Female friendships in nineteenth century children’s literature

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FEMALE FRIENDSHIPS IN NINETEENTH CENTURY
CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

by

CATHERINE BARKER, B.A.

A Master's Dissertation,
Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the award of the

MASTER OF ARTS

of the Loughborough University of Technology

September, 1988

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Introduction: Twentieth Century Perspectives on Nineteenth Century Children's Literature.

The study of nineteenth century literature causes problems in that the twentieth century reader and critic can make too many assumptions about a bygone age, from what is essentially a creative, rather than a factual source. It is all too tempting to look upon a Victorian novel as a kind of microcosm, a tiny cameo of real Victorian life, whereas, as Peter Laslett establishes in his essay, The Wrong Way through the Telescope, (Laslett: 1976) the reader only actually gets to view a particular society through the mind of the writer. Even autobiographies and diaries are not completely reliable sources, as they are generally written with a reading audience in mind and an author will naturally choose to suppress some episodes and exaggerate, or even invent others.

Further complications ensue when investigating the portrayal of women in nineteenth century fiction, as the Victorian Woman has inevitably attracted stereotyping both in literature and art. Popular twentieth century feminist perspectives have tended to downgrade, in fact, to patronise the women of this period, by examining the lives of the brave few, such as Florence Nightingale (1820-1910) who did break away from the traditional role. It is often more of a hindrance than a help to take exceptional cases such as these and compare them to the norm, for the majority of women would have known no other way of life. The society in which they lived was one that considered the total subordination of women to men to be an entirely natural phenomenon.

The study of this subject through the medium of children's literature provides yet another perspective. It must be borne in mind that a literature for children and young people is, in reality, one which has always been written and carefully monitored by adults, or to be even more specific, written by middle-class adults for the education, entertainment and moral training of a predominantly middle-class audience. Again, this means that the modern reader has access only to a series of idealised situations, not indisputable
evidence of how young girls behaved; conducted their friendships or how they were prepared for marriage.

This raises the extremely important issue of whether, when dealing with nineteenth century literature, one should adopt a twentieth century critical viewpoint. Can, for example, a book written in the nineteenth century, purporting typical nineteenth century ideologies be dismissed according to twentieth century criteria because of its sexist stance? Bob Dixon thinks that it can and should - "I can never see much in the argument which "makes allowance" for the period when a book was written". He believes that if books are to be read now, "then surely we have to apply contemporary standards in evaluating them". (Dixon: 1977: 10)

Obviously the adoption of this rather unrealistic attitude would result in the removal of some of the best-loved children's classics from the library shelves.

For the purpose of this dissertation, a selection of nineteenth century children's books will be evaluated in the light of their intended audience - the nineteenth century child, with the aim of examining and analysing the manner in which a social ideal, in this case, the cult of dainty, home-loving, almost mindless femininity manifested itself in children's literature, and more specifically, how children's authors portrayed friendship as an integral part of this ideal.

The study which follows is based on a close reading of approximately thirty children's books, with passing references made from reading extracts of about a dozen more. These figures include books such as The Heir of Redclyffe ( Yonge: 1853), Jane Eyre (Bronte: 1847) and Westward Hol (Kingsley: 1855) which were intended more for adults, but adopted by a child readership. The earliest examples used are Moral Tales for Young People (Edgeworth: 1801) and the juvenile writings of Jane Austen. Obviously for the purposes of this dissertation, there is a concentration on nineteenth century literature, although several twentieth century texts have been used in order to further
arguments and provide comparisons, including works by authors such as Sylvia Sherry, Jan Needle and Gene Kemp. In addition to nineteenth century children's stories, G.& B. Rees-Williams' book, What I cannot tell my Mother is not fit for me to know, (Rees-Williams: 1981) a compilation of excerpts from Victorian school readers and Sunday school lesson books, as well as rhymes and rules for children, has provided access to some of the least-readily available, but extremely valid reading material - much of which would probably have reached a far wider audience than many of the longer, ostensibly middle-class novels.

The main criterion in the choice of novels was that they should be largely those aimed at adolescent girls, as this appears to have been the age during which the formation of friendships was either actively encouraged or discouraged, and the principles of the feminine ideal most stringently enforced. If it appears that specific attention has been given to texts such as Angelina (Edgeworth: 1801), The Daisy Chain (Yonge: 1855), What Katy did (Coolidge: 1872) or Little Women (Alcott: 1868), perhaps at the expense of other worthy examples, it is because these authors show particular concern for the issues surrounding femininity and friendship, and it seemed worth studying their ideologies in greater depth.

It can be argued that because in a patriarchal Western society women have always been oppressed, that they have always enjoyed a peculiar kind of subculture, a special sisterhood brought about by the shared experiences of the female life-cycle: menstruation, sexual initiation, pregnancy, childbirth, menopause. For the average middle-class nineteenth century woman with only a standard female education, these would have been taboo subjects. As Elaine Showalter states in her introduction to A Literature of their Own, (Showalter: 1984) the fact that women knew they shared these secret experiences, albeit in concealment, with other women, provided an instant kind of bond. A further solidarity would have existed because of women's sharing of common outward roles: the carer, comforter, child rearer and slave.
Nineteenth century authors, especially those writing for children and young people, do not always display much understanding of the actual psychological need for friendship. In the same way in which friendship among boys and young men was supposed to foster manliness, heroism and team-spirit, friendship among girls and young women was manipulated in such a way as to nurture their femininity - hence total conformity with the social ideal of the day. These ideas will be developed using examples from children's fiction from both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and to a lesser extent, school reading-primers and text books. Whenever possible arguments have been reinforced using material from mothers' and young women's advice manuals - numerous enlightening extracts from which can be found in P. Branca's Silent Sisterhood (Branca: 1975), C. Dyhouse's Girls growing up in late Victorian and Edwardian England (Dyhouse: 1981) and D. Gorham's The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal. (Gorham: 1982). In the latter book, Deborah Gorham examines every aspect of the feminine ideal and its impact on girls growing up during the last century. Using advice manuals to provide evidence, she establishes a firm link between female friendship and the feminine ideal. In this study, the idea is to be taken a stage or two further, in order to understand how friendships, as part of this ideal, were presented to girls and young women in their literature. As P. Nestor's study Female Friendships and Communities (Nestor: 1985) deals with manifestations of friendship in a selection of nineteenth century adult literature, so the objective here, is to examine children's literature. As children's authors considered childhood friendship to be an important moral issue, this study should be of interest to those concerned with authority as well as the portrayal of women in children's literature.

Before embarking on a discussion of female friendship in relation to the nineteenth century feminine ideal, it is first necessary to consider the different ways in which authors have chosen to write about friendship in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and how friendship can actually be upheld as an organising principle of children's literature.
From its earliest origins, child literacy has been a tool in adult hands. Early children's literature was contrived within a framework of friendship, authors going to great lengths to befriend children that they might more easily reach their young audience with morals relating to the religious and social ethic of the day. On the role of the adult in child education, John Locke believed that, "fear and awe ought to give you the first power over their minds, and love and friendship in riper years to hold it". (Locke: 1705: 146). Rousseau encouraged the tutor to become "the companion of his pupil and win his confidence by sharing his games". (Rousseau: 1762: 19) Children's authors and publishers obviously realised the validity of these theories, as can be seen on examining the sort of honeyed titles available, - The Children's Friend and The Child's Companion, for example, which first appeared in 1824, and the homely-sounding Aunt Judy's Magazine, which began in 1866, and of course, the work and marketing tactics of John Newbery, (1713-1767). Writers, publishers and booksellers tried to follow the ideas of Locke and Rousseau by establishing a cosy intimacy with the child, a sort of exclusiveness, so that they would firstly continue to read, and also be lulled into greater susceptibility to the moral punchline and the heavy didacticism in which simple stories were so often steeped.

Adults were able to reach a child audience through friendship because even the smallest children understood the importance of having friends. Robert Roberts, recalling his childhood in Edwardian Salford, explains how one's friends were often upheld as a kind of status symbol. There were rarely friendships with children outside the immediate community and "those that did have them gained extra prestige". (Roberts: 1971: 48) Robert writes of the way in which parents sought to control and mould the friendships made by their offspring, for adults were "ever on watch" and one would be warned off certain boys altogether". (Roberts: 1971: 27) Often this would be done not to any lack on the child's
behalf, but because the parents were despised or their morals questionable. These concerns are mirrored exactly in children's books. The rules of choosing companions and conducting friendships can be seen at their most strongly and undisguisedly didactic in some of the reading primers of the second half of the nineteenth century.

In children's poems, rhymes and prayers, there is a strong concern for friendship and looking after one's friends. A poem from *A Poetry Book for Schools*, 1879, encourages children to ask God to "Bless all my friends, both far and near and keep them safe and well". *Pretty Poems for Young People*, c.1900, takes a far more didactic approach with the sad tale of Wicked Willie, who is so nasty that he has no friends at all:

> And they shunned him everyone,  
> And they would not know him;  
> And their games and picture-books  
> They would never show him.

In the final stanza, Willie is described as "dull and sad" in his lonely, friendless state - a warning indeed!

Friendship, being something which all children understand and value, was often used in fables. The fable of *The Two Men and a Bear*, for example, is concerned with the loyalty and devotedness of true friends - the moral being that one should, "Never again... travel with a friend who deserts... in the hour of danger." (*My Book of Fables*, c.1895) As well as there being fables predominantly about friendship, there were also fables written to convey moral teaching on other pet subjects, using friendship to enhance the lesson. *The Grade Lesson Book, First Standard*, c.1870, for example contains a story designed to discourage children from stealing. Because the bird in the tale (rightful owner of the stolen eggs!) turns out to be a friend, the crime seems much, much worse, and the moral is therefore enhanced, - "I will never forget how good a friend one of you has been to me, and I will rob none of your nests again". At the mere thought of having robbed a friend, the child is contrite.
However, the aspect of friendship with which reading primers were most concerned, was that of selecting suitable companions. In the story *Good and Bad Apples*, young readers are warned, "If you keep company with wicked boys, you will soon be like them" (*New Royal Readers No. II*: c.1885), and in the short essay *Choose Good Companions*, children are strongly warned, "It is better always to ask the advice of your parents about who should be your playfellows". Why? Because "they know better than you do". (*New Class Books for Sabbath Schools Second Reading Lessons: c.1875*)

Children were also advised not to set the love of their friends above the love of their siblings. The above reading book contains a short lesson, *Brothers and Sisters*, in which children are told to "Mind one thing: brothers and sisters love you more than any other boys and girls in the world, and were you to die, they would weep very much". These examples, taken at this stage simply from reading primers, demonstrate the importance of childhood friendships, not only to children themselves, but to adults as a major part of the process of character formation and the moulding of young minds.

