, ruled against him on one of the published pictures, describing it as 'artistic fiction'. After this, Barnardo's

15. Era, 27 February, 1876, p.12.

photographs became much more of a simple record.\textsuperscript{17}

In the play, there is a limited suggestion of Jo's representativeness in the vague ascription of responsibility for his plight to Society. 'There he goes', exclaims Bucket, having once more to move the boy on,

It's devilish hard! ... It ain't right, though.... The law backs me, and Society requires it! But it ain't right!

A little later he tells Jo:

... Society don't want to know much of the like of you - don't want to see you, in fact wants you rubbed off the slate, to use a figure of speech. So, instead of being rubbed off, rub yourself off. (phrase of JO's music on piano) That's my advice to you! So now move on!\textsuperscript{18}

This, however, is the extent of social criticism in the play, which makes no further effort to relate the image of Jo directly to the world outside the theatre.

At the same time, the image which the play was devoted to creating was undeniably effective at the box office. After a deceptively short season at the Globe, the play toured the provinces, Australia, Africa, India and China.\textsuperscript{19} Various other adaptations of Bleak House were made,

\textsuperscript{17} Lloyd, op. cit., pp.12-16. Though clearly in many ways a different kind of play, Little Lord Fauntleroy (1888) should, like Jo, probably also be seen as an exercise in picture-making. Mrs Burnett herself seems to have seen Fauntleroy very much in visual terms. Describing how he evolved out of her own son, Vivian, born in 1876, she dwells on the idea of Vivian as a picture:

He was a very fortunate small person in the fact that nature had been extremely good to him in the matter of combining his mental sweetness and quaintness with the great charm of physical picturesqueness. All his little attitudes and movements were picturesque. When he stood before one to listen he fell unconsciously into some quaint attitude; when he talked he became ingenuously dramatic; when he sat down to converse he mentally made a droll or delightful little picture of himself.

(Frances Hodgson Burnett, 'How Fauntleroy Occurred and a Very Real Little Boy Became an Ideal One', in Piccino and Other Child Stories, London 1897, p.134.)

\textsuperscript{18} Bleak House, op. cit., Act II, Sc. ii.

\textsuperscript{19} Disher, Melodrama, op. cit., p.72.
mostly featuring Jo. There were at least four in 1876: Bleak House at the Pavilion, Bleak House; or, Poor Jo in Sheffield, Jo the Waif at Greenwich, and The Life and Death of Jo in Coventry. There were at least six others over the next thirty years. Jennie Lee herself made a triumphant return to London with Burnett's version in 1896.

The influence of Jo was apparent also in the recurrence of the pathetic little crossing sweeper in various guises in a number of later plays which had nothing to do with Bleak House. Among these were Little Gerty, the Lamplighter's Daughter (1876), in which the little girl is forced to wander through the streets until her father's name is cleared, How We Live in London (1878), in which Jessie Garratt 'found well-deserved favour as the helpless little street boy Jerry Joyous', and Fate and Fortune; or, the Junior Partner (1891), in which Gracie Murielle played the little match girl Madge, described by The Theatre as 'a sort of female Jo'.

As I have suggested, the importance of Jo lay in his definition in terms of his social condition rather than of his moral status. While the suffering and pathos of earlier stereotypes like those of the mother and child in poverty, the orphan, the two children alone in adversity, and, particularly, the waif as seen in Jo, were not the only characteristics employed in later representations of the street child, the sense effected by such stereotypes of children as the special victims of urban poverty was important in helping to define some of the uses to which the street child was put in melodrama during the 1880s. While in general terms the greatest successes in melodrama during the decade show it as conforming to the picture Gareth Stedman Jones

20. Poor Little Jo (1877), Poor Jo (1878), Move On; or, The Crossing Sweeper (1883), Jo the Waif; or the Mystery of Chesney Wold (1881), Lady Dedlock's Secret (1885), Bleak House; or, Events in the Life of Jo (1903). There was even a musical on the crossing sweeper theme: The Crossing Sweeper (1893).

21. Era, 28 April, 1878.

22. The Theatre, 1 September, 1891, p.134.

23. See Appendix 3.
has drawn of a popular culture which was conservative, 'dense and inward-looking' and disinclined to social protest, there was a body of melodrama during these years which developed the waif and child victim stereotypes inherited from plays of the 1870s like The Two Orphans, Jo and Nicholas Nickleby in responding to the prevailing social distress.

Unlike theatre for the middle and upper middle classes, and unlike melodrama itself in the late 1890s, melodrama in the 1880s did not generate plays which placed particular emphasis on childhood. At the same time, children did play an important part in reflecting contemporary social concern, itself a subordinate theme in melodrama for most of the period. Playwrights who used children in thus dramatising the contemporary social problem included George Conquest and Clement Scott, as well as other lesser figures. It is the plays of G.R. Sims, however, which provide probably the clearest example of the development of this kind of role for the melodrama child, the representative first of urban poverty in general and then of social problems of which children were the special victims. This development is the more interesting given Sims's high reputation as a judge of popular taste, while his attempts during the 1880s to give children greater prominence illustrate the limits to the emphasis which could be placed in melodrama at this stage either on children or on the social questions of which they were often the peculiar symbols. Before entering on these issues, however, it is important to establish Sims's importance in articulating the popular culture which nourished these concerns.

Sims's background was both middle class (through his merchant father) and reformist (through his Chartist grandfather and his mother, active in a number of women's causes and at one time President of the Women's Provident League). He was in fact intended by his father for a commercial career and began his working life as a clerk in his father's office in the City. By his own account, however, Sims was less than diligent and devoted his spare time to studying life in

'back streets, bar-parlours, penny gaffs ... outside workhouse doors ... early markets and dock gates'. This fascination with low life went together with a passion for popular journalism which finally found an outlet in a column in the Weekly Despatch and regular contributions to Henry Sampson's Fun in 1874. Sampson launched another popular sporting and dramatic paper, the Referee, in 1877, and Sims joined it as a founder-contributor, a connection sustained until his death in 1922. By the end of the 1870s Sims was well known not only for his popular journalism, but also for his short stories, and, most particularly, for his Dagonet Ballads, which sold 100,000 copies in the sixpenny edition between 1877 and 1879. He added to his already considerable following when he began writing stage farces in 1879 with Crutch and Toothpick, which ran for 234 performances in its first run before an estimated audience of 92,000, and again with his first melodrama, The Lights o' London (1881), one of the landmarks of late Victorian popular theatre, which attracted an initial audience of nearly a quarter of a million.

By 1881, then, Sims had established himself as one of the most successful articulators of popular culture of his day, with a vast audience to which he catered through his ballads, his journalism, his short stories, and through the theatre. Perhaps the best description of this public was provided by Pearson's Weekly in 1891. 'Mr Sims', it said,

belongs to the people; he is part and parcel of that penny public largely represented by gentlemen who frequent the seats of our parks on Sabbath mornings, or crowd the gods of the Adelphi on the Saturday night.26

Essentially, these were the readers of the penny papers, the habitués of the pit and gallery, for whose custom the music halls and theatres competed,27 and whose patronage sustained the institutions of entertainment which Gareth Stedman Jones cites as the pillars of late

27. See testimony by George Conquest to the Select Committee on Theatres and Places of Entertainment (1892).
Victorian popular culture. With this audience, Sims's success was probably unrivalled. 'No living author', said the Birmingham Daily Mail in 1887, 'has so thoroughly mastered the secret of hitting the popular taste'.

At the same time, this success sprang not only from his acute sense of his audiences's tastes and his highly developed skills as a journalist and dramatist, but also from his judicious deployment of a vast knowledge of London working class life, described by William Archer as unequalled by any writer since the death of Charles Dickens. This was derived in part from observations carried out on his own account, but also, and more importantly, during expeditions through the East End in the company of a nuisance inspector and a school board officer, Arthur Moss, both of whom he had met at an East End political club in about 1879. It was from this meeting that he traced his real education in the facts of urban deprivation. Moreover, since Moss, the school board officer, was much the more important of his two guides, it is clear that Sims discovered the poor by way of their children. Children therefore played a special role in the dramatisations of working class life which it was his special talent to integrate with traditional melodrama, as well as in his later reformist journalism. In drama, especially, the ground for this was already prepared through the wide popular acceptance of the association between children and urban poverty dating from the 1870s and earlier.

His acute sense of his audiences's tastes, the unprecedented realism of his dramatisations of low life, and the prominence of children in them suggest Sims's peculiar importance as an articulator of the urban melodrama audience's notions of childhood, while the process of development which his representations of children underwent are a guide also to the evolution of those notions. This process of development can be divided roughly into three stages: the first, from The Lights o' London

30. Pall Mall Gazette, 7 April 1885, p.19.
(1881) to the publication of his articles entitled How the Poor Live (1883), which contributed markedly to the sense of social crisis during the mid-1880s; the second, comprising the reformist dramas which flowed from his involvement in the social debates of the mid- and late 1880s; and the third, from about 1891 to the closure of the Adelphi and Princess's theatres at the end of the century, which saw a new emphasis in his dramas on humour and heroic vitality in the working class child. The remainder of this chapter will be concerned with the first two of these phases. Since the third marks a considerable shift from the social imagery of the 1880s, it will be discussed in the following chapter.

The Lights o' London is the best example of Sims's dramatic method of presenting realistic scenes of low life as interludes in the main plot as a means of giving a sense of realism and scale to the play as a whole. In this the play illustrates both his use of melodrama as a form of journalism and the extent of his use of children at this stage in his career as protagonists in evocations of a panoramic and kaleidoscopic view of working class life. 31

Despite its author's relative inexperience, the play is a very skilful exercise of the melodrama form. It is full of coincidence, colour and cliff-hanging suspense, but after the fashion of melodrama its plot is essentially predictable throughout. It is not until the scene shifts to London that the play reveals a focus of interest quite other than its ostensible and conventional theme of loss and restitution. Quite simply, this is London life. In developing this interest no attempt is made to tamper with old-fashioned practice. Instead, Sims takes the customary sentimental or comic interlude whose traditional role was merely to provide an emotional change of pace, and turns it into a panoramic view of London life which brought the play instant acclaim. 'Again and again', wrote the reviewer for the Pall Mall Gazette, 'a loud burst of applause attested how keenly the public

31. The title of Sims's first book of short stories, The Social Kaleidoscope (London 1878) is perhaps the clearest indication of his sense of urban life at this time.
appreciated the exactitude of the reproduction of scenes with which it is most familiar ..., and if Clement Scott recoiled a little before a drama if anything 'too real, too painful, too smeared with the dirt and degradation of London life', the Era hailed it as a triumph which demonstrated Sims's ability 'to do for the Stage what Charles Dickens did for literature...'. William Archer noted Sims's talent in 'using old materials in novel and original combination, with a true and keen observation in details which imparts a freshness of interest to even hackneyed scenes and situations.' In effect, as Archer saw, the plot formed no more than a frame for a 'picture of low-class life painted with a fidelity which is almost without precedent on our stage', a point which recurred in other comments on the play.

Not all the scenes which prompted such praise involve children. A coster claiming to sell fresh plaice, for example, is told that his wares are less than wholesome. 'Then you should have bought 'em last Saturday night when I offered 'em to you', he replies. 'They was fresh then'. Again, in a scene outside a casual ward, George, the hero, desperately poor, tries to beg or borrow money for poor sick Bess from two men discussing a donation of £200 to a foreign mission. 'My dear fellow', says one,

if your distress is genuine you can get relief. Go to the Charity Organisation Society. They will enquire into your case, refer to your employers and places where you have previously lodged and then, doubtless, give you a letter of recommendation to some Charitable Society.

GEORGE: Tomorrow, tomorrow she [Bess] may be dead. I want help now.

32. 'A Drama of the Streets', Pall Mall Gazette, 16 September 1881, p.11.
33. The Theatre, 1 October 1881, p.239.
34. Era, 17 September 1881, p.6.
36. Ibid., p.310.
39. Ibid., Act III, Sc. ii.
But the other main scenes of this kind both involve children. In one a policeman finds a boy in the street and tells him to go home:

BOY: Ain't got no home, sir.
POL: Ain't got no home. Where's your father?
BOY: Father's doin' three months for smashing mother's nose with a quart pot.
POL: Well where's your mother?
BOY: She's doin' six months for stealin', sir.
POL: A nice family. What did she steal for?
BOY: To get the money for a lawyer, sir, to speak up for father.
POLS: What fools the women are. 40

The policeman offers to arrest the boy and have him imprisoned for three months' free board and lodging, and the child gratefully agrees.

The other such scene concerns a little girl working for a beggar, whose trick for attracting charity is to have her crying in the street at having lost the sixpence given her by her father to buy the family beer. Kind hearted passersby make up the 'loss' many times to save her from a beating. 41

Seen against a background of familiar streets and scenes, these incidents represented points of focus for the audience in the panorama of working class life presented by the play, and of this general picture children occupied much of the foreground as representatives of the poverty which was part of the London panorama. In the context of the pattern of development in images of working class children, it is interesting that in The Lights o' London these children, with one incidental exception, are not individualised and do not exist as characters independent of the situations they dramatise. Moreover, while less sentimental in conception than, for example, Jo, they are still passive suffering figures as incapable as he is of affecting their condition.

40. Ibid., Act IV, Sc. i.

41. Another sign of Sims's use of melodrama as dramatised documentary is the recurrence of virtually identical incidents like this one in both his plays and his journalism. The situation of the child put out to beg by pretending to have lost money given her by her father, who will 'kill' her for losing it when she goes home is described along with other begging 'dodges' in Sims's article 'Some Begging "Dodges"' in the survey of London life edited by him just after the end of the century, Living London, vol. 3 (London 1902).
Sims's next melodrama was *The Romany Rye* (1882), a conventional rural drama not suited to be a setting for an urban panorama like that of *The Lights o' London*. It concerns the gipsy, Jack Hearne, who returns to his people after years overseas and finally proves to be the rightful heir to the local big house and its lands. But even here Sims includes a documentary scene about life in the slums. In this case the scene is a low lodging house in the Mint, belonging to the baby farmer Mrs Knivett, where babies can be hired for begging. A local woman, Sue, known as Philadelphia, comes to the house:

**SUE:** Where's Mrs Knivett?
**BOSS:** What d'ye want, Philadelphia?
**SUE:** A baby for the day.
**BOSS:** (calling off) Mother, is there any babies to spare? Philadelphia wants one. (to Sue) You want it for the starvin' lay, don't yer?

**SUE:** Yes!

**BOSS:** A nice thin 'un if there's one in the house.
**MRS. K.** (off): There isn't!
**BOSS:** (listening) Eh! Oh! (to Sue) All the babies is engaged but mother 'ull keep one tomorrer if you like.

**SUE:** All right, a thin 'un mind (going).

Again, the child implied in the scene is the totally helpless victim of working class poverty and degradation, whose role is to impart to the play something of the social colour with which Sims's name had become associated after *The Lights o' London*.

Thus in the first phase of the development of his urban melodrama Sims exploited sentiment in the image of the child in interlude scenes of social deprivation which created the panorama of urban life against which the orthodox plot was set. In this *The Lights o' London* exemplifies his initial method of dramatising social questions within a traditional melodrama framework, his sense of the infinite variety of urban life, and his characteristic use of children as its special victims.

With the independence achieved by the success of *The Lights o'*

Sims extended his investigations of the East End. Such forays place him in a long tradition of journalistic interest in the East End which included Henry Mayhew and the 'Amateur Casual', James Greenwood. Indeed as a social investigator he could perhaps be seen as the link between this earlier school of journalism and the more thoroughgoing researches of Charles Booth. More importantly, his work reflects the growth of social concern which characterised the 1880s. His articles entitled *How the Poor Live* which appeared in 1883 in the *Pictorial World*, are paired by A.S. Wohl with Andrew Mearns's *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London* as a catalyst not only for the general interest in social questions which drew so many young middle class men into the East End, but also for the Royal Commission on Working Class Housing in 1884-1885, to which Sims was called as a witness.

As we have seen, his activities were in large measure influenced by his links with the School Board, and children were the common factor in his explorations. This was not uncongenial to him. It was said of him in the 1890s that he 'admits only love of three things, children, horses and dogs', and that for him 'the children are charming only in proportion to their poverty and suffering'.

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43. By 1894, Sims was reported to have made £72,000 from the play ('Quaint George Sims', *New York Sunday Advertiser*, 29 April 1894), and it is likely that he continued to enjoy a handsome return from it since he claimed in 1917 that it had been performed somewhere in the world every night between its first production and the time of writing (Arthur Calder-Marshall, *Prepare to Shed Them Now: The Ballads of George R. Sims*, London 1968, p.19). It was rumoured in 1901 that he had long paid tax on £20,000 a year (Shurey's Illustrated, 1901; Scrapbook, p.145, Sims papers, Manchester University.) Certainly, great wealth was integral to his public image as a man about town in the 1890s, reinforced by the detailed accounts of his daily life provided by his column in the *Referee* and by innumerable newspaper interviews.

44. See H.J. Dyos, 'The Slums of Victorian London', *Victorian Studies* II, 1967-68, for a fuller discussion of this tradition of journalism, and of Sims's place in it.

45. Wohl, *op. cit.*, p.204. See also Gareth Stedman Jones's account of the importance of *How the Poor Live in Outcast London*, *op. cit.*, p.282.

46. Newspaper interview, Scrapbook, p.113, Sims papers, Manchester University. Original source and date not given.
importance of children in the social crisis was not limited to Sims, however. The association of working class childhood with poverty was not only an inheritance from the 1870s and earlier: it also reflected the parallel course of the generalised social concern expressed in the Outcast London agitation and the growing preoccupation with childhood in many areas of society during the 1880s, which continued into the 1890s and beyond.

The titles of a number of melodramas of the mid-1880s, like *The Outcast Poor* (1884), *Outcasts of the City* (1884), *Outcasts of the Streets* (1886) and *Outcast London* (1886), while often concealing traditional urban dramas of no special contemporary relevance, testified to a degree of general interest in social questions among their audiences, which is confirmed by the fact that of the four successful melodramas of 1885, three (*Hoodman Blind*, *Alone in London* and *Shadows of a Great City*) were urban plays centrally concerned with urban poverty. Some indication of children's significance as symbols of the plight of the poor in these plays is evident in the use in two of them, *Hoodman Blind* and *Alone in London*, of particularly harrowing versions of the mother and child in poverty. The fourth successful drama of 1885 was Sims's remarkably popular *The Harbour Lights*, a nautical play which nonetheless opens with a topical reference in the form of a scene featuring city children on holiday at the seaside under one of the children's country holiday charity schemes.

Such plays indicate a frequent if not invariable association between the contemporary social crisis and children as its peculiar victims and exemplars. At the same time, the solutions advanced to help children in this situation varied. One example of a conservative response is afforded by Clement Scott's *Sister Mary* (1886), in which reference is made to the social problem through the 'work'us kid' Charity, who is urged by the heroine to 'be honest and earn a good name and keep it'. Responding warmly, Charity says of her

47. Successful is here taken to mean an initial run of 100 performances or more.
48. The play attracted an estimated 655,000 people to its first run.
She's a brick to me, she is. Seems to do a gal good to hear her speak. If the ladies as goes to Church knew how much good they could do for gals like me by a kind word now and then I wonder if they'd be any slower getting up to Heaven.49

More interesting, however, is George Conquest's _Saved from the Streets; or, Waifs and Strays_, staged at the Surrey in 1886. The Surrey was situated on the borders of Southwark and therefore lay in central-south London, where Charles Booth found the extent of poverty to be, at 47%, the highest in the city.50 Like that of the other minor theatres, the Surrey's clientele was mainly local in origin. _Saved from the Streets_ is therefore significant as a response to social conditions in the 1880s from an area in which they were most acute.

The main plot of the play is a traditional one. Edna's uncle wills his fortune to Edna instead of to his nearest relative, the wicked Amos, who murders him and has the blame put on Edna's husband Harry, who is imprisoned for the crime. Amos has Edna herself put in a lunatic asylum run by the villainous Dr Dobell, who drugs her to make her seem mad. Dobell takes away her son at birth and gives him away to another woman, Maggie, to look after with her own boy. Amos finds the boys, kidnaps both, and apprentices them to a fisherman at Yarmouth. Edna escapes and lodges with Maggie, where Amos eventually finds her and begins to poison her slowly with a drug supplied by Dobell. Meanwhile Harry escapes from prison and the boys run away from Yarmouth, and before long find themselves in an Industrial School. Edna, Maggie and Amos all search for the children. Amos finds them first and tries to drown them by locking them in a cellar which floods with the rising tide, but Maggie and Edna rescue them in a boat and the villains are confounded.

The boys are not central characters in the play, and do not have much effect on the development of the plot. Moreover, they have clear

49. Clement Scott, *Sister Mary* (1886), Act I, Sc.i. A less sympathetic response can be found in Pinero's West End comedy of the same year, *The Hobby Horse*, produced for a wealthier audience, which tells the story of a fashionable lady who goes to the East End to care for waifs and strays, but discovers the folly of her ways and returns to resume her proper responsibilities to home and husband.
origins in earlier children of urban melodrama. The idea of the waifs, the stronger protecting the weaker, which Sims also used for Two Little Vagabonds in 1896, is a clear reference to The Two Orphans, and the sentimental possibilities of the situation are enthusiastically exploited, as in their first appearance in Act III where the boys are given a coin:

JOE: Thank'ee, sir. Look here, Jim, a Joey, a bit of silver; what a blow-out of pudding you shall have. No, I don't think pudding would be good for you, a cup o' eels is more strengthening.

JIM: Oh, Joe, you only think of me. Many's the time you've brought me little strengthening things when I know you have gone without yourself. You're father, mother and all to me, Joe.51

Likewise, there are echoes of Jo's 'I'm a movin' on, sir' in Jim's protests when Amos comes to take them from the Industrial School:

JIM: Sir, we never knewed our mother or father either. We've always seemed to be in everybody's way in this 'ere world. I don't know what we was sent into it for, unless it was to be chivvied and kicked by everybody what comes across us.52

But Conquest went beyond the dramatising of contemporary social problems and used the play to suggest practical as well as moral solutions. Thus the visit of the comic woman Peggy to the Industrial School in search of Joe and Jim becomes the occasion for a plea for greater support for such institutions:

PEGGY: ... I only wishes I could afford to subscribe a tenner, for the way they takes these dirty little ragamuffins out of the gutter, and turns them into clean, decent members of society, is something as deserves to be supported.53

And Jim and Joe, having failed to persuade Amos to leave them at the Industrial School, bewail the lot of apprentices such as they:

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51. George Conquest and R.H. Eaton, Saved From the Streets; or, Waifs and Strays (1886) Act III. The similarity in the concerns and styles of Saved From the Streets and Mankind suggests that the former is mainly the work of George Conquest.

52. Ibid., Act IV.

53. Ibid.
JOE: I only wish I know'd how to write. I'd write to the newspapers and tell 'em what us poor prentices has to go through.

JIM: What use would that be, Joe?

JOE: The Public would all know it then, and if you can only touch their hearts they'd see fair play and kick up a rumpus until we was treated like human beings and not like homeless curs. 54

Such social criticism was probably inspired by Sims's *The Lights o' London* of 1881, but the message of *Saved From the Streets* was blunter and more overt than that of Sims's play, the more so for being less skilfully integrated into the structure of the work. Nonetheless, it represents a particularly full development of the potential for social criticism contained in the image of the waif, given the conservatism of the melodramatic form.

In the more highly charged social climate which plays like *Saved From the Streets* reflected, and to which his own journalism had contributed, Sims moved into what can be seen as the second phase of his representations of urban childhood. While not abandoning his technique of sandwiching scenes of social comment between episodes in the main narrative, he wrote three plays during the late 1880s in which social problems of the day are dramatised in much greater detail and at much greater length, at the expense of more traditional elements of melodrama. Social comment here is not just an element in a social panorama: instead of framing a general picture of urban life the melodrama plot now frames a dramatisation of a specific social problem and Sims's documentary purposes are much more overt. These plays represent an intensity of social criticism through the theatre which is impressive for the time. They also demonstrate both a continuity in Sims's technique of dramatised social journalism and the evolution of his concerns away from poverty and the working classes and towards the social position of childhood, so that he now began to present children as the victims, not of a broader pattern of social inequality, but of specific types of abuse. In so doing, they indicate the course taken by humanitarian thinking in one of the architects of the social crisis in the middle of the decade, and one who was also particularly identified with the popular culture defined by Gareth Stedman Jones, away

54. Ibid.
from a concern with children as the representative symbols of a wider social crisis to an interest in the position of childhood as a social problem in its own right. Despite their relatively short runs, therefore, these plays represent something of a link on the popular level between the Outcast London crisis and the passage of the 1889 Act for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, at the same time suggesting a comparatively small degree of popular involvement in the issues raised by the latter. While Sims alternated these plays with others on traditional themes, it seems appropriate here to examine these dramas together, in order to show both the continuity of his methods and the changing emphases in his interests.

The first of these documentary dramas was *The Last Chance* (1885). Like Sims's other reformist dramas of the 1880s, *The Last Chance* is built around a conventional story of dispossession and restitution, but its real concern is with dramatising the plight of the unemployed, a theme which is focussed on a scene at the dock gates to which the hero, Frank Daryll, comes with his neighbour, Karasoff, seeking work. The piece takes its name from a moment early in this scene which in effect summarises the chapter Sims devotes in *How the Poor Live* to the plight of those looking for work at the docks:

> FRANK: And these men, do they come day after day like this and wait for the chance of work?
> KARASOFF: Yes, the last chance. Some of them almost live at the dock gates, some of these poor souls would die here if they could find a quiet corner.
> FRANK: The last chance for some of them. I can read it on their white despairing faces. This is the harbour to which many a wreck drifts at last, and I, it is my last chance, too.

In an interview published in the *Pall Mall Gazette* as part of a special supplement devoted to the play, Sims made his purposes plain:

> If my scenes at those grim portals help to arouse a more lively interest among the great in this terrible problem of how the poor are to live, I shall feel repaid for many a sleepless night and many a long day of depression.

As if to reinforce the link between the play and *How the Poor Live*, the supplement quotes Sims's published account of the crowd at the dock gates as a description of the scene staged at the Adelphi, and notes how the scenery was painted from studies done at the docks under Sims's own supervision.  

Though not a great success at the box office, *The Last Chance* is an important play in the context of Sims's social criticism through dramatised documentary and, given the supplement to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, affords a valuable insight into his methods. It shows not only the solid grounding of the play in social research, but also the way in which Sims was able to graft a sizeable amount of social criticism onto a traditional melodrama, leaving its basic structure and conventions intact. While children are not a special feature of it, the piece is significant for this chapter since in its social purpose and technique it represents a model for two other plays with which Sims was associated in the 1880s which are both concerned with the question of juvenile street performers, *Jack in the Box* (1887) and *Master and Man* (1889).

Taken together, these two plays represent a transition in Sims's concerns from the social question as it had been defined earlier in the decade, not least in his own journalism, to an interest in specific types of abuse of which children were the victims. Nonetheless, the link between them and his earlier preoccupations is fairly clear in Sims's continuing sense of children as victims, expressed in the earlier articles as a sense of them as victims of social deprivation. Three of the thirteen chapters of *How the Poor Live* are in fact devoted to creating this sense, concerned as they are with the work of the School Board among the coming generation of the poor. The same idea is evident in his use of the numbers of parents reneging on or seeking remission of school fees as a gauge of the fluctuations in distress for his articles of 1886, *The Pinch of Poverty*.  

57. Ibid., p.20.
58. *Pall Mall Gazette* advertisements of the play suggest a run of about sixty nights, indicating an initial audience of about 76,800.
Sims wrote *Jack in the Box* in partnership with Clement Scott in 1885, the year of *The Last Chance*, though it was not produced in London until 1887. Scott was normally inclined to deprecate the intrusion of social concerns into melodrama. His hesitancy before even *The Lights o' London* has already been noted, while his opposition to Ibsen was later to become notorious. But he was nonetheless the author of strong words on the subject of Italian street musicians in a review in *The Theatre* some years before and the comparatively heavy treatment of some scenes in *Jack in the Box* suggest his hand rather than Sims's. Like *The Last Chance*, the play is an open protest against a social evil, with a conventional plot which in effect forms no more than a framework for its reformist content. At the same time, it was billed as a 'musical variety drama' and represents a probably

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60. The play was first performed in Brighton in 1885 and was reported by the *Era* to have been a considerable success in the provinces before coming to London. (*Era*, 12 February 1887, p.14.)


62. *Jack in the Box* was written against the exploitation of Italian child street entertainers. The Charity Organisation Society committee which investigated the practice reported that the system operated by means of pairs of men (padroni) who spent six months of each year in England and six in Italy, where they persuaded Neapolitan parents to part with their children on promise of payment after two years and of teaching the child to play a musical instrument by which he would later be able to earn his living. The children had to walk through France, performing in towns and villages on the way before embarking for England. On arrival, they were placed in depots in London, and from there distributed throughout the country in groups under other padroni. Their work consisted of soliciting charity in streets and pubs by playing or pretending to play musical instruments. Some would exhibit guinea pigs or white mice. All their earnings were taken by their padroni, of whom they stood in dread. Most of the children were boys, but lately girls had also been imported. These slept in the same room as the padroni, with predictable results. The children were afraid to betray the padroni and if questioned gave false names or said the padroni were their fathers or brothers. On occasion, they escaped and were advertised for in the papers like runaway slaves. Sometimes they were stolen from one group by another. Some prosecutions were brought, but more often the padroni were simply told to leave the town. ('Charity Organisation Society, Italian Children. Report of the Committee of the Charity Organisation Society Appointed to Enquire into the Employment of Italian Children for Mendicant and Immoral Purposes', London 1877).
unique attempt to combine melodrama and music hall, a complicating factor in assessing audience response to its child character. Fanny Leslie, the music hall star, played the juvenile hero Jack Merryweather and a performance of songs and acrobatics by her preceded the play, which was itself interspersed with further songs. The drama tells the story of a wealthy Australian, Richard Moreland, who has come to England in search of his long lost son, Edward. He is thrown off the track by the first villain, Roy Carlton, who himself plans to be Moreland's heir. It transpires that some years before, the wicked Italian padrone Carlo Toroni caused Edward to be suspected of murder. To avoid the police, Edward joined a troupe of strolling showpeople with whom he has remained until now. Carlton and Toroni contrive for a time to keep father and son apart with ploys which include the kidnapping of Edward's young daughter, but they are constantly outwitted by Jack Merryweather, described by the *Era*'s review as 'a ubiquitous young person in the show line', who rescues the girl. Carlton makes a last attempt to denounce Edward, but Jack exposes Toroni as the real murderer and all ends happily.

Described in this way the plot can be seen to have almost no intrinsic point of contact with the play's real concern, the denunciation of men like Toroni who lived by the exploitation of Italian children. This purpose is made clear from the first scene, in which Carlton is seen with a visitor. Toroni is announced:

BOLTON: Toroni! Why isn't that the fellow who was charged with cruelty to a little Italian boy? It was in all the papers.

CARLTON: The papers must have something to write about.

BOLTON: They say that his place is crammed full of organ grinders and Italian girls and performing children.

CARLTON: Well, he is coming, so till tomorrow goodbye.64

In the same scene, Jack Merryweather intrudes on Toroni and Carlton with a letter for Moreland, and immediately establishes a character which is larger and rather livelier than life in the style of the pantomime principal boy. The first child stereotype of the play, he

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is presented as the protagonist in accomplishing the play's social purpose. Seeing Toroni he exclaims:

JACK: So help me never, it's Signor Toroni.
TORONI: (turning) Who are you? Ah, why it's little Jack Merryweather (holds out hand).
JACK: No, thank you, Signor Toroni. I ain't got you on my visitin' list, as the duchess said when the chimney sweep called to leave his card.
CARLTON: You know this boy?
TORONI: Know little Jack in the box? Yes, I know him for as impudent a young rascal as there is in the profession.
CARLTON: The profession?
JACK: Yes, the profession. You ask at the country fairs if anybody knows Jack in the box, as mother calls me, and tell 'em not to speak all at once for fear they'd wake the baby. (Sings - 'Don't make a noise or else you'll wake the baby') I'm a hactor!

And when Toroni tries to force him to hand over Moreland's letter, Jack casts him in a dual role as the villain not only of the ostensible plot but also of the play's social theme:

JACK: Oh, that's your game is it? (tucking up sleeves etc.) You're a nice chap you are. Why don't you steal me as you do the Italian kids or offer mother twopence o' gin for me?

Toroni's villainy as the exploiter of little children is defined in greater detail in the following scene. He has been looking for Jack in the hope that he will lead him to Edward and has summoned to his aid an old Irish clown called Professor Sullivan who is in Toroni's power. Now, thinking he has seen Jack, he dismisses the old man:

TORONI: ... I shan't want you now; be back home by the time the children come in! That'll do. (exit R.)
PROF.: Be back by the time the children come in! Poor little devils, I know what that manes - if they don't bring in any money there's the horsewhip and they've got to go and rehearse their business in the den till they're dead bate and then go starvin' to bed. It makes me blood boil! The man that lays his hand upon a child except in the way o' kindness, I'd - begorra I'd like to break a whisky bottle over his head.

65. Ibid., Act I, Sc. i.
66. Ibid.
67. Ibid., Act I, Sc. ii.
By Act II, Sc.iii Jack, in disguise, has infiltrated into Toroni's den with the Professor's help by being recruited as one of the padrone's performing children. Once there he witnesses the ill-treatment of an Italian child who returns without any money: the second child stereotype of the play. In the ostensible plot, Toroni's villainy is defined by his behaviour to Edward and by the murder which, as it eventually becomes clear, is his work. But the murder is never shown on stage and the pivotal scene in which the padrone's villainy is given full rein is this one which concerns his behaviour to the children in his charge, not the crime for which in the time honoured fashion of melodrama he is at length brought to book. The child enters from the cellar in which he has been locked:

BOY: Oh, Signor, don't kill me, don't kill me.
TORONI: (cracking whip) Come here!
BOY: (falls on knees) Don't Signor, don't! Oh, I'm so tired and ill and I can't sing the song - I'll forget the words. My head is so bad, so bad.
TORONI: This is the second time you've come home at night without any money, you lazy young vagabond. Have you had anything to eat today?
BOY: No, Signor! And I'm so hungry, so very hungry.
TORONI: And you'll stop hungry till you sing that song without a mistake (cracks whip). Now begin. (Gives him hurdy gurdy.)
BOY: I'll try, Signor, indeed I will.
TORONI: (cracking whip) Begin then.
(BOY begins 'Santa Lucia' and breaks down, TORONI horse-whips him. BOY howls.)
JACK: (aside) The beast! I can't stand it - I shall bust!

Finally, when Toroni and Carlton try to have Edward arrested during Merryweather's show at the fairground, Jack and the Professor expose Toroni himself to the crowd as the murderer, but again his real crime is his maltreatment and exploitation of children:

TORONI: It is a lie - the man will escape.
JACK: It is no lie. Look at this man, you people, he is a cowardly Italian brute who steals children and thrashes them and starves them to dance.
CROWD: Shame! Down with the Italian.
PROF.: Settle him betwain ye.
(Throws him down the steps, big row, SAVOYARD [i.e. BOY] has run on.)

68. Ibid., Act II, Sc.iii.
JACK: See, here is one of his victims.

(Tears BOY's jacket off showing weals on his arms)

THAT's his work!

CROWD: Down with Toroni! Down with the kidnapper!

Whether or not Sims and Scott derived the information on which these scenes are based from the C.O.S. or from other sources, the play stands as a dramatisation of the Society's findings. Though rather different in style, it continues the trend of dramatised documentary demonstrated by The Last Chance and amounts to an appeal for social reform which is equally strong. But as well as the expression of such reformist sentiments within the framework of a traditional melodrama, it is interesting to note the child character types used in dramatising them. The passive, pathetic and suffering Savoyard is an example of the type of oppressed child long familiar in melodrama and exemplified by Jo, but is defined by the brutality shown him rather than by his poverty. Jack Merryweather, that prodigy of vitality, is a new and complementary type. As the play's chief protagonist, he represents a virtue both melodramatic in style and social in expression: he is, in other words, a melodramatic character adapted for social comment. He dominates the play in a way which anticipates the more purely theatrical child heroes of the late 1890s. To a large extent the nature of the character is derived from its sources in pantomime and music hall. Nonetheless it is interesting to find a child used in this way as the active agent of a virtue which is concerned not only with confounding a conventional melodramatic villainy but also with advancing the cause of reform in the world outside the theatre.

Jack in the Box seems to have run only a fortnight in London. The critics found fault with both the character of Jack Merryweather and with the brutality of the child beating scene. It is worth noting that this is unrelieved social criticism and lacks the vitality and

69. Ibid., Act III, Sc.iii.
70. See footnote 62.
71. The Era, for example, felt that 'Inhuman cruelty and physical torture are for the law to deal with, not the stage', and that, for her part, Fanny Leslie as Jack Merryweather 'overdoes the pert vulgarity of the part and forces its pathos'. (Era, 12 February 1887, p.14.)
humour of equivalent scenes of social comment in *The Lights o' London*. The poor reception in London of *Jack in the Box* may have influenced Sims's handling of the social questions in *Master and Man* (1889), the third of this series of plays, written in collaboration with Henry Pettitt. Like *Jack in the Box*, it was written against the exploitation of child street performers, in this case child acrobats.

The question of child acrobats, whether in the street or elsewhere, had been a subject of public debate for some years and various attempts had been made to deal with the problem by legislation. The Earl of Shaftesbury was instrumental in the introduction of Bills to regulate the employment of children as acrobats in 1872 and 1873. Both had failed, but instances of cruelty to child acrobats continued to receive wide publicity between 1873 and 1879, the year of the Children's Dangerous Performances Act. The Act prohibited the employment of children under fourteen in any performance deemed dangerous by the Court, but lax administration rendered it a dead letter. Shaftesbury raised the matter again in 1883, quoting further examples of cruelty resulting from the lack of effective legislation, but nothing was done.

In reviving the question in 1889, when the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act was passed, Sims and Pettitt followed much the same pattern, with some significant differences, that Sims had followed with Scott in writing *Jack in the Box*. Once again there was a conventional melodramatic plot of attempted seduction, false imprisonment and so on, associated with a strong sub-theme, in this case through the part played by little Johnny, child of the hero and heroine, Jack and Hester Walton. The villain has Johnny kidnapped and handed over to a pair of unscrupulous street acrobats, Jim and Lee. They starve and beat him and force him to perform beyond his strength. His sad plight and that of the other child acrobats is spelt out when he meets his father by accident in a pub. Neither knows of the other's relationship to him, but they become friends all the same. Johnny tells Jack he does not always get enough to eat, and that when he cannot stand on his head long enough all he is given is 'stick pie':

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JACK: Stick pie - what's that?
JOHNNY: Why, a beating!73

Jack shares his meal with the boy before Jim and Lee take him away to perform outside a school. Having gathered a crowd, Lee introduces the act, presenting himself as Johnny's father:

LEE: ... Ladies and gentlemen.... This here is my boy Johnny, and he's going to do a spring and jump on to my shoulders, and then turn a double somersault on to the ground.
CROWD: And what are you going to do y'self?
LEE: Why, take the money!
OMNES: Ha! ha! ha!
LEE: Now then, Johnny - one - two - three (Bus: BOY looks round dazed, tries to pull himself together - runs, and falls exhausted) What the devil are you a'doin' - It's all right, ladies and gentlemen - it's only the boy's hanky-panky - just a bit of play actin' as we chucks in. (aside, to BOY) Do it - or I'll rope's end you when we get away.74

Jack now enters, seeing Johnny attempt the feat again and fail so that Lee strikes him. Jack knocks the villain down and carries the boy to a seat. Lee demands to know what right Jack has to interfere between him and his 'son'.

JACK: By the right every man has to protect a helpless child from a coward and a brute.75

The main burden of social commentary in Master and Man is carried by the lengthy scene in Act IV in which little Johnny is forced to perform by Jim and Lee. The need to preserve the basic melodrama structure conflicts to some extent here with the play's avowedly reformist purposes, if only in the length of the scene, which as the Era reviewer pointed out is longer than demanded by the comparatively minor role played by Johnny in the main plot.76 All the same the scene serves a real dramatic purpose, following more or less naturally

73. G.R. Sims and H. Pettitt, Master and Man, (1889) Act IV.
74. Ibid.
75. Ibid. Discussion of the rights of parents over children was a continuing theme throughout the debates on the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act (see discussion of this in, for example Pinchbeck and Hewitt, op. cit., pp.385, 622-30, and Behlmer, op. cit., esp. p.284).
76. Era, 21 December 1889, p.16.
from the kidnapping of the boy and helping to prepare for the reuniting of the Walton family. At the same time the characterisation of the villain, Carlton, separate from the acrobats Jim and Lee, avoids the difficulty which weakens Jack in the Box of having one character as the villain in two aspects of the play which are essentially distinct. Thus in at least two ways Master and Man shows a much closer integration of the theme of social protest with its melodrama framework than is the case with the earlier play where the sub-theme tends to dominate the traditional structure. This is probably one reason for the relatively greater success of Master and Man in the West End. It ran for 125 performances at the Princess's where it was seen by 131,000 people.

Another central difference between the two plays is the firmly non-proletarian nature of the main characters in Master and Man. Though she is seen as a governess in Act I this makes little real difference to the characterisation of Hester, who, as the type of frustrated motherhood sounds much like, for example, her predecessors Alice in Mankind (1881) and Nan in Alone in London (1885):

HESTER: I cannot be calm, I cannot rest. All day I can think of nothing else, and when in the stillness of the night I am forced to wait till daylight comes, and worn out and wearied I fall asleep, I start and wake from my dream - thinking I have his little arms around my neck - his sweet face pillowed on my breast - and feeling his warm kisses on my lips. Where can he be?

Similarly, social status is irrelevant to the character of Jack, the melodrama hero wrongfully imprisoned whose name is cleared at the last. But for little Johnny social status dictates not only a different character from that of the waifs examined earlier in this thesis but also the nature of the protest he is used to make.

In particular such characterisation leads to an insistence on family virtues and the relationship between parents and children. Thus in Act IV when Jack shares his meagre meal with Johnny the poignancy of the situation in which father and son are brought together ignorant of each other's identity is exploited to the full. At the same time

77. Sims and Pettitt, op. cit., Act IV.
the scene evokes the golden memory of the family both have lost:

JACK: Might I enquire the name of my guest?
JOHNNY: Johnny, sir.
JACK: Johnny - why, I've a little boy named Johnny!
JOHNNY: We seem to be regular friends all at once, don't we?
JACK: Yes!
JOHNNY: Please, Mr. Friend - is your little boy anything like me?
JACK: (looking at him) Like you? I have not seen his face since he was a child but I know he has bright fair hair like yours. Like you? I hope so my boy, for then he will have a sweet and gentle face - and beautiful blue loving eyes like his mother's.
JOHNNY: My mamma has beautiful blue eyes.
JACK: Your Mamma?
JOHNNY: Yes!
JACK: And is she like your father - does she train you with stick-pie?
JOHNNY: Oh, no! She is always kind and loving, and she always told me that my father had a kind and loving heart, too, and taught me to pray for him - and told me that one day he would come back, and then we should all be happy again - and then she would cry - and I would put my arms round her neck and kiss her tears away.
JACK: Dear little fellow - will you kiss me?
JOHNNY: Why, of course I will!78

Johnny's pure diction and his rightful place at the centre of a secure and loving family mean that he cannot be used as Sims used street arabs in interludes in plays both before and after Master and Man as the protagonist in a dramatised documentary of working class life. He therefore lacks the class representativeness possessed by such characters and serves only to dramatise the particular social evil represented by the cruel exploitation of child acrobats.

