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A CRITICAL INTRODUCTION

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Ph.D. degree in English

Richard Benvenuto

Major professor

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THE NOVELS OF CHARLOTTE YONGE:

A CRITICAL INTRODUCTION

By

Virginia Thompson Bemis

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
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ABSTRACT

THE NOVELS OF CHARLOTTE YONGE:

A CRITICAL INTRODUCTION

By

Virginia Thompson Bemis

Charlotte Mary Yonge was the major novelist of the Tractarian movement and has few superiors in writing the Victorian novel of domestic manners. A disciple of John Keble, and well-educated by the standards of her time, she wrote widely and was respected by critics and public. Her novels have been neglected, but are worthy of renewed attention by modern scholars. They give a vivid and accurate presentation of the Victorian era and its reading public, valuable for students of social and cultural history. This dissertation focuses on her major novels and what they reveal about Yonge, her readers and her era as regards the Church, the family and the position of women.

Yonge's religious beliefs were Tractarian as interpreted by Keble. She seldom discusses theology directly, preferring to portray Anglican doctrine through the lives of her characters. Unlike many contemporaries, she stresses the supportive, consoling aspects of religion over the rigid and punitive ones. Religion serves as the ethical and moral basis of all social organization in her novels. The Heir of Redclyffe, her best-known novel, examines two personalities: the essentially contrite and the self-satisfied,

and gives a Christian type of Byronic hero in Guy Morville. The Daisy Chain centers on family life and how faith enables a family to cope with crisis, while gaining a sense of purpose and providing tasks to be fulfilled.

The family is presented as the icon of stability and order in an uncertain world. It provides all emotional needs, and gives personal context to the individual. Yonge presents many varieties of the classical Victorian family mythos, emphasising filial obedience and close emotional bonding between family members; creating a domestic version of the feudal system. Heartsease is concerned with revitalizing an apathetic and alienated family. The Pillars of the House deals with family duty and emotional relationships in a large orphaned family.

Yonge believed deeply in the absolute inferiority of women. Her ideal women, though intelligent, well-educated and active, are equally convinced of the value of submission to male authority. Her most interesting heroines are those who have difficulty accommodating themselves to the prescribed role. Yonge evinces concern for the question of woman's place, but concludes that intellect and ability can find scope within the traditional domestic pattern. Hopes and Fears, Yonge's only study of a middle-aged woman, deals with the necessity of a mentor at all stages of a woman's life. The Clever Woman of the Family is explicitly anti-feminist, showing the disastrous effects of stepping "out of her proper place," and the value of female intelligence when guided by male wisdom.

Virginia Bemis

Yonge's portrayal of Victorian daily life and thought is vivid and accurate, as is her creation of character. She is also valuable for the contrast between what she says about Victorian customs and values and what she actually shows about them. Her work is worthy of serious critical attention for this and for what she reveals about the Victorians' own popular image of themselves. Her self-chosen limitations restrain her creative ability; she thus could not become a first-ranked novelist, but she has great value as a popular chronicler of Victorian mores amidst sweeping social and cultural change.

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PREFACE

Charlotte Yonge's life and work deserve more critical attention than they have received in recent decades. While it would have been logical to rely in great measure on her personal papers, it was not possible. Yonge's literary executor, Christabel Coleridge, destroyed all diaries, letters, manuscripts and other papers after completing the official biography. I have therefore relied on that biography, which includes some letters and autobiographical material, and on the work of Battiscombe, Mare and Percival. My primary reliance for evidence as to Yonge's opinions and feelings has been on the novels themselves.

Information on Yonge has generally been long out of print, as have her novels until comparatively recently. The Tractarian movement, however, has received considerable scholarly attention, and most of the standard works are readily available. Instead of replicating this information, I have concentrated on Yonge's novels in an attempt to analyze and render accessible relatively unstudied material. Several of the standard works on Tractarianism are noted in the bibliography, while the main body of the dissertation focuses on Yonge and her novels as means of examining both Tractarianism and other issues.

The dissertation begins with a chapter of biographically-oriented examination of Yonge's life and work, and an assessment of her status in her time. The three succeeding chapters each contain

a section of general discussion followed by a close analysis of two novels in terms of the chapter's theme. For religion, I have used The Heir of Redclyffe and The Daisy Chain, for the family Heartsease and The Pillars of the House, for woman's role The Clever Woman of the Family and Hopes and Fears. I conclude with a discussion of her value to modern scholars.

The Novels of Charlotte Yonge:
A Critical Introduction

The world of Charlotte Yonge's novels grew directly out of her personal world. The High Anglican, affluent middle-class background of her writings was that of Yonge herself. It has been said, with a good deal of accuracy, that Yonge remained a child in spirit all her life; certainly she evinced a strong desire to adhere to the values of her youth. In creating a fictional world modeled on the world and values of her childhood, Yonge was able to maintain contact with the period in which she had been happiest and most secure. For all her awareness of social and technical change, the early Victorian era was her real home.

This world was reproduced in her work with an almost photographic precision. As such, it gives the reader an invaluable picture of the mores, activities and personalities of the middle classes from the first excitements of the Oxford Movement through the difficult adjustment the generation of the 1850's faced at the approach of a new century. The people whose lives Yonge chronicled formed much of the British reading public. They were the audience for writers greater than she; with whom she was familiar

largely through their published work. Viewed in this light, a study of Yonge's work can tell us much about the readers to whom Hardy, Eliot, Arnold and Tennyson were addressing themselves; giving the modern reader an even greater sense of their achievements. In her own voice, Yonge is limited in scope and ability. As a chronicler of daily life and popular thought she has few peers. This was the quality that made her a best-seller in her day and even earned her the respect of writers of the first rank.

No discussion of Yonge's life and works would be complete without a look at her parents' lives. They formed her character and taught her the world-views she was later to use in her work. Her father was her most constant and most welcome critic. Indeed, until his death she never published a word that William Yonge had not first approved. Parental influence was strengthened by the fact that she was an only child until she was seven, and all her life an only daughter. She was much loved, much protected and much controlled. When she was over seventy, Yonge was still living by the rules her parents laid down for her before she was seventeen, and writing according to the values they had taught her. Filial devotion, to an extent modern readers would consider unhealthily exaggerated, was a key portion of her philosophy.

The Yonge family came from Devonshire, centering about Puslinch, the ancestral home. They had been landowners and members of the lower-level county gentry for over two centuries. Yonge always felt distinct pride in this ancestry, unblemished by "trade"

or any like sacrifice of social position. Those characters in her books who need to do what moderns would consider working for a living; that is, anything outside land ownership, the learned professions or government service, are keenly pitied.

Yet the Yonge family were not idle. They had a strong tradition of active employment in the professions, the military or managing their own estates. Many of Yonge's relatives were doctors, maintaining the family practice in Plymouth. Charlotte's Uncle James, who seems to have been the model for Dr. May of The Daisy Chain, gave up an appointment in London and the chance of a brilliant career as a specialist to take over the family practice at his father's order. This combination of activity and unquestioning obedience to family demands was a strong Yonge characteristic, never so strong as in Charlotte herself.

After local preparatory schooling, William Yonge (Charlotte's father) was sent to Eton, which he left at sixteen to join the Army. He served in the 52nd Foot, commanded by Lord Seaton, a distant relative. Though his army career was short, Yonge saw active service in the Peninsula until Napoleon's surrender and exile to Elba. Fortunately, in his view, the 52nd were then prevented by weather from sailing for America, so William was able to fight at Waterloo, and then participate in the occupation of Paris.

William Yonge had looked forward to a military career, but found himself forced to renounce it as his brother had renounced his dreams of medical fame. After a long and difficult engagement,

marked by parental opposition on both sides, William was finally able to marry Fanny Bargus in 1822. As a condition for her consent, Fanny's formidable mother insisted that he leave the Army. With his wife and mother-in-law, he settled on the latter's estate in the small Hampshire village of Otterbourne. There he spent the rest of his life, acting as squire, managing his acres, and finding his main fulfillment in Church activities.

Fanny Bargus, Charlotte's mother, was clever, delicate and shy. Charlotte inherited this shyness, but as compensation was heir to Fanny's quick intelligence and acute powers of observation. Fanny had been privately educated, with the exception of a short stay at what would now be called a finishing school. Her unhappy experience there made her a confirmed believer in the absolute value of home teaching for girls, a belief which she transmitted to Charlotte. In spite of her lack of formal education, she was well read, and able to teach her daughter French and Italian in addition to such accomplishments as painting in watercolors.

Charlotte Mary Yonge was born August 13, 1823. Her childhood was a happy one. Unlike many of her class and generation, she did not spend all her time in the nursery. Her parents firmly believed that children should not be left to the servants, so adult contact from an early age stimulated Charlotte's precocious intelligence.

While fond, the Yonges were not indulgent. They raised Charlotte strictly, according to rigid codes of truth-telling and ladylike behavior. One of the primary rules of the house was absolute

obedience to one's parents' slightest wish, and Charlotte followed this rule so well that at times she was rather a prig. In later life she was fond of telling of one childhood occasion. Her parents believed in a plain diet for little girls, consisting largely of bread and milk. When a servant, thinking this a little too plain, brought Charlotte buttered bread, Charlotte immediately acted like the heroine of a popular tract and ran to tell her mother of the forbidden treat.

Charlotte was not always such a pattern child. Like many shy children, she tried to cover her shyness with noise and boisterous behavior. She was untidy, careless and hot-tempered, much like Kate Caergwent of Countess Kate, who is said to be a self-portrait. In fact, as a child Charlotte could be quite rebellious. Along with the bread and butter story she remembered with some amusement being put in a corner for some small fault and immediately starting to sing "Begone, dull care," to prove how little she minded the punishment.

While her spirit was subdued by strict early training, Charlotte never felt herself to be unreasonably repressed. She was allowed to play in the garden, help her grandmother with the chickens, and exercise her lively imagination in playing with her dolls. Like many only children, she had imaginary playmates. The group of "ten boys and eleven girls who lived in an arbour"[1] was the prototype for the

[1] Georgina Battiscombe, Charlotte Mary Yonge: The Story of an Uneventful Life (London: Constable and Company, 1943), p. 30.

many large families of her later fiction. As she described her youth:

> I was repressed when I was troublesome, made to be obedient or to suffer for it, and was allowed few mere indulgences in eating and drinking, and no holidays. And yet I say it deliberately, that except for my occasional longings for a sister, no one ever had a happier or more joyous childhood than mine.[2]

One of Charlotte's chief joys was learning. She was taught to read early, and soon began studying other subjects. At first, her mother was her closest companion and chief tutor, keeping notes on the progress of the lessons. Charlotte reproduced some of these entries over 50 years later in an autobiographical sketch for Mothers in Council, including her own parenthetical comments.

> Jan 7, 1828---Charlotte began Fabulous Histories (i.e. Mrs. Trimmer's Robin, Dicky, Flapsy, and Pecksy. I loved them, though the book is one of the former generation--pale type, long s's, ct joined together. I have it still).
>
> Jan 27---"Why did Pharaoh think his dreams were alike when one was about cattle, and the other about cows?" [sic] C. "Because the fat ate up the lean of both." "Was there anything else in which they were alike?" C. "Oh why, mamma, seven and seven."
>
> July 5---Charlotte said, "Mamma, how do the men that write the newspapers know of all the things that occur?" (N.B.--I had a passion for fine words.)
>
> Aug. 3---Ch. began Sandford and Merton. (This means for lessons).
>
> Sept. 11---Charlotte saw a picture of the Fire King some time ago at the Southampton Gallery, and to-day she said she thought if he rode in a wax chariot he would be melted.

[2] Christabel Coleridge, Charlotte Mary Yonge: Her Life and Letters (London: Macmillan, 1903), p. 56.

Dec. 19---C. began Rollin's Ancient History. (It lasted me years, but it was excellent for me; I am very glad I read so real a book.)

Dec. 28---Sunday. C. began Trimmer's Sacred History.

March. 20---It is noted that C. has done since the 1st of August 1016 lessons; 537 very well, 442 well, 37 badly. Reading, spelling, poetry, one hour every day; geography, arithmetic, grammar, twice a week; history and catechism, once.[3]

Each year, there was a visit to Puslinch and the cousins there. This was the only occasion on which Charlotte could behave as an ordinary child among other children. There were ten Puslinch cousins, and another group in Plymouth; and Charlotte was able to share in their games and adventures. She formed a habit of recording conversations verbatim, and later used them for the basis of the life-like dialogue in her novels. There was a family tradition that a close friendship with one of her boy cousins was forbidden by her parents, who disapproved of first cousin marriages. If this is so, it is the only evidence of her ever having formed anything approaching a romantic attachment.

Charlotte's brother Julian was born in January of 1830. Care of the baby kept Fanny Yonge much occupied; she and her daughter were less close until Julian was grown. From this point, William Yonge became Charlotte's principal tutor. He emphasized hard work and advanced subjects, leading her early into mathematics, classical languages and ancient history. But his methods of teaching were

[3] Coleridge, pp. 61-62.

most unsuitable for so shy a child. Yonge would never have admitted any resentment of his strictness, allowing no rebellion to enter her picture of a perfect relationship with the father she worshipped. She was to describe him as:

> the most exact of tutors, and [he] required immense attention and accuracy, growing rather hot and loud when he did not meet with it, but rewarding real pains with an approval that was always to me the sweetest of pleasures. Being an innate sloven and full of lazy inaccuracy I provoked him often and often, and often was sternly spoken to, and cried heartily, but I had a Jack-in-the-box temper, was up again in a moment, and always loved and never feared my work with him. So we rubbed on with increasing comfort in working together, well deserved by his wonderful patience and perseverance.[4]

Other contemporary observers felt differently, and thought that a more relaxed system would have given Charlotte the self-confidence she lacked, and made her less apt to withdraw from the world. Indeed, Christabel Coleridge's note to the above passage is that "The impression produced on onlookers was of great sternness and severity." Yonge was adept in re-interpreting reality to conform with her own system of values, particularly when it concerned her adored father. He was her primary emotional focus, all other relationships, even that with her mother, being in second place. Though she was later to deny this, she regarded him as a "Bild" (her own term for a personal idol).

Her other "Bild" was John Keble, next to William Yonge the dominant influence in Charlotte's life. Keble's teachings on Church

[4] Coleridge, p. 75.

doctrine and his interpretations of Tractarianism from his place at the center of that movement formed the basis of all her religious thought. Religion was always the primary motif in her work, and to the end of her life she remained utterly faithful to Keble's interpretations. Her last book, Reasons Why I am a Catholic and Not a Roman Catholic, was based solidly in the Book of Common Prayer and the Thirty-Nine Articles as interpreted by Keble.

To the Tractarians, Keble was the perfect example of a priest. He held extremely high standards of piety both for himself and for his parishioners, and was accustomed to judge his every thought and action by religious connotations. By the time he came to Hursley (the parish in which Otterbourne then was) in 1835, he was famous both for his leadership of the Tractarian movement, which centered around him, and for his authorship of The Christian Year. While Tracts for the Times gave the movement its intellectual basis, The Christian Year was its aesthetic core. The poetry is minor, but met with immediate success on publication and was popular for many years thereafter. It was admired, albeit with qualifications, by such diverse critics as Wordsworth and A. E. Housman.

The poems are erudite, accurate in observation, and deeply thoughtful. They show an almost total memorization of the Bible, and a distinct tendency to see everything in terms of Christian typology. Their only real lack is in emotion, a quality almost entirely replaced by decorum. Keble was no mystic. He firmly believed, and taught Charlotte, that enthusiasm was a dangerous

quality in religion and that sobriety was essential for any discussion of major religious matters. This view was but one of the Keble dicta that Yonge obeyed implicitly.

In spite of its poetic imperfections, The Christian Year was as notable a success as The Heir of Redclyffe was later to become, and Keble could have looked forward to a career as a prominent literary figure. But Keble was ever impelled to follow the high standards he had set for himself as a priest. When he had won every possible distinction at Oxford and his reputation as an author was at its highest, his fear of becoming proud led him to renounce fame in favor of becoming a parish priest. It was this that led him to Hursley and a role as Charlotte's religious mentor.

Keble entered eagerly into William Yonge's plans for building a new church at Otterbourne. He and William, with Charlotte listening, spent hours talking over details of ecclesiastical architecture. This enthusiasm transmitted itself to Charlotte, and church architecture and church-building became favorite avocations of her characters. She followed the Tractarian tendency to see the adornment of a building in a quasi-medieval style as a symbol of the restoration and revitalization of a divinely established Church.

Soon after Keble came to Hursley, he began preparing the youth of the parish for Confirmation. Charlotte, as the most clever, was given an especially thorough course. She studied Church history from a Tractarian viewpoint, using Biblical texts and the comparative analysis of liturgy. This laid the foundation for her lifelong taste

for religious scholarship and her permanent allegiance to High Church beliefs and practices.

Charlotte was provided with more than scholarship in her studies with Keble. At fifteen, she was naturally emotional and rather romantic. It would have been easy for her to respond to religion solely on that basis. Keble saw to it that she had a solid theological basis for her understanding of Tractarian dogma. Her feeling for religion came to be as much intellectual as emotional and was founded on a course of study that now would be thought too specialized for anyone not a candidate for ordination.

Keble was extremely careful to guard Charlotte against the dangers of over-enthusiastic absorption in Church matters. Proper decorum demanded religion be a matter for the head, not the heart. Much later, in her introduction to Musings Over the Christian Year, she was to recall his giving her two strict warnings just before her Confirmation. As she reports it, the warnings were:

> the one warning against too much talk and discussion of Church matters, especially doctrines; the other, against the dangers of these things merely for their beauty and poetry---aesthetically, he should have said, only that he would have thought the word affected.[5]

Charlotte took these warnings to heart, and ever after felt that

[5] Charlotte Mary Yonge, Musings Over the Christian Year" and "Lyra Innocentium (Oxford: James Parker, 1871), p. v.

doctrinal discussion was best left to priests (or at least to men) while young ladies were better occupied with the more domestic side of Church activities: parish visiting, bazaars, the Altar Guild, and Sunday School teaching. The warning against aestheticism protected her from becoming too involved in ritual for its own sake as did so many others of her generation. Following Keble's example, she never supported any practice not solidly based in early Church ritual or in the Book of Common Prayer.

Charlotte was confirmed in the fall of 1838. She felt this to be the major event in her life, marking her acceptance as a full member of the Church, and granted Confirmation an equivalent importance in her writing. In the eyes of her family, however, she was still a child, just beginning to be a young lady. Her daily life was quiet and uneventful, occupied with lessons and household duties. Her father was still her main instructor, teaching her mathematics, Latin and Greek to rigid and perfectionist standards. His methods were as severe as ever, but Charlotte by now was able to approach his requirements more easily, which made the lessons happier.

From her mother, Charlotte learned drawing, needlework and history. There were visiting masters to teach dancing and modern languages. By the time she was grown, Charlotte had studied French, Spanish, German and Italian. She became proficient enough in Italian to translate entire books, including her favorite I Promessi Sposi, and was able to write stories in French, including her first known story, a novelette called Le Chateau de

Melville (1838).

Activities then more typical for young ladies also had their place in the schedule. Gentle walks or errand in the village were the only form of exercise she took, nothing else being considered appropriate. She preferred activities of a mildly scientific sort: shell-collecting, botany and arranging dried flowers. When not so engaged, she was an avid reader and a dutiful parish worker.

In 1835, Charlotte had become friends with Dr. Moberly, the new headmaster of Winchester, and his wife and baby. This was the start of a long and close relationship, with Yonge acting as "older sister" to all twelve Moberly children, and being godmother to Margaret (for whom she created Margaret May so that there would be a story about a "good Margaret"). The Moberlys served as models for schoolroom and nursery behavior, particularly in The Daisy Chain, and helped Yonge keep in close touch with her most eager audience, children and young people.

For many years, Charlotte taught a class of girls in the Hursley Sunday School. This was her only real contact with persons below her in the social scale. Her parents strictly forbade her to talk to the villagers except on Church matters, lest she hear something unsuitable for a young lady. Nor was she allowed to enter a cottage unchaperoned. So implicit was her obedience to her parents' wishes that as an old woman, well over seventy, she still would not enter a cottage alone. She thus missed the opportunity to know the villagers and understand their lives; an important section of

English life was forever to be missing from her work. A further constriction of her writing was that her reactions to social change continued to be kept within the strict and limiting parameters of what Papa, Mamma and Mr. Keble had considered suitable and correct.

During the years from 1838 (Confirmation) to 1844, when her published book appeared, Charlotte's pattern of life changed little from that described above. As she grew to the adult status of 'Miss Yonge," she began to have more friends of her own. The most important of these was Marianne Dyson, sister of a friend of Keble's. Dyson was an invalid, a writer of children's stories, and probably served as the model for Ermine Williams in The Clever Woman of the Family. She and Yonge became close friends, and she acted as Yonge's literary mentor.

Yonge discussed every turn of plot and character in early books with Dyson, who encouraged her to write first for Sunday School texts, then in short stories about village life. Some of these were printed in The Magazine for the Young. Most, however, were lost when Christabel Coleridge, acting as literary executor, burned all Yonge's papers and manuscripts after preparing the official biography.

In spite of Dyson's encouragement, it was not possible for Yonge to write without consulting both her father and Keble. William Yonge was both an adored father and an extremely stern editor, who fancied his prose style. While he lived, he insisted that his daughter read him everything she wrote so that he could

make changes. Some of these were useful, as he restrained her tendency to prolixity. Other changes ranged from irrelevant to harmful. At most times, Yonge was obedient, but occasionally her pride of authorship asserted itself enough that she put a manuscript away rather than see it altered more than she could accept.

Keble too changed things, usually in the interests of orthodoxy or decorum. He was particularly interested in seeing that no possible hint of "coarseness" intruded into Yonge's work.

> Thus he would not allow Theodora in Heartsease to say the "really she had a heart, though some people thought it was only a machine for pumping blood." He also transformed the "circle" of the setting sun into an "orb" and a "coxcomb" into a "jackanapes."[6]

Keble also felt that it would be wise for female characters, when quoting Latin or Greek, to say they had heard it from father or brother, in order not to appear unfemininely clever. Knowing both herself, Yonge did not adhere to this too strictly, though it is certainly a manifestation of a typical attitude among her readers.

Yonge had started contributing stories to the Magazine for the Young soon after 1842. Her first novel, Abbeychurch; or Self-Control and Self-Conceit, was published in 1844 after a long family debate. This was a turning point in her life equal in

[6] Margaret Mare and Alicia C. Percival, Victorian Best-Seller: the World of Charlotte M. Yonge (London: George C. Harrap, 1948), p. 133.

importance to that her father faced when pressed to leave the Army. It was initiated by the same person, Mrs. Bargus. Still living with her daughter and son-in-law, Mrs. Bargus was in active control of family activities. She nearly stopped the publication of Abbeychurch, and with it Yonge's entire career as a novelist, because of her strong feelings that writing for money was no proper occupation for a lady.

Writing for pay would indicate either that Yonge's father could not support her or that she was displaying an unladylike degree of independence from parental control. As William Yonge was perfectly well able to support his family in comfort, the question of need for money did not arise, so the issue remained one of obedience. Writing itself was not objected to, as Yonge's previous productions had all been approved of by the family. What Mrs. Bargus wanted to forbid was Yonge's writing for pay, which would mean engaging in quasi-independent business dealings. This in turn would mean entering a world beyond the home, and forfeiting social standing in the process.

William Yonge also had doubts about the propriety of his daughter becoming a professional author. While his views were not as strong as those of Florence Nightingale's parents on the subject of nursing, he did feel that a lady ought not to engage in paid employment unless her family needed money. This view is reflected over and over again in the novels. The only women who work for pay, other than servants, are those whose families are so poor as to make their contribution absolutely necessary, or those who have no male protector. In each case, the loss of caste is keenly felt.

The result of all this controversy was a family conference. Mrs. Bargus, Mr. Yonge and Mr. Keble weighed all the possible factors, from Yonge's evident eagerness to tell stories to the possible financial return. Finally, Mr. Yonge pronounced that there were only three possible reasons to become an author:

Love of vanity, or of gain, or the wish to do good.[7] Yonge was too lacking in self-confidence to be vain, and too pious to want money for herself, so she had no hesitation in answering that her motives in writing were to teach and to be useful to young girls like herself.

After this, Yonge's parents were satisfied, and Mrs. Bargus began to think better of the idea. Finally, when it was decided that Yonge would spend no money on herself but use it for good works under Mr. Keble's direction, Mrs. Bargus gave her consent, and the publication of Abbeychurch went forward. Much later, a friend asked Yonge what she would have done had the decision been that she should not publish. Her answer was as automatic as the previous one:

> Oh, I must have written; but I should not have published, at least not for many years.[8]

Her calling as an author would have had to surrender to filial duty, as so many desires did in her novels, but only to a certain extent.

[7] Mare and Percival, p. 129.

[8] Battiscombe, Yonge, p. 62.

Yonge was almost the perfect type of the ideally submissive Victorian woman, but she felt her writing to be something of a divine call, and therefore would have felt justified in this mild form of rebellion.

Yonges first five books were quite heavily didactic, far more so than most of her later work. Each could serve quite well as a tract, though her gift for story-telling keeps them from being so theological as to be uninteresting to the laity. Her narrative skills expand with practice from Abbeychurch (1844), which has no plot to speak of, to The Castle Builders (1854; serialized 1851-1853) which shows more mature powers and a far greater ability to sustain narrative.

Abbeychurch is sub-titled Self-Control and Self-Conceit, and explores that theme through a series of relatively disconnected episodes surrounding the visit of some young people to a Mechanics' Institute and the spiritual dangers they find there. As was often the case for Yonge, Dissent, radical politics and associating with people who do not believe the literal truth of every word in the Bible put the characters' souls in mortal danger. In the end, all parties come to recognize the value of filial obedience and strict adherence to the teachings of the Church of England.

Henrietta's Wish (1850) continues the theme of absolute filial piety, and the disastrous results of its lack, particularly in girls. Even at the time, the treatment in this work was considered rather exaggerated. Henrietta's desire to live in a particular town

is actually mild enough, not contrary to any idea of her mother's, and supported by several adult male relatives. Yet the real sin, which brings disaster to the family, appears to be having generated an independent thought without prior parental sanction. Critics of the day, while often supporting the idea of absolute filial obedience, felt that this was going a little too far.

The Two Guardians (1852) also suffers from exaggerated didacticism. The heroine is so priggish as to make many of Yonge's other heroines seem like dangerous radicals. Among her accomplishments is the breaking off of an engagement between a relative of hers and a young man who has every good quality save one, he is an "infidel." His flaw consists in expressing doubts as to the literal truth of Genesis and in occasionally reading German works of theological criticism. These heretical tendencies obviously, in Yonge's youthful eyes, make him a man not to be trusted. The ex-fiancee goes into a decline and dies, but with her soul both intact and Anglican.

Aside from Abbeychurch, interesting as a first novel, the most interesting to a critic in this period are Scenes and Characters (1874) and The Castle Builders (1851). The former is distinguished by the first print appearance of the Mohun family, developed from Yonge's group of imaginary childhood companions. They were as real to her as any of her own relations, and this verisimilitude communicates itself to the reader. The Mohuns and their kin families,

the Mays, Merrifields and Underwoods, appear at intervals throughout Yonge's writing career, in a series of novels known to students of her work as the "linked novels." "The linked novels" include The Daisy Chain, The Trial, and The Pillars of the House. With each appearance, the characters have aged appropriately (with a few minor exceptions) and behave in an entirely self-consistent way over a fifty-year span.

The Castle Builders; or the Deferred Confirmation, is marked by excellent sketches of minor characters, and a purposeful, coherent plot; far more than a series of loosely connected episodes. In her earlier works, the plots show all the marks of having been first conceived as short stories. By this time, Yonge had learned to control her characters more firmly than before, and to blend teaching and narrative in order to make the former more palatable. From this time forward, she was usually able to make religion in the novels a reasonable natural outgrowth of plot and character.

Yonge was for the most part a self-taught writer. Her father, Keble and Dyson gave her advice and read her work in all its preliminary stages, but she was not in contact directly with the literary world. Her reading was wide, and such lessons as she absorbed came through this medium. The literary world came, however, to be aware of her books. Some scholars nominate The Castle Builders as the book which so fascinated Tennyson that he refused to go to sleep, continuing to read by candlelight until he finally cried, "I see land: Mr. ___ is just going to be confirmed!" Only then was

he willing to go to sleep, confident that the story would come to a satisfactory conclusion. Others consider a later work, The Young Stepmother (1861; serialized 1856-1860), which deals with the adult Confirmation of one Mr. Kendal, to be the book in question. As F. T. Palgrave, from whom the story comes, refers to the book only as "one of Miss Yonge's deservedly popular tales"[9] the issue remains somewhat in doubt. The fact that confirmation, as in Yonge's own case, customarily took place in the mid-teens, makes The Young Stepmother the more likely candidate. Mr. Kendal, a widower with grown children, is an unusual enough confirmand to be a subject of remark by any reader, while the Confirmation in The Castle Builders is of a youth, and so somewhat less out of the ordinary. What is certain, however, is that Yonge's work was enjoyed by eminent literary figures of her time, who at the very least found it pleasant recreational reading and were brought to care intensely about the fortunes of the characters. Perhaps her greatest narrative skill was this ability to make the reader wonder what would happen next.

In 1850, Yonge started a Church of England magazine for girls. She called it The Monthly Packet and served as its editor from 1850 to 1890. It was one of her most absorbing interests, and many of her works were first serialized there. In the case of such a book as The Pillars of the House, which occupies two large volumes in book form, this could take several years.

[9] Mare and Percival, p. 195.

The Packet was meant to help instill in girls the proper Tractarian attitudes as defined by Keble. It also served a useful family function by providing suitable reading material for this audience, which could be imperilled by indiscriminate novel-reading. The Packet's contents provided absorbing stories and interesting characters with nothing that could bring a blush to the cheek of even the most sheltered young person. Yonge gave her view of the magazine's editorial policy in the first number:

> If the pretty old terms, maidens and damsels, had not gone out of fashion, I should address this letter by that name to the readers for whom this little book is, in the first place, intended; young girls, or maidens, or young ladies, whichever you like to be called, who are above the age of childhood, and who are either looking back on school-days with regret, or else pursuing the most important part of education, namely self-education. It has been said that every one forms their own character between the ages of fifteen and five-and-twenty, and this Magazine is meant to be in some degree a help to those who are thus forming it; not as a guide, since that is the part of deeper and graver books, but as a companion in times of recreation, which may help you to perceive how to bring your religious principles to bear upon your daily life, may show you the examples, both good and evil, of historical persons, and may tell you of the workings of God's providence both here and in other lands.[10]

As long as Yonge remained the editor, The Monthly Packet did exactly that, and until widespread social change overtook and passed it in the 1880's, the magazine remained quite popular with its intended audience.

[10] Battiscombe, Yonge, p. 67.

At approximately the same time that The Monthly Packet was being launched, Yonge found something that was to lead her to becoming a best-selling author. Marianne Dyson had tried to write a story and been unsatisfied with the result. She felt unwilling to try further revision, and gave Yonge the plot. As Yonge later described it:

> She told me that there were two characters she wanted to see brought out in a story, namely, the essentially contrite and the self-satisfied. Good men, we agreed, were in most of the books of the day subdued by the memory of some involuntary disaster, generally the killing of someone out shooting, whereas the "penitence of the saints" was unattempted. The self-satisfied hero was to rate the humble one at still lower than his own estimate, to persecute him, and never be undeceived until he had caused his death. This was the germ of the tale, devising action and narrative.[11]

From this idea, Yonge was to develop one of the most talked about books of the 1850's, The Heir of Redclyffe.

Until 1853, Yonge was a moderately successful writer, but definitely a minor one. If her career had continued in that vein, her work would be of interest to the modern reader only as a curiosity. The Heir of Redclyffe established her as a best-selling writer and was a sensation throughout the English-speaking world. It reached immense popularity shortly after its publication in 1853. It was read and discussed by almost everyone in the educated classes. Young ladies fell in love with the hero, Sir Guy. Young men were indignant at the behavior of Philip, Guy's jealous and priggish cousin.

[11] Battiscombe, Yonge, p. 71.

Julian Yonge was one of many to declare that Guy should have horse-whipped Philip round the quad for interfering in his (Guy's) affairs. Nor was Julian the only soldier to find the Heir absorbing reading. Among officers hospitalized by wounds or disease in the Crimean War, The Heir of Redclyffe was the book most in demand.

More intellectual groups also found The Heir of Redclyffe attractive. Clergymen, university professors and politicians all read it avidly, and their reactions helped make it the most successful book of the day. The aristocracy, both in England and abroad, also welcomed the book and found the characters to be like family friends. This popularity lasted for years. Margaret, Princess Reuss, wrote to Yonge from Dresden in 1882 that:

> My sister and I have read several of your books with the greatest pleasure, and among them with especial delight the Heir of Redclyffe and Daisy Chain. I cannot tell how much these books are to us; it is not enough to say that they are our favourite ones, because they are far more than that, and cannot be compared to other books. As we have grown so fond of the personages in them, we should like to know so very much if they are or have been really living, or at least like some living people, or else if they are imagined persons. We are of the latter conviction, for such characters, as especially dear Guy's and Amy's are scarcely to be found on earth.[12]

Guy's character in particular found admirers in a wide range of persons, from Julian Yonge and the seventeen-year-old Princess Reuss to the young William Morris. Morris is said to have admired Guy's

[12] Coleridge, p. 350.