Friendship as a theme in children's literature inevitably evolves in accordance with the social and moral climate of the day, and therefore a clear pattern of development is discernable. Early nineteenth century literature was very much geared towards the creation of the Rational Child. Choice of friends, like every other aspect of a child's life, was firmly built on reason. Two stories of particular relevance here are Maria Edgeworth's *Angelina* or *L'amie Inconnue* and *Mademoiselle Panache*. Edgeworth was a committed disciple of Rousseau's teachings on education. In *Angelina*, an undesirable liaison is formed by the heroine because of "certain mistakes in her education", because her father and mother had "cultivated her literary taste, but ...neglected to cultivate her judgement", allowing her reading material to be sadly "confined to works of imagination". (*Edgeworth: 1801:226*)

This was certainly not the only time that the acquisition of unsuitable companions was blamed directly on the effects of reading imaginative, rather than rational works. In *Mademoiselle Panache*, the ever-sensible Mrs. Temple says of her daughter's manner of
choosing friends, "You do not yet reason with perfect accuracy, Helen". (Edgeworth: 1801: 93) In *The Good French Governess*, Maria Edgeworth sought to demonstrate Rousseau's principles of education through trust and friendship. In her preface, she went as far as to state that this book was in itself, "a lesson to teach the art of giving lessons". (Edgeworth: 1801: V) The story explains how Madame de Rosier educates her young charges firstly through befriending them, then enhances Isabella and Matilda's capacity for education by making them "friends, instead of rivals, by placing them ...in situations in which they could mutually sympathise, and by discouraging all painful competition." (Edgeworth: 1801: 307)

The works of Maria Edgeworth will be discussed in greater depth when examining the models and lessons appertaining specifically to female friendship.

In children's literature from the mid to late nineteenth century, the portrayal of friendships becomes rather more sentimental. There is also a tendency to confuse friendship with charity, as can be seen in M. L. Charlesworth's *Ministering Children*. (Charlesworth: 1854) This book, in which the ultimate in personal hardship and misfortune is to be prevented from attending Sunday school, consists of a series of incidents wherein a child befriends someone in need. Friendship in this case is actually charity - there are bowls of steaming hot soup and second-hand socks for the poor, magnanimously distributed with helpings of scriptural teachings for the poor-in-spirit. While it seems that children were discouraged from forming friendships across the social classes, charitable acts were positively encouraged, as can be further witnessed in Charlotte Mary Yonge's *The Daisy Chain* (Yonge: 1856) and Louisa M. Alcott's *Little Women* (Alcott: 1868).

During this period especially, literary portrayals of male friendships were designed to foster the Victorian Christian-imperialist ethic, and female friendships, more than ever before, were presented in such a way as to both encourage and reinforce the feminine ideal. The act of selecting friends and conducting friendships was now an extremely important moral issue. Just how
important it actually was can be understood by looking at some of the copious quantities of advice literature written specifically for young people. A particularly good example is *The Heritage of Youth* written by Scottish minister, David Watson. In a chapter rather romantically entitled "A Poet on the Heritage", Watson instructs his intended audience, in this case young men, on the nature of worthwhile friendship. He warns them to be "wary and cautious in striking up a friendship with the unknown", to choose a friend wisely, to "choose him frank, honourable and above all, pure, chaste in word and act" for "friendship is good, if it be with the worthy" and once such a friend has been found, he must be grappled to the soul with "hooks of steel". There follow dire warnings to any reader hitherto unconvinced, as "Many a young man has been ruined for want of discernment, ruined by forming an evil acquaintanceship". In addition to being a moral failure himself, such a young man would also bring despair to his family – there would be "far away in some sweet secluded hamlet or village, or Highland glen, a mother's broken heart and a father's bent form and prematurely whitened hairs". Poignant stuff, but according to the author, this heart-rending scene was "a tragedy all too familiar, all too frequent!" (Watson: 1903: 160-1) Although *The Heritage of Youth* was not published until 1903, it contains exactly the kind of guidance to be found in Victorian children's literature. In *The Daisy Chain*, Charlotte Yonge takes great pains to convey to her readers through the dubious antics of Tom May, the trouble that is inflicted on a family when a child mixes with undesirables.

As well as the lessons concerned with the actual selection of companions, the second half of the nineteenth century gave rise to a great deal of restorative friendships in children's literature, and the popularity of this theme, along with its moral overtones, has endured. In Evelyn Everett-Green's *Dulcie and Tottie*, the saintly Norman is restored to new levels of physical health and spiritual vigour through the loyal friendship of his self-effacing cousin Dulcie. This is after conventional treatments have failed. (Everett-Green: 1894) Johanna Spyri's *Heidi*, a novel without the stifling conventions of the Victorian social and religious ethic,
is predominantly concerned with the theme of friendship. The characters in this book all lead lonely and empty lives until Heidi appears on the scene. Her innocent, ready friendship has a restorative quality - her companions become revitalised, regenerated. The crowning moment occurs when crippled Clara, inspired by Heidi's loyal devotion, learns to walk. (Spyri: 1881) Cases of small, often orphaned children forming friendships with sour, misanthropic old people, were not unusual. It is a theme which occurs again and again in books such as Margaret Robert's Banning and Blessing, (Roberts: 1890) and Eleanor H. Porter's Pollyanna. (Porter: 1913)

The ultimate use of regenerative friendship as a theme occurs in Frances Hodgson Burnett's classic story, The Secret Garden. The author's main point is to show the vital importance of childhood companionship, and this is achieved through the juxtaposition of a normal world of friendship and play, and one of boredom and solitude. Burnett takes two extremely lonely, isolated children - hard, unloving Mary and sickly, selfish Colin, and creates a story about the effect that friendship has on their previously thoroughly unappealing characters. "I have no friends at all", says Mary, at the beginning of the novel, "I never had. My Ayah didn't like me and I never played with anyone". (Burnett: 1911: 39) Later, she says to her new friend, Dickon, "I like you, and you make the fifth person. I never thought I should like five people". (Burnett: 1911: 96) Colin, once plaintively professing, "I never had anything to be friends with, and I can't bear people", (Burnett: 1911: 161) eventually decides to abandon his life as an invalid, proclaiming, "Magic is in me! Magic is making me well!" (Burnett: 1911: 203) The children believe the source of the magic to be their beloved secret garden, but the author makes it quite clear that the only magic at work is that of simple friendship, the joy of sharing with others.

It would be entirely wrong to assume that nineteenth century tales of friendship were accompanied on every page with heavy overtones of self-righteous morality. Children's books were constructed with the aim of providing education through entertainment and there
are consequently numerous examples of authors having presented childhood friendships in such a way as to give real pleasure to their young readers. This can be seen in Little Women, through the private world of make-belief games shared by the March sisters, and in the delightful friendship between Jo and Laurie, and similarly in What Katy did. (Coolidge: 1872) Bob Dixon, asking why what he calls "this compassionless book", has been read so widely for over a hundred years, believes the answer to lie in its "sentimentality and suffering, or the enjoyment of suffering, which is masochism", along with its "top-dressing of religion". (Dixon: 1977: 11) Sadly, Dixon seems to have missed out on the joys of the Katy books. Yes, it is through suffering and pain that Katy is brought into line with and taught to accept her femininity, but the real appeal of What Katy did is its enduring freshness. The way in which the Carr children and their friends are seen to interact is the principle endearing feature of the story. They enjoy many make-belief games, among them the fated "Kikeri" and "Game of Rivers", and like real children, they build dens, have secret hiding places and share their hopes and dreams. This is childhood friendship at its best, friendship for fun, intended to give pleasure to young readers, and importantly, providing a breath of fresh air in what would otherwise be a rather cloying novel.

Gillian Avery believes that part of the importance of friendship in children's literature stems from the fact that, "there is a stage in the reading of most girls where romance is needed without sex". (Avery: 1975: 228) This can best be illustrated by looking at children's books from the Edwardian period, when the portrayal of friendships had perhaps reached an all-time peak of sentimentality. Later nineteenth century fiction had seen girls and young women hugging and kissing each other, with perfect decorum, of course. Katy's idea of intimate friendship after all, is just to be able to walk together at recess. In later fiction, the physical aspect of friendship was taken further, with the portrayal of schoolgirl infatuations and crushes. Such a relationship can be seen in L. T Meade's The School Favourite - "I want you! I want you!" Poppy said with a sob," then later, "Elizabeth's arm flung around
Peggy's neck, their cheeks touching, their young figures close together." (Meade: 1908)

This kind of relationship was not limited solely to girls' books. In a 1913 edition of Boys Own Paper, there appeared a review recommending Horace Anneley Vachell's book, The Hill, as a "fine, wholesome, manly novel", one which upheld a loyal friendship as an ideal to be emulated. As pointed out by Gillian Avery in Childhood's Pattern, later critics have concluded that the jealous love displayed between the two public school-boy characters is actually a tale of unconscious homosexuality. However, as at this stage friendships across the sexes were still discouraged, books such as these did provide their audiences with romance without the author having to allude too strongly to questions of sexuality.

In modern children's literature, the same basic friendship themes persist. They are often presented with a subtle helping of morality, but it is obviously a morality of much more accord with twentieth century views of child and adolescent psychology. Books such as Sylvia Sherry's A Pair of Jesus Boots are concerned with friendship, group loyalty and choosing the right sort of companions. It is a different kind of morality. Parents often forbid their children to mix with Rocky D'Rourke because of his criminal background, but the emphasis is now on the importance of the child making the right decision for him or herself. There is a greater freedom of choice. "Yer a good skin", Rocky frequently tells his friend Billy. Rocky recognises there are different levels of friendship and bestows his, only upon those he trusts. (Sherry: 1969)

Regenerative friendship as a theme continues, with books such as Michelle Magorian's Goodnight Mr. Tom (Magorian: 1981) and the more obviously adolescent novels such as Jan Needle's My Mate Shofiq continue to explore the moral issues underlying friendship. Again, this relationship between a white boy and a young Pakistani, shows how literary friendships reflect a changing ethic. (Needle: 1978) In the nineteenth century, children were discouraged from forming relationships across the social classes - now, this novel encourages
friendship across the barriers of both class and race. Similarly, children are now taught the value of forming friendships across the sexes, yet it could be argued that it is more difficult to come to terms with sex as a barrier than either class or race. The fact that *The Turbulent Term of Tyke Tyler* (Kemp: 1977) still possesses the power to shock readers living in a so-called liberated age, serves to prove that there has not actually been a tremendous break away from traditional notions of friendship.