The modest success of the three plays tends to obscure their importance as dramatised journalism. Taken together, they represent the second phase in the development of Sims's urban melodrama which saw an attempt to dramatise social problems more overtly and with greater particularity than before, even at the expense of the melodrama form, in plays timed to coincide with debate on contemporary social questions, together with an evolving concern with children rather than

78. Ibid.
poverty. The child stereotypes involved reflect this more direct approach to social reform. The waif still appears as the passive, suffering victim of social abuses, but in Jack Merryweather there is also an anticipation of the more vital child characters of the late 1890s, used here in directly confronting the problem of child exploitation. And the suffering appropriate to little Johnny in Master and Man requires a third stereotype, one stripped of Jack Merryweather's class characteristics and defined in more middle class terms, appropriate to his more passive, pathetic role. At the same time Johnny's less dominant style facilitates a closer integration of the play's social concerns with the main plot, though its reformist purpose remains clear.

How far audiences responded to the plays as social comment and how far they took them purely as melodrama is difficult to say, though the question is a significant one since the answer to it would suggest the extent to which the child characters portrayed were seen purely as melodrama types and how far they were understood as representing a social problem in real life. For their part, the critics tended either to ignore the plays as social criticism or to attack their social content. William Archer, judging as always in purely theatrical rather than social terms, regretted Sims's retreat from the sharp observation of everyday life which had distinguished The Lights o' London as a reversion to convention. Thus The Last Chance showed 'a sad falling off'. The 'fresh and genial episodes had almost disappeared, the novel and keenly observed characters had vanished entirely'.79 The Era reviewer, on the other hand, in dealing with both Jack in the Box and Master and Man, singled out for hostile criticism those scenes which dramatised the social evils around which the plays are constructed. Of the scene in Jack in the Box in which Toroni beats the child for failing to bring back money, the Era declared:

Inhuman cruelty and physical torture are for the law to deal with, not the stage. It is not the playwright's business to usurp the functions of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.80

Such criticism suggests that there were limits to the social criticism possible in melodrama, while pointing to the play's connection with the agitation leading to the 1889 Act.

Sims and his co-author were more circumspect two years later in the relevant scene in *Master and Man*, perhaps with this criticism in mind. Nonetheless, after praising the play in traditional terms for its appeal to the honest, homely people who like to see the plotting and the passions, the pathos and the humour, the vices and the virtues, - their own world transferred with a bold hand to a broad canvas the *Era*'s reviewer was still unimpressed by social criticism on the stage and found he could

spare the acrobatic business, and a good deal of the talk of the child might be cut away to the advantage of the play and the relief of the audience. 81

*Master and Man* was Sims's last essay in sustained social criticism through the theatre, but it was not his last attempt to use the stage to dramatise his views on social questions involving children. The highly popular 82 *London Day by Day*, also produced in 1889 at the Adelphi is, like *The Lights o' London*, a conventional drama, taken up largely with the story of how Violet Chester comes into her inheritance and how her father is cleared of a false charge. In a return to his earlier method, however, Sims includes in it a short scene which makes an interesting comparison with the impassioned plea in *Master and Man* against child acrobats. In *London Day by Day* the subject is child labour. In a 'realistic street scene' an old gentleman meets young Jack the crossing sweeper:

OLD GENT.: (to Jack the crossing sweeper) Do you mean to say you've had nothing to eat today?
JACK: I ain't had nothing in my mouth but the handle of my broom. That's cheap, but it ain't very fillin'.


82. *London Day by Day* attracted an estimated 200,000 people to its first run.
OLD GENT.: Shocking! It's terrible that children should be allowed out in the street at this hour of the night. There will soon be a law, I hope, to prevent it.

JACK: (following him) Oh, I suppose you're one of those coves that's always passin' Hacks o' Parliament - to prevent poor folks earning their living. Here (shouting after GENT.) the lor makes me go to school all day so I can't earn nothing then. If the lor's going to make me go to bed all evening, 'ow do you think I'm goin' to live?83

The question of child labour was thus a different one from that of the exploitation of child acrobats and hinged perhaps less on whether children should or should not work than on whom they should be able to work for. Indeed, given the extent of urban poverty, the problem of how far the state should interfere with children earning or helping to earn their own living was one which exercised many minds.

The liveliness of Jack the crossing sweeper, like that of Jack Merryweather in Jack in the Box, looks forward to the more vital and humorous street children of melodrama in the 1890s. At the same time, London Day by Day marked the last occasion that Sims sought through the theatre to urge reform in the social condition of children, and his return to the interlude scene as a vehicle for social commentary shows his retreat from the more singleminded concern with social questions evident in The Last Chance, Jack in the Box and Master and Man.

Nonetheless, these were important experiments in dramatised documentary within the limits set by traditional melodrama. While the relative novelty of this kind of realism was probably a cause of their indifferent success, they yet represent an impressively ambitious attempt by a writer peculiarly atune to contemporary

popular cultural concerns to locate in specific social abuses the generalised suffering enacted by children in earlier urban melodramas like *Jo, The Two Orphans* and *Nicholas Nickleby*. In this context, they can be seen as impressively comprehensive attempts to dramatise the problems of real life, as opposed to the conventional situations more common in such plays, in terms of the moral categories and stereotypes offered by popular melodrama. The central position of children in two of these three plays therefore suggests something of the way in which their social condition could be apprehended within the limits presented by melodrama's peculiar conventions which, as Louis James suggests, were also conventions which governed popular perceptions of life outside the theatre.

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84. For Sims this seems to have marked the beginning of an important shift, leading eventually to a fatalistic acceptance of poverty which saw the only possibility for effective social reform in the saving of children from the degradation in which their elders were irretrievably sunk. Such a view underlay his 1907 campaign to have clauses inserted in the Children Act passed the following year banning children from public houses. Where in *How the Poor Live* he pointed to the desperate living conditions of the poor and to the threat they seemed to pose to social and political institutions, he now concerned himself with the high rate of infant mortality and the threat it seemed to pose to the nation and the race. These high rates of infant mortality, he argued, were not directly related to poverty: We can leave poverty and environment and the housing question out of the argument, for I shall have written in vain if I have not proved that poverty and housing conditions are not largely responsible for the evil. The home conditions are in most cases of child neglect vile, but they are of the parents's own making. We have therefore to recognise the dominant fact that where children are cruelly neglected there is in ninety per cent of the cases a history of habitual intemperance in one or both parents. (*The Black Stain*, London 1907, pp.155-56).

Children, he argued, must therefore be saved, not from poverty, but from a 'degenerate motherhood' ('The Cry of the Children', sixth article, *Tribune*, 21 February 1907, p.6) in causing whose condition drink played a major role, not only by corrupting their intelligence but also by causing them to neglect their maternal responsibilities, particularly in breast feeding. In this way, Sims moved from a sense of children as the exemplars of poverty to one of their importance for the race and the nation as a whole, independent of the social question.
As an anonymous 'workman's biography' declared of Sims in the early 1890s, 'He as chucked up the radikle bisness same as me an' piches into the goverment worse than wat the toryes does'. The observation underlines a retreat from social issues in Sims's West End dramas (though not in his journalism) after 1889, and a new emphasis in his plays on domestic themes. As part of this the child came to play an important role in a number of Sims's plays both as a focus of sentiment through a development of the traditional theme of the mother's search for her child and through a partial incorporation in the child of the dramatic functions, and many of the stereotyped characteristics, of the hero and the comic man. These will be discussed here in detail as symptomatic of a general trend in melodrama which will be illustrated by reference to plays by other writers.

Master and Man (1889) was the last of Sims's overtly reformist plays and London Day by Day (also 1889) was the last play in which he used the technique pioneered in The Lights o' London (1881) of interpolating social comment in the drama through the mouth of a child in an interlude scene. His movement away from social concerns was clear by 1891 with the production of The Trumpet Call in which a realistic doss-house scene adds a touch of the picturesque without making any reformist point at all. Instead, there is a scene of parenthood bereft as brave Cuthbert Cuthbertson, honour bound to join the army and hide himself from his wife and family, meets his little son and is forced to pretend to be a stranger:

1. 'Workman's Biography' of G.R. Sims, Scrapbook (Caricatures), p.129, Sims papers, Manchester University. No source, author or date is given, but internal evidence places it in the early 1890s.
CHILD: Goodbye, Mr. Soldier.

CUTHBERT: Goodbye, my little man (putting his hand on his head, aside and sobbing) My child, my little child.²

Thus the child, used in so many of Sims's earlier plays as a symbol of poverty, now appears in a genteel version of the mother and child, representing not the privations and humour of working class life, but the special kind of domestic and family respectability which Cuthbert has lost. This use of the child was of course not new. Cuthbert's little son performs much the same role as, for example, the child in Henry Arthur Jones's The Silver King (1881), or even Willie Carlyle in East Lynne (1874), the sentimental symbol of family values. But in the context of Sims's earlier preoccupations this use of a child signifies the beginning of a movement away from social concerns to more domestic themes.

At the same time, depictions of proletarian life in Sims's plays in which poverty had been the most prominent feature now began to stress working class humour and vitality, though still using the child as a representative figure. Thus the exchange in London Day by Day between the old gentleman and Jack the crossing sweeper over the rights and wrongs of child labour finds a parallel in a similar exchange in The Black Domino (1893), in which an interest in social questions has been replaced by cheeky humour which serves, like Jo's poverty in earlier years, to define the boy's social status, now celebrated rather than regretted. A 'very ikey boy' is brought into a police station for stealing an old gentleman's watch. His first words are reminiscent of Jack Merryweather in Jack in the Box (1887):

(Enter POLICEMAN with a very ikey BOY, OLD GENTLEMAN following)

BOY: (shouting back) Allright Bill, tell mother to leave my supper on the 'ob - I may be late! (Door shuts - to POLICEMAN) Oh, here I say, just stop him and ask him to tell mother to put a sorcer over the beer mug so it don't flat!

POLICEMAN: You'll go flat if you don't look out!

² G.R. Sims and Henry Pettitt, The Trumpet Call (1891), Act II.
BOY: (to INSPECTOR) Good evening! (OLD GENTLEMAN takes his hat off) Keep your hat on - it's werry draughty here! ³

In later plays the social content of Sims's plays became at most vestigial. Faint signs of his old concerns appear in Two Little Vagabonds (1896), for example, but they are not developed. Thus the heroic child Dick, overcome with gratitude when the heroine refuses to have him charged with stealing her purse, repents of his deed and tells her:

DICK: (restraining his emotion with difficulty) You mustn't think it's my fault that I ain't honest. I haven't been taught anything else. If I had a trade I wouldn't steal. ⁴

A more fully developed, and more ironic, comment on social questions is provided by the Gaffer, the play's comic villain, seeking to explain to his crony how it is that he is wearing clerical dress:

GAFFER: ... just now I'm a 'Converted Gambler' travelling with tracks [tracts], and collecting subscriptions for the Sericity for the Total Suppression of Skittle Alleys and Bagatelle Boards in Public 'Ouses and all other forms o' immorality among the workin' classes.

DIDO: Go on! - You never get no subscriptions, do you?
GAFFER: No, I don't - but my respectable appearance, my black bag and (taking out book) the list of subscribers to the Sericity which I got o' the cove as cleared the waste paper basket at one of the offices, gives me a chance of gettin' into lots o' respectable 'ouses, and having a look at the front gardens and piping of the window fastenings with a h'eye to business. ⁵

The idea of industrial training for waifs is not developed beyond Dick's one reference to it, and Sims's satire of the more quixotic reform movements is, if anything, more an argument against misguided interference with the working classes' way of life than a plea for social reform. These are virtually the only times social questions are raised in the play.

4. G.R. Sims and Arthur Shirley, Two Little Vagabonds (1896), Act II.
In the development of Sims's concerns, *The Black Domino* marked the abandonment of both his earlier interest in social questions and of urban melodrama itself in the West End. Sims's retreat from social issues is consistent with indications of a similar trend in popular politics cited by Gareth Stedman Jones in support of his argument for a decline in popular radicalism between 1870 and 1900. Stedman Jones's evidence suggests that this decline was particularly marked between the 1880s and the 1890s. Thus he points to the fading of the Metropolitan Radical Federation between the 1880s and the early 1890s, the fall in circulation and influence of the *Star* newspaper between its foundation in 1889 and the late 1890s, the replacement of political and educational activities in workmen's clubs by music hall entertainments between the mid-1880s and the early 1890s, the relative failure of the Social Democratic Federation after the early 1890s to match the membership achieved by the London Republican Clubs in the early 1870s, and the decline of radicalism within the SDF itself, notably between 1887 and 1902. Sims's abandonment of urban melodrama is likewise consistent with audience trends apparent in the success of only three urban dramas in the West End during the 1890s compared to eight in the 1880s.

The retreat from social issues and from urban drama apparent in Sims's plays during the 1890s is likewise consistent with the development of what Stedman Jones has referred to as a popular culture.

7. Ibid., p.481.
8. These were: *The Lights o' London* (1881), *Taken from Life* (1881), *Alone in London* (1885), *Hoodman Blind* (1885), *Shadows of a Great City* (1885), *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* (1888), *London Day by Day* (1889) and *A Man's Shadow* (1889), in the 1880s, and *A Woman's Revenge* (1893), *Two Little Vagabonds* (1896), and *How London Lives* (1897), in the 1890s. This trend was not reflected in the minor theatres, where urban dramas remained popular (see Frances Fleetwood, *Conquest: the Story of a Theatre Family*, London 1953, pp.261-68, 'Plays produced at the Surrey' [1881 onwards]). The growing divergence between the minor theatres and the West End in this respect may have been due to the declining importance in the minor theatre audiences of those clerks and artisans whose migration to the suburbs was a feature of the period. Such groups were likely to have transferred their patronage to the West End.
'oriented towards the family and the home' under the impetus of growing suburbanisation and rising real wages, which freed wives of skilled men from the need to work outside the home and encouraged its development as the centre of leisure activities.

Some indication of Sims's adjustment to a cultural shift of this kind is evident in his elaboration of the themes of family and parenthood in The City of Pleasure, adapted from a French original and produced in 1895.

The plot of The City of Pleasure is a complicated one, but it depends to a greater extent even than The Trumpet Call on the pathos of frustrated parental love. The central relationship is that between Jean Marras and his daughter Zelie. Its tone is set in the prologue, in which Marras is wrongly convicted of the murder of his worthless first wife. Zelie, eight years old, is brought in to give evidence at his trial and the judge allows the distracted father the words of farewell to her which dominate the scene and provide the emotional drive for the rest of the play:

JEAN: Come, my darling, come to your father: kiss me.
ZELIE: Oh, father! father! (runs to him)
(He lifts her up and stands her on the COUNSEL's bench in front of him and embraces her fervently)
Oh, you are crying! Are they going to hurt you?
JEAN: No, dear, they are not going to hurt me.
ZELIE: Then you will come home?
JEAN: Yes, soon, dear.
ZELIE: Oh, but I want you to come now. Come with me - do!
JEAN: No. Not now - I can't! But soon, I promise you.
ZELIE: (crying) You always told me not to tell stories, but you are telling me one now when you say you are coming home. You are looking at me as if you would never come home again.
JUDGE: This scene is most painful ...

9. Stedman Jones, 'Working Class Culture', op. cit., p.485. This new domestic ideal was of course not peculiar to the clerks and artisans (see J.A. Banks, Prosperity and Parenthood, London 1954).

10. As noted in Chapter 2, half a million people left for the suburbs between 1881 and 1901, of whom a considerable proportion were better off workmen and clerks (see Royal Commission on London traffic, 1906, vol. III, p.127: Appendix 6, Table 3, and Report of the Select Committee on artisans' and labourers' dwellings improvement, 1882, p.x.)

11. See graph, Appendix 4.


This is in fact the only scene in the play which involves a child, but the idea of the bond between parent and child which it establishes becomes the theme and central motivation of the play. Thus Marras, sentenced to twenty years imprisonment on New Caledonia, is sustained, as he tells the villain, Charles, only by the memory of his daughter:

Oh - God - man, picture it day after day, week after week, month after month in that hideous place, that hell on earth, surrounded by beasts not men. I could hear her - as on the day I was sentenced - say, 'You'll come home to me again, Daddy dear!' I could feel her sweet kisses pressed upon my lips till it almost drove me mad.14

Driven by such thoughts he escapes and returns to Paris to find his daughter. An extra twist is added when he stays at a tavern run by Zelie, now eighteen. At first ignorant of his identity, she attempts to steal his money to pay off her creditors. Marras recognises her, rejects her as a thief and goes off in search of his other daughter, Marion. Zelie at length proves her devotion both to him and to her half-sister Marion when she is stabbed by a villain in Marras's place as she and her father are rescuing Marion.

The relationship between Marras and Zelie is balanced in the play by the maternal love shown by another character, Madame Margemont. She is in fact Marras's second wife and the mother of Marion. After Marras's conviction she marries his lawyer Margemont and on Marion's birth not long after the trial Margemont tells the mother the child is dead and gives her away so as not to have his wife reminded of Marras. When their own daughter Genevieve is killed in an accident in the Alps Madame Margemont begins to pine away. Margemont seeks out Marion who is Genevieve's double, adopts her and has her impersonate the dead girl so that Madame Margemont is revived by the belief that her daughter is restored to her. Before long, however, she discovers the deception and is at first furious, before the sacred bond of motherhood is re-established:

MARION: Ah no! Listen - think what it was to me to hear for the first time the word spoken

tenderly - lovingly as you spoke it.

MADAME: What do you mean?

MARION: I mean that I - abandoned, robbed of every­thing - of name, of care, of love, through you I was able to believe for one instant, for one minute that I had a mother -

MADAME: (stopping abruptly) I ought to repulse you - drive you away, and yet, I cannot tell why, your words move my heart. You who bear the name and face of my daughter, Genevieve, and yet are not - who are you? Who are you?

MARION: (on her knees) I am your other daughter - Marie! (sic)

MADAME: Marie - Marie! (hand to head)

MARION: Yes - mother!15

As if to reinforce the point, the magic of motherhood is in­volved at a different point when Zelie discovers where the villain Charles has hidden Marion by telling Charles's spurned mistress how Zelie and Marion comforted her mother as she lay dying of grief after the mistress, La Sauterelle, had abandoned her.

Despite Sims's emphasis of the parenthood theme in The City of Pleasure, however, the more domestically-oriented popular culture of the 1890s was more successfully expressed, at least in melodrama, in a growing centrality of child roles, reflected in both a greater emphasis on the idea of a search for a mother, and an increase in the importance of the heroic child in enacting melodramatic situations. Insisting as it does on the sanctity of the parent-child relation­ship, The City of Pleasure presents it, in traditional fashion, largely from the parent's viewpoint, and while Zelie is wounded protecting Marras at the end of the play, the scene loses dramatic impact because she is no longer a child. Sims's success with his play of the following year, Two Little Vagabonds, suggests that the relative failure of The City of Pleasure may well have resulted from a lack of child roles in both representations of domestic life and scenes of sensational action.

These are major points of contrast between the two plays. Run­ning as it did for 275 performances before an estimated audience of 289,000, Two Little Vagabonds was one of the last great West End melodramas. As a child-centred play, moreover, it also represents the

15. Ibid., Act III, Sc.i.
high water mark of the melodrama child in the West End. The nature of its child roles also means that examination of the two themes in the developing centrality of children in melodrama in the 1890s, those of motherhood and the child hero, is best pursued through a discussion of the character of these roles in the context of their antecedents, which shows Two Little Vagabonds as representing a peak in the increasingly central roles of child characters in melodrama during these years.

In outline, though less in detail, the adventures of Dick and Wally in Two Little Vagabonds resemble those of Joe and Jim in Saved from the Streets. Barbara Thornton's husband intercepts a letter to her from an old flame, from which he wrongly concludes that their son is not his. In a fit of anger he gives the baby away to the Gaffer, a burglar and confidence trickster whom he finds robbing the house. The Gaffer and his consort Biddy are next seen seven years later with two boys, the Thorntons' son Dick, sturdy and brave, and Wally, sickly and frail, the son of the Gaffer's niece. Against their better natures, both are trained as thieves, but are as brothers, with Dick as Wally's protector. The boys come across Barbara, still searching for her child, and are caught stealing her purse, but she, though ignorant of their identities, refuses to press charges and gives them her London address. The boys want a better life than stealing and decide to run away from the Gaffer. Dick walks to London, but Wally is too weak for the journey and has to stay with

16. 'It was an amazing play', wrote Sydney Fairbrother, who played Wally.

I have never known such floods of tears and handkerchiefs were on hire at a penny each for the evening.... The number of sample bottles of medicine that were sent round to me to cure my cough would have filled a chemist's shop.

(Sydney Fairbrother, Through an Old Stage Door, London 1937, p.121.)

She and Kate Tyndall drew warm reviews for their performances as Wally and Dick even from critics not much impressed with the play as a whole (see for example The Theatre, 1 November 1896, p.4). One of the many ordinary patrons whose admiration they won was Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll), who sent both women a copy of Alice in Wonderland in the belief that they were both children (Fairbrother, op. cit., p.122). Sydney Fairbrother also played Wally with a stock company at the New Pavilion where the play ran for three months, an impressive run for a minor theatre (ibid., p.127).
the Gaffer until he can find a way to follow. Meanwhile, Barbara meets Thornton again, but will not forgive him for giving away their son. Thornton finds the Gaffer and pays him £300 to return the boy. Since Dick has run off, Thornton is given Wally instead, and Barbara accepts the boy as her own and hires a nurse to care for him. It happens that the nurse attended him in hospital years ago, and so it emerges that he is not the Thorntons' son after all. Dick has meanwhile found his way to the Thorntons' house, and after Wally invites him to stay, is himself shown to be the Thorntons' son, though to save his feelings Wally is told they are brothers. Barbara therefore has her child, but the Gaffer still has a packet of Barbara's letters, obtained by nefarious means, which were written before her marriage but which could be used to impugn her virtue in her husband's eyes. Dick leaves to steal them back from the Gaffer as Thornton sets off to revenge himself on the Gaffer for giving him the wrong child. Thornton is captured, but Dick succeeds in taking the letters and frees him. Thornton is wounded in the escape but they make their getaway through a skylight. Act V is largely given over to Wally's lingering death from wounds incurred during another attempt by the Gaffer to kidnap Dick.  

The play is essentially a combination of compromises. Barbara's seven-year search for her child, reminiscent of Mankind, the escape of Dick and Thornton through the skylight, and the wounding of Wally, are all in the tradition of sensational melodrama. They are combined with sentimental themes associated with children, not only the traditional passive, suffering child and his inevitable death scene, but also the more recent idea of the son in search of a mother, then

17. The significant parts of Two Little Vagabonds are almost certainly Sims's work. Shirley showed little interest in children in plays written by himself alone. The wit and vigour of the characters of the boys and the Gaffer and the Biddy, and the dexterity in the use of sub-plots shown in Two Little Vagabonds are likewise characteristic of Sims but not of Shirley, whose earlier plays are comparatively awkwardly written and conventional. It is likely that Shirley was responsible in Two Little Vagabonds for the conventional plot hinging on Barbara and Thornton, while Sims handled the boys and the character parts. This is supported by Sydney Fairbrother, who ascribes her success in the role of Wally to Sims's careful coaching in 'the ins and outs of Cockney character', (Fairbrother, op. cit., p.120) indicating his particular interest in the part.
being explored by J.M. Barrie and others before more socially elevated audiences. At the same time, Sims balances traditional themes and situations with the contemporary interest in childhood not, as in earlier plays, by references to social problems, but by the elevation of children, previously secondary characters in the drama, to central roles in a traditional play. A balance between the topical and the traditional is apparent also in the use of child characters who both refer back to older, passive stereotypes, and, especially in Dick, incorporate a more contemporary interest in children's vitality and vigour by taking on many of the attributes of the melodrama hero.

Like Saved from the Streets, Two Little Vagabonds owes much to The Two Orphans, a point noted by The Times's reviewer. From the earlier play came both the idea of the stronger waif protecting the weaker, and, to some extent, the picaresque notion of the children adrift on the world. Beyond this adroit use of the models offered by The Two Orphans, however, Sims refers most clearly to past stereotypes of children in Two Little Vagabonds through the character of Wally, who in one of his aspects represents an especially full embodiment of the suffering waif. As the weaker of the two children, therefore, he is the equivalent of Jim in Saved from the Streets, Conquest's play of 1886. There are, however, significant differences between the two. Jim is a comparatively colourless character. Defined by his helplessness, he bears much the same relation to his stronger companion Joe as the child does to the mother in the traditional representation of the mother and child in poverty. Essentially, he is a sentimental prop for the character of Joe in the same way as Kit in Hoodman Blind is a prop to Nancy. Wally, however, is a more complex creation, showing much the same passivity as Jim, but in a way which demonstrates his derivation from more than one child stereotype. Wally in fact is something of a composite figure, revealing different characteristics, drawn from different past and present models, at different stages in the play.

When he is first seen, with Dick in the Gaffer's camp, he has something of the air of Jo, with his cough and air of general wretched-

ness, and something also of Smike in Halliday's adaptation of *Nicholas Nickleby* (1875), as the waif exploited by villains.

Later in the play, when Wally has been taken as the Thorntons' son, efforts are made to transform him from a waif into something more appropriate to his new station. The stage directions for the beginning of Act III describe him thus:

> Wally discovered, dressed as a young gentleman - Fauntleroy costume - looking at big picture book ...

But Wally proves difficult to change, as when Barbara tries yet again to correct his grammar:

> WALLY: What! have I put my foot in it again! Don't worry, mother, you'll see how nicely I shall talk soon. I mean to try and be a reg'lar little toff, so that you shan't be ashamed of me.

Wally's failure to conform to the middle class stereotype appropriate to his supposed parentage prepares the audience for the revelation that he is not the Thorntons' son, since in melodrama birth is all. The Fauntleroy image is a convenient shorthand for the middle class characteristics he should have had as the Thorntons' son, no matter what the environment in which he had found himself until now. In effect, what Sims does here is the reverse of a common theme in melodrama, the idea that the higher virtues resulting from a child's higher social origins would always mark him out regardless of his present circumstances. Examples of this can be found both before and after the appearance of *Two Little Vagabonds* in 1896.

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19. Sims and Shirley, *op. cit.*, Act III.

20. Ibid.

21. Thus George, in *The Outcast Poor* (1884), really the son of Colonel Bell but exchanged at birth with the son of his nurse, remains honest though raised in a family of thieves, and bravely defends the blind girl Amy against Cecil, the usurper brought up as the Colonel's son in his place. And in *When Darkness Falls; or, The Cry of the Children* (1903), Harry, the son of the honest army officer Captain Montrevor but stolen away and raised by villains, remains honest while the villain's son becomes a pickpocket, and in later scenes in South Africa, 'stoutly refuses to fight for the Boers, and betray his parentage by his innate refinement of manner'. (*Era*, 23 May 1903, p.12.) Again, in *A Human Terror* (1903) Prince Rudolph, whose little girl Marie was given to the human beast, Tournemaine, years ago by her wicked mother, at last
In this case, the manipulation of stereotypes is directed to showing that Wally, in preparation for later events, should continue to be seen as a Cockney waif, despite his new surroundings, because his origins are shown to be humble. His ineradicable otherness from the Thorntons is also significant for the theme which dominates Sims's treatment of the death scene.

After the revelation that he is not the Thorntons' son, Wally, wounded during an attempt to kidnap Dick, enters on a death scene whose model, given the motherhood theme, is as much to be found in East Lynne as in waif plays like Jo or Nicholas Nickleby. Wally is therefore sentimentalised as much for his motherlessness as for being a homeless, hungry waif, and the process purifies his vowel sounds as Barbara's lessons could not do, making him as much akin to Willie Carlyle as to Jo:

WALLY: Don't cry, Dick - or any of you - for I am going to a better place - where my cough won't trouble me - The nurse has told me all about it - everybody's happy and nobody's poor, nor cold, nor friendless, like we were so often, Dick - and I shall find my mother - my real mother! Goodbye, Dick - Goodbye, goodbye, lady! - Don't forget poor Wally, who was your little son for a - for a - week!

DICK: (sobbing) Wally - my brother!

BARBARA: (kneeling) O, God! receive this innocent child into thy arms! 22

The motherhood theme in Two Little Vagabonds, however, has two aspects. Like Mankind and Saved from the Streets it is basically concerned with a distraught and suffering mother's recovery of her lost child, and up to a point this is treated by Sims in traditional style. Thus when Thornton begs Barbara's forgiveness for giving

(footnote continued): finds her working in a drink shop. He removes the child, 'who, strangely enough, is a pretty, neatly dressed girl with a refined manner'. (Era, 14 March 1903, p.12.) Nor was this a convention solely of melodrama. Vera Berringer's Cedric Errol, in Frances Hodgson Burnett's 'authorised version' of Little Lord Fauntleroy (1888) was criticised by the Era as 'speaking English with the upper-class pronunciation which calls matter "mattah" and omits the "r" from "very", tricks from which the "young barbarians" of New York are usually free'. (Era, 19 May 1888, p.9.) The convention suggests more a sense of the immutability of class than any idea of heredity. Social Darwinism does not seem to have been an influence on melodrama.

22. Sims and Shirley, op. cit., Act V.
away her son, she denounces him in familiar terms:

BARBARA: You took him in your arms, he clasped his little hands around your neck - his little arms - and you unloosed them to give him to a thief!23

Her speech recalls, among many others, Alice's in Conquest's *Mankind*, grieving over the loss of her child Jessie, taken from her by her wicked husband Edmund:

ALICE: Ah! does he know - can he even think of the terrible suffering he has inflicted on me, how I yearn to place my longing arms round my little darling's neck and cover her with kisses.24

Similarly, the idea of the deprived mother mistakenly taking the wrong child as her own reinforces the traditional notion of the mother's sacred relationship with her offspring. As Barbara tells Thornton when she discovers that Wally is not her child:

BARBARA: It is you who have inflicted this new torture on me! For a whole week I have lavished my kisses and my caresses on a child that is not mine! This poor lad who thinks I am his mother will suffer through you as well, for he must be un-deceived! What are other people's children to me? I want mine - mine - mine!25

At this point, however, the resemblance of *Two Little Vagabonds* to such earlier models ends, since the situation is here dramatised from the point of view, not of the mother, but of the child. The mother's search for her child thus becomes the son's search for a mother.

This was an idea which had been presented to West End audiences at least as early as 1891, in J.M. Barrie and H.B. Marriott-Watson's *Richard Savage*, about a long lost son, the product of his mother's unwise youth, who returns to her and dies after finding himself unwanted. It was a new theme in melodrama, but one which reflects the

23. Ibid., Act II.
25. Sims and Shirley, _op. cit._, Act III.
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23. Ibid., Act II.
24. G. Conquest, Mankind (1881), Act I.
25. Sims and Shirley, op. cit., Act III.
increasing centrality of the melodrama child while at the same time providing a means of expressing the sentimentality which traditionally attached to him. Another way in which the shift of emphasis it represents was reflected in melodrama can be seen by comparing the famous death scene in *East Lynne* with Wally's in *Two Little Vagabonds*.

*East Lynne* throughout is about Lady Isabel, and her loss of her husband and children. It is in a sense about the loss of identity she suffers in this, through the loss of the roles by which she is identified. Thus after Francis Levinson has tempted her away from husband and family and she, seeing his true nature, has left him, she declares:

*ISABEL:* My husband, my children! - Oh, never again to hear him say 'Isabel, my wife!' Never again to hear their infant voices murmur the holy name of 'mother!'²⁶

Her children are never more than symbols of Isabel's loss and serve only to define her. Nor does this state of affairs change in Willie's death scene. Willie dies as Lady Isabel's child, and the real pathos resides in her position as the mother whose child is dying before her eyes with her unable to declare herself to him. Willie himself barely appears before the death scene and has no real character apart from that of the dying child. Thus the famous climax of the scene comes after Willie has died, when Isabel, no longer disguised as Madame Vine, is told that Carlyle and his new wife are approaching.

*ISABEL:* (breaks from Joyce): Let them come! I care not now, for my life's sands will soon be run. Oh, Willie, my child! dead, dead, dead! and he never knew me, never called me mother!²⁷

While Willie's death is seen as another torment for the mother and wife deprived of her sacred roles, that of Wally is the death of the child deprived of a mother. In this sense Wally is the dramatic focal point of his death scene in a way in which Willie is not of his. Bernard Shaw accused Sims of saturating himself with the sentiment of Dr Watts's 'My mother',²⁸ and something of this can be seen in Wally's

²⁷ Ibid., Act III, Sc.iii, p.38.
dying meditations:

WALLY: (raising head) She's such a dear, kind mother!
But not mine - mine's dead - she drank - my
real mother did! I am going to her now
wherever she is - and it won't be long (coughs) ...

And a little later:

WALLY: I wonder what heaven's like? Nurse, I fancy
I see it sometimes - a place where poor boys
like me are with their mothers! 29

In this sense, Wally's death scene differs also from that of Jo,
though in other ways the two characters are recognisably versions of
the same stereotype. Though it is understood that Jo, like Wally,
is an orphan, the source of his pathos is his poverty, hunger and
ignorance. The absence of a mother is not singled out as a factor
in it.

Thus Wally dies in the hope of seeing his mother in the next
world in a scene built around his failure to find her in this. In
this way, Two Little Vagabonds uses the traditional melodrama theme
of the mother's search for her child, but takes it from the point of
view of the child rather than the mother. The child therefore becomes
the focus of the theme. This was a novel step, even though the
stereotype represented by Wally was basically derived from older
models.

Also new was Sims's handling of the character of Dick, whose
vigour and heroic vitality are contrasted with Wally's pathos and
suffering throughout the play. In the manner of the traditional
melodrama hero, Dick is brave, protects the weak and confounds the
wicked. Even his recognition as the Thorntons' son can be taken as
a variant of the hero's traditional coming into those 'estates' to
which J.K. Jerome saw him as invariably entitled. 30 The analogy
should not of course be taken too far: with a child hero, for example,
there is little room for the serious rather than comic or sentimental
romantic interest which generally attached to the melodrama hero.
Nonetheless, with the play's focus on him, and with his capacity for

29. Sims and Shirley, op. cit., Act V.
bold and daring deeds and his personal blamelessness, Dick is clearly the hero and central figure in the play, a position dramatised most obviously by his role in the sensational rescue of Thornton and their escape through the skylight. Bernard Shaw found this scene 'silly' and 'devoid of all interest or credibility', but its presence was required by the formal demands of melodrama. Moreover, it provided the traditional opportunity for the hero to demonstrate his heroism, even when that hero was a child.

Essentially, this image of child heroism dates from the early 1890s and gave expression to a less passively sentimental sense of the child among melodrama audiences. It also followed from the tendency of melodrama to assimilate what was originally a symbol of social deprivation into its traditional stereotypes.

The potential for development in this direction had long been present in melodrama, particularly in the notion of the two waifs adrift in the world enacted in Two Little Vagabonds and earlier in plays like The Two Orphans and Saved from the Streets. Dramatically speaking, the pathos of a Wally, Louise or Jim needed a complement in the greater protective strength of a Dick, Henriette or Joe. At the same time, the passive misery of the individual waif, so fully embodied in Jo as an image of urban poverty in the 1870s and 1880s, was capable of relatively little development in melodramatic terms. Based as it was solely on sentiment, Jo lacked the involved plot line, vigorous action and dramatic incidents which were basic fare in melodrama, especially in the minor theatres. With the receding of the social question, there was a need for an image of the waif more consistent with melodrama's traditional concerns, and this required more dynamism than Jo offered. Again, this meant, at least in the short term, the development of aspects of the waif already present in earlier representations of him rather than the invention of a new stereotype. Elements of a more active image of the waif were, for example, evident in the character of Smike in Halliday's highly successful adaptation of Nicholas Nickleby (1875). Smike's more active style of suffering found imitation in the 1880s and, more significantly

for the present discussion, represents a precedent for the heroism during the 1890s of children like Dick in *Two Little Vagabonds*, generated as they were by the cultural shift defined by Gareth Stedman Jones, who were less bowed down by their social condition.

While the hero of *Nicholas Nickleby* is Nicholas himself, its real focus is on the ill-treated, exploited Smike. Nicholas's wicked uncle Ralph, who has falsely inherited the family fortune, sends him to Dotheboys Hall as a teacher. At the school, Nicholas finds the vicious Squeers in charge. Squeers and his wife cruelly oppress young Smike, who was a pupil at the school until the man who left him there years ago ceased to pay his fees. Now he is the Squeers's drudge, weak from overwork. Nicholas escapes with him to London. Ralph and Squeers find the boy, but Ralph is revealed as Smike's father and repents of his misdeeds as his son dies.

Smike has elements of both the child victim and Jo, as in the scene in which Nicholas's sister Kate comforts him after a nightmare:

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SMIKE: ... Let me look at you and touch your hands.
       Yours is the only face, except your brother's,
       that ever looked kindly on me and when you let
       me lay my withered hand in yours a thrill of
       joy goes to my heart and makes me happy.33
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But unlike Jo, Smike's oppressors are identified and there is a plot of a recognisably melodramatic kind which concerns his dealings with them. Elements of sensational melodrama thus exist in *Nicholas Nickleby* where they are missing in Jo, in the shape of a hero

32. Dickens's Smike, like Louise in *The Two Orphans*, has attributes of both the adult and the child. 'Be a man,' Nicholas tells him in Chapter VIII, 'you are nearly one by years, God help you'. (Charles Dickens, *Nicholas Nickleby*, London, Chapman and Hall, n.d., p.134.) But later, though he is ostensibly only two years younger than Nicholas, they are described as young man and boy. 'The boy caught the young man's hands passionately in his'. (Ibid., p.188.) In modern terms Smike is an adolescent, but Dickens expresses this as a mixture of the adult and the child. In the play as in the novel the pathos of Smike resides in his likeness to a child. Thus in Halliday's play Smike tells Nicholas how Squeers has worked him until he can barely stand, and Nicholas answers, 'Poor boy'. (A. Halliday, *Nicholas Nickleby* [1875], Act II, Sc.i.)

33. Halliday, op. cit., Act III.
(Nicholas), villains (Ralph and Squeers), and a story line.

However it is Smike's capacity for action, limited though it is, which most sharply distinguishes him from the passive child victims of The Two Orphans and the hopeless, hunted waif, Jo. In running away from Dotheboys Hall, Smike does more than exist helplessly, and his flight marks a stage in the incorporation of the waif into the traditional melodrama form.

At the same time, the idea of the oppressed waif as an active participant in the drama had to wait some time before it was taken up in a major play. Gipsy Tom, or Tom Chickweed, who appears in Alone in London by the minor poet Robert Buchanan, shows the use that came to be made of it by the mid-1880s.

In the course of an elaborate plot, in which Nan the persecuted heroine is swept from her life of rural bliss in Suffolk to poverty and degradation in London, she is befriended by the loyal, crippled little waif Chickweed. The climax of the play finds Nan locked in a sluice hut with the water turned on to drown her. She is rescued from this plight by Chickweed and others of her friends, who go on to catch the villains in the midst of a burglary. During the struggle, Chickweed stabs and kills Nan's chief persecutor. 34

The clearest model for Chickweed is probably the crippled knife grinder Pierre in The Two Orphans, who kills his brother Jacques out of love for the blind orphan Louise. The part of Chickweed was taken, however, by Buchanan's niece and future biographer Harriet Jay, a clear sign that Chickweed was to be played as a child, while

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34. Alone in London was Buchanan's most successful play, though he liked it the least and sold it for less than its worth. It afterwards toured for years and made its new owners a clear profit of £14,000 within a decade (Harriet Jay, Robert Buchanan, London 1903, p.114). The stereotype of the pathetic but vigorous waif embodied in it by Chickweed proved just as durable. One later example of it was the little cripple Matt in Sims and Shirley's In London Town (1899). Another was the ill-treated workhouse boy Pickles in A Little Outcast (1901), who rescues little blind Ruth from incineration in a lime kiln, and later swings by a rope onto a boat to save her, no longer sightless, from the villain. Yet another was Pierre, the ill-used retainer of Tournemaine, the 'human terror' in A Human Terror (1903). Ultimately, of course, all of these had their origins in Smike.
contemporary engravings of The Two Orphans show Pierre as a young man. The influence of Jo is apparent in Chickweed's destitution, homelessness and wretchedness, but in rescuing Nan from the sluice hut and killing the villain he shows a capacity for violent action which is foreign to Jo and transcends what is possible for Smike. As a symbol of poverty Chickweed was well enough understood to need little elaboration. In terms of the play's plot, however, he is more important as an active participant than as an object of pity.

At the same time, G.R. Sims had shown as early as The Lights o' London in 1881, and later in London Day by Day (1889) and The Black Domino in 1893 that the waif need not be a pathetic figure, and the discovery was important in promoting the child to a more significant position among melodrama stereotypes.

The waifs in the three Sims plays were cameo roles and played no significant parts in the plots, but, possibly because of them, the idea of the vital, lively waif was beginning to achieve greater prominence in melodrama by the early 1890s, and it is probably from this time that the development of the true heroic child can be traced. Two plays of 1891 show the direction in which such roles came to evolve. Grif (1891), though set in the Australian goldfields, takes its name from a little shoeblack who is clearly in the tradition of urban melodrama. Wealthy Matthew Nuttall wants his daughter Alice to marry well, but she loves his secretary Richard Handfield, so he turns them both out. They marry, and, living in dire poverty, meet the little shoeblack Grif, 'an Australian "Jo" of Bleak House', as The Theatre called him, 'only that he is cheery in all his starvation'. Grif warns Alice that a gang of thieves are trying to make Richard join them. They fail, and so try to ruin him by having him pass a forged note. This too comes to nothing and Richard goes to the goldfields with his friend Jim Pizey. Failing to make the two fall out, the thieves stab and rob Jim so that Richard

35. See, for example, The Illustrated London News, 3 October 1874, p.328.

36. The Theatre, 1 November 1891, p.230. The Era noted that the figure of Alice Esden, who otherwise played the part of Grif with admirable humour, pathos and naturalness, 'hardly gave the idea of semi-starvation usually connected with waifs ...' (Era, 10 October 1891, p.9.)
will be blamed. The mob want to lynch him. Meanwhile Grif has accidentally acquired a letter telling of a planned attack on Nuttall's station. Alice goes to warn her father and on her way meets Richard fleeing from his pursuers. Grif overhears the villains discussing Jim's murder, but is shot by their chief, the Oysterman. Alice and Richard warn the station in time and Grif's dying words secure the Oysterman's arrest and clear Richard's name.

In a gesture towards *The Two Orphans* Grif shares a tub and a blanket with a pathetic little street arab named Little Peter. But Little Peter is a very minor character and plays no significant part in the drama, so while the situation of the two waifs recalls Louise and Henriette, the main dramatic interest in *Grif* lies in the exploits of the more vigorous of the two rather than the piteous condition of the weaker, and thus points to the transformation which was under way.

*Grif* ran at the Surrey for four weeks, a normal run for that theatre. Another colonial play which was contemporary with it was *Ned's Chum*, at the Globe. Ned Fellowes is the honest upstanding guardian of Harold, the son of a childhood friend. In the course of a conventional plot involving forged money and shares in a mine, much is made of the affection between Ned and Harold. Harold in fact has no real part in the story until the last act when, to save Ned, he leaps into his guardian's arms at the moment the villain tries to shoot him. Harold stops the bullet meant for Ned, but unlike Grif recovers to live happily ever after with Ned and his sweetheart Lucy, who in announcing to him her approaching marriage to Ned, tells Harold he must henceforth call her 'mother'.