"almost deliquescent purity"[13] to such an extent as to wish to model his life on Guy's. A reading group at Oxford of which Morris and Burne-Jones were members was fascinated by the book and resolved to take it as their guide to life. Dante Gabriel Rossetti sympathized with Morris and Burne-Jones in this admiration for Guy, and enjoyed the book's conscious ties to a romanticized medieval past.

Just at this time, the Tractarian movement was becoming widely popular, and The Heir of Redclyffe could not have better timed. Guy Morville had many qualities which appealed intensely to readers of Scott and other novelists of romance. He joined charming manners and good looks with violent rages, deep melancholy and equally deep repentance. His sense of doom from an ancestral curse and his courageous facing of an early death were like something out of a poem. As well, his high principles, self-sacrifice, resolution in the face of temptation and devout following of Church of England principles as enunciated by Keble made him respectably Tractarian. Yonge had succeeded in creating a Byronic hero suitable for a mid-Victorian drawing room. From this time forward, she would be regarded as the major Tractarian novelist. She was never again quite to reach this peak of perfection, but maintained a high level of reader interest. She could always be counted on to soothe one's doubts and to make one feel that doing one's duty to Church and

[13] Battiscombe, Yonge, p. 76.

family could ensure not only a heavenly reward but an earthly niche as a hero or heroine of romance.

Julian Yonge had followed his father's example and joined the Army in 1852. In 1854, his regiment was ordered to the Crimea. This stress was too much for William Yonge. After seeing Julian off at Portsmouth, William had a series of strokes, and died in February of 1854.

Yonge had lost not only a father but a mentor, and though she would not have admitted it, a "Bild." To Yonge, her father was perfect and could do no wrong. Only his death removed her from complete dependence on him. After this she was forced to attend to household business and other matters which he had kept under his own control.

Her father's death meant that Yonge not only had to manage for herself and her mother in business matters, but that her writing was no longer done under paternal supervision. The Daisy Chain, which had started in the Packet in 1853, and Heartsease, almost completed, were the last major works over which William Yonge had influence. While she continued to discuss works in progress with others, particularly Keble, there was now no one with whom she eagerly and unquestioningly shared every word. Nor was there anyone whose dictates she would obey so implicitly in matters of style or content. Of the major novels, The Trial, The Clever Woman of the Family and The Pillars of the House are entirely her own, her father's

influence being felt only in the values he had taught her; values which she never seriously questioned.

In The Pillars of the House Yonge speaks of what was surely her mental state at this point.

> The unmarried woman seldom escapes a widowhood of the spirit. There is sure to be someone, parent, brother, sister, friend, more comfortable to her than the day, with whom her life is so entwined that the wrench of parting leaves a torn void never entirely healed or filled, and this is above all the case when the separation is untimely, and the desolation is where lifelong hopes and dependence have been gathered up.[14]

Yonge mourned for her father in just such a way, but found in time that she gained greater maturity from being forced to be relatively independent. There was no more referring of every detail to her father, whether in writing or in daily life. At thirty-one, she finally left the school-room mentally.

Heartsease, the book nearing completion at William Yonge's death, was quite successful, though not the sweeping success that the Heir of Redclyffe had been. It sold well, and provided further funds for Yonge's good works. This proved that Yonge's hold on the public taste was consistent; that she knew what readers of the time wanted and how to give it them. Even readers of markedly different religious views found Heartsease an engrossing book. Charles Kingsley, a staunch anti-Tractarian, was so impressed with the book at

[14] Charlotte Mary Yonge, The Pillars of the House, or Under Wode Under Rode, 3rd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1874) volume 2, p. 630.

first reading that he immediately wrote to the publisher to tell of his enthusiasm. In his letter to Parker, Kinglsey commented that,

> I think it the most delightful and wholesome novel I ever read. The delicate touches, moreover, of character I could mention are wonderful, and I found myself wiping my eyes a dozen times before I got through it. I don't wonder at the immense sale of the book, though at the same time it speaks much for the public taste that it has been so well received. You should be proud, and I doubt not are, that such a work should have come out of your house. Never mind what the Times or anyone else says; the book is wise and human and noble as well as Christian, and will surely become a standard book for aye and a day.[15]

In fact, the book of this period to become a standard was The Daisy Chain. Serialized starting in 1853, its book publication was in 1856, and it was a solid success. It is by far the least narrowly focused of Yonge's novels, and the one most popular today. While not an immense immediate success, it has been a lasting one, and Ethel and Dr. May are generally considered to be Yonge's best and most credible characters. While Guy Morville was her most striking creation, the Mays are far more realistic, particularly since they change and develop in the course of the novel in a way that Guy, who is for all practical purposes a Tractarian saint, never could.

According to Georgina Battiscombe, Austen Leigh, the critic and nephew of Jane Austen, discussed the work and its appeal to the reader in 1872.

[15] Coleridge. p. 348.

> I have just been reading Miss Yonge's Daisy Chain, I am not sure whether for the second or third time. I wonder where it is ranked in her own estimation. I place it very high among her works, and consider it a model speciment of her peculiar powers. No one else could have written anything like it. The variety of the characters, the nice discrimination of their shades, the force with which they are drawn, the whole process of their development, strike me as admirable, and ... make me place it very high, not only amongst her works, but in the general region of fiction. Like Walter Scott's novels, and my own Aunt's, I am never weary of reading it.[16]

By this time, Yonge had developed her style and had a sure vision of her public. She was now a consistent writer, and well on her way to becoming a literary institution.

Maturity in style was coupled with changes in Yonge's daily life, producing further personal maturity. Julian Yonge had not stayed long in the Crimea, but had been invalided home after a severe sunstroke early in the campaign. Once her brother had recovered enough to go out, Yonge's life was much less cloistered than it had hitherto been. She enjoyed accompanying Julian on morning calls and to dinner parties, and even to London occasionally.

During the period after Julian's return, Yonge travelled extensively for the first time in her life, and for the first time without at least one parent in attendance. Her most exciting trip was to Ireland, to be bridesmaid at her cousin Jane Colborne's wedding. The trip included balls, dinners, the Opera, everything that could be a contrast to the quiet life at Otterbourne. Every

[16] Battiscombe, Yonge, p. 93.

detail was stored up to be used later in her writing. Of particular importance was an excursion to the Devil's Glen and Glendalough. The scenery was dramatic, and the description in her letter to her mother occupies two pages of small print as Christabel Coleridge reproduces it. The scenery and the guide reappear in Hopes and Fears in the story of Lucilla Sandbrook's convention-defying journey to Ireland.

Yonge's shyness made her unhappy at being treated as a celebrity in Dublin, where everyone wanted to meet the author of The Heir of Redclyffe, and she was glad to return home. Even at thirty-four, she needed a chaperone for the trip back to England, and made this custom part of Hopes and Fears, while never questioning the custom's absolute rightness.

Hopes and Fears is something of an anomaly among Yonge's works. While definitely a major novel, it is the only one not written from the point of view of a young person. Her favored viewpoint characters range anywhere from five years old to barely thirty, with most in their late teens to early twenties. Honora Charlecote, the main character in Hopes and Fears, is a middle-aged spinster, much like Yonge herself, and one of the book's primary themes is the clash between her generation and the next. Yonge was much concerned with the problem of the old maid who finds her proper mentors deceased or abdicated, and the question of where to find new guidance. Of course, it is disastrous for a single woman to be without a mentor, and Honora finally comes to the tragi-comic realization that she must now depend for guidance on the next generation, in the person of

a clergyman young enough to have been her son.

This awkward, but in Yonge's mind inevitable resolution, marks a thematic turning point in her work. Her emphasis was shifting from character to problem, and her way of solving the various problems she poses in succeeding novels was to follow a pattern she established in Hopes and Fears. Change, she feels, is inevitable and should not be resisted. The important things are that change, when it comes as part of the natural order of things, should be solidly based on tradition and that continuity should be maintained. Honora manages this by submitting herself to a priest trained by an older one who had been her teacher, thus combining past and present in what Yonge sees as an ideal synthesis. While Yonge was eventually to fall behind the times, in her maturity she spent a great deal of thought on the problem of change and how to cope with it, as did so many others of her generation.

During this period, there were also changes at home. Julian Yonge married in 1858, and brought his wife to live with his mother and sister at Otterbourne. He had now retired from the Army, and intended to settle permanently in the family home, which now belonged to him as the heir. This was not an easy arrangement. The older ladies had been accustomed to a quiet life centering on the Church, writing, and on intellectual and theological interests shared with the Kebles and Moberlys. Frances Walter Yonge was not bookish, and at only nineteen, was too young to share in many of her sister-in-law's interests. The addition of two adults (and soon of children)

to the household caused crowding and made it difficult for Yonge to prepare lessons for Sunday School, edit the Packet or work on her novels, which were of course subordinated to domestic claims.

Finally, this problem was solved by separating the two households. In 1862, Yonge and her mother moved to Elderfield, a cottage nearby, leaving Otterbourne House to Julian, Frances and their children. In the new house, Yonge's work was easier, and she continued the saga of the May family in The Trial, serialized from 1862-1864 and published in book form in 1864. Also from this period is Countess Kate (1862) whose heroine is based on Yonge's own childhood looks and personality. Yonge was singularly lacking in vanity, and Kate Caergwent is not an attractive child, though all the more sympathetic for that reason. Kate reappears as an adult in The Pillars of the House, an outstanding example of Yonge's ability to hold a character in her mind over a decade or longer and to produce an entirely credible development in characterization.

Yonge's next major work, in 1865, was The Clever Woman of the Family, an anti-feminist novel. The central character, Rachel Curtis, is far more intelligent than anyone else in her circle, but lacks humility and proper male guidance. Through these failings, she is both swindled financially and made a public laughingstock in her community. Finally, she is allowed to repent under the guidance of an elderly clergyman very much like Keble, and is then rewarded with a husband and children.

Life at Elderfield was quiet, preserving the daily routine almost unchanged since Yonge's confirmation. Yet there were soon to be sweeping changes, which would result in Yonge's finally being as alone as Honora Charlecote, without any member of the previous generation to guide and advise her. Mrs. Keble was becoming more and more an invalid, and Keble himself was aging. In 1864, he suffered a stroke and both he and his wife died in the spring of 1865. Yonge's grief was tempered by the many honors paid him and by the knowledge that she never had and never would deviate from his teachings, but the loss of her "Bild" left a void in her life second only to the loss of her father.

Soon after Keble's death, Fanny Yonge's health began to fail. By 1868, she was extremely ill, declining both physically and mentally. She was completely bedridden and aphasic, demanding constant nursing and attention, particularly from her daughter. Yonge had always found illness difficult, and was completely lacking in the supposed innate gift for nursing the Victorians expected all women to posess. While she was devoted to her mother, and cared for her dutifully, by the end, in the fall of 1868, she found that her mother's death came as a relief. In a letter to Marianne Dyson, Yonge described her thoughts and feelings, which were much like those in her novels. Her particular thankfulness was that:

> The "Ephphatha is sung," when I think of the frowning look with which she would try to make us understand her, and the struggle to say words of praise, "glorify" so often coming. ... It is so very gentle and as she

> wished, and I really did miss her much more four months ago, when the real response failed me, and I saw her in the state I knew she hoped not to be in, than now that the habit of leaning on her has been so long broken. It is as if the threefold cord of my life had had one strand snapped suddenly fourteen years ago, but slowly, gently untwisted now.[17]

It is not surprising that a person with as strong High Church leanings as Yonge's should have considered becoming a nun. While her mother lived, Yonge's duty to remain home was clear. After Fanny Yonge's death, Yonge considered joining the Sisterhood at Wantage. Such a directed life, under strong spiritual guidance and emphasizing strict submission to superiors and to a rule must have been immensely attractive, and the idea of joining or founding a Sisterhood appears in several of the novels.

Julian, Mr. Bigg-Wither (Curate of Otterbourne) and Canon Butler of Wantage united in discouraging the idea. They may well have felt that she was unsuited to the religious life, and certainly argued that her calling was to work in the world through her writing. It was some consolation that Butler accepted her as an Exterior Sister, and she continued in that status for the rest of her life.

Freed from home duties for the first time in her life, Yonge was able to travel. Aside from the trip to Ireland, she had seldom been more than a day's journey from Otterbourne, and preferred staying close to home. But in the fall of 1869, she went with Julian

[17] Coleridge, p. 236.

and Fanny to France. This was her first and only trip abroad, and like the Irish trip it proved a useful source of material for her writing.

The trip's major object was a visit to the French statesman Guizot at his home in Normandy. The connection, unusual for one as shy and politically innocent as Yonge, was through Guizot's daughter, who was one of Yonge's devoted readers. Mme Guizot de Witt was eager to translate some of Yonge's books into French, and a friendship had developed from the business correspondence on that subject.

Yonge found the busy, cheerful French household to be much like the one at Puslinch. As the Guizots were devout Protestants, she was even able to join in family prayers. Their interests were much like her own, including looking at prints, hunting for fossils and inspecting schools. In short, the Guizot household was the Yonge family translated into French.

The trip continued with a visit to Paris, which Yonge probably found much less to her taste than Normandy. No letters recording her opinions on the Paris of the Second Empire have survived, but it is unlikely that she would have found much there of which she could approved. Her general references to Paris in her novels tend to be somewhat disparaging, but this may simply be the traditional pious English view of Paris as a wicked city.

Upon her return to England, Yonge took up her former pattern of life almost unchanged. She was now middle-aged and without the mentors on whom she had previously relied, but met this crisis, like

all crises in her life, by immersing herself in writing and Church activities. Through the troubled 1860's she wrote mainly historical fiction, notable for its impeccable accuracy in detail, as though it were the written version of a Pre-Raphaelite painting, and its complete lack of understanding any school of thought or way of life other than her own. She transplants Victorian social codes and Church of England theology to mediaeval Germany, the court of Henry V or that of Catherine de Medici. At the time, these novels were quite popular, particularly among those who enjoyed the accurate rendering of setting and artifacts, but they are now justly neglected.

This lack of sense of period was but one of the flaws that become apparent in Yonge's writing. With two exceptions, her Life of Bishop Patteson and The Pillars of the House, her subsequent output was large and mediocre. While William Yonge and Keble had been intrusive critics, they had been helpful in restraining her tendency to over-fluency, and her work suffered from their loss. No longer did she have anyone to tell her when to stop or to cut back, and she never developed such a sense on her own.

Yonge was also becoming increasingly isolated from the changing outside world, partly through her own choice. Talk and debate with Keble and through him with other prominent scholars of the Oxford Movement had kept her aware of changing trends in theology and philosophy and sharpened her understanding. Without an interpreter of things she felt a woman could not really understand, Yonge tended to rely too much on her own memories of past lessons to form her opinions.

Without intellectual stimulation, she became mentally somewhat lazy, and inclined to react rather than think. Her opinions and literary tastes at fifty were much as they had been at twenty, and underwent little change in the next decades. The rapid intellectual and social changes of the late nineteenth century left her far behind. She did not understand the new world in which she found herself, and her writing reveals that she felt any effort to do so was unneccessary.

Yonge's last major works both appeared in 1873. The energy and enthusiasm she was still able to muster for a congenial subject overcame for the last time her tendency to retire further and further into a vision of life as it used to be at Otterbourne. The first of those works was her most successful work of non-fiction, the Life of Bishop Patteson.

Writing the biography of a missionary bishop was a task Yonge could approach with enthusiasm. Her love of missionary work had made her familiar with the topic, which was made even more congenial by the fact that the subject was one of her distant cousins. John Coleridge Patteson went to Melanesia as a missionary and was eminently successful in that field even before his consecration as Bishop. In 1871, he was murdered by islanders who believed they were taking revenge on a slave trader who had been impersonating him. He is still revered and commemorated within the Anglican Church as a patron of the racial tolerance he devoted his life to achieving. His background and development within Tractarianism were much like Yonge's own, with the added advantage of a University education.

Unlike Yonge, his experiences in the mission field and his status as a male and a priest led him to go so far as to disagree with Keble himself on points of ritual and doctrine. Yonge recognized that such a privileged position entitled Patteson to form his own opinions, and made full allowance for that in describing and analyzing his career, development and accomplishments. The result is an honest and well-crafted piece of Victorian biography, and shows significant traces of the scholarly potential Yonge had sacrificed.

Yonge's last major novel, The Pillars of the House, also appeared in 1873. Another one of the linked novels, the Pillars is one of Yonge's most characteristic works. Dr. May and many of the other characters from The Daisy Chain reappear, and the book marks the first appearance of the Underwood family.

The Underwoods are the thirteen children of a saintly, poor and tubercular clergyman, who dies early in the book, leaving his family penniless. As his widow is an invalid, care of the family devolves on the two oldest children, Wilmet and Felix, the "pillars." Felix, who is a lay saint after the Keble model, sacrifices his social position by going into trade to support the rest of the family. Felix was Yonge's own favorite among her heroes, and stands alongside Guy Morville as the perfect type of the Tractarian young man.

Naturally, Felix is rewarded both spiritually and temporally for his virtuous life. The rest of the family also fulfils didactic purposes as well as being interesting individually. Edgar refuses to be confirmed, becomes a free-thinker, forges a check and is eventually

scalped by wild Indians. Yonge apparently feels this to be exactly what someone who will not be confirmed deserves. Geraldine and Lance sacrifice their artistic talents to Church and family duties. Clement, after some humbling of his pride, is ordained. Alda, Wilmet's twin, is a heartless flirt who marries for money and a title, only to find that her husband is an incurable drunkard. Wilmet, the de facto mother of the family, marries and, after an intense personal struggle, abandons her unwomanly tendency toward independence and submits to her husband's direction. Each one of the thirteen has some part to play, and the various turns of their lives provide a plot crowded with incident.

The Pillars of the House is of course far more complicated than such a summary can indicate. Its two major themes, as usual with Yonge, are religion and family duty. Every event from the trivial (Bernard's purchase of a dog) to the crucial (Felix's decision to restore the income from the lay rectory to the parish at Vale Leston) is judged by its religious or family significance. Those Underwoods who follow Keble's religious teachings and Yonge's rigid code of family duty may suffer, but are eventually rewarded for their steadfastness. Those who break the rules are punished, and even repentance does not entitle them to the satisfactory lives bestowed on the virtuous.

After the Pillars, Yonge's writing was more noted for quantity than quality, and she lived more and more in retirement. She was unwilling to make new friends, to travel, or to take the social

position that would have been open to so popular an author. Thus she became even more isolated than before from current literary trends and from contact with other authors. She found no one to fill the place of the Kebles and the Moberlys (who had left Winchester) in providing outside contacts and material for her writing. As shy in late middle age as in youth, she welcomed any excuse to withdraw from social life. Such an excuse was rendered even more welcome when it appeared under the cloak of family duty. In September of 1873, shortly after The Pillars of the House was published, she found just such a reason for withdrawal. Julian Yonge's invalid sister-in-law needed a home, and Yonge was expected to take Gertrude Walter to live with her.

The care of an invalid was a great drain on time and energy for Yonge, who disliked nursing, and she was often unable to devote the time or effort to her work that was needed for quality. However, Gertrude supplied the companionship that Yonge had missed since her mother's death. Miss Walter had similar tastes to Yonge, and the two became close friends. As Christable Coleridge described the relationship, which lasted until Walter's death in 1897:

> She called herself playfully "Char's wife," as she played the part of helpmeet in her work ... she acted as confidant and critic to Charlotte's subsequent stories, kept all the reviews of them, sorted and arranged all the autography letters received from famous people, and in short for many years gave her friend all the companionship which so genial and sympathetic a person required.[18]

[18] Coleridge, pp. 270-271.

Yonge published her first book, Abbeychurch, in 1844. Her last novel, Modern Broods, came out in 1900, and in it she brought to a close the long and closely interwoven saga of the Mays, Mohuns, Merrifields and Underwoods who had been appearing at intervals since Scenes and Characters. Her final work, left unfinished at her death, was Reasons Why I Am a Catholic and not a Roman Catholic, printed posthumously in 1901.

Throughout her sixty year writing career, Yonge was always a prolific author. She wrote with seeming ease, perhaps too easily in the last half of her writing life. Between 1873, when her last major work, The Pillars of the House, appeared in book form and her death she wrote over a hundred books and stories, both fiction and non-fiction. This was in addition to her duties as editor of The Monthly Packet and Mothers in Council, which consumed a good deal of her time and energy. She also maintained a full schedule of parish work, charity activities and looking after Gertrude Walter, who remained an invalid until her death in 1897.

The hundred books are a mixture of genres. Several continue the "linked novel" Mohun-May Merrifield-Underwood series. Many were historical novels, a genre which she particularly enjoyed. A large proportion of her work was non-fiction. This included books of readings, literary criticism, and translations from the French of biographies and religious works. Her own history books, intended mainly for children, included treatments of Greece, Rome, Germany, America and France. She also prepared text-books, from Shakespeare's

Plays for Schools and English Church History (both in 1883) to the Westminster Historical Reading Book of 1891. In 1890 she undertook and completed a life of the Prince Consort.

As always, she continued writing on religious topics. The Catechism, the Psalms, the Gospels, the Prayer Book and the teaching of Sunday school classes all received attention. In all of these, she stayed true to the High Church teachings of her girlhood. Even her last work, Reasons Why I Am a Catholic and not a Roman Catholic, was really a restating of the arguments for Anglicanism John Keble had taught her as a fifteen-year-old candidate for Confirmation.

Yet all this activity had one drawback. It was certainly profuse, but with a few exceptions, quite mediocre. Even her most devoted admirers can find little to say for most of her publications in the last thirty years of her life. Only a driving curiosity about favorite characters and their descendants can make one wade through works like The Long Vacation and Modern Broods.

Her inspiration had not entirely worn out in her last years, however. Unknown to History, an historical novel on Mary, Queen of Scots and her mythical daughter (the unknown of the title) is a charming tale, and is still occasionally read by admirers of historical fiction.

Two other books stand out above the large and mediocre mass of work after 1873. The first, Magnum Bonum, is another of the family sagas that were Yonge's forte. The three-volume novel deals with two branches of the Brownlow family and their efforts to prove worthy

of the "magnum bonum", a medical discovery to be used only for good and in accordance with Church teachings. In the confusion of characters caused by the Brownlow clan's unfortunate habit of duplicating given names, Janet Brownlow stands out as a further example of Yonge's scorn for the intellectual woman. Janet starts out by wearing Pre-Raphaelite dresses and insisting on higher education. She follows this by immodestly studying medicine (though Yonge later came to relent on the issue of "lady doctors", if only for the mission field) and falling under the spell of a confidence trickster who wishes to market the "magnum bonum" as a patent medicine. Although she is far more clever than her brothers and cousins, this does not exempt her from what Yonge sees as the absolute need for male direction and supervision. Janet eventually redeems all her sins by dying while tending the sick in an American yellow fever epidemic. Her brother and cousin, who both treated the discovery with proper humility, join their findings to those of another doctor, and the "magnum bonum" is used for humanity's benefit.

The other major work of the last years is Womankind. A collection of essays first appearing in The Monthly Packet, Womankind is a distillation of all Yonge's views on the proper status of woman in the Victorian world. As in her novels, she deals only with the gentry, leaving aside the question of how a servant, factory girl or a farm-worker's wife should behave. Her views will be discussed in more detail in a later chapter.

A major reason for Yonge's output of potboilers during her later years was the desire for money. As usual, the money was not for herself, since she still firmly believed that a desire for wealth would be both unladylike and prideful. She wanted the money for various worthy causes that were dear to her heart. She had dreamed for years of endowing a church in Otterbourne, following the example of so many families in her novels, and had saved her money toward that end. But in 1875 another claim on her finances took precedence. Julian Yonge had engaged in speculative investments, one of which had failed, bringing him near to financial ruin. As always, Yonge welcomed the chance to subordinate her personal wishes to family duty, and the money was used to re-establish Julian and his family on a sound financial footing.

Nor was the endowing of a church the only dream Yonge had to relinquish. She had edited and loved The Monthly Packet since 1850, and it had been her favorite medium for publication. Some of her best work, including The Daisy Chain and The Pillars of the House, had been serialized in its pages before book publication. Now, however, the magazine was gradually losing money and circulation. It was out of touch with the times. The demure young lady of her youth had been replaced to a large degree by W. S. Gilbert's "English girls of eleven stone two/and five foot ten in her dancing shoe"[19] who golfs, rows, plays tennis, and completely lacks mock-modesty.

[19] W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan, Utopia, Limited. Act II.

This new generation had wider interests than Yonge was willing to countenance. While she enjoyed and approved of such new phenomena as the bicycle, she was adamant in excluding from the Packet all moral, political and religious subjects that might be in any way unsuitable for the audience of young maidens she still believed in. The maidens now could, and did, go elsewhere for their reading. The Packet had innumerable rivals, cheaper and appealing to a wider audience.

Yonge did not push the magazine as other editors might have done. She discouraged advertising unless the products were absolutely fitting for young ladies. She also approved of only a small group of authors, and contributions from anyone outside that group were not desired. This, coupled with her rigid adherence to the views and behavior of her own "young-ladyhood" let circulation decline until the publishers replaced her as editor in 1890.

Her successor was Christabel Coleridge, a close friend and disciple, later to be her official biographer. Even new blood and fresher views coming from one young enough to be her daughter could not save the Packet. Without Yonge, it lost its personality and became a pale copy of the other girls' magazines of the day. It struggled along for a few years, but finally ceased publication completely in 1895.

Though no longer controlling her beloved Packet, Yonge did not give up editing. In 1890, just after giving up the Packet, she became the first editor of Mothers in Council, the house organ of the

Mothers' Union, a Church-sponsored uplift organization. This was a smaller audience but one very much to her taste, being composed entirely of women who were active members of the Church of England. There could hardly have been a more congenial forum for Yonge in her last years. It was here that she published the fragments of autobiography Coleridge reproduced in the official biography. In these, Yonge dwelt lovingly and in great detail on the childhood she never really left.

In old age as in youth and middle age, Yonge's life was narrow but placid and satisfying. It centered on the village life of Otterbourne and on her writing. She walked, studied botany and natural history, and continued her Church activities. Each day began with prayers, followed by teaching Scripture in the village school. This was followed in its turn by Morning Prayer at the Church; then she worked at her writing until lunch. After lunch and a walk, she alternated parish activities with proof-reading, reviewing and editorial work for Mothers in Council and the parish magazine. As Morning Prayer began her day, Evensong at church ended it. On Sunday, she attended services and taught children's classes in the Sunday School.

Yonge continued thus happily and busily occupied for the remainder of her life. The only difficulty she encountered was in trying to avoid the tourists and autograph-seekers who periodically descended on Otterbourne hoping for some contact with a noted author. Her extreme shyness made this difficult for her, and even old age

made her no happier at being in the public eye.

She died in March, 1901, of pneumonia following on bronchitis. She had only a short illness, with little pain, and was able to receive the Holy Communion with her friends in a ceremony reminiscent of the deathbed scenes that played so prominent a part in her novels.

A great public outpouring of sentiment followed her death. Newspapers published long and fulsome obituary notices, though sometimes feeling obliged to comment on her "old-fashioned" qualities. Her memorial sermon was preached by a Regius Professor of Pastoral Theology, and there was talk of burying her in Winchester Cathedral, beside Jane Austen. But in the end, clergy and relatives in conference decided that one so strongly tied to Otterbourne should remain there. Her funeral took place on the thirty-fifth anniversary of Keble's death, a coincidence she would surely have appreciated, and she is buried at the foot of Keble's memorial cross.

CHAPTER II

RELIGION

In the world of Yonge's novels, religion was the central fact of life and the Church was the key social structure. Tractarianism as interpreted by Keble was the philosophical basis for every part of life, and Yonge remained faithful to that creed throughout her writing career.

This in itself was nothing unusual for a Victorian writer. Yonge was but one member of a host of religious writers, ranging in allegiance from Roman Catholic to extreme Calvinist Protestant, and including every possible shade of opinion in between. The religious novel, a book whose major purpose was to teach the reader about a particular creed, was one of the most popular genres of the day, and found a place in all but the most strait-laced homes. A religious novel could be approved where all others were condemned as frivolous and worldly. When a novel was really an extended tract, it was felt to be far more respectable than a secular novel.

With a few notable exceptions such as Kingsley, Mrs. Oliphant and Yonge herself, most of the Victorian religious novelists are completely and deservedly forgotten. None but the extremely curious today reads the work of Hesba Stretton, Mrs. Charles or Elizabeth Sewell, and they were not accorded a high literary rank even in their time of greatest popularity. In her own day, Yonge's status was a great deal higher, and there are signs, in the reprinting of some of

her work and in a modest growth in critical interest, of her restoration to status as a respectable novelist of the second rank and of a recognition of her value as social and cultural portraitist. Such lasting value as she may have achieved is due in large part to her treatment of religion while using it as a central theme.

Yonge had a partly didactic purpose in writing, and acknowledged her wish to share with her readers the benefits of Mr. Keble's spiritual insights. However, she managed to spare those readers the large sections of undiluted preaching common in the religious novel of the 1850's and 1860's. She felt that it was improper for a lady to devote much time to strictly theological discussion. It was also, in her view, uninteresting to the reader, who needed something more subtle in order to accept and profit by instruction. Her favored mode of teaching was the parable rather than the sermon.

Each novel (including most of the historical novels) is essentially a domestic novel of manners in a Victorian setting. Yonge describes the daily lives of families in the middle, professional and upper classes, in an atmosphere of comfortable Tractarian piety. She breaks from the mainstream of the domestic novel in showing the Church of England as an active and vital force in the lives of her characters. The moral questions, worldly triumphs, sufferings, deathbeds and happy endings that form the stock scenes in so many novels of the period are not part of an atmosphere of vague general goodness. In Yonge's hands, they become part of a living Anglican framework. The Church provides her characters with the strength they need to

face their trials, and the humility needed in success.

The Church is the principal consistent factor in Yonge's work, and the Church, as shown through the lives of its members, is her constant subject. Rather than preach its doctrines directly, she prefers to illustrate them in life. She considers it more effective not to engage in direct debate on the merits of Confirmation, the Holy Communion, auricular confession or Infant Baptism. She prefers to illustrate such a principle in operation, and show its benefits to a character in whom the reader has taken an interest. The reader who sees the comfort or joy given to a character through participation in the sacraments of the Church of England is likely to be moved, even if not convinced.

Occasionally, she tends to sacrifice the development of plot or character to the message she is presenting. She is quite ruthless in killing off characters in order to teach their families lessons in resignation to Divine Will. Usually character changes are relatively self-consistent and take place over a long period of time, rather than instantaneously on reading a tract or hearing a sermon. In event and character, the writings remain more or less believable. It is what she refuses to discuss at all that is the greatest sacrifice.

Yonge's work is narrowed by her refusal to question the doctrines she had learned as a child. She refused either to experience or imagine anything outside her parents' way of belief. Her work is by no means philosophical if one takes that to mean exploration of the

nature of beliefs or a considered reaction against any other position. Her tenets are taken as given, and that removes all possibility of further discussion. She enjoys the confidence that comes from knowing what is right, and doing what follows from that knowledge.

A contemporary review of Yonge's Musings Over The Christian Year shows clearly one source from which she gained this tendency. In discussing Keble's few "defects of character," the author remarks on his own narrowing.

> He scarcely ever ventured on exercising his own character and judgment on doctrines or on disputed ecclesiastical questions. It was his bliss to receive and to rest in what he had received. He felt that his safety lay in the shadow of reverent example ... No caution was more frequently given to young people by him than that against arguing on doctrines or Church matters. When some one was inclined to question the ground of something connected with the Church of England, he pointed to his sister, and asked whether anything could be substantially wanting to a Church which had nourished a saintly life like hers, that had been all untroubled by hint of dissatisfaction. He turned hastily away from whatever even seemed to cast an irreverent glance at what he held sacred.[1]

This example, with this caution against discussing certain matters, was one Yonge always followed. Her preferrred mode is to create a character to whom she can point as Keble did to his sister, and for the same effect. Doubt and discussion are irreverent and therefore to be avoided, particularly for the audience of "young

[1] B. Orme, 'Miss Yonge's 'Musings over "The Christian Year",'" The Sunday Magazine, (May 1, 1871), p. 468.

maidens" to whom she addressed herself. Her novels provide a comforting refuge from doubt and rational inquiry for any reader feeling threatened or simply fatigued by too much exercise of the mind on such matters. When directly questioned, Yonge's answers show that she had thought (though not "for herself", which was wrong) and based her opinion on scripture study and the Book of Common Prayer. Still, she refuses to preach at any length, which is a marked difference to other religious writers, as her refusal to speculate and discuss is as regards the philosophers.

One primary reason for this reticence in preaching was the doctrine of Reserve in Communicating Religious Knowledge. This had been a key point of Keble's theology, and one of the primary ways in which the Oxford Movement differentiated itself from other renewal movements then and later. Adherents of this doctrine refrained from excessive discussion and were careful to temper their discourses according to the relative level of sophistication of their hearers. This removed much from Yonge's potential subject matter, for much of her intended audience was children. Any real examination of a person's spiritual state she left to priests and parents, feeling that she had no right to interfere.

