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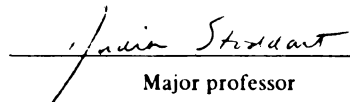
CHARLOTTE YONGE AND FEMALE EDUCATION :
STRIKING A JUST BALANCE BETWEEN OLD EFFORTS
AND NEW CULTURE

presented by

Diane L. Riggs

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AND NEW CULTURE

By
Diane L. Riggs

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ABSTRACT

CHARLOTTE YONGE AND FEMALE EDUCATION: STRIKING A JUST BALANCE BETWEEN OLD EFFORTS AND NEW CULTURE

By

Diane L. Riggs

Though best known for her religious conservatism and "uneventful" life, Charlotte Yonge also contributed an important voice to the nineteenth-century debate over female education. Within the ideological spectrum of women's instruction, Yonge's education, through its inattention to feminine "accomplishments" and strong emphasis on classical studies, mathematics and theology, was very progressive for the times. As shown in her writings about girls' education and affirmed in her novels, Yonge's educational beliefs were similarly forward-looking. Tractarian doctrinal instruction shaped the moral messages in *The Heir of Redclyffe*, *The Daisy Chain* and *The Clever Woman of the Family*, but Tractarian teaching techniques made Yonge's stories more entertaining than pedantic. Through engaging anecdotes and skillful character development, each novel subsequently communicated Yonge's progressive stance on female education to a surprisingly wide and divergent audience. Ultimately, Yonge and her fictional creations demonstrated that, contrary to conservative thought, intelligent and well-read women could be both useful and attractive.

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Dedicated to the memory of my father,

Donald L. Wolfarth
October 27, 1926 - April 30, 1993

for inspiring my love of language,
and showing me the power of education.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1	
THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY DEBATE OVER FEMALE EDUCATION: 'SEX IN MIND'	4
CHAPTER 2	
CHARLOTTE YONGE'S EDUCATION AND EDUCATIONAL VIEWS: 'ODD, ECCENTRIC, AND BLUE'	21
EARLY EDUCATION	22
RELIGIOUS TRAINING	26
EDUCATIONAL BELIEFS	30
EDUCATIONAL ACTIVISM CLOSE TO HOME	39
CHAPTER 3	
CHARLOTTE YONGE, NOVELS AND EDUCATION: 'THE TRUE WAY TO MAKE LESSONS INTERESTING'	47
CRITICAL 'STANDARDS' FOR NOVELS	49
INFLUENCES BEHIND YONGE'S NOVEL-WRITING	52
YONGE'S NOVELS	55
<i>The Heir of Redclyffe</i>	58
<i>The Daisy Chain</i>	63
<i>The Clever Woman of the Family</i>	68
CONCLUSION: 'LEAPING INTO THE GULF'	76
BIBLIOGRAPHY	83

INTRODUCTION

The first eighteen months of the twentieth century were hard on Great Britain's traditionalists and conservatives. Not only did they lose Queen Victoria and her conservative court, they also suffered the demise of a well-known and old-fashioned authoress: Charlotte Mary Yonge. Born just four years after Victoria in 1823, Charlotte Yonge inherited her family's belief in monarchical fealty, sympathized with the crown throughout her life, and within two months of the queen's death, was laid to rest by well-wishers in the small southern village of Otterbourne. Yonge's once wide popularity waned rather rapidly after her death (as did the Queen's to a large extent), but reviewer Edith Sichel avowed in May of 1901 that "There are probably few people born between 1845 and 1865 who did not leave a little piece of their hearts in her quiet grave" (88). Few of England's educated citizens, in fact, could avoid encountering at least one of her numerous books and articles which popped up on England's literary landscape during all but two of Victoria's sixty-three year reign.

Because she has been most widely known for her unwavering devotion to the Oxford Movement, researchers commonly credit Yonge with acting as a spokesperson for John Keble, so-called "author of the Movement" (Donaldson 9). In this capacity she figures prominently in Joseph Baker's *The Novel and the Oxford Movement* (1932), Margaret Maison's *The Victorian Vision: Studies in the Religious Novel* (1961), Raymond Chapman's *Faith and Revolt: Studies in the Literary Influence of the Oxford Movement* (1970), Robert Lee Wolff's *Gains and Losses: Novels of Faith and Doubt in Victorian England* (1977), and most recently, in Barbara Dennis' 1992 biography, *Charlotte Yonge (1823-1901), Novelist of the Oxford Movement*. Without a doubt, Charlotte Yonge cherished deep religious convictions and wrote primarily for the Church and a Church

congregation. But it would be shortsighted not to acknowledge that the impact of her writings – the majority of which somehow pertained to education and young women – extended far beyond the confines of High Church Anglicanism. Charlotte may personally have lived a life of relative seclusion, but at least some of her literary creations enjoyed an audience and thus an influence that not only spanned the ocean but cut through a cross-section of religious beliefs as well.

At the height of Yonge's popularity, her views about female education, though layered within messages about Tractarianism, reached many young minds. If we are to bring those instructional views into focus, we must first recognize that her works served more than a narrowly religious function. This is not to say that scholars should therefore ignore her religious intent, especially since her tales derive so much meaning from moral themes, but instead to suggest that we can also look upon her theological beliefs as one part of a larger educational aggregate. In this context, Yonge's early training and consequent doctrinal ideology did not merely inspire her religious campaign, it also shaped the subtle and engaging quality of her crusade for female education.

The following chapters explore Yonge's uniquely staid yet unconventional contribution to the education revolution in more detail. The first chapter outlines the nineteenth-century debate over female education, and discusses the different ways in which individuals perceived women's need and capacity for training. The second examines Yonge's early instruction and subsequent educational beliefs within the context of that debate. Finally, the last two chapters investigate how Yonge's early training influenced the successful storytelling techniques that enabled her to widely but unobtrusively present her instructional beliefs through novels. Though *The Heir of Redclyffe*, *The Daisy Chain* and *The Clever Woman of the Family* are clearly religious novels, they all effectively communicate part of Yonge's message about female education.

Yonge's active and often progressive involvement with female education is especially noteworthy because scholars and critics more often recognize, and sometimes dislike her for

her stoical conservatism. Christabel Coleridge, supposedly acting upon Yonge's wishes, chose the biographical material which initially established the authoress' unyielding image. When Coleridge subsequently destroyed Yonge's personal papers in what Barbara Dennis describes as a "holocaust" (*C. Yonge* 5), she then compelled future researchers to rely on her 'definitive' biography when constructing their own impressions of Charlotte Yonge. Twentieth-century critics, increasingly intolerant of works incompatible with modern ideas of gender equality and women's rights, have since tended to overlook the educational value of Charlotte's literature in their concern over or repulsion for the authoress' strict "anti-feminist" and Tractarian beliefs. Q.D. Leavis, in reviewing Georgina Battiscombe's 1943 Yonge biography, launched a virulently acerbic attack against Yonge, protesting that the canon of English Literature should not be "burdened" with a "timid and inexperienced" writer who was no better than "a day-dreamer with a writing itch," and a "simple-minded fanatic" to boot (152, 154, 155). Even Battiscombe depreciated Charlotte as "an intelligent woman who *failed* to recognize the value of anything lying outside the small orbit in which her self revolved" (*Yonge* 17; emphasis added).

Biographers have described Yonge's life as "very quiet" (Coleridge v) or "uneventful" (Battiscombe *Charlotte Mary Yonge: The Story of an Uneventful Life*), and her role in life as that of a passive "observer and recorder" (Dennis *C. Yonge* 3). Such an image is deceptive. Charlotte Yonge, through words and actions, contributed a forceful voice to the debate over female education, and her ideas were much more forward-looking than her few biographical studies might lead one assume. As nineteenth and early twentieth-century commentary, and her writings attest, not only was Yonge a personal example of advanced female education, she was the creative force behind countless articles and fictional characters who spread her beliefs far beyond her quiet home in Hampshire.

CHAPTER 1

THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY DEBATE OVER FEMALE EDUCATION: 'SEX IN MIND'

While fourteen year old Charlotte Yonge attended to reports of Victoria's rise to the throne and wrote to her cousin Anne about "the Coronation," Reverend Sydney Smith wrote a sermon enjoining the new queen to "bend her mind to the very serious consideration of educating the people" ("Duties of the Queen" 422). Smith offered this appeal on behalf of England's poor, but the message applied equally well to women's training, a subject which Yonge would address later, and he and many others had addressed before. Diverse opinions about women and instruction, rising out of the ongoing struggle for general educational access, interested and divided the country throughout the nineteenth century. As Martha Vicinus defined her, the "perfect" upper middle class lady "combined total sexual innocence, conspicuous consumption and the worship of the family hearth" (ix), but not everyone agreed on which educational formula would produce that variety of feminine perfection, or even that such a womanly ideal was desirable. During Charlotte's lifetime, two basic groups contested for ascendancy: those who wished to limit the scope of feminine roles and education, and those who, though not unanimously in favor of changing women's roles, fought to expand and improve female education. When the dust finally cleared at century's end, educational reformers again held the field in this age-old battle.

By the nineteenth century, tradition had long associated education almost exclusively with religion, rank and money. Before Caxton brought the printing press to England in the fifteenth century, only royalty and the very wealthy had access to texts which were painstakingly (though not flawlessly) transcribed by monks. Treatises on education first appeared during the thirteenth century, but most focused upon or were directed at the sons

of noblemen (Orme 9). Only seven English texts on formal instruction either addressed or considered girls and women during the entire span of the middle ages (Travitsky 4). In 1476, Caxton began providing documents in English (instead of the customary French or Latin), thereby promoting more reading opportunities for the common man, but in his dedication to translating and/or reprinting existing religious texts, printed no material for or about women.

Thanks to the influence of imported Italian thought, England's educational system finally began to shift in the 1500s. Within Italy, education extended beyond court surroundings; many upper class women in urban centers obtained some form of convent instruction – schooling which included some writing, reading (often Scriptures), music, math and domestic training in, among other things, sewing and needlework (Weaver 173-75). These ideas of female instruction then spread from Italy to England by way of influential Spaniards Juan Luis Vives and Catherine of Aragon. Catherine, Henry VIII's first wife, sponsored numerous treatises on women's education, and brought the humanist Vives (who himself wrote several books concerning female education) from Spain to instruct her daughter Mary. Spurred by the succession of two educated queens (Mary I and Elizabeth I), English printers began producing what Suzanne Hull describes as a "small but steady stream of books for a female audience" late in the century (1).

English *men* also gained more educational opportunities at the end of the sixteenth century and beginning of the seventeenth century, a spurt again influenced by the church. John Mulder records an upsurge in new school buildings, many financed by endowments from "men of Puritan leanings" (14), and a Puritan dominated effort during the Tudor and Stuart reigns to promote more universal education. Puritans and other humanist reformers worked under the broad conviction that "Christian and humane learning" would prove the panacea for a wide variety of social ills (15). They promoted broad-based curriculums strong in literature, classic Latin and Greek studies, history and antiquity, and in leaving

traditional scholasticism behind, hoped to popularize an educational system that would develop the "whole man" (Lawson and Silver 92).

Toward the end of the sixteenth century, women began to benefit from the same wave of humanist thought when reformers like Richard Mulcaster began advocating schooling for girls. By the early seventeenth century, a few private boarding schools offered traditional classical studies and/or domestic and moral training to the daughters of England's gentry and merchants. More commonly though, middle and upper class parents instructed their daughters at home or, as in the case of Lord Fairfax, hired aspiring young literary artists like Andrew Marvell who tutored in the Fairfax household from 1651-1653 (Lawson and Silver 122). In conjunction with Protestant reform, Christian humanist thought also enhanced women's general status by including them in the church's "participatory flock," emphasizing the importance of marriage and motherhood, and promoting the instruction of *all* women so as to improve their domestic and devotional skills. As Betty Travitsky states it, "humanists and the reformers joined religious enthusiasm and educational impulses into ideologies aimed at producing pious, learned women" (7).

Much of the ardor for educating women, however, surfaced only among those with Puritan or other strong religious beliefs. Puritans trained their daughters and wives to serve as spiritual household guides, but in more conventionally secular society, most women held less exalted positions, ranked lower in general estimation than men, and were, as daughters, less valued than sons. Margaret Cavendish, seventeenth-century Duchess of Newcastle, was extremely intelligent, but firmly believed in the inferiority, even disposability of her sex. "Daughters," she wrote, "are to be accounted but as moveable goods or furnitures that wear out" (qtd. in Goulianos 65). Charles II, illegitimate father to numerous sons and daughters, granted lordships and dukedoms to Lady Castlemaine's and Nell Gwyn's boys, but refused to even acknowledge Lady Cleveland's two daughters (H. Noel Williams 20, 140, 211, 324).

During the eighteenth century, the industrial revolution and British colonialism effected yet another shift in society's perception of women. As the century progressed, women

found themselves increasingly confined within and defined by narrowing domestic boundaries. Aided by the socially constructed ideal of the affective family, political policy encouraged women to bear and raise more and more children to support what Ruth Perry labels the "new political and economic imperatives of an expanding English empire" (206). At the same time, as remunerative employment moved out of homesteads and into factories, domestic labor, divorced from the means of production, lost much of its economic value. Domestic workers, chiefly women, lost importance and were, by the 1851 census, clearly segregated from "productive" wage labor (Danahay 417). The term "spinster," once ascribed to a female manufacturer proudly included as an active part of the family workforce, soon came to signify a burdensome dependent who was both economically and socially undesirable (Newton 27).

Despite women's relatively low social and political standing, the issue of acculturating and training girls, even for an obscure homebound existence, gained increasing attention during the nineteenth century. A broad mix of variously opinioned men and women, predominately of the middle and upper classes, produced scores of books, articles and lectures on the topic. Not all Victorian thinkers, however, believed the issue deserved as much attention as it got. A number simply saw no sense in codifying a system of education for women, single or otherwise, who plainly had little use for advanced learning. Opponents to advanced female education presumed that women innately knew everything necessary to fulfill their life's purpose, and had little reason to acquire any more knowledge than suited their nonremunerative domestic destiny. As Emily Shirreff explained the argument against female education (which she went on to refute) in 1858:

Knowledge *has no* practical value, using those words in the sense commonly attached to them, of *money value*, to women, or to men tied down to manual labour. To the latter, indeed, it may afford a hope of escaping from such labour to a higher sphere of employment; but to women it holds no worldly inducement whatever. So long, therefore, as education is tested by the amount of knowledge acquired at a certain age, and needed for certain immediate purposes, female education may be tolerated as a harmless fashion, but it has no real purpose or importance.
(6-7)

Serial publications also reflected the sentiment that formal training for females was unimportant. The popular magazine, *Punch*, ridiculed the idea in its very first reference to advanced education, providing this flippant definition: "The Higher Education of Women — Learning to walk in French boots with six-inch heels" (Adburgham 97).

Others discouraged female education by expressing doubts about women's physical and mental capacity for cerebral exercise. Some, says Jill Conway, believed that women were less evolved than men, and could not safely expend energy both on reproduction and intellectual growth (141). "The ablest authorities," claimed conservative novelist Elizabeth Sewell in 1866, "are unanimous in saying that a young girl's intellect is in far greater risk of being overstrained than that of her hardier brother," due to her proportionally smaller brain (265). "This question of health," explained Sewell more thoroughly in *Principles of Education*, "must be a primary consideration with all persons who undertake to educate girls. It will be a perpetual interruption to their plans for study and mental improvement" (qtd. in Hellerstein et al 69). In 1874 Henry Maudsley reinforced the idea that intellectual exertion was dangerous for women by citing the American education system in which girls, while able to match their male counterparts in learning, suffered physically debilitating side-effects rendering them incapable of the "adequate performance of the natural functions of their sex" (473). By highlighting the alleged physical dangers of learning, writers like Sewell and Maudsley promoted a relative lack of education as the best way to protect both women and the country's progeny. As Maudsley declared, "it would be an ill thing, if . . . we got the advantages of a quantity of female intellectual work at the price of a puny, enfeebled, and sickly race" (472).

A concern for propriety and dread of public censure also provoked some women to deliberately under-develop or disguise their intellects. Charlotte Yonge, for instance, remembered a childhood encounter with the Warden of Winchester during which she felt "preternaturally virtuous" for quietly allowing him to relate a myth she already knew (qtd. in Coleridge 102). According to popular opinion, excessive cleverness led to the "danger of

the sex being unsexed" (Sewell 269), and was advertised as not only appallingly unfeminine, but distinctly unattractive to men. "With most people," noted Anne Mozley in 1868, "cleverness is applied to women as a term of veiled reproach, and not without show of reason, because it is a testimony to intellect at the expense of something distinctly feminine. . . . Superior intellect can scarcely be what is called attractive" (411, 413). Some readers could not even tolerate signs of excessive intellect in fictional heroines; Lady Elizabeth Rigby Eastlake, in her 1847 review of *Jane Eyre*, viciously denounced the title character as "an uninteresting, sententious, pedantic thing" (167). Need one wonder at Mr. Tulliver's despair over his beloved, but aggressively precocious daughter in Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*? "A women's no business wi' being so clever;" avers Maggie's father with the voice of public opinion, "it'll turn to trouble, I doubt" (17).

Those who opposed meddling with "standard" female training commonly feared that more highly educated women would turn toward the emerging industrial work force and away from habitual paths of matrimony and mothering. Many arguments that emerged in favor of education consequently de-emphasized the new directions in which well-instructed women could travel, and instead stressed the already trodden routes which education could make even more pleasant and expedient, both for women and their families. During the initial decades of the nineteenth century, few spokespersons from the middle and upper classes argued that a woman's place was not in the home, or that a woman should be trained to employ herself anywhere but within close proximity to hearth and family. As Shirreff painted societal opinion:

What society wants from women is not labour, but refinement, elevation of mind, knowledge, making its power felt through moral influence and sound opinions. It wants civilizers of men, and educators of the young. And society will suffer in proportion as women are either driven by necessity or tempted by seeming advantages to leave this their natural vocation, and to join the noisy throng in the busy markets of the world. (417-18)

Thus when asked, "Why should women be educated?" many Victorians answered by alluding to woman's role as, to quote Harriet Martineau in 1822, a "domestic companion" and "guardian and instructress of infancy" ("On Female Education" 91-92).

More conservative writers and speakers approached the subject of female education by clearly establishing their belief in women's inferiority, and proposing instructional courses which suited women's theoretically weaker intellectual powers. Mrs. Anna Jameson unequivocally stated that the "intellect of woman bears the same relation to that of man as her physical organization; – it is inferior in power and different in kind" (53), and Mrs. Dinah Maria Craik viewed the idea of "the equality of the sexes" as nothing short of "blasphemous" (12). Conduct book writer Mrs. Sarah Stickney Ellis even advised that "as women . . . the first thing of importance is to be content to be inferior to men" (*Daughters of England* 6). She exalted the ideal woman as one "whose highest duty is so often to suffer and be still; whose deepest enjoyments are all relative; who has nothing, and is nothing of herself" (73), and promoted only such learning as could be proven "conducive to woman's moral excellence" (57). As for the value of classical learning, Mrs. Ellis asked, "what man is there in existence who would not rather his wife should be free from selfishness, than be able to read Virgil without the use of a dictionary?" (*Women of England* 47).

