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III.

IN THE STEPS OF ROUSSEAU
III.

In the Steps of Rousseau

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very Heaven!

(Prelude Bk.XI)

"An age," writes Morley, "touched by the spirit of hope
inevitably turns to the young; for with the young lies
fulfilment."

During the second half of the 18th century the in­
creasing interest in the young, reinforced though it was
by other contributory influences, owed its most genial
and generous impulse to Rousseau. Pleading for self ac­
tivity and self realisation Rousseau would have the child
placed at the very centre of any educational scheme.

"They (the wisest writers)", he says, "are always looking
for the man in the child, without considering what he is
before he becomes a man." "Mankind," he pleads, "has
its place in the sequence of human life; the man must be
treated as a man and the child as a child. Give each his
place and keep him there."

Against the traditional
doctrine of human depravity he sets forth his radiant
faith that nature is all good and bounteous: "Tout est
bien en sortant des mains de la nature." The child is
born good and pure; he is capable of his proper perfec­
tion, if he is allowed to develop freely: Every human
fault comes from education in the family, the school, and
the society.

As is evident from the popularity of Richardson's

2. Emile, Book I.
3. Id. Book II
Pamela (1741) and Marmontel’s “Moral Tales”, sentimentality dominated the taste of the mid-eighteenth century. We may trace its earlier development in Steele’s papers on family life and in the rise of Sentimental Comedy, of which Steele has been regarded as the founder. It had set in as part of a general reaction against the licence, cynicism, and insensibility of the Restoration Age. The popular taste was gradually being weaned from such brutal sports as cock-fighting and bull-fighting, its cruelty to the convicts and its indifference to the treatment of negroes. Out of this humanitarian sympathy for the weak and helpless was born also an interest in the child. It remained, however, a current of vague feeling, until Rousseau’s persuasive eloquence directed it into the educational channel—“What had been the most drearily mechanical duties, were transformed into a task that surpassed all others in interest and hope—the entire atmosphere of young life, in spite of the toil and the peril is made cheerful with sunshine and warmth of the great folded possibilities of excellence, happiness, and well-doing.”

In England “Emile” won enthusiastic admiration. By 1763 the book was thrice translated. In 1769 Thomas Day writes to Richard Lovel Edgeworth (Vol. I, p. 221)

“Were all the books in the world to be destroyed, except scientific books (which I except not to affront you) the second book I should wish to save after the Bible would

2. Morley op. cit., p. 882
Rousseau's theories inspired the pedagogic experiments of Edgeworth and David Williams. These ideas, it is true, were not new, for most of them could be traced back to Montaigne and Locke whose works Rousseau had read. Locke had stressed the necessity of "a sound mind in a sound body," of inuring children to hardship, of directing their inclination to something that may be useful to them, of cultivating the senses and of evoking the pupil's will by all these means. To this sober sense of Locke's, Rousseau brought his paradoxes, his exhortations and lyricism of such power that the heart was captivated and the mind convinced. "What was so realistic in him (Locke)," observes Morley "becomes blended in Rousseau with all the power and richness and beauty of an ideal that can move the most generous parts of human character." With all the exaggerations to which Rousseau was carried away by his ideal and in spite of all the errors of his professed disciples, his revival of interest in the child was to prove a factor of utmost importance in education and a source of great inspiration to educationists. "The study of 19th century education," says Adamson, "begins in the "Emile" of Rousseau."

Two other movements gave a momentum to education in England: the rise of Methodism and the Industrial Revolution. "The effect," Leslie Stephen writes, "of

2. Lectures on Education 1789
3. Some Thoughts Concerning Education para. 1.
4. Id., para. 32
5. Id. para. 202
6. Morley op. cit., pp. 203, 204
the English Methodist Movement in diverting a great
volume of discontent, "into the religious, instead of
the political channel, is of an importance not easy to
calculate." Educationally, however, the importance of
the Wesleyan revival, and of Evangelicalism within the
Church itself lay, as Jacques Pons points out, in creat-
ing "une ambiance où toute idée de perfectionnement
moral devait être bien accueillie. Un besoin d'instruire
le peuple, de le diriger vers le beau et le bien, fut
donc dans le domaine de l'éducation la contrepartie des
tendances évangélistrices." Indeed, the education of
the masses, especially the share which fell to Sunday
Schools, was so closely associated with the religious
revival that it is impossible to separate them. English
education largely derived its characteristically reli-
gious and conservative tone from the evangelical impulse
of the period, in sharp distinction to the educational
movement of a more secular and radical character in
Europe.

