

MY WORLD STORY BOOK

When They Were Children: Part 2

A Compilation of Historical
Biographies for the Young Reader

Compiled by Marlene Peterson

Libraries of Hope

My World Story Book
Book Twelve: When They Were Children Part 2

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Chapter 1



Jeanne d'Arc (Part 1)

1412-1431 A.D., France



Joan of Arc, Gari Melchers

By the side of the grey willow trees and waving rushes, the river Meuse wound its way through the flat green valley, spreading itself sometimes in broad flashes, sometimes winding like a narrow silver ribbon, and again hiding away altogether among the grey stones that marked its course. All was green, grey, and level around. Even the little villages which dotted the river banks, with low roofs covered with moss and lichen, looked as if they were but a growth of the valley, and the grey church tower the tallest growth of all.

One of these little hamlets by which the river flowed was the village of Domremy, a peaceful little spot which seemed to have but little connection with the great world of war and bloodshed which in those unhappy days threatened to lay France in ruins.



Joan of Arc, Gaston Bussière

JEANNE D'ARC (PART 1)

The people of the village were no fighters, but poor hard-working peaceful labourers, who tried to make a living out of their few fields, guarding their flocks and herds, and caring but little for the troubles that tore their country in pieces, except when some marauder swooped down and drove off their cattle and seized their goods. Then indeed the trouble touched them, but it was their own personal loss they feared. France was so much divided into small factions that there was little call to loyalty and patriotism.

Like all the other villages, Domremy had its church with its little grey tower pointing upwards, and close to the church, separated only by the churchyard, was the house where Jacques d'Arc lived, and where on a cold January morning (in 1412) his little daughter Jeanne was born. There were other children in the house, strong boys who would grow up to help their father, and another girl, so the coming of this new baby made but little stir. They carried her across the churchyard to the village church, and there she received her name of Jeanne, or Jeanette as she was always called at home. It seemed to the simple villagers almost presumption to use the name of the great S. Jean for little helpless commonplace babies, and so they almost always added the diminutive, as we would say "little Jean."

There were all the rightful number of godmothers and godfathers round the font when Jeanne received her name, and the priest, Messire Jean Minet, said special prayers to preserve the child from evil spirits, for did not a girl always need such special protection?

Were there others round the font too which earthly eyes could not see? Surely the great cloud of witnesses stooped low that day to gaze upon the little face, and the church must have been filled with the rustling sound of angel wings as that baby brow was signed with the sign of the cross and the little soldier was enrolled under Christ's banner.

It was not an idle life that awaited Jeanne. Although her father was one of the chief men of the village, he, like all the rest, was poor, and had to work hard to make a living. There were many ways in which the children could help as soon as they were old enough, and each had his share to do.

In winter time, when the mists hung low over the valley and the sky was grey and cold above, Jeanne, in her coarse woollen gown and wooden sabots, would work in the fields or keep guard over the sheep. Then, when spring came round, scattering her flowers over the valley and wreathing a soft green haze over the grey bushes at the Blackthorn Spring, when the buds began to show warm and thick upon the Wood of the Oaks upon the slope of the hill, there, barefooted and happy, Jean gladly did her work, and was never tired of wandering in the wood or sitting spinning in the little garden behind the house, where the apple-blossoms spread their dainty pink against the blue sky.

The other village children often talked with bated breath of fairies who lived by the Blackthorn Spring and under the old beech-tree, called "the Tree of the Fairies," and even grown-up people believed in them too.

"I have heard that fairies came to the tree in the old days," said Jeanne's godmother once, "but for their sins they came there no more."

But Jeanne did not believe much in those fairies. She went sometimes with the other children to hang wreaths upon the Fairy tree, but she never expected to see them. She was much too busy and had too many other things to think about to pay any attention to fairies.

At home the good mother taught little Jeanne the few lessons she had to learn. There was no need for a little peasant girl to learn the ABC, for it was not expected that she should read or write,



Joan of Arc kneeling before angel, Henryk Siemiradzki

JEANNE D'ARC (PART 1)

but she learned the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, and Our Lady's "Hail Mary," and she was taught to spin and do fine needlework, besides the weeding and digging and work in the fields.

Sitting by the light that came sparingly through the small windows of the little grey house, Jeanne and her sister often sat spinning diligently, and while they worked together the mother would tell them the tales that Jeanne loved better than any fairy tales. These were the stories of the lives of God's saints, and Jeanne listened entranced, and was never tired of hearing them over and over again. Best of all perhaps was the beautiful story of the brave Maid Margaret, she of the golden heart and pure unspotted life, fit emblem of the golden-hearted, white-petalled daisy. Like Jeanne herself, this maiden had walked barefooted in the meadows, watching her sheep, when the Roman governor had seized her and carried her off to Antioch. There she refused to deny her Lord, and after being sorely beaten and bruised she was cast into a dungeon. Then came the part which made Jeanne's eyes gleam, when the poor maiden, weak and suffering, was beset by Satan, who came in the form of a fearsome dragon breathing out flames and smoke, and gazing upon her with burning eyes of dreadful fury.

The mother's voice went evenly on, while Jeanne waited eagerly for the rest of the story.

"But Maid Margaret showed no sign of fear, even when the monster came so close that she felt his hot breath upon her cheek. She raised herself on one arm, and then with a hand which did not even tremble, she made before her the sign of the cross.

"The dragon vanished at that sacred sign. The roaring ceased, the smoke cleared away, and Margaret was alone once more.

"Then a soft radiance lit up the dimness of the dungeon, and a voice sweeter than any earthly music fell on Margaret's ear: 'Margaret, faithful servant of Christ, give thanks that thou hast triumphed over thy enemies. Hold fast thy faith, for soon thy torments will be ended, and thy Lord shall bid thee enter into thy rest.'"

Then came the ending of the story, the terrible martyrdom and the promise of S. Margaret that she would be ever near to help all women in distress who called her memory to mind.

Another of Jeanne's favourites was the story of S. Catherine, who in a vision saw the King of Glory, and taking Him for her Lord and Master, found His ring upon her finger, and remained faithful even unto the cruel death which awaited her.

Chapter 2



Jeanne d'Arc (Part 2)

1412-1431 A.D., France

Perhaps in the chapel on the hill Jeanne may have seen the pictures of her favourite saints set in the windows through which the sun threw rainbow tints upon her bowed head as she so often knelt before the altar there. Surely too the picture of S. Michael the Archangel must also have been set in those same windows, for in no other way could the child have learnt to know his face and figure, as there is no doubt she early learned to do.

But life was not made up only of peaceful days of spinning and story-telling and church-going in the little grey village on the banks of the Meuse. Sometimes the distant storm came nearer, and the thunders of war rolled past, and the poor folk of Domremy suffered with the rest of France and were driven for a while from their homes.

Jeanne listened breathlessly to the tales which came from the outside world telling of wars and bloodshed and



*Joan hanging garlands on the fairy oak, illustration from
The story of Joan of Arc by Andrew Lang, 1906*

JEANNE D'ARC (PART 2)



Appearance of Sts Catherine and Michael to Joan of Arc, Hermann Stilke

treachery. The French were betrayed into the cruel hands of the savage English people. There was no King of France. The rightful King was uncrowned and deserted. The villagers listened, too, but they cared much more that their sheep and cattle had been stolen, and were only anxious to guard them from further harm. Only into Jeanne's heart the news sank deep, and she could not forget the uncrowned King.

Everyone in the village had a good word for little Jeanne, although they often laughed at her for going so often to church. She was too devout for a child, they thought. Yet after all it had seemed to do her some good, for her word could be absolutely trusted and her solemn "There is no mistake" was much more to be depended upon than the vows which other people swore. She was so kind, too, to those in trouble, and was always ready to nurse any sick child in the village or to help in any way those who needed her. Sitting spinning in the garden or wandering with her sheep about the green meadows, she dreamed her dreams, as most children do, but she was a practical, healthy little maiden, friendly with the other village children, strong and happy and busy as the day was long. It was always a great joy to her to steal into the quiet church and kneel there, feeling the presence of God and His saints very near, but even when she could not leave her work to go there, she loved to hear the bells calling to matins and compline. Wherever she was and whatever she was doing, that sound was like music to her, and it was a great disappointment when sometimes the old verger forgot to ring the bells. Jeanne begged him to try and remember, and then to sharpen his memory she



Joan of Arc consulting the Hermit about the mission she has to accomplish, Fleury François Richard

JEANNE D'ARC (PART 2)



Jeanne d'Arc presented to Charles VII, Dominique Papety

added, “and if thou dost not forget I will give thee cakes.”

Time passed by and there was sorer need than ever that some helper and defender should arise to save France. Was there no strong man among her sons whom God would raise up to do battle for the rightful king? Yes, the call had come, but it came to no strong man, no great warrior, but to the little village maiden spinning under the pink petals of the apple-trees.

It was only a voice she heard at first, which seemed to come from the side of the garden nearest to the church.

“I come from God to help thee to live a good and holy life,” it said. “Be good, little Jeanne, and God will aid thee.”

Jeanne started up and looked in the direction from whence the voice came, and all that she saw was a shining light, brighter than any she had ever seen.



Joan of Arc in Prison, Howard Pyle

“I am but a poor girl,” she said; “I know not how to ride a horse or how to make war.”

Again the voice sounded in her ears:

“Daughter of God, thou shalt lead the Dauphin to Reims, that he may receive worthily his anointing.”

There was much for Jeanne to ponder over when the vision faded, but her thoughts were too deep to tell to others. In those summer days as she sat in the oak woods with the sunlight dancing through the green leaves and the solemn stillness of the woods around her, again and again she seemed to hear the voices and see the shadowy forms of the saints who were sent to help her. S. Margaret was there and S. Catherine too, and it was in such heavenly company that she was taught and strengthened and prepared for the work that was awaiting her.

What could it mean? It was nothing evil, she was sure, for the light was so wonderful and the words were so good. Could it be the voice of an angel?

It was all so strange, she dared not tell anyone, and so she kept the secret to herself. The next time she heard the voice she was not so frightened, and the simple words repeated again, “Little Jeanne, be good,” came like a message of comfort.

The third time when she heard the voice and saw the light, there breathed into the radiance a shadowy form having in his hand a shining sword, a crown upon his head, and wings that wrapped him round. In an instant Jeanne knew him for S. Michael, the great warrior archangel, and she listened with bowed head while he spoke.

“Little Jeanne,” he said, “it is thou who must go to the help of the King of France; it is thou who shalt give him back his kingdom.”

As Jeanne knelt there trembling she could scarcely believe the message was meant for her. What could she, a little maiden of only thirteen summers, do in this far-away village to help the King?

“Daughter of God,” said the voice she had learned to know, “thou must leave thy village and go forth into France.”

Jeanne looked up.

“I am but a poor girl,” she said; “I know not how to ride a horse or how to make war.”

JEANNE D'ARC (PART 2)

So the pleasant days of childhood spent in the green forests, the happy hours of spinning in the garden passed away, and little Jeanne, trying to obey the first message of the Voice's "be good," prepared to answer the call, not in her own strength but in the strength of God.

Chapter 3



Charles Dickens (Part 1)

1812-1870 A.D., United Kingdom



Portrait of Charles John Huffman Dickens (1843), Margaret Gillies

On the 7th of February, in the year 1812, there was a baby born in a comfortable little house at Landport, on the coast of Hampshire. Outside the sea was wailing its winter dirge, and inside the baby was crying as babies usually do when the world is very new to them, whether it be winter or summer. And all this happened, too, on a Friday night.

Now everyone knows that Friday is considered rather an unlucky day on which to be born. "Friday's child is full of woe," so the rhyme goes, and the old nurse, who held the crying baby in her arms, shook her head over him and thought it a pity he should begin life at such an unlucky time. She did not know that this baby was born with a magic gift, a gift that was to make the old dull world forget its woes for a while and laugh aloud with pure joy and delight, so that it could never be quite such a dull old world again. Little Charles Dickens was indeed a "Friday's child," but so full was his heart of the joy of life, the magic of happiness, that with his wonderful gift he turned whatever he touched from despair into hope, from dull greyness into the

sunshine of joy and laughter.

But all this, of course, happened later on. Just at first the small baby was very much like any ordinary baby, beginning its little life with a mournful wail.

“I was born (as I have been informed and believe) on a Friday, at twelve o’clock at night. It was remarked that the clock began to strike and I began to cry simultaneously.” So wrote Charles Dickens long afterwards in one of his books called *David Copperfield*, a great part of which is said to be the story of his own life.

John Dickens was the name of the baby’s father, and he was a clerk in the Navy Pay Office, earning enough money to keep things comfortable in the little house at Portsea. He had married Elizabeth Barrow, and a little daughter, Fanny, had been born two years before the arrival of Charles upon the scene. There, in the garden before the house, the two children used to play together as soon as Charles was able to toddle by himself.

Little children have often a way of noticing things very closely, which seems quite wonderful. Perhaps it is that they do not look at too many things at once, and so remember very distinctly what they do notice. Charles was certainly one of these noticing children, and he had besides a wonderful memory. When he was a man he described exactly the little garden in which he had trotted about, holding Fanny’s hand and grasping the slice of bread and butter in his other little chubby fist. How well he remembered, too, those dreadful fowls that looked so tall and fierce as they scuttled past him. There was the cock, almost as tall as himself, that crowed with such vengeance that it made him shiver, and the geese that came waddling after him, stretching their long necks and making him dream at nights that he was being chased by hungry lions. He saw them all as clearly as he had seen them with his baby eyes.

But the home which the little boy remembered best, and where he spent the happiest days of his childhood, was at Chatham. Close at hand was the dockyard with its wonderful ships, its delicious smell of tar, its mysterious ropes and the queer old sailors ready to talk to the eager little boy



Charles Dickens is here shown as a boy of twelve years of age, working in a factory. Illustration from "The Leisure Hour" by Fred Barnard, 1904

who was so keen on all things connected with the sea. Those old seafaring men found their way afterwards into many of his stories, and when touched with his magic wand they have lived on for ever.

Not far from Chatham, on the high road, was an old house called Gadshill which had a great fascination for Charles. When he was a very little boy his father took him to see it, and told him that if he worked hard and was very persevering he might some day live in that very house or one quite as handsome. Charles never forgot his father's words, and as soon as he was old enough to walk there by himself he would steal away and sit gazing at the old house, dreaming dreams and making up pictures as he looked. Although he was only a little boy he had read parts of Shakespeare's plays, and knew that this was the place where old Falstaff went out to rob the travellers, and that made it all the more interesting. It was a very "queer small boy" who used to sit there dreaming those very large splendid dreams of what he would do in the future, but they were dreams which some day became real and solid.