In efforts to mold the average middle- to upper-class girl into the perfect bridal candidate – one, if modeled after poet Coventry Patmore's "Angel in the House," of whom a new husband could say: "Her disposition is devout, / Her countenance angelical;" (83) – training often concentrated more on a young woman's heart and soul than her head. Traditional educational theorists, including Shirreff and Madame Bureau Riofrey, emphasized a curriculum that encouraged women to acquire mental and emotional *qualities* rather than specific knowledge. Women could only effect good, Riofrey claimed, if given the degree of religious enlightenment which would in turn occasion "the development and cultivation of moral virtues" (8). Mrs. Ellis contended that religious instruction was utterly

indispensable since "religion alone can improve the heart" (*Women of England* 45), and one commentator on girls' fashionable schools roundly criticized both the "great insufficiency of all *directly* religious instruction in some schools," and the uninviting manner in which such instruction was presented ("An Inquiry" 712). Most importantly, devotional intensity imparted extra force to the "moral sway" which females innately exerted over husbands and sons who, though themselves typically educated under clerical rule, were not, as W. J. Reader puts it, "trammelled by any great degree of pious austerity" (39).

To smooth the way toward religiously and socially sanctioned espousal, much of the education for middle-class girls also focused on what June Purvis calls "ornamental knowledge" – learning apparently designed to attract increasingly elusive suitors (64). Accomplishments like playing the piano, singing, dancing and drawing furnished women with an entertaining and aesthetically pleasing veneer. Exhibitions of artistic prowess, staged either at home, at evening parties, or in boarding school parlor gatherings, allowed young maidens the social opportunity to advertise for and possibly attract potential mates. But while most spectators favored marriage and supervised courtship, not all agreed that such talent contests were especially healthy. The author of "An Inquiry into the State of Girls' Fashionable Schools" cautioned in 1845 that such competitive displays were "destructive to Christian tempers" and rendered participants either unbecomingly "bold" or irritatingly prone to "nervous flutters" in future life (710-11). Mrs. Ellis, similarly concerned with hazards underlying female desire for distinction, specifically warned against the temptations arising from musical passion (*Daughters of England* 59).

Following the lead of their contemporary historical counterparts, most nineteenth-century middle- to upper-class fictional heroines have at least a passing acquaintance with pianos, dances and singing. Pianos and the music associated with them figure prominently in both Austen's *Emma* and William Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* as anonymous tokens of love – the mysteriously appearing gifts from Frank Churchill to Jane Fairfax, and Dobbin to Amelia Sedley. Characters' skills in playing the instrument generally enchant male

members of an audience (with the possible exception of Miss Glorvina O'Dowd's vigorous musical pursuit of Dobbin), but cause a female like Emma Woodhouse to "unfeignedly and unequivocally regret the inferiority of her own playing and singing" and "heartily grieve over the idleness of her childhood" (Austen 156). In Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*, music also poses as the instrument through which a *man* evokes the sort of feminine passion which so concerned Mrs. Ellis. Though intelligent and strong-minded, Maggie Tulliver becomes "lost in the vague state of emotion" and finds herself "weak for all resistance" when listening to Stephen Guest's vocal duet with her cousin (and his fiancée) Lucy (416). These dangerous musical interludes eventually culminate in forbidden declarations of love and an ill-advised boating excursion that destroys Maggie's reputation.

For the continuing felicity of any relationship beyond the drawing room, women also learned how to best manage their personality. In the "Introductory Observations" prefacing her novel, *Temper & Temperament; or Varieties of Character*, Mrs. Ellis lamented over the regrettable "mismanagement of temper . . . in the social and domestic intercourse of life" which "frequently lies at the root of . . . misery" (4, 6), and obviously intended the novel as an object lesson in proper personal conduct. Barbara Horwitz also affirms that eighteenth and nineteenth-century writers viewed "good nature" as the single most important goal of women's education (111-13). Such writers believed women were better off with a happy disposition than with any quantity of intellectual and social accomplishments.

Desires to properly temper the feminine demeanor, and fears about the negative influence (or unnecessary expense) of fashionable schools encouraged many parents to seek alternatives to schooling daughters away from home. Upper-class parents, disinclined to mingle their offspring with lower-class children, and middle-class parents, faced with the absence of a mandatory, nation-wide publicly funded school system – not implemented until 1914 – both favored the home training option. As Sewell explained, there was also a sociological rationale behind home tutoring for young women: "Girls are to dwell in quiet homes, amongst a few friends; to exercise a noiseless influence, to be submissive and

retiring. There is no connection between the bustling mill-wheel life of a large school and that for which they are supposed to be preparing" (qtd. in Hellerstein 69). In accord with standard home schooling practice and Shirreff's proposition that "*teacher* is really synonymous with *mother*" (84), many mothers commonly headed or closely supervised their daughters' early education. For older children or younger girls with physically or mentally fragile mothers, governesses, often augmented by nannies and special subject tutors, typically presided in the nursery and schoolroom.

In the minds of traditional thinkers, a man, once willing and financially able to contemplate matrimony, should be able to locate a mate whose knowledge base would not exceed his, whose temper would defer to his, and whose moral guidance would prove efficacious and yet unobtrusive. Toward that end, John Ruskin believed that female education should ultimately make women more agreeable to men, and advised that a woman's training in "hard" subjects extend only so far as it will "enable her to sympathize in her husband's pleasure, and in those of his best friends" (160). In like fashion, Mrs. Ellis promoted low intensity scientific study because it made women "more companionable" to men, demonstrated God's greatness, and might cure women of annoying and silly fears born of ignorance (*Daughters of England* 42-43). As Ruskin concluded, and as other relatively conservative thinkers would have agreed, "It is not the object of education to turn a woman into a dictionary," but to enhance her "[p]ower to heal, to redeem, to guide, and to guard" (157, 174).

As one might expect, much guiding and guarding took place in the nursery as each precious symbol of the union between man and wife arrived. But while motherhood played a role in the argument against higher learning, women's maternal office also served as part of a traditional platform from which more "radical" educational theorists could safely advocate advanced instruction. Sydney Smith, co-founder, first editor and frequent contributor to the liberal *Edinburgh Review*, reminded readers that the early education of a future leader or sluggard was in the hands of a woman who "cannot lay the foundation of a

great character, if she is absorbed in frivolous amusements, nor inspire her child with noble desires, when a long course of trifling has destroyed the little talents which were left by a bad education" ("Female Education" 83). To those concerned that additional education would cause a woman to neglect her children, Smith offered a pithy response which staunch progressives Frances Cobbe and Emily Davies subsequently quoted in their own writings: "Can anything . . . be more perfectly absurd than to suppose that the care and perpetual solicitude which a mother feels for her children, depends upon her ignorance of Greek and mathematics; and that she would desert an infant for a quadratic equation?" (80).

Like Smith, Harriet Martineau believed that mothering, because of its uniquely significant impact on future generations, warranted special and broad-ranging educational preparation. Certainly women should be well versed in domestic affairs, but to prepare for their role in aiding their children's mental growth, Martineau proposed that women also study such things as General History, the Philosophy of Nature, Philosophy of the Human Mind, and "living languages" ("On Female Education" 91-92). In 1830, an anonymous American article, perhaps influenced by Martineau's early writings, attempted to quiet fears that women's education could lead to rivalry between husbands and wives. The writer then clinched his/her argument by appealing to readers' patriotism. "Upon the distribution of knowledge," the author wrote, "depends the stability of our liberties, and where can the seeds of this knowledge be better sown than in the nursery, and whose hand is better calculated to direct the tender scion than that of a mother . . .?" ("Female Education" 67).

In launching arguments for training based on the idea of woman as active educator, writers like Smith and Martineau began to challenge the "natural inferiority" assumptions around which conservatives like Ellis and Sewell built their case for restricting female intellectual study. Smith asserted that "[a]s long as boys and girls run about in the dirt, and trundle hoops together, they are both precisely alike" ("Female Education" 79). Martineau, in *Household Education*, declared it was "nonsense" to charge that the brain which could learn French would not be able to master Greek, and suggested that if women were light

minded, it was purely the fault of a training regime which promoted such a condition (271). In her 1864 article on "Middle-Class Education in England," Martineau even alleged that girls studying the classics proved to be "pupils who get over the ground faster, care more for what they learn, and enter into the spirit of the literature with a readier sympathy and more immediate enjoyment" than their more "wicked" male counterparts (552).

Toward mid-century the "woman question" grew to encompass a new concern. Relatively high female birth and survival rates, male emigration to the colonies, and gentlemen's decisions to marry later in life conspired to plague England with "redundant" women (alternately tagged "surplus," "superfluous" or "odd") – too many women, that is, for the relatively meager supply of males to assure that every female could lawfully fulfill her destiny as wife and mother. In 1860 Jessie Boucherett estimated that, according to the most recent census (likely that of 1851), fully one-third of all Englishwomen were single and somehow self-supporting (242). Mrs. Craik cast the figure of self-dependent single women as high as fifty percent (29). And though the chance of finding oneself comparatively alone in the world was spread equally among every class of woman, sensitive social activists seemed to find the fate of financially and socially orphaned gentle women particularly troubling.

Theorists might have speculated that lower-class women, historically accustomed to scraping by for themselves, would not be entirely devastated by the prospect of working for a living. Then too, lower class orphans typically received a more employment-oriented, skill-based education than did their socially superior counterparts. A workhouse-trained pauper girl was "fitted to discharge the duties of its station in life" through a course which typically involved hands-on field work and domestic management training (Kay 6-9). Hospital Schools, also acting on the "station in life" theory, educated lower class girls "to make good servants;" between scant helpings of elementary academic courses, most became well acquainted with the workings of the hospital kitchen and laundry room (Fletcher 77). On the other side of the tracks, orphaned middle and upper class women faced their own

unpleasant dilemma. Burdened with an array of profitless female "accomplishments" and socially discouraged from working for a living, not only were they ill-qualified for most jobs, if upper class women actually found gainful employment, they almost certainly risked losing all-important class standing.

Governessing quickly became known as one of the only "careers" that could preserve a practitioner's class standing. Since women were commonly thought to possess inherent teaching abilities – part of the legacy of motherhood – and upper-class women had presumably undergone training as befitted their station, impoverished gentlewomen were ideally positioned to instruct other young ladies while personally profiting through their continued association with the socially elite. On the surface it seemed a fair trade, but as M. Jeanne Peterson observes, governessing did not guarantee either a woman's financial security or her sense of social identity. Not only did governesses earn low wages,¹ they awkwardly became "members" of the families for whom they worked:

She was a lady, and therefore not a servant, but she was an employee, and therefore not of equal status with the wife and daughters of the house. The purposes of her employment contributed further to the incongruence of her position. She was hired to provide the children, and particularly the young women of the family, with an education to prepare them for leisured gentility. But she had been educated in the same way, and for the same purpose, and her employment became a prostitution of her education, of the values underlying it, and of her family's intention in providing it. (11)

Despite poor pay and social instability, over 21,000 women swelled the ranks of reported governesses by 1851, and thousands more categorized themselves as schoolmistresses and assistants (Gordon and Gordon 210).

As the supply of governesses began to outstrip demand, and governesses' complaints of poor treatment collided with employers' charges of instructional incompetence, a new tide of advocates for female education campaigned for improved teacher preparation and expanded job possibilities. New employment meant revised training and enlarged roles for women, but some front line crusaders still wove their arguments for innovation into the well-

¹ Peterson records that average mid-century governess salaries ranged from £20 and £45 per annum. At the same time, single ladies required at least £150 to £200 per year to maintain a genteel life style (8).

established pattern of traditional female functions. Opposing suggestions that excess numbers of single women should be forcibly lessened by whatever means possible (including emigrating women to colonies), Frances Cobbe proposed that while marriage was "indeed, the happiest and best condition for mankind," an *unhappy* marriage was merely the source of "misery and sin." If, she and others argued, women were more highly educated, fairly paid for their labor and thus freed from unhealthy compulsions to marry for position or financial stability, the evils incident to unloving matches could be replaced by the social good born of healthy affectionate unions (62-63). Even steadfast liberal Emily Davies, founder of the Girton college for women, couched part of her pitch for higher education in terms of its benefits for the "government and administration" of such things as housekeeping and charity work, (*Higher Education* 71-72, 79, 94). Along similar lines, both Martineau (*Household Education* 272) and Cobbe (222) explicitly testified that well-educated women made the best housekeepers.

On behalf of women fated to tread the often weary paths of governessing, reformers promoted higher education as a means to guarantee a better class of teachers who in turn could produce a well-instructed crop of young pupils. As Davies baldly stated, "It is obvious that for those who have to impart knowledge the primary requisite is to possess it" (*Higher Education* 74-75). For her part, Cobbe promised that a "few dozen *accurately* trained governesses" could "revolutionize the present state of female education" (234), and by mid-century Queen's College had arisen to test that pledge. Established in 1848 by Christian socialist Frederick Maurice, and resided over by Emily Davies' brother Llewellyn from 1873-86, Queen's College became the first women's school to offer teaching certificates for middle and upper-class women either forced into or voluntarily entering the governess trade. Other colleges for women soon followed, including, in 1850, Frances Buss's school in Camden (later the North London Collegiate), and in 1854 Cheltenham's Ladies' College, headed by principal Dorothea Beale. Meanwhile Emily Davies continued her fight to give females access to all-male Cambridge, and in 1865 finally won admission

for women to Cambridge local examinations. In 1931, looking back on the past century of educational change, Sir Charles Grant Robertson praised Davies' efforts and lauded Buss and Beale as "two pioneers who stand and always will stand, in a class by themselves" (451).

In establishing opportunities for women's higher education, progressive activists challenged many long-standing suppositions about women's intellectual capacity, instructional tolerance, competitive ability and social value. Perhaps recalling Mary Wollstonecraft's charge in 1792 that the bulk of writers on female education had conspired to create "artificial, weak characters" who are "useless members of society" (53), and John Stuart Mill's impassioned assertion less than a century later that men had done everything in their power to "enslave [women's] minds" (27), women like Cobbe, Davies and Boucherett fashioned their ideas of female education around more secular, self-dependent and utilitarian (i.e. historically male) models, such as that outlined in Samuel Smiles' *Self-Help*. Smiles concluded that the best taught students were those who learned to teach themselves, and declared that the "object of knowledge should be . . . to render us better, happier, and more useful" (331). Frances Cobbe, citing examples of women known for their intelligence, superior education, *and* "womanliness," declared that each woman should "decide what is fit for a woman's brain," and be allowed access to such training as had "so long proved efficacious in the case of men" (227, 223).

Like fictional characters Mary Barfoot and Rhoda Nunn in George Gissing's *The Odd Women*, Boucherett and Davies sought to eradicate the misguided assumption that every female brain was fit for teaching, and promote training for middle- to upper-class women in fields other than instruction. "Women who have no vocation for teaching," claimed Davies in 1860, "are forced by necessity into a profession for which they are unsuited" (*Thoughts* 3-4). As Boucherett explained the same year, the large numbers of women vying for relatively few teaching positions effectively pushed wages down, and forced those who were unable to find a position into a workhouse or other unpleasant refuge for homeless women.

The solution, she claimed, was to provide business courses for women – book-keeping and math, for instance – that would enable them to locate respectable work as cashiers, accountants and bank clerks. Trained saleswomen for female apparel, she believed, should also replace the men currently "sacrificed to this feminine occupation" (246). In sum, as fictional Mary Barfoot vehemently stated, the "ordinary teacher-woman" should be abolished altogether (*The Odd Women* 98).

But as Barfoot, Nunn and their real-life counterparts learned, just as society had resisted women's higher education, so too did it struggle against accepting female office workers. First, as in other service positions, pay was typically low, especially for women. Lee Holcombe documents significant gender-based pay disparities in teaching positions, shop work, office work and civil service jobs which extended throughout and well beyond the Victorian period (43, 57, 138-39, 151-52, 174-78). Additionally, because employers could save money by hiring women, male employees began to feel threatened by the new influx of cheap labor. As late as 1929, the author of a *Blackwood's Magazine* article titled "The Education Proper to a Young Lady of Leisure" scoffed at the modern "office girl who plays hockey," and condemned her as "a sort of person who is of no value to the community . . . the woman who is actually injuring her country by helping to swell the ranks of the unemployed men" (231). The writer (identified only as "X") firmly averred that every leisured lady bore the responsibility not to work, but to lead "her generation in cultivation [and] in manners." Consequently, "X" advocated more traditional training for young ladies that, in order of importance, included lessons in Scripture, English, continental history, French, singing, poetry, sewing, cooking, dancing, riding and more music (234).

By the twentieth century, despite on-going educational debates, most middle-class girls had access to training programs extending far beyond the once conventional, home-bound female curriculum. In 1869, England finally witnessed a concerted and comprehensive state effort to reorganize old grammar schools through the Endowed Schools Act – and in the process created close to 100 new girls' schools. Fletcher says the Act was designed to

assure every middle-class parent that his or her sons' and daughters' educational needs would be equitably met, but also reports that commissioners who enforced the Act were often accused of being "tools of a party bent on destroying all established values, and especially the Church" (1-9). Robertson, in his centenary retrospective on education, seconded such religious concerns and declared it his "unshakable conviction" that religion's fundamental place must be re-established "as an essential preliminary to any further educational advance" (458). Thus, while he alleged that women had all but realized civic and educational equality through the revolutionary changes of the nineteenth century, Robertson mourned the loss of moral and religious fervor which early characterized every English man's and woman's training.

CHAPTER 2

CHARLOTTE YONGE'S EDUCATION AND EDUCATIONAL VIEWS: 'ODD, ECCENTRIC, AND BLUE'

When the Endowed Schools Act passed in 1869, Charlotte Yonge, at age 46, had finally become independent. She had already lost both her father and John Keble, and her mother had just died after a trying illness. By then a confirmed old maid, Charlotte remained faithful to childhood teachings, and imagined herself, like her main character in *Hopes and Fears; or Scenes from the Life of a Spinster* (1860), as a relic from the "old school." She, like Honora, "had grown up among those who fed on Scott, Wordsworth, and Fouqué, took their theology from the *British Critic*, and their taste from Pugin; and moulded their opinions and practice on the past." Both she and Honora also saw themselves as somehow disconnected from the "new generation" whose tastes ran toward "Kingsley, Tennyson, Ruskin, and the *Saturday Review*," and who, unlike their elders, valued common sense over chivalry, realism over romance and the future more than the past (547). Yet for all her old-fashioned spinsterish conservatism, Charlotte Yonge proved to be a remarkably progressive and influential force behind improved education for women. Her ideas about women and their relative status did not match those of Martineau or Davies, but much of her personal education, educational philosophy and scholastic activism easily rivaled even liberal standards for practice and theory.