The new spirit of economic and industrial re-
organisation is embodied in Adam Smith. The advance in
mechanical invention, the decay of cottage industries,
the scientific farming and enclosures, the redistribution
of population, and the growth of towns, the minute sub-
division of industrial labour, the exploitation of
child and adult workers as factory-hands whose ignorance
neglect, and degradation constituted a menace to social

1 History of English Thought in the 18th Century, Vol. II, p. 432
2 L'Education en Ancienneté entre 1750 et 1800, p. 51
order and national stability; all these changes concentrated in England during the last quarter of the 13th century and the first quarter of the 19th, called for remedial measures. The Sunday School movement and the educational clauses in the Industrial legislation of the period were attempts to deal with the new situation in so far as it affected children. Alive to the danger of physical and mental degeneration of the labouring poor, Adam Smith advocates state action in popular education. He recommends the establishment of parish schools—similar to those in Scotland. He reinforces his plea for popular education by utilitarian and police motives:—that the more instructed are less liable to the delusions of enthusiasm and superstition and that in free countries the safety of government very much depends upon the favourable and well-informed judgment of the people. But his main argument is inspired by a higher motive. "A man," he writes, "without the proper use of intellectual faculties of a man, is, if possible, more contemptible than even a coward and seems to be mutilated and deformed in a still more essential part of the character of human nature."

Revolutionary theories, methodism, sentimentalism, social and economic changes are some of the factors which conspired to bring about an educational renaissance in the second half of the 18th century. Two main schools of thought now seem to direct the course of education in England, the one seeking for it a religious, the other a secular basis. Notwithstanding, however, the bitter

controversy with which this issue was fought, the secular no less than the theological school recognised the supreme importance of religion in matters educational. What divided them was a shifting of emphasis. The British School Society equally with the National Society made Bible reading an essential part of their teaching. The British Society's view of education was stated to be based upon a belief "that the pure law of Christ's gospel is a law of liberty, and that education, the great liberator of all souls in prison, is so intimately associated with that gospel that it cannot be separated from Bible teaching and that, moreover, such teaching ought to be so catholic and so practical in its character as to rise free from sectarian bias."

Lancaster describes his general educational outlook in these terms: "Above all things, education ought not to be made subservient to the propagation of the tenets of any sect, beyond its own number; ... and yet, a reverence for the sacred name of God and the scriptures of truth, a detestation of vice, a love of veracity, a due attention to duties to parents, relations and to society; carefulness to avoid bad company, civility without flattery, and a peaceable demeanour may be inculcated in every seminary of youth, without violating the sanctuary of private religious opinion in any mind."

This very well expresses the Radical policy in England which directed the development of English education.

2. Quoted by Binns op. cit.
during the nineteenth century, Dr. Arnold was a shining example of this pervasive spirit of religion in English education. Of him whose watchwords were "Christianity without Sectarianism" and "Comprehension without compromise" it was observed that his education "was not (according to the popular phrase) based upon religion, but was itself religious." It would seem that Dr. Arnold in his reformed at Rugby sought to realise what Milton declared to be the end of learning: "to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him, so we may the nearest by possessing our souls of true virtue, which being united to the heavenly grace of faith makes up the highest perfection."

New pedagogy, philanthropy, religious zeal and a genuine tenderness for children, inspired a host of writers, towards 1770, to produce books for and about children. John Newberry, the first genuine "children's publisher" died in 1767, his firm was sold in 1779, and his books were now passing into neglect. But the rich mine he had opened promised immense possibilities of exploitation to others. The enthusiastic reception and influence again of foreign writers, particularly the French Rousseauists such as Berquin, Madame d'Epinay, and Madame de Genlis, encouraged English writers to attempt something similar in child literature. Into the nursery did the moral tales begin to pour in