Chapter 4



Charles Dickens (Part 2)

1812-1870 A.D., United Kingdom

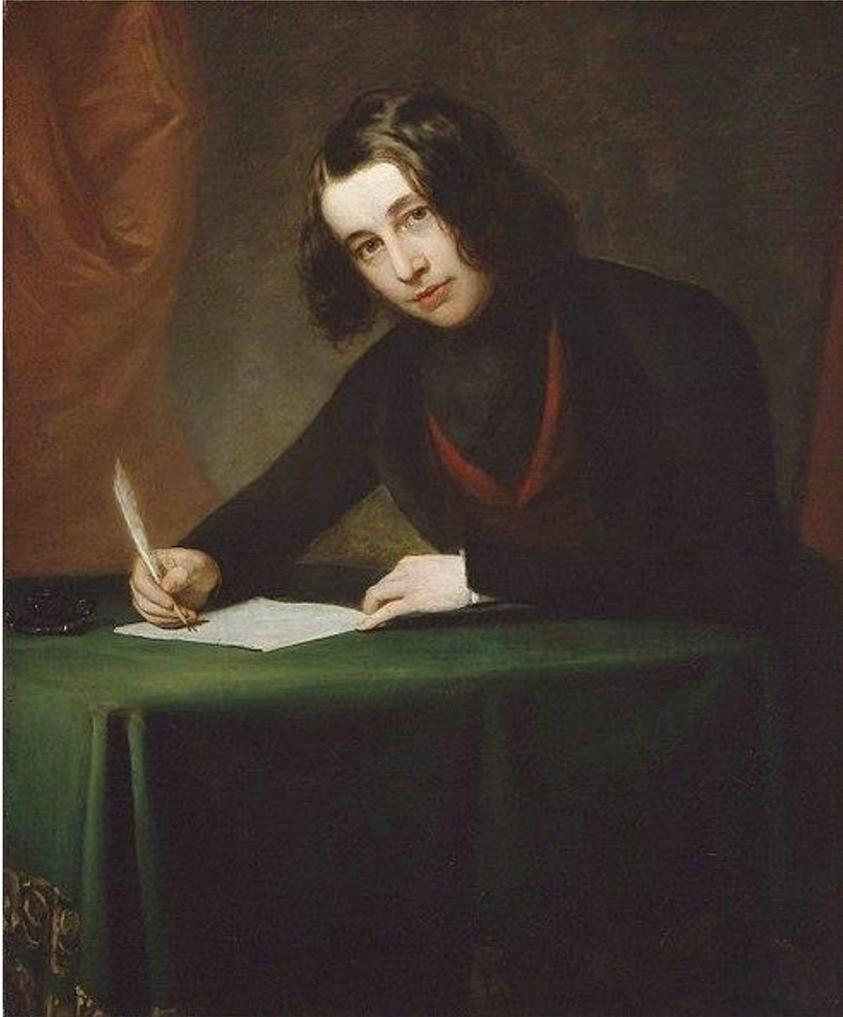
Charles was not a strong child and was rather small for his age. He never was very good at games, even at marbles or peg-top, but he was fond of watching the other boys, and while they played he always had a book in his hand, for he was never tired of reading.

Perhaps, if he had been stronger and able to play like other boys, he would have read less and watched less, but then how many things we would have missed later on when he began to write his stories. His eyes were so keen even then that he looked at and pondered over everything, and never forgot the smallest details.

It was his mother who taught him to read, and later on she began to teach him Latin too. In *David Copperfield* he says, "I can faintly remember learning the alphabet at her knee. To this day, when I look



Charles Dickens (1842), Francis Alexander



Charles Dickens, Daniel Maclise

upon the fat black letters in the primer, the puzzling novelty of their shapes and the easy good-nature of and Q and S, seem to present themselves again before me as they used to do.”

Here again is an account of the high-backed pew in church at morning service, where as a little boy he was warned not to let his eyes wander but to look at the clergyman. “But I can’t always look at him—I know him without that white thing on, and I am afraid of his wondering why I stare so, and perhaps stopping the service to inquire and what am I to do? It’s a dreadful thing to gape, but I must do something. I look at my mother, she pretends not to see me. I look at a boy in the aisle, and he makes faces at me. I look at the sunlight coming in at the open door through the porch, and there I see a stray sheep half making up his mind to come into the church. I feel if I looked at him any lon-

ger, I might be tempted to say something out loud; and what would become of me then! ... I look from Mr. Chillip, in his Sunday neckcloth, to the pulpit, and think what a good place it would be to play in, and what a castle it would make with another boy coming up the stairs to attack it, and having the velvet cushion with the tassels thrown down on his head. In time my eyes gradually shut up; and from seeming to hear the clergyman singing a drowsy song in the heat I hear nothing until I fall off the seat with a crash, and am taken out more dead than alive.”

Later on, in the same book, Dickens describes his little store of books. “My father had left a small collection of books in a little room upstairs to which I had access (for it adjoined my own) and which nobody else in our house ever troubled. From that blessed little room *Roderick Random*, *Peregrine Pickle*, *Humphry Clinker*, *Tom Jones*, the *Vicar of Wakefield*, *Don Quixote* and *Robinson Crusoe* came out, a glorious host to keep me company. They kept alive my fancy, and my hope of something beyond that place and time—they and the *Arabian Nights* and *Tales of the Genii*—and did me no harm.”

CHARLES DICKENS (PART 2)

The books were not mere stories to him, they were real life, and he knew the people that lived between the covers of these books better than those he met in the everyday world.

There is a wonderful country called the Land of Make-Believe, which most children know well, but which few grown-up people ever enter. It is so easy to reach that you can arrive there in a second, and yet when you are once inside its borders, the everyday commonplace old world seems thousands of miles away.

Little Charles had found the key to the entrance gate of that land when he found those old books, and no child ever enjoyed the delights of Make-Believe Land more than he did. Just think what a difference it made to him! Here was a little boy who looked very much like other little boys, whose jacket was often dusty and hair untidy, whose ears were sometimes boxed with the Latin grammar when he did not know his lessons, and who had a curious habit of carrying about the centre-piece of an old set of boot-trees. That was what the commonplace people in the everyday world saw. How different it all was in the Make-Believe World. This was no little boy, but a tall hearty captain of the Royal British Navy, wearing no dusty jacket, but a splendid spotless uniform. The curious weapon in his hand had nothing to do with an old set of boot-trees, it was a terrific life-



Dickens' Dream, (unfinished painting) Robert W. Buss

preserver which kept at bay a swarm of bloodthirsty savages that dogged the noble captain's footsteps. No boxing of ears could hurt the captain's dignity, for such insults are unknown in Make-Believe Land.

As children grow up it becomes more and more difficult for them to find the way to Make-Believe Land, and even when they sometimes reach the very gates they are obliged to turn back sadly, for they have lost the key. But this never happened to Charles Dickens. He never forgot the way to that delightful land; he never lost that Golden Key.

The next step after reading so many books was, of course, the desire to write one himself, and so Charles began a very grand tragedy entitled *Mismar, the Sultan of India*. People began to think this very queer small boy was extremely clever, and to find that he could amuse and entertain them too. Not only could he write stories but he could tell them as well, and he had a quaint way of singing little comic songs that was quite delightful.

His father was fond of showing him off, and often in the evenings, when he ought to have been in bed, he was sitting in his little chair, lifted on to the table, singing and amusing the assembled company.

It was not very good for him, but little Charles enjoyed it all amazingly, and these were the happiest years of all his childhood, especially when he and his sister Fanny were sent to school. For, unlike most little boys, Charles loved school and loved lessons. He wanted to learn everything. He had made up his mind that he was going to be a great and successful man. The master soon noticed how quick and bright the boy was, and took a great fancy to him, helping him even out of school hours, so that he got on very quickly.

He was a handsome little boy at that time, with long curly fair hair and keen bright eyes. He was very good-tempered and amusing too, and his school-fellows were all fond of him, for, although he was clever he was not a prig, but loved all kinds of fun and mischief as much as any of them. And what stories he could tell them, too!

Then suddenly, when Charles was only eleven years old, the sunshine seemed to fade out of his life and a grey mist of misfortune descended on the family. His father was never a good business man, and had begun to owe more money than he could pay back. Instead of living in the pleasant house at Chatham, the family now moved to a small lodging in a poor part of London, where everything seemed to Charles most wretched and mean.

Chapter 5



Charles Dickens (Part 3)

1812-1870 A.D., United Kingdom



Photograph of Charles Dickens, courtesy of
the National Portrait Gallery

There was no more talk of schooling now. Charles spent his time running errands, cleaning boots, and trying to make himself generally useful. He could not understand the change at all, and he was very miserable. He did long so eagerly to learn many things, he had built such splendid castles in the air of the great things he meant to do, and now suddenly all the castles came tumbling down and he was only a little, bewildered, shabby boy, learning nothing, and with no one to teach him anything. He would have given anything in the world if only he could have gone back to school.

But there are other ways of learning besides having lesson-books and going to school, and although Charles did not know it, he was learning many things in the London streets which no lesson-books could have taught

him. The same habit of looking at people and noticing everything was as keen in London as it had been in the Chatham dockyard. The look of the streets, the faces of the poor people he saw, their ways and conversation were all stored up carefully in his mind, and afterwards with his magic touch he made them all alive and real again for us, with a reality that makes them live for ever. Indeed this world would have been a much duller place for many people had not Charles Dickens learned those odd lessons in the queer by-streets and out-of-the-way corners of London life.

In those days, anyone who owed money and could not pay it was put into what was called the Debtors' Prison, and before very long Charles's father was taken there, and the family fortunes went from bad to worse.

There were now several little brothers and sisters besides Fanny, who was just then the only successful member of the family, having been elected a pupil of the Royal Academy of Music. It was but a sad little household at No. 4 Gower Street, and money grew scarcer every day. Charles began to carry off his father's books to sell, and after that the furniture went piece by piece to the pawnshop, until there was nothing left but a few chairs, the beds, and a table. Then it was that some work was found for Charles to do.

In the early days at Chatham, Charles had been very fond of one of his relations, a young man called James Lamert. This youth had always been kind to the little boy, taking him to the theatre,



Dickens receiving his characters, William Holbrook Beard

and even making a little miniature theatre for him to play with. James Lamert was now a manager of a blacking manufactory, and he offered to take Charles into the warehouse, and give him six shillings a week. The offer was thankfully accepted, and the boy was set to work.

But what unsuitable work it was for the poor child, and how he hated it! He was a delicate little lad, easily hurt in mind and body, and he shrank from the rough companions and ugly sights and sounds amongst which he now lived. It was indeed a miserable time, and Charles Dickens never, all his life, forgot the misery and unhappiness he suffered there. He had so longed to go to school and to learn more and more, and now all that he knew was slipping away and he was becoming a hopeless, ignorant little drudge. The place, too, was full of horrors for him, as he describes it in one of his books.

“It was a crazy old house with a wharf of its own, abutting on the water when the tide was in, and on the wind when the tide was out, and literally overrun with rats. Its panelled rooms, discoloured with the dirt of a hundred years, I dare say; its decaying floors and staircase; the squeaking and scuffling of the old grey rats down in the cellars, and the dirt and rottenness of the place; are things, not of many years ago in my mind, but of the present time.”

Here Charles Dickens worked, at first in a little recess off the counting-house, but before long in the common workroom with the other boys. Each boy had his little table, with rows and rows of pots of blacking-paste ready to be covered, first with oil-paper and then with a little blue cap. The blue cover had then to be tied round with string and the edges neatly trimmed and the label stuck on. All day long, and every day, there they sat, covering and pasting and snipping away at those



Photograph of Charles Dickens and his daughters,
courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery

endless rows of little blacking-pots.

And yet in spite of all his unhappiness and dislike of the work, Charles set his mind to it, and tried to do it as well as he possibly could, and he learned to do it as quickly and as thoroughly as any of the other boys.

It was a strange life for a child to lead. His home was now broken up and the whole family had gone to live in rooms in the Debtors' Prison. Charles was boarded out with an old woman, who took children in as lodgers, and who he afterwards described as "an ill-favoured, ill-conditioned old lady, of a stooping figure, with a mottled face, like bad marble, a hook nose, and a hard grey eye that looked as if it might have been hammered at an anvil without sustaining any injury. ... She was a great manager of children, and the secret of her management was to give them everything that they didn't like, and nothing they did—which was found to sweeten their dispositions very much."

Charles was still such a little boy that he could not know very well how to manage to live on his six shillings a week. Sometimes he was tempted to spend his money, which should have been kept to buy his dinner, on stale pastry and then he had to go without any dinner at all, and very often he had nothing to eat but a slice of pudding heavy and flabby, with great fat raisins in it, stuck in whole at wide distances apart.

But in spite of the daily drudgery, the lonely, pinching life, and the rough companionships, no real bitterness seemed to creep into the boy's nature. His wonderful sense of humour lifted him over many a rough place, and the kindness and tenderness of his heart taught him to find something good and kindly in those around him. And all the time his keen eyes were always watching, his active brain, always half unconsciously, was noting things that happened around him, and which he never afterwards forgot. Then after a while brighter days began to dawn. The father of the family managed to pay his debts and was able to leave the Debtors' Prison, and Charles was set free from his prison too. The blacking factory knew him no more. Once more his hopes began to rise, once more he was to have a chance of winning his way in the world. He could scarcely believe his good fortune, it seemed so much too good to be true, but he actually found himself at school again and could begin to learn all that he longed to know. So Charles thought he would now begin to climb the ladder that was to lead him to fame and greatness, but he did not know that he had already mounted many a step, that the grey dreary life had been a wonderful school for him, and the lessons he had learned there would be useful to him all his life. The magic wand was there ready to touch the world and charm it at will from tears to laughter, but some of its most potent spells would never have been laid upon us but for those childish days of want and hardship, when he was learning his lessons from the book of life.

Chapter 6



David Livingstone (Part 1)

1813-1873 A.D., United Kingdom/Zambia

The old world goes on its way, so full of sorrows and so full of sin, that the pages of her history make often but sorrowful reading. So many of her sons there are who strive only for riches and renown, who trample down the weak and helpless or use them as stepping-stones to achieve their end, and it seems as if selfishness and cruelty were everywhere triumphant. But here and there a name stands out upon the dark page, the name of a hero writ in shining gold, and the story of his life seems to lift poor human nature out of the dust and makes it once more possible to believe that we are the sons of God.

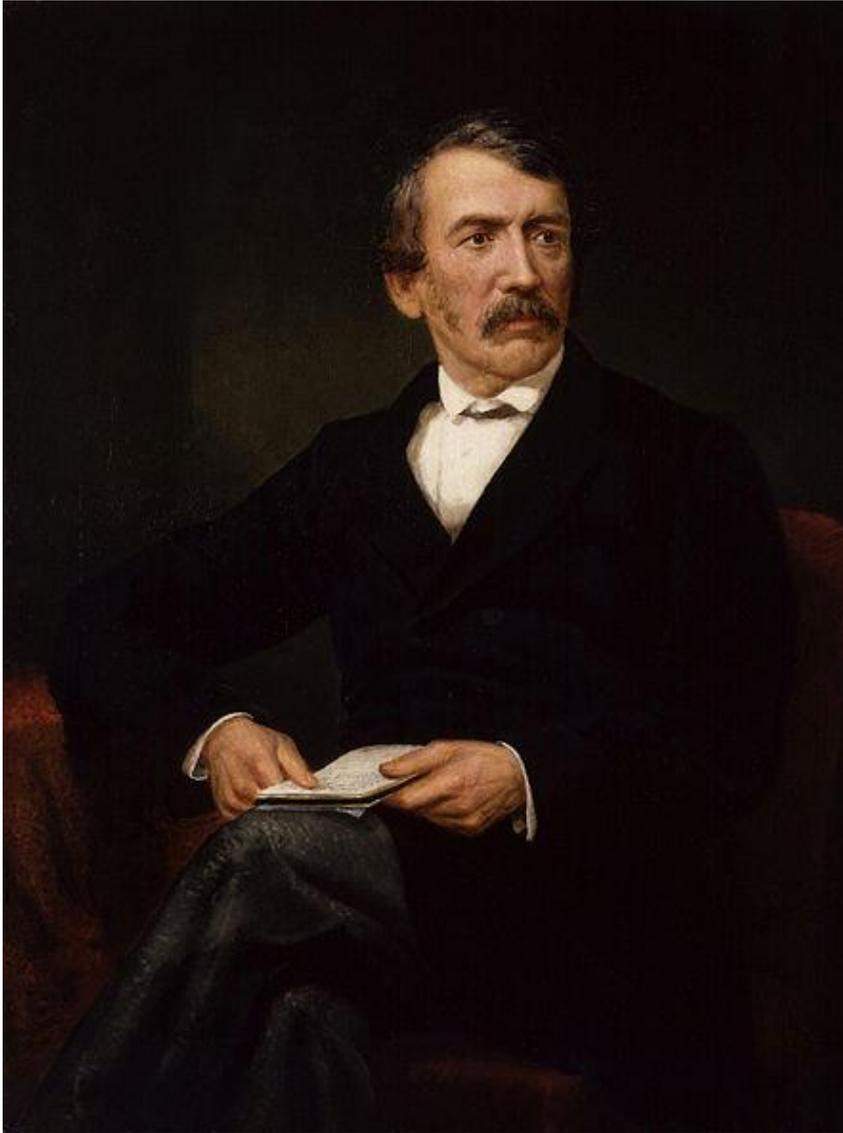
Like stars in a dark sky those names shine out, and there are none that shine with a steadier, purer radiance than the name of David Livingstone.