Returning to these traditional notions, for it is nineteenth century literature which is under examination here, in which boys were friends with boys and girls with girls, it has been shown that friendships were portrayed both to give pleasure to the reader, and to provide, or to enforce an established code of moral behaviour. Friendships between girls and young women were completely, inextricably bound up in the nineteenth century concept of femininity, and can only be dealt with as such. The following chapter is therefore concerned with a discussion of the feminine ideal which was an inevitable part of a patriarchal society, and very strongly upheld in children's literature of the period.
The idealisation of feminity reached a peak during the nineteenth century. It is unfortunately an inevitable aspect of any patriarchal society that "the definition of woman serves the needs of patriarchy, not the needs of women." (Corham: 1982) Women, therefore played a complex dual role. In certain matters, they were expected to be a tower of strength, in others, to bow down meekly and willingly to the better judgement of their menfolk. In fact, they have been described as "simultaneously the supporting pillars and the helpless parasites of society". (Calder: 1976:13)

The fundamental concept of feminity was based on the psychological idea that feminine qualities were entirely natural for a woman. There was, in the nineteenth century, generally no recognition of the fact that it was the process of socialisation which caused young children to adopt their very distinct sex-roles. Women's subjugation was seen as perfectly just because of certain differences in her psyche and her physiological make-up. According to the words of wisdom expressed in *Elements of Health and Principles of Female Hygiene*, "Woman is so formed as to be dependent on Man". (Tilt: 1852:15) Women were taught unquestioningly to accept their lowly position. *The Daughters of England, their position in Society, character and Responsibilities*, advises readers that, "As women, ...the first thing of importance is to be content to be inferior to man". (Ellis: 1843:111-12) *The Juvenile Spectator* comfortingly reassures any possible doubters that this is not a misfortune. On the contrary, the fact that, "Females, from infancy to age are in a state of subjugation ...should convince them they are objects of the fondest solicitude". (Argue: 1810)

The subjugation of women was certainly not something new. As stated so succinctly by Virginia Woolf in *A Room of One's Own*, "Women have for centuries served as "looking-glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size". (Woolf: 1929) However, the fact that male
dominance and female meekness and domesticity intensified in the
nineteenth century can be attributed largely to the rise of
capitalism and the Victorian work-ethic. Men created for themselves
a harsh, fight-to-survive world of entrepreneurship and profiteering,
and as a refuge from the very world that they had created, they
expected the home environment to be a kind of haven. There was a
sharp contrast between the essentially anti-Christian ethic of
capitalism and religious fervour in the home - a home where, however
insecure the economic world, the Victorian male was master. The
running of the household revolved largely around his needs, pleasures
and aspirations.

Enter the Wife and Mother, the all-important figure in this cult
of cozy domesticity, whose "mission" as stated in A Woman's Thoughts
on the Education of Girls, was to, "superintend and arrange those
things which form the physical comforts of the home" and to "adorn
that home with the refinements of intellectual culture". (Roe: 1866:
39) "Let no-one think scorn of the feminine ideal", cries the
author of Happiness and Utility as promoted by the Higher Education
of Women, for it is an "ideal of a life and character, strong in
its weakness, exalted in its lowness, powerful over others by
its abnegation of self". (Grant: 1873)

Clearly setting out the feminine ideal and then strictly
enforcing its principles on a young female readership, was a major
concern of nineteenth century children's authors. A popular treat­
ment of the subject was to compare and contrast a child who
conformed perfectly to the ideal with one who did not, as is the
case in Simple Susan, (Edgeworth: 1796) wherein Susan's character
shines beautifully against one outstanding for her distinct lack of
correct female traits. Another common treatment of this theme was
for an author to take a rather wild, naughty character and show how
her life improves once she has decided to become feminine. This is
certainly the case with Katy Carr, who "tore her dress every day,
hated sewing, and didn't care a button about being called good",
yet secretly, she was always "planning how, by and bye, she would
be beautiful and beloved, and amiable as an angel". (Coolidge:
1872:17)
The division between the sexes and the training for one of two quite separate roles began at a very early age, within the home environment. A piece of advice in the *Girls Own Paper* admonishes those aspiring to step outside the bounds of "their separate sphere of usefulness", for, should man and woman "interfere, or tread on the other's ground", then the result would be "a feminine man, or a masculine woman ...both of which is an aversion to both sexes". (Leach: March 1884) There was thought to be nothing more pitiable than a female "unable to ply her needle", comparable only to "a male who does not know how to read". (Mother's Home Book: 1879) Children's authors tackled the lesson of correct behaviour for the separate sexes in two main ways. The first was by providing the reader with stereotypical role models, as can be clearly seen in Louisa M. Alcott's *Little Men*. When introducing Meg's small children, Alcott describes the boy in light, jolly terms. He is rather rough and ready. He is encouraged to clump noisily about the house, to bang doors, because his father is training him "to be a manly boy". His sister, Daisy, on the other hand, is "sunshiny and charming". She already has "all sorts of little womanlinesses budding in her". She enjoys nothing better than to sew, to play with dolls and to "quiddle about the china closet". (Alcott: 1871: 29-30) It is perhaps rather surprising that in *The Brownies*, (Ewing: 1871) the subjects of the highly moral tale are two young boys - Tommy and Johnnie. It seems slightly to contravene traditional rules that Mrs. Ewing uses two male characters to enforce a lesson about helping parents with everyday domestic chores.

The second method by which authors tried to enforce the principles of the feminine ideal, was to teach the lesson by way of example, taking a character not particularly adept in the intricacies of feminine accomplishments, and seeking to improve them. This is how Charlotte M. Yonge develops the character of Etheldred May in *The Daisy Chain*. A character with whom a young audience must surely have identified, Ethel is untidy and inclined towards forgetfulness. She is more concerned with acquiring an education and with her lofty ideals of helping evangelize the poor community at Cocksmoor, than she is with the obligatory needlework, and is frequently chastised.
for her lack of feminine traits: "I don't think dear mamma would have liked Creek and Cockamoor to swallow up all the little common lady-like things". (Yonge: 1856: 182) It is not just Ethel's attitude which runs contrary to the ideal, but also her physical appearance. She is tall and angular, and inclined to be clumsy. What is more, she is quite shortsighted and taken to wearing her father's spectacles, thus so besmirching her femininity that her brother Harry feels painfully self-conscious upon being seen in her company. The lessons Ethel must learn are indirectly aimed at the young readers everywhere, that they may recognise in her faults, their own.

Ethel, and those like her were not alone in having to conform. Boys and young men had to live up to the Manly Ideal of the day. The required qualities were loyalty, a sense of honour and duty, courage, pluck and love of justice, and especially from the time of the Crimean War and Indian Mutiny, fervent patriotism. Westward Ho! (Kingsley: 1855) is an example of a boy's novel packed with Victorian ideals, the first chapter dealing with a boy's moral training. While girls were being turned into domestic, marriageable little ladies, young men were receiving their training in the popular Christian-cum-Imperialist ideology of the period, from writers such as W.H.G Kingston, Captains Marryat and Mayne Reid, Robert Ballantyne and G.A. Henty.

Sisters were taught to serve their brothers, doubtless as part of their training for married life. A sister was supposed to regard her brother as "her chosen champion and hero", while she was "pledged to him as his future clever little housekeeper, companion and nurse" (The Mother's Companion I: 1887:p.61) and if this attitude seems patronising in the extreme, it was not all that was expected. Sisters were also considered by many to be their brothers' personal moral guides. They had it "very much in their own hands to form their brothers' tastes and judgements". (Our Mothers and Daughters I: 1892: 83) How strongly this expectation is reflected in children's literature! There are numerous examples of devoted brother and sister relationships. Returning briefly to Demi and
Daisy in *Little Men*, the reader is told that Demi fought his sister's battles valiantly, whereas she considered him "the most remarkable boy in the world", would "lend him her nimble fingers in all sorts of work, and help him with his lessons". Every morning, she would tap at his door with a motherly, "Get up my dear, it's 'most breakfast time; and here's your clean collar". (Alcott: 1871: 30) The May family of *The Daisy Chain* subdivides into loyal brother and sister partnerships - Richard and Margaret, Normal and Ethel, Harry and Mary, the sisters in each case helping their beloved brothers through moral dilemmas and personal crises. In *A Very Ill-Tempered Family*, (Ewing:1875) the reader witnesses a sister suppressing her strong-willed nature, and much of her individuality to add strength to her twin brother's temporary period of poor moral judgement. It is a most didactic tale, in which the sister saves her brother's life because of her decision to place his spiritual needs before her own. The benefits of such devotion do not appear to have been particularly great. In the opening pages of *A Great Emergency*, Mrs. Ewing explores the theme of sibling relationships, and it can be seen that Henrietta's devotion to her brother is very much underestimated by him: "I'm particular friends with you as a sister still; but you know Rupert and I are both boys". (Ewing: 1874: 42) In a later children's book *Jeremy*, (Walpole: 1919) the author depicts a completely one-sided relationship, for while his sister Mary clearly hero-worships him, Jeremy is loathe to show her any affection at all, and actually resents her loving attentions.

Young girls, in attending to their brothers' needs, were being trained in the skills required for home-making and motherhood, such as cooking, needlework and household management. Neither was this training restricted solely to the middle classes. The women described by Robert Roberts in *The Classic Slum* stand worlds apart from traditional ideals of femininity, yet the sex-roles are just as clearly defined, with any man who chose to help with domestic chores being called derisive names, such as "mop-rag" or "diddy man". (Roberts: 1971: 54)

In addition to practical skills, a girl was supposed to acquire
accomplishments such as piano-playing, or painting in order to provide pleasure to a future husband, but these were not essential if the fundamental lessons were well-learned. A piece entitled Before you are fifteen, appearing in The Children's Friend, reassured the less artistic that, "not everyone can learn to play or sing or paint well enough to give pleasure to her friends, but the following accomplishments are within everybody's reach." (The Children's Friend: July 1899) The fifteen skills that follow are extremely domesticated, mindless ones - for example, shutting doors softly and keeping rooms tidy. Such were the limited requirements of a female education. While men were educated with a definite profession or calling in mind, or for the business world, girls were educated to become good wives and mothers. In The Daisy Chain, Ethel faces much opposition to her love of learning. She is rebuked by her brother Norman, with whom she has been learning Latin and Greek - "I assure you, Ethel, it is really time for you to stop, or you would get into a regular learned lady, and be good for nothing." Ethel's sister Margaret kindly encourages her to end her studies, by trying to convince her that she will never be able to keep up with the standards of her brother, for, "We all know that men have more power than women." (Yonge: 1856: 101) Even though Ethel's great mission in life is to become a teacher, she is frequently thwarted in her attempts to obtain a meaningful education. Miss Stodart, moralising upon the subject of Female Writers: Thoughts on their Proper Sphere, and on their Powers of Usefulness, (Stodart: 1842) expressed her belief that if women simply had to learn Latin and Greek, then they should only read them while simultaneously usefully employed at their needlework. She was certainly not alone in these beliefs.