Reserve appealed strongly to a naturally reticent writer, and Yonge welcomed its series of admonitions to guard and conceal one's love for the Church. Making a parade of such things would be prideful, so she replaced that with description of the delight her characters took in missionary meetings and decorating the Church on holy

days. Many of her readers found this relative austerity refreshing, in contrast to the more fervid utterings of fundamentalists or the type of tract/novel in which children conduct a sort of inquisition into how much the other characters love Jesus. Yonge summed up her feelings in one of her commentaries on Keble's Christian Year.

> Reserve, reverent reserve, was ever a characteristic of the school of divines of which the "Christian Year" was the first utterance. Those who had gone before them, in their burning zeal to proclaim the central truth of the Gospel, had obtruded it with little regard to the season of speaking or the frame of mind of the hearer; and moreover, there was a habit of testing the sincerity of personal religion by requiring that its growth should be constantly proclaimed and discussed with great fullness of detail.[2]

Yonge "proclaimed and discussed" the spiritual lives of her characters only where necessary to the plot, as in certain passages in The Heir of Redclyffe and The Daisy Chain. Her attention and skill were devoted largely to the portrayal of the outward and visible signs of faith and to the type of instruction a firm and loving parent might give a child.

This was precisely the impression Yonge wished to convey. In her view, the relation of the individual to the Church should be that of child to parent. As each individual was a child of God, the Church, to which all were joined in Baptism, was the family of God. Within that family the ordained priests and deacons fill the paternal role,

[2] Yonge, Musings, p. 90.

interpreting scripture and guiding the behavior of the laity. The teachings of the Church as interpreted by the clergy were to be obeyed as implicitly as a child would obey his parents, and with as little question. As the lawful, divinely established authority, the clergy were the primary guiding force against the secularism and fragmentation of the age.

Yonge saw the firm establishment of clerical authority as the paramount social need of her time. In an age of intellectual ferment (which she usually did not discuss) she felt that no researches should be undertaken without clerical sanction. If learning was to be strictly secular it was far better to remain ignorant and innocent. Only a priest, properly trained in theology and Church history, and drawing all his conclusions from Scripture and tradition, was qualified to act as final arbiter.

This was not to say that she was opposed to scientific research or industrial progress. The essential was to approach these under proper spiritual guidance, having always in mind that all activities should be motivated by a desire for the closer knowledge of God.

In this as in other respects the clergy were intended to set an example for the laity. With this in mind, most of Yonge's clerical characters are patterns of right thought and conduct. She never describes a truly bad priest, and differs in this respect from many of her contemporaries. When she did describe an idle or ineffective priest, she carefully specified that he was of the "old school" and

thus represented the Church tendencies to which Tractarianism was a reaction. The Reverend Fulbert Underwood (The Pillars of the House) is such a priest. Persuaded to take orders for the sake of a family living, he is far more interested in horses and sports than in his duties as Vicar of Vale Leston, and neglects the poor of his parish through sheer laziness. This leaves the poor to choose between drink, Rome and Dissent, the latter being much the least desirable. But even he is merely thoughtless and unsuited for his work. His successor, Clement Underwood, had been an annoying ritualistic prig as a boy (and an extremely convincing specimen of the genus) but learned humility and became an ideal clergyman on the Keble model. Under his guidance, the parish is revitalized and all vestiges of Dissent expelled.

Clement is also one of the few examples of the celibate clergy Yonge presents. In general, she feels that it is their responsibility to set an example of Christian family life for their parishioners to emulate. The myriad duties of charity work, parish work and Sunday school also demand a rector's wife. Yonge prefers married clergy with children for these reasons, and the few celibates in her novels are those for whom it seems individually appropriate. Clement, who had watched his father die of consumption leaving behind thirteen destitute children (several tubercular themselves) can hardly be blamed for resolving to stay single. His mentor, Robert Fulmort (also a major character in Hopes and Fears), is so nearly a saint that he is able to take humanity in general as his family.

Women's active roles in the Church are strictly limited in Yonge's world. It is not so much that she disapproves of the ordination of women as that the thought never even occurs to her. Aside from clergy wife, daughter and parish worker, the only permitted activity for women was to join a Sisterhood. The Tractarians accepted this as a contribution for single women and widows, and one which allowed them to do good works not possible for women with family responsibilities. Yonge modeled the orders and sisters in her work on groups she knew personally, and presents a reluctance to accept the idea as being rather comically old-fashioned.

In her direct discussion of religion, Yonge tends to concentrate on the Sacraments as a supremely important part of Christian life. This emphasis on the Sacraments was particularly Tractarian, part of an attempt to restore their vitality in a society that neglected them. Most Anglicans had become used to thinking of Sacraments as rites of passage rather than as channels for divine grace. The Holy Communion, which Yonge stresses particularly, was all but ignored, and the Tractarians were thought of as dangerous ritualists for encouraging weekly celebrations and frequent reception where four times a year had been thought sufficient.

Yonge gives the most space in her books to baptism and Confirmation (coupled with the Holy Communion). These were the only ceremonies really common to all Anglicans and necessary, in Yonge's eyes for renewing one's submission to God and obedience to the Church. She realizes that only a few chosen men could receive Holy

Orders, and that many people might not marry, but to her mind baptism and confirmation were absolutely imperative.

To a Yonge character, baptism is the most important even in life. It is absolutely necessary for salvation, and must be administered as soon as possible after birth. People like Guy Morville speak of it as the greatest gift they ever received.

Confirmation assumes nearly equal theological importance, though less absolute necessity. As being voluntary, it was far more useful to an author. Yonge could safely assume that her readers' experience of confirmation would be varied. Many of them were still preparing for confirmation, which customarily took place in the mid-teens; assuming the same importance that "coming out" did in more worldly families. Still others had only recently been confirmed. The devout remembered their confirmation with as much joy and awe as Yonge herself, and for her it had been the high-point of her conscious life. Even the parents in her audience could be expected to read with an eye towards guiding their children.

All of these groups could be expected to take an intense interest in stories of solemn preparation for confirmation. The doubts, strivings, fears and triumphs attending the process would be their own. They would sympathize with the many plots Yonge evolved in which the confirmation of one or more characters is an important element.

In Yonge's interpretation, the person confirmed gains strength against the temptations of the world through taking on voluntarily the submission made at baptism. As well, there is the direct contact with God made possible through Communion. Unless undertaken with false scruples or failures in absolute obedience, the commitment changes life. Selfishness and careless living grow directly from refusing to be confirmed or from neglecting the duties that come with the status. Arthur Martindale's bad character, dissipated life and failure as husband and father all stem directly from such an attitude.

> It had been grace missed and neglected, rather than wilfully abused ... his confirmation had taken place as a matter of form, and he had never been a communicant; withheld at once by ignorance and dread of strictness, as well as by a species of awe. Even his better and more conscientious feelings had been aroused merely by his affections instead of the higher sense of duty ...[3]

Only through proper obedience can Arthur become a reformed soul and obtain the help he needs.

Confirmation is the center of The Castle Builders, in which two sisters defer their confirmation, first through feelings of unworthiness, later through more worldly motives. Unconfirmed, they cannot receive Communion, and so are separated from God. This causes

[3] Charlotte Mary Yonge, Heartsease, or the Brother's Wife, (London: Macmillan, 1906 originally published 1854), p. 433.

them to sink into self-will, disrespect to their elders, flouting of clerical authority and mixing with Dissenters. Nothing in their lives goes right while they remain unconfirmed.

> ... though they acknowledged the duty of attending to Church ordinances, these were to them duties in themselves, which stood alone, unconnected with practical life, and without influence over it. So as confirmation was to come but once in their lives, why not at one time as well as another? And the thought of the Holy Communion made them still more inclined to defer it, since they would be afraid to stay away and yet dreaded to go without due preparation. They did not feel in their hearts, though in some degree they knew with their understandings, that prayers, Church services, confirmation, Communion, were all steps to lead them on in the track of daily life, the waymarks set about their faith; nay, further, the wings which might bear onwards their steps.[4]

To "feel in their hearts" is essential. Yonge insists that the Church be approached through faith rather than reason; reason being in a sense a breach of absolute trust in God.

The greatest blessing confirmation could bestow was the admission to the Holy Communion. This is a source of immense spiritual benefit to Yonge, and she sees frequent reception as a Christian duty. A fairly common occurence in her fiction is the deathbed Communion service as a means of uniting the dying and their friends in a spirit of Christian resignation and serenity. In any circumstance the faithful communicant is strengthened for their reponsibilities of

[4] Charlotte Mary Yonge, The Castle Builders, (1854; repr New York: Garland, 1976), p. 49.

the world. Had Edgar Underwood been a communicant, he would never have been scalped by Red Indians (or so Yonge seems to imply) and Arthur Martindale would not have slid into debt and dissipation had he been fortified by the sacraments.

In her presentation of the sacraments, Yonge tends to follow the Church custom of her time as it has been recorded in diaries and memoirs. This is true even of such minute details as the necessity of obtaining a "ticket" from the rector of one's parish before being confirmed. In thought on the subject, she of course adheres to the High Church views. Most Low and even some Broad Church thinkers felt that reliance on sacraments rather than scriptual exegesis was error, and that such things as frequent Communion were Romish in tendency. Their emphasis was on preaching, which Yonge tended to minimize. She seldom discusses a sermon, and prefers to show the clergy doing what would now be called pastoral counseling.

Doubt was one of the perils against which obedience and the sacraments were supposed to provide protection. Yonge prefers not to go into great detail as to the nature of doubts, unlike Gosse or others who were preoccupied at times with finding religious truth. This was far too dangerous, Yonge felt, since it might lead a reader to share the questions. Better to cope with doubt by avoidance; by not reading questionable books, going to secular schools, or thinking too much about the arguments of other groups. The one and infallible solution, in this as in everything, was submission. If one simply refused to consider the Church as subject to private judgment and

accepted Church of England usages and tenets on every issue, one had no further problems.

In very few of Yonge's novels does she devote much attention to a doubter and his or her crises of conscience. She prefers to have such a person be a minor character, easily routed by a sensible clergyman. When she does examine an individual skeptic, she is extremely careful not to specify the nature of that person's questioning. It is enough to say that doubt usually proceeds from improper upbringing.

Miss Fennimore (Hopes and Fears) has doubts as a result of ignorance. She was raised in a Unitarian family and was instilled with high moral and ethical standards but without the all-important religious foundation. Since even the most worthy actions are suspect in Yonge's eyes if not motivated and directed by the Church, Miss Fennimore is surely headed for disaster. Only the example of Phoebe, her naturally religious pupil, saves her from complete destruction and puts her on the path of repentance. Before this, Miss Fennimore has corrupted her other pupils through her tendency to treat religion and the Church as irrelevant in the modern age, which leads the girls to discard even the secular moral standards she teaches. Yonge bypasses the actual question: whether the Church is in fact relevant and what the age needs from the Church, in favor of a survey of the bad effects of such questioning. Bertha, the youngest pupil, becomes so frivolous as to elope (at fifteen) with a dissipated friend of the

family, and nearly dies of brain fever before reaching a properly submissive and ladylike frame of mind.

The chastened Miss Fennimore is received into the Church and purged of all her doubts after seeing how faith enables Phoebe to cope with Bertha's illness. After a term of expiation as a settlement worker in a slum parish, Miss Fennimore is able to return as governess, now basing all her lessons firmly on the Church. Nothing in her previous ideas of "Christianity modified by the world's progress" would shock any modern reader other than an extreme fundamentalist or the most conservative of Anglo-Catholics. Her main sin appears to consist in applying personal reason rather than pious submission to Church doctrines and customs, and encouraging her pupils to do likewise.

The Clever Woman of the Family is Yonge's only full-length study of a person perplexed by religious doubts. Under the pernicious influence of undirected reading in popular magazines, Rachel Curtis comes to question accepted standards in the Church, parental authority and her feminine role. She dislikes the curate for being "not quite a gentleman" and thinks him utterly foolish for making choir practice more important than her education classes for the poor. This is most unwise of her, since any Church activity must take precedence over a secular one, and Church music is an important part of restoring dignity to the service. Without the curate's "lawful authority" to guide her, all her schemes for community uplift miscarry disastrously.

Rachel starts by going to Church only on Sundays, and sneering at those who attend daily early services. She soon falls prey to a swindler whom she defends as "one of the many who have thought for themselves upon the perplexing problems of faith and practice."[5] Thinking for oneself is a cardinal sin to Yonge, and Rachel is properly punished for it. The swindler makes off with most of the money she has collected to help the lace-makers. She directly causes the death by diphtheria of one of her proteges. After all this, her arrogance disappears only to be replaced by confusion and a desire to return to the simple faith of her childhood.

In quest of direction, Rachel submits her self to the tutelage of Mr. Clare, a saintly old priest modeled quite explicitly after Keble. His gentle guidance leads Rachel to the conclusion that doubt is not "the sign of intellect" but a sign of wilful pride. She comes to appreciate the beauties of Church music and the traditional service. Eventually she regains a calm and childlike innocence in matters of faith and learns to read and think in a "humble, patient, earnest spirit." Submission to her mother and her husband follows, and Rachel is finally permitted to live happily with her doubts all resolved. She is still permitted to study, but under clerical direction to keep from too much use of reason.

Not far from the perils of doubt were the twin pitfalls of Dissent and Rome which lay in wait for the unwary Anglican. In spite of

[5] Yonge, Clever Woman, v. 1, p. 218.

the many spectacular conversions of Tractarians to Roman Catholicism that startled Victorian England, Yonge treats that body with a surprising amount of respect. She honors the Roman Church as bearer of a great common tradition and as sharer of Christian truth. She responds favorably to the beauty of its services and particularly to its music. There were so many resemblances between the Roman Catholic and Anglo-Catholic traditions that Yonge (in her early twenties) for a time found herself perplexed as to where her duty lay.

Yonge always referred complex religious questions to Keble and followed his advice. In this instance, his considered opinion was that

> No doubt we could ask Roman Catholics many questions they could not answer, and they could ask us many which we could not answer; we can only each go on in our own way holding to the truth that we know we have.[6]

This resolved Yonge's confusion and confirmed her in her belief in the basic rightness of Anglicanism. The recognition of the truth to be found in Roman Catholicism led her to be more tolerant of that church in her fiction than was true of many writers of her day.

Yonge does not present Roman Catholicism as a sinister force or dwell on the Pope and the Jesuits as enemies of England bent on subversion. Instead she treats the Roman Catholic Church as containing much that is true and beautiful, though unfortunately in

6 Yonge, Musings, p. xix.

error on such points as the position of the Pope and clerical celibacy. The few characters who are born Roman Catholics are treated sympathetically and not discouraged from attending Mass or fulfilling their own religious obligations. Sibby, the Underwoods' Irish nanny-housekeeper, remains a Catholic and attends Mass even though employment in the family of an Anglican priest. When she finally does decide to convert (to attend her beloved 'Master Clement's" services) Clement bemusedly wonders if that would not be encouraging schism, and resolves to discuss the matter with Sibby's own priest.

Protestants who convert to Catholicism are treated as mistaken seekers for truth who have paid too much attention to outward forms and not enough to English tradition. It is an unwise and thoroughly regrettable action, but not to be regarded with the extreme disgust and loathing other writers tended to feel.

Yonge's full force of disapproval is reserved for Dissent. This is far worse than Romanism and nearly as bad as free-thinking or outright atheism. Membership in a dissenting church implied a deliberate rejection of Anglican principles by persons having the opportunity to know better. Clement Underwood would never treat a "Dissenting conventicle" with the respect he accords a Roman Church. In a period in which Dissent was becoming quite socially respectable, Yonge's attitude is rather reactionary.

The issue was as much a class division as a religious one. High Church principles went along with Tory politics, upper class values and social standing, and in most cases support of the status quo. The

Low Church, in Yonge's view, was associated with the Liberal Party, the middle classes, industrialism and Reform. This was less desirable and could lead to morally risky contacts with Methodism or Calvinism. Dissent was irrevocably bound with radical politics, republicanism, rejection of the social order and insistence on "thinking for oneself." A dissenter, then, was likely to be a dangerous revolutionary, and was certainly someone with whom a lady should not associate.

Dissent was therefore to be discouraged. It was the duty of the clergy and upper classes to make sure that the Church gave the lower classes moral and spiritual guidance. Only thus could they be content with their lot and strive for piety and respectability. If their betters neglected them, the poor were hardly to be blamed for succumbing to the blandishments of the only religious bodies to take an interest in them. One of Clement Underwood's first duties at Vale Leston is to start a ministry to the quarrymen of Blackstone Gulley and the workers of East Ewmouth, all totally ignored by the previous Vicar. Eventually, Clement is able to endow a parish there so that they may have their own priest and their own community.

Dissent is one of Clement's main problems at Vale Leston. Those quarrymen and workers who have not taken to drink look to Dissent out of an instinctive quest for spiritual guidance. Their real desire is to become good Christians, but without the Church to help them they are being led into schism. Dissent reaches even into Clement's own family. His sister Angela has been an extreme ritualist but

ignored the substance of the High Church. She therefore finds in it no consolation in grief. Her guilt for having carelessly caused a fatal boating accident leads her to Low Church Practices as part of an attempt to reject her previous life. The more she moves away from Tractarianism the more she, like the quarrymen, moves perilously close to Dissent. In both cases, it is partly the Church that has failed them. While Tractarian principles are without question in Yonge's eyes, she is ready to acknowledge failures in practice and the trouble this can lead to. To her, a church that provides no emotional support is no church at all. Ceaseless activity is needed to make the Church the ideal she dreams of, and Yonge finds great interest in the process. Tractarianism remains the cure for all the flaws in individual parishes and the institutional Church. There is an ideal to be striven for, but her daily observation shows her that most parishes are far from ideal. Then as now, parishes could be bitterly split by quarrels over relatively trivial matters, and Yonge shows them so (though always saved in the end by a return to right principles.)

Angela is saved in such a way, after a perilous flitation with Dissent. She begins to speak scornfully of "trusting to ordinances"; that is, following traditional ways of worship. This is followed by scoffing at Clement's services and by joining a Low-Church Bible Study class in which spinsters try Biblical exposition and commentary on their own, with no clerical guidance and no husbands or fathers

to supervise them. This is bad enough, but could be forgiven as long as Angela remained within the fold of the Established Church. But she continues "thinking for herself" and starts reading Plymouth Brethren tracts and scandalizes her friends by threatening to attend a Brethren-sponsored revival meeting.

Reading anything of that sort is wrong, and as Felix tells Angela, "going among schismatics [is] wrong in itself."[7] He reminds her that the only sure way to reach the truth is "by the means and in the union our Blessed Lord appointed."[8] This, of course, means the Church of England.

Coming from a saint like Felix, this is enough to convince Angela, and no more is heard of any variety of Dissent. She even stops going to the Bible class, and eventually, backed by her new-found stability, joins a nursing sisterhood.

Religion is intended to be the central focus of the individual's life. Yonge devotes much of her time to showing religious discipline supporting the individual in crisis and increasing his or her joy in times of success. Those without proper religious training and attitudes are miserable even though successful in the world's eyes, like Flora May and Alda Underwood. A properly devout person can enjoy both social success and the benefits of Christianity. Yonge

[7] Yonge, Pillars, v. 2, p. 584.

[8] Yonge, Pillars, v. 2, p. 585.

implies that wordly activities are a duty for those with positions to maintain. Parties, concerts and excusions are perfectly proper as long as they add to, rather than supplant, Church activities. Yonge's message is that it is permissible both to be a Christian and enjoy life, which must have endeared her to her readers. While fundamentalists of various sorts disapproved of most activities other than prayers and Bible reading, Yonge encouraged family outings, reading respectable novels, study and all sorts of innocent family amusements. Her world of cheerful family activity is in sharp contrast to the gloomy daily life portrayed by such writers as Edmund Gosse. In Yonge's eyes, it is one's Christian duty to enjoy God's gifts and to share that enjoyment with others.

Yonge divides her characters into groups illustrating certain religious themes. In each case, religion or its lack is the key to psychological health and spiritual well-being. There is the charming, weak person who takes religion as lightly as everything else in life and gradually collapses morally and physically without its sustaining force, like Owen Sandbrook and Edgar Underwood. Opposed to these are the naturally weak in whom religious training and serious thought produces strength, converting them into people on whom family and community can rely, like Charles Edmonstone and Clement Underwood. High standards of Christian holiness can even supplement and develop one's natural charm and make the person loved by all, as in the case with Violet Martindale, Dr. May and Felix Underwood. In such cases, the charming Christian often approaches sainthood, and is quite obviously

presented as a model to be emulated.

Yonge sees love as both a Christian duty and as an essential part of the personality of a balanced individual. Theodora Martindale is a particularly striking example of this principle. She suffers from lack of parental love and this rejection colors all her life. Her pride, alienation and reluctance to submit her will to that of the Church all stem from the same root. She is refusing any tie to others because she has never been cared for herself.

Only under Violet's loving guidance can Theodora relax and open herself to emotion. She needs to accept love within the family before she can be whole mentally or spiritually. Eventually, Theodora is able to discard the protective shell and find both religious faith and a husband. The former, of course, is far more important in Yonge's eyes.

Variations on this pattern appear again and again. The individual flawed in some way, but striving for perfection, who finds emotional stability and the Church together through the loving example of a happy Christian family is a favorite Yonge motif. Guy Morville learns to subdue his temper while living with the Edmonstones, and the Underwoods informally adopt and completely Christianize the half-savage Fernan Travis.

Religion also affects the individual in the choice of a career. The Church is meant to take precedence over any other object of allegiance, with the one exception of filial duty. No-one should choose a life-work that would in any way interfere with devotion to

the Church, nor one that would lead him into morally dangerous situations. At times, the choice may be as simple as Dr. May's wish not to be distracted by the demands of a fashionable London practice and his consequent choice of Stoneborough. Similarly, Clement Underwood's decision to become Vicar of Vale Leston is a choice between the slum parish that would wreck his health and the rural parish that not only desperately needs a concerned priest but is really a family responsibility. In both cases, the choice is between valid fields of service in favor of the one in which more good can be done. They both continue doing the work they have been trained for and been called to, allowing their feelings of religious and personal duty to guide the choice of location.

In other cases, the choice is more difficult and Yonge requires the complete sacrifice of personal inclinations and gifts to the service of religion. Lance Underwood ends by doing so, and it is clear that Yonge feels he is doing the only possible right thing. First trained in a cathedral choir school, Lance is a gifted singer and instrumentalist with the added possibility of becoming a talented composer. When offered the chance to join a theatrical troupe, he refuses adamantly on the grounds that his musical talents can only properly be devoted to the Church. Not only would a career in secular music lead him to association with stage people, most of whom are of questionable morals, but it would mean that he was using art for an unworthy purpose. Yonge makes no distinction whatever between the music halls and a career as a classical musician.

The only real reason for art, in Yonge's view, is to advance the glory of God. Even her own writing had to be justified in this way, having no right to exist on its own. Any purpose other than a religious one ranges from frivolous to evil depending on the circumstances. Church music is thus of infinitely greater value than even the best of secular music. The latter is permissible for enjoyment, but not suitable as a career.

Lance sees a danger of breaking his sacred obligation to devote himself soul and body to God's service if he takes up a musical career. His conversation with his brother Edgar, who is trying to persuade him to join the musical group, runs thus:

> ... it wouldn't be making my soul and body a reasonable sacrifice to turn the training I had for God's praise into singing love songs to get money and fame.
>
> Why do you assume that beauty and delight of any sort is not just as pleasing to God as your chants and anthems?
>
> No. One is offered to Him, the other is mere entertainment.[9]

Later in the exchange, Lance adds that:

> ... the fever and transport that comes of one kind of music has nothing good in it.[10]

He is referring to secular music, and ends by refusing any connection with it.

[9] Yonge, Pillars, v. 2, p. 128.

[10] Yonge, Pillars, v. 2, p. 129.

Edgar, whose irreverent attitude is shown most clearly when he characterizes choir singing as "singing in a surplice for ladies to whisper about," keeps on in the theater and tries his luck as a painter. He is naturally a failure at both, and goes from bad to worse. Singing "love songs to get money and fame" leads to forgery, manslaughter, adultery and finally to death by violence.

Lance has a quiet and respectable life editing a country newspaper. Unfortunately for music, his decision means an almost complete renunciation of that field. His only musical activity from this time forward is to occasionally play the organ in church. Yonge does not suggest that this is in any way a cultural or personal loss. It is the only right choice, and the complete stifling of what she suggests was a considerable musical talent is a small price to pay for the satisfaction of devoting oneself entirely to God.

Yonge's views on the place of religion in society accord with her views on religion in general and are strictly Tractarian in their orientation. As the Church is the center of individual life, so it is the central social structure. All social and political activities are to be judged by their religious implications. Only those that the Church would sanction can be approved.

As a Tractarian, Yonge joined her fellows in being against child labor, sweated workshops and the sale of spirits. She was for parks, fair wages, old age pensions and universal elementary education as long as it was under Church guidance. Her concept of the Christian

social duty was a practical one, involving efforts to make general living conditions better and thus make it more possible for everyone to live a Christian life.

This does not imply that Yonge favored government action, particularly in regard to charity. All such matters were better left in private hands or under the sponsorship of the Church. The giving out of food and clothing by the monasteries before their dissolution by Henry VIII was the example she preferred. The modern equivalent was for people to raise money to be given to the Church for parish relief. There is little direct self-denial or sacrifice connected with government sponsored relief, and Yonge felt that these were essential qualities of charity, spiritually beneficial for the donor.

Yonge's idea of charity was a type of practical paternalism in which the upper classes looked after the lower as parents look after children. Her almsgivers are not like Dickens' Mrs. Pardiggle or Charlotte Bronte's Mr. Brocklehurst, concerned with orthodoxy at the expense of physical needs. A good parent, she feels, must supply both. To be sure, Ethel May wants a church for Cocksmoor, but she also wants (and gets) food, clothes and shoes for the inhabitants, as well as a school and a grant to construct the school building. All Yonge heroes and heroines realize that a cold, hungry, illiterate person is hardly to be blamed for lacking in religious fervor.

Paternalism was encouraged by the Tractarians, who felt it was modeled on the relationship of Christ toward the Church. This also encouraged them to support the established social order. Yonge

firmly believed that diversity of rank and property was ordained by God, and that to question or alter this arrangement would be sinful. The rich had a duty to act morally as stewards for the money and property with which God had entrusted them. The poor had a duty to submit cheerfully to their condition and to follow the Church's advice to be content in the state of life to which God had called them.

Yonge's novels portray a theocentric universe, in which all things are arranged in their order of religious importance. Every presentation of a religious question proceeds according to the Tractarian principles Yonge learned from Keble. Through her novels, Yonge was able to spread Tractarian doctrines much further than they would otherwise have reached, and to make them quite appealing to the reader of her time. This attraction can also be sensed by the modern reader, whether agreed with or not, but it is not the novels' primary value now. Yonge's novels are important to a great extent as exposition of Victorian religious principles of the High Anglican persuasion. This makes the novels of great use to the student of Victorian religion and ethics.

It is in popular novels that readers see themselves partly as they are and partly as they believe themselves to be. We can learn much about what the Victorians believed to be true of themselves in their religion from studying Yonge's work. Here we find a world in which religion is certain and doubt is easily resolved. Duty is

paramount, always easily discerned and accomplished by perseverance. The reader of Yonge's work found no such exceptional persons as might be found in Tennyson or Eliot, but people like his own family and neighbors, finding drama in the incidents of daily life and what Keble called "the trivial round, the Common task."[11] This very tendency cannot but have pleased readers who knew their life to be equally prosaic for the most part. We do not look in Yonge for the high religious drama or depth of philosophy that we find in other contemporary writers. It is in portraying people engaged in their "common tasks" that she convinces, and for portraits of their religious lives that we can read her work with profit.

The Heir of Redclyffe

The Heir of Redclyffe may not have been a novel of the first rank, but it was a novel which appealed strongly to the public taste. A major reason for this appeal was the book's ability to reconcile the romantic traits the reading public loved with the contemporary social trend toward piety and respectability. In the person of Sir Guy Morville, the novel's hero, Yonge managed to make each reader feel that he too could become a hero of romance. The ordinary Englishman of the time could not hope to rival Byron's exploits in

[11] John Keble, "Morning" in The Christian Year, Lyra Innocentium and Other Poems, (London: Oxford University Press, 1914), p. 3.

Greece, and would not wish to behave like Heathcliff, but Guy Morville proved that one could be romantic and respectable simultaneously. By faithful Church attendance, control of the temper and regular prayer, any reader could invest himself with Guy's special charisma.

Through Guy and his life with the Edmonstone family, Yonge produced a happy combination of the religious and the romantic.

> The idea of a wild solitary figure coming from a doomed family in a grim old Gothic castle on the crags and being tamed by religious principles and cozy Victorian domestic influences was a new and attractive one, and this High Church Heathcliff, this Byron made virtuous, this new type of gentleman-saint with the temper of a Bronteesque hero, the face of a Sir Galahad and the conscience of a Hurrell Froude, conquered the Victorian public.[12]

From his first appearance, Guy is engaged in a struggle for perfection. The struggle is within himself and the real enemies are his pride and passionate temper. Even in his recurring battle with his nemesis, Philip (the actual heir of the title) Guy's true victory is over himself. Through his example of self-conquest, Guy is able to transform those about him, teaching even Philip humility and submission to divine will.

Guy begins the novel as a lonely orphan, raised by a surly grandfather, who is removed from the "grim old Gothic castle on the crags" on his grandfather's death. He comes to live in the family

12 Margaret Maison, The Victorian Vision: Studies in the Religious Novel, (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1967), pp. 32-33.

of his guardian, Mr. Edmonstone, and discovers a foster mother in Mrs. Edmonstone. Through her example of female purity and gentle motherly teaching, Guy learns to practice Yonge's primary religious virtue, submissiveness. Yonge does not mean a gloomy and grudging acceptance of fate, but a cheerful surrender to the guidance of a superior power. Guy needs to be taught to find "delight" and "pleasure" in substituting divine will for his own.

Through the entire procedure, Guy is portrayed as a sincere penitent with a well-developed (even over-developed) sense of his own sinfulness. Next to his rebellious nature, this tendency to morbid introspection is his major fault and Yonge continually reminds him that this is wrong. Despair is a sin, a rejection of God's mercy and forgiveness in favor of glorying in self-pity. Mrs. Edmonstone is entrusted with the task of reminding Guy that he must not give way to despair, which is his greatest risk. His tendency is not to feel hopeful after winning a severe struggle with his temper, but to feel despondent at having had to struggle at all. This, Yonge feels, makes him likely to give up too easily, or perhaps to respond too violently to a sense that his conduct does not matter. This defeatism she calls

> Guy's chief danger, as it was likely to make him deem a struggle with temptation fruitless, while his high spirits and powers of keen enjoyment increased the peril of recklessness in the reaction.[13]

[13] Charlotte Mary Yonge, The Heir of Redclyffe, (1853; repr New York: Garland, 1975), v. 1, p. 91.

He runs the risk of feeling that merely being tempted is a failure, which could lead in turn to reckless pursuit of pleasure. Yonge is concerned that Guy not abdicate from the struggle entirely, but keep working toward a state of confidence in God's guidance.

Mrs. Edmonstone's advice to Guy is eminently practical and generally directed toward leading a Christian life as a part of the community rather than as a hermit or in some mythical perfect universe. The first thing she teaches Guy is the value of perseverance in shaping one's character. Guy is far too prone to assume that one partial failure in control means that he is completely lost. It is important to Yonge that he comes to realize that Christian submission is a process rather than a single event. It is necessary for the Christian to fail, to resolve to do better and to fail again. With time, however, the failures are fewer and smaller and there is an eventual victory over self.

The reader who would model himself on Guy must likewise persevere and seek for help rather than relying on his own unaided efforts. Only in this way can there be even a possibility of success. With trust in God and an adamant refusal to give way to despair, victory is absolutely certain.

Guy also receives some useful advice on how to conduct himself as a Church member while still living in the world. Yonge is clear that any wordly activity has a certain amount of temptation. Guy's first reaction is to avoid family parties and other such comparatively

innocent forms of worldly activity with as much vigor as Yonge would recommend for drink or gambling. This conflicts with the duties of Guy's social position as a family member and part of the aristocracy.

This is self-indulgence in Yonge's eyes. Certain obligations go with one's social position and since they are God-given, one must fulfill them. It is preferable to resist small temptations through strength of character rather than through avoidance. Mrs. Edmonstone tells Guy that:

> If a duty such as that of living among us for the present, and making yourself moderately agreeable, involves temptations, they must be met and battled from within. In the same way, your position in society, with all its duties, could not be laid aside because it is full of trial. Those who do such things are fainthearted, and fail in trust in Him who fixed their station, and finds room for them to deny themselves in 'the trivial round and common task.' It is pleasure involving no duty that should be given up, if we find it liable to lead us astray.[14]

If duty calls us to live in the world and engage in its activities, it would be sinful not to do so. The advice is made doubly potent with the addition of the quotation from Keble's Christian Year, giving it the force of an ex cathedra pronouncement.