Outsiders looking at the somewhat reclusive authoress in her old age might have thought Charlotte as "odd, eccentric, and blue" as her Miss Winter feared Ethel would grow up to be in *The Daisy Chain* (160). She reputedly looked like Queen Victoria, but possessed the intellect of a near genius and the imagination of a child. She had long since established her reputation as a devoted parishioner and noted religious novelist, and seemed to have always known her purpose in life. Inside, however, just as "the child was so entirely

the mother of the woman" (Coleridge 120), so too was Charlotte's childhood the womb from which sprang lifelong convictions and practices. Most of her ideas about education originated from early childhood lessons and experiences, and were typically initiated or sanctioned by parents and other close relatives. The inspiration to energetically promote her beliefs developed first from a family sense of noblesse oblige, and then more fully through associations with Keble and the Church. But though it was cushioned within these traditional class and religious influences, Charlotte's early education was markedly more advanced than that of most female contemporaries.

EARLY EDUCATION

Charlotte began the tale of her own life (her unfinished autobiography forms the first three chapters of Coleridge's biography) by tracing her roots "very far back" so as "to show the influences of race and place which, for better and for worse, have made me what I am"

(1). She especially prided paternal influences and characterized her fathers' forebears as men gifted with a knack both for winning heiresses, and for bravely, yet piously, distinguishing themselves. Many made their mark in typically genteel professions, through the church (as clergy or schoolmasters), military, law or in medicine. Charlotte's mother, Frances Mary Bergus, was the Vicar of Botley's granddaughter and, according to Charlotte, "a nervous, sensitive, ailing child, very clever, and probably not understood by her mother" (8). William Yonge, Charlotte's father and the son of Cornwood's vicar, graduated from Eton at 16 and retired from the army at 27. Upon Mrs. Bergus' insistence, he then dutifully exchanged his military career and Devonshire homeland for wife Frances and a quiet country existence on his mother-in-law's small Otterbourne estate.

As their clerical backgrounds suggest, one important trait that the Berguses and Yongs shared was their religious proclivity; members of both families were firm High Church adherents – Anglicans known for class elitism, political conservatism and their support for the Establishment. Thomas Dyke's letter in Browne's *Annals of the Tractarian Movement*

distinguishes High Church believers from their Low Church brethren in terms of how each perceived man's relationship with God:

The consistent Low Churchman believes that in all intercourse between God and man, man is dealt with as an isolated individual; that grace is communicated from God to man, independently of all external media The consistent High Churchman, on the other hand, believes that it is as the members of an outward and visible, though at the same time, spiritual and mystical Community, that man approaches God; that life and grace flow down from Christ to every member of this community . . . conveyed by certain external media, called Sacraments He further believes that this body which is called the Church, constitutes a visible kingdom in this world . . . out of which, as far as he knows, there is no salvation. (258-59)

Because Low Churchmen claimed a personal, unmediated connection with God and thus felt no special need to affiliate with a single Church, High Churchmen regarded them as little better than religious vagabonds, selfishly and indiscriminately feeding on Biblical offerings at any old (or new) religious trough. High Churchmen perceived themselves, by contrast, as upholders of the one true Church, and unselfish champions of salvation for the entire church community.

According to Owen Chadwick, the word *high*, as it came to be used toward the end of the seventeenth century, originally meant "strict" (*Spirit of the Oxford Movement* 4), a term which succinctly describes the training Charlotte Yonge received from her High Church parents. Fanny and William Yonge ostensibly adopted the Edgeworth philosophy of education, "modified by religion and good sense" (Yonge qtd. in Coleridge 56), but at least one cousin admitted to feeling sorry for Charlotte when witnessing the rigorous and exacting manner of her tutoring. Even Coleridge commented that "a less loyal and loving nature might have found the criticism and repression hard" (122). For her own part, Charlotte accepted full responsibility for the personal faults, laziness and inabilities which may have occasioned tyrannical outbursts from her instructors, and claimed that, excepting her perennial desire for a sister, she thoroughly enjoyed childhood.

From the very outset, in its unrelentingly stern and systematic routine, Charlotte Yonge's education did not typify that of the "average" Victorian lady. Her training regimen, consciously designed to de-emphasize frivolous "accomplishments" and eradicate feminine

vanity, was far more structured (she received instruction at specific times of the day for pre-determined durations), and comprehensive than that of most young nineteenth-century girls. She was reading by age four, and her mother kept an agenda of Charlotte's progress (or lack thereof) as well as a grade for each lesson. In an eight month period beginning just before her daughter's sixth birthday Mrs. Yonge recorded: "It is noted that C. has done . . . 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" (Yonge qtd. in Coleridge 62). While even modern educators might consider the average four-lesson-per-day pace extreme for so young a scholar, Charlotte never complained and continued the early habit of hyper-productivity throughout her life.

On January 31, 1830, Charlotte experienced what she retrospectively dubbed the "greatest event of my life" (73) – the birth of her only sibling and brother, Julian. Considering on one hand the sacrifices which Charlotte endured on behalf of this kinsman and on the other the professional accolades she later received as a writer, one cannot be quite certain why his birth stands out as her life's "greatest event." The happening did, however, trigger the delicious "novelty" of being able to claim her beloved father as instructor, and when William Yonge assumed Charlotte's tutoring, she finally learned how to write – a task that her parents had previously deferred for fear that it would cramp her hands. She "shed many tears" in frustration over this first lesson. And though many of her subsequent lessons proved equally provoking for both father and daughter, Charlotte's ever firm belief in her own inadequacies and self-described "Jack-in-the-box temper" safely saw her through the early hardships of paternal schooling (75).

Charlotte seems also to have tolerated her father's tyrannical teaching style because she all but worshipped him. In her autobiography, parts of which she wrote more than a third of a century after his death, she romantically described him as tall, strong and handsome,

with dark keen eyes . . . [and] . . . with the most wonderful power both for sweetness and for sternness that I ever knew. Watt's line 'He keeps me by His eye' is almost explained to me by the power those eyes had over me. I loved their approval and their look of affection, and dreaded their displeasure more

than anything else. Even now, when for twenty-three years they have been closed, to think of their beaming smile seems to me to recall my greatest happiness, of their warning glance my chief dread and shame. (50-51)

Under that watchful eye, Charlotte's studies extended far beyond those which her mother had earlier provided. Mr. Yonge balanced apportionments of fun reading, like Sir Walter Scott and Jane Austen, with appropriately "solid" material like Goldsmith's *Rome*, and conducted new lessons including reportedly futile attempts at account keeping, frustrating but more rewarding trials with arithmetic (for an hour every day before breakfast), and, by Charlotte's twelfth birthday, much loved Latin.

Charlotte's affinity for classical languages happily foreshadowed equally prosperous accomplishments in modern language studies. Her parents imported a language master named De Normanville, "an old man, with white hair powdered, . . . a huge French nose, and hemless ears" (109), who taught Charlotte both French and Spanish. His instruction went so well that when Charlotte was fifteen, the Yonge family successfully printed and sold copies of her French story, *Le Château de Melville, ou Recreations du Cabinet d'Etude*, to raise money for a girls' school founded near the new church. Unfortunately, Charlotte's other outside tutor, a "lugubrious" and "pious" dancing master from Southampton, was not so propitious in his trade. Both she and her brother disliked the man and hated his lessons even more. Largely unidentified attempts at infusing Charlotte with some degree of musical finesse also, in the author's own words, "signally failed" (59).

On the whole, through an academic program which lasted past her twentieth birthday, Charlotte "worked up to the point of such Greek, Euclid, and Algebra as had furnished forth [her brother] the Etonian and soldier of sixteen" (108). In many ways hers was a boy's education, and since, upon Julian's birth, the width and breadth of her studies magnified in direct proportion to her brother's educational needs, one can only wonder if she would have received such a thorough foundation had she been an only child, or had she been raised with only sisters. Perhaps, however, the most unusual aspects of Charlotte's educational upbringing were her parents' active willingness to let her "tag along" (and sometimes even

lead) through her brother's curriculum, and her consequent status as somewhat of a feminine anomaly. As Margaret Mare and Alicia Percival note, due to her well-trained brain and social/musical ineptitude, "Charlotte clearly fell short of the standard of perfection for 'accomplished' young ladies of the days of Queen Victoria's girlhood" (36). Battiscombe, in summing up Charlotte's lack of nineteenth-century husband-catching appeal, similarly alludes to the author's "alarming and well-deserved reputation for cleverness" and her habitual inattention to personal appearance (*Yonge* 101).

It seems ironic that biographers would describe Charlotte's education as having "fallen short" of any standard since, for its time, her training extended so far beyond and above the general course of female instruction. The biographers' emphasis on Charlotte's lack of transitory accomplishments, neglect of her physical appearance, and exhibition of an "alarming" intellect, perversely demonstrates precisely how skewed nineteenth-century female education had become, and how unconventional Charlotte's instruction was by comparison. While deficient in the finer arts, she learned far more of virtually every solid subject than most women, and was exposed to studies in practical math and science that many women never even attempted. Perhaps most strikingly, besides becoming adept at several modern languages which most theorists "approved" for feminine study, Charlotte also mastered Latin and Greek, two dead languages typically known only to England's upper-class males. Hers was an education truly remarkable for its serious breadth and depth within a social climate that seemed to like its women well-rounded only in lighter studies, artistic acquisitions and domestic engineering.

RELIGIOUS TRAINING

Extensive and influential as it was in her life, Charlotte's secular instruction in many respects proved less significant than her religious enlightenment. The daughter of deeply religious parents, Charlotte attended church services from earliest childhood, and when she was about three, her mother established a Sunday School for village children. As the record

of Charlotte's early progress notes above, Mrs. Yonge, in addition to seeking salvation for the local children, instructed her daughter in church ways as well. Charlotte faced weekly Catechism recitations, learned Bible history, and engaged in daily Bible readings under her father's supervision. Yet, despite all the attention to religion, she claimed *not* to be "devoutly minded" in her childhood. Plagued by her vivid imagination, Charlotte allowed fears of the world's end to overshadow other divine considerations, and for a few years dreaded everything to do with church or Bible study (qtd. in Coleridge 96).

In 1836, Charlotte's religious childhood abruptly ended when John Keble ("the chief spiritual influence of my life!" - 116) became the new Vicar of nearby Hursley. Keble and William Yonge, with Charlotte standing by absorbing every detail, labored together over the design and construction of Otterbourne's new St. Matthew's church,¹ and when Charlotte was fifteen, Keble volunteered to personally undertake her Confirmation tutelage. Studies with Keble marked Charlotte's religious epiphany, and throughout their long association, Keble's impact on her life was very nearly as profound as her father's. Battiscombe, in fact, maintains that the Vicar and his young protégé had a "father-daughter relationship" and that Keble's wife (another Charlotte) accepted young Charlotte's enthusiasms and confidences as would a mother (*Keble* 182). Margaret Maison, on a more ecclesiastical note, echoes Mare and Percival's assessment that Keble was Charlotte's "Pope"² (Maison *Search Your Soul* 32; Mare and Percival 132), and Charlotte herself stated that he was her "master . . . in every way" (qtd. in Coleridge 119). Just after Keble's death in 1866 Charlotte wrote, "Our brightest light has been removed – or rather, the beams shine upon us from a greater distance" ("Easter-Tide at Hursley" 385). Thirty-five years later, the authoress rejoined her mentor and was, symbolically it seems, buried at the graveyard adjoining St. Matthew's Church in a flat grave spread just at the foot of Keble's upright commemorative cross.

¹ Local Otterbourne residents still (as of 1992) call St. Matthew's the "new church" so as to distinguish it from the overgrown ruins of the original parish church which now blend into a field next to the London-Southampton rail line less than a mile from both St. Matthew's and the former Yonge family residence.

² "Pope" is a somewhat ironic label considering Tractarianism's strong opposition to Romanism.

To fully appreciate Keble's significance in the life of a precocious and sheltered young lady, one must keep in mind his consequence to English society at large. He, as mentioned above, played a primary part in what Victorians knew as the Oxford Movement or Tractarianism (or to detractors as Rabbinitism or Puseyism), a powerful Anglo-Catholic thought wave which gathered most of its support from conservative, well-educated High Churchmen like those in the Yonge family. As an Oxford scholar and author (in 1827) of *The Christian Year*, later the "bible of the Oxford Movement" (Battiscombe *Keble* xvi), Keble easily rose to the forefront of the intellectual movement which began in 1833 just after his Oxford University Assize Sermon on "National Apostacy." Concerned that dissenting and Roman influences were wrenching the Church of England from its traditional moorings and imperiling its very existence, members of the Oxford Movement sought to revive old church doctrine, or, in the most basic terms, to "Catholicize the present Establishment" (Browne 42). By promoting the importance of such things as Church Sacraments and the doctrine of Apostolic succession, while also refuting the errors of Romanism, the authors of various tracts (later collected under the title *Tracts for the Times*) hoped to reclaim the Church's "abandoned children" who had mistakenly taken refuge with the dangerous "foster-mothers" of "Methodism and Popery" (Hutchison 4).

From Keble, Charlotte Yonge gained both a theoretical *and working* knowledge of all Tractarian-tinged church doctrines. She became well-versed in the background and importance of the Church's religious tenets, but learned that doctrine did not constitute true faith unless practically applied and expressed in daily life. As Keble preached in *The Christian Year*:

Only, O Lord, in Thy dear love
Fit us for perfect Rest above;
And help us, this and every day,
To live more nearly as we pray. (3)

Much doctrinal knowledge came from additional studies in Bible history, as well as through an examination of the Church's history and the lives of its past leaders. Other information, and inspiring examples of doctrine in action, came from direct contact with Movement

leaders (including Newman, Pusey and Isaac Williams), Movement supporters, Oxford University contacts and State figures (such as Sir William Heathcote and William Gladstone) who visited Keble, and thus Charlotte, at the Hursley vicarage. As Dennis points out, though Charlotte Yonge rarely ventured outside the geographical confines of Otterbourne and Hursley, so long as Keble continued to draw the outside world in, her mind had many opportunities to travel great distances ("Victorian Crisis" 28-29).

Far as her mind might have gone, however, most of Keble's central lessons kept Charlotte primarily focused on the importance of familial and religious loyalty. Keble personally revered his scholarly, High Church father, and tried to follow his father's teaching as closely as he could. Charlotte, already well-versed in the fifth commandment, found in Keble's example the definitive affirmation for her own, as Maison apprehends it, "ruthlessly strict" views on parental and ecclesiastical obedience (*Search Your Soul* 36). Keble's upbringing also taught him to mistrust any form of Liberalism, a common Tractarian skepticism, explains Charles Harrold, arising from the conviction that liberalism meant secularism, and secularism meant the destruction of social order (36-37). Charlotte again absorbed this belief, indignantly exclaiming at one point, "Do not Liberals show themselves to be the Church's natural enemies?" (Battiscombe *Keble* 274).

Inevitably, the straight and solid line of Keble's beliefs has since induced many biographers to couple his name with the qualifier "limited" or "narrow." Hutchison remarked that Keble's "thoughts ran in a groove" (xii), and Battiscombe that "His mind ran in a deep but narrow channel" – a channel out of which he either willfully or involuntarily refused even to glance (*Keble* xviii). Not surprisingly, critics also charged Yonge with an alleged "narrowness of religious sympathy" ("Religious Novels" 117). Many scholars unfortunately failed to recognize that both Keble and his young protégé drew from their "limited" doctrinal beliefs the strength and affirmation which enabled them to concentrate on immediate and practical concerns without expending energy on abstract religious debates.

Keble and Tractarianism gave Charlotte the unshakable religious convictions with which to fulfill the Movement mandate not just to *be* good, but, what is more important, to *do* good.

Charlotte's religious training, though ostensibly part of a conservative education, was yet another symptom of just how advanced her early tutelage was. Traditionalists advocated religious study for women, but only of the "heart" variety; they wanted women to be pious by instinct instead of thought. Shirreff, Ellis and Riofrey all encouraged young ladies to acquire a thorough but gentle religious grounding that would inspire moral qualities, not intellectual exertion. Ruskin, though he urged exposure to a wide range of secular subjects and approved of some religious tutoring, explicitly cautioned against allowing the fair sex to meddle in theology, since he believed it was the "one dangerous science for women" (159). Not only did Charlotte investigate this "dangerous science," she veritably internalized her chosen faith; judging from her rumored flirtation with convent life (Battiscombe *Yonge* 128-29), she would probably, as Elaine Showalter hypothesizes, have made a career in the Church had she been a man (144). At the same time though, she gleaned widely accepted moral truths from her intellectual study, thereby proving that cerebral exertion was not necessarily incompatible with feminine spirituality.

EDUCATIONAL BELIEFS

By the time Charlotte Yonge reached adulthood, close parental and Tractarian guidance had fully shaped her personal creed and coincidentally inspired a firm commitment to women and education. Charlotte approached the training issue with the intensity of a revolutionary, but many of her views about women coincided with the conservative thought typified by Mrs. Ellis and Elizabeth Sewell. Sewell was, after all, a fellow Tractarian (Elizabeth's brother William actively participated in the Oxford Movement) and virtual neighbor on the nearby Isle of Wight, and since Yonge first entered the field of Tractarian fiction (by then already well-known to Sewell), few critics have ever talked of one without at least mentioning the other. Regarding women's education, however, Charlotte shared

common ground with moderates and liberals like Sydney Smith, Harriet Martineau and Charles Kingsley. As she got older Charlotte also attempted to gradually revise early views and practices to suit corresponding late-century advances, a habit which causes Battiscombe to describe Yonge as a "progressive conservative" (*Yonge* 123).

The core of Charlotte's conservatism centered around one unalterable conviction about the relative status of men and women. On the very first page of the first chapter of *Womankind* (Miss Yonge's later-in-life summary of views on women and women's lives), she unequivocally stated, "I have no hesitation in declaring my full belief in the inferiority of women, nor that she brought it upon herself. I believe – as entirely as any other truth which has been from the beginning – that woman was created as a help meet to man" (1). She goes on to concede that a smart woman is superior to a half-witted man, but always maintained that the best man had no female equal. In one attempt to explain Charlotte's unalterable belief in male supremacy, biographer and friend Ethel Romanes listed the number of remarkably "good men" with whom the authoress had frequent or constant contact (9-10). Cloistered as she was with some of the brightest and most fervently upright figures in recent history, and trained by some of them to avoid all forms of feminine vanity, Charlotte's fealty to men was no more than a rational response.