In Catching them Young, (Dixon: 1977) the nineteenth century female is described as a "bird in a gilded cage", and the comparison is a striking one. Dixon sees the supports, or bars of the cage as comprising physical deportment, speech, role-enforcement and dress. These are restraining factors, at the same time ensuring femininity and attractiveness. The "gilt" upon the bars of this cage is marriage, and of course, the ultimate fulfilment, motherhood. Katy Carr and Josephine March are just two examples of characters from
children’s fiction, who are made to conform to the "caging" ideals of femininity, and are then seen to earn their share of the "gilding" in the prospect of marriage. Certainly the "gilded cage" idea is an interesting one on a symbolic level, implying restraint, while serving also as an object of decoration and status.

Marriage was considered the "core of social life and social aspiration" (Calder: 1976: 59) and as the 1851 census revealed an excess of approximately half a million females in the population, the race to find a husband was a matter of grave importance. In Little Women, Mrs. March advises her daughters that "to be loved and chosen by a good man is the best and sweetest thing which can happen to a woman". (Alcott: 1868: 135) Thus, the onus was very much on the wife to make sure the marriage was successful. As she had done all in her power to attract a husband, she now had to do everything possible to ensure that he continued to love her. Hints for Wives expressed the belief that "personal neatness and deportment" should not be neglected once a girl became a wife — in fact, "how much more requisite to keep yourself lovely in the eyes of him to whom there is now no privacy or disguise". (The Family Friend: 1849) Advice to those embarking on marriage was plentiful. Marianne Farningham (alias Mary-Ann Hearne) dedicated her autobiography "especially to girls and women who are timid as to the years before them and the duties they have to face". (Farningham: 1901)

The majority of women would never have experienced independence, as basically, marriage meant replacing the authority of a father with that of a husband. As women were encouraged to marry very young, and men only when socially settled, as is the case with Flora May and George Rivers in The Daisy Chain, the switch in authority cannot actually have been that great. As a daughter and sister, a girl would have served her father and brothers, especially to prepare for her future as a wife. Authors writing for older girls and young women, were keen to include stereo-typical portrayals of the ideal wife, such as can be found in Ruth Lamb's rather didactic novel, Only a Girl Wife. Here, the reader is lead to think most highly of Mrs. Fereday, who "like a true wife ... placed her husband's pleasure and convenience first of all". (Lamb: c.1880: 9) So
highly did this author uphold the value of this truly Christian marriage, that Only a Girl-Wife became one of the reading recommendations of the Religious Tract Society. Never is there the slightest hint of the forward-thinking of later writers such as D.H Lawrence or Thomas Hardy, who portray marriages as potentially happy only if both parties retain their individuality. From the idealised situations presented in Victorian children’s literature, it could be concluded that women were simply not encouraged to have any individuality. A good wife was supposed to serve her husband, promote the Word of God and minister to the community’s poor and needy.

The Feminine Ideal was as much a spiritual, as a social concept, and the idea of the wife and mother as a kind of “Angel-in-the-House” is one that is heavily represented in nineteenth century children’s literature. Motherhood was a very highly revered state. In fact books such as Louisa M. Alcott’s Little Women series, can be seen from beginning to end as a glorification, if not a sanctification of motherhood. In the last part of the saga, Jo’s Boys, the values which run continuously throughout the story reach a climax with a final toast, “To Mother, God bless her”. (Alcott: 1886) This acts as a reinforcement of traditional family values with motherhood the ultimate means of fulfilling the feminine ideal. The background is one against which the mother is not only physical carer and comforter, but even more importantly, an excellent moral guide. The March girls are forever confessing to their mother, being shriven by her and collecting her instructions regarding future behaviour. Each of them, apart from Beth, have one major character-weakness, running contrary to the feminine ideal. Both is a kind of foil against which her sisters’ weaknesses seem to be judged. With Meg, the weakness is vanity, with Jo, tomboyishness and with Amy, selfishness. Their mother, silent throughout their escapades is always brought on, eventually, to proffer spiritual advice to her daughters, and hopefully, to contrite readers, too. In Little Men, Jo herself has rather surprisingly adopted a similar role for herself, as physical comforter and moral guide to the children in her husband’s school.

Charlotte Yonge liked to kill off her mothers at quite an early stage in the proceedings. This is certainly the case with
The *Daisy Chain*, in which Mrs. May is quickly done away with in a carriage accident, and it seems as though it was perhaps easier for her to handle motherhood this way. It meant that there was no need even to allude to the physical side of marriage — no need to be constantly reminded by Mrs. May's presence that here was a woman who had borne eleven children. With all matters physical out of the way, Charlotte Yonge could concentrate on an atmosphere of child-like innocence, and really begin to enforce the "Angel-in-the-House" ideal. Memories of Mrs. May linger sweetly, yet painfully in the house, and are used as a kind of symbol of supreme goodness and purity. The children feel her spiritual presence and are wretchedly unhappy if they feel that through hasty actions or childhood pranks, they have somehow wronged her.

Once mother is dead, the role of moral guide and confidante falls upon the eldest daughter, Margaret — the new "Angel". Lying in bed, an invalid, clad in robes of white, she is the epitome of the spiritual side of the ideal. Flora May outwardly appears to conform to the feminine ideal, for she is neat and tidy, physically beautiful and well-versed in the necessary codes of etiquette. However, Charlotte Yonge hints many times to her readers that while conforming perfectly to the social side, Flora falls very short of the spiritual side of the ideal. She is rather worldly, and lacks the patience and gentleness to act as a spiritual guide to her younger brothers and sisters.

In *Dulcie and Tottie*, (Everett-Green: 1894) Rose has all the social graces that are lacking in Dulcie. Dulcie, however, fulfils the spiritual requirements perfectly, and in a comparison of the two characters, Evelyn Everett-Green clearly reaches the conclusion that spiritual rather than social graces are more important in a young woman. Although readers are encouraged to judge the characters on their individual merits, it is obvious that the author has not tried to make worldly, shallow Rose particularly likeable. Dulcie cares for people, Rose only for occasions and status.

The emphasis on the spiritual side of the feminine ideal is reminiscent of the Cult of the Virgin Mary, much evidence of which
is visible in Medieval literature and art. There was, in both cases, an extremely high degree of idealisation. Arthur Hughes' illustrations to the 1869 edition of Tom Brown's Schooldays (Hughes: 1857) include a picture of Tom Brown meeting the mother of a school friend. She is depicted almost as a saint. She is neat and tidy, delicately slender and her facial expression is one of absolute piety and tenderness. This is the Victorian woman as a spiritual, not a sexual being. Had Hughes added a halo, she might easily have been taken for a Madonna.

Gillian Avery, discussing the spiritual part of the feminine ideal, remarks that it is the Victorian story-book mother, rather than God, or the Saints, who is often "invoked ... as a talisman against evil". (Avery: 1975: 131) This is especially the case with young male characters who are leaving home to embark on some kind of adventure. Harry May of The Daisy Chain becomes a sailor, and carries on board with him the memory of his dead mother as a protection from both bodily and spiritual harm, and Ralph, at the point of the shipwreck in The Coral Island, (Ballantyne: 1857) quickly invokes a mental image of his mother as a kind of talisman against the almost certain fate of death by drowning.

The feminine ideal, comprising physical appearance, social accomplishments and spiritual graces was certainly not strictly adhered to by all girls and young women. Children's authors were keen to discourage tomboyishness in their readers. Henrietta, in A Great Emergency is a figure of fun because she likes boys' games and insists on parting her hair on the boy's side, and Mary May in The Daisy Chain is forbidden from something as simple as visiting the river with her brothers, because "No-one but a Tom-boy would dream of it". (Yonge: 1856: 114) It is Jo March, however, who has come to be thought of as the archetypal nineteenth century tomboy. In bothering to include a tomboy character at all, Alcott is acknowledging that there existed those who were not content to live a restraining life of dutiful femininity, but she was also allowing herself plenty of opportunities to slip in some moral guidance on the subject. Jo's behaviour is not really portrayed as normal or
socially acceptable. She is considered "old enough to leave off boyish tricks" - (Alcott: 1868: 8) tomboyishness being regarded merely as an adolescent stage, something to be outgrown. The author might not have approved of this kind of behaviour in a young woman, but Jo March remains without a doubt, both the most interesting and the most definite of her characters. She is really the only character with any sense of individuality, and it goes very much against the grain in the reader, that Jo is finally made to conform to the feminine ideal, and marries a boring, middle-aged professor.

The suppression of tomboy characters in children's literature, and subsequent enforcement of traditional sex-roles carried on well into the twentieth century, which shows just how strong the concept of the feminine ideal actually was. The best-known twentieth century tomboy is George in Enid Blyton's now controversial Famous Five series. Once again, the reader is given frequent assurances that this is only a silly, adolescent phase, to be outgrown as soon as possible. Arthur Ransome shows evidence of a more enlightened attitude. Pigeon Post, (Ransome: 1936) for example, consists of a group of eight child characters - five girls and three boys. It is interesting that while the females do the domestic chores, they also participate equally in any action. The most dominant and assertive of the eight characters is actually a girl - Nancy Blackett.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, a few advice-book writers, such as Lucy White Palmer, tended to advocate that young girls and boys be treated in a similar way - that the feminine qualities of a girl will naturally assert themselves when she is ready. A Word in Behalf of the Little Girls implores mothers, "Be not in too great a hurry to impose upon your little girl the burden of her sex". (Palmer: 1889) It is from this period that the "New Woman" supposedly emerged.

Many women may have started to become interested in issues of emancipation, but there was actually little departure from
traditional notions of the feminine ideal. *Miss Secretary Ethel*, subtitled "A Story for Girls of Today" (Adams: 1898), is a story about a young girl who has had a formal education, and learns shorthand in order to make a career as personal secretary to a baronet. Ethel maintains true to the feminine ideal, and in addition to her secretarial duties, she cares for the baronet as a daughter, until finally, he adopts her as such. Not really a modern tale of a young female desperately wishing to escape from the confines of the home! The sentimental cover illustration does little to break away from the traditional mould - Wearing a typical "Angel-in-the-House" expression, Ethel is pictured reaching out her hands to a small kitten.

*The Strike of the Sisters*, appearing in *The Girls' Realm*, in 1899, must at first glance, have appeared rather radical. It is a tale of two sisters who decide to rebel against having constantly to wait upon their brothers. Surely this would have raised sympathetic stirrings in the hearts and minds of many young female readers - yet sadly, the story was not as forward thinking as it appears. It ends with a moralising grandmother pointing out to the errant sisters exactly why boys and girls must stick to the roles allotted to them by society. If anything, *The Strike of the Sisters* ran entirely contrary to any conception of a newly-liberated woman, while appearing to have provided a balanced discussion.