Mrs. Edmonstone teaches Guy to hope and helps him to see that his temptations are ordinary ones, common to most of humanity. She also teaches him how and when to enjoy his faith, so that Guy gradually becomes as happy inwardly as he is outwardly charming. He

[14] Yonge, Heir, v. 1, p. 60.

learns to avoid self-indulgence in guilt along with self-indulgence in pleasure, both equally faulty in Yonge's eyes. His duty to the Church is to obey, but to obey willingly and cheerfully, without using his own imperfections as an occasion for spiritual pride.

Guy must confront and subdue his worldly pride as well as that of the spirit, and it is in this context that Yonge's use of Byronic imagery is most apparent. Guy has brilliant eyes; dark, angular eyebrows, often drawn together in a frown; and a brow contracted with passion. Under stress his eyes flash, or gleam wrathfully "like an eagle's," or "with dark lightning." Also under stress, his cheeks flush, his brow darkens, and at times his features convulse and he bites his lip until it bleeds. Amy, whom he later marries, is both frightened and attracted by these displays of rage, and Yonge evidently intends the reader to feel likewise. Guy is as dangerously fascinating as Heathcliff or Manfred.

Parallel with this and emblematic of the Sir Galahad side of Guy's nature is another set of descriptions of a far more peaceful character. His light wavy hair, fair skin, fine speaking and singing voice and merry laugh join with the mental qualities of earnest interest and honest gladness to show his better side, that which responds to Mrs. Edmonstone's teaching. The Galahad aspect appears under religious stimuli, the Byronic when Guy is responding too much to personal pride.

By the time of Guy's greatest spiritual crisis, he has progressed so far that he finds talk of Church matters and charitable activities

more pleasing than most other subjects. He is even at the point of endowing a sisterhood, and this laudable Tractarian impulse leads him to be suspected of having lost the money gambling.

This episode leads to Guy's climatic struggle to subdue his temper. His guardian condemns him without a hearing, and Guy cannot defend himself without revealing the plans for the sisterhood (which is being planned in secret for fear of public indignation). Mr. Edmonstone also ends Guy's engagement to his daughter Amy. So indignant is Guy at having his word questioned, and so miserable at the thought of losing Amy forever that he undergoes the most violent emotional storm of his life. The intensity of his emotion breaks down all the control he has had such difficulty in learning.

Guy rushes out onto the moors and does not stop until he drops from exhaustion. He sits on the summit of a hill and plots his revenge against Philip, whose suspicions and talebearing are responsible for all

> Never had Morville of the whole line felt more deadly fierceness than held sway over him, as he contemplated his revenge, looked forward with a dire complacency to the punishment he would wreak, not for this offence alone, but for a long course of enmity. He sat, absorbed in the plan of vengenace, perfectly still, for his physical exhaustion was complete; but as the pulsations of his heart grew less wild, his purpose became sterner and more fixed. He devised its execution, planned his sudden journey, was himself bursting on Philip early next morning, summoning him to answer for his falsehood.[15]

[15] Yonge, Heir, v. 1, p. 269.

This mad desire for revenge is a manifestion of his ancestral curse, the doom of the Morvilles. Were this a standard novel of the Byronic mode, Guy would surrender everything to his violent desire for revenge. This would be the equivalent of surrendering to the devil.

Guy's narrow escape from "the besetting fiend of his family" comes just at sunset. Yonge uses the sun to recall him to his better self, the Sir Galahad side of his nature. Opposed to the darker portion of Guy's inner self, she introduces the light of faith which illuminates his inner darkness him first to pray and then truly to forgive his enemy.

> "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us."
>
> Coldly and hardly were they spoken at first; again he pronounced them again, again, --each time the tone was softer, each time they came more from the heart. At last, the remembrance of greater wrongs, and worse revilings came upon him; his eyes filled with tears, the most subduing and healing of all thoughts--that of the great Example--became present to him; the foe was driven back.
>
> Still he kept his hands over his face. The tempter was not yet defeated without hope. It was not enough to give up his first intention ... it was not enough to wish no ill to his cousin, to intend no evil measure, he must pardon from the bottom of his heart, regard him candidly, and not magnify his injuries.[16]

Guy has finally learned the way to control his temper. When he directs the same energy toward a true Christian spirit of forgiveness,

[16] Yonge, Heir, v. 1, p. 270.

he conquers. After this, no amount of discouragement, slander or separation from Amy can make him regress. Faith gives him the strength to become permanently calm and forgiving.

Once Guy has forgiven Philip, his essentially contrite spirit makes him the perfect knight of quasi-medieval legend. In his newly regenerate state, he begins to explore his past life and his development with the Church. He returns to Redclyffe to rediscover his roots there and to find a substitute for his happy life at the Edmonstones'. In his boyhood, Redclyffe was simply an arena for youthful adventure. As a man, Guy finds it a place for service, and makes his duty an antidote for despair.

To Yonge, service is an extremely important part of one's membership in the Church. A Christian not actively engaged in good works is a flawed Christian. Even a child or an invalid can find something worthwile to do. Since Guy is a landowner and natural Community leader, his duty to serve is increased, bringing with it a moral obligation to benefit his entire community.

Guy is careful to place himself under the lawful authority of the parish priest in his activities and thus ensure their moral fitness. His good works include building cottages, establishing a village school and setting an example of regular Church attendance and reception of Communion.

After a long period of solitary work and study, Guy has a chance for an adventure in the Byronic mode. It is also actuated by the most admirable Christian principles, self-sacrifice and love for one's

fellow man. With this established, Yonge can allow herself to present a gripping accident, made the more convincing by being seen not through Guy's eyes but from the viewpoint of observers of his daring rescue attempt. Of all Yonge's dramatic moments, this is perhaps the most memorable.

Redclyffe is on the seacoast, and one night a violent thunderstorm causes a shipwreck on the Shag Rock. This storm is the physical equivalent of Guy's previous emotional storms, and Guy is able to surmount it through the same religious principles. He leads the rescue of the ship's crew, rowing through high seas in a small boat at great risk to himself. He does this without any desire for personal glory. He acts with thought and because it is the right thing to do, so his heroics become wholly admirable and Yonge is able to endorse them as a model for the reader.

The thunderstorm was one analogy to Guy's mental state before forgiving Philip. At the tensest moment of the rescue the tossing waves and ominous darkness are subdued by the rising sun. The Shag Rock is bathed in light, the sun gilds the waves, and the entire scene is filled with life and energy as the rescued sailors come ashore. Again the sun is a symbol, this time of Guy's absolute trust in Christ, the stiller of storms. This trust gives him the courage he needs to complete the rescue successfully, even as before it enabled him to triumph over his passtionate nature. Now Guy is entirely Sir Galahad, and a suitable object for hero-worship by any Tractarian reader.

The redeemed Guy is completely restored to Mr. Edmonstone's favor and vindicated in the eyes of the world. Although it is the daring and spectacular exploit that others admire most, Guy is really being rewarded for steadfastness and perseverance in well-doing and for his refusal to give in to despair. His final vindication, appropriately enough, comes at Easter. In spite of Guy's refusal to betray confidences it is finally shown that all of his money has gone for such worthy purposes as supporting indigent relatives and helping the prospective sisterhood. He is absolutely cleared of the stigma of gambling, and is fit for respectable society. His patient waiting has been rewarded and he is further encouraged in his spirit of Christian submission.

As befits the hero of a novel, Guy is granted earthly rewards as well as the joy of obedience to God's will. His engagement to Amy can resume and they marry as soon as possible. Amy's saintly traits of obedience, resignation to divine will and joy in submission have helped Guy to conquer self-pity and temper. The example of a pure-minded and serene Christian maiden has been exactly what was needed to tame a wild Byronic youth and it is entirely fitting that they should now be united in the joys of Christian domesticity.

Guy and Amy take their honeymoon in Italy and it is there that Guy marks his final and decisive rejection of Byron and all he stands for. While others recommend Byron for his descriptions of scenery while deploring his way of life and views on human emotion, Guy says:

> I should be more unwilling to take a man like that to interpret nature than anything else, except Scripture. It is more profane to attempt it ... there is danger in listening to a man who is sure to misunderstand the voice of nature, --danger, lest by filling our ears with the wrong voice we should close them to the true one. I should think there was a great chance of being led to stop short at the material beauty, or worse, to link human passions with the glories of nature, and so distort, defile, profane them.[17]

Nature is intended to be a visible reminder of the presence of God, and to trust Byron on nature would be to risk losing the contact with God that sublime scenery should bring.

The only literature of value is that written by men whose minds are properly religiously directed. Yonge recommends Shakespeare, whose entire body of work shows that he must have been religious at heart. She also endorses Wordsworth, whose reverence for nature and its Creator proves the value of his poetry. Spenser and Scott are also to be recommended. Surprisingly for a staunch Tractarian, Yonge includes Milton in the group of acceptable authors. While his religion is "not quite the right sort," it is sincere and his devotion to God cannot be questioned. This makes him acceptable reading to both Guy and Yonge.

This selection of literature continues the process of replacing the Byronic with the acceptable Christian. Yonge is fully aware of the dangerous possibilities for her readers of trying to imitate Byron too closely. The regenerate Guy combines all the attractive

[17] Yonge, Heir, v. 2, pp. 125-127.

aspects of the Byronic: good looks, vitality, sexual attractiveness, athletic ability and heroism. He joins these with the Christian virtues of humility, piety and submission. By the time of his marriage, Guy is so nearly perfect that he is obviously destined for sainthood. This necessitates an early death, and he dies most apporpriately. His old enemy, Philip, is stricken with a fever. Guy, nearby on his honeymoon, insists on going to nurse him, catches the fever and dies.

Guy's death is his apotheosis. It is everything that a Christian deathbed should be. He resigns himself to death and meets it both gladly and peacefully. It is even possible, due to the fortuitous presence of an English clergyman, for Guy to make his confession and receive the last rites of the Church of England. His essentially contrite nature sustains him to the last, and his serene acceptance of his fate impresses all around him. This is the final victory over self that Mrs. Edmonstone had promised. He welcomes death as a friend and dies smiling, illuminated by the dawn rising over the mountains. This time the sunlight is the light of heaven and Guy is at perfect rest.

Such a death is to be admired, and possibly even emulated. While one cannot be assured of an heroic death nursing an enemy, one can hope to meet death as bravely and calmly as Guy did. With the same trust in God to sustain one, Yonge implies that one can meet any of life's tragedies in a mood of joy and acceptance.

Alternatively, if one's destiny is to live and to prosper, one can meet that with equally happy submission. Amy, Guy's teenaged widow, finds a serene and fulfilling life in raising Guy's posthumous daughter and in nursing her own invalid brother. But it is Philip, Guy's former enemy, who takes this lesson most to heart.

Philip undergoes a complete conversion. From arrogance he reaches an abject sense of his own unworthiness. His guilt at having caused Guy's death (for which he has secretly wished) is so great that he can never enjoy his inheritance of Guy's fortune and estates. He learns, however, that since it has happened, it is right, and he must do his duty. This has taught himself humility and submission to God's will in emulation of Guy and serves to the reader as a further example of proper religious attitudes in daily life. He takes up the baronetcy and its associated benefits as a duty and leads a long life of Christian service.

The keynotes of the book are repentance, perseverance and submission. Repentance of all one's sins, however trifling they may seem, is essential to acceptance of God in one's life. This must include an effort to avoid any possibility of temptation unless it comes under the heading of duty. It is also of prime importance to persevere, never yielding to discouragement or despair. Trust in God's mercy and goodness will bring one the strength needed for any task, even as it did for Guy. And the most necessary among the cardinal virtues is submission. Only by surrendering one's will

absolutely to God's and cheerfully accepting whatever He sends can one live a properly Christian life. These were lessons Yonge always wished to teach, and in The Heir of Redclyffe she presented them to the reading public in a more attractive and interesting form than any of her contemporaries could hope to reach.

The Daisy Chain

In The Daisy Chain, Yonge links three important religious activities as part of her central theme: the fulfilment of a religious task. These were three of the great interests of her life, converted into driving forces in the lives of her characters. Church-building had appeared in previous works, though never assuming such a central place. Sunday schools had been and remained a prominent interest of the female characters. Added to these now came a third, equally of interest to the time: foreign missions. In this work, Yonge both reflected a trend she saw in the activities of Bishop Patteson and his fellow missionaries, and influenced the trend itself. In fact, "It is no exaggeration to say that The Daisy Chain became one of the most important pieces of propaganda in directing the thoughts of the younger generation of Tractarians to the mission field."[18]

[18] Mare and Percival, p. 147.

While it might not be possible for every reader to share Harry May's adventures in the Loyalty Islands, or to emulate Norman and Meta in embarking as missionaries for New Zealand, any reader could attend S. P. G. meetings like those in the book, or raise money for the missions as Ethel and Margaret did. Thus each reader at home could feel part of the romance of bringing the Gospel to the heathen, even as they could share vicariously in Guy Morville's Byronic attractiveness. To Yonge, the colorful settings and activities in the mission field provided a touch of romance she found sadly lacking at times in mundane English life, with the added attraction of being safely connected with the Church.

In the world of The Daisy Chain, every thought and activity is somehow or other connected with the Church. There is no such thing as a division between Church and world or Church and family. There is an orderly progression of religion and religious feeling from individuals outward to the Church as a whole. Yonge starts with concentration on an individual's religious feeling; how it affects and is affected by the world about it. From the individual she moves to a consideration of family religion, with the May family serving in some sort as a microcosm of the Family of God.

The progression of influence continues outward from the May family into the community. Their influence leads to a revitalization of the parish, and eventually to the establishing of a new church at Cocksmoor, with Richard May as Curate. A parallel extension takes

place with Norman May's departure to spread the Gospel in New Zealand. The chain of influence is complete from the individual Christian obedient to the teachings of his pastors and masters to the Universal Church and back again.

At the start of the book, there is no such large design in the mind of anyone other than the author. All is serene for the May family. Dr. May's practice is flourishing, the boys are doing well at school, a new baby sister has arrived, and Ethel is able to read the day's gospel in Greek.

This security, which Yonge is careful to remind the reader is only transitory, is in sharp contrast to the situation at Cocksmoor. The people there are rough, lawless and have no religious guidance whatever. The Stoneborough clergy, whose job it should be to guide these people, are poor and overworked. The responsible lay people refuse to have anything to do with "that sort of person." The result is that Cocksmoor is as much in need of mission work as any South Sea Island.

Ethel May makes a vow to somehow, however long it takes, build a church for Cocksmoor so that the people there can enjoy the advantages of the faith in which her parents have raised her. The vow becomes still more sacred to her because it was uttered on the day of her mother's death in a carriage accident. Yonge does not entirely approve of a young lady making a vow (it is much too assertive) but agrees that Ethel, as a representative member of the Stoneborough

community, does have a responsibility to take care of the less fortunate in Cocksmoor. The work toward Christianizing Cocksmoor is to be the May family's cherished goal from then on. Their faith is a sustaining force that enables them to bring order out of the emotional chaos following Mrs. May's death, and it is to help them bring order out of the moral chaos of Cocksmoor.

The fortunes of Cocksmoor and of the May family continue to be linked throughout the book, but never so closely as in the period just after Mrs. May's death. Even as Cocksmoor needs the guidance and discipline of organized religion, the Mays (particularly the older children) need to rely on the Church's discipline to make them accept whatever misfortune God chooses to send. The struggle to conquer self-will in little things enables them to be fitter for larger tasks when they occur. With their own characters and consciences formed, they are able to pass on to others the benefit of ordered and confident Christian lives.

Discipline is a recurring motif in The Daisy Chain. Yonge clearly intends to show that strict obedience to the Church is one of the primary requisites for salvation, and that the conquest of self is the first step in that road. In their own ways Ethel, Harry, Norman, Flora and the others fight this battle. Their triumphs and losses form the plot and the lesson of the book. The strength provided by Church discipline enables them to order their internal lives and their submission to the Church allows them to extend that order

outward to others. Their Sunday school teaching, missionary work and general way of life all go far to turn the world about them into a placid replica of a busy and loving Victorian family.

The first instance in which Church discipline and self-control become an absolute necessity is at confirmation. Norman and Harry May are preparing to receive that sacrament at the same time. For neither is the road easy, but both recognize it as the major accomplishment of their adult lives and reverence the ceremony accordingly.

For Norman, the family intellectual, preparation is marked by an access of spiritual pride. His cleverness and ability to outdistance all his school competitors make him reluctant to teach in the Cocksmoor Sunday school. Such teaching is the duty of any Christian gentleman not fully occupied with equally worthy tasks, but Norman feels it beneath the dignity of someone preparing for Oxford. He describes it as:

> all very well for those who could only aspire to parish work in wretched cottages---people who could distinguish themselves were more useful at the University, forming minds, and opening new discoveries in learning.[19]

Yonge would say that to teach a child or youth the truth of Christianity is the highest possible calling, and far more worthy of praise than any secular learning. Norman would have done well to remember

[19] Charlotte Mary Yonge, The Daisy Chain, or Aspirations, A Family Chronicle, (1856; repr London: MacMillan 1915), p. 188.

the example of his father, who gave up the possibility of a brilliant career in Harley Street for a small-town practice in Stoneborough because he could be of more service there.

Norman's life is marked by the struggle to subdue this sense of his own superiority. His pride in his own attainments and the tendency to set his own judgment above that of his proper guides lead him into trouble several times. At this stage, what saves him is reading the copy of Thomas a Kempis his mother left him, and following its advice for inward peace. Yonge heartily endorses the maxims she quotes:

> ... do the will of another rather than thine own. Choose always to have less rather than more. Seek always the lowest places, and to be inferior to every one.
>
> Wish always and pray that the will of God may be wholly fulfilled in thee.[20]

This is exactly what Yonge would wish him to feel.

With this guidance Norman is able to subdue his pride for a time and have his father consider him worthy to be confirmed. Norman's learning of humility is not yet perfect, and his pride breaks out again later under far more spiritually risky circumstances. However, the progress toward self-conquest he has made at this time, coupled with the inflow of grace bestowed by confirmation, enable him to meet and surmount the future threat as well.

Harry's progress toward confirmation is met with even greater obstacles than Norman's. His carelessness and lack of consideration

20 Yonge, Daisy Chain, p. 207.

for others lead Dr. May to feel that Harry is totally unfit to be confirmed. Without the "grave and deep feelings" that would show the proper character at a solemn time, no-one can be considered fit. Harry's penchant for boisterous play and rather frightening practical jokes shows him to be too immature for the solemn promises a confirmand must make.

The result is that Harry, a naval cadet, faces going off on a long training cruise unfortified by the sacrament and denied admission to Communion during that time. Harry fears that in his unconfirmed state he will be too susceptible to temptation and dreads leaving home for the moral and physical dangers at sea. After a good deal of misery on Harry's part, and floods of tears from both him and his sisters, Dr. May relents and gives his permission. Harry's showing of true penitence has saved him, but only after such suspense as to leave the reader (or at least readers of the time) fearful as to the ultimate outcome.

At the actual service, Norman is "grave and steadfast, as if he knew what he was about and was manfully and calmly ready---he might have been a young knight, watching his armour."[21] Harry is last of all the confirmands, and can hardly speak his vows for sobbing, he is so overcome by mixed joy and humility. He is provided with all the sustenance he had hoped for. Even shipwreck and danger of death

[21] Yonge, Daisy Chain, p. 246.

can do nothing to shake it, and he ends by teaching his faith to the natives who rescue him. Some of them are already Christians and thus recognize and cherish him as an example of faith. His bravery in adversity and gentle exposition of doctrine so impress the chief that he resolves to "get a real English mission, and have all his people Christians."[22] His people, like the people of Cocksmoor, are in need of proper Anglican guidance, and Harry sees bringing them a church as a way to emulate Ethel in her plans for Cocksmoor. Eventually Harry's dream is fulfilled, and the May influence has extended itself to the other side of the world.

While Harry becomes a missionary rather inadvertently and dramatically through a shipwreck, Norman becomes one through choice and deliberate dedication. This pledging himself to fight for a sacred cause, prefigured in the knight imagery Yonge used, comes about as a result of his studies at Oxford.

He begins them having it in mind to become a brilliant scholar and still retaining traces of his scorn for ordinary parish work. Norman finds that reading the wrong books (unspecified) and having to argue in defence of the Church has shaken his faith. His pride in being able to understand the books leads him further into error, while arguing makes his childhood faith seem futile. Yonge is extremely careful not to name the books or specify the arguments Norman's non-Tractarian classmates have used. She blames him for having read such

[22] Yonge, Daisy Chain, p. 476.

things, it being as dangerous as tasting poison, particularly to one who glories in his intellectual powers.

Even Ethel, who feels that her adored Norman can do no wrong, thinks it somewhat unwise to respond to doubt by examining one's previous convictions. She is quite sure that it would not be right for a woman, since women are meant to follow without question. It is dubious even for a man, but their higher mental powers make them better fitted to endure the risk. She (and Yonge) would recommend trying to "pray the terrible thought away" without studying it. Fortunately for Norman, he is able to find the flaws in his opponents' logic and confirm the soundness of Tractarian reasoning. This strengthens him and renews his confidence in the teachings of home.

His response to this trial of his faith is to flee the occasion of sin with a desperation amounting almost to paranoia. He decides to leave Oxford and his studies as soon as possible and devote himself to the Church. To remove himself from temptation, he feels he must renounce intellectual life (which Yonge seems to distrust) entirely and "go to the simplest, hardest work, beginning from the rudiments, and forgetting subtle arguments."[23] In order to do so, he resolves to become a missionary and do basic parish work in some foreign country.

Once again, the May influence is spread abroad. Norman feels

[23] Yonge, Daisy Chain, p. 476.

that it will take half the world between him and the seat of his intellectual doubts to be a sufficient shield against temptation. In New Zealand, he is able to retain his childhood innocence in teaching the innocent natives. The discipline learned at home strengthens him in adversity and enables him to exchange his dreams of political glory for a life of rather dull work as headmaster of a mission school, and an eventual reward as an archdeacon.

This complete shunning of anything outside the charmed Tractarian circle is typical of Yonge, as is the anti-intellectualism. Whether one prays the awful thought away or leaves for New Zealand, one must leave doubt as far behind as possible. Only through adhering as closely as one can to the faith of a sheltered Tractarian childhood is salvation possible.

Richard, the oldest May son, also enters the Church and beomes a pattern clergyman. A model son, studious and dutiful, he sets a good example for his siblings and fellow students. He is one of the few gentlemen to teach a Sunday school class, fulfilling his duties as a Christian and gentleman even when he would rather be at home with his family.

As a priest, Richard is so thoroughly familiar with the Bible and the Prayer Book that he can substitute for another priest and deliver a sermon on short notice. His "suitable grave composure" and quiet simplicity" impress all his hearers, as does the impromptu sermon, in which he uses the day's Gospel as a basis for advice on

daily living. Richard, like Keble, gives up a future as a Church dignitary to devote himself to work in a country parish.

Richard also enters into Ethel's plans for Cocksmoor. His major function is to moderate her enthusiasm. To Yonge, enthusiasm is almost always wrong, and anyone eager to do something is probably mis-motivated. Only "calm" considered action is valuable. As a priest, thus having "lawful authority," Richard can guide Ethel to be moderate in her teaching and fund-raising, and avoid the dangers of grandiose schemes.

As Curate of Cocksmoor, Richard is the ideal parish priest. He is no mystic, but a practical clergyman, concerned with bringing to Church the poor who are being treated with contempt because they lack proper clothes and manners. He fully recognizes that sound shoes and warm clothing are as important as tracts, and more so in the early stages of mission work. He never neglects a chance to show Christianity as practical and active, and encourages many others to join in the work of civilizing Cocksmoor. In a pattern Yonge was to repeat, he works toward a model village of tidy houses and clean, pious working class people. As Keble was at Hursley, Richard is a father figure to all his parishioners, and guides them as gently and firmly to the truth as his parents had guided him, Yonge implies that he will eventually succeed in giving his Cocksmoor family all the domestically Christian virtues of the May family, in a form suitable for their social class. Implicit in the process is a feeling that everyone should want to be an upper-class Englishman and that this is the

only proper way of life.

Still another May child, Flora, finds grief a severe test of her religious faith. When her baby is drugged to death with Godfrey's Cordial by an ignorant nursemaid, Flora is prostrated with grief and remorse. She lacks the confidence that they will meet in a better world (one of the few ways of coping with the high infant mortality of the day). She trusts that the child is saved, but Flora is not so sure about herself. Since childhood, Flora has regarded her religion as a matter of outward form. She says her prayers without thinking of their meaning and in general goes through the motions of a devout life because it is socially acceptable rather than because it means anything to her. In fact, her observances are calculated to further her quest for social status in London.

Yonge uses Flora's case to preach against trusting in forms only. She prefers errors of enthusiasm or honest searching for truth to calculating and self-satisfied mock piety, and contrasts Flora sharply with her father in their responses to the child's death.

> The simplicity and hearty piety, which, with all Dr. May's faults, had always been part of his character, and had borne him, in faith and trust, through all his trials, had never belonged to her. Where he had been sincere, erring only from impulsiveness, she had been double-minded and calculating; and, now that her delusion had been broken down, she had nothing to rest upon. Her whole religious life had been mechanical, deceiving herself more than even others, and all seemed now swept away, except the sense of hypocrisy, and of having cut herself off, for ever, from her innocent child.[24]

24 Yonge, Daisy Chain, p. 512.

Flora's acute despair keeps her from accepting the consolation available to the rest of the family. Yonge both pities and blames Flora for this. Yonge cannot help sympathizing with Flora's grief for her child and admiring her efforts to bear up for her husband's sake. At the same time Yonge disapproves of Flora's rejection of the lesson she should be learning; acceptance of God's will in all things. Grief and loss are meant to bring one nearer to God and further from trusting in any earthly thing. Flora insists in believing herself so sinful as to be permanently unworthy of forgiveness, and Yonge regards this as self-will and pride. While Flora certainly deserves to be punished for her worldly ways, she is not totally beyond redemption and it is wicked of her to think so. Here Yonge is reminding her readers that the sense of God's infinite mercy is more important than the "sense of sin" puritan divines tended to emphasize.

Only when Flora is willing to humble her pride and submit to everything God sends is she able to break free from her depression. The sound principles in which she was brought up finally bring her to yield and accept God's will as she ought. Now she is able to cultivate patience and acceptance, both primary virtues in Yonge's canon, and trust that this will eventually produce a measure of contentment.

The culminating episode of the book is the Consecration of the church at Cocksmoor. The seven-year effort to raise the money and plan the building has elevated the entire May family and given them

a worthwhile other-directed task to pursue. A Church-centered and Church-sanctioned effort in any direction improves the character and spiritual life of all concerned. Building a church is particularly beneficial, as it requires the planners to think of the reasons for doing so and the physical symbolism of the building they plan. With their increased moral and spiritual health, the Mays are able to extend their gains in self-discipline, humility, obedience and Christian knowledge to Cocksmoor and the South Seas.

Ethel, whose particular dream the church-building has been, feels the mingled sense of triumph and calm most keenly. Through Ethel's meditation during the actual service, Yonge sums up the meaning of the quest.

> There was an almost bewildered feeling---could it indeed be true, as she followed the earlier part of the service, which set apart that building as a Temple for ever, separate from all common uses. She had imagined the scene so often that she could almost have supposed the present, one of her many imaginations; but, by and by, the strangeness passed off, and she was able to enter into, not merely to follow, the prayers, and to feel the deep thanksgiving that such had been the crown of her feeble efforts. Margaret was in her mind the whole time, woven, as it were, into every supplication and every note of praise; and when there came the intercession for those in sickness and suffering, flowing into the commemoration of those departed in faith and fear, Ethel's spirits sank for a moment at the conviction, that soon Margaret, like him, whom all must bear in mind on that day, might be included in that thanksgiving; yet, as the service proceeded, leaving more and more of earth behind, and the voices joined with Angel and Archangel, Ethel could lose the present grief, and only retain the certainty that, come what might, there was joy and union amid those who sung that Hymn of praise. Never had Ethel been so happy; not in the sense of the finished work---no, she had lost all that---but in being more carried out of herself than ever

> she had been before, the free spirit of praise so bearing up her heart that the cry of Glory came from her with such an exulting gladness, as might surely be reckoned as one of those foretastes of our Everlasting Life, not often vouch-safed even to the faithful, and usually sent to prepare strength for what may be in store.[25]

Margaret is the invalid sister, too perfect to live, whose saintly guidance has helped all the family. The man "whom all must bear in mind on that day" is Alan Ernescliffe, her late fiance, an equally saintly character who bequeathed most of the money that endowed the church. In symbol of their perfect Christian love, the roof of the building is like the hull of a ship (Alan had been a sailor) and Margaret's betrothal ring is set round the stem of the Communion chalice.

Yonge is by no means a mystic, in fact deeply suspicious of such things, but Ethel's meditation is as close to a vision as any Yonge character ever receives. The glimpse of the Church Victorious strengthens Ethel to take her place as guide and helpmeet to the family when Margaret conveniently and symbolically dies the same day. The rest of Ethel's life is full of quiet and self-effacing service to others, exactly as Yonge would recommend for any woman.

The tale is subtitled "Aspirations," and Yonge made it one of aspirations rightly directed and thus coming to proper fruition. She believed that under the Church, every action turns to glory in the

25 Yonge, Daisy Chain, p. 570.

end, while under any other sponsorship no action can prosper. Thus the book can be seen as a comment on an increasingly secularized age; an attempt to return the society to a semi-mythical time when the Church guided all and so all was well. Yonge's philosophy is a domesticated version of a tendency that showed up in the work of many others, from Carlyle and William Morris onward. The wish was to do something practical, undertake some kind of work, be of some use to one's community. Yonge's contribution was to show how one could do something of this and still be a "lady" in the Victorian sense. To a reader feeling a tension between social role and religious feeling, Yonge insisted that there was in fact no such tension. She smooths over and avoids conflicts whenever possible, dealing with them by "praying the thought away." Had she addressed questions directly, her work would be of more value than the limits she placed on it permit.

CHAPTER III

THE FAMILY

In one or another of its forms the family served as an icon to the Victorians. It was the ideal of stability and order in a world increasingly lacking in those qualities. It was the means of conserving traditions and transmitting property to succeeding generations. Within the family, each person had his or her assigned place and duties and the satisfaction to be found in doing as one ought. Indeed, the family could act as a resolver of doubts, since its code often provided guidance where the individual might falter. This was of particular importance to the Victorian faced with new situations and changes in the social structure and unsure of how to adapt to them.

To Yonge, as to so many Victorians, the family home was a sanctuary against an alien and threatening outside world. It provided a shelter from the tensions and doubts of contemporary life and the pressures of competition. It provided support for the moral and spiritual qualities she saw as increasingly at risk in a secular age. The home was a place set apart from the world, a place where order and daily ritual were maintained and affirmed when business, State and even the Church were changing. The family was the center of stability to a people who very much wished for certainty.

Family life became the one sphere in which true peace could be achieved. Within the family circle, the old virtues of filial piety,

kindness, duty, humility, resignation and service to others were both possible and rewarded. In a world of Bounderbys and their ilk, one's own family were often the only persons one could truly trust. In addition, the family provided a degree of companionship, trust and support unavailable to those outside its bounds.

A person without a family lacked context. He was truly alone, not knowing where he could fit in; outside the intricate and fulfilling net of rights and responsibilities family life gave. Yonge found such a person an object of pity, missing an essential part of human development. Until given the benefits of family life, no man (and it is almost always a man) could be psychologically and spiritually whole. The process of integrating someone into a family, whether by adoption or marriage, is a recurrent sub-plot in her novels.

The safest and most practical way of dealing with the isolated individual is to bring him or her within the aegis of an established family. This performs the double function of giving the lonely one the advantages of family life and of making the friendship suitable. There is something suspect to Yonge in the idea of making friends freely without regard to family ties. She far prefers that one should keep within the limits of the family and the concurrent natural obligations. She is so adamant on this subject that she blames Honora Charlecote (Hopes and Fears) for adopting the Sandbrook children, when she should leave them to their blood relatives. Today, one would be inclined to feel that Honora's action was admirable, particularly since the relatives are not really interested in caring for the

children, but Yonge insists that the family comes first at all times.

Healthy friendships bring the friend into a family by marriage or a church-sanctioned relationship such as becoming a godparent. Kate Caergwent has such a childhood friendship with Adelaide de la Poer, and eventually marries her playmate's brother, Lord Ernest. This makes a friendship with an outsider proper, since they are later to become sisters. In the same way, Alan and Hector Ernescliffe and Meta Rivers are drawn into the May family first by friendship and later by marriage, though Alan dies before his wedding. Nonetheless, the spiritual ties of betrothal are potent enough to make him one of the Mays for all time.

Yonge felt that the ideal friends "... are those who amalgamate with the home life, and love it."[1] If a friend is all but part of the family, the logical next step is to become an actual part. The co-opted outsider becomes a member of a desirable family, giving hope to the reader that he too could do so. Even if one's own family was less than perfect, it was possible to envision oneself emulating a Fernan Travis or Hector Ernescliffe.