At the sound of that name a figure stands before us as lifelike and as real as if he had lived but yesterday. It is the figure of a man tall, strong, and powerful, with keen fearless eyes, and the background is the dark continent of Africa where he laboured to bring deliverance to the captive and carried the light of God's truth into the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

This splendid figure with his splendid plan, his knowledge and dauntless courage, we watch him as he pushes his way through pathless jungles where the foot of a white man had never trod, fighting



David Livingstone, illustration from Athenais journal, A-7, p.52, unknown author, 1876



David Livingstone, Frederick Havill

with lions and wild beasts, fighting a more strenuous fight yet with disease and death, strong of arm and strong of brain, with a heart as tender and compassionate as a woman's. From what great family, we ask, did this hero spring, what splendid chances went to the making of this man?

A little grey village in Scotland, as poor and commonplace as the lives of the hard-working people who lived there beside the cotton-spinning factories. This was the birthplace of David Livingstone. A boyhood of toil and hardship, a daily fight with poverty, a struggle to obtain books and learning, these were the difficulties of which the boy made stepping-stones to reach the goal, aided by no brilliant chances of birth, riches, or education.

In one of the narrow alleys of the village of Blantyre in Lanarkshire there lived, about a hundred years ago, a poor hard-working family called

Livingstone. The father, Neil Livingstone, was an upright industrious man, rather stern perhaps, but with a kindly heart beneath the sternness, and with good, brave Highland blood in his veins. His grandfather had fought many a battle for Bonnie Prince Charlie, and at last at Culloden had laid down his life for his king. That was a story which the children were never tired of hearing, although their mother would shake her head over the tale, and tell how her grandfather fought on the other side. She, too, could tell many stories of the deeds of her grandfather, who had lived in those cruel, terrible times when the Covenanters were hunted down like wild beasts, driven from their homes to take refuge in caves, and imprisoned or put to death for conscience' sake.

The mother's blue-grey eyes shone as she talked of those days, and although she was so small and delicate, it was easy to see that the spirit of the Covenanters still dwelt within her and that she would have fearlessly faced death for what she believed to be the right. There was never a more

DAVID LIVINGSTONE (PART 1)

loyal and loving soul than that which dwelt in this humble Scotch mother, and her clear dark eyes were like windows out of which “her love came beaming freely like the light of the sun.”

It was a hard life and a difficult one which the mother had to face. The money Neil Livingstone earned by selling tea was little enough, and there were five children to feed and clothe, besides the two little mounds in the churchyard which left such an ache in the mother’s heart.

It was on the 19th of March 1813 that David was born, just when the last wreaths of snow were melting behind the dykes, and the first signs of spring had begun to cheer the land after the long, dour winter days. He was a strong healthy child, as hardy as his Highland forefathers, and with his gentle mother’s beautiful grey-blue eyes and a great deal of her tender, loving nature.

There was plenty of work in the home for even small hands to do, and as soon as David was old enough to go to the village school he had begun to be quite a help to his mother. She was very particular about keeping the house neat and tidy and spotlessly clean, and she taught David to be thorough in all his work. When he swept the room for her there was no leaving of dust in dark corners where it might not be noticed, no dusting round in circles and not underneath. David learned to be as careful and tidy as she was herself, and did his work most cheerfully, only asking that the door might be kept shut while he was sweeping out the room, so that the other village boys might not see him doing housework.

Neil Livingstone was very strict with his children, and his word was law in the house. Whenever he made a rule they all knew it must be obeyed, and that nothing would excuse disobedience. One of his rules was that every night at dusk the cottage door was locked for the night, and the children were all expected to be home by that time.

Now it happened that one night David was so much interested in his games that he never



*Dr David Livingstone with his daughter,
courtesy of Wellcome Images*



How I found Livingstone, Henry Morton Stanley, illustration for French edition:
Comment j'ai retrouvé Livingstone, Hachette, 1876

noticed that the sun had gone down, and when he raced home in the gloaming, it was to find the door shut and barred as usual, while he was left outside. He looked blankly at the closed door for a few minutes, but never dreamed of knocking or kicking. His father's rules were like the laws of the Medes and Persians, and there was nothing to do but to make the best of it. A kind neighbour, seeing him standing there supperless, gave him a slice of bread, and David sat down on the doorstep, ate his supper, and then curled himself up to sleep. Of course his mother, missing the child, when it grew late, came anxiously to the door to look out, and found him quite prepared to spend the night there, and of course his father, smiling rather grimly, said, "Bring the bairn in."

Chapter 7



David Livingstone (Part 2)

1813-1873 A.D., United Kingdom/Zambia



Photograph of David Livingston

By the time David was ten years old he was considered big enough to begin to earn his own living and do something towards helping the rest of the family. A place was found for him at the cotton-spinning mill, his days at the village school came to an end, and he began to work like a man.

Every morning he had his porridge at five o'clock, buttoned his jacket tightly, pulled on his bonnet, and set out in the pitch darkness or faint grey light of dawn to walk to the factory, where work began at six o'clock. He was what was called a "piecer," and his work was to watch the looms and tie together the threads which broke in the weaving.

It was not very exciting work, but it was extremely tiring and, except for a break for meals, it went on until eight o'clock at night, which meant working almost fourteen hours a day.

But if David found it hard at first, when Saturday came, and he was paid his first earnings, he was as happy as a king. He held the half-crown tight in his fist, having carefully planned beforehand what he meant to do with it, and then he started for the village shop, where he had seen an old Latin grammar for sale. He had set his heart on that grammar, and it did not cost a great deal, so when he had

it safe under his arm he ran all the way home, and bursting into the room, threw his earnings into his mother's lap. It was quite the proudest day in his life.

The old Latin grammar helped to lighten many a dull hour at his work now. He propped it up on the top of the spinning-frame, and as he went backwards and forwards he learned little pieces of it by heart, until he became a fairly good Latin scholar.

It might have been supposed that after fourteen hours at the factory David would have been glad to rest or play when he got home at night, but instead of that he was off at once to the night-school, and even when he returned at ten o'clock he would still sit up poring over his beloved books, until his mother came and blew out the candle and bade him be off to bed.

All the children loved books, and they had always been encouraged by their father to read as much as possible. Neil Livingstone himself collected all the books he could, and was specially fond of stories of travel and missionary work. Whenever there was a missionary meeting held within walking distance he was always there, and he took David with him whenever he could. Those long days of work in the factory, the hours spent in the night-school and the poring over books till midnight might make one think that David was merely a studious, hard-working boy, but whenever a holiday came round he showed what a splendid out-of-door boy he was as well. Away on the moors, scrambling over rocks, climbing hills, wading the river, he was in his element, and what David did not know about plants and beetles, birds and butterflies, was not considered worth knowing by the other boys. If he was keen on his books he was just as keen on making collections, hunting for plants, and gathering together all kinds of out-of-door knowledge. Nothing escaped his eye.

He was keen, too, on games, and knew all the best pools for fishing, so that once he actually caught a salmon. It was forbidden by law to land a salmon, but David could not bring himself to be a law-abiding citizen that time. It seemed a shame to throw the great glittering fish into the water again, and yet it was almost impossible to carry it home without being seen. His brother Charlie was



David Livingstone, suffering from fever, carried above water on the shoulders of one of his men, etching by Necker

DAVID LIVINGSTONE (PART 2)



*Livingstone reading the Bible to a group of African men,
David Livingstone Memorial in Blantyre, South Lanarkshire, UK*

with him, and together they considered the matter, with the result that David slipped the salmon down the leg of Charlie's trousers and then marched him home.

"Puir bairn, he's got an arfu swollen leg," said the neighbours pityingly as they passed, and David managed to keep his face becomingly solemn until they reached home. There was no doubt that David was the greatest favourite with all his brothers and sisters. The whole house was merrier when David was at home, and he could tell such splendid stories and was always ready to play games with the little ones.

All this time there was something else David was learning besides his factory work and his night-school lessons, and that was to be honest and straightforward and truthful in word and deed. He had been early taught to fear God, but as he grew older something more powerful than fear began to take hold of his heart. The more he thought of our Lord's wonderful life on earth, the more his heart was filled with a great admiration and a great love, and a longing to follow in His footsteps even afar off.

It was the thought of that going forth to seek and to save that which was lost, to help the helpless and the weak, that made the boy's heart burn within him. That tender healing of body as well as soul, the carrying of light into dark places, made his heart throb with a great hero-worship, and slowly, day by day, he began to weave his plan of service for his Master, while he watched the weaving of the thread in the loom and joined the broken pieces together.



A medical missionary attending to a sick African, Harold Copping



David Livingstone attacked by a lion in Africa, Lithograph courtesy of Wellcome Images

There were far-off lands still in darkness, waiting for the light. There were helpless men, women, and little children stretching out their hands and calling for aid, souls and bodies, as of old, waiting to be healed.

He was only a poor factory boy dreaming his great dream of service, longing to try to follow the example of the Great Physician, making up his mind steadfastly to do his best, however poor that best might be; yet there in the little grey village of the North, hedged in on every side with difficulties, he manfully set his face towards the good, and never once did he turn back.

And what was the good towards which he strove so earnestly? It was not the love and admiration of his fellow-countrymen, not a name that should be famous all the world over, nor the honoured rest beneath the Abbey roof which shelters England's heroes. All these were to be his indeed, but it was a higher reward he sought, even the sound of his Master's voice, saying once again, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Chapter 8



Richard Wagner (Part 1)

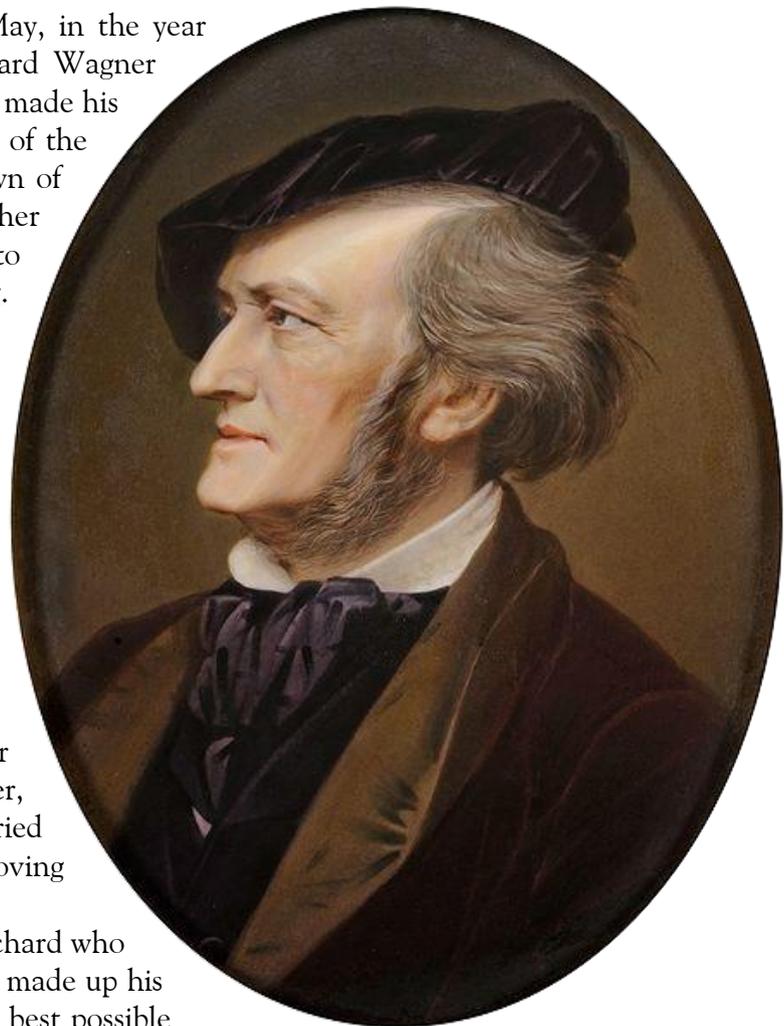
1813-1883 A.D., Germany

It was in the merry month of May, in the year 1813, that the great musician Richard Wagner was born. The room in which he first made his voice heard was on the second floor of the Red and White Lion, in the old town of Leipzig, where there was plenty of other noises in the busy street outside to drown the sound of his feeble wailing. Two days later he was carried to S. Thomas' Church, where he received the name of Wilhelm Richard.

Richard's father was a clerk in the police service at Leipzig, but he was a student too, and loved all kinds of literature and poetry, and was especially fond of the theatre. Many of his friends were actors, and when, soon after Richard's birth, he died and left a widow and seven children, it was one of these actor friends, a man named Ludwig Geyer, who took charge of the family, married the widow, and became a kind and loving stepfather to the children.

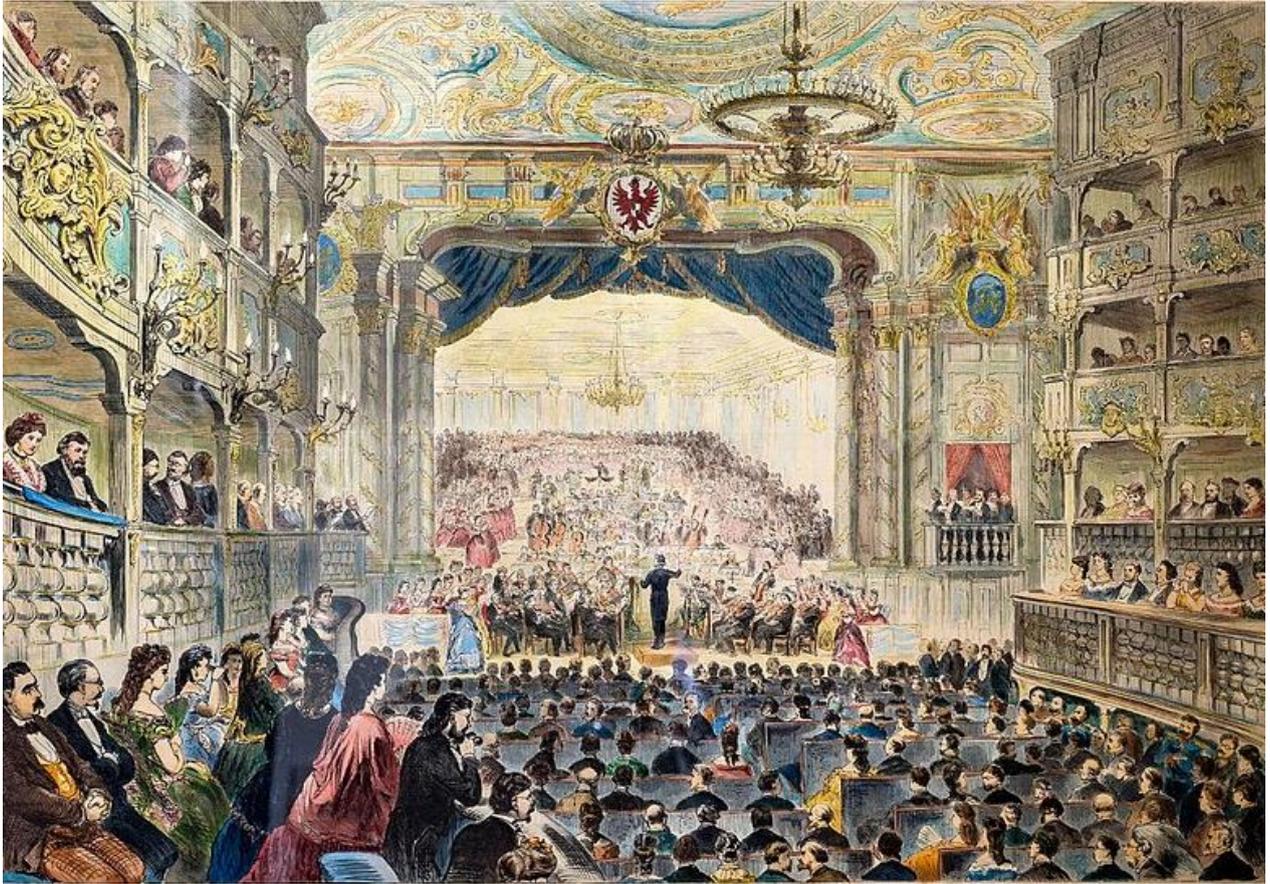
From the very first it was baby Richard who was his stepfather's favourite, and he made up his mind that the child should have the best possible education and turn out a credit to the family. He was anxious that all the children should do well, but his hopes were set on Richard. It was no easy matter to provide for a family of seven children, so Ludwig Geyer was thankful when he was given a post in the theatre at Dresden and could comfortably settle there with his large family.