It has been demonstrated, using examples from numerous texts, that children's authors of the nineteenth century played a significant part in the enforcement of the feminine ideal. The double-irony of this situation is first, that the majority of these writers were actually women, and secondly, that to be writing and publishing books at all, they must to some extent, however small, have had to break away from the traditional female role themselves. Writing books was not considered properly feminine because it was a task which temporarily took a woman away from her domestic duties. It is far more likely, regarding the situation with hindsight, that men felt threatened by the success of female writers. The author of a piece which appeared in *The Leader* in
1850, admitted that there were few male authors capable of writing as well as Currer Bell or Mrs. Gaskell, yet even after showing a recognition of their talent, he continues by encouraging women to stick to their household chores. "This is the March of mind", he agrees, "but where, oh where, are the dumplings? Does it never strike these delightful creatures that their little fingers were meant to be kissed, not to be inked?" Becoming increasingly whimsical, he enquires, "Are there not husbands, brothers, friends, lovers to coddle and console? Are there no stockings to darn, no purses to make, no braces to embroider?" In fact, this person's idea of a perfect woman is "One who can write, but won't". (Dunbar: 1953:32) The concept of the female novelist, described in W.S Gilbert's libretto to The Mikado as "a singular anomaly who never would be missed" (Gilbert: 1885) seems to have been a common one. The act of writing novels took women away from chores within the home, which is why female novelists were often objects of male ridicule. Another aspect of the feminine ideal was that ambition and intellect were supposed to be suppressed, or concealed in favour of at least an outward show of self-abnegation and humility.

As the very notion of female authorship ran contrary to the feminine ideal, it seems rather ironic that so many female works contained a rigorous enforcement of traditional concepts of womanhood. Books written for older girls and young women, such as What Katy Did, Little Women and The Daisy Chain were quite obviously written every bit as much to subconsciously indoctrinate, as they were to entertain. The Heir of Redclyffe' (Yonge: 1853), not intended for children, but soon adopted by them, can be regarded almost as a model moral story. Charlotte Yonge presents the perfect Victorian idealised family life, a world in which the women are pure, pretty and gentle, and the men, manly, courageous and noble. Nineteenth century literature tended to force the sexes even further apart, as is reflected in the fact that the majority of Victorian children's books were aimed either at boys or girls, but seldom both simultaneously. Young women, even from the books they read for pleasure, were bombarded with images brainwashing them into nurturing their precious femininity and their attractiveness to men, and urging them to improve their aptitude for domestic skills
and the cultural refinements which they would require as wives and mothers. Their literature, therefore played a vital part in the process of training for a future lifestyle—a lifestyle which would be essentially one of artificiality.

Female friendship has not been dealt with in this chapter, as the subject has been reserved for much fuller discussion in the next. It can, however, be seen very clearly as a major part of the nineteenth century feminine ideal, for "friendships between girls, like so many other aspects of a girl's life, were meant to foster femininity". The acquisition of such friendships revealed "a personality capable of intimacy and the mutual sharing, with other girls and women, of a domestic environment". (Gorham: 1982: 115) Inevitably, as children's authors had considered it their duty to advise young girls on every other aspect of their femininity, they similarly had much wisdom to impart on the subject of female friendships.
Female Friendship: Models and Lessons

One has only to look at a fraction of reading material - school reading primers and Sunday school readers, to see the immense popularity of female friendship as a major moral theme in nineteenth century children's literature. It is a theme which appears under several different guises, but almost always carries a moral message, however subtle, on the nature of friendship. Authors writing for girls and young women were keen to proffer advice on the selection of suitable female companions and how properly to conduct a friendship. There is a wealth of model friendships to be found in children's literature of this period, as well as the inevitable examples of the sort of relationships to be avoided at all costs. There is a kind of conformity of behaviour which attracts people, and one which repels - hence the popularity among children's authors of the friendless young lady, designed to act as a warning to sorry readers who may have been hoping to form lasting friendships without first attending to the reformation of their character weaknesses!

On the most fundamental level, the rules governing female friendship, as expressed through children's literature were as follows: A friend had to be vetted by a child's parents and should preferably have been from the same social class as oneself, although friends of a higher social status were often encouraged, so that girls could form desirable connexions. Topics of discussion between young female friends were supposed always to be seemly. They were encouraged to shun any conversation which could not, in all decency, be held within the hearing of their mothers. The short moral tale Telling Mother, advocates just this very rule, with its young female character self-righteously proclaiming, "What I cannot tell my mother is not fit for me to know - for your mother is your best friend". (Royal Readers, II, Third Series, 1879) Frivolous conversations were to be avoided, as were extreme levels of sentimentality. Friends were supposed to support one another, to find pleasure in each other's company
and to build a relationship upon loyalty, trust and mutual sharing. This was, in fact, the kind of "intimate friendship" so beloved of nineteenth century children's authors. Young females, in sharing their secret hopes, joys and aspirations, by indulging in "girl-talk" of the day, would be subconsciously reinforcing the feminine ideal in themselves and in each other. Because children's literature was largely in middle-class hands, it is probable that idealised literary friendships were part of an ideal relating really only to a bourgeois lifestyle. According to Robert Roberts, the degree of intimacy in friendships between slum-dwellers has actually been idealised out of all proportion. The stifling nature of close-living meant that friendships between women were quickly made and just as quickly broken, resulting in ever-changing allegiances. While it is normally the case for working-class people to try and emulate the habits of the middle classes, it is as important in this chapter as in the previous one, to remember that the topic under discussion is a middle-class ideal, tackled by middle-class writers with the aim of both entertaining and improving middle-class children. It is difficult, if not impossible, to determine how close reality ever came to the ideal.

The selection of suitable companions was considered vitally important for a young girl. Because of her youth and innocence, it would be all too easy for her to fall under bad influences from her contemporaries. Victorian mothers' manuals were full of advice on this matter. In Maternal Counsels to a Daughter, mothers are warned that "perhaps not even the acceptance of a lover is a more important era in the life of a young girl than her first serious choice of a friend". (Pullan: 1855: 81) Mothers were encouraged to play a prominent part in the monitoring of their daughters' friendships, and daughters, in their turn, were taught that where friends were concerned, their mothers really did know best. In Lanston Parsonage, (Sewell: 1846) young female readers were confronted with a classic example of how not to go about choosing friends. Madeline and Ruth Clifford are from a secure, loving family background and they manage reasonably well to overcome the "C.M Yonge - type" temptations to which they are
constantly exposed. When they are despatched to school, however, they meet unsuitable people and form friendships with them. They are drawn into idle habits, such as gossiping and reading forbidden French novelettes! The moral message is clear—don’t be tempted to weaken in the face of peer pressure thus making undesirable companions, but follow parental guidance only. Parents must always have been watching, in order to quickly suppress any unsuitable relationships. Certainly in Margaret Roberts’ Banning and Blessing, there is a strong sense that Bethia is constantly monitoring the developing friendship between her niece Lucy, and Cicely, for in fact she is “well aware that there is no influence over a girl as that of a companion a few years older”. (Roberts: 1890: 54) There is no feeling of malice, simply that Bethia, and indirectly the author, have this relationship under surveillance, as part of their adult responsibilities to youth.

Each author appears to have had her individual “hobby-horse” where female friendship was concerned. Charlotte Yonge, for instance, was most concerned with the actual choosing of companions and tended to acknowledge only distinct black or white friendships. The Daisy Chain contains either shining examples of friendship, such as the relationship between Meta Rivers and the May sisters, and Hector Ernescliffe and the May brothers, or cautionary tales such as the dubious friendship between Tom May and the Anderson boys. Mrs. Ewing considered the choosing of worthy companions to be an important subject, as can be seen in A Very Ill-Tempered Family, but she was more concerned for the actual way in which friendships should be conducted. Friendships had to be equal, not onesided. In A Great Emergency, there is a sharp warning that, “even if one is blessed with friends of such quick sympathy that they really enjoy hearing about people they have never seen, it is as well not to abuse the privilege, and now and then to allow them an “innings” at describing their remarkable parents, brothers, sisters and remoter relatives.” (Ewing: 1874: 34) The main character of this story certainly learns that boasting results only in the very shallowest friendships.

For a friendship to work, there had to be a proper bond, borne
of mutual understanding and the sharing of similar interests and dreams. Such was the belief of Evelyn Everett-Green, as expressed through Dulcie and Tottie, a novel predominantly about different levels of friendship. The humble Dulcie is unable to form much of a relationship with Rose because she is altogether too worldly, and tends to patronise Dulcie's spiritual ideals. The younger cousin, Clover, is not wrapped up in the same worldly values and she and Dulcie "were very friendly outwardly and would play contentedly by the hour together", yet theirs never becomes what might be termed a true friendship. Dulcie is "always conscious of a want on the part of her companion". Clover's overwhelming practicality of mind and subsequent lack of imagination means that she is unable to communicate on anything other than everyday matters - in fact, her "inability to enter any of Dulcie's deeper speculations or aspirations, proved an effectual block to real friendship". (Everett-Green: 1894: 110) The bond of mutual understanding which is missing between Dulcie and her cousins is very much present when she meets Elsie, a young invalid. Dulcie finds it pleasant to "talk to another little girl about her own feelings and ideas" (Everett-Green: 1894: 105) thus a friendship is sealed. What Dulcie finds lacking in her two cousins is any real sense of spirituality. It was common for children's authors to have their young female characters reject the elements of a friendship which ran contrary to the spiritual side of the feminine ideal, as is the case with Ellen in Wide, Wide World (Wethereill: 1850) who is repulsed when her friends want to play a secular game on the Sabbath.

There is something very cosy about the intimate female friendship which obviously had its attractions for children's authors. One of the most appealing scenes in What Katy did Next (of which there are surprisingly few, for this book is neither as interesting or as readable as its predecessors) is that in which Katy visits her old school-friend, Rose-Red, not having seen her for quite some time. Once Rose's baby is asleep and out of the way, the two old friends settle themselves into cozy chairs and begin to exchange their news: ""How Katy", said Rose, seating herself in "chit", ...
"pull up "chat", and let us begin". So they did begin, and went on ...till dusk fell." (Coolidge: 1886: 44) The particular appeal of this episode lies in the fact that the author does not disclose what Katy and Rose actually found to talk about, but all young readers would have known that this was girl-talk, and that it could have gone on much longer than dusk, had supper not been ready!