Though much more active figures in their respective dramas than the sentimentalised stereotypes of the 1870s were in theirs, the roles of Grif and Harold were subordinate to those of the hero and heroine who remained at the centre of the story. In this respect, the central roles of Dick and Wally in *Two Little Vagabonds*, overshadowing as they do the somewhat vague figures of Thornton and his wife, represent the culmination of a line of development in melodrama towards the child-centred play which ran parallel to that in other areas of theatre patronised by the upper social classes, which will be discussed later in this thesis.
It cannot really be argued, however, that the child was ever fully incorporated into melodrama in the hero's role. Generally speaking, the melodrama hero did not play a very active part in the plot, central though he was in it, and embodied attributes of serious romance with which it was difficult to invest a child. The action in melodrama was largely generated by the villain or adventuress and by the comic man, and it was in the role of the comic man, which included overhearing plans, frustrating the villain and rescuing the heroine, as well as light relief, that the child came to occupy a more central position in a number of melodramas at the end of our period. This was most notably the case in the minor theatres where melodrama remained strong after the demise of the form at the Princess's and the Adelphi theatres in the West End, and it was in the minor theatres that the melodrama child was seen at his most valiant. Billy in The Bootblack (West London 1898), for example, takes the blame for a murder for which the hero is about to be wrongfully arrested and is imprisoned in Portland Gaol where he is shot and wounded trying to escape. All ends happily for him, however, when he finds a wealthy father. Again, in A London Arab (Surrey, 1899), a little street arab, also called Billy, is charged with stealing turnips, but is freed by the JP on the intercession of his little daughter Sadie. Billy later twice rescues Sadie from kidnappers, in token of his eternal gratitude. Other plays in a similar vein included an invigorated version of The Two Orphans idea called Two Little Heroes (Crown, Peckham, 1901), A Little Outcast (Grand, 1901), When Darkness Falls (Surrey, 1903) and A Human Terror (Pavilion, 1903). A particularly spectacular example was Judy, or, a Child of the Streets (Standard, 1902), in which the heroic waif slays the villain in a duel with sabres. Some allowance must be made for the more violent tastes of East End audiences. Nonetheless, such a vital conception as Judy shows how far some versions of the waif had developed

37. By Jerome's definition, the melodrama hero's chief aim was to be accused of crimes he had never committed. He always lost his estates to the villain in Act I, only recovering them in the last act. In the meanwhile, he was incapable of earning his own living, for which he was dependent on the comic man or comic woman. Jerome proclaimed the need for a hero 'who wouldn't cackle and brag quite so much, but who was capable of taking care of himself for a day, without getting into trouble'. Jerome, op. cit., p.8.
since Jo, Nicholas Nickleby and The Two Orphans.

While the success of Two Little Vagabonds was symptomatic of both a changed social climate and the development of a more vigorous notion of childhood, Sims did not attempt to develop the child hero any further or place children in such prominent roles again. In exploring the idea of childhood vitality which led to the heroic child of Two Little Vagabonds, however, he did incorporate children in what were, in effect, the roles of comic man and woman in one of his last West End productions at the Adelphi, The Gipsy Earl (1898). While not an outstanding success, it is one of his most interesting plays, not least for the uses to which children are put within it.

The play contains two pairs of comic characters. One of these is 'Lijah Blossom the policeman and Jenny his sweetheart. The other is Dick the workhouse boy and Titia the lame little slavey, who supply both comic and sentimental relief. Inspired by dreams of adventure gleaned from penny dreadfuls, Dick sees himself as Dashing Dick, the Terror of the Turnpike Road, and persuades Titia to run away with him to seek adventure. Lacking resources, they join the gipsies in order to get to London. The villain Nathan Hearn promises them adventure and riches, but in fact forces them to beg in the street for him. Eventually the two waifs help to free the heroine after she is kidnapped by Nathan and all ends happily.

The device of a romantic involvement between children was reasonably well tried in 1896. With sentimental rather than comic intent, Burnett had included a romantic scene between Jo and the little slavey Guster in Jo, and Clement Scott in Sister Mary (1886) had worked for much the same effect with a scene between young Harry and Charity the workhouse girl. 38 Sims's treatment of the theme is both comic and sentimental, as in the scene in which Dick tells Titia he has been keeping back some of the money he has been forced to beg for Nathan, and hiding it in his shoe:

38. Nor was the theme peculiar to waifs. W.S. Gilbert, for example, included a love scene between an Eton boy and his sweetheart in Brantinghame Hall (1888).
DICK: It makes me hobble a bit sometimes, when a 'arf crown works under the 'eel, but I don't mind that. As soon as I've got enough, Titia, we'll make a dash for freedom.

TITIA: (half crying) But we made a dash for freedom before!

DICK: Ah, but this time we know a bit more of the world - no more gipsies or 'ighwayman! We'll run away to sea - I'll be the Bravo of the Bosphorus and you shall be my Ocean Bride!

(Exeunt.)

Romantic interest could thus be generated by semi-comic child characters where it was impossible for child heroes. Moreover, Dick's romantic stance enables him to defy the villain in something like the traditional manner of the comic man, though with more sentimental effect, as when Nathan offers to strike him for his defiant talk:

DICK: You'd better not try! Don't you forget as my foot is on my native 'eath 'ere, and the policeman is a pertikler friend o' mine.

But Dick is comic also as a burlesque figure through whom Sims pours gentle mockery on the extravagances of the penny dreadful. Thus Dick is first seen deep in a book:

DICK: 'Quick as a flash o' lightning Terrible Tom the Boy 'ighwayman sprang from his coal black steed and drew his six shooter and stretched the two villains on the ground, and the beautiful girl rushing to him flung her arms white as allybaster round his neck and exclaimed, "Oh, my preserver! my preserver!" To be continued in our next'.

(with a sigh) Oh, why wasn't I born a 'ighwayman?

After running away to seek their fortunes they are discovered in Act II, Sc.ii with Dick dressed as a burlesque pirate in a red shirt with a belt and empty pistol, and Titia as a waif, with her few possessions in a little bundle. Titia is approached by 'Lijah the policeman and Dick, entering, bails him up with his empty pistol:

41. Ibid., Act I, Sc.i.
DICK: Ah! (points pistol) Release that maiden or your blood shall stain the heather.42

He then attempts to rob 'Lijah, Titia returning the money behind Dick's back.

The difficulty with burlesque of this kind was that the main plot of the play is itself very little different from the penny dreadfuls Sims was ostensibly mocking. The real conflict between the laughter called for from the audience by the scenes involving the children and the serious response demanded of them by those involving, for example, Pharaoh Lee or the adventuress Alice Vandalour, showed that the incorporation of children as comic figures of this kind in a conventional melodrama was at best uneasy. Pharaoh's fight with Nathan in Act II, Sc.iii, for example, is intended as serious melodrama but in tone is much like Dick's grandiloquent assault on 'Lijah:

PHARAOH: Oh, I'm not afraid of your black looks, or your threats - I know you for the brute and coward that you are!

(NATHAN livid with rage rushes at him with uplifted hands) PHARAOH: (seizing him with iron grip by the throat) Back, you dog! You can frighten old men and women and children, but I know you for a white livered cur, and treat you as one (flings him away with such force that he falls) ...43

Thus Sims's play undercuts itself, since what is burlesqued in some scenes is played with all seriousness in others.

Nonetheless, the play remains an interesting example of the kind of comic possibilities he saw for children in conventional melodrama. Dick and Titia are more engaging, more lively, and more lifelike than most children in melodrama, and provided scope for Sims's undoubted talent for a kind of proletarian comedy of manners. The play certainly represents the most ambitious development in the West End during our period of those comic possibilities which became apparent in the waif with the receding of the social crisis of the 1880s. Possibly a more complete integration of the waif into the role of the comic man

42. Ibid., Act II, Sc.ii.
43. Ibid., Act II, Sc.iii.
could have been achieved had the most suitable melodrama houses in the West End not failed in the next few years. That adaptation did not take place in *The Gipsy Earl*.

To this extent, the assumption by the melodrama child of the role of the comic man, as well as of that of the hero, remained incomplete. At the same time, *The Gipsy Earl* shows the degree to which the idea of the passive suffering waif exemplified in *Jo* in 1876, while shown to be still popular by Jennie Lee's successful revival of it in 1896, had been overlaid by one which expressed the child's intrinsic humour and vitality. While there are signs of a changing emphasis in *The Gipsy Earl*, Sims treated these qualities as fundamentally class characteristics for which the child was chosen, like the comic man, as the best exemplar. The notion of the child as the centre of interest because of his childlikeness was therefore not a theme in melodrama before its virtual demise in the West End by the end of the 1890s. At the same time, Sims showed as early as 1896 in *Two Little Vagabonds* that the motherhood theme developed so effectively for middle and upper middle class audiences by J.M. Barrie could be successfully adapted within the bounds of melodramatic convention by reversing the old device of the mother's search for her child. In this way, melodrama suggests a degree of heightened interest in children among popular audiences during the period through its incorporation in some plays of children into the more central roles in the drama, but no real sense of the distinctiveness of childhood as a separate state.
George R. Sims's use of the child as a symbol of poverty and deprivation and its development in his hands as a representative of working class vitality later in the period mirrored the flow and ebb of social concern among the upper working and lower middle class audiences who formed his public from the early 1880s to the 1890s. This process and the more central roles played by many child characters in melodrama during the period reflect various things: the suburbanisation of a considerable portion of these classes and the increasingly domestic tone of their culture, tendencies inherent in melodramatic sensationalism and, up to a point, the fall in fertility which was beginning to make itself felt across the society as a whole, though most marked for the moment amongst the upper classes. As I have suggested, the change in the image of the melodrama child from one of pathos to one of liveliness and humour echoed a general tendency in late Victorian society to see the child less in passive sentimental terms and more as a character in his own right capable of independent action. At the same time, it was only partly the result of factors felt across class lines and owed much to the distinctive character of upper working and lower middle class experience and to the interaction of this with the pattern of cultural life and ideas which was peculiar to those classes. In this way, images of childhood altered according to a changing sense of class identity, dictated early in the period by poverty and social deprivation and later by a sense of the vitality and humour of working class life.

In theatrical terms, too, the transformation of the child in melodrama took place within an already existing system of stereotypes themselves largely class based. He therefore came to fill existing roles, notably that of the comic man, and never fully developed a distinct stereotyped identity based on his age rather than on his social status. As I have argued, therefore, it cannot really be
said that there was any suggestion in melodrama of a separate realm of childhood experience or any attempt to celebrate childhood itself as a state, though as we have seen Sims himself sought in Jack in the Box (1886) and Master and Man (1889) to develop the notion of children as the peculiar victims of particular social evils.

While the child was incorporated into melodrama's traditional themes in a more central way than before, the evidence of the plays therefore tends to support Lawrence Stone's sense of the upsurge in solicitude for children in the late nineteenth century as centred on the middle and upper social classes. This chapter and those which follow it will be devoted to confirming this impression by locating the sources of the new interest in children in particular sections of the middle and upper middle classes, and to defining in some detail the phases through which this so-called 'cult of childhood' evolved.

Essentially class-based as it is, such an approach has not been universal in the historiography of childhood of this period. As I have argued in the introduction to this thesis, the problem of the transformation in attitudes towards children in the late nineteenth century has been handled in three different ways. It was suggested that legislative histories, like that of Pinchbeck and Hewitt, conceive the change too narrowly, as expressed only in legislation and institutions, and largely ignore the cultural and ideological background against which the reformers worked, and of which, indeed, they were themselves products. Similarly, cultural studies of the new sense of childhood which concentrate, as those by Coveney and Grylls do, on its expression by particular writers, fail through the narrowness of their focus to establish the character of the trend as a broadly based shift in attitudes. Explanations of both kinds, in emphasising the work of individuals, or even, in the case of Behlmer's study of the N.S.P.C.C., of institutions, in effect seek to explain the change in terms of its results, and fail to identify the distinctive class experiences which caused it or the role of separate class traditions in shaping and articulating it.

Explanations such as these of the upsurge in solicitude for children and the conclusions reached in the two preceding chapters on images of childhood in melodrama suggest that what is needed is an account which recognises different patterns of cultural development between class and class, is firmly based in empirical evidence relevant to particular class experiences, and does not confuse causes of the trend under discussion with symptoms of it. As far as the change as it was felt among the middle and upper middle classes is concerned, some indications of what such an explanation might be are offered by Stone himself and by the work of Gillis and Reeder on the history of child welfare, particularly in the 1890s.

Writing of changes in attitudes towards children between the late medieval period and our own, Stone points to changes in rates of birth and child mortality as of critical importance. 'Children no longer die', he argues,

and it is worth while to lavish profound affection upon them and to invest heavily in their education, while their numbers have been limited by contraception.  

At the same time, the work of John Gillis and David Reeder, following as it does in some respects that of Anthony Platt on the American child-saving movement, points to the importance of middle and upper middle class women in equivalent movements in English child welfare. Discussing the drive to institutionalise working class children from the 1880s on, Gillis notes the dominant role of women, especially from the 1890s. 'While women like Mary Carpenter had been active child savers earlier in the nineteenth century' he writes, 'their numbers and assertiveness were weak compared to this new generation'.

Looking particularly at Oxford, he points to the prominence of 'upper middle-class ladies from north Oxford' in the city's N.S.P.C.C., Vigilance Association and Mothers' Union, as well as among the home visitors of the Oxford Health Committee in showing that 'affluent women provided much of the thrust of child saving in Oxford and elsewhere'.

4. Ibid., p.111.
Raising the question of fertility, David Reeder complements Gillis's argument and takes it a stage further. In the context of a 'general concern about children represented by numerous voluntary societies and the emergence of a scientific (medical and psychological) interest in child development', he notes the increasing number of women voluntary workers concerned with children in London elementary schools from the 1880s, particularly with the formation of Care Committees and After Care Committees attached to school districts after 1902. 'Such organisations', he writes, would repay investigation for the contribution they might have made to generating a groundswell of anxiety. To what extent were voluntary workers relaying changes in child rearing practices and attitudes to children that had been made possible by the declining fertility of the suburban middle classes?6

Reeder does not pursue this idea, but it is nonetheless an important one, echoing at least in part Stone's more general sense of the increasing solicitude towards children as caused by declining rates of birth and child mortality, and gaining added significance from Anthony Platt's account of the prominence among American child savers of 'middle-class housewives with small families of two or less children in suburban residential areas'.7

Gillis, Reeder and Platt are essentially interested in the interaction with organisations in which such women were numerous of children and adolescents from the working classes. Consideration of the interaction between classes, however, should not limit our perception of the late Victorian concern with childhood as a phenomenon within as well as between classes, and shaped by particular class experiences and values. As we have seen, Lawrence Stone, concerned with the family rather than with child welfare as an aspect of class interaction, describes the 'second and far more intense phase of permissiveness' as an event, initially at least, within the families of the

5. Reeder, op. cit., p.82.
6. Ibid., p.87.
7. Platt, op. cit., p.78.
middle classes. It therefore seems reasonable to look for a connection between the trends described by Stone on the one hand and by Gillis and Reeder on the other. In so doing, we should expect the heightened interest in children expressed by Gillis's 'upper middle class ladies from north Oxford' and Reeder's lady voluntary workers to be focussed on their own children and on those of their class as well as on those of the working classes. At the same time, we shall take up Stone's suggestion and examine the course of birth and child mortality rates among them for a clue as to why this heightened interest should be peculiar to these groups.

The remainder of this chapter, therefore, will discuss the following questions: the peculiar position of middle and upper middle class women during this period, and the ways in which the fall in the birth rate among them and of the death rate among their children are related to their enhanced solicitude for children; the importance of a life of conspicuous leisure in shaping the ways in which that solicitude was expressed; and the significance of such women in the theatre audience. The following chapters will concern the two phases of the child cult in the theatre which the patronage of these women helped to bring about and sustain, and the images of children which underlay those phases.

The first main point concerns the increase in numbers of the middle and upper middle classes as a whole in the decades immediately preceding our period, and the causes and effects of the decline in their birth rate evident from the 1870s, combined with a general fall in child mortality. Such a discussion must begin with the work of J.A. Banks in relating the decline in the birth rate among the upper social classes to the effects of the Great Depression beginning in the mid 1870s.

The focus of Banks's concern is on the different rates of fertility decline among the social classes as defined by the 1911 Fertility Report. The Report identified eight social classes, of which five were general and three were related to particular

occupation groups. The five general classes were:

(i) professional, civil service, upper and intermediate business occupations;
(ii) lower ranks of commercial employers and employees, and farmers;
(iii), (iv) and (v) skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers.

The three specialised classes were textile workers (vi), miners (vii) and agricultural workers (viii). In his study of class fertility trends during the period, John Innes presents the following graph as a representation of the relation between rates of fertility decline and social status between 1851 and 1886. The graph shows completed fertility by date of first marriage:

![Graph showing fertility trends by social status and marriage date](image)

FIGURE 1

The graph supports Innes's conclusion that

Participation of all classes in the decline was combined with a growing divergence in their trends. In the general classes, I to V, the positive relationship between relative fertility decrease and status was continuous and increasing.10

10. Ibid., p.66.
Innes compensates for the lack of standardised figures for marriages entered into after 1886 by the use of single marriage age-groups which show the trend continuing up to about 1896. Likewise, he finds that birth rates in London show a correlation with status indices in 1901. By 1909-22, however, the difference in rates of fertility decline is shown by London area-class surveys as beginning to lessen, and a trend towards their equalisation is confirmed by the figures for 1924-33. Overall, then, the picture is of a general decline in fertility led by the upper social classes, ending in a rough equalisation of the rate of decline across the classes by the time of the First World War.

As part of the explanation of this trend Banks cites the reduction in child mortality. In company with his wife, Banks's interest in this is as an additional source of cost to the middle class household, a further incentive to the family limitation which it is his purpose to explain since older children were more expensive to maintain. From our point of view, however, it should be seen with the fall in the birth rate as a second significant cause of the 'cult of childhood' which implied that the attention devoted to the fewer children now being born among the upper classes was less likely to be wasted by their death and was extended over a longer average period. Table I below shows mean annual death rates per 1000 living from 1846 to 1900 by sex and age (from 0 to 19), and infant mortality per 1000 live births.

11. Ibid., p.69.
12. Ibid., p.121.
TABLE 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Infant Mortality per 1000 live births</th>
<th>Deaths per 1000 living</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>males</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1846-50</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871-75</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896-1900</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>females</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1846-50</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871-75</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896-1900</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two points emerge from these figures. The first is that rates of infant mortality and of deaths up to four years of age changed relatively little before 1900. The second is that mortality was sharply reduced among children and adolescents between five and nineteen, with the steepest decline taking place between the ages of five and fourteen and between 1871-75 and 1896-1900. Once past their earliest years, therefore, children were more likely to survive their childhood, though the hazards of birth itself remained very real. As another way of showing the improvement in mortality rates and its concentration in the five to nine and ten to fifteen age groups, Table II shows the average percentage decline in the death rate among the child population as a whole for the age groups 0 to 4, 5 to 9, 10 to 14 and 15 to 19 between 1846-50 and 1871-75 and 1871-75 and 1896-1900.


16. Logan's figures, however, show a decline of about fifty per cent in infant mortality and even more in mortality up to four years of age for the succeeding period from 1896-1900 to 1921-25.

17. For the period in question, these age groups showed the most marked decline in mortality of all age categories. Logan's figures show a lessening of the rate of decline in mortality with increasing age. Logan, op. cit., p.134.
TABLE II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>0-4</th>
<th>5-9</th>
<th>10-14</th>
<th>15-19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1846-50 to 1871-75</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>26.76%</td>
<td>27.87%</td>
<td>25.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871-75 to 1896-1900</td>
<td>11.54%</td>
<td>39.30%</td>
<td>41.25%</td>
<td>39.60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the period in question, then, the rate of improvement in mortality figures, like the improvement itself, was highest for children aged 5 to 14. The lower rate of improvement for the 15 to 19 age group is the beginning of a series of progressively lower figures which extend across the older age ranges.

The largest single element in these rates of decline is the fall in deaths due to infectious disease which were reduced by fifty-nine per cent in children between one and four years old and by sixty-eight per cent in those between five and fourteen between 1848-72 and 1901-1910. In the absence of a full-scale, class-based study of child mortality it must be assumed that all classes shared at least to some extent in the general decline in child deaths. Since the greatest single element in the decline was a reduction in deaths by infectious disease, however, it seems reasonable to conclude that the middle and upper middle classes were likely to have benefited most, as higher spending power and higher living standards brought with them a greater ability to pay for medical care and to create a healthier environment for children. Recent research, indeed, tends to confirm this assumption. Though it relates to 1911 and is therefore a little outside our period, Table III below supports the conclusion that infant death rates, like birth rates, among the middle and upper middle classes were considerably less than those among classes lower on the social scale.

19. Logan, op. cit., Tables 5A and 5C.
TABLE III

INFANT DEATH RATE, 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<td>'families of the upper and middle classes'</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'textile operatives'</td>
<td>148</td>
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<td>'miners' (i.e. coal)</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'agricultural labourers'</td>
<td>97</td>
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In the light, therefore, of the much greater rate of decrease in births among the upper social classes and the likelihood that the decline in child mortality was also steeper in these classes, it is reasonably clear that middle and upper middle class families underwent a transformation not felt by classes below them on the social scale. This meant that to a degree not felt by other groups the upper social classes were in a position to devote more attention to fewer children, and to know that the objects of that attention were more likely to survive.

The nature of the attention involved here is clearly the central question in assessing the greater importance ascribed to children by the middle and upper middle classes in the last decades of the century. The answer to it relates closely to the style of life adopted by the middle and upper middle classes. In assessing the effect of that life style on their notions of childhood, it is necessary to look first at the economic situation of these classes before and after the mid-1870s and at the life of conspicuous leisure characteristic of middle and upper middle class wives, which in turn had important effects on the relationship between child and mother, on the child's position in the


21. This term, like others which will be used in the following analysis such as 'conspicuous consumption' and 'vicarious waste' are of course derived ultimately from Thorstein Veblen's sociological description of contemporary American society, The Theory of the Leisure Classes (London and New York 1899). Veblen's work provides much of the conceptual basis for a number of studies on which this chapter is based, notably those by J.A. and O. Banks (op. cit.) Leonore Davidoff (The Best Circles, London 1973) and James Laver (Children's Fashions of the Nineteenth Century, London 1951).
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household, and on the child's social role outside the home.

Once again, Banks provides the starting point for discussion. Taking Rowntree's definition of middle class households as those which employed at least one servant, Banks finds both a considerable growth in the numbers of such households in the 1850s and 1860s and a marked rise in their standard of living. These are reflected in a rise of thirty-five per cent in the numbers of general servants employed, rises at three times that rate in the number of specialised servants (cooks, housemaids and nursemaids) and six times in numbers of housekeepers employed between 1851 and 1871. Together with an accompanying elaboration of domestic life through the acquisition of new domestic comforts and what he terms 'the paraphernalia of gentility', this implied the rise of an ideal of conspicuous leisure for the wives of the middle and upper classes, and a greater increase in their numbers than for the population as a whole, owing to their disproportionate ability to pay. Banks goes on to argue that the apparent threat to these living standards with the onset of the Great Depression in the mid 1870s led to the widespread adoption of contraception as a means both of restraining living costs and of meeting through more education the higher expectations of a generation of middle class children to whom a far wider range of occupations was open than before.

The ideal of conspicuous leisure had important effects on the development of attitudes towards children both within and outside the home. As we have seen, Banks cites a trend to the hiring of more specialised servants as an aspect of the rising standard of living among the middle and upper middle classes. Those, therefore, who began with only a maid-of-all-work would, as their incomes rose, add a housemaid (or nursemaid), and then a cook to their establishment. Like other areas of household management, then, child care became the

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24. Ibid., p.195.
province of specialised domestic service. Some idea of the prevalence of nurses in middle and upper middle class households in the 1880s and 1890s is apparent in Theresa McBride's calculation that their numbers rose from 39,000 in 1851 to 75,000 in 1881, or to between four and five per cent of all servants. In general terms Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy has confirmed this increase in their numbers by counting advertisements for nurses which appeared in the following numbers per day in The Times between 1822 and 1882:

TABLE IV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Nurses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1822</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1838</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similarly, advertisements by nurses in search of employment rose from one per day in 1822 to 13.3 in 1882. While these numbers fell off during the 1880s, Gathorne-Hardy concludes that this was due to the establishment of nurses' employment agencies.

Of course, any discussion of the effect of nurses on the development of notions of childhood within the family is limited, as Gathorne-Hardy himself admits, by a lack of comprehensive and representative evidence. And yet the heavily domestic character of late Victorian upper middle and middle class life and the large and growing numbers of nurses in the households of these classes make such a discussion important, particularly if we accept as relevant to these classes at this time Lawrence Stone's suggestion that childhood

26. Theresa McBride, "As the Twig is Bent": the Victorian Nanny', in A.S. Wohl (ed.) The Victorian Family: Structure and Stresses (London 1978), p.46. Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy goes further, giving the numbers of nurses and nursery maids as 92,606 in 1861, out of a total of 1,065,836 domestic servants, and 103,908 in 1871, out of a total of 1,303,194 domestic servants, making them some ten per cent of the total. On this basis, he estimates their numbers at about 200,000 in the 1890s, when domestic servants totalled some two million. (Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy, The Rise and Fall of the British Nanny, London 1972, pp.179-80).

27. Gathorne-Hardy, op. cit., p.66.

28. Gathorne-Hardy, ibid., preface.
history, like that of women, is inseparable from that of the family. Given the intermingling of public and private life implied by the ideal of conspicuous leisure for middle and upper middle class wives, such a discussion is also a necessary complement to the discussion of the effects on children of such a life-style as it was carried on in more public circumstances, both within the home and outside it. Despite the difficulties, then, the attempt should be made, and once made, a number of probable conclusions emerge about the effects of the nurse on relationships between parents and children.

It has been suggested that the use of nurses showed a lack of affection in mothers. It is, of course, true that specialised as she was in the practical aspects of child care represented by feeding the children, dressing, bathing and taking them for walks and so on, the use of a nurse implied a more specialised and limited role for the mother also, from whom these duties had been taken away, and therefore a probable change in the relationship between herself and her children. While the relationship probably became more distant, however, the evidence does not suggest that this led in general to a decrease in affection between mother and child. J.A. Banks, for example, points to a principle of motherhood, well established by the second half of the century, which held that mothers should be free from the practical duties of child care in order to devote themselves to the moral welfare of their children. Theresa McBride cites as further evidence of an increased regard for children's well-being the rapid decline in the use of wet-nurses from the 1860s, a process linked by Gathorne-Hardy to the increased use of nurses. Similarly, Patricia Branca concludes from her study of household manuals that

33. Gathorne-Hardy, op. cit., p.42.
By the third quarter of the century it was a fairly well-accepted principle of child care that the mother direct the child positively, through love, kindness and a soft manner. Physical chastisement was to be rarely employed and only when all else failed.34

Evidence of this kind, quite apart from that offered by the cult of childhood in the theatre which will be discussed in detail in the following two chapters, indicates that freedom from responsibility for her children's physical care and discipline tended on the whole to enhance the emotional aspects of a mother's relationship with them as it reduced the practical.

One aspect of this indicated by Gathorne-Hardy was the 'idealisation' of the mother which he finds 'so common between 1850 and 1939 that I was at first tempted to think of it as inevitable'.35 Mrs Darling in J.M. Barrie's Peter Pan is perhaps one of the best images of such an ideal of motherhood presented by the plays during our period.

This idealisation of the mother, however, depended also on a compartmentalising of domestic life which sharply reduced parent-child contact. 'Separation', as Gathorne-Hardy notes, 'particularly separation from the parents, and even more particularly from the mother - is the central element in the Nanny situation.'36 In these circumstances, children would normally have seen their mother for ten minutes in the morning and again for an hour or so in the drawing room between half past four and six in the evening before retiring to the nursery.37 From the parents' point of view this represented a ritualising of relationships between adult and child, and a concentration into a relatively short time of an interaction rendered largely sentimental by the delegation to the nurse of parental authority and responsibility for the practical duties of motherhood.38

35. Gathorne-Hardy, op. cit., p.78.
36. Ibid., p.77.
37. Ibid., p.20.
38. See Gathorne-Hardy's discussion of this point, op. cit., p.80.
At the same time, freed as she was from direct responsibility for her children by the employment of a nurse or nursemaid, the middle or upper middle class mother was also likely to be freed from direct responsibility for other aspects of household management by the employment of other specialised servants. In this context it is probably safe to say that the influx of middle and upper middle class women into the voluntary societies described by Reeder and into the various agencies described by Gillis owed much to a growth in their own numbers and to the lightening of their responsibilities to both children and household management. Nonetheless, as Leonore Davidoff observes, whatever such women's charitable activities, their first duty was seen to be to maintain the increasingly elaborate routine of morning calls, tea, whist and dinner parties, balls and receptions by which their social status was proclaimed. 39

In this lay a conflict between a woman's social and maternal roles. At the same time, like the growing trend to the employment of nurses within the home, such a lifestyle imposed a pattern on the development of notions of childhood among the middle and upper middle classes. The ritualising, compression and frequent sentimentalising of parent-child relationships within the family and especially of those between mother and child should therefore be seen in the same context as the effects on adult notions of childhood brought about by a life of conspicuous leisure as it was carried on in more public circumstances.

It is, of course, true, at least up to a point, that 'the physical and emotional care of young children was considered to be a distraction from the more important business of wider family and social duties'. 40 Nonetheless, there are indications by the 1880s, if not before, of a sense of conflict between a woman's social life and her duty to her children. In Bronson Howard's play Young Mrs Winthrop (1884), for example, husband and wife are distracted from domesticity and their child who is at the centre of it, he by his business affairs, she by constant socialising at balls and parties.

The situation at the opening is symbolically represented by the set:

Scene - Interior. A private residence of a man of wealth... A mantel-piece and fire on R, near front. An easel, with portrait of a beautiful little girl of four years, up RC. Small stands or tables RC and LC. A number of presents for a child's birthday on chairs and other pieces of furniture C and LC. Evening. Lights for ordinary family life. 41

But Constance Winthrop grows away from her husband until only the child seems to hold them together. Then Douglas Winthrop returns one night to find little Rosie ill and Constance out at a ball. She is summoned, but the doctor advises against allowing her to see Rosie straight away:

DOCTOR: ... I came downstairs to ask her not to go to the child at present. Mrs Winthrop will be somewhat excited, of course - returning from - a - social festivity under such circumstances.

DOUGLAS: Yes (with some bitterness) from a fashionable ball-room to the bedside of a sick child is a very abrupt change - for a mother. 42

The child dies and the parents' marriage seems headed for divorce now that the link between them is gone. They talk over the prospect with an old lawyer friend who in the course of discussing the division of property mentions one piece of property which cannot be divided, their child's grave. In the memory of Rosie they rediscover their love for each other, so that even in death she unites them.

Howard's play is some indication of a tension between the maternal ethic described by Banks and the upper middle and the middle class wife's social obligations described by Davidoff. By the 1880s, however, the evidence suggests that for many such women an increasingly elaborate life of social display did less to stifle a solicitude for children enhanced by family limitation and falling child mortality than it did to shape the ways in which that solicitude was expressed through the incorporation of children in it. One sign of this is

41. B. Howard, Young Mrs Winthrop (1884), Act I.
42. Ibid., Act II.
James Laver's observation that children's dress grew more formal in the 1880s, reflecting a growing tendency for children to accompany their parents on formal occasions and a consequent drive to 'vicarious waste', or the use of children's costume to display their parents' wealth and status.  

This tendency was itself a sign of a trend towards putting children themselves on display, exhibiting not only the dress which established their and their parents' status, but also their own childhood, sentimentalised by the particular circumstances in which they appeared. Such an approach to childhood complements the more overtly theatrical display of children on the stage. It is therefore helpful in understanding the context of the child cult to examine briefly some of the aspects of this tendency to child-display.

The clearest example of this kind of use made of children is offered by the development of children's balls from the 1870s onwards, which also gave expression to a sentimental delight in the notion of children imitating adult social rituals. The best known of these occasions was the annual children's fancy dress ball at the Mansion House which became a regular feature of the London season. The first account of it in the Illustrated London News appears in the issue for 9 January 1875 beside a description of a similar function held by the Marchioness of Salisbury. Some 1,200 invitations were issued, 'to the leading members and officers of the corporation, and many of the principal citizens with the younger people of their families'.  

As described in the Ladies' Column of the Illustrated London News in 1887, these latter came in a wide variety of guises, including all the Sovereigns since 1066, various historical characters, Swiss peasants, Spanish muleteers, gypsies, shepherdesses, lady graduates, Britannia, a heathen Chinee and a pirate. The seven year old son of the City Marshall came as his father. Various entertainments were provided for the children, but the feature of the evening was a grand procession two by two around the Egyptian Hall.

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44. Illustrated London News, 9 January 1875, p.27.
45. Ibid., 22 January 1887, p.117.
and the presentation of the children to the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress. In later years guests generally numbered between 700 and 1,000. The balls received wide coverage in the press, particularly in illustrated papers like the Illustrated London News and the Lady's Pictorial which specialised in important events on the social calendar. They continued late into the Edwardian period, with George Sims's niece Minty Lamb among the guests in 1910, 1911 and 1912.

The same kind of interest in children as diminutive participants in adult social life is apparent in the growing practice of bringing them into the drawing room to meet the parents' guests. Such occasions were in some senses theatrical, casting the child, wittingly or otherwise, as a performer displaying his or her childishness before the visitors. Certainly this is the implication of Dolf Wyllarde's description of such an occasion in his novel A Lonely Little Lady (1897):

Several people had ceased their conversation and turned round to listen in evident expectation of being enchanted. The Brownie's heart began to beat faster. It always frightened her to hear the sudden cessation of sound which generally preceded her speeches, and the half-familiar faces round her danced before her eyes, a blur of amusement.

'I was going to take off my hat to you [in the park] but you wouldn't look', Lord Bray said.

'Perhaps if you took it off next time without waiting for me to bow I should catch sight of you doing it!' suggested the Brownie. Her soft little voice sounded dreadfully clear to her own ears, and she heard the laugh which followed in hopeless wonder.

'She says he is going to take off his hat another time without waiting for her to bow'. The whisper went round the group like an echo. Why did they repeat her words and laugh?46

In Wyllarde's account the Brownie is a prisoner of social conventions to which she is expected to conform. Limits are placed on her ability to communicate even with children of her own age except on formal occasions such as the children's balls at which she is obliged to act as hostess. Wyllarde's attack is directed clearly against the insensitivity of a form of sentimentality which delighted in the notion of children aping formal adult behaviour whether, as here, in the context of a drawing room or at a children's ball.

In real life it was situations like this which led one of Lewis Carroll's child friends, Evelyn Sharp, to write in later years that as a child she had never wanted to grow up and 'share the dull pursuits of people who appeared to spend all their time doing things that she heartily detested'. For her, driving round the park in the afternoon 'meant sitting on the back seat and trying not to be sick', and she judged At Home days 'by her own misery when they summoned her to the drawing room, numb with shyness, to answer the perfunctory questions visitors in those days commonly put to defenceless children'.

Sentiment of this kind, focussing as it did on children as miniature participants in adult public and family life, dominated the first phase of the 'child cult' in the theatre between about 1887 and about 1891. It also underpinned the fashion for musical prodigies which followed much the same chronology. The efflorescence of interest in child musical performers during these years is important for our purposes, providing as it does a further indication that the cult of children, while in some senses theatrical in character, was not unique to the theatre. It also offers additional evidence of the importance of women in the audiences which children as public performers were able to attract, and an initial guide to the flow and ebb of the enthusiasm engendered by their performances.

There were comparatively few child musical prodigies in London before 1887, and their performances generally took place not in public concert halls, but, like little Galleotti's, over which The Theatre enthused in 1882, in the more exclusive and domestic setting of private houses. Something of a trend towards a more

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49. Critics in *The Theatre* were not always impressed by such occasions: '... the matinees given "by kind permission", in private houses', wrote William Beatty-Kingston in 1886, 'these "morning-afternoons", always draw crowds of dead-heads, acquaintances of the beneficiare and friends of the assorted artists, who make a good show, applaud freely, and justify the critic-in-waiting in recording the interesting fact that "Madame So-and-so's annual matinee musicale was attended by a numerous, fashionable, and enthusiastic audience".' (*The Theatre*, 1 June 1886, p.319.)
public forum for such children was apparent with the nine year old pianist Pauline Ellice's appearances at the Promenade Concerts in 1885, though she mixed these with performances of a more traditional kind at musical afternoons in private houses. Other child musicians who appeared in London in the early and middle 1880s included the fourteen year old American pianist Nettie Carpenter and the Douste sisters in 1886, but none of these achieved anything like the reception given to the little Polish pianist Josef Hofmann, whose first appearance in London in 1887 marks the real beginning of the craze for juvenile musicians which lasted until the mid-1890s.

The enthusiasm of the critics at this recital and others he gave in 1887 was more than matched by the audiences which attended them. At the first recital, according to the Era, 'the audience, especially the ladies, were in raptures'. At both his recitals in July Princes' Hall was 'thronged', with

the walls of the room lined with triple rows of standing listeners, and hundreds of applicants for places, money in hand, turned from the doors for lack of room ... while after the performances the boy was beset by autograph hunters.

After his London season Hofmann embarked on a tour of the provinces where his welcome was no less overwhelming. At the Town Hall in Oxford 'the room was crowded from end to end, and the platform itself was so full that there was only just room for the performer to come on'. Elsewhere, the Musical Times reported, the situation was the same: 'in the aggregate it is said he drew larger numbers of people to his recitals than any other living pianist has done'. If anything, the hysteria had grown by the time of his farewell recitals in London in November. 'On each occasion', reported the Musical Times,

the scene outside and inside the building was very remarkable. Though it was announced by advertisements that all the tickets were sold, hundreds of people came only to be disappointed, and at the final Recital they began to assemble six hours

51. The Theatre, 1 August 1887, p.91.
52. Musical Times, 1 August 1887, p.483.
before the time of commencement. Thus, legitimate interest developed into a perfect craze.\textsuperscript{53}

From England Hofmann went to the United States of America where he was said to be a bigger attraction than Adelina Patti,\textsuperscript{54} until the American Society for the Protection of Children forced him into retirement by measures which included the payment of $100,000 to his parents in lieu of proceeds from the recitals he was prevented from giving.\textsuperscript{55} He did not return to public performance until 1894, when he was seventeen.

Meanwhile he was succeeded in London by a new juvenile phenomenon, Otto Hegner, who was eleven years old when he first came before London audiences in April 1888. By general agreement, he surpassed Hofmann who compared to him was no more than a 'mechanically gifted child', while Hegner's abilities were said to be mature and developed.\textsuperscript{56} Again, patrons overflowed from the halls in which he played,\textsuperscript{57} and like Hofmann he toured the provinces, and in the opinion of the critics outshone his predecessor, though the crowds who came to see him play were apparently not so enormous.\textsuperscript{58} Returning for the 1889 season, Hegner then retired until 1892 when he was able still to attract a 'goodly audience'.\textsuperscript{59}

In the wake of Hofmann and Hegner other juvenile musicians attracted sizeable followings. Pauline Ellice, for example, 'drew a numerous and critical audience'\textsuperscript{60} to her recital at St James's Hall on 7th July 1887 when the craze for Hofmann was still in its early

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., 1 December 1887, p.727.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 1 January 1888, p.20.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 1 March 1888, p.147.
\textsuperscript{56} Musical Times, 1 April 1888, p.219.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 1 May 1888, p.281.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 1 June 1888, p.356.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 1 June 1892, p.345.
\textsuperscript{60} The Theatre, 1 August 1887, p.92.
stages, while little Jeanne Douste's fourth recital in 1888 was reported by *The Theatre* as attracting 'such a crowd of music lovers to Princes' Hall as is seldom gathered together within the precincts of that severely chaste apartment.' Nonetheless, by 1890 the enthusiasm for juvenile musicians had died down to the extent that those who did not bring a reputation with them found themselves, like the twelve year old Australian pianist Elsie Hall, playing to empty seats, and *The Theatre*, in which so many enthusiastic reviews of infant prodigies had appeared, printed an attack on the prevalence of such children in its *Musical Silhouettes* series:

... the younger the infant, the more do gaping men and silly women run after it. If a pianist four years of age could be brought out by some superhuman agency, would not the British public rush in crowds to hear him? There is not a pennyworth of art in it: nothing but idolatry, and the idol is the Glorified Infant ...  

The taste for child musicians did not disappear, but settled to a plateau both higher than it had been before the advent of Hofmann and lower than it was in the fevered days of 1887. Thus other prodigies appeared during the early 1890s, like Max Hambourg, who first played in London in 1890 and continued until late in the decade, as well as the twelve year old violinist Jean Gerady in 1891, Frida Simonson and Raoul Koczalski in 1893 and Maud MacCarthy and Bronislaw Hubermann in 1894, but none of these gained the acclaim which had greeted Josef Hofmann in 1887, and almost no juvenile phenomena of any importance could be found in London concert halls after the mid 1890s.

The fashion for child musical prodigies therefore provides a relatively compact and manageable guide to the duration, intensity and character of the first phase of the child cult between the late 1880s and early 1890s. In this sense, it is a test in advance of the representativeness of the evidence presented by the plays. At the same time, it furnishes preliminary indications of the importance of

61. Ibid., 1 August 1888, p.87.
middle and upper middle class women in supporting a cult of childhood catered to through public performances by children. Two points which are of special significance here are references by critics, such as that in the Era's review of Hofmann's first recital in 1887, to the enthusiasm of ladies in the audiences at such concerts and the origins of public performances by child prodigies in musical afternoons at private houses.

As it was in music, so also in the theatre the influence of such women was pronounced. As evidence of this Keith Richards has pointed to 'the attention devoted to theatre in women's magazines and the tendency for some theatrical journals to provide women's pages devoted to cosmetics and fashion'. But it is in the matinee that he finds the most specific indication of 'the extent to which women were becoming an important determinant of theatrical policy'.

Apart from their use for pantomimes, matinees initially served a variety of functions which were subsidiary to the main business of commercial theatre. Complaining that long runs and the demise of the stock company had led modern managers to neglect the classic works of the English stage, for example, the Stage Society began regular performances of sixteenth and seventeenth century stage masterpieces at matinees in the 1870s. John Hollingshead, known for a quite different kind of production, was a pioneer of such 'intellectual' morning performances in 1871. For similar reasons, the matinee also proved useful as a means of trying out work by new writers with whose plays managements were unwilling to gamble, given the need for long runs to recoup the increasingly heavy outlays required by new productions. At the same time, matinees were a suitable medium for special performances of various kinds, including

64. Era, 11 June 1887, p.13.
68. Nicoll, op. cit., p.203. See also Chapter 2, pp. 41-42.
benefits. One such, in 1870, is mentioned by the Bancrofts, who pioneered the matinee as they did the abolition of the pit. 'Held down, as it were, by long runs', they write, 'and "obstructed" so to speak, by our antipathy to benefits, Mr Hare asked our permission, which was at once accorded, to give a special matinee at the Princess's Theatre'. Likewise, the Bancrofts record the unusual occurrence of two morning readings by Dickens at St James's Hall, also in 1870.

As a commercial proposition, however, the matinee owed its debut to the vast expansion of the middle and upper middle class audience, evident as early as 1869 when the Bancrofts made their first experiment with morning performances in response to heavy bookings for Tom Robertson's School. At the time, the Bancrofts found the idea too 'novel' for audiences' tastes, but revived it with matinees of Peril on alternate Saturdays in 1876. It cannot really be said, however, that the matinee as an afternoon performance of a basically evening production was fully established until the Bancrofts produced Diplomacy in 1878.