1. A.P. Stanley: Life of Arnold, Ch. III, p. 62
profusion. Rousseau pronounced the fables to be unsuitable and their morality dubious and misleading for children. "Men may be taught by fables, children require the naked truth," he paradoxically declared. His matter-of-fact followers were not slow to take his hint. The child's little walks were haunted by the shadow of the Infallible Parent or Tutor. A war was declared against the child's world of fantasy and fun. Fairies were given no quarter. Madame Leprince de Beaumont, whose "Magasin des Enfants" was published in London in 1757 was one of the earliest writers to attack the fairy tales. "Outre qui ces contes ont souvent des difficultés dans le style," she explains in her foreword, "ils sont toujours pernicieux pour les enfants auxquels ils ne sont propres qu'à inspirer des idées dangereuses et fausses." Mrs. Trimmer agreed with a correspondent that Cinderella was "perhaps one of the most exceptionable books." Marie Edgeworth set out to controvert Dr. Johnson's assertions that endeavouring to make children prematurely wise was useless labour," and that children required to have their imaginations raised by giants and fairies and castles and enchantments. Referring to the supposed preference of children to such tales she asks, "But why should the mind be filled with fantastic visions, instead of useful knowledge? Why should so much valuable time be lost?"

Mrs. Sherwood whose edition (1820) of Sarah Fielding's Governess is cited as probably the fiercest example

1. Emile Bk.I
3. The Parent's Assistant, Vol.I. Preface 1815
of editorial recension, cut out two fairy tales because such stories "can scarcely ever be rendered profitable."

Strictly relevant as the issue of the Moral v. the Fairy Tale is to the subject of children's books, we have touched upon it for two reasons. In the first place, education had assumed an all-pervasive character in which children's books played an important part. As it has been well pointed out, "Education, as represented by attempts to amuse children out of school, was passing from the grasp, on the one hand of the usher and the dame, and on the other hand of the nobility and gentry who had their offspring privately trained for courtliness and good breeding supplemented by a little useful knowledge. It was rapidly growing into a general domestic habit." In the second place, Moral tales served as a vehicle for the diffusion of the new pedagogy. Misguided zeal led some writers far astray from the teachings of Rousseau. "I hate books - Reading is the curse of childhood - " said Rousseau and his disciples in England as in France, spent their lives writing books for children: "Leave childhood to ripen in your children, or we shall have young doctors and old children," he, again, warned; in the moral tale, the fictitious little creature placed in the midst of things, no more admires plants and flowers, he dissects; he counts and classifies animals and insects.

These errors and exaggerations evoked protests and

1. The Cambridge History of English Literature, Ch. XVI, Vol. XI
3. Emile, Bk. 2 and 3
the tyrannous authority of the new pedagogy and the
moral tale did not long remain unchallenged. "I hate
by-roads in education," said Dr. Johnson and advised
Boswell not to refine in the education of his children.
It was, however, the romantics who, in the name of ima­
gination, ranged themselves most uncompromisingly against
the dry didacticism and pedantry of the new school. In
close contact with nature they had a true conception of
what a "child of nature" could be. Not for them these
travesties of nature, the Sandforde and Mertons, the
Charles Grandissoms, and all the little heroes of juve­
nile literature, "prodigies of self-conceit, shallowness,
arrogance and infidelity...... These nurslings of im­
proved pedagogy who are taught to suspect all but their
own and their lecturer's wisdom."

Lamb regretted the disappearance of the old classics
of the nursery while in bookshops "Mrs. R's and Mrs.
Trimmer's nonsense lay in piles about." "Think," he
asks Coleridge, "what you would have been now, if instead
of being fed with Tales and old wives' fables, you had
been crammed with geography and natural history." In
"Hard Times" (1864) Dickens return to attack "this sore
evil" which Lamb here complains of. Long had the
children to endure this slavery to "facts"

The Pool of Quality (1766), the History of Sand­
ford and Merton (1785-1789); and the History of the
Peirichild Family (1814) deserve to be noticed here,
though chronologically, they fall outside our period.

3. Letter to Coleridge, 24 Oct. 1802
For "Sandford and Merton" and "The Fairchild Family" are listed among the books read by almost every early Victorian family when the children's education and general reading were carefully supervised. They are broadly representative of the two main trends of 19th century education: the one secular and moral, the other religious.