The subject of female friendship was tackled with a mixture of rationality and sentimentality. The rational line of thought was that poor behaviour in a child would result in no friends at all. Friendship was regarded as being symbolic of a girl's personal worth, friendlessness therefore pointing to the fact that a girl was probably unworthy. As Marianne Farningham states in Girlhood, "We never think very highly of the woman who cannot count upon the love ...of one staunch friend of her own sex". (Farningham: 1869)

While a girl without a friend was a "lonely being", it was indicative of a frivolous nature if a girl had too many friends. It was considered "impossible to have a close and real friendship with a great many". (Girls, Their Work and Influence: 1877: 35)

In fact, characters in literature who assumed friendships with large numbers of people, were usually portrayed as being rather shallow. The best option for a girl was to propagate just one or two intimate friendships, thus avoiding frivolity and proving her ability to form and conduct a close relationship.

For nineteenth century writers, female friendship provided a fine chance for the exercising of sentimentality. Volney Streamer, in 1900, compiled a book entitled What Makes a Friend? Beautifully presented, and obviously intended as a keepsake, this volume can be seen as the epitome of what intimate friendship meant to the Victorian woman. The text consists of a selection of quotations, some profound, others purely sentimental, on the nature of friendship. The end papers depict two young ladies, intimate friends, reading together on a window seat. It was during the Victorian era that female friendships were most idealised and sentimentalised, and it is highly probable that books such as Volney Streamer's were given by girls and young women to their friends, as tokens of
their undying love and affection.

One of the nineteenth century literary friendships that tends to be remembered purely for its poignant sentimentality, is that between schoolgirls Jane Eyre and Helen Burns at the Lowood Institution. Her friendship with consumptive Helen was the only redeeming feature of life at Lowood for Jane, and she is by her friend's side on the night of her death: "I clasped my arms closer round Helen; she seemed dearer to me than ever; I felt as if I could not let her go; I lay with my face hidden on her neck". (Brontë: 1847: 80) At daybreak, the friends are still clasped together, but Helen is dead. This is Victorian sentimentality in its extreme, and it was certainly not reserved just for adult books. In fact the sentimentality, the kissing and cossetting between young females in children's literature lends considerable weight to Gillian Avery's theory, discussed in the first chapter, that the portrayal of intimate female friendships was an acceptable way of providing young women with romance. Thus, authors could avoid having to resort to that dubious ground of writing about, and seeming to condone friendships across the sexes.

Extreme levels of sentimentality between young girls can be found in the shortest of children's stories, as well as the longer works and novels. There are many examples among the tales to be found in Something for Sunday Stories. In A Country Girl, for instance, there occurs a picturesque description of two little friends, Beatrice and Alice. The two children "loved each other dearly, and with their arms about each other they would sit under the deep shadow of the trees listening for the cuckoo's note". One of the volume's Twilight Talks, entitled Christmas Eve, opens to a similarly romantic setting - Two girls sitting at a window "in a cosy bedroom overlooking the snowy prospect; a bright fire burned in the grate, and a little table was spread with afternoon tea". Mary is comforting her friend with biblical texts. There were "bright tears glittering in her soft eyes ...and Dorothy kissed her almost reverently". (Shaw: 1905) The purpose of all the tales in Something for Sunday Stories is evangelical, not to moralise on the nature of friendship, and it is interesting that
when portrayals of female friendships occur, along with much hair-
stroking, petting and sobbing into one another's laps, they are
still as much a part of the intimate friendship ideal as are those
relationships in longer works which are more obviously concerned
with social rather than spiritual behaviour.

Margaret Roberts' novel, Banning and Blessing, can most
definitely be described as a romance for girls. The story is
based on relationships, be it the re-establishment of family ties
which have long been broken, or friendships between individuals.
Orphaned Lucy makes friends with Cicely, one of her Aunt's servants,
and perhaps the strongest point of the novel is the way in which
the author unfolds their developing relationship. The two girls
come to trust each other implicitly, to share their secrets and
dreams like any intimate friends: "I'd tell you anything, Miss.
Evelyn", said Cicely impulsively, and as Lucy lifted her face for
a kiss, Cicely's lips met hers and the friendship was sealed".
(Roberts: 1890: 45) Apart from obvious differences in social class,
the friendship is one of equality. Lucy values the warmth and
affection of a slightly older girl, and for Cicely, "to be Lucy's
companion in her walks and wait upon her was such happiness as she
had never dreamed of". (Roberts: 1890: 54) There are hints of
Cicely's affection for young farmhand, Tom Pooke, but as her feelings
are unrequited, the novel's main sentimental interest lies in her
friendship with Lucy.

There are numerous examples of intimate friendships in
children's literature, but a book which deserves a particular
mention is What Katy did at School. This serves as an interesting
case study because Katy and Clover are removed from their usual
home environment and the reader witnesses their having to make new
friends. While Katy and Clover attempt to establish friendships
at school, their younger sister, Elsie, sends them news of her
first intimate friendship at home: "We're the greatest of friends,"
she writes, "she says she loves me just exactly as much as if I was
her sister." (Coolidge: 1873: 139) At the same time, Katy and
Clover become intimate friends with fellow pupil, Rose-Red, and
this again is one of the friendships of children's literature that
One tends to remember. Rose, being a great practical joker, yet extremely kind-hearted too, is a delightfully drawn character and Coolidge, portraying the friendship between Rose and the Carrs employs her usual blend of fun, seriousness and generous helpings of sentimentality. She writes of the parting of Rose, Katy and Clover. Half broken-hearted, "they lavished tears, kisses, promises of letters and vows of eternal friendship." Amidst this sentimental scene, they also agreed that "neither of them ... was ever to love anybody else so well." (Coolidge: 1873: 176)

This treatment of friendship was not restricted solely to books for girls. As female friendships were designed to foster femininity, male friendships were supposed to produce a heightened sense of group loyalty and such portrayals of relationships between boys and young men often verged on sentimentality. This is certainly the case in R. M Ballantyne's The Coral Island. Ralph, who narrates the story proclaims himself and fellow castaways, Jack and Peterkin, "the best and staunchest friends that ever tossed together on the stormy waves." (Ballantyne: 1857: 18) The relationship they have is the male equivalent of the female intimate friendship. Ralph believes them all to be "tuned to the same key, namely that of love! ... We loved one another with much fervency ... and we love each other still." (Ballantyne: 1857: 167) Male friendships were rarely depicted with quite as intense a sentimentality as their female equivalents, and this can be attributed to two factors, firstly that part of the masculine ideal was to keep one's emotions firmly guarded and secondly, that the characterisation in boys' adventure books tended not to be very highly developed, subservient as it always was to the provision of an exciting action-packed story.

Female friendships in nineteenth century children's literature often seem over-sentimental and "slushy" to the twentieth century reader, but for all this sentimentality, it was always the duty of the author to maintain at least a basic rationality where female friendships were concerned. A favourite way of encouraging girls to use common sense when choosing their friends, was to provide satirical stereotypical examples of the purely sentimental,
consequently rather meaningless friendship. The more obviously
didactic authors, such as Maria Edgeworth, believed there to be a
most definite link between the reading of trashy romantic novels
and the formation of undesirable friendships. Writing as she always
did, with a strong moral purpose, Mrs. Edgeworth often provided
children with direct satire on the kind of sentiments expressed in
such romances.

In Angelina or L'amis Inconnue, the reader is confronted with a
highly satirical cautionary tale on the need to base one's choice
of friends on rational thought. The subtitle, "The Unknown Friend"
is a clue to the moral message of the story, for the title character,
Angelina, is seen to make the horrendous mistake of attaching
herself through letters to Araminta, a person she has never
actually met. "Yea, my Angelina," writes Araminta, "Our hearts are
formed for that higher species of friendship, of which common souls
are inadequate to form an idea." (Edgeworth: 1801: 225) Angelina
decides to elope and live forever by the side of her soulmate,
proclaiming herself unable to live without the higher pleasures
of friendship: "I have chosen for my asylum the humble, tranquil
cottage of a female friend ... whose genius I admire! Whose
virtues I revere! Whose example I emulate!" (Edgeworth: 1801: 228)
Reaching the heights of ridicule, Angelina, sighing by a window,
throws up the sash and composes a sonnet to Araminta:

"Hail, far-famed, fairest, unknown friend,
Our sacred silent sympathy of soul," (Edgeworth: 1801: 230)
Angelina, of course comes to learn her lesson. When she finally
meets Araminta, her expectations are shattered. Araminta does not
conform at all to the feminine ideal and is highly pretentious.
To make matters worse, she has a love of drinking. (The fifth
practical rule in Lessons in Domestic Economy for Elder Girls,
was "Never form friendships with those persons who are given to
drinking habits." (Hassell: c.1890)) Later, Angelina confesses
that her irrational behaviour was based on her desire for a friend,
"to whom I could open my whole heart, and whom I could love and
esteem, and who should have the same tastes and notions with
myself." (Edgeworth: 1801: 274) The moral of the tale lies in the fact that Angelina, "instead of rambling over the world in search of an unknown friend", chooses to attach herself "to those of whose worth she received proofs more convincing than a letter of three folio sheets stuffed with sentimental nonsense." (Edgeworth: 1801: 282) The author never intended the reader to take this friendship seriously. The Preface states that when discussing the "romantic eccentricities of Angelina", the "nonsense of sentimentality is here aimed at with the shafts of ridicule, instead of being combated (sic) by serious argument." (Edgeworth: 1801: V) From what must have seemed a humorous story, young girls thus learned to think carefully before bestowing their affections on the unknown and unworthy.

The Juvenilia of Jane Austen often displays a similar satirical treatment of female friendship, and shows that not all young women were incapable of acting rationally. In Frederic and Elfrida, it is once again the sentimentality of the intimate female friendship which comes under fire - "They beheld by a turning in the grove two elegant young women leaning on each other's arm" - an idyllic setting and a little later comes the classic sentimental parting, "With a heavy heart and streaming eyes did she ascend the lovely vehicle which bore her from her friends and home." (Austen: c.1790: 40-2) Austen also satirized the importance for females of having friendships amidst the correct social circles. In Henry and Eliza, she cuttingly describes the Duchess of F, "about forty-five and a half; her passions were strong, her friendships firm and her enmities unconquerable." (Austen: c.1790: 65) Literary send-ups of the frivolous friendship leads onto an equally important topic in the eyes of children's authors, that young females should at all costs beware of the shallow and superficial.

In Maternal Counsals to a Daughter, mothers are warned that friendship should be based on much more than "the silly chit-chat and often pernicious gossiping in which young girls indulge." This was considered a "serious evil". (Pullan: 1855: 56-7) Girls were warned against the dangers of childhood flattery. As Mme. de
Rosier reminds her young charges in *The Good French Governess*, "You know that is only childish affection without esteem."
(Edgeworth: 1801: 29) This is a lesson which Meg March has to learn in *Little Women*. In the chapter aptly entitled *Meg goes to Vanity Fair*, the reader witnesses the transformation of Meg, from a normally sincere, straightforward girl, if perhaps a little vain, into "a fine lady", crimped, curled and polished like a "newly-dressed doll". (Alcott: 1868: 124) The temporary transformation occurs because Meg succumbs to the flattery of friends, whom she later admits are shallow and frivolous, caring only for their appearances, their connexions and their coming-out parties.