In considering uses for female education, then, Yonge logically concluded that, in its most ideal form, intellectual training should prepare women to assist men. Charlotte deemed this position a woman's "most natural, most obvious, most easy destiny" (*Womankind* 4), and in sentiments reminiscent of Sewell's "Female Education" and Ruskin's "Of Queens' Gardens," proposed a broad range of female learning since, "as helpmeet . . . it is impossible to predict in what line [woman's] aid and sympathy may be needed" (39). If a woman lacked a "natural" opportunity to serve husband or other male relative, her life then gained meaning through utter devotion to "her celestial Spouse and King" (5). Devotion could even take the form of secular employment, so long as a woman dedicated her labor to Him. Excepting this last allusion to potentially gainful employ,

Charlotte's justification for women's education largely conformed to other conservative beliefs on the primacy of subservient wifedom and ennobled motherhood. Had she written *Womankind* earlier in the century, Charlotte might well have omitted any reference to female careers.

Yet when she delved into the details of female education, Charlotte clearly demonstrated her sympathy with more progressive beliefs. On the issue of female capability, for instance, Charlotte's views consistently differed from those of strict convention. Unlike Sewell and Maudsley in their morbid concern about the health risks associated with a woman's intellectual exertion, Charlotte never outwardly concerned herself about the strain that might result from a particular course of instruction. She even stated that young girls seemed physically stronger than their male counterparts (9). Of course strength did not imply uniformity; in line with Ellis and Craik, Yonge firmly believed that, in Craik's words "equality of the sexes is not in the nature of things" (13). She did concur, nonetheless, with Smith's ideas of relative capability and his belief that all women should be educated, as suited each individual's "taste" and "capacity," away from "petty and frivolous occupation," ("Female Education" 80).

Yonge's theories of educational methodology also deviated from conventional opinion. Because she recognized that intellectual talent varies from person to person, Charlotte advocated building a childhood curriculum around principles instead of rules. "Actual management learns adaptation," she wrote, "and in all cases principles are better than rules, as being both more stringent and more elastic" (*Womankind* 8). With the same thought in mind, she warned parents away from books on education that boldly promised a uniform outcome for every child subjected to a single specific instructional course. Charlotte firmly believed that early tutelage was most effective when structured as a foundation for continued individual studies outside and beyond the schoolroom. "Our own private theory," she wrote in an article on children's literature, "is that we ought to *teach* girls less, while we should encourage them to *learn* more" ("Class Literature" 454).

In specifying just what girls should learn, Charlotte seemed to divide the educational pie into three distinct but overlapping pieces: character development, religious indoctrination and intellectual training. In concert with decorously managed physical activity, girls (and boys), she believed, should be inculcated with such indispensable attributes as honesty, trustworthiness, parental homage, humility in success, "moral courage," honor, and a "contempt for mere pleasure" ("Didactic Fiction" 303). As Katharine Briggs notes, Christian theology sanctions every one of Charlotte's approved assets (29), characteristics that also match Riofrey's and Shirreff's traditional "training of the heart." Beyond these basic virtues, the "kindest thing to be done by a child," claimed Charlotte, was "to teach it self-restraint," an ability which would not only signal refinement, but clearly distinguish a "lady" from just any "woman" (*Womankind* 12). It should be noted, of course, that Charlotte addressed most of her thoughts and advice to class peers – members of the upper layers, though not the top-most crust, of England's stratified society.

As one might expect, the Church, a dominant force in upper class life, also figured prominently in Charlotte's educational scheme. Using notions similar to those of Mrs. Ellis, Charlotte advised that "Religious principle and practice . . . alone can really conquer the enemy, whether anger, obstinacy, or repining" (*Womankind* 23). Proper religious training thus buoyed up on-going character development. In application, though, Charlotte again promoted a more advanced form of instruction. She spoke out against a system which slighted women's intelligence by telling them "to be religious without being theologians" (211), and urged parents to actively promote religious knowledge, while allowing each child's spiritual feeling to develop on its own. Direct behavioral instruction should instill habits of prayer, reverence and duty, and specific religious lessons should include Scripture reading and historical studies, Catechism memorization, familiarization with the Prayer-book, and a close acquaintance with key Bible passages to be recalled in times of need. All training should be conducted with kindness and brightness (*not* to be confused with inappropriate "levity" or "sportiveness"), and should thus provide young girls with the

"scaffolding" so important in that part of life which comes after organized instruction (15-18).

Charlotte detected another sort of educational "scaffolding" in the written texts which parents could (and should) judiciously select for their daughters, but she did not favor over-scrupulous censorship or the practice of confining girls to material already within their understanding. Instead, Charlotte promoted a reading course designed to make girls reach for information just beyond their easy grasp, and to "stretch" their young minds with works from celebrated writers like Homer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Cervantes and, of course, Scott. Kathleen Tillotson explains that Yonge trusted in the "disinfecting power of great literature," ("Yonge as a Critic" 61) or, as Charlotte phrased it, "We do not believe that there can be sparkle where there is not depth" ("Class Literature" 453). Depth naturally presupposed moral weight, and Charlotte most deeply admired tales, from fairy stories to more serious novels, which avoided the dual "errors" of either omitting or overdoing their intended message. In evaluating contemporary work, she recommended authors from a broad range of political and sociological backgrounds, applauding, among others, conservatives Maria Edgeworth and Mrs. Craik, moderate Miss Martineau, and, in more than one article, liberal Charles Kingsley.¹

Books, apart from stretching minds and promoting morals, also formed the basis for more secular intellectual training. As mentioned above, Charlotte disagreed that a mere "smattering" of different information could adequately prepare girls for their future life. Prefacing her discussion of girls' lessons in *Womankind*, she stated:

I suppose the *lowest* standard for a lady must include, besides reading aloud, tolerable composition of a letter, and arithmetic enough for accounts, respectably grammatical language, and correct pronunciation; command of the limbs and figure, facility in understanding French, history enough not to confound Romans with Greeks, and some fuller knowledge of that of England, with so

¹ Yonge's choice of Kingsley is interesting for at least two reasons. First, as Joseph Baker notes, Kingsley proved himself "the great antagonist of the [Oxford] Movement" through direct attacks on Newman and Movement doctrines (88). In addition, Kingsley's view (as shown in *Water-babies*) that children, as part of nature, were the "foundation of morality" and inherently good (Reed 105) directly contradicted the Anglo-Catholic belief in humankind's (and thus children's) innate sinfulness. Yonge specifically praised *Water-babies* for its "latent though not consistent meanings" ("Class Literature" 452).

much geography as to avoid preposterous blunders, dexterity in needlework, and general information and literature sufficient to know what people are talking about.

This is indeed a minimum. (39)

If a lady had the aptitude and inclination to rise above mediocrity, Charlotte also advocated studies in music (particularly as applicable to Divine services), drawing, mythology, logic, additional history, Latin (the better to learn other languages), Greek, German, scientific arithmetic, geometry (the better to create symmetrical patch-work), algebra and Natural Science. Moreover, she encouraged young schoolroom graduates to continue studying any number of these subjects as personal taste decreed, a philosophy very compatible with Charlotte's personal educational experience and Martineau's advocacy of lifelong family learning in *Household Education*.

On a basic level, Charlotte also agreed with Martineau's early idea that a woman was meant to be her child's "instructress" ("On Female Education" 91-92). Since, as Charlotte stated, "instruction comes from no one so well" as from a capable mother, most young girls, she thought, would be well served by receiving whatever training their mother was best-suited to provide (*Womankind* 30). When, for reasons of health or time constraints, a mother could not devote sufficient time to her child's education, she should still contribute whatever she could, but also solicit the aid of a well-trained (preferably English, University-certified and over age 25) governess, as well as assorted tutors for subjects which neither she nor the governess could adeptly handle on their own. This model aligned itself with most conservative to moderate thoughts on the "who should educate" question of female instruction, but to Charlotte it represented something more like an attainable standard than perfection. In an ideal world, *fathers* or other father-like male relatives would instruct their girls.

In Charlotte's view, the value of male influence on females was foreseeably priceless. How better could the weaker sex appropriately acquire knowledge of the outside environment, than from one who not only operated within but also protected her from the man-made world? While generally supporting the mother-equals-teacher concept, Charlotte

went out of her way to specifically mention daughters, like those born to Sir John Taylor Coleridge and Mr. Edgeworth, blessed with their father's instructional attention. Sir Coleridge, she asserted, was "all the world" to his Mary and Althea (qtd. in Coleridge 94), and Maria Edgeworth's father was, despite other faults, "An able man, always instructing his children, and exciting them to activity of mind" ("Didactic Fiction" 302). Fathers, Charlotte believed, were at their most efficacious when thoughtfully explaining Scriptural meaning, or schooling their daughters to exhibit the self-restraint appropriate to ladies. For a young girl behindhand in feminine decorum, "one brief sharp sting of censure from father, uncle, or elder brother, will do more than a hundred reproofs from her own sex" (*Womankind* 11). Considering her ideas about female inferiority, it is somewhat noteworthy that Charlotte thought women even worthy of such close male attention.

As naturally followed from her preference for parental tutoring, Charlotte also favored home instructional sites over schools. Following what Maison describes as the Tractarian bias against compulsory State education, and the associated stance that "education without religion is madness" (*Victorian Vision* 26), Charlotte listed "a good school" as the third and last of her viable pedagogical options for young women (*Womankind* 30). Employing a somewhat different tack than Sewell's, Yonge reasoned that "The feminine nature is not one to improve by being massed together . . . and it is not possible to have large numbers of girls boarding together, without injury to qualities more essential than intellect" (27, 31). As discussed in the previous chapter, many women on various sides of the education issue shared Charlotte's distrust of girls' schools, and often for sound educational reasons. Martineau even suggested that the "genteel" schools' frivolously uniform curriculum was "so corrupting . . . that parents who would subject [their daughters] to such training [could] hardly be open to any appeal to their reason or their feelings" ("Middle-Class Education" 555). Charlotte personally characterized her mother's tenure at the Bedford Square girls' school as "banishment" (qtd. in Coleridge 15), a clear sign that Mrs. Yonge and her experience may also have figured into Charlotte's prejudice for home education.

As the century progressed, however, so, to a degree, did Charlotte's position on schools. Though she reiterated that most parents could not afford to send their daughters to a worthy institution, Charlotte granted that "a really good school is very much better than an inferior governess left to herself" (*Womankind* 30). At best, she anticipated that a boarding school of no more than twenty pupils, headed by an engaging and sympathetic matron, and run as much like a home as possible, had a reasonable chance of fulfilling young girls' needs. As a more cost-effective alternative, Charlotte also posed the possibility of "good day-schools, conducted by really superior teachers," also in home-like surroundings (33). Ultimately, as schools gradually improved and insinuated themselves into mainstream life, Yonge seems to have accustomed herself to the idea of non-home training. She anticipated the modern demand for school libraries, and if her novels are any indication, by the 1890s Yonge's disinclination to join girls and public schools was, according to Mare and Percival, "largely overcome" (76).

On the even stickier issue of women's higher education, Charlotte initially positioned herself with those who opposed it. As Joan Burstyn points out, some in the religious community feared that additional formalized education would destroy women's religious faith (120-21). Charlotte's objections encompassed some of those considerations but also focused upon intellectual concerns. It seemed too that she dreaded not so much the advanced education as the already familiar dangers of schooling women away from home. When Emily Davies solicited Yonge's support for a women's college in 1868, Charlotte gracefully but firmly declined, writing:

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 . . . Superior women will teach themselves, and inferior women will never learn more than enough for home life. (qtd. in Battiscombe *Yonge* 146)

A few years later, Charlotte's response to the Warden of Keble College upon the foundation of Lady Margaret Hall, while equally direct, centered itself around educational content rather than instructional locale. She suggested that the new system of "Lectures plus Church," as opposed to lectures *within* Church, bypassed the benefits yielded when traditional schools had operated under the "direct service of religion." In Charlotte's opinion, the college could only succeed if it were "an institution dedicated to Heavenly Wisdom, training the daughters of the Church to the more perfect cultivation of their talents" (146).

But, as happened with her prejudice against public schooling, Yonge's feelings toward higher education gradually thawed. Friends and former pupils of hers, including Elizabeth Wordsworth, Annie Moberly and Elizabeth Sewell, founded or ran women's colleges and girls' schools, and second generation Oxford Movement members (deviating from some of their founding predecessors' tenets) supported higher education for women. Faced again with radical change, Charlotte, Dennis reports, cautiously waded into the idea through discussions with her friends, and semi-frequent visits to Oxford where she could witness the experiment first hand (*C. Yonge* 38-39). Though never totally comfortable with either public school or higher education, late in life Yonge joined the Board of Governors for Winchester's new Girls' High School, and in 1899 founded a scholarship awarded every second year to one Winchester High School girl bound for University study.

The exemplary female embodiment of Yonge's educational theory would be an odd mix of convention and intellectual precocity. Compatible with Coventry Patmore's "Angel" and Ellis' feminine ideal, she would make her affections a personal law and habitually exhibit "self-denial, patience, meekness, pity, and modesty" (*Womankind* 6). Beneath the maidenly exterior, she would possess a degree of expertise in modern languages, assorted mathematics, arithmetics, geographies, geologies, histories, sciences and arts, worthy of Emily Davies' top Girton graduate. Moreover, like Yonge's stance on female education, aspects of the Yongeian prototype would appeal both to conservatives and liberals. Ruskin, if not repulsed by her religious convictions, might have discovered an intellectually

stimulating companion, and Charles Kingsley, recruiting young ladies at the Needlewoman's Institution in 1855 to actively "ennoble and purify the *womanhood*" of their impoverished neighbors (8), would have gladly welcomed a woman so dedicated to caring for the poor. In sum, Charlotte Yonge's protégé would be an old-fashioned woman with a state of the art education.

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVISM CLOSE TO HOME

Charlotte's strong commitment to charitable projects ran in close concert with her desire to expose other young women and girls to some of the lessons so valuable in her early instruction. Less affluent village children received, on average, very little in the way of education, and middle-class women struggled through a variable education system that was anything but systematic, and often far from educational. Acting on Keble's injunction to actively practice one's beliefs, Charlotte quietly contributed her time, mind, heart, pocketbook and pen to the cause of education. She did not demand that outsiders attend to her message; that would have been unladylike. Instead, through a steady stream of activity and publication, Charlotte began to disperse her message to those close by. Fully exploiting the "right of having something to do" (Craik 14), Charlotte spread her influence at home by teaching young village children, mentoring a number of young ladies, sponsoring educational projects, penning advice columns and history texts, and editing several periodicals. As a quietly devoted foot soldier for God's Church¹ on the front lines of an educational revolution, Charlotte Yonge's voice may have been soft, but her shadow was long.

When expounding on a lady's responsibility "to get as clear an understanding as she can of the great points that affect the glory of God and the good of her neighbour, and . . . to serve it in the quiet ways of elucidation, sympathy, and such other forms of help as she can unobtrusively give" (*Womankind* 221), Charlotte spoke from experience. At the tender

¹ Charlotte Yonge's motto, as almost all commentators and biographers note, was *Pro Ecclesia Dei*.

age of seven, a very young Miss Yonge had started to cast her shadow on education through a life-long career in religious elucidation. After only a short time of playing student, she found herself suddenly promoted to instruct a class at her mother's Sunday School. This, she claimed, was "a mistake, for I had not moral balance enough to be impartial, and I must have been terribly ignorant" (qtd. in Coleridge 95). But over the succeeding years, Charlotte had more than enough time to correct moral and informational faults, and by century's end declared herself "as devoted to Sunday-school work at seventy as I was at seven" (341). The parish school tutoring thus begun in childhood continued, unabated, until two weeks before her death.

Charlotte's dolls, whom she regarded in childhood as her family of playmates and children, also served as trial pupils (and later as model families in her novels). In her autobiography she recalled lining them up in nursery chairs to "do their lessons" after she had finished hers (59). Certainly these make-believe instructional episodes argue well for Charlotte's inclination to teach, and her positive claim years later that "no one who has the real faculty of teaching can fail to enjoy it" (*Womankind* 90), suggests that her talent for instructing afforded her both success and satisfaction. As for her real students, if we are to believe Coleridge's assessment of Charlotte's instructional finesse, they must have left the classroom in ecstasies: "she was the most skilful and brilliant teacher I ever knew. She taught in school like the most sympathetic and cultivated of day-school teachers, conveying an immense amount of knowledge and without a trace of stiffness or shyness" (127).

Charlotte' did not, however, spend her personal skill and brilliance exclusively on the village poor; in 1859 Mary Coleridge nominated "Cousin Charlotte" to referee a new club for young ladies, a gesture which may finally have satisfied Charlotte's childhood longing for a (few) little sister(s). As "Mother Goose" to her "brood of goslings," Charlotte superintended a process of selecting questions, grading answers and circulating the best responses for each of four monthly questions involving topics from religion, history, science and literature. The group also produced its own magazine, *The Barnacle*, complete

with members' illustrations, and assorted selections of verse and fiction.¹ In fifteen years of existence, the gosling roll call included a number of Coleridge cousins (Christabel, Mary, Mildred and Alice among them) as well as the future Mrs. Humphrey Ward, before melding into the pages of Yonge's periodical, the *Monthly Packet*, under the title "Arachne" and her Spiders (Coleridge 201-03). Both Christabel Coleridge and Mrs. Humphrey Ward went on to establish their own literary careers, and just after Yonge's death, Sichel named Ward as the definitive answer to the question "what [author] have people in their teens in the place of Charlotte Yonge?" (95-96).

Aside from employing her time and teaching talent, Charlotte also expended most of her earnings – those not sacrificed to her brother's bad financial luck – to promote religious and educational causes. Her generosity was sincerely heartfelt, but also emanated out of class conventions, strict parental example, and a firm belief in almsgiving (in character, unfortunately a bit reminiscent of Dickens' Mrs. Pardiggle in *Bleak House*²). As an upper-middle-class lady and a Yonge, Charlotte could not seriously consider "gainful employment" and was plainly expected to offer all surplus assets to higher purposes than personal desire. After her trial publishing experience with *Le Château de Melville*, and before she sent out her first "real" novel, *Abbey Church*, Charlotte's father carefully broached the issue of financial gain. As Charlotte recalled many years later:

I cannot forget . . . my father . . . gravely putting it before me that there were three reasons for which one might desire to publish – love of vanity, or of gain, or the wish to do good. I answered, with tears, that I really hoped I had written with the purpose of being useful to young girls like myself. The matter of gain we were old-fashioned enough to hold as quite out of the question; and for a long time it seemed a point of honour, and perhaps of duty, with me to spend none of it on myself. ("Lifelong Friends" 696)

When she received the revenues from her publications and had satisfied any fraternal cash demands, Charlotte eagerly devoted extra moneys to her pet charities: missionary style

¹ As for the quality of *The Barnacle*, gosling Christabel Coleridge claimed that it "contained some clever writings and still cleverer drawings" (202). Battiscombe, from her less partial vantage point alludes to a "sadly amateurish air," and views the publication as a relic of a time when "even if you drew as badly as most of the illustrators of *The Barnacle* no one complained that you were wasting your time in the attempt, for there was always time enough and to spare" (Yonge 107).