Richard was only two years old when he left Leipzig, so the very first thing he could remember



Richard Wagner, E. A. Römhild

RICHARD WAGNER (PART 1)



Richard Wagner conducts Beethoven's 9th Symphony at the Margravial Opera House Bayreuth on the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone of the Festspielhaus on 22 May 1872, after Louis Sauter

was the Dresden theatre and his kind stepfather carrying him about the stage. The theatre was like a mysterious magic world to him, whether he saw it from the stage box or whether he wandered amongst the actors and peeped half fearfully into the wardrobe, where wigs and false noses and curious costumes were lurking ready to spring out at him. Sometimes, too, he took part in the performances, and that made him feel very important indeed.

There was one special occasion when a performance was given for the King of Saxony, and to Richard's great joy he was allowed to act the part of an angel.

He was sewn up in tights, and wings were fastened to his shoulders, and although he had nothing to do but to pose gracefully, he gave his whole mind seriously to the task. He was not at all surprised, therefore, when the performance was over he was told that the King had sent him a big iced cake as a token of his approval. He felt he had quite deserved it.

Sometimes there were a few words to be spoken in the little parts which Richard took, and that provided a good excuse for leaving his lessons unlearned.

"I had a most important part to learn," he would say solemnly to his teacher, while all the other little boys and girls listened enviously.

However, by the time Richard was six years old his stepfather thought it was time to begin lessons in earnest, and sent him to a clergyman's house, not far from Dresden, to be taught there with

several other little boys.

So the magic world of the theatre was closed for Richard, but other things began at once to interest him. He enjoyed playing games, and books were discovered to possess all kinds of new joys. There was the exciting adventures of Robinson Crusoe, a biography of Mozart, besides the real accounts in the newspapers of the Greek War of Independence. That war fired all Richard's imagination, and he wanted to hear all about the Greeks, and he listened entranced to the old stories of Greek mythology.

Scarcely a year had passed in the country parsonage when again a change came into Richard's life. A messenger arrived post-haste from Dresden to fetch Richard home, as his stepfather was dying and wanted to see him.

The boy set off at once on foot to walk the three miles into Dresden, and when he arrived, very tired and very frightened, he could scarcely understand why his mother was crying and why his father should look so strangely ill. They bade him play his little piece of music on the piano in the next room to see if it would interest the dying man, and as he stumbled over the notes his stepfather

listened and said, "Is it possible he may have musical talent?" He had always been so anxious to discover some special talent in the boy.

Early next morning the children were told that their kind stepfather was dead, and had sent each one a message and his blessing.

"He hoped to make something of you," said the weeping mother to Richard, and it seemed as if now that hope was dead too.

Soon after that the good schoolmaster arrived and took Richard back to the old parsonage, but he did not stay there long. His stepfather's brother undertook to look after the widow and children, and he arranged that Richard should live with him at Eisleben, where he carried on his business as a goldsmith.

Richard was accustomed to changes by this time, and it felt almost like a new fairy tale



Richard Wagner, unknown artist

RICHARD WAGNER (PART 1)

to live in the old house in the market-place of Eisleben, the little town so full of memories of Martin Luther. Not that Richard cared much about Luther. His fairy time was made up of all the strange sights and sounds of the busy market-place and the wonderful music of the band of the hussars which were quartered near at hand.

There was no saying what strange and delightful sights might meet the eye when one looked out on to that market-place. Sometimes there was even a circus or a troupe of acrobats, and once there was a tight-rope stretched from tower to tower across the square, on which a man walked as easily as if he was on solid earth.

Richard felt certain then, that to walk on a tight-rope was the most splendid achievement in all the world, and he set himself earnestly to learn how to do it. He made a rope of twisted cords and stretched it across the courtyard, and in a very short time, in spite of many falls and bruises, he succeeded in walking across with the help of a balancing-pole. But he grew tired of being an acrobat erelong, and turned once more to the joy of that wonderful music which was more magic than anything else. One special piece he was never tired of hearing, "The Huntsmen's Chorus," out of the *Freischütz*. Why, he must have often seen in Dresden the great composer Weber, who had made this magic music! It was something to dream about.

But besides the strange sights and haunting music of the outside world, life was very interesting inside as well. In a little dark room overlooking a narrow courtyard, the old step-grandmother lived, and Richard used to love to creep quietly into the room and watch her as she sat among her birds. In and out of the window the robins fluttered, hopping fearlessly upon her chair and fluttering about the green boughs which she kept always fresh for them by the side of the china stove. Sometimes, alas! a cat would find its way in and carry off one of the friendly robins, but Richard always managed to catch others for the old woman to tame, and she was so pleased with him that she adopted him as well as the birds, and kept him tidy and clean.

Chapter 9



Richard Wagner (Part 2)

1813-1883 A.D., Germany



Richard Wagner, Gustav Bartsch

School did not fit in very well with the rest of the fairy-tale life, and Richard had many a tussle with the town-boys who mocked at his “square cap,” but out of school hours there were always adventures to be sought for in the country round about and along the river bank, which was like an enchanted world to him.

Then suddenly the fairy tale came to a cruel end. Eisleben, the acrobats, the brass band, the old grandmother and her birds all faded away, and Richard’s life was changed once more, and he was sent off to Leipzig to visit his father’s relations—the Wagners. He was only eight years old, but he had seen so many changes that he was quite ready for anything that might happen next.

And here was a change indeed! His uncle Adolph and aunt Friederike Wagner lived in a very large and stately mansion, quite unlike the old house in the market-place of Eisleben. It was a house that had belonged to the Electoral

RICHARD WAGNER (PART 2)

family of Saxony since the days of Augustus the Strong, and in one of its splendid apartments a bed was prepared for the small guest in a royal fashion.

It was delightful to live in a room hung with silken curtains and filled with beautiful furniture, but it possessed one great drawback for Richard. He could not bear to look at the rows of portraits that hung upon the walls. The painted faces were exactly like a row of ghosts watching him, and when he was left alone with them they seemed to come to life and step down from their frames and crowd around him. He tried to shut his eyes, but they terrified him almost out of his wits, although they were not terrifying portraits at all, but gentle ladies in hooped petticoats, with charming faces and powdered hair. Nevertheless when he crept into the great state bed, and his aunt carried away the candle, he lay shaking with terror until sleep came and mercifully chased the ghosts away.

In spite of those haunting pictures, Richard was sorry when his visit to Leipzig came to an end and another change brought him back to his family home at Dresden. All his brothers and sisters had been getting on well in the world, and Rosalie, his eldest sister, had such a good engagement at the Dresden theatre that she was able to support the whole family and keep things comfortable. Another sister was an actress as well, and one of the brothers had also gone on the stage, but their mother wished they had found something different to do. She had no liking for the theatre, and she was firmly determined that her youngest boy should have nothing to do with it. She was keenly



You both live on the heights of humanity! (Richard Wagner and King Ludwig II of Bavaria), Kurt von Rozyński

anxious that Richard should turn out well, and now that she had him at home again she watched anxiously to see in what direction his talents lay.

It was rather difficult to decide what was to be made of the boy, but as he was only just eight years old it was clearly necessary to send him to school, where it was to be hoped he would show some signs of cleverness.

So to the Kreuz grammar school at Dresden Richard went, but alas, for his mother's hopes! He was immediately placed in the lowest class, and began his school career there as a dunce.

Before long, however, it was discovered that Richard could be quick and clever enough when his interest was aroused. Anything he wanted to learn he learned quickly; he was only dull and inattentive when he was set to learn things he disliked, such as arithmetic and grammar. Anything strange or mysterious, anything with a story about it immediately interested him, and because he loved the Greek myths he set to work to learn Greek, that he might the better imagine how his beloved heroes spoke to each other. Grammar was always a tiresome obstacle, and he wished with all his heart that he could learn a language without it, but even grammar could be mastered if he made up his mind to it.

So time went on, and still his mother watched for some sign of special talent, and at last she thought her hopes were to be realised.

The head-master of the grammar school had ordered the boys to write a poem in memory of the sad death of one of their companions, and had promised that if any of the verses should be considered good enough he would have them published. Richard immediately set to work and wrote his set of verses, which he showed to one of the masters, and after the poem was "cleared of extravagances" it was sent in.

The verses were declared to be the best that had been written. The head-master decided that they were worthy of being printed, and Richard suddenly found himself famous.

"He is destined to be a poet," declared his mother, as she folded her hands in thankfulness.

But she rejoiced too soon! Richard soon tired of making verses, and won no more laurels. He was a rather idle but very happy schoolboy, fond of fun and mischief, and eager for any kind of adventure.

What was the use of trying to be a poet?

The old pictures at Leipzig were not the only things that filled Richard's fancy with ghostly terrors. All his life he had been haunted by uncanny fancies wherever he went. Whenever he was left alone in a room and he began to fix his attention on any particular piece of furniture, it always seemed to become alive and to twist itself into horrible shapes on purpose to frighten him. Scarcely a night passed that he did not wake up screaming over some dreadful dream, and though he was whipped and punished for disturbing the household, neither whipping nor punishment seemed to have any effect in curing him. Indeed he was so thankful to hear a human voice that he welcomed punishment gladly. None of his brothers or sisters would sleep near him, and the more he was left alone the louder he screamed.

Music had always been associated with Richard's ghosts, and the sound of a violin had from his babyhood filled him half with terror and half with a curious kind of delight. He had never forgotten "The Huntsmen's Chorus" which he had heard the band play in the market-place of Eisleben, and now he began to long to be able to play it for himself.

RICHARD WAGNER (PART 2)



Richard Wagner, Rudolf Eichstaedt

Weber, the composer of the *Freischütz*, patted the boy kindly on the head one day and asked if he wanted to become a musician, but Richard's mother answered for him. "He has never shown any signs of musical talent," she said sadly, which was quite true.

Richard loved to hear music but had never taken the trouble to make it for himself. Now, however, he was fired with the desire to play the overture to *Freischütz*, which charmed him by its mysterious feeling of ghostliness.

Without any help at all he set to work to pick out the notes on the piano, and before long managed to play the piece in his "own peculiar way." Seeing this, his mother when he was twelve years old engaged a master to give him regular music lessons, and he soon learned to play whatever piece of music he particularly fancied.

Now, too, he began to be interested in learning all he could about music and the great composers.

"Who was Beethoven?" he asked his sisters, and the story of the great master, deaf to his own wonderful music, thrilled the boy with keenest sympathy. At night, instead of ghosts he dreamed of



Richard and Cosima Wagner with Liszt and Hans v. Wolzogen in their home "Wahnfried," illustration from The Garden Arbor – Illustrated Family Journal, Leipzig, 1984, based on the painting by W. Beckmann

the great composers, met them and talked to them, and often woke up sobbing with excitement.

At last he knew what he wanted to do. He would compose music. Of course he had once made up his mind to be a tight-rope dancer, but that was when he was seven. His mother had arranged that he should be a poet, but then he had only been nine years old. Now that he was thirteen he knew his own mind, and he meant to set himself seriously to work to be a great composer.

"I hoped to make something of the boy," his stepfather had said sorrowfully when he lay dying. But Richard had needed no making. The genius was there ready to unfold itself all in good time, and to thrill the world with wild sweet music, music full of the strange fancies and ghostly terrors which haunted little Richard in his childhood's days.

Chapter 10



The Brontë Sisters (Part 1)

Charlotte 1816-1855 A.D.; Emily 1818-1848 A.D.; Anne 1820-1849 A.D., United Kingdom

The February winds were blowing across the Yorkshire hills and sweeping down the steep street of the little village of Haworth, as the heavily-laden carts piled with the furniture of the “new parson” came slowly up towards the parsonage. Above the street the moors rose higher and higher



The Brontë Sisters, Branwell Brontë

towards the round hills beyond, and there was scarcely a tree or hedge for the mad winds to wrestle with, as they swept the snow into long drifts by the side of the grey dykes and passed disdainfully over the stunted shrubs that struggled to hold their own on the bleak hillside. At the top of the steep village street the church, with its square tower, stood out clear against the moor and sky, and sheltering beside it was the low stone parsonage with its strip of garden, shut in on both sides by the silent churchyard.

There was curiosity astir in the village that day, for the new parson and his family were expected to arrive and several people were looking out of their doors and windows as the carts came slowly on, the horses' feet slipping and stumbling over the roughly-paved flagstones. Not that any of the villagers meant to show any interest or had the least intention of welcoming the new comers. The people of the West Riding were not given to welcoming strangers, and were certainly no respecters of persons. They were a rough independent folk, inclined to mind their own business and to expect other people to mind theirs, while they looked with a good deal of suspicion on any unknown thing or person. Their manners and appearance were as rugged as the wild country around, but there were good loyal hearts hidden away under the rough exterior, and kindly ways were there too.

Slowly the carts were dragged upwards by the tired horses until, in front of the church, they turned aside into a narrow alley and drew up at the gate of the parsonage. The new parson, Patrick Brontë, was bringing his wife and six little children to make their home there in the hillside village on the edge of the moors, and this was the first sign of their arrival.

Patrick Brontë was an Irishman, tall, strong, and handsome, quite a contrast to his small delicate wife, who looked almost too fragile to face the strong moorland breezes. The six children were as delicate-looking as their mother, and were like little rungs of a ladder, beginning highest up with Maria, who was six years old, and ending with Baby Anne, who was scarcely to be counted by years as yet. The children had all been born at Thornton, in Bradford parish, except the two elder girls, Maria and Elizabeth. Charlotte, following fast upon the heels of Elizabeth, was born on the 21st of April 1816, and then followed in quick succession Patrick, Emily, and Anne.

It was after little Anne was born that the mother's health began to fail, and when the family arrived at Haworth it was plainly seen that she had not very long to live. It had been no easy task to look after and clothe and care for those six little ones, especially when money was not too plentiful. Now it had grown to be a task quite beyond her strength.