It was extremely important for girls to understand the difference between genuine friendships and liking people for the wrong reasons. In *Mademoiselle Panache*, Helen is drawn to Lady Augusta for her rather dashing appearance, rather than her character. She learns her lesson, though - "I am sure the next time", said Helen, "I'll take care not to like a stranger merely for having a blue sash." (Edgeworth: 1801: 113) In *What Katy Did*, Katy has the same lesson to learn over her "intimate friend", Imogen Clarke, in what must surely be one of the most delightful episodes ever written for children. Katy's intimate friends are actually described as "one of the jokes of the household", (Coolidge: 1872: 57) and Imogen is no exception. She arrives for play, "dressed in a light-blue barge with low neck", "coral beads in her hair", "white satin slippers" and "yellow gloves", the whole effect being "so very gorgeous" that the Carr children, sensibly dressed in their everyday clothes, are "quite dazzled". Imogen, with her talk of drawing rooms and admiring brigadiers, had in fact "read so many novels that her brain was completely turned". Katy is quite taken in, crying, "Oh Imogen, you look just like a young lady in a story", (Coolidge: 1872: 64-5) but beneath the carefully constructed, if patched and darned, facade, lies a shallow, affected, silly girl. Even Katy realises she has made a mistake in thinking Imogen a friend, and her father's warning, to be "a little shy of swearing eternal friendship" with those who are unworthy of it, provides the moral of the episode. Children's authors were keen to point
out that shallow people rarely earned the rights to close friendships. This is certainly the case in *What Katy Did at School*, for the two most shallow and pretentious characters, Lilly Page and Bella Arkwright, are the girls with whom nobody really wants to be on intimate terms.

Authors' warnings to young girls to beware of forming "odd" attachments can largely be attributed to their own class-based prejudices. Charlotte Yonge, in *Books to Give and Books to Land*, compiled in 1887, made a definite distinction between the sort of reading material suitable for the middle and working classes. It was presumed that cottage children would not find the moral codes of the more obviously middle-class stories, either accessible or particularly relevant, yet surely one very real barrier would have been the high incidence of warnings to middle-class children to avoid forming friendships with children of the lower classes. Prior to her attachment to Imogen, Katy Carr had other disastrous intimate friendships: with Marianne O'Riley, a strange little Irish child, then "a queer old black woman with a "very bad temper" (Coolidge: 1872: 59) and Mrs. Spenser, the invalid wife of a criminal. Coolidge's main objections to these people is that they are clearly not from the same social background as Katy, and are therefore unworthy, if not actually an embarrassment. In *Banning and Blessing*, Margaret Roberts can be seen to condone female friendship across the social classes, but it is an uneasy acceptance. Lucy and Cicely are equals in their affection for one another, but as Cicely is a servant and must therefore of necessity wait on Lucy, readers remain conscious of the social differences between them. When Lucy becomes heiress to a country estate, she is advised that her friendship with Cicely should revert back to a mistress/servant level. Her Aunt warns her of Cicely, "Leave her in her own station, should you ever have it in your power to raise her from it ...I have seen much harm - very much - come from that mistake." (Roberts: 1890: 62) The main objection to a girl making friends with someone of lower social status, was that there may be bad influences from her probable lack of education
and lady-like qualities. Poorer friends, however, were acceptable if worthy. In *What Katy did at School*, Katy and Clover form a firm friendship with artist's daughter, Louisa Agnew. She is not from a fashionable part of town, and her family are quite poor, yet she is intelligent and interesting, and possesses the necessary social graces. Coolidge actually upholds this friendship with a poorer girl as being much more valid than a friendship with the wealthy, but boringly pretentious Lilly Page.

That friendships between girls and young women were considered an integral part of the feminine ideal, is indisputable. Middle-class parents worked tirelessly at the moulding of their daughters to fit this ideal. Understandably, they did not want to see their efforts eroded by other young ladies, under the guise of friendship. Recalling the wise words of Matilda Pullan, "not even the acceptance of a lover is a more important era in the life of a young girl than her first serious choice of a friend", and adults therefore considered the monitoring of female friendships to be an extremely important part of their responsibility to youth. An intimate female friendship was a girl's first real external relationship, beginning the process of acquiring skills such as interaction, sharing, entertaining and more importantly, making accurate character judgements. These skills would later prove invaluable in the selection of a potential husband. As nineteenth century children's authors took it upon themselves to instruct young female readers on every other aspect of the feminine ideal, so they chose to offer endless pieces of advice on the nature of friendship - to prepare them through their "childish mistakes" so that "when the time comes we are ready to take our places among the wonderful grown-up people who never make mistakes" (Coolidge: 1873: 22) - reassurance from *What Katy did at School*, to those girls who may secretly have harboured doubts about the judgements of their elders.
Female Friendship — Preparation for the Marriage Market.

The making of a good marriage match was of vital importance to the young nineteenth century middle-class female. Marriage was often an economic necessity, as a father could not necessarily afford to keep his unmarried daughters at home. Through marriage, a woman acquired financial security and also the increased social status of being a married woman. There was little else a woman could do, but polish up her feminine charms and refinements and await an offer of marriage. Spinsterhood was regarded as a terrible fate with a woman then having to earn a living for herself, perhaps as the governess or lady's companion so beloved of Victorian writers. Recalling the words of moralising Marmee in *Little Women*, "to be loved and chosen by a good man is the best and sweetest thing which can happen to a woman." (Alcott: 1868: 135) As a fairly succinct summary of the aspirations of the average middle-class woman, these lines help the twentieth century reader understand why every aspect of a girl's life, and often her personality were moulded towards those two great pinnacles of achievement — marriage and motherhood.

When discussing the definitions of, and theories behind the feminine ideal, it was found that children's authors worked tirelessly to enforce accepted codes of femininity upon their young readers, a delicate, innocent femininity which would in time attract marriage suitors. The pressure on girls to learn practical skills, such as needlework and household management can also be seen as preparation for their futures as wives and mothers. Certainly, in reading *The Daisy Chain*, one is left with the feeling that however genuine a character Ethel May might be, she is not the type to be overwhelmed with marriage proposals from eager suitors. Such was Charlotte Yonge's intention. Yes, Ethel does have a vocation in the form of her teaching, but it is nevertheless rather interesting that the only man to show a romantic interest in Ethel during the course of the novel then marries someone else, undoubtedly someone more skilled in the required social graces.
In many ways, female friendship is as much a part of the preparation for the marriage market as the acquisition of practical skills and social accomplishments. A girl's ability to form close friendships offered proof that she was able to conduct an intimate relationship, that she had considerable depth of character and was well disposed towards mutual sharing. As woman took it upon themselves to vow undying friendship to a chosen few, as in Jane Austen's *Love and Friendship*, wherein woman, "having exchanged vows of mutual friendship for the rest of our lives, instantly unfolded to each other the most inward secrets of our hearts", (Austen: 1790: 107) so they would later come to devote themselves unquestioningly to their marriage partners. Friendships between girls were supposed to breed the innocent sort of chatter amusing to men, showing their delicacy as in theory at least, they were to avoid discussion of any subject offensive to their mothers! A girl with a knowledge of intimate friendships would have practical experience of entertaining and social interaction, as well as having learned about trust, loyalty and mutual support. Friendships with suitable people would have served to increase her already delightfully sweet femininity, indirectly making her even better marriage material. A point of great concern to children's authors was that the girls who were capable of forming solid, sensible friendships would naturally be far more likely to pick reliable husbands.

Taking this idea at its most basic level, it has been seen that authors liked to confront their young readers with cases of characters choosing unsuitable companions then going on to make bad marriage matches. There is certainly a feeling that if a young woman lacks the ability to form decent friendships with those of her own sex, then she has little prospect of happiness in her relationships with members of the opposite sex. The importance of applying rational thought to one's relationships was a favourite topic of Maria Edgeworth, as has already been seen in *The Good French Governess* and *Angeline, or L'amie Inconnue*. However, the story which best demonstrates the connection between female friendships and marriage is *Mademoiselle Panache*. In this case,
the rational voice of the author is expressed through the character of Mrs. Temple, whilst Mme. Panache is representative of irrationality. Mrs. Temple considers external friendships to be extremely important - "as her children grew older, it was necessary that they should be accustomed to see a variety of characters, and still more necessary that they should learn to judge of them." (Edgeworth: 1801: 89) Her daughter, Helen, however is rather swayed by the irresponsible Mme. Panache and beautiful, yet shallow Lady Augusta. Edgeworth warns her young readers that Helen was "a little disposed to be fond of novelty, and sometimes formed a prodigiously high opinion of persons whom she had seen but for a few hours. "Not to admire" was an art which she had to learn." (Edgeworth: 1801: 89) The important thing is that Helen learns her lesson. Next time, she intends to "take care not to like a stranger merely for having a blue sash." (Edgeworth: 1801: 113) Helen learns to apply rational thought to her relationships before it is too late. Consequently, by the end of the story, she has made a good marriage match, whereas Augusta, who has never been taught to make accurate character judgments, acts like one of the heroines in her trashy French novels and elopes with one who can only be called an undesirable. Adhering to the strictest of moral conventions with the prospect of happiness for the worthy character and imminent tragedy for the unworthy, the author has in Mademoiselle Panache presented young girls with a case for the application of careful judgement to all friendships, that by the time of marriage, they are able to act with the height of rationality.

While Mademoiselle Panache is perhaps the best example of the link between choosing suitable friends and accepting a worthy husband, it is by no means the only one. In The Daisy Chain, the reader can see that Flora May is concerned only with people's outward show of femininity. Her character judgements do not run deep enough for the appreciation of inner, subtle qualities. In her sister Ethel, for example, she sees only physical faults. There is no understanding of Ethel's deep sense of purpose or her spirituality. It is no coincidence that Charlotte Yonge chooses to marry worldly Flora to George Rivers, a decidedly less-than-perfect husband.
In *Little Women*, which can be described as a series of moral lessons, Meg March is confronted with a situation in which she must judge the worth of some of her companions. In the chapter entitled *Meg goes to Vanity Fair*, she learns the value of true friendship when placed in the company of a group of frivolous, shallow females who are interested only in her physical appearance and social aspirations, not in her character. Again, the lesson regarding rational character judgements has been made within the sphere of female friendship. Meg knows that she must never again succumb to vanity and false flattery, and avoids making a bad marriage match. At the end of the novel, she is rewarded with a sincere marriage proposal from solid and reliable tutor, John Brooke.