Day complained of the total want of proper books to be put into the hands of very young children. He sweeps the slate clean of most of what was written before him, including Lamb's favourite nursery classics, the Newberry publications. As a good Rousseauist he excepts from his wholesale condemnation a few passages from the first volume of Broek's "The Pool of Quality". "Nor can I help expressing my regret," he says, "that the very ingenious author of that novel has not deigned to apply his great knowledge of the human heart to this particular purpose. He would by these means have produced a work more calculated to promote the good of his fellow creatures, though not his fame, than an hundred volumes of sentimental novels, or modern history." Indeed, the author of "The Pool of Quality" seems to have been a man of rare charm and ability. In him the revolutionary spirit of Rousseau was combined with a mystical strain of Jacob Böhme. Born and educated in Ireland, the pupil of Swift and Pope, the friend of Lyttleton and Chatham, the darling of the Prince of Wales, beau, swordsman, wit, poet, courtier, he spent his last days as the saintly

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1. Amy Cruse: The Victorians and Their Books, p. 287
2. Day: Sandford and Merton, Preface
recluse of Longfield, lavishing his large fortune on the starving Irish. "The Pool of Quality" which still keeps his memory green, bears the stamp of his excellent qualities; "it is a transparency, a shadow picture, in which the soul of the lovable Henry Brooke is the shining light."

It is the first of the pedagogic novels in English. Though bearing the obvious marks of Rousseau's influence, its genial touches of humour and humanity, its share of Irish eccentricity, invest it with a charm of its own. The hero Henry's natural education in the country is contrasted with his brother Richard's artificial upbringing in the chateau. Young Harry exposed to all weathers, always occupied in healthful exercise, is allowed to develop according to his healthy original instincts. Dick's promising talents and benevolent heart, on the other hand, are almost ruined by luxury and over-indulgence. At the age of five, little Harry visits his parents and confronted with rank and fashion he behaves most naturally. He values things, as children do, for what they mean to him. A laced hat serves him as an effective missile to play ducks and drakes among the wine glasses; a large Spanish pointer is a convenient mount to display his horsemanship among a group of little misses and masters who are overthrown like nine-pins. He remains unconcerned at the discomfiture he has caused, but gallantly rushes to the defence of his foster-mother when Dick pretends to

I.E.A. Beker: The History of the English Novel p.115
attack her. Again, when Dick and his companions simulate distress and petition him for his clothes he strips himself of everything but his shirt, which he moodily declines to give away. Upon this his mother exclaims: "Upon my honour, there is but the thickness of a bit of linen between this child and a downright fool." All these spontaneous expressions of Harry's pure and healthy instincts ran the constant risk of being misunderstood by his mother. He found his ideal preceptor (Dada) in Mr. Fenton, a whimsical old gentleman, who later turns out to be his uncle. Mr. Fenton disproves Rousseau's theory that old age disqualifies a person from being a child's tutor. He enters with Harry into all his little frolics and childish vagaries, opens the boy's mind and cultivates his morals by a thousand little fables. In order to reform Harry of his inordinate desires Dada tells him the story of the three little silver trouts. Such is the charming simplicity and tenderness of the story that the boy cannot help wishing himself to be like the good little trout which is glad to leave everything to God.

He leads him by his example to wait upon his servants and to respect his social inferiors, "for God made us all to be servants to each other." In bestowing charity upon others he guides him by the rule, "that which you cannot use cannot belong to you." By instituting prizes he encourages him to compete with the village boys for championships in "football, hurling,

wrestling, leaping, running, cudgelling, and buffing."

Formal education too, is not neglected but he would altogether reverse the method of schoolmasters who "generally lay hold on the human constitution, as a pilot lays hold on the rudder of a ship, by the tail, by the single motive of fear alone." He had no sympathy with Harry's first schoolmaster who is deservedly chastised by his pupils for unjustly flogging Harry. He dismisses him but not before giving him some valuable hints on education. He would concede the necessity of fear only as a safeguard against evil. But the application as a rule, of this motive tends to associate pain with virtue or serves to gratify the violent passions of "a giant of a pedagogue, raving, raging, foaming over a group of shrinking infants." In suggesting "cape of shame, wreaths of honour, or a place of eminence" as incentives to emulation he anticipates the methods adopted by the 19th century schools.