² See Chapter VIII.

work in South Pacific ports and at home in Otterbourne. Fortunately, though insisting on tithes like Mrs. Pardiggle, Charlotte's missionary work was not of the Mrs. Jellyby variety; Miss Yonge gracefully surrendered her monetary contributions directly to the church, without inconveniencing or neglecting her family in the least. Proceeds from her first major success, the *Heir of Redclyffe*, outfitted *Southern Cross*, a missionary ship bound for the Melanesian Islands, and £2,000 of profits from *The Daisy Chain* helped finance the construction of St. Andrew's College at Kohimarama. Closer to home, the 1908 edition of *The Victoria History of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight* lists a circa 1858 "school chapel" as one of Miss Charlotte Yonge's good works for the Pitt hamlet (part of the Otterbourne community), and reports that "In 1901 Miss Charlotte Mary Yonge by her will, . . . left £100 to the vicar for the time being for the benefit of the [Otterbourne] parish schools so long as they should be voluntary Church of England Schools" (Page 417, 444).

While money from her writings financed largely religious missions for the piously and financially impoverished, the publications themselves even more broadly influenced the character and content of educational materials for England's upper middle class. Yonge's literary output was prodigious; Romanes claimed that Charlotte sometimes worked on three different pieces simultaneously, writing one full page of each in succession so as to allow drying time for the two pieces not immediately under her pen (160). Besides the novels for which she became best known, other types of writings, ranging from non-fiction articles to history texts to biographies (all carefully watched over by Charlotte's father and Mr. Keble as long as both lived), increased her visibility among many different reading publics. Most importantly, she hoped to reach women. "So far as she had any sense of a mission," wrote Romanes, "we are sure she only thought of her own sex" (176).

In 1851, Yonge initiated, led and wrote for the *Monthly Packet*, a publication which Coleridge described as "the expression of Charlotte Yonge's individuality, and the means of extending her influence" among young women (165). The circulation never grew beyond 1500 to 1600 copies, but in High Church households like that of the future Lady Cavendish,

the magazine was "fairly read to pieces" (qtd. in Romanes 197), and successfully served as "a periodical for the upper-class schoolroom" in which Sunday school instructresses could themselves receive instruction (Bratton 174). In the first number's preface Charlotte explicitly targeted her audience of "young girls, or maidens, or young ladies" between the ages of 15 and 25, and addressed herself most especially to those "pursuing the most important part of education, namely, self-education." As to purpose, she explained:

this magazine is meant to be in some degree a help to those who are thus forming [their character]; not as a guide . . . 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. (qtd. in Romanes 45-46)

Charlotte's *Packet* proprietorship lasted until 1890 when the magazine's shrinking audience provoked the publishers to replace her with ex-gosling Christabel Coleridge; Coleridge and the magazine lasted until 1894. While at the *Monthly Packet*, Yonge also edited the *Monthly Paper of Sunday Teaching* (1860-1875), and after leaving the *Packet* assumed editorship (1890-1900) of *Mothers in Council*, another religiously inspired periodical directed at a like-minded audience of active Church of England women.

Charlotte also showed her desire to influence the younger members of her own sex through articles in which she gave advice to parents and authors. She praised and recommended books that taught habits and graces she thought appropriate for young ladyhood, and repeatedly entreated writers to "recollect that though boys seldom are influenced by story-books, . . . girls are," and as passive creatures should not be exposed to, among other evils, the "really injurious effect of [being taught] to expect a lover in any one who is good-natured to them" ("Didactic Fiction" 309). Girls would be better off, she believed, if nourished with books offering solid principles rather than vain aspirations. So, for that matter, would all young readers, and Charlotte firmly advised any prospective author, whether aiming to reach the poor or the rich, to refrain from publishing unless he or she could write "with sense and spirit, as well as with a good moral" ("Class Literature" 451). Not every author heeded Yonge's recommendations, in which case parents became the

last line of defense against a tide of inappropriate literary sentiments threatening to overrun their daughters' young minds. "Nothing could be wiser," Yonge claimed, than to reinstate the traditional rule of careful parents, who "let their daughters read nothing they had not read themselves" (*Womankind* 63).

Of course another safe parental option in the fight against evil was to let their female charges read books written by Charlotte Yonge. In *Womankind*, parts of which first appeared in the *Monthly Packet*, Yonge recommended one of her own scholastic texts (*Landmarks of the Middle Ages and of Modern History*) as good preparation for a deeper look into European history (48). Her general design behind history texts, as stated specifically about *A Book of Golden Deeds*, was to provide young people with a closer glimpse at the "soul-stirring deeds that give life and glory to the record of events" and to offer them examples to "inspire the spirit of heroism and self-devotion" (qtd. in Romanes 112). Because Charlotte rendered her personal objective in teaching history so visibly in her books, at least one contemporary critic warned teachers against viewing her history as an accurate or impartial account of past events. Though praising *Landmarks*, the analyst alleged that Miss Yonge violated the cardinal rule of historical objectivity in most all of her other history books, and cautioned "that the existence of feelings and opinions so strong as hers may, to some extent, interfere with the confidence which we ought to have in any one who undertakes to instruct our children in the history of their own, and in that of other countries" ("Miss Yonge's Novels" 38). Not all Englishmen, for instance, would agree with Charlotte's assessment that Charles I was "good and earnest," and bore "all his troubles in the most meek and patient way, forgiving all his enemies and praying for them" (*Young Folks' History of England* 263, 278).

A great believer in teaching through example, Charlotte employed not only historical heroes, but contemporary literary figures (including herself) to model what young women should or should not do. She praised authors Anne Manning, Mrs. Stretton and Lady Georgiana Fullerton for the "purity and principle which breathe through their writings"

(Oliphant, et al 195), and promoted her own feelings about moral taste and Scriptural allusion in an article titled "Authorship." But Charlotte also showed that she, and others by extension, should learn from mistakes. "Do not try to publish very early in life," wrote the former adolescent author, since one's youthful "knowledge of life cannot help being limited" ("Authorship" 53). And do not, she might well have added after becoming acquainted with Ethel Romanes, allow religious prejudice to narrow one's judgment of human value. Proving again how she grew to, if not embrace, at least tolerate social change, Charlotte managed to put aside philosophic differences with Darwin faithful George Romanes during her association with his wife Ethel. And even though Adrian Desmond and James Moore characterize the would-be minister turned evolutionist as a "kowtowing convert" and "perambulating paradox" (632, 633) – a man who thoroughly embodied the religious doubt which Charlotte found so hard to understand – Charlotte sent condolences to the widow upon his death and wrote later to express her gratitude "for being allowed [through Ethel's biography of her late husband] to see something of how beautiful a character" George had really been (qtd. in Coleridge 336).

Charlotte's kind notes to Ethel Romanes, like those she exchanged with friends, relatives and even writers who criticized her novels, demonstrate the deceptively gentle and retiring nature of the lady who worked so diligently to promote women's education. On the outside, she was a stereotypical Victorian lady, complete with self-effacing humility, favorite charity projects and limited experience in the "real" world, but within she harbored an absolute wealth of knowledge, intense and often forward-looking convictions, and an engaging sense of humor. Contrary to Dennis' assessment, in very few respects could Yonge accurately be labeled a "representative Victorian" (*C. Yonge* 4). Charlotte was religious, but in a far more knowledgeable and devoted way than most women; she believed in female subservience, but not in frivolous feminine "accomplishments" or futile inactivity; she affirmed woman's role as helpmeet and mother, but did not think intellectual training made women undesirable or unqualified for either position. Passively circumscribed within

a confining maze of social conventions, Charlotte, as she further demonstrated through her novels, was yet wise beyond her age about female education.

CHAPTER 3

CHARLOTTE YONGE, NOVELS AND EDUCATION: 'THE TRUE WAY TO MAKE LESSONS INTERESTING'

By the early 1850s Charlotte Yonge had been sharing her wisdom, in one form or another, for over twenty years. Working with a relatively select audience, she was continuing her parish teaching and article writing, beginning her work on the *Monthly Packet* and publishing a few story books directed mainly at children. When, through novels, she began putting "moralising . . . into action" (qtd. in Bratton 159) for a slightly older audience, Charlotte discovered what became her single most effective tool for educating the public. In this literary endeavor, Yonge followed the lead of other Tractarian novelists who initiated a sizable writing campaign before mid-century. In 1848 a *Fraser's Magazine* writer, remarking on the "abundant instruction" in ten years' worth of Tractarian "novels and story-books," dramatically exclaimed, "How strangely is the world changed upon us!" ("Religious Stories" 150, 166). And indeed, evangelically spirited fiction may well have, as Elisabeth Jay supposes, driven what she calls "that 'silent revolution' in manners and morals" which transformed George IV's dashing blades into Victoria's polite gentlemen (132). For Charlotte Yonge, conservative doctrinal beliefs undoubtedly shaped her religious fiction, but the novels themselves also exposed her unorthodox views on female education to a wider audience than she had ever reached before.

Yonge's decision to promote her ideas through fiction followed precedents set by other women and religious writers. As Jane Spencer documents, there seemed to be a special affinity between women and novels, particularly as manifested in the way eighteenth-century novelists employed and publicized the type of private writing frequently associated with women: the diary, the personal letter and the domestic conduct book (20). Consequently, because "victory in wit . . . could be made to fit in with their gentle femininity" (27), various

eighteenth-century women took up writing to make money (as did Charlotte Smith), or to promote a cause (like Maria Edgeworth, Hannah More and Jane West). Showalter suggests that novel-writing also allowed clerical-minded women, like Yonge and Sewell, an opportunity to channel religious energies into fictional clergymen who could preach for them (144). By the second half of the nineteenth century, Anglican women were only a few of the many Victorians who, according to Maison, used fiction as "the pulpit, the confessional and the battlefield" on and through which to stage their pet crusades (*Victorian Vision* 5).

During the nineteenth century, an upswing in general literacy rates – from just over 50% in 1841 to almost 97% by 1900 (Altick 60) – and a swelling middle class population made more room for all types of novelists by markedly increasing the size of the novel-reading public. By mid-century, when Yonge's authorship, as she said, "ceased . . . to be a simple amusement, and became a vocation" ("Lifelong Friends" 697), novels were no longer, as Sir Walter Scott had earlier called them, "bread eaten in secret" (188), and were finally recognized, at least by one writer, as containing "a distinct social purpose" and existing as an "essential part of education, civilization, and progress" ("Novels with a Purpose" 13). But who, one might ask, were these novels educating and civilizing? W.G. Greg, a writer for *The National Review*, located most novel-readers "among the rich and idle," "the young" and "women," individuals all prone, by nature or circumstance, to questionable mental powers and high impressionability (145) – and coincidentally the very individuals whom Yonge most wanted to reach. Greg feared that tales so "easily and rapidly absorbed into the system" during times of low mental resistance would subliminally shape "the course and the complexion of [a reader's] character" more than would solid religious doctrine (146). Yonge believed that novels could shape readers' characters *through* religious doctrine.

Greg's anxiety about novelistic impact directly coincided with his poor opinion of "young-lady novelists." Virtually countless in number and "unparalleled at any former

epoch," women writers, claimed Greg, were ill-qualified to contribute to "that branch of the literature of our day which exercises the widest and most penetrating influence on the age" (148, 149). George Eliot, in an 1856 *Westminster Review* article titled "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists," agreed that many female writers exhibited a "poverty of brains" (244), but did not lend credence to Greg's paranoia concerning their ability to monopolize popular fiction. The "sense of a female literary invasion," concludes Showalter, was nothing more than an illusion created by competition-wary male authors, and negative criticism such as Greg's was just one means by which men sought to stave off a phantasmic onslaught of female writers (39, 76). In reality, female authors like Yonge faced uniquely restrictive and conflicting demands which made nineteenth-century novel writing especially challenging. As women, they were expected to produce virtuous and wholesome fiction, but as novelists they were charged with accurately depicting a male-centered life to which they, as women, were allowed only partial access.

CRITICAL 'STANDARDS' FOR NOVELS

Since the wide acceptance of secular novels and subsequent transformation of the religious novel from "a literary outcast" to a fashionable genre (Maison *Victorian Vision* 1), forced literary analysts to appraise a continually new mix of texts and authors, both male and female novelists faced continually evolving societal and literary expectations. One article in *The Westminster Review* asserted that the novelist, "almost alone among his brethren of letters," remained untrammelled by criticism's "prescriptions and pedantries" ("Novels with a Purpose" 11), but most critics did not hesitate to specifically define and/or decree the novel's proper form and content. Greg, for instance, fervently advocated that fictional works be "supervise[d] with the most anxious and unceasing care" due to their often questionable morality (145). Other analysts, reviewing stories with extraneous additions and/or misjudged omissions, found as much to police in the areas of authorial qualification, novelistic tone and presentational style.

Every critic and periodical approached the subject from a slightly different angle, but almost all agreed that, at its most basic level, the exemplary novel was meant to be a "fictitious biography" portraying events and people "up to life" ("Religious Novels" 112-13). Borrowing from Aristotle's claim that "Probable impossibilities are to be preferred to improbable possibilities" (68), critics cocked their ears, pulled out their mirrors and lauded authors' most life-like echoes and reflections. *National Review* writer R. H. Hutton attributed Homer's, Chaucer's and Shakespeare's greatness to each author's desire to recreate life "in forms . . . essentially in harmony with the healthy realities of nature" (212). A writer for *Fraser's Magazine* identified authentically reproduced dialogue as an important facet of reality, and an essential weapon in the fight to engage readers' sympathy ("Novels of the Day" 214). Of critics who were also novelists, Henry James favored the "true realistic *chic*" of those gifted with the ability to "paint" rather than "draw" nature ("The Schönberg-Cotta Family" 79). George Eliot, disturbed by a tendency among lady novelists to reproduce "both what they *have* seen and heard, and what they have *not* seen and heard, with equal unfaithfulness," listed "genuine observation" as one of fiction's "right elements" ("Silly Novels" 245, 254).

Eliot also included "humour" (not to be confused with "silliness") in her abbreviated summary of approved fictional elements. Humor, as she used the term, should complement the author's efforts to make stories "real" by illustrating, without disparagement or flippancy, life's lighter hues. In the same vein, a writer for the *North British Review* avowed that "the best novelists are also great as humourists" because they, as opposed to satirists, elicit "some feeling of kindness and sympathy" for fictional individuals and situations ("Religious Novels" 112). Satire, through its tendency to evoke contempt and ridicule, excited sentiments which the *Fraser's Magazine* writer found incompatible with the many positive aspects of British society. He believed that while society (and its novels) were gradually assuming a "less artificial" character, ever present "cynical levity" attested to on-going affectation and ignorance ("Novels of the Day" 215).

According to some thinkers, the type of ignorance known as inexperience entirely disqualified would-be novelists. Greg, as mentioned above, was especially hard on ill-equipped female writers "whose experience of life," he said, "is seldom wide and never deep, whose philosophy is inevitably superficial, whose judgment cannot possibly be matured, and is not very likely to be sound" (149). The best creative authors, he believed, needed somehow to build a storehouse of usable experience through encounters with life's many sides, or as Hutton phrased it, "To paint life, an author must first have life in himself" (213). Without this reservoir of practical enlightenment, a novelist could never hope to convincingly portray either delicately subtle or blindingly brilliant shades of common life experience, and could thus never potently influence his or her audience.

Other writers, however, were not so concerned with an author's experiential depth as with his or her structural finesse and moral integrity. The "Novels of the Day" critic in *Fraser's Magazine* asserted that many novelists (especially women) were "absurdly careless as to the clearness of expression," and often derailed their readers with befuddling syntax and meaningless digressions (212). He proposed that precise language led most efficiently to truth, and that, beyond language, an author's "spirit" ultimately served to either "elevate or degrade his subject" (214). Religious subjects in particular, he thought, should be handled with care and delicacy, and should be promoted through "a consistent *tone* of reverence" and "*implied reference* to a higher standard" (216; emphasis added). George Eliot, perceiving an acute shortage of proper feeling, grieved over the "want of those moral qualities" which rendered the "*oracular species*" of novel – those formed around a religious or philosophical argument – "The most pitiable of all silly novels" ("Silly Novels" 254, 247).

Beyond idiosyncratic preferences for particular subject matter or styles of presentation, British critics after mid-century revealed a consistent desire for realism. Comments about humor, life experience, moral sense and grammatical prowess all point back to the goal of

closely approximating fact through fiction. As the "Novels of the Day" writer decreed for his, and many other critics', 'ideal' novel:

it must be written in good English, contain no impossible characters, impossible incidents, or impossible dialogues. It must not depend for its interest upon a fall from a horse or a brain fever, and none of the characters may on any pretence keep a diary. If these provisos are complied with, and if the author will kindly abstain from writing instructively, we shall owe him or her our thanks, and will generously leave the profession of the hero and the complexion of the heroine to his or her discretion. (217)

INFLUENCES BEHIND YONGE'S NOVEL-WRITING

With *The Heir of Redclyffe*, published in 1853, Yonge's fiction joined the ranks of works scrutinized for their ability to approximate real life, exhibit sensible levels of both levity and sobriety, and demonstrate substantial life experience without deforming the Queen's English. No doubt, especially as she began to receive critical feedback, Charlotte had some idea of the loose 'standards' by which novels came to be judged. It is also true, however, that most of Charlotte's reading and socializing were of the High Church sort, and that when she began publishing her (English) novels in 1844, religious impressions predominated. In "Authorship" Charlotte claimed that she was unavoidably drawn to writing through the "sheer love of the expression of thoughts, [and] of setting the puppets of one's imagination to work" (52). Through Keble, Charlotte acquired a reason to set the puppets to work, and, as Catherine Sandbach-Dahlström points out, Yonge's fiction was, by design, "didactic before it was aesthetic" (13). As one might expect, religious lessons guided Charlotte's literary efforts far more than any abstract social ideal of how best to construct a story.

During the writing process, Charlotte received story and style editing suggestions from family and friends, almost all of whom were Oxford Movement sympathizers. She consulted her father and Keble for final approval, and solicited on-going help from her mother and a close friend, Miss Marianne Dyson. Once finished, Charlotte also tended to circulate manuscript drafts for comments. Coleridge claimed that one draft of *The Heir of*

Redclyffe toured not only the Dyson household, but also the families of Sir John Coleridge and Dr. Moberly,¹ before returning home for Mr. Yonge's and Mr. Keble's input. Charlotte did not always take everyone's advice (as in the case of *The Heir of Redclyffe*), but only after running the all-important "gauntlet of that private public" did she feel ready to submit her creations for publication to a wider audience (166).