In her works, Yonge tends to write from the viewpoint of children or young people in the family. Seldom does she see through the eyes of anyone who is much over thirty. Usually, she discards the older people in favor of a new generation. In the "linked novels," the same

[1] Charlotte Mary Yonge, Womankind: A Book for Mothers and Daughters, (London: MacMillan, 1882), p. 271.

characters reappear, but the viewpoint passes to people in their teens and early twenties. This is perhaps not surprising in a writer who thought of her Confirmation at fifteen as the watershed of her life. When Violet Martindale says "I am come into the heat and glare of middle life,"[2] it is quite a shock to the reader to find that she is only twenty-two. Yonge always thought of herself as in many ways a child, and never really developed emotionally beyond late adolescence.

Additionally, Yonge felt that this period in life was the most narratively interesting. A young person is still making the choices of friends, career, marriage partner and beliefs from which plot crises can be drawn most readily. In her frame of reference, adults were already permanently committed to a way of life, and seldom changed. From the "heat and glare of middle life" onward, a person's interest to Yonge was mainly as a parent.

Parents, while not the viewpoint characters, are nevertheless the most important elements in a Yonge family. Their characters and guidance form the family and give it its atmosphere. Everything is referred to father and mother for approval, and their lightest wish is law.

The scheme of classification Yonge uses includes some parents so good as almost to qualify for sainthood. Their commands are so obviously just, if one accepts Yonge's values, that no right-minded

[2] Yonge, Heartsease, p. 353.

reader would seriously question them. These parents are kind, wise, even-tempered and sympathetic to their children. They are capable of entering with enthusiasm into childish amusements, in contrast to the image of the stern Victorian parent most of us retain from other works of fiction. They are so universally respected as to become community models of effective parenthood. In this category are Mrs. May and Mr. Underwood, both of whom have beneficient influence that continues even after their deaths. When any family problem arises, the ultimate decision is based upon what dear papa or dear mama would have wished.

Such an ideal parent is drawn from William Yonge, but without the irrational sternness his daughter refused to recognize. The parent is of course a devout member of the Church of England, well versed in Tractarian doctrines. Almost without exception ideal parents are members of the professional classes or minor County families. They are wise, considerate, gentle and absolutely morally upright. Fortunately a keen sense of humor and a willingness to play keeps these people from becoming tiresome prigs. The final virtue possessed by these paragons is a strong degree of family solidarity, which they transmit to their children.

The father in a Yonge novel displays most of the traditional attributes of the Victorian paterfamilias. His rule over his family is unquestioned and absolute, extending into even the smallest details. Every decision he makes must be obeyed, even should it be arbitrary and unfair. When Mr. Edmonstone forbids Guy Morville the

house and orders Amy to break off the engagement, no-one thinks of disobeying, for his word is law. There is some grumbling, for Guy is innocent of any wrongdoing, but no open opposition, for that would be almost a sin.

A father may delegate much of his power to his wife or older sons, but their duties are only viceregal. The daily running of the family usually falls to the wife or older daughters. This relieves the father of many tedious details while putting considerable demands on female executive abilities, for most Yonge families are larger than many small businessses of today. Delegation of responsibility makes the household run smoothly, each member having his or her appointed duties. Father devotes himself to the demands of his parish, medical practice or estate. He is usually satisfied to set general family directions, leaving specifics to others except when he chooses to interfere.

In general, the father is somewhat remote from his family with the exception of a chosen favorite, usually a daughter. This remoteness may be due to illness (Mr. Underwood), absorption in a demanding profession (Dr. May), thoughtlessness (Arthur Martindale) or simply the fact that the families are so large that it is not possible to pay much attention to any one member. Children in Yonge's work tend to regard their father with awe, indeed worship him, and find him their favorite companion on those rare occasions when he mingles with the family. However, the instances of true closeness are rare, rarer than Yonge herself realized.

The father at his best is like William Yonge, a benevolent despot in whom his children (and the author) refuse to admit any flaw, plain though it may be to the reader. Yonge felt that the mentor-pupil relationship she had with her father was the perfect model, and persistently recreated it in her books. Most scenes of fatherly tenderness involve lesson times, with a favored daughter being taught Greek or mathematics. In these settings the child seems to find the sort of close emotional bond that one would like to see.

Mothers are permitted by Yonge to be less godlike, and so are more attractive to the reader. Mother's room becomes the center of family life and Mamma herself the repository of every confidence. The children are relaxed and open with her in a way impossible with the worshipped father, and maternal guidance takes the form of advice where a father would command. A mother's control over her children is as absolute as a father's but far more subtly exercised. In cases where the mother must take command through default, as Violet Martindale does, she arranges things so as to make it seem that the father is really in control and she is only his agent.

Some of the most charming family scenes in Yonge show a mother and her children enjoying some pastime. Carey Brownlow (Magnum Bonum) takes her children for country walks, helps them catch polly-wogs and caterpillars, and reads to them from books that are both improving and amusing. The stiffer neighbors regard her as rather flighty, but Yonge obviously feels that a mother ought to relax her dignity on occasion. When little Armine astounds his schoolmaster

with his knowledge of Roman history, it turns out that:

> We played at it on the stairs: Jock and I were the Romans, and Mother Carey and Babie were the geese.[3]

This is much better than a formal mother like Lady Martindale who leaves her children's education to governesses and tutors and seldom sees them except on ceremonial occasions.

A mother holds primary responsibility for the moral and spiritual growth of her children. To this end she must participate in their daily upbringing and never leave them to the care of servants alone. No Yonge mother worthy of the name leaves her child entirely in the nursery. When Flora May does so in order to go on with her social life, she is severely punished for it. Her first child dies from having been drugged with Godfrey's Cordial by an ignorant nurse, and her second child is autistic. The healthiest and happiest children belong to mothers like Carey Brownlow and Mrs. Edmonstone, who are both firm and gentle, and whose relationship with their children is usually described as "tender" and "confiding."

Not every parent in Yonge's work is perfect. Some, like Dr. May, have faults they must learn to conquer. His is a hot temper that leads him to speak before he thinks and causes his family a great deal of misery. Even Carey Brownlow tends to be too childlike and thus has difficulty learning to assume authority when it is necessary

[3] Charlotte Mary Yonge, Magnum Bonum: or Mother Carey's Brood, (1879; repr. London: MacMillan, 1889), p. 40.

for her children. There are even outright bad parents like the wastrel Mr. Ponsonby (Dynevor Terrace), and Zoraya Prebel, who abandons Edgar Underwood and their baby son to return to the stage. Not satisfied with this, she reappears in The Long Vacation, forcing her daughter to act in a sleazy circus, with the obvious implications that she (the daughter) is likely to become a "fallen woman."

Many of Yonge's perfect parents seem far less than perfect to modern eyes. Their insistence on absolute obedience is overdone; it is amazing that any child learns to take responsibility for his own life. Their interference in the minutiae of even grown children's lives is exaggerated. They seem to wish to keep all their children in a state of infantile dependence. This was a state which Yonge herself never outgrew, so she sees nothing wrong in this, and fortunately for the reader the best parents in her books are too busy to insist on such a condition. One who is not is Mrs. Charnock-Poynsett of The Three Brides. Her control over her adult sons is abnormally strong, and she controls every aspect of their married lives, down to dress and recreation. Even after marriage, her sons consult her first, their wives later, whatever the issue. Her illness mysteriously becomes worse when there is any question of her moving to the dower house instead of living with her oldest son and his wife. She insists on censoring Cecil's (the daughter-in-law) friendships, never allowing her a voice in household affairs, and generally treating Cecil as though she were fifteen years old. Cecil is driven to listening to women's rights lecturers in an obvious effort to be noticed by

her husband, if only by shocking him. Nothing works, and Cecil ends by being estranged from her husband, who still looks to his mother as his primary emotional support. Mrs. Charnock-Poynsett promotes this by insisting that she needs Cecil's companionship while Raymond is in London attending Parliament, with the result that they spend more of their marriage apart than together. Cecil eventually comes to see all this as evidence of motherly concern, and tearfully repenting her resentful feelings. The reader, however, notes that of the three brides, the happiest and the one who gets along best with her mother-in-law is Rosamond, whose husband's clerical duties require him to live in his parish and take his wife with him.

Yonge exalts filial obedience to an extent that would win the admiration of a devout Confucianist. The parent's lightest wish is to be obeyed without question. The Fifth Commandment was the most important to Yonge, and she felt that submission to parental dictates equalled submission to the Will of God. To obey one's parents cheerfully and willingly is to obey God.

Again and again, a Yonge character sacrifices all his or her personal preferences on the altar of filial obedience. Ethel May discards all thought of marriage, even though she is coming to love an extremely suitable young man, because her widowed father needs her to care for him. Helen Fotheringham gives up her fiance and works herself to death looking after her detestable grandfather. Gerald Underwood's half-sister Lucilla even hesitates about running away from a mother who wants her to join a circus and face certain social

ostracism, all because she feels that her mother must be right, simply because she is a mother. Yonge's pages are full of tragic partings, broken engagements, lost careers and stifled ambitions, all relinquished because a parent wished it so.

Implicit obedience is valued above all things, even under the most unreasonable circumstances. The two most egregious cases are those of Mary Ponsonby and Frank Willoughby. Mary is perfectly happy in a most suitable engagement, sanctioned by her late mother, when world reaches her of her father's remarriage and his wish to provide a home for her. Mary takes this as an order, breaks off the engagement and sails for Peru. There she joyfully submits herself to her shady father and her new stepmother, a flighty young girl straight from a Roman Catholic convent school. Even contemporary readers felt that this type of filiality was excessive.

It seems that Yonge, in constantly recurring to the theme of obedience as the greatest joy and revolt as unthinkable, is trying to satisfy some need of her own. Her fanatical devotion to parents and parental authority looks very much like an attempt to exorcise inner stirrings of rebellion. In showing her characters as utterly obedient, she proves over and over that she herself is a good, obedient girl who does what she is told. Lettice Cooper's theory seems to fit what is known about Yonge. Cooper believes that:

> at some time too early in her life for her to remember it, she went through a period of mute rebellion against her mother ... love and duty made the small child Charlotte Mary repress these rebellious feelings for

> ever, so as to return to that love and harmony with her mother whose even partial loss she had not been able to bear. So she accepted for life in the emotional core of her heart the role of the good little girl, she opted for submission, for an unawakened sexual life and for a refusal to question even for a minute the standards in which she was brought up.[4]

Loss of parental love seems to be Yonge's greatest fear, and the motivating force which drove her characters. Frank Willoughby even gives up a genuine call to the priesthood to follow his father's preference for an Army career. Frank is desperately unhappy, and tortured by guilt for leaving God's service. His early death is a merciful release from an insoluble problem. Considering Yonge's reverence for the Church, one would expect her to endorse Frank's desire, but she prefers, as always, to exalt submission to parents as the only possible right action.

If a character does rebel in even a minor way, punishment is drastic. An unhappy life and loss of love follow such actions as concealing an engagement (Laura Edmonstone); marriage with consent but not approval (Flora May); or an outright elopment (Arthur Martindale). These are eventually followed by tearful reconciliations, and Yonge is fond of writing scenes showing the restored bond between parent and child.

Yonge was not always as rigid as she appears when discussing this issue. In other ways, she is quite surprisingly relaxed and almost

4 Lettice Cooper, "Charlotte Mary Yonge: Dramatic Novelist," in A Chaplet for Charlotte Yonge, ed. Georgina Battiscombe and Marghanita Laski, (London: Cresset Press, 1963), p. 40.

modern regarding childhood behavior. She did not feel that children were simply miniature adults, nor were they to be relegated to the nursery. Her children are not forced to be adults before their time, nor are the parents in her books ashamed to play.

Yonge is a strong advocate of outdoor activity for both boys and girls. Both are allowed to climb trees, run races and play various sorts of games. Decorum restricts girls to playing only with their brothers, but Yonge feels that a certain amount of tomboyishness makes a mentally and physically healthy young woman, well prepared to be a good wife and mother. Boys can be even more active as long as their sports do not include betting, smoking or drinking. She had been encouraged in this by her parents, and so never shows the inhibited, priggish child so common in the tracts of the day.

This generally simple and relaxed approach is carried through in education as well. Yonge firmly believed in education through play, storytelling and the reading of respectable literary works. She prefers the type of education given to the Brownlow children, who are encouraged to play outdoors and to make their own collections of rocks, beetles and the like as "visual aids." Children should have freedom to play as the May family does, even if it means getting dirty. Preferable to the sterile and unhomelike atmosphere of the boys' grammar school is this family expedition, boys and girls together, to

> a certain ditch where yellow mud was attainable, whereof the happy children concocted marbles and vases, which underwent a preparatory baking in the boys' pockets, that

they might not crack in the nursery fire.[5]

While this is going on, the older ones are walking, gathering plants and mosses and otherwise learning without formal lessons.

This shared brother-sister activity is best until the boys start preparing for the University and the girls start learning to run a household. It is at this stage that Ethel May has to sacrifice her cherished dream of keeping up with Norman's classical studies by reading Greek and Latin on her own. It is her duty to the family to put her studies aside in favor of cooking, mending and looking after the younger children. Household cares come first in a girl's life once she has reached the stage of "young-ladyhood," a phrase Yonge preferred to the then-current German "Backfischkeit" as being more descriptive and more seemly, and a phrase she certainly would have preferred to the modern "adolescence."

Close comradeship between brothers and sisters is one of the most attractive features of Yongean family life. Yonge is at her best and most convincing when showing siblings together. Her close observation of her cousins and of the Moberlys served her well, and she includes lifelike dialogue and the games, quarrels and private jokes that are so much a part of family life. When the May or Underwood children are together, the reader feels like a spectator at an actual family gathering. From the beginning of The Daisy Chain, it is quite evident that the genuine fondness the Mays have for each

[5] Yonge, Daisy Chain, pp. 65-66.

other is one of their most important characteristics.

Particularly close bonding takes place between "paired" brothers and sisters, often near in age, like Ethel and Norman May, or sharing interests as do Felix and Cherry Underwood. Such a pair will be the closest of companions, preferring each other to any outsider, or even to the others in the family. They share their studies and their play, confide in each other and trust each other in emotional stress. Thus it is that Norman confides his struggle against doubts to Ethel rather than to his father or clergyman brother, and it is her comfort that gives him the strength he needs at that time.

At times, Yonge carries this bonding to an unhealthy extent of which she cannot possibly have been aware. The brother-sister closeness becomes so all-encompassing that neither wants or needs any other emotional contacts. They cling to each other in a way that would make a modern psychologist suspicious, though Yonge felt it to be the most innocent and acceptable of pairings. So close do such pairings become at times that the parties almost regard themselves as husband and wife, and fiercely resent any interference between them. Felix Underwood, whom Yonge regards as almost a saint, is so upset when his sister Geraldine is proposed to that it is as though a divorce had been suggested. She in turn is so emotionally dependent on him that the thought of leaving him terrifies her and she refuses to consider it. When Norman May is to marry, Ethel seems to be losing a sweetheart rather than a loved brother, grieving because "Norman was

no longer solely hers,"[6] and feeling isolated because of

> the difference his engagement had made ... that he resorted elsewhere for sympathy ... they had been so much to each other, that it was a trial.[7]

This kind of exclusive dependency is, as far as can be determined from the books, entirely asexual. The problem lies in its very exclusivity, it leaves the parties little chance of forming other attachments, and tends to lead them into emotional isolation.

Georgina Battiscombe postulates that this recurrent thread, of which Yonge writes more convincingly than of actual courtship or marriage, dates from the early childhood Yonge never left emotionally. Yonge had been close to her cousin John, until their parents discouraged the relationship. As Battiscombe puts it:

> it is at least possible that Charlotte lived through childhood and early youth in a sisterly relationship with John, that later she loved him, perhaps only a little, perhaps only subconsciously, realising all the time that there could be between them no closer tie than the old affection that had existed ever since nursery days. What more natural than that she should take her relationship with John as a model when writing of the affection between brothers and sisters, never admitting to herself that there was in that relationship any note of passion? The depth of her feeling for John would inevitable make her describe the love between Harry and Mary, Felix and Geraldine, as a warmer emotion than brothers and sisters usually experience.[8]

6 Yonge, Daisy Chain, p. 593.

7 Yonge, Daisy Chain, p. 579.

8 Battiscombe, Yonge, p. 103.

Yonge certainly seems to confuse sisterly feeling with something far closer, and to do so quite innocently, out of unfamiliarity with the subject.

Yonge concentrates on the family because she feels it is only slightly less important than the Church in the scheme of things. To be a part of both, she felt, was all but essential for protection against the dangers of the world. Thus her primary focus is on family relationships and their changes. Events, however dramatic, are less important in themselves than for what they show about the family. No matter what success or failure takes place:

> ... it is the family unit which suffers or benefits in consequence. The characters involved rebel against the family, stray away from the family, betray the family: repent, return, are incorporated into the family again.[9]

In doing so, they provide a series of chronicles as absorbing and informative in their way as Trollope's political novels.

She is particularly gifted in showing family settings and daily routines. We see the lessons, reading, dress, food, recreations, child raising practices and all the other home activities of a Victorian family, saving only those she considers indelicate to mention. She is almost photographic in describing the May schoolroom, one of the most beloved of all her settings. This room is the novel's center, with its

[9] Catherine Storr, "Parents", in Battiscombe and Laski, p. 111.

> panes of glass scratched with various names and initials ... blue and white Dutch tiles bearing marvellous representations of Scripture history ... solid and heavy [chairs] the seats in faded carpet-work, ... a piano, a globe ... and loaded book-cases.[10]

Likewise, the vase with gummed-on leaves on Ermine Williams' table, and Margaret May's annoyance at being "plagued with troublesome propriety" ring true. If it were only for such glimpses of middle-class life, her novels would be of genuine value to the social historian.

Yet her primary accomplishment is to create and re-enforce a vision of the ideal Victorian family. To her, the family should be a place in which:

> ... the father's loving, yet sometimes grave and stern authority, can really form the child's thought of his heavenly Father; where the mother watches, loves and sympathizes so as to be the likeness to her children of the Church; where obedience is willing, honour comes of itself, and discipline is accepted as from indisputable authority, where concealment is unknown and confidence is free, with the sense that no friend, no adviser, is equal to the parents. ... Here "Papa" is not only the supreme authority, but the model of all that is good, or noble, the prime hero of his daughters' imagination, and often loved by them (especially) with deep and passionate enthusiasm; while "Mamma" is the unquestioned judge and arbitress in all questions of home, the comforter in all griefs or pains, the intercessor in all troubles; one in heart with the girls, and the first of women with her young sons, ---whose whole notions of womankind are formed on their mothers and sisters.[11]

[10] Yonge, Daisy Chain, p. 2.

[11] Yonge, Womankind, pp. 129-130.

This is a feudal vision, with a divinely appointed monarch and a hierarchy of obligations and privileges, everything proceeding in an orderly fashion from king to subjects. Even if the king/father is wrong or misguided, it would be wrong to disobey someone who rules by divine right. Conversely, the parent has duties as well as rights, and is held accountable to God for ruling his family correctly and wisely. Part of the narrative process of The Daisy Chain shows how Dr. May comes to learn that he has made mistakes in his paternal role, and has to surrender his complacent belief that all is well for a humble realization that he has harmed his children and must do his best to atone. His carelessness, which led even to his wife's death, has been his major flaw, and it is from that time that he becomes

> sensible of his own responsibility, but, with inveterate habits of heedlessness and hastiness that love alone gave him force to combat. He was now a far gentler man. His younger children had never seen, his elder had long since forgotten, his occasional bursts of temper, but he suffered keenly from their effects, especially as regarded some of his children.[12]

His gradual achieving of humility and gentleness is as important to the story as his children's learning of submission and obedience, and equally necessary for the formation of a successful family.

When this sort of family operates as it should, it is a most attractive place, the happiest and safest place for the individual in

[12] Yonge, Daisy Chain, p. 345.

the face of personal or social upheavals. This feudal system in miniature provided a comforting retreat like that offered by the romanticized vision of medieval society popular in art and novels of the period. It was equally a fantasy-based construct, an idealized portrait of something that did not exist and had never existed, but that was keenly desired. It served to satisfy a desire for order to readers seeking for a form of unquestioned stability, perhaps as a reaction to a perceived disintegration of familial and social hierarchies. In reading one of Yonge's family chronicles, the reader is taken to a childhood world in which right and wrong are explicit and easily distinguished, where parents are both all-powerful and all-good; the safe world of a nursery tale, with externalized and easily dealt with threats.

To readers who wished to believe that the family was as Yonge depicted it, her books gained an added appeal. It is easier today to realize that these large, cheerful families; or the imperfect ones working toward perfection; could be restrictive of opportunity for the individual. With hindsight, one can see more clearly that they often tended to promote conformity and strengthen the status quo. This tendency both annoys and interests a modern reader. In order to portray and uphold traditional values, Yonge had to show them clearly and interestingly, which makes her books useful to study. To the readers of her time, the books provided a symbolic validation of the dream of Victorian family life, convincing them that the ideal

of domesticity was attainable and worth striving for.

HEARTSEASE

Heartsease; or the Brother's Wife, is the story of the Martindale family and how it is changed by the advent of Violet, the "brother's wife" of the title. When the novel begins, the Martindales are a family in name only. The only true bonds between the members are those of law and custom. Real feeling has been so long suppressed that the members are almost completely alienated one from another. Yonge considers affection mingled with duty to be the proper sort of family tie, and sets about showing how Violet stimulates these feelings, thus creating a real family where none existed before.

Lord and Lady Martindale are absorbed in their own concerns and the social demands of rich Aunt Nesbit. They pay little attention to their children and receive little in return. Aunt Nesbit, who controls the family fortune, is completely absorbed in creating and maintaining a brilliant social career for Lady Martindale, to the point of concealing the death of one of the Martindale babies in order that a party not be "spoiled." The rest of her time is spent in manipulating the other members of the family through threats of disinheritance. With the leverage her money gives her, she persuades the others to pursue fashion and statue to the exclusion of all else.

Having grown up in such an environment it is hardly surprising that the younger Martindales have scant respect or affection for their parents. Indeed, they seldom take an interest in anyone other than themselves. They are either cold or lethargic, and largely incapable of feeling anything stronger than mild liking for another person. As usual, Yonge directs most of her attention to the young people, viewing the older generation primarily in their role as parents. The focus of the book, and of Violet's efforts at emotional healing, rest on the three Martindale children: John, Theodora, and Arthur.

Each of these young people is lacking in some quality needed for the proper functioning of a family. Until John has gained energy, Theodora the ability to love, Arthur self-discipline and the senior Martindales a proper sense of their parental obligations, the family will continue to drift sullenly through life, finding neither shelter nor emotional support at home. Violet's duty becomes to teach the others how to feel and how to behave properly toward their relations. This is a difficult task for her, as she is barely out of the schoolroom herself. Her strong sense of duty bears her up when her timidity and dislike of emotional storms would lead her to give in, and she learns to rely on proper religious feeling to support her in time of need. With duty and the Church supporting her, it would be impossible for a Yonge heroine to fail. Over several years, Violet's "firm meekness," her power of submission, encourages each family member to develop the qualities he or she lacks, until they emerge a chastened but happy family.

John's apathy toward the family and its obligations can be traced to a tragic love. At first his engagement to Helen Fotheringham was strongly opposed by Aunt Nesbit, and so by his parents, all of whom felt it unsuitable for him to marry the daughter of an impoverished clergyman. After several years, they relented too late. Helen was no longer free to marry, but felt obligated to care for her invalid and senile grandfather. He would not hear of her marrying, and needed constant nursing. This comes under the heading of filial obedience, a virtue Yonge raises to the point of a fetish. Instead of exploring some possible alternative arrangement. John and Helen part. She quite literally works herself to death caring for the old man, and is reunited with John only shortly before she dies.

This loss of his happiness to family obligations sours John and causes him to abdicate almost completely from contact with others except on a superficial social level. It is as though he had decided that refusing to care for others is the most effective way to avoid being hurt by their loss. The first break in his self-imposed alienation comes when he meets Violet, newly married to his brother Arthur. Violet reminds him of Helen both in appearance and in ideas, and this helps John to care for her as a sister.

Violet's gentleness, meekness, religious fervor and finally her compassion for him when she learns his story move John to express his grief for the first time since Helen's death. The very fact that she is timid and shrinking impels him to protect her even against Arthur, of whose faults John is quite well aware. As John muses to himself:

> She knows religion as a guide, not as a comfort ... Helen, my Helen, how you would have loved and cherished her, and led her to your own precious secret of patience and peace! ... And can I take Helen's work on myself, and try to lead our poor young sister to what alone can support her? I must try---mere humanity demands it. Yes, Helen, you would tell me I have lived within myself too long. I can only dare to speak through your example. I will strive to overcome my reluctance to utter your dear name.[13]

John takes Helen as his tutelary saint, and does his best to foster a like saintliness in Violet. As she is nearly perfect already, needing only a certain amount of strength, this is not too difficult. The question of family acceptance is somewhat harder. John exerts himself in a way unusual for him to make his parents accept Violet and recognize that she has ladylike traits and excellent moral principles in spite of her lower-middle class social standing. Thanks to him, they issue a pro forma acceptance of her as an official member of the family. Before Yonge is done, they have come to fully accept her as a daughter.

The act of taking responsibility for Violet as sister and close friend brings John closer to his parents and brother than he has been since childhood and this in itself is a major step toward re-establishing the family. He cares for Violet in her many illnesses and stands godfather to her first son. Taking on these duties forces him out of his "long-standing habits of solitude and silence." Again taking Helen as his guide, he tries to do what she would have done

[13] Yonge, Heartsease, p. 124.

for Violet, and in doing so improves his own character. He becomes an active participant and force for good in the family rather than a mere observer.

Violet's faith is sincere but inarticulate, "a guide, not a comfort." Her previous training has given her a sense of duty in such matters, but not the emotional relationship with the Church that Yonge would wish her to have. John helps her to model herself on Helen, acting under the same high principles that sustained her. He tells the entire story of their love, and in doing so comes to a better understanding of himself and his family. He becomes her major ally and support in creating true family feeling none had existed before. His male understanding of religion helps her instinctive sense of rightness, and helps her persevere in what she knows to be her duty. Seeing her carry on under great difficulties makes John only too aware of how he has shirked his own responsibilities.

> ... he had not been so utterly debarred from usefulness as he had imagined, and that he had neglected much that might have infinitely benefited his brother, sister, and father. ... He tried to draw out Helen's example to teach Violet to endure, and in doing so the other side of the lesson came home to himself. Helen's life had been one of exertion as well as of submission. It had not been merely spent in saying, "Thy will be done," but in doing it; she had not merely stood still and uncomplaining beneath the cross, but she had borne it onward in the service of others.[14]

As a token of his resolve to become an active Christian, John gives

[14] Yonge, Heartsease, p. 131.

Violet the cross Helen had always worn, and joins her in a course of submission combined with action.

Unlike John, Theodora is not at all lacking in energy. Where he is caring but apathetic, she is both vigorous and cold. Her primary lack is in the ability to love and thus to establish significant relationships with others. Yonge relates this quite clearly to a lack of parental love. Valued only for her looks and cleverness rather than for herself, Theodora has, not surprisingly, grown up unable to accept herself or to love others. Her low self-esteem and consequent fear of rejection lead her to be haughty in an effort to bolster her own status.

Her initial response to Violet is compounded of equal parts of scorn and anger. Not only is Violet insignificant and of low social standing, she has come between Theodora and her favorite brother. Since Arthur resents any criticism of his choice, this leads to a breach between him and his sister. John too is repelled by her attitude, leaving Theodora completely isolated.

After this Theodora occupies her time in sulking, flirting, jilting a succession of worthy suitors and generally behaving in an unmaidenly way. She is much too "strong-minded" to suit Yonge's taste, and consults only her self-will for guidance. She refuses directions from her parents or any of her fiances, all of whom, according to Yonge, have an absolute right to control her behavior down to the smallest detail. The only redeeming quality this worldly young woman has is her fondness for her brother, and it is through this that

she is saved.

Theodora cares for her nephew during one of Violet's illnesses. She does this in order to help Arthur, but comes to appreciate Violet's gentle, motherly ways and tenderness for her babies. This had been notably lacking in Theodora's own childhood, and she comes to admire Violet for her ability to be a true mother. At this time, Theodora finds Violet to be "a caressing, amiable, lovable creature, needing to be guarded and petted,"[15] and enjoys being able to lavish affection on someone. Later she comes to respect Violet's sense of what is right and her steadfast adherence to her principles.

Violet becomes the first person to exercise any influence over Theodora, who has always done exactly as she pleased. She starts by modifying her behavior simply to avoid hurting Violet, who has an annoying tendency to manipulate through tears. When Theodora comes to understand the social and religious codes of her time, she starts to behave rightly purely because it is right. She eventually stops flirting, going out unchaperoned and being disrespectful to her parents.

The process is not as easy as it appears in so brief a summary. Yonge is more plausible than many of her contemporaries in showing the length and difficulty of a spiritual struggle. Theodora's conversion to docile femininity takes several years and is punctuated by rebellion, backsliding and emotional crises of various sorts. Through all this, Theodora keeps trying to establish Violet as a "Bild," but

15 Yonge, Heartsease, p. 196.

Violet has the good sense to refuse. Even though she herself is lonely and desperately in need of companionship, Violet firmly refuses to become Theodora's idol and keeps sending her back to her own parents. They are rather weak and foolish, but are owed automatic deference from the mere fact of parenthood. Yonge believes, and shows, that acting properly toward one's parents stimulates them to behave as they should. In the end, a loving parent-child bond is established between Theodora and her parents.

Theodora's moment of greatest glory comes during a fire that destroys the Martindale mansion and removes the baneful influence of Aunt Nesbit, who dies as the house she built is being destroyed. Theodora works tirelessly at saving valuables and lives and is terribly burned. She loses her beauty as punishment for her pride, but gains her parents' respect and love. Her illness after the fire results in

> ... the first taste of her mother's love, and made her content to be helpless; as there she lay, murmuring thanks, and submitting to be petted with a grateful face of childlike peace, resting in her mother's affection, and made happy by the depth of warm feeling in her father's words.[16]

This return to infancy gives her the love she lacked before and enables her to "grow up" as a dutiful daughter. When her penance and regrowth are complete, she is rewarded by marriage to one of her former suitors. This worthy but extremely dull fellow, who now

[16] Yonge, Heartsease, p. 340.

exercises complete control over her activities (as Yonge feels is proper), is none other than Helen Fotheringham's brother Percy. Violet's influence for Theodora has been so effective that the latter has become a fit consort for the brother of a saint.

Arthur is a thoughtless, selfish young man with an intense passion for gambling which continually leads him into debt. He is a poor father and a worse husband. His major flaw in Yonge's eyes is his tendency to treat everything flippantly, whether it be family ties, religion or etiquette at a dinner party. This marks him as almost beyond redemption; the lack of a sense of serious values is nearly as great a sin as the neglect of filial duty. If it were not that Arthur shows some glimmerings of proper feeling, as when his son is born and he bitterly reproaches himself for his neglect of Violet, the reader would be inclined to give Arthur up as a bad job.

The only use Arthur has for any member of his family is as they minister to his comfort. His parents exist to provide money and status. They purchase his army commission and subsequent promotions and support him completely, since a Guards officer cannot possibly live on his pay. After his marriage he calculates that they owe him:

> ... a decent income in London. A house---where shall it be? Let me see, he [Lord Martindale] can't give me less than 1000£ a year, perhaps 1500£. I vow I don't see why it should not be 2000£.[17]

[17] Yonge, Heartsease, p. 17.

He sulks rather than being properly grateful when he gets only 1200 pounds a year and the rent of a house in Belgravia.

His idea of being a husband is to live exactly as he did when a bachelor, while Violet struggles with debts, dishonest servants, illness and pregnancy. Nonetheless, Violet's one wish is to please him and the least token of consideration is to her a reward beyond price. She eventually learns to control the family unobtrusively while letting it seem even to Arthur and herself that he is really at the head. Arthur is always resolving to treat his wife more kindly, but the resolves seldom last beyond the next invitation to the races. A complete financial crash provides the catalyst for change that the fire provided for Theodora, and he ends by becoming a responsible and self-controlled person.

As a father Arthur is no better than he is as a husband, It is difficult for a reader to see why his children worship him so when he alternates between petting them when it suits him and ignoring or punishing them the remainder of the time. He is particularly harsh toward his oldest son, John, who is delicate and bookish. Arthur's insensitive efforts to transform the boy into a hearty athletic type in his own image all but succeed in breaking the child's health and spirit. It is not until he nearly loses the child that Arthur comes to an understanding of the firm and patient guidance Yonge recommends as appropriate for parents. In his remorse, he begins to model himself after the person his children believe him to be, and their unquestioning filial loyalty makes him a better man.

Arthur comes to realize and repent for his failure as husband and father. Near the end of the book, he finally realizes that

> I have neglected them, let them deny themselves, ruined them, been positively harsh to that angel of a boy; and how they could love me, and be patient with me throughout, is what I cannot understand, though I can feel it.[18]

This time his regret for his failings is sincere and true repentance is followed by a conversion in his way of life. He learns to control his behavior and spending, and to treat his wife with fondness and his children with affection. At the time of his marriage his family's feelings for him were largely ill-concealed annoyance. Under Violet's steadying influence he gains the fondness and trust of all. His regenerate character engenders in him a new respect for his social, family and religious obligations. It is still quite difficult to like Arthur, but the reader is considerably relieved that he has at last learned how to behave.