Harry's new tutor, a gentleman well read in classics, is charged not to push the boy into learning of the languages beyond his own pleasure, nor to "perplex his infant mind with the deep or mysterious parts of our holy religion." "First, be it your care to instruct him in morality and let the law precede the gospel, for such was the education that God appointed for the world."

Harry is once grief-stricken for having behaved rather proudly and conceitedly with a young lord. This gives Mr. Fenton an occasion to ground him in religion.

2. Ch. IX, p. 110
3. Ch. IX, p. 210
He explains that Harry has both a good and a bad boy in him, each struggling with the other, that all the evil in him belongs to himself and the good belongs to his God. Such passages dwelling on the need of conversion must have been favourite with the methodists.

Harry's comprehensively planned education is finished off with a visit to London to hold up to him the bright as well as the dark side of the world's picture. Ample funds are placed at the disposal of Harry and his tutor for the relief of debtors in the Fleet prison. Even Mr. Vindex, the disgraced schoolmaster is enlarged and spared Mr. Squeers's fate. "His credit is restored, his school daily increased, and like Job, his latter end was far more blessed than his beginning."

Education so ideally conceived and ambitiously executed cannot but move us to admiration. There is, indeed, the financial snag, but who would ever care to reconcile education with cheese-paring economy. As the estimable Mr. Penton has well expressed: "I value the instilling of a single principle of goodness or honour into the mind of my dear Harry beyond all the wealth that the Indies can remit."

The book contains an elaborate and sympathetic study of childhood, such as had not yet appeared in an English novel. The author accords to woman, a far higher position than Rousseau concedes to Sophie. In one of the discourses between the author and his imaginary friend the latter describes women's qualities in

1. Ch. IX, p. 230
the manner of Rousseau. "Women unquestionably have their becoming qualities: in the bed chamber, kitchen, and nursery, they are useful to men, but beyond these my friend, they are quite out of the element of nature and common sense." The author refutes this view and recognises her as a companion to man, and as a being of superior order. He inveighs against the way the Society woman is brought to suppress her natural feelings and inclinations.

Since the book describes the whole course of the upbringing of an ideal nobleman, including his own experiences and those of others who cross his path, there is a lack of coherent unity. "The author," says Sir Walter Raleigh, "is so occupied with the works of public benevolence that he starves the child. Artistically, the novel is a chaos, and such unity as it has is due chiefly to the binder." Those who, like Charles Kingsley, regard this book as a witness to an ideal of humanity, will let the author teach his own lesson in his own way, trusting "that each seeming interruption is but a step forward in the moral process at which the author aims, and that there is full and conscious consistency in Mr. Brooke's method, whether or not there be dramatic unity in his plot."

With the publication of "Sandford and Merton" in 1783 the moral tale, properly speaking, appeared in England. Designed for children, "Sandford and Merton" is, at the same time, a social satire and a treatise

on education. As the Preface tells us, the book is a collection of stories drawn from different sources and adapted to children. The inset stories, forming as it were the nucleus, are strung together in a tale in which two children are introduced as the actors to lend dramatic interest and coherence to the whole. The contrast favourite with the Rousseauists, is presented between the pampered, proud and fretful Tommy Merton, an only son of a rich merchant, and the active, strong, and good-natured Harry Sandford, an only son of a plain and honest farmer. The interest of the book is centered in the reformation of Tommy. He was naturally a very good-natured boy, but had, unfortunately, been spoiled by too much indulgence. "His vivacity was greater than his reason, and his taste for imitation was continually leading him into some mischief or misfortune." Thrown in frivolous company he burns to outshine others in fashionable affectations. Struck by the descriptions of the Arabian horsemen he desires to emulate them on his spirited steed, which precipitates him into a quagmire. The reader F. J. Darton points out, feels a dreadful fascination in wondering what Tommy will be "crimed" for next. The patience of the preceptor, Mr. Barlow, joined to the example of Harry bring Tommy back to the right path.