In conceiving and constructing her novels, Charlotte inevitably relied on Keble's interpretation of the kind of writing most appropriate for an instrument of the Church. Long after Keble's death, in *Musings over the 'Christian Year,'* Charlotte recalled two warnings which he impressed upon her near the time of her confirmation: "the one against much talk and discussion of Church matters, especially doctrines, the other against the danger of loving these things for the sake merely of their beauty and poetry" (v). These cautions were evidently meant to quiet Charlotte's tendencies to eagerly reveal new knowledge and to romanticize religion. Keble also supplied advice enabling Yonge to handle literary success with the proper degree of humility and selflessness. In a letter written to Miss Dyson after hearing early reports of promising sales for *The Heir of Redclyffe*, Charlotte confided that Keble helped her to combat the danger of vainglory by listing all the people to whom she owed thanks, and then answering her request for a blessing with the words "prosper Thou her handiwork" (qtd. in Coleridge 192). Keble's tacit affirmation that she was somehow fulfilling God's will through her novels fueled Charlotte's sense of mission, and encouraged her to keep writing.

Keble's directives about the careful manner in which Charlotte should write and humbly manage success, came directly from the Oxford Movement's eightieth tract, Issac Williams' exposition "On Reserve in Communicating Religious Knowledge." Williams carefully elucidated both *why* Tractarians should exhibit stylistic and compositional reticence in their

¹ Sir John Coleridge was not only a relative, but a Justice of the Queen's bench, Recorder of Exeter, judge, and Keble's first biographer. His son, John Duke Coleridge, later became Lord Chief Justice of England. Dr. George Moberly was the headmaster at Winchester. His large family (fifteen children in all) allegedly served as a prototype for Yonge's fictional family tribes, and afforded Charlotte many opportunities to ply her teaching and mentoring skills.

writings, and just *how* they could lead others to God's truth without violating the doctrine of reserve. Reserve, according to Williams, served protective and preparatory functions. For those not ready to hear certain truths, religious knowledge could be "highly injurious." So while those within a circle of faith could speak freely to each other, "we conceal and pass over in silence things which are more deep, from an audience who are figuratively said to require milk" (16, 17). This "milk" theoretically worked to "ameliorate the heart" (64), and thus prepared a new initiate to seek and receive the "meat" and final truth of God's word. As for the *how* of serving meaningful yet easily ingestible lessons, Williams cautioned against self-aggrandizing rhetoric or argument, and advised that speakers and writers maintain the "reverential sobriety" which God used in the Old Testament when teaching through simple parables. The Church organization, Williams summarized, is founded on the principle " 'that GOD is in Heaven, and we on earth;' therefore, 'keep thy foot in the House of GOD,' and 'let thy words be few' " (76).

Coincidentally, the Oxford Movement influences which shaped Charlotte's instructional aim also inspired some of the very qualities which matched generic novelistic standards, and helped make her novels appealing to readers outside the Tractarian fold. In statements that could as easily come from a writing handbook as a religious tract, Issac Williams explicitly stated that eloquent preaching and delivery, though commonly conceived as the best way to spread God's message, was not nearly so effective as "the spirit of obedience" accompanied by a "simple and calm statement of the truth" (75). "The assuming of a religious tone is so far from being necessary," continued Williams later, "that it is highly to be deprecated, as injurious to ourselves and others; . . . in an age which looks so much to effect and appearance, we must thoroughly study truth and reality" (109). Keble and the Doctrine of Reserve taught Charlotte that God's best instructional assistants gazed through their Christian eyes and hearts, and simply represented daily truths without "unnecessarily obtruding religion" (109). Not only did such a spokesperson follow God's example, he or she practiced the selfless humility which so aptly suited His earthly servants. In essence,

the spirit of Tract 80 in Keble's injunctions to minimize discussions of church doctrine and avoid promoting religion for its aesthetic charm kept Charlotte from making her novels either sententiously instructive or implausibly glamorous.

In its human and doctrinal manifestations, religion forcefully shaped Yonge's career as a novelist. As it did for other religious novelists, faith gave Charlotte the impetus to write by inspiring her to actively work for God and Church,¹ and justified further writings by making her believe that "the books were intended in some way to do good" (Chadwick *Victorian Church* 462-63). Tractarianism also instructed her in the ways of biblical teachings, and showed her how to create realistic fictions which informed without sermonizing. "Reserve, reverent reserve," observed Yonge, "was ever a characteristic of the teaching of the school of divines of which the 'Christian Year' was the first utterance" (*Musings* 90). Most importantly for the interest of this study, by providing her with a reason to write novels and the means to make the novels critically accepted, religion also afforded Charlotte a vehicle through which she could widely promote her ideas about female education. Not only was Yonge, as Vineta Colby says, "the novelist who most gracefully converted the tractarian impulse into novels of family life" (186), she was the novelist who most adroitly promoted the Oxford Movement while simultaneously educating young women about women's education.

YONGE'S NOVELS

Evidence of Charlotte Yonge's novelistic "grace" abounds within many nineteenth and twentieth-century critical reviews. Critics were not unanimous in their adulation, or uniform in their opprobrium, but most all found Yonge in some measure worthwhile. Through their comments, analysts also demonstrated how well the authoress attended to admonitions in the Doctrine of Reserve and met many stock "requirements" for successful prose fiction. In 1856, a writer for the *North British Review* praised Charlotte for her "true adherence to

¹ As mentioned before, her first publication, *Le Château de Melville*, was written to raise money for a girls' church school.

nature" ("Religious Novels" 117). A year later, *The Saturday Review* cited Yonge's "moderation" as the "most prominent" cause behind her popularity, explaining, "she takes care not to get too far away from what is actual, or common, or possible" ("Dynevior Terrace" 357). Sichel described Yonge's ability to manufacture reality as "the faculty of intimacy" (89). Whatever the phrase, most reviewers agreed that Yonge succeeded in painting her stories "up to life."

Charlotte best approximated reality through character delineation; to her, characters were not merely creations, but "a company of friends" (qtd. in Coleridge 125). A reviewer for the *Christian Remembrancer* remarked on how "thoroughly natural" Yonge's characters were ("Miss Yonge's Novels" 36), and Sichel observed, "we do not so much read her stories as live next door to her characters" (90). As the *Christian Remembrancer* critic also noted, Charlotte did not seem as attached to some of her fictional companions as she did to others, another indication of just how tangibly human – with the possible exception of the saintly Guy Morville whom, a writer for the *Dublin Review* protested, was "hardly a denizen of earth" ("Miss Sewell" 318) – her characters became to her and her readers. A writer for the *Edinburgh Review* alleged that Charlotte drew her characters so well, readers could distinguish one from another in the course of a simple conversation. Through dialogue, the critic wrote, we become "aware of the characters, we hear them speaking their own thoughts," and we can recognize each speaker "in every phrase" without additional identification ("Novels of Miss Yonge" 363)¹.

Through the interplay of characters and events, Yonge also exercised the "humour" which George Eliot and the *North British Review* writer had thought so important to good novels. The *Saturday Review* critic praised the manner in which the authoress showed "the comic side of domestic events . . . in small and passing, but effective touches" ("Dynevior Terrace" 357). Hutton similarly commended Yonge's sense of the "light and humourous

¹ Coleridge reported that, as a girl, Charlotte developed a habit of writing down conversations which passed between her friends and cousins (151). No doubt this practice enhanced Yonge's talent for creating dialogue.

aspects of character" which enabled her to "paint [domestic] life with much felicity," but did not appreciate the "archaic narrowness" which, he thought, seriously limited and deformed her ideals and ethics (214, 216). In the area of "life experience," many critics found Yonge wanting. Nevertheless, when it came to handling religious subjects, Yonge again proved herself exemplary. "She does not give us a controversial treatise, under the form of a novel," stated the *North British Review* writer, "but . . . brings before us the ordinary pursuits, and interests, and characters of persons, conforming their lives according to a certain religious standard" ("Religious Novels" 117). "Our author's . . . moral," added a writer for *The Christian Remembrancer*, "is for the most part left to inference and reflection; the facts speak for themselves, and the lesson, if sometimes obvious, is never obtrusive" ("Miss Yonge's Novels" 34-35).

As shown in *The Heir of Redclyffe*, *The Daisy Chain* and *The Clever Woman of the Family*, Charlotte mixed educational lessons into her novels by following the same realistic techniques. By making certain characters especially engaging or intriguing, Charlotte taught through the example of their educations, through the relationship between the characters' training and subsequent actions, and often through the guiding commentary of an authorial deputy. Thus, while communicating a great deal of information about women's education, Yonge never allowed the theme to overtake or distort her stories' believability. Mrs. Ellis, if she happened to catch the January 3, 1857 issue of the *Saturday Review*, probably wished she had been so fortunate in her writings on training. A critic, reviewing Ellis' *The Education of Character*, likened her sentences to those which might emanate from a "moral-remark machine," and ridiculed her model "father of art" for pompously lecturing an erring son at length, when a "father of nature" would have sufficed with "Bill, can't you leave Tom alone?" ("Mrs. Ellis on Education" 17). Miss Yonge's families, whether headed by the endearingly graceless Mr. Edmonstone, temperamental and lovable Dr. May, or just the memory of a father, are all artfully natural.

The Heir of Redclyffe

Heralded by twentieth century critics as Miss Yonge's "first mature novel" (Brownell 177), "most famous novel" (Wolff 127), "masterpiece" (Maison *Search Your Soul* 32; Baker 102n), and as "one of the most popular novels of the century" (Battiscombe *Yonge* 72) which "had a reception such as has been given to no other book in our language" (Cruse 50), *The Heir of Redclyffe* stands alone as Charlotte's first immediate claim to literary fame. *The Heir of Redclyffe* was also the novel which provoked contemporary critics to breath the word "genius" in connection with it. Henry James claimed it had "almost . . . the force of genius" ("The Schönberg-Cotta Family" 77), a *Dublin Review* writer that it bore "evidence indeed of much genius" ("Miss Sewell" 316), and a friendly critic at the *Christian Remembrancer* that it was "a book of unmistakeable genius" ("Miss Yonge's Novels" 47). But Yonge's only Gothic-flavored tale is not interesting as a statement about female education because of its alleged genius or popularity; rather, it presents a unique interpretive challenge due to the fact that the story centers around two men, and Yonge's primary heroine, unlike those in either *The Daisy Chain* or *The Clever Woman of the Family*, resembles a traditional ornamental female. In this story, Charlotte conveys her message by illustrating the differences between the education of two sisters, and then employing a singularly engaging spokesperson to tell and show the reader which intellectual attributes are most desirable.

Developed from Miss Dyson's idea about playing out the consequences of bringing together two potentially antagonist types, "the essentially contrite and the self-satisfied" (Yonge *Musings* xxix), *The Heir of Redclyffe* focuses upon a psychological and spiritual journey for two men. Upon his grandfather's death, seventeen-year-old Guy Morville, whom Maison dubs a "High Church Heathcliff" (*Search Your Soul* 32) – though assuredly his lady love is nothing like Catherine – finds himself forced to leave his beloved Redclyffe and live with his guardian's family, the Edmonstones, at Hollywell. Outwardly good-natured, adored by animals and children, and prone to wearing "the expression of Raffaele's

cherub" (*Heir* 55), Guy soon wins the hearts of "puzzle-headed" Mr. Edmonstone (129), motherly Mrs. Edmonstone, their invalid son Charles, and daughters Laura, Amabel (Amy) and Charlotte. Guy is happy in his comfortable new home, but is occasionally agitated and troubled by the fear that he shares his family's historically quick and explosive temper. Very contrite about his faults, he asks Mrs. Edmonstone to guide him through episodes of angry passion. Gradually Guy gains self-control, and through his engaging goodness wins Amy's affection.

Captain Philip Morville, Mrs. Edmonstone's scholarly and respected (but somewhat impoverished) nephew, thinks "highly of [Guy's] candour, warmth of heart, and desire to do right," but harbors doubts as to Guy's "steadiness of character or command of temper" (26). Though himself betraying the Edmonstones through a secret engagement with Laura, Philip believes his distrust of Guy is warranted and hastily accuses the ward of abusing Mr. Edmonstone's trust after learning that Guy signed a check over to a notorious gambler. Fueled by Guy's unexplained request for another £1,000 Philip then persuades his uncle to banish Guy from Hollywell and dissolve the understanding between Guy and Amy. Both Amy and an innocent Guy pass a solitary winter, but happily the matter is resolved and the two wed. Guy has since conquered his temper and all feelings of resentment toward Philip, so when, during their honeymoon in Italy, he and Amy hear that Philip has contracted a serious fever in a nearby city, they rush to their cousin's aid. Philip survives, but as he begins to recover and realize just how wrongly he has maligned his distant cousin, Guy contracts the fever and dies. A remorseful Philip returns to England, and ultimately inherits Redclyffe after Guy and Amy's child proves to be a girl. With Philip's inheritance, a kind of psychic role-reversal comes full circle; Guy's now saint-like character commands universal respect, while Philip and Laura, though outwardly prosperous, find themselves inescapably surrounded by painful reminders of past faults in Guy's medieval estate.

Sandbach-Dahlström observes that Guy and Philip serve as doubles for one another, each possessing characteristics that the other lacks (44). In the same way, "silly little Amy"

and her more "sensible" sister Laura, Guy's and Philip's future wives, function as intellectual doubles. A governess trained both girls, but as the story opens Philip has taken Laura under his very learned wing, and Amy devotes most of her time to Guy and her sofa-ridden, wise-cracking brother Charles. Kathleen Tillotson claims Amabel is "an Amelia Sedley who by-passes *Vanity Fair*" (*Mid-Victorian Studies* 54), but though Amy might superficially resemble the "dear little creature" described early in Thackeray's classic (*Vanity Fair* 7), in temperament and choice of husband, she seems more like Fanny Price in Austen's *Mansfield Park*. Amy enters the action from behind a tall camellia, and, with tears ever ready to flow at the thought of a broken stem, deceased family pet or portrait of King Charles I, seems just as fragile as the flowers she tends so carefully. As Laura tells Amy, before Charles cuts her off, "Philip says . . . you only want bones and sinews in your character to —." Charles disagrees and claims that Amy's plump fingers were "not meant for studying anatomy upon" (*Heir* 9).

Upon Guy's entreaty not to waste God-given talents, however, Charles and Amy join in a course of self-improvement. They undertake daily readings, both classical and contemporary, and within a couple years Mary Ross, the vicar's daughter and a close family friend, talks to her father about "[h]ow improved" Charles is, and how Amy's "mind has been growing all this time [as] she takes in what the wise say" (132). But whilst others learn from de la Motte Fouqué's *Sintram*, and Manzoni's *I Promessi Sposi* (two of Yonge's favorite stories), Laura typically shies away from fiction and, upon Philip's urging, adds mathematics and algebra to her current science-oriented studies. Bowing under the stress of her secret engagement, she believes Philip when he tells her that "strengthening the intellect strengthens the governing power" over one's emotions (119). Of Laura, Mary simply wonders why, unlike Amy, she looks so much older than her age.

Amy's readings and forced separation from Guy before their wedding also teach her "how to bear things better" (267), and when she becomes Lady Morville, Philip discovers just how sturdy her backbone really is. As he tries to patronize "poor little Amy," she

gently but firmly rebuffs him – an unprecedented action which takes him by surprise and provokes him to admire the new "spirit and substance" lurking beneath her girlish exterior (318). During Guy's illness and after his death, Amy proves again that she is neither "poor" nor "silly," and is as adept at comforting Philip as she is at working with Guy's estate manager. By novel's end she surprises almost everyone with her "clear head" and "good sense" (387). Laura, physically worn and emotionally plagued beyond endurance after silently hearing reports of Philip's illness, finally confesses her concealed engagement to an appalled Mrs. Edmonstone who cannot conceive of how two girls with the same training could turn out so differently. Amy attributes Laura's filial treason to Philip's injunctions against novel-reading – had she read novels, she might have understood that Philip's demand for secrecy was wrong. Charles lays the blame on Laura having been Philip's pupil, and claims that Laura's "addiction" to physical sciences distanced her from her mother.

At this juncture a reader might be tempted to assume that Amy, after all, is the educational exemplar because, unlike Laura, she uses her education to enhance familial trust instead of strengthening her mind against parental duty. But while the proper use of one's education is a component of Yonge's message, the entire lesson is delivered not through Amy, but through her brother. Charles, whom Kathleen Tillotson praises as "an especially perceptive character-study" (*Mid-Victorian Studies* 54), is uniquely positioned to convey Yonge's views on education. He captivates most every reader through his keen observations and realistic sense of pathos-lined humor, and appeals most clearly to young women because his physical disability renders him both sympathetic to and symbolic of home-bound womankind. In addition, Charles' unique ability to always value other characters according to their actual worth, and his consequent function as a sort of prophetic narrator, suggest his status as, to quote Sandbach-Dahlström, an "authorial alter-ego" (173).

Charles is almost immediately engaging, if not through his affection for Guy, for his unwillingness to pay homage to his "very correct and sententious cousin" Philip (*Heir* 15). Though he cannot carry out any threats of physical harm against his large, healthy cousin,

Charles indulges in verbal abuse and thus releases some of the frustration which many readers must share at Philip's coolly heightening malevolence and Guy's increasing capacity to turn the other cheek. Through these impotent oral assaults, Charles also reveals how being "a helpless log" (70, 186) effeminizes him. "[T]here is no greater misery in this world," exclaims Charles, after ineffectually arguing against allowing his father to banish Guy from Hollywell, "than to have the spirit of a man and the limbs of a cripple. . . . This sofa . . . is my prison . . . and it is mere madness in me to think of being attended to" (186). During Guy's exile, Charles, like his sisters, can do little more than recline and wait, no more able to sway his father than is Amy in her "submissive melancholy" (189). Charles also proves himself "feminine" through his subsequent tenderness toward the young widow, his consoling words to Laura, and his helpful consideration for his former antagonist, Philip.

When Charles initially defends Amy's character against an insinuated lack of resilience, and asks where he would be without his "silly little Amy," he does not wish to keep her intellectually ignorant. He appreciates that her talents lie elsewhere, and does not want to risk losing her charming innocence or making her feel deficient for not being like Laura. Charles' (and Yonge's) true feelings about women's education arise when he responds to Guy's request that he select one of his sisters as a studying companion:

'Hum! Laura is too intellectual already, and I don't mean to poach on Philip's manor; and if I made little Amy cease to be silly, I should do away with all the comfort I have left me in life. I don't know, though, if she swallowed learning after Mary Ross' pattern, that it need do her much harm.' (71)

Though couched in outwardly conservative terms, Charles clearly indicates that female education is not inherently dangerous or undesirable, and draws attention to the exemplary education of a less prominent female character who, in insight and sensitivity, closely resembles him. Yonge originally visualized autobiographical Mary Ross in a letter to Miss Dyson, as "a sensible friend" for Amy and Laura, a "daughter to the clergyman in the next parish, very clever, reading and school-keeping, . . . caring little for dress, quite feminine, however, and very nice" (qtd. in Coleridge 180-81). In *The Heir of Redclyffe*, Mary gracefully demonstrates that an educated woman can be both feminine and socially useful,

and illustrates Yonge's belief that "a woman produces more effect by what she *is* than by a thousand talks and arguments" (qtd. in Coleridge 325). As a symbolic woman, himself, Charles embodies the lesson that domestic confinement should not preclude intellectual expansion, or keep one from feeling useful. After crediting Guy with bringing out the "stifled good" in him, Charles ultimately embarks on a career of writing for his father and Philip, and declares, "as to being of no use, which I used to pine about – why, when the member for Moorworth [Philip] governs the country, I mean to govern him" (*Heir* 462).