As the Bancrofts noted of their experiment with Peril, the matinee 'opened out a distinct source of income for future successful plays'. Indeed, as a means of catering to the new audience matinees were sufficiently profitable for actor-managers like Charles Wyndham to take 'quick trains into the local provinces for afternoon stands'. More than anything, however, matinees were a sign of the importance of women in the new theatre public. Some indication of women's significance in matinees is given by the Bancrofts' account of one of their last performances, of Masks and Faces, at the Crystal Palace in 1885:

69. Squire and Marie Bancroft, Mr and Mrs Bancroft: On and Off the Stage (London 1886), p.143.
70. Ibid., p.138.
71. Ibid., p.132.
73. Rowell, op. cit., p.21; Madge Kendall, Dame Madge Kendall (London 1933), p.158.
75. Richards, op. cit., p.69.
When it was over, the bulk of the audience, largely composed of ladies, walked round to the stage door, and there formed a long lane, through which we were obliged to pass to get away. We hesitated for a time, but at last, in answer to the manager's earnest entreaties, gave way, and so made a sort of royal progress out of the building. Scores of ladies followed Mrs Bancroft with the kindest demonstrations of more than good feeling, and she drove home laden with many baskets and bunches of flowers, deeply touched by the many sweet words that were spoken to her. 76

In part the taste of these audiences ran to the kind of romance for which matinees later came to be known, and in part to the genteel domestic dramas which were staple fare at George Alexander's matinees at the St James's. 77 But as suggested by the Era's review of the revival of Mrs Greet's and Ernest Sedger's The Little Squire (1894), matinee audiences also inclined to a type of sentiment which by the 1890s was seen to be peculiarly their own:

Bachelors and elderly cynics - 'brutes', as the ladies call them - may contumciously declare that no such children as Adrien de Coursay and Lise De La Riviere ever existed, adding the 'rider' that if they did exist, they ought to be slapped. But soft-hearted mothers, with tender hearts and pretty pocket handkerchiefs, will enjoy The Little Squire immensely ... and if all the mothers flock - as we believe they will flock - to the matinees at the Lyric Theatre, Mrs Greet and Mr Sedger may easily be indifferent to the censure of those who can see nothing in the juvenile business of The Little Squire but sentimental twaddle. 78

In general, then, it is clear that the late Victorian cult of childhood was based mainly in the middle and upper middle classes and that it can be explained largely by the decline experienced by these classes in their rates of birth and child mortality. Equally, the evidence points to the wives in these classes as the epicentre of the cult, comprising as they did a sizeable leisureed class who resolved, at least in part, the conflict between motherhood and an increasingly complex social and cultural life by incorporating children in their routine of conspicuous leisure, and whose socially-

77. See Rowell, op. cit.
78. Era, 10 April 1894, p.11. The play was first performed on 7 April 1890.
sanctioned maternal instincts led them to provide a market for the spectacle of children in performance, whether on the stage or in musical concerts.

It would be wrong, however, to locate the cult of childhood entirely among the wives of the middle and upper middle classes. As the critic for the *Lady's Pictorial* wrote in 1890, the playgoing public could no longer be 'spoken of as a body of people stirred by the same tastes and filled with the same desires'. Rather, it was broken into sections, so that those who hungered after 'intellectual exercises' and for lack of an Ibsen patronised Sydney Grundy, had their counterparts in that other section 'which takes delight in watching children on the stage'. The different types of production at matinees, whether of genteel domestic dramas or of sentimental child-centred plays, were evidence that matinee audiences were also diverse in their tastes.

Likewise, there are indications that children on the stage were an attraction to groups other than middle and upper middle class wives. The enthusiastic reception given in Oxford to the juvenile prodigy Josef Hofmann, for example, recalls Edgar Jepson's remark about the cult of children among Oxford undergraduates in the late 1880s, though this was said to be centred on little girls, often the daughters of dons, who would be taken on the river and invited to tea by the undergraduates. 'Little girls', adds Mark Longaker,

were the mascots, they appeared at student rituals and celebrations, and they were generally held in an esteem which Oxford knew neither before or since.  

Jepson and Longaker both wrote apropos of the poet Ernest Dowson. On his arrival in London in the late 1880s, Dowson enthusiastically continued to express the interest in children which had been fashionable at Oxford both by his devotion to the cult of child stars like Minnie Terry and by his fateful love for the child of a Soho restaurateur. While it is difficult to judge how far he was representative

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of young middle class men, it should at least be noted that his interest in children was shared by a number of his fellow writers and artists, including R.L. Stevenson, Whistler, George Meredith, and even, for a time, Aubrey Beardsley and Max Beerbohm, the heirs, in this respect, of an older generation including Poe, Ruskin and Lewis Carroll.

The remarkable success of plays like Bootle's Baby (1888), Little Lord Fauntleroy (1888), and, later, Bluebell in Fairyland (1901) and, of course, Peter Pan (1904) demonstrated the occasional enthusiasm of a broad section of the middle and upper middle class play-going public for children on the stage, and for the dramatisation of themes identified with childhood. Whether such enthusiasm normally transcended these class lines is doubtful, but a hint that it may have done so from time to time is offered by the success of Frances Hodgson Burnett's one-act play Editha's Burglar (1887) with a broad cross-section of the theatre-going public as a whole.

One of the earliest and most important plays in the first phase of the child cult, Editha's Burglar featured an encounter between the self-consciously innocent seven-year-old Editha and a burglar whom she charms into stealing her things but leaving alone those belonging to her sick mother. The play is interesting both for the range of critical approval it received and for the varied public with whom it prospered in varied forms over the next ten years. Warmly greeted even by papers which, like the Era, were not normally sympathetic to performing children, it also succeeded in less likely quarters. Far from being performed at matinees, for example, it was


83. Lady's Pictorial, 5 November 1887, p.479; The Theatre, 1 December 1887, p.330; Era, 5 November 1887, p.14; World, 2 November 1887, p.18 and 16 April 1890, p.27.
the curtain-raiser to a traditional urban melodrama, *Shadows of a Great City*, implying a very different audience from that which would have seen it in the afternoons. As a curtain-raiser, of course, its run was largely dependant on that of the main play, but its reputation was nonetheless made as part of this programme, and can be gauged by the number of new versions it inspired.

In 1890 Mrs Burnett herself incorporated the idea into a three-act drama, at first also entitled *Editha's Burglar*, then revised and renamed *Nixie*. With little Lucy Webling in the title role, the play hinged on a more or less conventional tale of attempts by a lover of Nixie's mother from the days before her marriage to tempt her into adultery. While most critics rejected the extra material thus added to the story, they were agreed on the virtues of the quaintly assertive and protective child around which *Editha's Burglar* in its original form was written. As the *Era* put it, Nixie was 'the most precocious child ever born into this wicked world'.

She is the little housekeeper. She is papa's pet and mama's guardian, and although we may find fault with Nixie, we would see it again if only for the pleasure of seeing Nixie, as represented by Miss Lucy Webling, order tea, insist on the necessity of having water boiling, and serve it out for papa's refreshment.

The play's lasting popularity not only with matinee audiences but also with the ordinary public was further indicated by the presentation of at least two later adaptations of it, one, *The Burglar's Baby* at the Lyric, Ealing in 1887, and the other a sketch called *Trixie's Trust* at the Bedford Music Hall in 1899.

While particular plays were thus manifestly able from time to time to draw large and varied numbers of the theatre-going public, the cult of childhood was on the whole centred among the leisured class of middle and upper middle class wives. In the following two chapters I shall be concerned with the imagery which was typical of

84. World, 16 April 1890, p.27; Lady's Pictorial, 12 April 1890, p.533; Daily Telegraph, 8 April 1890, p.2; *The Theatre*, 1 May 1890, pp.261-62.

the rapid acceleration of interest in children on the stage for which these female recruits to the theatre public were largely responsible. The new interest in childhood on the stage falls naturally into two phases, each characterised by distinct imagery. While recognising the dangers in a characterisation too sharply drawn, I shall argue that theatre in the period from about 1880 to about 1891, and most especially from about 1887 to 1891, reveals a sentimental response to children as miniature participants in adult life and a strong sense of childhood as picturesque. From the mid-1890s on, however, the trend was toward a sense of the integrity of the child's sensibility, a nostalgia for childhood as a lost world of vitality and imagination, and a growing preoccupation with what was termed 'child life' culminating in the notion of the child as the hero of his own imagination exemplified in Peter Pan. The first of these phases, from the late 1880s to the early 1890s, will be discussed in the next chapter in relation to its characteristic family setting and the roles of two of the most important child stars of the period, Minnie Terry and Vera Beringer.
As I have suggested in the previous chapter, the cult of childhood among the middle and upper middle classes can be divided into two phases which ran between about 1887 and 1891, and about 1898 and the end of our period. While it is likely that the audience for plays reflecting both phases remained basically the same, if broadened in the later period, the themes which characterised them, and the images of children enacted in them, were quite distinct.

Recent investigation of this preoccupation has centered on the literature of the period, and it is on the basis of this research that it has been said that late Victorian literature was in the grip of a cult of children, a term also used by contemporaries. The exact meaning of the phrase however becomes diffuse when its use is examined in any detail. Peter Coveney, for example, speaks of a 'cult of the child' in which

Writers begin to draw on the general sympathy for childhood that has been diffused, but, for patently subjective reasons, their interest serves not to integrate childhood and adult experience, but to create a barrier of nostalgia and regret between childhood and the potential responses of adult life.\(^1\)

In contrast to this sense of loss and nostalgia, Peter Green writes rather of children as being treated as objects of sentimental self-indulgence:

The child cult of the later nineteenth century was not based on a sympathy for, or consideration of children as they really were, on their own terms. It had far more selfish motives: relief of guilt, gratification of the ego. Children became the ideal symbol of their elders' glutinous yearning for purity. There was no question of communication or understanding: the traffic of sentiment all went one way. Children were regarded as objects - dolls, pets, almost mythic symbols, which reflected nothing but the magnanimity and tenderness of their elders.\(^2\)

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Quite different things are in question here. The relevance of either generalisation would depend on whether one had in mind writers of an earlier period like Frances Hodgson Burnett and Mrs Molesworth, or those of a later one like Kenneth Grahame and J.M. Barrie. Coveney's 'nostalgia' tends to encompass the latter, Green's 'glutinous yearning for purity' the former. Clearly, Coveney and Green are referring to two separate and different strains of thought involving separate and different writers and thus also different qualities of feeling. Closer examination of the phenomenon as an historical event in fact reveals a need to locate the kinds of interest of which Green and Coveney write in their proper periods and in the groups of which they were most characteristic. More particularly, there is a need from the historian's point of view to define in terms of more general social relevance the models of childhood which were implied by interests of these kinds.

In generating the climate of ideas described by Green an interest in the family was central, heightened as it was by the growing elaborateness of domestic life, the ideal of conspicuous leisure to which increasing numbers of women aspired, and the incorporation of children in it. With the importance of women in the new audiences these gave rise to a preoccupation with the family in plays for the middle and upper middle classes, in which family or equivalent settings were seen as appropriate environments for the sentimental interaction of adult and child characters in child-oriented plays during these years. Children were therefore seen in the context of adult life, and the child's place in that context was defined in terms either of its sympathetic or benevolent influence on adults or of its role as the focus of adult devotion. In either case a corresponding emphasis in representations of children lay in their picturesqueness of manner, speech and appearance. In establishing these points, this chapter will point to the family as a characteristic theme in middle and upper middle class theatre and to the child stereotypes to which it gave rise as these were exemplified in roles played by two of the most important of the child stars of the period, Minnie Terry and Vera Beringer. In so doing, it is appropriate to begin by discussing the place of the family in melodrama, in order to show by comparison the distinctive importance of the theme in theatre for the upper social classes.
While domestic themes are common in melodrama, plays of this kind are not generally concerned with the nature of family life. More often, and particularly in urban melodrama, the family is shown as a haven of security in which the hero and heroine are found at the beginning of the play, from which they are taken in the course of it, and to which they return at the end. The happiness of domestic life is an axiom of melodrama, like the virtues of the rustic village from which and to which the central characters in melodrama often follow a similar migratory route, via troubles and trials in the city. One play which shows the equivalence of the family and rural life as tokens of security and happiness is Henry Arthur Jones's *Hoodman Blind* (1885). The hero, Jack Yeulet, is tricked into casting his wife and child out of the house, so Nancy and the child go to London where Jack, repentant, seeks them in vain. Finally, all return to the village where they are reunited, having recovered not only their domestic bliss but also the equivalent security of a rural life.  

While less concerned with an idyllic rural existence, the same author's *The Silver King* (1882) imbues the family with more powerful, less conventional symbolic significance, which clearly touched a chord in audiences drawn from all classes, amplifying the sense of the family as a safe haven from trouble, a symbol of tranquillity. Young Denver, tricked into thinking himself a murderer, prepares to flee and bury himself far from the world he has known. In doing so he is cutting himself off from his wife and children of whom he no longer considers himself worthy:

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DENVER: ... the children, my littl Cissy, my little Ned, dare I give them one kiss before I go?
NELLY: Yes, come, they are asleep.
DENVER: (going forward towards the door, pauses and
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3. For further discussion of *Hoodman Blind* and a full description of the plot see Chapter 4, pp.70-73. Other plays on the loss and recovery of domestic happiness include Robert Buchanan's *Alone in London* (1885), *A Woman's Revenge* (1893), and *Master and Man* (1889), among many others.

4. The *Silver King* was one of the most successful melodramas of the early 1880s, running for 289 performances and attracting in the region of 300,000 attendances during its first run. It was widely praised in the press; even The Times reviewer, normally quick to attack melodramas, welcomed it as a change from Sims's 'sordid realism' and a return to 'old fashioned sentiment'. (November 20, 1882.)
retreats in front of table) No, no, I am not
fit to kiss them. Oh! Nelly, when they grow
up and ask for their father, what will you say?⁵

Denver then goes to the American silver mines, whence he eventually
returns with his fortune made and his hair turned silver by his
sufferings. Seeking out his family, he enters onto the stage alone
to the accompaniment of a hymn, a kind of blessing on him, sung by
schoolchildren, including his own children, in the schoolhouse (off).
The hymn dwells on the theme of expiation. It is a token of Denver's
coming rehabilitation into the respectability of family life which
the children symbolise:

What though my sins as mountains rise
And reach and swell to Heaven
Yet Mercy is above the skies
I may be still forgiven.⁶

By diligent investigation he establishes his own innocence, not only
before the law but, more importantly, in his own eyes, becoming once
again a fit husband for his wife and a fit father for his children.
Having discovered the truth, he prepares to resume his place in the
bosom of his family, which thereby is shown to represent the security
and happiness he has lacked for so long, as well as the respectability
and self-respect he has long since thought gone for ever. In this
his children figure largely as both the symbols and the reward of
the domestic virtues:

DENVER: Innocent! Innocent! There is no word but
that! Do you hear, all the world, I am
innocent! Do you hear, Nell, my wife, I am
innocent. I am fit to clasp you again, fit
to hold my children in my arms and hear them
call me 'father' ...⁷

The relative moral intensity and sophistication of the play
assured it immense popularity among middle class audiences as well
as among the more humble classes who formed the traditional melodrama
public. Nonetheless, it was fundamentally a melodrama of the trad­
tional kind, not least in its treatment of the family. Like Hoodman

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⁵. H.A. Jones and H. Herman, The Silver King (1882), Act II, Sc.i.
⁶. Ibid., Act III, Sc.ii.
⁷. Ibid., Act V, Sc.i.
Blind and many others, the Silver King tells the story of a family broken up not by internal contradictions but by external circumstances, in this case villainy, and its eventual reunion. These two elements, the family scattered by external forces, and its eventual reunion after separation during most of the play, represent a characteristic theme in melodrama.

With the parents separated, the emotional centre of many melodramas lay not in a concern for family life but in the relationship between parent and child. Up to a point, indeed, parenthood is an equivalent theme in melodrama to the concern with the family in plays for more socially elevated audiences. Parent-child relationships of this kind could involve either the mother or the father, or, as happens from time to time, a father-figure or father-substitute. But the most traditional relationship of the kind was, as we have seen, that of the mother and child.

While the dramatic raison d'être of the mother and child remained the illustration of the mother's sacred love, the gradual social elevation of the central characters in West End melodrama brought a growing emphasis on their middle and upper middle class status. The comic man and woman to some extent underwent a similar social promotion, but not until the late 1890s. For the bulk of our period, therefore, there was a clear social gap between the hero and heroine, with her child, and the comic man and woman who remained representative of the majority of the melodrama public. The mainly humorous role of the comic man and woman precluded much dramatisation of sentimental parental values. Nevertheless, it is interesting to see in G.R. Sims and Wilson Barrett's The Golden Ladder (1887), for example, the extent to which these values were taken as appropriate to the higher social orders represented by the hero's family rather than to the more humble classes represented by the parallel family of the comic man.

The clergyman Frank Thornhill, his wife Lillian and their little

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8. See, for example, The Trumpet Call (1891), The Great World of London (1898), and When Darkness Falls; or, The Cry of the Children (1903).
daughter Lillie are forced to shelter with the comic family of Sam and Tilda Peckaby and their daughter Victoria Alexandra. Some of the differences between the two families, especially those dramatised by the children, arise purely from their different social status. Thus when Lillie sees Victoria cooking a bloater for her father's dinner and wants to know how to do the same for her father, Sam Peckaby tells her:

**SAM:** Lawk-a-mercy. Now look at that. You may go, my dear, but your papa won't ever want a bloater. He'll be a bishop and have hot joints for his dinner every day.\(^9\)

On the other hand, when Lillian is falsely accused of murder and sent to prison, little Lillie goes into a decline, and thereby reveals a sensibility more delicate than could be expected of the robustly comic, but sympathetic, Victoria. In an exchange which implies that such an illness would not happen to her, Victoria tells her father how she has been in to check that Lillie has not been awakened by the organ-grinder who has just passed the window:

**VICTORIA:** ... I went in on tip toe and had a peep at Lillie - and she put out her little hand and took mine and pressed it, and I began to cry - and then the nurse said I must go or I should upset Lillie - as if I could help it.

**SAM:** Of course you couldn't. 'Arts ain't 'ard bake, and to see a dear little creature as she is a'lyin' like that 'ud melt a stone.\(^10\)

For her part, Lillian, in time-honoured fashion, is frantic when she learns her child is ill, and effects her escape. Villains try to stop her from seeing Lillie, but Frank bids them desist in language which would seem strange if used of the more matter-of-fact Tilda Peckaby:

**FRANK:** No power on earth shall prevent that poor mother seeing her child. Stand out of the way (SEVERIN leaves door). Go, go, Lillian to your darling! (LILLIAN going, calls out, 'Lillie'. LILLIE heard outside, 'Mother! Mother! At last! At last!')\(^11\)

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10. Ibid., Act IV, Sc.i.
11. Ibid., Act II.
At the same time the scene shows that what is being demonstrated is not the integrity of the family but the mutual devotion of mother and child, of which the father is no more than a spectator.

All the same, the bond between father and child had real dramatic potential which was realised in a number of plays of the period. Interestingly, several of these used the same situation, that of the daughter who unwittingly testifies against her father in court. Like many themes in late Victorian melodrama this has its origins in the 1870s. In this case, the source is probably a translation from the French entitled Proof, and first produced at the Adelphi in 1878. In the play's Prologue Pierre Loranée is convicted of the murder of his wife on the evidence of his little daughter, who is ignorant of the significance of her words. Pierre is sentenced to a lifetime's penal servitude, and the remainder of the piece concerns Adrienne's attempts to atone for her deed.

Proof ran an impressive 247 performances before a total audience of about 220,000. During the next twenty years a number of attempts were made to emulate its success with plays using the same situation. A Man's Shadow (1889) was one of these, and proved a highly successful vehicle for the child star Minnie Terry. The idea was reversed in Henry Pettitt's drama A Woman's Revenge (1893), so that a mother and not a father is convicted on a child's testimony, but the original notion was still grist to G.R. Sims's mill when he wrote The City of Pleasure (1895). In all of these much is made of the bond between father and daughter. Thus Pierre's double-edged parting words to Adrienne plague her until she meets him again years after: 'You have destroyed me, my darling - but I love you, I love you...'. And in a highly emotional court scene in A Man's Shadow little Suzanne refuses to speak at all, finally bursting into tears, while the judge

12. A Man's Shadow ran for 204 performances at the Haymarket, giving it a probable total audience of 142,000. Since stalls had replaced the pit at the Haymarket since 1879 it is likely that the bulk of the audience were from the middle and upper middle classes, as they would have been for other Haymarket productions during the period.

13. F. Burnand, Proof (1878), Prologue, Sc.ii.
in The City of Pleasure is so moved at the mutual grief of father and daughter that he begs the stricken man to let his child be taken away.14

In general, then, melodrama was concerned with relationships within the family rather than with family life itself. Situations in which characters were capable of virtuous as well as wrong actions, and the moral implications in the interaction of one person with another, were not appropriate material for its sharply distinguished categories of good and evil and its need for dramatic physical action. The growth of interest in family values and the nature of married life which was a defining feature of the dramatic revolution beginning with plays like Ariane (1888)15 and continuing with landmarks of the New Drama like A Doll's House (1891) and The Second Mrs Tanqueray (1893) was thus an event in the sub-culture of the middle and upper middle classes, and not in that of the upper working and lower middle classes who traditionally supported melodrama.

While children were not central to the dramatisation of the problems with which much of the New Drama was concerned, they nonetheless had a place in it which was established well before the late 1880s. The American Bronson Howard's The Old Love and the New, adapted for the English stage by James Albery in 1879, is evidence of this. Although in love with Harold Kenyon, Lilian marries John Stratton to save her father from ruin. Stratton discovers the truth about the arrangement only after Harold is killed in a duel in Paris. As an honourable man he decides the best course is for him to leave his wife and child and return only when asked. He goes to India where after three years Lilian dictates a letter to him through their little daughter Natalie, asking him to come back to them. Stratton reappears, but finds Lilian unable to unbend and express her true feelings for him directly. He believes her cold towards him, until Natalie writes to him again. The play ends with all three happily reunited.

15. See 'Five Years of Progress', W.A. Lewis Bettany's account of the origins of theatrical realism in The Theatre, 1 April 1894, pp.239-47.
Howard's *Young Mrs Winthrop* (1884) represents, as we have seen, a further exploration of the theme of the child as the bond between husband and wife, with its story of the husband and wife brought back from the brink of divorce by the memory of their child, killed by their neglect, itself the result of their distraction by business and social life respectively.

Sentiment of this kind was relatively unusual, however, until quite near the end of the 1880s when the fashion for performing children which affected music was felt in the theatre as well. It was registered in the greater number of children who acquired prominence on the stage as well as in an increase, particularly marked in 1888 and 1889, in plays with major child roles. By 1890, it had reached a point at which the *Lady's Pictorial* could declare, 'Whether artistic or inartistic, and boding good or evil to the stage, the craze for child actors is a widespread one and must be reckoned with'. While a variety of themes were explored in such plays, the child stereotypes which were, broadly speaking, most characteristic of these years emphasised both a sentimental interaction between adult and child in which the child was either the focus of adult devotion or the source of benevolent influence on adult life, and a picturesque-ness of children's manner, speech and appearance. The nature of the child roles involved, and, more importantly, the stereotyped characteristics of children which had the greatest appeal to middle and upper middle class audiences during these years, are best understood through a comparison of the major roles played by two children who were probably the best known child stars of the important years.

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16. These included: Vera Beringer, Minnie Terry, Gracie Murielle, Phoebe Carlo, Isa and Empsie Bowman, Irene Vanbrugh, Dot Hetherington, Nellie Bouvierie, Daisy Stratton, Leo Byrne and Lucy Webling. Adult actresses known for their representations of child roles during these years included Little Lotta, Ilena Norma, Annie Hughes, Alice Atherton, Rose Norreys, Edie King, Lillie Belmore and Gwendolen Hughes. While this thesis is a study of childhood on the theatrical stage, the high popularity of a number of child music hall stars during these years, like Sylvia Grey and Mabel Love, should also be borne in mind.

17. See Appendix 7, 'Plays with Major Child Roles, 1887-1891'.

between 1887 and 1891, and who also played most of the more significant roles for children during these years, Minnie Terry and Vera Beringer.

Of all the child actresses of this period, Vera Beringer was perhaps the one most closely associated with the matinee, and with the commercial exploitation of the fashion for children on the stage. While beginning her career in the relatively minor role of Jack in the traditional domestic melodrama Tares, it was as the star of The Real Little Lord Fauntleroy in 1888 that she could fairly be said to have helped establish one aspect of the child type which dominated the sense of childhood projected in the drama of the late 1880s and early 1890s, even though, due to the production of a pirated version of the story by E.V. Seebohm, she did not in the usual sense create the part. In Seebohm's version, Annie Hughes played Cedric Erroll, whose age was raised from seven to ten to accommodate her. Annie Hughes was more usually seen in the roles of young teenaged girls and critical praise of her performance was tempered by doubts as to whether she was not too old for the part. The controversy which had accompanied the production of Seebohm's play inevitably affected critical responses to it. With the notable exception of the Era's reviewer, who, on the appearance of Mrs Burnett's play stated a firm preference for the pirated version, most critics contrived to praise the play while condemning the adapter. 'Mr E.V. Seebohm', wrote Clement Scott, 'after the exercise of the utmost ingenuity, could not quite succeed in destroying the charm of Mrs Burnett's delightful and fanciful story'.

Others, like the critic for the Lady's Pictorial and William Archer in the World echoed his judgement while praising the performance of Annie Hughes in the title role.

Following on from the original book, both versions emphasised what was called Cedric's 'old fashioned' character. By this was meant a quality of precocious gravity and seriousness which is exemplified by the scene from Mrs Burnett's version in which he meets the Earl of Delincourt for the first time.

19. Daily Telegraph, 24 February 1888, p.3.
CEDRIC: (comes forward) Are you the Earl? I'm your grandson, you know, that Mr Havisham brought. I am Lord Fauntleroy (makes quaint little bow and holds out his hand). I hope you are very well. I am very glad to see you (crosses to EARL).

EARL: (staring at him as he shakes his hand) Glad to see me, are you? Thank you!

CEDRIC: You are quite welcome. Shall I sit down here? (sits on stool in front of table)

EARL: Yes. (aside) What an air the little beggar has! 22

Seriousness of this kind gained its sentimental effect in combination with Cedric's diminutive size and his precocious self assertion in adult company. It also lay in a quality of idealised childlike innocence and devotion, as in the close of Act I, after Mrs Erroll has been told Cedric is to be the Earl's heir and they are to live apart:

CEDRIC: Don't cry, Dearest! I will be as good an Earl as I can - and I shall always be your boy wherever I live. Don't cry any more! (clasps her neck)

(WARN CURTAIN)

MRS ERROLL: No, dear! It was only for a moment, and I will take my big boy in my arms and hold him - as I used when he was a baby - and we will pretend for a little while that there are no Earls and no castles, and that we are going to live in our dear little house together all our lives.

CEDRIC: (beginning to get sleepy) Yes - always - in our dear little house. (resting his head on her shoulder) I'm very tired, Dearest - I've had to think of so many things.

MRS ERROLL: Yes - darling! (strokes his hair - a little pause)

CEDRIC: (sleepily) You will live quite near me?

MRS ERROLL: (in a low voice) Yes.

CEDRIC: And see me - every day -

MRS ERROLL: Yes - darling.

(VERY SLOW CURTAIN)

CEDRIC: And you will say - 'God keep you all the night - and God bless you all the day?' (pause)

MRS ERROLL: God keep you all the night and God bless you all the day. (CEDRIC sighs softly and is asleep)

(CURTAIN)

22. Frances Hodgson Burnett, Little Lord Fauntleroy (French's Plays no.2196, 1900) Act II. Mrs Burnett's MS copy of the play in the Lord Chamberlain's Collection housed in the British Library is too difficult to read to be sure of accurate quotation, hence the use here of the published version.

23. Little Lord Fauntleroy (Burnett) Act I. This scene was singled out for special praise in the Lady's Pictorial (19 May 1888, p.547).
We should also note the nature of Cedric's role as a benevolent influence on the adult world. This was not a new idea, though unlike the pathetic image of the mother and child in melodrama which was nearly as old as the form itself, the notion of the child as an elevating influence on its elders seems to have emerged relatively late. In literature, George Boas places its origins as late as 1861, with George Eliot's *Silas Marner*, and the redemption of old Silas by the mere presence of little Eppie in his home. 24 As far as the theatre was concerned, the first example of such a situation was probably in W.S. Gilbert's melodrama *Dan'l Druce, Blacksmith* (1876), in which Hermann Vezin achieved a tour de force as a misanthropic miser humanised by a child, Dorothy, left as a baby in his care. The child grows into a paradigm of artless grace, played with enormous success by Marion Terry. 25

Dorothy established as something of a stereotype the idea of the child whose inherent virtue enables her to elevate those around her not by what she does but by what she is. In this she represents a rather more positive kind of virtue than do children like Lillie Thornhill in Sims's *The Golden Ladder* whose virtue is entirely passive and linked to her mother's, or like Suzanne in *A Man's Shadow*, whose innocence is powerless to help her father. Other plays in which the same kind of virtuous influence is exercised by a child over a father-figure include *Gaffer Jarge*, a one-act drama of 1884, in which an old man is prevented from destroying a paper invalidating his title to his house by the silent presence of his grand-daughter, and *Hans the Boatman* (1887) which moves the idea step further, hinting at the power of innocence to heal. Thus old Hans, blinded by an explosion, is embraced by his child who cries, 'Don't you know your little boy? See! the dog does'. The old man tears the bandage from his eyes and finds he has miraculously recovered his sight. 26

25. 'Miss Terry certainly shares with Mr Vezin the honours of the evening' (Era, 17 September 1876.) The play ran at the Haymarket for 119 performances, suggesting a total audience in its first run of 130,000.
Distinguished though he is by his male sex and by the essentially familial context of his influence, little Lord Fauntleroy clearly belongs in this tradition. From the point of view at least of the child, the three main characters in the play constitute a family unit, and both dramatic versions of the story emphasise his role in uniting it. 'I have been an obstinate old fool', the Earl tells Mrs Erroll in Mrs Burnett's play, 'and have treated you badly - but I am an old fool and the boy is the object of my life - Treat me as well as you can for the boy's sake'. In Seebohm's version, Cedric's intervention is even more decisive: Mrs Erroll, disguised as the boy's nurse, falls out with the Earl who orders her from the house, and Cedric declares his intention of going with her, forcing the 'nurse' to confess she is her charge's mother. Reconciliation follows. At the same time, it is a measure of the child's central role in the play that while the mutual devotion between Cedric and his mother exemplified by the scene at the end of Act I, quoted above, harks back to some extent to the traditional idea of the mother and child as a unit, facing adversity together, the relationship in Little Lord Fauntleroy is seen overwhelmingly from the child's point of view. It is Cedric who expresses his love and his mother who responds. And as the Earl is brought into the circle, he and Mrs Erroll form a frame through which the activities of Cedric can be viewed.

Much of the sentimentality in the role of Cedric Erroll lies in the incongruity between his precocious wisdom and the childlike innocence and devotion on which Mrs Burnett simultaneously insists. Critics like the reviewer of the Seebohm version in the Illustrated London News recognised this tension between Cedric's childish character and his pivotal function in the play as a guide to his elders. He was, the reviewer wrote, a 'strange old-world child', a 'curious, argumentative little being', mixing 'his innocent prattle with such sound commonsense'. Clement Scott in the Daily Telegraph concurred, describing Fauntleroy as 'a strange child with an old head on young shoulders'.

27. Little Lord Fauntleroy (Burnett, 1888), Act III.
28. Little Lord Fauntleroy (Seebohm, 1888), Act II.
30. Daily Telegraph, 24 February 1888, p.3.
Fauntleroy's prematurely adult gravity and seriousness were a distinctive feature of the play and were not reproduced exactly in other child-centred plays. In other respects, however, it is helpful to see Little Lord Fauntleroy in context with a play of the previous year, Editha's Burglar, since, as the earliest major plays in the first phase of the child cult, both contributed substantially to defining in theatrical terms the notion of childhood which underlay it.

Essentially, as William Archer pointed out, Little Lord Fauntleroy was built on the same idea as Editha's Burglar, 'that childhood hath charms to soothe the savage breast, whether of earls or of burglars. In both its forms', he added, 'the idea is eminently dramatic'. Editha's Burglar was an adaptation of Frances Hodgson Burnett's story, first published in St Nicholas in 1881, concerning seven year old Editha whose mother is ill and whose stepfather Edgar has to leave the house for a short while. In his absence a burglar, Jack Leary, enters and is discovered by the little girl. Out of sympathy with the difficulties of a burglar's life she helps him to load his sack with the family's possessions, begging him only to spare her mother's things and to take her own instead. While she is collecting them the burglar sees a picture of Editha's mother and in her recognises his own former wife. Edgar returns and in a scene described by Archer as 'a piece of absurd and puerile melodrama', the burglar reveals himself as Edgar's companion of former days and Editha's real father. He tries to claim the child but is persuaded by Edgar that she is better left where she is. The burglar leaves, promising, by Editha's example, to reform his wicked ways.

The appeal of the piece lay in the rather self-conscious innocence of Editha, displayed early in the play in her discussion with Edgar on burglars, a discussion which also captures the spirit of her dealings with the real burglar later on:

EDGAR: ... Don't puzzle your little brain too much - never mind about the burglars, Editha.

32. Ibid.
EDITHA: Well, I can't help thinking about them, a little - it seems to me that there must be some good burglars - And I can't help being sorry, even for the bad - you see they must have to be up all night, and out in the rain sometimes, and they can't help not having had advantages, if I meet a burglar, I am going to give him French lessons.33

Later she explains to the burglar that her mother is ill and not to be disturbed, heightening the sentimental whimsicality of the situation:

JACK: And h'are you all that's left to protect her?
EDITHA: Yes - and you see I couldn't hurt you - I'm too little. I'm only seven - and a little over - and I'm not going to scream - because that would waken mama - and that's just what I don't want to do.34

As we have seen, the play is interesting both for the range of critical approval it attracted and for the varied public with whom it prospered in different forms over the next ten years. For our purposes at this point, however, it is important for its contribution with Little Lord Fauntleroy to the notion of childhood underlying the child cult as it began in the late 1880s since, taken together as a sentimental image of the child, certain aspects of Editha and Cedric as they were presented on the stage stand out clearly as elements of a stereotype. Both are placed firmly in a domestic and family context, and both, while ostensibly dependant on their elders, act in a way which at the same time reverses their own roles and those of the adults on whom they are supposed to depend and exemplifies their own childish innocence. Thus Editha seeks to protect her mother's possessions from the burglar and Cedric acts as mediator between his mother and the Earl. Placed in a world populated by adults, therefore, both are yet at the centre of it and their actions determine those of the adults around them. To this extent, both embody a form of sentimentality which insists on the essential incongruity of such a role.

At the same time, the distinctiveness of the child in such circumstances is heightened by various dramatic devices which also

33. Cleary, op. cit.
34. Ibid.
reinforce the child's centrality in the play and are instrumental in creating images of the child which are characteristic of the period. This is particularly the importance of the Fauntleroy suit in Little Lord Fauntleroy, which is a token of Mrs Burnett's commitment in both the play and the book to manufacturing a pictorial as well as a moral image of her child hero. So far as the book is concerned, she makes her purposes clear in her account of the genesis of the Fauntleroy character, constantly stressing the importance of poses and attitudes in her conscious idealisation of Fauntleroy's model, her own son Lionel.

All his attitudes and movements were picturesque. When he stood before one to listen he fell unconsciously into some quaint attitude; when he talked he became ingenuously dramatic; when he sat down to converse he mentally made a droll or delightful and graceful little picture of himself. 35

On the stage as in the original story of course, the Fauntleroy suit facilitated this picturesque effect, and at least in the case of Annie Hughes it was evidently strikingly well achieved. The critic for the Lady's Pictorial, for example, referred to her 'lovable and picturesque presentment of the gentle little hero', 36 while the reviewer for the Illustrated London News called her Cedric 'one of the prettiest pictures that the stage has seen for many a long day'. 37 A similar effect is achieved in Editha's Burglar by the dramatic contrast between the villainous burglar and the little girl in her nightgown.

Mrs Burnett's Little Lord Fauntleroy enjoyed a run of over fifty matinees before going on tour. Vera Beringer alone played the role of Cedric between 600 and 700 times, 38 while others, like Lucy Webling, also became notable exponents of the part. When to this run is added that of Seebohm's version the total comes to something over 100 matinee performances. The scale of this achievement becomes clearer when one recalls that a run of fifty matinee performances was

35. Frances Hodgson Burnett, 'How Fauntleroy Occurred' in Piccino and Other Stories (London 1894), p.188.
36. Lady's Pictorial, 3 March 1888, p.220.
regarded as exceptional. For its part, as we have seen, Editha's *Burglar* and versions of it proved popular not only with middle and upper middle class audiences but also with the patrons of melodrama and music hall.

As a major play, however, the success of *Little Lord Fauntleroy* emphasised the commercial potential of the matinee and indicated the size of the audience possible for a child-centred drama. Seen with Mrs Burnett's other success, *Editha's Burglar*, it also established the main elements of the child stereotype most characteristic of plays for middle and upper middle class audiences, a stereotype which stressed relations between adult and child and the picturesqueness of children as participants in adult life.

Vera Beringer's role as Cedric Erroll launched her on a brief career in which she attempted to exploit the fashion for children of which *Little Lord Fauntleroy* was both a symptom and a source. While she continued to appear in matinees, however, the roles she was given to play were inconsistent with that of Cedric Erroll which had proved so popular, and she was unable to project a public personality which was sufficiently sympathetic for her to capitalise on her earlier triumph.

She next appeared in the dual principal role in her mother's adaptation of *The Prince and the Pauper*, produced at a matinee in 1890. The play suffered by being an attempt to exploit the market revealed by *Little Lord Fauntleroy* which was overambitious, too obvious and too different from the earlier play. Clearly, indeed too clearly for Clement Scott, *The Prince and the Pauper* was intended to repeat the great days of 1888. 'We obtain a *Little Lord Fauntleroy* once in a new moon', he wrote, 'but that being over is it worth while to trade still further on an exceptional success?'

The thinking which lay behind *The Prince and the Pauper* was all the more obvious for the faults in its production. The play required two children who not only resembled each other closely but were also capable of acting to a very high standard. Vera Beringer's co-star

was Alfred Field-Fisher. Unfortunately, as Scott pointed out, the two children were not in the least alike, and matters were made worse by the fact that they changed roles from scene to scene:

First Miss Beringer is the Pauper, then the Prince, Master Fisher is first Prince, then Pauper, and in the end Prince once more, till the confusion, save to the experienced eye, is complete. 40

Furthermore it was apparent that the part was rather beyond Vera Beringer's abilities, and that she was in any case rather under-rehearsed for it. 41

Her failure to capitalise effectively on her success as Cedric Erroll in her next role lay not, as in The Prince and the Pauper, in careless production, but in the character she was given to play. As the critic for the Saturday Review put it, it was unfortunate 'that Miss Vera Beringer should always play unpleasing parts'. 42

The role was that of Aphrodite Dodge, a formidable American twelve year old, in Mrs Beringer's co-adaptation of That Girl (1890). Aphrodite helps to ensure that the gentle heroine, Iris Wentworth, marries the hero rather than the villain. At the same time, she carries on her own romance with a diffident and aristocratic English boy, Harold Leigh. Something of the nature of the character is apparent in this exchange with the heroine:

APHRODITE (to IRIS): That's a new frock you've got on.
IRIS: Yes, do you like it?
APHRODITE: Ain't bad for a Britisher, ain't got enough colour in it though. Not enough trimming on. You should see Marmer when she's dressed to walk down Broadway - makes all the folks on the sidewalks stare.
IRIS: I'm sorry, my dear, it doesn't meet with your approval.
APHRODITE: Oh, you can't help it. All Englishwomen are dowdies. Marmer says so. 43

40. Daily Telegraph, 14 April 1890, p.3.
41. Lady's Pictorial, 19 April 1890, p.581; World, 16 April 1890, p.27 (Archer).
42. Saturday Review, 2 August 1890, p.140.
43. Mrs Oscar Beringer and H. Hamilton, That Girl (1890), Act II.
In effect, Aphrodite's role, like that of many of G.R. Sims's melodrama children, is to provide a measure of comic relief to the main drama. In addition to her conversations with adults, the vehicles for this are her romantic exchanges with Harold Leigh. Such child romances were well established as a theme in both areas of theatre. Romantic scenes between Jo and the little slavey Guster, though foreign to Dickens's conception, brought added pathos to Jo in 1876, for example, and Clement Scott used a similar scene in *Sister Mary* (1886) to the same end. G.R. Sims later put the idea to comic use with Dick and Titia in *The Gipsy Earl* (1898). Likewise, for polite audiences, Robert Buchanan varies his story of how the haughty heroine of *Lady Clare* (1883) learns to love her manufacturer husband with glimpses of a juvenile romance between Clare's spoilt but hearty fifteen year old brother Cecil and her husband's young sister Mary. W.S. Gilbert includes a similar scene in *Brantingham Hall* (1889), and the idea was also used in later child-centred plays like *The Holly Tree* (1891) and *The Little Squire* (1894).

Clearly, the nature of the relationship depicted varied greatly among these plays, but the role of such scenes as interludes in the main plot was generally plain. Equivalent scenes in *That Girl* between Aphrodite and Harold belong in this tradition, but the abrasive character of Aphrodite undermines the quality of pathos or comedy, or both, which are important to the role they are expected to play in the drama. This is apparent in Aphrodite's discussion with Harold of her mother and Captain Wentworth, the heroine's father:

APHRODITE: ... Say, Harold, that reminds me, I guess Marmer's mashed on the Captain, don't you?
HAROLD: I don't know. Why don't you say 'in love', Aphrodite? You 'mash' potatoes.
APHRODITE: So you do gentlemen, when you know how. It's just as easy. See how I've done with you.
HAROLD: But I'm not mashed.
APHRODITE: Oh, yes you air. You think I'm pretty, don't you? (HAROLD nods) And nice?
HAROLD: Sometimes.
APHRODITE: And you tell me how to speak, and what's like a lady, and that shows you think about me. And when a gentleman thinks about a young lady, he's half way to being mashed.44

44. Beringer and Hamilton, *op. cit.*, Act II.
Aphrodite's brash independence and self assertion were not popular with the critics. In the opinion of the Era's reviewer, Mrs Beringer and her collaborator Henry Hamilton had overshot their mark with Aphrodite 'and instead of making her amusing had made her an impertinence and a nuisance'.\(^{45}\) Cecil Howard in The Theatre agreed, blaming Mrs Beringer for weakening an otherwise promising play by writing up the part of Aphrodite Dodge, 'who has not one redeeming point but is simply obtrusive, disagreeable and wearying'.\(^{46}\) For his part, the critic for the Saturday Review could only mourn the talent wasted on such a role.\(^{47}\)

I have suggested earlier that the success of Little Lord Fauntleroy, and to a lesser extent, that of Editha's Burglar, established a model for the stage child which emphasises both a context of adult life in which the child is a sympathetic and benevolent influence, and a strong element of the picturesque in the stage image of the child which is presented. Clearly, neither of Vera Beringer's major roles after Little Lord Fauntleroy was based on such a model, and neither of them could be counted a success. Much of the responsibility for this lay with her mother who failed to appreciate what lay behind the success of Little Lord Fauntleroy, and who was largely instrumental in creating the roles her daughter subsequently played. Mrs Beringer may have been further at fault in rushing the productions with which she was involved. But it is also likely that Vera Beringer's own projected style and personality were important in denying her the pre-eminence she seemed likely to acquire after Little Lord Fauntleroy, and that they provide a measure of definition to what was not considered acceptable in a child on the stage.