Miss Barry calls Harry a super-Pool of Quality. He is a lad of invincible courage and chivalry. He twice saves the life of Tommy, at a ball he fights to

1. The History of Sandford and Merton (1785) Vol. III, p. 77
avenge the insult suffered by a young lady. Though he suffers Tommy to strike him, he challenges the arrogant Mash and returns a slap of the face by a punch of the fist. Such scenes are interspersed with readings from the old classics, accounts and stories of Laplanders, Highlanders, and negroes, and other exponents of fortitude, simplicity of life, and skill in all natural pursuits. New words in stories serve as pegs to hang on lessons in history, geography, and natural science. It was, says Jacques Pons, in accordance with the pedagogic principle then in favour, "que tout est matière d'instruction à chaque instant de la journée."

Mr. Barlow's complacent priggishness and his socratic method of imparting ethical instruction are not likely to find favour in the eyes of modern readers. Yet when Mr. Merton is in despair at his son's relapse into bad ways, Mr. Barlow shows commendable patience and remains unshaken in his faith "that human nature is infinitely more weak than wicked; and that the greater part of all bad conduct springs rather from want of firmness than from any settled propensity to evil."

Even his Socratic method is shot with an occasional gleam of humour. Here is a lesson on kindness to animals. Tommy is surprised at the extraordinary docility of a chicken saved by Harry from the claws of a kite. He thinks that all birds fly away at a man's approach because they are wild.

"Why then it is probable that animals

are only wild because they are afraid of being hurt, and that they only run away from the fear of danger. I believe you would do the same from a lion or a tiger."

Tommy: "Indeed I would, sir."

Mr. Barlow: "And yet you do not call yourself a wild animal? Tommy laughed heartily at this, and said, No. Therefore said Mr. Barlow, if you want to tame animals, you must be good to them and treat them kindly.

In its ethical teaching the book reflects the personality of a man whom Robert Edgeworth calls the most virtuous of human being he had ever known. His high sense of manliness, independence, and sterling qualities of character are stamped upon it. In his social philosophy Day shares Rousseau's humanitarian and egalitarian ideas, his contempt for riches and fashionable life and his exaltation of honest industry. The social import of the book is clear from the motto prefixed by Day to his second volume: "I do not know that there is upon the face of the earth a more useless, more contemptible, and more miserable animal than a wealthy luxurious man, without business or profession, arts, sciences, or exercises." (Lord Monboddo). We have some autobiographical glimpses of Day's retired literary life at Anningsley in the account of the virtuous Chares, settled "in a beautiful and solitary spot, and married to a virtuous young woman."

In education Day modifies Rousseau's ideas in the

light of his own and Edgeworth's educational experiments with their wards. In "Smile" the education of the earliest years is negative. "It consists, not in teaching virtue or truth, but in preserving the heart from vice and from the spirit of error." In "Sandford and Merton" the stress is laid on acquiring habits, on the changing of the sentiments of natural goodness "into fixed and active principles." Here Day's sturdy British morality is more in accord with Locke's teaching and insists on inculcating as early as may be, discipline and love of virtue.

Day rejects Rousseau's ideal of woman. He advocates the same training for boys and girls. "If women," argues the venerable Chares, "are in general feeble both in body and mind, it arises less from nature than from education." He criticises boarding schools for teaching nothing but trifles. "We seem to forget that it is upon the qualities of the female sex, that our own domestic comforts, and the education of our children must depend." "It is remarkable," says Elizabeth Godfrey, "how the child and the books acted and reacted; whether the book most formed the child's taste or was produced to meet that taste, is not easy to say.

Thousands of Victorian children were nurtured upon the History of Sandford and Merton. It was a robust, healthy, and self-reliant type of national character.

1. Emilie Book II. 2. Sandford and Merton Vol. III
3. Locke op. cit. paras. 46
4. Sandford and Merton Vol. III, p. 175
5. English Children in Olden Times p. 284
that Adam Smith envisaged. In the evolution of that character it would be interesting but not easy to gauge the influence of a book which Day wrote with a view to "inspire in youth" a manly independence of character, and a mind superior to the enticements of luxuriant indulgence. Leigh Hunt while condemning the 18th century children's books for their utilitarian morals, pays the following tribute to Day: "The pool of mercenary and time-serving ethics was just blown over by the fresh country breeze of Mr. T. Day."