In *The Heir of Redclyffe* Yonge subtly but aptly teaches about education through contrasting the two Edmonstone sisters and employing the charismatic Charles to direct readers' understanding of his and other characters' development. The scholastic disparity between Laura and Amy, like that between Philip and Guy, ultimately highlights the conflict between outward appearance and inner worth. Laura and Philip appear bright and good, but betray trust and pay with misery; Amy and Guy seem silly and unstable, but work to improve themselves and win universal respect and personal peace. Laura is not "too intellectual" because she studies math and science, but because she neglects her spirit and blindly pledges devotion to a single earthly source of guidance. Amy feeds her soul, and, with Charles, gradually learns to nourish her intellect as well. By story's end, Laura, alongside Philip, faces a "harassed, anxious life" (463). Charles and Amy, meanwhile, prove the value of religious *and* secular self-education through their work for others, and, in their relative serenity, most nearly approach the educational ideal as manifested in the spiritually mature and intellectually precocious Mary Ross.

The Daisy Chain

Though critics generally acclaim *The Heir of Redclyffe* as Yonge's best and most popular novel, the sizable May family in *The Daisy Chain* captured its share of hearts as well. Written at the same time as *The Heir of Redclyffe*, *The Daisy Chain* first appeared serially in the *Monthly Packet* for two years and then emerged as a full-length novel in

1856. The book did not impress contemporary critics as favorably as its predecessor, but twentieth-century scholars have come to regard it as one of Yonge's finest books.

Battiscombe praises it as Charlotte's "most human" novel (*Yonge* 93) and Kathleen Tillotson hails it as "the best of her many family chronicles" (*Mid-Victorian Studies* 55). From a novelistic and educational perspective, *The Daisy Chain* stands out as a work which James held up as an example of "the true realistic *chic*" ("The Schönberg-Cotta Family" 79), and which Sichel named as "the 'Iliad' of the schoolroom" (90). It is also a novel in which Yonge adeptly uses her personal experience to delineate the May family surroundings and young Ethel's education. Ethel patently functions as the "central character and ideal exemplar" of the author's fictional world (Sandbach-Dahlström 78), but Yonge skillfully endows her main heroine with a host of credible adolescent deficiencies and leaves the narrator and other family members to raise a swan out of what at first seems a very ugly duckling.

Throughout *The Daisy Chain*, Charlotte Yonge does not so much spin a plot, as string together a series of character studies which develop and advance through the characters' conversations about everyday life. As the novel's secondary title, "Aspirations," suggests, Yonge intended the novel to illustrate the danger of ambition, a danger that becomes more real when the family's guiding matriarch dies in a carriage accident, leaving behind a wounded physician husband, a paralyzed eldest daughter, Margaret and ten other motherless children. Just before she dies Mrs. May writes a letter to her sister describing the ever-growing "gallery of . . . chicken daisies" (43), and in this way, forecasts from the grave how the flaws of each child will impact his or her life. Her allusion to Tom's lack of perseverance and energy pre-figures his school troubles, her admiration for the one "thorough boy of the family" (44), Harry, points to his subsequently noble career as a sailor, and her fears for Norman's "love of being foremost" (45) foreshadow the scholar's unhealthy quest for distinction and temporary descent into religious doubt. Of the girls, she entertains the most anxiety for Flora and the most hope for Ethel. True to Mrs. May's

prophecy, Flora's desire to be universally admired and sought after inspires her early marriage to a man not wholly her equal, and Ethel, despite her "harum-scarum nature, quick temper, uncouth manner, and heedlessness of all but one absorbing object" (44), gradually proves her value as Dr. May's chief domestic manager and favorite confidant.

According to Coleridge, Yonge originally intended to focus her tale around Margaret (184), the daughter who, though an invalid, inherits Mrs. May's maternal authority. Apparently, though, Ethel's vibrancy won her the biggest role, and, as a writer for the *Edinburgh Review* speculated, Yonge then cast the angelic, bed-ridden older sister "more as an influence than a person" ("The Novels of Miss Yonge" 367). Ethel, described on the first page as a "thin, lank, angular, sallow girl, . . . trembling from head to foot with restrained eagerness," strikes one almost immediately as an ungainly pup who has yet to be housebroken, a likeness only reinforced by her domestic incompetence. Simultaneously "a caricature of the little Doctor [her father] in petticoats" (*Daisy Chain* 14) and a Mary Ross in the rough, Ethel tends to rush headlong and passionately into new projects, disregard injunctions to dress and act the part of a "lady," and prefer classical studies to petty domestic chores. Clever, boyish Dr. May, a character whom Romanes lauds as "*the* most alive" of all Yonge's creations (70), shares his daughter's quick-temper, but, like her, is also tender-hearted, and when relaxed has a droll sense of humor. Ethel and Dr. May are especially engaging because the narrator allows readers to share their thoughts and witness their most vulnerable moments. Ethel is so engaging that the narrator cannot keep from admonishing her directly when spying a fault: "Pride and temper! Ah! Etheldred! where were they now?" (*Daisy Chain* 333). Cool, lady-like Flora, whose inner depths are untapped until the very end of the novel, remains largely unfathomable and unsympathetic to her family, the narrator and the reader.

Both Flora and Ethel (ages seventeen and fifteen as the story begins) have grown up under the tutelage of their mother, assorted tutors and the "dry experience and prejudiced preciseness" (160) of their middle-aged daily governess, Miss Winter. Flora has been

refining her personal appearance, musical talents and domestic skills. Ethel, on the other hand, has used her spare time keep up with brother Norman's Greek and Latin studies. As the story begins, Ethel also has plans to found and teach at a parish school in nearby Cocksmoor, but when Sophocles, Thucydides and the Cocksmoor children interfere with feminine decorum and Miss Winter's lessons, the governess feels compelled to report her charge to Margaret:

"[Ethel's] time is too much occupied; . . . she is at every spare moment busy with Latin and Greek, and I cannot think that to keep pace with a boy of Norman's age [sixteen] and ability can be desirable for her. . . . I am convinced she does more than is right She may not feel any ill effects at present, but you may depend on it, it will tell on her by and by. Besides, she does not attend to anything properly. At one time she was improving in neatness and orderly habits. Now, you surely must have seen how much less tidy her hair and dress have been." (159)

Both Flora and Harry also express concern over Ethel's appearance. While at home, Flora discourages Ethel from wearing Dr. May's glasses and making a "spectacle" of herself (14), and, once married and rich, Flora forcibly dresses her sister in more ladylike outfits. Harry is amused when Norman accidentally brings Ethel's Latin verses to school, and a classmate copies over a verse "done when she – Norman, I mean – was in the fifth form." Still, unlike Norman, Harry firmly regards his sister's "attainments as something contraband" (82).

Contrary to appearance and Miss Winter's fears, Ethel does not grow up as some sort of intellectually freakish, heathen-looking misfit. Thanks to Richard, the eldest son, whose gentle manners and domestic skills make him "more like a sister than a brother" (40), Ethel slowly loses her boyish aspect and caps her secular and religious education with a degree in household management. Charged by his father, to "keep the Unready in order" (120), Richard successfully trains Ethel in the arts of needlework, tea-making, organization, follow-through, social sensitivity and humility. By the time Flora is about to marry and Dr. May pauses to contemplate his own improvement in temper and patience, Ethel possesses powers "as good for household matters as for books, or Cocksmoor" (358), and has long been her father's favorite companion and friend. As to her teaching project in Cocksmoor, Ethel's perseverance, notes the narrator, has "been a witness, and her immediate scholars showed

the influence of her lessons" (455). Flora, the contrasting model of cool beauty and grace, uses her accomplishments to bewitch the slow-headed but wealthy George Rivers. Once they are married she urges him to stand for Parliament and wins him a seat (and herself more power) through her speech-writing and social connections. They have a child, but Flora's constant round of social gatherings and political affairs cause her to trust her young daughter to an ignorant nurse who fatally poisons the baby with doses of an opiate based cordial. After this shock, Dr. May makes an allusion to the dangers of "Vanity fair" when speaking to Norman (547), and one cannot help wondering if he views Flora and her husband as a milder version of Thackeray's Becky Sharp and Rawdon Crawley.

Except in spirituality, Ethel, of course, is nothing like Amelia Sedley, or "silly little Amy" from *The Heir of Redclyffe*. She is a character very like her creator who, says Battiscombe, "develops as Charlotte would [have] like[d] to develop" (Yonge 60). Readers come to identify or sympathize with her because she, through her short-sighted social gaffs, unconscious goodness and intellectual precocity, is at once comical, lovable and praiseworthy. Other characters, like Flora and Miss Winter, who ignore Ethel's many good points and perceive her only as "ridiculous and silly" (285) or "odd, eccentric, and blue" (160), prove, through their own actions and prejudices, to be unreliable witnesses. Perversely, they also reinforce characters like Dr. May, Richard, and Margaret who believe Ethel is worth training, and see a special value in their wild, clever one. Yonge drives the lesson home by punishing Flora through the loss of her child, and rewarding Ethel by fulfilling her dream to raise a new church.

Though mingled with religious import and injunctions about familial responsibility (as in *The Heir of Redclyffe*), Yonge's educational message is again progressive. Through Ethel, who finds the work of making tea "hotter than double equations!" (69), Yonge demonstrated that all women were not, as many conservatives assumed, innately gifted with domestic skills, and that at least some found school work far more alluring than home work. Ethel illustrates that a woman can be intelligent and that, as Norman says, "knowing more than

other people" will not make a woman "good for nothing" unless she finds herself "minding nothing else" (164). As a school teacher, church-builder, surrogate parent-instructor for her younger brothers and sisters, and household despot (as Dr. May teasingly calls her), Ethel is anything but useless, and as Norman Ogilvie's brief courtship confirms, attractive as well. Ethel does not stay home with her father because she has no other choice, she stays because she *chooses* not to leave him. This personal decision enables her to find satisfaction through "her vocation in her father, Margaret, the children, home and Cocksmoor; her mind and affections were occupied, and she never thought of wishing herself elsewhere" (566).

The Clever Woman of the Family

While Ethel happily confines herself to home and hearth, Yonge's main character in *The Clever Woman of the Family* (1865), Rachel Curtis, longs for nothing more than to break free and "task [her]self to the uttermost" in a personal crusade against "vice and corruption" (3). But though she, like Ethel May, is one of Yonge's semi-autobiographical characters, Battiscombe characterizes Rachel not as an Yongeian ideal but as a "self-warning; there, but for the grace of God, I go; there, indeed, in some respects have I gone already" (Yonge 60). Because the author seems to use Rachel as an example of what *not* to do, Sally Mitchell defines *The Clever Woman of the Family* as "Yonge's 'anti-feminist' novel" (40), and Gail Cunningham agrees that Yonge designed the novel to deride the sentiments of her "New Woman" style heroine (37). Romanes, writing at the beginning of the twentieth century, simply viewed the novel as "almost Miss Yonge's cleverest book" (though not her most enchanting), and the one in which "She betrays more humour . . . than in any other" (99). Coleridge flatly excluded *The Clever Woman of the Family* from Yonge's biography and, in a curiously ambiguous footnote, explained her omission in terms of an unnamed "controversial element" which "detracts from [the novel's] charm" (230n). Whether one is charmed or not, the novel makes an interesting study from an instructional standpoint. Yonge clearly intends to show that Rachel's impassioned speeches about

restrictions on young women do not match her architect's beliefs, but despite Charlotte's obvious attempts to dictate interpretation, more than one educational message creeps out. Under the cover of a fundamentally conservative educational moral, Yonge not only affirms that women can be intelligent and attractive, but suggests a method by which smart women can effectively work within societal constraints.

In this complicated story which progresses largely by means of casual dialogue, the curtain rises on a conversation between two "maiden sisters," Rachel and Grace Curtis, on the morning of Rachel's twenty-fifth birthday. Rachel, the Curtis' Clever Woman, shares Laura Edmonstone's and Ethel May's intellectual curiosity but actively chafes against "conventionalities" that tether her health, strength and knowledge "to the merest mockery of usefulness" (3). "Something to do was her cry" (7), so when newly widowed cousin Fanny arrives in town with her seven children, Rachel is certain that her mission lies in teaching the fatherless brood. Fanny is tractable, but her rambunctious sons reject Aunt Rachel's instruction, and soon compel their mother to find a new instructress. Rachel then tries to make herself useful through writing, but Ermine Williams, the sweet, bright and crippled sister of Fanny's new governess, Alison, firmly advises against such action. At last Rachel locates Mr. Mauleverer, a sympathetic stranger who shares her interest in young girls forced into the pernicious lace making trade. Soon he enlists Rachel's backing to open a small wood engraving school, and Rachel supplies him and his female assistant with the money to support two students, Lovedy and Mary.

Unfortunately, as Fanny and Alison discover on a surprise raid of the Mauleverer establishment, the would-be engraving students, prompted by frequent beatings, make even more lace than before and receive little in the way of food or medical attention. Faced with her project's failure and conscience-stricken by Lovedy Kelland's subsequent death, Rachel finds herself rapidly transformed from a Clever Woman to "a silly girl who has let herself be taken in by a sharper" (223). To make matters worse, during her business partner's ensuing trial, Rachel fails to produce any concrete evidence against Mauleverer and leaves

the judge no choice but to acquit the crook. Before he gets released, however, two witnesses identify Mauleverer as a man named Maddox who, years before, ruined Ermine's and Alison's brother, Edward. During the second trial, Mauleverer/Maddox is not so lucky. Rachel, meantime, falls prey to the same illness that took young Lovedy, and nearly dies. During her recovery, she marries a young soldier named Alick Keith who, in conjunction with his kindly uncle, restores her faith, humility and womanhood. In answer to the last chapter's title question, "Who is the Clever Woman?" readers ultimately learn that, contrary to initial predictions, the long-suffering, self-supporting Ermine Williams, has truly been the Clever Woman of the Family all along.

Rachel, the nominal clever woman, and Ermine, the de facto clever woman, operate almost as two versions of the same person. In presentation they appear very dissimilar; Ermine has a "fine countenance" with "eyes bright and vigorous, hazel, the colour for thought" (32), while Rachel's features have "an irregular, characteristic cast" with a "nose *retroussé*" and "large, singularly sensitive nostrils quivering like those of a high-bred horse" (2). But underneath, Ermine's suitor, Colin Keith, recognizes that Rachel, whom he blasts as a "detestable, pragmatical, domineering girl!" is, in mind and spirit, "a grotesque caricature of what [Ermine] used to be" (95). Ermine, long since relieved of any less attractive attributes, now makes "friends with all who visit" (45). Rachel, reminiscent of Gissing's outspoken Rhoda Nunn from *The Odd Women*, and known to Avonmouth's timid curate as "the dogmatical young lady" (*Clever Woman* 37), makes friends, at least initially, only with Ermine.

Ermine's universal appeal is especially important because she, like Charles Edmonstone, her invalid counterpart from *The Heir of Redclyffe*, serves as the novel's interpretive director. If other characters (and readers) can admire Ermine for her wit and bravery, her evaluations of other characters (Rachel, in particular) will carry more weight. The clever Miss Curtis may first appear only as an un-evolved Ermine, or "a shrewdly critical portrait of a nineteenth-century 'intellectual woman' " (Mare and Percival 199), but

Yonge makes Rachel unexpectedly sympathetic in her own right. She and her thoughts usurp the lion's share of narrative attention,¹ and other likable characters, including Ermine and Alick Keith, openly and repeatedly praise her "spirit," nobility, "real truth and unselfishness" (*Clever Woman* 37, 52, 172, 273). Alick, as his uncle later reports, thinks Rachel's "reality might impress [Alick's self-absorbed] sister" Bessie (322). As both Dorothea Blagg (194-95) and Sandbach-Dahlström (142) mention in passing, Rachel also resembles Austen's waywardly endearing Emma Woodhouse. Like Emma, Rachel is opinionated, determined not to marry and prone to social embarrassment through her inability to accurately read various situations. But, like Emma, Rachel also tries to protect her only parent, and becomes more human as she openly faces her blunders and continually grows more self-aware. When, for instance, Rachel finds out that she has inadvertently lectured her ideal hero on the true meaning of heroism, she not only suffers the humiliation of confronting Alick (the hero), but feels compelled to satisfy a sense of "justice and truth" by admitting her error to a girl she had earlier contradicted (*Clever Woman* 179). Rachel's forthright energy, coupled with her sincere willingness to revise opinions and learn from mistakes, make her ultimately more alive and interesting than any other character – even Ermine.

Because Rachel puts absolute faith in everything "the Invalid" writes in the *Traveller's Review*, she and Ermine (who, unbeknownst to Rachel until Chapter 16, is "the Invalid") predictably concur on educational theory and support Yonge's favored "Edgeworth system of education" (34). In practice, however, Rachel's means of education has been far different from Ermine's. Deprived of her squire father when in her teens, the adolescent Rachel had

thrown herself into the process of self-education with all her natural energy, and carried on her favourite studies by every means within her reach, until she considerably surpassed in acquirements and reflection all the persons with whom she came in frequent contact [By necessity she has since fed her

¹ Yonge introduces nearly every new character through the filter of Rachel's consciousness – a technique which brings the reader closer to Rachel than to any other character, and reinforces the reader's impression that Miss Curtis is honest and observant.

sympathies through] periodical literature, instead of by conversation or commerce with living minds. (6)

Ermine also reads a great deal, but her early education was molded by interaction with her father, brother and Colin, and through "the civilizing atmosphere at the park" (95). She enjoys Rachel's intellectual challenges and is the first person in a long time with whom Rachel can "rub . . . minds" (45). Apart from Rachel's historical lack of intellectual fellowship, the most glaring deficiency in her education lies in her distance from religious truth. She clearly falls within what Brownell calls Yonge's "moral ecosystem" (169), but bypasses faith because she disrespects its flawed human messenger, Mr. Touchett. Ermine finds solace in the Church; Rachel, when dying Lovedy asks her to recite a Bible verse, finds "her whole memory . . . scared away" and can only beg the child's forgiveness (*Clever Woman* 231). Only through discussions and lessons with Alick's Keble-like uncle, Mr. Clare, does Rachel gradually regain "her child's heart" (316).