Most reviewers agreed that she was a 'clever' performer, but she nonetheless attracted occasional remarks which were sharply critical, and which, standing out from the general approval, are probably more revealing of her true acting style. This was particularly true of reviews appearing in the Era. That of Little Lord Fauntleroy, for example, acknowledged that her Cedric was 'for a little girl of her age, a very clever performance indeed, but it lacked inflection, charm, softness and poetry'. In her precociousness,

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45. Era, 2 August 1890, p.9.
46. The Theatre, 1 September 1890, p.133.
47. Saturday Review, 2 August 1890, p.140.
'Miss Beringer reminded us much of an American child; and was by so much the less agreeable to our taste'. By comparison, Annie Hughes's representation of the part was much more 'winsome and tender'. Vera Beringer's rather unsympathetic stage personality was probably seen at its worst in *That Girl*, giving rise to Cecil Howard's criticism in *The Theatre* that she 'certainly did not attempt to soften any of the repulsiveness of the character'. Her inability to pronounce the letter 'r' was denounced by the *Era* critic as affectation when she played the part of Cedric Erroll and in *The Prince and the Pauper* as a disability in need of cure. The vicissitudes of Vera Beringer's career arose partly from her mother's direction and partly from her own acting style, which critics, when they rebuked her for lack of softness and winsomeness, were tending to evaluate in terms of the image of the child which her own success as Little Lord Fauntleroy had shown to be appropriate to the time. That the popular image of the stage child was of significance for the success or failure of young actresses like her can be further shown by looking at the child who most nearly represented that image during the period: not Vera Beringer but Ellen Terry's niece Minnie, who has been called 'the greatest child actress of the age'. In order to explore more fully the image of childhood which lay behind the preoccupation with children during these years it is helpful at this point to examine Minnie Terry's career.

Comparison between Minnie Terry and Vera Beringer is made simpler by the conjunction, at least in the early stages, of their major roles. Thus a few weeks before Vera Beringer's appearance as Jack in *Tares*, in January 1888, Minnie Terry made her debut in an original role as the child who recalls her mother to virtue as she

53. Her first appearance 'on any stage' was as Georgie in *Frou-Frou* at the National Standard Theatre, Bishopsgate on 16 November 1885, at the age of three. She repeated the performance at the Crystal Palace and at a special matinee at the Haymarket later in the same year (*The Theatre*, 1 November 1889, p.272.)
is about to run off with her husband's partner in Robert Buchanan's Partners. With its comparatively humble central character, the rector's daughter, Margaret Gyde, its heavy emphasis on her side of the relationship with the child, and its highly traditional adventures, Rachel Denison, Tares was a comparatively old-fashioned play in which the child played a minor part. This was not so of Partners.

In the absence of her older, German husband, Claire Borgfeldt is about to allow herself to be swept into eloping with his young and foolish partner Charles, when in a scene which is a classic of its kind, the child unconsciously intervenes:

CHARLES: Ah, no, you love me. I have sacrificed all for your sake. My darling, I have won you - and now no power on earth can take you from me! (As she lies in his arms as if fascinated, CHILD cries off)

CHILD: Mamma! Mamma!

CLAIRE: Ah! (frees herself with a cry)

CHARLES: It is only the child -

CLAIRE: My child! - Go, go! She is coming -

CHILD: Mamma - (CHARLES moves quickly up to window) Mamma!

CLAIRE: Go - go - or I shall hate you! (CHARLES passes out) (CLAIRE closes window and stands clutching curtains as GRETCHEN enters in nightdress)

CHILD: Mamma! I have come to say goodnight! (CLAIRE, with low cry, totters down and kneels, convulsively embracing GRETCHEN. Enter ALICE with light.)

QUICK ACT DROP

When Borgfeldt returns, however, he finds both the firm facing ruin through Charles's irresponsible speculations, and anonymous letters accusing his young partner of making love to his wife. He sends her away, sells his possessions to help the firm, and demotes himself to cashier as an act of penance. He and Gretchen are next seen in reduced circumstances, Gretchen in a wheelchair, pining, as her nurse says, for 'a mother's love'. Finally, Claire is able to explain to Borgfeldt how Gretchen's intervention saved her from temptation.

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54. The review of the play in the Lady's Pictorial, indeed, does not mention the child at all (4 February 1888, p.115).

55. Robert Buchanan, Partners (1888), Act II.
The reconciliation is sealed when Gretchen tells her father, 'Papa - speak to Mamma!' Husband and wife sink sobbing into each other's arms.56

Partners includes much domestic detail. It is in fact a celebration of the family in which the child is shown to be an important influence on adult life. In this sense, the play is a more significant representative of the theatrical child cult than Tares which harks back much more strongly to earlier models in domestic melodrama and puts relatively little stress on the role of the child.

Though reasonably popular with audiences,57 Partners did not attract much praise from the critics as a play. In the Daily Telegraph it was described as a 'curious and perverse treatment of the simplest possible story that ever occurred to novelist or dramatist'.58 The critic for the Pall Mall Gazette found it 'long ... and extremely depressing',59 while its review in the Lady's Pictorial declared that it 'somehow fails to interest greatly'.60 At the same time, the character of Gretchen, who does not appear in Daudet's original story, was accounted one of the play's principal attractions, not least because of its exponent, Minnie Terry. Given the play's poor reception by the critics, it is possible that Minnie Terry's success contributed substantially to that of the drama as a whole. By contrast with the cerebral quality the critics detected in Vera Beringer's performance as Jack,61 Minnie Terry was described as

56. Buchanan, Partners, op. cit., Act V.
57. Buchanan's niece and biographer reports that he had 'no little success' with the play (Jay, op. cit., p.241.)
58. Daily Telegraph, 1 June 1888, p.3.
59. Pall Mall Gazette, 6 January 1888, p.6.
60. Lady's Pictorial, 14 January 1888, p.47.
61. Clement Scott found her 'clever and natural' (Daily Telegraph 1 February 1888, p.3), while the Era reviewer described her as 'clever and intelligent' (4 February 1888, p.8). Similar epithets were applied to her performances of later roles.
'charmingly natural and winning', 'natural, innocent and pretty', 'delightfully winsome and natural' and as 'very naturally' filling the role of Gretchen. Her acceptance of the part effectively prevented her from playing the role of Jack in Tares, which she was offered before it was given to Vera Beringer. Gretchen was, however, a role much more in keeping with the model of childhood established in Little Lord Fauntleroy. Like Cedric Erroll, she is described as seven years old and 'old-fashioned'. Again like Cedric, she is the centre of attention when she is on the stage, and her intervention, like his winning charm, is the pivot of the play, and places her in something of the same position as her mother's protector. In this way the reversal of roles which is a feature of Little Lord Fauntleroy is hinted at if not clearly developed.

At the same time the role of Gretchen shows a number of different emphases from that of Cedric. It is, for example, on a smaller scale, so that the part, while central, is not as large. Again, Gretchen is less assertive, and less obviously picturesque in conception. Her sentimental appeal lies more in her unconscious innocence, powerful, of course, in its own right, than in the more deliberate assertion of virtue which is characteristic of Cedric Erroll. Differences of this kind point to a quality of childhood characteristic of Minnie Terry's roles which differed in some significant respects from the more assertive conception embodied in Cedric Erroll.

From Partners Minnie Terry went to the role which was to be her greatest success, that of Mignon in Bootle's Baby (1888). The play was an adaptation by the stage manager Hugh Moss of John Strange Winter's story of the same name. The original story was

62. Lady's Pictorial, 14 January 1888, p.47.
63. Daily Telegraph, 1 June 1888, p.3.
64. Era, 7 January 1888, p.8.
65. The Theatre, 1 November 1889, p.272.
66. Ibid.
almost as well known \(^{68}\) as that of *Little Lord Fauntleroy*. Certainly, it was familiar enough for the critics for both *The Theatre* \(^{69}\) and the *Lady's Pictorial* \(^{70}\) to omit their usual summary of the plot from their reviews. It is a simple if in most respects a conventional tale. Helen Grace and the wicked Captain Gavor Gilchrist have been secretly married but Gilchrist refuses to acknowledge the marriage. Helen bears a child, Mignon, and falls into poverty. Meaning to leave the baby with its father, Helen goes to the barracks but places the child in the wrong room, that of the huge and genial Captain Algernon Ferrers, 'Bootles' to his friends, who adopts the little girl. Mignon becomes the pet of the regiment. Gilchrist continues to refuse to acknowledge Helen as his wife, but is killed in a riding accident. Helen, however, has always loved Bootles and they marry.

Unlike Cedric, Editha and Gretchen, Mignon does not play an active role in the plot. At the same time, she assumes a position of easy familiarity and mutual affection with the officers who surround her, not only with Bootles, but also, for example, with the comic Captain Lucy, with whom she carries on a mock romance.

Here they discuss a letter in which she is thinking of sending her love to Helen Grace:

**MIGNON:** I—I shan't send that letter.

**LUCY:** No? Look here, Mignon my sweetheart, — I — I shall get jealous, you know — if you go — sending — er — your love in all directions like that — er —

**MIGNON:** Oh, you silly Lal.

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\(^{68}\) John Strange Winter (pseud., i.e. Henrietta Stannard) specialised in tales of military life and wrote a number of novels of this kind which were unrelated to the *Bootles's Baby* idea. Nonetheless, the number of titles appearing under her name as sequels to the original story testify to its particular success. First published in 1885, *Bootles's Baby* was republished as late as 1919. Its first edition was followed by *Mignon's Secret*, *The Story of a Barrack Bairn* (1886), *Mignon's Husband* (1887), *Bootles's Children* (1888) and *Ferrers Court* (1890).

\(^{69}\) *The Theatre*, 1 June 1888, p.319.

\(^{70}\) *Lady's Pictorial*, 19 May 1888, p.547.
LUCY: Not at all - I think your conduct atwocious - you're a flirt, a dweedful flirt - I - I can't marry a flirt, you know.
MIGNON: I shall marry you when I'm old enough.
LUCY: When you're old enough! 'Fraid I shall be a bald old buffah then.
MIGNON: Bald old buffah! I think you're a cwross old buffah!
LUCY: Haw! Wreally!71
MIGNON: Yes - wreally.

and so on. Scenes of this kind balance effusions of more sentimental affection between her and Bootles, as in Act III:

BOOTLES: Well, darling, well?
MIGNON: Bootles got a headache?
BOOTLES: Such a headache, Mignon (taking her on his knee). (HELEN appears at back)
MIGNON: Mignon loves Bootles.
BOOTLES: Will Mignon always love Bootles?
MIGNON: Al-ways. Mignon will always love Bootles.
HELEN (aside): God bless you, God bless my baby and help me.72

With the added pathos of the mother separated from her child, sentiment here is heightened by Mignon's accentuated childishness, in contrast to the precocious wisdom of Cedric Erroll. Both forms of sentiment, however, depend on the child's close relationship with adults.

Likewise, the play is heavily dependent on the creation of striking stage-pictures, for which the plot with its many absurdities merely provides a vehicle. Perhaps the most important of these, dramatically speaking, centres on Bootles's discovery of the baby in his room. In this scene the visual aspect is all important, as shown by the stage directions which accompany the last lines of his monologue about the letter found with the child:

BOOTLES: It's the very devil. Mother means it [the baby] to stop - I don't know what to do. Eh? Don't cry. Have the chair then, there - watch and all (back of armchair faces upstage - the CHILD faces audience. BOOTLES goes C. facing audience and looking anxiously towards folding doors) I don't know what to do. It's the very devil.73

71. Hugh Moss, Bootles's Baby (1888), Act IV.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid., Act II.
After enumerating the play's many faults, the Era review cites this scene as one of its saving virtues, wondering at the marvellous incongruity of the tiny child and the huge soldier on which its impact depends. 74

As with Partners the adapter of Bootle's Baby incurred the displeasure of the critics. Clement Scott declared that Moss must have been 'insensible and almost colour-blind' 75 not to have made more of his material, while in the Lady's Pictorial the play was described as an acute disappointment to admirers of the original story. 76 But the attractions of its basic idea remained more or less intact and much as they were described by Scott:

... the vigour of manhood opposed to the innocence of childhood, the swell of the mess-room contrasted with the prattle of an adopted waif, the heavy-moustached cavalry officer stooping to the service of a baby girl, the heart of a strong man opening at the silvery call of a blameless child ... 77

Compared with Partners, the child in Bootle's Baby is much more in evidence, though she is the play's joint star, rather than, like Cedric Erroll, the centre of attention. At the same time, unlike both Partners and Little Lord Fauntleroy, the child in Bootle's Baby does not influence the actual events of the play, and Mignon's sentimental appeal lies not in any benevolent effect she has on any of the adult characters but in the dramatic contrast between childhood and adulthood offered by her presence in an army barracks. In other respects, however, the play presents a stage child who resembles reasonably closely the one created by Mrs Burnett in Little Lord Fauntleroy. The relationship between Bootle and Mignon parallels that between Cedric and the Earl, while the notion of the child in close sentimental association with adults in an adult environment is even more fully exploited. Mignon's picturesque situation among the army officers creates pictorial interest which also, like Cedric's

75. Daily Telegraph, 9 May 1888, p.5.
76. Lady's Pictorial, 19 May 1888, p.547.
77. Daily Telegraph, 9 May 1888, p.5.
suit, heightens the sentimental force of the play while focussing attention on the child. It is also worth noting that, like Editha, Jack, Cedric and Gretchen, Mignon is seven years old. Taken together, these factors proclaim Mignon's kinship with Cedric and her near approximation to the model of childhood he represents, despite her less assertive role in the play.

The impact of the role of Mignon, however, lay as much in Minnie Terry's performance of it as in its intrinsic qualities. Clement Scott described her as 'that delightful Mignon, who in the person of Miss Minnie Terry was nature itself and sweetness personified'. In The Theatre the quality of the acting, 'the brightness of the uniforms and the natural and tender charm of little Miss Minnie Terry as Mignon' more than compensated for the many flaws in Hugh Moss's work. Even in the Era, where Vera Beringer received a hostile notice a few days later for her performance as Cedric Erroll, Minnie Terry was called 'charmingly artless', and 'conspicuously free from the precocious airs and graces that usually mar the pleasure to be derived from juvenile performers'. In the Lady's Pictorial Bootles's Baby and Little Lord Fauntleroy were reviewed together on the same page, with photographs of Minnie Terry and Vera Beringer, and a page of sketches from Bootles's Baby, while Minnie Terry was honoured by another photograph in The Theatre, together with two more sketches from the play, with Mignon figuring in both. The play ran for 121 performances before a probable audience of 73,000 during its first run.

Such a reception after only two major roles suggests the beginnings of an assumption of star status in which Minnie Terry, unlike Vera Beringer and others who were not public figures independent of

78. Daily Telegraph, 9 May 1888, p.5.
79. The Theatre, 1 June 1888, p.319.
81. Lady's Pictorial, 19 May 1888, pp.546-47.
82. The Theatre, 1 June 1888, p.319.
the roles they played, was appreciated for the personality she projected on her own account as much as for the quality of her performances. Increasingly, indeed, it appeared that she was acquiring a stage personality which was both larger than and independent of the roles she was given to play.

Unlike Vera Beringer, Minnie Terry did not significantly alter her public image in subsequent roles, nor did she attempt any which were beyond her range. Her next appearance was as Daisy Lomax in Sydney Grundy's comedy-drama *A White Lie* (1889), a part less central than that of Mignon, but with two major scenes which revolve around the child character. The play tells a complex tale about a misunderstood note which results in Kate Desmond's husband expelling her from the house. This leads to a third act full of what the Era reviewer recognised as old-fashioned stock devices:

> We have the well-known scenes of the wifeless home, the artless child who touches the father to the quick by its innocent remarks, and the return of the weeping wife. 83

Indeed, the role of the child in this is an important one, and Grundy builds it up by using her to 'teach' Desmond in her innocent fashion the virtues of forgiveness. Just as old Borgfeldt in *Partners* rediscovers the pain of separation from his wife while reading a German spelling book with little Gretchen, so Desmond Lomax learns contrition and rediscovers his love for his absent wife while going through the alphabet with Daisy:

**DESMOND:** K is the Kiss before going to bed.

**DAISY:** L is the love watching over our head.

**DESMOND:** M is the Mother (shuts book abruptly).

**DAISY:** Oh, Daddy dear, don't stop! Let me read what it says about mamma (re-opens book and reads while DESMOND sits with his face buried in his hands). M is the Mother who taught us our prayers - 'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive theirs'.

**DESMOND:** That will do. We have had enough lessons for today.

Daisy asks what 'trespass' means, and Desmond breaks down.

**DAISY:** Poor Daddy. Daisy comfort him - (rocks his head gently, then produces her handkerchief).

There! dry your eyes (wiping his eyes). Little girls may cry, but not papas.

DESMOND: Ah, Daisy, it's no use trying to teach you anything - you end by teaching me. 84

Finally, as in Partners, the reconciliation of husband and wife becomes the restoration of both to a family of which the child is the centre:

DESMOND: Daisy, you've taught me many things. Teach me one more. When you've done something that is very wrong, and hurt your mother very much, what do you say?

DAISY: I ask mamma to kiss me.

DESMOND: Daisy, ask your mother to kiss me.

CURTAIN 85

Thematic continuity is therefore retained by the use of the same dramatic device used in Partners. At the same time, Daisy, while never losing her basic childishness, becomes, in a sense, Desmond's parent, as Desmond becomes, for the moment, a child, thereby accomplishing the same reversal of roles achieved in Editha's Burglar and Little Lord Fauntleroy. Again, however, her influence, and her sentimental appeal, come from her childish innocence rather than the incongruous and precocious wisdom of Cedric Erroll.

A White Lie is manifestly a play of its time also in the closer, less stereotyped intimacy it shows between adult and child, exemplified earlier in Little Lord Fauntleroy and Bootles's Baby. The child-oriented domesticity which results is best seen at the end of Act I, where Daisy and her mother try to hide their grief at Desmond's temporary absence on business by an hysterical game of blind man's buff ending in mutual tears.

It was just this aspect of the play to which Clement Scott objected, complaining of the waste of talent in Madge Kendall as the wife who

kisses her stage babies (sic) and nurses their dollies
and prattles their baby talk with them, and asks to say 'ta-ta' prettily and packs them up in their perambulators

84. Sidney Grundy, A White Lie (1889), Act III.
85. Ibid., Act III (end).
and cries when 'dada' goes away... Our finest artist has to cramp her style and depress her energy in order to compress herself into the limits of a drawing-room drama... 86

Scott's criticism indeed was typical of the play's generally cool reception in the press. In the Daily Telegraph Grundy's dramatic argument was declared 'as untenable as it is unconvincing', 87 a feeling echoed in the Lady's Pictorial, where the play was described as 'a great storm about nothing', 88 and also in the Era, 89 and by Clement Scott in the Illustrated London News. 90 But again Minnie Terry was cited as its saving grace. 'It is as delightful to see her as to hear her', 91 wrote the Daily Telegraph reviewer, while the critic for the Lady's Pictorial felt that the scene between mother and child at the end of Act I 'touches the only true note of pathos in the whole play, and Mrs Kendal's mute tribute to the child actress's share in helping the success of the play was certainly fully deserved by this clever little girl'. 92

Minnie Terry's last major role in these years was that of Suzanne in A Man's Shadow, Robert Buchanan's adaptation of the French melodrama Roger La Honte staged at the Haymarket later in 1889. Basically, the play is a melodrama of a traditional kind. Laroque is on the verge of ruin, needing 100,000 francs to save himself. On the night of his daughter Suzanne's birthday, two enemies appear, Luversan and Julie, intent on his destruction. Knowing his financial plight, they kill the old miser Gerbier and contrive to have Laroque accused of the crime. Gerbier's death is witnessed by Laroque's wife and child, who mistake Luversan for Laroque because of the close resemblance between the two. Gerbier's money, passed to Laroque anonymously, is sufficient to condemn him at a highly emotional trial at which Suzanne is called to testify. She breaks down, saying nothing, and Laroque

86. Illustrated London News, 1 June 1889.
88. Lady's Pictorial, 1 June 1889.
90. Illustrated London News, 1 June 1889.
92. Lady's Pictorial, 1 June 1889.
is sent to New Caledonia, leaving his wife and child in modest poverty. He eventually escapes and makes his way back to them. But Luversan is also there and is shot by the police who mistake him for Laroque. By this the truth is established and Laroque is reunited with his family.

The play was intended as a vehicle for Beerbohm Tree, who played both Laroque and Luversan, and it was on this dual role that dramatic interest was focussed. The part of the child was subsidiary, which perhaps helps to explain the nature of her characterisation which is by dramatic devices rather than by real interaction with other characters. Suzanne's sweetness and innocence are established by the exploitation of touching situations such as her birthday, the trial scene and her reunion with Laroque. The flavour of the character is apparent in her speech to her father on the night of her birthday:

SUZANNE: ... after dinner you were to hear my pretty speech.
LAROQUE: Let me hear it now!
SUZANNE: No, I cannot!
LAROQUE: Not to please me?
SUZANNE: Dear papa! Well, listen (kisses him). 'Dear papa, today I am eight years old, and I am very happy, and I mean to be always a good little girl - & - & ...'
MADELEINE: (prompting) 'I shall pray for you tonight ...'
SUZANNE: 'And I shall pray for you tonight, dear papa and mamma, and pray that when another birthday comes you may both love me as much as you do now!' (gives flowers to Laroque) There!
LAROQUE: (embracing her and almost sobbing) My darling!

Her piety, expressed for example in the prayer which precedes Laroque's return in Act IV, is almost distinctive enough to be picturesque, but compared with Cedric Erroll and Mignon she is a colourless character, too stereotyped to be dramatically interesting. She conforms to the model discussed earlier in being the centre of adult attention, whether with her parents, with her father's old comrades Tristot and Picolot, or, most acutely, in the trial scene, but in each of these interactions with adults she reveals comparatively little individuality or spontaneity. Her predecessor is to be found more in Adrienne in Proof

93. Robert Buchanan, A Man's Shadow (1889), Act I.
than in Mignon or Editha. In particular there is no sign of the reversal of roles between adult and child which is a feature of other child centred plays of the late 1880s.

The play's appearance at the Haymarket suggests that it was aimed at a well-to-do audience. All the same it remains in essence a traditional melodrama and from its popularity with both critics and audience it is probably safe to assume that it appealed to a diversity of groups. Certainly the Daily Telegraph reviewer was surprised to see the success at the Haymarket of a play which in 'olden times' would 'have been more welcome at the Adelphi and the Princess's than at the Haymarket'. Nonetheless he praised the work of Robert Buchanan, who had made 'a tawdry, vulgar, exaggerated transpontine melodrama' interesting to a 'fashionable Haymarket house'. The Lady's Pictorial echoed his surprise and delight at the transformation, calling the result 'one of the most remarkable plays presented on the modern stage'. Clement Scott hailed it in the Illustrated London News, while the Pall Mall Gazette's reviewer congratulated Buchanan on 'a play which is beyond all doubt the most powerful piece of drama he has ever penned. The energy and excitement of A Man's Shadow are almost too intense'. The play was even praised in The Times, an unusual honour for a melodrama. In every case, praise was prompted by Buchanan's adaptation of an unpromising original and by Tree's tour de force in the dual part of Laroque and Luversan. Minnie Terry received only muted commendation, due in part to a heavy cold from which she was suffering on the opening night.

As early as August 1889, however, Minnie Terry had already been pointed to as the symbol of a contemporary fashionable interest in

94. Minnie Terry in fact had to refuse the role of the child in a revival of Proof because rehearsals for it would have clashed with her appearance in A Man's Shadow (The Theatre, 1 November 1889, p.272).
95. Daily Telegraph, 13 September 1889, p.3.
96. Lady's Pictorial, 21 September 1889, p.373.
98. Pall Mall Gazette, 13 September 1889, p.2.
99. The Times, 13 September 1889, p.3.
children on the stage. The poet Ernest Dowson found, so he said, relief from modern' scepticism' and 'realism' in Minnie Terry's per-
formance in Bootles's Baby, which had shown 'that art can still offer us the counterfeit presentiment of one exquisite relation'. Dow-
son's perception of the trend was quickened by his own psychological difficulties, but his comments came only a little in advance of other indications that Minnie Terry was now seen, at least in some quarters, not just as a child actress but as a child star attracting interest as a public personality rather than simply as a portrayer of roles on the stage. In November 1889 The Theatre published a bio-
graphical sketch of her, in which the image of the dramatised char-
acter was merged with that of the child who played it:

Miss Minnie Terry exhibited none of the objectionable
traits of the 'infant phenomenon', but is a sweet
loveable child and appears really to mean the words
she has to utter in Act II of A Man's Shadow: 'I am
very happy and I mean always to be a good little girl'.

This was followed by an event of rather greater symbolic significance, E.L. Blanchard's benefit on June 2 1890, when Minnie Terry in a repre-
sentative role presented the doyen of pantomime writers with
flowers, accompanied by verses by Clement Scott:

I am a child of fairyland,
A gift of flowers my sisters send,
They bid me kneel and kiss the hand
Of all who loved the Children's Friend!

and so on.

Just as in music new juvenile prodigies were by 1890 no longer guaranteed an audience, so in the Theatre the taste for child actors was now less prominent than before. Something of a milestone, indeed, was reached with Vera Beringer's temporary retirement in 1891. At
her benefit she performed sections of her best known roles, Act II of The Prince and the Pauper and Act II of Little Lord Fauntleroy, as well sharing the lead with Minnie Terry in a new one-act play The Holly Tree Inn, an adaptation by Harry Walmer from a story by Dickens. Set

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100. Dowson, 'The Cult of the Child', op. cit., p.434.
101. The Theatre, 1 November 1889, p.272.
102. The Theatre, 1 July 1890, p.49.
in 1820, the play concerned ten year old Harry (Vera Beringer) and seven year old Norah (Minnie Terry), his intended bride, with whom he is eloping to Gretna Green. On the way they stop at an inn kept by an old family servant, Jabez Cobbs, who humours them until Harry's father can be sent for. Much is made in the meantime of Norah's babyishness and Harry's attempts at adult behaviour. Norah declares herself to be 'drefful hungry', having brought with her only a piece of cold toast which she accidentally sat on in the coach. When dinner arrives she falls asleep with her hair in the gravy. For his part, Harry is protective, calls her his 'young May moon' and tries to carry her upstairs. Finding her too heavy he has to push her from behind.

The play is interesting because of the conjunction it represents of the two versions of sentimentality provided by Vera Beringer and Minnie Terry and for the comparisons which such a conjunction makes possible. Both are placed within the same broadly domestic setting, in an environment dominated by adult values and both generate a form of sentimentality from their childish condition. In the case of Vera Beringer as Harry, sentiment resides in the child's imitation of the adult role, a device on which earlier plays such as Little Lord Fauntleroy and Editha's Burglar also depend. With Minnie Terry's Norah, however, sentimentality flows from the accentuation of her childishness, both in speech and action. She demands attention, as in Partners, Bootles's Baby, A White Lie and A Man's Shadow, not by the kind of precocious wisdom offered by Vera Beringer's Cedric Erroll, but by a picturesque and childish helplessness and quaintness of speech. At the same time much of the interest in the play lies in the interaction of the two children. While this is in no way realistically observed it indicates an important trend in the evolution of notions of childhood which was to find fuller expression later in the 1890s.

Something of the contrast in critical responses to Minnie Terry and Vera Beringer is also apparent in Clement Scott's reactions in the Daily Telegraph to The Holly Tree Inn which tend to confirm suggestions made earlier about the nature of the child type which was most accepted in plays of this kind. Echoing reservations about
her previously expressed in the *Era*, Scott found that the play, touching as it was, would have been more so 'had Miss Vera Berin- ger's sensibility equalled her intelligence'. After her retirement she ought, he felt, to 'devote herself more especially to a careful cultivation of the softer emotions'. On the other hand, 'what sweeter Norah could be imagined than pretty Minnie Terry, whose artless and spontaneous methods are so unlike those of the average stage child? The dear little girl, who was so "dreffully" hungry and so "dreffully" sleepy, was, in truth, a most delightful portrait...  

Vera Beringer now retired to complete her schooling. For her part, Minnie Terry continued to make occasional appearances on the stage. In March 1891, for example, she played Princess Elizabeth in Irving's production of W.G. Wills's *Charles I*. Again, dramatic interest centered on a domestic theme in the shape of the doomed king's family life. The *Era* review spoke of 'the gay carelessness that gave itself up to domestic happiness, to frolic with the children, and to the telling of stories for their delight'. Nonetheless, as one might expect of a play first produced in 1872, the role of the children was comparatively small. In 1892 Minnie Terry appeared in a matinee production, *Agatha*, as the son of an adventuress whose sole redeeming feature is the love she bears for her child. In neither play, however, did she generate the enthusiasm which greeted her performances in 1888 and 1889, and though she appeared from time to time during the remainder of the 1890s neither she nor any other in a role similar to those which made her reputation was able to attract such attention again during our period.

Staged against a background of social change affecting children symbolised by the onward march of the NSPCC and including such domestic developments as a decreasingly authoritarian style of child rearing, and a parallel movement of children into formal adult life among the middle and upper middle classes, the child-centred plays of the years between 1887 and about 1891, the period covered by the

early career of Vera Beringer and the peak of Minnie Terry's popularity as a child star, were the product of a distinct pattern of sentimental response to children. The nature of that response is shown by the nature of the image of the child which recurs in the plays. Not every popular child role in these years reflects every characteristic of the model of childhood which can be constructed out of the plays taken together, of course, but most if not all reveal one or more of the traits which comprise that model. Broadly speaking the child was pictured in an environment dominated by adults and in close relationship with them, either as a benevolent influence on their actions, with a consequent reversal of roles between adult and child, or as the object of sentimental devotion around whom the action revolves. Cedric Erroll in Little Lord Fauntleroy and Mignon in Bootles's Baby are representative examples of these two versions of the child, while Vera Beringer's failures in That Girl (1890) and The Prince and the Pauper (1890) help to indicate the limits of the more assertive notion of childhood represented by Cedric Erroll, and the importance of the gentler and more obviously sentimental child represented by Minnie Terry. It is, indeed, in Minnie Terry's roles that the most consistently representative image of the child can be found.
Vera Beringer's temporary retirement in 1891 coincided with a decline in the importance of child roles which placed children in sentimental association with adults, within the family or outside it, and which Little Lord Fauntleroy had shown to be popular with middle and upper middle class audiences of the late 1880s. The decline of the earlier imagery is evident in the relative failure of the adaptation by Mrs William Greet and Horace Sedger of Mrs De La Pasture's story The Little Squire (1894) compared with Arthur Law's adaptation of F. Anstey's story, Vice Versa, entitled The New Boy, produced the same year. Staged in a series of matinees, The Little Squire concerns young Adrien De Coursay and the saving of his mother from the designs of an adventurer. Two other children are prominent in the play, the 'old fashioned' little Lise Da La Riviere and Cicely Hardwicke, described by the Lady's Pictorial as 'the fashionable, frock-loving young lady of fifteen - Mr Gilbert's bete noire'. While the play was commended in the Lady's Pictorial and The Theatre, it also received a number of hostile reviews which favourably recalled Little Lord Fauntleroy but condemned this latest attempt to tap the same vein. William Archer in the World found that while there were no less than three major roles for children in the play 'they do not together make up a little Lord Fauntleroy'. Likewise, the Daily Telegraph described it as, unlike Mrs Burnett's play, a vehicle for 'the unnatural precocity of the little men and little women of today'. As far as the Era's critic was concerned, if any such

1. Lady's Pictorial, 14 April 1894, p.521.
2. Ibid., The Theatre, 1 May 1894, p.283.
4. Daily Telegraph, 7 April 1894, p.3.
children existed 'they ought to be slapped'.

Supported by what the Era called 'soft-hearted mothers with tender hearts and pretty pocket-handkerchiefs', The Little Squire ran for some four weeks. In contrast, however, to The Little Squire's genteel, family-centred and domestic sense of childhood, Arthur Law's The New Boy presented an account of rambunctious schoolboy life which provided a better guide to later developments in dramatised notions of childhood and presaged a resurgence of childhood as a dramatic theme in the last two or three years of the century based on a different image of childhood from those which had earlier prevailed. Anstey's story had in fact been adapted for the stage eleven years before by Edward Rose, but with relatively little success. F.C. Burnand's highly popular burlesque of Sandford and Merton in 1893, however, showed that audiences were now prepared to accept such a tale of schoolboy vitality. In developing this theme, Law's play tells the story of the diminutive Archibald Rennick, played to great effect by Weedon Grossmith, who is forced to pretend to be his own son Freddy in his uncle Candy's school and is in the process heaped with many comic indignities. His precipitate intrusion on the other adults after being forced to play football shows something of the life Rennick leads among the schoolboys, comforted only by the schoolgirl Nancy:

NANCY: I think they're chasing Freddy!
MRS RENNICK: Chasing Freddy!
RENNICK (outside): Keep back! I won't play, you're hurting me! Oh, you beasts!
MRS RENNICK: Freddy! Freddy!
(RENNICK runs in R, followed by a yell from outside - he has his coat off, and his trousers rolled up to his knees)
CANDY: What is the matter?
RENNICK: Stop them! Stop them! Don't let them in!

The play ran for no less than 437 performances, suggesting an audience of 233,000 for its first run. This makes The New Boy one of the most successful productions of the early 1890s.

5. Era, 7 April 1894, p.11.
6. Ibid., p.11.
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6. Ibid., p.11.
The New Boy's success is important for the new sense it shows of the separateness of adult and child life and for its emphasis, not on the varieties of innocence evident in characters like Cedric Erroll and Mignon, but on the vigour, even violence, of the school-boys among whom Rennick must make his way. While it did not signal the beginning of a series of plays on schoolboy themes, the ideas of children's vitality and the separateness of child life from the adult world which it embodies were defining features of the revival of the child cult in the theatre in the 1890s. At the same time this second phase of the theatrical child cult also reflected the influence of a new interest in fantasy which pervaded middle and upper middle class theatre after the mid-1890s, in contrast to the domestic realism which provided the setting for Minnie Terry's and Vera Beringer's most successful roles in the late 1880s. In creating the sense of childhood characteristic of middle and upper middle class theatre after the turn of the century, both were complementary, though, initially at least, they must be examined separately.

Expressions of the wider movement towards fantasy have been identified and classified by Allardyce Nicoll. The first of his categories is that of poetic drama, in which much was expected of Lord Tennyson, though with little result. Stephen Phillips assumed Tennyson's mantle with Paolo and Francesca in 1902. Nicoll goes on to cite 'the boom in Shakespeare', exemplified by revivals by Irving, Benson and Tree, and adventure drama, typified by such productions as that of The Prisoner of Zenda (1896) and a number of versions of The Three Musketeers in 1898. The early plays of J.M. Barrie represent a separate category and include Becky Sharp at Terry's Theatre in 1893, Richard Savage (1891), The Little Minister (1891), and perhaps more significantly for our purposes, The Professor's Love Story in 1895. Finally, Nicoll lists plays on supernatural themes, like Robert Marshall's Shades of Night at the Lyceum in 1896. To these one might add A Messenger from Mars which ran for a remarkable 500 performances in 1899.

The new trend to fantasy was therefore broadly based and unlike the child cult of the late 1880s those aspects of it which related to children seem, at least after 1900, to have been supported by a broader cross-section of the middle and upper middle class audience than was typical of the matinees characteristic of many of the child-centred plays of the earlier period. This chapter is particularly concerned with the expression among these audiences of the new interest in fantasy through the idea of fairyland, and the developing nostalgic identification of fairyland with an alternative world of childhood imagination and vitality from which adults were excluded, and which was finally embodied in *Peter Pan* (1904).

Until the mid-1880s, and in keeping with the naturalistic, often domestic settings in which the most successful child roles of the late 1880s were enacted, those forms of theatre in which fairyland was a characteristic idea did not link it to any significant extent with childhood, even for those audiences to whom such an association later appealed most strongly. W.S. Gilbert's fairy plays, produced for respectable audiences by 1870 and 1881, are a case in point. The first of these plays was *The Palace of Truth* (1870). It was followed by *The Wicked World* (1873), *Broken Hearts* (1875) and *Foggerty's Fairy* (1881). Of these *Broken Hearts*, and the story it tells of the contest of some all too human fairies for the love of the handsome Prince Florian, probably best illustrate Gilbert's purposes. The Island of Broken Hearts represents a real alternative world to that of everyday life, and one in which magic has a definite place. At the same time the failings of the island's inhabitants comment clearly on the world outside the theatre and the questions of love, fickleness and vanity explored by the play and catalysed by Prince Florian's magic scarf have little to do with the sentimental and nostalgic concerns later associated with childhood. This is even more true of Robert Buchanan's heavily serious imitation of Gilbert in *The Bride of Love* (1890).

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9. Stephen Wyatt traces a progression by 'select and well-to-do' audiences from Robertson's comedies to Gilbert's fairy comedies to the Savoy operas and the early Pinero farces to the society pieces of the 1890s, (*op. cit.*, p.183).
At a more popular level, three fairy extravaganzas produced at the Alhambra over the same period demonstrate a similar use of fairyland to explore purely adult concerns. The last of these was G.R. Sims's *The Golden Ring*, which ran for 105 performances at the Alhambra in 1883. It could never be said that the Alhambra was a theatre for children. Nonetheless, the *Era* described the play in these terms:

> It is as innocent as a nursery tale and as pleasant, reviving the kindly fairy tales of our youth, and blending with spirits of good and evil and weird unearthly forms, that genial element of everyday life in which Mr. G.R. Sims shines more than any other author of our day ... 10

The *Golden Ring* followed even more successful treatments of fairy tale themes at the Alhambra in the shape of *The Black Crook* which ran for 204 performances in 1872 and *The Bronze Horse* which went for 137 performances in 1881. In none of these were children the central characters. Moreover, while the *Era*'s description of *The Golden Ring* rightly indicates its derivation from children's fairy tales, the close conjunction between the fairy and real world is exemplified by Sims's exploitation in his extravaganza of topical themes through devices such as that of King Calino's visit to London to escape his wife, and suggests a version of fairyland which is, like Gilbert's, that of an alternative world ruled by adult values, rather than one which is the particular preserve of children.

It was in pantomime, however, that the association between children and fairyland was apparently clearest. The nature of this association should be explored both through the importance of children in pantomime audiences and through the nature of the entertainment provided for them.

'Going to the pantomime' was a frequent theme in popular illustrated magazines, particularly at Christmas. A stanza from 'Going to See the Pantomime', which appeared in *The Theatre* in 1882, is representative of the association seen between pantomime and children:

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What relief to see them joyous, see the daughter self-beguiled;
What a joy to note the mother smile whene'er her darling smiled;
And to see, as both were going,
Each a kiss of love bestowing -
What a picture to remember, that fond mother and her child.  

References to the importance of children for pantomime likewise abound in pantomime texts.

There is also evidence to suggest that children were by the later decades of the century being taken to pantomimes in greater numbers than before, and it is true that they were not wholly ignored by the theatre managers. Some theatres, of which Drury Lane was not one, offered half-price seats for children, and the limited provision of matinee performances (which normally numbered only two per week at Drury Lane) could be seen as in part a response to the needs of children.

In the content of pantomime entertainment, also, there was some evidence of efforts to appease a child audience, while by no means neglecting their elders, as in Sweet Cinderella at the Grand in 1888:

... Cinderella's trials and triumphs and final happiness are illustrated in very similar fashion to the nursery books, so the youngsters are of course highly pleased. For their elders political and topical hits, lively songs, choruses and dances are plentifully introduced ...  

And there is evidence of a degree of identification between children and fairy roles in the appearance of child stars as major figures within the fairytale which was part, but only part, of the pantomime as a whole. Thus, for example, Addie Blanche appeared as Mother

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11. William Tirebuck, 'Going to See the Pantomime' (last stanza), The Theatre, 1 February 1882, p.99.
14. See Appendix 9 for a summary of a representative pantomime, Puss in Boots (Drury Lane 1887).
Goose in the Drury Lane pantomime of 1880, Laura Lawson was Fairy Florizel in Robin Hood at the Alexandra Theatre in Liverpool in 1880, Mabel Love was Sunbeam in Jack and the Beanstalk in 1887, and Minnie Terry herself appeared in Cinderella at the Lyceum in 1893.

However, there is also evidence that in content and in terms of its characteristic audience pantomime was not primarily children's entertainment. In demonstrating this, two trends in the development of pantomime between 1880 and 1906 are important. The first of these, shared by melodrama, is a growing stress on the scale of the production, that is, on the magnificence of its staging, and the second is the increasing use of music hall stars and their characteristic style of entertainment. Both had the effect of confirming pantomime in its character of adult entertainment and illustrate the lack of interest among pantomime audiences in the development of fairyland as a metaphor for childhood. Significantly for later developments, both also combined to make pantomime less and less suitable as entertainment for the children of the middle and upper middle classes.

Looking at the first of these in greater detail, the growing dependence on scale and magnificence of production was led, like many trends in pantomime, by Drury Lane. Even in the 1880s, Augustus Harris was said to spend up to £6000 on a pantomime every year. Magnificence of staging itself became a selling point, so that extracts from reviews like this one from Sporting Life came to figure prominently in the lavish advertising devoted to Drury Lane pantomime:

A man who pays no regard whatever to cost, and who is only limited as regards the number of people - the armies - he places upon the stage by the extent of that area, cannot but arrive at imposing results. Add to this a determination to forever keep surpassing himself in the presentation of effects of scenic grandeur and skill, and in the embodiment of an endless train of picturesque and poetical ideas, and one is enabled to account in some measure for that unique example of theatrical enterprise - a Drury Lane Pantomime by Mr. Augustus Harris. The richness of the fabrics with which his armies are attired baffles

description. It is overpoweringly beautiful. Splendour is piled upon splendour with relentless persistency until the stage presents an appearance of bewildering magnificence. There is a transformation scene of dazzling effulgence. For magnificence 'Aladdin' excels all Mr. Augustus Harris's former efforts.  

Nor did this extravagance end with Harris's early death in 1896. Under his successor, Arthur Collins, the Drury Lane pantomimes became even more brilliant than before, often taking five hours to exhaust their displays.

Like the Era's reviewer in 1901, critics in their comments on the annual offerings of theatre managers at Christmas became used to greeting each pantomime, whether at Drury Lane or elsewhere, as more magnificent than the last:

One gets rather accustomed to hearing that Mr. Blank, the popular manager at the Dash Theatre, has surpassed himself in his latest effort in the region of pantomime ...

And it became commonplace for reminiscences of past pantomimes such as that by R.K.H. in The Theatre in 1888 to comment on the unprecedented richness of presentation now achieved in pantomimes everywhere.

A pantomime was in my youth a form of entertainment to which children were taken to be amused, and by which they were amused. And yet I suppose the scenery with which they were given would not now be thought good enough for a second rate theatre in a third rate town.

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16. Extract from a review of Aladdin (Drury Lane, 1885) from Sporting Life, quoted in an advertisement in the Era, 2 January 1886, p.12.

17. See for example the Era's remark on the Surrey pantomime of 1888, The Forty Thieves and Their Wonderful Cave: 'Mr. George Conquest's pantomime this year is certainly full of good things. At present it is a little too full, as was felt at half-past eleven on Monday evening, when several scenes of the pantomime and the whole harlequinade had yet to be got through' (Era, 29 December 1888, p.8.)


The second trend apparent in pantomime was the movement towards music hall which was evident in the increased use of music hall stars. This began in the provinces and was first seen in London in the early 1870s in productions like the Covent Garden pantomime *Blue Beard* (1871) in which G.H. McDermott appeared. The minor theatres in London were more conservative in this regard, but the same trend was apparent even at the Britannia, the most conservative of all, by 1874. By 1901, as the *Era* noted, the takeover was virtually complete:

In the 'up-to-date' pantomime the importance of the comedian is greatly increased. In the old 'annuals', the book was carefully written, and the lines adhered to. Nowadays, the idea only is supplied; and the onus of keeping the audiences amused falls on the leading comic actors, who 'embroider' the comic outline with their clever quips and odd inventions.