From the very first there was a shadow over the parsonage, and the children, young as they were, felt it in their strange old-fashioned way. They were wonderfully good, quiet children, never the least inclined to be noisy or troublesome, and with their mother ill they grew even quieter. Maria, feeling the heavy responsibility of being the eldest, and bearing the weight of seven years, was like a little mother to the younger ones and easily kept them in order. She was very small for her age, but she was her mother's right hand, and had long ago learned to be useful in the nursery and in household concerns. Their father was not particularly fond of children and was always afraid they would trouble their mother, so Maria kept them all out of sight as much as possible, and they were as quiet as little mice.

"You would not have known there was a child in the house," said one of the old servants, "they were such still, noiseless, good little creatures."

The parsonage was not very large, but there was a small spare room above the front door, which

THE BRONTË SISTERS (PART 1)



The Old School Room, Haworth, England

was called “the children’s study,” although the eldest student was scarcely seven years old. Here Maria kept the little ones amused, and when it was fine took them out for walks over the moors. That heathery moorland was the great delight of the children’s hearts, and they would wander out hand in hand, a solemn little procession of six, the elder ones carefully helping those toddlers whose steps were still somewhat unsteady.

After one year at the Haworth parsonage the invalid mother died, and the lonely children grew even quieter and more lonely. Their father saw but little of them, for he had even his meals by himself, but he laid down strict rules that they should be brought up to be hardy and not think too much of clothes or food. It was not difficult to keep that rule, for there were very few luxuries in the parsonage.

Mrs. Brontë had been too ill to make friends with anyone within reach of Haworth, so there was no one now to take an interest in the children, but before very long an elderly aunt came from Cornwall to live with them and take charge of the household. The children, however, clung to one another and were quite content to be left alone. They seemed to need no one if they could only be together, and they lived entirely apart in a world of their own, making their own pleasures and

interests.

Books were scarce, and Maria had begun early to read the newspapers and to tell the younger ones any news which she thought was suited to their understanding. There was always a great deal to be read about the Duke of Wellington; he was Charlotte's special hero, and any news about him was eagerly discussed. As soon as the children could read and write they made up little plays and acted them together, the characters usually being the Duke of Wellington, Napoleon, Hannibal, or Caesar. Sometimes serious disputes arose as to which was the greatest hero, and as it was seldom that there was any disturbance in "the children's study," their father strode upstairs at once to see



Charlotte Brontë, Evert A. Duyckinck, based on a drawing by George Richmond

what was the matter and to settle the dispute.

He wondered sometimes what these children were really like, and what thoughts they had in their minds, and one day he hit on a curious plan of examining them. He was quite sure if their faces were hidden they would answer more freely and without any shyness, so he got an old mask which was in the house, and each child was told in turn to hide behind it and answer out boldly.

He began with little four-year-old Anne.

"What does a child like you want most?" he inquired.

The childish treble from behind the mask answered promptly, "Age and experience."

Emily came next.

"What should be done with your brother when he is a naughty boy?" was the question.

"Reason with him, and when he won't listen to reason, whip him," was the

THE BRONTË SISTERS (PART 1)

firm answer.

When Charlotte's turn came she was asked which was the best book in the world, and the answer came unhesitatingly, "The Bible."

"What is the next best book?" asked her father.

"The book of nature," answered the sedate little student.

Maria, then ten years old, was asked what was the best way of spending time. "By laying it out for a happy eternity," answered the anxious-minded little sister-mother who had wasted very little of her time on childish pleasures.

Chapter 11



The Brontë Sisters (Part 2)

Charlotte 1816-1855 A.D.; Emily 1818-1848 A.D.; Anne 1820-1849 A.D., United Kingdom

It was no wonder that the father felt rather puzzled and thought that somehow they were unlike other children.

It was just about that time, when Maria was ten years old, that it was decided to send the two elder girls to a school which had been started for poor clergymen's daughters at Cowan Bridge. Maria and Elizabeth were the first to be sent off into this new unknown world of school, but a few months later Charlotte and Emily joined their sisters there.

It was a sad change for the children. Home-sick and wretched, the four little girls went through a most miserable time. It was not at all a suitable school for such delicate children, and the hardships and misery were almost more than they could bear. In winter-time it was specially hard, and even the strongest and most healthy children suffered greatly.

The getting-up bell rang long before it was light, and the poor little shivering mortals had to huddle on their clothes, brown stuff frocks and long holland pinafores, by candle-light, very often unable to wash at all, as the water in the basins was frozen hard. Hair had all to be brushed very flat and very straight back from the face, and there was no excuse made for chapped and chilblained hands if everything was not as neatly arranged as possible. Then came prayers, and there were lessons too,



*Portrait of Charlotte Brontë,
J. H. Thompson*

THE BRONTË SISTERS (PART 2)



Charlotte Brontë, George Richmond

to be done before it was time for breakfast.

The hungry shivering little sisters found it difficult to eat the food provided for them, not because it was simple, but because it was so badly cooked and unclean, and often they went without their breakfast of burnt porridge and had nothing to eat until dinner-time.

But worst of all, perhaps, were the long walks in the bitter cold winds, when chilblains made every step painful, and the grey frieze cloaks were not half thick enough to keep out the piercing cold.

It was Maria who first began to show signs of failing health, and when at last her father was sent for, and he came to take her home, it was too late. She died a few days after reaching the parsonage, and before the summer was over the next little girl, Elizabeth, was also laid to rest in the old grey churchyard which had always seemed part

of the children's home.

Charlotte and Emily were still left to endure the school life for some months longer, but it was considered advisable that they should not face another winter there, and so to their great joy they were allowed to come home and take up again the old dreamy, peaceful life with Patrick and Anne. The heathery moors were like old friends welcoming them back, and brought comfort to their sore little hearts as they wandered out again hand in hand, only four now instead of six.

Although Charlotte was not much older than the rest, she at once became the responsible elder sister, trying as best she could to fill Maria's place. Much too anxious-minded and old for her nine years, she was, like Martha, "careful and troubled about many things," and seemed to have left childhood far behind her.

All the children's regular lessons were now done with their aunt, but they learned a great deal more from their father's conversation out of lesson hours. He had a habit of talking over all kinds of public news that interested him, and the children listened eagerly, for they loved politics and any

kind of out-of-the-way information. For the rest they were well cared for by Tabby, the elderly maid, who ruled them most strictly but really loved them devotedly, and took a great deal of trouble to give them any little treat she could provide.

So the next few years were perhaps the happiest the children had known, and they began once more to invent their own pleasures and interests, and to write out their “original compositions” together.

Pennies were never very plentiful at the parsonage, and the children were obliged to be careful about writing-paper, so the stories were written, mostly by Charlotte, in the smallest possible handwriting, to take up the smallest possible space; handwriting which it is now almost impossible to read without a magnifying glass. These sheets, stitched together and put into covers of stout sugar-paper, formed quite a little library of at least a hundred volumes, containing tales, romances, poems, dramas, historical novels, and all kinds of adventures.

The Duke of Wellington, still Charlotte’s hero, figured largely in



Emily Brontë, Branwell Brontë

these books, and everything of interest was carefully noted by one or other of the children, although it was Charlotte who did the greater part of the “compositions.” The quiet lonely life and the hours spent on the moors studying “the book of nature” were apt to make Charlotte somewhat dreamy and romantic, but there was plenty of “the daily round, the common task,” to keep her practical and energetic too. Besides her lessons she had to dust the rooms, help with the cooking, look after the younger ones and sew diligently under the stern eye of her aunt, but in spite of everything she always found time to write out those beloved little books. She was small for her age, very slight and fragile, with soft thick brown hair and rather a plain little face, adorned, however, with a pair of wonderful reddish-brown eyes. When anything interested her greatly it seemed as if a lamp was lit behind those eyes, and her whole soul suddenly shone out. There was nothing merry or childlike

THE BRONTË SISTERS (PART 2)

about her, for she was a solemn small maiden much weighed down by her responsibilities, and her neat tidy ways and quiet manners, added to her rather quaint dress, might well have been described by those who knew her as “old-fashioned.”

Five years of this peaceful life in the old parsonage passed by, and then, when Charlotte was fourteen, she was once more sent away to school, but to a very different kind of school this time.

There were only ten pupils at Roe Head, Dewsbury, and the mistress, Miss Wooler, was so kind and motherly that it seemed more like a large family than a school, and Charlotte need not have dreaded beginning her school life again. Long afterwards, one of the pupils wrote a description of her arrival in these words:

“I first saw her coming out of a covered cart, in very old-fashioned clothes, and looking very cold and miserable. She was coming to school at Miss Wooler’s. When she appeared in the school-room her dress was changed, but just as old. She looked a little old woman, so short-sighted that she always appeared to be seeking something, and moving her head from side to side to catch a sight of it. She was very shy and nervous, and spoke with a strong Irish accent. When a book was given her, she dropped her head over it till her nose nearly touched it, and when she was told to hold her

head up, up went the book after it, still close to her nose, so that it was not possible to help laughing.”

At first Charlotte was desperately home-sick, and she did not seem at all to fit in with the other girls. The lessons she should have known she knew but little about, and all the curious knowledge she possessed on other subjects only made the odd-looking girl seem all the more odd to her companions. She did not care for games, for she did not know how to play them, and was quite content to stand alone under the trees in the garden, where she could watch the sky through the branches and dream her dreams while the others played. She was extremely fond of drawing, and every picture that came her way she studied so long and so carefully that the other girls would begin to tease her and ask impatiently what it was she saw in it.

Then, if Charlotte was inclined to talk and explain what she was



Anne Brontë, Charlotte Brontë

looking at, the girls began to discover that it was well worth while to listen to what the odd-looking little girl had to say. By degrees she became a great favourite with them, and whenever they wanted a story it was Charlotte who was always called upon to tell it.

It was at bedtime, perhaps, that those tales of Charlotte's were particularly in demand, for her stories always sounded specially thrilling in the dark. Indeed one evening they were thrilled over-much by one of these tales, and frightened almost out of their wits, so that someone screamed out loud and brought Miss Wooler to see what could possibly be the matter.

The little girls of the old parsonage and wild moorland had a wonderful power within them. Those schoolgirls shivering in their beds, as they listened to the quiet voice that held them spell-bound in the darkness, felt the strange fascination of the little story-teller, just as afterwards the world stopped to listen, and listening fell also under the spell of the genius of the sisters of Haworth parsonage.



Bronte Sisters statue, Haworth Parsonage, Hawthorne, England

Chapter 12



Jenny Lind (Part 1)

1820-1887 A.D., Sweden

Once upon a time, as the fairy tales say, there was born in the northern city of Stockholm a baby girl, who possessed as magic a gift as any princess in the fairy tales of Hans Andersen.

At the time when this baby was born, in the year 1820, Hans Andersen was a boy of fifteen living not very far off, in Denmark, with all those beautiful fairy tales still in his head, and he did



Jenny Lind, anonymous artist

not meet our princess until she was quite grown up, but the moment he saw her he knew at once she was wonderful enough to have lived all along in one of his own fairy tales.

Jenny Lind, of course, was not really a fairy princess, nor indeed a princess at all. She was only a little Swedish girl, born in a poor home in Stockholm, where no one gave her a very warm welcome. Her young father could not earn money enough for himself and his wife, and now here was another mouth to fill! Even the baby's mother did not feel specially glad at the arrival of her little daughter. She, poor woman, had to work hard and kept a day-school for other people's children, and a child of her own was rather in the way. Nobody guessed then that the baby had a magic gift which was to bring her fame and fortune. She was just a little unwelcome baby,



Jenny Lind, J.L. Asher

JENNY LIND (PART 1)

christened very grandly “Johanna Maria,” but known always by the funny, homely name of “Jenny.” Life was to be full of changes for little Jenny, and she was sent off at once to live in the country under the care of Carl Ferndal, organist and parish clerk of the church of Sollentuna. This man and his wife took good care of the adopted baby, and for four years Jenny lived the life of a country child and was as happy as the day was long. She was a real child of the woods and meadows, and loved nothing so much as rolling on the grass, picking wild flowers, and listening to the song of the birds. Birds and flowers seemed to have a special message for her, and she loved them with a love that never changed through all her changing life.

Then at the end of four years the country life vanished and town life began for the little maiden, for her mother quarrelled with the organist and carried Jenny back to Stockholm.

Everything was strange to the child in the big town. She did not like so many people or so much noise. She wished she was back in the woods listening to the birds. Town noises were all so frightening and ugly. Then suddenly she discovered that sounds could be pleasant in a town too. Every morning as the soldiers marched up the streets, they made music on their bugles, and the tune they played went singing on in her head all day long, just as the music of the birds used to do in the green woods.

At last one morning when Jenny thought she was quite alone and the soldiers’ tune was still singing softly in her head, she crept up to the piano, which had been left open that her stepsister Amelia might practise upon it, and began softly to pick out the tune with one finger.

“Amelia, is that you practising?” cried out the old grandmother, who was passing.

There was no answer, but the music stopped at once. The grandmother looked into the room. There stood the square piano, but no one to be seen near it. This was very strange. The grandmother rubbed her eyes and looked again. She was sure she had heard someone playing. Amelia might be



Jenny Lind, Francis Bicknell Carpenter



Jenny Lind, Eduard Magnus

JENNY LIND (PART 1)

hiding perhaps, so in she came and poked about behind chairs and table, until at last she caught sight of a tiny figure crouching inside the square piano, and stooping down she dragged out a very frightened and very dusty little Jenny.

“Child,” said her grandmother, “was that you playing?”

Jenny caught her breath with a great sob and confessed that she had tried to play on the piano without permission.

The grandmother looked down at the tiny child with amazement and almost with awe. She could scarcely believe that Jenny could have made the music she had heard. Already she caught the echo of that magic gift, the very spirit of music which no one had as yet guessed that the child possessed.

“Mark my words,” she said afterwards to Jenny’s mother, “that child will bring you help.”

That might perhaps happen some day, thought her mother, but just now the child was rather a hindrance than a help, and help was sorely needed. The day-school kept by Frau Lind was not a success, and after a few years she was obliged to give it up, and then Jenny changed her home once more.

The steward or gatekeeper of the House of the Widows, where Jenny’s grandmother had found a home, had no children and wanted to adopt a little girl, and this seemed the very thing for Jenny. It was a comfortable, happy home for the child, and she would be able to see her grandmother whom she loved.

All this time the spirit of music had grown with the child’s growth, and in the new home she could no more help singing than the birds in the trees.

“As a child I sang with every step I took, and with every jump my feet made,” she said many years afterwards.

The little singing maiden, hopping about the quiet Widows’ Home, must have seemed like a bird shut up in rather a gloomy cage, but Jenny was quite happy. As long as she might sing to herself she was never lonely, and then, too, she had always her dear cat with the blue ribbon round his neck for company, and he was most patient and polite in listening to her song.

There was a window in the steward’s house which looked down upon the busy street leading to S. Jacob’s church, and here on the broad window-seat Jenny used to curl herself up, with the cat sitting opposite, and sing to her heart’s content.

The passers-by, when they heard the child’s voice, would pause and look up. They half expected to see a bird-cage hanging there, but instead, all that was to be seen was a round-faced little girl and a solemn cat with a blue ribbon round his neck.

But wherever the song came from it was very sweet and haunting, and seemed to go straight to the heart, so the people always smiled as they looked upward, and were never tired of listening.