Ermine's education, because of its secular, religious and feminine depth, enables her to positively influence others through her writing, earn the respect and undying devotion of long-faithful Colin, and like Charles Edmonstone, improve in health and usefulness. Rachel's self-directed, self-willed education engenders positive social consciousness, but also provokes her to intemperately promote views without confirming her facts or gauging the appropriateness of a subject for a given audience. Her acute religious skepticism, in conjunction with her independent desire to effect social change, consequently makes her easy prey for the stranger who espouses both her clerical distrust and eagerness to ameliorate society's ills. But after Mauleverer betrays her trust, Rachel bravely looks inside instead of blaming others, views her humiliation as "just chastisement for headstrong folly and conceit" (268), and tries to discover what went wrong. Dennis asserts that "Charlotte Yonge has no sympathy at all with the 'strong-minded woman' " (i.e. Rachel) (*C. Yonge* 69), and Wolff contends that everything Rachel says and does "is anathema to Charlotte Yonge" (138). But as Ermine warmly avows, Rachel "has only been made to believe" that she is strong-minded (*Clever Woman* 172), and Rachel's 'punishment' actually leads to rebirth, re-

education and reward. She wins Alick Keith's love, and after a few months of confusion and recovery, finds religious peace through Mr. Clare, and a new vocation in Alick and their children. Alick's more "agreeable" but "double-minded" sister, Bessie – whom Sandbach-Dahlström appropriately likens to Flora May (146) – never sees past her selfish folly, and dies as a result of childbirth after tripping over one of her beloved croquet hoops.

Yonge constantly hints at her most blatant educational messages through Ermine. Ermine's pronounced piety stands out against Rachel's cynicism, and Ermine frequently comments about Rachel's want of a strong male influence. Toward the novel's end, in an uncharacteristically long prose passage, the narrator reinforces these themes, saying,

unwilling as [Rachel] would have been to own it, a woman's tone of thought is commonly moulded by the masculine intellect, which, under one form or another, becomes the master of her soul. . . . [H]appily for herself, a woman's efforts at scepticism are but blind faith in her chosen leader, or, at the utmost, in the spirit of the age. (*Clever Woman* 337)

Finally, in words which fall awkwardly from the ex-clever woman's mouth, Rachel testifies, "I should have been much better if I had had either father or brother to keep me in order" (367). Quite obviously, as Yonge reiterates in other writings, neither a woman nor her education is complete without religious and male guidance; and while self-education is laudable, it can do more harm than good when conducted without a proper foundation. As Rachel admits to herself, "The prayer of her life had been for action and usefulness, but . . . her unconscious detachment from all that was not visible and material had made her adhere too literally to that misinterpreted motto, *laborare est orare*" (286).

Beyond the obvious and conservative advice about guidance and religion, *The Clever Woman of the Family* is not, as Baker infers, Yonge's novelistic "attack on intellect" (115). In addition to Ermine's on-going approbation, three significant male characters specifically endorse Rachel's intellectual questing. "[T]here is something in that girl," concedes Colin, "she does think for herself, and if she were not so dreadfully earnest . . . she would be the best company of any of the party" (*Clever Woman* 97). Alick finds Rachel immediately engaging as a girl "of a strong spirit, independent and thorough-going, and thinking for

herself" (322). Finally, when the newly humbled Rachel flatly asks Mr. Clare, "Do you object to my having read, and thought, and tried?" his resounding "Certainly not" all but sanctifies her attempts at secular and theological study (323). Again Yonge reiterates that women can be educated and attractive at the same time. She also makes it clear that female intellect is most attractive when understated. But in a perceptible departure from standard rhetoric, Yonge intimates, through Ermine's commiseration with Rachel's "longing to be up and doing" and her "chafing against constraint and conventionality" (*Clever Woman* 95-96), that intellectual reserve is also an important vehicle through which women can effect change within very real social confines. When Rachel learns Colin's lesson on the value of holding "something . . . back" and the power of anonymity (101), Yonge's female reader discovers the most effective means for an educated nineteenth-century female to make a difference. As Romanes stated, "the book is not an attack on clever women, or writing women, or women who do anything at all worth doing, but on presumption, overmuch talk, and silly contempt for authority. The story is not at all an attempt to prove that women were never to venture out of the beaten tracks" (99).

Though Charlotte Yonge never ventured too far from her family and home, her novels afforded female readers many opportunities for imaginative excursions with her life-like families. As readers became acquainted with and entertained by Yonge's carefully crafted fictional characters, they also encountered Yonge's progressive educational beliefs. Young women who fell in love with religious purity and Guy Morville in *The Heir of Redclyffe*, learned from Guy's witty brother-in-law, Charles Edmonstone, that self-education, if not narrowly practiced or misapplied, can lead to personal satisfaction and utility. Ethel May, the endearing tomboy in *The Daisy Chain*, showed her human counterparts that women can meet the intellectual demands of a male education without sacrificing their spirituality, femininity or domestic prowess. Rachel Curtis, Yonge's bold and brash, "New Woman" in *The Clever Woman of the Family* taught young women to develop their minds through communion with greater minds, as Rachel wished she had done, and to follow Ermine

Williams' example by diplomatically directing their spiritual and intellectual energy toward positive social change.

As for change, Yonge was philosophical. "[W]e enjoy progress as long as we go along with it," she wrote in *Womankind*, "but . . . there often comes a time when the progress gets beyond us" (314). Fortunately, because Yonge employed early doctrinal lessons of instruction reserve and teaching through example in her novels, her moral and educational messages lived on through her stories during most of her lifetime. Critics continued to admire her ability to breathe life into fictional personalities, and new favorites grew into old favorites as the century advanced. As progress inevitably began passing her by, Charlotte, like her mentor, John Keble, held to the "reliance and contentment produced by the walking in an old unbroken path" ("Fairford and Hursley Windows" 485), but left behind a widely-read legacy of literature testifying to the novelistic skill which enabled her to spread her uniquely broad-minded views on female education through generations of young women.

CONCLUSION:
'LEAPING INTO THE GULF'

"Much of the best and most wide-spread writing emanates from the most quiet and unsuspected quarters," remarks Yonge's fictional Colin Keith (*Clever Woman* 101). Trade fictional Avonmouth and Ermine Williams for real-life Otterbourne and Charlotte Yonge, and the observation is even more apt. For a writer who, almost a century past, slipped from popularity when "the hearth" went out of vogue during Edward VII's long-awaited reign (Sichel 95), Charlotte Yonge has inspired an impressive outpouring of scholarly works and literary mentions – enough to rival even her own prodigious output. Whether, like Q.D. Leavis, twentieth-century critics have worked to "jettison their Charlotte Yongs" (160), or resurrect her, religious myopia and all, every effort signals the incalculable depth and breadth of her novelistic influence. Not only did her works surpass the popularity of other Tractarian novels, Charlotte's stories infiltrated school reading lists for young middle- to upper-class women after mid-century. Even contemporaries outside the Oxford Movement admired her work. It is not possible to quantify how significantly Yonge's novels directly changed the course of female education, if at all, but evidence suggests that her novels played a notable role in young women's lives on both sides of the Atlantic.

Baker, in his literary study of the Oxford Movement, positioned Charlotte as "the greatest of all purely Anglo-Catholic novelists in the Victorian Age" (102). Wolff similarly identifies her as "the most prolific and most skillful of all Tractarian novelists" (117). Charlotte easily merited such distinction, because the attributes that made her a good novelist, made her "a better novelist and more persuasive teacher" than other Tractarians (Jay 71). A critic for *Fraser's Magazine*, writing before Yonge rose into prominence, identified "Mr. Gresley and Mr. Paget" as the "acknowledged fathers" of Tractarian fiction, and explained the primitive 'attraction' of Gresley's novels as follows:

As stories, his productions were absolutely nothing. Of plot or character he seemed to have no idea whatever. His persons were little better than mere names, used as machinery for the enunciation of arguments; the arguments without this machinery would have been sermons of very unusual dullness. Thus the story was endured for the sake of the doctrine, and the doctrine was rendered palatable by the story, while either of them separately would have been intolerable. ("Religious Stories" 151)

Fortunately for the fate of Tractarian literature, Harriet Mozley (John Newman's sister¹) began experimenting with more realistic characters and situations in her children's books, *The Fairy Bower*, *The Lost Brooch*, *Louisa*, and *Family Adventure*. Charlotte Yonge later credited *The Fairy Bower* with setting up the "wave of opinion" which propelled her own "little craft" into view (qtd. in Tillotson *Mid-Victorian Studies* 42).

When Charlotte's work first floated into sight after mid-century, it competed with the works of Elizabeth Sewell and Lady Georgiana Fullerton, the two most famous Tractarian novelists at the time. Luckily for Charlotte, as the *Fraser's Magazine* writer assessed the situation in 1848, Sewell and her characters lacked clear reasoning abilities, and Fullerton, though her first book exerted a "fascinating power," failed to wield the power so as to communicate her intended purpose ("Religious Stories" 153). In 1854, a commentator for the *Prospective Review* summarized Yonge's advantage over Sewell and Fullerton by saying, "[Yonge] appears to have more real pleasure in her art, for its own sake, than either of them" ("Author of *Heartsease*" 461). Indeed, Charlotte's highest *art* relative to other Tractarian writers, was her ability to teach with interest and pleasure, and without seeming to sermonize. Even the *Dublin Review* writer who disliked Yonge's anti-Romish stance, thought it a "pity" that Sewell did not "take a hint from her contemporary, Miss Yonge, who is admirable in the way in which she implies high principle and religious motives without continually reminding us of them" ("Miss Sewell" 321).

In effect, Yonge's novels, unlike those of most other Tractarian or religious novelists, served as user-friendly conduct manuals instead of daunting doctrinal dissertations. Her

¹ Newman, one of John Keble's friends, was the Oxford Movement leader who defected to the Roman Catholic church in 1845. According to Kathleen Tillotson, after Newman's conversion, Harriet and he never met again (*Mid-Victorian Studies* 40).

family-centered lessons about religion and education followed in the tradition of Daniel Defoe's pedantic and formalized *Family Instructor* (1715), but none of Yonge's fictional parents spout Bible verses or find themselves "so provok'd as to use [their daughters] somewhat roughly" (Defoe 99). Instead, Charlotte employed novelistic standards of realism, humor and covert dogmatism to create very approachable characters who casually instruct readers, largely without narrative mediation or direction, through their conversations and actions. When Margaret May talks about her sister Ethel in *The Daisy Chain* and says, "Faith, energy, self-denial, perseverance, they go a great way" (232), the reader has already come to know, or perhaps to identify with Ethel's very palpable and engaging intellectual and emotional struggles. Charlotte's Tractarian-inspired use of nineteenth-century novelistic conventions thus not only made her stories warmly entertaining, but actively reinforced the Movement's position on living rather than preaching one's faith.

Yonge's ability to instruct through implication and example, rather than by doctrine and evangelism, also made her novels and children's books uniquely accessible to readers outside the Movement. In *The Victorian Church*, Chadwick positions Yonge's work on a higher and broader level than did Baker, and claims that "two or three of her books [rank] among the best *Christian* novels of any age" (215; emphasis added). Before critics positively identified the "Author of the 'Heir of Redclyffe,'" they were not at all convinced that she shared Oxford Movement beliefs. The *Prospective Review* writer professed him/herself baffled at "the sacerdotal nonsense mixed up with a very deep and generally healthy tone of religious feeling" in Yonge's novels, and went on to expand upon his/her (erroneous) conception of the authoress' faith as follows:

Her views of what is sacred are almost confined to what is *felt* as moral obligation or as spiritually lovely, by every faithful mind. She does not believe apparently in the *general* efficacy of priestly characters at all. . . . Nor has she that personal enthusiasm for the sacred office which ladies generally, both in high church and low church, and in the sects of dissent, are wont to feel. In the "Heir of Redclyffe" and again in "Heartsease," she has skilfully sketched a decidedly feeble clergyman, and nowhere drawn one of Miss Sewell's favourite paragons of Anglican power and excellence; – so that really this official monopoly of the power of absolution and of regenerating children, are no parts in any way of her system of faith. ("Author of *Heartsease*" 481)

Even Charles Kingsley, Tractarianism's most high profile antagonist, found himself captured by the religious feeling in Yonge's novels. In 1855, immediately after reading *Heartsease*, he wrote to Yonge's publisher, saying "I think it the most delightful and wholesome novel I ever read. . . . the book is wise and human and noble as well as Christian, and will surely become a standard book for aye and a day" (qtd. in Coleridge 348).

Within Yonge's other wise and human fictions, characters from *The Heir of Redclyffe* and *The Daisy Chain* seemed to draw the most attention. Coleridge reported that Pre-Raphaelites William Morris and Dante Rossetti were fascinated with Yonge's *Heir of Redclyffe*, as were most of the young men in Julian Yonge's regiment (183). When hospitalized during the Crimean War, officers requested more copies of that novel than of any other (Cruse 51), and Oxford undergraduates in 1865 still held Yonge in high esteem (Coleridge 183n). On the home front, young women became similarly enamored of Guy Morville. Cruse alleged that Alice Moberly was only the first of many young ladies "who lost their hearts to the all-conquering heir of Redclyffe" (51), and Romanes confessed to having read the novel "at least a score of times" (65).

The Daisy Chain, though not as enthusiastically received as *The Heir of Redclyffe*, sold more copies than any other Yonge novel. What is more, its heroine, Ethel May, won at least as many female devotees as Sir Guy. Critic Edward Salmon dryly insisted that "Ethel May's flights 'from hic, hæc, hoc, up to Alcaics and *beta* Thukydides' are not likely to secure much sympathetic enthusiasm" (517), but "[h]undreds of schoolgirls," reported Cruse, idolized the bumbling, brainy Ethel. One young Ethelite wrote to tell the authoress, "You are the mother of all my good thoughts," and another young girl claimed that she found her first friends through *The Daisy Chain* (54). Coleridge asserted that Ethel was an "inspiring example of conscientious usefulness" for untold numbers of school girls (184). Apparently Ethel also inspired a few men; in a letter written to literary critic M.E. Christie in 1896,

Yonge mentioned that a "Mr. Butterfield was said to be in search of Ethel for a wife" (qtd. in Coleridge 338-39).

When one reads tales of a Yonge novel having kept Tennyson awake at night (Blagg 194), or having been the last book that Lord Raglan read before he died (Yonge qtd. in Coleridge 338), or having fastened itself so tenaciously in a college student's mind that he had to write a friend about it (Cruse 55), there can be little doubt that Charlotte Yonge's creations were dynamic and influential. Like the Movement that inspired her art, Yonge avoided what Altick describes as the "prosaic materialism of the Utilitarian temper" and the "readily vulgarized emotionalism of the Evangelicals" (218), and carved herself a special niche on bookshelves throughout England. Her books became an established part of young women's curriculums and "continued powerful," notes Chadwick, because "few people seem to have wished to exclude them from schools" (*Victorian Church* 215). Salmon published survey results in his 1886 article which suggest, irrespective of his attempts to discredit the findings, that Yonge's popularity held fast, even thirty years after she wrote her most critically acclaimed novels. When interviewers asked 1,000 girls between the ages of eleven and nineteen to list their favorite authors/fiction writers, Charlotte Yonge's name (along with Charles Kingsley's) ranked third behind Charles Dickens and Sir Walter Scott. Shakespeare ranked fourth, George Eliot seventh, Thackeray fifteenth, Mrs. Craik eighteenth, and Miss Edgeworth tied with Ruskin (and Carlyle) in twenty-sixth place (527-28).

No sign, though, of Yonge's once pervasive presence is more convincing than the way in which her novels seeped into other writers' fictions. According to Cruse, in 1857 *The Heir of Redclyffe* made a guest appearance in George Lawrence's *Guy Livingstone* as a subject for its narrator to ponder, and in 1870 Yonge's *Heartsease* briefly surfaced in the memory of Rhoda Broughton's heroine in *Red as a Rose, is She* (51, 58). Margaret Oliphant, another phenomenally productive High Church authoress, included *The Daisy Chain*, *The Heir of Redclyffe* and Yonge herself in the 1876 novel titled *Phæbe, Junior*.

Heroine Phœbe Beecham refers to *The Daisy Chain* as a novel she admired in her "girlish days" (2: 80), alludes to a man who is "nothing the least like the Heir of Redclyffe," and claims, "All I know of clergymen's families I have got from [Miss Yonge]" (2: 175).

Yonge's most popular novel even crept into American fiction. In Henry James' first novel, *Watch and Ward*, he used Yonge's novel to mark his heroine's development, saying,

[Nora] had grown in the interval, from the little girl who slept with *The Child's Own Book* under her pillow and dreamed of the Prince Avenant, into a lofty maiden who reperused *The Heir of Redclyffe*, and mused upon the loves of the clergy. (102-03)

Louisa May Alcott, "the most popular author in America" as of 1893 (Yonge "Authorship" 53), brought Charlotte across the Atlantic to countless young girls by incorporating Yonge's classic into *Little Women* (1868). At the beginning of chapter three, American readers can still find Ethel May-ish Jo March up in the garret "eating apples and crying over the 'Heir of Redclyffe' " (32).

As mentioned above, American readers can also find Charlotte Yonge referenced in a slowly growing body of scholarship. Much of the general conversation revolves around Yonge's religious convictions – her self-professed role as "a sort of instrument for popularizing Church views" (qtd. in Romanes 190) – but she also appears as an example of "domestic realism" (Colby 8; Sandbach-Dahlström 14) and as one of the prime purveyors of Victorian children's/girls' literature (Bratton ch. 5). When we acknowledge that Yonge, as preacher, teacher and domestic realist, assumed many roles with equal skill, we understand that she is not a writer whom we should summarily or solely categorize as a religious zealot, a domestic novelist or a loyalist conservative. Like the nineteenth century itself and the debate over female education, Charlotte Yonge and her convictions cannot accurately be reduced to a single argument, nor should they be. As the general appeal of Yonge's fiction demonstrated, if one's views are simply shown instead explicitly stated or labeled, a great many people can find some common ground.

Charlotte Yonge's forward-looking beliefs about female education warrant attention precisely because they dwell alongside traditionalist leanings in a woman well known for

her conservatism and 'anti-feminist' outlook. One can only speculate, but Charlotte probably did more to popularize feminine scholarship through bringing Ethel May and Ermine Williams (and even Rachel Curtis) into conservative middle and upper-class households, than she could have done as one of Emily Davies' supporters. Though Yonge, as Gillian Avery rightfully observes, "abhorred . . . women's rights" (1437), she loved and worked for young girls throughout her life. She affected many young women, and scholars should not view her as one who has "failed" to merit modern literary attention simply because they cannot, as Horwitz has recently done in her study of Jane Austen and education, label Yonge as a closet 'feminist.' Charlotte was first and last the product of her education – an education that taught her about female responsibilities instead of rights, an education remarkable for its simultaneously repressive administration and tremendous depth, and an education which impelled her to educate others. As we await a possible Charlotte Yonge revival, we can only hope that, as she said toward the end of *Womankind*, "If the outward, material institution *be* lost, the seed sown in it may be in the heart, and bear its fruit in many a place we never heard of" (318).

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