Lord and Lady Martindale are kind-hearted (which leads to their eventual redemption) but foolish (which caused the original breakup of the family). The flaws in their children are mainly due to their abdication of their duties as parents. They have neither set good examples for their children nor guided them in character development.

Lord Martindale has been a busy government official with little time for his children. To them "Papa" was not a remote but loved figure but a complete stranger. His reluctance to distress his wife

[18] Yonge, Heartsease, p. 462.

leads him to be less firm than he ought and helps increase Mrs. Nesbit's bad influence over the family. A father is supposed to control his sons and guide his wife and daughter, and his failure to do so throws them on their own insufficient resources.

Lady Martindale is a weak, pliable woman whose loyalty to her aunt is one of her few admirable qualities. Mrs. Nesbit raised her and arranged her marriage, and she repays the obligation by leading a fashionable life (as her aunt wishes) and spending more time on her accomplishments and her collection of exotic plants than on her children. Since she does this as a matter of filial duty rather than selfishness, she is not too sinful, but is still punished by the deaths in infancy of three of the neglected children. She hardly knows her husband, leaves her sons to their schoolmasters and Theodora to an atheistic German governess who teaches her to despise her parents.

Violet's example of wifely devotion and motherly kindness helps bring the Martindales together after Mrs. Nesbit's death in the great fire that marks the symbolic end of the family's old way of life. The previous indications of regeneration are completed in this purification by fire. Lady Martindale's long-buried affection for her husband and children can now be expressed freely without fear of her aunt's disapproval, and she finds the womanly fulfillment proper to her role. Lord Martindale becomes a fond father and a doting grandfather. The entire atmosphere changes from a stiffly formal association of strangers to an easy, friendly grouping of intimates. Each

member fulfills individual responsibilities to the group and gains the appropriate rewards.

Violet has been the agent of this great transformation. When she first appears, as a bride of barely sixteen, she is a timid and hesitating girl, rather pretty, whose "chief grace was the shy, sweet tenderness, happy and bright, but tremulous with the recent pain of the parting from home."[19] She is homely in the British sense; homelike, home-loving and comforting. It seems as though she is to be a type of the "angel in the house."

Fortunately for the reader, Violet has more to recommend her than good looks, shyness and tears. Her genuine interest in things and people around her is in marked contrast to the assumed politeness of the other characters. She devotes equal patience to coaxing a peacock to eat from her hand and studying a cathedral, and, unlike many fictional heroines, is capable of seeing a joke. Rather than bursting into tears, she finds it hugely amusing that Arthur is unable to make a cup of tea, or that he cannot do without his cigars. Were it not for this, which lends her some resilience, she might have difficulty in her task of converting the family.

This she accomplishes through gentle persistence and the application of all the qualities they lack. She is frail and dependent enough to make people wish to help her, and a good enough listener to make them confide in her. By learning to "act as though" things are

[19] Yonge, Heartsease, p. 6.

as they should be and to trust in God for the strength she needs, she eventually makes the family what it should be. She conquers her foes: rejection, pride, coldness, fear, through submission and endurance.

In doing her duty as wife and mother, she recalls the rest of the family to their respective places within the group. Her character is so naturally superior that as soon as she learns to overcome her fears and exert herself to do what is right, she rapidly qualifies for sainthood after Helen's pattern. John sums up her effect best when he thinks to himself that

> My brother and sister, even my mother and Helen's brother, all have come under her power of firm meekness--all, with one voice, are ready to "rise up and call her blessed!"[20]

The "brother's wife" has indeed eased the hearts of all within the family. She becomes the central figure on whom all depend for comfort and support, while assuming no improper control over anyone. Her replacement of Aunt Nesbit in the central focus of the family leads to a replacement of control by threats with an unobtrusive influence for good. In effect, Heartsease is an extended tract on the virtues of gentleness, submissiveness and piety. While one is inclined to question the absolute value of these as cures for all family troubles, Yonge's other major thematic point is a valid one. A loving, emotionally secure family circle is indeed the environment in which the individual is most likely to find happiness and growth. It is

[20] Yonge, Heartsease, p. 436.

typical of Yonge that this growth must of necessity be directed toward the service of God and his Church rather than to any concept of individual expression. Her view is always that the family is a microcosm of the Church, and that to do one's duty to the family is equated with doing one's duty to God.

This was the work of Yonge's that Charles Kingsley termed "wise and human and noble as well as Christian and [it] will surely become a standard book for aye and a day."[21] Its great popularity in its time can no doubt be laid to its exaltation of the family and its repeated teaching that all sacrifices are worth while if made for the family. In finding that so saintly a character as Violet shared their daily tasks and frustrations and regarded them as "crosses to be borne daily," readers found validation of their way of life and its essential rightness, and a warming picture of its eventual goal.

THE PILLARS OF THE HOUSE

The Pillars of the House was the most successful book of Yonge's later years. It contains some of the most fully developed characterization of her career, and, given the basic premises under which she worked, the most credible. She regarded it as her most fully realized work, and Felix Underwood as her best and most interesting character. She was fonder of him than of Guy Morville or of Dr. May. Christabel

[21] Coleridge, p. 348.

Coleridge felt that he "represents exactly the type of goodness most admired by the author, not brilliant but steady, loyal, and thorough, and I think she liked him the best of all her heroes."[22]

The book covers nineteen years in the life of the Underwoods, the group who came closest of all to incarnating Yonge's view of the perfect family. At the outset, the family has no problems that could not be solved by an increase in Mr. Underwood's stipend. He is an underpaid and tubercular curate struggling to support eleven children (his wife is pregnant with twins.) In spite of these handicaps he is a clergyman modeled after Keble's dedication and saintliness; and a father modeled after William Yonge. Rather, he is drawn from Yonge's somewhat idealized view of her father, lacking the harshness and temper that others saw.

The greatest delight of all eleven children is in their father's society. They are fond of both their parents, but Mrs. Underwood definitely takes a secondary role. She has spent her life supporting her husband and caring for the house, to the point that

> ... while his physical life was worn out by toil and hardship, her mental life had almost been extinguished in care, drudgery, and self-control; and all his sweetness, tenderness and cheerfulness had not been able to do more than just to enable her to hold out, without manifesting her suffering.[23]

She takes little active part in her children's lives, their primary

[22] Coleridge, p. 233.

[23] Yonge, Pillars, v. 1, p. 90.

emotional bond being with their father. Where she is respected, he is worshipped, and his death is the greatest blow to befall the young family. The plot's major interest is in the efforts of the two oldest children, Felix and Wilmet, the "Pillars" of the title, to keep the family intact and raise the younger ones as their father would have wanted.

Even before this calamity, Yonge introduces the theme of family responsibility. When it is obvious that his father has not long to live, Felix (who has been destined for the clergy) gives up his plans for University education. He substitutes a job as shop assistant to a printer and bookseller, knowing that this will allow him to contribute to the family rather than drain its resources for his own benefit. This is quite a sacrifice, as he moves permanently down in the social scale, from gentleman to tradesman. This makes it impossible, in orthodox Victorian County eyes, for him to have any social contacts outside his family. The gentry will not associate with a tradesman, and the men on his economic level are far below him in education and culture, though Yonge admires their character in a rather patronizing way. Only when Felix has become a newspaper proprietor and inherited the Vale Leston estate is he accepted once more by his equals in rank. Even then he refuses to live as a leisured gentleman. Keeping the business allows him to return the lay Rectory to the Church without cheating his family, and nothing can be more worthy in Yonge's eyes than serving both Church and family at once.

Yonge never loses sight of Felix's loss of caste, nor does she allow him to do so. No less than a Bishop tells Felix "I honour you for the step you have taken. I wish there were more who would understand the true uprightness and dutifulness of thinking no shame of any honest employment."[24] Still, Felix is shown as having lost something very precious. He does his duty cheerfully, without complaining and because he knows it is right. This sanctifies both it and him. By the end of his life, Felix is regarded by all about him as almost a saint.

Felix sacrifices not only social standing but all hopes of love or marriage. It is not within his power to support a wife and children while twelve younger children depend on him. He feels he has no right even to dream along such lines. In a narrower escape than he realizes at the time, he relinquishes Alice Knevett to his younger brother Edgar. Edgar, while far more charming than Felix, is far less good, and is perfectly happy with this arrangement. Alice is a fickle young woman who jilts Edgar for a French wine-merchant and later is the cause of Edgar's killing her husband in a duel. This, of course, makes Felix assume the responsibility for supporting her and her two sons for the rest of their lives.

Some years later, Felix loves and is loved by a worthier girl, Gertrude May (of The Daisy Chain). By this time he is dying of "consumption" like his father, and while he could support a wife,

[24] Yonge, Pillars, v. 1, p. 175.

would soon leave her a widow. He therefore firmly directs both his and her emotions in the safe channel of emotion between brothers and sisters. He symbolically bequeaths her to his brother Lance, in a rather mawkish reflection of the Felix-Alice-Edgar triangle. Lance is equally as good as Felix, and much healthier, so he and Gertrude marry and name their oldest son Felix as a tribute to the departed father-figure.

His self-imposed vow of celibacy leads Felix to find his emotional reward within his immediate family. The younger children worship him as a father, and his closest confidante is his sister Geraldine. Their relationship is typical of the intensely close but completely innocent brother-sister bondings of which Yonge is so fond. She portrays them more convincingly than marriages, and seems to feel that they are somehow better, perhaps because there is no hint of sex. Felix and Geraldine confide everything to each other, look to each other for support and consolation, and find their greatest happiness in each other's company. Yonge treats this type of relationship in a way that shows she has no idea of the possible psychological implications.

Thus, when Geraldine receives a marriage proposal from a noted artist, Felix is intensely jealous. He reacts much as though he were to lose a wife rather than a sister:

> He had been so secure of her, too. She had seemed so set apart from marriage, so peculiarly dependent on him, that it had been to her that he had turned with a

> sort of certainty as his companion in the life of self-sacrifice that he knew to lie before him.[25]

Yonge finds this touching rather than alarming. After all, the birth family is the most important, and Geraldine is one of the classic Victorian invalids whose sofa is the center of the family. Nevertheless, Felix nobly stifles his feelings and supports Mr. Grinstead's suit. The years of privation have been particularly hard on crippled Geraldine, and her suitor could give her a life of comfort that to her would seem luxury. Felix realizes that he has no right to interfere, particularly if Geraldine feels as she should about a prospective husband.

He steels himself to no purpose. Geraldine is fond of Grinstead in a daughterly way, but does not love him. She cannot bear to leave her home and Felix, who is the most important person in her life. While he lives she needs no other emotional ties and feels no need of a husband. It is not until after Felix dies that Geraldine, feeling herself "widowed," accepts Grinstead. Before then, it would be as unthinkable for her to leave Felix as for a well-brought up young woman to leave her husband for a lover.

Felix is eventually honored by all for his successful efforts to keep the family together. Even those who prophesied that it would never be possible have to acknowledge that he has done extremely well. His rewards for his devotion to duty are great. One relative who

25 Yonge, Pillars, v. 2, p. 164.

respects his independence and integrity leaves him the ancestral estate at Vale Leston, and thus gives the family independent means. His newspaper becomes the most respected in the county in the "agricultural interest." All the children, except the mentally retarded Theodore, are educated and well placed in careers or marriages. Clement has been ordained, fulfilling Mr. Underwood's greatest wish, that one of his sons should follow him into the Church. Stella, the youngest sister, marries a peer. All his sacrifices are proven to have been completely worthwile.

Due to his effort and example, the family is all "sound-hearted, right-minded and affectionate." The only failures are two siblings who were practically adult at the time Felix took over the family, and even they have repented and returned in spirit. Felix dies young but well rewarded, and his sainthood is assured.

This stoic life of devotion to duty is in sharp contrast to that of Edgar, the second brother. Edgar is charming but rather selfish and quite lazy, unwilling to really work at anything long enough to succeed. Felix cheerfully accepts what is likely to be a lifetime of business drudgery in a dull provincial town because it is his duty to the family and to his father's memory. Edgar's prospects are much brighter. He is all but adopted by a rich relative and trained for a position and eventually partnership in the London office of Kedge & Underwood. His future is one of comfortable social status and a good deal of money. But where Felix is happy with drudgery for the family's sake, Edgar resents having to work

even in a profitable business, and lacks the sense of duty that would make it a pleasure.

In pursuit of his own interests Edgar neglects both his foster family and his obvious duty to help Felix support the children. He leaves his job, tries and fails at secular music (which is probably a sinful occupation), and then wants to become a painter. The most he can manage is third-rate pre-Raphaelitism which does not sell, while Geraldine wins awards and commands good prices for genre studies of kittens and paintings on religious subjects.

Edgar runs into debt and alters a check written by his cousin Marilda, who bought one of his paintings in an effort to help him. She conceals the forgery out of family loyalty, but he flees the country for fear of prosecution, and is heard of only sporadically through the rest of the book.

One of these appearances is in France, where he duels with and kills Alice Knevett's husband. Next, he appears in Egypt, saving Wilmet's fiance who has been badly injured in a railway accident. Still later, he is living in America and raising a son. As punishment for his various sins, he is scalped by Red Indians, surviving only long enough to entrust young Gerald to Fernan Travis (see below) who restores him to Felix and the rest of the family.

Edgar is soundly punished by Yonge for his scepticism, sloth and failure to take on his part of the family burdens. Only through a martyr's death in the service of the family can he be even partially rehabilitated, and even so he is always referred to as "poor Edgar."

It is hard today to feel that using artistic talent for secular purposes or not going to Communion weekly are as sinful as Yonge evidently feels, but others of his actions are still reprehensible. Forgery, manslaughter and stealing one's brother's sweetheart are no more admirable now than they were in 1870. It seems that his character is, to say the least, unstable.

One of Edgar's major functions is to make Felix appear even more saintly. It is almost as though they were two parts of one personality, with one partaking of most of the good qualities and the other of the bad. Edgar is Felix without the Church and its stabilising influence. As Guy and Philip were the contrast between the contrite and the self-satisfied, Felix and Edgar are that between the devout and the secular. Whenever Felix is tempted to do something for himself, his self-sacrificing nature takes control. Edgar shows how the undisciplined life leads a basically similar person from bad to worse. Only when Edgar becomes a father himself does he recapture some of Felix's qualities, and too late to save himself. His son Gerald, though, combines Edgar's charm and talent with Felix's piety, in a symbolic reuniting of the two.

Another contrasting pair within the family are the twin elder daughters, Wilmet and Alda. Like Felix and Edgar, one stays home and one leaves for a life with brilliant prospects as ward of a rich relative. Similarly, the one who stays with the family is rewarded, the one who leaves forfeits her chances and leads a most unsatisfactory life.

Wilmet is something of a paragon. At sixteen, assisted only by a former nursemaid and a cook-general, she assumes direction of a household that includes an invalid mother, a clerical lodger, Felix, two new babies and seven children ranging in age from three to four-teen. She not only looks after this household competently on a meager income but adds to that income herself by teaching in a young ladies' academy. Her only defects are those caused by the situation. While she can be loving and tender, and this is reciprocated by her sib-lings, she is often interfering, overcontrolling and inclined to worry far too much about "what it may lead to."

Admirable as she is for her strnegth and competence, Wilmet does not share in Felix's perfection. She can be unnecessarily severe to the younger ones, particularly crippled Geraldine, in an effort to assert her authority. Often her dictates have to be modified by the higher authority of Felix or of Sister Constance from Dearport who occasionally acts as a surrogate mother. Wilmet's most difficult task is to keep from over-suppressing her "womanly" traits in the effort to make herself strong enough for the necessary tasks of feeding, clothing and educating the family.

This is the primary problem in Wilmet's marriage. Before she can marry, she has to release her emotions as well as freeing her-self of the idea that she is indispensable to the family. She has felt as Felix does that marriage is impossible, and for many of the same reasons. However, Yonge is quite clear that woman's primary destiny is marriage, and Wilmet is endowed with all the womanly

characteristics that urge her to this. Major Harewood is eminently suitable in character and means, though he is not very handsome, and is also the brother of Lance Underwood's closest friend, which makes him practically a family member already and thus still more suitable.

Wilmet hesitates, being unable to discern where her duty lies. As usual, Felix has the last word. In a fatherly letter he advises Wilmet of his approval of the match and even represents that it is her duty to marry in order to provide for the children.

> My only fear is that you are too scrupulous and self-sacrificing to contemplate fairly, and without prejudice, what is best for us all ... Now it seems to me, that if you two are really drawn to one another, both being such as you are, it is the call of a Voice that you have no right to reject or stifle ... If you imagine that by such rejection you would be doing better for the children and me, I beg leave to tell you it is a generous blunder. Remember that, as things have turned out, I am quite as much the only dependence for the others as I was seven years ago. I felt this painfully in the spring, when I was doubtful what turn my health would take; and the comfort of knowing you would all have such a man to look to would be unspeakable--indeed, he has already lightened me of much care and anxiety ... Nothing need be done in haste, least of all the crushing your liking under the delusion of serving us.[26]

When Wilmet is persuaded that her feelings and her duty lead in the same direction, she consents to an engagement.

In her typically managing and masterful fashion, Wilmet goes off to Egypt to nurse Harewood after his accident. Duty and inclination combine to overcome her maidenly reserve, and she marries him on the

[26] Yonge, Pillars, v. 1, p. 425.

spot so she can stay with him unchaperoned. Then starts the most difficult period of her married life. Having learned a mastery of others unsuitable to her age and sex, she has to relinquish this in favor of the proper state of submission to her husband. It is quite a struggle, but her inner good character wins in the end.

Submission to proper authority is all that is lacking in Wilmet. It repairs the character flaws that have come through lack of proper guidance and support. Now her gentleness, "stately sweetness" and comfortable housewifely qualities can find full expression; not being cramped by sacrifice and lack of resources as before. Her family has well fitted her to become the serene and competent "loafgiver or lady" Yonge sees as the highest type of womanhood.

Wilmet's identical twin, Alda, is adopted by the same relative who takes Edgar. She becomes quite one of the family, given the same advantages and treated exactly as her cousin Marilda. Alda repays all this consideration with a general display of selfishness and deceit.

Alda is so fond of the fashionable London life that she embarks on a series of lies and betrayals in an effort to stay in Society. She tries to make a brilliant marriage by stealing Marilda's fiance, an act of disloyalty to one (Marilda) whose devotion to the family is absolute and who even under this provocation refuses to disown her. When he loses his money, Alda jilts him and marries a sporting baronet who proves to be an alcoholic and a compulsive gambler. He ill-treats her and neglects their children. Her life is a constant struggle

to keep up aristocratic appearances on an insufficient income, and she is constantly returning to the family for reassurance and consolation. Her husband cannot be depended on as Wilmet's can, and she never learns the serenity and acceptance that Wilmet does. When they are both matrons of more than thirty, Alda is still more beautiful than her sister, but Wilmet is the happier of the two. Yonge draws a physical contrast between the sisters at a family reunion. For Wilmet,

> it was matronly content that had plumped the chiselled contour of feature, and if the colouring showed less clear and flower-like, it was by contrast with Alda's defined, over-transparent white and carnation, and the wasted look that threw out the perfection of the delicate moulding. One gave the notion of comfortable, peaceful motherliness, the other of constant anxious wear and tear.[27]

The family division is not a simple break between those who leave and those who stay. The difference is in attitude rather than geography. Whatever is done in a spirit of cheerful acceptance of Divine will and to help the family is rewarded. Thus Robina, who goes out as a governess and sends her income home, is praised while Alda is not. Her hard work and helpfulness make the difference. Clement and Lance are admired for working hard at school and for their subsequent giving up of attractive careers in favor of family obligations. Angela, who stays at home and creates a good deal of trouble for the family through her religiously-oriented temper tantrums,

[27] Yonge, Pillars, v. 2, p. 602.

is less respected than Fulbert, who emigrates to Australia accompanying a missionary Bishop. His relieving the family of responsibility for his support and his hardworking and morally upright life in the colonies make him worthy of a high place in Yonge's esteem. But she reserves her greatest approbation for Lance, Clement and Geraldine, who come closest to the example set by Felix and Wilmet. After Felix's death, Clement and Geraldine become the new "Pillars of the House."

No discussion of this work would be complete without some mention of Fernan Travis. He is an excellent example of the outsider who becomes co-opted into the family through friendship with one of its members. Fernan, a Spanish-American tourist, is injured in a fire and nursed by the Underwood family. He is a half-savage boy who has never had the advantages of a true family upbringing, and to this are laid all his flaws. He has been raised with no religious principles at all and has not even been baptised, which Yonge finds more shocking than if he had not been taught to read and write. He swears, gambles and smokes, and tries to influence the Underwood boys to do likewise. He is badly in need of the kind and civilizing family influence the Underwoods can give him.

Fernan finds their goodness attractive, especially that of Lance, whose close friend he becomes; and is both surprised and touched by their kindness to a stranger. Their teaching by example shows him how to be a member of a group and how to love others. He senses in himself a great need for the family's love and support, and exerts an admirable strength of will in a successful effort to overcome his

bad habits.

While this is going on, the family also teaches him the faith and observances of the Church of England, thus making him share in the main moving force of their lives. They even persuade his father that he should be baptised, and Felix becomes his godfather. This spiritual tie is almost as strong as one of blood or marriage, and seals his permanent acceptance into the Underwood family and into the larger family of God. Fernan ends the day of his baptism saying happily, "I shall mind nothing now that I know what it is to be one of you."[28] In this context, "you" refers to both the family and the Church.

Fernan remains closely tied to the family in later life. He is always ready to help in time of crisis whether with money or in such practical ways as caring for a sick child. In all his changes of furtune he remains devoted to the family, and nothing pleases him more than to do something to make some member of it happy.

Even in his choice of a wife he stays close to home. His first and truest love is Marilda. When Alda convinces him that Marilda loves Felix, Fernan self-sacrificingly transfers his affections to Alda, who wants him for his money. After many vicissitudes, he does marry Marilda (which is one of Felix's dying wishes) changes his name to Travis Underwood, and becomes so fully a relative that no-one can imagine a time when he was a stranger.

[28] Yonge, Pillars, v. 1, p. 165.

The lonely outsider has been redeemed and made whole through the healthy and devout influence of an ideal family. This, in Yonge's view, is much to be desired, and constitutes a morally acceptable reason for outside friendships, which are usually suspect.

The Pillars of the House is a long novel, of two volumes with over six hundred pages in each. It is far more complicated than even this discussion can indicate and it is not possible to cover everything Yonge has to say about the family within its pages. The main connecting thread for the various characters is the family and how individuals fit into its structure. As always, Yonge expressed her emotions through the family. Love is best found there, and all the satisfactions of life are sweetest at home. The family is the happiest and safest place for the individual, and Yonge succeeds in making the reader feel something of the same attraction for these large, happy families that her original readers must have felt. The entire book stands as a validation to its first audience of the worth of the family to the individual and to society.

CHAPTER IV

WOMEN

The traditional picture of the Victorian woman is of a sheltered and rather fragile being. She was submissive and dependent, and fully aware of her inferiority to men in all practical matters. She did not wish a career, a University education or a vote. Her proper sphere was the home and family, and her moral purity the means by which she ruled. Yonge's ideal woman comforms quite closely to this stereotype. Gentle, meek, shrinking, but somehow capable of supporting and sustaining her family through these very qualities, the ideal Yongean woman is best seen in the person of Violet Martindale, who converts her family through her power of "firm meekness" without ever doing anything that would be considered unsuitable for a woman.

This was the image that Yonge endorsed and did her best to portray in her novels, and the nearer a woman approaches the domestic ideal, the more Yonge approves of her. If a woman can combine housewifery, intelligence, absolute moral purity, a strong practical streak and a dutiful, submissive personality, Yonge sets her up as a model for her readers.

There are a few of these paragons in the novels, though Yonge seems more interested in women who are trying to conform to the ideal than in women who have actually achieved it. The perfect women, like Margaret May and Helen Fotheringham, lack savor, and often seem

marked for an early death, as if they are too perfect to live in an imperfect world. Their function is to inspire by example, but it seems they can best do this from another world. For a novelist, the characters in need of such inspiration have more value to the tale.

Women who have some difficulty conforming to the traditional role appear far more frequently, and often take a more central position. Yonge spends far more time dwelling on their struggles to become lady-like than on the somewhat insipid perfection of their female models and mentors. Ethel May and Rachel Curtis are given far more attention than Margaret May and Ermine Williams, partly for their didactic value. There is more to be learned from following someone through a learning process than simply from studying a person who has already reached the goal, and Yonge's wish to teach and her instinct for what would teach most effectively combine to place the focus on the apprentices to the womanly role.

Daughter, sister, wife and mother are the preferred roles for women in Yonge's world. Each woman is defined primarily in her relationship to some man, often one who acts as her mentor. Nowhere is there evidence of a woman who thinks of herself as an individual rather than as part of some male-focused entourage. All female concerns and interests are defined by a man's wish to be fed, amused or cared for.

Even in the Church, where one would expect to find a direct relationship between the individual and God, women are expected to be subordinate. Women ought not to concern themselves with theology,

leaving that to the more powerful and disciplined male intellect. Yonge implies without directly stating it that woman is so limited in her grasp that contact with God is really possible to her only through the mediation of some man. For all that the Church is the central fact of life, women can play only a peripheral role therein. Yonge would have been horrified at the mere idea of an ordained woman or a woman theologian. The appropriate role is as parish worker and Sunday School teacher, providing comforts and gentle spiritual guidance under the supervision of a clergyman. Becoming a nun is merely a specialized version of this destiny.

One other and slightly more romantic role in the Church is available to women of sound character and considerable endurance. As the wife or sister of a clergyman, a woman can have an active and fulfilling life. The requirements are much higher than for an ordinary wife, as a clergyman must be better than an ordinary man. To act as chief assistant and earthly inspiration to such a man a woman must be well-nigh a saint. She must be able to manage a family and a staff, oversee Sunday Schools, direct charity work and in general act as administrative assistant. In this way, a clergyman has more time for scholarship and preaching.

This is the highest destiny open to a woman, though Yonge's view, as ever, is practical and does not romanticize the difficulties of trying to manage a large family on a small stipend. Next in value, and invested with much the same mystique, is the nun or lay "consecrated virgin." Instead of the helpmeet of one man, this woman is

the support and companion of Mankind through the Church. This sponsorship gives her activities a purpose and the direction Yonge feels a woman could not possibly be wise enough to supply for herself. Yonge does not look down on the single woman as a failure, but regards her as someone whose destiny is to devote herself to humanity in general. In this way, she is not an "old maid" but a person with a worthwhile life and a legitimate status in the community.

The pre-adolescent girls in Yonge's work is seen more in her position as child than specifically as a girl. Aside from the greater freedom given to boys and the fact that boys are sent to public schools to prepare them for careers, they are raised in much the same way. Yonge does not believe in keeping girls inactive or uneducated. A girl who has only "accomplishments," she feels, will not be capable of fulfilling her destiny as helpmeet to a man (or to Mankind).

As they grow, girls get fewer privileges than boys, and have more responsibilities. Boys are largely exempt from household duties, while girls are expected to share in the housekeeping. Girls often wind up acting as unpaid auxiliary servants to their brothers. They are expected to subordinate any activity of their choice to the higher calling of keeping their brothers amused and contented. This serves as excellent training for a future of submission to a husband's least whim. It is also their duty to their brothers. By providing a happy home atmosphere and a pure, maidenly influence, a girl can keep her brother from succumbing to the unspecified dangers of the outside world.

During her youth, a girl is expected to gain an education, and a rather broad one. Yonge saw nothing objectionable in a girl's studying science or the classics, though it was preferable that she do so at home. Bearing this is mind, a wide range of intellectual development was possible. Yonge herself was clever and well-trained, though not to the degree she saw as possible only for a man.

It was Yonge's firm opinion that the best possible education for girls was at home. There they would be protected from unsuitable friendships, unhealthy ideas and the possiblity of meeting young men of whom their parents would not approve. Only in the home circle could their mental and physical innocence be assured. A girl educated in school, especially a boarding school, might become frivolous and selfish, or might start exploring lines of thought that had not first been carefully examined by her parents.

At home the girl could be kept safely under parental control. If her parents were her only teachers, there would be no competing influences, and Yonge felt this was the wisest mode of education. She realized that it was not always possible, for a large family or an invalid parent might make it necessary to import a governess to supplement the parental teaching. This was not a step to be undertaken lightly. The wrong sort of governess could prove to be an extremely bad influence on a susceptible young girl. Theodora Martindale's governess is an agnostic, who speaks of the Bible as a series of myths and teaches her charge coldness and disrespect for authority. The Fulmorts' Miss Fennimore is a crammer, untempered by Anglican

principles, who goads one of her pupils into brain fever and is quite unfitted to cope with the youngest, who is mentally retarded. When Miss Fennimore repents and reforms, she decides that she is only fit "to teach in a school." The daughters of the middle classes obviously require less tender care than the daughters of the County.

Even an unsatisfactory governess like the Mays' Miss Bracy is preferable to sending a girl to school. Miss Bracy is certainly accomplished, but is nervous, over-apologetic and given to feeling hurt over fancied slights. She is a great trial to the entire household, but the Mays still consider themselves better off than Averil Ward, who was sent to school and learned nothing useful. Averil knows so little of anything that she cannot even nurse her parents in their last illness, and home nursing is one of the skills that Yonge assumes is natural to every woman, unless a school has taught her to undervalue it and not practice her innate skills.

Schools for girls are a necessary evil in certain cases. The Underwood girls attend a day school because their family cannot afford a governess and their parents are too busy with family and parish cares to do the teaching themselves. Only lame Geraldine is taught by her father, because she is too weak to go to school with her older sisters. The boys of course go to school, but boys are less corruptible and must also be fitted for careers.

Teaching, whether in a school or as a governess, is one of the few careers Yonge considers suitable for women who are obliged to support themselves. This is in keeping with the Victorian tradition

that a lady in reduced circumstances could only become a governess, a companion or a seamstress and remain respectable. Robina Underwood, Lucilla Sandbrook and others like them are usually clever and well-educated, but not good at needlework, which makes teaching the logical choice. A heroine from a poor family will set out methodically to prepare herself for teaching, and Yonge sees this as one of the few acceptable reasons for a girl to go to school. While there, she is to learn everything she can, so that she can relieve her family of the burden of supporting her as soon as possible.

Robina and Angela Underwood are sent to a school (curiously enough, it is Miss Fennimore's) in order to train to be governesses. Robina profits by the opportunity, and learns enough to teach not only such accomplishments as sketching and water-color painting, but several languages, mathematics, botany, geology and the usual history, orthography, etc. With this preparation, she becomes a governess to Lord de la Poer's children, and is soon accepted as a member of the family. She insists on keeping on in her job in order to save for her marriage, and is eventually able to start as a country clergyman's wife with a comfortable nest egg. Robina is admired for her insistence on working because it is family-directed; to keep her from being a burden on her brother or on her future husband. This makes it acceptable for her to work for wages instead of staying at home as a lady really should.

Whether educated at school or at home, Yonge feels that a woman's education should stop at the secondary level. She does not approve

of University education for women, feeling it both too secular and too masculine. As a well-known writer, her opinions were respected, and she was often asked for her support of various projects for the furtherance of women's higher education. Her usual reply was in such terms as these:

> I am obliged to you for your letter respecting the proposed College for Ladies, but as I have decided objections to bringing large masses of girls together and think that home education under the inspection and encouragement of sensible fathers, or voluntarily continued by the girls themselves, is far more valuable both intellectually and morally than any external education, I am afraid I cannot assist you.
>
> I feel with much regret that female education is deficient, but I think the way to meet the evil is by rousing the parents to lead their daughters to read, think, and converse. All the most superior women I have known have been thus formed, by home influence, and I think that girls in large numbers always hurt one another in manner and tone if in nothing else. Superior women will teach themselves, and inferior women will never learn more than enough for home life.[1]

For Yonge, home duties came first in a woman's life, and education could not be allowed to interfere. She required Ethel May to abandon her beloved Latin and Greek in favor of housekeeping and looking after the smaller children. Once this is done, Ethel is so busy that she is never able to go back to studying. Her brothers, who have little or nothing to do at home, are all being trained for careers and so must be left free to study.

[1] Yonge to Emily Davies on a college for women, 1868, in Battiscombe, Yonge, p. 146.

In general, Yonge feels that a woman may be as highly educated as she pleases, as long as it does not take her out of her proper sphere. If she has satisfied all her household duties, done her church work and catered to the whims of her father, brothers or husband, she may have some time for herself. Meta Rivers is able to escape to her room, and Thirlwall's Greece, after she has sung her brother to sleep every night. There is no suggestion that she might be justified in putting any of her own preferences ahead of her brother's need to be amused.

In later life, Yonge was to modify her ideas to a certain extent. The lack of qualified governesses and the greater availability of trained teachers led her to issue a somewhat grudging acceptance of the new girls' High Schools, as long as the students remained day pupils and were thus safely under home influence most of the time. Dolores Mohun is even allowed to give a course of lectures on science at a High School, though she never seems to become a qualified teacher.