Chapter 13



Jenny Lind (Part 2)

1820-1887 A.D., Sweden

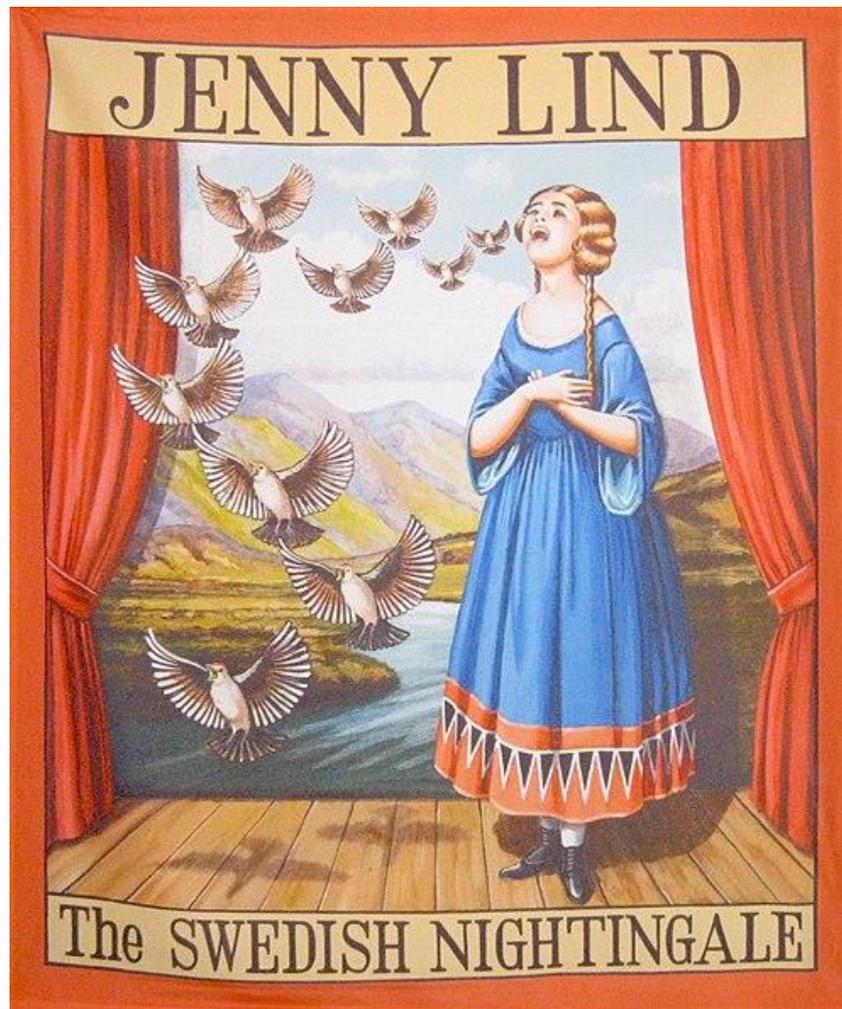
Now among the people who passed to and fro under the window of the steward's house was the maid of a Mademoiselle Lundberg, a performer at the Royal Opera House. This maid could not forget the sound of the child's voice, and she thought of it so often that at last she told her mistress about the little girl who sang to her cat in the window of the House of the Widows.

It sounded a very pretty tale, and Mademoiselle Lundberg began to think that she too would like to hear the child with the bird-like voice, so she bade her maid find out who the little girl was, and ask if she might come and sing to her.

There was nothing very fairy-like about Jenny in those days. She herself tells us that she was "a small, ugly, broad-nosed, shy, undergrown girl," but when she stood before the lady who had sent for her, and began to sing, the magic of her music cast a spell over all who listened.

"The child is a genius," cried Mademoiselle Lundberg. Then turning to Jenny's mother, who had come with her, she said, "You must have her educated for the stage."

But Frau Lind would not hear of such a thing, and the old grandmother, too, shook her head



Jenny Lind the Swedish Nightingale, courtesy of the University of Sheffield

JENNY LIND (PART 2)



Jenny Lind in La Sonnambula, unknown artist, Wikimedia Commons

when she was told. They disliked the stage and thought it would be an evil life for little Jenny.

“Very well, then,” said Mademoiselle Lundberg, “you must at any rate have her taught singing.”

There could be no objection to that, and after talking it over Jenny’s mother set out, with a letter of introduction in one hand and her little daughter in the other, to seek an interview with Herr Croclius, the singing-master at the Royal Theatre.

There was something very grand and worldly and almost frightening about the broad flight of steps which led to the theatre, and as the mother and child climbed up, Frau Lind’s heart failed her again and all her doubts came rushing back. She stood still and hesitated, half inclined to turn round and go home.

But an eager little hand was dragging her forward, and Jenny begged her to be quick and come on. Jenny was quite sure that there must be no turning back, and so, half unwillingly, her mother allowed herself to be pulled along until she reached the room of Herr Croclius, and they knocked timidly at the door.

The singing-master listened kindly to what they had to say, and then bade Jenny sing one of her songs to him, more out of kindness than because he took any great interest in the small, plain-looking child.

But the moment the song was begun all was changed. Again the magic of her gift wove its wondrous spell, and the tears gathered in the master’s eyes as he listened to the pure, fresh notes. Then when she had finished he rose to his feet and held out his hand.

“You must come with me,” he said, “to Count Pyke, the head of the theatre. We must show him what a treasure we have found.”

Now the Count was not at all inclined to think that Jenny was a treasure at all, and he frowned when he looked at the shy, plain little girl.

“How old is she?” he asked, to begin with.

“Nine years old,” said Croclius.

“Nine!” exclaimed the Count. “But this is not a creche. It is the King’s Theatre.”

He looked quite crossly at the small figure standing there. A child of that age was only fit to be kept in a nursery, what was the use of troubling a busy man with such foolishness?

“Well,” said Croclius, “if the Count will not hear her, then I will teach her for nothing myself, and she will one day astonish you.”

Indeed she had already begun to astonish the Count, for he thought after all there must be something wonderful about the commonplace child if Croclius, the great singing-master, was willing to teach her without any payment. At any rate he would allow her to sing to him, and would judge for himself.

So again Jenny sang one of the songs which she had sung to the cat when they sat together in the sunny window, and once again the spell worked. She always forgot her shyness when she once began to sing, and her whole face was transformed and “shone with heavenly light.”

In one of Hans Andersen’s tales there is the story of a nightingale that charmed the Emperor and all his court with its wonderful singing, although it was merely a plain little grey bird that almost shocked the court with its humble appearance.

“Is it possible?” said the lord-in-waiting. “I never imagined it could be such a little plain simple thing like that.”

JENNY LIND (PART 2)

But when the Emperor heard the song of the little grey bird, the tears came into his eyes and rolled down his cheeks, and the song went straight to his heart. He wished to reward the nightingale, but she would take nothing.

“I have seen tears in an Emperor’s eyes, and that is my richest reward,” she said.

That is what Jenny Lind might have felt when she finished her song, and looked up at the two men who were listening to her. The Count was like the Emperor in the fairy tale. He could only see the plain little grey bird through a mist of tears which filled his eyes and rolled down his cheeks.

Here was a treasure indeed. Such a singing bird must not be allowed to escape, and so it was at once arranged that Jenny should become the adopted child of the Royal Theatre, and that she was to be educated and taught to sing, all at the expense of the Government.

Frau Lind gave her consent very unwillingly, but it was a great matter that the child should be provided for, and there seemed nothing else to be done.

So the little grey bird began her training, which was to lead to such a world-wide success. She was scarcely ten years old when she began to act at the Royal Theatre, and her acting was almost as full of charm as her singing, so that she might have become a great actress as well as a great singer.

She was taught, of course, many other things besides acting and singing, and did her lessons just like any other little girl. Her sewing was perhaps the thing she did best, for she loved to put in neat, dainty stitches, and worked most exquisitely.

“Madame’s stitches never come out,” said her maid when Jenny was grown up.

It might be thought a



Daguerreotype of Jenny Lind by John Carl Frederick Polycarpus Von Schneidau (published in several articles)

strange life for a child, and there was much evil around her, but she grew up like a daisy in a garden, white and pure, with gold at the heart of her. Like S. Margaret, she kept herself unspotted from the world, and the purity of her heart put to flight the dragon of evil.

Even when the world began to ring with the fame of this wonderful “nightingale,” when kings and queens begged that she would come and sing to them in their palaces, when they “crowned her with flowers and filled her lap with gold,” Jenny Lind through it all remained, like the princess in the fairy tale, “as good as gold,” unspoilt and simple, “with the manners of a princess, the simplicity of a child, and the goodness of an angel.”

Chapter 14



Florence Nightingale

1820-1910 A.D., United Kingdom



Photo of Florence Nightingale, courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, London

On the 12th of May, the month of flowers, in the year 1820, a little English baby was born at the Villa Colombaia, just outside Florence, the fair city of the Arno. Spring had been busy sowing the fields with flowers and spreading a carpet of tender green beneath the grey olive trees. She decked with delicate budding leaves the knotted festoons of vines, and scattered blossoms abroad with such a lavish hand that the old city of palaces, with its sun-baked roofs and narrow, shadowy streets, now well deserved its name of the City of Flowers.

New life was springing up everywhere, and the little new life at the Villa Colombaia lifted its face to the light in company with the flowers.

“We will call her Florence,” said her mother. So the City of Flowers gave its dear name to the little English baby, who was one day to write it in letters of gold upon the scroll of fame.

It was not very long before the English family went back to their home in England, but the

baby they carried with them must always have seemed a link with the beautiful old city, the rainbow-coloured flowers of spring, and the sunshine and blue skies of Italy.

The first home that Florence knew in England was Lea Hall, in Derbyshire, but when she was five years old, and her sister Frances was six, they went to live in a new house called Lea Hurst, which their father had just rebuilt, and here all the rest of her childhood's summer days were spent.

It was a beautiful home, for Mr. Nightingale loved all beautiful things, and would have everything around him as charming as possible. The windows facing south looked over lawns and gardens and wooded slopes across the valley where the Derwent water wound its way, like a silver thread, to the hills beyond, and on every side the view was lovely. But surely most charming of all must have been the sight of the two little maidens in their dainty muslin frocks, Leghorn hats, and sandal shoes, as they played about the garden slopes, among the beds of purple pansies, blue forget-me-nots, and crimson wallflowers.

The children had each her own special garden, in which they worked diligently, planting, weeding, and watering, but it was Florence who was specially fond of flowers. It seemed as if the old City of Flowers had laid its charm upon her as well as gave her its name.

The two little sisters were very fond of their dolls, too, although they showed their fondness in very different ways, and brought up their families on quite different plans. Florence's dolls were all delicate and needed constant care. They spent most of their lives in bed, going through dangerous illnesses, while they were most carefully and tenderly nursed by their little mother, who doctored



Miss Nightingale, in the Hospital, at Scutari, illustration for The Illustrated London News, 24 February, 1855



The Mission of Mercy: Florence Nightingale receiving the Wounded at Scutari, Jerry Barrett

them, and tempted their appetites with dainty dishes until they were well again. Scarcely were they up and dressed, however, than some fresh ailment laid them low once more, and the nursing began over again. Frances's dolls, on the contrary, were scarcely ever in bed at all. They led stirring lives of adventure and excitement, but when an accident occurred and an arm was broken or a leg came off at the joint, it was Florence who tenderly "set" the arm, and put the injured joint in splints.

And if it was interesting to nurse dolls, how much more worth while was it to take care of live animals! Florence looked upon all animals as her friends, more especially those that were rather ugly and unfortunate. Anything that needed her care appealed at once to her tender little heart. It was she who welcomed and admired the very commonplace kittens which the stable-cat hid from less friendly eyes; and the old pony that was past work and of no use to anyone knew that his little mistress loved him as much as ever. Whenever she passed the paddock he came trotting over to see her, and then he would poke his nose into her pockets until he found an apple or a carrot, which was always hidden somewhere ready for this daily game of hide-and-seek. The birds, too, seemed to know and trust her, and even the squirrels came darting down for any nuts she carried with her, as she walked through the woods, evidently looking upon her as quite one of themselves.

Only half the year was spent at Lea Hurst, for in winter and early spring the family went to live in their other house, Embley Park, in Hampshire.

There were but few railways in those days, and so the journey was made by coach or in their

own carriage, and it was always a delightful time for the two children, who loved the excitement of driving along the coaching roads and stopping to rest at nights at the wayside inns.

During those winter months at Embley, Florence and her sister were kept very strictly at lessons with their governess. Their father believed that girls should be taught quite as thoroughly as boys, and he planned his little daughters' lessons just as carefully as if they had been sons. With him, Florence learned Greek and Latin and mathematics, and was extremely quick at learning foreign languages.

The little girls were taught, too, by their mother to work their samplers and to do fine sewing, so there was not much spare time in their days, although some hours were always set aside for them to run about outside with their dogs, to scramble about the woods or ride their ponies up hill and down dale.

From her mother, too, Florence learned the pleasure of visiting the village people and getting to know them in their homes, and she was always eager to be the messenger when there was a pudding or jelly to be carried to some invalid.

She was riding on her pony over the Hampshire downs one day, after a round of visits with the vicar, when they noticed that old Roger, the shepherd, was having hard work to collect his scattered sheep, and that he had no dog to help him.

The vicar stopped and called to him.

"Where's your dog?" he asked.

"The boys have been throwing stones at him, your reverence, and have broken his leg," answered the old man.



Nightingale and the Injured Collie Dog, illustration from Florence Nightingale as seen in her portraits by Maude E. Abbott, 1916

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

“Do you mean to say Cap’s leg is broken?” asked Florence anxiously. She knew the name of every dog about the place. “Can nothing be done for him? Where is he?”

The old man shook his head.

“No, there’s naught can be done, missy,” he said. “He will never be good for anything again. I’ve left him lying yonder in that shed. I’ll have to bring along a rope this evening and put an end to him.”

Florence turned beseeching eyes upon the vicar.

“Can’t we go and see?” she asked.

The vicar nodded, and they galloped off together to the lonely shed, and in a moment Florence had slid off her pony, entered the shed, and was kneeling by the side of the suffering dog. She always seemed to understand the language of animals, and as she patted and soothed and spoke in a low tone to poor Cap, he seemed at once to understand her, and feebly tried to wag his tail in response, looking up at her with brown eyes full of grateful trust.

The vicar, following after, carefully examined the injured leg and declared it was not broken at all, but that with careful nursing the dog might get well.



Florence Nightingale, courtesy of Wellcome Images



Bust of Florence Nightingale, courtesy of Wellcome Images, unknown location

“What shall I do first?” asked Florence anxiously.

“We might try a hot compress,” said the vicar.

Florence did not know exactly what a hot compress was, but when she understood that it was a cloth wrung out in very hot water, she set to work at once. The shepherd’s boy was told to light a fire of sticks and fill a kettle, and then came the question of a cloth and bandages. Looking round, Florence’s quick eye caught sight of the shepherd’s clean smock hanging behind the door, and this she declared was the very thing that was needed.

“Mamma will give him a new one,” she said, as she tore the smock into strips.

Very tenderly then did she doctor the swollen leg, and in spite of the pain, the dog lay quite still under her hand, watching her all the time with his understanding, grateful eyes.

A message was sent home to explain where Florence was, and all that afternoon she watched by the side of the suffering dog, and bathed the poor leg until the swelling began to go down.

It was evening before the shepherd came, and he came with a slow step, sorrowfully carrying a rope in his hand.

“Deary me, miss,” he exclaimed in astonishment, when the dog gave a whine of welcome and tried to come to him, “why, you’ve worked a wonder. I never thought to see the old dog greet me again.”

“You can throw away the rope, for he’s going to get quite well now,” said Florence, “only you must nurse him carefully, and I will show you how to make hot compresses.”