Incorporation of music-hall entertainers meant the incorporation also of the risque humour prevalent in the halls. This was particularly so of the minor theatres. Critics became preoccupied with the 'vulgarity' or otherwise of the productions they reviewed, so that performers like Harry Phydora who sang 'She Had To Go Without It After All' at the Stratford Theatre pantomime in 1888 were visited with their disapproval. Conversely, the absence of vulgarity from pantomimes like *The Forty Thieves and Their Wonderful Cave* (Surrey 1888), *Whittington and His Cat* (Crystal Palace 1890), and *Cinderella* (West London 1901) was noted as worthy of praise.

The focus of the fairy scenes, as of the production itself, was the principal boy, played in rousing, energetic style, often, especially later in the period, by female music hall stars like

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Harriet Vernon, described by A.E. Wilson as

... a magnificent and imposing creature, who was proud to show off her ample, Junoesque figure in the conventional trunks and tights of her day. She affected immense hats with ostrich plumes and carried a decorated and jewelled stick when occasion required. Her presence was bold, insistent, dazzling. She was indeed an immense principal boy. Who that ever heard her will forget her demanding in her rich, deep voice 'Where are the boys of the old brigade?' or marching magnificently at the head of the band of forty thieves? 

The fairy tale themes of pantomimes were not therefore aimed wholly or even primarily at children. This is further substantiated by the fact that subjects of the transformation scene, the climax of the pantomime fairy tale theme, reveal a relative lack of concern with ideas associated with childhood.

Given this it is not surprising to find that despite the increased numbers of children in their audiences, pantomimes were not dependent on them. This much is indicated by the relatively few matinees offered, compared to later children's plays, and the equally restricted availability of half price seats. Two other kinds of evidence in fact show that the heart of the pantomime audience was not children, but like melodrama, the adults of the pit and gallery.

First, there is the public role assigned to the occupants of these seats as described by the critics. A rousing vocal prelude to the pantomime at Drury Lane was the mark of proprietorship set on the production by the patrons of the cheaper seats. The Era's account of the opening night of Humpty Dumpty in 1891 is typical of many similar occasions. There was, the paper reported, not a vacant seat in the house when the conductor raised his baton for

27. Wilson, Christmas Pantomime, op. cit., p.219. Harriet Vernon was a serio-comic singer.

28. A.E. Wilson quotes the following description of a transformation scene from the Graphic in 1877: a 'marvellous complexity of mechanism, painting, limelight, coloured fire and ballet girls'. Wilson, Christmas Pantomime, op. cit., p.173. From this it is clear that the transformation scene was a scenic tour-de-force rather than a dramatic scene.

29. See Appendix 9 for a list of titles of transformation scenes in West End and minor theatres in 1888.
the choruses that were sure to come. And come they did, and soon pit and gallery did
With vocal voices, most vociferous
In sweet vociferation, out-vociferize
Ev'n sound itself.
At it they went with wonderful gusto for their own amusement and for the diversion of stalls and dress circle and private boxes. Stentorian lungs roared 'Hi-tiddley-hi-ti', 'Get Your Hair Cut' was shouted by those above to those below, who answered only 'Wink the Other Eye', while both joined forces to extol the fascination of the 'Pretty Little Mermaids at the Bottom of the Sea', and to 'Knock 'em in the Old Kent Road'.

In this way contemporaries recognised the prominence of the pit and gallery in the pantomime audience.

Secondly, the locations of the majority of the theatres where pantomimes were staged in the last decades of the century have some bearing on the nature of their audiences. Pantomime, like other areas of theatrical entertainment, was affected by the movement to respectability which was a feature of the period, but even if the behaviour of pantomime audiences became more restrained, the most loyal audiences were generally to be found not in the West End, where Drury Lane was the only theatre where pantomimes were produced consistently, year by year, but at minor theatres like Sara Lane's Britannia Theatre in Hoxton where the annual pantomime was a local event whose significance could sometimes surprise outsiders such as the Era's reviewer in 1885:

Informed as we were of Mrs. Lane's popularity, we were scarcely prepared for the sardine like tightness with which the Britannia was packed last Saturday evening. Serried rows of beaming faces filled the auditorium from the front row of the stalls to the topmost altitude of the gallery, and in the private boxes rows three-deep

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31. This was so of Drury Lane as it was of other places. It was a trend remarked on by the Era's reviewer of Harris's pantomime of 1885, Aladdin:

... Mr. Harris has educated his gods up to a civilized level, and nearly all of the rough humour - that is, the humour of the roughts - which characterised Boxing Night in times gone by and kept ladies away has disappeared. (Era 2 January 1886, p.8.)
of eager pantomime-lovers were ranged one above the other. No inconvenience seemed in the least to 'dash the spirits' of the Hoxtonites in their patronage of their local theatre ... 32

Similar descriptions could have been given of audiences at other theatres, like the Standard and the Pavilion in the East End, and the Surrey on the South Bank. 33

Primarily, therefore, while patronised by children in increasing numbers, pantomime was not children's entertainment in terms either of its content or of its characteristic audience, and if the version of fairyland it purveyed was in theory aimed at children it was in fact, like the fairyland of Gilbert's early plays and of the Alhambra extravaganzas, conditioned by purely adult concerns. Like melodrama, it was a product of the lower middle and upper working classes who filled the pit and the gallery seats and it developed according to patterns characteristic of other expressions of the cultural interests of these groups.

Middle class audiences, returning to the theatre from the 1870s onwards, were not particularly suited by these developments and there were rumblings of discontent throughout the period. For example, the Daily Telegraph said of a Covent Garden pantomime of the 1870s that interruption by music-hall entertainment was 'the only mistake of the evening', 34 while 'R.K.H.' in The Theatre in 1888 noted:

... the wealth of display in the endless processions and marchings to and fro, the crowds of more or less beautiful young women in gorgeous costumes, the long ballets danced by girls, many of whom seem to have but the slightest notion that dancing should be graceful

and asked:

Why these niggers and acrobats and topical song singers, all of whom can be seen so much more

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32. Era, 2 January 1886, p.7.
33. See also Bernard Shaw's well-known description of the Britannia under Sara Lane's management, Our Theatres in the Nineties, vol. III (London 1932), pp.351-57 (9 April 1898).
34. Wilson, Pantomime Pageant, op. cit., p.58.
comfortably and to so much greater advantage in any music-hall? ... It is high time that some protest should be raised against all this useless spectacle ...

No less a figure than Charles Dickens's son inveighed in 1896 against the 'deluge' of music hall entertainment, a deluge

... of hopeless, inane, and offensive vulgarity all over the country - a vulgarity which, it is not at all pleasant to think, has been of a most popular kind, and highly remunerative to performers and managers alike.

In quieter vein, Max Beerbohm pointed out two years later that although Drury Lane pantomimes were still technically for children, they were also much patronised by adults on their own account since at Drury Lane they could 'get in one evening all that they could get in two consecutive evenings spent at the Empire and at the Tivoli'.

These complaints were crystallised and summarised in an article in the Era in 1899. Children of seven to twelve, the anonymous writer argued, were not well catered for on the stage. There was a clear need for

a light and bright entertainment, full of real fairies, or as real as they can be made - real to look upon and hear and see in a real fairy tale converted into a play ...

Managements so far had shown themselves deaf to this demand, and so the children 'have to put up with pantomime or go without'. But pantomimes were not suitable because they 'are not simple'.

They are too gaudy, too full of processions, and too full of big ideas, topical notions and political allusions which they do not care about or understand. It is the children of a larger growth who patronise these 'shows', who like and appreciate them.

38. 'Children's Plays', Era, 16 December 1899, p.7.
Younger children needed to see on the stage

... the marvels of fairy tales - Grimm's, Andersen's - the old-fashioned stories and the new-fashioned works which are produced in such great profusion every year.

And while it was true that pantomimes were normally founded on fairy tales, these were not in a form calculated to appeal to children since they are altered out of all recognition, and the 'make-believe' atmosphere is not maintained sufficiently to create the necessary illusion. The humour, too, of the topical song by clever comedians is not to their taste. They object to having patriotism hurled at them in the magic forest or the enchanted cave. In truth, they resent it. They simply desire ... unadulterated fairyland ...

The number of pantomimes produced annually in the West End and minor theatres steadily declined from fourteen in 1880, to nine in 1890, to seven in 1904. As far as the minor theatres were concerned, this decline should be seen as symptomatic of the trends bringing about a similar decline in melodrama at the same theatres, discussed in Chapter 2. Drury Lane dominated pantomime in the West End, and while only one such production (The White Cat, 1904) at Drury Lane ran for less than 126 performances during our period, the significance of middle class criticism of the kind of pantomime seen there is evident in the evolution in the West End of alternative forms of entertainment for middle class children.

One effect of the dissatisfaction was the production of pantomimes shorn of music hall vulgarity and extravagant display. The career of Oscar Barrett illustrates this trend. After directing the music for Harris's pantomimes at Drury Lane in the 1880s, he staged his own at Crystal Palace in 1890. His efforts to mark this production out from other pantomimes by its respectability were rewarded by praise from the Era. Barrett, the paper's reviewer said,

while taking care to be never dull, is at the same time determined to be never vulgar. The most cultured ear may listen to the airs and concerted pieces with which he has embellished Dick Whittington with the certainty of getting keen enjoyment, and of never being offended ... 39

The partnership between Barrett and his librettist Horace Lennard resulted in further attempts to make pantomime respectable in the mid-1890s. Cinderella (1893), the first of three pantomimes produced by them at the Lyceum, was greeted by The Theatre as rescuing pantomime from 'The Slough of Vulgarity', and from the account of its star, Ellaline Terriss, audience reaction was even more emphatic:

... at the end, the enthusiasm was just amazing. Family parties stood on their seats, clapping and cheering. We took call after call. They just would not stop and they went on applauding long after the lights had gone up and the band departed. It took a long time before the auditorium could be cleared.

With Ellaline Terriss's help Cinderella outrivalled even that year's pantomime at Drury Lane, on which Harris lost £30,000. Significantly, there were fewer music hall stars to be seen in Drury Lane pantomime while Barrett mounted similar productions to Cinderella at the Lyceum in 1894 and 1895.

From the point of view of evolving notions of childhood on the stage, however, the most important effect of middle and upper middle class dissatisfaction with pantomime was the production in 1886 of what amounted to the first attempt at a form of specialised theatre for children, Alice in Wonderland, and with it the initiation of a new process by which the association between childhood and the idea of fairyland was achieved.

The adaptors of Carroll's two Alice stories, Henry Savile Clarke and Walter Slaughter, both came to the task with experience in pantomime. In form, however, the production was constrained by loyalty to Carroll's original, as well as by his desire for decorum, and this required a non-pantomime treatment. In effect, Clarke went no further in his adaptation than to select a series of scenes from

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40. The Theatre, 1 February 1894, p.104.
42. Wilson, Christmas Pantomime, op. cit., p.200.
43. Ibid., p.201.
44. In his diary, Carroll records that he gave permission for Alice to be adapted on the sole condition that the play exhibit 'no suggestion even of coarseness in the libretto or stage business'. (C.L. Dodgson, Diaries, 2 September 1886 [Ms. British Library].)

each of the two books, one of which was treated in each of the two acts, and to intersperse them with a number of songs and dances. Dialogue was closely based on Carroll's original dialogue and some care was taken to ensure the resemblance of the characters to Tenniel's original illustrations. Furthermore, where Carroll parodied existing songs, Slaughter retained the original tune.

As William Archer noted in 1898, the Clarke/Slaughter adaptation of the Alice stories was inadequate, 'a hasty sketch rather than an adequate dramatic transcript of this playroom classic'. Among other failings, an insistence on unity of place impaired the picaresque quality of the originals, what Archer called 'that sense of wandering adventure in which the juvenile mind so greatly delights'. Moreover, the introduction of Wonderland by a Midsummer Night's Dream-like chorus of fairies over Alice's sleeping form betrayed a failure to understand the nature and function of Carroll's sense of fairyland. It is indeed likely that by 1886 this sense of fairyland, founded as it was in the same kind of semi-satirical purpose which underlay Gilbert's fairy plays, the last of which had been produced five years earlier, was in some senses out of date. At the same time, and from another point of view, the idea of Wonderland as a child's fantasy world was possibly premature, since the focus of interest in children which was developing in the late 1880s involved, as we have seen, not fantasy but the kind of sentimental,

45. The World, 28 December 1898, p.29.
46. Ibid.
47. At the opening of the play, Alice is seen asleep at the foot of a tree with fairies dancing round her and they sing the following chorus:

Sleep maiden sleep, as we circle round thee,
Lulled by the music of bird and of bee.
Safe in the forest some fairies have found thee,
Here where we come to keep tryst by the tree.
Sleep Alice sleep. These are magical numbers,
Songs that we learned from the mount and the stream.
Ours be the task to keep watch o'er they slumber,
Wake, Alice, wake, to the Wonderland dream.

The fairies now troop off at each side and the chorus dies softly away in the distance and the scene changes to Wonderland.
(H.Savile Clarke and W. Slaughter, Alice in Wonderland, 1886, Act I.)
often domestic, and always naturalistic situations enacted by, for example, Minnie Terry.

Nonetheless, Alice in Wonderland is an important landmark in the evolution of a notion of childhood in this area of theatre, and this is so for a number of reasons. Not the least of these is the identification of a specifically child audience for it. These were clearly the children of the middle and upper middle classes. In reviewing the play the Era referred to 'the young gentlemen and ladies of the metropolis' whose proper habitat was not the pit but the stalls and dress circle. Indeed, the Prince of Wales's Theatre in which Alice was staged in 1886 had no pit or gallery. The play was revived at the Globe Theatre in 1888 where there was a pit, but at this production half price seats were offered not to the pit, but to the stalls and dress circle. The novelty of a play intended solely for children was implicitly recognised by the Era's reviewer, who also harboured reservations about the likelihood of the success of such an experiment. The production, he observed, was evidently intended for children. Until we see, as we may next week, the Prince of Wales's Theatre filled with juveniles, accompanied of course by their parents and guardians, but still themselves constituting the audience, it will be impossible to say that Alice in Wonderland is successful or not. Messrs. Clarke and Slaughter must eventually abide by the decision of the juveniles.

In this way, children were identified as a separate audience in their own right, and one for which fairyland was deemed an appropriate dramatic subject.

Just as important was the image of the child dramatised within the play. Alice is a child protagonist in an alternative world. It is true, as William Empson recognises, that her identification with that world is limited by her satirical function as the rational

49. The 'special prices' offered were, for stalls 5/6, for dress circle 3/6. No half price seats were advertised for the Drury Lane or Surrey pantomimes. Advertisements, Era, 29 December 1888.
observer of its eccentricities. But the fact of a child, as a child, seen in a version of fairyland, was yet of vital significance for the development of the notion of the child hero in plays after 1900. In this respect the play's importance as a prototype was recognised during the height of the interest in fairy plays at the turn of the century, before Peter Pan. In reviewing Bluebell in Fairyland (1901), for example, the Daily Telegraph noted that:

Like most things in fiction, Bluebell in Fairyland has its prototype, but it is surely no reproach to the pretty heroine of the story that her adventures recall in a measure those of a certain world-famed Alice, whose trip to Wonderland remains a joy forever alike in the nursery and the library.52

In a similar way, the Daily Telegraph noted in 1904 that

... fairy plays in this country are flowers of rare growth. Apart from the pantomime exotics, fairies are rarely seen, and were it not for Alice in Wonderland ... we should have seen little of the larger fairyland which dispenses with pantomime demons and their high-souled antidotes.53

Alice in Wonderland was followed by a small but steady trickle of children's matinee productions.54 Matinees were particularly well suited to theatre of this kind. In the first place, they were appropriate for specialist middle class audiences because of their lower costs, the result of overheads shared with evening productions, which meant that a matinee could be produced with a short run and therefore for a minority audience. Archer, in the 1890s, had declared that no play as a major production could succeed with an audience of less than 50,000.55 This was not so of matinees. Secondly, with respect to children themselves, the matinee was an appropriate form of production because it eliminated the need for them to be out at night. This was a special advantage over pantomime, in which matinees were generally presented only once or twice a week and

52. Daily Telegraph, 19 December 1901, p.4.
53. Ibid., 20 December 1904, p.12.
54. See Appendix 11, 'Pantomimes and Fairy Plays, 1880-1904'.
where productions could last up to five hours. Thirdly, there were strong financial reasons for managements to present matinees which were much less elaborate than pantomime and enabled the presentation of a second production simultaneously with the evening one.

But if the matinee form which was characteristic of children's plays was particularly suited to minority audiences, the concerns of these productions should be seen in the general context of theatre for the middle and upper middle classes of which they were a part, and to which they came to contribute. The various versions of fairy-land dramatised in children's plays were part of a general trend in middle and upper middle class theatre away from the naturalistic and realistic concerns of the late 1880s and early 1890s described at the beginning of this chapter. The limited number of plays for children during the decade before the turn of the century, produced largely at matinees, therefore tended to explore fantasy themes, though these were not always well developed. Signs of formal hesitation are apparent in some early productions in their attempts to integrate fairy themes in plays showing clear signs of derivation at least in part from drama and melodrama. The Era's review of the first result of the example set by Alice, Rosina Filippi's Little Goody Two Shoes, produced with an all-child cast by Mrs John Wood at the Court in 1888, expressed delight at 'so pleasing a change from theatrical entertainments, as we meet with them ordinarily', while noting with almost equal enthusiasm the Graspall of little Tommy Tucker:

This little fellow was the stage villain to the life; one might imagine oneself looking through an inverted lorgnette at a rascally Adelphi steward ...

Again, the children's opera, The Belles of the Village, produced at the Avenue in 1889 with another all-child cast, centred on the well-worn theme of the tribulations of a pair of rustic lovers, while in recognition of its audience including a dream sequence featuring a fairy ballet. A third all-child production, The House that Jack Built, (1894), revolved around a simple melodrama theme lightened by a fairy tale ending, and in E.W. Bowles's operatic extravaganza

The Water Babes at the Parkhurst in 1895 the shipwreck of two sisters proceeds in time-honoured style to the discomfiture of villains and prosperity and happy marriage of the two heroines. So, while produced for children and often with all-child casts, such plays contributed comparatively little to the development of the image of childhood in children's theatre, since the children who appeared in them were playing not children but adults. 57

At the same time, the years up to 1905 saw a series of productions based on traditional fairy tale themes, a series which increased in frequency after about 1898. Though this series of plays included productions derived from English themes, like Cock Robin in 1891, they were dominated on the whole by stories from Hans Andersen and the brothers Grimm. Plays of this kind included The Merry Piper of Nuremberg in 1891, Big Claus and Littl Claus in 1897, The Swineherd and the Princess in 1901, Rumplestiltzkin in 1903, and Little Hans Andersen also in 1903.

Plays like these were simple dramatisations of traditional stories and as such showed little development of dramatic form. Moreover, while children were seen as their appropriate audiences, children did not feature as their central protagonists. If anything, such plays were founded on the notion of children as consumers of fantasy rather than as participants in or symbols of it. At the same time, however, they provided one of two sources of dramatic vocabulary which were used in the dramatisation of fairy themes, not for children but for adult audiences. As we shall see, the other was Shakespearean, exemplified particularly in revivals of A Midsummer Night's Dream. The blurring of distinctions between adult and child concerns implied by this led eventually to the use of childhood interests and of childhood itself to define a fairyland alternative world which had meaning for adult audiences. This process was partly accomplished in a number

57. The same is true of other all-child productions of different kinds, of which there were a number during the period. These included Les Cloches de Corneville (705 performances with all-child cast, 1898), H.M.S. Pinafore (1880), The Pirates of Penzance (1885), Madame Angot (1885), as well as a number of all-child pantomimes.
of dramatisations of fairy themes for adults beginning early in the period. The first production of this kind was Victor Nessler's The Piper of Hamelin at Covent Garden in 1884, presented by the Royal English Opera Company. Unfamiliarity with German operatic treatments of fairy tale themes is probably part of the explanation for a lack of critical enthusiasm for Nessler's play. As The Theatre put it:

The English public are accustomed to see children's books dramatised in connection with Christmas pantomines, not with grand opera. 58

However, the relatively slow development of a specialised children's theatre based on fantasy themes in the 1880s suggests also that the time was not right for fantasy of this kind for adult audiences. The reception of Nessler's opera makes an interesting comparison with the reception of an equivalent production, Hansel and Gretel, featuring the music of Engelbert Humperdinck at Daly's Theatre in 1894. Certainly, Humperdinck's music was an undeniable asset. It had, wrote 'R.S.H.' in the World,

... a flavour all its own. As the epicure welcomes a novel subtlety that appeals to his palate in a sauce, so the musician welcomes an original sharpness or sweetness or strength that appeals to his palate in a composition. 59

But what was most significant was the opera's revelation of a new readiness in adult audiences by the mid-1890s to respond to fantasy expressed through childhood. One instance of this was the sequence in which the children, like Titania in A Midsummer Night's Dream, fall asleep on a bank in the forest with the help of the little Sandman, after singing an evening hymn. In their sleep they dream of angels, fourteen of whom descend to guard them. Of this the Era reviewer wrote that 'it was greeted with such a shout of applause that we have rarely heard, even at Christmas Time'. 60 'R.S.H.' in the World testified personally to the opera's power to compel belief.

58. The Theatre, 1 February 1884, p.80. Other reviews, such as that in the Era (12 January 1884, p.6) were similarly unenthusiastic.
59. World, 2 January 1895, p.12.
60. Era, 29 December 1894, p.7.
'At first', he wrote,  

I sat and smiled, gratified not impossibly by a sense of my own superiority to the grim realities of fairyland, but this mental attitude I was forced to eventually abandon and I am not ashamed to confess that I shuddered when I heard the sinister voice of the invisible witch uttering to an admirably appalling phrase of music the words  

Nibble, nibble, mousekin  

Who's nibbling at my housekin.  

For his part, William Archer lavished praise on Humperdinck's ability to think as a child and to express his thoughts as a man. 

There was no suggestion from any quarter that this was a children's play, other than in the derivation of its theme. However, an adult audience was clearly implied by its production at evening performances with matinees only on Saturdays. Since Daly's Theatre had no pit or gallery, the audience was also largely middle and upper middle class, and supported the opera through no less than 161 performances, making it something of a landmark in the incorporation of a child-based sense of fairyland into adult theatre. 

As a kind of sequel to this, another German fairytale for adult audiences was staged at the Court in 1897. This was The Children of the King by Ernest Rosmer (a pseudonym for Elsa Bernstein), revised by the poet John Davidson. Again the incidental music was by Humperdinck, but Humperdinck's music did not save The Children of the King from failure. The plot was gloomy and involved and the play was criticised in the Daily Telegraph for containing too many improbabilities and too much wordiness. It was, nonetheless, a play for adults and the Era's prediction that it would appeal to a small minority of the cultivated and poetical was an indication of the new respectability of such themes among adult audiences, even if the reviewer doubted the play's ability to attract the general public.

61. World, 2 January 1895, p.12.  
62. Ibid., p.11.  
63. Daily Telegraph, 14 October 1897, p.9.  
64. Era, 16 October 1897, p.10.
The last important example of such plays during this period was *Ib and Little Christina*, first produced in 1900, with a musical version in 1901, and adapted by Basil Hood from the fairy tale by Hans Andersen. The play tells a curiously stiff and formal story, in three acts. In the first act comes the courtship of the children Ib and Christina. In the second act, Christina, tempted by wealth, comes to ask Ib for permission to marry a rich innkeeper's son and Ib unselfishly agrees to the loss of his hitherto faithful friend. The third act finds Christina dead, but her daughter Christina is returned to Ib. Ib sees in her his childhood sweetheart and re-enacts incidents in Act I to do with his courtship of the child's mother. In thus, as it were, beginning the story again, he is also returning to his own childhood, a step confirmed when he adopts as mother to them both the old gipsy woman who has watched over him since his childhood, and tells her

**IB:** You see, I must be little Ib again - to play with her, and give her all my toys. We will both call you mother...65

The play, with its regressive implications, significant in view of J.M. Barrie's later exploitation of the regressive idea in *Peter Pan*, was greeted enthusiastically. 'Ib and Little Christina is not a mere child's play', wrote the *Daily Telegraph* reviewer, for it abounds in dramatic emotions that arouse general interest and attention. Fragile it is, but we could pardon fragility in many other works which miss the pure, sweet note of the warmly and worthily applauded *Ib and Little Christina*.66

And in implicit recognition of the play's escapist theme, the reviewer for the *Lady's Pictorial* wrote that it was 'as fascinating as Ibsen shorn of his eccentricities and squalor'. Meanwhile it was applauded in the *Era* for 'the sweet and simple talk of the children'.68

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65. Basil Hood, *Ib and Little Christina*, (1900), Act III.
The success of *Ib* and *Little Christina*, demonstrated by its revival with music by Walter Slaughter in 1901, testifies to the extent to which fantasy themes associated with childhood had become acceptable to adult audiences by the end of the century. Just as striking in this respect was the revival in 1898 of Clarke and Slaughter's adaptation of *Alice in Wonderland*, not for the largely mother and child audiences of matinees, but for the general public attending evening performances. It was warmly received by reviewers like that for the *Daily Telegraph*:

> We were children and grown-ups in that enchanted pleasance, the little ones revelling in the humours of the Hatter, the Dormouse, the Mock-turtle and the White Rabbit; their elders with a scarcely less keen perception of the seeming, looking through the fantastic guise of the author's wit and irony to the actual. 69

It was the revival of *Alice* in 1900, however, which, by the testimony of its two stars, Ellaline Terriss and Seymour Hicks, 70 conclusively demonstrated the popularity of children's plays with adult audiences and led directly to the production of the first wholly original play for children, *Bluebell in Fairyland*, in 1901. As we shall see, *Bluebell* provided an important source for *Peter Pan*, but in explaining the derivation of Barrie's play and the notion of childhood it embodied, it is important to examine some trends in adult theatre which were relevant to it.

Within adult theatre, the version of fairyland derived from Grimm, Andersen and traditional sources of children's fairy tales existed alongside another version which was relevant to the development of notions of childhood. This was derived from Shakespearean plays,


particularly *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, but also *The Tempest, As You Like It* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. These plays, especially *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, were prominent in the 'boom in Shakespeare' referred to by Nicoll and are important first for the interest in a fairyland alternative world their productions and reception indicate, secondly for the association between children and the fairy world which as supernumeraries they enacted, and finally for the imagery borrowed from them by J.M. Barrie in developing the *Peter Pan* idea.

The periods of greatest popularity of the Shakespearean fairy plays seem to have matched those of the child-oriented plays discussed in this chapter and the last, with peaks in the late 1880s and after 1900. There were three such productions, for example, in 1888 and 1889: a production of fairy scenes from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Crystal Palace in 1888, Benson's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 1889, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* at a series of Haymarket matinees, also in 1889. At the same time, the later period is marked by the important revival of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by Beerbohm Tree in 1900, and a later successful, though less distinguished, production of the same play by Otho Stuart in 1905.

Even allowing for the intrinsic importance of fairy scenes in the plays revived in 1888-89, the productions of those years laid heavy emphasis upon them. Oscar Barrett's production at the Crystal Palace in 1888 was limited to the fairy scenes of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, while Benson's production of the full play featured, according to the *Era*, 'a woodland glade by moonlight' which was 'a masterpiece of

71. Recent work by Jeremy Maas and Beatrice Philpotts on Victorian fairy painters indicates that child imagery played little part in their depictions of the fairy world of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Philpotts notes that it was 'the pastoral arcadia of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that was to provide the abiding image of fairyland' (B. Philpotts, *Fairy Paintings*, London 1978, p.11) for the fairy painters. But Maas indicates that while the fairy painters concentrated many 'opposing elements in the Victorian psyche' in which the need to 'escape the drear hardships of daily existence' and find a 'psychological retreat from scientific discoveries' was significant, the figures chosen to people their fantastic landscapes were not children or derived from children but 'creatures of the old mythology' (J. Maas, *Victorian Painters*, London 1969, p.148).
poetical effect, peopled by some half-hundred fairies, played by child supernumeraries. These were noted in The Theatre as 'numerous elves tripping here and there and peeping forth from all sorts of nooks and crannies'. The action moreover, was interspersed with 'various dances and groupings of the fairies, who at times carry coloured lamps', according to the Era. Archer noted a multitude of imperfections in the production but praised its fairy scenes and it was probably due to these that the production ran for an impressive 110 performances.

Benson's revival of A Midsummer Night's Dream of 1889 was the first of three productions of the play to run for more than 100 performances between that year and 1905. The second was Beerbohm Tree's memorable version of 1900. Enormous pains were taken to create fairy settings of which the Lady's Pictorial said

Anything more faultlessly lovely than the woodland scenes have probably never been seen on any stage in the world at any period of the drama's history. The grey-blue glamour which permates the leafy glade is the ideal atmosphere in which stately Oberon, graceful Titania, and the frolic elves should live and move and have their being, and it is in truth a dreamland, a land of supernal loveliness, a land of poetry and fantasy, to which we are transported by the magic of art inspired by something very like managerial genius.

One significant feature of the production was its Puck, described by the Era as 'clad in green and barely distinguishable from the grass and bushes that surround him'. In style, he seems to prefigure Peter Pan, played as he was by Louie Freer with what was described by the Era as

all the quaint vivacity demanded and with a tricksy sportiveness which was very effective. The exultant chuckle which she frequently introduced was amusing and her elfish approach and arch antics completed the success of her impersonation.

72. Era, 21 December 1889, p.11.
73. The Theatre, 1 February 1890, p.108.
74. Era, 21 December 1889, p.11.
75. Lady's Pictorial, 20 January 1900, p.76.
Probably the most remarkable moment in the production was the conclusion in which Tree exploited with rare effectiveness the otherworldly possibilities contained within the play. The _Era_ reviewer saw it thus:

... the fairies come to dance in the Palace after the company have retired to bed. The columns glow with supernatural sheen, the elves gradually disperse through the corridors, and as their songs sink into silence, the light dies out by degrees, and the curtain descends on a darkened and empty stage. 76

Tree's revival ran for 151 performances. Its success, and that of the revival of the same play by Otho Stuart in 1905, show the popularity during these years of the fairyland created by _A Midsummer Night's Dream_. Moreover, this popularity can be located with some confidence among the wealthier classes. Something of this is suggested by the success of the matinee performances of _The Merry Wives of Windsor_ at the Haymarket in 1889, given, as _The Theatre_ reported, 'to overflowing houses'. 77 Since the Haymarket was a pioneer in the abolition of the pit and, under the Bancrofts, had led the theatre back to respectability audiences there, especially at a matinee, were likely to be at least well-to-do. But more conclusive indications of the kind of public attracted by plays of this kind are offered first by the nature of plays inspired by them, and secondly by the venues of private performances of them.

Probably the most notable of plays produced in the 1890s under the inspiration of the Shakespearean fairy idea was Tennyson's poetic idyll _The Foresters_ (produced at Daly's Theatre in 1893), an unsuccessful attempt to combine the legend of Robin Hood with the arcadian magic of _A Midsummer Night's Dream_. Daly's Theatre had no pit or gallery. This, together with the names of Tennyson as the author of the piece and Sullivan as the composer of its incidental music, guaranteed a Society audience for what was described in the _Lady's Pictorial_ as 'a restful series of delightful pictures, reminding us now of _As You Like It_, and anon of _A Midsummer Night's Dream_'. References

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76. _Era_, 13 January 1900, p.13.
77. _The Theatre_, 1 February 1889, p.124.
to the second of these plays include Maid Marian's dream as she sleeps like Titania on a mossy bank:

Mystic strains of music rise and as the moon pierces through the leafy screen to kiss her form and wrap her in a haze of silver light, from underwood and fern, from beech and oak and elm, dart and glide and trip myriad elves. Back and forth and round and round they flit, pearl-grey drift of gossamer waving tiny hands and flashing from their dewey wands sparkles, rose and green and blue and diamond white. And circling round the sleeping maid with childish chant they ease her heart:

For you love him and he loves you.
Both be happy and adieu.
For ever and for ever more, adieu. 78

A further sign of the popularity among the respectable public of the fairy theme exemplified in A Midsummer Night's Dream is given by the semi-amateur production Ermynegarde in Fairyland also staged in 1893, at the Prince of Wales's Club. The play tells of Lady Ermynegarde who wants to stay in fairyland with the three fairies Puck, Peasblossom and Cobweb though her parents want her to marry the Marquis Prince Florian and become a Marchioness. The fairies cast a spell on Florian to make him forget her but he begins to waste away since his love for her is his life. She sees his plight in a magic mirror and cannot bear it but it is eventually revealed that Florian has fairy blood in his veins so she can after all marry him and stay in fairyland. The derivation of the play from A Midsummer Night's Dream is clear enough in the names of the fairies, and in the references made in it to Titania and Oberon.

The popularity among the upper middle classes of the Shakespearean fairy plays and of the imagery with which they are associated is illustrated also by the frequency with which such plays were staged in the gardens of private houses in amateur productions. Many of these productions were reviewed by The Theatre. They include scenes from A Midsummer Night's Dream at Chorleywood House in 1888, including 'a very pretty dance of elves by children', 79 Love's Labours Lost in an

78. Lady's Pictorial, 14 October 1893, p.578.
79. The Theatre, 1 September 1888, p.162.
outdoor production at Tunbridge Wells in 1890, a charity performance of the same play organised by the Countess of Radnor in the grounds of the home of Mrs Leo Schuster in 1891, and the production in the same year of A Midsummer Night's Dream in a private park near St Albans, from which The Theatre's reviewer gained 'a gallery of pictures that even the coming Socialism cannot rob us of'.

These productions helped to elaborate an additional version of fairyland to that provided in children's theatre, and it is in their value as a source of imagery, particularly for J.M. Barrie, rather than for any development of notions of childhood within them, that their chief significance for the present discussion lies. At the same time, there are indications that the Shakespearean fairy world, which in painting Jeremy Maas has described as moving, from the 1870s onwards, from being the province of fairy painters like the Doyle brothers to that of illustrators of children's books like Tenniel, Rackham and Dulac, was by the 1890s seen in terms of childhood. Thus the Daily Telegraph's reviewer of Tree's A Midsummer Night's Dream felt bound to assert that the play was 'no piece of idle child's play', and the Era's reviewer of Stuart's production of the same play in 1905 explained its popularity by the fact that 'a child could understand it and it brings back to adults a touch of their childhood'. These ideas are perhaps best summarised by Puck in Ermynegard in Fairyland, who asks his audience

Pray you tonight be children once again.
Laugh with our laughter - with our playmate grieve,
And aid us as our mystic tale we weave
With childhood's potent spell of 'makebelieve'.

80. Ibid., 1 September 1890, p.147.
81. Ibid., 1 September 1891, p.14.
82. Ibid., 1 October 1891, p.191.
84. Daily Telegraph, 11 January 1900, p.10.
85. Era, 2 December 1905, p.17.
86. J.W. Brodie Innes, Ermynegarde in Fairyland (1893).
In summary then, it is evident that interest in Shakespearean versions of the fairy world was strong at times when interest in plays featuring children was also strong, that this was particularly so of the upper middle classes, and that there are indications of the association of childhood with that world through a sense of their natural proprietorship of it. Moreover, it is clear from earlier discussion of adult fairy plays by Humperdinck and others that interest in alternative worlds as expressed in terms of fairyland developed not only by way of Shakespeare but also through children's theatre itself from which themes were appropriated for adult audiences, always in the knowledge that they were the peculiar property of children. In this way, an association between childhood and fairyland was confirmed which was not as apparent in dramatisations of fairy themes before Alice in Wonderland in 1886.

The direction of this chapter, as of the developing association of fairyland with childhood described earlier, is towards Peter Pan as the point at which this association helped make explicit an image of the child which both had real representative significance and marked a radical shift from the images of children enacted by the child stars of the late 1880s.

At the same time as this association was being achieved through fairy plays for children and through revivals of Shakespearean fairy comedies, J.M. Barrie was making his own contribution to the notion of childhood later embodied in Peter Pan, a contribution which lay in his nostalgic identification of childhood itself as a fairyland alternative world and as an ideal condition.

Max Beerbohm in his review of Peter Pan in 1905 wrote of Barrie that

time was when a tiny pair of trousers peeped from under his short coat, and his sunny curls were parted and plastered down, and he jauntily affected the absence of a lisp, and spelt out the novels of Mr. Meredith, and said he liked them very much, and even used a pipe for another purpose than that of blowing soap bubbles. Now at last we see at the Duke of York's theatre,
Mr. Barrie in his quiddity undiluted, the child in a state of nature, unabashed; the child, as it were, in its bath, splashing and crowing as it splashes. 87

Criticism of J.M. Barrie with this kind of hindsight is useful since Peter Pan not only brings together streams of development which are independent of Barrie's own earlier work but is also the product of his own thematic development. From this point of view his popular light comedy The Professor's Love Story (1894) is an important indicator of his later concerns and one which aids in their evaluation.

Hailed by the Daily Telegraph as early as 1892 as the 'new Robertson', 88 Barrie in this play worked within the formal conventions of naturalism established by Robertson and others from the 1870s on, while in spirit going well beyond it. Barrie's story tells of an absent-minded professor, Professor Goodwillie, who finds his mind wandering from his work for no reason he can think of. His doctor deduces the professor is in love and tells him so, but Goodwillie cannot see what the doctor has guessed, that he is in love with his young secretary, Lucy White. The professor's pursuit by the dowager Lady Gilding, and the early attempts by his sister Agnes to prevent any match with Lucy, delay his discovery of his true feelings for her. Lucy herself precipitates the discovery by tricking him into picking her up when he believes she has fainted.

The play is important in the context of the present discussion because of its theme of rejuvenation, contained within the equation Barrie makes between the professor's achievement of the youth he missed by overattention to his studies and his love for Lucy. Love leads him to recover the lost joys of childhood, equated by Barrie with vitality and life. While still unaware of his condition, he is transformed by it. Thus his doctor tells him

DR COSENS: ... Hang it, Tom, you seem ... to have become a boy again.

PROFESSOR: That's true, Dick, and I don't understand it. It must be something in the air. 89

88. Daily Telegraph, 26 February 1892.
89. J.M. Barrie, The Professor's Love Story (1894), Act II.
And on discovering his love for Lucy, he tells her

I see everything clearly now; why I was so
lighthearted in the field today; why I jumped
those wheatstacks. It was my youth come to me
at last. I had no youth at the age when I should
have had it.... 90

Barrie's adroit treatment of the play's essential fantasy within
the formal boundaries of naturalism proved highly successful. In the
Daily Telegraph it was said that he had written

a play, fantastic, graceful, human to the backbone,
and teeming with observation and character.
Gradually we see the chilled man melting in the
soft rays of love's sunshine. He becomes young
again, bright, genuine and happy. 91

The Illustrated London News called the play 'a poem in motion' 92 and,
like The Theatre reviewer who found in the amateur production of
A Midsummer Night's Dream in 1891 a refuge from 'the coming Socialism',
the reviewer from the same magazine found in The Professor's Love
Story a refuge from realism:

True enough the whole thing is artifice. In design
it is unreality itself, which within the intricate
framework is more truth than in all the problem
marvels our ears are assailed with, week by week. 94

Audiences likewise responded warmly to the play, sustaining it for 140
performances.

In much the same vein of fantasy, H.V. Esmond's Bogey, produced
a year after Barrie's play, was less subtle and less successful.
Despite its failure at the box office, however, its evident elaboration
of Barrie's theme of regression indicates a receptiveness to the idea
among a number of critics which was not limited to expressions of it
in Barrie's own work. At the same time, Esmond's more overt expression

90. Ibid., Act III.
91. Daily Telegraph, 26 June 1894, p.5.
93. The Theatre, 1 October 1891, p.191.
94. The Theatre, 1 August 1894, p.73.
of the idea makes explicit what Barrie states with greater caution, and therefore underlines some of the implications in the idea of regression as Barrie explored it in *The Professor's Love Story.*

Esmond's story veers uneasily between fantasy and naturalistic, domestic drama. Archie Buttenshaw, 'a happy little man of 55', is temporarily possessed by the spirit of a vicious forger and drunkard, Gordon Bates. Under Bates's influence, Archie craves drink and speculates wildly, plunging not only his own money but also that of his nieces and his old friend Miss Mindin, into shares in an apparently worthless silver mine. For a time, all appear to have lost their fortunes, but the mine turns out to be rich and all find themselves wealthy beyond their dreams.

The idea of childhood as a golden age is a consistent theme in the play. It is partly embodied in Archie's niece, appropriately named Fairy, 'a pretty golden-haired child of fifteen', whose presence drives Bates's spirit from Archie's body while she is in the same room. It is also Fairy, who in the language of dreams and fairy tales, and by evocations of childhood, urges Archie to marry Miss Mindin. Thus in Act I she tells him:

FAIRY: I dreamed three nights running of a ceremony in a little country Church where the bridegroom, a tubby little man, all blushes and pretty pomposity ...

UNCLE: Well, I never.
FAIRY: (continuing) ... led through the ivy porch a dear little lady with silver hair and twinkling dimples, that the tubby little man had kissed more than once when he was a happy little boy and she a happy little girl.

And the notion of Archie's and Miss Mindin's love as children, outlined in Act I, is taken up in the sentimental climax of the play in Act III, when the old couple, thinking they have lost everything, find solace in the memory of their childhood together.

96. Esmond, *op. cit.*, Act I.
97. Ibid.
MISS MINDIN: Let's shut our eyes and dream a little, Archie. Can't you see it all - the little stream laughing all along the rushes...

ARCHIE: I kissed you on the dimples and you cried.

MISS MINDIN: I was so happy I couldn't help it.

ARCHIE: There was no twenty thousand pounds then and the sunshine was very, very bright.

MISS MINDIN: There's no twenty thousand pounds now, Archie dear, and I believe the sunshine on that little Hampshire field is just as bright as ever.

(He buries his head in his hands. She says shyly, stroking his hair:)

MISS MINDIN: Archie, shall we go back and see?

(He looks up with a glad cry, takes her hands, kisses them. They both break down a little, and he takes her in his arms.)

The setting of the play and the idiom in which its situations are worked out are those of sentimental domestic drama. Unlike the transformation of the Professor in The Professor's Love Story, the overtly supernatural transformation of Archie into Gordon Bates is at odds with the play's basically naturalistic form. Certainly, the critics viewed Bogey in this light. The Daily Telegraph found the notion of Archie's metamorphosis 'ludicrous' while in the Illustrated London News Esmond was accused of concocting 'a wild scheme'. The play ran for only twelve performances and its disastrous failure was probably due to its incongruous combination of domestic sentimentality and the overtly supernatural. On the other hand, however, the notion of rediscovery of youth through love, which echoes Barrie's treatment of the same idea in The Professor's Love Story a year previously, and which is integrated far more effectively into that play's basic scheme than is the supernatural element represented by Bates, received warm commendation. The Illustrated London News found Eva Moore's performance as Fairy 'simply delightful'. The Theatre described her as importing into the play 'an element of brightness and vivacity, of tenderness and gentle pathos quite in keeping with the

98. Esmond, op. cit., Act III.
99. Daily Telegraph, 11 September 1895, p.3.
100. Illustrated London News, 14 September 1895, p.323.
name', while in the Daily Telegraph she was said to be 'simply charming, natural, gay, attractive and helpful to every scene'. The love scene between Archie and Miss Mindin, and particularly the part played in it by Patsy Bell as Miss Mindin, was likewise praised. 'The one artistic and beautiful performance' wrote the Daily Telegraph critic 'was the Miss Mindin of Miss Patsy Bell who has the sweetest of voices, and the purest of enunciation. Miss Bell played the Darby and Joan love scene with consummate grace and sense of delicate art'.