The ability to make accurate character judgements and form suitable friendships with other girls meant, then, that a young woman would be far more likely to use her common sense when considering offers of marriage. Friendships are also portrayed as a kind of testing ground for one's character strengths and loyalties. In *What Katy did Next*, Katy is seen in a final test of friendship as she tours Europe with friend Mrs. Ashe and her tiresome young daughter. Katy proves loyal in the extreme. She copes admirably with the problems and physical ills of her companions, offering moral support and concern for their material comforts. Finally, Katy's troubles are rewarded with a proposal of marriage from one who has witnessed this devotion to her friend, and has admired her caring qualities. The first steps towards turning naughty careless Katy into the perfect feminine woman occur through her friendship with cousin Helen. As girls were badly influenced by poor choices of companion, they were helped by good ones. In fact, throughout the whole series, when things go wrong for Katy, she evokes Helen's words of love and friendship almost as a self-strengthening charm. Female friendships were often presented in this light, almost as a practise run for marriage.

Children's authors tended to portray female friendship as a strengthenener of traditional sex roles. This is what Deborah Gorham meant when in *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal*, she said that friendships between girls "were meant to foster femininity." (Gorham: 1982: 115) Even friendships across the sexes were permitted
if the underlying purpose was to enforce traditional sex roles. In *Little Men*, the character Naughty Nen is introduced to a largely male community, in the hope of making the boys more protective and manly, this, in turn, making tomboyish Nen more feminine. The experiment does not work in the way predicted, however, for "Nen showed them that girls could do most things as well as boys, and some things better." (Alcott: 1871: 132)

The sort of societies for girls which sprang up in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, are examples of current adult opinion that grouping young females together in a social situation would somehow increase their femininity and strengthen sex roles. The Girls Friendly Society was founded in 1874, followed by the Snowdrop Bands, which achieved a height of popularity in 1889-90. The latter society was aimed largely at working, factory class girls and its objectives were to purify womanhood and exalt the feminine ideal. Girls were encouraged to devote themselves to female duty and domesticity. Later, came the Girl Scouts: In fact, a separate movement had to be created for young women, because scouting sounded too masculine and would have encouraged tomboys, hence the Girl Guides, with its patrol names similarly changed to more suitable feminine flower names. The aims of the organisation were to train girls to become the moral and domestic guides of future generations, to teach them about their femininity, moulding them into efficient female citizens, indirectly, of course, preparing them to become dutiful, skilled wives and mothers.

In *What Katy did at School*, Susan Coolidge expresses her agreement with the view that groups of girls would act to reinforce the feminine ideal in themselves and in each other. Katy, Clover and Rose want to form a friendly society, but they are adamant that it should be a society with a purpose. They decide on a society for the eradication of flirtation, called "The Society for the Suppression of Unladylike Conduct", (Coolidge: 1873: 72) for while a young man might find the attentions of a flirtatious young lady both amusing and flattering, she is not the sort he would choose for a wife. The object of the society was twofold: "It combines having a good time with the pursuit
of Virtue." (Coolidge: 1873: 74) In forming such a society, and surrounding it with an air of mysterious secrecy, the girls suddenly want to stop attracting the attentions of male students. They have preserved and nurtured in each other the feminine ideal, and Coolidge has managed thus to treat the subject of first adolescent crushes on young men, in a totally decorous and moral manner. One cannot imagine that the shallower characters, outside this inner circle of friendship, will go on to make particularly worthy marriage matches. The opening of What Katy Did Next shows the reader that friendship with sensible straightforward Katy and Clover has helped to transform the previously mischievous Rose into highly marriageable material. Entirely happy, and glowing with pride in her new role as wife and mother, she is upheld as a perfect role model. Her obvious love and adoration for her baby reminds readers that motherhood is the icing-on-the-cake, the ultimate in feminine achievement.

Middle-class adults considered it very much a part of their duty to society to provide young women with the principles of moral and social education which would ensure their later efficiency and effectiveness as female citizens, a role that was not fully assumed until a woman gained the status of marriage and began to run her own household. Weak or shallow friendships indicated a character likely to make an equally poor marriage match, whereas the strong, intimate friendship offered proof of a girl's solid worth as a future wife. This is why the years during which intimate friendships were likely to be made can accurately be described as a preparatory period for marriage, and why children's authors churned out so many books for young people in which child heroines eventually became happy and contented wives.
Friendship can be regarded as an organising principle of children's literature for three main reasons. Children like to read stories about subjects that are relevant to their everyday lives, and all children recognise the importance of friendship, accepting its unwritten rules. Secondly, authors tried to befriend their young readers for their own moral purposes, and thirdly, the very notion of friendship, of forming relationships external to the immediate family group, gives rise to a number of important moral issues. In much nineteenth century children's literature, these points appear in combination, as authors tended to adopt a rather chummy, conspiratorial tone when addressing their audience, and while a child enjoyed a seemingly straightforward tale, the ubiquitous moral messages would be steadily infiltrating his or her subconscious.

The moral stance on friendship depended a great deal on the social and religious ethic of the day, which is why there were so many restraints on female friendships during the nineteenth century. In an age when the only acceptable destiny for a young middle-class woman was to become a wife and mother, literary guidance on the formation and conducting of friendships was very much concerned with social preparation for marriage. The Feminine Ideal was such that young married women in literature were often bestowed with a kind of childlike innocence and the sort of personal qualities that could almost be described as ethereal. This sanctification of the state of motherhood occurred to such a degree that the mother in literature was invoked as a protective spiritual force against worldly evils. Having presented young female readers with such an ideal, children's authors considered it very much their responsibility to provide future generations of wives and mothers with practical advice and extensive moral guidance on its attainment.

The question of the moral issues concerning childhood friendship ties in very strongly with the Victorian concept of the Family. There was almost a sacredness about family life. A man's family life was his source of pleasure and revitalisation, his refuge from an
increasingly capitalistic society. Complete authority and matters of discipline rested with the father of the household, spiritual welfare with the mother, and supreme control with God. It becomes quite clear from a select reading of children's literature and mothers' advice books of the period, that threats to the socially secure, morally upright family came from outside, and that for children and young people, the single greatest external threat was the possibility of their being negatively influenced by their peers. Effectively, this put the child's previous careful moral training at risk - good work that might quite possibly be undone through consorting with an unvetted outsider.

As has been shown in this dissertation, children were educated through their literature from an early age about the importance of choosing their friends and companions sensibly. The process of advising children about friendship begins in the sort of short, didactic pieces found in school reading books - in Telling Mother, for example, in which children are warned not to allow unsuitable playfellows to cause rifts within the family, for, "Many a man has looked back with great sorrow to the time when first he allowed a sinful companion to come between him and his mother." (Royal Readers, No II, Third Series: 1879) Young people verging on adulthood continued to be advised about the dangers of forming dubious relationships. David Watson, in a heavy, lachrymose style which never really lightens, offers exactly the same advice, but this time to young men, to prepare them for their future responsibilities. After all his warnings and admonitions on the imminent destruction of family life through frivolous friendships, it is hardly surprising that the overall message is that, while "the friendship of man is good, ...the friendship of God is better." (Watson: 1903: 162) Certainly attitudes towards friendship can be linked with the aura of religious authority present in nineteenth century society. The kind of advice proffered by children's authors was very much based on scriptural teaching that, "he that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed", (Proverbs: 13:20) and in matters of friendship, like every other moral aspect of life, authors believed that one should, "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will
not depart from it." (Proverbs: 22:6)

Returning to the literature of the period aimed ostensibly at girls and young women, it has been shown that the guiding concern of most authors was that of influence, that a daughter’s moral and feminine training should be woefully undone through poorly reasoned relationships and rash friendships. This is why frivolity among young ladies was considered such a serious evil, and why authors of works such as Maternal Counsels to a Daughter deemed it necessary to warn against the "silly chit-chat" and "pernicious gossiping" so attractive to groups of young females. (Pullan: 1855:56-7) Ideally, the Intimate Friendship was really the only acceptable relationship for young women, with stresses on the impropriety and fickleness of trying to form such friendships with more than a very few people, and the importance of the chosen friend having earned parental acceptance. Certainly this is how the ideals of female friendship were portrayed in nineteenth century literature.

It is interesting that even with subject matter as potentially pleasurable as friendship, children’s authors just could not resist using their favourite medium, the tried and tested format of the cautionary tale. There is never really any sense that authors considered choosing suitable friends to be a straightforward matter. In accordance with the anonymous rhyme from Volney Streamer’s sentimental compilation,

Choose your friend wisely
Test your friend well;
True friends, like rarest gems,
Prove hard to tell,

it seems to have been accepted that accurate character judgements are difficult to make. Characters usually come to an understanding of the meaning of true friendship, but part of the process lies in learning from their own mistakes. By the end of the book, Maria Edgeworth’s Angelina is a reformed and sensible character, but not before she has learned her lesson the hard way, making herself appear extremely foolish in her infatuation with the pretentious Araminta. In Mademoiselle Panache, Edgeworth uses the same basic moral formula,
with Helen Temple becoming wise just in time to the true character of Lady Augusta. Susan Coolidge pokes gentle fun at the so-called intimate friendships of Katy Carr, and Louisa M. Alcott causes the reader feelings of unease when presenting Meg with the temptations of empty-headed, frivolous friendship. However, through all their tribulations, the characters emerge much wiser and are eventually rewarded with true friendships and prospects of marriage.

Obviously it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to assess the extent to which nineteenth century ideals of female friendship were ever a reality. The Victorian novel cannot be viewed as a microcosm of Victorian life, neither is it particularly enlightening to view it as a rather whimsical, artistic reflection of life. As stated by P. Nestor, "to view literature as historical source material, a simple reflection of a recoverable "reality" is naively to ignore both the nature of the creative process and the limitations on our access to the past." (Nestor; 1985: 3) Certainly when dealing with the middle-class nature of children's literature, with any sense of reality further obscured by the sterotypical treatment the Victorian Woman has attracted, the most meaningful way in which to contextualise is to view individual books as a reflection of nineteenth century ideologies. Nineteenth century children's literature is a useful socio-historical source material in that it provides evidence of the sort of ideologies present during a particular period. It could be argued that since the purpose of children's authors was as much to provide a moral education as entertainment, that children's literature often gives a more immediate access to social and religious ideologies of the nineteenth century, than might much adult literature. As part of the social ideal of the day, the subject of female friendship and its role in fostering and enforcing femininity obviously held great attractions for the children's author, not only in view of its place in a young girl's moral training, but more importantly, as part of her preparations for marriage, and her future life as mother and spiritual guide.
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