Roger was only too glad to do all that the little lady directed, and had no words to express his

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

thanks. But it was the look in Cap's grateful eyes that was all the thanks that Florence cared for.

She was only a child then, always ready to help anything that needed her care, tending her flowers and learning to be orderly and diligent, but she was laying the foundation of the great work that was to crown her life. The look of gratitude in the eyes of a dog moved her childish, pitiful heart, but how well was she to learn to know that look in the eyes of suffering men, when the very name of Florence Nightingale meant hope and comfort to the wounded soldiers, and the sight of her face bending over them was to them as the face of an angel.

Chapter 15



Sir John Everett Millais (Part 1)

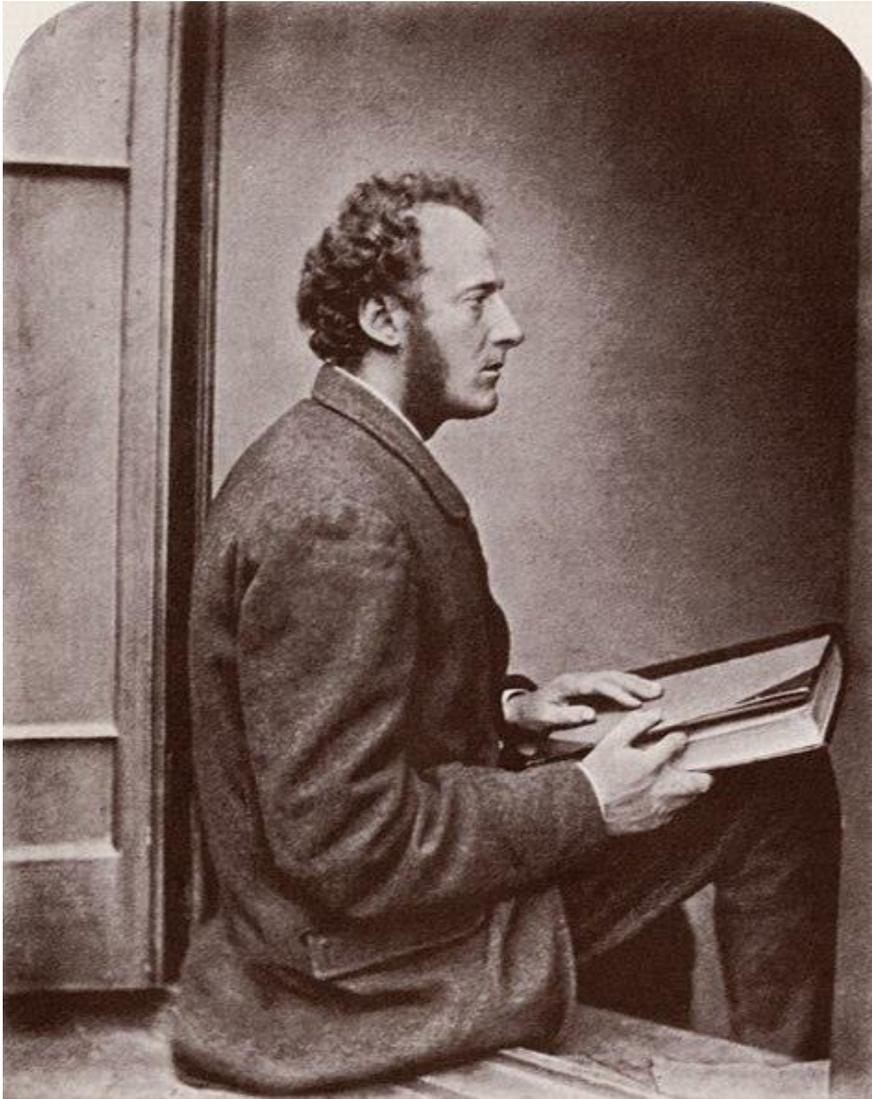
1829-1896 A.D., United Kingdom

In the story of the childhood of famous men and women, we seldom find the things we look for and would expect to find there. If we might invent the stories ourselves, they would, in most cases, be very different from the real accounts. But now and again we come across the record of a childhood which fits exactly with our ideas of what it should have been, and the story of the childhood of John Everett Millais is one of these. The famous painter began steadily from his earliest years to tread the road from which his feet never wandered. The golden thread which ran through all his life he grasped while still but a child, and it led him on without break or tangle to the goal of his ambition.

It was at Southampton that John Millais was born on the 9th of June 1829, but it was at St. Heliers in Jersey that he spent the first happy years of his childhood. His father, John William Millais, was descended from an old Norman family that had lived for generations on the island, and St. Heliers was an ideal home for children. Here John and his elder brother William, and their sister Emily, played amongst the rocks to their hearts' content, catching sand-eels and crabs, poking about in the clear pools, and carrying home all sorts of



Sir John Everett Millais, George Frederick Watts



Sir John Everett Millais, Lewis Carroll

treasures to fill baths and basins. It was rather a trial to their mother's patience, for she would much rather that the treasures had been left on the shore, and John, who was only four years old, was not a strong child, and she was anxious when he escaped from her care, and went to search for his beloved sea-beasts and seaweeds. However she soon found that the best way to keep him safe and happy, and out of mischief, was to let him have a pencil and paper on which to draw pictures.

John loved fishing off the pier and hunting in the pools, but he loved drawing pictures best of all. With a pencil and some scraps of paper he was perfectly happy, and he was never tired of drawing birds and butterflies, and anything else that caught his fancy. Lying flat on the ground, he covered his paper with all sorts of

figures and animals, and very soon other people besides his mother began to notice his drawings and to think them extremely clever.

"Mark my words, that boy will be a very great man some day, if he lives," said one of his uncles, after looking at his nephew's work.

John was not a difficult child to manage at home. He was frank and truthful and very affectionate, but he always found it difficult to keep to rules, and it was impossible to drive him by force to do anything he had made up his mind not to do. It was his mother who taught him his lessons and gave him all the help he needed, and only once was the attempt made to send him to school.

That school was certainly not a success, and he had been there only two days when he was sent home in dire disgrace. Some rule had been broken, and the master declared that John should have a thrashing to teach him to keep the rules another time. But John did not see the justice of this, and

before the thrashing began he turned round quickly and bit the master's hand. Of course he was sent home at once, and told he need not come back any more after such disgraceful behaviour.

Now John ought to have been very unhappy, and perhaps he was a good deal ashamed of that bite, but as far as school was concerned he was overjoyed to hear that he need not go back. To do lessons with his mother was quite a different thing altogether. With her to teach him he loved his lessons, instead of hating them with all his heart. "I owe everything to my mother," he used to say, when his childhood's days were past and he remembered all her love and patience with her little boy.

When John was about six years old there came a delightful and interesting change in his life, for the family went to live at Dinan in Brittany, and the children were charmed with all the new sights and sounds. There were many kinds of new things for John to draw, and greatest of all delights was the sight of the regiments of French soldiers as they marched through the town on their way to or from Brest. John loved the grand buildings and all the beautiful things his mother pointed out to him, but he was fascinated by those gorgeous French uniforms.

In the Place du Gruxlin there was a bench from which the two boys could watch the roll-call and see the soldiers above the heads of the crowd, and they never failed to be there when they heard the drums beating and the sound of marching feet. John of course always had his sketch-books with him, ready to draw all he could see.

He was working away one day, anxious to finish the portrait of a very smart drum-major in all the glory of his gold trappings, bearskin, and gold-headed cane, when two of the officers crept up silently behind the bench and stood watching what he was doing. They said nothing until the portrait was finished, and then suddenly clapped him on the back and cried "Bravo!" They were so much astonished at the child's clever drawing that they insisted on tipping him, and then returned with the boy to his home, as they wished to be introduced to his father and mother.

"The child should be sent at once to study in Paris," they declared, feeling sure they had discovered a genius.

The sketch of the drum-major was carried off by them to the barracks and there shown with great pride to the other officers. No one, however, would believe that it could be the work of a child of six, and bets began to be freely taken about it, while one of the two officers started off post-haste to fetch little John to prove their words.



*Portrait of Millais and his family,
Lewis Carroll*

SIR JOHN EVERETT MILLAIS (PART 1)



A Dream of the Past: Sir Isumbras at the Ford, John Everett Millais

It was very frightening to be carried off by the strange soldier-man and taken to the barracks all alone, and John went in fear and trembling, but as soon as he got there and was given a pencil and a sheet of paper he forgot to be afraid or shy, and began at once to draw a portrait of the colonel smoking a big cigar. It turned out to be a most excellent likeness, and the other officers were so delighted as well as astonished that they willingly paid their bet, which was the cost of a good dinner.

After two years at Dinan the family returned once more to St. Heliers, and there John began his first lessons in drawing, but his master, Mr. Bessel, soon told the boy's parents that there was nothing more he could teach John, and he advised them to take their little son up to London. It would be wiser to go at once to the President of the Royal Academy, and ask his advice as to what should be done with the young genius.

Chapter 16



Sir John Everett Millais (Part 2)

1829-1896 A.D., United Kingdom



Self-portrait by Sir John Everett Millais

Now the President of the Royal Academy had often been asked to look at the drawings of promising children, and he was not at all encouraging when John and his parents were shown in, and he heard what they had to say.

“Better make him a chimney-sweep than an artist,” he said. He had seen so many young men try to paint pictures who would have been much better employed sweeping chimneys.

However, the great man said he would look at the child’s sketches, and he evidently expected to see the usual kind of work, which so often only seems wonderful in the parents’ eyes.

But when the sketches were produced and laid before him, he suddenly sat straight up and his eyes grew quite round with astonishment. He looked from the sketches to the little fellow standing there, and seemed to find it impossible to believe that such small childish hands could have produced such masterly work. Would John draw some-

SIR JOHN EVERETT MILLAIS (PART 2)



Peace Concluded, John Everett Millais

thing here and now, he asked, that he might look on and judge?

There was no difficulty about that. John set himself promptly to work and began a drawing of the fight between Hector and Achilles. The president could scarcely believe his own eyes. He was sorry he had talked about chimney-sweeping, and he handsomely apologised. Here was one of the few exceptions to his rule, and he strongly advised the boy's parents to have him trained to be an artist.

So it was settled that John should begin to work at once to draw from the cast in the British Museum, and after a short time, when he was nine years old, a place was found for him in the Academy of Art, the best school known at that time, kept by Henry Sars, a portrait-painter.

The small boy with his delicate face, long fair curling hair, holland blouse and turned-down frilled collar, was rather unlike the rest of the art students, and he was an easy victim for the bullying of the bigger boys. His fondness for work, his extreme diligence and wonderful talent were added aggravations to the other pupils, and one big hulking lazy fellow took a special delight in torturing the child.

Little Millais' life was made a burden to him by this big bully, and it only grew worse and worse as time went on. They both had entered the competition for the silver medal of the Society of Arts, and when it was known that John had carried off the prize, although he was only nine years old, his big rival was furious.

The very next day the bully sat in the studio watching like a great spider in a web for the arrival



Apple Blossoms, John Everett Millais

SIR JOHN EVERETT MILLAIS (PART 2)



The Boyhood of Raleigh, John Everett Millais

of the small boy, and biding his time until all the other pupils were gone, he seized on the defenceless little boy and began to take his cruel revenge.

In spite of his struggles, Millais was hung head downwards out of the window and his legs were fastened securely with scarves and pieces of string to the iron bar of the window-guard. The child very soon became unconscious, and would most likely have died had not some passers-by in the street below noticed the hanging figure, and given the alarm by ringing the street door-bell.

After that the bully was seen no more at the Academy, and Millais was left in peace.

The prize day at the Society of Arts was a red-letter day in the life of John Millais, for he was to receive his silver medal from the hands of his Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex. Dressed in a “white plaid tunic, with black belt and buckle; short white frilled trousers showing bare legs, with white socks and patent-leather shoes; a large white frilled collar, a bright necktie, and his hair in golden curls,” he walked up when the secretary called out his name, “Mr. John Everett Millais.”



*John Everett Millais in the studio of his house at 2 Palace Gate, Kensington,
photograph by J. P. Mayall, from Artists at Home, 1884*

There was a pause. The Duke, who stood behind a high raised desk, saw no one to whom he was to hand the medal, and waited for the prize-winner to appear.

“The gentleman is a long time coming up,” he said at last to the secretary.

“He is here, your Royal Highness,” replied the secretary, and looking down over the desk, sure enough the Duke saw that the gentleman was standing there, but such a very little gentleman he was, that his golden head did not reach to the level of the top of the desk.

A stool was then brought, and standing upon it the winner of the silver medal could be seen more clearly, and the Duke patted his head and wished him every success.

“Remember, if at any time I can be of service to you, you must not hesitate to write and say so,” he added kindly.

That was a lucky promise for John, and it was not very long before he claimed the promised favour. Both he and William were very keen on fishing, and they had fished every year together in the Serpentine and Round Pond, until permission was withdrawn. Then John remembered the Duke’s promise, and wrote to ask if they might not be allowed to fish there as usual, and the request

SIR JOHN EVERETT MILLAIS (PART 2)

was granted at once. After that the pleasure was all the greater, for they were the envy of all the other little boys, who were only allowed to look on.

William was only two years older than John, and they always were together as much as possible, although William went to school and John still did his lessons with his mother. Both boys were “mad about art,” and “knew every picture in the National Gallery by heart.” One of their plays was to make a National Gallery of their own, out of a large deal box, the pictures hung therein being about the size of a visiting-card or a good-sized envelope.

All the old masters were hung there. There were Rembrandts, Titians, Rubens, Turners, all with most gorgeous frames made out of the shining paper of crackers, and all carefully varnished to look like oil paintings.

It was a good thing that little Millais was child enough to play at such games, for in other ways he was so much older than his years, and he was getting on so quickly with his work, that it seemed as if he had already left his childhood behind him. He was only ten when he was admitted to be a student of the Royal Academy, “the youngest student who ever found entrance within its walls, and during his years there he carried off in turn every honour the Academy had to bestow.”

So the golden thread led onwards, and the boy never loosed his hold upon it nor strayed into other paths. Little John Millais, “the child” of the Royal Academy, went steadily forward until he became Sir John Millais, its famous president.

Chapter 17



Robert Louis Stevenson (Part 1)

1850-1894 A.D., United Kingdom

“My tea is nearly ready, and the sun has left the sky;
It’s time to take the window and see Leerie going by;
For every night at tea-time and before you take your seat,
With lantern and with ladder he comes posting up the street.”

“What luck it is to have a lamp before our very own door,” thought little Louis Stevenson as he stood by the nursery window to watch for the lamplighter.

One by one the lamps along Howard Place were touched into points of light, until the lamplighter reached No. 8, and then came the crowning joy of all, when Leerie stopped to light that special lamp. Would he look up and see the small face pressed against the window, and nod “good evening,” or would he be too busy to think of little boys?

It was no wonder that the coming of the lamplighter was so eagerly looked for! The winter days were often long and wearisome to the little child shut up in the nursery there, and everything he could see from his window was interesting and exciting.

Louis, or “Smout” as his father called him, was so often ill, and caught cold so easily in the bitter cold Edinburgh winds, that he was often kept indoors the whole winter through, and all that he saw of the outside world was



Daguerreotype portrait of Robert Louis Stevenson as a child,
courtesy of Yale University



Stevenson's childhood home in Heriot Row, Edinburgh, England

through his nursery window. They were happy days indeed when he was well enough to play about the nursery, to lie flat on the floor chalking and painting his pictures, and to watch for Leerie when the gloaming came. But there were many other days spent in bed, when Louis was obliged to make-believe a good deal to keep himself happy, as he sat up with a little shawl pinned round his shoulders and his toys arranged on the counterpane beside him.