In conception, the play was probably, as the Daily Telegraph suggested, 'a deplorable mistake', yet its strengths are also clear and they throw into relief the basis of the fantasy, similar in kind though more ambiguously expressed, in The Professor's Love Story, while its emphasis on regression into a childhood world, insulated from the traumas of adult life, anticipates a major preoccupation in Barrie's later work.

By 1900, then, the theatre exhibited an intensified interest in alternative worlds and fantasy of all kinds, an association between these and childhood, especially in Shakespearean fairy plays and in adult plays and opera derived from themes in children's theatre, and the beginnings in J.M. Barrie of a sense of childhood not only as an alternative state of mind in its own right, but also as an ideal state of mind, and a source of opposing values to those of adult life. A number of ingredients were therefore now present in the available vocabulary of dramatic ideas which could facilitate a new approach to the treatment of childhood.

The beginnings of such a new approach can be seen in an upsurge of interest in children on the stage from 1899 onwards which produced a marked increase in the numbers of non-pantomime Christmas

102. The Theatre, 1 October 1895, p.231.
103. Daily Telegraph, 11 September 1895, p.3.
104. Ibid.
105. Ibid.
106. See Appendix 10, Pantomimes and Fairy Plays, 1880-1904.
productions for both child and adult audiences. The change at the turn of the century was not, however, merely quantitative, since the notions of childhood represented in some of these plays constituted something of a revolution in the image of the child in the theatre.

Part of this revolution centred on the role of the child as a protagonist. Except for Alice, children were not generally featured in fairy plays in such roles. The sense of an association between childhood and the fairyland alternative world had been an essentially passive one. Children were seen as observers of the fantasy world created for their pleasure, rather than as participants in it. Even in Alice's case, it is worth noting that her role was essentially that of passive observer, what Empson has called 'the child as judge'.

The greater number of children's plays produced after 1899 brought with them a more active conception of the child, now seen for the first time in plays of this kind as the action's motive force. The watershed in this development was Bluebell in Fairyland (1901), the story of the quest through Fairyland by Bluebell the little flower-girl, Dicky the bootblack and Peter the cat for the Sleepy King, and of his restoration by them to his throne. 107

Following directly, as I have suggested, from the success of Alice the previous year, Bluebell in Fairyland was the first original play for children. In theme and imagery however, it was derived largely from traditional sources. The nature of Blubell's and Dicky's normal life of poverty in London makes them distant cousins of Jo, while nursery rhymes, songs, dances and topical references in the production recall pantomime and musical comedy in which its stars, particularly Ellaline Terriss, had already made a considerable reputation. Together with the play's performance for evening audiences, they serve as a reminder that like Alice it was intended to appeal to adults as well as children. The influence of Alice, indeed, is clear and strong, both in the borrowing from Tweedledum and Tweedledee for the characters of Blib and Blob, and in the picaresque design of the plot.

107. The plot of Bluebell in Fairyland is summarised in Appendix 8.
though Alice's wanderings are less purposeful than Bluebell's search for the Sleepy King (possibly the publication of Baum's *The Wizard of Oz* in the United States in 1899 with its similar quest was significant in this). The mythical fairyland in which the children find themselves is traditional also in its consistency with the continental stories prevalent in children's theatre rather than with the native pastoral imagery of the Shakespearean fairy plays.

While in several important respects *Bluebell in Fairyland* looks back to earlier models, however, the play's own contribution to the development of child characters was considerable. This contribution lay partly in the contrast between Bluebell's normal poverty-stricken life as a flower-girl and her adventurous existence in fairyland. In this context, fairyland becomes an ideal alternative world, a place of escape from the rigours of everyday life. The novelty of this lay in the counterpointing of a real world of poverty with a fairyland replete with imaginative possibilities not available in real life. This idea with its escapist implications looked forward to Peter Pan, while the terms in which this version of fairyland was defined recall the earlier tradition of children's theatre represented by Hans Andersen.

In immediate terms, the chief importance of *Bluebell in Fairyland* lay in the brightness of the production and the centrality of its principal child characters in creating its tone and impelling its action. In these respects the play owes much to musical comedy, another important influence in the development of children's plays as a separate dramatic genre.

*Bluebell* was one of a series of productions in which Seymour Hicks and Ellaline Terriss were the leading lights, both in production

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108. While dramatised in naturalistic terms, Frances Hodgson Burnett's *A Little Un-fairy Princess* (later *A Little Princess*), first presented in matinees at the Shaftesbury Theatre in 1902, depends on a similar, apparently miraculous transformation of the orphan Sara Crewe's garret and later of her life itself at the hands of her benefactor and his Indian servant. Mrs Burnett's use of such a device here makes for an interesting comparison with the much stricter naturalism of *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, produced fourteen years previously.
and performance. Ellaline Terriss had for some years played leading roles in pantomime, notably in Oscar Barrett’s *Cinderella* in 1893. She was also successful in musical comedy, and her performance as the Fairy Queen in a harlequinade performed at a benefit for the Gaiety star Nellie Farren in 1898 perhaps exemplifies best her identification with both pantomime and musical comedy. In the same year the appearance of Ellaline Terriss with Seymour Hicks in the comic opera *The Lady Wrangler* set the tone for a long and successful partnership between the two.

The style of performance such a background implied was first applied by them to children’s theatre in their production of *Alice in Wonderland* in 1900. Earlier productions of *Alice*, perhaps inhibited by Carroll’s original stories, emphasised the comparatively restrained quality of its central character, an emphasis no doubt encouraged by the use of children in the role. Thus in 1886, Phoebe Carlo’s Alice was described in the *Daily Telegraph* as ‘the flesh-and-blood child of ordinary life ... the common nursery intellect in a region of extravagant fancies ....’,109 William Archer’s complaint of Rose Hersee in the production of 1898 that ‘she has all the elegant manners of a grown-up artist, and her self-possession is not at all that of a child’110 suggests a similar gravity in the way that production presented the character of Alice. In 1900, however, Lewis Carroll would have had difficulty, had he lived, in recognising his grave and sensible heroine from the *Era*’s description of Ellaline Terriss as

the pretty, ingenuous schoolgirl, ever ready for a romp, and enjoying with the intensity and self-absorption of the young her marvellous adventures in the land of dreams ... she has the power of depicting the brightness and animation of extreme youth. She sings, she dances, she is always on the alert, and her vivacity never flags from curtain-rise to curtain-fall.111

From accounts of the opening night it seems clear that Ellaline Terriss's performance in Bluebell was a little more restrained than it had been in Alice. Nonetheless, the Daily Telegraph's description of her as Bluebell suggests not only the extent to which her performance echoed that in Alice the previous year, but also the extent to which it was the key to the success of the production as a whole. 'Once more winning all hearts', the reviewer wrote, 'by the unaffected charm that belongs to her, the actress delighted her audience from first to last ... in such a part as Bluebell the presence of so well-graced and practised an artist is quite invaluable'.

Bluebell in Fairyland ran for 294 performances and its remarkable success made it something of a turning point in the evolution of children's theatre and in the nature of the central roles in plays for children thereafter. The emphasis on brightness and liveliness imported from musical comedy meant greater importance for the star as the focus of these qualities in the production. Two roles played by Nellie Bowman illustrate the effect of the trend evident in Alice in 1900 and continued in Bluebell in 1901. The first of these was her performance as Tom in the adaptation by another figure well-known in musical comedy, Rutland Barrington, of The Water Babies, presented to both matinee and evening audiences at the Garrick in 1902. 'Her elf-like activity', wrote the Era's reviewer, 'her touching rendering of the pathetic passages, and, above all, her unvarying alertness and vivacity in the later scenes were just the qualities required to make an ideal hero of the piece'. In the Daily Telegraph she was described as 'the life and soul of the play', who 'carried the whole drama upon her shoulders'.

112. See, for example, the Era, 21 December 1901, p.15; William Archer's review in the World, 25 December 1901, p.23; the Daily Telegraph, 19 December 1901, p.4; The Times, 19 December 1901, p.11.


The same style of performance was evident in Nellie Bowman's interpretation of a very different role, that of Little Black 'Sambo in Little Black Sambo and Little White Barbara in 1904. In what the Era called 'practically a variety entertainment', largely of a 'darkie' type, its reviewer said of her that she acts, sings and dances with admirable animation, energy and spirit, and keeps matters moving all the time she is upon the stage. Her liveliness is very exhilarating and she does her work with a quick confidence that carries the audience with her entirely.116

The bright and lively style of performance, therefore, which in children's theatre found its most successful expression in Bluebell in Fairyland, implied a greater importance for the star of the production than had hitherto been the case. In children's theatre, and with the use of women in child roles, this led to productions, like the 1900 version of Alice, Bluebell and other plays inspired by musical comedy, which were centred more fully on child heroes and heroines than was so of children's plays during most of the 1890s, and to the evolution of child protagonists conceived in more vital terms than had been the case, for example, in Alice in 1886. The conception in Bluebell and similar plays of the child as the embodiment of brightness and life and as the focus of these qualities in the production brought in its train the idea of the child's independence from the adult context in which it was seen in plays of the kind discussed in the previous chapter in which children like Minnie Terry and Vera Beringer had starred in the late 1880s and early 1890s. At the same time, from counterpointing the unpleasant facts of real life (whether these are seen as poverty or as adulthood itself) with the imaginative alternative of fairyland to the wholehearted rejection of the real world in favour of fairyland as a fitter environment for imaginative fulfillment was a relatively short step. It is in this progression, and in the parallel evolution of fairyland as a metaphor for the world of the child's imagination that the important differences lie between Bluebell in Fairyland and the play in which the developments described in this chapter find their fullest expression, Peter Pan.

An important distinction between Bluebell and Peter Pan concerns the different origins of the versions of fairyland on which they draw and which help to define the notions of childhood characteristic of each. The fairy landscape through which Bluebell and Dicky travel is derived largely from Grimm and Andersen, with some contribution from traditional English children's tales in episodes like the Funeral of Cock Robin. On the other hand, Barrie's first statement of the Peter Pan idea in The Little White Bird (1902) depends almost wholly on a notion of fairyland derived from A Midsummer Night's Dream, which presents a world populated, not by kings, princesses, ogres or giants, but by fairies. As a further consequence of the choice of Shakespearean imagery, the setting of the Peter Pan sections of Barrie's book, Kensington Gardens, is pastoral rather than fantastic as in Bluebell, and the fairies seen in great profusion, as in Barrie's description of a fairy ball witnessed by little Maimie Mannering, correspond closely to representations of the fairy world by painters earlier in the century in their illustrations of A Midsummer Night's Dream:

Maimie's curiosity tugged her forward, and presently ... she saw a wonderful light. The light, which was as high as your head above the ground, was composed of myriads of glow-worms all holding on to each other, and so forming a dazzling canopy over the fairy ring. There were thousands of little people looking on, but they were in shadow and drab in colour compared to the glorious creatures within that luminous circle, who were so bewilderingly bright that Maimie had to wink hard all the time she looked at them.117

Peter Pan himself bears a more than passing resemblance to Puck as

117. J.M. Barrie, The Little White Bird (London 1932), pp.176-77. For comparison, see the following paintings: Richard Dadd's 'Puck' (1841) and Sir Joseph Paton's 'The Quarrel of Oberon and Titania' (1849), 'The Reconciliation of Oberon and Titania' (1847) and 'Titania's Elves Stealing the Squirrel's Hoard of Hazel Nuts' (1850). Paintings using a similar idiom, though not Shakespearean in subject, include Paton's 'The Fairy Raid' (1847) and John Anster Fitzgerald's 'The Fairies' Banquet' (1859) and 'The Fairies' Barque' (1860). As Beatrice Phillpotts observes, fairy themes were appropriated later in the century by illustrators of children's books like Arthur Rackham, Edmund Dulac, the Robinson brothers and Kate Greenaway (op. cit., p.13).
played by Louie Freer in Tree's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* four years earlier, 'clad in green and barely distinguishable from the grass and bushes that surround him'.

To the basic stock of imagery adapted in *The Little White Bird* from that used in the Shakespearean fairy plays, and thence imported in attenuated form into *Peter Pan*, Barrie adds two important concepts. The first is the identification of children with fairies. 'When the first baby laughed for the first time', he writes in Chapter 16, 'his laugh broke into a million pieces and they all went skipping about. That was the beginning of fairies'. The idea recurs in almost the same words in the play, in a speech by Peter to Wendy in Act I. In *The Little White Bird* it is used to reinforce the notion of irreparable loss in growing up when 'on attaining the age of eight or thereabout children fly away from the gardens and never come back. When next you meet them, they are ladies and gentlemen holding up their umbrellas to hail a hansom'. Seen against his exploration in *The Professor's Love Story* of the idea of childhood as a lost world of vitality and life, Barrie's identification of children with fairies in *The Little White Bird* is of some importance, suggesting his discovery in fairyland of a correlative for the sense of childhood implied in the earlier play.

The second theme added by Barrie to the imagery inherited in *The Little White Bird* is that of the special relationship between a child and his mother. It is of course also a central theme in *Peter Pan* and has been the subject of devastating critical comment. Nonetheless, as I hope to show, it should not obscure the true significance of the

118. *Era*, 13 January 1900, p.13. While strongly critical of the weakening effected by Barrie in *Peter Pan* of the 'serious romantic protest' mounted by Blake and Wordsworth through the idea of the child, Peter Coveney's recognition that 'Peter Pan does in fact retain many of the attributes of the romantic Child of Nature' points to the identification of Peter Pan and Puck with a pastoral landscape. (Coveney, op. cit., pp.256-7.)


120. Ibid., p.236.

121. See, for example, Max Beerbohm's reviews of *Peter Pan* at the time of its first production (*Saturday Review*, 7 January 1905, p.13 and 14 January 1905, p.144), and Peter Coveney, *op. cit.*
play for this study, which lies in its creation of a child whose embodiment of a vitality which is larger than life and total rejection of adult values show him to be the ultimate expression of the idea of the child hero, whose heroic qualities are integral with the alternative world of fairyland which he inhabits. On this aspect of the play the motherhood theme has little bearing.

The Peter Pan of The Little White Bird is a relatively pale reflection of the hero of the play. Barrie's biographer Dennis Mackail suggests that it was Bluebell in Fairyland which initiated the metamorphosis of the first into the second. Barrie, he writes, was deeply interested by Bluebell.

He talked about it, thought about it, and acted bits of it in more than one nursery where younger or less fortunate children hadn't been taken to it themselves. ... The story became involved for a while with his own stories, and as it did so, a new and an old determination became more and more fixed in his mind. He wanted to write a fairy play for children, too.122

The evolution of the idea of Peter Pan into that contained in the play which was thus begun involved changes whose effect is to add considerably to Peter's heroic stature. These changes are twofold, but related. There is, firstly, a change in the setting away from the pastoral, homely, slightly claustrophobic situation of Kensington Gardens to that of the Never Land, separated by great distances of geography as well as of imagination from the real world. This is part of the second, and perhaps more vital, difference between the book and the play. With the change of setting there is also a relegation of the fairies of The Little White Bird to a purely background role. Only one fairy, Tinkerbell, remains as a central figure, so that she and Peter's clothing of leaves are now the only reminders of the play's origins in A Midsummer Night's Dream. In the place of the fairies Barrie presents a world peopled by what the Era called 'the choicest personages from the pages of Marryatt or Cooper, side by side with the heroes of our youth'.123 The effect of this is to remove from the play the landscape interest of the Shakespearean fairy world and to emphasise

123. Era, 31 December 1904, p.17.
the possibilities of dramatic, heroic action inherent in the world of
boys' adventure stories. Moreover, as Barrie says in his introduction
to Act II, the island exists as a reflection of Peter Pan's own imagi-
nation, and not merely, as in the Kensington Gardens of *The Little
White Bird*, as a place where he can be found. Thus the wild beasts
'stealing past to drink', the mermaids 'basking in the lagoon', the
pirates 'landing invisibly from the longboat', and the redskins setting
out on the war-path are all 'really out pictorially to greet Peter in
the way they think he would like them to greet him ... everybody and
everything know that they will catch it from him if they don't give
satisfaction'. 124

This device serves to make Peter Pan an altogether more heroic
figure than he is in his Kensington Gardens setting, the embodiment of
youth, vitality and life. In this he represents a point towards which
middle class theatre had been moving since the 1880s. He combines the
pastoral theme of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, albeit in attenuated form,
with the liveliness brought to children's theatre by Ellaline Terriss
out of musical comedy, with the special nostalgia for childhood and
youth which had developed in Barrie's own work, and expresses it all
within the heroic framework of boys' adventure stories.

Together with the idea of the child hero which the character of
Peter Pan represents, the notion of motherhood is of course a central
preoccupation of the play, though more muted in its expression than in
*The Little White Bird*. Powerful as it is, however, even dominant as
it might be as a concern in the play as a whole, Barrie takes care to
mark Peter Pan out by his refusal to subscribe to it beyond his filial
relationship to Wendy, which he abandons without evidence of real
regret at the end of the play. On a conscious level, this refusal is
exemplified by his rejection of Mrs Darling's offer to be his mother.
In rejecting her offer he also declines to accept the process of growing
up in which acceptance would have involved him:

PETER: (passionately) I don’t want to go to school and learn solemn things. No one is going to catch me, lady, and make me a man. I want always to be a little boy and to have fun.

And at the same time, with the selfishness which is a product of his supreme independence, he is also unable to appreciate the nature of the relationship he has rejected. Thus, Peter, having seen the children go to their beds without being noticed by Mrs Darling, now watches her reunion with them.

... there is joy once more in the Darling household. The little boy who is crouching at the window sees the joke of the bumps in the beds, but cannot understand what all the rest of the fuss is about.

In this way, Peter Pan is defined as different from the other children, a unique being who is so at least in part because of the self-sufficiency which insulates him from the need to form emotional ties of this kind. His self-sufficiency is therefore the key to his heroic status, to his total freedom of body and imagination. For Barrie these are quintessential qualities of childhood and it is these which defeat Hook’s efforts to control Peter in the scene which represents almost an apotheosis of the child hero, and the climax of developments in children’s theatre to this point, the sword fight on the pirate ship:

(He does not, especially in the most heated moments, quite see PETER, who to his eyes, now blurred or open clearly for the first time, is less like a boy than a mote of dust dancing in the sun ...)
HOOK: ’Tis some fiend fighting me. Pan, who and what art thou?
(The children listen eagerly for the answer, none quite so eagerly as WENDY)
PETER: (at a venture) I am youth, I am joy, I am a little bird that has broken out of the egg.
HOOK: To’t again.

Productions of Peter Pan exceeded 100 performances in 1904, 1905, 1906 and 1907. This popularity marks it out as the culmination of the

126. Ibid., p.573.
trends delineated in this chapter: the reaction against pantomime by middle class audiences returning to the theatre from the 1870s onwards, the development in the theatre of a sense of the natural association between children and fairyland through themes adapted for adult audiences from children's theatre and through revivals of Shakespearean fairy comedies, the influence on notions of childhood resulting from this of musical comedy in developing the idea of the child hero, and the final development of the child hero in the character of Peter Pan, in whom the notion of childhood imagination as a self-enclosed, self-sufficient world is stated for the first time.
CONCLUSION

In summary, this thesis asserts the need to assess the late Victorian interest in childhood as a broadly based change in attitudes which nonetheless had largely separate roots and was differently expressed in the principal class sub-cultures within the society. It takes the theatre as the most widely representative cultural form of the period and therefore as the best index to these sub-cultures, and finds the clearest division in the theatre public to be between the upper working and lower middle classes on the one hand, and the middle and upper middle classes on the other. Each supported dramatic forms which were broadly representative of them.

As the distinctive form of the upper working and lower middle classes, urban melodrama, together with the case study offered by George R. Sims, indicates a transformation of the child between the 1880s and 1890s from a symbol of poverty and deprivation to a representative of working class humour and vitality. This change reflects general falls in rates of birth and child mortality, but is more directly related to the particular effects on the upper working and lower middle classes of changing economic conditions and suburbanisation, as well as to the sensationalist tendencies of melodrama itself. It took the form of an assumption by the child of existing stereotyped roles rather than of any celebration of childhood itself as a state, and should therefore be seen as largely distinct from the cult of childhood among the middle and upper middle classes.

This was centred mainly, though not exclusively among the wives of these classes, encouraged as they were to adopt a more solicitous attitude towards their children by a sharper decline in the birth rate among them than among those below them on the social scale, the general decline in child mortality by which their children benefited disproportionately, and the widespread assumption by domestics of the practical aspects of child care. The public expression of this changed response to children was facilitated by the demands of conspicuous leisure to which such women were subject and of which the matinee, an important venue for the cult of children, was a product.
The evidence of the plays suggests that the notion of the child as a miniature participant in adult family and social life, characteristic of the first phase of the child cult (from c. 1887 to c. 1891), was the product of this heightened solicitude as it was publicly expressed and of efforts to involve children in the rituals of conspicuous leisure.

The thesis goes on to define a second phase of the child cult, similarly sustained, but owing much to a new interest in non-realist themes, beginning late in the decade and stressing children's unique vitality and the integrity of their imagination. The change is clear in the contrast between Clement Scott's response to Bootles's Baby (1888) cited earlier, and J.M. Barrie's first sustained statement of the Peter Pan idea in The Little White Bird (1902). Stressing the relationship between child and adult, Scott summarises the theme of Bootles's Baby as

... the vigour of manhood opposed to the innocence of childhood, the swell of the mess-room contrasted with the prattle of an adopted waif, the heavy-moustached cavalry officer stooping to the service of a baby girl, the heart of a strong man opening at the silvery call of a blameless child.¹

Taking Kensington Gardens as a metaphor for the lost world of childhood, Barrie on the other hand finds a vast gulf fixed between the adult and the child state:

On attaining the age of eight, or thereabouts, children fly away from the Gardens, and never come back. When next you meet them they are ladies and gentlemen holding up their umbrellas to hail a hansom.²

It is this sense of the incompatibility of adult and child which lies behind the climactic battle between Hook and Peter Pan with which the previous chapter concludes.

Two main conclusions emerge from the argument advanced in the thesis as a whole. The first is that while a trend away from the moral categorisation of the child towards a heightened sense of

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¹ Daily Telegraph, 9 May 1888, p.5.
their vitality was an element in a transformation in attitudes towards children which transcended class lines, the shift in attitudes was largely centred on the middle and upper middle classes, giving rise to the 'cult of childhood' which has been discussed in the literature of the period.

The second main conclusion of the thesis is that the cult of childhood among the middle and upper middle classes developed through two phases which gave rise in the theatre to child roles which were quite distinct in character. The nature of this difference is evident in the notations from Scott and Barrie given above.

Taken together, these conclusions represent an outline of a pattern of notions of childhood which relates to late Victorian London society as a whole. It is not a pattern of responses to children necessarily characteristic of a particular institution or movement, though aspects of it can be closely related to institutions and movements which were part of the transformation described here. The impetus behind this study, in other words, has been towards an understanding of the development of a particular idea in late Victorian cultural life, and not, in the first instance, to the provision of a cultural background for any one movement of social or political reform.

At the same time, I have sought to locate particular ideas about children in particular areas of society rather than assume that notions of childhood voiced in any one area of theatrical activity was necessarily representative of the society as a whole.

In thus attempting to encompass notions of childhood developed through melodrama within a study which also deals with images of children in theatre for the middle and upper middle classes, it has been necessary to treat the evidence thematically. Illustrated by a range of other material, the plays of G.R. Sims therefore provide the principal evidence in my discussion of melodrama, while plays starring Vera Beringer and Minnie Terry are the basis of the discussion of the first phase of the cult of childhood in middle and upper middle class theatre. While in both instances these case studies lie at the
centre of the themes under discussion and illustrate them adequately for the purposes of this thesis, the work done here shows clearly what remains to be done. This thesis thus points the way to fuller study of, among other things, the child stars of the 1880s and 1890s, not only on the stage but also in the music halls. Addie Blanche, Katie Barry, Laura Lawson, Phoebe Carlo, Maude Clitherow, Gracie Murielle, Empsie Bowman, Daisy Stratton, Geraldine Somerset and Mabel Love are among those for whom there was no space in this thesis, but of whom detailed study would reveal further dimensions to the pattern of response to children shown here to have been engendered by Vera Beringer and Minnie Terry.

More strikingly, the discussion of the work of G.R. Sims carried on here has been mounted without the benefit of a full biographical study of Sims himself or, with the possible exception of Gareth Stedman Jones's 'Working Class Culture and Working Class Politics', of any detailed treatment of popular culture during the period. Given his importance as a social reformer as well as his prominence as a popular journalist and playwright Sims surely demands closer attention than he has received, while the discussion of ideas current in respectable circles offered by literary historiography, limited though literary evidence may be in its representativeness, has no parallel relevant to the upper working and lower middle classes.

Deficiencies like these in current historiography represent limitations to what it has been possible to achieve in this thesis. At the same time, the conclusions which have been reached here point to further work to which this study could be seen as preparatory. On the most general level, the thesis suggests the importance of the theatre as an index to cultural attitudes and stereotypes during the period. More specifically, the argument advanced here concerning the transition from the first to the second phase of the child cult among the middle classes points to the need for a history of the child study movement as an expression of the class-based sense of the integrity of childhood imagination exemplified by Peter Pan. The idea is the more inviting given the availability of the bibliographies of child study referred to in the bibliography of this thesis. (See under Monroe and Wilson.)
The areas suggested here for further research are various, but they are suggested out of the same set of priorities which has prompted this thesis. Of these, a sense of contemporary patterns of ideas as the starting point for the study of social history rather than as a backdrop to it, or, worse, as a separate category divorced from politics or social reform, comes first. This thesis is offered as a study of this kind. It is hoped that others will follow.
## APPENDIX 1

### POPULATION PER SEAT IN LONDON THEATRES AND MUSIC-HALLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Population of Greater London</th>
<th>Population per seat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>49918 (theatres)</td>
<td>c.3,554,180</td>
<td>71 (theatres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>84300 (music-halls)</td>
<td></td>
<td>41 (music-halls)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>134218 (theatres &amp; music-halls)</td>
<td></td>
<td>26 (theatres &amp; music-halls)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>65859 (theatres)</td>
<td>c.5,633,806</td>
<td>85 (theatres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>158013 (music-halls)</td>
<td></td>
<td>35 (music-halls)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>223812 (theatres &amp; music-halls)</td>
<td></td>
<td>25 (theatres &amp; music-halls)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>58569 (theatres)</td>
<td>c.6,107,604</td>
<td>104 (theatres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>132738 (music-halls)</td>
<td></td>
<td>46 (music-halls)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>191307 (theatres &amp; music-halls)</td>
<td></td>
<td>32 (theatres &amp; music-halls)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources:**

Report of the Select Committee on Theatrical Licenses and Regulations, (1866):

Appendix I, p.295: 'Number of persons whom the metropolitan theatres will contain, as reported by the managers': total taken here excludes opera houses.

Appendix III, p.313: 'London concert halls, music-halls and entertainment galleries, estimated figures': these figures relate to the 'number of persons accommodated daily'. Where the theatres and capacities appear in Howard, London Theatres and Music-halls, 1850-1950, they broadly agree with the 1866 list. Crystal Palace appears in the 1866 list as accommodating 100,000 persons daily: for purposes of comparison the figure of 5,000 supplied to the Select Committee of 1892 is taken instead and the total amended accordingly.

Report of the Select Committee on Theatres and Places of Entertainment, (1892):

Appendix IX: 'Papers Handed in by Mr T.G. Fardell, 11th. April 1892': (A) 'Return Giving Numbers of Persons Music-halls and Theatres will Accommodate'.

Figures given in Booth, C., Life and Labour of the People in London (1902), vol. viii, p.120, relating to 1896.
APPENDIX 2

NOTE ON THEATRE CAPACITIES

Diana Howard, in her book *London Theatres and Music-halls 1850-1950*, includes the capacities of theatres and music-halls, in many cases, with the numbers of people who could be accommodated in the various parts of the theatre. Explaining these figures, she mentions that they represent:

The maximum number of people permitted to view the entertainment, including seating and standing room. The capacity of places of entertainment was continually reduced after 1875 ...\(^1\)

In fact no official limits to the capacities of places of entertainment existed as far as I have been able to discover. This would help to explain the disparities between the various sets of figures advanced in representing the capacities of various theatres. The list of theatres and music-halls given to the Select Committee on Theatres and Places of Entertainment in 1892, for example, gives the capacity of the Surrey Theatre as 2300,\(^2\) while its manager, George Conquest, told the same committee that his theatre held 'nearly 3,000'.\(^3\) Conquest's previous theatre, the Grecian, rebuilt in 1877, with a capacity given by Howard as about 1,850, was advertised as able to hold 5,000,\(^4\) while the Britannia Theatre in Hoxton, with a capacity of 3,450 according to the figures supplied to the Select Committee in 1892 (Howard gives the figure for 1866 as 3,923, 'later limited to 2,972'), held no less than 4,790 one memorable night in 1898 for a performance of the pantomime *King Klondyke*.\(^5\)

The reason for the flexibility of these figures is partly the lack of official limits to their capacities, partly the nature of the accommodation offered by the theatres in the pit and gallery.

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2. Report of the Select Committee on theatres and places of Entertainment, 1892, pp.450-1, Appendix no. 9.
3. Ibid., p.208.
and partly the purposes which could be served in inflating or understating them. Audiences in the pit were seated on wooden benches which might be loosely or tightly packed with people. Standing room adds another complication to the problem since it too was a flexible quantity. No one in fact understood the elastic nature of the theatre capacities better than the managers, some of whom employed packers to help ensure that as many patrons as possible were crammed into the available space. Conquest indeed numbered a closely packed audience among the pleasures of his gallery, arguing before the Select Committee of 1892 that to set a limit on the capacities of theatres would be unfair to the boys who made up the gallery audience, who enjoyed 'cramming themselves up, packing themselves together'. 6 For this reason figures given by Howard, as well as those given to the Select Committees of 1866 and 1892 relating to the capacities of theatres in general and their pits and galleries in particular, are likely to be conservative, though, since they are the best available, I have used them for this chapter.

Other parts of the theatres normally consisted of numbered seats so the figures for these can be taken as in general reasonably reliable, though, as Irving told the Select Committee in 1892, the proportion of stalls to pit was 'constantly' varied according to the nature of the production. 7

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7. Ibid., p.68.
## APPENDIX 3

**PRODUCTIONS ATTRACTING 200,000 OR MORE TO THEIR FIRST RUNS, 1880-1905**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Play</th>
<th>Theatre &amp; Date</th>
<th>Classification (Nicol)</th>
<th>Run (Performances)</th>
<th>Estimated Audience</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>The Corsican Brothers</td>
<td>Lyc. 18/9</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>208089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Olivetted</td>
<td>Strand 18/9</td>
<td>CO</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>419400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The World</td>
<td>DL 31/7</td>
<td>MD</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>216000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>The Bronze Horse</td>
<td>Alh. 4/7</td>
<td>CO</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>287700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Colonel</td>
<td>PW 2/2</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>316800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Lights o' London</td>
<td>P'cess 10/9</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>239400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Patience</td>
<td>Op.Com. 23/4</td>
<td>CO</td>
<td>578</td>
<td>295936</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Robinson Crusoe</td>
<td>DL 26/12</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>219600</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>DL 6/8</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>114</td>
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<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>Babil and Bijou (rev.)</td>
<td>Alh. 8/8</td>
<td>Spec.</td>
<td>165</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Iolanthe</td>
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<td>Rip Van Winkle</td>
<td>Comedy 14/10</td>
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<td>207624</td>
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<td>P'cess 16/11</td>
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<td>289</td>
<td>303450</td>
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<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>Cinderella</td>
<td>DL 26/11</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>131</td>
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<td>Claudian</td>
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<td>Vaud. 17/5</td>
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Notes: (1) Abbreviations:

- **Theatres**: Lyc. (Lyceum), DL (Drury Lane), Alh. (Alhambra), PW (Prince of Wales's), P'cess (Princess's), Op.Com. (Opera Comique), Adel. (Adelphi), Vaud. (Vaudeville), Ave. (Avenue), Hay. (Haymarket), Roy. (Royalty), Shaft. (Shaftesbury)
- **Plays**: D (drama), CO (comic drama), MD (melodrama/musical drama), C (comedy), P (pantomime), Spec. (spectacle), RO (romantic opera), FC (farcical comedy), O (opera), F (farce), Extr. (extravaganza), MC (musical comedy), MPC (musical farcical comedy), CD (comic drama), MF (musical farce)

REAL WAGES 1880-1914


These figures should be treated as only approximate.
APPENDIX 5

SUCCESSFUL THEATRICAL PRODUCTIONS IN LONDON 1870-1900

Sources: John Parker, 'Long Runs on the London Stage to 1939', in Who's Who in the Theatre (all editions).

Notes:
(1) The figures on which this graph is based were derived by classifying Parker's list of productions running for 100 performances or more according to the designations given in Allardyce Nicoll's list of all plays produced in England, and arranging them in
quinquennial periods. Nicoll continues his list in a subsequent volume, but his system of classification changes, making it impossible to extend this graph to the end of the period.

(2) As 'light comedy' I have included those plays described by Nicoll as: burlesque, comedy, comedietta, comic drama, comic opera, comic operetta, musical comedy, musical comedietta, or musical comic drama.

As drama or melodrama, I have counted those plays which Nicoll designates as: drama, domestic drama, military drama, melodrama, musical drama, or spectacular drama.

While the class bases of these two broad categories are fairly clear, the graph, taken in isolation, is subject to two kinds of distortion: (a) middle and upper middle class interest in a number of dramas during the period tends to inflate the number of successful dramas, if these are taken as generally supported by the upper working and lower middle classes; (b) Nicoll's classifications, as he admits (op. cit., p.230) are tentative rather than definitive.

(3) Given the factors described in 2(a) and (b), the graph should be read in conjunction with the figures relating to the decline of pit and gallery as a percentage of West End theatre accommodation (p. 9 and Appendix 6) and the number of productions of various types which attracted 200,000 or more their first runs (Appendix 4). These suggest the position of melodrama was weaker, especially in the 1890s, than is indicated in the graph. Nonetheless, the graph reinforces the impression given in Appendix 6 of the uneven and gradual nature of the decline in pit and gallery accommodation, which left many theatres virtually untouched until the end of the century.
## APPENDIX 6

PIT AND GALLERY, STALLS AND CIRCLE, AND BOXES IN THE WEST END THEATRES, 1866-1900

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</table>

**NOTE:**

1. Figures given in brackets in this table are those supplied to the Select Committee of 1866 and are used here where no figures are available from Howard, *London Theatres and Music-halls, 1850-1950*. It should be mentioned that Michael Booth in his article, 'The Theatre and its Audience', in *The Revels History of Drama in English*, vol. 6 (1975), gives the percentage of stalls among the twenty-seven theatres listed in the Select Committee's Report as 19, whereas the figure should be 9, with the pit and gallery making up 63%.

2. The figures in this table should be taken as approximate, both for individual theatres (see 'Note on Theatre Capacities'), and overall, due to the lack of available figures for some theatres and to inconsistencies between not only Howard and the Select Committee Report (1866) but also Howard and other accounts.

APPENDIX 7

PLAYS WITH MAJOR CHILD ROLES, 1887-1891

This list is of plays relevant to Chapter 7. It does not include melodrama, pantomime or fantasy plays, which are discussed elsewhere in the thesis. While it does not include every play in which children appeared, the list can be taken as including the most important plays of these years with significant child roles, and as providing an indication of the importance both of 1888-89 for child-centred plays and of the matinee as a venue for them.

1887
- Frou-Frou
- Editha's Burglar
- Hans the Boatman

1888
- Partners
- Ariane
- Little Lord Fauntleroy
- The Real Little Lord Fauntleroy
- Bootles's Baby
- The Scarlet Letter
- The Scarlet Letter
- Run Wild

1889
- A White Lie
- Belles of the Village
- Brantinghame Hall
- The Man and the Woman
- Fool's Mate

1890
- Nixie
- The Prince and the Pauper
- That Girl

1891
- For Charity's Sake
- Charles I (rev.)
- The Holly Tree Inn

Performances:
- anon. Criterion 9/7 matinee
- E. Cleary Princess 29/10
- C.M. Greene Grand 4/7
- R. Buchanan Haymarket 5/1
- Mrs C. Praed Op.Com. 8/2
- E.V. Seebohm P.of Wales 23/2
- Mrs F.H. Burnett Terry's 14/5 matinee
- H. Moss Globe 8/5
- S. Coleridge/ N. Forbes Royalty 4/6
- A. Nelson/ C. Charrington Olympic 5/6 matinee
- E. Coffin Strand 30/6
- S. Grundy Court 25/5
- H. Foster Avenue 18/11
- W.S. Gilbert St James's 29/11
- R. Buchanan Criterion 19/12 matinee
- F. Broughton Toole's 12/12 matinee
- Mrs F.H. Burnett/ S. Townsend Terry's 7/4 matinee
- Mrs O. Beringer Gaiety 12/4 matinee
- Mrs O. Beringer/ H. Hamilton Haymarket 30/7
- C.S. Fawcett Comedy 29/1
- W.G. Sills Lyceum 4/3
- Mrs O. Beringer Terry's 15/1 matinee
APPENDIX 8

PLOT SUMMARIES: PUSS IN BOOTS (1887) AND BLUEBELL IN FAIRYLAND (1901)

1. Puss in Boots, Drury Lane Pantomime, 1887 (from The Theatre, 1 February 1888, p.97).

'... the opening scene is the "Den of the demon lawyer", the occupant of which is going to foreclose his mortgage on the mill, and turn young Jocelyn out of doors, but Love steps in and expresses her determination to befriend him. Then come the Milleries, a most perfect and realistic scene by Henry Emden, where Jocelyn rescues Princess Prettipet, and the Barn, where, while he is sleeping, Love bestows on his cat the wonderful Boots, and then Puss persuades him to bathe; the pretence that his clothes are stolen leads to his introduction as the Marquis of Carabas; and the journey to the Ogre's Castle, where the Cat, after having killed the Ogre by getting him to transform himself into a mouse, passes off as the property of his master the Marquis, and so on through the old nursery legend. But whilst all this is going on we are shown the King and Queen, parents of Princess Prettipet, holding their silver wedding, and the little children (Miss Katti Lanner's troupe) performing a doll ballet, and the suitors of the Princess attend for her to make her choice. Nothing yet seen on the stage equals the wealth and richness of this procession. The costumes are of the Renaissance type, and are made of the richest velvets, satins and brocades; the entire space is filled with Ladies of the Court and their attendants and pages, with the young suitors and their retinues, with squires and equerries, heralds, knights etcetera, finishing up with another ballet, and then comes a panorama representing the park and vineyards, all supposed to belong to Marquis, and the "Hayfields", in which the children dance the Haymakers' Ballet very prettily, and on the road after this the State coach of the King and Queen breaks down, and they are obliged to take advantage of a costerbarrow drawn by the "Blondin donkey", who creates roars of laughter, and so at last they reach the castle, where in the Pavilion of Chivalry, there is a grand parade of knights, mounted and unmounted, in every imaginable suit of burnished armour. An
enormous flight of steps, filling the entire stage, and reaching to the "flies", is occupied by these mailed warriors, whose appearance fairly dazzles and almost fatigues the eyes from their splendour and brilliancy; and after the wedding breakfast comes the transformation, an exquisitely delicately tinted representation of the "Golden Honey-moon", wherein a white fan and coryphees represent lilies of the valley and other pure white flowers play a conspicuous part'.

NOTE:

'Katti Lanner's troupe', mentioned here, were supplied by Katti Lanner's National Training School of Dancing, directed by her since its foundation in 1876. Katti Lanner herself was Viennese and arrived in England as a dancer in 1871. After her retirement from dancing she arranged ballets and divertissements at Drury Lane and Her Majesty's, and collaborated on Christmas pantomimes at various theatres, including Drury Lane, and the Crystal Palace. She became ballet mistress at the Empire in 1887 and remained there until shortly before her death in 1908.¹

It seems likely that Katti Lanner's school, probably the best known source of child dancers in London, together with the school kept by Augustus Harris for the children in his Drury Lane productions, were the main targets of Millicent Garrett Fawcett's criticism in two articles she wrote in the Contemporary Review in the 1880s on 'Children in Theatres' against evasions of the Education Act. The loophole in the Act to which she pointed particularly was that which exempted schools charging more than 9d per week from the School Board's supervision. Schools such as Harris's and Katti Lanner's charged 10d per week, deducted from the children's earnings.²

2. Bluebell in Fairyland, Vaudeville, 1901 (from MS copy, Lord Chamberlain's Collection, British Library).

Bootblacks, flowergirls and dancing girls are seen in the street at Christmas time. Bluebell, a little flowergirl, and Dickie the little bootblack are in love. The benevolent twins Will and

Won't appear and give them money on behalf of the philanthropist Mr Joplin. Bluebell goes home to her garret and reads her two little sisters a story about a miser king put to sleep for his greed by a fairy till he be wakened by a child. She falls asleep and dreams of Fairyland in which she finds herself in the company of a cat called Peter whom she knows in real life, but who can now speak. She and Peter are told by fairies that they must go and wake the Sleepy King. They will be guided, the fairies say, by the schoolboy twins, Blib and Blob. In the next scene, they approach the castle where the Reigning King is giving a party for all the children to stop them from waking the Sleepy King. Blib and Blob are there. Bluebell enters and they meet and play nursery rhymes. Bluebell tells them her mission and they tell her it is dangerous. She decides to see what the Reigning King is like before undertaking the mission. The King and Queen jeer at her when she tries to join their party. She tells them she is off to wake the Sleepy King and they have her arrested, but she is rescued by a good fairy. In Act II, Peter and Bluebell are lost at night. Blib and Blob appear, bemoaning the situation, but Bluebell is assured by the fairy Water-lily of her protection. Their friend Will O' the Wisp leads them to an enchanted glade, where Bluebell's good fairy comes with food, and Blib and Blob get none, being too greedy. The fairy gives them the password which they will need to enter the Magic Oak beneath which the Sleepy King is sleeping, and then goes. There now enter the Cock and Hen Sparrow who do a comic routine. Cock Robin follows, makes love to the Hen Sparrow and is shot from off stage. There is a song, 'Who killed Cock Robin?' A Rabbit enters with a gun on his way to hunt keepers. An Owl tells Bluebell and Peter and the twins that they have found the Magic Oak. It is guarded by a yellow dwarf whom Peter kills. They enter the oak. The next scene is a cave which they enter, finding the king inside. He has a very long beard and as he sleeps he utters terrifying groans. There is comic business in cutting his beard. Bluebell finally manages to wake him by ringing bells and makes him promise to give his gold back to the people of his kingdom. Blib and Blob try to take some of the gold and are left behind for being naughty. In the next scene, the party is still going on at the Palace. There are songs, and Bluebell
enters with Dickie, who now appears in the guise of the Sleepy King. Dickie dismisses the Reigning King and Queen and offers to make Bluebell his Queen if she will stay in Fairyland with him, but she is concerned about her sisters and decides to return to her garret. She is next seen asleep in the garret. She awakes. Dickie enters with Mr Joplin and Will and Won't. Mr Joplin announces his wish to adopt the girls and leaves with them. Bluebell returns for Dickie.
APPENDIX 9

TITLES OF TRANSFORMATION SCENES IN PANTOMIMES PRODUCED IN 1888

'Hail, Smiling Morn!' (Babes in the Wood, Drury Lane)
(Not given in reviews surveyed) (The Forty Thieves, Surrey)
'Triumph of True Love' (Cinderella, Grand)
'The Home of the Celestial Bodies' (Robinson Crusoe, Sanger's)
'Earth, Air, Fire and Water' (Beauty and the Beast, Sadlers Wells)
'The Home of Flora' (Babes in the Wood, Elephant and Castle)
'A Peep into Fairyland' (Babes in the Wood, Pavilion)
'A Peep into Fairyland' (Whittington and his Cat, Marylebone)
'Psyche's Bower of Bliss where Butterflies Dwell' (The Magic Dragon, Britannia)
## APPENDIX 10

### PANTOMIMES AND FAIRY PLAYS, 1880-1904

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Pantomimes</th>
<th>Theatre</th>
<th>Fairy Plays Title (in brief)</th>
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<td>Foggerty's Fairy</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<td>Iolanthe</td>
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<td>1883</td>
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<td>The Golden Ring</td>
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<td>1884</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Covent Gdn. Gaiety St George's Hall</td>
<td>The Piper of Hamelin Camaralzaman (bsq.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Avenue</td>
<td>The Fairy Glen</td>
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<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Pr. of Wales</td>
<td>Kenilworth (fairy bsq.)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Alice in Wonderland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Court Globe</td>
<td>Little Goody Two-shoes Alice in Wonderland (rev.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Globe Avenue</td>
<td>A Midsummer Night's Dream The Belles of the Village</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Pr. of Wales Adelphi</td>
<td>The Rose and the Ring The Bride of Love</td>
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<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Crystal Pal. Royalty</td>
<td>Love-in-a-Mist Cock Robin and Jenny Wren and Old King Cole and Good Queen Cole</td>
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<td>1892</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Grand</td>
<td>Cinderella (comic opera)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Comedy Comedy Lyric Savoy Daly's</td>
<td>The Piper of Hamelin The Fay o' the Fern The Magic Opal The Merry Piper of Nuremberg The Foresters</td>
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<tr>
<td>1894</td>
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<td>Hansel and Gretel John-a-dreams The House that Jack Built</td>
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<td>The Lost Princess The Water Babes</td>
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<td>1896</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>1897</td>
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<td>Year</td>
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<td>Snow-White (fairy opera)</td>
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<td>Garrick</td>
<td>Alice in Wonderland (rev.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Garrick</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Her Majesty's</td>
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<td>Pr. of Wales's</td>
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<td>Shock-headed Peter</td>
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<td>Ib and Little Christina</td>
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<td>Garrick</td>
<td>Tattercoats</td>
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<td>The Enchanted Fountain</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Savoy</td>
<td>Alice in Wonderland (rev.)</td>
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<td>1902</td>
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<td>The Man who Stole the Castle (rev.)</td>
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<td>Shock-headed Peter (rev.)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Royalty</td>
<td>Katawampus</td>
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<td>Savoy</td>
<td>The Swineherd and the Princess</td>
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<td>St George's Hall</td>
<td>Ib and Little Christina (rev.)</td>
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<td>The Fairy Queen (based on A Midsummer Night's Dream)</td>
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<td>The Water Babies</td>
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<td>Garrick</td>
<td>Tattercoats (rev.)</td>
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<td>Garrick</td>
<td>Rumpelstiltzkin and</td>
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<td>New</td>
<td>Ali Baba</td>
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<td>Snowdrop and the Seven Little</td>
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<td>Men and</td>
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<td>Brer Rabbit and Brer Fox</td>
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The years listed from 1898 to 1904 correspond to the number of pantomimes represented in the text.
ARCHIVE COLLECTIONS

Lord Chamberlain's Collection of Plays, British Library.
G.R. Sims Papers, Manchester University (held by Dr David Mayer, Department of Drama).