Yonge's opinions on careers also changed slightly toward the end of the century. Home was still preferable, but more employments could be considered ladylike if devoted to Church work. In one of her later books, a "Lady Doctor" appears. This doctor, whose practice is in Ceylon, appears to be a medical missionary. As this is not for self-aggrandisement but in God's service, it is accepted, though Yonge still feels it rather questionable as an employment for a woman.

Yonge recommends against early marriages, though she is not above using them for dramatic effect. Teen-aged brides like Amy Morville and Violet Martindale are pathetic and affecting, excellently fitted to engage the interest of a public with a strong taste for the sentimental. In general, Yonge felt that before seventeen, a girl should be a schoolgirl, occupied with her studies. From 17 to 21, she should devote her time to helping her parents, as a species of apprenticeship for wifehood. Only after coming of age should she start a definite path in life, whether it is to be marriage or a single life, dedicated to Church or family.

Until that time, a girl should occupy her mind with some useful course of study or charitable work, structured to promote mental discipline. Yonge recommends preparing for the Cambridge Examinations as Robina Underwood does. "As these [exams] are conducted in writing and are not competitive they do not seem to me to involve anything unfeminine or undesirable."[2] Competing in public or for marks is not suitable for a lady.

Whatever the direction of a young woman's education, her character training was supposed to proceed along much the same lines. The ideal girl is refined, though not prudish. Her nobility of character and propriety of conduct strengthen her, so that she does not shrink from dirt or trouble if it is her manifest duty. Yonge has no patience with a woman too "refined" to nurse the sick or to help the poor. This

[2] Yonge, Womankind, p. 84.

sort of squeamishness is considered false modesty, while a true lady will face anything if it is indeed necessary to help others.

True modesty must, however, be preserved in a girl's relationship with men. Except for her father and brothers, she should have little contact with men. The truly modest and shrinking maiden never flirts, never acts other than frankly and sisterly, and spends as little time as possible thinking of love. It is reprehensible and immodest to betray a romantic interest in a young man. Ideally, a proposal of marriage should come as a complete surprise, and the girl's first reactions should be shock and a strong reluctance to leave her parents. This is usually, though not invariably, the case in Yonge's novels. Amy's response to Guy's proposal is first fear that she has been too "forward", then confusion, followed by a "gleam of frightened joy ... downcast eye and troubled smile"[3] as she rushes immediately to tell mamma, still not sure that her wish to accept is right.

Yonge's portrayals of courtships are usually stiff and unconvincing. This may be due to the fact that she apparently never received a proposal, or even thought of being in love. This type of thing is not really good to think about, she feels, for a modest girl does not do so until it actually happens to her. Thus Yonge prefers to skip over this stage and proceed directly to the wedding. This is after all woman's ultimate destiny, and she draws detailed

[3] Yonge, Heir, p. 224.

portraits of young brides becoming accustomed to the role of wife.

The etiquette of the time made it almost impossible for a well-brought-up young Englishwoman to know a man well enough to find out if she wanted to marry him. Propriety was all-important, and for a girl to see a young man from outside the family circle without proper chaperonage was unthinkable. Margaret May has to give up a walk with her sisters and the governess (who apparently is not a sufficient chaperone) when Alan Ernescliffe decides to join them. She envies the younger girls very much for being too young to be "plagued with tiresome propriety."[4]

Propriety is tiresome but necessary in Yonge's view. If a girl is not free from every breath of scandal, she can hardly be a fitting partner for an upright and Christian man. When Lucilla Sandbrook insists on trespassing and poaching while on a fishing expedition, little is said. When she goes to Ireland accompanied only by a female cousin of her own age, this is so scandalous as to render her unfit to be a clergyman's wife. It is odd, to say the least, that Yonge accepts the poaching as a minor matter, in spite of its being distinctly illegal. She reserves her horror for the unprotected travel, which is "unfeminine."

As one would expect, sexuality is an entirely taboo topic. The closest contact ever shown is a chaste and sisterly kiss. No woman admires a man's physical attractiveness except in the detached way suitable for looking at a portrait of a saint. The typical attitude

[4] Yonge, Daisy Chain, p. 5.

of a girl toward her betrothed is one of hushed reverence more suitable to a demi-god than a human being. Babies arrive only well after marriage, and their arrival is completely unannounced.

Marriage is treated and analyzed as the chief duty of woman, while a wife is judged according to her ability to sustain the prescribed submissive relationship to her earthly master, accepting his guidance and the restraint of his authority. Yonge defines four kinds of wives in Womankind: the cowed, the dead weight, the maitresse femme and the helpmeet. The helpmeet is the type she recommends and expects her female readers to model themselves upon. The others are useful both for their dramatic interest and as examples of the behavior to avoid.

The cowed wife is a weak, ineffectual woman married to a rough or violent man. Like Alda Underwood Vanderkist, who bears seven daughters in the first eight years of her marriage and is desperately afraid of her alcoholic husband's ranges over such things as no truffles in the soup, these women are more submissive than even Yonge thinks proper. They are badly treated, to a point that would certainly justify divorce today. Even then, many would have condoned separation. Yonge, however, feels that no misconduct on the husband's side can remove him from his supreme position; the King can do no wrong. Her recommendation is that the woman be meek and endure, whatever the provocation: desertion, cruelty or adultery; and eventually her spirit of patient resignation to her lot will triumph.

This works very neatly in fiction, where Yonge controls the destiny of all the characters, often in defiance of the rules of probability. Sir Adrian Vanderkist manages to drink himself to death before completely wasting his estate, and his wife and daughters are not left entirely destitute.

The deadweight wife is the selfish, spoilt child who consults only her own whims. Her tastes and caprices rule the household, interfering with her husband's work and her children's development. She is about as much use to the family as one of the younger children. Such a one is Juliana Acton (Hopes and Fears) whose self-centered cruelty to her sisters, Phoebe and the feeble-minded Bertha, who need a home, causes even her usually indulgent husband to protest. The deadweight wife's main characteristic is the shirking of her evident duties. She simply will not take her share of responsibility, thus making more work for the rest of the family.

More blameworthy in Yonge's eyes is the "maitresse femme." This dangerous woman usurps her husband's place as ruler of the family, relegating him to the background. Her fatal flaw is an overly developed self-will (always a cardinal sin to Yonge). This need to control where she should submit eventually results in losing the love of her husband and children and the respect of the community. A widow can sometimes be forgiven for doing this; a woman whose husband is living never can.

It is this self-will that Wilmet Underwood must subdue in the early months of her marriage. She has been accustomed to controlling

her brothers and sisters and ruling the household for years, and it is not easy for her to achieve the proper state of cheerful submission to her husband. On her honeymoon, she finds herself bitterly regretting her impulses toward disobedience to a clearly expressed desire of her husband's:

> He had distinctly bidden her to go ... it had been a clear desire, courteously and calmly uttered, but decisive ... He had commanded, she had disobeyed ... Perhaps Wilmet had never known so hard a moment as this first galling of the yoke of subjection---the sense of being under the will of another.[5]

Her will once conquered by guilt and shame, Wilmet comes to find joy in submission, and fulfilment in being controlled.

Even if the husband is actually weaker, his wife should conceal this from the world, and preferably even from herself. All of her endeavors should be directed toward making him seem the authoritative figure he ought to be. As Violet Martindale does for Arthur, the weak man's wife should help and support her husband, concealing her cares and hurts and making even her closest friends believe that nothing is wrong in the marriage. Yonge tells her readers that if a wife loves her husband, prays for strength and does her duty, his character will grow and he will actually become what she has made him seem, as Arthur does.

Any woman capable of performing such a miraculous transformation could easily qualify for sainthood. She certainly removes herself

[5] Yonge, Pillars, p. 223.

from any danger of being considered a maitresse femme, and instead falls into the category of helpmeet. The helpmeet is the perfect wife, Patmore's "Angel in the House." The helpmeet exercises a quiet, firm authority as second-in-command of the family. She adapts everything so as to free him for his masculine duties, which are superior by definition. She is comforter, supporter and principal assistant, but never presumes to step out of her proper niche, second place.

There is only one set of circumstances in which it is both permissible and praiseworthy for a woman to engage in "unfeminine" activities. As long as modesty is not outraged, filial obedience takes precedence over traditional views of what is proper for women. This permits a wide range of activities that Yonge would ordinarily condemn. If the woman in question is obeying her father's wishes and exhibiting family loyalty, she is allowed to behave almost as though she were a gentleman rather than a lady.

Marilda Underwood is such a woman. The only child of parents who wished for a son, she is trained to assist her father in his business. She far prefers this to her mother's plans for a brilliant marriage. Indeed, only her wealth would make such a match possible, as she is far too plain and blunt-spoken to be acceptable in polite society. Only those discerning enough to see her essential kindness and womanliness (the latter shown by her wish to do housework) find her at all attractive.

While her father lives, Marilda is essentially a junior partner in the firm. After his death she assumes complete control and does

an extremely competent job as owner and operator. Yonge clearly indicates that Marilda is actually running the business rather than leaving it to a manager, and that she continues to do so even after her marriage to Fernan Travis. Her husband, a wealthy man in his own right, becomes a partner; Marilda continues at the head of the business.

All this activity is right because her father wished it; thus it comes under the heading of filial duty. This makes it proper for Marilda to act without male supervision and to function outside the sphere of home, family or a "ladylike" occupation. She is doing her best to act as the son her father wanted. Her somewhat masculine looks and ways of speech joined with her poor taste in dress to make her a comic character, but her devotion to her father's memory and kindness to all her relatives make her loved in the family. Yonge appears to respect Marilda for doing her duty under difficult circumstances. Thus she is considered somewhat eccentric, but not to be punished or shunned, and eventually is rewarded with a suitable husband.

Marilda's case is unusual and excused only by her clear duty to follow her father's wishes. Were it not so, she would not be justified, and her fate would probably be more like that of Janet Brownlow. Janet mistakes personal inclination for duty in wishing to develop her late father's discovery, the "Magnum Bonum." In spite of the fact that she has several brothers who should properly take precedence, she sets herself to study medicine so that she can take

credit for the discovery.

Having embarked on an unladylike career for selfish motives, she finds the Magnum Bonum experiments too hard to perform. Her lack of proper male guidance makes her an easy prey for a shady Greek doctor who marries her, steals the formula, misuses it and deserts her. Janet is allowed to redeem herself by nursing the sick in a yellow fever epidemic and dying of the disease herself.

This is rather an extreme case, but represents Yonge's general attitude towards those who leave the prescribed feminine pattern without due cause. She was horrified and distressed, finding nothing so terrible as a woman who stepped out of the lady's role. Her graphic recounting of the terrible fates of such women leaves little doubt that she intended her readers to recoil as well. It would be difficult for a young girl raised on Yonge's work not to feel that a career or an education outside the bonds Yonge approved of was, to say the least, dangerous.

As one would expect, Yonge is an extreme anti-feminist. Her most explicit statement is The Clever Woman of the Family, but her opinions appear again and again. Agitation for what Queen Victoria called "this wicked, mad folly of woman's rights" is a sin, and will surely be punished. Women should leave public life to men, and confine themselves to charitable works under the supervision of a clergyman. She does not admit the possibility that there might be anything wrong or in need of change in women's status or opportunities.

Her attitude stemmed from a profound belief in the absolute inferiority of women. This was laid down in the Bible, and therefore not subject to question. Men, she feels, are more spiritual, more intelligent and wiser, and their superiority is ordained by God. A man can reach greater, higher and nobler things than any woman, and it is Divine Will that women be content with this state of affairs. Yonge regards such feminist ideas as the vote, careers (particularly in such masculine fields as medicine) and equal education as sacrilegious.

In addition, it is foolish for a woman to think of trying to equal a man or take a man's place in the world. Even a truly exceptional woman is mentally and physically incapable of making anything even remotely approaching the contribution that men make daily. Yonge asks her readers, "mentally where has the woman ever been found who produced any great and permanent work?"[6] In fact, such women were to be found among her own contemporaries and immediate predecessors. Jane Austen, the Brontës, George Eliot, all of whom Yonge had read, were among the examples she chose to discard because they did not fit her theory.

Where feminist characters appear in Yonge's work they are shown as either foolish or dangerous. They can cause great distress to themselves, their family and the community. Yonge recognizes, and portrays with feeling, the inner stresses on a woman whose talents

[6] Yonge, Womankind, p. 223.

and tastes seem to have no scope within the traditionally accepted role of woman as helpmeet and housekeeper. Ethel May would far rather be studying the classics than mending linen, and Rachel Curtis is desperate for any sort of useful activity at all. Both are profoundly unhappy and unable at first to resolve the contrast between what they want and what society tells them is fitting for a woman.

Yonge resolves this conflict at a stroke by declaring that no conflict actually exists. The answer is really quite simple: there is infinite scope for intelligence and activity within the domestic sphere, and women should stay there at all costs. Such things as intellectual development and community service are worthy outlets for surplus energy, but only if undertaken after fulfilling all traditionally womanly obligations and while adhering strictly to prescribed modes of behavior.

The community in The Three Brides is shocked by the unwomanly behavior of one Mrs. Duncombe. At a community meeting to discuss rebuilding a burned out section of town, she makes the only sensible and practical proposal. It includes rebuilding, providing jobs and repairing the unsanitary drainage system. The proposal is obviously a sound one, and would make the town a far healthier place in which to live.

But Mrs. Duncombe makes her speech in public, rather than asking her husband or some other man to speak for her. This scandalizes the community, except for a few feminists whom Yonge makes look thoroughly ridiculous in dress and speech and thus not to be considered. In the

end, Mrs. Duncombe's unwomanly behavior is severely punished. Her plan causes, in defiance of any scientific probability, a typhoid epidemic and many deaths. This serves her right for "putting herself out of her proper place." Mrs. Charnock-Poynsett, whose views are always accepted as right, comments that,

> The woman has much power of working usefully and gaining information, but the one thing that is not required is for her to come forward in public ... the delicate edges of true womanhood ought not to be frayed off by exposure in public.[7]

These delicate edges must be protected at all costs, even if it means the sacrifice of personality or the relinquishing of the chance of doing good to the community. Anything that was not suitable for the sheltered daughter of affluent parents was of course forbidden. The test must always be whether an opinion or a course of action is acceptable to such men as Keble and William Yonge. "That which a man would not tolerate in his sister or daughter is not becoming, and is unsexing."[8]

The whole of Yonge's consideration of the "woman question" is dedicated to defining and portraying the boundaries of woman's "proper place", and to keeping firmly within those boundaries. With her usual gift for detail and eye for the significant, Yonge is able

[7] Charlotte Mary Yonge, The Three Brides, (London: MacMillan, 1876), pp. 91-92.

[8] Yonge, Womankind, p. 233.

to present that place as both comfortable and attractive, full of both material and psychological rewards to the dutiful. She defends a system that was coming under increasingly critical scrutiny by showing how well it can function in ideal cases, and how happy some women (and men) can be within it. The home and the customary round of duties are shown as so cozy and friendly, the family so appreciative of its center and inspiration that it would be most ungrateful to feel that there is anything important missing in this domesticated paradise. That something (indeed a great many things) was missing is only too clear from the historical evidence. But these things were not worth having, and the "unsexed" woman finds her victory over convention a hollow one, bitterly regretting her departure from her "proper place." The woman who subdues any such desire (often to the point of denying she even had it) gains a life modeled on the virtuous woman of the Bible, whose price was above rubies, and is rewarded most of all by the inner knowledge that she is doing God's will.

The Clever Woman of the Family

The Clever Woman of the Family is Yonge's most detailed anti-feminist statement. It deals with two women: Rachel Curtis, who believes herself to be the "Clever Woman," and Ermine Williams, whom Yonge clearly sees as superior. Rachel, the feminist, acts as a vehicle for Yonge's dislike for any type of the New Woman. Ermine

is held up as a model to be emulated by Yonge's female readers.

Yonge puts Rachel's case very skillfully, and seems to enjoy acting as devil's advocate. Rachel is an active, intelligent young woman, and deeply distressed by the sufferings of the lace-makers in her town. Only her wish not to hurt her mother has kept her from outright rebellion at the socially-enforced idleness proper to a woman of her class. Finally, her dissatisfaction at being a young lady breaks out in a resounding feminist statement:

> I am a young lady forsooth! --- I must not be out late; I must not put forth my views; I must not choose my acquaintance; I must be a mere helpless, useless being, growing old in a ridiculous fiction of prolonged childhood, affecting those graces of so-called sweet seventeen that I never had.[9]

At first one wonders if Yonge had ever felt this way herself. Rachel was certainly not alone in her time in feeling this sense of constriction, of resentment of "tiresome propriety," and moreover her desire for action is directed toward helping those less fortunate than she. And on other occasions, Yonge has expressed a certain resigned acceptance of the fact that woman's position in society is not all that it might be. It would certainly be possible to see in this statement the stirrings of a larger discontent.

Had so respected a writer as Miss Yonge enrolled herself on the side of feminism, it would have provided literary models for a generation or more of readers. Her patronage could have done much

[9] Yonge, Clever Woman, v. 2, pp. 4-5.

to make these unconventional ideas respectable. But this appealing prospect was not to be. Yonge is setting up Rachel as a straw man (or woman), allowing her to state her arguments for the express purpose of refuting them.

Rachel's intense desire to do something for the sweated lacemakers of Avoncester leads her to form the Female Union for Lacemakers' Employment. The name is hastily changed to Female Union for Englishwomen's Employment when it is pointed out (by a man) that the original acronym is F. U. L. E.; sounding like fool. In spite of this obvious warning of disaster to come, Rachel proceeds impulsively on, without proper clerical supervision. No charity can prosper under such circumstances, and Rachel's efforts are a complete failure.

The project is intended to train young lacemakers for alternative employment as wood-engravers. The couple in whose charge Rachel puts the girls starve and ill-treat them, and they are rescued only by a woman Rachel has always despised for being too gentle and yielding. Rachel entrusted the project's funds to a confidence man masquerading as a minister, who cannot be convicted of embezzlement because she has foolishly neglected to keep proper records or have any written agreement.

Rachel's self-directed education did not develop in her a masculine sense of business. Thus she is unable to protect herself against the swindler, and takes all warnings merely as foolish principles directed at keeping her idle and dependent. The same education has stifled the housewifely and motherly faculties she scorns,

but that Yonge says would have made her able to detect the children's ill-treatment.

Part of Rachel's self-study has been in homeopathy with the vague idea of becoming a "doctress." This only leads her further into disaster. Her so-called medical knowledge is all from books, none from home nursing, and she ends by killing a diphteria patient with her half-understood homeopathy.

Even her efforts at writing for publication are based on half-understandings. She writes an article decrying "Curatolatry," and is upset to find she has combined Greek and Latin roots. Even after retitling the article "Curatocult," it is rejected by editor after editor. Even the Englishwoman's Hobbyhorse (a veiled reference to a noted feminist periodical) rejects her efforts.

Rachel's opposite is Ermine Williams, the real "Clever Woman," who has the good taste not to grate on the genteel Victorian sensibilities. Ermine has all the qualities Rachel wants to have and lacks. She is learned in many fields, understanding them as far as any woman is capable of doing.

Her modesty keeps her from making a parade of her knowledge. Her most closely kept secret is that she writes critical articles under the pseudonym "Invalid." The Traveller's Review and several other distinguished magazines, all of which reject Rachel's offerings, compete for Ermine's thoughtful writings on the Edgeworth system of education. Ermine even acts as replacement editor for the Traveller's

Review, though she is careful to have her letters copied in a masculine handwriting. Her mind has greater depth than Rachel's and her anonymity protects her from the stigma of setting up for an authoress.

Ermine not only writes on a high intellectual plane, but also keeps house for her sister and their brother's young daughter. This proves to Yonge's satisfaction that she is truly womanly; Rachel has no time for children unless they fit into her theories. Ermine manages to do all this while confined to a sofa, thus combining feminine fragility with womanly endurance of suffering.

Each time Ermine appears, she is still more noble, dignified, gentle and submissive to divine will. Her major function is to provide Rachel and the readers with a model of intellectual powers applied to suitable objects by a woman who never steps out of her "proper place." Rachel herself comes to realize that Ermine's real talents are greater than those of any around her, and her willingness to accept guidance from the wiser and deeper male sex has made it possible to use her intellect for the good of all.

Ermine devotes all of her considerable power and influence to supporting the status quo and to showing that woman's proper work and most useful sphere is behind the scenes. She proves that, if not contaminated by feminism or wilfulness, "intellect and brilliant power can be no snares, but only blessings helping the spirits in infirmity and trouble, serving as a real engine for independence and usefulness, winning love and influence for good, genuine talents

in the highest sense of the word."[10] Yonge concludes the book with this passage, serving to restress the theme.

In carrying out her theme, Yonge causes Rachel to suffer a nervous breakdown. The twin calamities of the FUEE fraud and the death of her patient send her into a complete collapse. Her grief, guilt and shame, coupled with the lack of a strong religious faith, create a mental state of confusion and lack of confidence in her own powers. She feels acutely the need of some guidance, a thing she has hitherto rejected scornfully. She needs someone stronger and wiser than herself to depend on, and seeks this quality (as Yonge feels is natural and right) in a man.

Rachel's destined master is Captain Alick (Alexander) Keith, V. C., a military hero and sound scholar, who can read not only Greek and Latin, but Hebrew, fluently and accurately. He knows more of the social and religious issues in which Rachel is interested than she does, and goes into them far more deeply.

Alick has loved Rachel for some time, and being accustomed to command, has no trouble in persuading her to marry him. He sees nobility of character in her insistence on accepting all the blame for the failure of the FUEE. Her unselfishness, dislike of useless convention and lack of prudery make her an ideal wife for a member of a marching regiment. Yonge always distinguishes between the established social mores and a type of squeamishness and prudery that

[10] Yonge, Clever Woman, v. 2, p. 319.

keeps women from doing their duty. Rachel's mistake has been in rejecting the former along with the latter.

Now, under the influence of love, Rachel comes to see that dependence is an inevitable part of woman's nature. She has been accustomed to thinking it "poor and weak" to be in love. She has scorned the idea of wanting anyone to take care of her. To her, marriage has been "ordinary drudgery," to be avoided as beneath an intelligent woman. Her love for Alick has changed all this, making her for the first time something approaching a truly womanly woman. Her former pride has been replaced by "a meek submission, very touching in its passiveness,"[11] an ideally receptive state.

Meekness and submission are qualities Yonge recommends to all women. In them, she says, lies women's true power. If a woman can but be meek and submissive enough, albeit strong when her duty calls her, she can be a great force for good in the world. It is here that a woman's destiny lies, rather than in seeking to act "out of her proper place" and without male guidance.

So Rachel gradually comes to learn, under the twin influences of her husband and his clergyman uncle. Mr. Clare, a cultivated and saintly clergyman of Keble's generation, is a fitting spiritual guide for a questing mind. With his help, Rachel subdues her religious doubts and learns humility. Mr. Clare is as careful of her sensibilities as he is of everyone's, and reaches her first through the intellect she has been so proud of.

[11] Yonge, Clever Woman, v. 2, p. 175.

The female mind, according to Yonge, is constituted in such a way as to need a masculine inspiration for its fullest development. In fact, "a woman's tone of thought is commonly moulded by the masculine intellect, which, under one form or another, becomes master of her soul."[12] So it is with Rachel. Mr. Clare becomes the spiritual director she needs, and the father figure every woman in Yonge's world wants. Under his guidance, she comes to realize that to submit to one's husband's direction is the greatest joy a woman can experience.

Thus Rachel comes to a full awareness of her feminine potential. The energy she used to devote to foolish efforts to appear intellectual, she enthusiastically turns to the care of her orphaned nephew. This unfortunate child is born prematurely after his rather flightly mother falls over a croquet hoop. Her death in childbirth is medically improbable, but an infant is necessary to allow Rachel's thwarted maternal instincts to flourish, and poor Bessie Keith is sacrificed to the demands of the plot.

Yonge makes some fun of Rachel for her habitual dependence on books by baby experts in raising the child. The "Hints on the Management of Infants" appears to be a Victorian Spock or Gesell, which Yonge thinks rather silly. By this point, however, Rachel has progressed to being able to temper book-learning with womanly instinct. This finally fits her to raise her own children lovingly and firmly in the kind of reverence for male and clerical authority

[12] Yonge, Clever Woman, v. 2, pp. 267-268.

she herself has learned. Ermine, the real "Clever Woman," comes to endorse Rachel's book-derived and experience-tested views on child-rearing as "very sensible," and when Ermine speaks, it is clear that she is speaking for Yonge.

In order to be fully certified as a womanly woman, Rachel has to learn the habit of complete obedience to her husband. She has been accustomed to independence, not consulting even her mother about her actions. As others in Yonge's books must learn, a husband's lightest word is law. In a major trial of strength, Alick forbids her to go to London alone. To be travelling unchaperoned and going about the city alone is improper for someone of her station, and Alick's air of "absolute determination" makes her feel that contesting the point further would be useless. She gives in, whereupon he allows her to go on condition that she takes the housekeeper with her. When this fails, she takes Mr. Clare, who, though old and blind, is sufficient protection for a lady's reputation. This makes Rachel conclude that she needs care and protection from the world. A man may do as he pleases, a woman must be sheltered and guarded. Readers like the parents who objected to afternoon sessions at North London Collegiate School because they could not spare servants for four journeys daily as chaperones to their daughters must have been comforted to find that Yonge endorsed their opinions.

This obedience does not mean that Yonge feels a woman should abandon the effort to think for herself. It is a positive duty to train one's mind and form one's own opinions. Mere passive acceptance

of dictates from above is not sufficient. There must be a willing and cheerful acquiescence in commands and a true understanding of their rightness. Only a woman who has thought for herself on moral and religious questions is really capable of learning how much better and deeper her husband's ideas are.

The "Clever Woman" has turned out to be a fool. Her rejections of what society in general considered feminine are shown to be disastrous. Rachel's failures in a man's world show that she is really a woman after all. The essentially intuitive, emotional female character is validated to Yonge's complete satisfaction, and readers are shown that feminism leads to misery, while womanly submissiveness is rewarded with an attractive husband and the respect of the community.

It is difficult not to feel that Rachel is a far more vital and interesting character before her transformation than after. Her ideas and enthusiasms seem quite justified, for the prescribed role must have been painfully constricting for an active, intelligent woman. If Yonge had any suppressed resentments about the role she so conscientiously championed, this may have been her way of expressing them. Once Rachel comes to accept her destiny, she becomes a bore. The vividness of the early Rachel does much to undermine Yonge's expressed thesis. There is no complete contradiction between what is said and what is shown; in fact it is subtle enough to pass unnoticed by the already convinced reader, or the reader seeking the kind of validation Yonge was known to provide. What is certain is that Yonge has portrayed with fidelity and clarity a type of woman who must have

existed, though seldom appearing in popular fiction.

Hopes and Fears

Hopes and Fears is the story of three women: Honora Charlecote, Lucilla Sandbrook and Phoebe Fulmort. Yonge felt that women, having less mental scope and strength of judgment than men, could easily be led into foolish actions. Again the only remedy for this is firm male guidance, preferably from either a male relative or a clergyman. In Hopes and Fears, the reader is shown some of the difficulties which a lack of guidance can cause at various stages in a woman's life. As a contrast, Yonge shows how serene and fulfilling life can be for someone who conforms to the womanly pattern.

Honora Charlecote is one of the most unusual and interesting of all Yonge's characters. The typical Yonge heroine is barely out of girlhood, in many cases still in her late teens. There is such an emphasis on youth as to make Violet Martindale say she has reached "the heat and glare of middle life" when she is only twenty-two. Children and young adults are generally the central personages in Yonge's novels. Honora, though, first appears as a woman of thirty, and is over fifty when the story ends. This is Yonge's only full study of a mature woman.

According to Yonge, Honora is

> ... neither more nor less than an average woman of the higher type. Refinement and gentleness, a strong

> appreciation of excellence, and a love of duty ... the qualities of womanhood well developed, were so entirely the staple of her composition that there is little to describe in her. Was she not one made to learn; to lean; to admire; to support; to enhance every joy; to soften every sorrow of the object of her devotion?[13]

This, then, is the nature of woman: to do all these things not for herself, but for some other.

In spite of all her qualities "of the higher type," Honora is prone to creat "Bilds" or idols, and one of Yonge's objects is to show how this female tendency can lead a woman to do foolish things. Fatherless and unmarried, Honora is particularly susceptible to this danger. The warning to unattached women is carried throughout the book, and Honora lives to regret that she idolized first the older and then the younger Owen, thus forfeiting Humfrey's love and the fulfilled life she could have had as his wife.

As a young woman, Honora creates a "Bild" of Owen Sandbrook, a fashionable and unstable young clergyman, while ignoring the presence of worthy but unromantic Humfrey Charlecote. Humfrey is obviously her destined mate, but she regards him merely as a kind older brother. Owen becomes a missionary in Canada, but tires of hard work and sacrifice, making a fashionable marriage and taking a comfortable country living in England. In spite of this disillusionment, Honora still worships him and refuses to admit any flaw in his character.

[13] Charlotte Mary Yonge, Hopes and Fears, or Scenes from the Life of a Spinster, (1860; repr. London: MacMillan, 1874), pp. 3-4.

When Owen dies of consumption, he bequeaths his son and daughter to Honora. She adopts them over the objections of all concerned. It is quite obvious that Yonge blames Honora severely for this, although it could be said that she is only obeying a charitable impulse. But the claims of family are so strong in Yonge's eyes that it is wrong for Honora, who is no relation, to take the children when they have relations willing to care for them.

Honora has good intentions, and means to be "justice and mercy combined" as a foster mother. Owen, who is exactly like his father, down to the self-centered character, takes his father's place in Honora's affections and gets all the mercy. Lucilla, who is like her mother, is treated coldly and punitively.

Both Owen and Lucilla are extreme disappointments, though their later repentance does much to atone for this. Unsuccessful in the parental role, Honora also comes to see that she has made a great many mistakes, ones that could have been avoided had there been someone to advise her. She finds that she has twice obsessively loved an unworthy person, has rejected the man she really loved and who loved her, and misunderstood Lucilla. The estate Humfrey left her has been mismanaged through her lack of business sense. All this is laid to the absence of a natural mentor, who could have guided her and helped her to exercise her naturally good qualities. The need to "lean, support and admire" is strong in her, and she gradually must come to realize the superior wisdom of a much younger generation and take as her mentors Robert Fulmort, who teaches her Christian

resignation, and Humfrey Randolf, a distant relative and her proper heir.

The latter is also the "wise man" and proper object of reverence. In the 'Indian summer" of her life Honora is able to combine the energy of her youth with the tempering of experience and good sense.

> Her girlhood suffered from a great though highminded mistake, her womanhood was care-worn and sorrow-stricken. As first the beloved of her youth, so again the darling of her after-age was a disappointment ... Desolateness taught her to rely no longer on things of earth, but to satisfy her soul with that love which is individual as well as infinite ... She is no longer forlorn; the children whom she bred up, and those whom she led by her influence alike vie with one another in their love and gratitude.[14]

Honora has been misguided, but acted from right principles and the wish to do good, and so is eventually rewarded. Although her life has been unfulfilled in the way that she had hoped for, she still can look back and count it a success. The single woman's life can be as fulfilling in its sphere as that of the married woman in hers, though attended with more difficulties due to the lack of a natural mentor and guide. A middle-aged spinster appears in Yonge's work not as a comic character or object of satire, but as one with a recognized place in society and duties to perform, and entitled to respect thereby. This status, absent in so many novels of the day, must have been reassuring to the reader who knew or suspected that

[14] Yonge, Hopes and Fears, p. 643.

she would never marry, and is one of Yonge's major positive creations.

Lucilla, Honora's adopted daughter, serves as still another example of the dangers besetting a woman who goes into the world while lacking proper male guidance. She commits indiscretion after indiscretion, though never falling into any unpardonable folly. After an extended period of penance, she is rehabilitated and allowed to have a womanly life.

In her childhood, Lucilla suffers from a distinct father fixation. Sandbrook has spoiled her outrageously, and caused her to become entirely dependent on him for affection. When his death abruptly severs the relationship, she responds by stifling her feelings. Honora's favoritism toward the younger Owen, which Lucilla sees as a further rejection (and this is indeed the case), causes her to reject in turn everything Honora tries to teach her.

The result is that Lucilla grows up cold and unfeeling. She is a thorough flirt, and entirely lacking in decorum, piety or sense of duty. Her greatest pleasure is in seeing how far she can go in shocking society, leading to her gaining a reputation as a "fast" woman. In fact, Lucilla is distinctly unmaidenly, having all the qualities Yonge most disapproves of in a woman.

In spite of this, Lucilla's beauty and intelligence win her many suitors. The most prominent of these is Robert Fulmort, a young clergyman from a wealthy family. Such a marriage would be the greatest of honors for a young woman with the proper attitude, but Lucilla feels otherwise. She would far prefer to have him become a partner

in his father's gin-distilling business, so that she can live as her rich cousins do. She sets herself strongly against Robert's desire to devote himself to a slum parish. She and Robert both realize that she would be miserable in such a setting, yet this is not at the root of their parting.