It was all very well to make-believe in the daytime, when he could drill his soldiers and sail his ships and build his cities on "the pleasant land of counterpane," but when night came on it was weary work to lie long hours awake with a cough that hurt, dreaming half-waking dreams of wild terrors that were worst of all.

The wintry winds shrieked as they swept past, thumping at the window and howling away into the distance, and they sounded to the shivering child like a horseman galloping up into the town, thundering past with jingling spurs in fearful haste on some dreadful errand, only to turn and gallop back again with the same mysterious haste. Louis in his little bed, shaken with terrified sobs, said his prayers over and over again, and longed for the morning to come. It was so difficult to be brave when the night was so dark and he was so full of aches and pains.

MY WORLD STORY BOOK

But there was always someone at hand ready to comfort the child through those long dreadful hours. His nurse, Alison Cunningham, "Cummie" as he called her, never failed him. She was always there to drive away the terrors and soothe the pain, always patient and always gentle with the poor little weary boy. His nurseries changed first to Inverleith Row and then to No. 17 Heriot Row, but Cummie was always there. She was his sure refuge from terrors at night and the sharer of his joys by day; the feeling of "her most comfortable hand" he never forgot. Sometimes on those long watchful nights, when his wide-open eyes began to see fearful shapes, he would ask:

"Why is the room so gaunt and great?
Why am I lying awake so late?"

She would wrap a blanket round him and carry him over to the window, where he could look across the dark trees of the gardens beneath and see a few lights shining in the windows of the houses in Queen Street opposite. Safe in her arms, no shadows could touch him, and together they gravely discussed the question as to whether the lights meant that another wee laddie was awake watching with his nurse for the morn to come.

"When will the carts come in?" was the question always on his lips those weary nights. For the coming of the carts always meant that daybreak was at hand and the world was astir once more.

"Out in the city sounds begin,
Thank the kind God, the carts come in!
An hour or two more, and God is so kind,
The day shall be blue in the window blind."

Chapter 18



Robert Louis Stevenson (Part 2)

1850-1894 A.D., United Kingdom



Robert Louis Stevenson at the age of 4, unknown artist

But it was not only Cummie who watched over and cared for little Louis, there were his father and his mother too. Often during the night the nursery door would open gently, and his father would come in and sit by his bedside and tell him story after story, until the child forgot his pain and weariness and drifted away into the land of dreams. His father's tales always had a special charm for him and helped him through one terrible hour which he never forgot. He had been left alone in a room and by mistake had locked himself in, and then was unable to unlock the door. Evening was coming on, all his terrors of the dark began to gather round as the shadows crept nearer.

“All the wicked shadows coming
tramp, tramp, tramp,
With the black night overhead.”

But his father was close at hand, and his voice came through the key-hole talking about such delightful, interesting things that Louis held his breath to listen and quite forgot the shadows and the darkness until the locksmith arrived to open the door.

Then there was his young mother, “my jewelest of mothers” as he called her, who was so ready to play with him

and who always made even the dull nursery a sunshiny, happy place. She was not very strong, and Louis began early to try to take care of her. One day when he was only three years old, he was left alone with her after dinner and remembered that Cummie always wrapped a shawl about her; there was no shawl to be found, but he reached up and took a doyley off the table, carefully unfolded it, and spread it over as much of her as it would cover.

“That’s a wee bittie, mama,” he said comfortingly.

Cummie was very strict about Sunday, but his “jewelest of mothers” had a way of overcoming the difficulty, and if he promised to play nothing but the “Pilgrim Progress” game she sewed a patch on the back of one of his wooden figures, and lo! there was Christian, ready to flee from the City of Destruction, with all his exciting adventures ahead.

There was of course the Shorter Catechism to be learned, and there was no way of avoiding that, but afterwards came long chapters out of the Bible which Louis loved to listen to, and Cummie would read parts of the old writings of the Covenanters, and everything she read to him she managed to make most interesting. Louis himself learned to repeat long passages out of the Bible, besides Psalms and hymns, and he always recited them with a great deal of action, his small hands scarcely ever still, and his dark eyes shining with excitement.

With mother and Cummie to amuse him all day long, he was rather like a small prince in the nursery, and it was his will and pleasure that someone should constantly read to him. He never could listen quietly to any story, but must always try to act it, slaying dragons, attacking the enemy, galloping off on a fiery horse to carry news to the enemy, until he was tired out, and Cummie would smooth back the hair from his hot forehead, and try to persuade him to rest.

“Sit down and bide quiet for a bittie,” she said, and coaxed him to sew a piece of his kettle-holder, or knit the garter that was as black as only a child’s grimy little hands could make it.



Robert Louis Stevenson at the age of 7, Wikimedia Commons

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON (PART 2)

When spring came it brought new life to little Louis, and the long nights of pain and cold winter days were forgotten, as he played about the garden of his grandfather's manse at Colinton. Like the flowers, he began to lift up his head and grow strong in the sunshine. It was a different world to him when the sun shone and the sky was blue, and the splendid colours of the flowers made his days a rainbow riot of delight. There was no more lying in bed, no more coughs and wakeful nights, but instead, long warm summer days spent in the garden, or down by the river, where there was the joy of Louis's heart—a mill.

There were cousins there too, in the sunny garden, ready to play all the games that Louis invented, to lie behind the bushes with toy guns watching for a drove of antelopes to go by, to be shipwrecked sailors on a desert island, where the only food to be had to keep them from starvation was buttercups, and even to eat those buttercups and suffer the after effects rather than spoil the pretending game.

There too was the kind aunt who brought out biscuits and calves-foot jelly at eleven o'clock from her store-room, which always had so delicious a smell of raisins and soap and spices. Never was there so kind an aunt, and never did anything taste so good as those biscuits and that calves-



Photo of Robert Louis Stevenson and his father,
circa 1913, Wikimedia Commons

foot jelly.

The children stood rather in awe of their grandfather, for he was very strict, and woe betide any small foot that left its mark on the flower-beds of the manse garden. It was whispered that their grandfather made a nightly round and examined each little muddy shoe put out to be cleaned at night, ready to fit it into the track which the evildoer had left on the flower-bed. It was enough to make them very careful where they stepped. It was awe-inspiring, too, to see their grandfather in the pulpit every Sunday, and though they admired his beautiful face and his white hair, there was something rather terrifying about him, and the cold dark room where he sat solemnly writing his sermons was seldom invaded by any of his grandchildren.

But there was something in that dark room which Louis longed with all his heart to possess. On the walls hung some very highly-coloured

Indian pictures, just the sort of gorgeous colouring that Louis loved, and he wanted one more than anything else in all the world. At last there came a day when he was sent into the awesome room to repeat a Psalm to his grandfather, and his heart beat high with hope. Perhaps if he said his Psalm very nicely, his grandfather might reward him with a gift of one of those coloured pictures.

“Thy foot He’ll not let slide, nor will
He slumber that thee keeps”

quavered the little voice, while Louis kept one eye on his grandfather’s solemn face, and one on the Indian picture. When the Psalm was finished, his grandfather lifted him on his knee, and kissing him gave him “a kindly little sermon” which so surprised Louis, who had a very loving little heart, that he quite forgot his disappointment about the gaily-coloured pictures he had longed for.

Chapter 19



Robert Louis Stevenson (Part 3)

1850-1894 A.D., United Kingdom/Samoa

When those sunny summer days came to an end and Louis went back to Heriot Row, he had a companion with him now who made even the grey days cheerful. His cousin Robert Alan Stevenson spent a whole winter with him, and together they lived in a make-believe world of their own. Disagreeable things were turned into delightful plays, and even their meals were interesting. Instead of having to eat up a plateful of uninteresting porridge for breakfast, the magic of make-believe turned it into a foreign land, covered with snow (which was the sugar of course) or an island that was threatened by the encroaching sea (that was the cream), and the excitement of seeing the dry land disappearing or the snow mountains being cleared was so entrancing that the porridge was eaten up before the magic came to an end. Even cold mutton could be charmed into something quite delicious when Louis called it red venison, and described the mighty hunter who had gone forth and shot down the deer after many desperate adventures. Jelly was



Robert Louis Stevenson at age 15, photo from *Robert Louis Stevenson* by Fradelle & Young, 1902



Photo from *Robert Louis Stevenson; some personal recollections by the late Lord Guthrie*, by Andrew Elliot, 1920

who could walk into the shop with assurance and ask to see those books. Many a time did Louis stand outside, having no penny to spend, and try to see the outside pictures and to read as much of the printing as could be seen at such a disadvantage.

It was no use going in unless the penny was forthcoming, for Mr. Smith kept a stern eye on little boys, and seemed to know at a glance whether they were "intending purchasers" or not. Inside the dark little shop which "smelt of Bibles" he stood, and seemed to grudge them the pleasure of even turning over the pages of those thrilling plays.

"I do not believe, child, that you are an intending purchaser at all," he growled one day, sweeping the precious books away when Louis had "swithered" over his choice so long that no wonder dark suspicions were aroused.

always a kind of golden globe of enchantment to him, and he was sure the spoon might at any moment reveal a secret hollow, filled with amber light.

The boys possessed also very grand make-believe kingdoms which kept them very busy with the affairs of the nation. The kingdoms were called Encyclopaedia and Nosingtonia, and were both islands, for Louis loved islands then as much as afterwards when "Treasure Island" took the place of Nosingtonia.

But perhaps the greatest joy of all was when Saturday afternoons came round and the boys went down to Leith to look at the ships, always the chief delight of their hearts. Passing down Leith Walk they came to a stationer's shop at the corner, where in the window there stood a tiny toy theatre, and piled about it a heap of playbooks, "A penny plain and twopence coloured."

Happy indeed was the child who had a penny to spend (for of course no self-respecting boy with paintbox at home ever thought of buying a "Twopence coloured"),

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON (PART 3)

It was those little books which opened to Louis the golden world of romance, the doors of which were never closed to him again.

It was not until Louis was eight years old that he began to read. His mother and Cummie had always been ready to read to him, and that, he thought, was the pleasanter way. But quite suddenly he discovered that it was good to be able to read stories to himself, and it was a red-letter day when he first got possession of the *Arabian Nights*.

Long before he could write, he was fond of dictating stories to anyone who would write them for him, and poor patient Cummie would write sheet after sheet of nonsense, all of which she treasured and read to his mother afterwards. Sitting over the fire at night while Louis lay sleeping in his little bed, the mother and nurse whispered together over the cleverness of their boy, and anxiously tried to reassure each other that he was growing stronger, while they built their castles in the air always for Louis to dwell in as king.

Louis's school-days made but little impression upon him. He was so often kept away by ill-health, and the schools were so often changed, that he never won many laurels there. Whatever he liked to learn he learned with all his heart, and to the rest he gave very little attention whatever. He was not very fond of games, for he was not strong enough to play them well, and it was only when the make-believe magic began that he was in his element. He played football, but had to invent a tale of enchantment which changed the ball into a talisman, and the players into two Arabian nations, before he could enjoy it.

Far more exciting than any football was the business of being a lantern-bearer, that game of games, which he described with his magic pen long afterwards.

Picture Louis, stealing out of the house at North Berwick on a late September evening, his

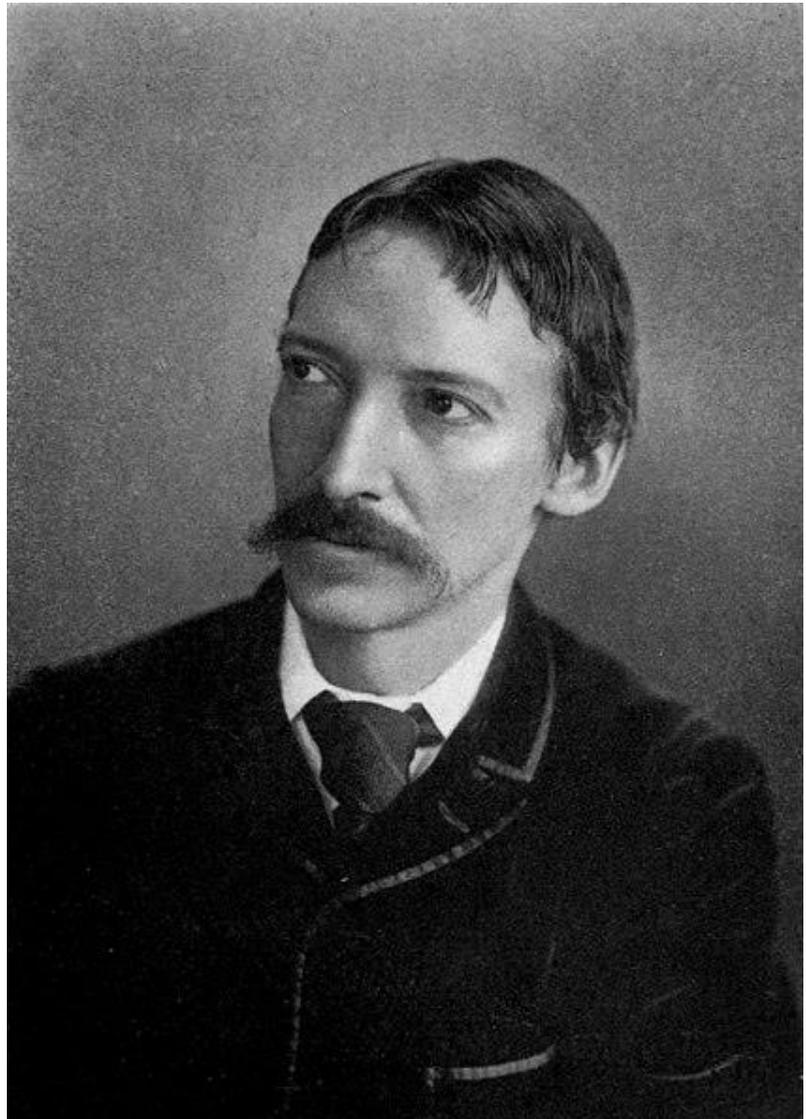


Photo of Robert Louis Stevenson by Henry Walter Barnett from *I Can Remember Robert Louis Stevenson* by Rosaline Orme Masson, 1893

overcoat buttoned up tightly over something that bulged at the waist, his very walk betokening an errand of mystery. Presently, coming over the wind-swept shore, another dark figure is seen, also with a buttoned-up overcoat, and the same kind of bulge at the waist.

“Have you got your lantern?” breathed Louis.

“Yes,” comes the answer. All is well. Over the links and away to the shore the mysterious figures wend their way and are joined by others equally mysterious, and one by one they climb into an old boat and crouch together there at the bottom. The wind whistles and shrieks overhead, but down there they are sheltered, and the overcoats are slowly and carefully unbuttoned, and what seemed to be but a bulge is shown to be a tin lantern burning brightly, which quite accounts for the strong smell of toasting tin which has been hanging in the air about them.

In the dim light of these lanterns the lantern-bearers sit, and wild and exciting is the talk that mingles with the shriek of the wind, while the sky is black overhead, and the sound of the sea is in their ears.

No one can talk as Louis does, he lays a spell upon them all with his make-believe magic, but after all it is not the talk that is so fascinating, but rather the buttoning up of those overcoats over the lighted lanterns, the exquisite joy of knowing that unseen and unsuspected a hidden light is burning brightly there that was the joy of being a lantern-bearer.

So it was that the make-believe magic kept Louis happy in his childhood’s games, and when he grew up to be a man and left the games behind him, the make-believe magic was never left behind, but gave a great happiness to the world as well as to himself.

“Be good and make others happy” was his own particular rule, for he believed that everyone should be as happy as ever they could, and even children should remember that

“The world is so full of a number of things,
I’m sure we should all be as happy as kings.”

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