UNPUBLISHED THESES


PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS

PP 1887, XXIX, XXX; 1888 XXXV: Royal Commission on Education.
PP 1184-85, XXX: Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes.
PP 1905, XXX; 1906, XL, XLI: Royal Commission on London Traffic.
PP 1881, IX: Select Committee (House of Lords) on the Law Relating to the Protection of Young Girls from Artifices to Induce Them to Lead a Corrupt Life.
PP 1892, XVIII: Select Committee on Theatres and Places of Entertainment.
PP 1866, XVI: Select Committee on Theatrical Licenses and Regulations.

PERIODICALS

In the course of research for this thesis many reviews were seen relating to the plays on which the study is based. There are three reasons for not including these in this bibliography:
(1) The great number of these reviews (over 1000) makes detailed listing impractical.

(2) Access to these reviews is easily gained by ascertaining the date of the first night of the production (from Nicoll, A History of English Drama or Wearing, The London Stage) and following this up in the relevant periodicals. Wearing also lists reviews from the principal theatrical papers.

(3) My list of reviews is in any case selective rather than comprehensive.

Principal articles from these and other periodicals are listed in the bibliography individually under 'Contemporary Sources'.

Daily News

Daily Telegraph

Dramatic and Musical Directory of the United Kingdom

Dramatic Notes: A Year Book of the Stage

London Entracte

Era

Era Almanack

Era Annual

Illustrated London News

Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News

Lady's Pictorial

Musical Times

The Oxford Magazine

Pall Mall Gazette

The Referee

Saturday Review

Stage

The Theatre

The Theatre Annual

The Times

Tribune

World
## PLAYS

### A. Basic Selection

The following plays were studied in detail from MS copies in the Lord Chamberlain's Collection at the British Library. The selection was made not only for specific child roles in particular plays, but also to obtain a detailed sense of different types of play characteristic of particular theatres and authors, and a sense of the broad range of contemporary theatrical activity. Plays running over 100 performances are marked with an asterisk. See Appendix 3 for a list of abbreviations used.

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<th>Venue</th>
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<td>AGATHA</td>
<td>I. Henderson</td>
<td>Crit.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALICE IN WONDERLAND</td>
<td>H.S. Clarke &amp; W. Slaughter</td>
<td>Vaud.</td>
<td>1900</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALONE IN LONDON*</td>
<td>R. Buchanan &amp; H. Jay</td>
<td>Olym.</td>
<td>1885</td>
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<td>H. Foster</td>
<td>Ave.</td>
<td>1889</td>
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<td>THE BELLS OF HASLEMERE*</td>
<td>H. Pettitt &amp; S. Grundy</td>
<td>Adel.</td>
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<td>G.R. Sims &amp; R. Buchanan</td>
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<td>D. Jerrold</td>
<td>Adel</td>
<td>1896</td>
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<td>S. Hicks</td>
<td>Vaud.</td>
<td>1902</td>
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*BIG CLAUS AND LITTLE CLAUS; THE PRINCESS AND THE SWINEHERD AND THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES; THE SOLDIER AND THE Tinder Box*  
H. Andersen & B. Hood  
Terry's  
1897

*Bleak House (later JO)*  
J.P. Burnett  
Globe  
1876

*Bohey*  
H.V. Esmond  
St James  
1895
THE BOOM OF BIG BEN
A. Shirley
Pav.
1901

BOO TLES'S BABY*
H. Moss
Globe
1887

THE BRIDE OF LOVE
R. Buchanan
Adel.
1890

CHEER BOYS CHEER*
H. Hamilton, A. Harris & C. Raleigh
D.L.
1895

THE CHILDREN OF THE KING
C. Ambruster & J. Davidson
Crt.
1897

THE CITY OF PLEASURE
G.R. Sims
P.W. Birmingham
1895

LES CLOCHES DE CORNEVILLE*
H.B. Farnie & R. Reece
Folly
1878

THE DANDY FIFTH
G.R. Sims
D.Y.
1898

THE DEGENERATES*
S. Grundy
H.
1899

A DOLL'S HOUSE
H. Ibsen
Nov.
1874

EAST LYNNE
T.H. Palmer
(Nottingham)
1874

THE BOOTBLACK
A. Jefferson
W. Lond.
1898

BRANTINGHAME HALL
W.S. Gilbert
St James
1888

BROKEN HEARTS
W.S. Gilbert
Sav.
1888

CHILDREN OF THE Ghetto
I. Zangwill
Adel.
1899

THE CITY OF MILLIONS
C. Berte & W. Bailey
W. London
1903

CLAUDIAN*
H. Herman & W.G. Wills
P'cess
1883

THE DANCING GIRL*
H.A. Jones
H.
1891

DAN'L Druce*
W.S. Gilbert
H.
1876

THE DERBY WINNER*
A. Harris
D.L.
1894

DRINK*
C. Reade
P'cess
1879

EDITHA'S BURGLAR
E. Cleary
P'cess
1887
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<td>EMILY</td>
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<td>Adel.</td>
<td>1903</td>
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<td>ERMYNEGARDE IN FAIRYLAND</td>
<td>J.W. Brodie-Innes</td>
<td>P.W. Club</td>
<td>1894</td>
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<td>THE FORESTERS</td>
<td>H. Tennyson</td>
<td>Daly's</td>
<td>1893</td>
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<td>GAFFER JARGE</td>
<td>A. Ramsay</td>
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<td>THE GOLDEN LADDER*</td>
<td>G.R. Sims &amp; W. Barrett</td>
<td>Globe</td>
<td>1887</td>
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<td>THE GREAT RUBY*</td>
<td>H. Hamilton &amp; C. Raleigh</td>
<td>D.L.</td>
<td>1898</td>
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<td>THE GREEN LANES OF ENGLAND</td>
<td>G. Conquest &amp; H. Pettitt</td>
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<td>HANSEL AND GRETEL*</td>
<td>A. Welti, E. Humperdinck</td>
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<td>HEARTS ARE TRUMPS*</td>
<td>C. Raleigh</td>
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<td>1899</td>
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<td>THE HOBBY HORSE*</td>
<td>A.W. Pinero</td>
<td>St James</td>
<td>1886</td>
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<td>HOODMAN BLIND*</td>
<td>H.A. Jones &amp; W. Barrett</td>
<td>P'cess</td>
<td>1885</td>
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<td>THE ENGLISH ROSE*</td>
<td>G.R. Sims &amp; R. Buchanan</td>
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<td>1890</td>
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<td>FOR A CHILD'S SAKE</td>
<td>H. Herman &amp; M. Turner</td>
<td>Surrey</td>
<td>1899</td>
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<td>FREEDOM</td>
<td>B. Rowe &amp; A. Harris</td>
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<td>1883</td>
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<td>G.R. Sims</td>
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<td>THE GREAT UNKNOWN</td>
<td>A. Daly</td>
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<td>GRIF</td>
<td>W. Lestocq</td>
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<td>THE HARBOUR LIGHTS*</td>
<td>G.R. Sims &amp; H. Pettitt</td>
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<td>HELENA IN TROAS</td>
<td>J. Todhunter</td>
<td>Hengler's</td>
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<td>THE HOLLY TREE INN</td>
<td>Mrs O. Beringer</td>
<td>Terry's</td>
<td>1891</td>
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<td>HOW LONDON LIVES*</td>
<td>M. Field &amp; A. Shirley</td>
<td>P'cess</td>
<td>1897</td>
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HUMAN NATURE
H. Pettitt & A. Harris
D.L.
1885

IB AND LITTLE CHRISTINA
B. Hood
Crit.
1900

IN LONDON TOWN
G.R. Sims & A. Shirley
Peckham
1899

THE IRON MASTER*
A.W. Pinero
St James
1884

JANE SHORE
J.W. Bounding & R. Palgrave
Grand
1886

JIM THE PENMAN*
C.C. Young
H.
1886

JO THE OUTCAST
J. Mortimer
Str.
1883

LADY CLARE
R. Buchanan
Globe
1883

THE LIGHTS O' LONDON*
G.R. Sims
P'cess
1881

LITTLE GOODY TWO SHOES
R. Filippi
Court
1888

LITTLE LORD FAUNTLEROY
E.V. Seebohm
P.W.
1888

A HUMAN TERROR
H. Merriman
Pav.
1903

IMPULSE*
Bolton Rowe
St James
1883

IN THE RANKS*
G.R. Sims & H. Pettitt
Adel.
1883

JACK IN THE BOX
G.R. Sims & C. Scott
Strand
1887

JANE SHORE*
W.G. Wills
P'cess
1876

JO*
J.P. Burnett
Globe
1876

JUDAH*
H.A. Jones
Shaft.
1890

THE LAST CHANCE
G.R. Soms
Adel.
1885

LITTLE BLACK SAMBO & LITTLE
WHITE BARBARA
R. Barrington
Garrick
1904

LITTLE HANS ANDERSEN
B. Hood, W. Slaughter
Adel.
1903

LITTLE NOBODY
M. Righton
Vaud.
1890
A LITTLE OUTCAST
C.A. Clarke & H.R. Silva
Grand
1901

THE LITTLE SQUIRE
Mrs W. Greet & H. Sedger
Lyric
1894

A LONDON ARAB
M. Wallerton & F. Gilbert
Surrey
1899

LONDON'S CURSE
E. Hoggan-Armadale
Str.
1901

A MAN'S SHADOW*
R. Buchanan
H.
1889

MASTER AND MAN*
G.R. Sims & H. Pettitt
P'cess
1889

THE MERRY DUCHESS*
G.R. Sims
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1883

MICHAEL AND HIS LOST ANGEL
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1896

A MILLION OF MONEY*
A. Harris
D.L.
1890

NED'S CHUM
D.C. Murray
Globe
1891

THE NEW WOMAN*
S. Grundy
Com.
1894

THE LITTLE PILGRIM
W.G. Wills
Crit.
1886

A LITTLE UN-FAIRY PRINCESS
Mrs F.H. Burnett
Shaft.
1902

LONDON DAY BY DAY*
G.R. Sims & H. Pettitt
Adel.
1889

MANKIND
G. Conquest & D. Perritt
Surrey
1881

THE MAN WHO STOLE THE CASTLE/
SHOCK-HEADED PETER
T. Gallon, L. Lion
Garrick
1901

MAY AND DECEMBER
S. Grundy & J. Mackay
Crit.
1887

A MESSAGE FROM MARS*
R. Ganthony
Ave.
1899

MICHAEL STROGOFF*
J.T. Byron
Adel.
1881

MY LITTLE GIRL
D. Boucicault
Crt.
1882

THE NEW BOY*
A. Law
Terry's
1894

NICHOLAS NICKLEBY*
A. Halliday
Adel.
1875
NICHOLAS NICKLEBY
H. Simens
Amphi., L'pool
1875

NO THOROUGHFARE
O. Brand
Grand
1903

THE OLD LOVE AND THE NEW*
B. Howard
Crt.
1879

OLIVER TWIST*
T.W.C. Carr
H.M.
1905

OUTCAST LONDON
A. West, H. Young & G. Roberts
E & C
1886

PARTNERS
R. Buchanan
H.
1888

PETER PAN*
J.M. Barry
D.Y.
1904

THE PIPER OF HAMELIN
R. Buchanan
Com.
1894

THE POINTSMAN*
R.C. Carton & C. Raleigh
Olym.
1887

THE PRISONER OF ZENDA*
E. Rose
St James
1896

THE PROFESSOR'S LOVE STORY*
J.M. Barrie
Com.
1894

NIXIE
F.H. Burnett & S. Townsend
Terry's
1890

NOTRE DAME*
H. Halliday
Adel.
1871

OLIVER TWIST
O. Brand
Grand
1903

ONE OF THE BEST*
S. Hicks & G. Edwardes
Adel.
1895

THE PALACE OF TRUTH*
W.S. Gilbert
H.
1870

PEGGY
J. Mackay
Roy.
1881

PHANTOMS
G. Conquest & A. Shirley
Surrey
1894

PLUCK*
H. Pettitt & A. Harris
D.L.
1882

THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER
Mrs O. Beringer
Vaud.
1890

THE PRODIGAL DAUGHTER*
H. Pettitt & A. Harris
D.L.
1892

PROOF*
F. Burnand
Adel.
1878
THE QUEEN'S COLOURS
G. Conquest & H. Pettitt
Grec.
1879

THE RICH AND POOR OF LONDON
M. Goldberg
Stand.
1900

ROGUES AND VAGABONDS
E. Hill-Mitchelson & F. Benton
Surrey
1899

THE ROSE AND THE RING
H.S. Clarke & W. Slaughter
P.W.
1890

RUMPELSTILTZKIN
Mrs H. Bell
Adel.
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SANDFORD AND MERTON
F.C. Burnand
Com.
1894

THE SCARLET LETTER
S. Coleridge & N. Forbes
Roy.
1888

THE SECOND MRS TANQUERAY*
A. Pinero
St James
1893

SHADOWS OF A GREAT CITY*
J. Jefferson & C.R. Shewell
P'cess
1885

THE SILVER FALLS
G.R. Sims & H. Pettitt
Adel.
1888

THE REAL LITTLE LORD FAUNTLEROY
(Later Little Lord Fauntleroy)
Mrs F.H. Burnett
Terry's
1888

RICHARD SAVAGE
J.M. Barrie & H.B. Marriott-Watson
Crit.
1891

THE ROMANY RYE*
G.R. Sims
P'cess
1882

A ROYAL PARDON
G. Conquest & H. Pettitt
Grec.
1878

RUN WILD
E. Coffin
Str.
1888

SAVED FROM THE STREETS
G. Conquest & R.H. Eaton
Surrey
1886

THE SCARLET LETTER
A. Nelson & C. Charrington
Olym.
1888

THE SHAUGHRAUN*
D. Boucicault
D.L.
1875

SHOCKHEADED PETER
P. Carr & N. Playfair
Garr.
1901

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS*
W. Barrett
Lyr.
1896

THE SILVER KING*
H.A. Jones & J. Herman
P'cess
1882
SISTER MARY
C. Scott & W. Barrett
Com.
1886

THE SNOW MAN
A. Sturgess
Lyc.
1899

THE SPIDER'S WEB
H. Pettitt
Olym.
1883

SWEET LAVENDER (rev.)
A.W. Pinero
Terry's
1890

THE SWINEHERD AND THE PRINCESS
A. England & A. Collard
Roy.
1901

A TALE OF THE THAMES
G. Conquest & A. Shirley
Surrey
1895

THAT GIRL
H. Hamilton & Mrs O. Beringer
H.
1890

TRILBY*
P. Potter
H.
1895

THE TRUMPET CALL*
G.R. Sims & R. Buchanan
Adel.
1891

TWO LITTLE VAGABONDS*
G.R. Sims & A. Shirley
P'cess
1896

UNCLE JOHN
G.R. Sims
Vaud.
1893

SNOWDROP
N. Doone & N.H.C.W. Newte
Bijou
1894

SOPHIA*
R. Buchanan
Vaud.
1886

THE STAR OF INDIA
G.R. Sims & A. Shirley
P'cess
1896

SWEET NANCY
R. Buchanan
Lyric
1890

TAKEN FROM LIFE*
H. Pettitt
Adel.
1881

TARES
Mrs O. Beringer
P.W.
1888

THROUGH THE WORLD
B. Ellis
Pav.
1901

TRIXIE'S TRUST
Anon
Bedford M. Hall
1899

TWO LITTLE HEROES
E. Hudson & C. Longdon
Crown, Peckham
1901

THE TWO ORPHANS*
J. Oxenford
Olym.
1874

THE UNION JACK*
H. Pettitt & S. Grundy
Adel.
1888
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<th>Play</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<td><strong>VICE VERSA</strong></td>
<td>E. Rose</td>
<td>Gal.</td>
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<td><strong>THE WAIF</strong></td>
<td>C. Dick</td>
<td>H.</td>
<td>1892</td>
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<td><strong>THE WATER BABIES</strong></td>
<td>R. Barrington</td>
<td>Garr.</td>
<td>1902</td>
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<td><strong>WHEN DARKNESS FALLS</strong></td>
<td>W. Bourne</td>
<td>Surrey</td>
<td>1903</td>
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<td><strong>A WHITE LIE</strong></td>
<td>S. Grundy</td>
<td>Crt.</td>
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<td><strong>A WISE CHILD</strong></td>
<td>G.R. Sims</td>
<td>(L’pool)</td>
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<td><strong>A WOMAN’S REVENGE</strong></td>
<td>H. Pettitt</td>
<td>Adel.</td>
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<td><strong>THE YORKSHIRE LASS</strong></td>
<td>J.W. Jones</td>
<td>Olym.</td>
<td>1891</td>
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<td><strong>YOUTH</strong></td>
<td>A. Harris &amp; P. Merritt</td>
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<td><strong>THE VILLAGE FORGE</strong></td>
<td>G. Conquest &amp; T. Craven</td>
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<td>J.M. Barrie</td>
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<td>E.W. Bowles</td>
<td>Parkhurst</td>
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<td><strong>WHEN THE LAMPS ARE LIGHTED</strong></td>
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<td><strong>THE WOMAN FROM GAOL</strong></td>
<td>G.R. Sims</td>
<td>Pav.</td>
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<td><strong>THE WORLD</strong></td>
<td>P. Merritt, H. Pettitt &amp; A. Harris</td>
<td>D.L.</td>
<td>1880</td>
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<td><strong>YOUNG MRS WINTHROP</strong></td>
<td>B. Howard</td>
<td>Crt.</td>
<td>1888</td>
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**B. General Selection**

The following plays were surveyed through reviews.

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<th>Year</th>
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<td><strong>AIREY ANNIE</strong></td>
<td>F.C. Burnand</td>
<td>Str.</td>
<td>1888</td>
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<td><strong>ALI BABA</strong></td>
<td>Mrs H. Bell</td>
<td>Adel.</td>
<td>1903</td>
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APRON STRINGS
B. Hood
Terry's
1897

AS IN A LOOKING GLASS*
F.C. Grove
O.C.
1887

THE BABES*
H. Paulton
Tooles
1884

THE BAUBLE SHOP*
H.A. Jones
Crit.
1893

A BIT OF OLD CHELSEA
Mrs O. Beringer
Crit.
1897

THE BLACK FLAG
H. Pettitt
Pav.
1887

THE BLIND GIRL'S FORTUNE
Anon.
E. Lond.
1874

BLUE BEARD*
Anon.
Ch. Cross
1874

BRER RABBIT AND BRER FOX
P. Carr
Crt.
1903

THE BRONZE HORSE*
H.M. Paul
Alh.
1881

THE BURGLAR'S BABY
J. Douglas & C. Williams
Lyric, Baling
1897

THE ARMADA
H. Hamilton & Sir A. Harris
D.L.
1888

AS YOU LIKE IT*
W. Shakespeare
Imp.
1880

THE BABY
Lady V. Greville
Terry's
1891

BECKETT*
A. Tennyson
Lyc.
1893

THE BLACK CROOK*
J. & H. Paulton
Alh.
1872

BLEAK HOUSE
O. Brand
Grand
1903

THE BLIND SISTER
G. Conquest & P. Meritt
Grecian
1874

BO-PEEP
E.E. Baker
Ladbroke Hall
1889

BRIGHTON*
B. Howard & F. Marshall
Crt.
1874

A BUNCH OF VIOLETS*
S. Grundy
H.
1894

CAPTAIN SWIFT*
C.H. Chambers
H.
1888
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<td>CARLYLE'S WIFE</td>
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<td>THE CASE OF REBELLIOUS SUSAN*</td>
<td>H.A. Jones</td>
<td>Crit.</td>
<td>1894</td>
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<td>CHARLES I*</td>
<td>W.G. Wills</td>
<td>Lyc.</td>
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<td>A CITY OF SIN</td>
<td>A. Shirley &amp; W. Muskerry</td>
<td>Surrey</td>
<td>1903</td>
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<td>THE COLONEL*</td>
<td>F.C. Burnand</td>
<td>P.W.</td>
<td>1881</td>
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<td>THE CONSPIRACY</td>
<td>G.L. Gordon</td>
<td>P.W. L'pool</td>
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<td>A CROOKED MILE</td>
<td>C. Lemore</td>
<td>Vaud.</td>
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<td>Surrey</td>
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<td>Stratford T.R.</td>
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<td>CRUTCH AND TOOTHPICK*</td>
<td>G.R. Sims</td>
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<td>DANGEROUS WOMEN</td>
<td>F.A. Scudamore</td>
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<td>THE CUP*</td>
<td>A. Tennyson</td>
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<td>DEVIL's LUCK: OR, THE MAN SHE LOVED</td>
<td>G. Conquest &amp; L. Tinsley</td>
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<td>1885</td>
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<td>A DEAD MAN'S GOLD</td>
<td>G. Conquest &amp; H. Spry</td>
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<td>1887</td>
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<td>DOROTHY*</td>
<td>G.H. McDermott</td>
<td>Grecian</td>
<td>1871</td>
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<td>DIPLOMACY*</td>
<td>C.W. Scott &amp; B.C. Stephenson</td>
<td>P.W.</td>
<td>1878</td>
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<td>DOROTHY GRAY</td>
<td>J.F. Nisbet</td>
<td>P'cess</td>
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<td>DREAM FACES*</td>
<td>W.F. Miller</td>
<td>Garr.</td>
<td>1890</td>
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<td>THE DREAM FLOWER</td>
<td>A. Lowther</td>
<td>Com.</td>
<td>1898</td>
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<td>DRIVEN FROM HOME</td>
<td>G.H. McDermott</td>
<td>Grecian</td>
<td>1871</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Place</td>
<td>Year</td>
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<td>EAST LYNNE</td>
<td>Anon.</td>
<td>Stand.</td>
<td>1883</td>
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<td>THE ENCHANTED FOUNTAIN</td>
<td>Mrs De Lacy Lacy</td>
<td>St James</td>
<td>1900</td>
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<td>L'ENFANT PRODIQUE*</td>
<td>A. Carre &amp; A. Wormser</td>
<td>P.W.</td>
<td>1891</td>
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<td>FASCINATION</td>
<td>R. Buchanan</td>
<td>Nov.</td>
<td>1887</td>
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<td>FATE AND FORTUNE; OR THE JUNIOR PARTNER</td>
<td>J. Blood</td>
<td>P'cess</td>
<td>1891</td>
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<td>FEDORA*</td>
<td>H.C. Merivale</td>
<td>H.</td>
<td>1883</td>
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<td>FILLE DE MADAME ANGOT*</td>
<td>H.J. Byron</td>
<td>Phil.</td>
<td>1873</td>
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<td>POOL'S MATE</td>
<td>F. Broughton</td>
<td>Ave.</td>
<td>1890</td>
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<td>FOR CHARITY'S SAKE</td>
<td>C.S. Fawcett</td>
<td>Com.</td>
<td>1891</td>
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<td>FOR LIFE (A NEW TRIAL)</td>
<td>C.F. Coghlan</td>
<td>P.W.</td>
<td>1880</td>
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<td>FRIVOLI</td>
<td>W. Beatty-Kingston</td>
<td>D.L.</td>
<td>1886</td>
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<td>AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE</td>
<td>H. Ibsen</td>
<td>H.</td>
<td>1893</td>
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<td>FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD*</td>
<td>T. Hardy &amp; J.W.C. Carr</td>
<td>Globe</td>
<td>1882</td>
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<td>THE FATAL CARD*</td>
<td>B.C. Stephenson &amp; H. Chambers</td>
<td>Adel.</td>
<td>1894</td>
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<td>THE FATHER OF HER CHILD</td>
<td>A. Shirley &amp; F. Dawson</td>
<td>West L.</td>
<td>1903</td>
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<td>FIENDS OF LONDON</td>
<td>H. Fuller</td>
<td>Surrey</td>
<td>1903</td>
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<td>FOGGERTY'S FAIRY</td>
<td>W.S. Gilbert</td>
<td>Crit.</td>
<td>1881</td>
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<td>A FOOL'S PARADISE*</td>
<td>S. Grundy</td>
<td>Garr.</td>
<td>1892</td>
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<td>FOR EVER</td>
<td>G. Conquest &amp; H. Pettitt</td>
<td>Surrey</td>
<td>1882</td>
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<td>FOUR LITTLE GIRLS</td>
<td>W.S. Craven</td>
<td>Crit.</td>
<td>1897</td>
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<td>FROU-FROU</td>
<td>Anon.</td>
<td>Com.</td>
<td>1894</td>
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GABRIEL'S TRUST
A.C. Calmour
Vaud.
1891

GIRLS AND BOYS
A.W. Pinero
Toole's
1882

THE GREAT WORLD OF LONDON
G. Lander & W. Melville
Stand.
1898

HAGAR
G.R. Sims & A. Shirley
Coronet
1902

THE HAPPY LAND*
W.S. Gilbert & A.S. A'Beckett
Court
1873

HELD BY THE ENEMY*
W. Gillette
P'cess
1887

THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT
H.C. Newton
O.C.
1894

THE IDLER*
H. Chambers
St James
1891

IN GAY PICCADILLY
G.R. Sims & C. Corri
Broadway, New Cross
1899

IN THE DAYS OF THE DUKE
H. Chambers & C. Carr
Adel.
1897

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO MEND, (rev.)*
C. Reade
P'cess
1878

A GAIETY GIRL*
O. Hall
P.W.
1893

THE GRAND MOGUL
H.B. Farnie & E. Audran
Com.
1884

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS
G. Grossmith
Ave.
1901

A HAPPY DAY
R. Henry
Gai.
1886

HANS THE BOATMAN
C.M. Greene
Grand
1887

H.M.S. PINAFORNE
W.S. Gilbert & A. Sullivan
O.C.
1878

HOW WE LIVE IN LONDON
J.A. Cave & A. West
Vic.
1878

INCOGNITA*
C. Lecocq, F.C. Burnand & H.
Greenbank
Lyr.
1892

IN SIGHT OF ST. PAUL'S
S. Vane
P'cess
1896

IN TOWN*
A. Ross & J. Leader
P.W.
1892

IVY
M. Melford
Roy.
1887
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<th>Publisher/Location</th>
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<td>JANE*</td>
<td>H. Nichols &amp; W. Lestocq</td>
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<td>1890</td>
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<td>JOAN OF ARC*</td>
<td>C.A. Clarke</td>
<td>Str.</td>
<td>1871</td>
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<td>JUDY; OR, A CHILD OF THE STREETS</td>
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<td>Str.</td>
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<td>LADY DEDLOCK'S SECRET</td>
<td>P. Simpson</td>
<td>O.C.</td>
<td>1884</td>
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<td>LIBERTY HALL*</td>
<td>R.C. Carton</td>
<td>St James</td>
<td>1892</td>
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<td>THE LIGHTS OF HOME*</td>
<td>G.R. Sims &amp; R. Buchanan</td>
<td>Adel.</td>
<td>1892</td>
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<td>LITTLE DR. FAUST*</td>
<td>H.J. Byron</td>
<td>Gai.</td>
<td>1877</td>
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<td>LITTLE GERTY, THE LAMPLIGHTER'S DAUGHTER</td>
<td>G. Lander</td>
<td>(L'pool)</td>
<td>1876</td>
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<td>LITTLE MARY*</td>
<td>J.M. Barrie</td>
<td>Wynd.</td>
<td>1903</td>
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<td>THE LITTLE MINISTER*</td>
<td>J.M. Barrie</td>
<td>H.</td>
<td>1897</td>
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<td>LITTLE NELL</td>
<td>O. Brand</td>
<td>Grand</td>
<td>1903</td>
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<td>A LITTLE RAY OF SUNSHINE*</td>
<td>M. Ambient</td>
<td>Roy.</td>
<td>1898</td>
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<td>JERRY AND A SUNBEAM</td>
<td>C. Hamilton</td>
<td>Str.</td>
<td>1898</td>
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<td>JOSEPH'S SWEETHEART*</td>
<td>R. Buchanan</td>
<td>Vaud.</td>
<td>1888</td>
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<td>LADY CLANCARTY*</td>
<td>T. Taylor</td>
<td>Olym.</td>
<td>1874</td>
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<td>LADY JANE'S CHRISTMAS PARTY</td>
<td>T. Gallon</td>
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<td>A LIFE OF PLEASURE*</td>
<td>H. Pettitt &amp; A. Harris</td>
<td>D.L.</td>
<td>1892</td>
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<td>LITTLE CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS*</td>
<td>G.R. Sims</td>
<td>Lyr.</td>
<td>1893</td>
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<td>LITTLE EYOLF</td>
<td>H. Ibsen</td>
<td>Ave.</td>
<td>1896</td>
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<td>LITTLE MISS MUFFET</td>
<td>James Albery</td>
<td>Crit.</td>
<td>1882</td>
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<td>LITTLE ONE</td>
<td>A. Ayers</td>
<td>Vaud.</td>
<td>1885</td>
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<td>THE LITTLEST GIRL</td>
<td>R. Hilliard</td>
<td>Crt.</td>
<td>1896</td>
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THE LITTLE VICOUNT
H. Vezin
Gal.
1884

LOTTA (MUSETTE)
F. Marsden
O.C.
1883

MAMMA*
Mrs M.J. Chippendale
Crt.
1888

MAN AND WIFE*
C.W. Stephenson
P.W.
1873

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR
W. Shakespeare
H.
1889

MIDNIGHT PARIS
A. Shirley
Pav.
1900

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM (rev.)*
W. Shakespeare
Globe
1889

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM (rev.)*
W. Shakespeare
Adelphi
1905

MOVE ON; OR, THE CROSSING SWEEPER
J. Mortimer
Grand
1883

MR MARTIN
C. Hawtrey
Com.
1896

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING*
W. Shakespeare
Lyc.
1882

LOST IN NEW YORK
L. Grover
Olym.
1896

THE MAGISTRATE*
A.W. Pinero
Crt.
1885

MAN AND THE WOMAN
R. Buchanan
Crit.
1889

THE MATERNAL INSTINCT
T. Bedding
D.Y.
1898

THE MIDDLEMAN*
H.A. Jones
 Shaft.
1899

MIDSUMMER EVE'
A. Kaye
(Beckenham)
1893

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM (rev.)*
W. Shakespeare
H.M.
1900

MISS TOMBOY
R. Buchanan
Vaud.
1890

M.P.
T.W. Robertson
D.W.
1870

MRS LESSINGHAM
G. Fleming
Garrick
1894

THE MYSTERIES OF LONDON
L. Gilbert
Surrey
1901
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<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
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<th>Year</th>
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<td>MYSTERIES OF THE THAMES</td>
<td>F.B. Warren</td>
<td>W. Lond.</td>
<td>1904</td>
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<td>MYSTERY OF A HANSOM CAB*</td>
<td>A. Law &amp; F. Hume</td>
<td>P'cess</td>
<td>1888</td>
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<td>THE NATURALIST</td>
<td>J.W.C. Carr</td>
<td>St G.</td>
<td>1887</td>
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<td>NELL; OR, THE OLD CURIOSESITY SHOP*</td>
<td>A. Halliday</td>
<td>Olym.</td>
<td>1870</td>
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<td>NEMESIS*</td>
<td>H.B. Farnie</td>
<td>Str.</td>
<td>1873</td>
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<td>NERVES*</td>
<td>J.W.C. Carr</td>
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<td>THE NEW BABYLON*</td>
<td>P. Merritt &amp; G.F. Rowe</td>
<td>Dukes</td>
<td>1879</td>
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<td>THE NEW EAST LYNNE</td>
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<td>W.W. Collins</td>
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<td>A NEW TRIAL</td>
<td>L.F. Coghlan</td>
<td>P.W.</td>
<td>1881</td>
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<td>NICHOLAS NICKLEBY</td>
<td>(episodic sketch)</td>
<td>Anon.</td>
<td>1885</td>
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<td>NITA'S FIRST</td>
<td>T.G. Warren</td>
<td>Nov.</td>
<td>1884</td>
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<td>NERVES*</td>
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<td>THE NEW MAGDALEN*</td>
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<td>St. G.</td>
<td>1882</td>
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<td>THE NOBLE VAGABOND</td>
<td>H.A. Jones</td>
<td>P'cess</td>
<td>1886</td>
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<td>THE O'DOWD</td>
<td>D. Boucicault</td>
<td>Adel.</td>
<td>1880</td>
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<td>C. Dickens Jr.</td>
<td>O.C.</td>
<td>1884</td>
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<td>AN OLD MAN'S DARLING</td>
<td>E. Oliver</td>
<td>Ladbroke Hall</td>
<td>1895</td>
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<td>OLIVER TWIST</td>
<td>G. Collingham</td>
<td>Olym.</td>
<td>1892</td>
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<td>THE ONLY WAY*</td>
<td>F. Wills</td>
<td>Lyc.</td>
<td>1899</td>
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<td>THE ORPHANS</td>
<td>A. Shirley &amp; C.H. Longden</td>
<td>Pav.</td>
<td>1898</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Year</td>
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<td>THE OTHER LITTLE LORD FONDLEBOY</td>
<td>F. Bowyer</td>
<td>Ave.</td>
<td>1888</td>
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<td>THE OUTCAST POOR</td>
<td>J. Cross</td>
<td>Surrey</td>
<td>1884</td>
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<td>PAMELA'S PRODIGY</td>
<td>C. Fitch</td>
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<td>1891</td>
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<td>PARTNERS FOR LIFE*</td>
<td>H.J. Byron</td>
<td>Globe</td>
<td>1871</td>
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<td>THE PASSPORT*</td>
<td>B.C. Stephenson &amp; Y Yardley</td>
<td>Terry's</td>
<td>1895</td>
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<td>THE PEOPLE'S IDOL</td>
<td>W. Barrett &amp; V. Widnell</td>
<td>Oylm.</td>
<td>1890</td>
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<td>THE PHYSICIAN</td>
<td>H.A. Jones</td>
<td>Crit.</td>
<td>1897</td>
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<td>THE PIPER OF HAMELIN</td>
<td>V. Nessler</td>
<td>Cov. G.</td>
<td>1884</td>
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<tr>
<td>THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE*</td>
<td>W.S. Gilbert &amp; A. Sullivan</td>
<td>Savoy</td>
<td>1900</td>
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<td>THE PRAYER IN THE STORM*</td>
<td>B.N. Webster</td>
<td>Adel.</td>
<td>1874</td>
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<td>PYGMALION AND GALEATA*</td>
<td>W.S. Gilbert</td>
<td>H.</td>
<td>1871</td>
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<td>OUR BOYS*</td>
<td>H.J. Byron</td>
<td>Vaud.</td>
<td>1875</td>
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<td>THE OUTCASTS OF THE CITY</td>
<td>J. Aldred &amp; H.P. Gratten</td>
<td>(Jarrow)</td>
<td>1884</td>
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<td>A PANTOMIME REHEARSAL*</td>
<td>C. Clay</td>
<td>Terry's</td>
<td>1891</td>
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<td>THE PARVENU*</td>
<td>G.W. Godfrey</td>
<td>Crit.</td>
<td>1882</td>
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<td>PAW CLAUDIAN*</td>
<td>F.C. Burnand</td>
<td>Toole's</td>
<td>1884</td>
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<td>THE PHARISEE</td>
<td>T.M. Watson &amp; E. Leicester-Wallis</td>
<td>Shaft.</td>
<td>1890</td>
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<td>PICKWICK*</td>
<td>J. Albery</td>
<td>Lyc.</td>
<td>1871</td>
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<td>W.S. Gilbert &amp; A. Sullivan</td>
<td>Sav.</td>
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<td>THE POMPADOUR*</td>
<td>W.G. Sills &amp; S. Grundy</td>
<td>H.</td>
<td>1888</td>
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<td>THE PROFLIGATE*</td>
<td>A.W. Pinero</td>
<td>Garrick</td>
<td>1889</td>
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<td>RANK AND RICHES</td>
<td>W. Collins</td>
<td>Adel.</td>
<td>1883</td>
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RESCUED
D. Boucicault
Adel. 1874

ROMEO AND JULIET*
W. Shakespeare
Lyc. 1882

ROMULUS AND REMUS*
R. Reece
Vaud. 1872

A SAILOR AND HIS LASS
A. Harris & R. Buchanan
D.L. 1883

SANTA CLAUS
C. Daly
Crys. Pal. 1898

THE SCHOOL MISTRESS*
A.W. Pinero
Crt. 1886

THE SHOP GIRL
H.J.W. Dam & I. Caryic
Gai. 1895

THE SILENT WITNESS
J. Coleman
Olym. 1889

SINS OF THE CITY
G. Conquest & P. Merritt
Surrey 1884

SLEEPING BEAUTY
C. Daly
Lyric, Hammersmith 1890

SOWING THE WIND*
F. Grundy
Com. 1893

THE ROAD TO RUIN (rev.)*
T. Hulcroft
Vaud. 1873

ROMEO AND JULIET*
W. Shakespeare
Lyc. 1884

A ROYAL FAMILY*
R. Marshall
Crt. 1899

SAINTS AND SINNERS*
H.A. Jones
Vaud. 1884

THE SCARLET SIN
G.R. Sims & A. Shirley
Crown, Peckham 1900

THE SENTIMENTALIST
H.V. Esmond
Dy. 1901

THE SHOWMAN'S DAUGHTER
F.H. Burnett
Roy. 1892

THE SILVER SHELL
H.J.M. Dam
Ave. 1893

THE SLEEPER AWAKENED
A. Harris & R. Henry
Pal. 1892

SNOW WHITE
F. Hoare
St G. 1899

THE SQUIRE*
A.W. Pinero
St James 1881
SUNLIGHT AND SHADOW*  
R.C. Carton  
Ave.  
1890

TODAY  
C. Brookfield  
Com.  
1893

TRIAL BY JURY*  
W.S. Gilbert & A. Sullivan  
Roy.  
1875

THE TRIUMPH OF THE PHILISTINES  
H.A. Jones  
St James  
1895

TWINS*  
J. Derrick  
Olym.  
1884

THE TWO ROSES*  
J. Albery  
Vaud.  
1870

UNCLES AND AUNTS  
W. Lestocq & W. Everard  
Com.  
1888

UTOPIA (LIMITED)*  
W.S. Gilbert & A. Sullivan  
Sav.  
1893

VULTURES OF LONDON  
J. Rochefort  
Surrey  
1903

WEAK WOMEN*  
H.J. Byron  
Str.  
1875

THE WEDDING MARCH*  
W.S. Gilbert  
Crt.  
1873

THOROUGH-BRED*  
R.R. Lumley  
Toole's  
1895

THE TONGUE OF SLANDER  
T.G. Warren & J. Douglas  
Str.  
1887

THE TRIPLE BILL*  
Mrs Adams-Acton  
Terry's  
1891

TRUE BLUE  
L.S. Outram & S. Gordon  
Olym.  
1896

TWO LITTLE DRUMMER BOYS  
W. Howard  
New Ealing Th.  
1901

UNCLE MIKE  
F. Warden  
Terry's  
1893

UNDER THE RED ROBE*  
E. Rose  
H.  
1896

A VILLAGE PRIEST*  
S. Grundy  
H.  
1890

THE WANDERING JEW*  
Anon.  
Adel.  
1873

WEALTH  
H.A. Jones  
H.  
1889

WELCOME LITTLE STRANGER  
J. Albery  
Crit.  
1890
WHEN LONDON SLEEPS
C. Darrell
Imp.
1899

WHITE MAGIC
N. Syrett
St James
1905

THE WHITE SLAVE
B. Campbell
Grand
1884

THE WICKED CITY
R. Grahame & G. Logan
E & C
1902

THE WILD DUCK
H. Ibsen
Roy.
1894

WITH FLYING COLOURS*
S. Hicks & F. Latham
Adel.
1871

A WOMAN'S REASON
C.H.E. Brookfield & F.C. Philips
Shaft.
1896

C. Pantomimes

Over 100 pantomimes were surveyed. The following list is of those mentioned in the text.

ALADDIN
D.L.
1885

BLUE BEARD
Cov. Gard.
1871

CINDERELLA
Lyc.
1893

CINDERELLA
W. Lond.
1901

DICK WHITTINGTON
Crys. Pal.
1890

THE FORTY THIEVES AND THEIR WONDERFUL CAVE
Surrey
1888
CONTEMPORARY SOURCES

Unless otherwise specified, the place of publication is London.


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Margaret Ogilvie. By Her Son, J.M. Barrie, 1896.
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