To the orthodox there was something unsatisfying in the undogmatic ethics of Sandford and Merton, implying as it did the sufficiency of practical goodness. They fastened, therefore, with avidity upon the Fairchild Family which insists upon regeneration (in the strict sense) as necessary to salvation. "Whoever attempts to keep the commandments without the help of God, is labouring in vain," so the old clergyman told Miss Fairchild when she was but a very little girl living with her aunts. "Go into your own room," he recommended her, "and there kneel down and confess to God that you are a miserable sinner, fit only to go to hell."

We are struck by the pietistic rigour with which the book instils into children a sense of their own depravity and the awful examples with which it seeks to impress upon them the enormity of such sins as lying

1. John Blackman: Memoir of Thomas Day p.119
2. Autobiography, Ch.III
3. The Fairchild Family (1818) p.896
stealing, evil passions and disobedience to parents. Henry plucks the forbidden apple and being afraid and ashamed to confess his wickedness, is locked up in a little room without food and company the whole day. The children quarrel, Mr. Fairchild whips them, reciting Dr. Watt's verses, "Let dogs delight to bark and bite..." and then takes them to see the shocking corpse of a criminal hung in chains upon a gibbet. This was to be an object lesson to children that death and hell would be the end of their quarrels. Emily steals some damascenes from a jar, spills the red juice upon her frock, wets herself to the skin to remove the stain, and brings on a dangerous illness. Miss Augusta disobeying her parents takes up a candle to look in the glass and is burned to a crisp.

Such incidents in the book are reminiscent of an earlier Puritan tradition as exemplified in James Jane- way's "A Looking Glass for Children". Their severity is due to Mrs. Sherwood's evangelical doctrine. They do not reflect her real personality, nor do they constitute the essential interest of the book. Lucy, Emily, and Henry act and talk (save when they are made the mouth-pieces of older persons) like healthy and ordinary children. The vivacity and cheerfulness with which they enter into their play and dramatic games are all the more surprising when we consider the rigid doctrine and discipline to which they have been subjected. In the words of Mrs. Field, we find the well-brought-up child in each chapter in worse mischief than the last.

1.Id. Story on the Sixth Commandment.
2.The Child and his Book
Stern the Fairchilds may be, but they are never unjust or unkind. The strength and certainty of their affection build a castle of comfort and security for their children. How devotedly do the parents nurse Emily in her illness, praying and watching by her all night! How do they rejoice in her recovery! In this picture of the Fairchild Family Mrs. Sherwood draws upon the recollections of her own life. Her journal records her strict but kindly upbringing. She generally did all her lessons standing in stocks, with a stiff collar round her neck, and had the plainest possible food, and yet she was a very happy child, delighting in fairy tales and enacting them in the wood.

The story of little Merton is built in some degree on Henry Sherwood's troublous young days at the Ashford Grammar School. Little Merton had been very tender in his health and the kickings, thumpings, and beatings he got amongst the boys, instead of making him hardy, made him the more sickly and complaining. When his mother was living, he was a cheerful little fellow, full of play and quick in learning; but now he became dull and cast down, and in consequence he got several floggings.

Mr. Bryant describes Sunday observance as one of the salient peaks of the mid-Victorian scene. Here is a picture of Sunday at Mr. Fairchild's. The family generally rise a little earlier than usual. After breakfast they all set off to the village church, chil-

1. The Life of Mrs. Sherwood (ed.) Sophia Kelly, p. 89
2. The Fairchild Family p 186
3. Arthur Bryant: English Saga, p. 136
children walking first (for they were not allowed to run on a Sunday) Mr. and Mrs. Fairchild coming up next and the servants behind. The Fairchilds spend two hours at school, hear the scholars the Catechism, and take them to the church. After the Divine Service the family come home. Children are ordered not to chatter away till dinner but to go into a place apart by themselves to pray or think of what they have been hearing in the church. After dinner they go again to church or hold services at home. After singing some hymns together the children go to bed.

Referring to the plebiscite held by a literary journal by which the Fairchild Family was voted as the most vividly remembered book, Mr. Dorton remarks that the Fairchild Family was the dominant book in the nurseries up to the fifties of the 19th century. Victorian England, Sir. S.H. Scott points out, was divided into those who brought up their children on Sandford and Merton and those who preferred the more religious atmosphere of the Fairchild Family.

1. Life and Times of Mrs. Sherwood
2. The Exemplary Day p.187