The precipitating incident is a trip to Ireland which Lucilla insists on taking with her cousin Horatia. Not only are they planning to fish, which is unladylike, but to travel unchaperoned. The latter is so shocking as to make her entirely unfit for polite society. Robert issues an ultimatum: either she resigns the expedition and stays quietly at home, or she forfeits his regard forever.

Honora also tries to dissuade Lucilla. She reminds her wayward charge that she is "going beyond the ordinary restraints of women in your station; and a person who does so, can never tell to what she may expose herself. Liberties are taken when people come out to meet them."[15] Lucilla scornfully rejects this idea as outmoded. Nothing, she says, could possibly happen to her, and one should be above society scandal. She refuses to be managed or advised by anyone. She is assuming a "masculine" independence of thought and action for which she will certainly be punished.

This is doubly forbidden according to the rules both of society and of the Church. Honora continues her sermon by belaboring just this point:

[15] Yonge, Hopes and Fears, p. 177.

> ... there is harm to yourself [she tells Lucilla] in the affectation of masculine habits; it is a blunting of the delicacy suited to a Christian maiden, and not like the women whom St. Paul and St. Peter describe. ... You, my poor child, who have no one to control you, or claim your obedience as a right, are doubly bound to be circumspect.[16]

Even the appeal to Biblical authority, coupled with an appeal to the shade of her father (who Honora feels would certainly have disapproved) fails to sway Lucilla. She continues on her trip, standing convicted of the twin sins of unladylike behavior and lack of filial piety.

Yonge's shocked horror at a journey with an older female cousin was soon to be seen as excessive even in conservative circles. But she felt it necessary, as always, to uphold the strict standards imposed by her parents. The narrative thus demands that Lucilla be made aware of the gravity of her crime, punished, and only admitted back into the author's good graces after an extended period of repentance. This takes a good deal longer than in the case of Rachel Curtis (years rather than months) because Rachel is motivated by a sincere, if misguided, wish to do good, while Lucilla's wilful behavior rises from frivolity and contrariness.

In Ireland, Lucilla is forced to defend herself from "insulting advances." A rather bounderish fellow named Calthorp, with whom Lucilla has flirted at parties, follows the two women for a few days, tries to call on them, and has the temerity to address Lucilla in "familiar, patronizing tones." Lucilla finds the pursuit insulting,

[16] Yonge, Hopes and Fears, p. 178.

and fears that he will talk about meeting her when he returns to his club. The "insulting advances" seem to be nothing more than ordinary conversation and the offering of assistance when Horatia sprains her ankle, as Yonge is much to prudish to suggest even an unwanted kiss, but the tone makes it clear that almost anything might have happened to a woman protected only by another woman. While a woman may be perfectly capable of protecting herself, Yonge maintains that "the very fact of having to defend herself is well-nigh degradation."[17] The message is clear: transgression of the social code in its most conservative interpretations is unworthy of a "Christian maiden."

Lucilla is overcome by grief and guilt, and realizes she has lost Robert forever. Enough pride still remains to her to make her unwilling to return and play the part of dutiful adopted daughter to Honora. Impulsive in maintaining her pride as in everything, she embarks on an extended period of solitary penance, taking up a career as a governess. She realizes that she is not really suited for such a position, but like many actual ladies of the time needing to earn a living, there is quite literally nothing else she can do.

As a governess, Lucilla is not a success. Her clothes are far too modish, making her appear "fast" for her station, and she is too beautiful to be acceptable in a household where there are young men. She is also temperamental, and tends to neglect her duties in favor of such new-found pursuits as amateur photography. In spite of all

[17] Yonge, Hopes and Fears, p. 239.

this, her pupil is quite fond of her. Nevertheless, Lucilla loses her job through helping her employer's nephew with his photography. This leads to some flirtation, which shows she has not yet entirely reformed, and the flirtation to her discharge.

Chastened and nervously exhausted, Lucilla returns home and begs Honora's forgiveness for all her wilful conduct. This submission once made, Lucilla recovers quickly from her "decline" and is able to be for the first time a truly feminine woman. While she still has brilliant color, joyous eyes and a lively manner, these are supplemented with tact, grace, pensiveness and calm. All these qualities will be needed in her future life, and Yonge sees them as among the chief ornaments of a woman.

Lucilla is now ready for her true vocation, marriage. Instead of Robert Fulmort, who has now vowed himself to celibacy, she marries Mr. Prendergast, a shy, awkward, elderly clergyman she has known since childhood. She has finally found the father-figure she has been searching for all her life. Though the other characters are rather startled, it is clear that Yonge approves, thinking that a certain amount of paternalism in a husband is a good thing for a marriage.

Now that Lucilla has learned to obey and has been rewarded with the fatherly love she sought, she is a changed woman. The headstrong girl who once appeared at a ball in a dress trimmed entirely with fishing-flies and a coronet of both flies and fishhooks (a decidedly "fast" costume) is now

> ... happy but subdued; quiet and womanly, gentle without being sad, grave but not drooping; and though she was cheerful and playful, with an entire absence of those strange effervescences that had once betrayed acidity or fermentation. ... The satisfied look of rest that had settled on her fair face made it new. All her animation and archness had not rendered it half so pleasant to look upon.[18]

This new-found tranquility is the hall-mark of Lucilla's submission to the divine plan for her life. Like Honora, she has learned to be fulfilled and contented through submission. In both cases, the struggle has been severe and painful, enough so to make a reader feel that her own difficulties are less by comparison.

In the case of Phoebe Fulmort, Yonge gives us an example of the naturally perfect woman; the paragon as daughter, sister and wife. Phoebe belongs to a subplot concerned with the doings of the Fulmort family. This focuses on Phoebe, and could aptly be called "Phoebe, or How a Young Girl Kept her Innocence in the Midst of Worldly Surroundings, and how she Converted her Rationalistic Governess and her Reprobate Brother."[19] She also cares for her invalid mother, nurses her reckless sister Bertha through brain fever, keeps up her accomplishments and education, and prevents the family from sending her feeble-minded sister Maria to an institution.

[18] Yonge, Hopes and Fears, p. 588.

[19] Mare and Percival, p. 196.

Phoebe is a representative of the Yongean ideal woman. The adjectives Yonge employs for her are earnest, innocent and sincere. These are qualities Yonge values and promotes in women, particularly when combined with a ready blush and a "fresh, simple air." Phoebe's common-sense and sound Tractarian principles keep her firmly on the right course, and she has the additional advantage of a suitable male mentor in her clergyman brother Robert (Lucilla's suitor and a recurring mentor figure in the linked novels).

Her function in the novel is to illustrate the joint power of right principles and maidenly modesty in the face of any threat. This enables her to rout a burglar and to testify calmly at his trial, winning the admiration of the County. She is also able to withstand considerable pressure from her selfish older sisters. These unamiable and self-centered socialites wish her to enter society and marry, as they did, only for money. Phoebe will not engage in the superficial, materialistic life, nor will she marry someone she cannot respect and defer to. Further, she will not desert Maria, fulfilling a promise to her late mother.

Phoebe combines Honora's intelligence and wish to do good and Lucilla's quick perception and patience. Coupled with the possession of a suitable mentor, this makes her able to succeed in her objectives, where Honora and Lucilla fail in theirs. Her greatest joy is in being of service to others; helping her family unobtrusively but cheerfully, so that everyone benefits. She is content to be the center and mainstay of the household, without looking for praise or

recognition.

Her activities range from decorating Robert's spartan room in London with pictures, books and comfortable furniture, so that the place becomes a real home, to nursing her mother in her (the mother's) last illness. Her kindness and ability to create a homelike atmosphere persuade her brother Mervyn to stop drinking, while her patience and sisterly loyalty to him in the face of social ostracism cause him to reform his way of life. He renounces gambling, unspecified excesses, and having rakish young men as his guests. Under the impetus of fraternal feelings, and a quite credible wish to annoy his sister Juliana (Yonge's psychological observation is as accurate as ever) he makes a home for his younger sisters.

Unfortunately, the rakish guests are not banished soon enough. Bertha falls in love with one of them and elopes. She is rescued in time to save her reputation, but develops "brain fever" and is saved only by Phoebe's devoted nursing. Phoebe's simple and trusting faith rescues Bertha and impresses Miss Fennimore, the "Rationalistic Governess," with the truth of a religious system that provides such strength under trial. Phoebe has learned not to preach, which would be improper for a lady, but to teach through the example of right living and right thinking. Under her influence, remarkable for a girl still in her teens, Miss Fennimore abandons Unitarianism, joins the Church of England, and after a period of teaching in a school (which Yonge views as a penance) is welcomed once more into the family circle.

Phoebe's love story once again is to prove to the reader the superiority of a right-thinking Christian maiden. She is no flirt like Lucilla, indeed she spends very little time thinking of love. Her innocence of such feelings is entirely suitable for a young lady who should not even consider such matters on her own initiative. Phoebe prefers home and siblings to balls and young men, and her developing love for Humfrey Randolf comes as rather a surprise to her. He sees in her a suitable helpmeet wife, and she discerns in him a worthy object for devotion. As always, Phoebe uses a good sense and good judgment in her choice and is properly rewarded.

At Phoebe's wedding, which forms the closing scene of the book, the young couple is described as

> ... goodly to look upon, in their grave, glad modesty and self-possession, and their youthful strength and fairness---which, to Honor's [sic] mind, gave the idea of the beauty of simple strength and completeness, such as befits a well-built vessel at her launch, in all her quiet force, whether to glide over smooth waters or to battle with the tempest. Peaceful as those two faces were, there was in them spirit and resolution sufficient for either storm or calm, for it was steadfastness based upon the only strong foundation.[20]

The ideal woman is matched with the ideal man in the perfect marriage, one of the sort denied to Honora and Lucilla. The lesson of Phoebe's life is this: be kind, patient and submissive, yet energetic and steadfast, and you will be rewarded. This is what Yonge wishes to teach her female readers, that forming one's life

[20] Yonge, Hopes and Fears, p. 643.

according to the conventions could provide deep emotional satisfactions, while departing from them leads to a thwarted life. Like Guy Morville, Phoebe serves to illustrate the possibility of romance in daily life and (relatively) mundane settings. Both are models whom a reader could hope to emulate, with patience, steadfastness and piety in their own lives. Thus a reader could share something of the special qualities of the chosen model, and conduct life according to a pattern invested with romance and yet more or less functional in ordinary life.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

For many years after her death, Yonge was considered primarily as a writer of children's stories. Such critical attention as she received after her popularity waned was largely scornful, dismissing her as an unfashionable speaker for out-moded social and religious codes. Interest in her work was mainly limited to a small circle of cultists and bibliophiles, and to readers who had discovered copies of her books on family bookshelves. There were occasional references to her work in studies of Tractarianism, but few literary critics or social historians paid much attention to a writer who had been one of the most popular of her day.

In recent years, there have been signs of a critical re-evaluation of Yonge and her place in the study of Victorian literature. The Heir of Redclyffe, her most famous book, has been reprinted, as have Abbeychurch, The Castle Builders, Magnum Bonum and The Clever Woman of the Family. There are also current or recent editions of some of her children's books: The Little Duke, The Dove in the Eagle's Nest, and Countess Kate. One often finds her discussed in surveys of literature, and referred to as an authority on household matters and domestic details. While she cannot be ranked with Eliot, Dickens and the Brontes, her work has both a certain intrinsic merit and a great deal of value for

the student of Victorian social and cultural history.

Popular literature is particularly useful to the historian for the portrait it gives of a particular time. Analysis of such works can reveal much about their readers. It can indicate what they believed about themselves and their world, what they wanted to believe, and which of their beliefs they considered important enough to have validated in fictional form.

It is in this sort of analysis that Yonge's novels become more than mere literary curiosities. Even Q. D. Leavis, who otherwise denied that Yonge's works had any claim to be taken seriously as art, felt that examination of the Yonge opus could be profitable as "contribution to the sociological history of literature."[1] Taken in this light, one can find in Yonge much of interest to a modern reader.

Throughout her career, Yonge acted as an upholder of traditional values in several areas. In an age of growing religious skepticism and of lip service paid to doctrine, she took her religion seriously and admitted it to every part of the daily life she portrayed. It is said that one of her greatest achievements was to make goodness attractive, in the persons of such heroes as Guy Morville.

[1] Q. D. Leavis, "Charlotte Yonge and Christian Discrimination", in Scrutiny, XII, 1949, reprinted in A Selection from Scrutiny, comp. F. R. Leavis, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, (1968), p. 147.

While Yonge's religion is narrow doctrinally, it is credible in its presentation. The inner crises of her characters are real to them, if not to the modern reader. While the doubts they feel seem inconsequential today, and their scruples mere hair-splitting, one can see that they do feel these things intensely. The ability to show this intensity of religious feeling in many of its manifestations is one of Yonge's major uses to the historian. Today it is difficult to see why establishing monthly celebrations of Communion was a matter of such import, or how it was that people should find their greatest pleasure in attending diocesan missionary meetings, which partook of few of the qualities of showmanship found in modern religious television programs, but so it was. Contemporary diaries and other biographical material show that the enthusiastic participation in religious observances and the passionate concern for doctrine was not peculiar to Yonge, but fairly common.

Throughout her life, Yonge supported the Established Church, and the high Church segment of it within which she was raised. In every work, she adhered firmly to Keble's views, making them seem gentle, homelike and familiar to the reader. Along with many of her readers, she could never be quite happy with "Christian Socialism," which went against her views that the established social order was the proper one, if only all parties did their duty according to the station to which God had called them. Nor was she pleased with the extreme ritualist party, who were preoccupied with incense and services in Latin, and with celebrating the feasts of obscure saints.

Where Yonge and her generation had felt reverence toward Church services and buildings, the ritualists often seemed to her to be more concerned with outward forms than with inward feelings. Such characters as the Vicar's sister in Magnum Bonum--far more concerned with having a banner decked with tassels and cords of the proper liturgical colors than with the meaning of the Harvest Festival it was to decorate--are emblems of her dislike for those who adhere to ritual alone.

In an age of doubt, Yonge provided her readers with the comfortable feeling that home-religion was the best. While she came to acknowledge that doubt did not automatically make one an infidel, she provided in her books a system of resolving doubts that had always worked for her. This included active participation in good works and parish affairs, and reliance on the Church and its teachings as a firm and unyielding support in resolving any questions.

Yonge held up religion as a more life-enhancing force than did many of her contemporary writers. And in a time when the will to believe was strong and the desire to believe stronger still, she provided not only a moral code, but a set of emotionally fulfilling practices and tenets, suitable for adoption by the perplexed reader. In later years, her doctrinal views had solidified in a form too narrow to meet the needs of the new age, and this no doubt contributed to the relative decline in quality of her later work. During the peak of her creative output, the years from The Heir of Redclyffe

through The Pillars of the House, (1853-1873), she told readers what they wished to hear: that a renewed Anglican spirit was compatible with both moral earnestness and the natural human desire for romance. Her achievement in her day was to teach what a large proportion of the population wished to be taught. Her value now is in the evidence she provides for students of Victorian churchmanship of the beliefs and customs mid-Victorians held. Far more useful than Keble's Christian Year, her books provide a record of the cycle of the Church year and of the place of the Church in the daily lives of many of its nineteenth-century adherents.

It was partly for this ability to show religion as a living force that Henry James praised Yonge as a great practitioner of what he called "Sunday Reading." This genre he defined as a mixture of religion and fiction, always containing a moral lesson. The main trait of this school is compromise between serious and mundane matters, between the interests of youth and those of adults. In its highest form, it produces a novel which can be read by adults to children without either part being bored. While James does not place this type of writing on the same high plane as "real novels," he admits of their value as "semi-developed" novels.

> Occasionally, like the 'Heir of Redclyffe,' they almost legitimate themselves by the force of genius. But this only when a first-rate mind takes the matter in hand. By a first-rate mind we here mean a mind which (since its action is restricted beforehand to the shortest gait,

> the smallest manners possible this side of the ridiculous) is the master and not the slave of its material.[2]

Yonge's scope of consideration was certainly much restricted, and deliberately so. There was much in the Victorian world of which she knew nothing and therefore could not speak; still more of which she chose not to speak. But within the bounds she laid down for herself, she was certainly the "master and not the slave" of the content of a novel of domestic manners. While her portraits of family life among the professional classes and "squirearchy" are idealized to a certain extent, she idealized much as the age idealized itself, and is the more valuable for reflecting the family as her readers wished it to be.

Yonge presents the family as the individual's primary source of strength and emotional support. Within her painstaking accounts of middle and upper-middle class life we see the family circle the Victorians tried to achieve. The home is ordered, secure and a refuge from the outside world. Papa is firmly in command of his large brood, and so good and highminded that his authority is absolute. Mamma is kind and supportive, her firm, tender control over her children guiding them subtly into right conduct and right thought. Each child has his or her place in the family hierarchy; the older ones look after the younger; the girls defer to the boys; and everyone

[2] Henry James, "The Schonberg-Cotta Family", The Nation, (September 14, 1865), repr. Notes and Reviews, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Dunster House, 1921), p. 78.

to the parents. Everyone is so happy within the circle that they choose family companionship and family activities in preference to any other.

When this family does not exist, as is often the case, it is the ideal toward which everyone strives. Unruly members are gently but firmly coerced into behaving as they ought. Repentant wanderers are welcomed back into the fold. Surrogate parents are supplied when death or absence prevents one from filling the destined role. In particular, the oldest daughter becomes mother to the rest, as Margaret May does for the other "daisies" and Wilmet for the thirteen young Underwoods.

By doing one's duty, one is provided with an automatic status within the family, and the satisfactions that come with fulfilling a clearly defined role. Once again Yonge's sense of what was right fitted what her readers wished to hear.

In family stories too, Yonge made traditional values interesting and exciting. The world resembles closely that in which she grew up. It was the peaceful place, the shelter, the area of sentiment and sentimentality. It is not unsurprising that her most vital pictures were of brothers and sisters and the closeness that develops between siblings united against a hostile outer world. In providing herself with the large and lively dream-family she had always wished for, Yonge gave her readers a surrogate family as well. Loyalty, kindness, filial piety, amusements, daily tasks and family feuds all appear, giving a picture of a home so all-encompassing that nothing

outside is needed.

The settings and daily activities of middle-class domesticity are vividly and faithfully portrayed. Yonge's readers could see themselves and their homes with almost photographic accuracy. The schoolroom in The Daisy Chain, shabby and beloved of its occupants, is so lifelike as to leave an indelible impression:

> ... the two large windows [looked] out on a broad old-fashioned street, through heavy framework, and panes of glass scratched with various names and initials. The walls were painted blue, the skirting almost a third of the height, and so wide at the top as to form a narrow shelf. The fire-place, constructed in the days when fires were made to give as little heat as possible, was ornamented with blue and white Dutch tiles bearing marvellous representations of Scripture history, and was protected by a very tall green guard; the chairs were much of the same date, solid and heavy, the seats in faded carpet-work, but there was a sprinkling of lesser ones and of stools; a piano; a globe; a large table in the middle of the room, with three desks on it; a small one and a light cane chair by each window; and loaded bookcases.[3]

The stage is set for the entrance of the May family; they are the more convincing for being seen in the setting to which they so obviously belong.

Similarly, Ermine and Alison Williams and their little niece fill their lodging-house rooms with keepsakes and ornaments in their attempt to give it a homelike atmosphere.

> One end of the room was almost filled by the frameless portrait of a dignified clergyman, who would have had

[3] Yonge, Daisy Chain, p. 2.

> far more justice done to him by greater distance; a beautifully-painted miniature of a lady with short waist and small crisp curls, was the centre of a system of photographs over the mantel-piece; a large crayon sketch showed three sisters between the ages of six and sixteen, sentimentalizing over a flower-basket, a pair of watercolour drawings represented a handsome church and a comfortable parsonage ... the table-cover was of tasteful silk patchwork, the vase in the centre was of red earthenware, but was encircled with real ivy leaves gummed on in their freshness, and was filled with wild flowers.[4]

The true Victorian sense of coziness and clutter is present. Nothing is undecorated, no part of wall is without its pictures, and the whole is completed with the patchwork table-cover and ivy-decorated vase, obviously products of the ladies themselves.

In these carefully reproduced settings we see all the activites of a Victorian family. Lessons, in all varieties, go on daily. There is sketching, music and other accomplishments, reading aloud, children's games, and family discussions. At the same time Yonge shows the work underlying the attractive surface. Even in the relatively affluent households, everyone has daily tasks. Yonge does not skimp on showing the duties of a busy housewife, the difficulties of managing on a small stipend, or a boy's resentment at having to wear his brother's hand-me-downs. The general sense is one of shared effort toward a common goal, the maintaining and continuing of the family unit.

4 Yonge, Clever Woman, p. 59.

The mere devotion of so much space to the family and its concerns (which take precedence even over plot) is enough to validate its extreme importance. Everything in the novels is related in some way to family and family activities. The family we have come to think of as the stereotypical Victorian unit is exalted, all others are judged according to how well they measure up to that standard.

Her view of the nature and importance of the family was one that Yonge never altered to any significant extent. Conscious of the value of the family in her own eyes and those of her readers, she had merely to continue reporting what she saw. By the end of her life, she was picturing a domesticity that was about to disappear under the twin stimuli of economic change and war. Her main object was to write what she called "family news for those who wanted to know how their old friends has got on!"[5] She was happiest when talking about the families of the "linked novels," and those who read her work with interest find that the value of these works is in showing the later careers of those they had come to see as friends in previous books.

Revolt against the unquestioning acceptance of parental authority was taking place throughout Yonge's lifetime. Had she lived to read it, she would not doubt have been deeply shocked and distressed by The Way of All Flesh, with its bitter portrait of an all-powerful father. Another revolt in which she had no wish to share was that

[5] Mare and Percival, p. 230.

against the subordinate status of women. Time and again, Yonge illustrates her belief in the divinely ordained inferiority of woman. The rising status of the middle-class woman and her increased range of choice in life made Yonge most unhappy. Female subordination was a matter of faith, and not subject to debate. While women were purer and more refined than men, they were less intelligent, less strong, less forceful and less wise. There is simply no possibility of a woman, however well qualified, being able to do anything as well as a man, however poorly qualified he might be.

Yonge devoted her considerable narrative powers to preaching the subordination of women as part of the natural order of things. Her portraits of gentle, yielding traditional womanhood, contrasted with the ridiculous figures cut by those who leave their proper place, do much to re-enforce the attractiveness of the former role. Cherry Underwood's two cartoons, drawn in response to pressure from others to "go in for" women's rights, show the contrast most graphically:

> ... a kind of parody of Raffaelle's School of Athens, all the figures female, not caricatures, but with a vein of satire throughout. The demonstration on the floor was an endeavour to square the circle; some of the elder ladies were squabbling, some of the younger furtively peeping at themselves in pocket-mirrors or comparing ornaments; some in postures of weariness ... another mimicking her teacher, a third frowning at her rival's success. There was no air of union or harmony, but something of vanity and vexation of spirit pervaded all.[6]

6 Yonge, Pillars, v. 2, p. 459.

This represents secular education and endeavour, and to engage in this makes woman a laughing-stock. Unless their training is devoted to Church and family, it is foolish, discordant and ultimately fruitless.

In Cherry's second drawing, the figures take on a different aspect.

> The companion was arraged on the same lines, but the portico was a cloister ...the figures and occupations were the same, but all was in harmony. The maidens, though mostly in secular garb, wore the cross; the central figure, in matronly beauty, was portioning out the household tasks, while in the place of the harsh or sour or tyrannizing disputatious ladies were women ... the demonstration on the floor was no longer impossible. It was the circle of eternity spanned by the Cross ...[7]

Now all is well, for the women are engaged in proper womanly tasks, and guided by the Church. This makes it possible for them to work without danger of becoming either frivolous or rigid. As long as they remain in their proper place, it is permissible for women even to develop their intellects, providing that they do not meddle in things reserved for men. They must avoid medicine, which coarsens even men, theology, which is far too deep, and above all never engage in competition, either with each other or with men. Competitive spirit is most unseemly in a woman, as it takes away her submissive charm.

[7] Yonge, Pillars, v. 2, p. 459.

Yonge did not participate in active anti-feminist campaigning as did such of her contemporary writers as Mrs. Lynn Linton, though Yonge equally disapproved of the "girl of the period." When questioned directly, or through the Monthly Packet, however, she felt it her duty to make her opinions known. When Edward Talbot (Warden of Keble College, Oxford) asked her opinion on the founding and purpose of an early women's college, Lady Margaret Hall, Yonge replied in much the same terms as did Cherry Underwood in her paired drawings. Yonge's opinion was decidedly negative, and she informed Talbot that:

> I do not think any scheme succeeds that has not a decided religious object, and in my mind the real difficulty is that this plan seems to be Lectures, plus Church, not like the original concept of a College, education primarily for the direct service of religion to which other students were admitted. If it is to be merely a boarding-house on good principles where young ladies may be sent to prepare for examinations it may be a sound institution worthy of support but not commanding any enthusiasm and likely to depend on the fashion of the day. But if it were in any way possible to make it in some way an institution dedicated to Heavenly Wisdom, training the daughters of the Church to the more perfect cultivation of their talents, whether as educators or mothers of families, then I think there would be such salt of the earth in the College as to make it lasting and beloved and to be a real blessing in raising the whole ideal and standard of women.[8]

Woman's destiny is to be daughter of the Church and mother of a family. Self-cultivation is dangerous, self-sacrifice is all-important. In considering the question of developing one's talents

[8] Battiscombe, Yonge, p. 146.

in God's service, Yonge admitted the existence only of those talents which fit into her picture of ideal womanhood. Should one have a talent for some line of work reserved for men, it was one's duty to renounce it in favour of more womanly pursuits. By "raising the whole ideal and standard of women," Yonge does not mean giving greater opportunities and choices to women, but creating a climate in which every woman can and does approach the highest type of woman portrayed in the novels.

Most of Yonge's views were articulated in Womankind. Here she laid down what a girl, a daughter, sister, wife and mother should be, at every stage from infancy to old age. Once again, due to her limited knowledge of the world, the pattern portrayed is one that could better be called "ladykind". No-one could do as Yonge recommends unless living in much the same affluent circumstances as Yonge herself. A domestic servant, a factory girl, a farm laborer's wife; all were alike unable, for valid and eminently practical reasons, to conform to the stereotype. To be consistently presented with such an ideal as the only right way of life can only have caused resentment and confusion at being given an impossible task.

Yonge's views on female education did undergo some change. By the 1890's, she had finally accepted the necessity of High Schools, realizing that most parents did not have William Yonge's abundant leisure to devote to teaching children, and that there was a notable lack of qualified governesses of sound religious principles. She agreed to High Schools the more readily because a day school made it

possible for home influence to remain strong. She even came to look a bit more favorably on women's colleges, once she had seen that they were in fact serious-minded places, in which a young woman could be educated and still remain a day. When it came to women in careers, she remained adamant, unless the training was intended to fit a woman for missionary work.

In her last novel, Modern Broods (1900), Yonge showed signs of becoming less rigid on some questions of behavior. She allows men and women in their late teens and early twenties to go sailing together or ride bicycles without having to be concerned about "tiresome propriety." Parents, rather than the etiquette of former days, were to be the arbiters of what was right and wrong for young ladies. If mamma and papa permitted an activity, it became proper to engage in. Her views on bicycles are an example of such change. Many were scandalized at the idea, feeling that the machines revealed an impermissible amount of "limb", but Yonge found them a harmless and healthful amusement for young people and endorsed them as a recreation, though only after the household tasks were completed. Yonge was not happy with the rapid social and technological changes that were taking place, but did her best to sympathize with the inevitable. She was too much the realist to waste her time in futile efforts to oppose change, particularly as she knew that "We shall not find that everything is mischievous because we never thought of it before."[9]

[9] Battiscombe, Yonge, p. 147.

More productive, she felt, was an attempt to explore change and interpret it, to integrate change into the basic value system as far as possible. Her conservatism had always been deep, but not so deep as to blind her, and so it remained.

Still, Yonge continued to idealize the perfect woman of literary convention and manuals on behavior. The saintly, gentle, submissive woman who is also a capable home executive and faithful support to husband or father appears over and over again. There is at least one (and usually several) held up for the audience's admiration and emulation in every novel from Abbey Church through Modern Broods. Yet along with this exaltation of the perfect helpmeet and explicit disapproval of the rebellious woman, there runs an undercurrent of suppressed discontent. Yonge would have denied its existence, but to the reader it is quite definitely there.

What Yonge says about the role of women in Victorian society and what she shows about that role are often extremely different portraits. She shows how difficult it was for an intelligent, active woman to conform, just as when she discusses the family she shows the tensions in that structure. In neither case is she willing to allow that these problems point to any defects in the pattern. In fact, Yonge is actually showing various strategies for accomodating oneself, and their relative degrees of success.

Yonge's perfect female characters often tend more or less toward insipidity. Her most lively characters are those who find it hard to accomodate to the constraints of the prescribed role. There

is much more interest for the reader in their struggles than there is in the platitudes of their ideal sisters. Rachel Curtis, though impulsive and misguided, is a much more rounded character than Ermine Williams. Stubborn, untidy Kate Caergwent, with her rough voice and unruly hair (said to be a self-portrait of Yonge as a child) outshines the ladylike little girls with whom she is expected to play. By far the most beloved of Yonge's heroines is Ethel May, a decided misfit as a Victorian lady. Ethel is awkward, clumsy (she is very nearsighted, but her father will not permit her to wear glasses) and possessed of a great desire for learning and a passionate desire to accomplish something. Ethel has been a favorite of generations of readers, in large measure for these very qualities, which do not hold out to them an impossible pattern of perfection.

Seeing is, however, a different matter from interpreting. Yonge saw the problems and recorded them, but would not acknowledge their validity. No writer, however accurate in observation or skilled in the creation of character, can be a novelist of the first rank while persisting in subduing or distorting the truth to fit a didactic purpose. In furtherance of her wish to teach that her accustomed way of life was both comfortable and true, Yonge distorted what she saw so that it would conform to what she felt.

Everything in a Yonge story is transmitted as it is understood by a gently-reared, childlike and untraveled lady from an affluent Tractarian family. What does not fit this pattern is either ignored completely or wilfully misinterpreted.

Yonge, of course, was not the only writer of her time to display this tendency. It was really demanded by a large segment of the mass audience, who wanted to be reassured that all was well with the world. They preferred that uncomfortable realities not intrude too closely on their fiction. While reading a popular novel, it was possible to feel that the world was going well and needed few if any modifications. Yonge's ability to do this, while keeping her out of the first rank of writers, was one of the keys to her success. The assumptions she worked under are available for study today, as are the observations she recorded. Both what she says and what she shows are of great interest to the student of literature.

There is distortion in every aspect of Yonge's fiction. Political unrest is dismissed as baseless ingratitude and a bad Chartist sentiment. Personal and family difficulties are all to be conquered by trust and by reading The Christian Year. Any flaws in the picture are caused by a stubborn, rebellious spirit on the part of the individual; social and personal wrongs are laid to failures in duty and submission. If everyone would only behave nicely, obey their pastors and masters and do their duty according to their divinely ordained status, all would be well. Her resolute refusal to acknowledge anything else, even while recording the evidence, severely limits her.

Yonge's value lies partly in her observation of the daily life of the middle classes and partly in her self-imposed limits. In examining the things she refuses to understand, one can find much of interest. An unconscious symbol-system is operating, as Q. D. Leavis

remarks:

> ... the type of admirable wife who is no wife because of an accident to her lower limbs or spine, the saintly clergyman who has either gone blind or developed consumption, the passionate relation between brother and sister in a picture of life where the idea of sex is prohibited ... [are symbols of unhealth.][10]

All of these are present and more besides, serving as emblems of the effects of a repressive system. With so many of her characters harmed in some way by the very system they inhabit, it is hard not to feel that Yonge saw more than she was willing to say. Unconsciously, she may have felt how constricting and harmful the life she portrayed could be, even while she consciously celebrated it.

At the same time, there is a more positive side to the contrast between what is seen and what is shown. Yonge's women characters, while urged to be properly submissive, nevertheless lead lives of action and, unlike the heroines of so many other contemporary books, are literally permitted to call their souls their own. What she shows of their learning, deeds and thoughts indicates a value placed on the woman of intellect and character. While preaching submission, Yonge shows that helplessness is not intended, and a girl reading her books and modeling herself on what the heroines actually do could expect a reasonably satisfying life. This may perhaps be attributed to Yonge's awareness of her own capabilities (had she been a man, she

[10] Leavis, p. 149.

would probably have become a Bishop) and the keen business sense that led her to correspond closely with her publishers on royalties and editions even while maintaining the outward life of any other woman of her class.

Such speculations must of necessity be incapable of proof, especially since Yonge's personal papers no longer exist. Nevertheless, this level of symbolism (both positive and negative) is there for the reader, and is a contributing factor in the retention of interest in her novels. The "first-rate mind" that James saw never reached artistic greatness, but its power within its sphere is clear, and its skill in presenting the world of the Mid-Victorians undoubted.

In her old age, the world had passed Yonge by. Her fictions had declined in power and her readers were turning to other and less "safe" works, which explored areas Yonge would not. What remains for the modern student is a body of work of varying quality; which at its best captures much of the spirit of an age. Considered as a speaker for the "earnest Victorians" and as a source for the study of cultural history and literary convention, Yonge has definite worth.

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